A REVIEW OF THE 50th LAMAS CONFERENCE OF LONDON ARCHAEOLOGISTS HELD AT THE MUSEUM OF LONDON ON 16 MARCH 2013

The 2012 Ralph Merrifield Award was presented to Peter Marsden, formerly a colleague of Ralph's at the Guildhall Museum and organiser of the first LAMAS conference. To celebrate the 'golden' anniversary of the conference it is planned to fully publish the five papers presented during the afternoon session with an introduction by Peter Marsden in next year's *Transactions*.

CLEARING THE DEAD: EXCAVATIONS AT STEVENS STREET, BERMONDSEY

Alexis Haslam (Pre-Construct Archaeology Group)

The site was situated on the northern edge of an area of relatively high ground known as the Bermondsey Eyot in the London Borough of Southwark. Excavations were carried out here by Pre-Construct Archaeology between July and September 2011. Evidence of Roman activity consisted of two parallel linear masonry foundations and three further associated features, all of which had been robbed out. These features appear to represent the truncated remains of a late Roman masonry building, the foundations of which may have been robbed out during the middle Saxon period (*c.*AD 650–850) to provide building material for the nearby minster church (Fig 1). Other evidence of Roman activity was provided by a wealth of residual finds, including the hand from a copper-alloy statuette holding a libation bowl, late Roman pottery, 113 coins (mostly dating AD 330–378), box-flue tiles, fragments of imported marble veneer and various pieces of masonry, including fragments of Bath and Barnack stone, plus part of a column shaft.

The earliest evidence of Saxon activity on site was provided by a residual early 8th-century sceatta. During *c.*1050–1100 the site was extensively quarried for gravel. It is assumed that this activity was connected with the establishment of the Cluniac Priory of St Saviour's during the 1080s, which replaced a Saxon minster church. The backfill of the quarries, in addition to the Roman finds mentioned earlier, contained the *ex-situ* remains of at least 185 inhumation burials, one of which has been radiocarbon dated to cal AD 690–882. It is assumed that these individuals represent charnel material, which had been cleared from the site of the new priory. Evidence from excavations at Bermondsey Square (BYQ98) suggests that the cloisters of the new priory may have been built over the Saxon cemetery, which was largely cleared as part of this development. There were also three *in-situ* burials dating to *c.*1000–1160, interpreted as part of the priory burial ground. A medieval stone-lined subterranean structure appears to have served as an ossuary until 1450–1500, when it was converted into a cesspit. After the Dissolution during 1550–1630, a series

Fig 1. One of the robbed out Roman foundations discovered at Stevens Street, showing the discarded masonry (Photo: Alexis Haslam, PCA)

of linear horticultural bedding trenches was dug across the site.

EXCAVATIONS IN LAMBETH PALACE GARDENS

Antonietta Lerz (Museum of London Archaeology)

An evaluation was undertaken in the palace gardens to examine the anomalies revealed by a geophysical survey. This work revealed fragments of several late Roman linear ditches, which when combined with previous discoveries confirm that there was a late Roman settlement of some description here. The most significant discovery was an early Saxon (*c.*AD 400–550) oval-shaped sunken-floored building, the edge of which was ringed by postholes. Finds from the backfill of the structure included 32 circular perforated lead weights, which lay in a broad row against the north-eastern edge of the building (Fig 2). The function of these objects is uncertain, but they may have served as loomweights as the presence of three bone pin beaters (used for beating down individual threads in the weft of the cloth during weaving) implies that this building may have served as a weaving hut. Other finds included late Roman and early Saxon pottery, a copper-alloy Roman bracelet fitting, a fossilised bone reused as a hone, a piece of sawn antler, a lead knife blade, and a composite triangular bone comb of either late 4th- or 5th-century date. The impression is that this building might be of 5th-century date and possibly represents continuity of occupation on a site which previous fieldwork has established was still occupied during AD 350–400.

