

ARCHAEOLOGICAL FINDS IN THE CITY OF LONDON 1965-6

Contributed by the Guildhall Museum

CITY OF LONDON

Sites excavated 1965-6.

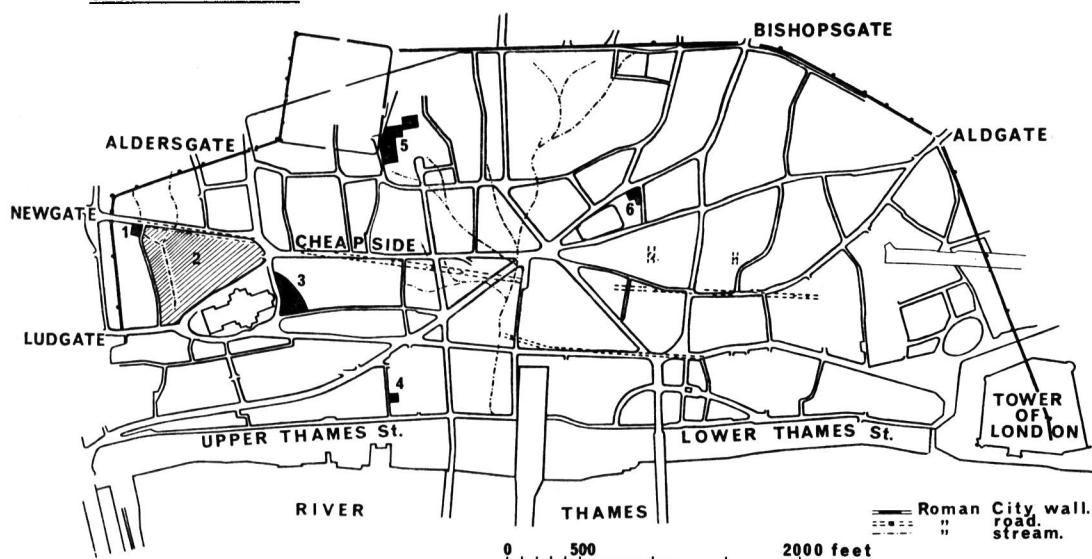


Fig. 1
City of London. Sites excavated 1965-6.

INTRODUCTION

This is an account of archaeological observations made on a number of building sites (fig. 1), and of the controlled excavation on the Guildhall Extension Site. The text has been compiled by Mr. Peter Marsden, who also directed the excavations, with the valued advice of Mr. Ralph Merrifield. Special thanks are due to Mrs. Irene Wade and Mr. Nicholas Farrant who acted as supervisors on the Guildhall site, and to the members of the former City of London Excavation Group who provided a keen force of volunteers.

Reference is made in this report to groups of excavated objects which have been recorded in the Museum Excavation Register (e.g. *E.R.* 1207). It is hoped that these groups will eventually be published, but they are now available for study on application to the Director, Guildhall Museum, 55, Basinghall Street, London, EC2.

ROMAN

Site 1. 6-9, Newgate Street (1965)

Piling operations in connection with the rebuilding of the site disclosed black silt along the eastern side of the site on the frontage of Warwick Lane, and the foreman reported that black

silt was also found in the south-west corner. The former deposit must have been part of the western arm of the stream discovered on the site of the Paternoster Development in 1961.

Site 2. *Paternoster Development (1965)*

Thirty-nine borehole sections were kindly made available by the site contractor, and copies of these are now filed at the Museum. From these, and from other levels and observations taken during the general excavations, it is now possible to reconstruct the land contours on this site at the beginning of the Roman period. Each borehole gives the levels of the main strata at one point, and in order to determine the original land surface, it is necessary to ascertain the level of the natural sub-soil in a considerable number of places. As on all sites, borehole sections must be used for this purpose with caution, because in many cases the bore has been driven through the filling of an excavation, such as a rubbish pit, by human agency into the natural surface so that the top of the remaining sub-soil is below its original level. Many of the Paternoster site boreholes give misleading levels of this nature, since the ground has been much disturbed by pits dug for the disposal of refuse.

Except where the natural soil had been cut into by the stream¹ the sub-soil everywhere on the site was brick-earth. Its highest level lay in the north-west corner of the site between the two branches of the stream, at 43 to 44 ft. above O.D. The general level on the east side of the stream lay at between 40 and 42 ft. above O.D., and in that area the natural surface seemed to have been nearly horizontal.

Fifteen borehole sections were taken at the south-west corner of the site between the stream and Ave Maria Lane, and the highest recorded level of natural soil lay at 38.2 ft. above O.D., probably indicating that the land was slightly lower in this area (as is the modern street level). These borehole sections show some interesting geological disturbances deep in the London Clay.

One borehole was sunk through the alluvium filling of the stream valley, about half way between Ludgate Hill and Newgate Street. In this, the black silt was found to overlie the natural gravel of 24.1 ft. above O.D. We do not know whether this bore was sunk into the deepest part of the stream valley, so it is quite possible that the stream-bed was even deeper. As this level is about 16 ft. lower than the level of the surrounding natural brickearth, this stream valley must have been a considerable barrier to east-west communications. The excavations showed that the narrow stream valley in the northern half of the site had a deep V-shaped section, indicating a rapid flow of water. At the southern end of the site, however, it seemed to widen out considerably, and did not have such very steep sides.

Site 3. *St. Paul's Choir School, New Change (1965)*

During the rebuilding of this site (fig. 2) in 1965 the natural brick-earth surface was exposed at 38 ft. 6 ins. above O.D.

The natural surface in the southern half of the site was overlaid by layers of hard gravel metalling which was evidently of Roman date. The purpose of this is very difficult to determine because the area was too wide to have been simply a road; and if it had been a courtyard it is strange that no sign was observed of any floors or foundations of a building. At the south end of the site, between the church of St. Augustine and New Change, and immediately north of Watling Street, the layers of gravel tended to thin out.

At one point, however, on the east side of the site, the higher Roman strata still survived, and at that point were a series of layers of cambered gravel metalling overlying the natural clay. There was an accumulation of 4 ft. of gravel metalling, and in the sections exposed it had all the appearances of a Roman road about 13ft. 6ins. wide. The section suggested that this was a Roman road aligned roughly east-west. Only further observations on adjoining sites will clarify its purpose and alignment.

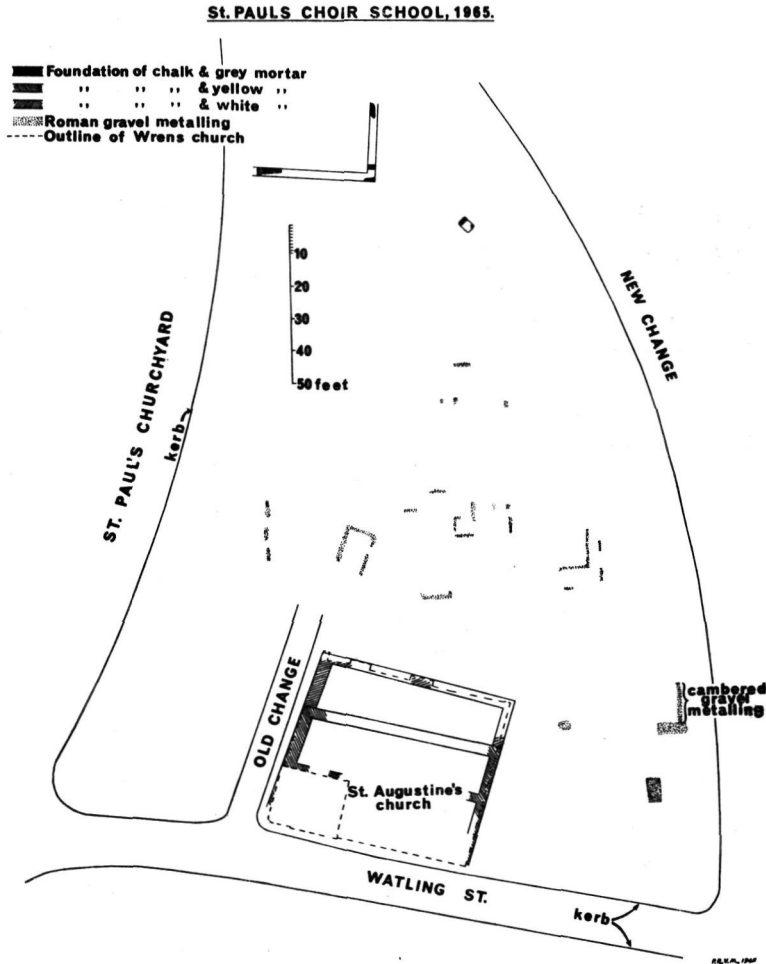


Fig. 2
Roman and medieval features on the St. Paul's Choir School site.

