

# Excavations at Anchor Iron Wharf, Greenwich: Part 2, industrial and social development in the 17th–19th centuries

Antony Francis and Julian Bowsher, with contributions from Jacqui Pearce (pottery, clay pipe), Lynne Keys (iron slag), Ian Betts (ceramic building material), and Ian Tyers (dendrochronology)

## Introduction

This is the second of two articles on the site at Anchor Iron Wharf, Greenwich SE10, where the Museum of London Archaeology Service (MoLAS) undertook a sequence of fieldwork (evaluation, excavation and watching brief) in 2001–2003 in advance of redevelopment for housing (Fig. 1). The site records are available for reference and further study at the London Archaeological Archive and Research Centre (LAARC) under the site code LAS01. In 2008, MoLAS was renamed Museum of London Archaeology (MOLA) and some references in this

article, such as in the acknowledgements, use this new style.

The site lay in east Greenwich, in an Area of High Potential for Archaeology as defined by the London Borough of Greenwich. Its approximate centre was at National Grid Reference 538930 178220. It comprised a Thames frontage (Anchor Iron Wharf) and a strip of land running back from the river, bounded by Hoskins Street to the west and Lassell (formerly Marlborough) Street to the east. Its southern edge followed a property boundary *c.* 30m south of Collington Street, which crossed the site (Fig. 2).

The first article<sup>1</sup> reported on the Tudor stables found in the southern part of the site. They were very probably those built on the orders of Henry VIII during the renovation in 1532/3 of Old Court, a riverside property immediately west of the site, which at the time was owned by the Crown. This article focuses on the industrial and social development of the site in the 17th–19th century, and is particularly concerned with its northern part, where the archaeological monitoring of service trenches, dug during the watching brief phase of fieldwork, revealed evidence of an iron works

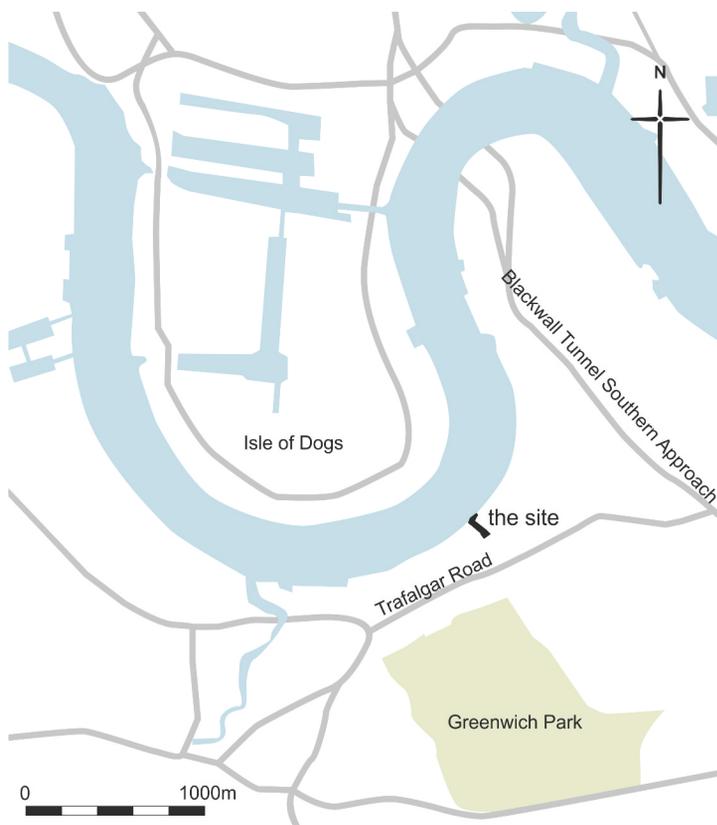


Fig. 1: site location

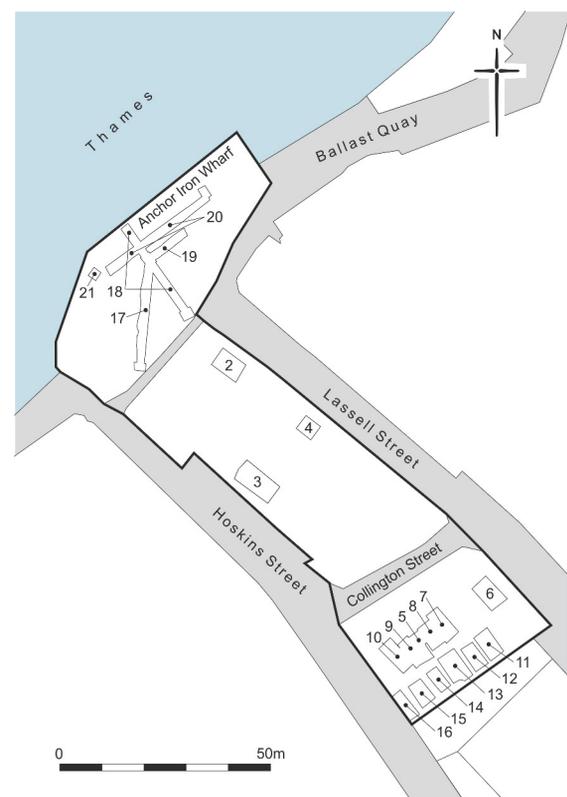


Fig. 2: location of trenches (excavation trenches 2–16, watching brief trenches 17–21)

