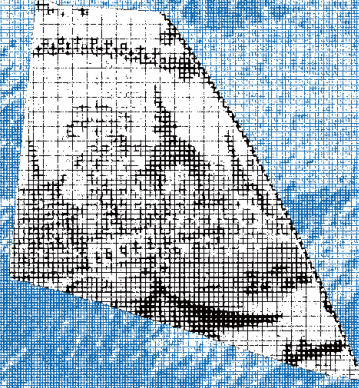


Fragments of Historical Treasure:



The Archaeological Practice of Everyday Objects

Water flows,
People flow,
Emotion flows,
Memory flows,
History flows.

The world is woven from the threads of time, space,
and perception,

And within this fabric, all things drift to and fro,

Embracing the endless cycle of life and death.

Flowing.

Beneath this land, cultural relics are churned by the
tides of this river,

Fragments of ancient life are stranded on shores by
the pull of sun and moon,

Witnessing the progress of human civilization, the
turbulence of eras, the changes of society,

In eternal symbiosis with nature,

Never absent.

Life is like a river, nurturing you and me.

Contents	(01)
I. Introduction	P.02 – P.03
II. Everyday Objects	P.04 – P.05
III. Three Experiments	P.06 – P.95
01. Mudlarking	P.07
Artifacts from different time periods	P.08 – P.11
Access Points of Thames Foreshore	P.12 – P.13
Tide Time	P.14 – P.20
Fieldworks Index	P.21 – P.25
The Surroundings	P.26 – P.49
02. Mapping	P.50 – P.63
London Atlas: Geology	P.52 – P.55
Footprint	P.56 – P.63
03. Clay Vessels	P.64 – P.65
Form	P.66 – P.69
Texture	P.70 – P.87
Material	P.88 – P.96
Technique	P.97 – P.99
IV. Bibliography	P.100 – P.102

This project portfolio and research records, adapted into a catalogue, serves as a descriptive and interpretive tool that documents, analyzes, and contextualizes the experimental process through specific lenses: historical context, eco-conscious perspectives of the Anthropocene, local archaeological excavation, and the embodied body memory within ceramic works.

The catalog unfolds through four primary features—documentation, interpretation, educational engagement, and historical record—inviting the public to connect with the archaeological practices embedded in everyday objects. This engagement extends beyond the mudlarking tradition to encompass personal explorations of daily life. History can be embodied in an object, allowing people to hold and experience memories of a specific period or moment; likewise, our environment has its own stories that deserve attention. Through hands-on practice, people can contribute their own stories to this catalogue, enriching it with personal connections and perspectives.

