CROSSED WIRES: THE RE-DATING OF A GROUP OF FUNERARY LEAD CROSSES FROM NEWGATE, LONDON

B Sloane and B Watson

SUMMARY

The date and provenance of a group of at least 89 lead funerary or mortuary crosses found with skeletons near Newgate Street, City of London, in 1905, and now held by the British Museum, the Science Museum, and the Museum of London, are radically reappraised. The published interpretations that they were crosses accompanying victims of the Black Death outbreak of 1348–50 and that these victims were probably Franciscans buried in the friary cemetery, are refuted. Instead, the argument is made that the crosses certainly date to after 1553, and were most probably buried with victims of 'gaol distemper' who died in nearby Newgate Gaol in the 18th century. The nature and ownership of the cemetery is explored, and the crosses re-evaluated in terms of post-medieval burial practice. The intriguing story of where the crosses ended up is recounted.

INTRODUCTION

On 7 December 1905, F G Hilton Price, FSA, read to the Society of Antiquaries of London a communication concerning the discovery of 'a number of leaden grave crosses near the Grey Friars Monastery, Newgate Street, London' and concluded that the crosses had been placed with Franciscan friars who had succumbed to the Black Death in the mid-14th century (*Athenaeum* 1905; Hilton Price 1907) (Fig 1). The area to the south of this discovery was investigated during 1907–09 (Norman & Reader 1912). The area where the crosses were found was to remain untouched by further development until 1998, when the Museum of London Archaeology Service (MoLAS) began extensive excavations on the site of the new Merrill Lynch European Headquarters (Lyon in prep). These excavations lay adjacent to the site of London's medieval Franciscan friary, and were directed in part by one of the present authors (BW). One year later, and synchronous with the excavations, the second author (BS) was appointed to a Research Fellowship at the University of Reading, funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Board (AHRB), to examine the archaeological evidence for medieval burial practice in Britain. These two separate strands of research converged on a report written exactly a century ago, concerning the identity of a cemetery near Newgate, and the lead crosses interred with its occupants. Re-examination of the report by the authors revealed that there were problems with the logic used to date the lead crosses, and over the association of the site with the medieval Franciscan friary (1225–1538). The case for re-examining the data was clear.

THE ORIGINAL EXCAVATION: CIRCUMSTANCES AND SUMMARY OF DISCOVERIES

The excavations that produced the crosses occurred as part of a major southward extension to St Bartholomew's Hospital during the period 1903–09, and the specific groundworks which revealed the archaeological discovery took place in July and August of 1905 (Fig 2). Hilton Price was not able personally to visit the site, but relied on two eye witnesses for his information (Hilton Price 1907, 14). The excavation area was described as being an oblong measuring 'about 50 feet by 20 feet [15m by 6m], situated

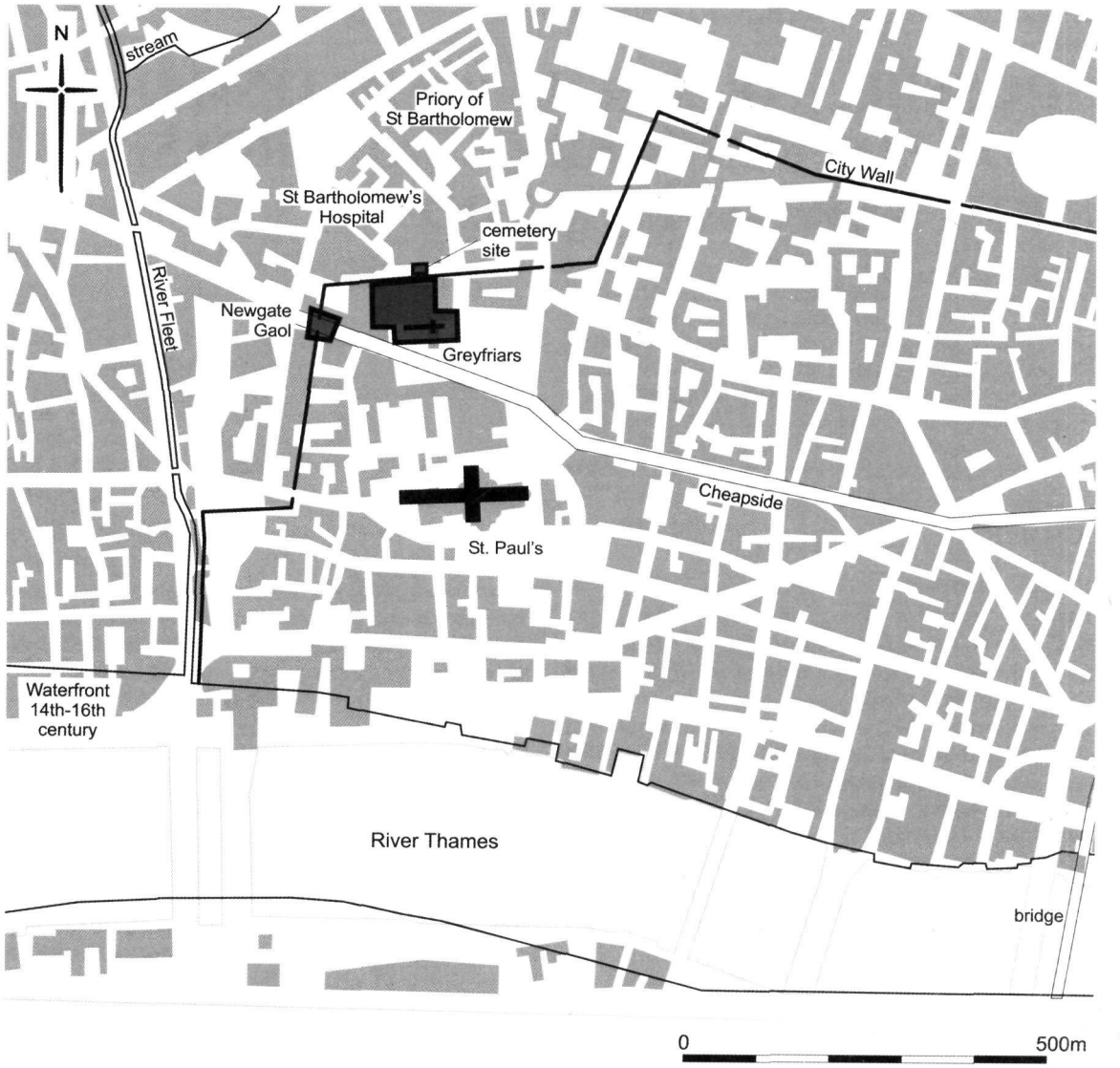
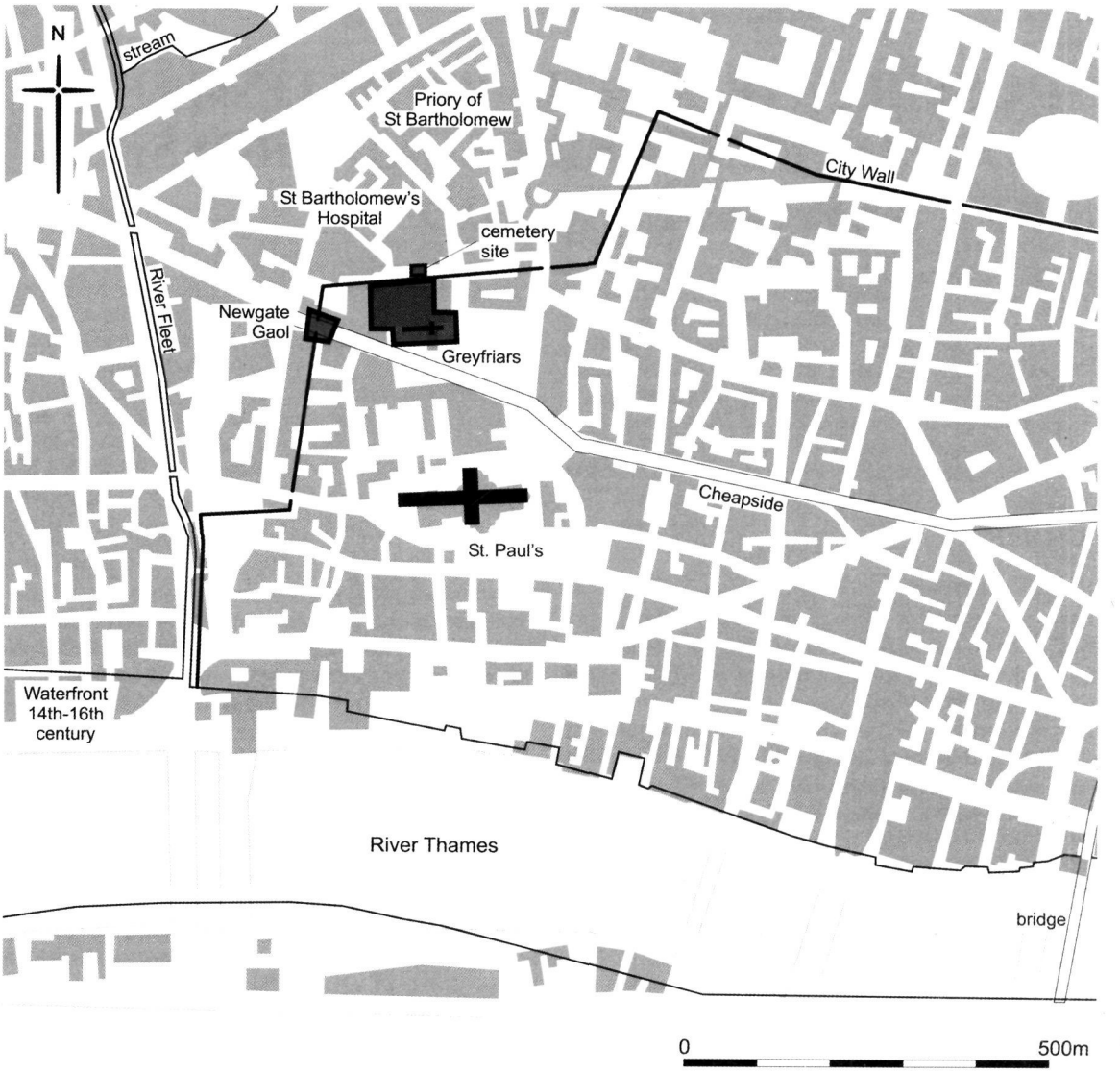


Fig 1. Detail of the walled City of London in c.1520, showing the Franciscan friary; the approximate findspot of the crosses is marked (see Fig 2 for more detail)

close to the wall near the southern extremity of the St Bartholomew's Hospital property, and extending partly beneath the old swimming bath of the Bluecoat School'. The excavation was about 20ft (6m) deep, and was 'upon the site of the playground and bath of Christ's Hospital School' (*ibid*, 15). There also appears to have been a second area nearby subjected to some form of watching brief, as Hilton Price (*ibid*, 18) describes an area 'just outside the city wall, in the south east corner of the site' where a brick structure and further burials were encountered.

