

# ARCHAEOLOGICAL FINDS IN THE CITY OF LONDON, 1963-4

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## INTRODUCTION

This annual report on archaeological discoveries in the City of London has been extended to include the results of all work carried out during 1963-4. Combining these two years has meant that there is less delay in the publication of recent excavations. Reference is made in this report to groups of excavated objects which have been recorded in the Museum Excavation Register (*e.g. E.R.915*). It is hoped that these groups will eventually be published, but they are now available for study on application to the Director, Guildhall Museum, London, E.C.2. Thanks are due to Mr. N. C. Cook, Director of the Museum, who dated the pottery groups; and he and Mr. R. Merrifield kindly read through this report and made many helpful suggestions.

A considerable number of sites were rebuilt during 1963-4 (*Fig. 1*), but of these only sites 4, 8, 10, 11, 12, and 14 were completely excavated, so there will be a chance of archaeological work by future generations on the remaining sites.

During October 1964 the City of London Excavation Group was formed, and rescue work was carried out at week-ends on parts of the Roman baths in Huggin Hill under the supervision of Mr. N. Farrant, to whom the staff of the Guildhall Museum are most grateful. The excavations of the Group are directed by the writer, and are sponsored by the Guildhall Museum and the London and Middlesex Archaeological Society.

The remains of the Roman baths in Huggin Hill stand out as being exceptionally well preserved, and the rebuilding of the site has only slightly damaged them. It is very desirable that the bath building should be carefully excavated at some future date and part of it might even be considered for permanent preservation.

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## ROMAN

### Site 1. *Blackfriars Bridgehead Improvement Scheme* (*Fig. 2* and *Plate 1(a)*)

On 6 September 1962, during excavations connected with the Blackfriars Bridgehead Improvement Scheme, in the City of London, the first timbers of an ancient ship lying in the bed of the River Thames were brought to light. Subsequent archaeological excavations in the bed of the river during low Spring tides in October and November 1962 resulted in the uncovering of part of the starboard side and stern of the ship. In July 1963 the major portion of the forward half of the wreck was uncovered in a cofferdam (*Plate 1*), in which part of a new embankment wall was to be constructed. Most of the timbers were carefully lifted out and were brought to the Guildhall Museum where they have been treated for preservation.

# CITY OF LONDON

Sites excavated 1963-4

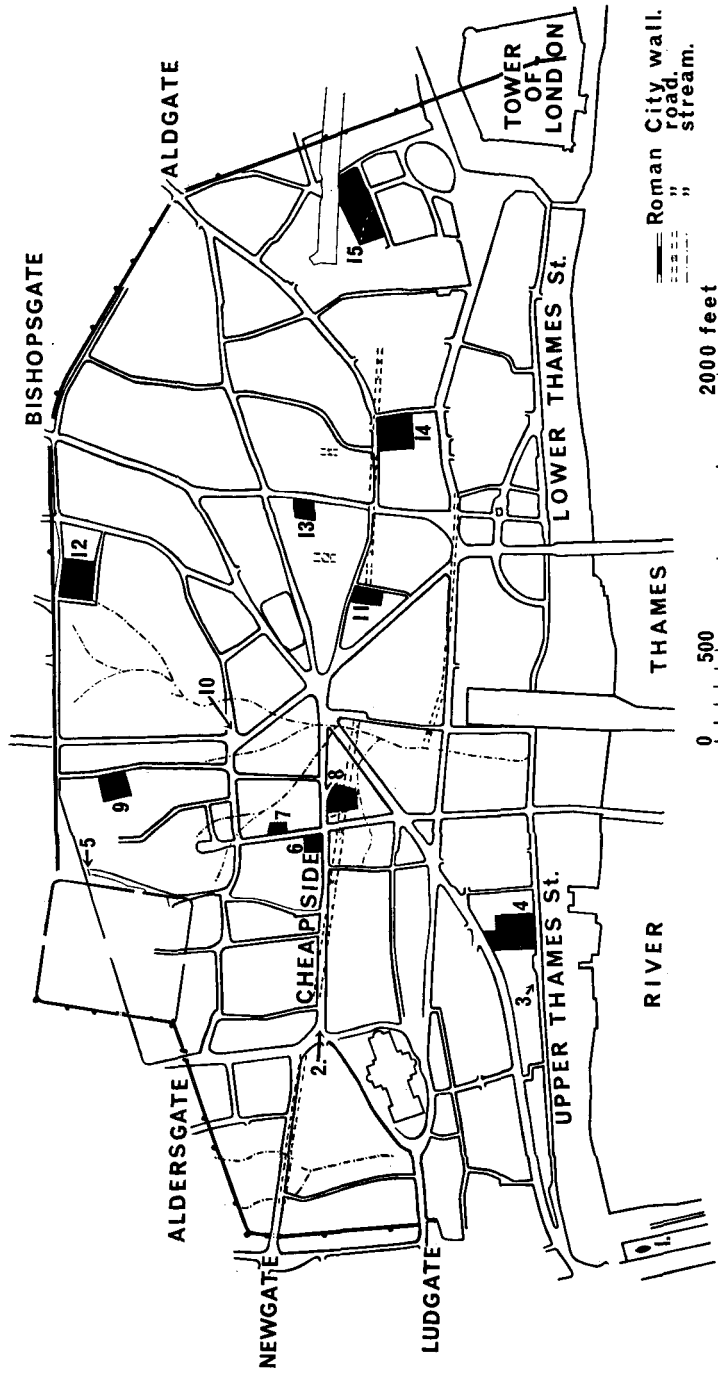


Fig. 1

The age of the ship has been established beyond all reasonable doubt by associated dateable objects. On the bottom of the ship was a layer of fine grey clay in which were found a piece of leather finely decorated with perforations in the form of a dolphin of typical Roman design, and two fragments of a Roman pottery bowl (*E.R.860*). Other objects in this layer included broken barrel staves and a wooden mallet which was possibly used for caulking.<sup>(1)</sup> Above the clay and still inside the ship, was a thick layer of coarse river gravel, which had been deposited after the ship had sunk. In this were found fragments of more than sixty different Roman pots, several dozen Roman shoe-soles, amphora bungs, a millstone (which was probably within the ship when she sank), and many broken Roman bricks and tiles (*E.R.854*). This pottery, which was of the second and third centuries A.D., had evidently been deposited after the wreck of the ship, but before the starboard side had collapsed inwards, for some of it was sealed by a portion of the collapsed side. The latter also covered a rectangular socket, cut in a floor timber,<sup>(2)</sup> which seems to have been the mast-step. The collapsed side sealing the step was of great evidential importance, for lying directly in a recess at the bottom of the mast-step was a worn Roman bronze coin of the Emperor Domitian (*E.R.857*), which was minted in A.D. 88 or 89. (*Roman Imperial Coinage*, Domitian, 371). One other bronze coin (*E.R.858*), of the late third century A.D., was found in the general filling of the wreck. In view of this large quantity of dating evidence, all pointing to the one period, there can be no doubt that the Blackfriars ship is of Roman date. The bulk of the evidence points to the second century, but it is clear that material was still being washed into the wreck late in the third century.

The shape and construction of the ship, however, are like no other vessel of the Roman period which has so far been found. The reason for this seems to be that the vessel is of native British construction. The species of oak (*Quercus robur?*) from which all the timbers had been cut is native to central and northern Europe and is not found in the Mediterranean.

The bow of the ship had been flattened by the weight of overlying gravel and water, so early estimates of her length indicated that she was longer than she actually was. The length of the ship seems to have been about 55 ft., and her beam 22 ft.

The ship was clearly a river and estuary barge, because of her wide and reasonably flat bottom with no keel. That she sailed in the estuary of the Thames is shown by her cargo of ragstone, probably quarried in the Medway Valley, near Maidstone, and by the borings of the ship worm *Teredo* and another salt-water creature, *Limnoria*, in some of the timbers. Both *Teredo* and *Limnoria* cannot live for any length of time in fresh water, so the ship must have made regular visits to the salt water of the Thames estuary while the infestation was taking place.

The barge was carvel built<sup>(3)</sup> and seems to have been double ended. Instead of a keel, there were two broad planks, which met in the centre and extended from the stempost, possibly as far as the sternpost. These two planks were about 3 in. thick, whereas all other planks were only 2 in. thick. The sides met the flat bottom to form a definite angle, or chine, of between 30° and 35°, and the planks were fastened to the floor timbers by long iron nails, with hollow cone-shaped heads (*Plate 1(a)*).

The floor timbers were mostly 8½ in. thick, and about 12 in. wide, and they were spaced between 5 and 16 in. apart. Cut into their undersides were limber holes for the flow of bilge water. Immediately aft of the mast-step, the floor timbers and the side frames were

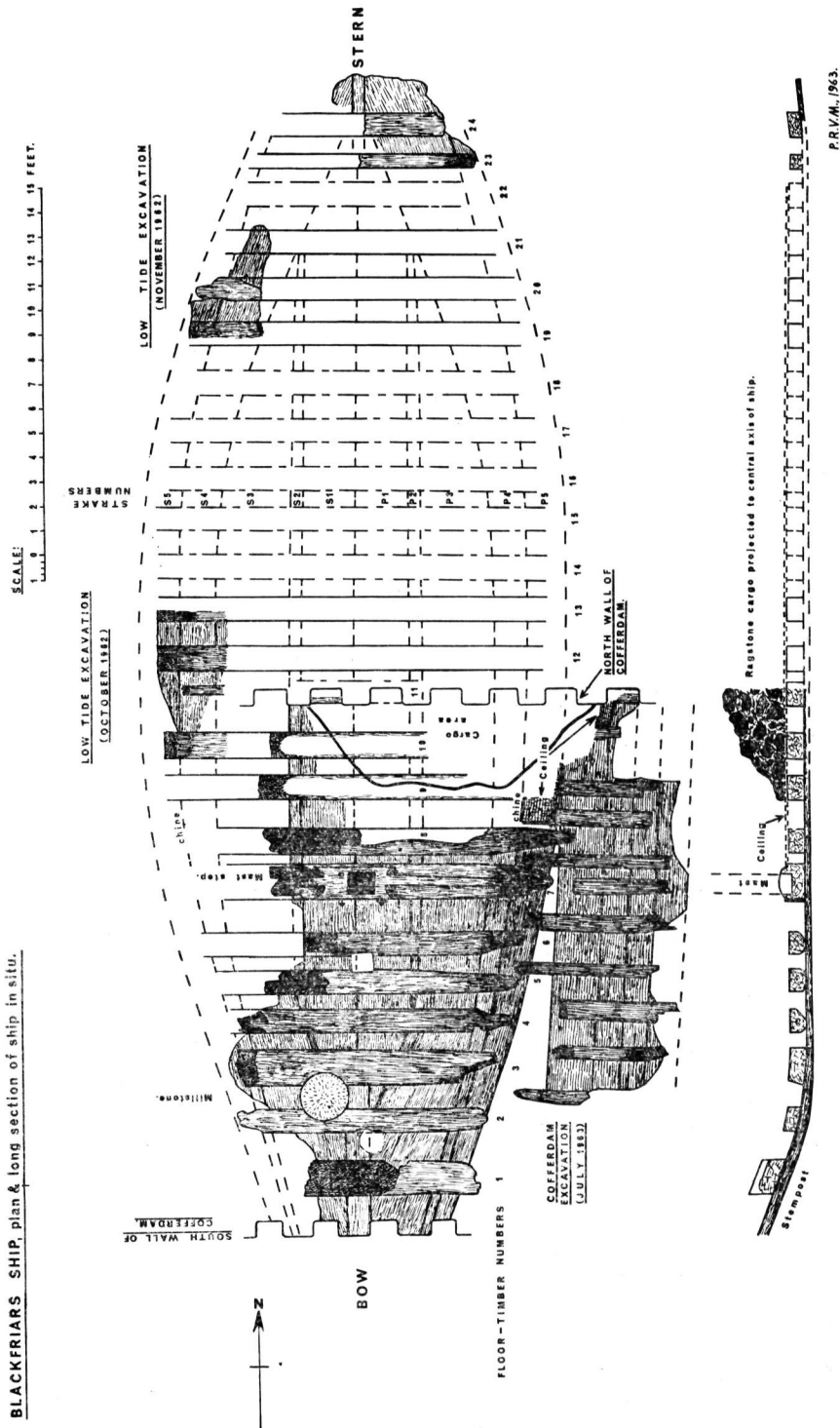


Fig. 2  
(site 1)

covered with a ceiling of planks 1 in. thick, and on top of this was found some of the cargo of Kentish ragstone.

