

Title: The registered finds from the Cyril Jackson School, Limehouse Causeway

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1. The registered finds from Regent Street, Limehouse (LHC93)

1.1 Catalogue of the registered finds from Context [1]

1.1.1 Domestic

1.1.1.1 Drinking (general)

Wooden cup

<11> [1] Near-complete: Small thin-walled, billet turned, stave made cylindrical cup or beaker, distorted with a split base. There are two small (opposing) holes below the rim, and five thin incised grooves on the exterior, not completely regularly spaced at 10-15mm. The wood is identified as beech (*Fagus*).

1.1.1.2 Drinking (alcohol)

Lead tankard or measure

<25> [1] Complete although flattened and distorted: Spouted tankard (measure?) inscribed 'W Williams, Spread Eagle, Limehouse; 'WAH' also scratched on handle. Two 'WIV' (William IV) excise marks. This may be a measure (eg. half-pint), also used as a tankard.

1.1.1.3 Food (consumption)

Lead (plated) spoon

<83> [1] Incomplete: most of stem missing. Pointed oval bowl (bowl L 55mm). Thin rectangular-sectioned stem, plain with no moulding at bowl-junction.

Nickel alloy (plated) spoon

<133> [1] Complete: Broad oval bowl (L 45mm), simple moulded projections at bowl and handle junctions. Short squared handle. Overall L120mm. Mustard or sugar spoon.

Nickel alloy (plated) spoon

<134> [1] Complete: Pointed oval bowl (L 50mm), fiddle handle. Overall L 143mm. Manufacturer's mark on underside of handle.

Nickel alloy (plated) spoon

<135> [1] Complete: Oval bowl (L 50mm), simple moulded projections at bowl and handle junctions, fiddle handle. Overall L 145mm. Manufacturer's mark on underside of handle.

Nickel alloy (plated) spoon

<136> [1] Incomplete: Oval bowl (L 50mm), simple moulded projections at bowl junction, half stem missing.

1.1.1.4 Food (storage)

Barrel bung

<6> [1] Complete: Plain, circular with fragment of textile adhering. D 57mm, T 10mm. The wood is identified as oak (*Quercus*).

1.1.1.5 Furnishings/Fittings

Copper alloy keyhole plate

<76> [1] Complete: Oval plate with four small attachment-holes. L 40mm.

Copper alloy clock-key

<79> [1] Complete: Clock-key with oval bow, short circular-sectioned shank and a hollow diamond-shaped winder. Overall length 63mm.

Copper alloy fitting

<81> [1] Near-complete: Straight tapered fitting, moulded with flat base. ?hook. L 48mm, W 5-10mm.

Copper alloy mount

<85> [1] Complete: Circular, slightly domed mount with central square hole. Made from thin copper alloy-sheet. D 28mm.

1.1.1.6 Indefinite

Copper alloy ring

<77> [1] Complete: Plain ring with slightly bevelled oval-section. D 23mm.

Copper alloy ring

<78> [1] Complete: Plain, very corroded, with flattened-oval section. D 28mm

Copper alloy fitting

<82> [1] Complete: Hollow tubular object with moulded widely-spaced external spiral and closely-spaced bands of grooves. L152mm, D 22mm.

Lead object

<75> [1] Complete: Hollow conical object, with holes at both ends, internal screw thread and external shallow spiral groove. L 25mm.

1.1.2 Personal

1.1.2.1 Accoutrements

Wooden fan-handle

<12> [1] Complete: Cylindrical fan-handle, shaped with six regularly-spaced grooves and indentations possibly to resemble bamboo, but also serving as grips. There are two

uprights extending from the handle which would have held the fan; both of these have the heads of two small copper-alloy pins or tacks in situ, also (on the interiors) the remains of glue or resin. Overall L 230mm, W 12-15mm, D 12mm. Wood identified as bamboo and is therefore an imported object.

Wooden box-base or box-lid

<128> [1] Incomplete: Lathe-turned small hollowed circular object. Thin-walled and very light which tapers gently to a point and has a carved screw-thread. Possibly a small screw-top box or box-lid. H approx 45mm, D 40mm. Fruit wood or birch, but this remains to be confirmed.

Lead frame

<80> [1] Near-complete: Delicate ornate mirror-surround or picture frame. Decorated with floral motifs and (at the top) a crown. Cast in a mould. 70 x 60mm.