Reconstructing the sequence of archaeological features from Hilton Price's report is difficult, as no plans or sections were published. The natural geology at the base of the trench was London Clay. Above this there was some form of large pit, whose base was upwards of 20ft (6m) below the contemporaneous ground level. The width of the pit is not given, but must have been very considerable since all the later graves were described as cut into it. The basal fill of the pit



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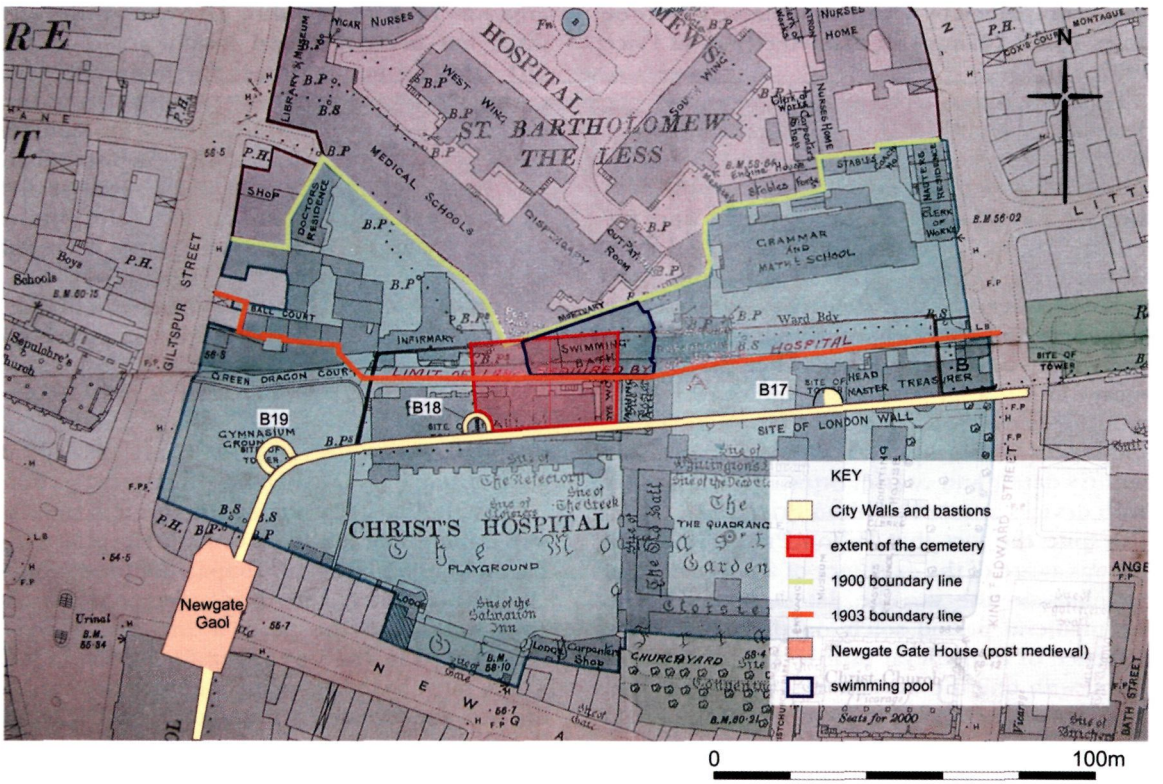

Fig 2. The area of the site in 1903, showing the principal buildings of Christ's Hospital and the extent of the cemetery as determined by map regression and the approximate location of the 1905 excavation described by Hilton Price (Christ's Hospital archive)

was described as dirty grey gravel. The upper fills were not described.

Numerous graves were cut into the upper levels of the pit. Here, the report becomes confusing. It would appear that two areas of burial were encountered, totalling some 400 skeletons. In one area, many of these were found 'in boxes, about 14 feet (4.3m) in length, which had entirely rotted away' (Hilton Price 1907, 15). These appear to be distinct from those graves cut into the upper levels of the large pit, and may have lain in a separate part of the excavation. The burials cut into the pit were placed in separate graves, the bodies laid one above the other with over 1ft (0.3m) of earth between each, and arranged 'about eight deep'. The highest grave was about 8ft (2.4m) from the surface. This would suggest that the lowest levels were some 16ft (5.5m) below ground level and perhaps 4ft (1.2m) above the base of the large pit. This detail is contradicted by Hilton Price's first account of the site, in which the excavation area was described as a single mass burial pit (*Athenaeum* 1905).

Many of the skeletons were well preserved, with hair surviving in a number of cases. The individual (rather than boxed) inhumations were found without any trace of coffins, but were clothed in 'coarse frocks', and about 100 lead crosses were found with them. The crosses were plain 'that is to say they are uninscribed', and had been found 'possibly laid upon their [the skeletons'] breasts' (Hilton Price 1907, 15–16), although the exact positions were uncertain. Of these, Hilton Price managed to retain 89 which he displayed before the Society of Antiquaries. One of the interments was found accompanied by a bronze figure of Christ, 2¾in (70mm) high, from a crucifix. Hilton Price identified it as very good 14th-century work. Two graves were apparently accompanied by letters fashioned from lead; a 'B' and a 'C', while another grave

was accompanied by a lead disk, pierced by three holes 1⅝ in (42mm) in diameter (Hilton Price 1907, 18).

The only other archaeological feature to be described (situated in the south-eastern corner of the site) was a brick structure containing an inhumation in a wooden coffin. The skeleton was accompanied by a silver crucifix, and the letters 'P' and 'S' and the number '6' in lead. Hilton Price estimated the date of these items to be 16th-century. The brick structure was, he suggested, the friary charnel house. Finally, he listed some other finds from 'other parts of the excavations': a green-glazed earthenware jug with the arms of Henry VIII on it; a candlestick and sherds of Metropolitan slipware (so of 17th-century date); and coarse, brown glazed pottery 'with devices in relief' (Hilton Price 1907, 19).

Despite the fact that Hilton Price (1907, 15; 18) was aware of the existence of a post-medieval cemetery on the site, he dated the burials to the medieval period solely on the basis of the presence of a medieval bronze figure of Christ found with one the burials. He concluded 'that these crosses belonged to members of the Friars Minors in London who had died of the Black Death in the great visitation of 1348–1349' (1907, 17). It is certain that Hilton Price was mistaken about the context of the site, and therefore assigned an incorrect date to both the graves and crosses.

LOCATION AND HISTORY OF THE SITE

The site has been redeveloped a number of times since the early 19th century, and now lies partially under the new Merrill Lynch buildings, and partly under the Horder Wing of St Bartholomew's Hospital. As the confusion over whether the site was intra- or extramural is central to Hilton Price's dating, a map regression exercise was undertaken to relate the location of the 1905 excavation to the line of the city wall and the post-medieval cemetery. This exercise shows that the site described by Hilton Price lay beyond the city wall and directly above the city ditch. The centre of the 1905 site was situated approximately at NGR 531,910/181,463. Fig 3 shows a schematic cross section of the site, showing the 13th-century city ditch as revealed by archaeological investigations in the locality, with an approximation of how the burials described by Hilton Price could have been situated within the infill of the city ditch.[1]

The medieval city ditch within the Newgate area was 18–23m in width. The base of the city ditch has been recorded locally at 9.1–10.3m OD (the former is some 8m below modern ground level). The sequence of deposits within the ditch was: primary fills (wet, silt stained, sandy gravel) top 9.6–11.6m OD, then waterlain silts (top 11.9–13.1m OD), which were sealed by systematic infilling during the 16th century. Excellent organic preservation of finds occurred within the lower ditch fills (Lyon in prep).

It is documented that in 1553 the 'town ditch' from Newgate to Aldersgate was 'stoppyed up with brycke and made playne [with the] erthe' (Nichols 1852, 77). Evidence of a 16th-century brick culvert constructed within the infilled ditch was discovered during 1999 archaeological work at the Merrill Lynch headquarters (Watson 2000, 10). A postern gate was let through the city wall to permit access from Christ's Hospital to St Bartholomew's Hospital. To span the (now mostly choked) city ditch, a footbridge was constructed. Stow states that the postern and bridge were constructed in 1547–48 (Kingsford 1908, I, 34). These must have lain immediately to the east of the site, and a masonry foundation encountered during an archaeological evaluation of the Horder Wing of St Bartholomew's Hospital may have been a remnant of the footbridge (Tyler 1999, 23).

In 1552 the former premises of Greyfriars, apart from the monastic church, was established as a new Royal Hospital, known as Christ's Hospital, which functioned as an orphanage and school (Allan 1984, 11). In 1538 the choir of the former friary church was taken over by the new parish of Christ Church. This new parish, according to Stow, took in the former precinct of Greyfriars, that of St Bartholomew's Hospital, and the parishes of St Nicholas Shambles and St Audoen Newgate, as well as part of the parish of St Sepulchre (Dyson 1997, 78; Kingsford 1908, I, 318). The 1905 site thus fell within the new parish. The registers show that by February 1539 baptisms were being undertaken (Littledale 1895). The first burial apparently took place in 1541 (although these dates were altered from 1538 in the register: *ibid*, 257). The site of the parochial cemetery of Christ Church during the mid-16th century is uncertain.

The earliest map of the site is the recently discovered section of the so-called 'Copperplate map' of 1559 (Schofield 2001). This shows, in elevational format, Christ's Hospital within the city wall, the wall's bastions, and, beyond, the

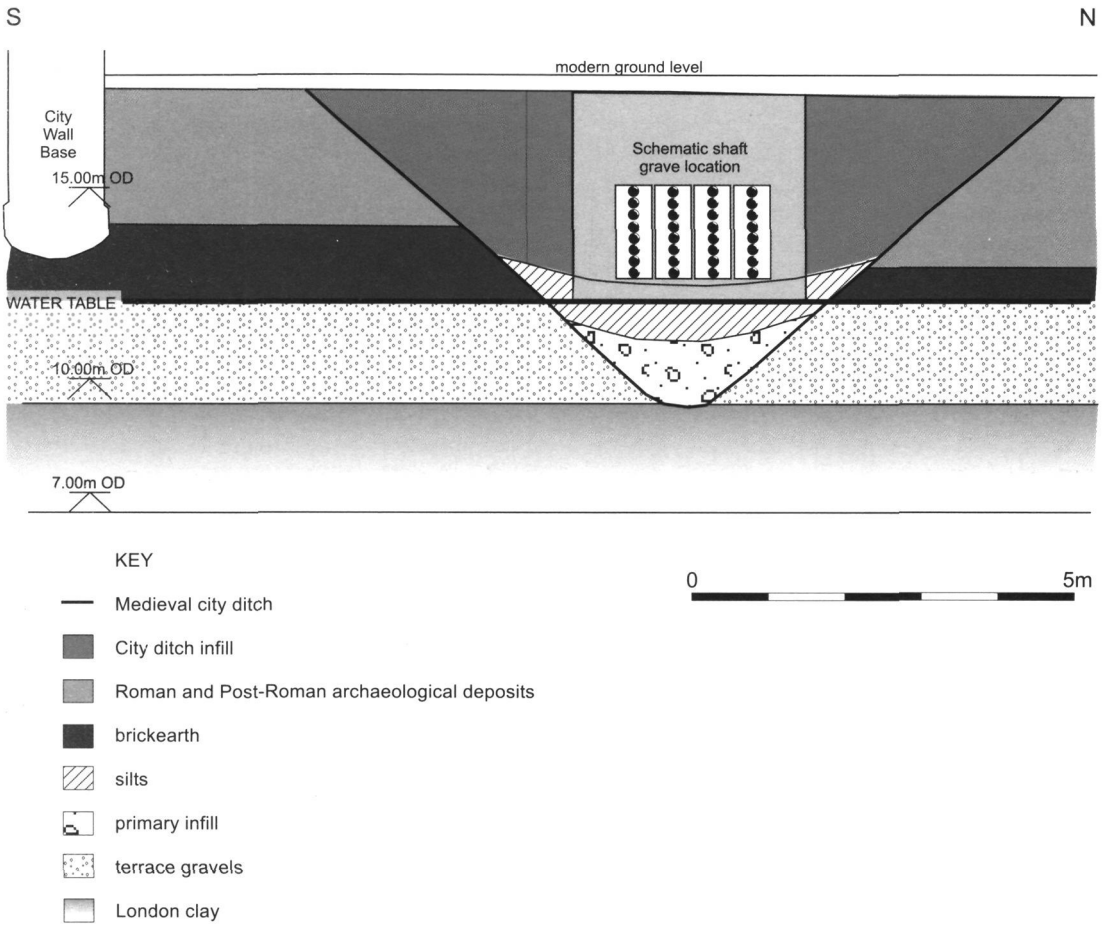

Fig 3. Schematic cross-section of the medieval city wall and ditch showing geology and depths of various archaeological deposits and an approximation of how the burials from the cemetery could have been situated within the infilled city ditch

postern and bridge. The city ditch is shown as infilled by this period, and the space is shown as open between the city wall and that of St Bartholomew's Hospital precinct to the north. There is no evidence of a cemetery at this date. The London woodcut map of *c.*1562–3 shows houses built over the Giltspur Street stretch of the city ditch, while the area of the ditch that was to become the burial ground is still shown as open space (Procket & Taylor 1979).