The starboard side had collapsed inwards, and the port side outwards. Owing to the lack of time, the former could not be investigated in detail; but the latter, which was much better preserved, was recorded in detail. It consisted of several broad oak planks, which had been fastened to side frames by iron nails. These side frames were in no way attached to the floor timbers. Instead, their bottom ends overlapped the ends of the latter, with which they alternated, and both floor timbers and side frames were attached to a single strake, and this formed the only link between them. The reconstruction of the collapsed side on to the bottom has given the shape of the ship to a height of about 7 ft. Unfortunately the gunwale and deck beams were not found, so the height of the deck above the bottom is not known. The shape of what may have been the upper part of one of the side frames suggests that a deck did exist, and presumably there was a hatch in it, aft of the mast, and over the hold where the cargo lay.

The coin found in the mast-step was not the least remarkable feature of the ship, and it is interesting to note that nowadays it is a custom to place a coin in the construction of a wooden ship, to bring luck to the vessel. It is surely more than coincidence that the coin, which lay reverse uppermost, showed the figure of Fortuna, the Roman Goddess of luck, holding a ship's steering oar. It seems likely that the coin, which was not a new one, was chosen because of its appropriate reverse type.<sup>(4)</sup>

Much research on the Roman methods of ship construction has been carried out in the Mediterranean, and it is now known that the form of each ship was built of planks first, and the ribs were inserted afterwards. One of the three ships of the Roman period to have been discovered in London, the County Hall ship found in 1910, was built in this way. The planks of the Blackfriars ship, however, had mostly been fastened to a pre-existing skeleton of ribs—a method of building a ship quite different from that employed in the Mediterranean, or from the contemporary clinker<sup>(5)</sup> method of Scandinavia and the Low Countries. Clearly the Blackfriars ship is an example of a hitherto unknown method of early shipbuilding and it would seem likely that this was local. In 1958 a Roman boat was discovered at New Guy's House in Bermondsey, and it is now clear that this also had been built in a similar way. It is probable that the method of building the Blackfriars ship was derived from the shipbuilding of the Belgic or Celtic tribes of northern Gaul or the Low Countries, because these peoples also inhabited south-eastern England.

Perhaps the most significant feature of the Blackfriars ship is that she shows that within about a century of the Roman invasion of Britain, both the technique of barge construction and the barge shape were, to a large degree, established. This carries the history of the sailing barges on the Thames back to a much earlier period than has previously been suspected.

Nothing is known of the subsequent history of the Thames-Medway barge until the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and it is not yet possible to say whether it continued to be developed from Roman times onwards, or whether the form was created anew after an interval of centuries. The survival of the custom of placing a coin in the mast-step from pagan times to the present day is, however, a reminder of the continuity of tradition, and it may be suspected that there was similar continuity in methods of shipbuilding.<sup>(6)</sup>

## NOTES

- 1 *Caulking*: the fibres filling the seams between planks to make them watertight.
- 2 *Floor timber*: a bottom rib in the ship.
- 3 *Carvel built*: with planks laid edge to edge.
- 4 Two Roman wrecks have recently been excavated in the Mediterranean and in each of these a coin was found in the mast-step. See *Mariners' Mirror*, 51, 33.
- 5 *Clinker built*: with planks overlapping.
- 6 For a full report on the ship see *A Roman Ship from Blackfriars, London*, by P. Marsden, Guildhall Museum, London, 1967, 5s.

Site 3. *Lambeth Hill* (Fig. 3).

In Upper Thames Street, near the north-west corner of No. 211 (now demolished), was recorded a Roman drain running in a westerly direction (Fig. 3). It was revealed in a series of holes for modern foundation pile caps, and consisted of a brick floor with brick walls on either side, and the floor was laid on rammed chalk. Its construction is very similar to a drain found near Bucklersbury in 1869 (*R.C.H.M.*, Vol. 3, *Roman London*, Fig. 31, p. 109).

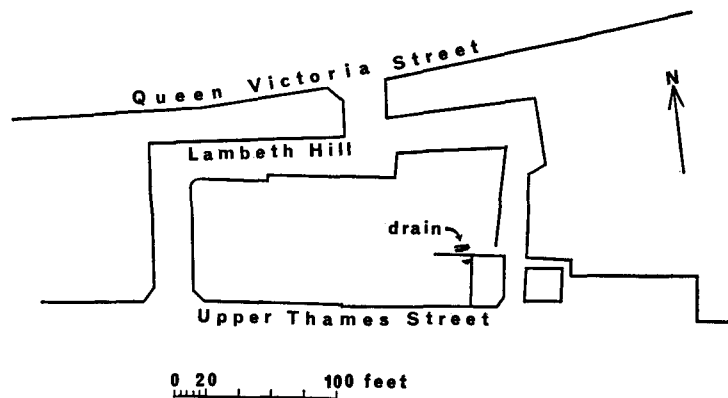
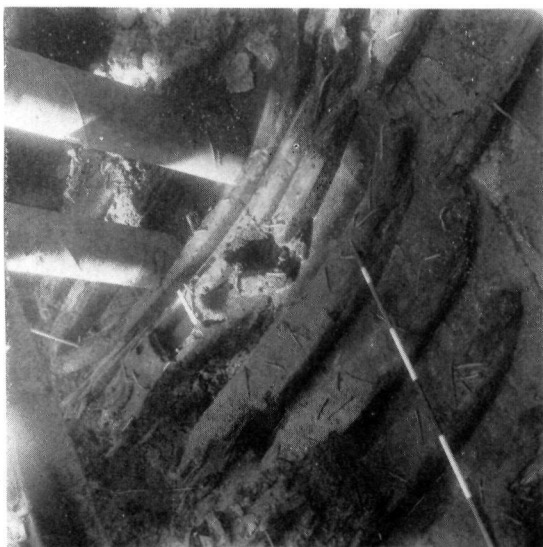


Fig. 3

Site of Roman drain in Lambeth Hill (*site 3*)

Site 4. *Huggin Hill, Upper Thames Street*.

Excavations for the foundations of a large office building on the west side of Huggin Hill were started in July 1964, and at an early stage Roman walls began to appear. The Museum obtained permission to excavate the site during the three days of August Bank Holiday week-end, and thanks are due to the many volunteers who took part. Special thanks are due to the West Kent Border Archaeological Group and to the Wandsworth Historical Society. In the following October the City of London Excavation Group was formed to carry out archaeological work at week-ends on this and other sites. Sponsored by the Guildhall Museum and the London and Middlesex Archaeological Society, the excavations were directed by the writer and site supervision at week-ends was exercised by Mr. N. Farrant. During subsequent week-ends the archaeological excavations continued, and during the week-days the contractors' excavations were closely watched. The general result of this intensive work is described below (*Figs. 4, 5 and 6*).



(a)



(b)



(c)



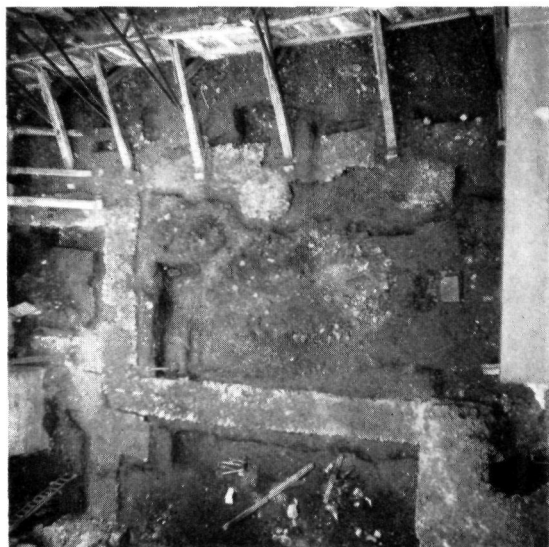
(d)

- (a) Bottom of Blackfriars ship (site 1), showing mast-step (centre), part of stone cargo (right), and part of collapsed port side (bottom right). View to north-west
- (b) Roman bath building, Huggin Hill (site 4): apse of room VII (caldarium) looking west
- (c) Roman bath building, Huggin Hill (site 4): flue channel in apse wall of caldarium: view to north-west
- (d) Roman bath building, Huggin Hill (site 4): niche and flue on outside of apse wall of caldarium: view looking east

PLATE 2



(a)



(b)



(c)



(d)

(a) 3-6 Gracechurch Street (site 13): Roman walls (a) and (b): view to south-west  
(b) Foundations of St. Nicholas Acon church: view to east (site 11)  
(c) Apse at east end of St. Pancras church (site 8), showing rough stone foundations  
with plastered wall face above  
(d) Burial in nave of St. Nicholas Acon church (site 11)



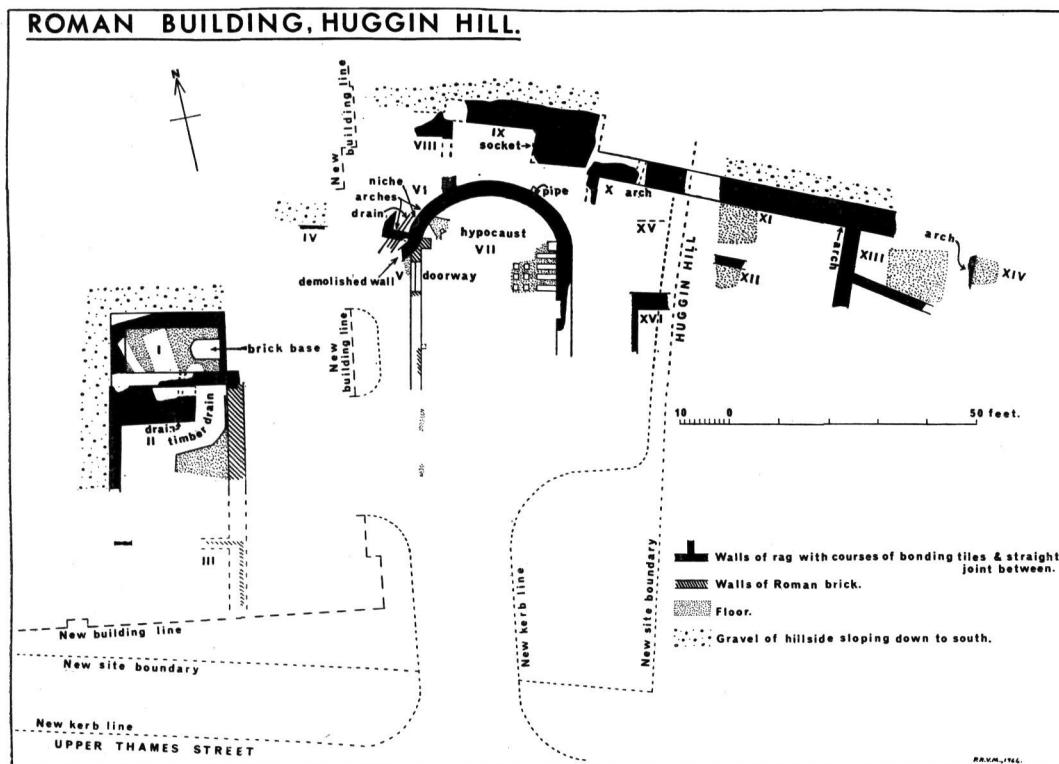


Fig. 4  
(site 4)

#### PERIOD I (Fig. 4)

Most of the walls on the site were found to belong to a large Roman building, and this, from its size and layout, appears to have been a public bath building.

It had been constructed in an excavation dug horizontally in the slope of the hillside just above the river. The floors were on at least two levels; the lower, at the junction of the river gravel and the impervious London clay at between 12 ft. 6 in. and 14 ft. 4 in. above O.D.; and the second in the gravel at about 22 ft. above O.D.

Room I was a chamber measuring 19 ft. 3 in. long and 9 ft. 10 in. wide internally. Its walls, which had unfortunately been demolished almost to the floor level, were built of ragstone, with double courses of bonding tiles at vertical intervals of about 1 ft. 3 in. The north and west walls were 3 feet thick and the south wall 2 ft. 5 in. The north wall was faced on the inside with bricks laid horizontally, the outer part of the wall being of ragstone with courses of bonding tiles. The east wall, which was built entirely of bricks, was only 1 ft. thick, and against its east face was a very hard foundation of ragstone and white mortar at least 2 ft. 3 in. wide. There is some doubt as to the period of this foundation, which is shown on the large-scale plan (Fig. 5).

