

Bringing London's archaeology to a wider public: the work of the City of London Archaeological Trust, 1974–2011

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In 1974 the City of London Archaeological Trust (CoLAT) was established jointly by the Guildhall Museum (which with the London Museum became the Museum of London in 1976) and the Corporation of the City of London. It has several purposes: to support publication and research, conservation (of monuments, buried structures or finds), education and exhibitions, relating to the archaeology of all periods in London and its environs (over time, a region defined as out to the M25, itself a creation of the 1970s).

CoLAT is a charity working to support many kinds of archaeological endeavour in the London area by occupying a central role among relevant organisations. The Trust is managed by a committee composed of archaeologists and historians with London expertise, and representatives of the Corporation of London. There are nominees from the Museum of London, UCL Institute of Archaeology, the Society of Antiquaries of London, and the Council for British Archaeology. The City component, of members of the Court of Common Council, can include aldermen, and has included former Lord Mayors. For many years the Trust has appreciated an annual grant from the Corporation, though there are currently signs that this may not be forthcoming in the future. In the last couple of years we have been especially grateful for an annual grant from this magazine itself, to be administered in conjunction with our own resources, and the editor of *London Archaeologist* is now a member of the management committee.

Enough description; what has CoLAT done? This brief outline reports its work since about 1984, when the



Fig. 1: two of three 15th-century armorial mounts recovered at Swan Lane in 1981 (MOLA). They may have originally come from a knight's sword belt



Fig. 2: a reconstruction by Richard Lea of Holy Trinity Priory Aldgate, produced for the publication in 2005 of several excavated sites in the priory (MOLA). Computer reconstructions of ancient London buildings are a powerful yet under-researched educational tool

Trust's assets were £128,000. These rose largely through management of its investments by Corporation officers to £328,000 in 1997; and at present, in 2011, they stand at about £200,000.

The chief area of support, since inception, has been archaeological work in the City of London; mainly post-excavation analysis and work

towards publication. Two projects in particular have seen major funding. In 1985–9, £100,000 was granted over four years as part of the cost of analysis and writing up of the large excavation of the Roman basilica and Leadenhall Market at Leadenhall Court (in partnership with larger funds from English Heritage). Over the years, the

writing up of four waterfront excavations in Thames Street (Swan Lane (Fig. 1), Seal House, New Fresh Wharf and Billingsgate Lorry Park) has proceeded in stages, some funded by CoLAT, and others by livery companies (of which more below). Other excavations which have been given grants towards post-excavation analysis

include 73–75 Cheapside and Colchester House Pepys Street. On the finds side, there was much support for the *Medieval Finds* series of volumes produced in the 1990s, and much work towards publications yet to appear, for instance on post-medieval redware and tin-glazed pottery. Supported projects have ranged from the prehistoric period to the 20th century. Particularly in the last decade, there have also been topics originating in outer boroughs and exceptionally slightly beyond the M25. One project sought to clarify the London links of a named potter who may have worked in 17th-century America.

Several notable archaeological books and reports have been produced with CoLAT assistance: Gustav Milne's *Port of Roman London* (1992), the third edition of the DUA/MoLAS *Site Manual* (1995), *Westminster Tiles* (2002) by Ian Betts, *Holy Trinity Priory Aldgate* (2005) by myself and Richard Lea (Fig. 2), and MoLA's new Roman London map (2011); and many archaeological papers in journals, from regional to international in readership.¹

Other supported projects have been diverse: for example, dendrochronology (Thames Exchange, 1990), abstracts and bibliography lists for *London Archaeologist* (1993), purchase of a Roman flute (1992), metallurgy of waterlogged metal objects (1993), research on the position of archaeology in the planning process undertaken by the now-defunct Standing Committee on London Archaeology (1993–4), fingerprints on Roman pottery (2003), a database of clay tobacco pipe makers' marks (2003), assessing Victorian

clearance pottery groups in Lambeth (2003), digitisation of back issues of *London Archaeologist* (2004), Roman barrels (2006), reconstructing medieval Blackfriars (2007), several kinds of study of human remains from sites in the London area, conferences, at least one exhibition, and projects to make the archaeological archive at LAARC more accessible. We have also financed the purchase of equipment for the Central London Young Archaeologists' Club and geophysical survey at Bruce Castle. Since 1997 CoLAT has made several grants to the Thames Archaeological Survey and its successor the Thames Development Programme to survey submerged structures and remains of ships on the Thames foreshore. Since 1995, the Trust has given out almost £550,000 in grants.

There have been a few aspects which we used to fund in previous years, but currently do not. The first is any work towards a university qualification, undergraduate or post-graduate; we think that other funding organisations should do that. So bursaries were funded by CoLAT in the 1990s but are not any more. There has also been a hardening against funding general post-excavation work, as legislation and indeed developer thinking moved to support the idea of developers shouldering more of the post-excavation obligation; which often turns out to be an asset and a matter of pride to the individual developer. In this category of 'developer' we include the Church of England, since cathedrals and parish churches, and their graveyards, have been the subject of much archaeological work in recent

decades.