1.1.2.2 Health/Hygiene

Lead syringe

<84> [1] Complete: Ring-headed plunger, conical nozzle. Overall L 110mm. This type of small syringe was generally used with a rubber tube for enema application or douche type contraceptive use (Jonathan Evans, pers.comm).

Wooden brush

<5> [1] Near-complete: Scrubbing brush, rectangular with rounded ends and 44 bristle holes. The clumps of bristles were wired into place; some lengths of wire and fused/hardened clumps survive. L 168mm. W 62mm; T approx 16mm. Wood identified as oak (species *Quercus*).

Wooden brush

<10> [1] Near-complete: Washing-up brush? Cylindrical brush-head on hand-carved handle, both head and brush are warped, laminated and split. The brush-head (D 45mm, T 17mm) has a small section missing, but would have had 12 or 13 holes for clumps of bristles. Some bristles remain, held with lengths of wire on the underside. Handle L110mm. Wood identified as oak (species *Quercus*).

Wooden clothes peg

<127> [1] Complete: Cylindrical split clothes peg, strengthened with iron band (D 10mm). L 130mm. Wood identified as ash (species *Fraxinus*).

1.1.2.3 Toys

Wooden doll

<7> [1] Incomplete: Lathe-turned 'Queen Anne' doll torso, with head, neck and armless body terminating in pedestal with double socket for articulated hinge legs. The back and top of the head are flattened, but the back of the head is rounded; possibly these dolls (<7>, <8> and <9>) were made from pieces of balustrade. The face has two oval pewter

eyes, three-dimensional with raised eyeballs, and a carved mouth; damage has obscured the nose area. The doll is nude – there are no traces of clothing or hair surviving and there are two (rusted) nails (possibly the ears) on either side of the head. Overall L 170mm. Wood is unclear, but is thought to be alder (species *Alnus*).

Wooden doll

<8> [1] Incomplete; Lathe-turned ‘Queen Anne’ doll torso, very similar to <7> with similar double socket for articulated hinge legs. One (glass?) eye remains, and a triangular nose carved in very shallow relief. There are the remains of nails or tacks on either side and on the back of the head. Overall L 172mm. Wood is unclear, but is thought to be alder (species *Alnus*).

Wooden doll

<9> [1] Near complete: Lathe-turned ‘Queen Anne’ doll torso, similar to <7> and <8>, but without any features, or socket for hinge legs. It does have remains of bark on back of head, and also on a band around the middle, but instead of ending in a socket tapers to a wedge-shaped point. Given the absence of any facial features this might be an unfinished example of a ‘Queen Anne’ doll or a very crude copy. L 160mm. Wood is unclear, but is thought to be alder (species *Alnus*).

1.1.2.4 Structural

Wooden wedge or bung

<131> [1] Complete. Elm (?) wedge, square-sectioned tapering to a point. L 125mm. Wood is unclear but is thought to be elm (species *Ulmus*).

Wooden object

<129> [1] Cylindrical hand-carved pointed object with four thin incised grooves around the middle. There are darker areas, possibly indicating wear and/or a coating of pitch at the base and on the point. L 60mm, D 16mm. Possibly a peg top, structural or from a game. Wood is unclear but is thought to be oak (species *Quercus*).

Wooden object

<132> [1] Two identical long rectangular pieces of elm, almost certainly structural each with a thin ridge on one face extending to dowel/peg and socket holes. L approx 160mm. Wood identified as elm (species *Ulmus*).

1.2 Catalogue of the registered finds from context 3

1.2.1 Personal

1.2.1.1 Health/hygiene

Wooden brush

<1> [3] Near-complete: Scrubbing brush, rectangular with rounded ends and 47 bristle holes. The clumps of bristles were wired into place; some lengths of wire and fused/hardened clumps survive. L 170mm. W 50mm; T approx 12mm. Pine wood ([confirm wood; Damian](#))

1.2.1.2 Toys

Wooden handle

<3> [3] Near-complete: Hollow turned, shaped handle, decorated with grooves, probably from a skipping rope. L 120mm. L 120mm. Ash? ([confirm wood; Damian](#))

1.2.1.3 Tools

Wooden awl handle

<4> [3] Complete: Small round handle, flat at the top and tapering gently to form a compacted pear-shape. There is a mineralised iron band at the bottom, marking the junction between the handle and spike, and a small piece of in situ square-sectioned tang (possibly the spike was also square-sectioned). L approx. 45mm, D approx 40mm (very laminated).