The floor of room I was composed of hard pink mortar overlying an extremely hard foundation of ragstone and white mortar more than 6 ft. 6 in. thick. The pink mortar floor

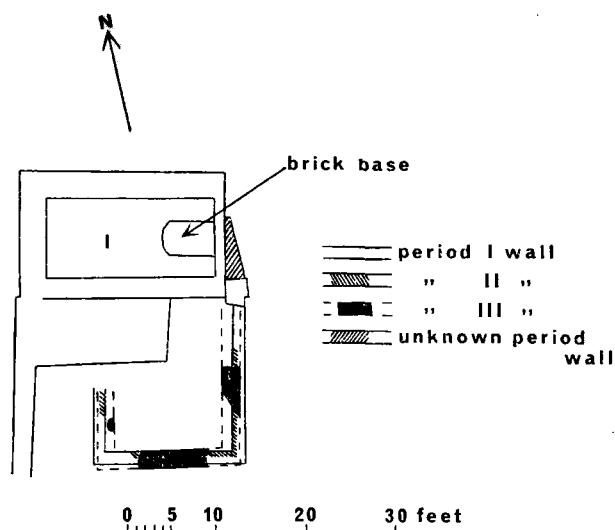


Fig. 5

Walls of periods II and III (*site 4*)

surface curved up against the faces of the north, south and west walls of the compartment, but at the base of the east wall there was a 3 in. quarter-round moulding. In the middle of the east end of the chamber was a tile base 3 ft. 10 in. wide and 5 ft. 11 in. long, which overlay the quarter-round moulding, and would seem to have been the base of a series of steps from a higher level to the east.

The west and north walls of room I acted as retaining walls set in the hillside, and the west wall continued south to form the west wall of room II. In room II a large buttress of ragstone, faced with horizontal layers of bricks, lay against the south wall of room I, from which it was separated by a straight joint. Passing through both wall and buttress from north to south was a brick-built drain. It would seem that room I was a cold plunge bath, and that the drain was used to empty the water, probably through an opening in the south wall to link up with the tile drain found about 7 ft. below the floor of room I. On the south side of the buttress a timber drain was found set in the London clay. The small tile drain probably emptied the cold plunge water into this, to be carried southwards into the Thames. On the south side of the wooden drain was a floor of pink mortar overlying a foundation of Kentish ragstone and hard mortar. The surface of this floor lay at about 12 ft. 6 in. above O.D., and it was bounded on its east side by a wall 3 ft. 6 in. thick. This was mostly built of courses of brick on a ragstone and mortar foundation. Further south in area III were found other pieces of walling indicating the presence of another chamber of the bath building. It is possible that these brick walls, which are so different from almost any other structure on the site (except the west wall of room VII), may indicate partial rebuilding of the baths.

In the area between rooms I and VII the Roman walls had evidently been demolished to a lower level and were therefore not seen in the excavation, but a modern builders' foundation trench did reveal the north face of a retaining wall, of ragstone with courses of bonding tiles, at the north end of this area (IV). A deep archaeological excavation also

revealed the corner of a brick structure resembling a hypocaust *pila* to the south of IV. Another deep excavation exposed a small piece of pink mortar floor in area V, on the west side of room VII. It also revealed a ragstone wall which had been demolished to a low level (see below).

The north end of room VII was apsidal (*Plate 1(b)*), and the chamber was 27 ft. wide internally. Its surviving mortar floor was at 14 ft. 4 in. above O.D., and on it lay the brick-built *pilae* of a hypocaust. The shape and construction of this room strongly suggests that it was the *caldarium* of the bath house. On the inside of the walls were found iron nails which originally held box-flue tiles to the inner face of the walls. The tiles had been broken away and fragments of them were found in the yellow brickearth filling the chamber.

Passing through the north-west end of the apse was an arched flue 1 ft. 8 in. wide, and 1 ft. 9½ in. high (*Plate 1(c)*). Its bottom was level with the floor of the hypocaust, and its purpose must have been to allow the passage of hot air between rooms VI and VII.

The north and east walls of room VII were built of ragstone with triple courses of bonding tiles at vertical intervals of 1 ft. 3 in. and the apse wall was standing a little over 7 ft. high. The west wall of the room, however, was built mostly of layers of brick upon a stump of ragstone walling, and, as in rooms II and III, this would seem to indicate partial rebuilding. At the north end of the west wall of room VII there was a doorway 5 ft. 9 in. wide. Its sill lay about 3 ft. above the hypocaust floor, indicating the level of the vanished floor which originally overlay the hypocaust. At about the same level was found a red clay water-pipe, with internal diameter of 2¼ in., which passed through the apse wall. On the outside of the wall the end of the pipe was surrounded by a box of tiles and slabs of ragstone, which presumably formed a filter to stop the gravel, sand and rubble, which had been back-filled behind the apse wall, from being washed into the pipe. The gravel filling behind the apse wall was presumably dumped during the construction of the baths. The filter was filled with silt, and had evidently collected the dirt from the natural ground water as it passed into the pipe.

The sill of the doorway lay about 3 ft. above the hypocaust floor level, and just north-west of it, in room V, was found a ragstone wall which was bonded into the apse wall. It had been demolished to the level of the door sill, and the surviving top had been plastered over and painted white.

Room VI was bounded on its east side by the apse wall, which contained a rounded niche of unknown purpose to the south of the arched flue passage and 10 in. above it (*Plate 1(d)*). The niche was 2 ft. 6 in. high, 2 ft. 5 in. wide and 1 ft. 3½ in. deep, with a fairly flat bottom, and was roughly lined with mortar. The south and west walls of the room were built of ragstone, but joints between them showed that they were probably not built at the same time. The internal faces were left rough, but the outside faces were plastered and painted white.

Passing through the south wall towards the south-west was an arched flue passage, 1 ft. 11¾ in. wide and 1 ft. 9 in. high, with its bottom level with the bottom of the flue passage in the apse wall. The flue channel was traced for a distance of 5 ft. and continued beyond this point. Presumably it carried hot air between room VI and other compartments in the unexcavated area between rooms I and VII. In view of the fact that two flues lead from room VI, it is possible that this room contained the furnace. Running along the bottom of the second flue, and sloping towards the south, were the bottom boards of a timber drain or pipe 9½ in. wide.

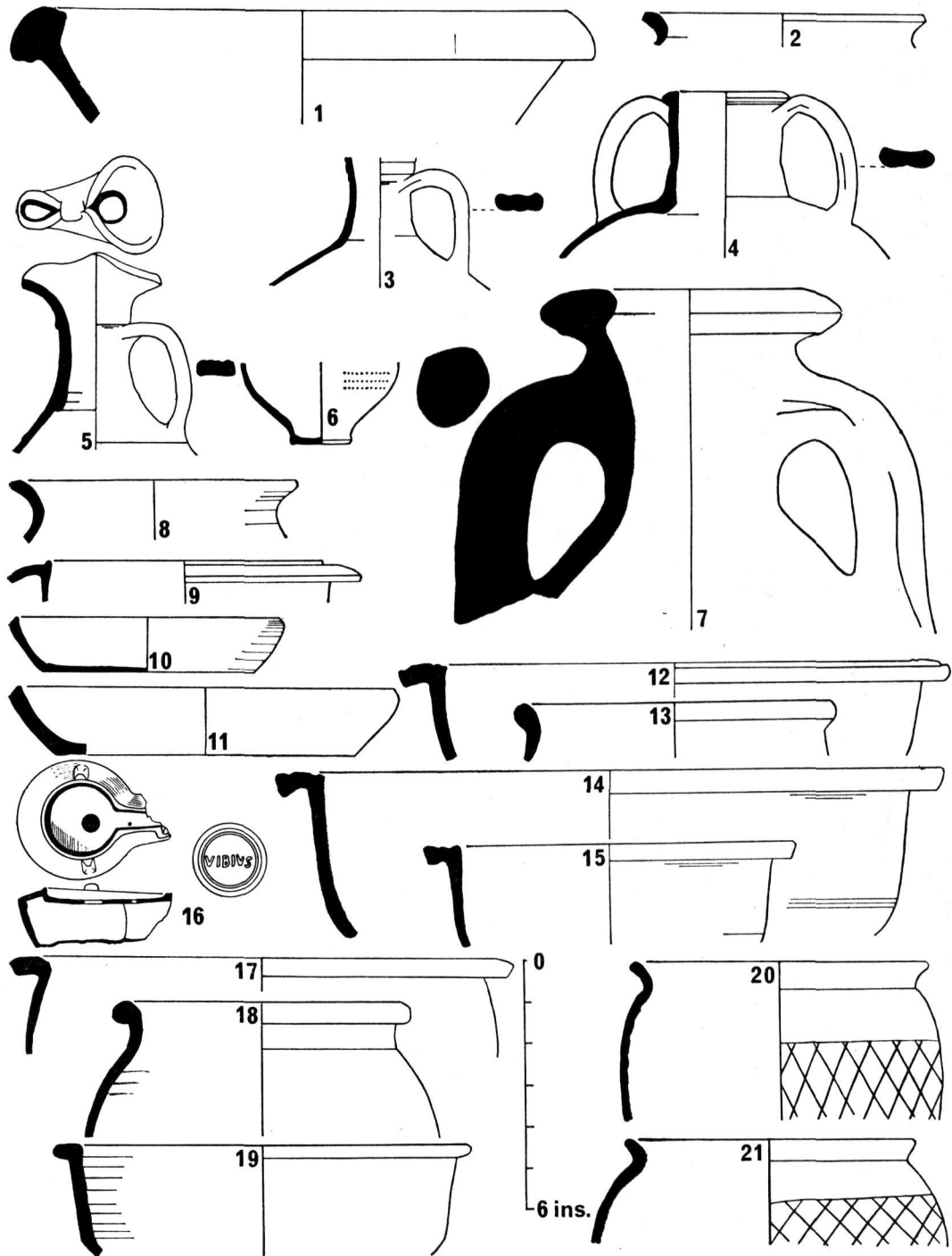


Fig. 6

Pottery dating evidence from Roman bath building, Huggin Hill (*site 4*)

The north walls of rooms VIII and IX were massive retaining walls supporting the gravel of the hillside, and on the south side of the wall in room IX there was a heavy buttress of ragstone and white mortar, containing some broken Roman bricks. This was separated from the retaining wall by a straight joint. The floor level of room XI was indicated by the level of the bottom of the white painted wall plaster on the south face of the retaining wall and on the west face of the buttress, and by a small patch of pink mortar flooring which survived in the north-east corner of the room. It lay at about 22 ft. above O.D. 2 ft. 10 in. above this was an upward sloping offset of 3½ in. on the south face of the northern retaining wall. An interesting feature of this room was a small flat stone containing a round socket, probably of Purbeck marble, projecting from the west side of the buttress at floor level. In room IX, unlike rooms II and VII, there were layers of occupation debris beneath the earth filling.

The floor level of room VIII, as indicated by the bottom of the white painted wall plaster on the south face of the northern retaining wall, also lay at about 22 ft. above O.D.

On the east side of the buttress lay room X, the floor of which lay well below this level. This room was bounded on the west by a retaining wall, and on the north by a wall much disturbed by later pits and foundations. A tile archway, similar to that in the apse wall of room VII, was found passing through the northern wall.

Excavations during 1965 exposed two additional portions of the bath building. At XV was found the pink plaster facing of the south face of a wall, but the wall itself appeared to have been robbed at that point. No sign was found immediately west of Huggin Hill of a westward continuation of the north wall of XII. Just to the south, however, was discovered the north-west corner of room XVI, the internal faces of which were covered with white painted plaster. The floor of this room was not found and may have been at a level comparable with that of room VII.

An eastern extension of room X was found during rebuilding excavations in 1930 on the site of 11-12 Little Trinity Lane, on the side of Huggin Hill, by Mr. G. C. Dunning.<sup>(1)</sup> On that site this was found to be a massive retaining wall 5 ft. wide and standing 9 ft. 6 in. in height. It supported on its north side the gravel of the hillside and on its south side was a pink mortar floor which overlay the London clay. The floor level therefore presumably lay at about 12-14 ft. above O.D. which is the approximate level of the top of the London clay at this point. On the south side of the retaining wall were found a series of chambers, XI, XII, XIII, and XIV, with floors of pink mortar, with the exception of room XIII, where the floor was of bricks set in mortar 3 in. thick. Passing through the retaining wall in the north-east corner of room XI was an arch with its base level with the mortar floor. It was 1 ft. 9 in. high and 2 ft. wide. Another arch has found passing through the wall dividing rooms XIII and XIV.

#### PERIOD I: DATING EVIDENCE (*Fig. 6*)

Unfortunately very little dateable material was recovered from strata associated with construction and occupation of the bath building. The only pottery contemporary with the construction of the baths was found in the gravel and rubble back-fill on the north side of the apse of room VII. This consists of three sherds (*Fig. 6*, Nos. 1-3) (*E.R.949*), all of which are difficult to parallel from other sites. A few small sherds (*E.R.911*) were found in the earth and mortar foundation of the north retaining wall of room IX, but only two of these are closely dateable. Both are of the first century A.D. The period of the occupation

of the baths is represented by a few small sherds from the dark occupation debris of room IX (*E.R.910*), which have been dated to the first century A.D. (*Fig. 6, No. 4*).