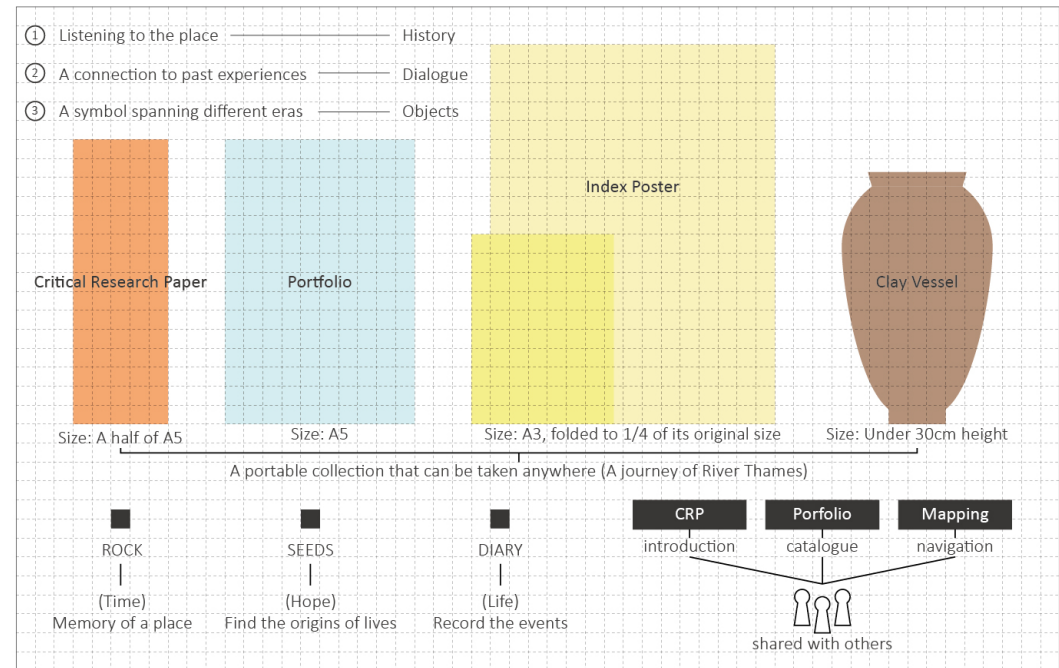


Diagram:

Tseng, S-N. (2024) [The concept diagram of this portfolio as a catalogue].

The documentation section preserves comprehensive records of the research process, detailing dimensions, materials, techniques, images, and dates, thereby capturing the physical and visual essence of each piece. Additionally, it reflects on inspirations drawn from influential sources, lending historical and cultural depth that connects past and present.

Furthermore, the interpretation section offers a critical perspective on the exploration and discoveries made, reflecting on how the study informs the project. It explores the background of significant elements that shaped my focus and tracks the path toward interdisciplinary expansion. This section provides nuanced personal insights and realizations gained from analysis, serving as a statement on the project's direction and a balanced evaluation, with considerations that may guide future inquiries.

Moreover, this catalogue functions as an educational resource that fosters an understanding of environmental learning. By highlighting nature's offerings, it emphasizes the untapped potential in existing resources and how these can support sustainable human development. It aims to raise

awareness of the climate crisis, encouraging responsible actions for a sustainable future.

Finally, the catalogue serves as a historical document, capturing contemporary concerns and the pioneering efforts in this field. It presents potential solutions to the public and remains a valuable asset for students, researchers, and artists, preserving insights and information that may be limited elsewhere.

As both an informative document and a creative artifact, the catalogue bridges individual spatial work with broader cultural and historical dialogues through three key experiments: the fieldwork of mudlarking, which generates mappings of human activity related to the local geology and geography; the creation of clay vessels that incorporate geographical textures by combining Scarva Earthstone Clay or London Clay with reclaimed materials sourced from the foreshore; and the application of traditional techniques in these artistic processes.