No dateable material was discovered in any of the gravel layers on this site, but the fact that in the sections exposed the gravel immediately overlay the natural brick-earth, strongly indicates that it was laid down at an early date in the occupation of this area.

Site 4. *Hudson's Bay Company site, Little Trinity Lane (1965)*

A trench was archaeologically excavated on a small bombed site on the east side of Little Trinity Lane immediately north of Sugar Loaf Court. The trench was 5ft. wide, parallel to Little Trinity Lane, and was 10ft. east of the old frontage of that lane.

The purpose of the excavation was to determine whether or not the Huggin Hill Roman bath building extended as far east as this site.² Immediately beneath the modern cellar floor was found a thin spread of natural river gravel overlying the top of the London Clay. The Roman bath building had been cut into the hillside overlooking the river, and if it had extended as far east as the Little Trinity Lane site there probably should have been some sign of it. There was no sign of the building, however, and it may be concluded that it did not extend this far. This therefore limits the east-west length of the building to between 180 and 245 ft.

Site 5. *Guildhall Extension site (1965-6)*

The site comprised the cellars of several office buildings which had been demolished recently, and extended around the north and west sides of the Corporation of London offices and the Guildhall, between Basinghall Street and Aldermanbury. During the pause between demolition and rebuilding in 1965-6 the City of London Excavation Group carried out an extensive investigation of the area.

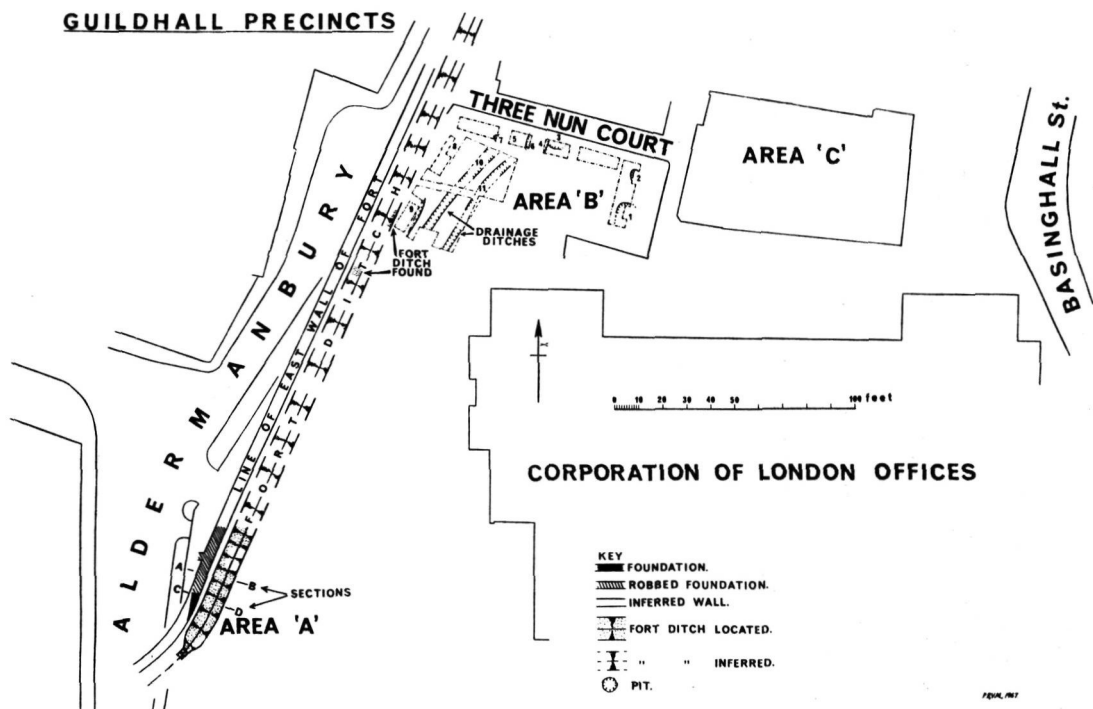


Fig. 3
Roman features on Guildhall Extension site.

The natural surface (fig. 3). The natural brick-earth surface at the north end of area A lay at 37 ft. 9 ins. above O.D.; at the north-west corner of area B at 36 ft. 6 ins. above O.D.; and at the east end of area C. at 34 ft above O.D. The natural surface therefore dropped away to the north and east of area A. A small trench dug just west of the Guildhall itself showed that the natural surface (gravel at that point) lay above 40 ft. above O.D., and it is clear that the Guildhall was built on one of the highest pieces of land in the City.

Gully in area A (see fig. 4, phase I). The only early feature in area A was a narrow and irregular gully dug into the natural subsoil. It was about 1 ft. 9 ins. wide and 1 ft. 6 ins. to 2 ft. deep, and varied in width very considerably. The lips of the gully were quite sharp and it had evidently not remained exposed to the weather for long, as was confirmed by the lack of any silt deposit at its bottom. It was filled with clean gravelly brick-earth which appeared to have been dumped. The level from which the gully had been dug indicated that it was probably dug during the first or early second century, and it seems likely that it was filled in with the gravelly brick-earth when the fort was built during the Trajanic or Hadrianic periods.

Gullies and pits in area B (fig. 3). Two gullies (10 and 11) were found in area B, and pottery from the silt filling of both indicates that they were originally dug during the first century and continued in use until the fourth century (E.R. 1229, 1232). There was clear evidence that gully 11 had been re-cut and in its silt filling was found pottery of the third-fourth century (E.R. 1231).

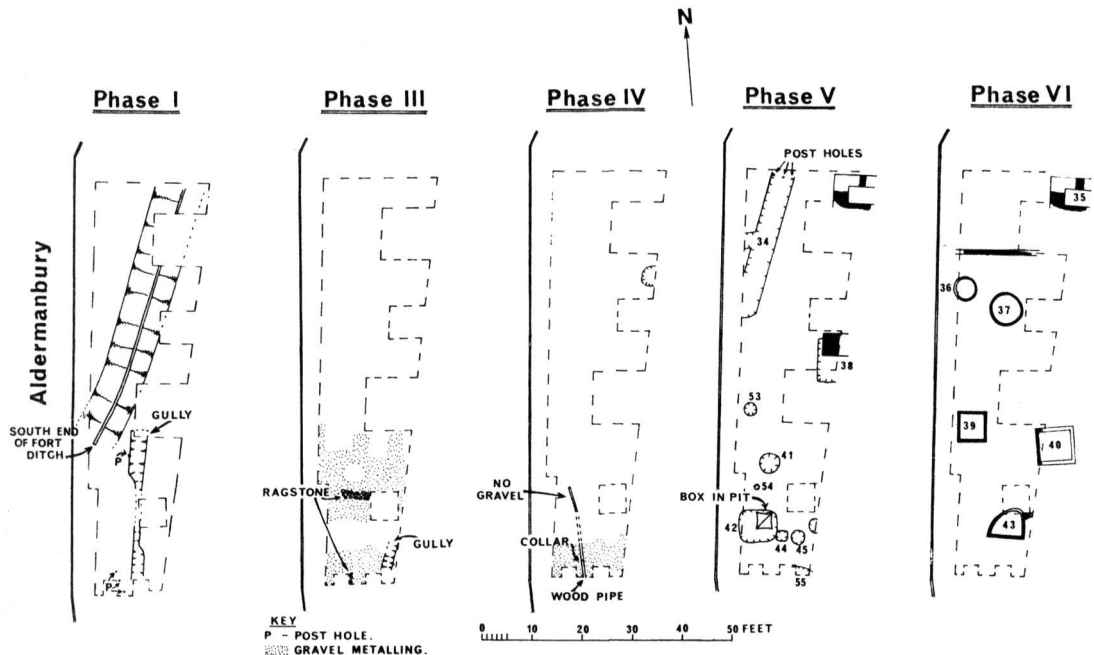


Fig. 4
Guildhall Extension Site, area "A"

