
London's Waterfront and its World, 1666–1800

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with contributions by
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Cover illustrations:

Front: Admiring the view of the City from Somerset Stairs, a detail of a painting of 1750–1 by Antonio Canaletto (Royal Collection, RCIN 400504)

Back: Cowrie shells found in the warehouses of about 1700 excavated on the Billingsgate site, evidence of London's involvement in the slavery trade (photo Andy Chopping)



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Summary

There are very few traces of the period 1666 to 1800 remaining in central London today; they must be uncovered and reconstructed by a combination of archaeology and documentary research.

This monograph brings together the archaeological and documentary evidence for a number of properties on four waterfront sites excavated by the Museum of London in Thames Street in the City of London in 1974–84: from west to east, Swan Lane (site A) and Seal House (site B), a short distance above the medieval and present London Bridges; New Fresh Wharf (site C) and Billingsgate Lorry Park (site D), a similar distance below the bridges. The archaeological discoveries for the period 1666 (the Great Fire of London) to about 1776 are presented and are placed in context by a study of the Thames waterfront on both banks from the west side of the City eastwards down to Deptford, originally a small town but now a suburb of London, six miles away. The detailed study ends with the decision, in 1796, to establish what became the London Docks downstream of the City. This is therefore an examination of the developments and processes which led to the construction of the first of the London Docks, the West India Dock, in 1801–6. Although the construction of that dock was the major new beginning of London's 19th-century worldwide commercial expansion, it should also be seen as the culmination of 150 years of previous intensive development of the waterfront in the City.

The area examined in greatest detail is from London Bridge to Custom House in Thames Street, and the lanes leading north from Thames Street in this eastern district. This area, next to and downstream of the Bridge, formed the centre of London's trading waterfront at this period. Excavations at two sites in Upper Thames Street a short distance above the Bridge are first described. On the west side of Swan Lane in 1981–2 (site A), a large group of pottery was found in

a stone-lined cesspit, amounting to 648 sherds from up to 119 vessels, probably a house clearance from the immediately post-Fire period. At Seal House (site B), across the lane to the east, excavation in 1974 uncovered a row of six small brick houses on the east side of Black Raven Alley, which led from Thames Street to the wharf. They were built in 1671 by William Darvoll, and are shown on a survey of the site by William Leybourn in 1686, as they belonged to the Fishmongers' Company. A well which may have been in the cellar of one of the houses contained pottery, including complete vessels, of the early to mid-18th century in its fill. The houses were demolished in 1776 as large warehouses began to proliferate in the area.

In the study of the four sites in the medieval period published in 2018, the two downstream of London Bridge were New Fresh Wharf and Billingsgate Lorry Park (often called Billingsgate for short). At New Fresh Wharf (site C) in 1974–5, only small fragments of post-Fire walls were recorded, and their details are left in the archaeological archive; some details from documentary evidence are presented. At Billingsgate (site D) however, extensive remains of post-Fire buildings to about 1732 were excavated in 1982–3. These lay on Botolph Wharf, on both sides of the lane which bisected the wharf and led to the Thames. At the north end of the west half of the Wharf the pre-Fire church of St Botolph Billingsgate was not rebuilt but its site became secular buildings, a house of the Minshull family which reused a 15th-century undercroft formerly beneath the south aisle of the church as a cellar for storage. Francis Minshull was a merchant on an international scale with interests in America. The rest of Botolph Wharf was developed initially by Sir Josiah Child, who was prominent in the East India Company. The buildings here, a mixture of houses (probably with shops) on the street and warehouses, went through several periods of alteration before the whole wharf except for the church site was

redeveloped in the 1730s. The wharf was at the heart of the cartel organisation of wharfingers Joseph Ashton and others which increasingly paralysed the landing of imports.

The finding on the Billingsgate excavation of cowrie shells shows that they were stored here. The distinctive bright markings of the cowries immediately suggested exotic, probably tropical, species. Further identification confirmed at least two species, money cowrie and gold-ringing cowrie, both with long histories as economically significant commercial commodities. They form an early example of artefactual evidence for the slavery trade in London. An outline of London's connections with slavery from the 16th century to 1800 is presented.

A new period of warehouses on all the sites in the 18th century did not leave any physical remains to be studied, but the information is derived from documents, maps and plans. The study goes on to summarise the major debates of the 1790s about how to improve the port with new and grander docks, specifically to be built, as they were from 1801 downstream. The creation of the hub of the British Empire required large land clearances for new purposes in and to the east of the City after about 1750, which were apparently accomplished with no opposition. On four occasions large tracts of land were taken for commercial use or the rebuilding of London Bridge and its new roads.

The waterfront of the City of London was an important element in the development of London as an imperial centre, since it was the City's trading gateway to the world before the London Docks were established in the early 19th century. What happened to the buildings and the people living on and using these riverfront sites in the century after the Great Fire to about 1800 is both particular to London and an example of changes in the topography of an important port in the Atlantic world. The inventories of Minshull and another merchant who lived nearby, Richard Beckford, are transcribed. Two groups of late 17th-century and 18th-century ports are briefly surveyed as parallels: major ports on the west coast of continental Europe, from Hamburg to Cádiz, and five colonial towns on the eastern seaboard of the United States and in the Caribbean. London did not

compare favourably with the most developed European ports in the character of its waterfront, but its material culture plays an important part in the history of the American and Caribbean colonial settlements. This is well illustrated by the finds recovered from Port Royal, Jamaica, part of which was buried beneath the sea in an earthquake of 1692.

