

# Late medieval and post-medieval developments at 100–104 Bermondsey Street, Southwark

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with contributions by

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*The article outlines the results of an archaeological investigation which revealed a sequence of buildings, beginning in the late medieval or early Tudor period, constructed on the west side of Bermondsey Street, Southwark. The earliest stone foundations were overlain by a succession of brick structures, the earliest of which date at the latest to the late 16th or early 17th century. The 18th century expansion of the tanning industry in this district was also represented in the form of a large horncore-lined pit, the fills of which contained notable quantities of Chinese porcelain, armorially decorated tobacco pipes and a wooden gaming piece. Other finds include a toilet set. Bermondsey Street is shown on 16th century maps and was described by Stow as being built-up on both sides. The site was situated in the southern part of Bermondsey Street and the medieval Abbey of St Saviour lay less than 200m to the south. The archaeological record shows a remarkable sequence of rebuilding and modifications, reflecting a dynamic urban environment. The article summarizes the excavation results and relates them to the known archaeological and historical background.*

## Introduction

A rescue excavation was undertaken by Pre-Construct Archaeology in March 1997 at 100–104 Bermondsey Street, London Borough of Southwark (fig 1). The site lies on the western side of an ancient thoroughfare which ran north-east from the medieval Abbey of St Saviour to Tooley Street (fig 1). Its archaeological potential had been shown by trial work undertaken by the Museum of London in 1990 which demonstrated the presence of artefacts dating from the late medieval period onwards. A stone wall, probably part of a late medieval building with a frontage on to Bermondsey Street, was discovered in the north-east corner of the site. The first datable structures on the site were however believed to have been built in the 17th or 18th century (MoL 1990).

## Topography

The predominant feature of the topography of pre-18th century Bermondsey was a series of low-lying islands divided by stream channels. These islands are composed of sands and gravels deposited during the Pleistocene period. The site lies toward the south-eastern periphery of one of these islands, known as the Horsleydown Eyot (Drummond-Murray *et al* 1994, 252). Many of the streams would have been tidal and, prior to the construction of an effective river wall, the foreshore of the main channel would have been considerably closer to the site than it is at present. The early history of the area was therefore heavily dependent on fluctuations in sea level caused by climatic change and isostatic readjustment (Graham 1978, 501–10). Later marine transgressions resulted in the deposition of clays which can amount to a depth of nearly 2m in low-lying areas (Drummond-Murray *et al* 1994, 252–3).

## Prehistoric and historic background

Prehistoric finds are known from the Bermondsey area and cover the period from the Mesolithic to the Late Iron Age. In the Roman period the city of Londinium lay north of the Thames and a major suburb south of the river was situated around the modern Borough High Street. No evidence of large-scale Roman occupation has been recovered from the immediate vicinity of the site. Romano-British ditches have however been found close by, at 22–28 White's

