

4th Annual Public Lecture - 1995

THE PORT OF MEDIEVAL LONDON

Gustav Milne

Mr Milne started his lecture with a brief definition of intertidal zone aspects of maritime archaeology and a description of the long survey of the River Thames. The origins of the great port of London lay within the period 900 - 1400. Old London had moved east from the site of the Mid Saxon port whilst old Southampton moved west from Hamwick. The 12th century, in particular, had been a century of great change with a possible sea level rise resulting in flooding. Warehouses started to appear, with evidence of foreign merchant enclaves and cargoes from Spain, Germany and France. There were also early ship remains with vessels of over 50 ft by the end of the century. One early boat had been recycled as part of a waterfront revetment at the Customs House site. As an aside, the audience appreciated Mr Milne's wry definition of a watching brief namely 'watch things very briefly as they are destroyed!'.