Nine pits were also found in area B, and five of these were dug in the same small area. The earliest contained material of the first half of the second century (pit 4 (E.R. 995) and pit 8 (E.R. 998)). It may be significant that these roughly coincide in date with the building of the Cripplegate Roman fort, which lay only about 20 ft. to the west.

Pit 3 (E.R. 994) contained pottery of the second half of the second century and Pit 2 (E.R. 993) pottery of the late second—early third century. The contents of the latter included two fused balls of blue frit for glass-making or enamelling, and sherds of hard pink ware with a black gloss, decorated *en barbotine* with animals, one of which was a bear. Other sherds of this or a similar pot were discovered in the filling of the medieval pits 13 (E.R. 1002) and 17 (E.R. 1006) on this site.

Pit 1 (E.R. 992) contained sherds of the first half of the third century, and pit 9 (E.R. 999) sherds of the late third—early fourth century with a coin of Claudius II struck after his death in 270 A.D. Pits 5 (E.R. 996), 6 (E.R. 997) and 7 were found together and all contained sherds of the fourth century.

Gullies and pits in area C (see fig. 6). In view of the depth of the modern cellar floor and foundations of Bassishaw House and the extensive burial pits associated with the medieval church, it is not surprising that very little Roman made ground had survived. At only two places (64, 69), were Roman deposits found immediately overlying the natural brick-earth, and pottery from both of these is dateable to the Flavian period (E.R. 1041, 1044). Two shallow gullies dug into the brick-earth were found at the east end of the site, and in one of

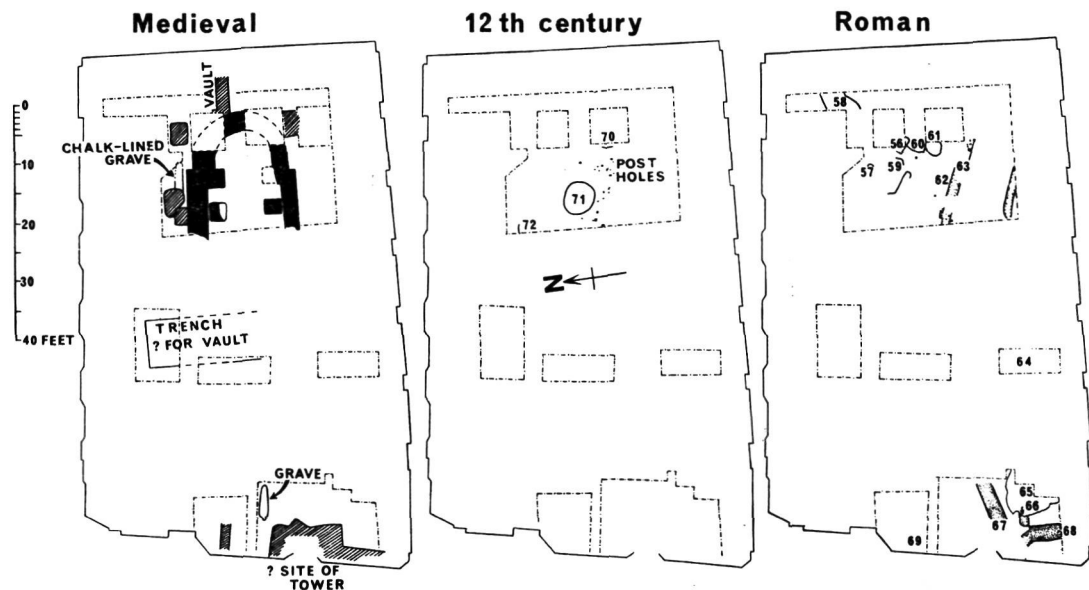


Fig. 6

St. Michael Bassishaw Site.

Foundations marked solid were of chalk and gravel. Foundations hatched were of stone and mortar.

these (63) were a few sherds of the period 70-90 A.D. (E.R. 1048). There was also a scatter of post holes which were filled with light grey clay, unlike the medieval post holes which were filled with black earth, and these are tentatively attributed to the Roman period. They occurred in two main clusters in the filling of the gully (63), suggesting that they may have been associated.

Apart from this the evidence of Roman occupation only survived in the form of rubbish pits, the earliest of which were dateable by their contents to the Flavian period. These were pits 60 (E.R. 1040), 61 (E.R. 1043), and 58 (E.R. 1049). There were also a series of pits dateable to the early second century, including 56 (E.R. 1046), 57 (E.R. 1053), 65 (E.R. 1054), and 62 (E.R. 1056). Pit 65 was specially interesting in that it contained a sherd of Samian ware (form 33) with the graffito CATTI. and a fragment of decorated 'Black' Samian ware stamped OF LIBERTI. It is significant that pits 60 and 65 and the deposit of Flavian debris (64) all contained lumps of slag and in one a crucible fragment. These suggest that metal working occurred nearby during the late first and early second centuries.

No pit groups were discovered which by their contents could be attributed with certainty to the latter half of the second and the third centuries.

Several gullies of the fourth century, however, were discovered at the west end of the site. These took the form of small U-shaped ditches. The bottom of gully 67 sloped down to the west, and in it were a quantity of pottery and a coin of Constantinopolis (A.D. 330-335). The gully also contained lumps of slag (E.R. 1037, 1038). Gully 66, which had been cut through the earlier pit 65, contained pottery of the fourth century and a coin of Gratian (A.D. 367-375) (E.R. 1045, 1054, 1057). Gully 68 sloped down to the north, and in it were found a considerable quantity of pottery and coins of Constantine II (A.D. 335-341) and of the house of Valentinian (A.D. 364-378) (E.R. 1052, 1055, 1058).

An undated find from the site worth mentioning was a fragment of a Roman brick stamped P.P.B. [R.LON]. This was discovered in pit 71, which has been dated to the twelfth century (E.R. 1061).

The fort defences in area A (fig. 3). Part of the eastern defences of the Cripplegate fort passed across the western edge of the site, and these consisted of the foundation of the fort wall, and just beyond it the V-shaped fort ditch.

The fort wall had mostly been robbed during the twelfth century, but the impressions of the robbed stones in the natural brick-earth were exposed, showing that the robber excavation was confined to the wall and did not extend into the natural clay on either side of the Roman foundation to facilitate the demolition of the wall. At the south end of the exposed length of robbed Roman wall a short length of the foundation survived *in situ*. It consisted of two layers of Kentish ragstone set in brick-earth. Some of these pieces of stone had yellow mortar adhering to them indicating that they had been re-used. Amongst the lumps of ragstone were a few fragments of brown coloured sandstone.