For the 17th century there are a number of detailed maps relating to Christ's and St Bartholomew's Hospitals, and it is clear that, by the early 17th century, the land west of the postern bridge had become a cemetery. The earliest map is the 1617 Treswell map of St Bartholomew's Hospital (Fig 4). It clearly shows the city wall, with the postern and the footbridge. West of the footbridge, a rectangular plot of land is labelled as 'Church yard belonging to Christchurch'. East of the footbridge adjoining Bastion 18 (RCHM(E) 1928, 104), was a space called 'Ye Car yard to Christ Hospitall'.[2]

While the cartographic evidence for this new cemetery is clear, there is very little in the way of published documentation concerning its foundation. The parish registers for Christchurch, Newgate Street, covering the years 1541–1754 are incomplete, and there are no entries for the period between August 1588 and November 1666 (Littledale 1895). Also the surviving entries do not distinguish between burials in the cemeteries and those in the church.

A plan of *c.*1650 (Fig 5) shows the layout of Christ's Hospital in detail. To the north of the city wall the cemetery is simply called 'Church

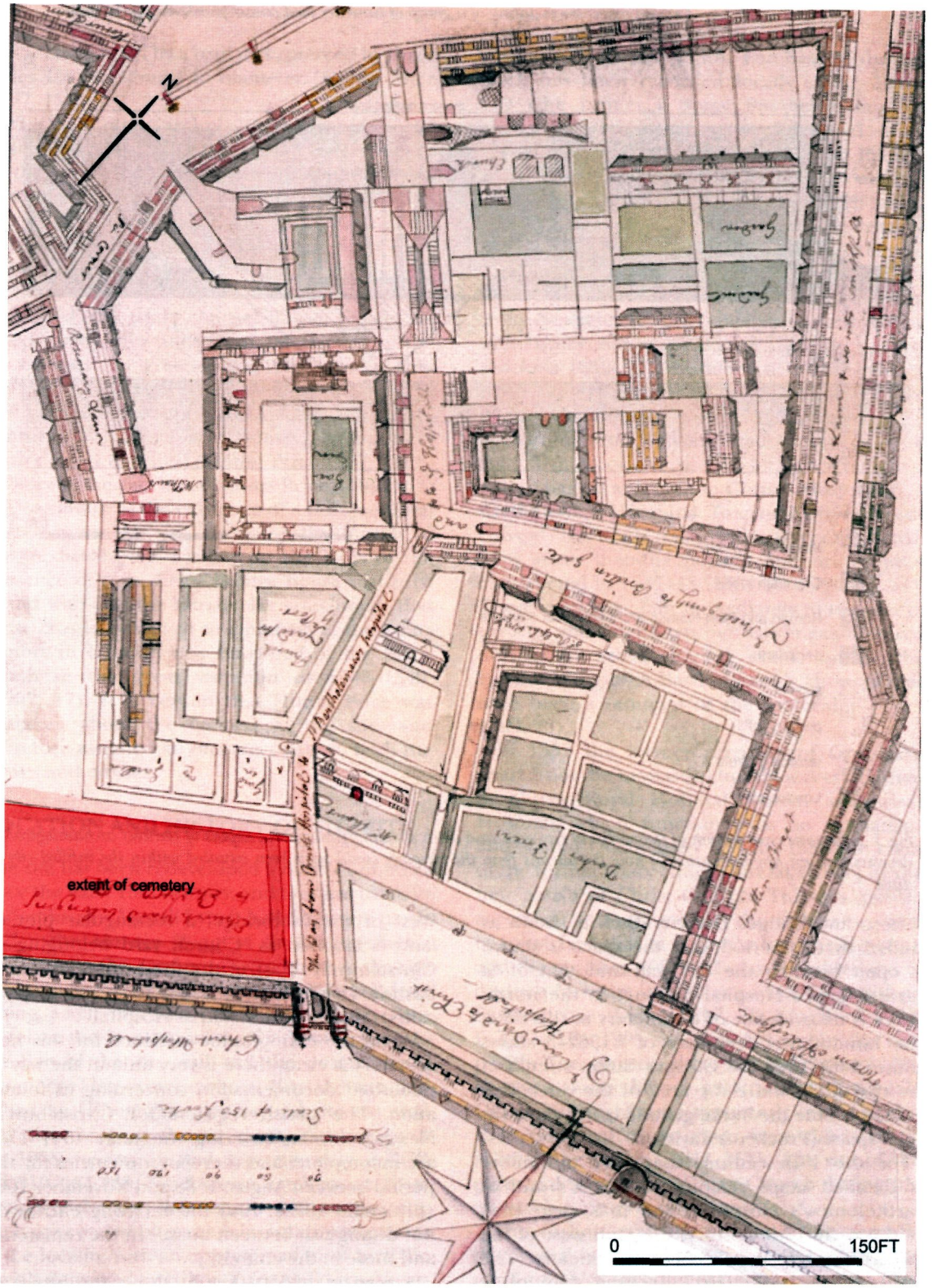

Fig 4. An 18th-century copy of Ralph Treswell's 1610 survey of St Bartholomew's Hospital and the City wall, showing the postern and bridge out of Christ's Hospital and the cemetery to its right (west) (© British Library Crace Collection, Maps. Crace VIII, 92)

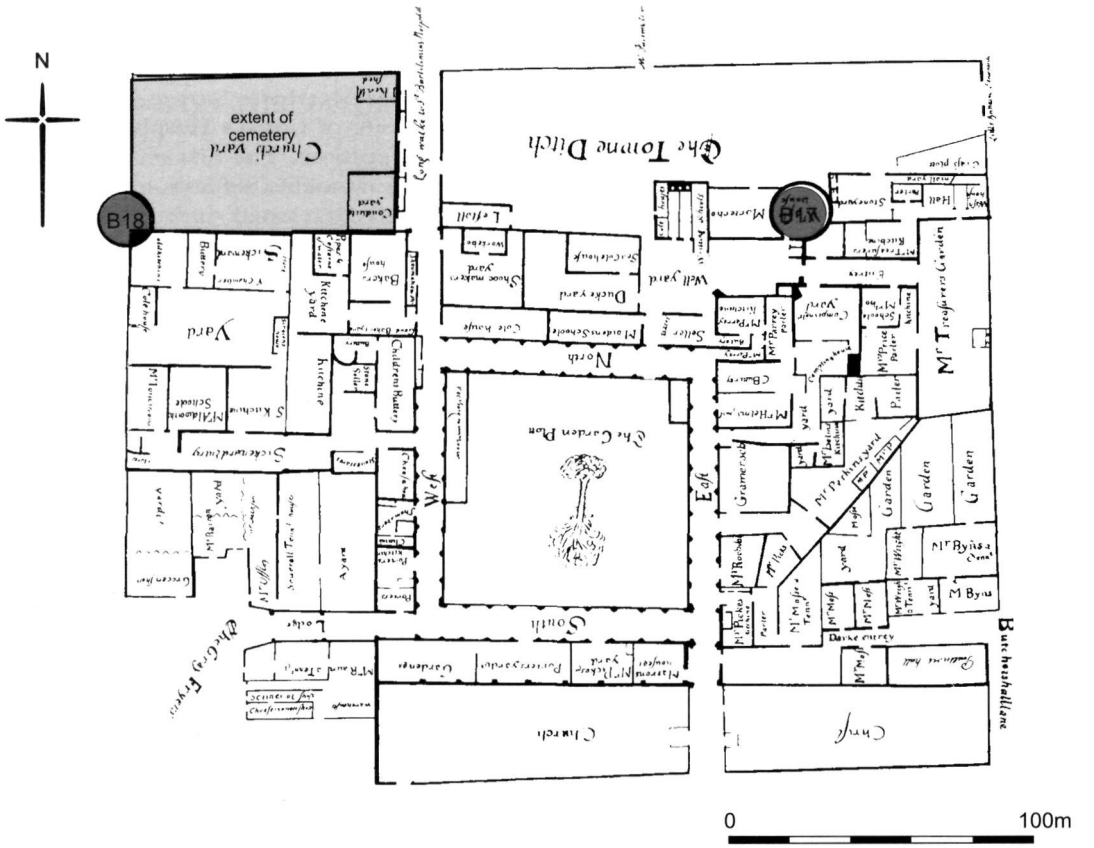

Fig 5. Detailed plan of Christ's Hospital c.1650 showing the site of the cemetery north of the City walls (Guildhall Library Print Room Pr.141/CHR) (note figure reversed to show N at top)

yard'. Already there is evidence that the cemetery was suffering from encroachment. In the south-eastern corner is a 'Conduit yard', while in the north-eastern corner is a building entitled 'J Kevill shed'. The 'grave yard' which was indicated on the 1617 map is not mentioned (and may actually have been a mis-reading of the 'Car yard' of 1610). This area is simply called 'The Towne Ditch'.

Following the Great Fire of 1666, the area was surveyed by John Ogilby in 1676 (Hyde 1976). The cemetery was now called the 'hospital churchyard', while the land east of the postern remained known as the 'town ditch'. Within the city walls, the friary church had been destroyed in the Great Fire; between 1674 and 1687 the parish church of Christ Church was rebuilt on the site of the old friary choir (Jeffery 1996, 190).

The extramural cemetery continued in use through the greater part of the 18th century. The western portion of this cemetery is shown as the 'Burying Ground' on Rocque's map of 1746, but by this date the adjoining eastern portion of the city ditch was already partly built over (Hyde 1982, 4). The area of the 'Burying Ground' was also shown as open space on Horwood's map of 1792–93 (Laxton 1985, 14). In 1795 an Act of Parliament allowed the Governors of Christ's Hospital to enlarge both their premises in London and Hertford (Act 1795). The preamble to the act stated that it would be necessary to 'appropriate a Piece of Ground called the *Burying Ground* of the Parifhioners of the Parifh of *Christ Church Newgate Street*, and the prifoners of *Newgate*...'. It was stated that the Christ's Hospital held this land from the Corporation of London. In return for waiving their right to use their existing burial ground, the parishioners of Christ Church Newgate were to be given a

nearby plot of land as a replacement. This was to be acquired by Christ's Hospital specifically for this purpose. This new burial ground was also to be used by prisoners of Newgate. It was created by extending the existing cemetery of St Botolph's, Aldersgate, westwards (to King Edward Street), forming an open space now known as Postman's Park (Act, 1795, Third Schedule). This arrangement allowed the old burying ground to be closed and subsequently built over during the 1795–1835 redevelopment of the school.

The last cartographic evidence of the cemetery dates to *c.*1810 (Fig 6), where the cemetery is labelled as 'Burial ground for Newgate & for poor of Christ's Church'. By 1825, the cemetery had been completely taken into the extended precinct of Christ's Hospital allowed for by the 1795 Act, and the new Great Hall had been erected over its southern half. Further buildings followed, including the boys' washroom, bath house and latrines, and, in 1870, the swimming pool building (Lempriere 1913, 506). The school remained here until 1902, when it was relocated to Horsham, Sussex (Allan 1984, 11, 76). The site of Christ's Hospital was disposed of in two portions. The first one (5/8 acre, 2529 square m) was sold to St Bartholomew's Hospital, which was redeveloped during 1903–04 as the new out-patients' block (D'arcy Power & Waring 1923, 91–2). The second portion was sold to the Post Office and redeveloped as the King Edward Buildings General Post Office during 1907–09 (Norman & Reader 1912, 274), which in turn was redeveloped again during 1998–2000, when it was transformed into the new Merrill Lynch Headquarters (Lyon in prep). A plan made in 1903 shows clearly the disposition of these buildings at the time of the transplant of Christ's Hospital, and immediately prior to the beginning of the redevelopments of 1903–09 in