## ANCHOR IRON WHARF

built on reclaimed land. Over the site as a whole, the finds assemblage recovered during the project illustrated how the social make-up of this part of Greenwich changed from the 17th century onwards.

### Geology and topography

The site lies on the south bank of the Thames and is underlain by bands of clean sands and gravels, typical of natural river terrace deposits.<sup>2</sup> The surface of the natural strata sloped down towards the river from a maximum of 2.13m OD, in the southern part of the site, to 0m OD, close to the river. In the central and southeast part of the site, the sands and gravels were sealed by a colluvial subsoil at 2.02–2.45m OD but in the northwest part of the site, which had been reclaimed from the Thames, the subsoil was absent and the river gravels were sealed by a black river silt at 1.25m OD. For comparison, modern Lassell Street lies at 4.2–4.4m OD.

### Archaeological and historical background

There was no evidence of prehistoric, Roman or medieval activity on the site. However, by the end of the 10th

century the manor of East Greenwich was held by the Abbey of St Peter, Ghent (in modern Belgium), which established a daughter priory at Lewisham. Old Court, within whose grounds the site lay, was the manor house for East Greenwich. In 1415, land belonging to alien priories (that is, those dependent on foreign houses) was seized by the Crown. Henry V subsequently granted the manor to the Sheen Priory but ownership reverted to the Crown in 1531. Royal ownership of the site was ended when Sir John Morden acquired the freehold of the manor of Old Court in 1699. After his death in 1708, the property passed to Morden College and the trustees of the college owned the land on which the site stood until recently.

The decision by Henry VII to build a new palace at Greenwich, 300m upstream, vastly increased the importance of the area. The Tudor palace buildings were demolished in the 1660s and, after Charles II's plans to reconstruct it fell through, its site in central Greenwich remained largely vacant until the 1690s when the Greenwich Hospital for Seamen was built upon it.

From the 17th century onwards, maps are available which chart the development of Greenwich. Maps from the 1690s<sup>3</sup> clearly show the road now known as Lassell Street. The layout of the streets, including the curved part of Old Woolwich Road to the south-east, is substantially the same today. The 17th-century leases, discussed in the first article, reveal that Old Court was a substantial property and included orchards, gardens, stables and outhouses as well as the main house.

Anchor Iron Wharf first appears, as an extension into the river, on a map by John Holmes of 1739<sup>4</sup> (Fig. 3). The reclaimed land is marked as 'Anchor Wharf' and the area is described in the map's key as 'a Coachway & Anchor Wharf & Forge' held by John Crowley. A later estate plan of 1771<sup>5</sup> reveals little change except that the western side of Marlborough Street (later Lassell Street) was occupied by small houses. In less detail, the same situation is shown on John Rocque's map of 1746.<sup>6</sup> Some background to these developments is provided by the Minute Books of



Fig. 3: detail from John Holmes's Greenwich Survey of 1739 showing Anchor Wharf and its environs (reproduced by permission of the Trustees of Morden College)

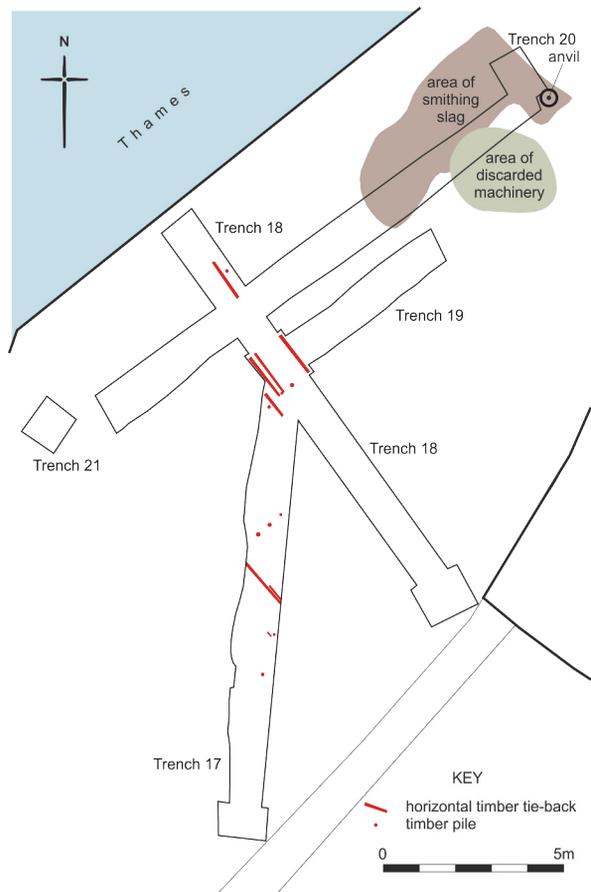


Fig. 4: location of the timber tie-backs and piles, the anvil, discarded machinery and large area of smithing slag found during the watching brief.

