

## London Archaeological Prize 2018

The winners of this prestigious biennial prize (often known as the Publication Prize) were announced at the London Archaeological Forum on Monday 19<sup>th</sup> November by the prize administrator Alison Telfer, on behalf of the chair of judging panel, Peter Rowsome, *London Archaeologist's* Secretary, Becky Wallower, and the four judges: John Lewis (Society of Antiquaries), Cath Maloney (formerly the LAARC), John Pearce (King's College London) and Signe Hoffos (COLAS and Friends of the City Churches) .

Fourteen publications were nominated this year, from which nine were shortlisted. There was near unanimity in determining the prize this time, with one publication in a commanding first place, and a clutch of other highly praised books a little way behind. The shortlisted publications are listed below, with details of author(s) and publisher, and comments from the judges to give a flavour of their assessment.

★★★**The winner was presented with a certificate, and a cheque for £250, by Cath Maloney:**

***An Immense and Exceedingly Commodious Goods Station: The Archaeology and History of the Great Northern Railway's Goods Yard at King's Cross, 1849 to the Present Day, Pre-Construct Archaeology, 2016***

**Rebecca Haslam and Guy Thompson with contributions from Kevin Hayward, Chris Jarret, Tim Smith and Berni Sudds**

A lucid and absorbing study of the development of the goods yard at King's Cross in its socio-economic context, seemingly without sacrificing the structural and technical evidence which specialists would need, and packed with fascinating detail. The chapter syntheses are a boon for navigating the detail.

This publication reveals the complex magnificence of the King's Cross Goods Yard. It does this through its clear presentation, from its text to its well-placed, colour-coded drawings and historic illustrations. It brings the Goods Yard to life, all its myriad operations, its energy, its engines, the noise, the grime.

★★**Although the panel decided not to award a runner-up prize this time, two publications were given honourable mentions:**

***St Paul's Cathedral: Archaeology and History, John Schofield with others, Oxbow Books, 2016***

An important and surprisingly fascinating study of one of our major, iconic buildings through the many archaeological investigations it has undergone over the last 20 years and the matching of these with a wealth of surviving building records and other accounts, as well as wonderful illustrations.

A superb fusion of archival and archaeological evidence informs this masterful survey of London's great cathedral from its pre-Fire foundations to the present day. Lavishly illustrated and rich in detail, this comprehensive account draws on a wealth of archival sources and an array of contemporary subject experts.

***The Deptford Royal Dockyard and Manor of Sayes Court, London: Excavations 2000–12, Antony Francis, MOLA, 2017***

The book clearly links the detailed development of the dockyard as a space to the wider forces which shaped it, both the processes of ship-building and naval history in the post-med period.

This publication of the excavations of the largest naval dockyard is impressive. The specialist shipbuilding and dockyard operations and activities are clearly presented and illustrated through the use of well-placed plans, historic documents and pictures. A fascinating story.

★**The remainder of the shortlisted publications, in no particular order, were:**

***Living and Dying in Southwark 1587-1831: Excavations at Cure's College Burial Ground, Park Street, Louise Loe et al, Oxford Archaeology, 2017***

The book nicely uses evidence of the major skeletal sample associated with an alms house to convey the experience of a community living hard-pressed lives, if not in abject poverty, in 16th-19th century London.

A very effective demonstration of new insights which can be gained for post-med urban communities from osteological study, it uses historical sources well to contextualise the community.

A very well presented publication of the first burial ground of an alms house to be archaeologically excavated, and even though the burial registers were of very limited use due to the burials being un-named, quite a lot of new information about London's population could be deduced. The scientific data was clearly presented, linking in well with the text.

***From Brunel to British Rail: the railway heritage of the Crossrail route, Andy Shelley, Oxford Archaeology, 2016***

Important analysis of a major element of the city's historic fabric and will be of particular interest to railways specialists.

Using the findings of the Crossrail excavations, the development and workings of the GWR are revealed through engaging text and wonderful plans and illustrations, and a very useful gazetteer of all the sites.

Excellent!

***Archaeology at Bloomberg (e-book), various, MOLA, 2017***

Very attractive presentation, engaging text, excellent new reconstruction drawings, well-pitched and lucid. Achieves good balance between conveying a sense of a specific London neighbourhood and its place in the wider world.

This e-book has wide appeal being beautifully presented with lots of pictures, many of them stunning, and good succinct text which tell not only the story of the site through its archaeology but also of the unique Mithraeum.

***The River's Tale: Archaeology on the Thames Foreshore in Greater London, Nathalie Cohen and Eliot Wragg, TDP/MOLA, 2017***

Lots of interesting material, engagingly written, especially the chapters on ship-breaking and river defences in WWII, where new insights are really clear.

This is a really interesting book, well-written and illustrated (though the latter were a bit too small), revealing many rather forgotten and unknown aspects of London's past.

A promising debut from the Thames Discovery Programme, with an intriguing introduction to the archaeology of the London foreshore.

***Excavations at the British Museum: An Archaeological and Social History of Bloomsbury, Rebecca Haslam and Victoria Ridgeway, British Museum, 2017***

A very particular, interesting story is told in this publication, not only of the BM itself, but also before it, whilst it was on the very fringes of London. There are many different aspects to the story which is told well, with clear plans at every stage, contemporary pictures and specialist reports.

An engaging history of the British Museum and its environs in the light of recent archaeological work. A corner and a courtyard of this iconic site provide intriguing insights into the transformation of fields and farms into the heart of modern London.

***Queen Mary's Hospital, Carshalton, An Iron Age and early Roman-British Settlement; Andrew Powell, 2017, Wessex Archaeology***

A good old-fashioned report - excavation, finds, environmental - which brings interesting insights into a period poorly defined and understood in the London area and, although phasing was difficult, the evidence was carefully presented and discussed to provide a convincingly new contribution to the Iron Age/Romano-British period in London's past.

A model of good practice in the recording, analysis and presentation of a site on the cusp of British pre-history.