Two arguments have come out of this research, and they are offered for future development by others. The first is that the archaeology of the port of London in the period 1666 to 1800 is best considered on the widest possible scale, by treating as one the whole riverfront conurbation from the City to Deptford. We should study the internal varieties of houses, artefacts, and ways of living within this single zone, and by combining archaeological analysis with the study of documents. The second idea is that the archaeology of post-medieval waterfronts must be advanced by comparative study of British, European and north American ports in the period.

The overall conclusions from this study are first that the Great Fire of London in 1666 changed an important and central part of the topography of the conurbation, but there were also many important continuities and the Great Fire should be placed in context. Second, archaeological sites along the waterfront, both in the City area and downstream as far as Deptford, have revealed a rich urban culture with many elements of foreign fashions, and these foreign influences were strongest in the nation's largest port. Third, the period 1666 to 1800 on the London waterfront was one of change as the need to store, distribute and send out increasingly large amounts of goods governed the nature of development on both sides of the Thames. Large complexes of warehouses were required, and these were built by removing swathes of domestic buildings. Fourth, during this period London became the hub of the new British Empire, but contributed to the exploitation of people from other lands known as slavery. The creation and prosperity of the British Empire affected many regions of the world and their inhabitants, but they also required constant change in the topography of the City and the lives of its inhabitants, as London became the hub of that empire.

Acknowledgements

The analysis and discussion presented here is the product of many years of work by many archaeologists and documentary historians. The main author of the site narratives and discussion sections dealing with the topography of the waterfront and its buildings is John Schofield; the documentary history of the sites is provided by Stephen Freeth incorporating previous research by Tony Dyson. The other principal contributors are Lyn Blackmore, who studied the medieval and post-medieval pottery, glass and other artefacts from Swan Lane (site A) and Seal House (site B); and Jacqui Pearce, who studied the pottery from Billingsgate (site D) and clay tobacco pipes from all three reported sites. Where a chapter is by several hands, the authors are named; Chapters 1 to 2 and 4 to 9 are by John Schofield. The appendices forming Chapter 10 were edited by Jacqui Pearce. The contributions and assistance of many others from the Museum of London and outside to the larger project of which this is part are acknowledged in the companion volume which dealt with the sites in the period 1100–1666.¹ The Billingsgate excavation of 1982–3 (site supervisor, Steve Roskams; finds supervisor Margrethe de Neergaard; project manager John Schofield)² is the main one reported here. For the present volume, we thank especially Brian Ayers and D H Evans for reading the drafts and for their views. Many colleagues at or formerly of the Museum of London have been of great assistance: Trevor Brigham, Tony Dyson and Trevor Hurst; and in the final stages of preparation, the Archive Manager Michol Stocco and her colleagues at the Archaeological Archive at the Museum of London Stores; Richard Dabb in the Picture Library of the Museum; and at Museum of London Archaeology, David Bowsher and photographers Andy Chopping and Maggie Cox. The site plans and other drawings have been produced by Carlos Lemos and Sue Cawood. A large number of images come from the Paul Mellon Collection at the Yale Center for British Art, New Haven, Connecticut, and this is only possible because the collection is in the public domain (licence CCO 1.0 Universal Public Domain Dedication). We are most grateful; without these images the work would have been much poorer. We also thank the London Topographical Society for permission to reproduce details from maps they have published. Other images cited in the footnotes are available online, and these images should be consulted as though they were part of the monograph. One particularly relevant resource is the archive of images of London at London Metropolitan Archives (LMA) of the Corporation of London.³ Stephen Freeth would like to thank the archivists and staff of all the record offices used, and especially Peter Ross and his colleagues at Guildhall Library, who have been unfailingly helpful under trying conditions. Much appreciated also has been the assistance of Peter Capon at the Fishmongers' Company, which allowed access to the Leybourn plans of Company property in 1686.

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¹ Schofield *et al.* 2018 (online version of text: www.colat.org.uk/london-waterfront/).

² Seen in a BBC TV documentary about the excavation in the *Chronicle* series, archived at several locaitons on the internet and at www.colat.org.uk.

³ www.londonpicturearchive.org.uk.

1 The waterfront of the City of London, 1666 to 1800: introduction to the study

‘By 1775, London was the centre of the world’ – Fernand Braudel

‘Very little is known about London during the 18th and early 19th centuries’ – L D Schwarz