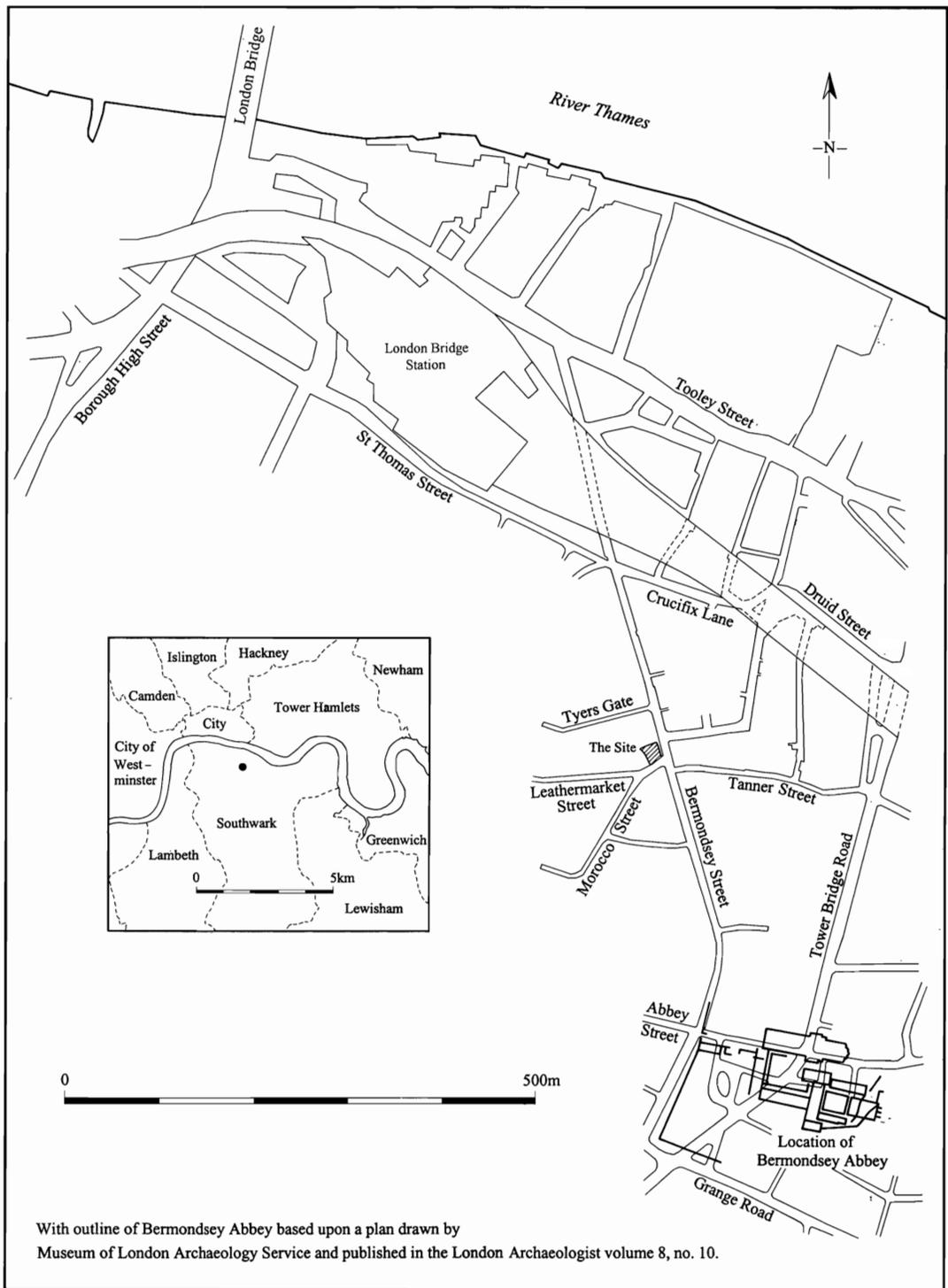


Fig 1 100-104 Bermondsey Street, Southwark: site location plan. (Reproduced from the Ordnance Survey 1:10,000 scale map with the permission of The Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office, © Crown Copyright MC87175M).

Grounds, Queen Elizabeth Street, and 9 Tanner Street. It would seem that this part of Bermondsey formed part of the agricultural hinterland of the Roman settlement (Drummond-Murray *et al* 1994, 254–5).

The nucleus of medieval Southwark sprang up around the market, held on Borough High Street, and the southern bridgehead from the City. The expansion of this settlement apparently had little impact on the southern part of Bermondsey Street before the late medieval period. The history of the area was intrinsically linked to the development of the abbey, founded in 1089 (Beard 1986, 188). Bermondsey Street itself developed as a thoroughfare from the abbey to Southwark and London Bridge. The river could also be crossed by ferry and this service was flourishing at the time of the Domesday survey (Maldon 1900, 130–1).

The importance of Southwark grew with the establishment of the religious houses of Bermondsey and St Mary Overie. Urban growth was further stimulated by the building of ecclesiastical palaces for the bishops of Winchester and Rochester, the abbot of Battle and the prior of Lewes (Maldon 1900, 131). The first Cluniac monks arrived in Bermondsey from La Charité on the Loire in 1089 and founded an abbey. Its influence grew quickly and in 1094 William Rufus endowed the monks with the surrounding manor (Beard 1986, 188). Further land grants are recorded for the reign of Henry I. The house continued to prosper and further benefited in 1140 when King Stephen exempted it from taxation and tolls and extended its land holdings (Weinreb & Hibbert 1983, 58). Perhaps it was this which stimulated the late 12th century rebuilding of the infirmary (Beard 1986, 190–1). The importance of the area was confirmed when a council of nobles and clergy selected by Henry II met at Bermondsey in 1154.

The shape of Bermondsey was changing throughout the medieval period with the expansion of the settlement eastward, especially along the Thames foreshore from London Bridge. The development of London's suburbs in the post-medieval period reflected the growth of population, and the social and economic change generated by this rapid growth must have affected Bermondsey. However, the 'Agas' woodcut and Braun and Hogenberg's map, published in the 1560s (Prockter & Taylor 1979), show the area surrounding Bermondsey Street as open ground. Settlement was concentrated to the north along Tooley Street; a little to the east animals are depicted grazing on Horsleydown. Streams are shown flowing towards the Thames which served both as sewers and to power the watermills depicted on the riverbank (*ibid*, 60).

Wenceslaus Hollar's map of 1666 (Schofield 1984) shows more extensive settlement to the east of Bermondsey Street, especially in the area to the south of Crucifix Lane. Bermondsey Street and Long Lane appear to be built up on both sides. A large open area survived to the north of Long Lane, extending from Bermondsey Street almost to Borough High Street. The development of settlement along the waterfront towards Rotherhithe is most noticeable.

By the late 14th century the tanning industry was of growing importance. In 1392 butchers in the City were ordered to take hides and offal to Bermondsey (Weinreb & Hibbert 1983, 59). The attraction of Bermondsey for tanners was at least twofold; the area was on the periphery of the city and marginal ground could probably have been acquired relatively cheaply. An abundant water supply was also guaranteed by the numerous streams which crossed the area. The economy of Bermondsey became increasingly dominated by the tanning industry, and the leather workers were granted a charter in 1703 by Queen Anne (Weinreb & Hibbert 1983, 59).

Richard Horwood's map of London (1813 edn, London Metropolitan Archives) demonstrates notable developments from the times of the earlier Rocque map of 1747, indicating a densely packed network of tanning yards and curriers' workshops. The open area to the north of Long Lane had been occupied by tanning yards and a large glue manufactory. The glue factory appears to have extended far to the north and buildings associated with it may have lain to the west of the area excavated at 100–104 Bermondsey Street. Large tanning yards are shown to the north of present day Tanner Street, spreading towards White's Grounds. A distillery had been established to the south of Snowfields and a brewery to the south of Crucifix Lane. Many of the inhabitants of Bermondsey were faring badly and the workhouse shown to the south of Russell Street bears grim testimony to this.

Tanning is one of the foulest-smelling industries known to mankind. In association with glue-working, brewing and distilling, the air around Bermondsey Street must have been rank. Dickens visited the nearby leather market and described it as reeking with evil smells (Weinreb & Hibbert 1983, 59). Tanning continued to be a major local industry throughout the 19th century.

### The archaeological sequence

The earliest part of the sequence exposed at the site indicated that it was situated on marginal ground at this time. The lowest horizon consisted of waterlaid grey clays which were recorded below a depth of 0.15m OD. No artefacts were evident in this deposit, which had been sealed by further layers of clays and silts. The full depth of these later deposits was recorded in a section which showed a raising of the ground level by 0.57m. The upper part of this deposit contained medieval tile fragments dating to AD 1150/80 to 1500. The medieval ground level of the site lay between 0.72m and 0.62m OD. The available evidence tends to confirm the hypothesis that the site was situated on low ground to the south-west of the Horsleydown Eyot.

