

‘THE GRAVEYARD DRAWS THE LIVING STILL, BUT NEVER ANYMORE THE DEAD’¹: 150 YEARS OF ROMAN FUNERARY ARCHAEOLOGY IN OLD FORD, TOWER HAMLETS

Gary Brown

SUMMARY

Roman artefacts have, since at least the mid-19th century, been recorded over a wide area of a district of Tower Hamlets now known as Old Ford, for the most part in relatively close proximity to the Roman London–Colchester road. Amongst the earliest and most recognisable finds were those associated with burials, both cremations and inhumations. Whilst all of the earlier finds were chance discoveries, a record of the findings was often made and reported in the learned journals of the time. Systematic archaeological excavation at Old Ford, located approximately 4.5km north-east of Londinium, commenced in the late 1960s and with it came evidence for further Roman burials. This article continues a tradition of reporting and quantifying Roman burials at Old Ford initiated, arguably, by John Price in 1870, and periodically followed up by Smith (1909–11), Wheeler (RCHME 1928) and Owen et al (1973). It seems appropriate therefore that the work undertaken in the 1990s is assessed and compared with these earlier findings.

INTRODUCTION

The status of Old Ford in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets has been subject to

much debate: whether, for example, it was a small town, market, or even a religious centre (Fig 1). A forthcoming volume (Brown *et al* forthcoming) will explore some of these themes more fully; the current paper will look at the evidence for the burials themselves, the cemeteries and their position in the landscape (Fig 2).

Since 1844 more than 100 inhumations have been identified either side of the Roman London–Colchester road between the River Lea in the east and Coborn Road in the west and it is now possible to postulate the locations of up to six separate inhumation cemeteries (Fig 2; Table 2 (see appendix)). These range in size from a few individuals, possibly representing family groups, to a more extensive graveyard of intercutting burials. A number of cremation burials have also been identified, none under controlled excavation conditions, although one was reported to archaeologists and its contents subsequently analysed. A problem with the antiquarian records is one of precision, that is, identifying the exact findspots for particular burials or cremations. Due to this difficulty this article proposes that cremation

¹ ‘In a disused graveyard’ by Robert Frost 1874–1963

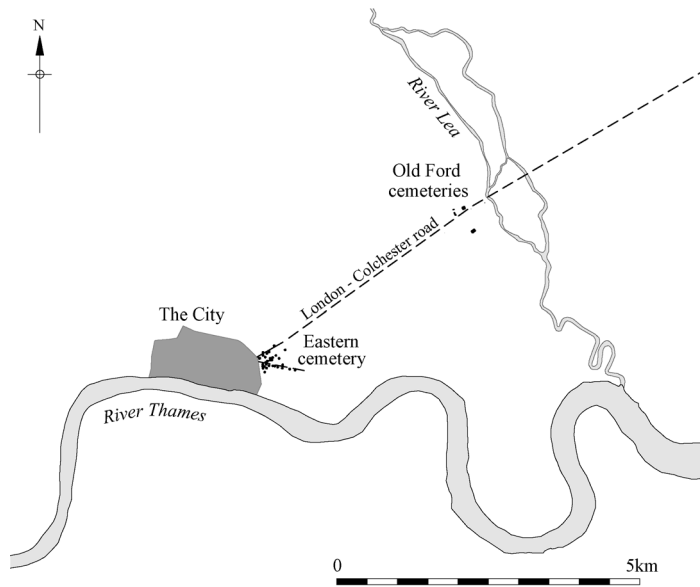


Fig 1. The location of the Old Ford Roman cemeteries

and inhumation cemeteries were separate entities. In some instances, for example Saxon Road (Sites 4 and 9), it is likely that the two types were contained within a single plot, whereas there is no evidence that the Lefevre cremation and inhumation cemeteries (Sites 3 and 7) were part of the same entity, indeed the evidence appears to contradict it. For this reason each is dealt with as being a separate entity, and indeed many were.

In Roman Britain, especially in the south of the country, burials are frequently found where the body was either laid on, or encased within, a layer of plaster (Philpott 1991, 8). Such burials are found in London and in Old Ford; at the latter location no fewer than ten have been found, in coffins of stone, lead and wood. Typically, across England, the material used was gypsum plaster or lime, but analysis of graves in London, especially those in the Eastern Cemetery, shows that the vast majority of this type of grave used crushed sedimentary marine chalk (Barber & Bowsher 2000, 101–2). At Old Ford analysis of material in the stone coffin from 114 Armagh Road also confirmed the use of marine chalk (Owen *et al* 1973, 145 n 5), and it seems probable that the majority here were chalk, rather than plaster or lime as described in antiquarian accounts.

CREMATIONS (Fig 2, Sites 1–4)

Cremation burials, in general, pre-date inhumation burials as a practice in Roman Britain, and indeed cremation was the predominant burial practice in pre-Roman south-east England (Philpott 1991, 8). Cremation started to lose favour by the middle of the 2nd century AD but was still practised widely until the end of the century and beyond. However, cremation never completely ceased to be practised, and some 4th-century examples are known from Roman London's Eastern Cemetery (Barber & Bowsher 2000, 57), although it cannot yet be demonstrated that there were any 4th-century examples at Old Ford. In addition to the cinerary vessel, which contained the burnt bone and other pyre debris, other vessels, usually between one and three, may have accompanied the cremation urn (see Table 2). Many cremated remains were interred straight into a small pit without a container, although whether such a practice occurred at Old Ford is not recorded.

Cremations, although not as numerous as inhumations, appear to have been well represented at Old Ford. Unfortunately, the vast majority were uncovered accidentally in the mid-19th century and reported to

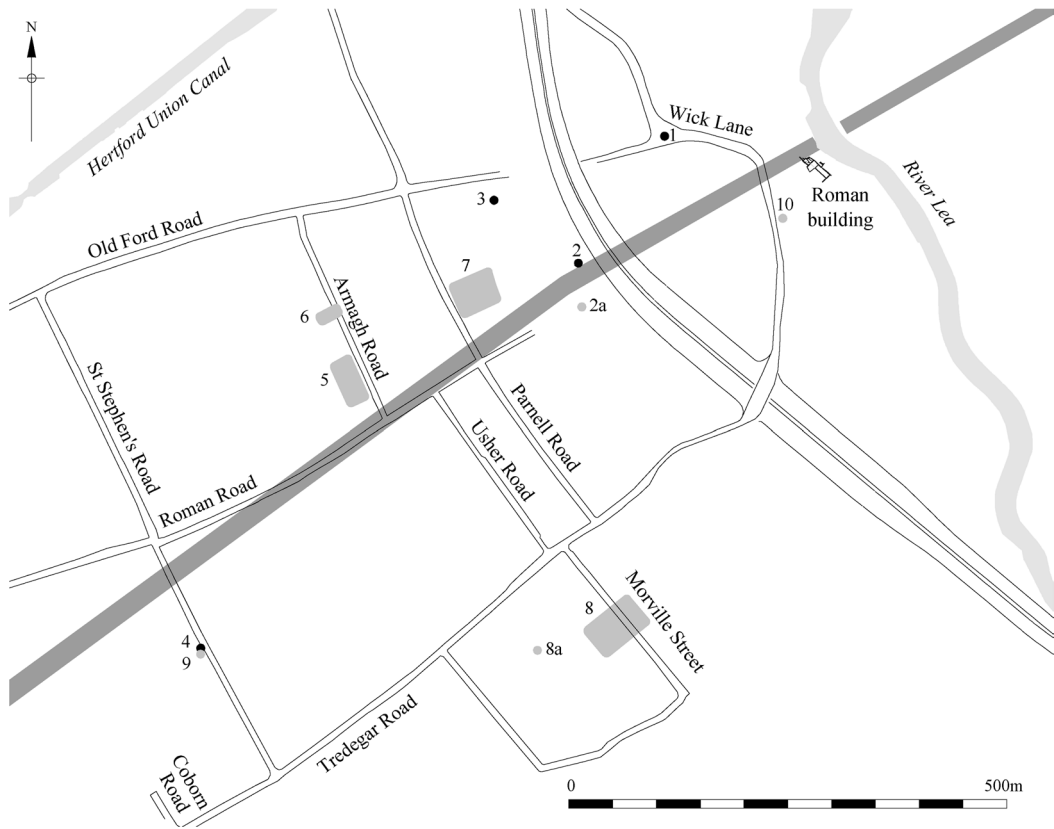


Fig 2. The location of the various Roman cemeteries within Old Ford. For site details see Table 2 (black = cremations; grey = inhumations and inhumation cemeteries)

antiquarians such as Charles Roach Smith, or were recognised as potentially being such after the material was disposed of, as occurred at Lefevre Road in 1969 (see below).

This paper proposes that there were perhaps four, possibly more, separate cremation cemeteries in the Old Ford locality (Fig 2, Cemeteries 1–4). These discoveries are summarised in Table 2.

1 Wick Lane cremation cemetery

There is very limited evidence for this cemetery except that Roach Smith in 1844 (Roach Smith 1856, 310) reported the finding of ‘some Roman urns, containing burnt bones’ and that these were located in Wick Lane opposite the White Hart Inn, in an area where other Roman finds were regularly made. Neither the extent nor the number of urns is recorded, but it is clear that more than one was discovered.

2 Station cremation cemetery

In a similar vein a few years later Edward Stock reported finding further examples from a nearby area, one that Roach Smith referred to as being ‘fields and gardens in which Roman urns have occasionally been found, and Roman coins in great abundance’. Stock ruefully noted of the later findings ‘several specimens have been destroyed by the workmen in their haste to accomplish the [railway] cutting’. The cemetery was discovered during the cutting of the East and West India Dock Birmingham junction line, the position of which is shown on a map of 1847. The Old Ford station was later appended to this line. During its construction a sarcophagus was found. It was in these fields, states Stock, ‘that the Roman road, now traversed by the works going on upon the ... [railway], led to the Old Ford over the Lea there can be no doubt; and that

the field through which the cutting is carried was once a Romano-British burial place is fully borne out by the perfect urns and broken pieces of Samian *paterae* and cups now brought to light' (Stock 1849, 392).

3 Lefevre cremation cemetery

Over a century later, when building the Lefevre Walk Estate, it is possible that construction workers may have inadvertently destroyed another cremation cemetery. A worker recalled the mechanical excavation of a number of jars, which at the time were thought to have been 'seconds' from a nearby pottery factory (Creswell & Sheldon 1979, 88). However, this interpretation was put in doubt when a cremation urn and accompanying flagon were found during ground works at the same redevelopment. The cremation urn was a product of the Alice Holt kilns with an accompanying Verulamium ware flagon, indicating a 2nd-century date of deposition.

Analysis of the contents, although comprehensively burnt, demonstrated that the deceased was probably female, suffered from dental calculus, and was in her early 20s when she died. Mixed in with the human remains were fragments of ribs and vertebrae of sheep/goat, a piglet mandible fragment and bird bones, possibly from the funerary feast or to accompany the individual to the afterlife (Creswell & Sheldon 1979, 92).

4 Saxon Road cremations

One further possible group of cremation urns was identified close to the junction of Saxon Road and New Coborn Road (now St Stephen's Road). Smith reported 'pottery vessels [were found] which include two cinerary urns (containing bones), two globular jugs with narrow necks, a thumb pot, a vase with hatched pattern, other vases, and a plain bowl ... and a two handled cup with slip decoration and a flat bowl' (Smith 1909–11, 232). These cremations were found in close proximity to a stone sarcophagus as noted below.

INHUMATIONS (Fig 2, Sites 2a and 5–10; Table 2)

Whilst occasional inhumation burials are known from the 1st and first half of the 2nd centuries, this practice became more

prevalent from c.AD 180 onwards, particularly in places with military connections and urban centres (Roberts & Cox 2007, 251). This practice increased in popularity and it became the dominant rite during the 3rd and 4th centuries. Roman inhumation burials took various forms; frequently, but not invariably the bodies were placed in caskets, with or without grave furniture or personal items. Several different types of burial are represented in the six Old Ford inhumation cemeteries proposed here.

Soil conditions are variable across the study area which profoundly affected the level of preservation of the bone where the individual was either buried in a wooden casket or in no casket at all. This was most acutely observed at the Ranwell cemetery (Cemetery 5), where, for the most part, the presumed acidity of the soil either removed all trace of the skeleton, or only left small fragments such as the skull or leg bones, while the rest of skeleton was represented by soil staining. Preservation was improved at Ranwell cemetery in the two instances where the body had been laid on or within chalk packing. This degree of decay has had a profound impact on the ability to discuss the pathologies, gender and age of the buried population in this cemetery. The level of acidity in the soil varied across the study area and the bone at the Lefevre cemetery was in an altogether better state of preservation and therefore more detailed osteological analysis was possible. Many of the other inhumations were found in the 19th and early 20th centuries, and therefore the quality of the record was variable. There may, for instance, be some discussion regarding body posture or inclusion of grave furniture, but frequently such details are absent from the record.