Fig 2. Excavating the lead weights in the Saxon sunken-floored building in the grounds of Lambeth Palace, view looking north (Photo: MOLA)

RECENT EXCAVATIONS AT CONVOYS WHARF

Antony Francis (Museum of London Archaeology)

In 1513 a new Royal Naval Dockyard was established at Deptford in the London Borough of Lewisham. During the 18th century the dockyard expanded beyond its original perimeter. The dockyard declined in importance after the Napoleonic Wars and closed in 1869, as its facilities could not cope with the ever increasing size of vessels. However, the Royal Naval victualing yard established here during the 1740s continued in use until 1961. During 2011–12, in advance of the redevelopment of the former dockyard at Convoys Wharf, an extensive programme of archaeological work was undertaken by MOLA.

Pre-dockyard activity consisted of scattered linear ditches, probably of both prehistoric and Roman date. In the backfill of a 2nd- or 3rd-century Roman enclosure ditch a partial inhumation burial was discovered. A concentration of dumped Roman building materials implies the existence of structures nearby.

Extensive areas of the truncated brick-built foundations of the Tudor 'Storehouse' were uncovered; this building formed the core of the complex of buildings that subsequently developed here. These storehouses were badly damaged during the Blitz and their remaining superstructure was demolished in 1952. Other dockyard buildings discovered included the probable remains of the 'Treasurer of the Navy's House', plus the officers' quarters and the ironworks. Elements of the Stuart period dockyard wall were also identified.

Along the riverside a series of dock basins, slipways and mast ponds was constructed. Part of the timber revetting of the Tudor dockyard basin known as the 'Wett Dock' was discovered. Over time the dock basins and slipways were successively enlarged, so generally their latest phases of either 18th-

Fig 3. The 19th-century slipway in Area 4 of the MOLA excavation of the Deptford Royal Naval Dockyard, view looking south-west. The vertical and raking timbers post-date the dockyard (Photo: MOLA)

or 19th-century date had obliterated almost all traces of their predecessors. Three of these slipway structures together with the foundations of their cover buildings were investigated. These rectangular slipways where ships were constructed were lined with brick or masonry retaining walls and floored with well-preserved rough outs of discarded ship timbers (Fig 3).

One property that was latterly incorporated into the dockyard as it expanded was Sayes Court, which from 1652 to 1694 was the home of John Evelyn, the celebrated diarist and gardener. He established a famous French and Italian style garden here complete with orchards and parterre of which no archaeological trace survived apart from its boundary wall. However, traces of the foundations of Evelyn's house survived below the more substantial remains of a brick-built cellared house, probably of 18th-century date.

EXCAVATIONS AT 8–10 MOORGATE, CITY OF LONDON

Alison Telfer (Museum of London Archaeology)

The archaeology of this site and its subsequent survival have both been profoundly influenced by its location adjoining the western edge of a tributary of the Walbrook stream. Archaeological survival has been greatly improved by the waterlogged nature of the area, which meant that it remained open land until relatively late in the post-medieval period. For previous work undertaken within the three trenches excavated within the standing buildings see the 2011 conference report (*Trans London Middlesex Archaeol Soc* 62, 257). By 2012 the standing building had been demolished allowing access to the rest of the site. Recent fieldwork has revealed more of the cluster of early Roman clay and timber buildings previously investigated. One of these buildings possessed at least five rooms, the largest of which possessed a tiled hearth and plastered walls.

To the rear of these buildings was an area of 'backyards' divided by east–west-aligned fences. This external area contained a row of six box plank-lined Roman wells. The basal fills of one of these wells contained a candlestick, a complete pot and a length of chain, plus the skeleton of a mature adult male. How he came be interred in this well is uncertain. Perhaps he was the victim of an accident or foul play; as Roman law forbade burial within a settlement, his presence here was illegal and would have grossly polluted the well. Other significant finds included an early Roman copper-alloy oil or perfume flask made of riveted panels and a crucible which were found together (Fig 4). The copper-

Fig 4. Early Roman copper-alloy perfume flask from 8–10 Moorgate, height 82mm (Photo: Andy Chopping, MOLA)