Morden College. On 26 March 1713, Sir Ambrose Crowley was granted a lease of 21 years for a coachway to his house.<sup>7</sup> A further lease was made to his son John Crowley in September 1726<sup>8</sup> for 36 acres and 1 rood of marsh and renewing the lease of the coachway. The lease records that John Crowley was to 'lay out and expand in building a new substantial brick wharf in the place of a timber wharf now without of repair'.<sup>9</sup> This wharf was known as 'Ballast Wharf or Ballast Key'. The reference indicates that by 1726 a timber wharf had existed for long enough for it to fall into disrepair. The combination of Minute Book and map evidence shows therefore that the reclamation of the wharf area took place some time between 1726 and 1739. The John Holmes map also shows a building, presumably for the forge, in the north-east part of the wharf. This building was still standing in 1807 when it is shown in an estate plan.<sup>10</sup>

A plan of 1761, made when the premises were leased to Isaiah Millington for 35 years, shows 'Anchor Wharf' but without any detail of structures on the site.<sup>11</sup> Thomas Calvert and Thomas Vardon are also annotated on this document and their names re-appear, together with Millington's, in the renewal of the lease in 1801.<sup>12</sup> Thomas Calvert was now referred to as a 'manufacturer of iron'. The Millington family's association with the wharf part of the site continued until late 1857 when Morden College accepted the surrender of the lease from 'Crowley Millington'.<sup>13</sup> William Webster leased the wharf after this, but his tenancy was evidently short-lived as he was issued with a Notice to Quit in 1862.<sup>14</sup>

As late as 1834 this area of the site was still at the easternmost edge of Greenwich and undeveloped. Its layout remained much as it had been in the Tudor period. By the 1860s, however, the riverside was beginning to acquire a more industrial character and a new building had appeared in the south-east corner of Anchor Wharf,<sup>15</sup> apparently replacing the building in the north-east. Small houses had been built on the western and southern sides of the main site with further development south of Collington Street. Collington Street and Bennett Street (now Hoskins Street)

were now clearly defined. A map in Morden College Archives shows that 'The Anchor Wharf' was leased to James Fennings from the end of 1863.<sup>16</sup> In the closing decades of the 19th century the wharf was apparently being used for trading iron and other metals, as demonstrated by a letter of 1895 addressed to C.A. Robinson and Co, Iron, Metal and Glass merchants at Anchor Iron Wharf, East Greenwich.<sup>17</sup> On the southern part of the site, the 'British Sailor' public house was licensed from 1889.

The construction of the power station in 1902–1910, on a plot to the west of the site and beyond the Morden lands, marks a major change in character for the area. By the 1930s much of the site appears to have been occupied by warehouse buildings and domestic houses only remained on its eastern side. Even here, the west side of Lassell Street, the last remaining houses had gone by the 1950s. The last buildings to be demolished on the site included the 'British Sailor'. By the time of the recent redevelopment, the site north of Collington Street contained breakers yards and the wharf was an empty concrete surface, enclosed within an iron stockade.

### The archaeological sequence

Evaluation and excavation trenches were excavated in the south and central part of the site. Service trenches in the wharf area were excavated by machine and archaeologically monitored as part of a watching brief (Fig. 2, Fig. 4).

Pottery recovered over the southern and central part of the site provides useful hints about the social development of this area of Greenwich from the 18th to the 19th centuries (although 17th-century pottery was found across the site, much appeared to be residual in later contexts). All those contexts assigned to the 18th century were found in those parts of the site to the south of the wharf frontage (Trenches 2, 5, 7, 9–13) and included a high proportion of decorative wares with floral patterns. One interesting example is part of a plate decorated with the portrait of a clean-shaven, long-haired man in armour that may represent Charles II or William III. Finds of delftware with royal or aristocratic portraits are relatively rare in

archaeological contexts, and this particular vessel may have been quite old when discarded with early 18th-century material. Ceramics for serving and drinking tea and coffee became increasingly important during the course of the 18th century, and were well represented on the site. The emphasis on good quality ceramics designed specifically for the dinner table and for tea-drinking suggests that a reasonably comfortable standard of living was enjoyed by their original owners.