5 Ranwell cemetery (Figs 3 and 4)

Prior to the development of the Ranwell East Estate, located between Armagh Road and Libra Road on the north side of Roman Road, excavation in 1990 revealed evidence for a large inhumation cemetery (Pitt 1991). A total of 78 burial/grave cuts was recorded, but the cemetery is likely, given the density in the excavation areas, to have contained 200+ individuals, possibly more. The cemetery appears to have been established in the

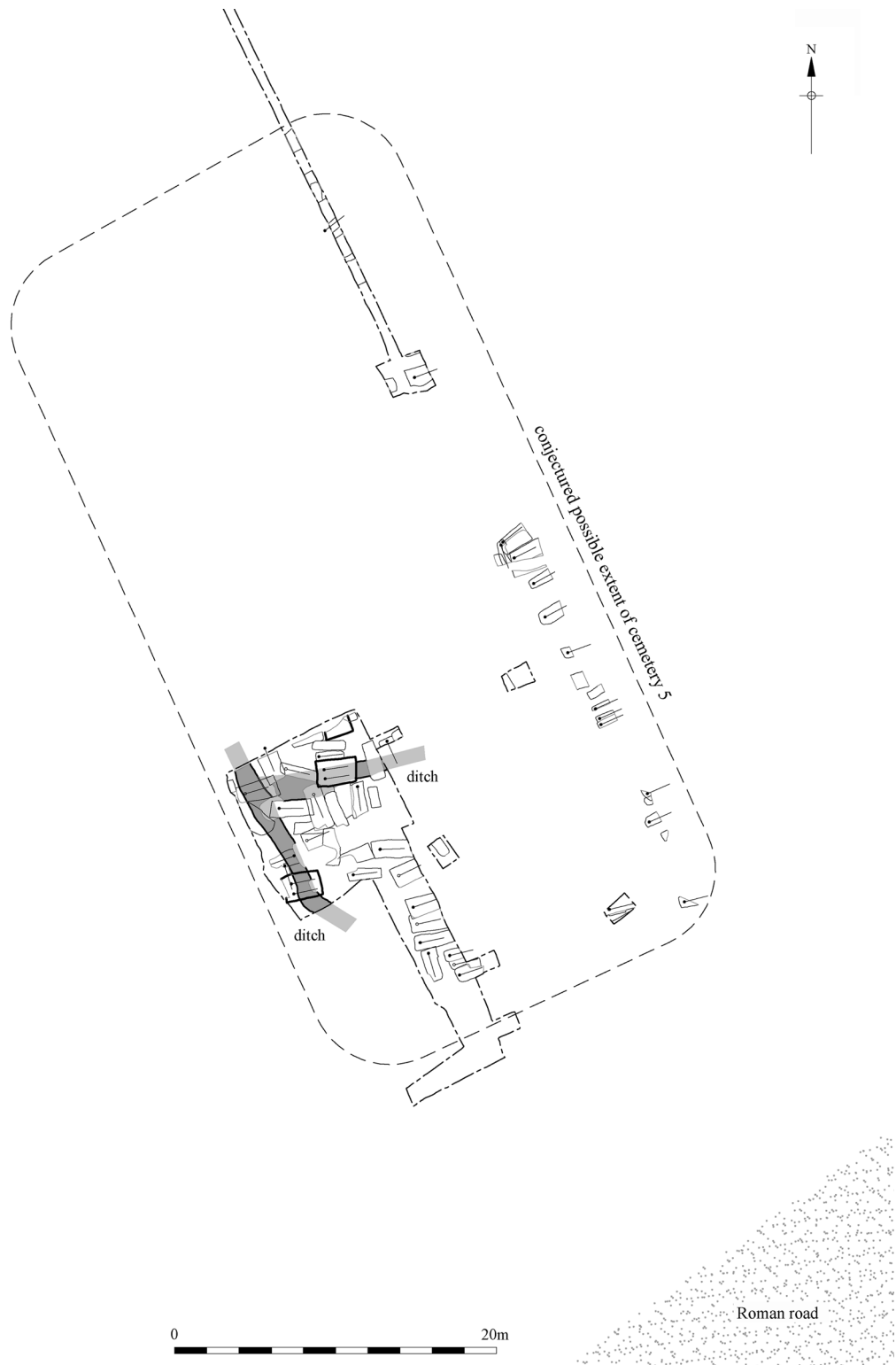


Fig 3. Overall plan of the Ranwell cemetery

mid-3rd century with a closure date in the late 4th century. The southern limit to the cemetery was approximately 18m north of the London–Colchester road; it extended over 60m to the north of the road and was at least 25m wide. There are no definitive boundary markers outlining the extent of the cemetery, but it could not have extended in excess of 23m to the east of the excavation area as burials were not recorded at the adjacent excavation site (72a Armagh Road). Soil conditions at this site were particularly hostile to the preservation of skeletal material, and frequently it was restricted to fragments of skull or teeth, or parts of long bones. Sometimes the evidence was simply a body stain, and on other occasions there was no indication of any body remaining at all. Wooden coffins were represented by stains and sometimes by the presence of iron nails, some up to 0.20m long. In other burials where a coffin stain was present but not iron nails, it is presumed that wooden nails or dowels were used.

There is very little evidence for the land use prior to the establishment of the cemetery. A couple of large, but unexcavated pits are presumed to have been gravel quarries for the nearby road and a few smaller pits also predated the cemetery, all dating to after AD 200. A relatively large pottery assemblage dates the infill of a stratigraphically early east–west ditch to after AD 250, but it may have been dug a number of years earlier. However, there seems to have been no intensive land use during the preceding two centuries within the boundaries of the site. The ditch may have been a cemetery boundary marker as several north–south-orientated burials appear to have respected it. It was, however, subsequently infilled and was cut through by later graves. A couple of buildings were located within the general proximity of the graveyard. Flanking the southern side of the street at 586a Roman Road were two phases of early Roman timber buildings, plus a small oven or kiln. During the late Roman period there was a significant change in land use when these buildings were demolished (Vuolteenaho 2010). A timber-framed building was located a short distance to the east on the adjacent site (Pitt 1990, 11). However, there is no evidence to suggest that any of these buildings were associated with the cemetery.

The nature of the site and the areas available for investigation do not readily lend themselves to interpreting the cemetery's layout, but it appears that the distribution of burials was less dense in the east and south and much denser towards the centre where there were multiple inter-cuttings. Five north–south graves appear to have respected the east–west ditch, although one of these had also been severely truncated by two of the later burials. The most easterly of these graves was also much shorter, c.1.2m long, and may represent evidence for that relatively rare occurrence, a child burial, although no bone survived to support this hypothesis. It is suggested that children were often buried in separate cemeteries to adults, or in different parts of the same cemetery, but such a practice has not been observed at Old Ford.

A later, but north–south, ditch was dug after AD 270, and may have been an attempt to formally define the cemetery's western boundary. In the process it truncated a number of earlier burials and may subsequently have contributed to the apparent crowding. That notwithstanding, at least one burial, Grave [132], was cut through the backfilled ditch, demonstrating a possible lack of maintenance, but also the continuing usage of this burial ground. Unfortunately modern truncation beyond this point precluded establishing how far, if at all, the cemetery extended westwards.

Of the graves recorded in 1991, 23 (29.49%) were orientated north–south, 53 (67.95%) were orientated east–west, one was orientated north–west–south–east (1.28%), and one was of indeterminate orientation (1.28%) (Figs 3–4; Table 1). Ground conditions, presumably acidic soils, were not conducive for the preservation of skeletal material. Eleven of the graves, six of which were orientated east–west and five orientated north–south, were left unexcavated as construction works were not planned for this area.

Due to the degradation of the bone, determining the position of the body at the time of interment was only possible for some burials. All burials were extended and the vast majority were supine (on their backs), with only a single east–west example prone (face down); the last was also laid on a layer of chalk. Of those where it was possible to determine body orientation within the east–west graves all bar

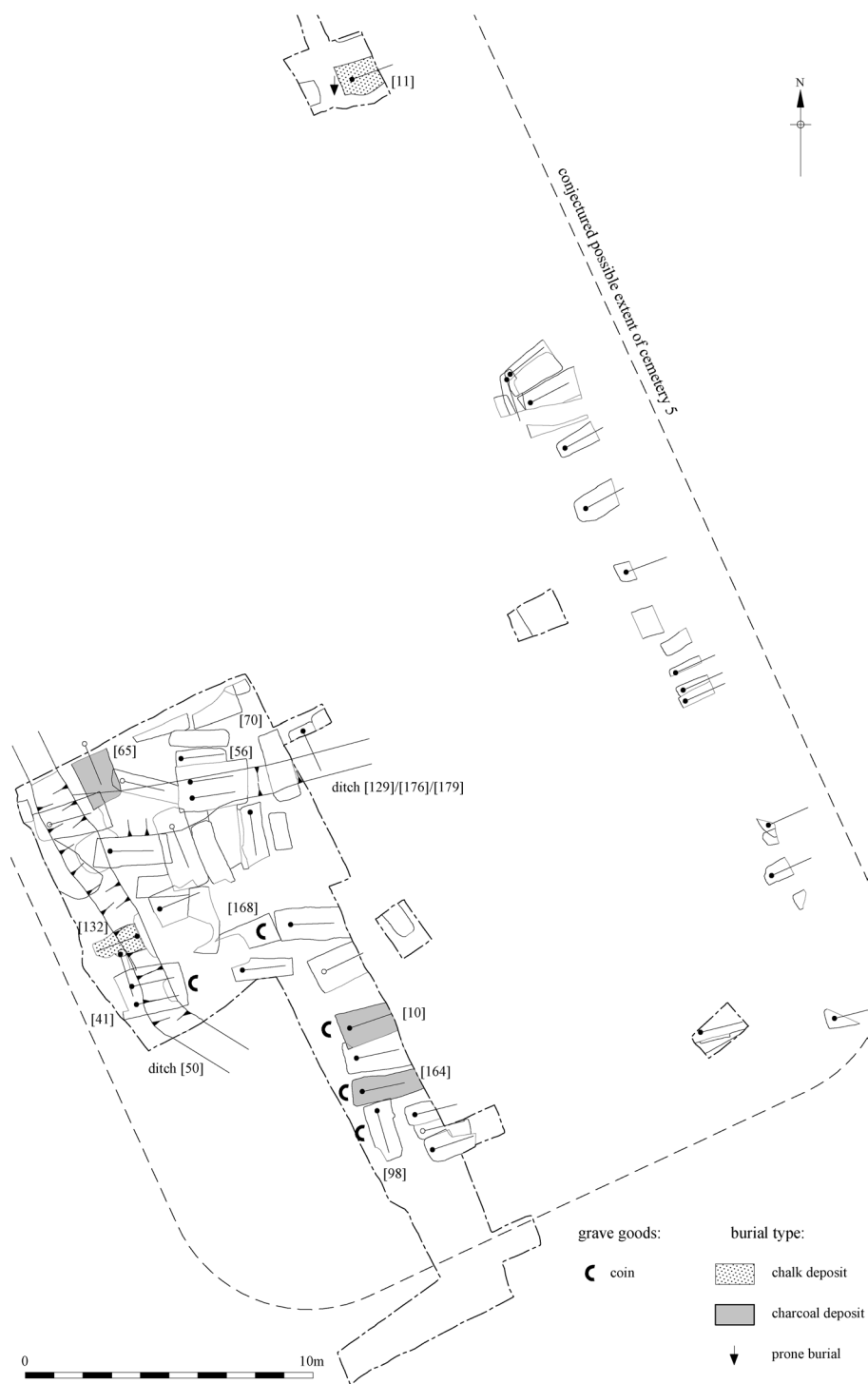


Fig 4. Detailed plan of the Ranwell cemetery, showing the 'special' graves and those with grave goods

one faced east, that is head to the west, and of those orientated north–south all faced south. It is presumed that all of the burials, with the exception of the one referred to above, were for adults, but osteological analysis has not been undertaken.

Several burials in this cemetery require special mention. There were two, possibly three, double burials, *ie* two coffins and two bodies within a single grave cut. One of the ‘grave cuts’ contained no staining for bodies or coffins, and there is therefore some doubt as to its interpretation. In the other two cuts, Graves [41] and [56], all the bones were badly degraded, and the bodies all faced east (Fig 4). There were no obvious grave goods in Grave [56] but pottery from the upper closing fill suggests a date after AD 270. In Grave [41] there were ceramics of a similar date to those recovered from Grave [56], but one of the two coins recovered from it, an irregular ‘Fallen Horseman’ type, provides a *terminus post quem* of AD 355–365 (DGLA coin spot dating form BOD91). This coin is the latest definitive evidence for the use of the cemetery. Coins were recovered from several grave fills, the most unusual being the Republican coin of Augustus found in a late 3rd-century grave, Grave [164] (see below).

Chalk burials have been a widely observed phenomenon in London’s Roman cemeteries (Barber & Hall 2000, table 7.1), and are

represented by two burials in the Ranwell cemetery as well as elsewhere in Old Ford (Fig 4). Both were orientated east–west, but one was a supine west-facing burial with one arm to the side and the other crossed over the pelvis, while the second burial was the sole example of a prone burial recorded at this cemetery. Bone preservation in these two burials was marginally better due to the alkaline properties of the chalk material.

Three burials are considered to be particularly unusual. Two east–west burials, Graves [10] and [164], were located close to one another towards the southern extent of the cemetery, and a north–south example, Grave [65], was in a more central location (Fig 4). These were differentiated from all the other interments in Old Ford, and possibly London as a whole, by their manner of burial. The two east–west bodies had been contained within wooden coffins which had been placed over a layer of charcoal spread across the base of the graves, whereas the north–south example was covered by a dump of charcoal. This is a highly unusual inclusion in Roman graves. However, during the 9th to early 12th centuries AD, the practice of burying a corpse with a layer of charcoal around, within or on top of the coffin or body was quite common (Gilchrist & Sloane 2005, 120).

There is little that can be said of the north–south example, Grave [65], as the bones

Table 1. Ranwell east cemetery characteristics

East–West	Number of burials	North–South	Number of burials	NW–SE	Number of burials
Head to W	29	Head to N	4	Cut only	1
Coffin stains / nails	6	Coffin stains / nails	8	-	-
Charcoal, head to W	2	Charcoal, head to N	1	-	-
Chalk, head to E	1	Chalk, head to N	0	-	-
Chalk & prone, head to W	1	Prone	0	-	-
Unexcavated	6	Unexcavated	5	-	-
Cut only	7	Cut only	5	-	-
E–W indeterminate	1	N–S indeterminate	-	-	-
Other indeterminate	1	-	-	-	-
Sub-total	54		23		1
Grand total					78

were very degraded and a large portion of it lay beyond the limit of excavation. Of the east–west examples the more northerly, Grave [10], was of a juvenile or young adult in a supine position. The other was also supine but of a more mature adult. However, in both cases the bones were degraded. The backfill of each east–west grave contained a single coin of late 3rd-century date, but of much more interest, and rarer, was that in Grave [164] there was also a Republican bronze *as* of Augustus, dated 40–28 BC. This hardly seems likely to have been attributable to casual loss; as a bronze coin it would not have been in circulation much after AD 70 (J Gerrard pers comm). It has been established that late 1st-century BC silver coins are present in late 3rd-century AD British hoards, but very few bronze coins are represented (Philpott 1991, 211). Presumably this coin had special meaning for the individual or was deposited as part of the closing ritual. A 1st-century BC coin from Cnidus (Turkey) was found in a 2nd-century cremation in St Albans (Philpott 1991, 212).

6 Armagh Road cemetery (Fig 5)

A small cemetery, possibly an extension to the Ranwell cemetery, was located a short distance to the north of it, in proximity to Armagh Road. In total three burials have been located, all the result of chance discovery. Two coffins were of stone and one of wood, and one of the stone coffins contained the remains of two individuals.

In 1972 during the redevelopment of a site known as McNerney's Beale Road Development (hereafter Beale Road) there was the chance discovery of a stone coffin (Owen *et al* 1973, 135–45; Schwab & Owen 1972, 27), although the findings were actually to the east of Beale Road much closer to Armagh Road. This coffin was orientated north–south and measured (externally) 2.07m by 0.71m and c.0.34m deep. It was cut from Oolitic limestone and traces of lead on the lid led the excavators to suggest it might originally have had lead brackets to hold the lid down.