The foundation of the fort wall on this site was about 4 ft. 3 ins. wide and about 2 ft. 8 ins. deep. The medieval robbers' trench at one point branched off obliquely from the west side of the robbed fort wall. The bottom of this minor trench was level with the bottom of the fort wall, and it was evidently following the line of an internal Roman wall as the impressions of the robbed stones in the bottom of the trench indicated. The width of the robbed trench was 2 ft. 9 ins., and this was presumably the actual width of the foundation of the minor wall. The latter may have been part of a small internal turret, but the oblique angle of the minor wall to the main fort wall raises a difficulty.

At the bottom of the robbers' trench of the fort wall, at the north end of area A, was found a line of three post-holes each between 3 and 4 ins. square (fig. 4, phase V). The line of holes lay at right angles to the line of the fort wall, one in the centre line of the wall and one on either side. It seems unlikely that these posts were of medieval date because they were overlaid by the dumped fill of the robbers' trench, and did not project into the filling. It would appear that they must have been put in at the time of the construction of the fort wall, perhaps to assist in the setting-out of this part of the fort.

Beyond a narrow berm of about 2 ft. 6 ins. lay the fort ditch (fig. 5; plate 1). The section of the ditch clearly indicated that it had been re-dug. The original ditch was V-shaped in section with a narrow gully, square in section, at the bottom, and was about 9 ft. 6 ins. wide and about 5 ft. 6 ins. deep. There was clear evidence that the bottom of the ditch gradually sloped down towards the north, thereby indicating the direction of flow of any water which might collect at its bottom. At the south end of the excavation area the ditch came to a definite end (see fig. 4, phase I). It is no doubt significant that this occurred at the north end of the curving south-east corner of the fort. The filling of the ditch was mostly preserved at its bottom, and consisted of clean brick-earth (fig. 5, level A). A few bones, brick fragments and sherds of the late first or early second century were found in it (E.R. 1070). The clean brick-earth was quite unlike the silt deposits which occurred at a higher level, and had evidently been dumped.

A considerable length of the fort ditch was excavated, and the upper surface of level A was found to be extremely smooth and even sloping. This can only be explained by the hypothesis that the ditch had been re-cut. (See sections A-B and C-D).

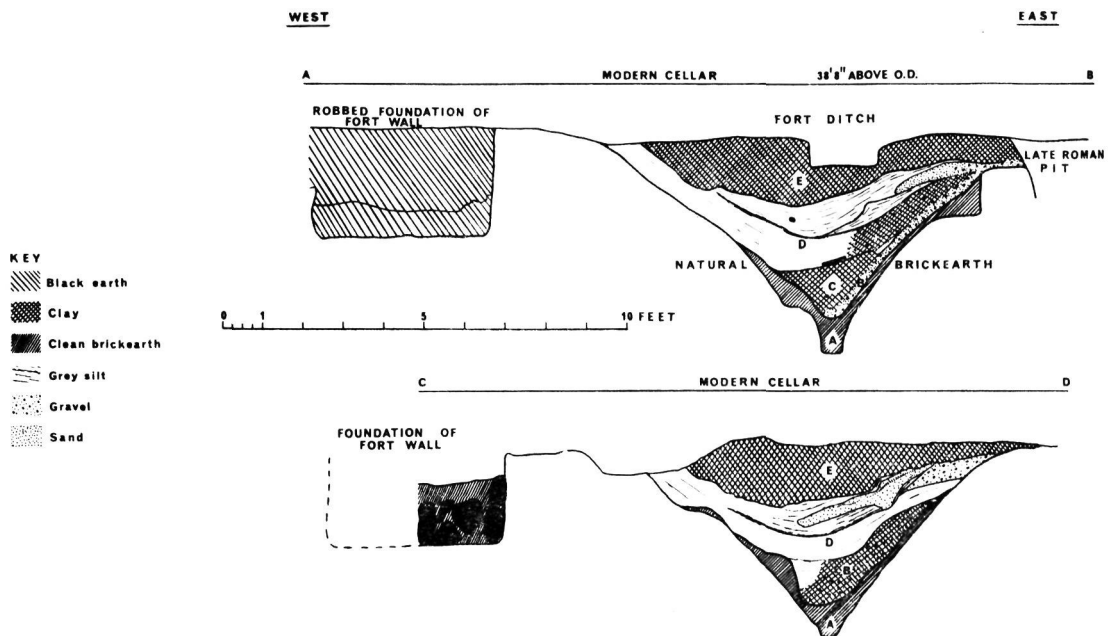


Fig. 5
Sections across the fort ditch and robbed wall.



PLATE 1. Roman fort ditch and robbed wall (right); view looking south.

PLATE 2. Roman fort ditch; view looking south.

A—original form of ditch; B—re-cut form of ditch; C—gully form of south end of ditch on the site.





PLATE 3. Guildhall site; medieval pit 42, with the wooden 'box' completely excavated.

PLATE 4. Guildhall site; large chalk-lined medieval cess pit; looking south-east.
A—stone-lined channel or drain; B—arched opening.

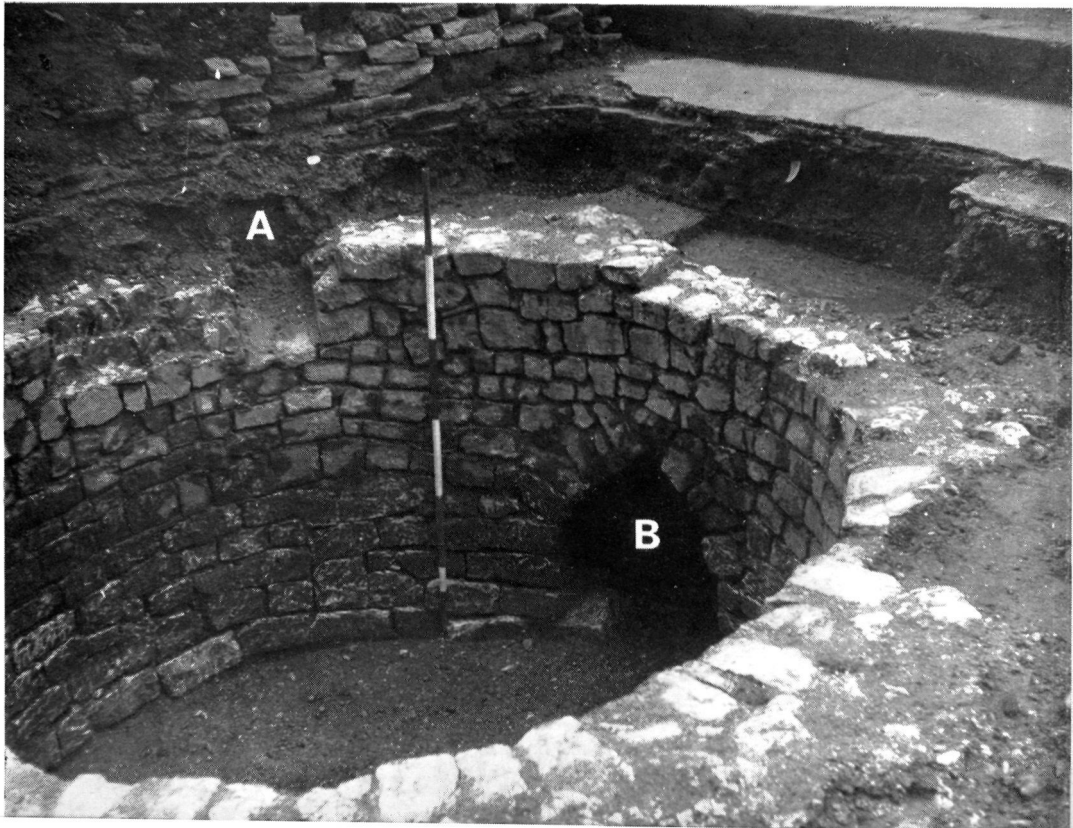
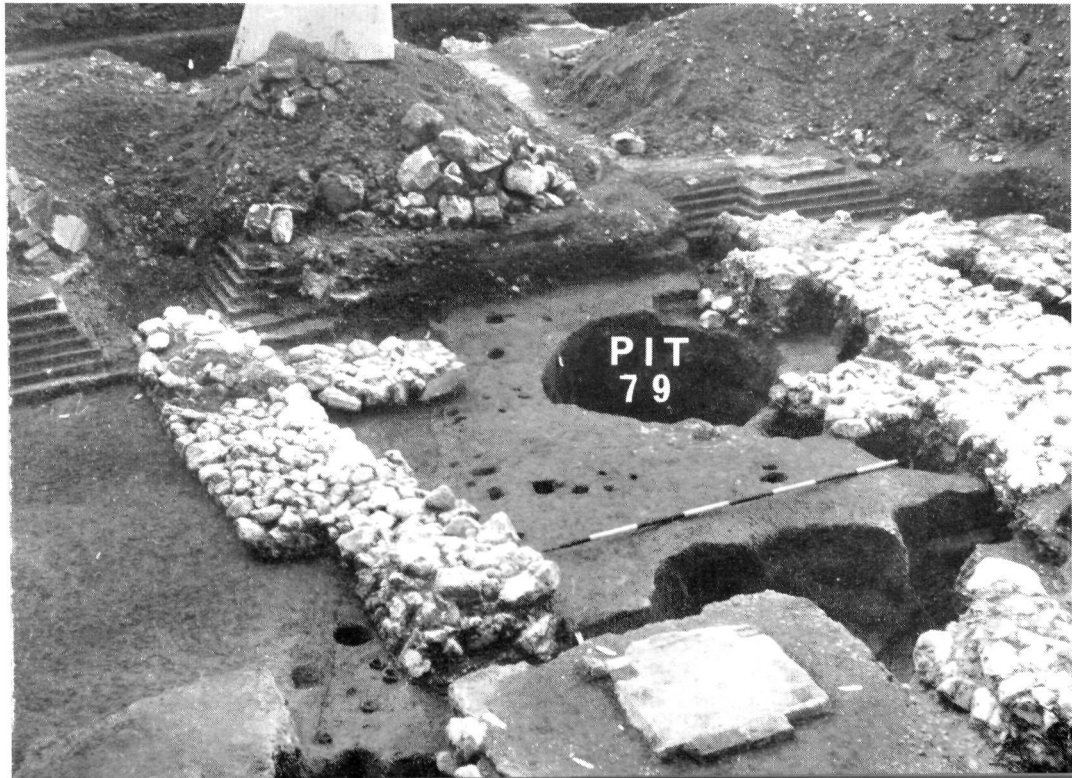