These few sherds all suggest that the bath building was constructed not later than the Flavian period.

#### DESTRUCTION OF THE PERIOD I BATH BUILDING

The deep rooms II, III and VII were all filled with dumped brickearth, which only contained scattered building rubble. There was no demolition layer below this filling. It seems, therefore, that the walls were not demolished until after the brickearth had been dumped inside the building. In room VII the box-flue tiles were found to have been smashed and the fragments lay in the brickearth dumped into the hypocaust. Only one small piece was still attached to the wall. The floor which originally overlay the hypocaust in this room was missing, and no recognizable fragments of it were found in the room, so presumably it had been completely removed before the brickearth was dumped. In the clay overlying a patch of mortar floor, uncovered south of room VII, was found a broken piece of red tessellated pavement which had presumably come from some part of the building. Another fragment of pavement, containing small white tesserae, was found re-used as building material in the foundation of a period II wall overlying room II, and this may also have come from the baths. In the dumped brickearth filling of room VII were found, in addition to the broken box-flue tiles, a considerable number of fragmentary roofing tiles, and many pieces of painted wall plaster, in which red was the predominant colour. On several of these were graffiti, two of which (*E.R.935*) have been examined by Mr. R. P. Wright. He has read one fragment as:

... ]S CAM[ ...  
 ... ] IV [ ...

and the second as QVINTVS.

When the building was demolished it would seem that it was intended to re-establish the hillslope, for the walls at the north end of the building, which were set more deeply into the hillside, were left standing to a height of about 10 ft., whereas the heights of the walls to the south decreased gradually towards the river.

The date at or after which the baths were filled with dumped clay is clear, for many sherds were found in the clay (see *Fig. 6, Nos. 5-21*) (*E.R.914, 915, 916, 917, 918, 919, 920, 923, and 940*). The pottery from these groups has been dated to the early second century A.D.

#### PERIOD II (*Fig. 5*).

After the clay had been dumped and the baths demolished, a room was constructed on the south side of the site of the cold plunge bath, room I. Only the foundations of the east, west and south walls survived. Its floor level must have been more than 19 ft. above O.D. The new foundations were several feet deep and were built of ragstone set in soft brown sandy mortar, containing in their lower part much re-used material, probably from the baths. This included fragments of painted wall plaster and the small piece of pavement with white tesserae mentioned above.

PERIOD III (*Fig. 5*)

Traces of a further rebuilding in this area were also observed. A somewhat narrower room with a length of about 17 ft. 6 in. (north to south), and a width of 12 ft. (east to west), now replaced the period II room. Its south, east and west walls overlay the foundations of the latter, and were built of ragstone with a single course of bonding tiles at the top of the surviving portion. The faces of the walls were extremely smooth due to the fact that the pointing was flush with the face of the stones.

No evidence was found to date periods II and III, but the construction of the walls of the latter phase show that it occurred during the Roman period.

PERIOD IV (*not shown on plan*)

Very slight remains of a later building survived. These consisted of foundations of ragstone set in a dark earth. One of these overlay the east wall of the period III chamber. No dating evidence was found, but it may be noted that the foundations of the fourth period, unlike most medieval foundations in the City, contained no chalk.

THE DATING EVIDENCE (*Fig. 6*)<sup>(2)</sup>

*Pottery in gravel backfill on the north side of the apse of room VII (E.R.949)*

1. Mortarium rim. Soft gritty cream coloured ware.
2. Rim of jar. Buff ware with black core.
3. Jug neck with single handle. Buff ware. Cf. for type, *Leicester*,<sup>(3)</sup> Fig. 28, No. 2, dated late first-early second century.

*Dating*: No close parallels can be found for No. 1, but the texture of the pottery suggests that this group dates from the first century A.D.

*Pottery from the occupation debris of room IX (E.R.910)*

4. Jug neck with two handles. Hard sandy red ware.

*Dating*: This is an extremely small group. The jug neck is a first century form, and the only other closely dateable sherd, a fragment of thin fine hard grey ware with an orange slip, is also of first-century date.

*Pottery from the dumped brickearth filling the baths*

5. (*E.R.918*). Figure-of-eight jug neck, with a single handle; hard pink ware.
6. (*E.R.920*). Base of 'poppy-head' beaker, decorated with a zone of applied dots. Grey ware. Milky slip above bottom row of dots.
7. (*E.R.920*). Amphora neck, with two handles, one of which has a broken potter's stamp. Buff ware. Cf. *Leicester*<sup>(3)</sup> Fig. 33, No. 3, dated early second-fourth century A.D.
8. (*E.R.940*). Rim of jar. Pale grey and buff ware.
9. (*E.R.919*). Rim of flanged bowl. Fine white ware.
10. (*E.R.915*). Dish. Fine buff coloured ware.
11. (*E.R.940*). Dish. Buff ware, burnt grey in places.
12. (*E.R.914*). Reeded-rim bowl. Pink ware.
13. (*E.R.914*). Rim of bowl. Grey ware with light red surface. Cf. *Leicester*, Fig. 24, No. 15, dated first-second century.
14. (*E.R.914*). Reeded-rim bowl. Sandy buff ware.
15. (*E.R.914*). Reeded-rim bowl. Pale pink ware.

16. (*E.R.920*). Lamp, stamped on base VIBIVS. Fine pink ware. Cf. *London in Roman Times*, London Museum Cat., p. 64, type IIIb. This type evolved about A.D. 100, and lasted throughout the second century.
17. (*E.R.924*). Rim of bowl. Grey ware.
18. (*E.R.924*). Rim of necked jar. Pink ware with grey core. Cf. *Leicester*, Fig. 42, No. 20, dated A.D. 125–130.
19. (*E.R.920*). Bowl of reeded-rim form, but without the reeded-rim. Buff ware.
20. (*E.R.923*). Cooking pot. Grey ware. Burnished rim and upper part of body, with burnished lattice decoration below. Cf. *Excavations in Southwark* by K. M. Kenyon, 1959, Fig. 21, No. 4, dated early Hadrianic.
21. (*E.R.923*). Cooking pot. Black ware. Burnished rim and upper part of body, with burnished lattice decoration below. Cf. *Leicester*, Fig. 26, No. 8, dated to *circa* A.D. 100.

*Dating*: The pottery found in the dumped clay filling points to a date before the middle of the second century, the most common type of pot from this level being the reeded-rim bowl, which is characteristic of the first half of the second century (see *Leicester*, p. 88).

## NOTES

1 MS. records kept at the Guildhall Museum.

2 Grateful thanks are due to Mrs. Irene Wade who kindly drew the pottery.

3 K. M. Kenyon, *Excavations at the Jewry Wall site, Leicester*: XVth Report of the Research Committee of the Society of Antiquaries, 1948.

### Site 6. *Sun Life site, Cheapside* (Fig. 7)

No Roman stone structures were seen during the rebuilding of this site, but the level of the natural pebbly brickearth immediately east of Honey Lane lay at 34 ft. above O.D. (Newlyn).

The site contractor, while excavating at the S.W. corner of the site encountered water at a high level in the natural soil, and although no stream was found here it is possible that one may have existed under Honey Lane, or just to the west of the Lane.

More definite evidence of a stream was encountered in the eastern half of the site where the contractor also met water at a high level. Excavations beneath the cellar immediately west of the site of No. 93 Cheapside (now demolished) revealed a thick deposit of black silt in a hollow in the natural ground level. This stream valley extended to the north end of the site and the position of this stream is shown in Fig. 7.

In the area between Honey Lane and the last mentioned stream valley the level of the natural surface appeared to rise a little, and above it there were many layers of loose gravel which seemed to have been dumped. It is possible that the gravel was dumped in the Roman period to raise the land above the rising water level.

### Site 7. *Atlas Assurance site, King Street, (1963)* (Figs. 7, 8 and 9)

This site lies on the east side of King Street, and immediately north of Prudent Passage. Thanks are due to the Atlas Assurance Company for granting permission to dig on their site, and to the volunteer diggers from St. Paul's School for working so hard during their Easter holiday.



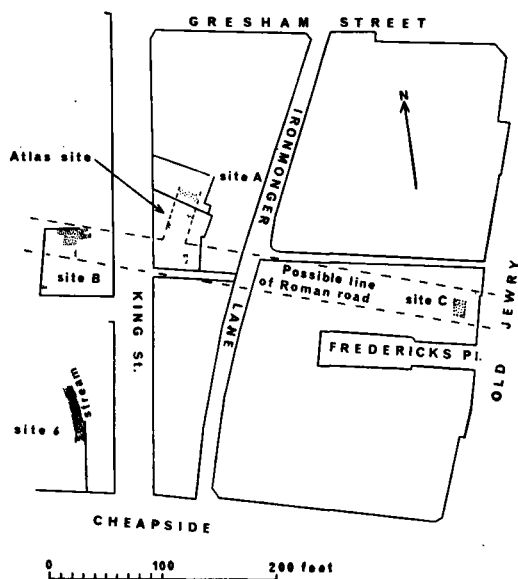


Fig. 7

Roman features near *site 7* (also showing *site 6*)

The purpose of the excavation was to test the possibility, based on earlier discoveries on sites nearby, that two Roman roads might have passed across this site. The excavation did in fact reveal Roman gravel metalling where each of the roads was thought to lie.

One of these roads was thought to have crossed the south end of the site on an approximately E.-W. alignment (*Fig. 7*). Trench 3 was dug across its suspected line, but the Roman deposits were found to have been much disturbed by later pits. The natural sub-soil was pebbly brickearth, which on other sites in this area is usually found to occur close to the junction of the brickearth and the underlying gravel.

In two corners of trench 3 (*Fig. 9*, section E-F) layers of typical gravel metalling immediately above the natural surface survived to a height of 3 ft 7 in. There were four layers of metalling and between them were thin layers of earth in which were found a few pottery sherds of the first century A.D. (*E.R.813*). The thickness of this metalling, together with the similar discoveries on neighbouring sites, (*Fig. 7*, sites B and C) suggests that there may have been a road here, but in view of the disturbed nature of the Atlas site considerable uncertainty still remains.

Trenches 1 and 2 were dug to locate the second Roman road which seemed to be aligned approximately N.E.-S.W. Trench 1 revealed a complex of Roman strata which were difficult to interpret (*Fig. 9*, section A-B) in this narrow cutting. Immediately overlying the natural pebbly brickearth there was a thin trampled surface (level 1), and this was overlain by a deposit of dumped clean brickearth (level 2). In the latter were found a few Roman sherds (*E.R.827*). Level 2 formed a small bank, near the west end of the trench, which abruptly stopped with an even steep sloping face about 8 in. high. Along the bottom of this was a slot which, in view of the smooth side above, may have contained the edge of a wooden plank which lay against the clay face.

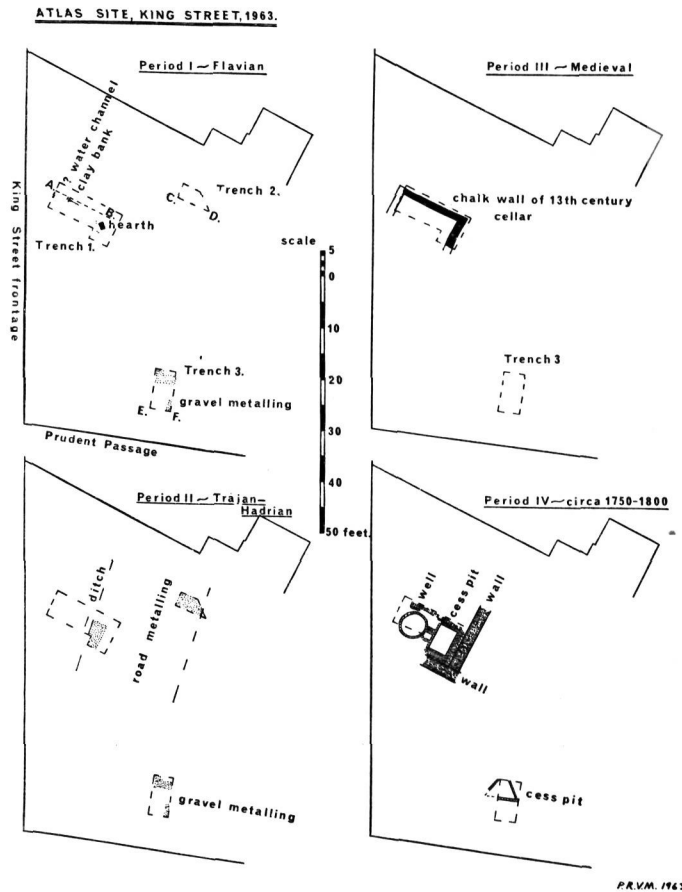


Fig. 8  
Plans of site 7 at various periods

The brickearth (level 2) continued to the west of the bank at a lower level, and had a slightly uneven surface. Overlying the brickearth west of the bank was a stratum of finely layered black earth (level 4), which may have been deposited by water. Pottery from level 4 (*E.R.818*) has been dated to *circa* A.D. 70-80, and the deposit was sealed above by a deposit of dumped brickearth.