Within the coffin was a supine skeleton, head to the south, facing north, right hand

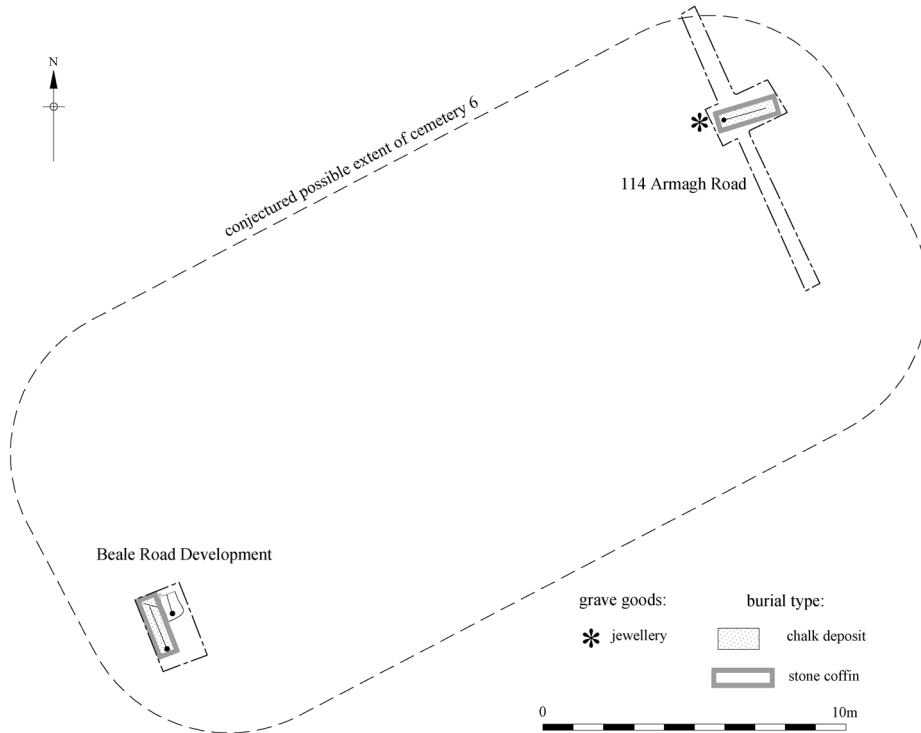


Fig 5. Armagh Road cemetery

crossed over the pelvic region and the left arm lying straight down the side of the body. It was lying on, and partly covered with, a layer of chalk. The occupant was a male aged 55–65 years, whose height was 1.65m (5ft 5in). His left tibia and fibula showed a well healed spiral fracture, and the positioning of the bones suggests the use of an orthopaedic splint (Owen *et al* 1973, 143). This indicates that the individual had access to a doctor or knew people who could set broken bones. The thoracic spine showed clear evidence of wear and tear, and two of the vertebrae were joined by bony growths. Poor oral hygiene was evident with five dental cavities on the non-biting surface of the teeth. One of the cavities had developed into an abscess that subsequently ruptured out through the jaw; a similar infection had affected Burial [331] at Lefevre Walk (see below). Owen summarised the Beale Road individual at the time of death as an old man who ‘suffered from marked osteoarthritis, had a discharging sinus on the face and possibly walked with a limp ...’ (Owen *et al* 1973, 143).

On removing the chalky material the partially disarticulated remains of the original occupant of the coffin were found at the feet of the later interment. These remains were of a female aged 30–35 years, whom one might speculate was either the wife or relative of the later occupant. At the time of death she was approximately 1.56m (5ft 1½in) tall. Advanced osteoarthritis was apparent in the spine of this individual, and wear and tear marks on the lower spine suggest she had also suffered a slipped disc. Analysis of muscle markings on the arm bones suggests that she was right-handed and that she probably endured a lifestyle of repetitive movement and lifting (Owen *et al* 1973, 142).

There were no obvious grave goods in the coffin, but within the cut at the south end was a complete shallow greyware bowl, possibly from the Alice Holt kilns, dated to after AD 250 (J Gerrard pers comm). Beneath the stone coffin was a fragment of a black burnished ware jar dated AD 250–400.

Another burial, on the east side of the coffin, had been cut through by both the coffin, and more recently a machine bucket. This too was orientated north–south, with the head to the south, but the lower part of the body had been destroyed by the machine

bucket. The skeleton had been laid in a wooden coffin (now decayed), apparently in a supine position. In common with confined skeletons from the nearby Ranwell cemetery, the remains were extremely fragile. Due to the degree of truncation and the fragility of the remains it was not possible to determine height or gender, but the teeth suggested the age at death as between 18 and 25 years (Owen *et al* 1973, 143).

In the same year there was another chance discovery of a stone coffin in front of 114 Armagh Road (Owen *et al* 1973, 136) (Fig 5). Again the sarcophagus was of Oolitic limestone, the lid of which measured 2.20m by 0.75m and the internal chamber 1.90m by 0.50m and 400mm deep. The coffin was, in contrast to the Beale Road example, orientated east–west and a late 3rd- or 4th-century coin was recovered from the fill above the coffin. The skeleton, laid on a deposit of chalk, was supine with the head in the west and the hands crossed over the pelvic region. The remains were of a female, aged between 25 and 30 years at death, who was approximately 1.65m (5ft 5in) tall, although the right humerus was 15mm longer than the left. This would obviously have affected the gait of the woman, and the fact that she also suffered with rickets presumably exacerbated this difficulty (Owen *et al* 1973, 141). As with the Beale Road female these remains also showed a life of repetitive strains and lifting; on this individual demonstrated by prominent muscular markings on the upper limb bones. The teeth demonstrated considerable wear, with the complete flattening of the dental cusps and the partial exposure of the dentine, presumably from the abrasive action of grit in the flour. A large dental cavity was also recorded on one of the lower molars.

A few personal items were buried with this woman: two hairpins, one of jet, the other of bone, were found near by and presumably were hair fasteners. The jet pin was highly decorated and lathe turned. A corroded iron key was found by her right hip and may originally have been fastened to the waist by a cord.

7 Lefevre cemetery (Figs 6–7)

This cemetery was first discovered during the construction of the Lefevre Walk Estate

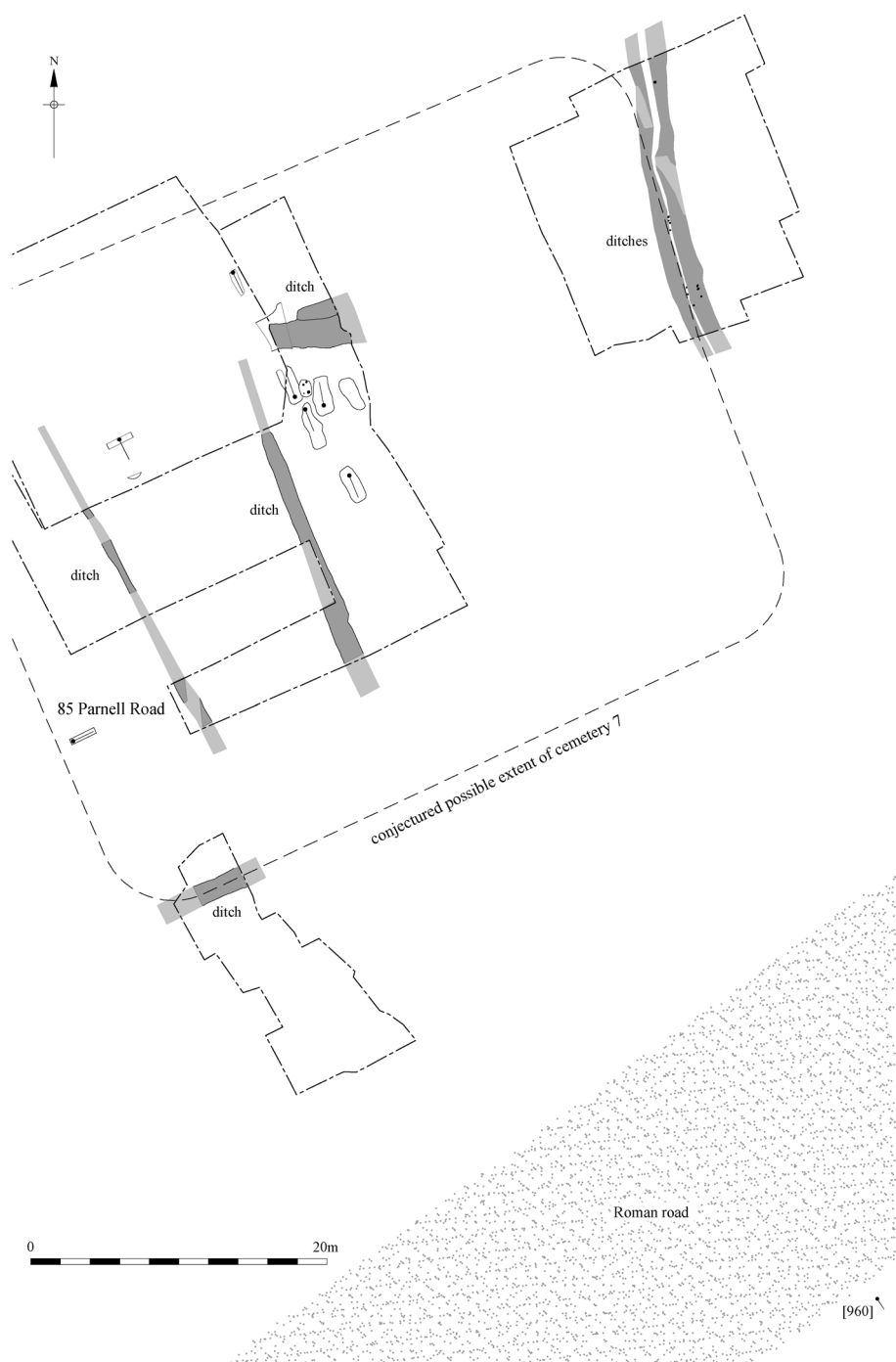


Fig 6. Lefevre cemetery

in 1971 when all features observed were designated as either late Roman ditches or pits, not graves despite the recovery of human

remains (Sheldon 1972, 105). The site was subsequently more fully investigated during further redevelopment in 1995–6. The cem-

etry is considerably smaller than the Ranwell example, comprising approximately ten inhumation burials.

There was very little evidence for any formal markers or boundaries for this cemetery, as the area had been compromised by modern construction activities. An east-west ditch, which had been re-cut on at least one occasion, may have formed the northern limit and was in part investigated in 1971 as Pit 3 (Sheldon 1972, 105, fig 3). At that time it was interpreted as a grave as human vertebrae were recovered from its fill, but later, when more fully investigated, this interpretation was disputed as no more skeletal material was recovered. A late 3rd-century coin was also recovered from this feature. It should be noted that at least one burial, Pit 8, was located north of this ditch, so the interpretation as a boundary marker may be suspect. All grave cuts were orientated north-south. One 'grave', Grave [347], contained no skeletal material, but both the shape of the cut and the range of finds contained within are indicative of it having been one. It was not clear if Pit 2 represented a separate grave or was in fact part of Pit 1 as only the curved southern extremity of it was recorded. No skeletal material or grave goods were apparent within the fill.

The first burial was found during the construction of a new playground in 1971 and at this time there was little archaeological control of the area. Designated Pit 1 (Fig 7), the feature was observed to be lying on a layer of chalk. The skull was of a male aged between 25 and 40 years at death. As elsewhere in Old Ford oral hygiene was not well practised and the teeth showed 'little wear and considerable caries' (Sheldon 1972, 101), suggesting that the individual ate fine food containing little roughage to wear down the teeth. Within the grave, to the side of the skull, were ceramic grave goods: a bulbous flagon, probably from the Much Hadham kilns, and an Alice Holt 'dog dish'. Flanking Pit 1, were two other narrow intrusions, both of which were probably graves, but the archaeological team had insufficient time to excavate them or the remainder of Pit 1 before the ground was machined away; other burials may also have been destroyed at this time.

One grave, Pit 5, was in part investigated

in 1971 and more fully in 1996 as Grave [333], containing Burial [341] (Brown *et al* forthcoming) (Fig 7). This is perhaps the most lavish burial recorded to date in Old Ford, despite the absence of a stone or lead coffin (or, apparently, a wooden one). The grave cut was 2.50m long, up to 1m wide and up to 340mm deep. The grave contained the remains of a young adult female, aged between 17 and 22 at the time of her death. She was supine and buried with her head to the south, facing north. The skeleton was in a relatively robust condition and was intact apart from the feet, which presumably were lost during the playground works of 1971. The right arm was flexed with the hand over the pelvis, the left arm was extended by her side, and both legs were extended. Grave goods were plentiful. Pottery fragments from the same vessel were located around and under the body and a beaker in 'black burnished' fabric was recovered from the area of the feet in 1971. A large piece of tile was placed on top of the knees but more importantly she was bedecked in a large amount of personal ornament (see below). Despite this woman's relative youth, it was evident she practised poor oral hygiene. She had cavities on 6 of the 29 teeth recovered, and there were carious lesions on the partially erupted wisdom teeth. Calculus was also recorded on her teeth; calculus is the build up of mineralised plaque deposits which are associated with a high starch intake, and often with a general lack of oral hygiene.

A short distance to the east was Grave [321] which was 2.55m long, 1.30m wide and up to 570mm deep. The presence of a wooden coffin was demonstrated by 23 iron nails. The grave contained an extended supine skeleton of an adult male, Burial [323], aged over 45. As with Burial [341], the skull was at the south of grave and the feet to the north. This individual was approximately 1.77m tall. Also in common with Burial [341], his right arm was flexed with the hand over the pelvis and the left arm extended as were both legs, but, unlike the other burial, no items of personal adornment or other grave goods were found, although some pottery fragments were recovered from the fill.