PLATE 5. St. Michael Bassishaw; foundations of the small twelfth century church; looking north.

PLATE 6. Foundations of chancel of the twelfth century church St. Michael Bassishaw. The pits and post-holes all pre-date the church; view looking north-west.



The form of the re-cut ditch (fig. 5) was V-shaped without the narrow gully at the bottom which was a feature of the original ditch. At the south end of the exposed length of fort ditch where the first ditch had terminated, the re-cut ditch continued only as a small U-shaped gully (fig. 3, plate 2) 2 ft. deep and 1 ft. 4 ins. wide, the bottom of which was about a foot higher in level than the bottom of the original ditch shown in section C-D. The bottom of the re-cut ditch also sloped down to the north, showing that there had been no change in the direction of flow. Set into the outside of the gully was a post hole about 3 ins. in diameter.

Filling the re-cut fort ditch were several layers of silt (fig. 5). The bottom layers B and C were the earliest deposits and tended to merge into one another. Level B was a gravel deposit which occurred along the east side of the ditch but not on the west side. Level C was a yellow silt deposit mostly at the bottom of the ditch and was probably natural brick-earth which had been eroded from the upper part of the east side of the ditch. Level B contained sherds of the period 120-130 A.D., and a coin of Hadrian minted in 118 A.D. (Roman Imperial Coinage, Hadrian 557) (E.R. 1071). Level C contained a few sherds dated to the same period as level B, and a brick fragment with the end of a stamp]N. (E.R. 1072). This was probably the end of the official brick stamp P.P.BR.LON. which is sometimes found in London. Level D was a deposit of fine grey silt with occasional sand deposits, in which were found broken bones and tiles, as well as a good quantity of pottery dated to the Antonine period (c. A.D. 140-180) (E.R. 1073, 1074). The bottom of this deposit contained a scatter of large animal bones, and a large portion of a broken human skull. Three smashed cooking pots were also found, and these, when restored, were found to be almost complete. All of this material seems to have been deliberately thrown into the ditch at about the same time.

Level E was clearly not a silt deposit but a layer of brick-earth mixed with much rubbish, which seemed to have been dumped, presumably to fill the marshy hollow which was all that remained of the fort ditch by that time. This deposit contained a considerable quantity of pottery (E.R. 1075) dateable to the end of the second or beginning of the third century. Among the latest sherds were a few fragments of white rouletted Castor Ware, which are at present difficult to date precisely. There were however, none of the pottery types typical of the third or fourth centuries. The dumping represented by level E continued along the whole length of the fort ditch on the site, except at the extreme south end where the ditch had become a gully.

The lower filling of the latter was a grey gravel and silt deposit in which were found several large animal bones. This must be contemporary with levels B and C in the more northerly part of the fort ditch, because it was overlaid by the same deposit of fine grey silt (level D).

At the south-west corner of area B the outer lip of the fort ditch was exposed, thereby giving the alignment of the defences on the east side of the Cripplegate fort.

Later Roman features in area A (fig. 4). A certain amount of made ground beyond the fort ditch survived at the south end of area A. In the surface of the natural brick-earth, which was not level here were found a few small post-holes. There was no means of proving whether these were earlier or later than the digging of the fort ditch (fig. 4, phase I). Immediately east of the south-east corner of the fort was found a thick deposit of gravel metalling (fig 4, phase III) in which was a scatter of lumps of Kentish ragstone. In two places in the gravel were found dumps of ragstone probably deposited with the gravel to help make up the ground level. In one or two places the gravel layer resolved itself into two distinct layers, each with a surface, but because of the loose unrammed nature of much of the deposit this could not be proved over the whole area.

At the south end of area A the gravel was overlaid by a series of clay and earth deposits, most of which appeared to have been dumped. These deposits at the extreme south end of trench A were overlaid by another layer of hard gravel metalling (phase IV). Beneath this was a small gully filled with black earth in which were found two iron collars of a wooden water-pipe, inside one of which could be seen the impression of the wood. It seems likely, however, that the pipe had been laid after the upper gravel layer had been deposited, and that gravel had afterwards been re-laid above the pipe. This would explain a band of dirty gravel which overlay the line of the pipe.

Site 6. 1-4, Threadneedle St. (1965-6). (Fig. 7).