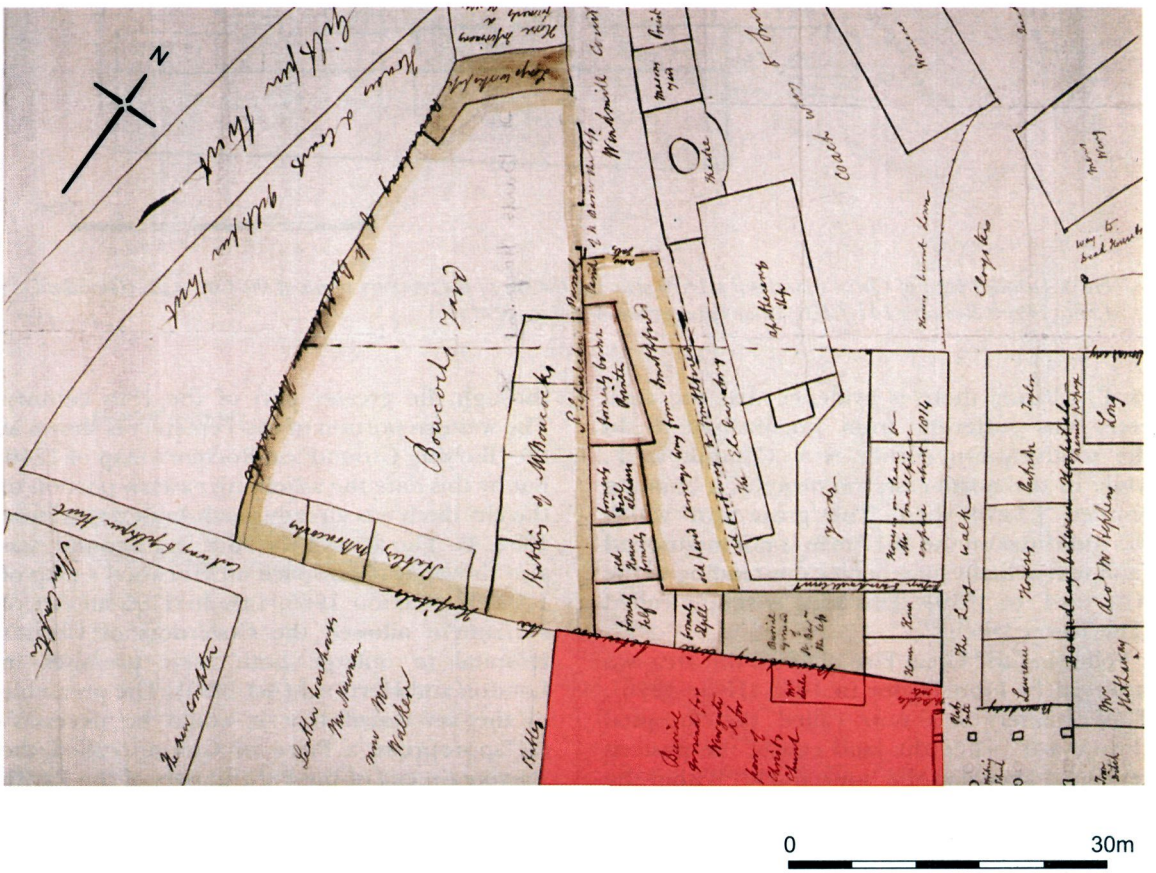

Fig 6. The area of Giltspur Street and the boundary between the properties of Christ's and St Bartholomew's Hospitals in c.1810. The cemetery is marked (Guildhall Library Print Room Pr.259/GIL)

which the burials and funerary crosses came to light (Fig 2).

OBSERVATIONS ON THE NATURE OF THE CROSSES

Hilton Price furnished his audience with a broad consideration of the crosses and their manufacture. He considered it likely that they had been cut with shears and chisels from milled sheet lead, and then hammered out (Hilton Price 1907, 20–1). Recent examination of a selection of the crosses by Geoff Egan has shown that Hilton Price's observation concerning their manufacture requires some revision. Fig 7 shows three examples demonstrating the variety of form that can be found in the collections, while Fig 8 provides basic, scaled silhouette outlines of a wide selection of the crosses to give a further idea of the range.

It is quite apparent that the crosses were all very poorly made by unskilled labour. No experienced sheet-metal worker would have made objects this crude. The overall size of the individual crosses varies, as do the shape and dimensions of their arms. The crosses vary in length from 54 to 165mm. They were clearly not made from a standard template, but look more like a series of individual efforts by a number of different people. If just one or two individuals had made them then a better standard of workmanship would have been expected. Also if a template of some description had been used then a much greater degree of standardisation would have resulted. The crosses were probably cut from sheet lead by knives (not by shears or chisels). In many places this process is marked as a series of short, jagged cuts. One cross (SM A654859) shows evidence of having been cast in a very crude and leaky mould, with very substantial amounts of flashing remaining between the cross arms and no evidence of having been cut, milled, or hammered.

A large number of crosses have one relatively smooth face (the original sheet face), and one with a ribbed or slighted hammered appearance. This is due to the sheet metal being rolled (with something like a rolling pin, presumably a large metal rod) to flatten it, after it had been cut into a cross. This process has resulted in some very

Fig 7. Detail of three of the lead crosses, two letters, and the number '6' (or possibly '9') found on the site. Dimensions/details: P (A3370) L 108mm, S (A3369) L 105mm, 6 (A3371) L 94mm (courtesy of MoL)

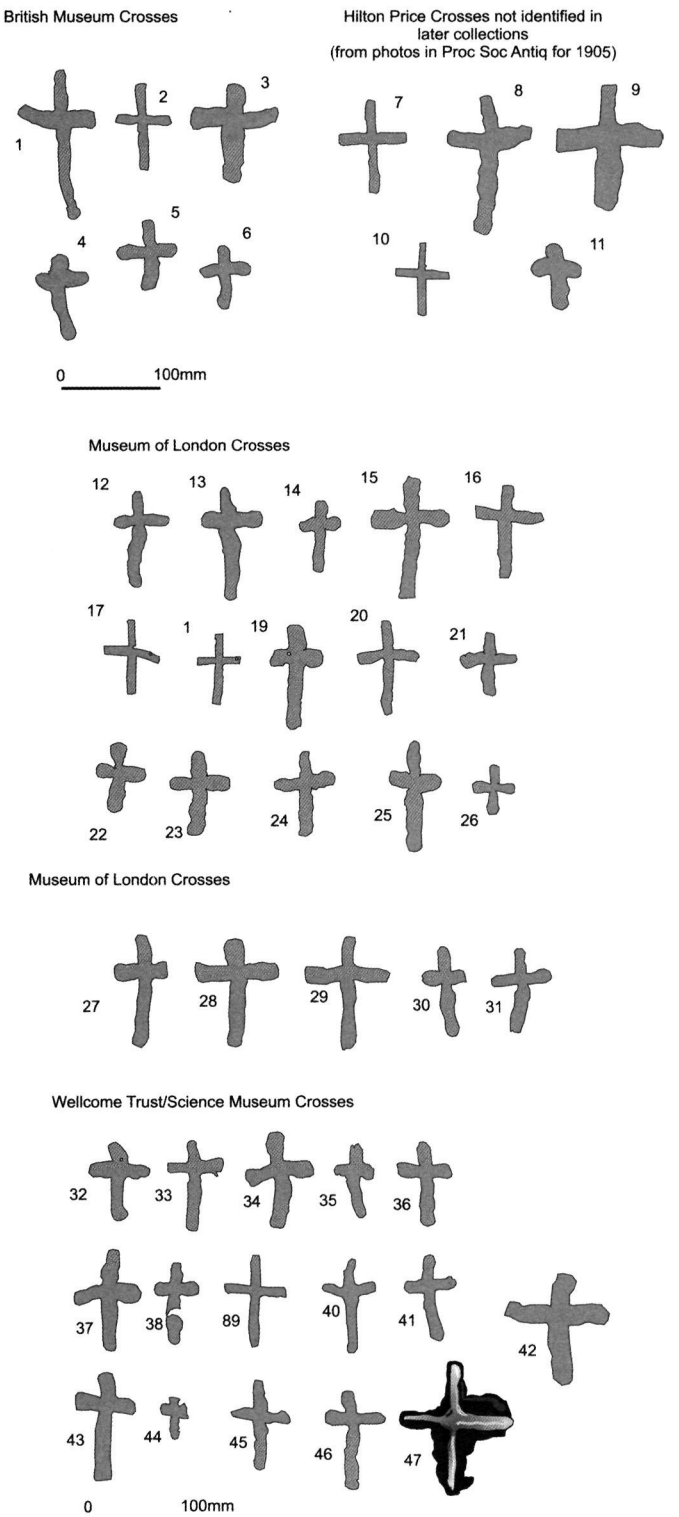

Fig 8. Silhouette plans of a broad selection of the crosses to show relative sizes and styles. Note that some of the crosses were unavailable for illustration at the time of preparation for this article. For numbers please refer to Appendix

thin sheets, and the distortion of the original edges. In some instances the rolled ends of the arms of the crosses have been folded over (*eg* MoL A8904e) or in others probably accidentally turned over or creased/crumpled during handling (*eg* MoL NN18702). Some crosses have a curved and distorted appearance due to this rolling process.

Several of the crosses have a single punched hole, always off-centre and sometimes so close to the edge of the metal it cannot have been intended to fix the cross to another object such as a shroud. Instead this hole may have been intended to secure the sheet metal during cutting (a number of the holes certainly predate the rolling process).

Of the other finds, the letters 'S', 'C' and 'P' were probably cast in crude clay moulds, then finished by being worked into their final shape by cold hammering. Due to extensive hammering of the edges their mode of manufacture is not certain (as any cut marks will have been obscured). The '6' was probably initially cast too, but it has some evidence of rolling as well as being hammered.

The tiny (probably silver?) crucifix is certainly of post-medieval date and has a flattened loop on the top arm of the cross (L 28mm). The somewhat uninspired figure of Christ was made separately.

The nature of the crosses and the letters, therefore, strongly suggests that they were created by a number of different unskilled workers using very crude techniques and simple tools, working to the most basic of designs. The crosses were clearly not being made for the commercial market. This lends powerful weight to the hypothesis that those buried with them were certainly at the lower end of the social strata.

THE CHARACTER OF THE CEMETERY AND THE PEOPLE BURIED THERE

It is clear that the cemetery revealed during 1905 was the one belonging to Christ Church, Newgate Street. From cartographic and documentary evidence it is certain that the cemetery was established by the early 17th century, and was still (at least partly) in use in the early 19th century. The crosses and other finds discovered with the interments are, therefore, not related to either the medieval Black Death visitations, or the Franciscan friary. Who, then, were those buried in the cemetery, and why were at least 100 of them accorded burial with lead crosses?

Christ Church already had a cemetery, established in the early 1540s, the location of which is uncertain. Possibly it was situated within the former intramural cemetery of the Franciscans, or burial may have taken place within the monastic cloisters.[3] In addition to the former precinct, the new parish of Christ Church took in the former parishes of St Audoen's and St Nicholas in the Shambles, so burial may initially have continued at cemeteries attached to these churches until their closure in 1552. After the Great Fire, the nave of the old friary church was demolished, and a new cemetery established on its site (Jeffery 1996, 190). This area is still public open space. However, a new burial area was needed for the parish by the early 17th century. Harding's recent work on the early modern burial grounds of London and Paris demonstrates that a combination of mounting population and recurrence of epidemics in the late 16th and early 17th centuries prompted the Court of Aldermen in 1604 to establish a committee to find more burial space (Harding 2002, 99). Individual parishes responded to the problem by acquiring additional land wherever possible, and the open land left by the infilling of the city ditch was utilised in this fashion by St Botolph Aldgate in 1615 and St Botolph Bishopsgate in 1617. The new churchyard at Christ Church was almost certainly established within this context, and may indeed have been among the earliest.

Such new churchyards were not initially popular with parishioners, and in response to this reluctance, some vestries created two-tier burial pricing. It followed, therefore, that the less wealthy would tend to be buried in the new cemetery areas. Harding has also shown that the cheaper areas of churchyards were, perhaps unsurprisingly, much more often used for parish pensioners, servants, and foundlings (*ie* those without known family nearby) than were church interiors (Harding 2002, 58–9). The Christ Church cemetery was, therefore, likely to have served the poorer members of the community and those with no one to organise and pay for a private burial, and certainly by 1810 this was its explicit role, as the map evidence indicates.

It is most likely to have been such 'lower' churchyards that were also the locations for the mass graves, dug in years of high mortality associated with various epidemics, and culminating in the exceptional events of 1665. Hilton Price's account of the very large wooden boxes (14ft/4.3m in length) containing numerous burials may well represent the archaeological evidence for such mass graves. It seems inherently probable

that these were not transportable boxes, but revetted pits, and we might look to contemporary descriptions of plague burials in London in 1625, where authorities were compelled 'to dig Graves like little cellers, piling up forty or fifty in a Pit' (quoted in Harding 2002, 66). The absence at Christ Church of any churchwardens' accounts for the years between 1588 and 1666 means that we have no direct information on mass burials in the plague outbreaks between these years, and there are no obvious references before or after, but it does seem likely that at least part of the cemetery was set aside for plague burials from time to time.