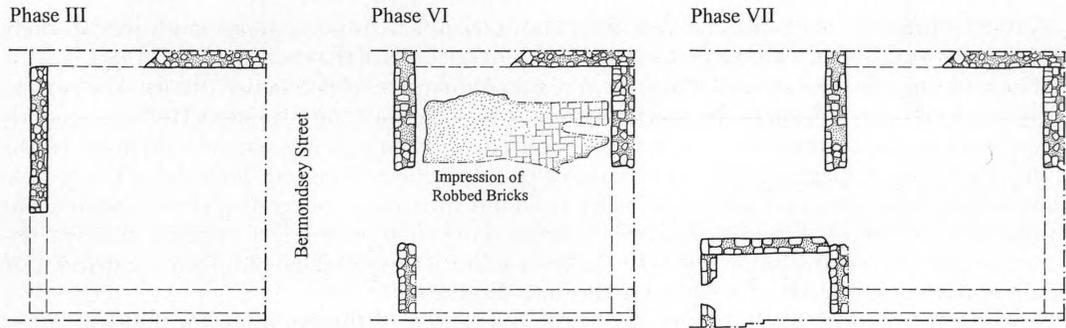
The frequency of finds did not suggest that large-scale refuse dumping was practised here in the late medieval period. Although finds occurred toward the top of the clay layers they were sparse. Some distinct layers of dumping were evident above the clays, but as these did not accumulate to any great depth before being covered by buildings or surfaces, it seems unlikely that concerted attempts were being made to raise the ground level.

By early post-medieval times the first building had been erected along the Bermondsey Street frontage. This dating is based on ceramic building material and it is unfortunate that this has a particularly wide date range; the construction of this building could however be as early as AD 1380–1400. The surviving walls, which form a 90° angle, were built mainly from stone but included some datable brick fragments. The frontage itself was not uncovered and is presumed to have lain farther to the east. No associated floor layers were evident under the modern one, but the room exceeded 3.45m east–west and it is thought to have extended at least 3.8m to the south (fig 2, phase III). The width of the walls, which did not exceed 0.25m, would seem to preclude a masonry superstructure. Large stone buildings are known from Bermondsey Abbey but they were supported on massive chalk and gravel foundations which rested on the underlying gravels of the Bermondsey Eyot (Beard 1986, 187–91). This was clearly not the case at 100–104 Bermondsey Street, where a wooden superstructure would seem more likely; these are well attested for the late medieval period. The following building phase dated to the late 15th or early 16th century (fig 2, phase VI). Given the date of the second building there seems little reason why the original structure should not be of late medieval date.

The second phase of building modified and in part superseded the earlier structure. A ground plan similar to that of the first phase was adopted. The foundations of the western wall continued in use but a new brick-built footing was constructed above them. A new wall was constructed to the east and this presumably formed the frontage, which had moved westward. Internally the room was furnished with a brick floor, which was later robbed out. The dimensions of the room were slightly reduced, measuring 3.15m east–west by at least 3.8m to the south (fig 2, phase VI).

Only a portion of the building was fully excavated and a confident interpretation of its use cannot be offered from the recorded remains. Town houses with street frontages often had shops on the ground floor and living quarters on the first floor, but there is nothing in the archaeological record to support such a claim for Bermondsey Street. Some idea of the type of building referred to may be provided by an illustration, dating to c 1820 by J C Butler, showing the southern part of Bermondsey Street (BL Additional MSS 24422-163). This shows several houses some of which, based on their architectural detail, are likely to date to the 16th or 17th century.

The stratigraphy in the north-west quadrant of the site suggested that there was very little activity in this area during the early construction period. To the south the archaeological sequence was fragmentary, having been badly disturbed by later intrusive features. Some metallised surfaces may have existed before brick paving was laid. Postholes were evident, suggesting the existence of timber outbuildings. There is little doubt that this was an area of outdoor activity to the rear of buildings fronting on to Bermondsey Street. The use of this area cannot



Please note that some structural features continue in use through several phases.

