



## Respected for our research.

As one of the UK's largest archaeological organisations we put our research expertise at the heart of everything we do. Our highly respected teams in London, Northampton and Basingstoke are world leaders in archaeological fieldwork and study; furthermore we are recognised as an Independent Research Organisation by UK Research and Innovation.

Our mission is to bring together elements of archaeological practice, research, public engagement and professional training. As such we work with major construction and development partners to generate large quantities of archaeological data which is expertly investigated to produce knowledge to be shared for the benefit of people and society.

Over the coming year our strategic focus is on ensuring significant growth in our collaboration efforts with Higher Education Institutions and in grant funded activities. We intend to maximise the potential of our considerable expertise and large body of data derived from major fieldwork programmes, including over 40 years of hands-on archaeological practice.



We want to take our pioneering research out into the world, to work alongside partners and collaborate with communities to create meaningful archaeological legacies. Through these efforts we will engage with a range of audiences including academia, heritage organisations, business and commercial sectors, and the public.

This prospectus sets out our approach to research development and co-production with partners, as well as our thematic framework for these activities. I hope you enjoy reading about our successes to date and feel compelled to get in touch to find out more about working with us.

Janet Miller, CEO, MOLA

If you are interested in collaborating or taking up a research opportunity with us, please get in touch [research@mola.org.uk](mailto:research@mola.org.uk)

# Research partnerships: what can MOLA offer?

## Quality of research



- Opportunities to collaborate with some of the UK's most experienced archaeological specialists and researchers
- Access to archaeological material and datasets of all sizes, types and time periods, from across London and the UK
- Innovators and leaders in archaeological practice, undertaking pioneering and award-winning research

## Pathways to impact



- Strong links to business and industry, through commercial operations, commissions and partnerships with major companies across sectors
- Contacts and partnerships with charities and cultural institutions
- Community engagement through major citizen science programmes, with routes to demonstrate and capture research impact and legacy

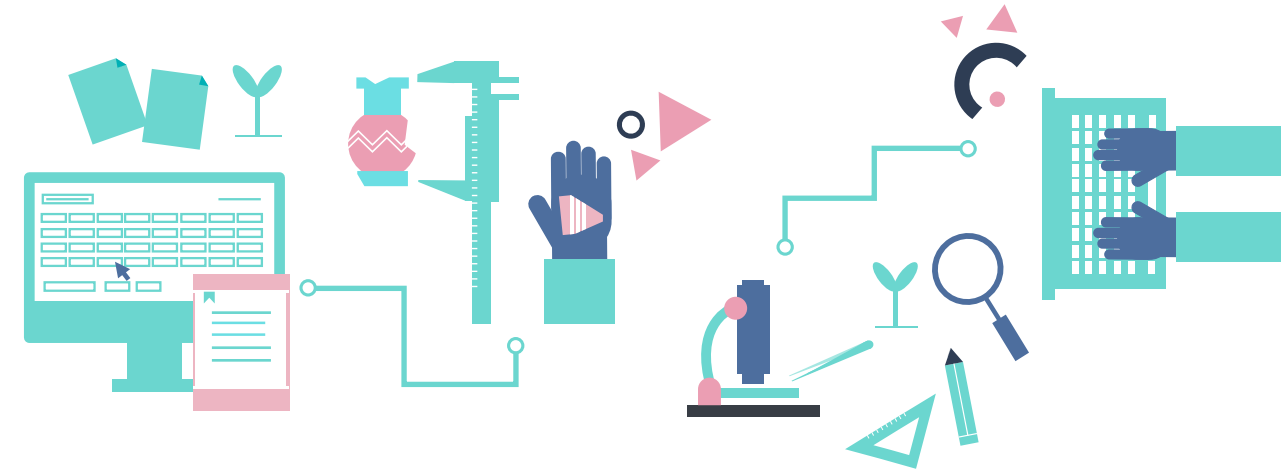
## Research environment



- Bespoke facilities and research spaces in our offices in London and Northampton, including processing areas, labs, library, GIS and database resources
- Access to skilled professionals including communications, publications and all aspects of archaeological fieldwork
- Access to wider networks and support for researchers including governance, business planning, award-winning research and a considerable publications record



# Routes to undertaking research



The development of new research projects follows two complementary routes, with many merging both paths:



- Projects initiated and designed by staff and sector partners that respond to our research themes, specialisms and data or material held by us



- Strategic research that answers directly to our long term ambitions and the future shape of our organisation

Whichever the route, our staff act as principal and co-investigators on projects, taking responsibility for designing and doing research, delivery of work packages, and project outputs.