Similarly, in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, the main emphasis was on decorative wares, with vessels used for dining and serving food and tea predominant. Teawares were an essential requirement in polite society at the end of the 18th century, fulfilling an important role in demonstrating their owners' ability to keep up with the major social rituals of the day and, if possible, to do so in style. Sherds from saucers in Chinese blue and white porcelain were found alongside part of a saucer in Chinese style made in Bow porcelain. The Bow factory, situated at the New Canton works in Stratford, aimed much of its production of 'useful wares' at the growing middle class market.

Unsurprisingly, 83% of all sherds in contexts assigned to the 19th century come from the factory-made refined wares that dominated ceramic supply and usage across the country at this date. One group of pottery included teawares in Chinese porcelain, transfer-printed ware, bone china with enamelled decoration, pearlware and black basalt ware, as well as several pieces of lustreware. This particular assemblage is representative of a reasonably well-appointed household, although due caution must always be exercised in making comparisons of this kind since what has survived is only a sample of what was originally present, and can give only hints about taste, wealth and related questions.

The most elaborate clay pipes found on the site, bearing beautifully executed armorial decoration, date to the mid- to late 18th century and were probably not made locally. By contrast, the later pipes carry more standard designs or are completely plain. Decorated pipes would cost more than plain ones,

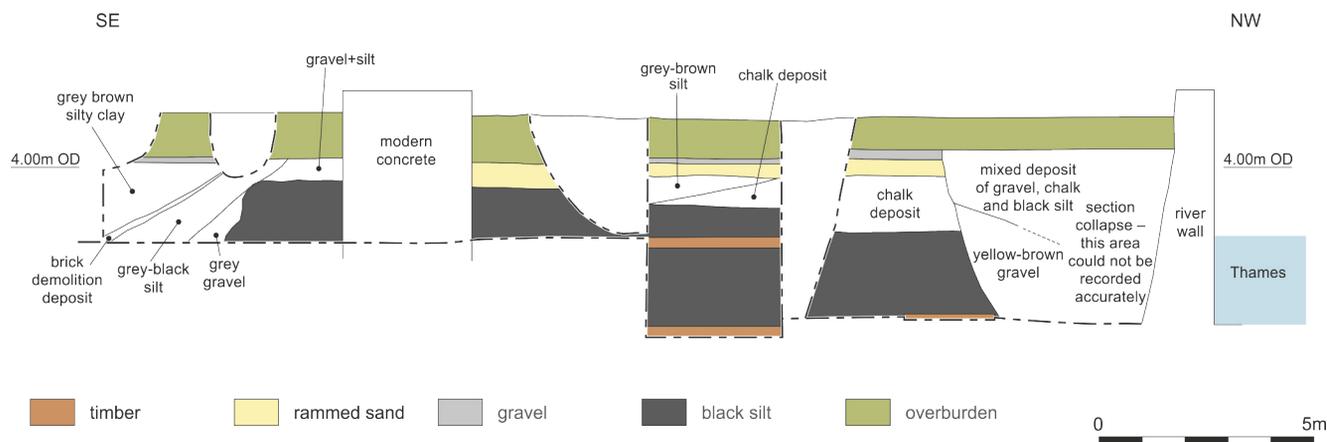


Fig. 5: the northeast facing section of trench 18.

although the difference would not be great for such an everyday item, designed to be used a few times and then thrown away. The late 18th- to early 19th-century clay pipes represent largely local production and include a number of examples decorated in styles common across the country at this time. No mid-late 19th-century pipes were found on the site. Overall, however, too few clay pipes were found to allow any firm conclusions to be drawn about the social character of the site in these centuries.

On the wharf part of the site, large oak timbers were identified in the deepest trenches (17 and 18, see Fig. 4). These timbers were tie-backs or land-ties and were laid horizontally at right angles to the river wall to brace its base. Lap joints in the tie-backs would have housed cross timbers that would themselves have been braced against the piles driven deep into the river gravels. Such halving lap joints were evident on two of the timbers. A large-headed iron nail (the head 25mm diameter, with a 10mm square shaft) had been driven into the joint of one timber to increase its strength. Two of the tie-back timbers were recovered complete at 2.18m and 2.99m long respectively; the longest tie-back with a broken end was 3.36m long. The squarish cross-sections of the tie-backs generally measured 0.2–0.3m.

All the tie-backs were roughly straight, apart from one which consisted of a worked but recognisable tree trunk and major branch, forming a bent shape. The branch made an angle of c. 135° to the trunk. This ‘knee’ may have been a rejected rough-out for a ship’s timber.<sup>18</sup> Other tie-backs also showed evidence of reuse: the end of one

timber was sawn at an angle, producing a rough joint; a tenon joint had been cut into one end of another; and a mortise survived in a third. It was not clear whether these timbers were reused ship or building timbers.