A number of conditions, for the most part degenerative, presented themselves on Skeleton [323]. There was severe joint

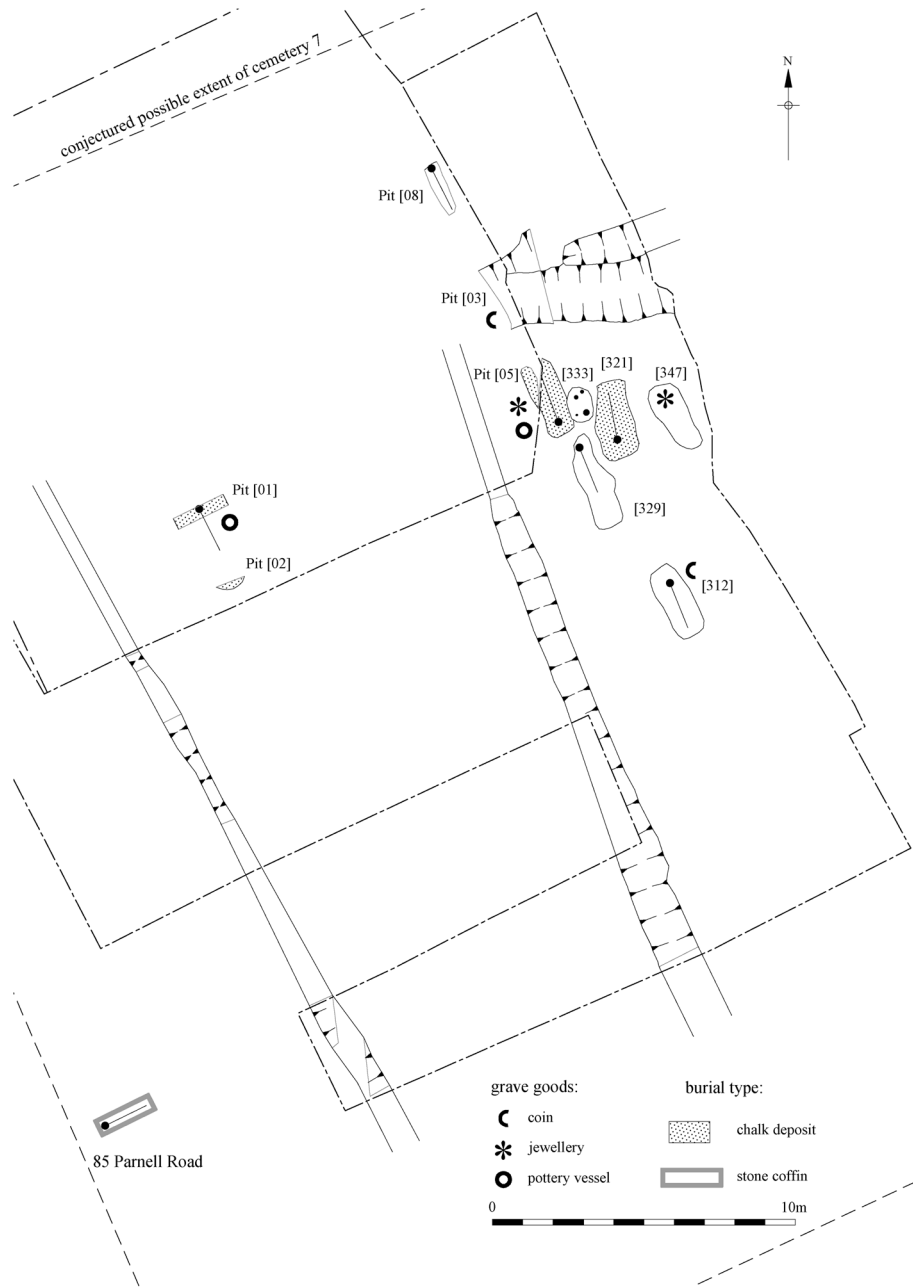


Fig 7. Details of 'special' graves and grave goods at the Lefevre cemetery

disease to the whole spine and less severely in the shoulder joints which presented itself as outgrowths of bone around the joint margin, known as osteophytes, and there was evidence for increased porosity of the joint surface. Osteophytes are usually associated

with abnormal stress being placed upon the joints, either through occupational factors, or simply by the normal wear and tear of the ageing process. Schmorl's Nodes, which result from the degeneration of the inter-vertebral discs, were recorded in several thoracic and

lumbar vertebrae and incipient arthritis in the shoulder joints was also indicated. Changes to the scapulae and clavicles provided further evidence for joint disease at the shoulder. Furthermore, extra bony growths (Enthesopathies) were recorded throughout the skeleton, but were especially apparent at tendon and ligament insertions. These, and other diagnostic changes, were most severe on the right side of the spine where there was also considerable alteration of the joint shape. The most noticeable enthesopathy was a bony projection on the 1st left metatarsal of the left foot, which would not only have deformed its shape but would have also caused some discomfort. The changes could be typical of the early stages of a condition known as diffuse idiopathic skeletal hyperostosis (DISH), the specific cause of which is unknown, but it often appears to be associated with obesity and possibly late onset diabetes. There was a fracture to the skull although this was well healed. It is also possible that the depressed skull fracture resulted in some degree of brain damage. Infections were also indicated on the skeletal remains: there were marks on the left tibia which are characteristic features of a non-specific infection, probably an inflammatory reaction resulting from trauma. A severe ear infection on the left side of the skull was noted, but as the bone appeared to be well healed, it was probably not active at the time of death. Unsurprisingly perhaps this individual also suffered dental caries and calculus (Dodwell 1996).

East of this was Grave [347], although no skeletal remains were recorded; as with many of the Ranwell cemetery burials, the skeleton may have dissolved through soil acidity. It is also possible that the remains were disinterred and reburied elsewhere some time later. Evidence for a wooden coffin was indicated by 11 nails, although no coffin staining was observed. The grave cut was 2.45m long, 1.08m wide to the north tapering to 780mm to the south. Although skeletal remains were absent, there were several finds from the base indicating a previous burial; indeed they were grouped in the middle of the feature as if previously over the pelvic region, possibly originally contained in a bag. The finds — a copper-alloy bracelet, a broken shale bracelet and

two finger-rings, one of iron and the other of silver, and broken pottery — were recovered from the fill.

South of Grave [333] was Grave [329] which was 2.55m long and 1.12m wide. It contained the remains of a supine adult female, Burial [331], aged between 26 and 45 at the time of death. There was no evidence for a coffin and neither were there grave goods, with the exception of a tile (*tegula*) fragment under the pelvis. In contrast to Burials [341] and [323] the burial had the head to the north, and was thus facing south. Both arms were flexed, with the right hand over the stomach and the left hand over the pelvis. Both legs were extended, but unfortunately the skull had, for the most part, been removed during the earlier estate development. That notwithstanding, from what remained it was clear that this female suffered oral discomfort. She had a 6mm hole in the surviving fragment of the left mandible which was an externally draining abscess, almost certainly active at the time of her death. There was also evidence of calculus. Whilst there was no evidence of serious bone trauma, she may have suffered from back pain as the lower back showed signs of incipient arthritis (Dodwell 1996).

Approximately 2m to the south of [329] was the final grave in this group, Grave [312]. The grave cut was 2.48m long and up to 1.15m wide with a maximum depth of 0.55m. Evidence for a coffin was provided by iron nails and an iron bar, the latter probably for bracing the casket, but found lying across the chest region of the skeleton. The grave contained an extended supine adult inhumation, Burial [326], of indeterminate sex, but probably male and of indeterminate age. The left arm was flexed with the hand over the pelvis but unfortunately the lower right arm and right hand did not survive. The skeleton demonstrated degenerative changes where the vertebrae of the neck had an altered morphology. There was also a possible transverse fracture of the fibula that resulted in the near fusion of the lower leg bones (Dodwell 1996). From the grave fill a copper-alloy coin, a *nummus* of Constantine II (AD 332), was recovered. Several pottery and ceramic building material fragments were also found.

To the north of the boundary ditch was

a further grave, Pit 8, probably orientated north–south. However, very little of this was recorded, but it was at least 1.50m long and 500mm deep. Part of a skull was seen in section, but no other parts of the body were revealed (Sheldon 1972, 105).

Located between Graves [321] and [333] and slightly truncating the south-east corner of the latter was a small rectangular, vertically sided pit. Cut through the base were four postholes, roughly one in each corner. 30 iron nails in the fill may represent evidence for a small wooden container, although their exact positions were not recorded. Also recovered from the fill was a copper-alloy pin. It is probable that this feature represented the position of a grave marker. A second grave marker may have been located to the south of Grave [312], but there were no postholes or other items within the fill to help to substantiate this.

In 1969 a stone coffin was found during groundworks opposite 85 Parnell Road (Sheldon 1972, 147 n 2). It contained a skeleton but there are very few other published details with the exception of it being orientated east–west, and that the skull was to the west.

There are two further burials from this part of Old Ford, but they do not originate from this cemetery. One was found during excavations in 1996; adult human skeletal remains, Burial [960], had apparently been placed, or even dumped, into partially infilled features close to the Roman road (Fig 6) (Brown *et al* forthcoming). Though extended and supine, there was little evidence of care being taken in disposal of the body. There was no evidence of a coffin and there were no grave goods. The skeleton was aligned perpendicular to the road, its head to the north. The skeleton was of an adult but the age and gender were unclear. The abraded, punctured appearance of the bone surfaces may be the result of saturation in water followed by root or animal action.

East of the Lefevre Walk Estate a stone coffin containing a skeleton was discovered in 1870 to the south of the platforms at Old Ford Station (an approximate location is shown on the 1870 OS map). The coffin was 2.05m (6ft 9in) long, 0.68m (2ft 3in) wide and 380 (15in) high. Within the coffin was a skeleton, but the reporter provided no

further information (Smith 1909–11, 235) (Fig 2, reference 2a).

8 Morville cemetery (Fig 8)

A small cemetery was located, first in the 19th century (Price 1870, 208) and again in 1972–3 (McIsaac *et al* 1979, 39–45), in the vicinity of 12–14 Morville Street (now part of the Tredegar Road Estate). The site is located c.300m south of the Roman road and c.470m west of the River Lea.

During building works in 1868 two stone coffins were uncovered and investigated. The first, Coffin 1, was constructed of Oolitic limestone and measured 1.88m (6ft 2in) by 0.60m (2ft) and was externally 0.40m (16in) deep. The body of the coffin had one rounded end, although the lid was rectangular and longer than the coffin itself. Coffin 2 was found 3m from the first, and was 2.18m (7ft 2in) long, 0.71m (2ft 2in) wide and externally 0.50m (1ft 8in) deep. It too was constructed from Oolitic limestone but was of regular rectangular form. Both coffins were orientated roughly north-east–south-west (Price 1870, 208).

Contained within Coffin 1 was the 'perfect skeleton of a female in excellent preservation' (Price 1870, 209). The skeleton, as shown in an illustration, was supine with the head to the north-east, and, surprisingly, with the feet in the rounded end of the coffin. The skeleton had been covered with chalk and a small (probably) Castor ware vessel was laid by the feet (identification by J Gerrard).

Adjacent to the rounded end of the coffin was a further 'burial', albeit of a completely different type. An amphora vessel, possibly a Dr 20, 0.61m in diameter, was set in the ground and contained the remains of two adult skeletons, but unfortunately no further details are provided. Such a burial is atypical, not only for the London region, but nationally. The use of amphorae as containers is well attested and several were, for example, recorded at *Londinium's* Eastern Cemetery but they always held cremated not disarticulated skeletal remains (Barber & Bowsher 2000, 23). This was not the case in this instance as Price categorically states that this was not a cremation burial (Price 1870, 211).

Coffin 2 was, if anything, even more

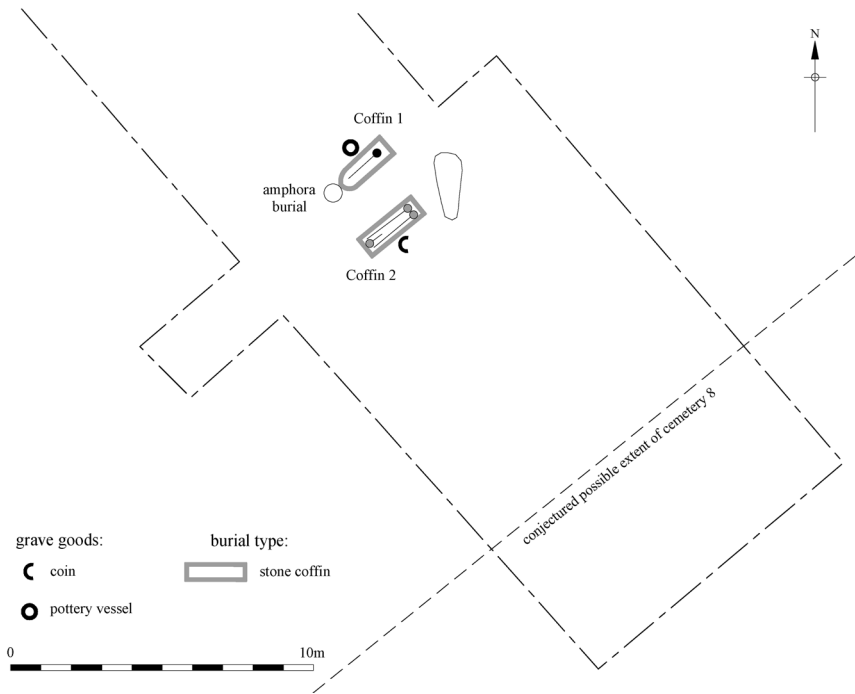


Fig 8. Morville cemetery

peculiar: 'It contained the skeletons of three adults, two males and a female, in perfect order. Two lay side by side; the third had been placed at the other end of the sarcophagus, and laid between the others. It would appear that one male had been interred subsequently, as he was lying at full length, whereas the body by his side had apparently been shifted to make room for the newcomer, and been buried sideways' (Price 1870, 211). Found near to the burials were coins identified as being 'two small brass [coins] of Probus [AD 276–282]', suggesting that the burials were of late 3rd-century date. Price also recorded that a sword was found near by in its scabbard!

Approximately a century after the first recording of Roman remains in Morville Street an opportunity arose for further work prior to the comprehensive redevelopment of the area during 1972–73 (McIsaac *et al* 1979, 39–49). This investigation identified two pits that may have marked the position of the previously excavated coffins, as well as a third described as a shallow, vertically sided rectangular pit, on a north–south orientation. Four iron nails were recovered

from the base of the feature and two crushed late 3rd- to early 4th-century pottery vessels (a jar and a bowl) were recovered from higher up in the fill. This feature was interpreted by the excavators as a possible burial, although evidence for a coffin or skeletal remains was absent (McIsaac *et al* 1979, 43). No other funerary remains were found in this location.

In 1855, at the 'Iron Building and Roofing Works', located along the east side of Morville Street a stone coffin was uncovered (not illus on Fig 8). It was orientated east–west, and the skeleton, described as being of an adult, was 'entire' (presumably supine) and the arms of the skeleton were 'crossed at the breast' (Cowper 1860, 192–4). The base of the coffin was covered with a layer of lime (probably chalk). The coffin itself measured 2.0m (6ft 7in) by 0.66m (2ft 2in) externally, and was undecorated.

Located close to the coffin, three pottery vessels were also found. One, a grey 'vase', apparently contained the bones of an infant, and was accompanied by two red ware vessels, possibly samian.

Reginald Smith (1909–11) reported that railwaymen recalled finding a stone coffin

on the site of the Carlisle Tavern located on the corner of Lacey Street and Mostyn Road, a short distance to the south-west of the Morville Street group. There were no further details provided (Fig 2, reference 8a).

9 Saxon Road cemetery (Fig 2)

A second small cemetery may have existed some distance to the south of the Roman road, this time focused on the Saxon Road area (Table 2). Details concerning these discoveries are confused, an issue which has been discussed elsewhere (Smith 1909–11, 232; Owen *et al* 1973, 145 appendix note).

Smith apparently had a good relationship with railwaymen as they also informed him that a stone coffin was found in the middle of Saxon Road in the vicinity of the Collingwood Estate, but there are no further details. Price is a little more forthcoming regarding the discovery of an east–west-orientated Oolitic coffin found close to the junction of Saxon Road and New Coborn Road (now St Stephen's Road). This coffin measured 1.98m (6ft 6in) by 0.63m (2ft 1in) and was 0.58m (1ft 11in) high. The skeleton was supine with the arms at the side of the body, and in common with a number of the Old Ford stone coffin burials, was covered in chalk. Approximately 0.60m south of the coffin a pottery assemblage was uncovered, comprising a minimum of 13 vessels, two of which contained the cremated remains referred to earlier (Table 2).