1.2.1.4 Nautical

Wooden pulley block sheaves

<2> [3] Three heavy pulleys with central holes (approx 20mm), slightly different diameters, joined with broken oak peg. These pulleys are unfinished 'shivers' (Damian Goodburn, pers.comm), the product of a pulley block maker, made from a dense heavy South American tropical wood. Such unfinished examples are unique in London's archaeological record. D 74mm, 80mm, 92mm.

Parrel bead

<137> [3] Complete: Cylindrical bead with central hole (12mm). Ash wood, (species *Fraxinus*) this object formed part of sailing rigging on a ship (Damian Goodburn, pers.comm). D approx 35mm (very laminated).

1.3 Catalogue of the registered finds from context 5

1.3.1 Domestic

1.3.1.1 Food consumption

Lead (pewter) spoon

<27> [5] Incomplete: Tablespoon. Oval bowl and part of stem with flattened oval-section.

1.3.2 Personal

1.3.2.1 Clothing

Shoe

<*> [5] Near-complete: adult man's shoe, R foot. Natural-shaped with broad oval toe. High vamp, quarters with latches and single lace-holes, insole, mid- and tread-sole with low layered heel.

1.4 Discussion

The three privy groups are discussed together as a single assemblage, using the interpretive themes developed for the project (below). They appear to be dumped rubbish from the tenements with a fairly even mix of domestic and personal items with a few unidentified objects, which may have originated from the shipyards. The state of preservation is good, and it is likely that everything originally in the pits was retrieved.

1.5 Chronology

The pewter tankard <25> is stamped with two William IV excise marks. William IV reigned from 1830–7 although the excise marks continued to be used for at least a year after his death. The tankard therefore provides a TPQ of 1830 which complements the pottery TPQ of 1836. The tankard is also inscribed with the name 'W Williams, Spread Eagle, Limehouse', with 'WAW' scratched on the handle.

The other finds are less easy to date closely. The shoe is early-mid 19th century type. The spoons have indistinct 'hallmarks' which may be manufacturer's marks mimicking hallmarks (Alex Werner, pers. comm.). Most of the spoons are plated nickel silver and post- c 1840.

1.6 Function and cost

The non-ceramic finds are mostly domestic and personal in nature. They almost certainly belonged to the occupants of the tenements, and are on the whole functional items presumably discarded when worn out or no longer required. The most varied and numerically frequent group of objects was derived from context [1], suggesting this household contained the largest range of things. None are particularly expensive; the fan handle for example might appear to be an unusual find, but Limehouse with its seafaring history was a multicultural area and the fan could have belonged to a prostitute or been a sailor's gift. The spoons are mismatched, plain and well-used. 'Silver' cutlery made of nickel alloy and electroplated with silver or left uncoated was cheap and readily available by the 1840's, and would have penetrated even the poorest levels (Alex Werner, pers.comm). Similarly the mirror frame, possibly a Coronation souvenir, would have been cheaply manufactured in a mould.

1.7 Gender, and individuality

The wooden dolls and skipping rope handle are children's and probably girls' toys; presumably the two larger dolls were already broken when discarded and have been stripped of any clothing or hair. The dolls are lathe-made: manufactured porcelain dolls from Germany would have been expensive at this time and these toys would have been more usual, especially in poorer households.

The syringe has been identified as an enema or contraceptive syringe, used with a brass-mounted rubber tube for rectal or vaginal irrigation (Jonathan Evans, pers.comm). If a contraceptive syringe there are obvious female gender implications. Contraceptive syringes gained in popularity in the second half of the 19th century; they must have been expensive but presumably would also have been available for loan or hire and therefore in general use.

The clothes peg also traditionally has female associations, although male lodgers may well have hung out their own clothes. The awl handle comes from a small wood- or leather-working tool, probably although not necessarily used by a man, and the shoe is a man's shoe.

1.8 Condition of material

It can be difficult to tell whether an object is damaged before or after deposition. Some items were obviously worn or broken when thrown away (the shoe from [5] for example, and two of the spoons (although the stems may have snapped in the ground), but in most cases it is not clear why things were discarded. The brushes were probably worn out, but bristles seldom survive in the soil.

1.9 Variability

There is no discernable difference between the condition or nature of the contents of the three privy pits. When statistically compared with the other two study sites (Sydenham Brewery and New Palace Yard) the LHC93 assemblage contained by far the greater quantity of registered finds.

1.10 Acknowledgements

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