Fig 5. One of the 11th- or 12th-century turf-walled buildings discovered at 8–10 Moorgate, view north (Photo: Maggie Cox, MOLA)

alloy panels of the flask were decorated with minute Celtic-style ornamentation in blue enamel, suggesting that it was produced in Britain. By the late 2nd or 3rd century masonry buildings had been constructed on part of the site. One particularly interesting discovery was a collection of 49 forged 3rd-century denarii**.**

When the site was reoccupied during the 11th or 12th century a series of three or four rectangular timber buildings, defined by lines of postholes and turf-built walls with internal plank linings, was constructed (Fig 5). It is thought that this walling technique was quite commonly used in London during the Saxo-Norman period, but the actual turf rarely survives. These buildings, like their Roman antecedents, were separated by gravel alleyways. To the rear of the buildings was a circular wattle-lined cesspit or well, which was subsequently used as a cesspit.

NEW EXCAVATIONS AT BUCKLERSBURY HOUSE, CITY OF LONDON

Sadie Watson (Museum of London Archaeology)

In 1954 this iconic site was where Professor Grimes unexpectedly discovered the Temple of Mithras (see 2012 conference report *Trans London Middlesex Archaeol Soc* 62, 264). Subsequent watching-brief discoveries in 1954–55 by Ivor Noël Hume (then the Guildhall Museum field archaeologist), during the construction of the double basement when a huge amount of material was dug out of the infilled Walbrook channel, were published in *Excavations in the Middle Walbrook Valley* (*LAMAS Spec Pap* 13 (1991)). These discoveries included an important collection of largely unstratified, but very well-preserved Roman metalwork. Since 2011, in advance of redevelopment, a new programme of archaeological investigation has been carried out by MOLA. In the north-

east corner of the 1950s development by chance a complete transect of the waterlogged Walbrook channel deposits (over 5m deep) was preserved and it is the excavation of this area which has offered the unique opportunity to see what was destroyed in the 1950s. There are various other small areas of significant archaeological survival around the site perimeter, which have helped reconstruct more of the site sequence.

By the late 1st century AD a causeway constructed on piles carried the east–west road to the presumed site of a bridge over the Walbrook channel. There was an early inhumation burial on the edge of the channel bank, which was possibly a votive offering connected with the construction of the bridge or just another of the scattered burials that occurred around the fringes of the earliest phase of Roman settlement. Before the late 1st century AD the area along the edge of the channel was occupied by a series of small clay and timber buildings, which were eventually destroyed by the Hadrianic Fire (*c.*AD 125–130). The character of these buildings seems to be semi-industrial, with a lot of evidence for non-ferrous metalworking. Well-preserved elements of these buildings included plank flooring, external boardwalks and lengths of plank-built fencing. Some of the buildings had evidence of votive foundation offerings, including complete pots. To the rear of the buildings were backyards occupied by a number of box plank-lined wells; finds from one of these wells included a Cupid amulet (Fig 6). Structures within the yards included what appear to be oval pens for small animals or poultry and possibly a communal oven. The presence of a water-mill nearby is indicated by the discovery of *ex-situ* fragments of mill stones, a wooden axle wheel from a lantern gear, and a possible wooden mill wheel paddle.

By the late Roman period and contemporary with the Temple of Mithras, there were two masonry buildings on the site containing areas of tessellated flooring and monochrome mosaic panels (Fig 7). In between the two buildings and leading towards the temple was a narrow roadway. In an area immediately north of the temple adjoining the road was an external area of tessellated pavement, possibly a roadside shrine. Nearby was a timber-lined well,

Fig 6. Copper-alloy Cupid amulet (length 5cm) from one of the Roman wells at Bucklesbury House (Photo: Maggie Cox, MOLA)

which went out of use during the 4th century; it contained an individual set of pewter tableware comprising two bowls and two cups, interpreted as ritually deposited material.