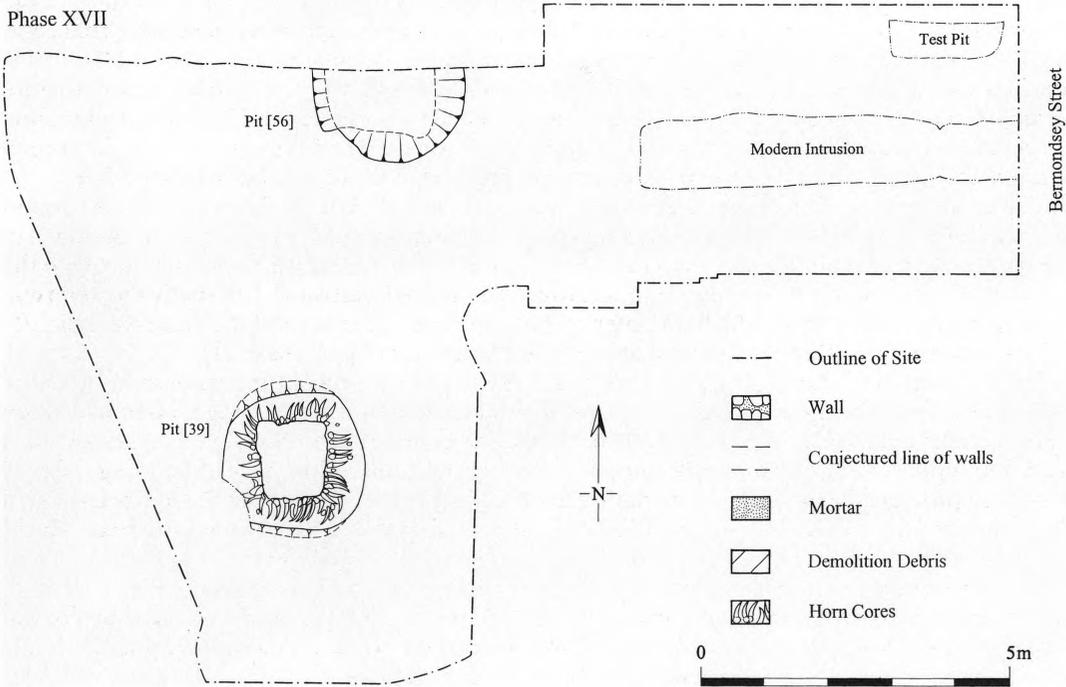
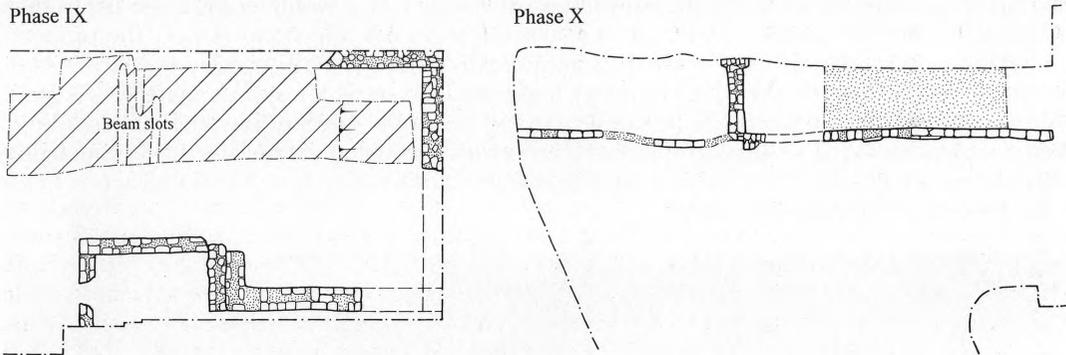


Fig 2 100-104 Bermondsey Street, Southwark: structural phasing.

however be linked to the buildings described above, as it was situated to the south-west of them and may have related to another property situated to the south of the excavated buildings.

The buildings on the east side of the site were subsequently modified in two phases. The earliest of these added an extension to the south-west of the western wall (fig 2, phase VII). Subsequently a new south wall was constructed, and to the north the western wall was partially demolished (fig 2, phase IX); the full extent of the new building could not be established. Too little of the ground plan of these structures survived to offer any valid interpretation concerning their function. The stratigraphic position of these structural elements dates them to the 17th century. A silver sixpence of late 16th century date and a remarkable toilet set were recovered from the demolition debris and are described in more detail in the finds discussion.

Ancillary structures were also erected to the north-west of the buildings on the east side of the site (fig 2, phase X). The dimensions of the footings suggested that masonry superstructures were probably not used here; these were more likely to have been made of timber. Mortar floors had been laid directly on to earth. Workshops or storage space would seem more likely than domestic usage. The southern extent of the structures did not appear to respect the property boundary as defined to the east. Here the standing party wall partially overlay the earlier stone structure, demonstrating that this boundary had remained static for approximately 400 years. An unsurfaced open area, possibly a simple garden, lay to the south of the ancillary buildings. The brick paving to the south was replaced by an extensive cobbled surface (fig 3), which possibly indicates a change of use in the area. The cobbled surface may have facilitated access to the rear of the buildings from the south.



Fig 3 100–104 Bermondsey Street, Southwark: post-medieval cobbled courtyard surfaces with part of the horncore-lined tanning pit. (Photograph by Tim Loveless for PCA).

In the mid–late 18th century all the buildings, including the ancillary structures to the west, were demolished, and those on the Bermondsey Street frontage replaced. Little of the ground plan of the new buildings was recovered; however, one room measuring 3.2m by more than 2.1m was excavated on the west side of the main building complex. This room was furnished with a tile floor, which was later robbed out. The shifting property boundary was once again in evidence, as the room had been truncated to the south by a 19th century construction trench. The street frontage was also moved again as no load-bearing wall was seen to the east.

In the open area to the west some 18th century pitting was evident (fig 2, phase XVII). To the south-west a large horncore-lined tanning pit, also pertaining to phase XVII, was excavated, which cut the cobbled surface. The horncores were set into a clay matrix which acted as a water-proof sealant. The pit would then have been used as a tank for soaking hides, the underlying natural deposits being largely impermeable. The scale of the tanning industry can be judged from the number of horns, which numbered well over 300, used in this one pit. A sample of 282 of the most complete horns was analysed. This group indicated a wide age distribution from juvenile through to old adult. Short, medium and longhorn cattle were present. Of these 66% were apparently males, 23% possibly castrates, 11% were female. The majority of the males were young while the females were mainly old. The assemblage appears to reflect common butchery waste of the 18th century (Meddens 1997).

In the mid-18th century, after the pit went out of use for tanning purposes, it was employed for disposal of domestic rubbish. Some of the more important finds recovered at the site came from these deposits and are described in detail in the finds discussion. This part of the assemblage does not just provide important dating information but was particularly helpful in forming a picture of the community from which it derived.

### The finds

A silver sixpence of Elizabeth I with a date of 1592, came from demolition debris. From the same deposit came a toilet set, which because of its particular interest is described in detail.