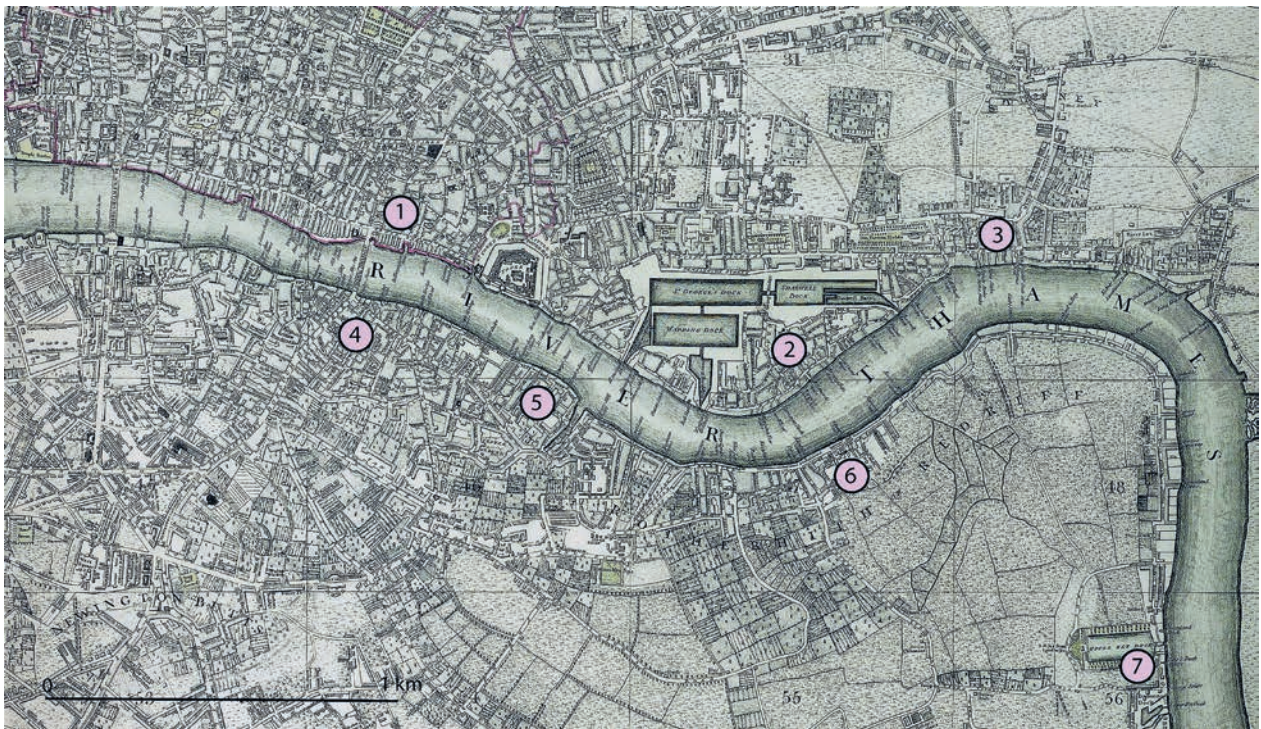


Figure 1 The City of London and settlements to the east, as will be studied in this monograph; from Carey's map of London in 1803 (LMA, London Picture Archive 31062). 1, City of London; 2, West India Docks; 3, Ratcliffe; 4, Southwark; 5, Bermondsey; 6, Rotherhithe; 7, Deptford

After the Great Fire of 1666, London became the centre of a commercial empire which was to stretch round the world. This was entirely new in London's history. The present monograph contributes to an explanation of life and work in London in the century and a half after the Great Fire.

The City waterfront along the north bank of the River Thames from 1666 to about 1800 is the central subject: the buildings and their uses, some of the people, their lifestyles and material culture. From this, suggestions can be made about the role of the waterfront in the development of London as the hub of an overseas empire by the middle of the 18th century. The topographical scope of the study however is not only the north

bank within the City, but the contrasting nature of development on the south bank in Southwark, and the gradual expansion of port facilities and associated settlement to the east. The boundary downstream will be Deptford (Figure 1) though there will be mention of Blackwall which was a little further down the river. The historic port of London has always been at some distance from the sea.

The port of London in the 17th and 18th centuries has been studied before, but from an outside, general perspective. One influential view was the study of the English shipping industry by Ralph Davis in 1962. Unravelling here, sentences within a single paragraph describe the main historical developments:

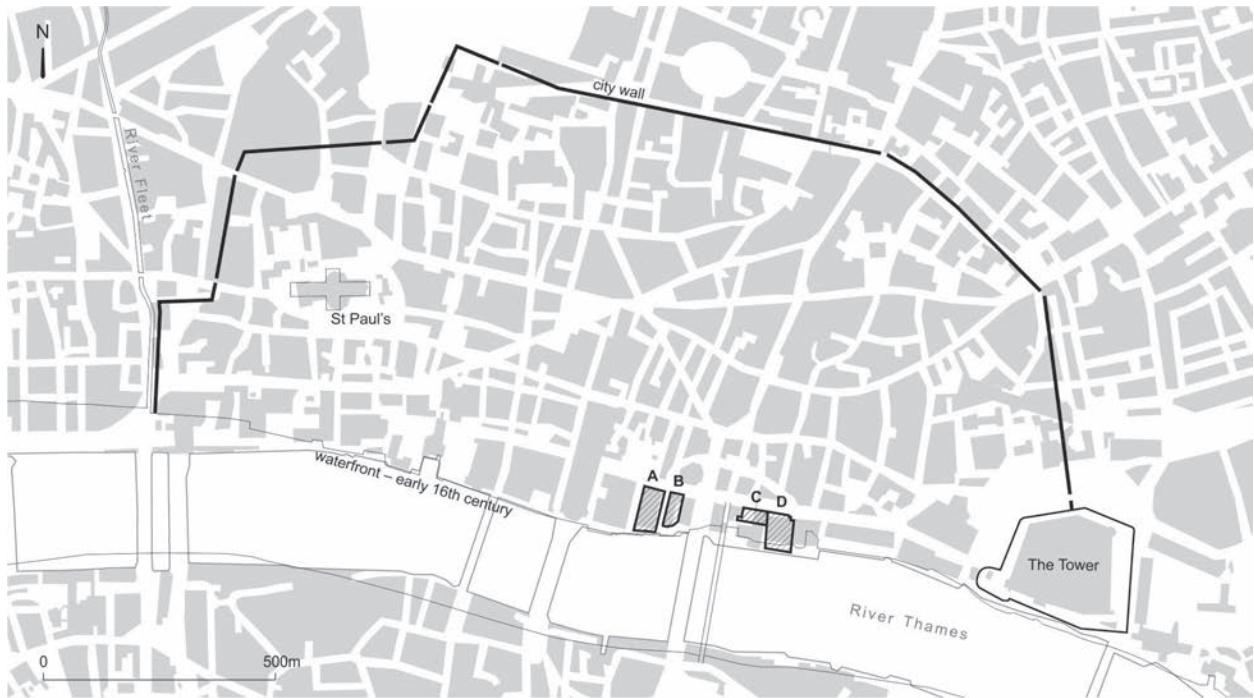


Figure 2 The City of London, showing the four sites in the study (A: Swan Lane, B: Seal House, C: New Fresh Wharf, D: Billingsgate) (Carlos Lemos)