CoLAT has had some but limited success in approaching City livery companies directly and for specific projects, when a link with the medieval company can be demonstrated. This has been most successful with the London Waterfront Tenements project (Swan Lane to Billingsgate), where grants were obtained through the argument that the company or its members owned or occupied one of the sites in the medieval and post-medieval periods (Dyers, Fishmongers, Grocers, for instance at Billingsgate (Fig. 3)) or must have been intimately connected with the making of objects found in profusion on these waterfront sites (the Girdlers, who made several grants for writing up the Swan Lane assemblages of medieval buckles and other ornaments). We have failed with similar arguments to other companies; but this remains one of the unique selling points for CoLAT in difficult times for all fundraisers.

Like all charities, CoLAT is considering its remit and whether it should curb its actions in these financially difficult times. Our trust deed allows a wide range of activities, not all of which we may be able to afford or pursue. We continue to support archaeological research,



Fig 3: two objects from 17th-century levels excavated at Billingsgate Lorry Park in 1982, published with the aid of a grant from the Grocers' Company in 2009: (left) a pewter lid from a Westerwald stoneware mug; (right) fragment of a 16th-century figurine in Raeren stoneware. Both show that ceramic objects from around Cologne and the Rhineland were common in upper-class London households (MOLA)

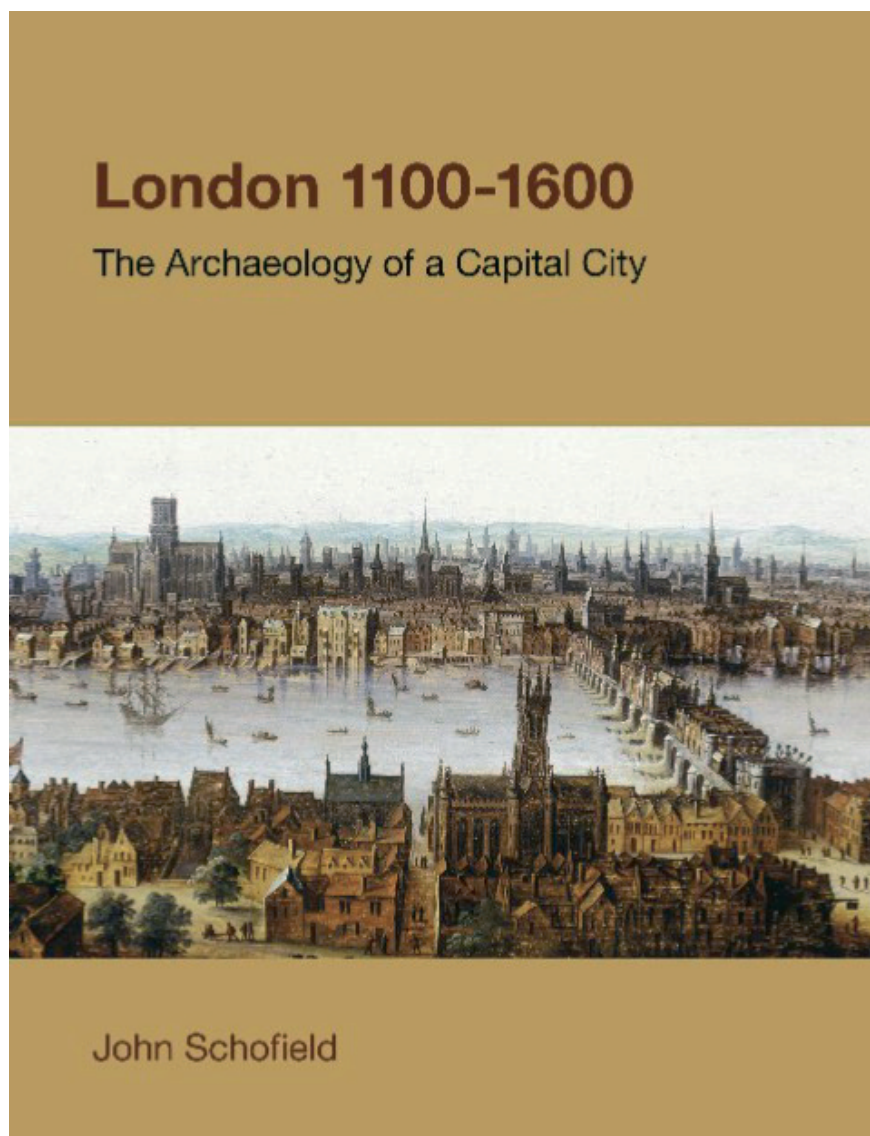


Fig. 4: *London 1100–1600*, published by Equinox in September 2011: an assessment of 40 years of increased understanding of the city and its region

publication and education at all levels. But building on this we are currently expanding our activities. Our mandate includes the preservation and bringing into public perception and enjoyment the monuments of London; and under our previous chairman Mrs Ann Pembroke, CoLAT is drawing attention to the little-known Roman monument beneath a modern building in Lower Thames Street, the Billingsgate Roman bath-house. This has lain hardly known since being left in a newly-built basement in the 1970s. It belongs to the