However, the mass burials were not those that were accompanied by the lead crosses. The latter were found apparently within individual shafts containing up to eight inhumations buried one above the other. We further believe that they were buried without coffins (since no wood was found), and had all been dressed in similar coarse smocks. Such a standardised, repeated, and very modest burial rite, associated with multiple burials strongly suggests some kind of institutional system for disposing of the dead, yet the evidence from the crosses themselves suggests that this was no case of mass-production by a single source (through the use of moulds for example). To determine who these people might have been is something of a detective story.

Firstly, we know from the 1795 Act and the 1810 map that the cemetery was used for the poor and for prisoners from Newgate. The parish registers (Littledale 1895) clearly confirm this. Between 1579 and 1734 no fewer than 1,011 individuals in the burial register are described as being 'from Newgate', and that excludes the missing 78 years of the register. The term ceases to be used in 1734 and for the remaining 20 years of the registers appears to be replaced by the term 'prisoner'. Between 1691 and 1754 (the period when the register seems to be most consistent) 1,879 individuals described in these terms were buried in a cemetery area of Christ Church. That prisoners were being buried in a cemetery of Christ Church is also clear from contemporary mid-18th-century accounts. Strype *et al* (1754, i, 683) recorded that many prisoners awaiting trial or punishment in Newgate gaol often contracted a disease called 'Gaol Distemper' (typhoid), due to overcrowding and insanitary conditions, 'of which they die by dozens, and cartloads of them are carried out and thrown into a pit in the churchyard of Christ Church, without any ceremony'. So, the cartographic evidence, the Act of Parliament, and the burial registers seem to combine to show that the extramural cemetery was the recipient of thousands of bodies of those who had died in Newgate Gaol, and that mass burial was involved. The manner and place of death of those buried would tend to have precluded any normal family burial, and there thus may have been the need for an institutional burial rite.

However, the registers also show another group of dispossessed, who may also have been the recipients of an institutional burial. At least 509 individuals are described as 'almswomen' or 'pensioners' between 1691 and 1754. Many parishes supported their poor and destitute, but this number is significantly high. It seems probable that the almsmen and women of Christ's Hospital were also being buried in the cemetery on a regular basis.

A third identifiable institutional burial group in the registers are those described as being from the Workhouse. However, we can certainly discount these as being the recipients of the crosses since only 13 individuals are so identified.

Returning then to the archaeological evidence, we need to establish whether either of the two most likely groups were being buried in the sort of numbers that would correlate with the archaeological evidence described by Hilton Price of narrow, shaft burials with eight inhumations one above the other. Firstly, the description may have resulted from the misinterpretation of discrete individual inhumations that, seen in section, appeared to overlie each other. The use of a narrow, unlined, shaft for mass burial is unusual compared with the deep, broad, mass burial pits or trenches such as have been recorded at the Black Death cemetery of East Smithfield (Grainger *et al* in prep), or at the site of London's 'New Churchyard' of 1569 (Malt & Hunting 1991, 35; Malt & White 1987), and such as are commonly referred to in contemporary parish registers. The form of this shaft would preclude being left open for any length of time, since the sides would simply have collapsed. But three London excavations have shown that it was certainly used. At St Mary Spital, several shafts of this kind, dating to the 15th and 16th centuries, one containing as many as 12 individuals, have recently been excavated (Chris Thomas pers comm), while others were encountered alongside more typical later 16th-century mass graves at the New Churchyard (Malt & Hunting 1991, 31–6), and at the 19th-century lower

cemetery of St Brides in Farringdon Street (A Miles pers comm). Hilton Price's recounted observations therefore cannot be ruled out as mistaken.

Since the parish registers give the precise date of each burial, it is possible to calculate for each day of each year how many prisoners and how many pensioners were being recorded as buried on the same date (and thus possibly receiving a common grave). Between 1691 and 1754, the year of greatest mortality for prisoners (including those from Newgate) was 1729, when 92 prisoners were buried and seven pensioners. Prisoner burials exceeded 50 in 12 years during this same period (1698, 1724–30 inclusive, 1737, 1740–41, and 1750). In contrast, pensioner burials never exceeded 27 in any year. The highest numbers of burials recorded were in 1746 (26) and 1747 (27). In terms of potential mass burial, the highest recorded group buried in one day was that of eight prisoners on 21 February 1729 (officially then 1728 of course). Another group of seven was buried on 18 January 1740. A further five groups of five burials can be identified, 12 groups of four burials, and 75 potential triple burials. Again, in contrast, never were more than three pensioners buried on the same day: this number occurred only three times.

Given that about 100 lead crosses were recovered from these shaft graves, it would appear that the only recorded group who were dying in sufficient numbers to be buried up to eight deep (at least in the records that are available) were the prisoners from Newgate Gaol. The crude nature of the crosses themselves is of note here. The extremely simple approach of sheet lead being knife-cut, hammered and/or rolled without a template and with no regard for finish suggests that the makers were entirely unskilled. It does seem conceivable that each cross could have been manufactured by prisoners for themselves or for dying inmates (assuming that the sheet lead was available and that the rolling and hammering tools were of a kind accessible within the cells), or even that jailers were bribed to provide such items. Put another way, it is hard to imagine people at liberty setting about making such items. No work was provided for prisoners until the 19th century 'although debtors always had the right to follow their trades, and many other prisoners would make goods for sale to help support themselves' (Byrne 1992, 30).

However, if this was the case, and crosses were routinely offered to those who had died incarcerated, then such a circumstance would surely have left many more crosses than 100 to be found by Hilton Price, as thousands of prisoners were likely to have been buried in this ground. Two further options should therefore be considered. The first is that the burial practice was an idiosyncrasy of a single sexton (or possibly jailer?), and that therefore the crosses were only manufactured for a single generation. In support of this the coincidence of multiple burials with the decades between the 1720s and the 1750s would allow for a single practitioner to have provided the crosses. The crude and highly variable form of the crosses argues against a single source however, and the *Ordinary of Newgate Accounts* (accounts of felons' final days published by the prison chaplain) for 1687–1747 (Corporation of London Guildhall Library AN 20.1.2, S L3/1) reveal no evidence whatever concerning the mode of burial of prisoners during this period.

A second option is that within the overall category of 'prisoner', there was a further subset of society with whom it was appropriate to bury such crosses. One possibility is that of gender. Returning to the parish registers, between 1691 and 1754 a noteworthy total of 478 (25.4%) of the 1,879 people who were described either as 'from Newgate' or 'prisoner' were women. Multiple burials of women on the same day are indicated from the registers, but the greatest single number was that of three women who were buried on Christmas Eve 1747. If the description of shafts containing eight burials provided with crosses is accurate, sex was not the defining character.

Another possible subgroup is of distinct religious groups, although it must be emphasised that we have no evidence for any employing lead funerary crosses at this date in any context. The earliest group with a specific link to Newgate prison may be that of the nonconformists, sorely affected by the events of the early 1660s. Records relating to Newgate prison show that following the passing of the Act of Uniformity (1661) and the Conventicles Act (1664) large groups of nonconformists were imprisoned in Newgate. Of the 120 Quakers jailed there for nonconformity in 1665, 52 died of plague (Crippen 1909, 377). Such discrimination continued into the late 17th century and beyond, so it is conceivable that the identity of oppressed religious groups might be expressed in their funerary arrangements. Religious oppression of this order had begun

to fade during the first half of the 18th century, following such laws as the Tolerance Act of 1738, so Roman Catholics (and other minority groups such as the French Prophets) may have felt more freely able to articulate specific burial practices despite desperate straits imposed by prison. Thus, not being incarcerated for their faith, but for other, secular crimes, they were allowed some aspect of its expression in death. This hypothesis has the advantage of also tying in with the peaks of mass burial suggested by the parish registers.

Clearly there are very significant gaps in the documentary coverage of the registers, and clearly there may have been other groups being disposed of who were not identified by description in the registers, so no absolute certainty exists. It does, however, seem plausible that the repeated devastation caused by disease, and especially typhoid, among the wretched population incarcerated in Newgate gaol provoked some kind of crude response in those set to bury their corpses, and that rude lead crosses were placed in the folds of their 'coarse frocks' before their bodies were lowered into their unmarked shafts.

THE HISTORY OF THE CROSSES: A STORY OF DISPERSAL AND CHINESE WHISPERS

The post-discovery history of the crosses is every bit as interesting as their excavation. They were reported, and displayed, at a lecture of the Society of Antiquaries in 1905 (*Athenaeum* 1905, 841). They then began to find their way into public, and private, collections.

At least four of the crosses were accessioned at the British Museum in the same year (BM accession numbers 1905,1121.1–1121.4), and a further six were accessioned in 1906 (BM 0514.1–0514.6). They bear differing descriptions, suggesting they formed two separate acquisitions. The first are described simply as plain, thin, lead-alloy crosses, with edges irregularly beaten out, and assigned a suggested date of 14th to 15th century. They were provenanced to Christ's Hospital. The second group were not assigned a date, and described as plain, flat, lead mortuary crosses.

A further six crosses were acquired by the Guildhall Museum before 1908, entering the museum's catalogue as number 249 (GM 1908, 23) and accessioned as 8904. These were described as 'Mortuary crosses (six), roughly cut in lead, from graves on the site of Grey Friars' Monastery (Christ's Hospital); perhaps 1348–9; from 3½ in x 1¾ in to 5¾ in x 3¼ in'. Such a location would have been taken as being certainly intramural at the time: the hospital still stood and some elements of the old friary were probably still visible.

Hilton Price clearly held many of the crosses himself for a time, perhaps all of the remainder. One of the group acquired by the Wellcome Institute (see below) had an anonymous note attached: 'Leaden Cross, from Plague pit of 1348–9, site of Christ Church, London, 1907 (One of these laid/on breast of each body). Given me by Mr F G Hilton Price. Dec. 08' (SM accession A17456). It seems likely too that the collection of 32 crosses accessioned at the London Museum in 1912 (MoL accession numbers A3336–A3367) may have been obtained from the Hilton Price collection. In the catalogue, these were described as 'Leaden mortuary crosses found with interments on the site of Grey Friars monastery'. They were given a date of the 14th century, and were provided with a broad location of 'Newgate Street'. This effectively cemented the intramural location. At least eight, and probably significantly more, of these crosses were subsequently auctioned in 1920, a number of which were bought by the Wellcome Institute.

The Wellcome Institute appears to have obtained its first example in 1919, the one donated in 1908 by Hilton Price to a friend, when it was purchased in Stevens's Auction Rooms in Covent Garden in December 1919 for the considerable sum of 16 shillings.[4] Stevens's, a respected and busy auction house, was the source for several further acquisitions: two crosses for 5s in August 1920 (SM accessions A635017 and A635018), and six in December of that year (SM A635015 and A635016; A654844–A654846; and A9076) for a total price of £1 6s 3d. A further group was that acquired from the London Museum. Three of an otherwise undated group still bear the original London Museum accession numbers (MoL accessions LM A3344, A3358, A3367), and by association, a total of 17 crosses may have been acquired at this time (SM A654840–A654843; A654847–A654859). The Wellcome Institute had thus gathered a total of 26 crosses by 1921. In the *London Museum Medieval Catalogue* 27 crosses were listed in the collections, and an additional five examples were described as in collections of the Guildhall Museum (Ward Perkins 1940, 290). At least eight crosses had been sold by the London Museum by the end of 1920 (there are currently 21 accessions of the

original 32 obtained in 1912). The remaining eleven examples are 'not traced', a number which includes all eight definitely sold in 1920, so it may be that three examples were disposed of at this time.

The notes that were made of the provenance of the crosses are contradictory and complex. Most describe the fact that the crosses were placed on the breasts of plague victims at the Greyfriars, and dated to 1348–50, in line with Hilton Price's original surmise. Two, however, are noted as 'Lead mortuary cross from monastic victim of the plague, English, 1601–1700', and one is described as being from Greyfriars, but dated to the 12th century. In the *London Museum Medieval Catalogue* the crosses were described as 'found with internments at Christ's Hospital Newgate Street, on the site of Grey Friars' burial ground' (Ward Perkins 1940, 290).

A further cross was presented to the London Museum in November 1929 by a Mrs Greg or Grey. It apparently originated in the Hilton Price collection, and was described as a 'Leaden coffin cross, medieval' from 'London' (London Museum accession 29.186/1). One more surfaced at another auction at Steven's Auction Rooms in September 1934, identified as being from Christ's Hospital, and purchased by the Wellcome Institute for 17s 6d (SM accession A205305).