London was by far the greatest of the English seaports, without a serious rival. Until far into the 18th century the volume of its foreign and coastal trade at least equalled that of all the other ports put together. London participated fully in all important new trading developments from the reign of Elizabeth I until the American War of Independence, with the exceptions of long-distance fishery and coal exporting...

London pioneered the Mediterranean and East India trades in the last decades of the 16th century and for two hundred years ships from the outports were rarely seen in the Mediterranean and were unknown in the Indian Ocean. London opened up the American and West Indian colonies, and for over half a century almost monopolised their trade, throwing a meagre share to Bristol...

London's demand for imported timber and iron, for house- and ship-building, was the first to appear on a large scale in the 17th century, and grew faster than that of other ports until the end of the century. Most of the vast shipments of Newcastle coal were destined for London...

Through most of the 17th century London was increasing its share in the total volume of English trade and shipping; and then the shift of colonial trade towards the western ports [of Britain], and of Baltic and Norwegian trade to those of the north-east... and the increasing importance played in the

total volume of trade by exported coal and corn, began slowly - very slowly - to nibble at its pre-eminent position [during the first half of the 18th century].¹

In sum, the greatness of London in 1700 'depended before everything else on activity in the port of London'.²

This study concentrates on the central part of the waterfront of the City of London: the land and facilities south of Thames Street on both sides of the north end of London Bridge and between the Bridge and Billingsgate. It is primarily of archaeological and documentary evidence for a number of secular properties and the site of a parish church in the period 1666 to about 1750 on four sites which were excavated by the Museum of London ahead of redevelopment in 1974–84 (proper excavations in 1974 to 1983, and a watching brief on excavation by machines at Billingsgate Lorry Park in 1983–4). All four sites lie to the south of Thames Street and have river frontages; they are close together. On the west, upstream side of both medieval and modern London Bridge are Swan Lane (now Riverbank House) and Seal House (offices of 1975, by Holford Associates, at the time of writing scheduled for redevelopment again), while New Fresh Wharf (now St Magnus House,

¹ Davis 1972 (2nd impression of the 1962 study), 34.

² Davis 1972, 390. Davis thought that a quarter of London's 18th-century population depended directly or indirectly on the port; this figure may have actually been higher (Schwarz 1992, 9).

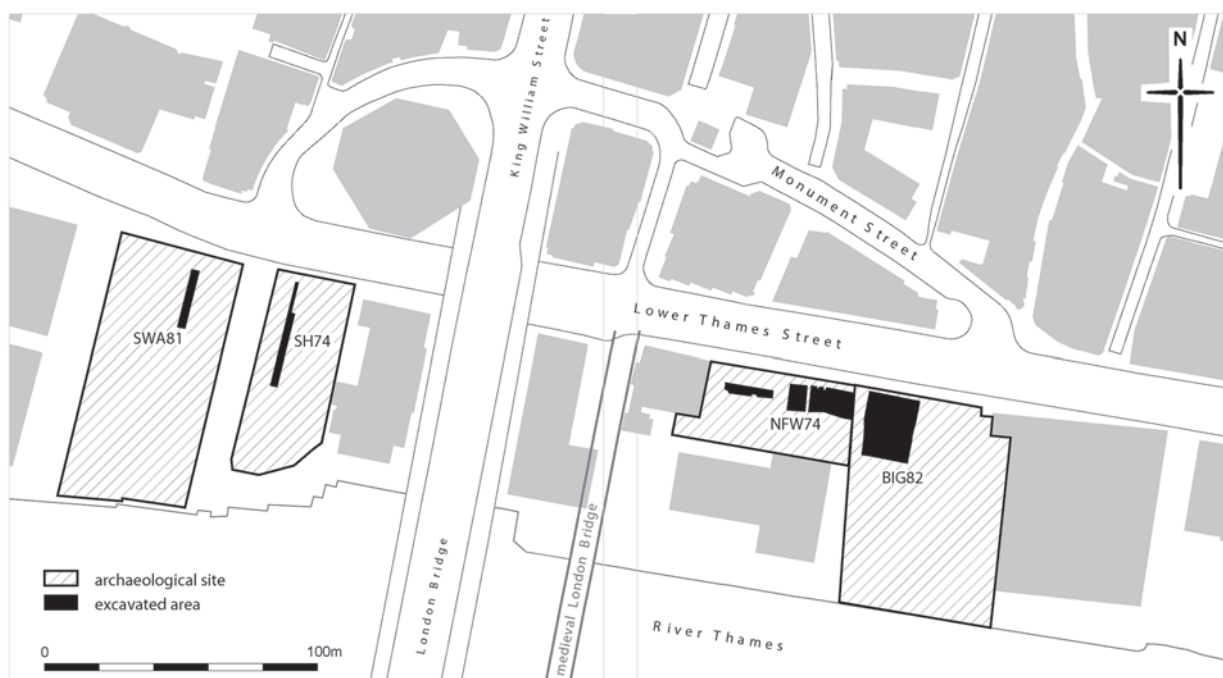


Figure 3 Location of the four study sites on either side of the present London Bridge, showing the areas of excavation (Carlos Lemos). From left to right, SWA81=Swan Lane, site A; SH74=Seal House, site B; NFW74 = New Fresh Wharf, site C; BIG82=Billingsgate lorry park, site D