10 'Wick Lane' cemetery (Fig 2)

In 1856 Charles Roach Smith reported the finding of a lead coffin some time prior to 1844 (Roach Smith 1856, 308–11). The exact findspot was not determined but is traditionally located in Wick Lane opposite the site of the historic White Hart Inn (now demolished). Pottery vessels, some cinerary, were apparently found close by (but see above). However, it is possible that the location of the lead coffin was misreferenced, as what Roach Smith actually wrote was that the 'site of its discovery is a spot about 150 yards [137m] to the south of the Old Ford over the river at Stratford-le-Bow' (Roach Smith 1856, 310). This puts it well to the south of the road (see Fig 2), and this re-siting puts it in proximity to a large, recently

discovered masonry building (Humphrey & Seddon 2008).

The coffin was 1.42m (5ft 6in) long, a maximum of 0.38m (15in) wide and 0.23m (9in) high. It was constructed from sheet lead, with the two long sides bent upward from the base and the ends soldered to them. The lid, which overlapped the sides, was highly decorated, with cable moulding down the sides and across the centre in diamond patterns. A central panel displayed a swastika motif (RCHME 1928, 164). The coffin contained the skeleton of 'a young person' (the coffin was relatively small) and was laid within a chalk matrix.

RCHME reports that 'several other burials by cremation and inhumation were found in the same area' after 1866.

DISCUSSION

This paper proposes that it is possible to identify six separate inhumation cemeteries in Old Ford representing evidence for 103 separate graves and 107 individuals. The quality of the evidence is often patchy, particularly the 19th-century discoveries, and even where the recording is of a high standard, on occasion the poor preservation of the skeletal remains limits their analytical potential. However, it is possible to draw some provisional conclusions.

Spread across the cemeteries were 11 stone coffins or sarcophagi representing 10.78% of the total. Stone coffins are often proposed as being indicators of wealth, and as such the wealthy appear to be well represented in the Old Ford burial record. All but one was rectangular in shape and all were covered with rectangular lids, and were invariably undecorated. Four stone coffins were orientated north–south, four east–west (both 3.92%), and three were in an indeterminate position (2.94%). Unfortunately none were found during controlled archaeological excavation, although two, 114 Armagh Road and 85 Parnell Road, were excavated by archaeologists following their chance discovery. Philpott notes that stone coffins frequently are found in groups, although such grouping may only be two coffins, and that these groups often occur in urban settings (Philpott 1991, 59 n 5). The two adjacent coffins at Morville Street would

fit this pattern, as would the Armagh Road group. There were up to three stone coffins (apparently) from the Saxon Road / New Coborn(e) Road area, although the records for each are poor and the findspots imprecise. Stone coffins also frequently contained chalk fills, and of the eleven from Old Ford at least six had this treatment. In some cases the chalk was relatively thin, but in others it was thick enough to totally immerse the body.

At both the Armagh Road and Morville Street cemeteries there was evidence for either the re-use or continued use of the coffin, with more than one occupant contained within, and evidence for moving the remains of the earlier incumbents. It is possible that these particular coffins could have served as family vaults, with, for example, a husband or wife joining their partner on the occasion of their own demise. The Morville Street example (Coffin 2) is interesting in that it contained three individuals, and it is possible that a third adult was interred with his parents.

It is of some interest that a well appointed Roman building with *opus spicatum* flooring and a hypocaust system has been recorded in the vicinity of the Wick Lane cemetery (Humphrey & Seddon 2008), although it is not possible to positively associate the two. Interestingly, the Wick Lane lead coffin, which was elaborately decorated, was small and possibly intended for a child or adolescent, and was of a material again associated with wealth. If this lead coffin is added to those of stone, non-wood caskets represent 11.88% of the Old Ford total.

At Morville Street, the skeletal remains of two adults were found in an amphora in proximity to Coffin 1 (Fig 8). As noted above, this was highly unusual, if not unique in London, as amphorae are otherwise known to contain or accompany cremated remains. It is possible that these remains were originally laid out in the nearest coffin and were respectfully disinterred and reburied at a later date.

By far the greatest number of burials were either in wooden coffins, as evidenced by wood stains, iron nails or a combination of both. However, some graves contained no evidence for a container, for example, the burial of the lavishly adorned young woman at the Lefevre cemetery (Grave [333]) (Fig 7); although of course such evidence may

have been destroyed as part of the decay process.

A total of 29 north–south burials was recorded at the Ranwell and Lefevre cemeteries, of which seven could be demonstrated to have had the heads to the north and two with the heads to the south, both of the latter being found at Lefevre. One of the Ranwell examples was a charcoal burial. There were no east–west burials at Lefevre, but this orientation dominated the Ranwell cemetery with a ratio of more than 2:1.

Petts (2004) has suggested that in the 4th century there were two main burial traditions in England. Those belonging to Group 1 were east–west extended and supine, and were accompanied by very few grave goods, while Group 2 burials were orientated north–south and frequently contained grave goods, including jewellery; within this group there was greater variety of burial positions, including crouched and prone individuals (Petts 2004, 77–80). Petts observed that Group 1 burials tended to be part of orderly and well laid out cemeteries, probably managed, with little evidence for intercutting graves. Group 2 burials were often in less well managed cemeteries. However, sometimes clusters of both types of burials occur within the same cemetery. It appears that the layout of the Lefevre cemetery accords fairly well with the Group 2 characteristics (Fig 6), except for the evidence of clustering. The evidence from the Ranwell cemetery is, however, somewhat contradictory (Fig 4). There is some evidence that the east–west burials were laid out in rows, and east–west and north–south ditches are indications that the cemetery was planned or managed. However, five of the north–south burials were laid out in a closely spaced row, causing some intercutting of the graves. It is possible that this row respected the line of the adjoining east–west ditch. Others were isolated, including one of the three charcoal burials (see below).

Charcoal burials (Fig 4)

As noted above, the Ranwell cemetery contained three charcoal burials, one north–south, Grave [65], head to the north, the other two east–west, Graves [10] and [164], both with heads to the west. Such burial

types appear to be unique, certainly from the London perspective (none are listed in Philpott 1991 or Barber & Hall 2000, table 7.1), but are otherwise indistinguishable from other burials. It is possible that one such burial was uncovered at Burton Bradstock, Dorset, although the pottery suggests it might have been of late Iron Age date (Farrar 1966, 114). Grave [164] contained two coins in its backfill, one a Republican *as* dated to c.40 BC, but the other providing a *terminus post quem* of AD 270. The other two charcoal graves appear to be of a broadly similar date, one dated numismatically to after AD 270, and the other by pottery to after AD 250.

Chalk burials (Figs 4 and 7)

Within the Ranwell cemetery there were only two east–west chalk burials, of which one, Grave [132], was the only example of the head being positioned at the east end; the other individual, in Grave [11], was lying in a prone position, again the only instance of this class of burial. Three chalk burials were recorded at the Lefevre cemetery, two with the head to the south, Pit 5/Grave [333] and Grave [321], and the other, Pit 1, with the head to the north. As noted above, six of the stone coffins and the lead coffin also contained chalk. It has been suggested that chalk burials are associated with the Christian faith (for example, Green 1977, who also incorrectly cites that 12 chalk burials had been found in Old Ford prior to 1977), but such interpretations appear not necessarily to apply in Old Ford, where there were several north–south orientated examples. It should also be noted that the burial of the young woman (Burial [341]) in Grave [333] was laid on chalk, north facing and heavily adorned, not Christian burial attributes. Philpott acknowledged the difficulty in classifying characteristics of plaster, presumably including chalk, burials and suggests that the ‘principal unifying characteristics are the presence of substantial coffins and mausolea, and the location predominantly in urban and villa cemeteries, which suggest that rite was practised by the wealthy members of the urban curial and rural landowning classes, who were probably the same people’ (Philpott 1991, 95). Certainly some of the Old Ford chalk burials

fit these criteria; there is in some instances indication of wealth (lead or stone coffins, personal jewellery), but as to their class or origins this can only be conjecture. There is to date also no evidence for mausolea from the locality.

Prone burials (Fig 4)

Philpott defined four main sub-groups of prone burial: those with signs of coercion, those that were hastily or carelessly prepared, simultaneous double burials, or formal or semi-formal burials (Philpott 1991, 72–3). The Ranwell example fits none of these sub-groups particularly well, but is more identifiable with the last group, the formal or semi-formal burials. It was in a recognised cemetery, was orientated east–west, laid on chalk, and was therefore almost certainly contained within a coffin. There was no evidence, however, for decapitation or other body modifications. Whilst many prone burials were sited on the periphery of a cemetery, this was not the case of the Ranwell individual. There was no evidence that any of the Ranwell double graves contained prone skeletons. In the Eastern Cemetery of *Londinium* 96.7% of the inhumation burials were supine and only 3.3% were prone, showing that this rite of burial was practised only occasionally (Barber & Bowsher 2000, 87).

Skeletal remains

The study of the skeletal remains has been shown to be of considerable importance, not only demonstrating evidence of disease and deficiency, but also providing indicators of economic status or diet. If the Old Ford data set was larger, there would be potential to compare the individuals recovered from the various cemeteries to see if there were significant differences in the age or gender of these disparate populations. Unfortunately, of the 107 inhumations recorded to date at Old Ford only eight (7.48%) have been recorded in sufficient detail to provide such information: three from the Armagh cemetery and five from the Lefevre cemetery, the remaining example being from the 114 Armagh Road coffin. These are too few and too disparate to be statistically viable, but

they do provide an initial insight into the buried population of Old Ford.

Of the nine individuals all were adult, four were females, four were males and one was indeterminate. In terms of stature all but one individual was within the height range determined of the population at large: men between 159 and 178cm, with a mean height of 169cm, and women between 150 and 168cm, with a mean of 159cm (Roberts & Cox 2007, 254). The female burial, [341], at Lefevre Walk, was well above the mean at 174cm tall, and was the second tallest individual in this sample, exceeded only by the male in the same cemetery, Burial [323], who was 177cm tall (Dodwell 1996).

Six of the individuals demonstrated evidence of dental problems, for the most part caries and dental calculus. Of those with cavities, the majority had more than one, including the youngest person, who aged not more than 22 at death had six cavities. Nationwide there was a marked increase of these conditions in the Romano-British population when compared with the pre-Roman population and this is presumed to be in part a result of an increased consumption of fermentable carbohydrates (sugar) in cereal crops as well as more exotic fare such as figs and dates (Roberts & Cox 2007, 251). The other aspect, of course, was poor or limited oral hygiene, which is demonstrated by the presence of calculus (also observed on the Lefevre cremation). Analysis of burials from the Eastern Cemetery of *Londinium* has shown a low incidence of dental caries (7.3%) in the teeth of that population (Barber & Bowsher 2000, 283; Barber & Hall 2000, 114). It is suggested that this low incidence is a result of a relatively sugar-free diet and/or good oral hygiene. The Old Ford sample was not quantified in the same way but it is clear that the average is higher. Two individuals demonstrated 15% or more of their teeth with caries, one was described as having 'several' cavities, and evidence was also presented on some of the others. One may assume from this a generally poor level of oral hygiene (evidence of calculus was recorded on three of the Lefevre individuals), but it could be partly due to a high level of cereal consumption. Four of the Lefevre individuals also demonstrated evidence of tooth loss before death and one

woman under the age of 30 had such wear to her teeth that she had flattened the cusps and worn away the enamel (Dodwell 1996). A further progression of the decay process was demonstrated in two individuals as abscesses. In both cases, one male and the other female, the abscesses were active at the time of death and drained through holes in the jaw (Owen *et al* 1973, 143; Dodwell 1996). This was likely to have been both painful and unsightly.

Many of the individuals demonstrated evidence of general wear and tear, presumably through their daily activities, age, lifestyle or diet. The two youngest individuals demonstrated no obvious pathologies. Within the next group, aged 25–40, there was some limited evidence of change, especially to the spine. For example, the Beale Road female showed signs of osteoarthritis in the spine, and changes to the lower lumbar vertebrae indicated a slipped disc. In addition the muscle marks on the right humerus were pronounced, indicating the individual had been right-handed and involved in heavy lifting (Owen *et al* 1973, 142). However, a slightly older female from the Lefevre cemetery demonstrated nothing more than incipient arthritis in her lower back (Dodwell 1996).

Not surprisingly, the older population (aged 40–65) demonstrated more evidence of severe or advanced conditions, although the oldest person present was not in the worst state of health. This individual, the male from Beale Road, was one of those with an active abscess, and also had osteoarthritis, with two vertebrae joined by degenerative outgrowths of bone. In addition he had a well healed fracture of the left tibia and fibula; the alignment of the repairs suggests the use of an orthopaedic splint (Owen *et al* 1973, 143).

The individual at Lefevre Walk not buried in a grave and of indeterminate age, Burial [960], displayed some signs of alteration to the neck vertebrae, but more clearly suffered a fracture to one of his legs, the healing of which resulted in the fusing of the lower leg bones (Dodwell 1996).

Perhaps the most remarkable individual was one recorded at Lefevre Walk, Burial [341]. The remains were of a tall male (177cm) aged over 45 years, whose skeleton exhibited severe degenerative joint disease of the spine

and to a more limited extent of the shoulder joints. These were mostly demonstrated as bony outgrowths known as osteophytes; such features are usually demonstrated where the individual had undergone periods of increased stress on the joints, through say lifting weights, hauling loads *etc.*, or simply by the normal wear and tear of the ageing process. This individual possessed Schmorl's Nodes, which represent evidence for weight bearing stress on the spine during teenage years (Roberts & Cox 2007, 259). He had several other degenerative modifications to his bones, in particular the spine, and may also have presented evidence of suffering from diffuse idiopathic skeletal hyperostosis (DISH). Bone alteration in his left foot would both have been painful and have made walking difficult. A healed fracture to the skull may have caused the individual some brain damage, but of course this is unproven (Dodwell 1996). There are a few contradictions in this character, in that DISH and to a lesser extent caries suggest being well fed and overweight, but the wear and tear distributed throughout his skeleton appear to attest to a life of hard work and manual handling. It is possible that some, but presumably not all, of the heavy work was done as a young man, as indicated by the Schmorl's Nodes. DISH is a rare condition in the Roman period with evidence for it from only nine sites (Roberts & Cox 2007, 260), one of which was the Eastern Cemetery of *Londinium* where several examples were observed (Barber & Bowsheer 2000, 286).