We also actively support researcher development through applications for grant funding and post-doctoral research fellowships and in our capacity as an IRO, we are eligible for grant funding from UKRI.

In 2020 we will host the third round of the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) Collaborative Doctoral Partnerships, welcoming the first cohort of PhD students, co-supervised by our staff, in the autumn.

# Our research themes

**Our Discoveries** - new knowledge created through our archaeological work largely undertaken with major UK development and construction schemes.

## Techniques and specialisms:

- archaeological science
- digital recording and visualisation of sites
- urban morphology
- geoarchaeology and modelling past landscapes
- connecting theory and practice

## Material and material culture:

- human osteology
- anthropology of death

## Intertidal and riverine archaeology:

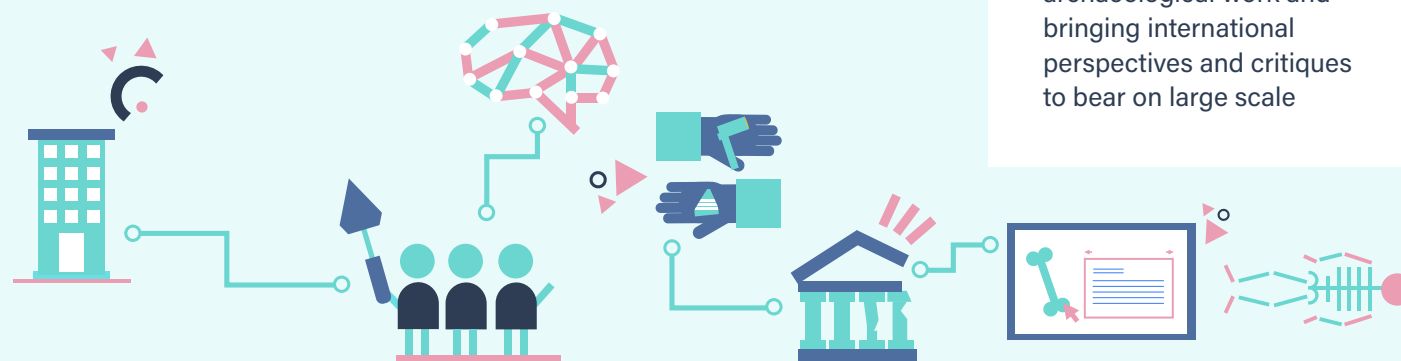
- urban waterfront archaeology from the Roman to post-medieval periods
- impacts of historic and modern climate change on archaeology

**Citizen Science** - data, research and participation opportunities offered through our citizen science projects and those in the wider sector

- Evaluating community and public engagement outcomes and impacts
- Understanding how to engage diverse audiences and co-creation of archaeological research and knowledge
- Assessing the opportunities that citizen science offers for research and education

**Archaeology and the Contemporary** - exploring the effectiveness and value of an archaeological approach to the contemporary world

- Applying archaeological approaches to contemporary collections to reflect on and develop archaeological practice
- Addressing the big issues of contemporary society – migration, homelessness, colonialism, health and well-being
- Building the modern world by defining social and public benefits of archaeological work and bringing international perspectives and critiques to bear on large scale





# Knowledge Transfer Partnerships

We want to develop the application of research outcomes to our projects in order to transform archaeological practice. Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (KTPs) are three-way partnerships lasting 1-3 years between the business (MOLA), a recent MA/MSc or PhD graduate (the KTP associate) who carries out research, and a university academic who provides support to the KTP associate and their research. In order to qualify as a KTP, projects must deliver innovation and benefits and potentially open up a new area of business activity.



Areas of activity that would benefit from partnership working on a KTP include:



## Artificial Intelligence (AI) in archaeology

Much of the vast data produced in archaeology still requires manual processing. How can we work with AI to speed things up and deliver enhanced results?



## Archaeological Science

How can techniques from other disciplines be applied to our assemblages and projects?



## Citizen Science

How can we better understand the quality and impact of community engagement, and the science generated by these projects?



## Learning and development research

How can we create effective and impactful e-learning resources for professional and community audiences in archaeology?



## Visualisation of data and output

How can we present information to aid visualisation and interpretation?

# Grant-funded research projects and fellowships

Grant-funded research projects and fellowships help to develop not only our core research themes and questions, but the skills and experience of our team too.

For example, MOLA archaeologist Sadie Watson is undertaking a four-year UKRI Future Leaders Fellowship. 'Measuring, maximising and transforming public benefit from UK Government infrastructure investment in archaeology' will focus on how we can ensure that public spending on archaeology for infrastructure projects leads to meaningful and relevant research, as well as genuine community participation, with the aim of informing future policy and practice.