Prefix	site codes	Address
A	SWA81	Swan Lane Car Park, 95–103 Upper Thames Street, EC4, 1981–2
B	SH74	Seal House, 106–108 Upper Thames Street, EC4, 1974
C	NFW74 (also SM75 and FRE78)	New Fresh Wharf, 2–6 Lower Thames Street, EC3, 1974–8
D	BIG82, BWB83 (earth moving)	Billingsgate Fishmarket Lorry Park, Lower Thames Street, EC3, 1982–4 (excavation in 1982–3, removal of the rest of the site by machines, 1983–4)

Table 1 The four study sites: their prefixes used in this text, their Museum of London site codes, and addresses at the time of excavation

1974–81 by R Seifert and Partners) and the Billingsgate lorry park (now the Northern and Shell Building, built as Simon Montagu House in 1983–5 by Covell Matthews Wheatley Partnership) are on the east, downstream side of both bridges (Figure 2, Figure 3). The four sites are labelled A–D from west to east, regardless of the date of excavation, as shown in Table 1, which also gives their main archive references (Museum of London archaeological site codes). The Roman and Saxon strata from these sites have been published, and their medieval and later strata up to the Great Fire of 1666 were published in 2018.³ The detailed circumstances of the excavations, and the acknowledgements of the funding, the excavators and all who assisted the projects, are given in the previous account.⁴

As will be noted at several points in this text, the waterfront area around the bridge now looks completely different from what it did in 1666. But several of the lanes down to the north side of Thames Street are still conserved, with 19th-century buildings, to give some idea of what the area was like (Figure 4); or further west along the waterfront near St Paul's, a fragment of a street runs alongside 17th-century buildings (Figure 5).

The setting of the sites south of Thames Street in the immediately post-Fire period is shown by the map of Ogilby and Morgan of 1676, the relevant part given here as Figure 6. Since the 1770s and possibly for a few years before, Thames Street has been divided at the north end of the bridge into Upper Thames Street (to the west) and Lower Thames Street (to the east).

Detailed documentary study has been undertaken for the largest excavation, that at Billingsgate Lorry Park. The archaeological and documentary evidence is placed

³ Miller *et al.* 1986; Brigham 1990 (Roman period); Steedman *et al.* 1992 (Saxon period to 1200); Schofield *et al.* 2018 (1100 to 1666).

⁴ Schofield *et al.* 2018, xxii–xxiii.



Figure 4 Lovat Lane today, looking north (John Schofield)

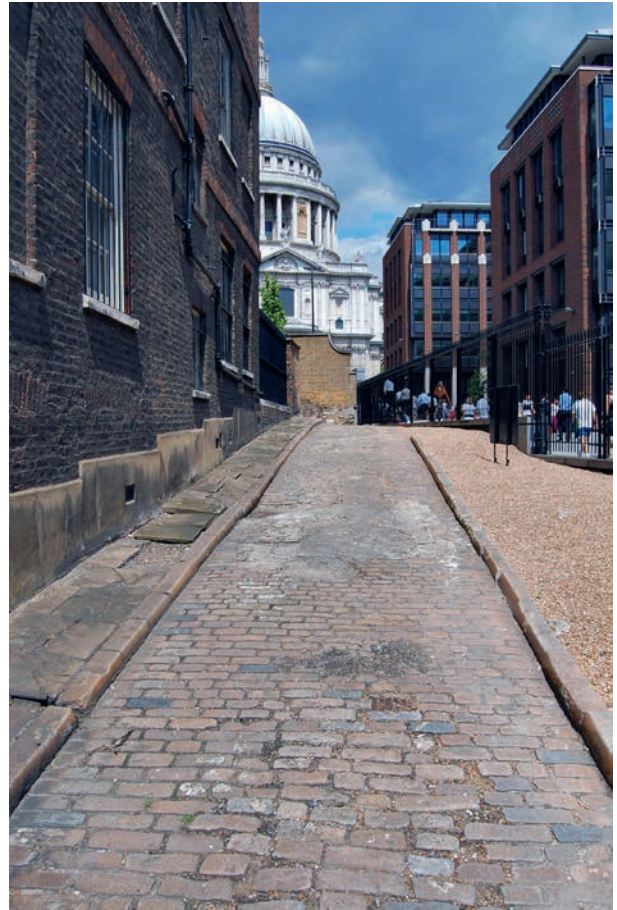


Figure 5 A fragment of post-Fire St Peter's Hill, in its pre-War form, now preserved along the side of the late 17th-century College of Arms, looking north (John Schofield)

in context for all four sites by study of several maps of the area, that is by Ogilby and Morgan in 1676, Morgan alone in 1682, Rocque in 1747 and Horwood (as updated by William Faden) in 1813. All these have been produced in facsimile in recent decades.⁵ They are complemented by painted or drawn views of this part of the riverside, and especially by the panorama of the north bank of the Thames produced by Samuel and Nathaniel Buck as part of their project to publish engraved views of many British towns; the London views were published in September 1749.⁶

The East India Company, founded in 1601, is mentioned from time to time in the present account, but its detailed working is not a central theme.⁷ The Company built ships in its yards at Blackwall (from 1614) and Deptford until 1639, but then both docks or yards were discontinued when the Company decided to

concentrate on freighting rather than building its own ships.⁸ The great majority of its records, in 1988 estimated to occupy nearly nine miles of shelving (since then transferred to the British Library), are of the period after 1750.⁹ East India Company ships did not come into the Pool of London, as they were too large and the river here too shallow. But their imported goods did, in great profusion. They had an office on Botolph Wharf in the decades around 1700.