There was one set of remains that seems out of place for someone who presumably lived in a relatively rural setting and therefore should have had easy access to fresh food. The remains were of a woman, aged 25–30, who, somewhat surprisingly, suffered from rickets, as demonstrated by marked bowing of the lower leg bones (Owen *et al* 1973, 142). Rickets is a manifestation of Vitamin D deficiency in a child (osteomalacia in adults). This vitamin is obtained from foods such as oily fish, but particularly from sunlight, and the condition is rarely seen in the skeletal remains of the Romano-British population. This individual also had one leg 15mm shorter than the other, considered to be a congenital condition, and presumably she walked with a distinct limp. In the Eastern Cemetery

of *Londinium*, a child aged approximately six years at death also suffered from this condition. The individual apparently came from a family with some wealth as the casket was of lead and malnutrition presumably was not the cause; analysis of the bones suggests the child was unable to digest sufficient nutrients (Barber & Bowsheer 2000, 286, 325).

The nine individuals, some with incomplete analysis, have demonstrated a range of conditions and complaints. There appears to have been an abnormally high incidence of dental cavities amongst such a small sample group, leading in at least two cases to the formation of abscesses. Such decay, and in parallel, the presence of dental calculus, may have been the result of a more sugary diet, whatever the origin of the sugar. A rich lifestyle may also be reflected in the incidence of DISH, but it is possible that the onset of this condition followed the head injury, leading a formerly active man to follow a much more sedentary lifestyle.

Evidence of a hard lifestyle is demonstrated in many of the individuals, with emphasised ligament and muscle marks on the bony surface. In one instance they were so pronounced that it was possible to suggest right-handedness. It was not possible in a single instance to provide a cause of death but this is usually the case unless a disease or trauma is unequivocally apparent.

Grave goods (Figs 4, 5, 7–10)

There are surprisingly few examples of grave goods from across the cemeteries, and many of the goods were found by antiquarians. There were no discoveries from the Ranwell cemetery, in spite of the unusual nature of five graves. Several burials contained coins, all 3rd- or 4th-century in date, with the exception of a single Republican example, but none were in close proximity to the deceased's body, for instance in the mouth. Coins were deposited in this location in order to pay Charon, the ferryman, to cross the Styx. It has recently been suggested that coins deposited in the grave fill may represent offerings by mourners during the funeral process, although accidental loss cannot be excluded (Brown 2007, 127).

One of the stone coffins at Morville

Street contained a small Castor ware (Nene Valley) jar close to the left ankle. In the close proximity of another of the Morville Street stone coffin burials were three ceramic vessels, consisting of an urn, a shallow dish and a 'vase' containing the bones of an infant (Cowper 1860, 192–4). Within the grave backfill for one of the Beale Road (Armagh Road cemetery) coffins a shallow dish was found on its south side. At the Lefevre cemetery occasional pottery vessels were recovered: located to the side of the skull in Grave/Pit 1 were two vessels (Fig 7), a Much Hadham flagon and a 'dog dish', possibly from Alice Holt, and Grave [333] contained a black burnished beaker, dated AD 350–400, which was found at the feet of the woman (Sheldon 1972, 103–7). Unfortunately too few vessels have been recorded during the recent Old Ford cemetery investigations for meaningful interpretation. Antiquarian reports of Roach Smith and Stock suggest that the eastern cemeteries at Old Ford contained large numbers of ceramic vessels. A scrutiny of the drawing accompanying Stock's note indicates a variety of pieces and dates (Stock 1849). Of the seven items shown, one could not be identified, but of the others there was a North Kent or Highgate Wood beaker with barbotine dot decoration, dated AD 50–250; a face pot dated AD 240–400; a 2nd-century urn, probably used as a cremation urn; a Moselkeramik jar with barbotine decoration dated AD 200–275; a bowl and a flagon, both dated c.AD 50–200 (J Gerrard pers comm). Face pots are regularly found in religious areas and one from London's Western Cemetery contained a cremation (J Hall pers comm).

There was very limited evidence for the inclusion of personal adornments in any of the Old Ford graves. The young woman who suffered from rickets appears to have been dressed when buried, as suggested by the two hairpins found near the skull and an iron key from her pelvis region. The pins were both decorated, and their inclusion suggests the hair was 'dressed' for burial; the choice of jet for one was perhaps to protect the female deceased from evil spirits (Allason-Jones 1996, 16; Puttock 2002, 101). This pair is the only recorded instance of hairpins from Old Ford burials, and surprisingly few were found at *Londinium's* Eastern Cemetery (Barber &

Bowsher 2000, 119). The iron key, found by the right hip, suggests a personal item and may originally have been attached to the waist by means of a cord or belt. Keys have occasionally been found in other graves in Britain, as far north as York, but for the most part they have been found in the southern counties. As well as being a domestic or household item, keys in graves may have served a symbolic function, perhaps as 'an obvious and widespread symbol of hope in the face of death' (Black 1986) or an individual's own key to the underworld.

Grave [347] at the Lefevre cemetery contained no evidence for a skeleton or coffin, but its size, shape and location indicate that it had been a grave (Fig 7). It is possible that the skeleton had completely dissolved, as at the Ranwell cemetery, or that the body/remains had been disinterred. What remained, however, was a small cluster of objects in the centre of the grave, which comprised two finger-rings and two armlets. One ring was of silver and the other was of copper alloy, but was in a fragmentary state. One armlet was also of copper alloy with debased and undecorated snake's head terminals, and the other, which was incomplete, was of shale or lignite (Crummy *et al* forthcoming), a close relative of mystical jet.

Grave [333] at the Lefevre cemetery, containing the remains of a young female, Burial [341], was on the face of it as unpretentious as the others in this cemetery, with no evidence found for even a wooden coffin. However, as the remains were underlain with a layer of chalk, it is likely to have been contained in a coffin. The individual was buried with several items of jewellery: a glass bead necklace formed of 145 individual small beads, a bracelet of jet beads on her right wrist, a copper-alloy bracelet on left forearm, a gold ring with intaglio on the middle finger of her left hand, and an iron ring on the ring finger of her left hand (Fig 9).

The necklace was composed mostly of 114 blue beads, of which exactly 100 were of rectangular section, interspersed with green, red, turquoise and gold-in-glass beads in a variety of shapes. Necklaces composed of small glass beads are generally a 4th-century phenomenon, with parallels at London, the Lankhills cemetery in Winchester, and Butt Road cemetery in Colchester (Barber

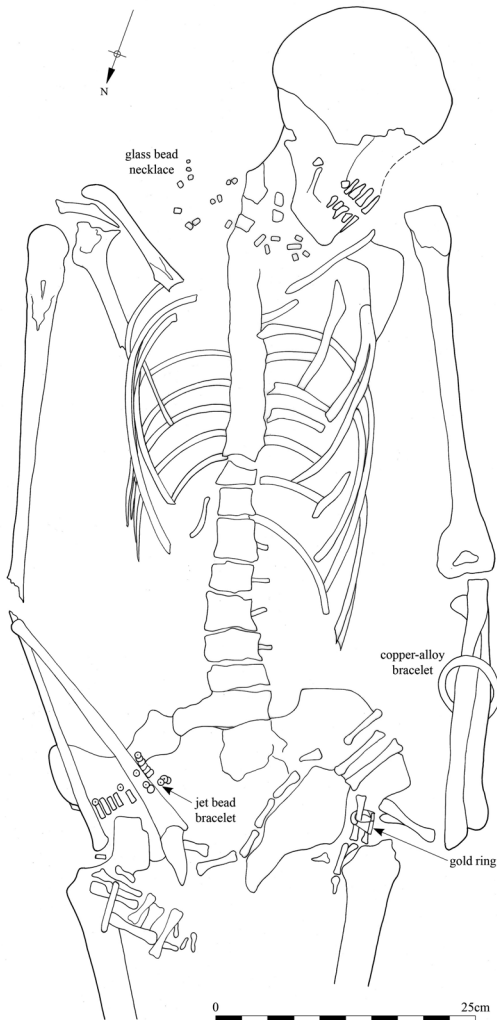


Fig 9. *Supine female burial [341] from the Lefevre cemetery, showing her array of jewellery: a bead necklace, a copper-alloy bracelet on her left forearm, two finger-rings on her left hand, and a bead bracelet on her right wrist*

& Bowsher 2000, 118, 219; Leary *et al* forthcoming; Cool 2010, 291–6; Crummy *et al* 1993, 40, 50–4, 136–43, table 2.54, 161, table 2.67).

The jet armlet worn on the right wrist was segmented and composed of 11 rectangular beads and 51 circular disks that had been drilled and presumably connected with cord; it had an estimated diameter of 105mm. The jet armlet possibly acted as a personal

insurance to protect the wearer as jet was thought to have magical properties.

The copper-alloy bracelet was plain and similar in style to that from Grave [347], but of more specific interest is that on the outside of the object were the mineralised remains of a textile which was shown to have been flax. The cloth was of a relatively coarse weave and it is thought to have been part of a linen winding sheet rather than part of the woman's clothing. An iron ring worn on the third finger of the left hand appeared to have had a plain bezel, but broke up on being lifted, preventing better description. A fine gold ring with a decorated bezel and intaglio mount was positioned on the forefinger of the left hand. The stone intaglio is decorated with two facing mice with raised tails and was almost certainly cut in the 1st or early 2nd century, but remounted during the 3rd or 4th century (Crummy *et al* forthcoming; Henig 2008, 234) (Fig 10).

Burial [341] is rather unusual as this young woman was buried with a variety of jewellery, whereas for the most part within Roman burial customs, only one category of personal ornament was worn in the grave, for example a single bracelet, a group of bracelets or a bracelet on each arm (Croom

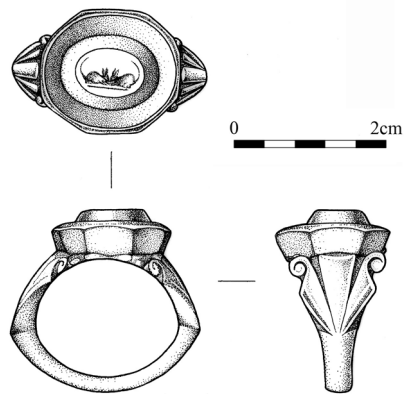


Fig 10. *The gold finger-ring with a decorated bezel and intaglio from female burial [341] from the Lefevre cemetery*

2007, 289). However, this burial possessed three different categories: necklace, bracelets and rings, and it should not be forgotten that a complete black burnished ware beaker also

accompanied the remains. This is paralleled by graves at Butt Road, Colchester, where one burial possessed a variety of hairpins, armlets, a finger-ring and necklace (Burial [537]), while another was accompanied by a silver penannular brooch, several armlets, finger-rings and a bone comb (Burial [647]) (Philpott 1991, 340 table A30), and a third by four bracelets, three finger-rings and a bead necklace (Croom 2007, 289). As to why a person might have been accompanied by so much jewellery, it has been suggested that such items were thought to have been imbued by the spirit of the owner (Allason-Jones 1996, 16–17; Wardle 2000, 118). This spirit could become malignant if the material were passed on and so it accompanied its owner to the afterlife. In instances where young women are buried with jewellery, such items may represent a dowry and as such ‘the malignant powers of those who died before their time were feared to a greater extent’ (Wardle 2000, 118). Whether this was a dowry or not it accompanied the body in its entirety to the security of a grave.

None of the grave goods from Old Ford were unique or particularly unusual in this context, even if some items were quite exceptional, such as the gold finger-ring (Fig 10). A range of items is represented, including ceramic vessels, jewellery, and animal bones. One class of material apparently missing from all of the Old Ford cemeteries is glass vessels, although these are routinely found in the cemeteries of *Londinium* and Southwark (Barber & Hall 2000, table 7.1).

Who is the buried population?

Assuming a nominal number of cremations, say 20, at Old Ford, there is evidence for almost 130 individuals having been buried in the vicinity of the settlement. To this figure one could add an estimated 70–100 extra burials from the unexcavated portion of the Ranwell cemetery, bringing the total to a minimum of 200 individuals. Not a large number when compared with the Eastern cemetery of *Londinium* or Southwark, but a major difference with *Londinium* and Southwark is that both were urban centres of considerable magnitude. At Old Ford this was not the case. To date a mere handful of structures have been located despite one of

the most intense sequences of investigations to have been undertaken within Greater London. It is possible that the Romano-British settlement was actually focused on the river crossing and its junction with the two Roman roads, the one imposed in c.AD 50 and recorded crossing the Lefevre Walk Estate (and by Stock and others), and the other marked by Old Ford Road / Wick Lane, with a probable pre-Roman antecedent. Otherwise excavations have revealed a largely agricultural landscape, some relatively small-scale industries, and a masonry building by the River Lea, the status of which is under consideration. Present evidence therefore does not indicate a large settlement in the vicinity of Old Ford, but does not necessarily preclude it.

If there was not a large resident population at Old Ford where did these cemetery populations come from? There is no evidence from the skeletal remains to support death by acts of violence either through war or civil unrest. Disease is a possibility, especially those that leave no mark on the bone. Perhaps sufferers of plague or other contagious diseases from *Londinium* were buried away from the city. However, as demonstrated above, the Ranwell cemetery at least was in operation for a number of years, with burials both intercutting one another and also straddling boundary ditches. The presence of cremation burials is also indicative of a long practice of burial in this location, and therefore epidemics as a significant contributor may be ruled out.

It has already been demonstrated that there was not a single cemetery, but rather that there were several separate cemeteries. Of these at least two, Morville cemetery (Cemetery 8) and Saxon Road cemetery (Cemetery 9), lay some distance to the south of the road and may represent several extended family groups who dwelt on nearby farmsteads. Another, Wick Lane (Cemetery 10), was possibly associated with the recently found, well-apportioned building, and others may yet be located in this vicinity.

All the remaining cemeteries are located to the north of the road and in relatively close proximity to it, although the Old Ford station sarcophagus was south of this line. Two cremation cemeteries, Wick Lane cremation cemetery (Cemetery 1) and

Lefevre cremation cemetery (Cemetery 3), were both located closer to the older, pre-Roman road, now marked as Old Ford Road/Wick Lane. As such it is possible that these were two of the earliest cemeteries established at Old Ford, and in use when the 'new' road was being kept clear of peripheral activities in the 1st and 2nd centuries.

Archaeological excavations have demonstrated that the Ranwell and Lefevre cemeteries are not part of the same entity, as significant non-cemetery activity, including evidence for a clay and timber building interpreted as a barn type structure (Pitt 1990, 21), has been identified between the two, and similarly the Lefevre and Station cemeteries were separated by an expanse of fields or agricultural activities. A similar pattern presumably also existed east towards the river. There is no evidence for boundaries between the Armagh Road cemetery and Ranwell cemetery, but these are, for reasons discussed above, presumed to be separate.