The tie-backs were set at two levels. The lower timbers were laid directly on the surface of the river gravels, and the higher timbers at about 1.0–2.0m above this. The timbers located in the central part of Trench 17 were some 20m back from the modern river wall and too remote to have been associated with it. They are likely, therefore, to have been tie-backs for an earlier wall or revetment structure (of which no evidence was identified). Although six of the larger timbers, all oak, were sampled from dendrochronological dating, no significant cross-correlations could be identified with data from London, the rest of Great Britain, or northern Europe. This probably indicates that the relatively short and fast grown tree-ring series within the sampled timbers were dominated by non-climatic signals, suggesting that the timbers were derived from open pasture, hedgerow, or managed woodlands, or from somewhere for which no suitable reference data is currently available. Two timbers cross-matched, indicating that they were contemporary. Five timber piles or spikes were also recovered, generally 0.12m square in cross-section, although one was larger at 0.21m by 0.22m. All were broken, with the longest surviving 1.60m long.

Despite the absence of secure dating, the condition and character of the timbers was consistent with an early 18th-century date. The timbers could form part of the wharf known, from

documentary and map evidence, to have been in place by 1726 or belong to the waterfront which replaced it before 1739. Similar arrangements of tie-back timbers have been found on many sites on the Thames. For example, at Bellamy’s Wharf, Rotherhithe, the 17th-century dock wall was braced by a series of timber tie-backs many of which were identified as reused ships’ timbers.<sup>19</sup> Nearby, at Bombay Wharf, Ceylon Wharf and East India Wharf, tie-backs bracing another 17th to 18th-century waterfront wall also showed evidence of reuse.<sup>20</sup>

Land-fill had then been dumped around the tie-backs, behind whatever revetment or wall they supported, to build up and reclaim the area of the wharf (Fig. 5). The earliest of these deposits consisted of black river silts, presumably dredged from the Thames. The upper part of this dumped silt contained debris such as brick fragments or chalk. Finally, along the western half of the wharf, the land-fill was sealed by a compact, 0.90m thick, levelling deposit of chalk. The chalk was then overlain by up to 0.75m of yellow or yellow-white sand that had been compacted to the hardness of sandstone. This surface, presumably the quayside working surface associated with the iron works in the northeast part of the wharf, lay at 3.75–4.00m OD.

The evidence for the iron works itself centred on an anvil *in situ* at the north end of Trench 20 (Fig. 4). It was cylindrical with two substantial ‘lugs’ on opposite sides that anchored the anvil into the chalk and the sand deposit, though it was also secured by chains that passed through its sides and base. The anvil was 0.56m high, with a radius of 0.40m and a 60mm diameter

hole passed vertically through its centre. The face of the anvil was battered into a slight dished shape, its rim was broken and thin indentations up to 7mm wide presumably indicated where it had been hit at an angle. Around, and to the east of, the anvil lay a deposit of very hard, concreted slag over 1.0m thick and extending over an area 12m by 7m. The slag was smithing hearth bottom: it was black, shiny and granular, and incorporated pebbles, gravel, soil and glass into its matrix.

Pieces of broken machinery lay discarded immediately south of the anvil. Some were encrusted with the slag deposit. Conspicuous amongst the broken metalwork were a set of smooth rollers. Two were 0.80m long, with a radius of 0.38m; a 0.47m long roller had a radius of 0.12m; and a smaller 0.46m long roller had a radius of 0.10m.

Morden College estate plans of 1739 and 1771 both show a rectangular building in the northern part of the wharf, but in neither case does the building include the location at which the anvil was found. This building is not on the 19th-century maps. On the 1834 'Survey of the Parish of St Alphege' there seems to be a building in the centre of the wharf area; in later 19th-century maps, this is replaced by a building at the end of Lassell Street (then known as Marlborough Street).

The walls of the iron works may have been built directly onto the riverside walls. Were this the case, any evidence for them could be concealed beneath the modern concrete parapet on the riverside wall. A 4.9m long iron girder running along the inside of the river wall may have supported the base of a wall or machinery inside the works.

A succession of gravel yard surfaces extended over the wharf area, and in the western part of the site sealed the slag deposits associated with the iron works. The gravel yard was, in turn, overlain by a thick, rust-coloured dump of fine granules or flakes of iron and slag with occasional brick and tile, hammerscale, coal and casting waste, all probably demolition or disuse debris from when the iron works fell out of use. Large chains that passed through the river wall through circular holes, and presumably used to moor vessels to the wharf, were buried within this

dump. One of the chains was attached to a winding mechanism that was 0.56m high, 0.30m wide, and consisted of two cylinders each with five evenly-spaced arms 0.27m long. In places, iron plates lay on the surface of the dump.