The locations of a wider group of archaeological sites on both banks of the Thames which are mentioned in this study are shown on the map of London Bridge and its environs in 1747 by John Rocque (Figure 7), and listed with their main published references in Table 2.

The questions being posed and the structure of the study

This work is not only an account of archaeological excavations and related documentary research, but is

⁵ Respectively Hyde 1992; Barber and Hyde 2013; Hyde 1982; Laxton 1985.

⁶ Hyde 1994, 47–8, pl 40–4. This panorama and many other views of the Thames from Woolwich to Hampton Court, up to 1750, were studied for their topographical information by Hugh Phillips in 1951.

⁷ For a summary of the Company's history before 1800, Davis 1972, 257–66.

⁸ For excavation of the Company dockyard at Deptford, Divers 2004.

⁹ Moir 1988, ix, 10.

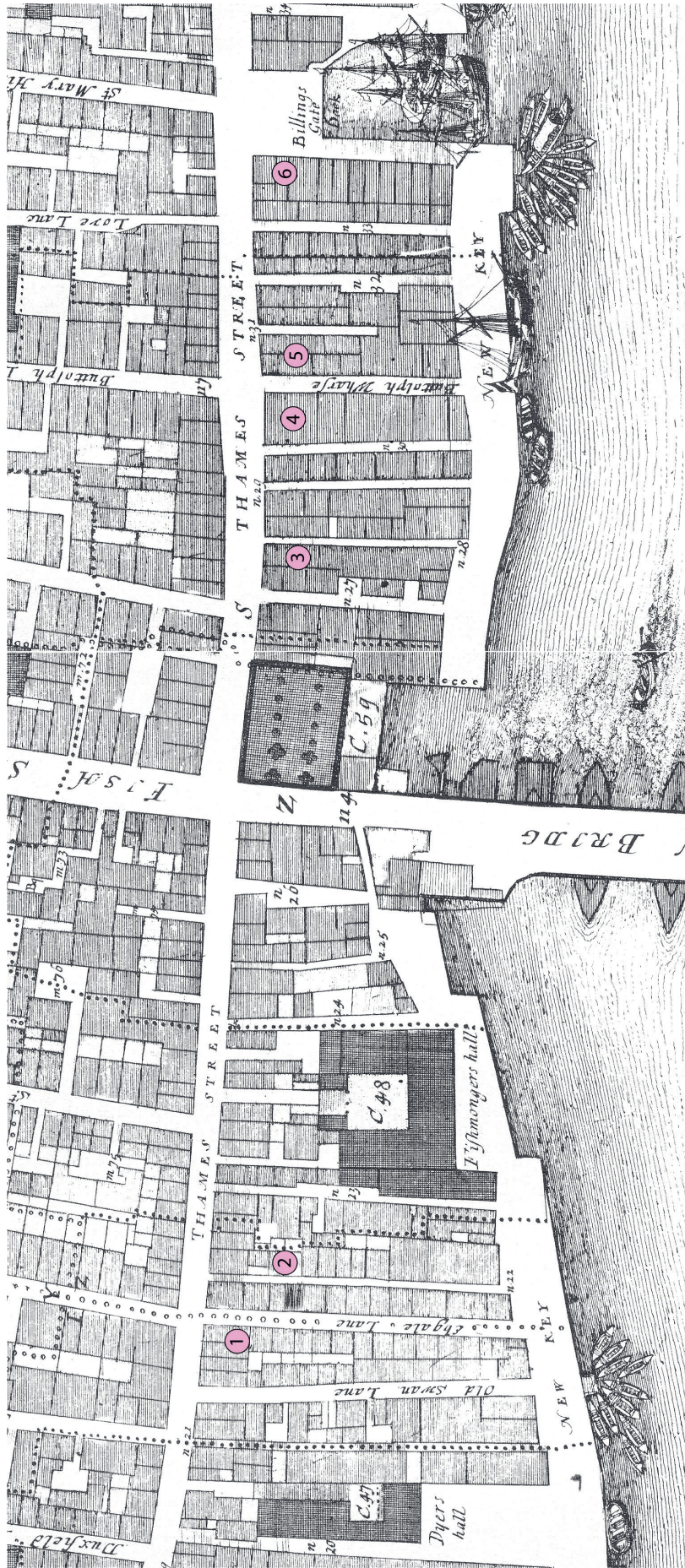


Figure 6 The study sites in their setting on the map of the City by Ogilby and Morgan, 1676 (Hyde 1992).
 Key to sites: 1, Swan Lane (site A); 2, Seal House (site B); 3, New Fresh Wharf (site C); 4, Billingsgate, houses on other side of Botolph Wharf alley (site D); 6,
 west range of Billingsgate dock (included for comparison with other figures). The church marked C59 is St Magnus