During builders' excavations, fragments of a Roman building were exposed at the south-east corner of the site. A portion of the foundation of a wall (a), 2 ft. thick and aligned

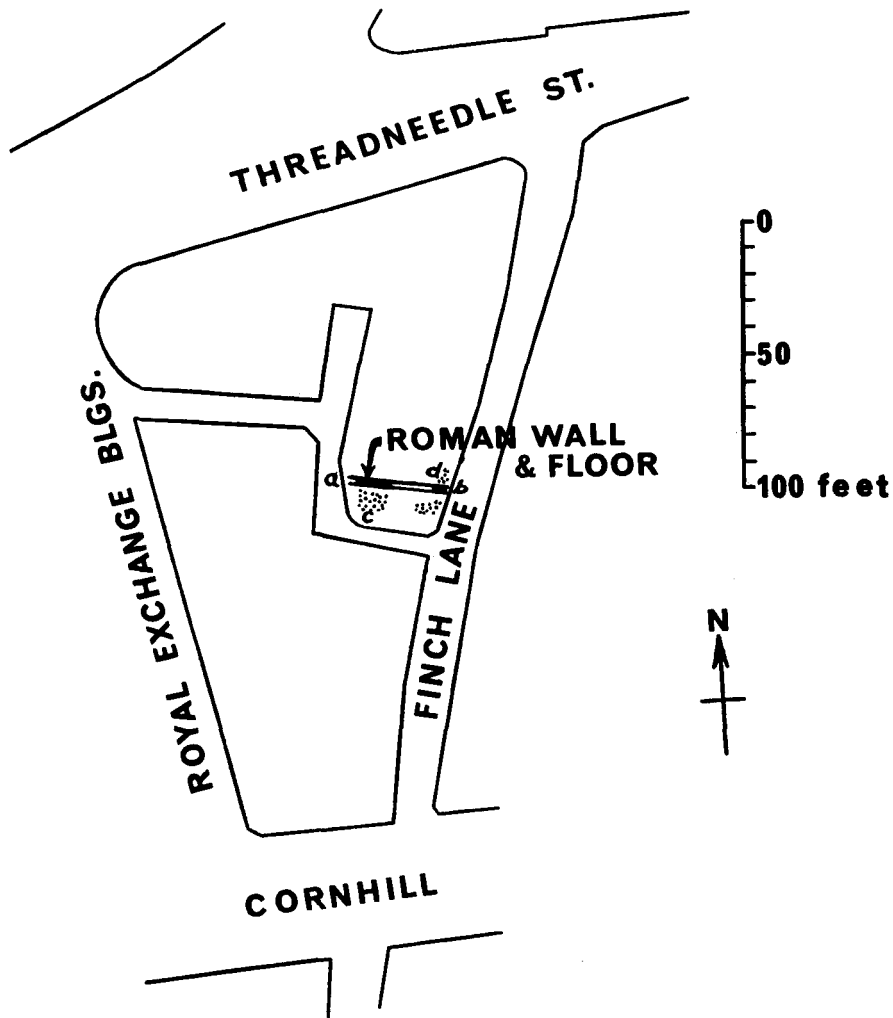


Fig. 7
Roman building, 1-4 Threadneedle Street.

approximately east-west was constructed of flints and buff mortar, with three courses of tiles at the top. Between the middle and upper courses on the south side there was an off-set, overlying which was a floor (*c*) 4 ins. thick, of white mortar with small fragments of brick. This extended more than 8 ft. south of the wall, immediately overlying the natural brick-earth. Another fragment of Roman wall (*b*) was later exposed in a section further east. This was also aligned approximately east-west, and was presumably a continuation of the wall (*a*). In both cases the foundation trench had been dug to a depth of 2 ft. 8 ins. in the natural brick-earth. On the south side of wall (*b*) was a continuation of the floor (*c*), and on its north side was a hypocaust, the upper floor of which was on the same level. The lower floor was 2 ft. 7 ins. below the upper. Between the two floor levels the wall was 2 ft. 2 ins. thick, and was faced on its north side with horizontal bricks. Above the upper floor it was only 1 ft. 6 ins. thick, and there was a quarter-round moulding border at the edge of the floor. The wall was still standing to a height of 2 ft. above this.

The top of the natural brick-earth in the middle of the site was at a level of 38 ft. above O.D.

MEDIEVAL

Site 4. *St. Paul's Choir School, New Change (1965)*

At the north end of the site (fig. 2) the contractors trenches exposed several fragments of chalk and grey mortar foundations, presumably of medieval date. The floors and walls of this building had been destroyed when the pre-war buildings with deep cellars had been constructed. The medieval foundations composed an L-shaped structure, possibly two sides of a room; and an apparently isolated pier.

At the south end of the site was situated the church of St. Augustine, and the removal of burials in 1965 exposed some of the medieval structure of the church beneath Wren's foundations. This church is first mentioned in 1148, and in 1252-3 Alexander le Cordwaner made a grant of land on the north side for its enlargement. It was destroyed in the Great Fire of 1666, rebuilt by Wren in 1682-95, and finally destroyed by bombing during the Second World War.³

The removal of burials in 1965 exposed only the northern half of the structure of the medieval church, and at some future date it would be desirable that the remainder should be archaeologically excavated.

The church mentioned in 1148 seems to have occupied the southern two-thirds of the site of Wren's church, and to have been about 61 ft. long. During the exhumation of the burials there was clear evidence that the church had been enlarged on the north side, presumably about 1252-3. The northern part of the building was bounded by other foundations which butted against the earlier church foundations. The area over which the church was extended measured 16ft. wide and 59ft. long.

The foundations of the twelfth century church were built of chalk and yellow mortar, while those of the extension of 1252-3 were of chalk and white mortar.

Wren's foundations were unmistakable because they were built mostly of re-used stones set in hard grey mortar. A series of pier foundations in Wren's church evidently supported columns.

Site 6. Guildhall Extension site (1965-6)

The modern cellar floors were unfortunately too deep for any of the medieval made ground to have survived, but the foundations of several buildings, and the lower parts of a number of rubbish pits were found dug into the Roman levels. (fig. 8)

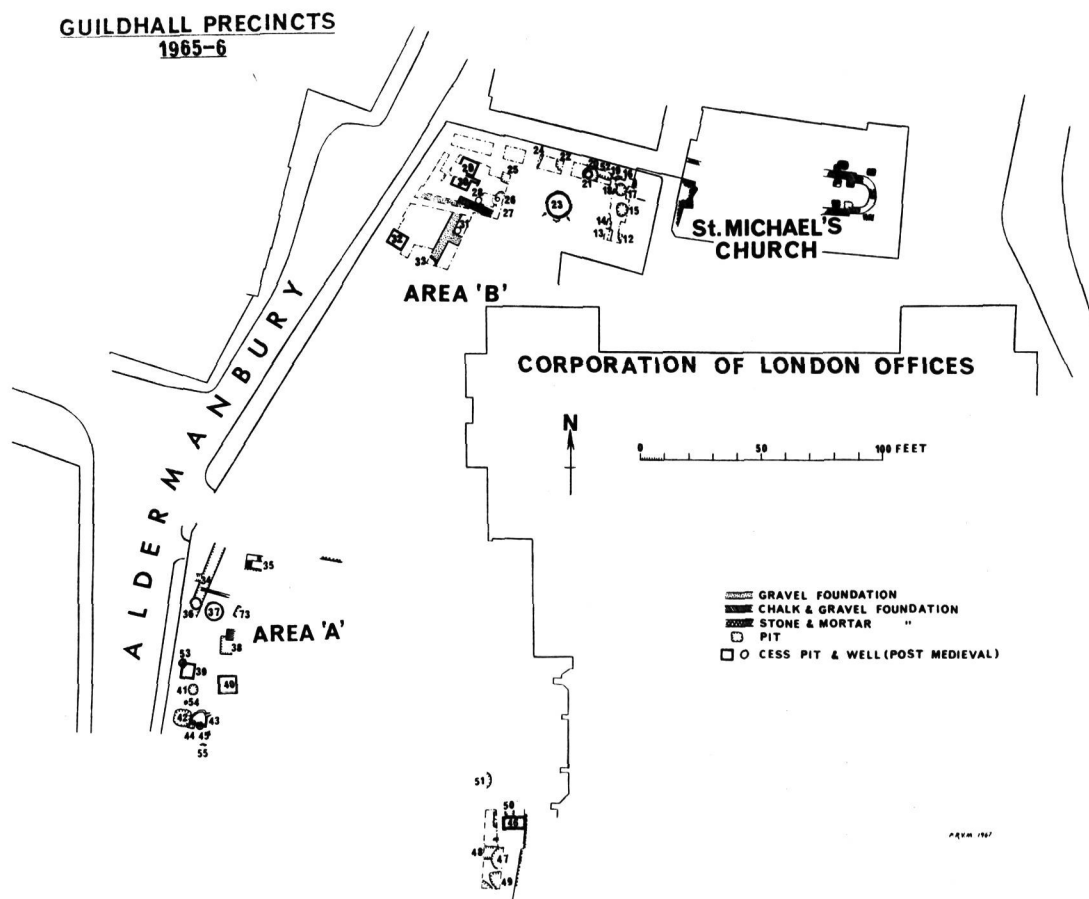


Fig. 8
Post-Roman features on Guildhall Extension Site.