There is as yet no definitive answer but it seems that Roman Old Ford was largely an agricultural landscape bisected by the strategic London–Colchester road, with some residential and industrial roadside activity. In addition to the agrarian boundaries, it appears that several small cemeteries had also been established alongside or close to this important road, but, importantly, the orientations of many fields and graves reflect that of the northern road. It is possible therefore that many of these graves do not hold residents of Old Ford, but were largely occupied by people from *Londinium* or its hinterland. It is moreover possible that the pattern seen here, approaching the river crossing, was repeated along the length of the road from Aldgate to the Lea. It has long been recognised that the cemeteries skirting *Londinium* were insufficient to contain the populations of four centuries, and perhaps many of the 'missing' were

buried considerable distances away from the city along the major routes, including this. It is perhaps a contentious proposition, and it is possible that future archaeological investigations in the area of Wick Lane/Fish Island will reveal evidence of a more nucleated settlement from which a larger buried population was generated. At present, however, we have the dichotomy of very few buildings and a relatively large buried population in Old Ford, whereas archaeological excavations in *Londinium* have revealed evidence of significant numbers of dwellings, producing population estimates of more than 25,000 persons for the 1st and 2nd centuries AD (Swain & Williams 2008, 40). Furthermore, while the numbers of individuals known from the cemeteries of *Londinium* and Southwark are relatively large, they do not represent more than a small proportion of the estimated population of these two urban centres.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am grateful to a number of people who have assisted with the compilation of this paper, through the provision of data, comments, or illustrations: Josephine Brown for plan illustrations and for reading the draft text; Cate Davies for illustrations associated with Burial [341]; James Gerrard for assessing pottery illustrated or described in earlier reports; Natasha Dodwell for osteological analysis; Jenny Hall for editing the text and making numerous suggestions to improve it; Cath Maloney and the LAARC staff; Krysia Truscoe and the GLSMR; Kieron Tyler at MoLAS (now MOLA); and the staff at the Guildhall Library. Finally I am appreciative of the work of all antiquarians and more recent archaeologists who, through the endeavours of their labours and recording, have made this paper possible.

gbrown@pre-construct.com

Table 2. List of burials

Number	Site address	Burial Type	Orientation	Description	Grave goods	Lime	Reference
Cremations							
1	Wick Lane Cemetery. Centre of Old Ford Road, on the east corner of Wick Lane by White Hart Inn	Cremation		Urns containing burnt bone pre-1844.			Roach Smith 1856, 310
2	'Station' Cemetery similar location as above	Possible cremations		Further complete vessels located during cutting for railway.			Stock 1849, 392
3	Lefevre Cremation Cemetery Lefevre Road Estate (TQ 3697 8372)	Cremation		In 1969 the staff of John Laing Construction recorded a cremation probably of the 1st century. Two vessels presumably from a single feature at the collapsed edge of a drainage trench. They comprised a jar and a flagon, the former containing cremated bone. The cremated bone was analysed and revealed an incomplete assemblage from an early 20s adult. The remains are tentatively ascribed as female.	Flagon not containing bone. The jar was Alice Holt ware and the flagon of Verulamium ware & both dated to mid-2nd century. Also 11 fragments of sheep/goat, mandible of young piglet & bird bones.		Creswell & Sheldon 1979, 87-93
4	Saxon Road Cremations Saxon Road / Corbona Road, 60 yards S of Roman Road.	Cremations		Near a stone coffin (see below) were 'pottery vessels, which included two cinerary urns containing bones.	Also 2 globular jugs, a thumb pot, a vase with a hatched pattern, a vase with hatched pattern, other vases, a plain bowl, a two handled cup & a flat bowl.		Price 1870, 206-8

Number	Site address	Burial Type	Orientation	Description	Grave goods	Lime	Reference
Inhumations							
5 Ranwell Cemetery							
Ranwell East Estate BOD 91							
1	Grave [10].	Inhumation	E-W	Supine burial [54], young adult or juvenile. Coffin stain. Charcoal. Head to W.	Pot in upper fill [09] AD 250-400 & two coins AD 270-285 (irregular <i>antoninianus</i>) pot from 2nd fill [44] AD 200-400.	Charcoal	Pitt 1991
2	Grave [12]	Inhumation	N-S	Burial [13] only back of skull survived. Coffin stain. Head to N.	Pot in upper fill [11] AD 300-400.	N	Pitt 1991
3	Grave [27]	Inhumation	E-W	Supine burial [42]. Possible juvenile. Head to W.	Pot in upper fill [28] AD 350-400.	N	Pitt 1991
4	Grave [30]	Inhumation	E-W	Supine burial [47], very degraded. Head to W.	Pot in upper fill [29].	N	Pitt 1991
5	Grave [33]	Inhumation	N-S	No remains, no coffin stain, but size of cut suggests child burial. Cut only.	Pot in fill [32] AD 200-400.	N	Pitt 1991
6	Grave [34]	Inhumation	E-W	Burial [39] skull only. Head to W.	Pot in upper fill [25] AD 300-400.	N	Pitt 1991
7	Grave [36]	Inhumation	N-S	Burial with coffin stain but no remains.	Pot in upper fill [35] AD 300-400.	N	Pitt 1991
8	Grave [37]	Inhumation	Probably E-W	Very truncated. No bone, body as stain.	Pot in fill [38] AD 200-400.	N	Pitt 1991
9	Grave [41] double burial	Inhumations	E-W	1) Burial [89]. Supine bone generally very degraded; skull, some limb and vertebrae. Head to W. 2) Burial [97]. Supine bone generally very degraded. Head to W.	Pot in upper fill of double grave [40] AD 270-400. Coins in [40] 1 irregular fallen horseman cAD 355-365 & irregular <i>antoninianus</i> AD 270-285. Pot in top fill above skeleton [88] undated.	N	Pitt 1991
10			E-W			N	Pitt 1991

Number	Site address	Burial Type	Orientation	Description	Grave goods	Line	Reference
11	Grave [56] double burial	Inhumations	E-W	1) Burial [78]. Bone very degraded but some enamel surviving. Coffin stain. Head to W. 2) Burial [93] but only body stain, Coffin stain. Some enamel surviving. Head to W	Upper fill of double grave [55] AD 270-400.	N	Pitt 1991
12			E-W			N	Pitt 1991
13	Grave [61]	Inhumation	E-W	Supine burial [73]. Extended & very degraded, head to W.	Upper fill AD 250-400.	N	Pitt 1991
14	Grave [63]	Inhumation?	Roughly E-W	No remains, no coffin stain. Cut only.	Pot from upper fill [62] AD 250-400.	N	Pitt 1991
15	Grave [65]	Inhumation	N-S	Burial [122]. Bones badly degraded. Coffin stain. Charcoal dump on top of skeleton. Head to N.	Pot in upper fill [66] AD 250-400.	Charcoal	Pitt 1991
16	Grave [70]	Inhumation?	E-W?	Possible double burial based on size of cut burial. No bone, no stain. Cut only.		N	Pitt 1991
17	Grave [75]	Inhumation?	E-W	No remains, no coffin stain but 1 nail.		N	Pitt 1991
18	Grave [77]	Inhumation	E-W	Supine burial [142]. No bone, body as stain. Coffin stain & nails.	Pot in upper fill [76] AD 180-400 & lower fill [112] AD 250-400. Bronze object in [76].	N	Pitt 1991
19	Grave [81]	Inhumation	N-S	Body stain [94] but no remains. Nails.	Pot in upper fill [80] AD 200-400.	N	Pitt 1991
20	Grave [83]	Inhumation	N-S	Coffin stain but no remains	Pot in upper fill [82] AD 200-400.	N	Pitt 1991
21	Grave [98].	Inhumation	N-S	Burial [84]. Very degraded. Head at N.	Pot in upper fill [52] AD 250-400, coin in fill [59] AD 260-320 Follis.	N	Pitt 1991
22	Grave [102]	Inhumation	E-W	Burial [107]. Body stain only. Coffin stain. Teeth survive. Possible juvenile. Head to W.	Pot in fill [101] AD 300-400.	N	Pitt 1991
23	Grave [106]	Inhumation	N-S	Burial [111]. Very degraded & truncated. Head to N.		N	Pitt 1991
24	Grave [116]	Inhumation?	N-S	No bone, no coffin stain. Nails.	Pot in fill [115] AD 120-200.	N	Pitt 1991

Number	Site address	Burial Type	Orientation	Description	Grave goods	Lime	Reference
25	Grave [123]	Inhumation	NW-SE	Burial [126]. Very decayed, only tooth enamel survived. Coffin stain. Head to W.	Pot AD 150-400.	N	Pitt 1991
26	Grave [132]	Inhumation	E-W	Burial [131]. Very degraded but with chalk layer [148]. Head to E.	Pot in upper fill AD 200-400.	Y	Pitt 1991
27	Grave [135]	Inhumation?	E-W	Burial. No bone, no stain. Cut only.		N	Pitt 1991
28	Grave [137]	Inhumation?	N-S	Burial. No bone, no stain. Cut only.		N	Pitt 1991
29	Grave [143]	Inhumation?	NW-SE	Burial. No bone, no stain. Cut only.		N	Pitt 1991
30	Grave [147]	Inhumation	E-W	Burial [156]. Supine burial, stain only. Coffin stain. Cut by ditch. Head to W.	Pot in upper fill [145] AD 250-400.	N	Pitt 1991
31	Grave [151]	Inhumation	E-W	Burial [150]. Represented by teeth only. Head to W.	Pot in upper fill [149] AD 250-400.	N	Pitt 1991
32	Grave [164]	Inhumation	E-W	Burial [162]. Very degraded, only part of skull & legs surviving, mostly body stain. Coffin stain. Layer of charcoal. Head to W.	Pot in upper 2 fills [138] AD 250-400; [153] AD 150-400. Coin of Augustus (c.40-28BC) from charcoal & coin from upper fill dated AD 270-285 (Victorinus / Tetricus I).	Charcoal	Pitt 1991
33	Grave [168]	Inhumation	E-W	Burial with coffin stain but no surviving skeletal material.	Pot in upper fill [167] AD 250-400 & coin AD 270-285 (irregular <i>antoninianus</i>).	N	Pitt 1991
34	Grave [170]	Inhumation	E-W	Burial [207]. Very degraded with only skull & larger long bones surviving. Head to W.	Pot in upper fill AD 250-400.	N	Pitt 1991
35	Grave [172]	Inhumation	N-S	No surviving skeleton but some coffin stain?		N	Pitt 1991
36	Grave [174]	Inhumation	N-S	Very truncated burial. No bone, no stain.		N	Pitt 1991
37	Grave [185]	Inhumation?	N-S	Bones, no stain; only possibly a grave.	Pot in fill AD 250-400.	N	Pitt 1991
38	Grave [187]	Inhumation	N-S	Burial [188]. Skull in N, S facing. Head to N.	Pot in fill AD 150-250.	N	Pitt 1991

Number	Site address	Burial Type	Orientation	Description	Grave goods	Line	Reference
39	Grave [194]	Inhumation	E-W	Burial [193]. Body supine but very degraded. Coffin stain. Head at W.	Pot in upper fill AD 250-400	N	Pitt 1991
40	Grave [196]	Inhumation?	N-S	No bones, no stain, but nails.	Pot in fill AD 150-400.	N	Pitt 1991
41	Grave [204]	Inhumation	E-W	Burial [210]. Very degraded. Only skull & long bones survive. Head to W.	Pot in fill AD 200-400.	N	Pitt 1991
42	Grave [206]	Inhumation?	N-S	No skeleton or coffin stain, but nails.		N	Pitt 1991
43	Grave [213]	Inhumation	?	Indeterminate orientation. Coffin stain but no bone, no stain.	Pot in fill [211] AD 240-400	N	Pitt 1991
44	Grave [215]	Inhumation	E-W	Burial. No bone, no stain.	Pot in [214] AD 250-400	N	Pitt 1991
45	Grave [218]	Inhumation	E-W	Supine burial [217]. Very degraded, only parts of a long bone surviving. Head to W.	Pot in fill [216] AD 250-400	N	Pitt 1991
46	Grave [220]	Inhumation?	N-S	No bone, no stain.		N	Pitt 1991
47	Grave [235]	Inhumation	E-W	Burial [234] Skull frags and stain of right arm. Nails. Head to W.		N	Pitt 1991
48	Grave [239]	Inhumation	E-W	Burial [238]. Skull fragments only. Head to W.		N	Pitt 1991
49	Grave [241]	Inhumation	E-W	Burial [246] Only tooth enamel survived. Coffin stain. Nails. Head to W.		N	Pitt 1991
50	Grave [243]	Inhumation	E-W	Burial [244]. Only skull survives. Coffin stain. Head to W.		N	Pitt 1991
51	Grave [250]	Inhumation	E-W	Burial [249]. Very degraded bone. Skull fragment and right humerus stain only. Head to W.		N	Pitt 1991
52	Grave [251]	Inhumation	E-W				Pitt 1991
53	Grave [256]	Inhumation	E-W	Burial. No bone, no stain. Coffin stain. Nails. Possible child/juvenile.		N	Pitt 1991
54	Grave [259]	Inhumation	E-W	Burial [258]. Adult skull. Head to W.		N	Pitt 1991
55	Grave [260]	Inhumation	E-W	Burial. No bone, no stain, coffin stain only.		N	Pitt 1991
56	Grave [264]	Inhumation	E-W	Burial [266]. Very degraded part of skull survives. Head to W.		N	Pitt 1991
57	Grave [270]	Inhumation	E-W	Burial [269]. Very degraded only part of skull and arm survive.		N	Pitt 1991

Number	Site address	Burial Type	Orientation	Description	Grave goods	Line	Reference
6 Armagh Road Cemetery							
1	Beale Road development site (TQ 3677 8358).	Inhumation	N-S	Accidental discovery of stone sarcophagus (oolitic limestone). It was 2.07m long x 0.71m wide c.340mm deep. Grave cut 30-40mm wider than coffin. Skeleton lying extended on back with head at S and partly covered with plaster.	No grave goods in coffin, but shallow dish found to south of coffin.	Y	Owen <i>et al</i> 1973, 135-45
2	Beale Road development site (TQ 3677 8358).	Inhumation		On removal of plaster second, but partly disarticulated skeleton revealed.		N	Owen <i>et al</i> 1973, 135-45
3	Beale Road development site (TQ 3677 8358).	Inhumation	N-S	On east side of sarcophagus was a further skeleton, lower portion of which was accidentally removed by machine. It appeared to have been in an extended position. Iron nails around body suggest burial in wooden coffin. Head at S.			Owen <i>et al</i> 1973, 135-45
	Opposite 114 Armagh Road in 1972. (TQ 3679 8360)	Inhumation	E-W	Accidental discovery of stone sarcophagus. Lid measured 2.20 x 0.75m. Chamber (internal dimensions) 1.90 x 0.50m and 400mm deep. Body of skeleton had been lain on its back in extended position, head at W feet at E hands meeting at pelvis.	Two pins near skull one of bone, the other of jet. Iron key found by right hip. The jet pin was highly decorated and lathe turned. Both probably hair items.	Y	Owen <i>et al</i> 1973, 135-45
7 Lefevre Cemetery							
1	Opposite 85 Parnell Road (TQ 3693 8360)	Inhumation	E-W	Accidental discovery of stone coffin containing a skeleton. Head to W. Found 1969.			Sheldon 1972, 147 note 2
2	Parnell Road & Appian Road	Inhumation	N-S	A pit, Pit 1, was exposed in southern section of trench. On west side floor of 'pit' was a skull (to N). Two features flanked the grave and could have been burials, but there was insufficient time to excavate them before removal by mechanical excavator.	To side of skull were two vessels 1) Bulbous flagon; 2) dish presumably grave goods.		Sheldon 1972, 101