### Discussion and conclusions

Despite the watching brief on the riverside being restricted in scope, much detailed information was obtained about the development of this area of the site. A brick wharf that replaced an earlier timber wharf was built between 1726 and 1739 when the extension into the Thames is first depicted. The key to the John Holmes 1739 map refers to 'Anchor Wharf & Forge', indicating that metal- (likely iron-) working was an early use for the wharf and perhaps even its original intended use. The association of the wharf with iron continued at least until the end of the 19th century.

The watching brief showed how the reclamation of the Wharf area was achieved by using timber tie-backs to brace the base of a new river wall. The area was backfilled with what appeared to have been dredged-up river silts. The tie-backs were laid at two levels, the lower timbers directly on the river gravels. No relic waterfronts were identified – perhaps because they lay under the part of the site that was not excavated, or they may have been destroyed by the construction of subsequent waterfronts.

Dendrochronology was unable to provide a date for the tie-backs.

A compact levelling deposit of chalk was used to increase the height of the wharf further, and this was sealed by a compacted sand deposit. An iron foundry was located in the north part of the wharf, with an anvil anchored into the chalk and sand deposits. Pieces of machinery, including a set of smooth rollers of varying size, were discarded nearby. Slag deposits related to smithing activity on an industrial scale, with some refractory material and casting waste also recovered. Sequences of gravel yard surfaces were identified.

Evidence from archaeological work on the Anchor Iron Wharf site combined with documentary and cartographic evidence show how the character of this area of Greenwich

changed after the demolition of the Royal Palace, 300m upstream, in the mid-17th century. When the present site was acquired by Sir John Morden in 1699, the property was a substantial one, but by 1739 some of the older buildings seem to have been demolished to make way for houses, with development beginning east of the site and the site extended into the Thames for the 'Forge'. Although it is hazardous to draw conclusions based on a relatively small body of evidence, pottery recovered from the site hints at a reasonably comfortable standard of living in this area in the 18th century, with pottery aimed at the growing middle-class market. There is evidence for such well-appointed households in the 19th-century assemblages, but the majority of pottery recovered from this period is from the dominant factory-made refined wares.

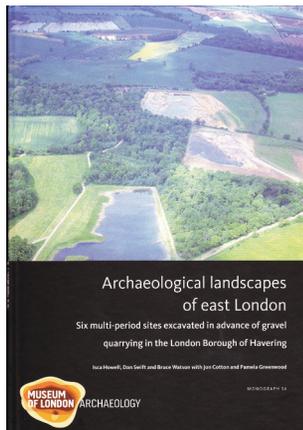
The riverside was also changing. The name of the wharf area changed over time, from 'Ballast Quay' in 1695 to 'Anchor Wharf' in 1739 to 'Crowley's Wharf' in 1869 and 1897 to 'Robinson's Wharf' in 1937 to 'Anchor Iron Wharf' later in the 20th century. By the 1860s the riverside was beginning to acquire its industrial character, and forges along the Thames would have been employed making ships' anchors and chains. A combination of evidence suggests that as the riverside became more industrialised in the mid-19th century, the social balance of the area of the site tipped from one of affluence to one that was less well-off.

### Acknowledgements

The authors would like to thank Berkeley Homes (City & East London) Limited for commissioning and funding this work and Mark Stephenson of English Heritage for his valuable input. Thanks also go to Frances Ward, Greenwich Heritage Centre and Elizabeth Wiggans, Archivist, Morden College. The site supervisors were Julian Bowsher (evaluations) and Antony Francis (excavation and watching brief), and the field staff were Kevin Appleton, Raksha Dave, Catherine Drew, Elaine Eastbury, Vince Gardiner, Richard Hewett, Isca Howell, Will Johnson and Mark Wiggans.

Finds analysis was carried out by Jacqui Pearce (pottery and clay tobacco

## Archaeological landscapes of east London



Isca Howell, Dan Swift and  
Bruce Watson with Jon Cotton  
and Pamela Greenwood

Museum of London  
Archaeology Monograph 54

2011

144 pages  
Colour, B/W illustrations,  
tables, bibliography and index

£14

Reviewed by Alastair Ainsworth

This book is a triumph of persistence by many people and organisations. Between 1977 and 1997 several rescue excavations were undertaken in advance of gravel quarrying by Newham Museums Archaeology Service (previously the Passmore Edwards Museum) within the Rainham and Upminster region of the London Borough of Havering. Unfortunately there was no funding available at the time for post-excavation work or publication. Although a related popular book *'From ice age to Essex: a history of the people and landscape of east London'* was published by Pamela Greenwood and others in 2006, it was not until funding was available from the Aggregates Levy Sustainability

Fund that it became possible to publish this definitive monograph containing the full site data, including details of an important rescue excavation within the study area undertaken by the Ministry of Public Building and Works in 1963.