Foundations and pits in area A. One of the earliest medieval activities was the robbing of the fort wall (fig. 4, phase V). The robbers' trench (34) was dug down to the bottom of the Roman foundation, and it was filled with rubbish, which included many bones and sherds of pottery dateable to the late twelfth or early thirteenth century (E.R. 1069). Three distinct deposits were observed filling the trench, and the finds from each have been kept separate. The tip lines showed that the main robbers' trench on the fort wall had been filled from south to north, and the minor one branching to the west from the fort wall trench had been filled from west to east.

- Pit 55, (E.R. 1086). Small group, dated twelfth century.
- Pit 53, (E.R. 1091). Small group, dated twelfth century.
- Pit 54, (E.R. 1092). Small pit, dated twelfth-thirteenth century.
- Pit 73, (E.R. 1088). Large square pit containing pottery of the thirteenth century.
- Pit 44, (E.R. 1093). Small circular medieval pit.
- Pit 45, (E.R. 1094). Deep circular pit, containing pottery of late twelfth or thirteenth century.
- Pit 41, (E.R. 1095). Circular rubbish pit, containing a few sherds dateable to the late thirteenth century. The excavation of this pit was abandoned when a depth of 9 ft. 6 ins. beneath the modern cellar floor was reached (*i.e.* at 30 ft. 2 ins. above O.D.).
- Pit 42, (E.R. 1076). This was a large pit dateable by the large number of sherds within it to the first half of the thirteenth century. Its filling was removed in three parts. The upper half of the pit filling which contained many fragments of glazed and unglazed pottery lying in dark grey earth (E.R. 1076a). The lower half of the pit which also contained many sherds (E.R. 1076b). Lying on the bottom of the pit at 8 ft. 9 ins. below the modern cellar floor was a square timber-lined structure or box (plate 3) which was full of hundreds of sherds of pottery (E.R. 1076c). Almost all were fragments of glazed jugs, and many of these have been joined to make complete vessels. In addition, two jugs were found in the box almost undamaged.

The jugs are all of a similar type, and their bases show no signs of wear. This suggests that they were perhaps part of a consignment of jugs sent for sale but that they had been broken in transit, and that the broken pieces were placed in a box, which measured 3 ft. x 3 ft. 5 ins. x 3 ft. 5 ins., and dumped into the pit. No trace of bottom boards of the box could be found, however. In this connection it is perhaps worth noting that two fragments of waster material were included amongst the debris. This would not explain, however, why the two complete jugs were also thrown away.

Foundations and pits in area B. The foundations of part of a medieval building, presumably a house, roughly aligned on Aldermanbury, were uncovered in the southern part of area B (fig. 8). These were mostly of compacted gravel lying in foundation trenches. One foundation, at the north end of the building, was constructed of alternate layers of chalk and gravel, and may have been later than the purely gravel foundations. Dating this building was impossible, in the absence of any pits or other deposits which could be stratigraphically related to the foundations.

North of the building was a large pit or well (plate 4), lined with chalk and ragstone (23 on fig. 8). There were two stone-lined channels sloping down into the structure, the positions of which are indicated by arrow-signs on the plan (fig. 8). Between them was an arched opening at the bottom of the pit lining, and its position is marked by a bracket. The arch appeared to lead nowhere, since immediately behind it was undisturbed brick-earth, and its purpose remains unknown. The direction of the channels showed that liquids flowed *into* the pit, and it seems most likely that it was a cess-pit.

At the bottom was a deposit of gravelly silt containing many decorated and undecorated floor tiles and pottery sherds, all evidently dumped, and these were dateable to the fifteenth century (E.R. 1220a). Above were fine silt deposits, several feet thick, containing considerable quantities of pottery and other objects dateable up to *c.* 1500 (E.R. 1220b). Above this the pit was filled with brick rubble, from the lower part of which was recovered pottery of the early seventeenth century.

A number of rubbish pits were found, and there was an interesting concentration of them at the east end of the area between the medieval house and St. Michael's church. It would appear that they were dug in a garden or yard which presumably belonged to the house. Some pits contained considerable quantities of durable rubbish, such as animal bones and broken pottery, while others contained very little and were probably cess-pits.

Pit 13 (E.R. 1000) was a timber-lined pit containing many decayed pieces of wood scattered in its earth filling, and sherds which have been dated to the late thirteenth century. Pit 13 had been cut into pit 14, which was left unexcavated. Pit 15 (E.R. 1001) contained pottery of the thirteenth century, with a few sherds of yellow-glazed Andenne Ware. Pits 17 (E.R. 1002), 18 (E.R. 1003), 16 (E.R. 1004), 20 (E.R. 1005), 52 (E.R. 1006) and 22 (E.R. 1009) also contained pottery of the thirteenth century.

The middle part of pit 24 was wood-lined and contained a few early medieval sherds and a decayed shoe sole (E.R. 1011). The lower part, which was not wood-lined, contained a few sherds of the thirteenth century (E.R. 1010). It is possible that pit 24 really consisted of two pits, one dug into the other. The upper part of its filling contained a considerable quantity of sherds of the late thirteenth century.

In the middle of the northern part of the site was a well, the bottom of which was lined with chalk blocks. The filling was mostly post-medieval, but one medieval sherd lay at its base. It seems to have been dug through the gravel filling of Pit 21, which contained three medieval sherds (E.R. 1007). It is therefore impossible to date the construction of the well, but the very slight evidence perhaps suggests a medieval rather than a post-medieval date for its original construction, although it seems to have been rebuilt.

All of these pits were situated in the eastern half of the area, beside the site of the church of St. Michael Bassishaw, first mentioned in the late twelfth century. At the north-east corner of the site was a foundation of chalk and brown mortar, probably of the medieval church itself.

Area C. The church of St. Michael Bassishaw (fig. 6)

The earliest mention of the church of St. Michael Bassishaw, which was situated on this site, is in 1196. The church was subsequently rebuilt during the fifteenth century, and destroyed in the Great Fire of 1666. It was rebuilt by Wren in 1676-9, and it is recorded that the medieval church was longer than Wren's building. The church was finally demolished in 1897, when all the burials were removed.⁴ An account of discoveries made at this time is

published in the *Transactions of the London and Middlesex Archaeological Society* (New Series II, vol. 2, p. 149).

On its site was constructed Bassishaw House, an office building which was demolished in 1965 to make way for the Guildhall redevelopment. As a result of the Government ban on office development in the London area, there was time for the City of London Excavation Group to carry out an investigation of the site.

The excavation exposed the bottoms of a series of medieval foundations built in two different ways. The earlier group were built of layers of chalk and gravel and evidently formed part of the twelfth century church. The deep modern foundations and post-medieval burial pits had caused a very considerable part of the structure of the medieval church to be destroyed. The earliest foundations were uncovered at the east end of the site, and comprised an apsidal chancel 9 ft. 9 ins. wide, with the east end of the nave, which was 13 ft. 6 ins. wide (plate 5). Buttress-like foundations, presumably the base of the chancel arch, were found just in front of the chancel. These were bonded into the north and south sides of the church. Only slight traces of the one on the south side remained, but the shape of that on the north side was complete. To the west of the chancel arch were two pier foundations, also of layers of chalk and gravel, one on each side of the nave. These were not bonded into the side walls of the nave, and their exact purpose is uncertain. It is clear from the excavations that the twelfth century church was small, and probably did not have any side aisles. The trenches dug at the west end of the site showed no trace of the early church, indicating that it probably did not extend so far, and was therefore less than 63 ft. long.