Number	Site address	Burial Type	Orientation	Description	Grave goods	Lime	Reference
3	Parnell Road & Appian Road	Inhumation	N-S	South of Pit further excavation possible. Pit 2 in central slot. Small fragment remained and might represent end of burial Pit 1.			Sheldon 1972, 103-7
4	Parnell Road & Appian Road	Inhumation	N-S	The most northerly, Pit 8 at least 1.50m long and 500mm deep. Part of a skull seen in section, but no other parts of body revealed.			Sheldon 1972, 103-7
5	Parnell Road & Appian Road	Inhumation		Central pit, Pit 3, was 2.20m wide and 750mm deep and investigated in more detail than other two. Irregular in shape & appeared to incorporate part of an earlier gully.	Late 3rd-century coin from fill.		Sheldon 1972, 103-7
6a	Parnell Road & Appian Road	Inhumation		Southerly pit, Pit 5, 1m long and 400mm deep. In cutting back the section a beaker was found resting on the sand in the N. Burnt flints and charcoal in fill of feature. Remainder of feature excavated in 1995 as Grave [333].	Black burnished beaker, similar to Crambeck ware, dated AD 350-400	Y	Sheldon 1972, 103-7
6b	Lefevre Walk Estate redevelopment 1995-6	Inhumation	N-S	Grave [333] 2.50m long, up to 1m wide and up to 340mm deep. Almost certainly part of Pit 5 (see above). The grave contained a supine young adult skeleton [341]. Head to S. The right hand was flexed with hand over the pelvis and left arm was extended. Both legs were extended. There was no evidence for a coffin. The individual was buried with several items of jewellery. Pottery fragments from same vessel were located around and under the body & a large piece of tile was placed on top of the knees.	Glass bead necklace (over 130), bracelet of jet beads on right wrist, copper-alloy bracelet on left forearm, gold ring with intaglio of middle finger left hand and iron ring on ring finger of left hand.	Y	Dodwell 1996

Number	Site address	Burial Type	Orientation	Description	Grave goods	Line	Reference
7	Lefevre Walk Estate redevelopment 1995-6	Inhumation	N-S	Grave [347] was 2.45m long, 1.08m wide in N tapering to 780mm in S, 11 nails were recovered, probably from a wooden coffin. No skeletal remains were found. However, several finds suggest the feature was a burial and the finds were grouped in the middle of the feature as if previously over the pelvic region.	Copper-alloy bracelet, finger-ring, broken shale bracelet and broken pottery.	N	Dodwell 1996
8	Lefevre Walk Estate redevelopment 1995-6	Inhumation	N-S	Grave [329] was 2.55m long, 1.12m wide. It contained a supine adult inhumation [331], orientated N-S, with head to N. There was no evidence of a coffin and neither were there any grave goods, with the exception of a <i>tegula</i> fragment under the pelvis. Both arms were flexed with right hand over the stomach and left hand over the pelvis. Both legs were extended. The skull had for the most part been removed during the earlier development.	Several sherds of pottery recovered from the fill.		Dodwell 1996
9	Lefevre Walk Estate redevelopment 1995-6	Inhumation	N-S	Grave [312] orientated N-S was 2.48m long up to 1.15m wide and maximum depth of 0.55m. It contained an extended supine adult inhumation [326]. Evidence for a coffin was provided by iron nails and an iron bar. Head to N.	Several pottery & cbm fragments were recovered from the fill. Two copper-alloy coins recovered from the burial: Constantine II AD 330-345, Constantine II <i>nummus</i> AD 332.		Dodwell 1996
10	Lefevre Walk Estate redevelopment 1995-6	Inhumation	N-S	Grave [321] was orientated N-S, was 2.55m long, 1.30m wide and up to 570mm deep. The grave contained an extended supine adult skeleton [323]. Skull was at S of grave feet to N. Evidence for a wooden coffin demonstrated by 23 nails. The right arm was flexed with the hand over the pelvis and the left arm was extended. Both legs were extended. No items of personal adornment were recovered.	Pottery fragments were recovered from the fill.	Y	Dodwell 1996

Number	Site address	Burial Type	Orientation	Description	Grave goods	Lime	Reference
11	Lefevre Walk Estate redevelopment 1995-6	Inhumation	N/A	Human skeletal remains [960], were apparently placed, or even dumped, into partially infilled features close to the Roman road. Though extended and supine, there was little evidence of care being taken in the burial of this adult. The body was without grave goods, and there was no evidence of a coffin. The skeleton was aligned perpendicular to the road, its head to the N.	N	N	Dodwell 1996
12	Near the end of the platform at Old Ford Station	Inhumation	N-S	A stone coffin containing a skeleton found in 1870. It measured 6'9" long, 2'3" wide and 15" high.	N	?	Smith 1910, 235
8 Morville Street							
1	R/o 12-14 Morville Street	Inhumation	NE-SW	Two stone coffins parallel to one another. Coffin 1 measured 5'6 1/2" x 2" x 16". Contained female skeleton with head to NE and feet to SE. The amphora contained the remains of two adult skeletons, presumed to have been original occupant of grave. Discovered in 1868.	Beside the ankle small vase in castor ware & an amphora.	Y	Price 1870, 208 Smith 1910, 233
2	R/o 12-14 Morville Street	Inhumation	NE-SW	Coffin 2 measured 7'2" x 2'4" x 20" and contained skeletons of two males and a female. Two were side by side & other at other end.	Found nearby were two coins of Probus (AD 276-282) and remains of iron sword with bronze sheath.	Y	Smith 1910, 233
3	14-20 Morville Street (TQ 8715 8320)			Excavations undertaken in vicinity of burials found in 19th century. Two rectangular features containing 19th-century pottery may be where two sarcophagi were removed (see above). A third cut, was rectangular in plan with step sides interpreted as a grave cut, although no remains were found.			McIsaac <i>et al</i> 1979

Number	Site address	Burial Type	Orientation	Description	Grave goods	Line	Reference
4	Carlisle Tavern at the SW corner of Lacey Street.	Inhumation		R Smith says railway men remember a stone coffin being found on the site Morville Street. Burials (see above) were stored at same place after the excavation & it may be one of the coffins referred to here.			Smith 1910, 234
5	Iron Church and House Works which lay between Tredegar Road and Mostyn Grove	Inhumation	E-W	Undecorated Oolitic limestone coffin / sarcophagus. Arms apparently crossed over chest. Presumably supine.	3 vessels; 'vase' containing bones of infant, urn & shallow dish.	Y	Cowper 1860, 192-4
9 Saxon Road Cemetery							
1	Saxon Road / Coborn Road, 60 yards S of Roman Road	Inhumation	E-W	A stone coffin 6'6" x 2'1" containing a skeleton of an adult male. Burial supine with arms to side.		Y	Price 1870, 206, (but see Smith 1910 above)
2	Saxon Road / Coborn Road, 60 yards S of Roman Road			Stone coffin containing the skeleton of an adult male found in 1865 at the site of the first house in Saxon Road, west of the corner with New Coborn Road.			Smith 1910, 232
3	Saxon Road on the Collingwood Estate	? Inhumation		Railway men also remember a coffin being found probably after 1868. No details given and this may represent the rediscovery of a burial found earlier in the vicinity.			Smith 1910, 234
10 Wick Lane Cemetery							
1	Centre of Old Ford Road, on the east corner of Wick Lane by White Hart Inn	Inhumation		Lead coffin with skeleton. Lid decorated cable moulding arranged in plain lines along the sides and in diamonds down the centre with a swastika in one panel. Skeleton said to be of a young adult.		Y	RCHME 1928, 164
Total 105							

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- ALLASON-JONES (1996), L Allason-Jones *Roman Jet in the Yorkshire Museum*
- BARBER & BOWSHER (2000), B Barber & D Bowsher *The Eastern Cemetery of Roman London: Excavations 1983–1990* MoLAS Monograph 4
- BARBER & HALL (2000), B Barber & J Hall 'Digging up the people of Roman London: interpreting evidence from Roman London's cemeteries' in I Haynes, H Sheldon & L Hannigan (eds) *London Under Ground: the Archaeology of a City*, 102–20
- BLACK (1986), E W Black 'Romano British burial customs and religious beliefs in south-east England' *Archaeol Journ* 143, 201–39
- BROWN *et al* (forthcoming), G Brown, B Bishop, A Douglas, J Leary, V Ridgeway & R Taylor Wilson *Traffic Control to Development Control: Archaeology at the Lefevre Walk Estate and Adjacent Sites in Old Ford* PCA Monograph
- BROWN (2007), L Brown 'Charon's obols? A case study in the role of coins in Roman burial ritual' in C Fenwick, M Wiggins & D Wythe (eds) *TRAC 2007 Proceedings of the Seventh Annual Theoretical Roman Archaeology Conference, London 2007*, 121–30
- CLARK *et al* (2008), J Clark, J Cotton, J Hall, R Sherris & H Swain *Londinium and Beyond: Essays on Roman London and its Hinterland for Harvey Sheldon* CBA Res Rep 156
- COOL (2010), H E M Cool 'Objects of glass, shale, bone and metal (except nails)' in P Booth, A Simmonds, A Boyle, S Clough, H E M Cool & D Poore *The Late Roman Cemetery at Lankhills, Winchester: Excavations 2000–2005* Oxford Archaeology Monograph 10, 266–309
- COWPER (1860), B H Cowper 'Stone coffin and Roman pottery found at Bow' *Trans London Middlesex Archaeol Soc* 1, 192–4
- CRESWELL & SHELDON (1979), J B Creswell & H Sheldon 'The Lefevre Road cremation burial' in McIsaac *et al* (1979), 87–93
- CROOM (2007), A Croom 'Personal ornament' in Todd (2007), 288–98
- CRUMMY *et al* (1993), N Crummy, P Crummy & C Crossan *Excavations of Roman and Later Cemeteries, Churches and Monastic Sites in Colchester, 1971–88*, Colchester Archaeol Report 9
- CRUMMY *et al* (forthcoming), N Crummy, M Henig, C Johns, P MacDonald, W Manning, I Riddler & P Walton Rogers 'The small finds' in Brown *et al* (forthcoming)
- DODWELL (1996), N Dodwell 'Lefevre Walk human remains archive report' in Taylor-Wilson (1996)
- FARRAR (1966), R A H Farrar 'Roman inhumation burials, at Burton Bradstock and Chick-erell, Dorset' *Proc Dorset Natural History and Archaeol Soc* 87, 114
- GILCHRIST & SLOANE (2005), R Gilchrist & B Sloane *Requiem: the Medieval Monastic Cemetery in Britain* MOLA
- GREEN (1977), C Green 'The significance of plaster burials for the recognition of Christian cemeteries' in R Reece (ed) *Burial in the Roman World* CBA Res Rep 22, 46–53
- HENIG (2008), M Henig 'Intaglios from Roman London' in Clark *et al* (2008), 226–38
- HUMPHREY & SEDDON (2008), R Humphrey & G Seddon *An Assessment of an Archaeological Watching Brief on Land at 419 Wick Lane, Old Ford, London Borough of Tower Hamlets* MoLAS-PCA unpub report
- LEARY *et al* (forthcoming), K Leary, B Sudds & V Ridgeway *Roman Burials in Southwark: Excavations at 52–56 Lant Street and 56 Southwark Bridge Road* PCA Monograph
- McISAAC *et al* (1979), W McIsaac, I Schwab & H Sheldon 'Excavations at Old Ford, 1972–1975' *Trans London Middlesex Archaeol Soc* 30, 39–96
- OWEN *et al* (1973), W J Owen, I Schwab & H Sheldon 'Roman burials from Old Ford, E3, February and May 1972' *Trans London Middlesex Archaeol Soc* 24, 135–45
- PETTS (2004), D Petts 'Burial in Western Britain AD 400–800: late antique or early medieval?' in R Collins & J Gerrard (eds) *Debating Late Antiquity in Britain AD 300–700* BAR Brit Ser 365, 77–88
- PHILPOTT (1991), R Philpott *Burial Practices in Roman Britain. A Survey of Grave Treatment and Furnishing AD 43–410* BAR Brit Ser 219
- PITT (1990), K Pitt *Preliminary Report on the Archaeological Excavations at 72a Armagh Road and PRB 95, London E3* DoGLA, Museum of London unpub report
- PITT (1991), K Pitt *A Report on the Archaeological Excavations in Area M of the DICE Project Ranwell East Estate, Bow E3* DoGLA, Museum of London unpub report
- PRICE (1870), J E Price 'Notes on Roman remains recently discovered in London and Middlesex' *Trans London Middlesex Archaeol Soc* 3, 195–222
- PUTTOCK (2002), S Puttock *Ritual Significance of Personal Ornament in Roman Britain* BAR Brit Ser 327
- RCHME (1928), Royal Commission on Historical Monuments (England) *An Inventory of the Historical Monuments in London 3: Roman London*
- ROACH SMITH (1856), C Roach Smith 'Notice of a leaden coffin, of early fabric discovered at Bow' *Archaeologia* 31, 308–11
- ROBERTS & COX (2007), C Roberts & M Cox 'The human population: health and disease' in Todd (2007), 242–72

- SCHWAB & OWEN (1972), I Schwab & W J Owen 'A Roman burial group from Bow' *London Archaeologist* 2(2), 27–31
- SHELDON (1971), H Sheldon 'Excavations at Lefevre Road, Old Ford, E3, Sept 1969–June 1970' *Trans London Middlesex Archaeol Soc* 23(1), 42–77
- SHELDON (1972), H Sheldon 'Excavations at Parnell Road and Appian Road, Old Ford, E3, February–April 1971' *Trans London Middlesex Archaeol Soc* 23(2), 101–47
- SMITH (1909–11), R Smith 'A stone coffin and other Roman burials found at Old Ford in East London' *Proc Soc Antiq London* 23, 230–8
- SWAIN & WILLIAMS (2008), H Swain & T Williams 'The population of Roman London' in Clark *et al* (2008), 33–40
- STOCK (1849), E Stock 'Proceedings of the association October 11' *Journ Brit Archaeol Assoc* 4, 392
- TAYLOR-WILSON (1996), R Taylor-Wilson *An Archaeological Excavation at Lefevre Walk Estate, Old Ford, E3, An Interim Report (Volumes 1 & 2)* PCA unpub report
- TODD (2007), M Todd (ed) *A Companion to Roman Britain*
- VUOLTEENAHO (2010), J Vuolteenaho with I Betts, A Pipe & B Richardson 'New evidence for the London–Colchester Roman road and adjacent settlement at Bow / Old Ford' *London Archaeologist* 12 No. 8, 223–7
- WARDLE (2000), A Wardle 'Burial goods and pottery cremation urns' in Barber & Bowsher (2000), 117–41