Set into the upper surface of the brickearth (level 2), at the east end of the trench there was a hearth formed of a single burnt Roman brick which was very cracked. The brickearth immediately surrounding it had been scorched and burnt red. Just beyond two corners of the brick were two small double post-holes indicating that some small structure had been built beside the hearth. Stratigraphically the hearth and the possible water channel were contemporary but nothing was found to indicate the purpose for which they had been built.

Level 5, which overlay the clay bank, contained pottery of the late first century (*E.R.825*), while above the hearth area level 5 had been cut into by level 6. Level 7 was a deposit of dumped brickearth with other soils mixed with it in places and it contained pottery of the

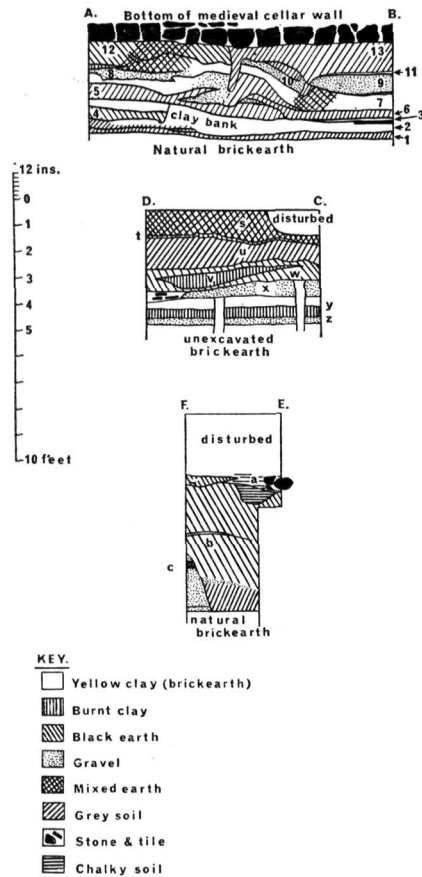


Fig. 9  
Sections through strata, site 7

early second century (*E.R.830*). In the western half of the trench the surviving Roman made ground contained no clear evidence of structures, and most of the strata contained pottery of the early second century.

In the eastern half of the trench was found a layer of gravel metalling, level 9, with a hard upper surface, and with a definite western edge, along which was a small gully. This metalling is evidently a continuation of a small Roman road or path first discovered on the site of 13-14 King Street in 1956 (*Fig. 7*, site A), where, unfortunately, its exact position had not been recorded. Section A-B shows that the road had not been re-surfaced and presumably it did not remain in use for very long. It overlay levels 6 and 7, the latter of which contained pottery of the early second century A.D. (*E.R.830*), while overlying the gravel metalling was the grey soil, level 13, which also contained pottery of the early second century (*E.R.826*).

Trench 2 was dug to locate the eastern edge of the supposed road (section C-D, level X), which showed that it had a width of 20 ft. No gully was found beside the eastern edge. As in trench 1, the gravel metalling was up to 7 in. thick, and had a hard upper surface.

In trench 2 it overlay a post-hole 5 in. in diameter which had been driven through a layer of brickearth (level Y), and a deposit of red burnt daub. Beneath this there was an extremely hard layer of gravel metalling, about 4 in. thick, which overlay a deposit of brickearth. At this level it was necessary to abandon the excavation.

From the bottom of level W a post hole, 4½ in. in diameter, projected downwards through the gravel metalling. Level W itself was a layer of black earth, in which was a deposit of burnt clay (level V) containing Roman bricks. This may indicate the presence of another hearth.

#### Site 8. 76–80 Cheapside (Fig. 10)

Excavations for the foundations of this new office building revealed the surface of the natural brickearth in the north-eastern corner of the site, lying at about 31 ft. 6 in. above O.D. Cutting into this, however, there was the silt-filled valley of a stream. In section the stream valley was an open 'U'-shape, and its bottom lay about 12 ft. below the level of the brickearth (i.e. at about 19 ft. 6 in. above O.D.). The bottom of the stream valley was filled with clean grey silt to a depth of several feet, and above this lay black silt containing Roman antiquities. If this stream were a tributary of the Walbrook which lay about 100 yards east of the site, the flow of water would have been extremely rapid, for the bed of the Walbrook stream at Bucklersbury House lay at about O.D., more than 19 ft. below the bed of the stream in Cheapside. It is also interesting to note that a similar deposit of clean grey silt underlay the black silt of Roman date in the stream on the site of Winchester House, London Wall (site 12).

Crossing the site from east to west were traces of the main Roman road which eventually passed out of the city through Newgate. The road on this site was more than 27 ft. wide, but less than 36 ft. wide, as is indicated by the Roman pile structures on either side of it. The evidence from this and other sites taken together suggests that its width was about 32 ft. The Roman road was composed of superimposed layers of gravel metalling, which on this site had survived to a thickness of 5 ft. 6 in. in one place. In all places where it was seen the road metalling immediately overlay the natural subsoil, indicating that it was an early feature.

The road was traced through most of its course, and it is reasonable to assume that it crossed the stream by way of a bridge, although no definite evidence for this was found. There was no indication that the stream had been revetted anywhere on this site.

At one point in the course of the Roman road was observed a group of small posts or piles, each about 3–4 in. in diameter. These had been driven into the natural grey silt, and they extended upwards about one foot into the lower layers of gravel metalling. There seems no doubt that the posts were there before the road, and that the road metalling had been built up around them. They were immediately north of the centre of the roadway, and it seems possible that the latter was originally half its subsequent width, with a slight wooden structure standing beside it. No sign of any Roman stone structures was seen on this site, but in some of the drier areas were Roman layers of red burnt material, including daub. In the north-eastern corner of the site two burnt layers were seen in section, with their bottoms respectively at 31 ft. 6 in. and 35 ft. above O.D. A layer of red burnt clay containing large fragments of four lava querns was found near the north-east corner of the site. Three sherds (*E.R.853*) found with the querns are dateable to the Flavian period.

**76-80 CHEAPSIDE.**

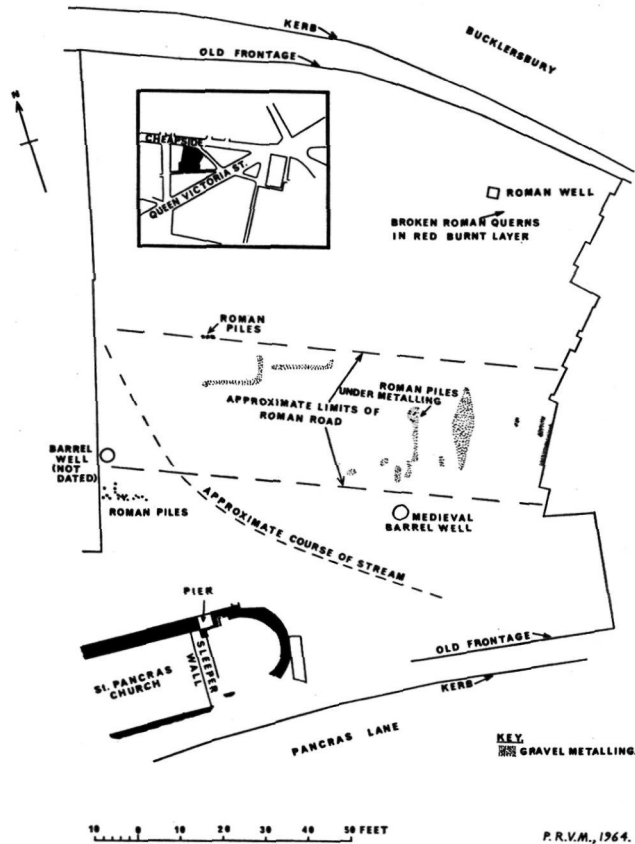


Fig. 10

76-80 Cheapside: plan of Roman and medieval features (*site 8*)

Nearby was a square wood-lined well measuring 2 ft. 6 in. by 2 ft. 7 in., with its bottom about 24 ft. 6 in. above O.D. (i.e. about 7 ft. below the level of the natural brickearth). Some Roman sherds were recovered from the lower filling of the well (*E.R.852*).

Site 9. 17-19 Coleman Street

The complete excavation of this site to a great depth showed that the whole area had been extremely disturbed. Many 'U'-shaped pits were seen penetrating the natural gravel. The filling of these and the ancient made ground above them was a very dark grey earth. It was not possible to see any clear stratification, and few finds were recovered. No sign of any Roman or medieval structures was found. At one point, however, the natural surface appeared to have been undisturbed, and here the natural subsoil seemed to be brickearth, 6 in. in thickness, overlying the river gravel. The top of the natural gravel at that point was 30 ft. above O.D.

This same type of make-up has been noted on other sites in the area, and it seems most

likely that the area was marshy in early medieval times. There is, however, no evidence of marshiness during the Roman period.

Site 10. *Lothbury*

While digging a tunnel across the northern half of Lothbury from the public toilets to No. 5 Lothbury, a Roman wall was encountered. This was 2 ft. thick and was aligned approximately N.W.–S.E. It was built of ragstone with a double course of bonding tiles. At the level of the top of the upper course on the south face of the wall there was an offset of 2 in. The wall extended below the bottom of the tunnel which lay at 12 ft. 9 in. below street level, but a deeper excavation immediately north of the toilets showed that the natural gravel lay at 15 ft. 2½ in. below street level (i.e. about 27 ft. above O.D.).

Site 11. *Westminster Bank, Nicholas Lane*

The surface of the natural brickearth lay at 37 ft. 6 in. above O.D. in the north-west corner of the site but unfortunately the excavation for the deep modern cellars had destroyed almost all of the made ground. In the central part of the site should have been found part of the Roman east-west road which originally skirted the south frontage of the forum. Only very slight traces of this remained, amounting to a few small patches of gravel metalling, overlying the natural brickearth, and only a few inches thick beneath the modern cellar floor.

In the churchyard of St. Nicholas Acon the archaeological trench reached the natural brickearth. A few inches above the natural surface was a deposit of burnt clay and daub about one foot thick (*Fig. 17*, section A–B, level M). In this were found a few burnt sherds, apparently of the late first–early second century A.D. (*E.R.873, 874*). Above this was a deposit of dirty brickearth, level J, probably dumped, which contained an amphora handle (*E.R.883*). Level I was a deposit of loose gravel which seems also to have been dumped, and pottery from it (*E.R.876*) is dated to the Roman period. Level C, which overlay level I, was a deposit of burnt clay and daub, apparently representing the debris of a later wattle and daub building destroyed by fire. The layer contained much broken and burnt plaster, painted white (*E.R.877*).

Cutting into these levels were a series of square post holes (shown on the section), possibly Roman, which had evidently been driven down from level A, a deposit of black earth containing Roman and medieval pottery (*E.R.881*). The Saxon wall (see *Fig. 16*), lying at right angles to the north wall of the nave of the church, was a small retaining wall holding back on its west side the undisturbed black earth which contained pottery of the fourth century (*E.R.891*).