Figure 7 The central area of the waterfront of the City of London, showing the main sites used in this study (based on Rocque 1747, from Hyde 1982). For key to the archaeological sites shown, see Table 2

Number on Figure 7	site	Main archaeological publication
1	Bull Wharf	Ayre and Wroe-Brown 2015a, 2015b
2	Vintners' Hall and surroundings	Schofield with Maloney 1998, 297–8
3	Thames Exchange	Milne 1992
4	Walbrook	Schofield with Maloney 1998, 86
5	Steelyard	Schofield with Maloney 1998, 259–60
6	Watermark Place	Fowler and Mackinder 2014
7	Swan Lane/Riverbank House	this volume; Mackinder 2015
8	Seal House	this volume
9	New Fresh Wharf	
10	Billingsgate Lorry Park	
11	Custom House	Tatton-Brown 1974, 1975
12	Winchester Palace	Seeley <i>et al.</i> 2006
13	London Bridge	Watson <i>et al.</i> 2000
14	Fastolf Place	Blatherwick and Bluer 2009

Table 2 Archaeological sites on both banks of the River Thames excavated in recent years

also an enquiry. The study is permeated by two *general arguments* and a number of *questions*.

The arguments are as follows. First, the Great Fire of London in 1666 changed an important and central part of the conurbation of London, but there were also many important continuities. Second, archaeological sites along the waterfront, both in the City area and downstream as far as Deptford, have revealed a rich urban culture for the years 1666 to 1800 with many elements of foreign fashions, and these foreign influences were arguably strongest in the nation's largest port. Perhaps in London we can study consumer tastes and consumption.

Against this background, the study has set itself a number of questions:

1. To what extent do these waterfront buildings follow the usual notions of rebuilding after the Great Fire? How do they compare with late 17th- and 18th-century buildings on other London sites? What changed between 1666 and 1800?
2. Was the City waterfront a distinctive place within the post-Fire City of London? How did it differ from the south bank facing it?
3. What is its place within the archaeology of post-Fire London as a whole?
4. How does this study elucidate the late 17th- and 18th-century port and its national and international connections?
5. What evidence has been found of London's links with slavery?

6. What were the buildings used for? How do studies of the present kind illuminate the history of buildings in London?

Chapter 2 comprises a survey of the structure of the port of London in the period 1666 to about 1750: major public works (including plans for a new wharf), the geography of stairs, how shipping was managed, and the system of carts working the waterfront. Chapter 3 is the central account of the archaeological excavations of 1974–84 on either side of the north end of London Bridge, and discussion of the excavated buildings, including their documentary history; then in Chapter 4 a view of other sites on both banks of the Thames and to the east of the City as far as Deptford, also up to about 1750. This development of the Thames downstream of the City places the development of the central waterfront area in context. Chapter 5 takes the history forward from 1750 to 1800, the time of monumental complexes of warehouses, and includes an account of the Sufferance Wharves on the south bank and east of the Tower. Chapter 6 introduces the little-researched subject of slavery in London, from the 16th century to 1800. Chapter 7 provides an epilogue to the London narrative, taking us into the 19th century and the end of the period studied in detail as the London Docks opened up a new era in the port's history. Chapter 8 is about connections with other ports: documentary evidence of traffic with British ports, then a short survey of the topography and archaeology of foreign (European) and colonial ports, including the finding of much London artefactual material in late 17th-century Port Royal, Jamaica. Chapter 9 comprises discussion of all the results and the questions posed: the buildings, material culture and lifestyle of the occupants of the sites; trade and ships; parallels for the topography of the waterfront in other contemporary ports in Europe,

North America and the Caribbean; the port of London as a factor in London's growth at this period; and cultural influences from abroad on London life shown by the excavated artefacts. One underlying question is whether the waterfront zone around and south of Thames Street looked and felt different from the rest of the post-Fire City. Specialist reports and appendices occupy Chapter 10: on the pottery and other artefacts, coins, ceramic building material, cowrie shells, and the transcription of two relevant inventories of merchants' houses. The archaeological material and the contents of the inventories are complementary sources, each providing what the other does not. Together they give us a rounded view of the material or household culture of the period.

Some of the people in this narrative have names. In the context of London's waterfront, that is not unusual: the study of the same sites in the period 1100–1666, already published, mentions many owners and occupiers of the waterfront properties from the 12th century, and especially from the 14th.¹⁰ The names of the protagonists in the present work are in two groups: first, those who were responsible for redevelopment of the sites, rather like modern developers, but who probably only stepped onto the sites on a few occasions: Josiah Child and William Darvoll. The second, more interesting group are those who were major or minor tenants of the properties excavated, because the material culture may be theirs: Joseph and Henry Ashton, Edward Leaver, Francis Minshull (with his wife and later widow Elizabeth), and Robert Pallady senior and junior. We look at the houses of Thomas and Richard Beckford, both Masters of the Clothworkers' Company, on the east side of Billingsgate dock and nearby in Great Tower Street. The inventory of furnishings of Richard Beckford's house at his death in 1679, transcribed in Chapter 10, is a valuable insight into the lifestyle of a rich London merchant with property in Jamaica and investments in colonial shipping.

This monograph seeks to illustrate the lives and lifestyles of people in this part of London, as the port of London changed around them. It draws attention to the considerable amount of archaeological excavation, finds analysis and documentary research which has been undertaken in recent decades on the subject of London's waterfront from the City to Deptford in the late 17th and 18th centuries.

