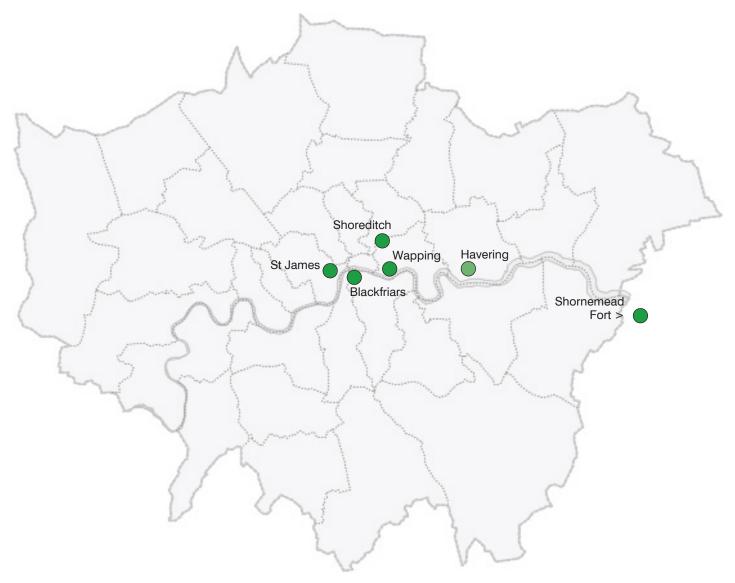
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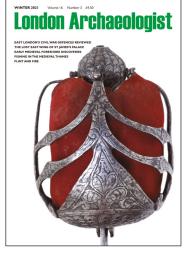
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A basket-hilted sword with a straight single-edged blade dating from 1636–45, and inscribed along the length 'ME(FEC)IT HVNSLOE' or 'Made in Hounslow'. The basket-hilt has a guard decorated with a featherwork pattern lined with red cloth.

Before the English Civil War, the Hounslow sword factory produced thousands of swords, and also ground and polished blades of various types, many of them identified with the 'Me fecit Hunsloe' inscription.

Such was the factory's reputation that in April 1643 Sir William Waller, a leading parliamentarian general, wrote to the authorities asking specifically for '200 Hounslow Blades'. In 1645, Parliament ordered a further 3,200 swords and belts at five shillings each (London's Civil War Defences are re-assessed by Peter Mills in this issue, see page 59).

The sword is one of the objects planned for display in the new Museum of London at Smithfield.

Photo: © Museum of London