Site 12. *Winchester House, London Wall* (*Fig. 11*)

The rebuilding of this site showed that the old cellars had been dug into the natural gravel on the east side of the site. The highest recorded level of the natural gravel in that area lay at 28 ft. 6 in. above O.D. The bed of a stream, evidently a tributary of the Walbrook, was found cutting into the natural gravel to a level below 21 ft. 6 in. above O.D. The stream valley was wide and dish-shaped in section, and no sign of any revetments was found. The lowest few feet of the stream valley were filled with grey silt, above which lay a thick deposit of dark grey sandy silt containing Roman pottery. The lowest three feet of this dark silt contained Roman pottery sherds (*E.R.810*). A well-preserved Roman

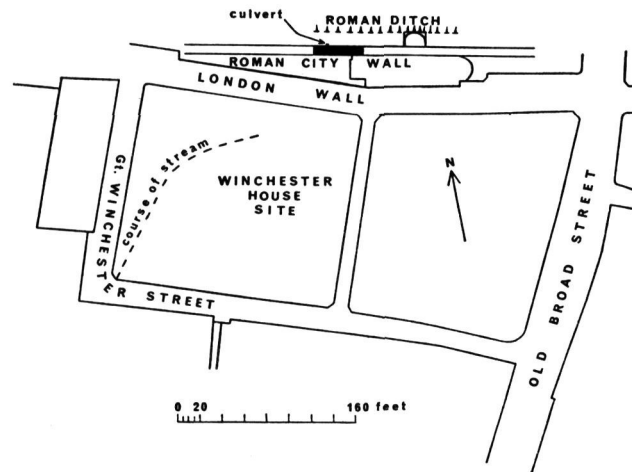


Fig. 11  
Winchester House, London Wall (*site 12*): position of stream bed

iron chisel (Acc. No. 23317) was discovered by a workman in the stream silt at the north end of the site. The surface of the natural gravel on the west side of the stream lay at about 21 ft. 6 in. above O.D., and was overlaid by black silt, which appeared to extend westwards on to the site of 26-28 Winchester Street, which was also being redeveloped at the same time.

### Site 13. 3-6 Gracechurch Street

During the rebuilding at the north end of this site a Roman foundation which was aligned W.N.W.-S.S.E. was uncovered. It lay in the natural gravel beneath the modern sub-basement at 26 ft. below the level of Gracechurch Street with its bottom 6 ft. below the basement floor at 26 ft. above O.D. It was 6 ft. thick, and was built of ragstone, a very hard white mortar and some broken Roman bricks. Its position coincides with part of the supposed southern sleeper wall of the nave of the Roman basilica, which was recorded on this site by Henry Hodge in 1881-2 (Royal Commission on Historical Monuments, London, vol. 3 (1928) *Roman London*, Plate 5). In this part of the site the surface of the natural subsoil and the overlying made ground had been completely removed when the sub-basement was built. Since the surface of the natural brickearth lay at 39 ft. 9 in. above O.D. at the south end of this site, the bottom of the Roman foundation must have been at least 14 ft. below the contemporary ground level.

A careful watch was kept on excavations south of the Roman foundation for some indication of the supposed southern external wall of the basilica, but none was observed. The existence of this wall must now be regarded as doubtful since the only wall recorded by Hodge in this area, in the shallower excavations of the nineteenth century, was not parallel with the basilica walls, and in the light of subsequent finds to the south of Corbet Court (described below) almost certainly belonged to another building.

In the line of Corbet Court and beneath the modern basement on its south side, a considerable amount of Roman made ground had survived. The main structural feature

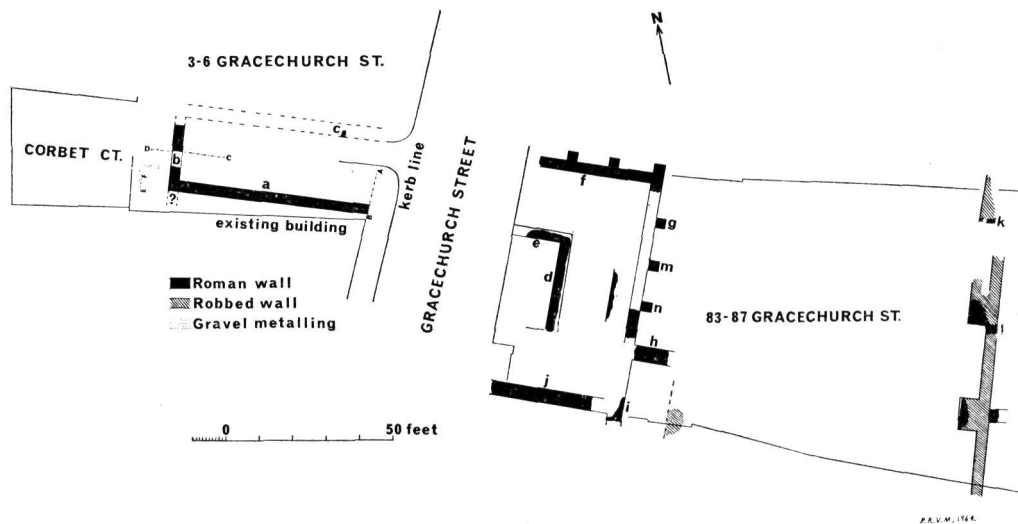


Fig. 12

3-6 Gracechurch Street (*site 13*) and 83-87 Gracechurch Street: plan of Roman structures

(*Fig. 12*) was a Roman compartment 19 ft. 6 in. wide, and more than 58 ft. long. Its southern wall (*a*) was 3 ft. thick, and built of ragstone and brown mortar with two triple courses of bonding tiles, the upper at about 39 ft. and the lower at about 35 ft. above O.D. The foundation of this wall was constructed of layers of flint set in brown mortar, with its bottom at 29 ft. above O.D. (*Plate 2(a)A*).

The general construction of the wall on the western side of the cellar (*b*) was similar, except that it contained only one triple course of bonding tiles, a continuation of the upper course in wall (*a*), below which was the foundation with its base at 32 ft. above O.D.

Of the north wall of the compartment (*c*) only a small piece of the foundation of layered flints and brown mortar was seen, but its construction was exactly as in walls (*a*) and (*b*), and quite different from the foundation of the basilica. This difference is important, for the wall not quite parallel with the basilica, recorded by Henry Hodge, lay in approximately this position. It is clear, therefore, that this was not the south wall of the basilica, as has been suspected, but the north wall of the building to the south.

There was some variation in the filling of the room (*Fig. 13*). At the west end (section C-D), the surface of the natural gravel was uneven, and was overlaid by a thick deposit of mixed earth (level F) with no clear stratification. This appeared to have been dumped, and in it were found some Roman sherds (*E.R.869, 869A*). At the eastern end of the site (section A-B), however, the natural gravel had a horizontal surface which was overlain by a thin layer of mortar. Level A, above the mortar, was a deposit of pebbly brickearth which appeared to have been piled up against the north face of wall (*a*) at the level of the lower triple course of bonding tiles. Level B, above, was a thick deposit of layers of black 'occupation debris' which were piled high against the face of wall (*a*). In this level were found sherds (*E.R.903*) which have been dated to the period Nero-Vespasian (*circa* 60-80 A.D.).



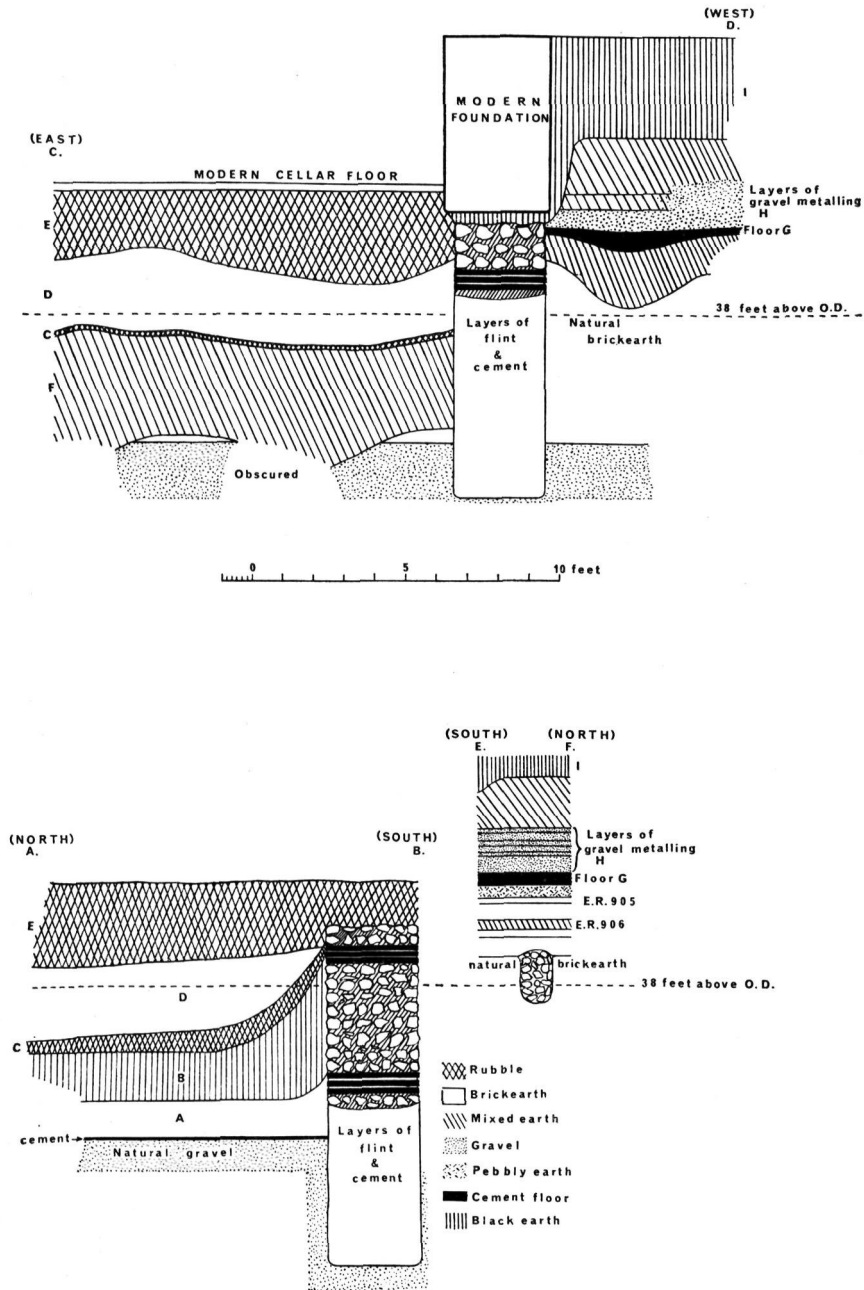


Fig. 13  
3-6 Gracechurch Street (*site 13*): sections through Roman strata

Above the lowest filling there was a succession of deposits which occurred through all parts of the compartment that were seen. The lowest of these, level C, was a thin layer of loose mortar, hardly compact enough to have been a floor. Above was a thick deposit of dumped brickearth, level D, the upper part of which contained many fragments of wall plaster. Above this was level E, a thick deposit of building rubble containing stones, tiles and mortar exactly similar to the material used in the walls. It is reasonable to conclude that this was derived from the demolition of the building. This rubble did not extend to the west of wall (*b*), however, and it seems likely that the latter had been left standing to a greater height to limit the rubble spread. It is significant that this wall alone had been robbed, so it was evidently visible and accessible after the remains of wall (*a*) had been buried.

To the west of the compartment the undisturbed natural brickearth remained to a height of about 39 ft. 9 in. above O.D. Section C–D shows a small hollow dug into the natural soil and overlain by a mortar floor, G. This floor extended all over the excavated area to the west of the compartment (see section E–F), but it was not possible to ascertain whether it was part of the same building or an earlier structure cut by the west wall of the compartment. Overlying the floor several feet west of wall (*b*) were six superimposed layers of hard gravel metalling (level H). This faded out within about 5 ft. of wall (*b*), and it may have been the metallated surface of a road or courtyard. Above the gravel metalling was a thick layer of mixed earth, which was in turn overlaid by black soil (level I) which was probably of medieval date.

Two mortarium rims (*E.R.905, 906*) found in the made ground beneath the mortar floor G (section E–F) have been dated to the first century.

Beneath the layers containing the mortarium sherds (section E–F) a hollow was seen in section dug into the natural soil filled with lumps of ragstone lying in clay, and overlain by a deposit of dumped brickearth. In view of its filling, it is possible that this was not a pit, but the foundation of an earlier Roman building.

The Roman compartment appears to have been part of a larger building which was found on the site of Nos. 83–87 Gracechurch Street in 1934<sup>(1)</sup> on the other side of the road. Here were found the walls of a building of similar construction to those on the present site. The walls on both sides of Gracechurch Street were of the same thickness, constructed of ragstone mostly containing triple courses of bonding tiles. It can be shown that these tile courses are at about the same level on both sites, and in both cases their deep foundations were built of layers of flint and mortar.