It appears that the original idea for this book was to provide a study of the evolving landscape (described in the book as a "chrono-thematic report") of an arbitrarily defined area of east London which incorporated six of the unpublished rescue excavations. However the authors of the various chapters have included relevant information from sites throughout east London, Essex, and beyond, in order to put the published sites into context. This approach provides an up-to-date review of the archaeological evidence for landscape change from the Palaeolithic to the present day in east London and Essex.

The book can be read, I'm sure deliberately, on two levels. For the general reader interested in the evolving landscape of the region there is a fascinating story to be obtained by glossing over the detailed archaeological information such as tables of radiocarbon dates. For those readers that need to dig deeper, the book provides the detailed data for the excavated sites that will allow additional investigation.

One statistic that surprised me was that the combined population of Rainham and Wennington parishes declined from 18,620 in 1971 to 12,114 in 2001. I would not have expected there to be any population decline during this period in small towns that are within commuting distance of the City of London. Unfortunately the book did not provide any explanation for this population change.

This book will be of interest to anyone who wishes to understand the changing landscape of the region over time, and is a must-have for those involved in fieldwork in east London and Essex, especially for the book's extensive bibliography.

*(cont'd from previous page)*

pipes), Ian Betts (building material), Jackie Keily (bulk glass, accessioned finds and coins), Lynne Keys (iron slag), Anne Davis (botanical samples), Alan Pipe (animal bone), Liz Goodman (conservation), Damian Goodburn (timber) and Ian Tyers (dendrochronology). The graphics were produced by Ken Lymer and Juan Jose Fuldain. The site was surveyed by

MOLA Geomatics and photography was by Maggie Cox. Robin Nielsen and Julian Hill provided project management for the work.

*Antony Francis is a Project Officer at MOLA. His book Stepney Gasworks: The Archaeology and History of the Commercial Gas Light and Coke Company's Works at Harford Street, London E1, 1837-1946, published by MOLA, appeared in 2010. He is*

*currently working on the post-excavation analysis for the site of the Royal Dockyard founded in 1513 at Convoys Wharf, Deptford, excavated in 2011-12.*

*Julian Bowsher has been a Senior Archaeologist at MOLA for nearly 30 years. Although now mostly desk-based he has been involved in various aspects of Greenwich's archaeology for many years.*

1. J. Bowsher and A. Francis 'Excavations at Anchor Iron Wharf, Greenwich: Part 1, the Tudor buildings' *London Archaeol* 13 no 7 (2012) 175-80.

2. Geological Survey of Great Britain (England and Wales), sheet 270.

3. Public Record Office, Map of the Manor of Greenwich, June 1694, PRO MR 329 (I) and Map of the Manor of Greenwich, November 1695, Public Record Office, PRO MPE 245.

4. John Holmes, Greenwich Survey map including Billingsgate, Anchor Wharf, Back Lane, Church Street, Crane Street, 1739, Morden College archives.

5. Morden College estate plan of 1771, copy in Greenwich Local History Library, MC2342.

6. J. Rocque 1746 Exact Survey of the City of London Westminster and Southwark and the Country 10 Miles Round, reproduced in H. Margary 1971 *Exact*

*Survey of the City of London Westminster and Southwark and the Country 10 Miles Round by John Rocque, 1746.*

7. Morden College Archives, Minute Book, 26 March 1713.

8. Morden College Archives, Minute Book, 22 September 1726.

9. Morden College Archives, Lease to John Crowley, September 1726, LXVII/2.

10. Morden College Archives, Plan of 1807, envelope LXVI.

11. Morden College Archives, Early Plan Book.

12. Morden College Archives, 'Lease between Morden College and Isaiiah Millington, Thomas Calvert and Thomas Vardon', 5 May 1801, LXVII/5.

13. Morden College Archives, Minute Book, 5 December 1857.

14. Morden College Archives, Notice to Quit, 25 December 1862, in cardboard file marked 1860s.

15. Morden College Archives, Map 'On lease to James Fennings, From Christmas 1863', Map Book A.

16. *Ibid.*

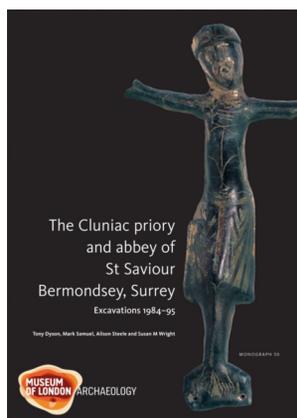
17. Morden College Archives, letter dated 3 October 1895, in cardboard file marked 1890s.

18. Damian Goodburn, *pers. comm.*

19. D. Saxby and D. Goodburn 'Recent maritime archaeological discoveries on the Thames waterfront at Bellamy's Wharf, Rotherhithe, London SE16' *London Archaeol* 8 no 8 (1998) 200.