The waterlogged Roman deposits, as expected, have produced a huge amount of well-preserved metalwork including brooches, jewellery, a large amount of coinage, hand tools, bronze working debris, and pieces of military equipment, including fragments of horse harness. The numerous organic finds discovered have included shoes and other leather objects, while wooden objects have included a number of waxed writing-tablets. The discovery of an inked writing-tablet is unusual. Other finds included a tiny amber

Fig 7. Polychrome mosaic panel within one of the late Roman buildings at Bucklesbury House (Photo: Maggie Cox, MOLA)

amulet in the shape of a gladiator's helmet and a stitched leather panel depicting a gladiator fighting a hippocampus (a mythical animal with the forequarters of a horse and the tail of a fish). It appears that during the Roman period the Walbrook in this locality was being used to dispose of domestic and industrial waste, plus some objects that appear to have been ritually discarded.

AFTERNOON SESSION: 50 YEARS OF LONDON ARCHAEOLOGY: PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

Compiled by Bruce Watson

As a generalisation all periods of the capital's heritage during the last 50 years have been characterised by a huge gain in both the quality and quantity of data as fieldwork necessitated by development has become embedded in the planning process. One consequence of this ever increasing amount of data is the difficulty of producing comprehensive and up-to-date syntheses for any aspect of London's heritage. This absence of synthesis is particularly acute for Roman London for which no comprehensive overview has been published since 1991 (*Roman London* by D Perring). There are numerous aspects of the material culture of Roman London, ranging from brooches to burials, which would benefit from research and synthesis. The most comprehensive introduction to the capital's heritage is still *The Archaeology of Greater London: an Assessment of Archaeological Evidence for Human Presence in the Area Now Covered by Greater London* (MoL, 2000).

Over the last 50 years the scale and scope of archaeological investigations across Greater London has changed from watching-briefs and narrow linear trenches to open area excavations. At the same time the scientific study of excavated material has made huge advances. For instance, scientific dating techniques such as radiocarbon dating have revolutionised the chronology of the prehistoric period. Now with multiple radiocarbon dates and probability modelling, it is possible to refine the occupation of a site to within a few centuries, whereas previously it would merely be assigned a broad date such as 'Earlier Iron Age' on the basis of associated ceramics. Dendrochronology has also significantly refined aspects of the Roman and medieval dating.

PREHISTORY IN LONDON: THE RIVER'S TALE (*c.*500,000 BC–AD 43)

Jon Cotton

Bearing in mind the huge chronological scope of this period, Jon chose to use the Thames as a unifying theme to draw together selective themes. These included viewing the River Thames as a shaper and creator of landscapes and an artery of communication; though to date no evidence of prehistoric craft has been recovered from London. It is also important to realise the importance of the network of Thames tributaries from

the Mesolithic onward as the foci of human activity and the impact of changing river levels on the pattern of land utilisation. Fifty years ago London's prehistory was dominated by finds of Lower Palaeolithic hand axes recovered from the Thames gravel terraces during quarrying and by the wealth of Bronze and Iron Age material recovered from the river by dredging.

The human impact on London's landscape dramatically increased during the Earlier Neolithic (*c.*4,100–*c.*3,300 BC), with the advent of agriculture, wholesale forest clearance and the subsequent construction of ritual monuments, such as ring ditches, cursus monuments and henges. By the Later Neolithic (*c.*3,300–2,000 BC) the impression is that large areas of the Thames river terraces were now covered by a network of ditched fields. By the 2nd millennium BC, prompted by rising river levels, some of the low-lying areas of arable and even marshland pasture were abandoned. The subsequent burial of these fields and marshland brushwood trackways under a thick blanket of alluvium has inadvertently preserved them. Contemporary with this climatic change there was a new focus on the votive deposition of a variety of bronze objects into the Thames, including weapons. Further evidence of social change and possibly conflict was marked by the establishment of ring forts during the Late Bronze Age. During the Earlier Iron Age (*c.*800–400 BC) these forts were superseded by a series of larger riverine fortified sites or 'hill forts', including a double-ditched enclosure at Woolwich. By the Later Iron Age some of these fortified sites, such as Uphall Camp, Ilford, seem to have become important tribal or political centres.