The recorded levels of the structures on the site of 83–87 Gracechurch Street are related to the old basement floor, but it is fortunately possible to relate approximately the cellar floor level to Ordnance Datum. The depth of the natural gravel where it is overlain by brickearth, and is therefore undisturbed, is generally fairly constant on neighbouring sites. It is reasonable to assume that it was at about the same level in these two areas which were only about 50 ft. apart. In the records of the discoveries on the site of 83–87 Gracechurch Street it is noted that the undisturbed top of the natural gravel lay at about 10 ft. below the basement floor. Since on the site of 3–6 Gracechurch Street the undisturbed top of the gravel lay at 33 ft. 10 in. above O.D. we may reasonably conclude that the basement floor on the site of 83–87 Gracechurch Street lay at *about* 44 ft. above O.D. On this basis the O.D. levels of the walls on both sides of Gracechurch Street are compared in tabulated form below:

	Level of upper triple course of bonding tiles	Level of lower triple course of bonding tiles	Top of foundation	Bottom of foundation
Wall (a)	+39 ft.	+35 ft.	+34 ft. 6 in.	+29 ft.
Wall (b)	+39 ft.		+38 ft. 10 in.	+32 ft.
Wall (d)	+38 ft. (double course?)	+34 ft. 6 in.	+34 ft. 6 in.	+28 ft.
Wall (e)		+35 ft.	+34 ft. 6 in.	
Wall (f)		+36 ft. 5 in.		Below +29 ft.
Wall (h)	+39 ft. 6 in.		+37 ft. 4 in.	+28 ft.
Wall (i)	+40 ft.		+39 ft.	+30 ft.
Wall (j)	+39 ft.	+35 ft. 8 in.	+35 ft. 8 in.	+30 ft.
Wall (m)			+38 ft.	+28 ft. 3 in.
Wall (n)				+28 ft. 3 in.

The remarkable similarity in the O.D. levels of the main structural features on both sites, together with the similarity in method of construction, strongly suggests that the walls belong to one building, and it would seem that walls (e) and (f) on the site of Nos. 83-87 Gracechurch Street are a continuation of walls (a) and (c) on the site of Nos. 3-6. On the former site they were recorded as being 19 ft. apart, while on the latter they were 19 ft. 6 in. apart. The only discrepancy is a very slight difference in alignment. A small error could be easily explained, however, by the difficulties of plotting, for there are no recent large scale surveys of the Gracechurch Street area, and the site plan of Nos. 83-87 Gracechurch Street gave only a basement outline of the building which existed *prior* to the 1934 rebuilding of the site.

If (c) is the same wall as that recorded by Hodge in 1881-2, as seems likely, there is, however, an interesting difference between walls (c) and (f). The latter was 3 ft. wide, with buttresses on its north side projecting 3 ft. from the wall, while according to Hodge the former was 4 ft. wide with no buttresses. Walls (a), (b) and (c) were the sides of a semi-basement beneath which the natural gravel had survived to a height of only 31 ft. 9 in. above O.D., whereas on the south side of wall (f) the surface of the natural brickearth remained to a level just over 34 ft. 6 in. above O.D. It seems likely, therefore, that the room contained by walls (a), (b) and (c) ended beneath Gracechurch Street, and that the semi-basement did not extend to the west side of the street.

#### NOTE

1 Recorded by Mr. F. Cottrill on behalf of the Society of Antiquaries, by whose permission the information is reproduced.

#### Site 14. Fenchurch Street, Rood Lane

The excavations on this large site, which is bounded by Fenchurch Street, Rood Lane, Eastcheap, and Philpot Lane, revealed only a small amount of Roman structure.

At the north-east corner of the site (*Fig. 14*) an accumulation of 5 ft. of layers of hard gravel metalling was observed. In the middle of the metalling was a horizontal layer of

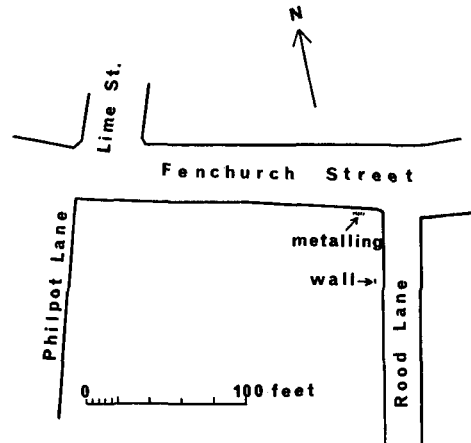


Fig. 14

Fenchurch Street, Rood Lane (*site 14*): plan of Roman structures

yellow clay (brickearth) 2–3 in. thick, which contained scattered lumps of red burnt clay. The bottom of the gravel metalling was hidden by modern concrete, but the section exposed extended to a depth of 17 ft. 3 in. below pavement level (i.e. 37 ft. 10 in. above O.D.). This metalling is on the line of the main east-west Roman road which skirted the south end of the forum.

A few yards to the west, under the site of No. 21 Fenchurch Street (now demolished) another section was exposed. The Roman made ground consisted of layers of brickearth and other dumped material, but at intervals there were thin layers of hard gravel which would appear to have been overspill of material used for making up the Roman road. The natural brickearth was found at a depth of 17 ft. 4 in. below pavement level (i.e. 37 ft. 9 in. above O.D.), and this level was only one inch below the bottom of the first section. It is likely, therefore, that the road metalling lay close to or even directly above the natural soil, as was observed on the site of 30–32 Lombard Street (*Lond. Middx. Arch. Soc. Trans.* vol. 21, pt. 2, 138–9). This suggests a very early date for the origin of the road.

At about 52 ft. south of Fenchurch Street, and close to the frontage of Rood Lane, a further section was exposed in which lay a Roman wall. It was built of ragstone and yellow cement, and contained a single course of bonding tiles. There is some uncertainty about the exact alignment of the wall, but it was probably approximately N.–S.

No evidence was seen on this large site of any early Roman fire debris which might be ascribed to the destruction of London by Boudicca in A.D. 60.

#### Site 15. *Crutched Friars site*

This large site is bounded by Crutched Friars, Savage Gardens and Pepys Street. Unfortunately the whole area had been previously excavated down almost to the level of the natural gravel, which lay at about 31 ft. above O.D.

A narrow line of black mud lying in the gravel was observed crossing the site from N.W. to S.E. (shown on the plan, *Fig. 1*). This probably represents the course of a small stream.

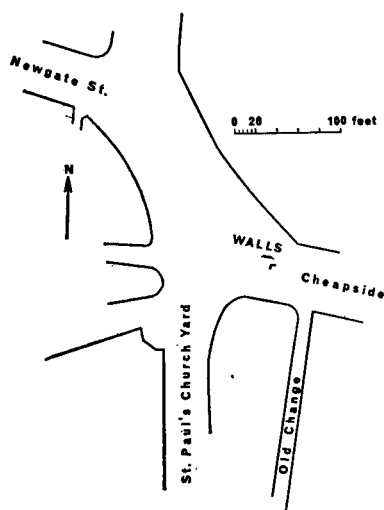


Fig. 15  
West end of Cheapside (*site 2*): plan of walls

## SAXON AND MEDIEVAL

### Site 2. *West end of Cheapside*

Excavations in the roadway at the west end of Cheapside, opposite Old Change, resulted in the exposure of two buried stone walls (*Fig. 15*). The tops of the walls lay at a depth of about 4 ft. 7½ in. below the modern road surface, and they extended below the bottom of the excavation, which was 7 ft. 3 in. below the road surface. The southern face of the northern wall was exposed, and this was built of beautifully tooled rectangular blocks of ragstone measuring 1 ft. 6 in. by 8½ in. The core of the southern wall was built of lumps of ragstone set in brown mortar, but the face was not seen.

These are probably remains of the Little Conduit in Cheapside, which is first mentioned in 1389, and had been removed before 1720 as being a hindrance to traffic (see A. H. Harben, *A Dictionary of London*, p. 353).

Also in Cheapside a lead water pipe (*E.R.942*) was discovered during sewer excavations in 1964. It was found opposite Milk Street, under the north carriageway of Cheapside, at a depth of about 10-11 ft. The pipe was surrounded by puddled clay, and was aligned east-west parallel with the modern roadway. The pipe is oval in section, the internal diameters being 2¼ in. and 1¾ inches, and the lead casing was ⅜ in. thick. Enquiries made at the time among public authorities showed that the pipe is not modern, and it is possible that it was originally connected with the conduits in Cheapside which supplied water until the early 18th century.

### Site 5. *Aldermanbury Street section*

Prior to the destruction of the length of Aldermanbury immediately south of Route 11, now called London Wall, the section where Route 11 had cut across Aldermanbury was investigated.

This section of Aldermanbury was called 'Gayspore Lane' until about the mid-eighteenth century, and it was first mentioned in 1333.

The section had been seriously disturbed by the nineteenth century sewer which lay in the middle of the road, but there was a narrow (undisturbed) section on its E. side.

The natural surface was found to be gravel into which two small gullies had been dug. These were parallel as far as could be judged from the short length exposed, and the small ridge of gravel between them contained a post hole. Each gully was filled with silt to the level of the surface of the natural gravel. Above the natural gravel and the gullies were three levels of gravel with hard surfaces, and it is likely that these are road surfaces. Between the bottom and the middle layer of gravel was a thin layer of silt, and each gravel layer contained silt, indicating that the road was subject to flooding.

Finds of pottery dateable to the late thirteenth century occurred in each gravel layer. These medieval gravel road deposits differed from Roman road metalling in the City in that they were less compact and were of dirty gravel containing much domestic refuse in the form of bones and broken sherds. Cement had not been added to convert them to hard gravel concrete, as was sometimes the case in Roman times.

Above the gravel surfaces were layers of rubbish and silt, and cutting into the medieval gravel near the centre of the modern road was a ditch filled with mud. Near the bottom of this was a void, oval in section, which evidently marked the position of a decayed wooden water-pipe, as an iron collar of the kind used to link two sections was found *in situ*. The refuse surrounding the pipe was all of the late thirteenth century.

Above were layers of rubbish, each containing pottery of the late thirteenth—fourteenth century: these amounted to a thickness of about 8 ft., extending up to within 3 ft. of the modern road surface. Some of the layers produced interesting objects. In one was found a fine fragment of a blue glass vessel, while in others were many pieces of bronze slag, possibly indicating medieval bronze working in the vicinity.

A surprising feature of this section was the considerable make-up deposited during a comparatively short period. The position of the later medieval and post-medieval roads may not have exactly coincided with those of the fourteenth century and of modern times, and this might account for the absence of anything resembling a road surface above the three surfaces found at the bottom of the section. It does not, however, explain the apparently rapid accumulation of made ground. This is likely to have been due to a deliberate attempt to raise the ground level in the fourteenth century, probably in response to increasingly marshy conditions. It is quite possible that another medieval road surface, which has since been removed, was laid above the deposits of make-up.

A fragment of Pingsdorf ware, apparently derived from the side of the builder's excavation, was found on the site of No. 40 Basinghall Street (a new tower block beside Route 11 (London Wall)). This drew attention to a shallow depression, possibly a pit, in which more sherds of Pingsdorf ware were found (*E.R.784*). Also from the north end of the site workmen recovered a group of pottery (*E.R.799*) dateable to the late thirteenth century and thought to be from a well.

No evidence was found on either site of Roman occupation of the area, although it lies within the Roman city wall.

#### Site 7. *Atlas Assurance site, King Street* (Fig. 8, Period III)

At the south end of this site trench 3 was dug through the centre of a large rubbish pit.

The bottom half of the pit filling was black earth containing pottery of the twelfth century (*E.R.837, 839, 846*). The upper half contained tiles, bones and lumps of chalk, but no pottery. Above the pit were a number of layers of chalky earth, and associated with one of these (*Fig. 9, section E-F, level a*) were a few sherds of the twelfth-thirteenth centuries. Also connected with level *a* were lumps of ragstone which may have formed the foundations of several walls.

In trench 1 the Roman layers were found to have been cut by a medieval cellar. Three walls of this were found, and they were built of large chalk blocks set in cement. They had no foundations deeper than the cellar floor, which appears to have consisted of earth. A greenish earth filling of the cellar was preserved at the west end of the trench only, and pottery from it was dated to the thirteenth century (*E.R.842*).

Later disturbances were responsible for the removal of most of the cellar filling. One of these was a rubbish pit containing pottery (*E.R.835*) of the late fifteenth century, but most of its filling had been dug away when a later well and cesspit were built.

#### Site 8. 76-80 Cheapside (*Fig. 10*)

The most important medieval feature on this site was the remains of St. Pancras Church. First mentioned in 1257, the church was finally destroyed in the Great Fire of 1666.<sup>(1)</sup> The churchyard, however, continued in use as a burial ground until the nineteenth century.

While the burials were being removed in 1963, prior to the development of the site, the walls of the church were brought to light. These extended westwards under a small passage which bounded the west side of the churchyard.