Specimens from the original group clearly went a considerable distance with their owners. In 1951, the Guildhall Museum acquired a cross (MoL accession GH 17155) from the Leicester Museum as part of a collection of London material formerly owned by the late Mr V B Crowther-Beynon FSA. He was President of the Numismatic Society in the 1930s, and endower of Cambridge University's eponymous fund for archaeology and anthropology. The cross from his collection was honoured with the most specific description yet: 'Leaden mortuary cross, found, with interment, in the Lesser Cloister, Grey Friary, Newgate Street, AD 1348–9, Christ's Hospital 1905'. It measured 4.7in by 3.6in. It was joined by a gift of two more crosses (MoL accessions GH 255585 and 255586), this time from the Bridgnorth and District Historical Society, in 1971. These were accompanied by written cards defining them as 'absolution' crosses, each found with 'a human skeleton, a friar, in a great pit containing about 400 skeletons uncovered during excavations on the site of the churchyard of the Grey-Friars Monastery (Christ's Hospital), Newgate Street, London EC'.

The most poorly provenanced are a curious group of five crosses currently on loan to the Science Museum from the Wellcome Institute, and originally held in the latter's 'strongroom' (SM accessions A115565, A629427, A629445–A629447). These are not the originals, but instead are copies (made in Willesden) of crosses lent for exhibition at Antwerp, Dresden, and Buenos Aires. We do not know when these exhibitions took place, nor what happened to the originals. Indeed it is not certain (though it is very likely) that these actually came from the site to which the others belong. The description states that they were from London, and that they were 'from the graves of victims of the plague in London, original 17th century'. All but one strongly resemble in form and size the Newgate crosses (one is rather more of a Maltese cross shape), and there is no known findspot of a similar nature in any other literature. There is thus a high probability that the originals were part of this group. Why the 17th-century date was ascribed to these is unclear.

The remaining objects discovered with burials and reported by Hilton Price comprised the crucifix, the lead letters 'S' and 'P' and the lead number '6' found with a skeleton in a brick vault; and the letters 'C' and 'B' in lead from other graves (Fig 7). These too survive (at the Museum of London, respectively A3368–73) but their dates of accession are not recorded. The accession sequence follows immediately on from the crosses obtained by the Museum of London in 1912, so it seems very probable that they formed part of the Hilton Price collection too.

In 1974, the creation of the Museum of London brought together the collections of the Guildhall and London Museums, and thus reunited a number of the crosses held at both these locations. Between 1972 and 1978 the Wellcome Institute transferred its holdings of crosses on loan to the Science Museum. Although the latter had not previously held any examples of the crosses, this now meant that significant collections existed in two national museums and one regional museum.

The story of the crosses was not yet complete. In 1978 a selection of the crosses was illustrated in a social history and archaeology of medieval England as coming from the friary cemetery (Platt 1978, pl 86), and this reference was later used to illustrate the opinion that funerary crosses were 'a relatively common feature' of medieval cemeteries (Daniell 1997, 166). In

1998, the book accompanying the 'London Bodies' exhibition at the Museum of London described authoritatively how in 1905 'a mass grave had been uncovered on the site of the priory of the Grey Friars north of St Paul's'. It went on to explain how the pit 'contained several hundred bodies, many of them accompanied by [the crosses]' (Werner 1998, 65–6). The crosses currently on display in the Science Museum (5th floor Science and Art of Medicine G9) are described as 14th-century mortuary crosses from an English Black Death cemetery. Thus the myth of a Black Death mass grave on the site of the Greyfriars, Newgate Street lives on.

This remarkable dispersal brings the sum of crosses received at one time or another into museum care and currently traceable to 63 (BM = 10, SM = 32 incl replicas, MoL = 21), leaving the whereabouts unaccounted for of 26 of those displayed in 1905. The object of this review is, of course, not to presume any kind of academic superiority over our predecessors, but to show how powerfully a simple slip can influence the facts. Hilton Price probably knew little of post-medieval burial customs, and the stratigraphic study of archaeological sites was in its infancy in 1905, so such a mass of burials, laid so deep would of course have had the appearance of a plague pit. What is more interesting is the assumption that these burials were friars, and the manner in which the crosses acquired embellished descriptions over time: first coffins, then cloister burials, and finally the single mass pit. All these characteristics were invented later. Equally interesting is the snapshot that this group gives of the manner in which artefacts were dispersed quite thoroughly from London to Leicester and Shropshire, via personal gift, auction, and museum donation.

THE CROSSES IN THEIR NEW CONTEXT: THE FINDS IN THE CONTEXT OF MEDIEVAL AND EARLY MODERN BURIAL PRACTICE

The identification of the funerary crosses as being certainly post-medieval, and almost certainly 18th-century, provides us with a unique new group of mortuary artefacts in Britain. Lead funerary crosses are known from a number of medieval sites, mostly monastic, but they are rare. Only two English sites, Bury St Edmunds Abbey and the Crutched Friars in Colchester, have revealed the recurring use of lead crosses in graves. Neither is as late as the 18th century. The Bury crosses are considered to have been of 12th- or 13th-century date, and several are inscribed, leaving Colchester as the one possible parallel for the use of crude, uninscribed crosses in a cemetery, and these would appear to be at the latest 16th-century in date (for a discussion of lead crosses see Gilchrist & Sloane 2005, 5.1). Lead crucifixes have been recovered from the 18th- to 19th-century burial grounds of St Pancras and St Marylebone in London, but these were finished with Christ figures, and not the crude crosses as found at Newgate. They probably accompanied Catholic burials (A Miles pers comm).

The inclusion of lead crosses in medieval graves has been interpreted as a means by which the bodily remains could be protected from demonic possession, or by which the deceased might exhort any who disturbed their bones to offer intercessory prayer to hasten their souls through Purgatory. The need for such talismans should have faded long before the 18th century according to current understanding, and archaeological evidence for grave goods from this time is indeed normally confined to coffin fittings, *depositum* plates, and items of mortuary dress. Indeed no published examples of lead mortuary crosses of this date have been found (see for example Litten 1991; Mytum 2004). This group is therefore particularly interesting as it sits outside our general understanding of orthodox burial practice for the time.

The intriguing possibility that these crosses may have been in some way associated with poor badges has been raised (T Hitchcock pers comm). From Elizabethan times, and encoded by the Badging Act of 1696, the poor who were in receipt of parish pensions (*ie* the pensioners recorded in the Parish Registers, above) had to wear small badges identifying themselves. Most often these were cloth badges stitched to clothing. However, some were brass or tin discs, and Romsey, Hants, used elaborate lead plaques (Hindle 2004, 22). These artefacts of deprivation certainly seem to resonate with the crude crosses from Newgate, and one or two of the crosses do carry small holes by which they *could* have been stitched to clothing, though proving any link is impossible, and, as we have seen, the pensioners do not seem to have been dying in the numbers and frequency demanded by the circumstances of the finds.

There are other rare types of grave finds from the post-medieval period which might indicate that the breadth of mortuary practice, and thus

of the belief structures of Londoners was wider that previously considered. For instance, in 1601 the gravediggers at St Dunstan in the West were charged with removing from a grave a lead coffin along with an hourglass, a handkerchief, and a garland of flowers (Harding 2002, 145). Such a reference is explained by the discovery of another garland in a grave in St James, Clerkenwell (Anon 1747, 264). The writer describes how in 1733, the clerk of Bromley church, Kent, dug up a garland wrought in filigree of gold and silver to look like myrtle, covered with a cloth of silver. Such garlands apparently often formed crowns for mourners to wear at the funeral, and the centre-pieces of such crowns could be, among other things, wire representations of hourglasses.

CONCLUSIONS

Exactly 100 years after the first report on the finds from the Christ's Hospital excavations, the cemetery and its associated artefacts can now be set in their proper place in the history of London. It is worth considering briefly how Hilton Price came to mistakenly pronounce the site to be a 14th-century Black Death cemetery. He knew (1907, 18) of the early maps showing that the cemetery was connected with Christ's Hospital, and he had undertaken some research in the literature, so he also knew about Pearce's (1901, 62) *Annals of Christ Church Hospital* and the use of this burial ground by the prisoners of Newgate and parishioners of Christ Church (1907, 15). He even stated the general impression 'that [the skeletons] must have been buried there in one of the great plague years 1603 or 1665' (*ibid*). All the pieces were in place, but he could not understand how the cemetery could lie beneath the playground and swimming baths of the hospital. It would appear that in his mind the only way that this could be the case was if the cemetery entirely pre-dated the hospital, and the only candidate he could perceive was the nearby friary. It remains a credit to him that there is sufficient information in his promptly published report for us to have been able to write this paper. The shaft burials, the 'coarse smocks', and of course the lead crosses all add a significant dimension to our understanding of post-medieval burial rites and the beliefs associated with them. We may never know the precise conditions under which people were provided with the crosses at their deaths. It might have been the practice of a single sexton, operating for only 20 or 30 years, which coincided with the mass burials from the 'gaol distemper'. It may conceivably have been a hidden Catholic rite, with unskilled prisoners themselves fashioning crude objects of their faith. Some part of the cemetery may yet survive the palimpsest of later development, and if so, should the occasion arise, it would be highly informative to excavate what remains under controlled conditions to try to answer these questions.[5] Equally, the many parish registers for City churches and Corporation cash books might hold further clues. What we can say with some considerable certainty at this point is that the crosses were provided to those among the lowest strata of society, people not usually represented well in the history of death and burial.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors would like to extend their thanks to the following people and organisations who have assisted in the completion of this report. The City of London Archaeological Trust provided resources for completion of the graphics and specialist study of the crosses. The London and Middlesex Archaeological Society were able to offset costs of printing for their *Transactions*. The various curators of the leaden crosses kindly provided access to the material and furnished the relevant accession numbers: John Clark of the Museum of London, Early Dept; Stewart Emmens of the Science Museum; James Robinson of the British Museum. Dr Vanessa Harding (Institute of Historical Research, London University) and Professor Tim Hitchcock (University of Hertfordshire) provided suggestions on research sources and welcome feedback on drafts of this paper. Adrian Miles and Kieron Tyler of MoLAS likewise commented on drafts. Mrs Dot Mariner and Tony Hogarth-Smith, the Christ's Hospital Archivists, provided assistance and access to documents during our research and kindly allowed the reproduction of a number of historic maps in their collection. Dr Geoff Egan, Museum of London Specialist Services, provided an expert view on the manufacture of the crosses and his comments form the basis of this section of the article. Jane Dunn of MoLAS prepared the graphics. Pete Rowsome of MoLAS provided assistance with project management and Sue Hirst of MoLAS editorial guidance.

Thanks are also due to British Library (Crace Collections) (Fig 4), Guildhall Library (Figs 5–6) and Christ's Hospital (Fig 2) for permission to reproduce the historic maps. Fig 7 was produced by Torla Evans and reproduced by courtesy of the Museum of London.