ROMAN LONDON (AD 43–*c.*400)

Harvey Sheldon

From the early 19th century onward major masonry structures such the Roman city wall were identified and unstratified artefacts recovered by antiquarians. In 1869 when the construction of Queen Victoria Street in the City of London revealed a fine Roman mosaic pavement, it aroused much public interest and was recorded in detail by John Price on behalf of LAMAS (*LAMAS Spec Pap* 13 (1991), figs 28–29). Due to the public interest the City of London authorities arranged for the removal of the mosaic and its subsequent public display.

However, there was a huge amount of unrecorded destruction and a complete lack of full-time staff to monitor sites until 1928 when an 'investigator of excavations' was appointed by the City of London Guildhall Museum. War damage devastated huge areas of London, which prompted the work of the 'Roman and Mediaeval Excavation Committee'. Under the leadership of Professor Grimes from 1946–68, this committee made numerous discoveries including the Cripplegate fort and the Mithraeum. This programme was supplemented by the work of a few archaeological staff based at the Guildhall Museum, which latterly included Peter Marsden. His discoveries during the 1960s included the Blackfriars boat, key elements of the basilica, a palatial complex under Cannon Street station, and the Huggin Hill bath house. Public outrage over the destruction of Baynard's Castle in 1972 and pressure from Rescue finally led to the creation of a network of archaeological units across the Greater London area. This provision allowed for the undertaking of more ambitious programmes of fieldwork, plus the systematic study and conservation of finds. Subsequent discoveries included the extramural cemeteries, the late Roman riverside wall, a bath house in Southwark, the amphitheatre, and the port facility. The deeply buried topography of the maze of gravel islands and creeks that formed Roman Southwark has also been mapped.

The impression is that there is still a great deal more to be discovered about Roman London and its hinterland and there is a huge amount of data both historic and recent waiting to be analysed. One issue that continues to vex people is the status of *Londinium* and how it may have changed over time. Did it start as an unplanned riverine commercial centre? The ruins of which, in the aftermath of the Boudican destruction of AD 60, were quickly redeveloped by the military as a port and a fort at Plantation Place, which then may have became the provincial capital by default. Alternatively, was *Londinium* planned and maintained as an

imperial creation and capital? Its street grid, imposing civic buildings including three bath houses, basilica and amphitheatre, Cripplegate fort, plus its landward defences and riverside walls, all can be interpreted as the result of edicts from Rome not local decisions.

SAXON LONDON (*c.*AD 400–1066)

Martin Biddle

Londinium was certainly occupied until the late 4th century and in *c.*AD 400 the riverside defences within the Tower of London were modified (see *Trans London Middlesex Archaeol Soc* 36, 19). However, during the 5th century AD the walled city appears to have been abandoned and the focus of activity probably shifted westwards upstream to the Strand area of Westminster. The first clue to early Saxon activity in this area was the discovery in 1726 at the church of St Martin-in-the-Fields of two 7th-century glass palm cups and a spearhead. Recent excavations around the site of the church have revealed evidence of 5th-century activity and burials dating from the 5th to the 7th century.

In the 1960s the archaeology of middle Saxon London or *Lundenwic* (*c.*AD 650–850) was largely unrecognised. It was not until 1985 that fieldwork along the Strand securely identified the port of *Lundenwic*, described by Bede in *c.*AD 730 as 'a trading centre for many nations who visit it by land and sea' (*A History of the English Church and People* (ed) J Sherley-Price (1955), 103). Previously middle Saxon discoveries in this locality had been erroneously interpreted as scattered farmsteads. Subsequent excavations have now established that there was an extensive planned urban settlement along the Strand with a network of metalled roads. Evidence of craft activities, including butchery, bone and antler working, iron smithing, non-ferrous metalworking plus weaving and spinning, has been found. The impression is that the production of woollen cloth was very important. It was the wealth of *Lundenwic* that encouraged the seaborne Viking raiders to sack it during the early 9th century. Initially attempts were made to fortify the previously undefended *Lundenwic* settlement, but by the late 9th century the commercial focus moved downstream to the more defensible, but derelict Roman city of *Londinium*. It is documented that since AD 604 part of the Roman city had been occupied by a cathedral (probably on the site of St Paul's), which may have served as the focus for a small settlement before the 9th century.