THE TOILET SET, by Nina Crummy; with technical information from Dana Goodburn-Brown of AMTech and Ian Slipper of the University of Greenwich

At least four instruments made up the set, but only two are now complete: a straight pick and a right-angled pick (fig 4). A third piece appears to be slightly damaged. It is straight-ended, but the tip, which has been pinched flat and expands slightly on one side, is probably missing. The picks lie on the inside of the set and have plain shafts, while the shaft of the (now) straight-ended tool is plain on its inner face, but decorated with a raised vegetal scroll motif on the outer, visibly displayed, face. On the outside of the straight pick is a short length of another shaft, but this appears to have been plain. The tops of the shafts are enclosed by a doubled-over strip of metal and a rivet placed near the ends of the strip holds all the elements of the set together. The bend in the strip projects a little way beyond the ends of the shafts and is pierced to take a small loop of wire. This loop seems too small and fine to have served as the direct means of suspension, but it may have held a larger ring or a cord. The total length of the set, including the wire loop, is 57mm.

The instruments are made from copper, without any significant alloying elements, and have been plated with silver, much of which is now missing. Heavy striations indicate that the pieces were cut from rolled copper sheet, and that rolled sheet was also used for the piece with a decorated shaft. The decoration itself does not appear to have been tooled, but it is unclear if it was applied by rolling or stamping.

The two picks present on the Bermondsey set can be identified as a straight nail-pick and an angled toothpick. The piece with the decorated shaft was probably a 'tongue-scraper', the terminal of which would have bent inwards, similar to the turned-in ends of tweezers. The fourth piece would almost certainly have been a small cupped scoop, serving as an ear-pick (Clark,

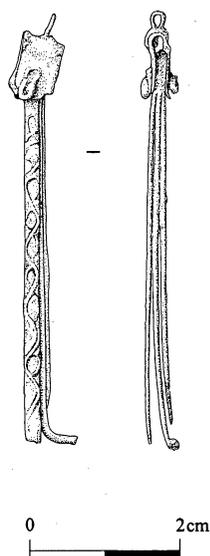


Fig 4 100–104 Bermondsey Street, Southwark: toilet set.

*c* 1976). Alternatively, the decorated piece may have been a scoop and the missing item a scraper. However, on other toilet sets the scraper is usually set on the outside and its bent terminal serves, when the set is closed, to protect the delicate points of the other pieces. This characteristic has been noted on a set from Alfriston, Sussex (Lower 1850, 359–60), on two from the City of London (Roach Smith 1854, 153), and on an unprovenanced example in the Museum of London which is also probably from the City (MoL 14732).

The Bermondsey set was fixed by corrosion products to a silver sixpence of Elizabeth I dated 1592. The deposit the items came from was dated on pottery evidence to 1650–1700.

A toilet set from excavations at Mont Orgueil, Jersey, consisted of three pieces: an ear-scoop, a nail-pick and a toothpick. It probably came from the floor of a house dated from the late 15th to the 16th century in the Middle Ward of the castle (Barton 1976). While in size and general simplicity the two sets are very similar, there are several differences which may be related to a difference in date. On the Jersey group the toothpick was of 'bird-claw' form; all the shafts were plain, there does not appear to have been a scraper, and the method used to fix the pieces together is also different. The head of the nail-pick terminates in a suspension loop, through which is fitted a small twist of wire. The scoop and toothpick are riveted to the shaft of the nail-cleaner just below the loop (Clark *c* 1976). A set of similar date to that from Jersey came from the cloister of Christchurch Cathedral, Oxford (Goodall 1988, 40 and fig 22, 11). The method of fixing the instruments together through the nail-pick is the same, though the Oxford set includes a fourth piece of uncertain function, possibly a later addition. The shaft of this fourth piece, another curved pick, has scroll decoration, executed in punched dots, on both its inner and outer faces. It derived from a layer that contained pottery dating to no later than the late 15th or early 16th century (Scull 1988, 26).

Before its transfer to the British Museum, the Roach Smith Collection contained two sets that almost certainly came from the City of London. Described as of 'gold and silver' (presumably one of each metal, though possibly silver-gilt), each set contained four instruments: ear-pick, toothpick, nail-pick, and scraper. In each case, the latter instrument protected the other three when the set was closed. Both sets had rings for suspension from a 'girdle'. Roach Smith considered them to date to the end of the 15th century or beginning of the 16th (Roach Smith 1854, 153, catalogue no 759). Unfortunately, neither appears in the British Museum registration book for the collection, suggesting that they were never received (J Cherry, pers comm). Their present whereabouts is unknown.

The date assigned by Roach Smith to his two sets may have been influenced by a silver-gilt set from Alfriston, Sussex. This is more elaborate than those from Bermondsey, Oxford or Jersey. It is engraved with a motto and the name of Dennis Herst. It was found in the churchyard where Herst was buried in 1584. It consists of four instruments: scoop, nail-pick, bird-claw toothpick and scraper, all with moulded shafts. The method of fixing the pieces together appears similar to those from Jersey and Oxford, and the three picks close together to fit along the scraper shaft with their ends protected by the turn of its blade (Lower 1850, 359–60). Lower considered that it predated Herst's death by some 30 or 40 years, but does not give a reason for this dating. The published illustration shows no obvious signs of wear. A seven-piece set of unknown provenance in the collections of the Museum of London is equally elaborate, but is considered to date to the 17th century (MoL 14732).

The Bermondsey set is not very well preserved, but the sixpence found with it shows little wear and cannot have been in circulation for very long. It therefore almost certainly pre-dates 1600, and probably pre-dates 1592. While there is some uncertainty over the precise context of the Mont Orgueil set, that from Christchurch Cathedral, Oxford, was well stratified, suggesting that it dates to no later than 1530. It may be that the Bermondsey set can be assigned a later date than either of these on the basis of the simplicity of the toothpick, which is of basic curved, rather than bird-claw, form. Alternatively, the difference in form may be cost-driven. The Bermondsey set, made from simple rolled copper sheet, was almost certainly a less expensive product than the moulded silver-gilt version from Alfriston, or the gold and silver (?silver-gilt) sets from London. A date in the mid to later decades of the 16th century is probably the most likely.