APPENDIX: LOCATION AND HISTORY OF THE CROSSES

Location	Object No.	Illustration No. (Fig 8)	Summary of notes from accession cards and catalogues *etc*	History
British Museum	1905.1121.1		Cross; lead alloy; plain; thin; edges irregularly beaten out. 14th-15th century, from Christ's Hospital	Acquired in 1905
British Museum	1905.1121.2		Cross; lead alloy; plain; thin; edges irregularly beaten out. 14th-15th century, from Christ's Hospital	Acquired in 1905
British Museum	1905.1121.3		Cross; lead alloy; plain; thin; edges irregularly beaten out. 14th-15th century, from Christ's Hospital	Acquired in 1905
British Museum	1905.1121.4		Cross; lead alloy; plain; thin; edges irregularly beaten out. 14th-15th century, from Christ's Hospital	Acquired in 1905
British Museum	1906.0514.1	1	Mortuary cross; lead; plain; flat. Christ's Hospital	Acquired in 1906
British Museum	1906.0514.2	2	Mortuary cross; lead; plain; flat. Christ's Hospital	Acquired in 1906
British Museum	1906.0514.3	3	Mortuary cross; lead; plain; flat. Christ's Hospital	Acquired in 1906
British Museum	1906.0514.4	4	Mortuary cross; lead; plain; flat. Christ's Hospital	Acquired in 1906
British Museum	1906.0514.5	5	Mortuary cross; lead; plain; flat. Christ's Hospital	Acquired in 1906
British Museum	1906.0514.6	6	Mortuary cross; lead; plain; flat. Christ's Hospital	Acquired in 1906
Hilton Price - now unknown	Not accessioned	7	Object recorded on photograph in Hilton Price 1907 article only	Not identified in any existing catalogues or collections
Hilton Price - now unknown	Not accessioned	8	Object recorded on photograph in Hilton Price 1907 article only	Not identified in any existing catalogues or collections
Hilton Price - now unknown	Not accessioned	9	Object recorded on photograph in Hilton Price 1907 article only	Not identified in any existing catalogues or collections
Hilton Price - now unknown	Not accessioned	10	Object recorded on photograph in Hilton Price 1907 article only	Not identified in any existing catalogues or collections
Hilton Price - now unknown	Not accessioned	11	Object recorded on photograph in Hilton Price 1907 article only	Not identified in any existing catalogues or collections
Museum of London	8904a	12	One of a group of six roughly cut lead alloy crosses, roughly cut. Findspot given as Christ's Hospital, Newgate Street, St Paul's, London	Acquired by Guildhall Museum by 1908
Museum of London	8904b	13	One of a group of six roughly cut lead alloy crosses, roughly cut. Found in graves on the site of Greyfriars monastery (Christ's Hospital), dated to perhaps 1348-9	Acquired by Guildhall Museum by 1908
Museum of London	8904c	14	One of a group of six roughly cut lead alloy crosses, roughly cut. Found in graves on the site of Greyfriars monastery (Christ's Hospital), dated to perhaps 1348-9	Acquired by Guildhall Museum by 1908
Museum of London	8904d		One of a group of six roughly cut lead alloy crosses, roughly cut. Found in graves on the site of Greyfriars monastery (Christ's Hospital), dated to perhaps 1348-9	Acquired by Guildhall Museum by 1908
Museum of London	8904e	15	One of a group of six roughly cut lead alloy crosses, roughly cut. Found in graves on the site of Greyfriars monastery (Christ's Hospital), dated to perhaps 1348-9	Acquired by Guildhall Museum by 1908

Location	Object No.	Illustration No. (Fig 8)	Summary of notes from accession cards and catalogues *etc*	History
Museum of London	8904f	16	One of a group of six roughly cut lead alloy crosses, roughly cut. Found in graves on the site of Greyfriars monastery (Christ's Hospital), dated to perhaps 1348-9	Acquired by Guildhall Museum by 1908
Museum of London	A3336		Cross, lead alloy? Note in London Museum catalogue states: Leaden mortuary crosses (thirty two) found with interments on the site of Grey Friars Monastery. XIV century	Acquired by 1912 by London Museum from Hilton Price collection. Cross not traced at MoL in 2004. Probably sold in 1920
Museum of London	A3337		Cross, lead alloy? Note in London Museum catalogue states: Leaden mortuary crosses (thirty two) found with interments on the site of Grey Friars Monastery. XIV century	Acquired by 1912 by London Museum from Hilton Price collection. Cross not traced at MoL in 2004. Probably sold in 1920
Museum of London	A3338		Note in London Museum catalogue states: Leaden mortuary crosses (thirty two) found with interments on the site of Grey Friars Monastery. XIV century	Acquired by 1912 by London Museum. from Hilton Price collection. Sold (to Wellcome Trust?) in 1920
Museum of London	A3339		Note in London Museum catalogue states: Leaden mortuary crosses (thirty two) found with interments on the site of Grey Friars Monastery. XIV century	Not traced by MoL in 2004. Probably sold in 1920
Museum of London	A3340	17	Lead alloy cross, roughly cut. Note in London Museum catalogue states: Leaden mortuary crosses (thirty two) found with interments on the site of Grey Friars Monastery. XIV century. Findspot given as Christ's Hospital, Newgate St, St Paul's, London EC1	Purchased in 1912
Museum of London	A3341	18	Lead alloy cross, roughly cut. Note in London Museum catalogue states: Leaden mortuary crosses (thirty two) found with interments on the site of Grey Friars Monastery. XIV century. Findspot given as Christ's Hospital, Newgate St, St Paul's, London EC1	Purchased in 1912
Museum of London	A3342		Lead alloy? Note in London Museum catalogue states: Leaden mortuary crosses (thirty two) found with interments on the site of Grey Friars Monastery. XIV century	Cross not traced by MoL in 2004. Probably sold in 1920
Museum of London	A3343		Lead alloy? Note in London Museum catalogue states: Leaden mortuary crosses (thirty two) found with interments on the site of Grey Friars Monastery. XIV century	Cross not traced by MoL in 2004. Probably sold in 1920
Museum of London	A3344		Note in London Museum catalogue states: Leaden mortuary crosses (thirty two) found with interments on the site of Grey Friars Monastery. XIV century	Cross certainly sold and acquired by Wellcome Trust in 1920, see SMA654857
Museum of London	A3345		Note in London Museum catalogue states: Leaden mortuary crosses (thirty two) found with interments on the site of Grey Friars Monastery. XIV century	Cross not traced by MoL in 2004. Probably sold in 1920

Location	Object No.	Illustration No. (Fig 8)	Summary of notes from accession cards and catalogues *etc*	History
Museum of London	A3346		Note in London Museum catalogue states: Leaden mortuary crosses (thirty two) found with interments on the site of Grey Friars Monastery. XIV century	Cross not traced by MoL in 2004. Probably sold in 1920
Museum of London	A3347	19	Roughly cut lead cross. Note in London Museum catalogue states: Leaden mortuary crosses (thirty two) found with interments on the site of Grey Friars Monastery. XIV century. Findspot given as Christ's Hospital, Newgate St, St Paul's, London EC1	Purchased in 1912
Museum of London	A3348	20	Lead alloy cross, roughly cut. Note in London Museum catalogue states: Leaden mortuary crosses (thirty two) found with interments on the site of Grey Friars Monastery. XIV century. Findspot given as Christ's Hospital, Newgate St, St Paul's, London EC1	Purchased in 1912
Museum of London	A3349		Note in London Museum catalogue states: Leaden mortuary crosses (thirty two) found with interments on the site of Grey Friars Monastery. XIV century	Not traced by MoL in 2004. Probably sold in 1920
Museum of London	A3350	21	Lead alloy cross, roughly cut. Note in London Museum catalogue states: Leaden mortuary crosses (thirty two) found with interments on the site of Grey Friars Monastery. XIV century. Findspot given as Christ's Hospital, Newgate St, St Paul's, London EC1	Purchased in 1912
Museum of London	A3351	22	Lead alloy cross, roughly cut. Note in London Museum catalogue states: Leaden mortuary crosses (thirty two) found with interments on the site of Grey Friars Monastery. XIV century. Findspot given as Christ's Hospital, Newgate St, St Paul's, London EC1	Purchased in 1912
Museum of London	A3352		Note in London Museum catalogue states: Leaden mortuary crosses (thirty two) found with interments on the site of Grey Friars Monastery. XIV century	Not traced by MoL in 2004. Probably sold in 1920
Museum of London	A3353	23	Roughly cut lead cross. Note in London Museum catalogue states: Leaden mortuary crosses (thirty two) found with interments on the site of Grey Friars Monastery. XIV century. Findspot given as Christ's Hospital, Newgate St, St Paul's, London EC1	
Museum of London	A3354	24	Lead alloy cross, roughly cut. Note in London Museum catalogue states: Leaden mortuary crosses (thirty two) found with interments on the site of Grey Friars Monastery. XIV century. Findspot given as Christ's Hospital, Newgate St, St Paul's, London EC1	Purchased in 1912
Museum of London	A3355		Cross, lead alloy? Roughly cut. Note in London Museum catalogue states: Leaden mortuary crosses (thirty two) found with interments on the site of Grey Friars Monastery. XIV century. Findspot given as Christ's Hospital, Newgate St, St Paul's, London EC1	Not traced by MoL in 2004. Probably sold in 1920
Museum of London	A3356		Note in London Museum catalogue states: Leaden mortuary crosses (thirty two) found with interments on the site of Grey Friars Monastery. XIV century	Not traced by MoL in 2004. Probably sold in 1920

Location	Object No.	Illustration No. (Fig 8)	Summary of notes from accession cards and catalogues *etc*	History
Museum of London	A3357		Lead alloy cross. Note in London Museum catalogue states: Leaden mortuary crosses (thirty two) found with interments on the site of Grey Friars Monastery. XIV century	
Museum of London	A3358		?Lead alloy cross. Note in London Museum catalogue states: Leaden mortuary crosses (thirty two) found with interments on the site of Grey Friars Monastery. XIV century	Sold in 1920 and acquired by Wellcome Trust (see SMA654843)
Museum of London	A3359		?Lead alloy cross. Note in London Museum catalogue states: Leaden mortuary crosses (thirty two) found with interments on the site of Grey Friars Monastery. XIV century	Not traced by MoL in 2004. Probably sold in 1920
Museum of London	A3360		?Lead alloy cross. Note in London Museum catalogue states: Leaden mortuary crosses (thirty two) found with interments on the site of Grey Friars Monastery. XIV century	Not traced by MoL in 2004. Probably sold in 1920
Museum of London	A3361		?Lead alloy cross. Note in London Museum catalogue states: Leaden mortuary crosses (thirty two) found with interments on the site of Grey Friars Monastery. XIV century	Not traced by MoL in 2004. Probably sold in 1920
Museum of London	A3362	25	Lead alloy cross, roughly cut. Note in London Museum catalogue states: Leaden mortuary crosses (thirty two) found with interments on the site of Grey Friars Monastery. XIV century. Findspot given as Christ's Hospital, Newgate St, St Paul's, London EC1	Purchased in 1912
Museum of London	A3363		Note in London Museum catalogue states: Leaden mortuary crosses (thirty two) found with interments on the site of Grey Friars Monastery. XIV century	Not traced by MoL in 2004. Probably sold in 1920
Museum of London	A3364	26	Lead alloy cross. Note in London Museum catalogue states: Leaden mortuary crosses (thirty two) found with interments on the site of Grey Friars Monastery. XIV century. Findspot given as Christ's hospital, Newgate Street, St Paul's, London EC1.	Purchased in 1912
Museum of London	A3365		?Lead alloy cross. Note in London Museum catalogue states: Leaden mortuary crosses (thirty two) found with interments on the site of Grey Friars Monastery. XIV century	Not traced by MoL in 2004. Probably sold in 1920
Museum of London	A3366		?Lead alloy cross. Note in London Museum catalogue states: Leaden mortuary crosses (thirty two) found with interments on the site of Grey Friars Monastery. XIV century	Not traced by MoL in 2004. Probably sold in 1920
Museum of London	A3367		?Lead alloy cross. Note in London Museum catalogue states: Leaden mortuary crosses (thirty two) found with interments on the site of Grey Friars Monastery. XIV century	Sold in 1920 and acquired by Wellcome Trust (see SMA654858)
Museum of London	A3368		Small pendant in the form of a small crucifix with Christ on the cross. There is a suspension loop above the cross. Cast. Findpost given as Greyfriars Monastery (site) Newgate, St Paul's London EC1. Object described as silver in London Museum catalogue.	Acquired in 1912