MEDIEVAL LONDON (1066–1485)

John Clark

This is the only period reviewed that boasts an up-to-date synthesis: J Schofield *London 1100–1600: the Archaeology of a Capital City* (2011). It was Professor Grimes's excavation of War damaged sites that provided the first systematic fieldwork inside the walled medieval city (see above); this included revealing the structural development of St Bride's church during 1952–60. Previously fieldwork within the City of London had largely focused on the salvage recording of readily identifiable features such as stone-lined cesspits and wells.

Undoubtedly the most important aspect of the capital's medieval archaeology since the 1960s has been the investigation of the waterlogged dumps of domestic refuse deposited behind a succession of City of London waterfronts. These deposits revealed a vast amount of finds, including textiles, shoes, scabbards and metalwork, published as a series of *Medieval Finds from Excavations in London* volumes. The recovery of large groups of stratified medieval pottery from these waterfront dumps dating from the mid-12th to the mid-15th century, which could be independently dated by dendrochronology and numismatic evidence, has led to the establishment of a new chronological framework for London's medieval ceramics. This work has led to the production of a new closely-dated type series — work of national importance.

Other important medieval discoveries have included the extensive excavation of a number of Greater London's monastic houses, parish churches and great houses as well as the humbler houses of merchants, shopkeepers and farmers. Another important theme has been the investigation of Greater London's cemeteries, including the emergency mass graves used during the Black Death, plus

numerous parochial and monastic burial grounds. Thanks to the Museum of London's Centre for Human Bioarchaeology an ever increasing amount of the capital's extensive osteological analytical data is now available online. It is extremely rare for the remains of named pre-Reformation individuals to be archaeologically identified and studied in England; almost all bodies which are examined from this period in London are anonymous. Very occasionally medieval burials are identified by an inscription. One example of an individual being identified by the inscription on her lead coffin is Anne Mowbray, Duchess of York (died 1481), the child bride of the younger of the Princes in the Tower. She was initially buried in Westminster Abbey, but *c.*1502–3, her remains were transferred to the Abbey of St Clare Minoresses, in Tower Hamlets, where she was rediscovered in 1964, when the site of the former abbey church was redeveloped (*British Archaeol* no. 130 (2013)).

The greatest future challenge for the capital's medieval archaeology is to improve its integration with documentary evidence; while there have been some very successful collaborations sadly there have been many missed opportunities.

POST-MEDIEVAL LONDON (1485–PRESENT DAY)

Roy Stephenson

Post-medieval archaeology in the Greater London area really began with the excavation of Henry VIII's palace of Nonsuch in 1959. Since then it has gone from being a low archaeological priority to being recognised as an important source of data to supplement cartographic, documentary and architectural evidence. Some idea of the diversity of evidence is provided by the range of sites involved.

First, there are the industrial production sites including the kilns used to produce tin-glazed wares. Secondly, there are the recreational buildings including the Rose Theatre. Thirdly, there are the industrial monuments such as the riverside slipway of Millwall Docks used to launch the SS Great Eastern in 1858 (see review of 48th annual conference *Trans London Middlesex Archaeol Soc* 62, 259). Fourthly, there are the monuments to conflict ranging from London's Civil War defences constructed during 1642–3, to World War II anti-aircraft gun emplacements, air raid shelters and the remains of buildings destroyed by enemy action. In 2005, a Museum of London community archaeology project in Shoreditch Park, Hackney investigated the remains of a series of early 19th-century terraced houses destroyed during the Blitz. The results of this project were broadcast as a Time Team documentary, which featured interviews with two sisters who had lived in one of these houses when they were children. Lastly, there are the cesspits found in the backyards of terraced houses, which with the advent of sewers and dustbins quickly went out of use during the mid-19th century. The final infilling of these features with finds-rich domestic rubbish provides a vivid picture of the material culture of the occupants' of these houses, to supplement the data from their census returns. The investigation of this last category of sites provides a wonderful opportunity for community archaeology projects. Successful projects to date have managed to engage with a completely new audience, who had hitherto shown no interest in the capital's heritage.