City of London, who have done marvellous things with the (slightly less extensive) Roman amphitheatre remains at Guildhall. We have been working with the City to widen knowledge of the conservation and presentation needs of the bath-house, for instance by approaching prospective funders in the international Italian business community in the City. A second concern in this area is to assist in a current scheme to mark the site of the 13th-century Great Conduit in Cheapside with a memorial plaque or

1. CoLAT-supported publications have included: G. Milne *The port of Roman London* (1985); G. Milne ed *From Roman basilica to medieval market* (1992); A. Westman *Site Manual* (3rd edn, 1995); MoL, *The archaeology of Greater London* (2000); I. Betts, *Medieval 'Westminster' floor tiles* (2002); N. Holder and D. Jamieson 'The prehistory of the City of London:

myths and methodologies' *Archaeol J* **160** (2003), 23–43; J. Schofield and R. Lea *Holy Trinity Priory Aldgate* (2005); N. Holder 'Mapping the Roman inscriptions of London' *Britannia* **37** (2007) 13–34; J. Pearce 'English porcelain of the 18th century in archaeologically excavated assemblages from London' *English Ceramic Circle* **20** (2008), 273–314; J. Schofield and J. Pearce

display of some kind; other monuments or sites may be taken up. At a wider level, CoLAT hopes in the future to be consulted by the Corporation on aspects of development and archaeological policy.

In September 2011 a new book, *London 1100–1600: the archaeology of a capital city* (Fig. 4) will attempt to summarise the archaeological discoveries about London and its region in those five centuries; many of which have been researched and published, or their artefacts conserved, with CoLAT support (acknowledged by the trust's logo on the cover, with those of the Museum of London and the City itself). This book will draw attention to these spectacular discoveries; to the best archaeological archive for a single place in the world, at LAARC; will review how London presents its heritage today; and call for a debate about how fragments of the past are valued in present-day development. All these are themes which CoLAT pursues.

At the heart of our work, however, has been the support and encouragement of archaeological writing, illustration and conservation work, notably of finds excavated in the City since the 1970s. A report in preparation on the Swan Lane site, with others on the Thames waterfront nearby around London Bridge, demonstrates how CoLAT seeks to bring all aspects of the archaeology of London to a wider audience, across the capital and increasingly world-wide (Fig. 5). In the year when the Olympics comes to London, CoLAT is working to explain the unique history and qualities, over the centuries, of this special place. *John Schofield is now in active retirement after decades with the Museum of London. He is secretary of CoLAT and Cathedral Archaeologist for St Paul's, and has written about urban archaeology and many aspects of medieval and Tudor London. His report St Paul's Cathedral before Wren will be published by English Heritage in November.*

'Thomas Soane's buildings near Billingsgate, London, 1640–66' *Post-Medieval Archaeol* **43** (2009), 282–341; C. Thomas and B. Watson 'The mendicant houses of medieval London: an archaeological review' in *The friars in medieval Britain* (ed N. Rogers, 2010) 265–97; and some of the production costs of the *Medieval finds from excavations in London* series.



Fig. 5: the Swan Lane site of 1981 produced many finds, but also remains of a 12th-century dyehouse complex. Documentary records described a constant presence of dyers on the site until the 17th century, when a dyehouse is shown on the site by Hollar in his *Long Panorama* of 1647. Thus excavations, documents and engravings come together to provide a richer, more complete picture

Letter

Brandon Place

I was very interested in Bruce Watson's article about Brandon Place in the last *London Archaeologist*. It is a bold attempt to interpret the somewhat sketchy details on the Wyngaerde panorama.

However, one or two corrections are necessary. The grant of 1516 is not (*pace* Carlin) to Brandon but to John and Margaret Lynny, and Brandon is merely one of three trustees involved in the transaction;¹ there is also a collusive common recovery for the same transaction.² John Lynny was the keeper of the gaol of the King's Bench and Brandon was marshal of the King's Bench so he worked for Brandon which explains how he could get him to be a

trustee. The property involved was probably on the opposite side of the road just north of St George's church (plot C95), though it might relate to a property a little north of Brandon Place (C56) with which the Lynnys were also associated.

The Broadgates was not the entrance to Brandon Place despite its name (*pace* Carlin) but a tenement which long predated Brandon's possession, being mentioned in 1460 at the site of the sheriff's tourn.³ The man who held it in 1549 was Sir John Gate not Grey; Gate was the keeper of Brandon Place for the King.

Although I can see why it was suggested that the outer court contained the 'elite' dwelling, with the service

buildings in the inner court, this is the reverse of the usual arrangement where the private quarters of the lord are in the inner, more secluded, court.

The bulk of the Brandon property lay south-west of the house, and did not extend to the north where the Falcon lay next to the brick wall which a later document said surrounded the house; the feature in front of the house (4 on Fig. 3 in the article) might be this brick wall.

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1. Feet of Fines 1509–58 68.

2. NA CP40/1016 f101.

3. BH Rent Vol 3 f15 – I understand a similarly named tenement existed in the City.