#### A WOODEN GAMING-PIECE, by Ian Riddler

A complete, discoidal gaming piece (fig 5) was recovered from the backfill of the tanning pit (for further items from this fill see below). It was made of wood, turned on a lathe which provided several raised concentric bands on the upper and the lower surfaces. The gaming-piece was originally circular, but its shape is now distorted, although the details of its raised mouldings are still visible. Its diameter is 20mm and its height 7mm. This object can be identified as a gaming-piece which was used either for the game of *Tabula*, or for draughts. *Tabula* had numerous variants and was played in northern Europe from the 11th century onwards (Murray 1941; 1952, 113–29; Kluge-Pinsker 1991, 55–88; Riddler 1994). It is an ancestor of backgammon and it was generally played on a board of 24 points or *puncta*, with the aid of 30 counters and two or more dice. The counters were normally discoidal and this allowed them to be stacked on the *puncta*. Counters for *Tabula* were produced in a variety of materials, including antler, bone, ceramics, ivory, stone and whalebone, as well as wood (Hall & Leahy 1996, 236). The majority of those which survive are made from skeletal materials, but wooden counters for the game have come from a series of waterlogged deposits at various sites. They are known from Bergen, Constanz, Freiburg, Göttingen, Lübeck and Novgorod (Bracker 1989, 145, 370; Müller 1996, 157; MacLees 1990, 80–3; Poljakova & Fecher 1973). A series of those from Constanz has largely been made from hardwoods (Müller 1996, 157 and figs 2.49–104). As here, most of these examples are lathe-turned and are undecorated, aside from the presence of concentric raised bands which stem directly from the method of manufacture (Müller 1996, tafn 29–30).

Whilst *Tabula* was played in medieval Europe, draughts was not, although *Tabula* counters have frequently been associated with that game, leading to some confusion (Endrei & Zolnay 1986, 43–8; MacGregor 1985, 137). Draughts was derived from chess and was played on a similar board; it may have been played in France from as early as the 12th century (Reeves 1995, 79). It was not a popular game during the medieval period, and it only gained widespread acceptance from the 16th century onwards. This particular counter comes from an 18th century deposit and it may, therefore, have been used either for *Tabula* or draughts. Unfortunately, in the absence both of a gaming-board and of sufficient numbers of counters, it is not possible to decide for which of these games this particular object was used.

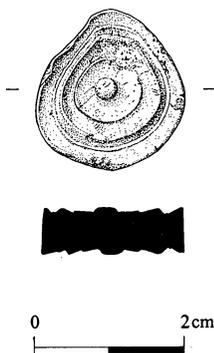


Fig 5 100–104 Bermondsey Street, Southwark: gaming piece.

#### THE TOBACCO PIPES, by Chris Jarrett

A total of 26 clay tobacco pipe bowls were recovered from the backfill of the tanning pit, 13 of which were decorated with one of two heraldic designs. The first consisted of the British royal coat of arms with a lion and unicorn, and the motto *Dieu et mon Droit*, surrounding a shield, without maker's initials. The second heraldic design consists of an eagle and a tailed dragon (with no hind legs), surrounding a shield with a winged male figure above the right side of the shield (fig 6), which represents an unidentified type. Not many designs were produced in the mid-18th century, outside the royal arms or the Prince of Wales's feathers. The unidentified type is likely to represent a company's coat of arms. As it would have been an expensive business to have such a finely engraved mould especially made, it is of importance to emphasize that seven examples were recovered from this pit. It therefore seems likely that it was made for some specific purpose at the time, particularly as only two other examples are currently known (David Atkinson, pers comm). The first type, the British royal coat of arms with a lion and unicorn, is dated to the first half of the 18th century, although American evidence suggests a second half of the 18th century date (Atkinson & Oswald 1969). A possible manufacturer for both types may be Henry Blundell who is known as a maker of armorial designs c 1745–64 and who was working close to the Bermondsey Street site (Kieran Heard, pers comm). The third quarter of the 18th century therefore appears to be a likely date for these pipes.

#### THE POTTERY, by Chris Jarrett

The largest amount of pottery from the site was recovered from two features — the backfilling of a tanning pit (39) and a rubbish pit (56). The clay lining of the tanning pit contained residual medieval sherds of Coarse Borderware (CBW), Kingston ware (KING), and a late medieval

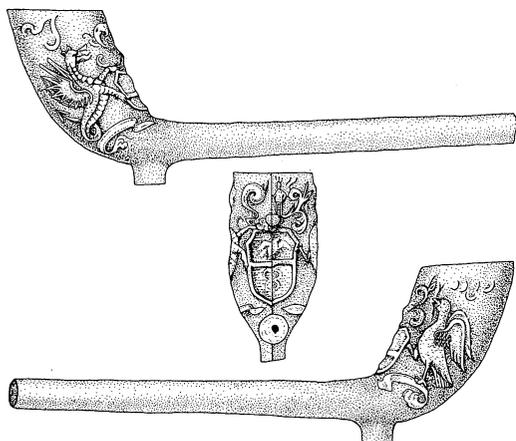


Fig 6 100–104 Bermondsey Street, Southwark: tobacco pipe with new armorial design.

earthenware (LME) coarsely glazed bowl. Sixteenth-century pottery was also present in this context, including Cistercian ware (CSTN), Tudor Green ware (TUDG), Tudor Brown ware (TUDB), Dutch slipware (DUTSL), 17th century green-glazed Borderware (BORDG) and yellow-glazed Borderware (BORDY), Metropolitan slipware (METS), post-medieval redware (PMR), Staffordshire red earthenware (STRE) and tin-glazed earthenware (TGE).