Sadie's research takes place within the framework of professional archaeology, with project partners including Historic England, the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists and the Europae Archaeologiae Consilium. The inclusion of HS2 Ltd as project partner will embed the new guidance into the commercial sector and lead the way in introducing new behavioural expectations.

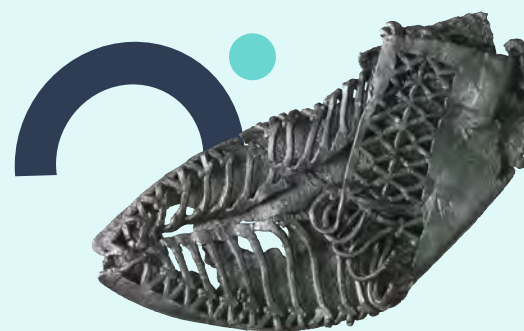
As part of the 'Our Discoveries' research theme we are re-examining our legacy projects, in particular material and data from fieldwork undertaken in the City of London during the 1980s and 1990s. We believe that there is benefit in revisiting and recontextualising these projects and would welcome proposals for collaborative research in this area.

## Examples of legacy research projects

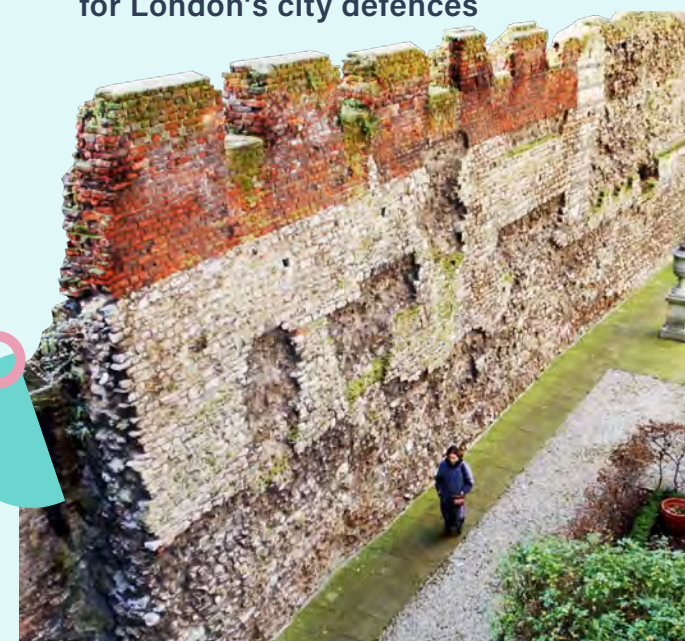
**Consuming Roman London**  
(currently in development as a collaborative research project)



**Roman leather from the Bloomberg development site in London**



**Synthesising the evidence for London's city defences**



# Collaborative Doctoral Partnership

Through our Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) Collaborative Doctoral Partnership (CDP) we support PhD researchers at UK universities. This work extends our existing strong record for academic collaboration and helps to develop future leaders, specialists and advocates for archaeology.

CDPs are partnerships between higher education institutions, museums, libraries, archives and heritage organisations with a proven track record in supporting and supervising postgraduate research.

We are delighted to have been recently awarded a CDP to support and co-supervise nine AHRC PhD studentships as well as a funded 3-year collaborative research project and UKRI Future Leaders Fellowship. Alongside this, two MOLA practitioners have also been awarded placements as Cambridge University Field Archaeologist in Residence and we have secured a £2m National Lottery Heritage Fund grant for our award-winning citizen science programme.



## The pathway:

- 1** Nine PhD projects will be co-designed and co-supervised by our staff, in collaboration with UK university colleagues; projects are focused on our research themes: Our Discoveries, Citizen Science, and Archaeology and the Contemporary.
- 2** CDP researchers benefit from training opportunities offered by MOLA and other organisations. CDPs enable us to share resources with the academic community, expand the knowledge base, improve research networks and exchange ideas.
- 3** CDPs help address skills needs and gaps in the wider archaeology sector, widen research opportunities and develop connections for future collaborative research and training projects.
- 4** Staff have an opportunity to develop supervisory and academic research skills; research students receive practitioner training from us, while communicating the results of collaborative research to new audiences.



# Case studies

'Witch bottles' are 17th century glass and stoneware vessels believed to have served as objects for ritual protection or as containers for a 'prepared cure' against witchcraft. Their contents commonly include pins and nails, but sometimes also urine, nail clippings and thorns. They have been found concealed in a range of contexts: placed in hearths or beneath the floors of historic buildings, on archaeological sites, in churchyards, ditches and riverbanks.