Conventions, methods and the archive

The four sites forming the archaeological and documentary core of this study have been given the letters A to D, from west to east (though there is no archaeological reporting on site C in this monograph).

¹⁰ Schofield *et al.* 2018; Schofield 2019 is a summary.

The archaeological recording within each site is based on the *context*, that is an event in the past which produces a trace worth recording. This is usually a layer or a wall with a physical extent, but can also be a trace of digging, a cut in the ground such as a pit, ditch or grave. The contexts are numbered in a single series within each site, and are always reported with square brackets: so B[48] is context [48] from site B (Seal House), and D[549] is context [549] from site D (Billingsgate).¹¹ The contexts at site B are also grouped into 'groups' (for instance, those comprising a wall or a floor) indicated by the letters Gp, for example Gp 90 (or Gp B90), Gp 9. This system was not employed on site D, where the strata are grouped into broader 'Events'.

Like all London sites, those studied here produced large amounts of pottery: almost 61 kilos of sherds from Seal House and 41 kilos from Billingsgate. The acronyms used to identify individual types of native and foreign pottery (wares) and those used for the pottery forms are given in Chapter 10. Individual accessioned non-ceramic artefacts are numbered, again within each site code, and presented with pointed brackets, so D<710> is a gold finger ring from context D[549]. Where a dimension of an item cannot be reconstructed with confidence, a question mark is used, so a brick might be described as '? x 104 x 62mm'.

The excavated material, catalogues, reports and photographs from these excavations are housed in the Archaeological Archive at Museum of London Stores, currently at Mortimer Wheeler House, 46 Eagle Wharf Road, London N1 7ED. The four museum site codes, as given in Table 1 above, are used to aid navigation of the material. When consulting the archive, the museum sitecode should be substituted for the letter used here, so a trade token cited below as A<3825> should be cited as SWA81<3825>. Intending enquirers should note, however, that the Museum of London has temporarily closed the archaeological archive for two years from December 2022, so that it can be re-organised and properly catalogued as part of the general new arrangements accompanying the setting up of the new London Museum at West Smithfield. Further information can be found on the websites of the two museums.

Documentary sources for this publication have been numerous and crucial. For Seal House (site B), the records of the Fishmongers' Company have shown that the excavated site was part of a terrace of six

¹¹ This excavation recording system was developed in the City of London from the middle of the 1970s. The first recording manual for use on sites was compiled by John Schofield in 1980; the revised third edition of the manual was edited by Andrew Westman (1994). It is available for use elsewhere in the world: https://www.colat.org.uk/_assets/doc/mol-site-manual-3rd-edition.pdf. It has been examined as a model in other countries, for instance in Italy: Carandini 1991.

houses in Black Raven Alley built for the company by William Darvoll, plaisterer, in 1671. Extensive documentary research has been undertaken for the Billingsgate excavation (site D). This covered part of the site of the former church of St Botolph Billingsgate, destroyed in the Great Fire and owned by the parish; and part of Botolph Wharf to the east and south of the former church, owned by the City. The main areas of investigation have been the aftermath of the Great Fire; the redevelopment of both church site and wharf, including buildings and occupiers; and the trade carried on at the waterside. For the aftermath of the Great Fire, the City's records include a huge amount of information about rebuilding and the disputes that arose. A bitter and long-running dispute between the City and the tenant of the wharf, Josiah Child, who carried out an aggressive land-grab of some of the church ground to improve his tenancy, has been tracked both in the City's records and in the records of the court of Chancery at The National Archives.

For the redevelopment of the former church site up to about 1800, the parish records have much to say. The parish of St Botolph Billingsgate continued as a legal entity after the Fire despite the loss of its church, with boundaries unchanged. Its residents continued to elect their own churchwardens, vestry and overseers; levy their own rates; look after their own money; compile their own minutes and accounts; and grant their own leases. The only difference was that they now shared a church building and clergyman with the adjacent parish of St George Botolph Lane, with which St Botolph was united for worship and whose church was rebuilt. The costs of maintaining this church building were agreed and allocated at joint meetings of both parishes. This solution, adopted for all the destroyed churches of the City after the Fire, and possibly unique

to London, was not reformed until after World War II. However it meant that detailed records continued to be compiled and preserved exactly as if the parish was still independent. For the redevelopment of the wharf, the City's records include head-leases as well as committee minutes. Use has also been made of the records of the Vintners' Company, the owners of Hammond's Key immediately to the west.

Other sources which have brought to life the buildings on the wharf, the personalities involved and their commercial activities are as follows. First, by great good fortune, many personal papers of the principal wharfinger up to 1728, Joseph Ashton, are preserved amongst the Chancery Masters' Exhibits at The National Archives. Second, Ashton's nephew Henry Ashton, who succeeded him as wharfinger, was a Director of the South Sea Company, part of the trade in enslaved people from Africa; the Royal African Company brought them from Africa to the West Indies, and the South Sea Company then distributed and re-sold them where they were needed. During Henry Ashton's time as a director, one of his distant relatives was appointed to the command of a slave ship and sent detailed reports back to Botolph Wharf. Third, Francis Minshull (d 1704), the parish's tenant of the large house built on the site of the former church, was another merchant. His commercial interests included wine and probably citrus fruit from the Canaries; the government of West Jersey (New Jersey) in north America, along with land speculation there; and the financing of several privateers during the wars with France and Spain. Finally the presence on the wharf of a Warehouse Keeper of the East India Company means that there are many references to Botolph Wharf in the voluminous records of that company, though searches so far have scarcely scratched the surface.