When the horncore pit was used as a rubbish pit two fills, (15) and (22), were laid down in it, with largely mid-18th century material. The pottery vessels were mostly complete, showing sherd links between the two fills, and the pottery from both fills has therefore been combined in table 1, with quantification by sherd count and rim EVEs (estimated vessel equivalents). Interestingly the dominant pottery type present was Chinese porcelain (fig 7; 37.42% by EVEs), mostly in blue and white, but with one vessel each decorated in Famille Verte and Famille Rose colour palettes. Staffordshire White salt-glazed stoneware (SWSG) and tin-glazed earthenware were the next most frequent wares in that order, with Borderware brown glazed (BORDB), Drab ware (SWSG DRAB) (fig 8), London Stoneware (LONS), (PMR) and Staffordshire combed flat ware (SCOM) also present. The presence of a rim sherd of a Creamware (CREA) plate in fill 15 does not necessarily date the deposit to the later 18th century, as the ware was made from *c* 1730 onwards (Jennings *et al* 1981) and the example was of the earlier yellow type rather than the later whiter variety. In fill 22 (14.92 EVEs) all the vessels were table wares whilst fill 15 (3.44 EVEs) contained a chamber pot and a bowl, possibly for cooking food, in addition to table wares. Fill 10

TABLE 1 100–104 Bermondsey Street, Southwark: pottery types and forms occurring in contexts 15 and 22 of horncore pit 38

Fabric	Form	No of sherds	Rim EVEs	Rim EVEs as % of assemblage	Fabric total EVEs within assemblage	Fabric total as EVEs in % of assemblage
CREA	Plate	1	*	0.00	*	0.00
CHPO	Bowl	22	1.36	7.41	*	0.00
	Plate	5	*	0.00	*	0.00
	Saucer	2	1.13	6.15	*	0.00
	Tea bowl	30	4.38	23.86	6.87	37.42
LONS	Jug	1	*	0.00	*	0.00
PMR	Bowl	1	*	0.00	*	0.00
RBOR	Bowl (handled)	6	0.64	3.49	0.64	3.49
SCOM	Dish	1	*	0.00	*	0.00
SWSG	Bowl	20	2.67	14.54	*	*
	Candlestick	1	1.00	5.45	*	*
	Jug	5	1.06	5.77	*	*
	Lid	1	0.85	4.63	*	*
	Plate	6	0.27	1.47	*	*
	Tea bowl	7	0.62	3.38	4.10	35.24
SWSG	Jug	1	0.52	2.83	0.52	2.83
TGW	Bowl	20	2.28	12.42	*	*
	Chamber pot	11	0.80	4.36	*	*
	Plate	3	0.78	4.27	*	*
	Tile	1	*	*	3.86	21.06
Total		145	18.36	100	18.36	100

\* indicates that no EVE value could be given.

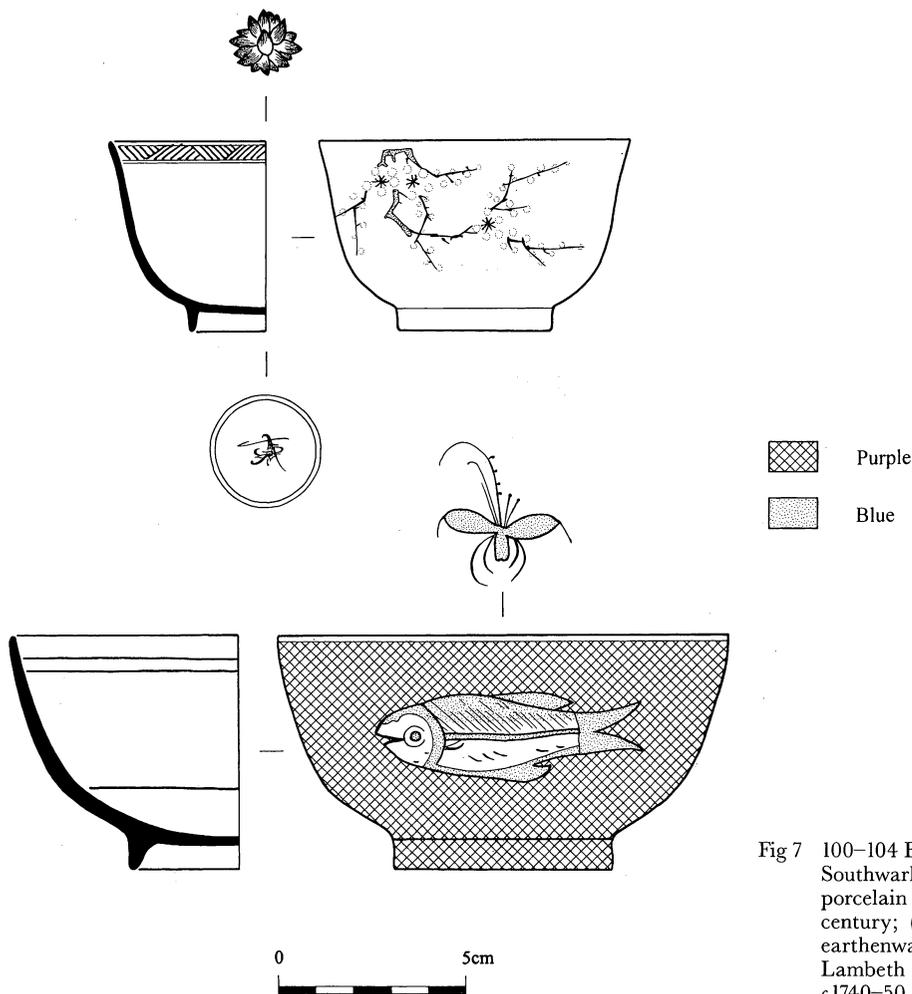


Fig 7 100–104 Bermondsey Street, Southwark: (above) Chinese porcelain tea bowl, mid-18th century; (below) tin-glazed earthenware bowl, probably Lambeth High Street, c1740–50.

contained much more fragmentary material than the earlier fills with largely the same fabrics present but with a higher occurrence of (PMR) vessels, and Creamware (CREA), and a single clay tobacco pipe which would date this event to c1780–1820 (Groves 1984). This probably represents levelling of the cut and compression of the earlier fills.