Location	Object No.	Illustration No. (Fig 8)	Summary of notes from accession cards and catalogues *etc*	History
Museum of London	A3369		Leaden letter S. Found with an interment on the site of Greyfriars monastery, Newgate Street. XVI century	Acquired in 1912
Museum of London	A3370		Leaden letter P. Found with an interment on the site of Greyfriars monastery, Newgate Street. XVI century	Acquired in 1912
Museum of London	A3371		Leaden number 6 found with an interment on the site of Greyfriars monastery, Newgate Street. XVI century	Acquired in 1912
Museum of London	A3372		Leaden letter B found with interment on the site of Greyfriars monastery, Newgate. XIV century.	Acquired in 1912
Museum of London	A3373		Leaden letter C found with interments on the site of Greyfriars monastery, Newgate. XIV century.	Acquired in 1912
Museum of London	NN18702	27	Lead alloy cross. Described in London Museum catalogue as leaden coffin cross, medieval, from London.	Acquired from a Mrs Greg or Grey in 1929, formerly in the collection of Hilton Price.
Museum of London	29.186/1	28	Roughly cut, lead alloy cross. Findspot simply given as London.	
Museum of London	17755	29	Lead alloy cross found at Christ's Hospital in 1905. Described in Guildhall catalogue for 1951 as a mortuary cross found with interment in the lesser cloister, Grey Friary, Newgate Street, and dated 1348-9.	Gift from Leicester Museum to the Guildhall Museum in 1951. Originally part of the collection of the late Mr Crowther Beynon.
Museum of London	25585	30	Roughly cut lead alloy cross. Accompanying note states 'This absolution cross was found associated with a human skeleton, a friar, in a great pit containing 400 skeletons uncovered during excavations on the site of the churchyard of the greyfriars monastery (Christs-Hospital) Newgate St, London EC. It was exhibited with others at a meeting of the Soc Antiq. London. See Athenaeum Dec 16th 1905'.	Gift from Bridgenorth and District Historical Society to the Guildhall Museum, November 1971.
Museum of London	25586	31	Roughly cut lead alloy cross. Accompanying note states 'This absolution cross was found associated with a human skeleton, a friar, in a great pit containing 400 skeletons uncovered during excavations on the site of the churchyard of the greyfriars monastery (Christs-Hospital) Newgate St, London EC. It was exhibited with others at a meeting of the Soc Antiq. London. See Athenaeum Dec 16th 1905'.	Gift from Bridgenorth and District Historical Society to the Guildhall Museum, November 1971.
Science Museum/ Wellcome Trust	A115565		Lead cross, cut from sheet of lead. Replica (made in Willesden) of one taken from the grave of victims of the plague in London, original 17th century. Copy of one which was lent for exhibition at Antwerp, Dresden and Buenos Aires – no further details as to whereabouts of original	

Location	Object No.	Illustration No. (Fig 8)	Summary of notes from accession cards and catalogues *etc*	History
Science Museum/ Wellcome Trust	A17456	32	Crudely executed cross of lead, beaten out of lead, not cut. From the plague pit on the site of Christ Church, placed on body of victim of Black Death, London, 1348-1349. With label, which states: 'Leaden Cross, from Plague pit of 1348-9, site of Christ Church, London, 1907 (One of these laid/on breast of each body). Given me by Mr./ F.G.Hilton Price. Dec. 08'	Purchased by Wellcome Trust at Stevens Lot 411, 19.12.1919, price 16s
Science Museum/ Wellcome Trust	A205305	33	Crudely executed cross of lead, beaten out of lead sheet, traces of adhesive on reverse. Cross placed on corpse of victim of Black Death, Christ's Hospital, London, 1348-1349. Note states: site of Greyfriars Monastery; place of excavation, said to be from graves of monks who died in Great Plague, 1348	Purchased by Wellcome Trust at Stevens Lot 118 13.09.1934, price 17s 6d
Science Museum/ Wellcome Trust	A629427		Lead cross, cut from sheet of lead. Replica (made in Willesden) of one taken from the grave of victims of the plague in London, original 17th century. Copy of one which was lent for exhibition at Antwerp, Dresden and Buenos Aires – no further details as to whereabouts of original	
Science Museum/ Wellcome Trust	A629445		Flanged cross, in a Maltese style, cut from sheet of lead. Replica (made in Willesden) of one taken from the grave of victims of the plague in London, original 17th century. Copy of one which was lent for exhibition at Antwerp, Dresden and Buenos Aires – no further details as to whereabouts of original	
Science Museum/ Wellcome Trust	A629446		Lead cross, cut from sheet of lead. Replica (made in Willesden) of one taken from the grave of victims of the plague in London, original 17th century. Copy of one which was lent for exhibition at Antwerp, Dresden and Buenos Aires – no further details as to whereabouts of original	
Science Museum/ Wellcome Trust	A629447		Lead cross, cut from sheet of lead. Replica (made in Willesden) of one taken from the grave of victims of the plague in London, original 17th century. Copy of one which was lent for exhibition at Antwerp, Dresden and Buenos Aires – no further details as to whereabouts of original	
Science Museum/ Wellcome Trust	A635015	34	Lead mortuary cross from victim of the Great Plague of 1348, English, 1340-1350. Note states: site of Greyfriars Monastery; place of excavation, said to be from graves of monks who died in Great Plague, 1348	Purchased by Wellcome Trust at Stevens Lot 352, 21.12.1920, Price 4s 3d. Originally accessioned as A9076B. This cross appears in a photograph in Hilton Price 1907
Science Museum/ Wellcome Trust	A635016	35	Lead mortuary cross from victim of the Great Plague of 1348, English, 1340-1350. Note states: site of Greyfriars Monastery; place of excavation, said to be from graves of monks who died in Great Plague, 1348	Purchased by Wellcome Trust at Stevens Lot 352, 21.12.1920, Price 4s 3d. Originally accessioned as A9076F. This cross appears in a photograph in Hilton Price 1907

Location	Object No.	Illustration No. (Fig 8)	Summary of notes from accession cards and catalogues *etc*	History
Science Museum/ Wellcome Trust	A635017	36	Lead mortuary cross from monastic victim of the plague, English, 1601-1700. However, note states: site of Greyfriars Monastery; place of excavation, said to be from graves of monks who died in Great Plague, 1348	Purchased by Wellcome Trust at Stevens Lot no, 24.08.1920, price 5s for 2 crosses (see A635018). This cross appears in a photograph in Hilton Price 1907
Science Museum/ Wellcome Trust	A635018		Lead mortuary cross from monastic victim of the plague, English, 1601-1700. However, note states: site of Greyfriars Monastery; place of excavation, said to be from graves of monks who died in Great Plague, 1348	Purchased by Wellcome Trust at Stevens Lot no, 24.08.1920, price 5s for 2 crosses (see A635017)
Science Museum/ Wellcome Trust	A654840		Crudely executed cross of lead, placed on corpse of victim of Black Death, London, 1348-1349	Possibly originally a London Museum accession by association with A654843, if so acquired after 1920
Science Museum/ Wellcome Trust	A654841		Crudely executed cross of lead placed on corpse of victim of Black Death, London, 1348-1349	Possibly originally a London Museum accession by association with A654843, if so acquired after 1920
Science Museum/ Wellcome Trust	A654842	37	Crudely executed cross of lead, placed on corpse of victim of Black Death, London, 1348-1349	Possibly originally a London Museum accession by association with A654843, if so acquired after 1920
Science Museum/ Wellcome Trust	A654843	38	Crudely executed cross of lead, placed on corpse of victim of Black Death, London, 1348-1349	Old accession number painted on A3358: this is almost certainly a London Museum accession, and would make this one sold in 1920 by that Museum
Science Museum/ Wellcome Trust	A654844		Crudely executed cross of lead, placed on corpse of victim of Black Death, London, 1348-1349. Note states: Found at the site of GreyFriars, Christ's Hospital	Purchased by Wellcome Trust at Stevens Lot 352 21.12.1920, 4s 3d, old accession number A9076C
Science Museum/ Wellcome Trust	A654845	39	Crudely executed cross of lead placed on corpse of victim of Black Death, London, 1348-1349. Note states: cross found on site of Grey Friars, in monks' graves	Purchased by Wellcome Trust at Stevens Lot 352 21.12.1920, 4s 3d, old accession number A9076D
Science Museum/ Wellcome Trust	A654846		Crudely executed cross of lead, placed on corpse of Grey Friars monk who was victim of Black Death, Christ's Hospital, London, 1348-1349. Note states: Found at Grey Friars, Christ's Hospital	Purchased by Wellcome Trust at Stevens Lot 352 21.12.1920, 4s 3d, old accession number A9076G
Science Museum/ Wellcome Trust	A654847	40	Crudely executed cross of lead, placed on corpse of victim of Black Death, London, 1348-1349	

Location	Object No.	Illustration No. (Fig 8)	Summary of notes from accession cards and catalogues *etc*	History
Science Museum/ Wellcome Trust	A654848		Crudely executed cross of lead, placed on corpse of victim of Black Death, London, 1348-1349	
Science Museum/ Wellcome Trust	A654849	41	Crudely executed cross of lead placed on corpse of Black Death victim, London, 1348-1349	
Science Museum/ Wellcome Trust	A654850	42	Crudely executed cross of lead, placed on corpse of victim of Black Death, London, 1348-1349	
Science Museum/ Wellcome Trust	A654851		Simple cross of lead, placed on corpse of victim of Black Death, London, 1348-1349	
Science Museum/ Wellcome Trust	A654852	43	Small, crudely executed cross of lead, placed on corpse of victim of Black Death, London, 1348-1349	
Science Museum/ Wellcome Trust	A654853		Simple cross of lead placed on corpse of victim of Black Death, London, 1348-1349	
Science Museum/ Wellcome Trust	A654854	44	Crudely executed cross of lead, placed on corpse of victim of Black Death, London, 1348-1349	
Science Museum/ Wellcome Trust	A654855		Crudely executed cross of lead, placed on corpse of victim of Black Death, London, 1348-1349	
Science Museum/ Wellcome Trust	A654856		Crudely executed simple cross of lead, placed on corpse of victim of Black Death, London, 1348-149. Note states: Found at the site of Christ's Hospital. Label on back of cross reads 'A4441/d/-/ Mortuary cross/from site of Christ's Hospital, City of London/Hilton Price'	
Science Museum/ Wellcome Trust	A654857		Crudely executed cross of lead, placed on corpse of victim of Black Death, London, 1348-1349	Object marked A3344. This is the London Museum accession number for one of the 5 sold in 1920 by that Museum
Science Museum/ Wellcome Trust	A654858	45	Simple cross of lead, now mounted on wood, placed on corpse of victim of Black Death, from site of Grey Friars, London, 1348-1349. Note attached to object states: 'Hilton Price/Coll-/from Grey Friars/Newgate St/12th Centy. Note on record states: although note on back of mount dates object to 12th c., its association with similar crosses produced during Black Death makes date of 1348-1349 more likely'	Object marked A3367. This is the London Museum accession number for one of the 5 sold by that museum in 1920
Science Museum/ Wellcome Trust	A654859	46	Crudely executed cross of lead, probably placed on corpse of victim of Black Death, London, 1348-1349. This cross has extensive flashing adhering showing it was cast. It does not appear to have been subjected to rolling/hammering as with others	
Science Museum/ Wellcome Trust	A9076	47	Lead mortuary cross from victim of the Great Plague of 1348, English, 1340-1350. Note states: site of Greyfriars Monastery; place of excavation, said to be from graves of monks who died in Great Plague, 1348	Purchased by Wellcome Trust at Stevens Lot 352, 21.12. 1920, price 5s. This cross appears in a photograph in Hilton Price 1907

NOTES

[1] Locally the top of the London Clay has been found at 9.4m OD. The overlying Pleistocene terrace gravel has been recorded at various points between 12.6m and 14.6m nearby at St Bartholomew's Hospital (Tyler 1999, 14; Daykin & Miles 2003, 26). This was capped by brickearth subsoil, located at 12.8 to 13.0m OD. The early Roman land surface was situated at between 13m and 14m OD. By the 13th century the accumulation of deposits had raised the ground surface locally over 2m to above 17m OD, the level from which the medieval city ditch was cut. Modern ground level is about 17.6m OD (Lyon in prep).

[2] Samuel Johnson's *Dictionary of the English Language* (1755) defined 'car' as 'a small carriage of burden' (1843 edn, 97).

[3] During the 18th century benefactors and members of Christ's Hospital were buried inside the friary cloister (Harrison 1775, 202). Within the 'north cloister, thene called the Dead Cloister' was a vault where deceased pupils were buried. The vault was sealed in 1809 and subsequently the inner quadrangle was used as the school cemetery (Trollope 1834, 346).

[4] In 1914 the annual cost of maintaining a boy at Christ's Hospital School was £69 (Allan 1984, 131).

[5] Evaluation Trench 7 within the Holder Wing was sited within the area of the cemetery, but no burials were found and natural geology was reached in this particular trench (Tyler 1999, 16). In 2003 archaeological monitoring of geotechnical pits in the George V Block revealed residual disarticulated human bone including neonatal material within post-medieval deposits (Daykin & Miles 2003, 27–8). Watching brief work on the Merrill Lynch Headquarters, very close to the site of the cemetery, during 1999 (Area K test pits 1–3) revealed post-medieval deposits and the top portion of the infilled medieval city ditch, but no sign of burials (Watson 2000, 10).

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