The plan of the church was very simple and most of what was discovered appeared to be of one period. It consisted chiefly of a nave 19 ft. 4 in. wide, with an apsidal chancel at the east end (*Plate 2(c)*). The nave and chancel were divided by a transverse sleeper wall 3 ft. 6 in. wide. The walls and foundations of the church were constructed mainly of ragstone and yellow cement. The north face of the north wall of the nave was evidently an external wall, for it was faced with roughly squared blocks of ragstone above a well tooled stone plinth, which presumably lay at ground level. This external face extended eastwards about half way along the chancel to a point where it was joined by the fragment of a wall running northwards. Beyond this the north face of the chancel apse was faced with white painted plaster, evidently an internal surface. This shows that there was a room, or rooms, on the north side of the chancel, but unfortunately in that area the church walls had been destroyed by the construction of a later stone vault. There was no sign of a doorway between this room and the chancel. The best preserved piece of wall was the south wall of the nave, which lay along the southern boundary of the site and was standing as high as the pavement level. In all the walls found there was no sign of any doorway or window, and it seems that the entrance to the church must have been at the west end of the nave, in the area which has not been excavated. The internal faces of the nave walls had both been plastered and painted white.

On the rough top of the demolished north wall of the church, at the western end of the chancel, a pier had been built of re-used shaped stones. This wall was presumably demolished after the destruction of the church in the Great Fire of 1666 so that it seems likely that the pier was the base of a post-Fire monument in the churchyard.

The church floors had largely been destroyed by later burials, but in the disturbed dark earth containing these were many broken patterned floor tiles. At one point on the south side of the nave a few were found at quite a high level above the bottom of the plastered wall. The walls survive beneath the new courtyard, and it would be worthwhile, if ever an opportunity occurs, to examine the plaster more closely for traces of wall-painting. Ragstone walls abutted the end of the church against the outside of the east end of the chancel indicating the possible former existence of rooms presumably connected with the church.

To the east of the church, a few medieval foundations of chalk were found, and there was also a well, built of barrels 3 ft. 6 in. in diameter, with the staves  $6\frac{1}{2}$  in. wide and  $\frac{1}{2}$  in. thick. Pottery and leather from the well (*E.R.809*) dates it to the thirteenth century.

A second barrel well was found at the west end of the site in the line of Roman road. No pottery was recovered from it, but its position in the line of the Roman road suggests that it was of post-Roman date.

FOUNDATIONS OF St. NICHOLAS ACON CHURCH.

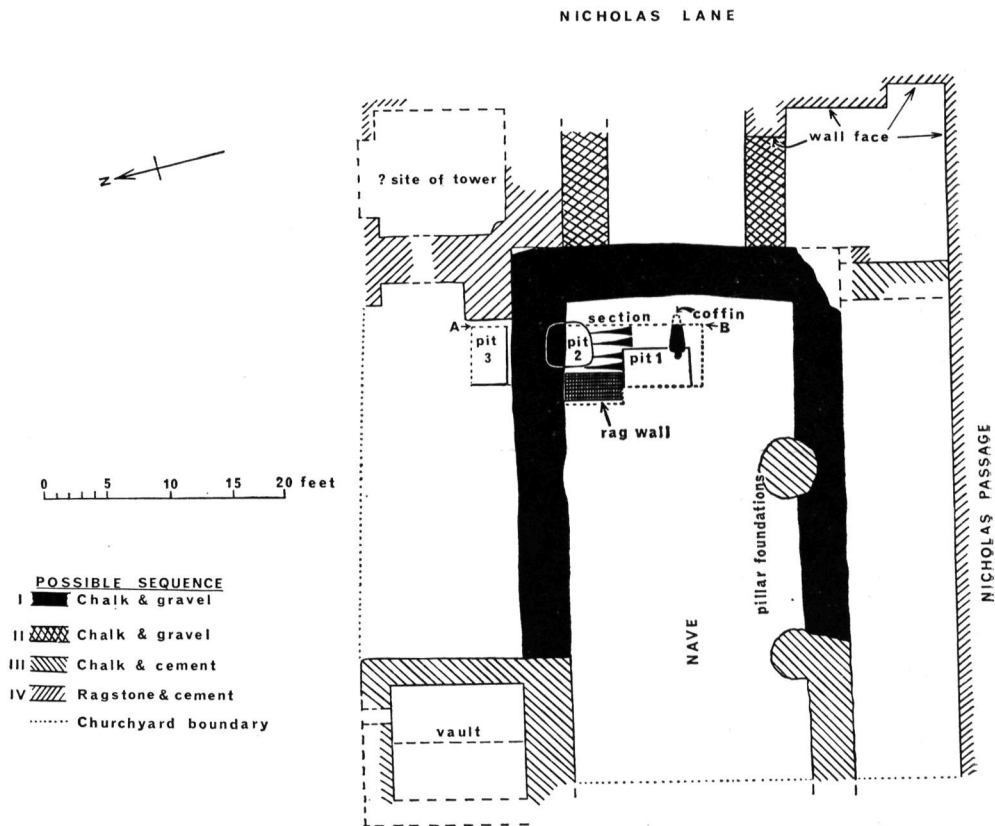


Fig. 16  
Plan of St. Nicholas Acon, Nicholas Lane (*site 11*)



## NOTE

1 H. A. Harben, *A Dictionary of London*, (1918), p. 455.

Site 11. *Westminster Bank, Nicholas Lane (1964)*

Prior to the rebuilding on this site, the churchyard of St. Nicholas Acon was cleared of burials and during this the walls and foundations of the church were uncovered (*Plate 2(b)*).

The church was first mentioned in records in 1084, when Godwynus and his wife Turnud gave to St. Mary and St. Adhelm in the church of Malmesbury their church dedicated to St. Nicholas, and in 1520 and 1615 it was repaired. It was finally burnt down in the Great Fire of 1666 and never rebuilt.<sup>(1)</sup>

The structures on the site were all foundations (*Fig. 16*). The earliest seemed to be the chalk and gravel foundation of the nave. The two chancel walls of chalk and gravel, also represented by foundations, appeared to have been constructed later, for they were built up against the E. wall of the nave, and were not bonded with it. Probably later still, the church was greatly extended by the construction of walls with foundations of chalk and cement. The nave appears to have been lengthened to the west; two large column foundations were inserted into its S. wall and a large sunken vault was built against its N. wall. The final phase seems to have been the addition of walls with foundations of ragstone and cement. These included the wall which formed the boundary of the churchyard by Nicholas Passage, a room on the S. side of the chancel, and a building to the north of the chancel which, from the shape and the massive nature of its foundations, was probably a tower. The foundations at the N.W. and S.W. corners of the tower were found to descend much deeper than in the section between the corners, and the stones were found to be pitched towards the corners forming a relieving arch.

In order to determine the age of the church a trench was excavated across what appeared to be the earliest foundation, i.e. the north wall of the nave. This (wall 1, in the section, *Fig. 17*) was found to overlie an earlier foundation (wall 2). The difference between them was marked because the foundation of wall 1 was constructed of large blocks of chalk lying in gravel, while wall 2 was built of ragstone set in cement.

Both foundations were antedated by pit 2 which they overlay. This was filled with grey earth and contained a large quantity of animal bones, and sherds of a crude coarse shell gritted ware (*E.R.878*) which are either late Saxon or very early Norman in date. In the pit also was found a much corroded fragment of a Saxon silver coin which has since disintegrated. Fortunately it was examined by Dr. J. P. C. Kent, who dated it fairly firmly to the second quarter of the eleventh century. Since we know that the first church, presumably represented by wall 1 or 2, was in existence in 1085, the pit can be securely dated to the period 1025-85. This is of considerable importance, as dated groups of pottery of the late Saxon period are practically unknown in the City of London.

On the north side of the wall was found another pit (3) which had been dug from a grey earth layer above. The grey earth fill of pits 2 and 3 was similar and it would seem from the stratigraphy that they were of about the same period. The grey earth layer overlying pit 3, level H, produced early medieval pottery including Pingsdorf ware (*E.R.879*).

Pit 2 appears to have been dug in the bottom of a ditch-like hollow, and just beyond the west end of the latter was found a wall of ragstone and brown cement. This had no

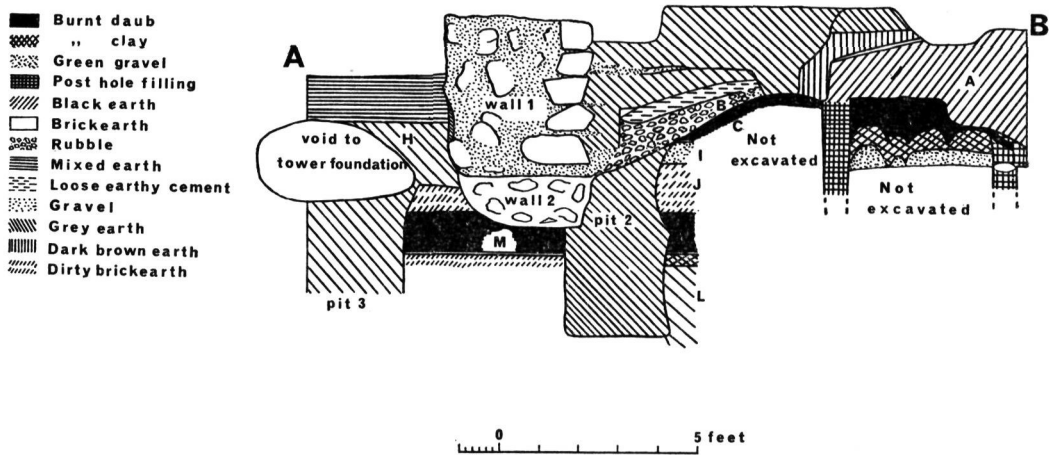


Fig. 17  
Westminster Bank, Nicholas Lane (*site 11*): section A-B in trench

foundation and its bottom followed the shape of the ditch. It was clearly earlier than wall 1, which intersected it. Pit 1 was later than the ragstone wall and had been cut through it. In this pit was found a quantity of rubbish including many coarse sherds (*E.R.889*), similar in type to those found in pit 2. Among them were fragments of Pingsdorf ware.

As it is hardly conceivable that rubbish pits would have been dug in the middle of a church, there seems little doubt that pits 1 and 3, like pit 2, antedated the church, which must have been built within a very few years of the Norman Conquest.

Filling the 'ditch' over pit 2 was a quantity of building rubble, level B, including a quantity of white painted wall plaster (*E.R.880*). This layer was certainly earlier than wall 1 which had been cut into it, and it may well be derived from the demolition of the building represented by wall 2. This was evidently standing on the site at about the time of the Norman Conquest, but it is uncertain whether it was the first church or a fairly substantial building which preceded it.

A lead coffin (*Plate 2(d)*), shaped to the head and shoulders, was found in a central position in the nave immediately in front of the chancel. It lay deeper than most of the church burials, and from its position evidently contained the remains of someone of importance, probably a benefactor to the church. Unfortunately it was removed very soon after its discovery and before any detailed examination had been made. It now lies re-buried in another cemetery with the rest of the burials from the site.

#### NOTE

1 H. A. Harben, *A Dictionary of London*, (1918), pp. 436f.

## POST-MEDIEVAL

### Site 7. *Atlas Assurance site, King Street*

The latest phase revealed on this site has been dated to the second half of the eighteenth century. The structures consist of a cellar, a well, and two cess pits.

While clearing part of the site for trench 1 two old walls, built of brick with occasional stones, were found which had been incorporated in the pre-war building on this site (*Fig. 8*, period IV). After breaking through the modern concrete cellar floor a crude floor of bricks was found beneath. Upon this were found pen-nibs, pins, and pottery (*E.R.819*) of the late nineteenth or early twentieth century.

Sunk into the brick cellar floor and contemporary with it was a circular brick-lined well. The latter was 4 ft. 2½ in. in diameter and its bottom was level with the surface of the natural brickearth 6 ft. 9 in. below the brick floor level. The bottom of the well was filled with black silt one foot thick, and in this was a sherd (*E.R.814*) dating from the late eighteenth century. Above the silt was a loose black chalky earth containing some broken bricks, presumably material dumped to fill the well after it had passed out of use.

About 2 ft. from the well and also contemporary with the brick floor was a brick-lined cess pit, the filling of which must surely have contaminated the water in the well. The cess pit measured 5 ft. 3 in. by 3 ft. 6 in. by 1 ft. 6 in. deep. The lower filling (*E.R.822*) contained pottery of the mid-eighteenth century and the upper pottery of the mid-nineteenth (*E.R.847*), indicating that the pit was still in use little more than a century ago. It was then covered by a very crude brick flooring set in earth, not earlier than 1861, for a halfpenny of that date was found immediately beneath it.

The second cess-pit, which was found in trench 3, was roughly triangular in plan. It was brick-lined and contained material of the late eighteenth century (*E.R.848a*).

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