## Bottles Concealed and Revealed

This 3-year AHRC-funded project aims to recalibrate the understanding of the phenomenon of mid-late 17th century 'witch bottles'. It is led by MOLA Finds Specialist Nigel Jeffries with Professor Owen Davies and Dr Ceri Houlbrook from the University of Hertfordshire, who specialise in the study of magic, witchcraft and popular medicine.



This work is the most comprehensive synthesis of 'witch bottles' to date, and will survey and critique all known examples surviving in museums and other collections around southern and eastern England. The project will also explore the origins of 'bottle magic', how it spread and changed in subsequent centuries, and its relationship to early modern medicine and popular magic.

The resulting insights will not only benefit historians and archaeologists, but also inform and engage museum and folklore curators, and those outside of academia for whom the subject of witchcraft resonates.





## The Dzhangal Archaeology Project

This work considers a group of objects collected by photographer Gideon Mendel at the site of the Calais 'Jungle' camp, many of which were displayed in his exhibition 'Dzhangal' at the Autograph ABP gallery in London. MOLA Post-Excavation Manager Louise Fowler is working with Sarah Mallet, TORCH Knowledge Exchange Fellow at the University of Oxford's School of Archaeology and co-curator for Pitt Rivers Museum's LANDE exhibition, to record and assess the objects.



The project uses archaeological methodologies and material culture to document the politics of exclusion and violence against displaced people at the UK border in France, but also the journeys undertaken and the networks of solidarity and resistance that were established between people in both countries.



The project focuses on the life histories of the objects – their use, reuse, eventual destruction – and the wider social, political and economic contexts that led to their deposition. It directs the archaeological lens to everyday items to help us think about the modern experience of migration and turn the gaze back on ourselves as archaeologists.



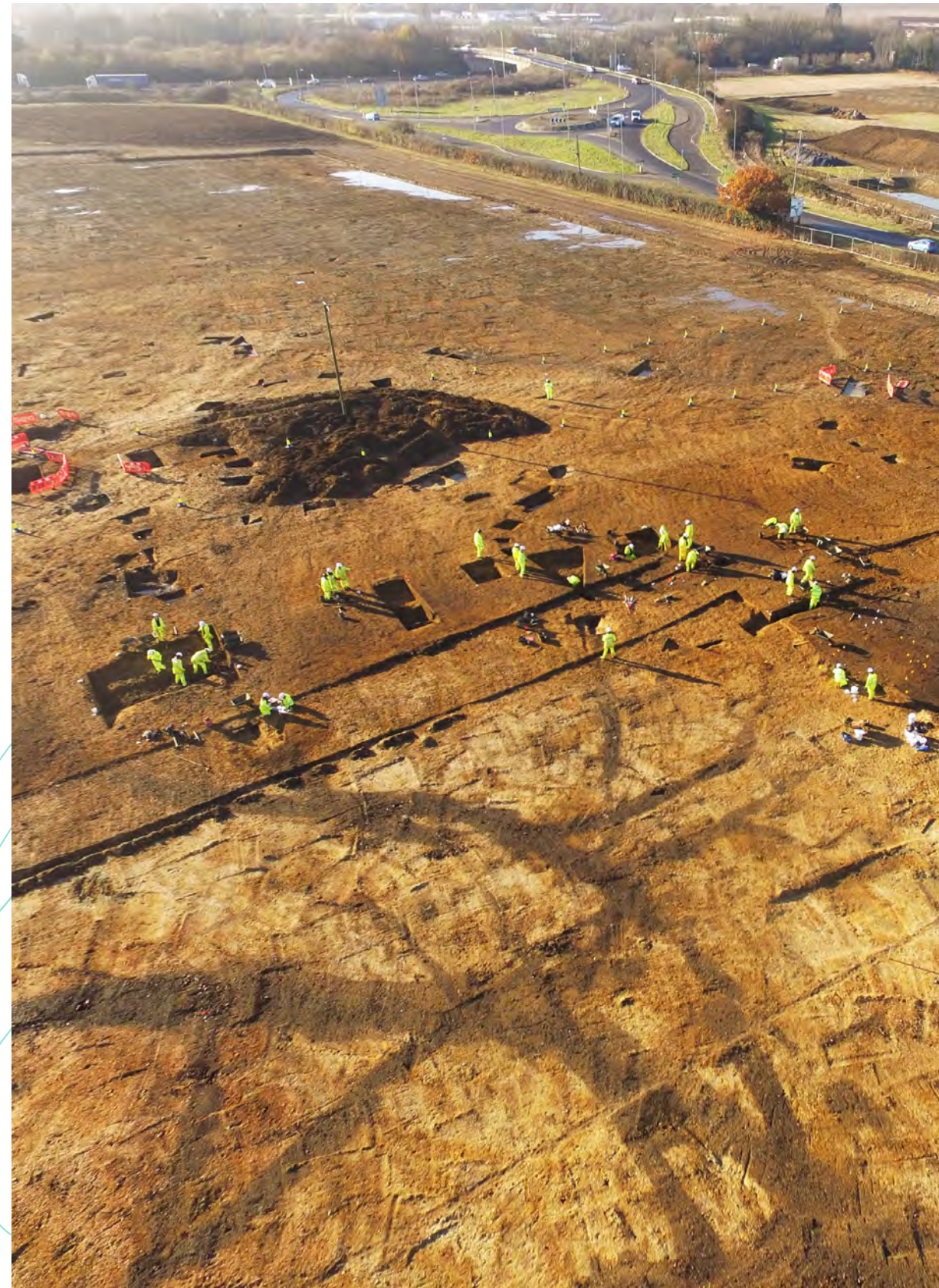
## **A14 Cambridge to Huntingdon Improvement Scheme**