20. D. Jamieson 'Bombay Wharf, Ceylon Wharf, East India Wharf (RHE01), 101-105 Rotherhithe Street, St Mary Church Street, SE16' summary in C. Maloney and I. Holroyd London Fieldwork and Publication Round-up 2002 *London Archaeol* 10 suppl. 2 (2003) 53.

## The Cluniac priory and abbey of St Saviour Bermondsey, Surrey. Excavations 1984-95



Tony Dyson, Mark Samuel,  
Alison Steele and Susan M  
Wright

Museum of London  
Archaeology

2011

297 pages, hardback  
colour and B/W illustrations,  
bibliography

£27

Reviewed by Graham Dawson

This monograph is a milestone, for not only is it the 50th produced by MoLAS/MOLA but it is also the last large-scale excavation by the DGLA unit in Southwark to be published, and this is a cause for congratulation.

The core of the report is chapter 3, which describes the surprisingly complex development of the south-east section of the monastic house (that is the east side of the cloister and the area east of it). This is followed by a general discussion and then the usual 'specialist reports' though this includes the rather more unusual study of the drawings of the priory/abbey by the Bucklers in the early 19th century when redevelopment destroyed its last remains. One of the surprises is how little remains of Pope's house, which was built within the northern part of the cloister.

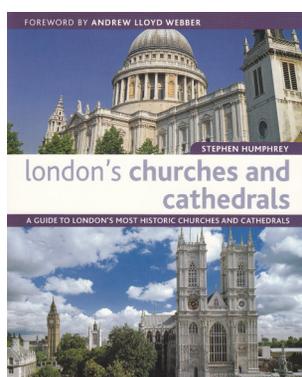
The most obscure period at Bermondsey is the Saxon period. There is one reference to it in the early 8th century suggesting a monastic establishment there, but this has been transformed into the 'documented Saxon minster', an idea that has informed the discussion of the whole Saxon/early Norman period, though nearly everyone accepts that the late Saxon minster was at Southwark. If there was late Saxon/early Norman activity just north of the site, for which there is some evidence, it would seem more likely that this was an estate centre rather than a minster, and the early chapel (building 1) would be a parish church built by the lord (the King in this case) for his tenants when a parish for Bermondsey was carved out of the Southwark Minster parochia. This would be a perfectly normal development and it might be that, in the early phase of the monastery, the monks occupied such building(s) while the Priory was being built.

The date of Bermondsey's foundation has always been regarded as problematic, but this is only because the Bermondsey Annals has Alwyn Child endowing it in 1082; it is clear that it was actually founded c. 1088 by William II and the Annals have got this date wrong, like so many others.

A peculiarity of the Bermondsey plan is that the east claustral range lies east of the south transept rather than continuing its line; this must have made liturgical processions and access to the church at night from the dormer somewhat difficult, and also produced a strange strip between the south nave wall and the north cloister alley (unfortunately outside the excavated area). It is difficult to see the reason for this and the earlier reconstruction of the monastic arrangements, in 1926 by Martin, showed the more usual arrangement; the later PCA excavations may throw more light on this.

The report is very well illustrated and is a major contribution to monastic archaeology and the history of Bermondsey but many aspects also have a wider significance. I do wish, however, that MOLA would go back to soft covers.

## London's churches and cathedrals



Stephen Humphrey

New Holland

2011

160 pages  
Over 200 colour illustrations,  
maps, directions, glossary

£14.99

Reviewed by Becky Wallower

Clearly intended as a guide for 'the church tourist', as the author dubs them, this book offers an eclectic selection of 47 churches. The obvious choices (Westminster Abbey, St Paul's) are included, as are some that I suspect are well off the tourist trail, such as Most Holy Trinity Dockhead, built in 1957-1960, and Guy's Hospital chapel. Humphrey covers every period, from some of the few surviving medieval examples like St Bartholomew the Great, to one of the last new churches to be built in London, St Barnabas in Southwark. It is an ecumenical choice too: Roman Catholic churches (the two cathedrals, Brompton Oratory) and Methodist chapels (Central Hall Westminster, Wesley's Chapel) are represented. Churches that are no longer used as such (St John's Smith Square, St Mary-at-Lambeth) also get a look in.

Humphrey, an ecclesiologist, historian and archivist, gives a helpful potted history of church building in the introduction, outlining policies, legislation and styles that influenced construction and restoration. He describes each church using bullet points for historical highlights and points of interest, as well as a narrative. The numerous excellent photos by James Morris employ a variety of perspectives, level of detail and lighting to give a sense of the atmosphere.

It's certainly a useful book for the 'church tourist' but I think there is much here to tempt the run of the mill Londoner or the odd archaeologist to call into a previously ignored church too.