In the nave and chancel area were discovered a series of post-holes filled with black earth, and these seem to have been part of a structure pre-dating the church. In one post-hole was discovered a small sherd of early medieval coarse pottery (E.R. 1062). Also earlier than the church was a large rubbish pit (71) which contained sherds of the twelfth century (E.R. 1061) (plate 6). Another earlier pit (16), which was only partly excavated, also contained some sherds of the twelfth century (E.R. 1066); and another pit (70) of similar date was found under the chancel (E.R. 1067). These pits are archaeologically important because they contain material which must have been deposited before 1196 A.D. when the church is known to have occupied the site. They are also important because they prove that the church was not built before the twelfth century. It may be noted here that among the unstratified finds from the site were several sherds of Pingsdorf ware.

The north wall of the twelfth century church had been partly built over earlier Roman and medieval rubbish pits, and the presence of two piers immediately adjacent to the north side of its north wall suggests that some subsidence had taken place as a result of this, and the church wall had to be strengthened with buttresses. The buttress foundations were built of chalk and yellow mortar, and one of them had cut through part of an earlier stone-lined grave.

Very few foundations were discovered of the fifteenth century rebuilding of the church. At the extreme south-west end of the Bassishaw House site was a massive foundation of ragstone and yellow cement, and its strength suggests that it was part of the foundation of a tower. This conclusion is supported by the account of discoveries made in 1897, where it is stated that Wren had built his tower, which lay at the west end of the site, on the site of the medieval tower. Evidence was found in 1965 to suggest that the later medieval church probably extended further west than Wren's church. In the cellar on the west side of Church Alley was found a small portion of a medieval foundation of chalk and yellow mortar.

This fragment is similar to some of the medieval church foundations, and is likely to be part of the church. As no other medieval foundations were discovered west of this point it probably indicates the western limit of the late medieval church, which was about 17 ft. west of Wren's church. No foundations of the latter were discovered, probably because Wren mostly built on top of the medieval foundations.

In the centre of the site was discovered a deep trench with vertical sides and right-angled corners. This was filled with earth and loose lumps of stone. Around its sides was a small ledge or offset in the brick-earth, and the regular character of the trench indicates that it contained a structure of some kind, but its position is related to nothing in the plan of Wren's church. In view of its great size it is most likely to have contained a deeply buried vault, the date of which was impossible to determine.

At the east end of the site were discovered two piers of chalk, ragstone and yellow mortar. These were situated on either side of the chancel of the twelfth century church, and it is possible that they supported pillars in the fifteenth century building. Immediately east of the twelfth century chancel was found the bottom of a vault lined with squared chalk blocks set in chalk rubble and yellow mortar.

POST-MEDIEVAL

Site 5. *Guildhall Extension site (1965-6)*

Features in area A (fig. 8). Several post-medieval features were discovered in area A, but only one of these was part of a building. It comprised the north wall of a cellar, and was preserved immediately beneath the modern cellar floor a few feet north of cess-pits 36 and 37. Only the lowest course of chalk blocks of the north wall survived. The faces of these blocks on the south side of the wall were smooth and vertical, and level with the bottom of the south side of the wall was a hard earth surface, evidently a sunken floor on which lay small fragments of chalk. The north side was rough and there was no comparable floor surface. The wall was constructed of mortar and chalk with occasional red brick fragments, which suggest that it was probably of post-medieval date.

Six post-medieval cess-pits were discovered. The most northerly of these (35) was surrounded by walls of ragstone and mortar which may have been of medieval date. If so then they had been discovered in the seventeenth century and used as a lining for a pit. The rubbish filling yielded fragments of pottery and clay pipes dateable to about the middle of the seventeenth century (E.R. 1078). The rest were all brick-lined. Cess-pit 36 was circular and its bottom was level with the bottom of the robbers' trench of the fort wall. Pottery sherds from its filling are dateable to the eighteenth century (E.R. 1097). Cess-pit 37 was a large circular pit, and pottery sherds and clay pipes from its filling date it to the early eighteenth century (E.R. 1084). Cess-pit 39 was square, and pottery and clay pipes from its filling indicate that it was in use up to the middle of the seventeenth century (E.R. 1096). Cess-pit 40 was probably square, but its filling was not excavated and the exact shape was not defined. Cess-pit 43 was D-shaped, and had a brick-lined channel sloping down to its east side. Pottery sherds and clay pipes from the sludge filling at its bottom and from the dumped rubble filling in the upper half of the pit were all of the nineteenth century (E.R. 1090).

Cess-pit 35 and 39 were probably contemporary, as were 36 and 37. The filling of cess-pit 43 may have resulted from the construction of the system of sewers beneath the streets of the

City about the middle of the nineteenth century, after which cess-pits were no longer required.

Features in area B. The earliest post-medieval feature exposed during the excavation was a brick-lined cess-pit (32) measuring 5ft. 2ins. by 5 ft. 11 ins., and originally more than 4 ft. 4 ins. deep. A very fine group of pottery and glass ware (E.R. 1016) was recovered from its filling and this can be dated to the second quarter of the seventeenth century. Of special interest from this group are two almost identical plates of Southwark delftware, with a blue decoration. These were made by the Dutch potter Christian Wilhelm who worked in Southwark from 1628 to about 1645. The most prominent decorative feature on these plates is a bird standing upon a rock.⁵

The well at the north end of the site (21) may originally have been built during the medieval period, but two kinds of brickwork above the original lining of chalk blocks showed that it had been reconstructed twice during the post-medieval period. It was 3 ft. in diameter, and its bottom lay 8 ft. 6 ins. below the modern cellar floor (i.e. at 28 ft. 11 ins. above O.D.). This level must have been below the water-table before it was artificially lowered by the construction of sewers in the area. Pottery and clay pipes from the filling of the well (E.R. 1014) have been dated to the period 1660-80, and represent the period at which the well passed out of use. It is of interest to note that this was the site of the house of Lord George Jeffreys (popularly known as 'Judge' Jeffreys).⁶

A small pit on the west side of the well (not shown on the plan) contained pottery of the mid-eighteenth century (E.R. 1015), and associated with this was part of a brick structure, possibly a floor, set in earth.

In the north-west corner of area B were found two adjacent brick-lined cess-pits (29, 30). Pit 29 contained pottery of the mid-seventeenth century in its lower fill (E.R. 1221b), and pottery dating to the mid-eighteenth century in its upper fill (E.R. 1221a). Cess-pit 30 contained pottery ranging in date from the early seventeenth century to the mid-eighteenth century (E.R. 1222). At the south end of the area was found the bottom of the roughly stone-lined cess-pit 33 containing a group of pottery of the mid-eighteenth century.

NOTES

- 1 See plan of site Lond. & Mdsx. Arch. Soc. T. Vol. 21, pt. 2, p. 137.
- 2 Lond. & Mdsx. Arch. Soc. T. Vol. 21, pt. 3, pp. 194-202.
- 3 H. A. Harben, *Dictionary of London*, 1918, pp. 36-7.
- 4 *Ibid.* p. 408.
- 5 See Hugh Tait: 'Southwark Delftware and the potter, Christian Wilhelm', *The Connoisseur*, August, 1960, pp. 36-42.
- 6 Lond. & Mdsx. Arch. Soc. T. New series, Vol. 6, 1927-31, pp. 177-198.

EDITOR'S NOTE

A generous contribution towards the cost of printing this paper has been made by the Corporation of the City of London, to whose members the Society takes this opportunity of making grateful acknowledgement.