This massive project was delivered through our consortium with Headland Archaeology (MOLA Headland Infrastructure) to deliver a comprehensive programme of works comprising over 40 separate excavations, covering around 350 hectares and engaging more than 200 archaeologists.

It is one of the richest archaeological landscapes in the UK, with remains including mammoth tusks, prehistoric funerary and ritual remains, and settlements dating from the Bronze Age and Iron Age through to medieval periods, allowing for the study of significant landscape change in south-west Cambridgeshire.

The project was supported by a MOLA community archaeologist who undertook a range of targeted public engagement activities and events. These included: site open days, talks and tours, digital engagement, local and national media coverage, and community excavations at Brampton and Huntingdon to enable communities to gain hands-on experience of archaeology.

Our research into this massive excavated landscape continues as the project progresses through its post-excavation assessment and analysis stage.

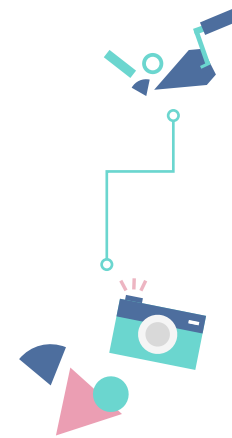




## CITiZAN

Coastal and Intertidal Zone Archaeological Network (CITiZAN) is an award-winning MOLA community archaeology project funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund. Since 2015 we have monitored threatened coastal and intertidal archaeological sites in England, with local volunteers recording sites using the CITiZAN app. This has revealed new information about the rich history and landscapes of our coast, from ancient timber trackways to the remains of shipwrecks and a First World War German U-boat. The programme also provides invaluable data on long-term trends in relative sea level rise, coastal and climate change.

Since 2019 CITiZAN has focused on six areas on the Mersey, Humber, Blackwater, Kent coast, Solent and south Devon where risk to intertidal and coastal archaeology is extreme. We train and engage groups from these communities as well as rangers and stewards on National Trust and National Park sites and provide digital resources for walkers using Natural England's England Coast Path initiative.



This citizen science project also features collaboration with universities, including projects with the University of Brighton, Canterbury Christchurch, and UCL. With the support of Lloyds Register Foundation and their Heritage and Education Centre, we are supporting MA students at the Universities of Hull, Liverpool and Southampton to research dissertations on maritime history and archaeology.



## Bloomberg and the Temple of Mithras

Excavations between 2010-2014 prior to the development of Bloomberg's new European headquarters recovered an astonishing quantity and range of objects in outstanding condition and was the most extensive and significant excavation of Roman London in 20 years.

The project also enabled MOLA to revisit the 1954 excavation by William F Grimes, Director of the London Museum, of the Temple of Mithras – as well as the public reception of the discovery through oral history interviews with those who visited and worked at the excavations.

Collaborative research into Roman leatherwork, writing tablets and site data is ongoing, with monographs in preparation that will explore key elements of the excavations. The first of these, Roman London's first voices was published in 2016 and will be followed by volumes detailing the Roman buildings and the thousands of artefacts recovered from this incredible location.

If you are interested in collaborating or taking up a research opportunity with us, please get in touch [research@mola.org.uk](mailto:research@mola.org.uk)





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