The fill of rubbish pit 56 contained a typical mid-18th century ceramic assemblage, unfortunately with a low EVE count (7.06). The wares identified are Staffordshire Agate ware (AGAT) bowl, blue and white Chinese porcelain (CHPO) bowls, plates and tea bowls, a London Stoneware (LONS) bottle, Nottingham Stoneware (NOTS) bowls, (PMR) bowls and dishes, a Red Borderware (RBOR) chamber pot, a Staffordshire Slipware comb-decorated (SCOM) dish, a Staffordshire White salt-glazed stoneware (SWSG) bowl, drinking mug, jar and tankard. Tin-glazed earthenware (TGE) was present as a bowl (fig 7), lid, ointment pot, and plates. Unfortunately the unmarked clay tobacco pipe bowls only numbered two and suggest a date of between c1730–80, which suggests a similar deposition date to that of the two earliest fills of the tanning pit.

#### FINDS DISCUSSION

Two important pottery groups are present from Bermondsey Street, both belonging to phase XVII, and comprise the infilling of the tanning pit (39) and the rubbish pit (56), both deposited

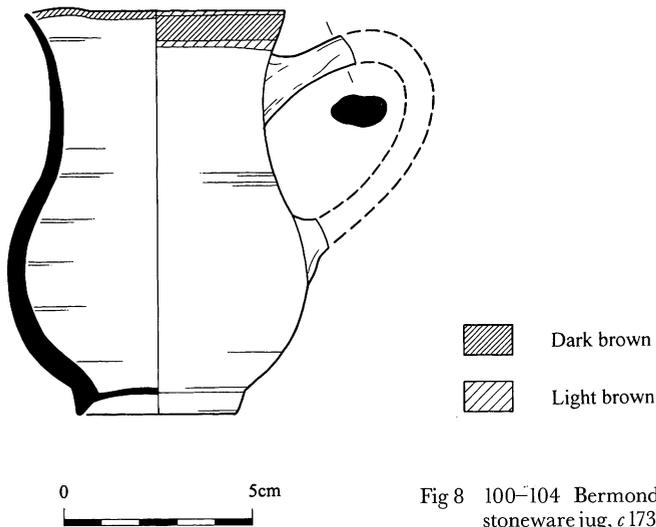


Fig 8 100–104 Bermondsey Street, Southwark: drab English stoneware jug, *c* 1730–50.

*c* 1750–70, with the tanning pit being finally infilled after *c* 1780 (fig 2, phase XVII). Fill 22 of the tanning pit contains a high percentage of tablewares, especially Chinese porcelain. At Cutler Street in the City of London, Chinese porcelain accounted for 12% (EVEs) of the *c* 1730–40 pottery assemblage (Vince & Egan 1981, 162–4), whilst at Crosswall, also in the City of London, a late 18th century well contained a high percentage (31% by EVEs) of Chinese porcelain (*ibid*, 162–4). The disposal mechanism for the pottery assemblage at Crosswall was suggested as house clearance, with the Chinese porcelain service pre-dating the deposition date by approximately 40 years (*ibid*, 162–4). At Bermondsey Street, except for two identical tea bowls, there is no evidence for the presence of a Chinese porcelain service and the porcelain is generally contemporary with the infilling of the pit. Normal household breakage is therefore indicated rather than house clearance. The pottery from the tanning pit is very different from that of the rubbish pit, and suggests that the currier or tanner users of the tanning pit were more well-to-do than the owners of the rubbish pit.

The individual finds of special interest consisted of the tobacco pipes decorated with a rare heraldic-type design, the toilet set from the demolition layer and a wooden counter for the game of *Tabula* which was also recovered from the backfill of the tanning pit.

## Conclusions

To summarize the evidence outlined above, permanent settlement on what had previously been marginal ground was established some time in the later medieval or early Tudor period. The establishment of the abbey in the late 11th century provides a probable *terminus post quem* for the establishment of the road which ran towards the London bridge, and ribbon development could have taken place from that time on. South Bermondsey was at that time on the periphery of the settlement area and open ground lay between the roads.

The growth in importance of the abbey would have stimulated the local economy and provided a spur for the spread of housing. Population growth in the 16th and 17th centuries would have placed land at a further premium. The succession of rebuilding phases at the site demonstrates that the area was relatively prosperous as properties were continually restructured or replaced. This impression is reinforced by the quality of some of the finds. Later developments also imply that there was increased exploitation of the garden and courtyard areas which lay to the west of the buildings along Bermondsey Street. The impression is one of increasing pressure on space.

By the time of the Great Fire the northern part of Bermondsey Street was being enveloped by housing which spread from the densely packed areas around the southern bridgehead and the

foreshore to the east of it. Extensive development had taken place along the foreshore toward Rotherhithe. The area to the south of this, and east of Bermondsey Street, was still open ground but was to be engulfed by urban expansion in the following century. The increase in maritime trade, reflected by the development of the foreshore to the north, may have stimulated economic growth in Bermondsey.

The tanning industry was well established by the late 15th century and by the beginning of the 19th century dominated Bermondsey. Tanning yards and curriers' workshops were densely packed around Bermondsey Street, with related industries such as glue-making and horn or bone working also represented. These developments were reflected in the excavation, for example the large horncore-lined pit was almost certainly associated with the tanning industry. Horncores are known to have been a by-product of tanning as the horns were still attached to the hides when delivered to the tanners' yard. The horn sheath was a commodity in itself and was undoubtedly traded on by the owners of the tanneries (Serjeantson 1989, 136–7). Post-medieval bone and horn working is known from several sites around the St George's Church area of Southwark (Sheldon & Schaaf, 1984). The use of the horncores as building materials represented the utilization of what would otherwise have been bulk waste materials.

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