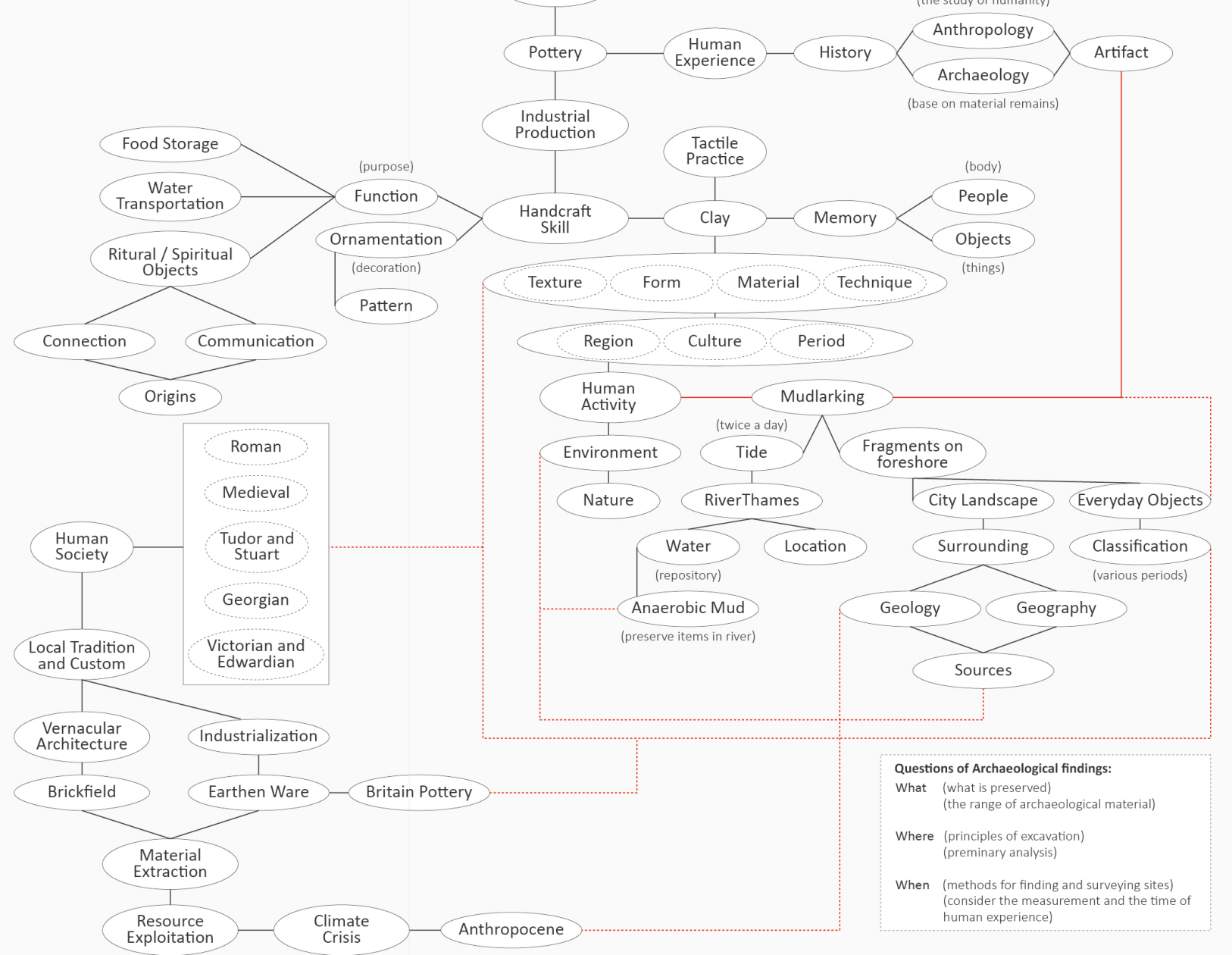
The term 'everyday objects' encompasses a wide range of pottery works—such as mugs, plates, bowls, and vessels—that people commonly use in their daily lives. This exploration extends from past artifacts to current ceramic tableware, emphasizing the intent behind container-making and how human ingenuity has facilitated the delivery of water and the storage of food. By uncovering the connections between human experience and material choices, we can delve into fragments unearthed through mudlarking to reveal insights into the local pottery industry, recognizing how nature has shaped human society within its spatial context.

These everyday objects act as vessels of memory, regional culture, and a sense of responsibility for environmental awareness. This study creates a pathway to connect with ancestral insights, inviting people to immerse themselves in past eras and explore the dynamic interplay between human creativity and the natural world. Tableware, in particular, embodies the deep relationship between the body and human behavior, bridging expansive environmental contexts with personal, intimate experiences.

Just as air, water, and light are essential to human existence, so too is the inner spiritual exploration and the quest to understand our origins. Everyday objects are bound to this desire to trace life's roots; nature nurtures us, yet it can also challenge and constrain us. Observing environmental changes across eras under the influence of societal development offers an opportunity for introspection on humanity's impact on nature. Like layers of sediment deposited over time, human activity has left enduring marks beneath the earth's surface, accumulating day by day, year by year, while the consequences of environmental degradation are increasingly woven into daily existence. Therefore, fostering dialogue to raise ecological awareness is essential in encouraging a collective sense of responsibility toward a more sustainable world for all—a core concept of this project. The hope is that these discussions will inspire greater engagement and action in the future, contributing to a better tomorrow.

Mindmap:

Tseng, S-N. (2024) [The mindmap of the project concept, based on the keyword 'ceramics'].
 (the starting point)



III. Three Experiments

(06)

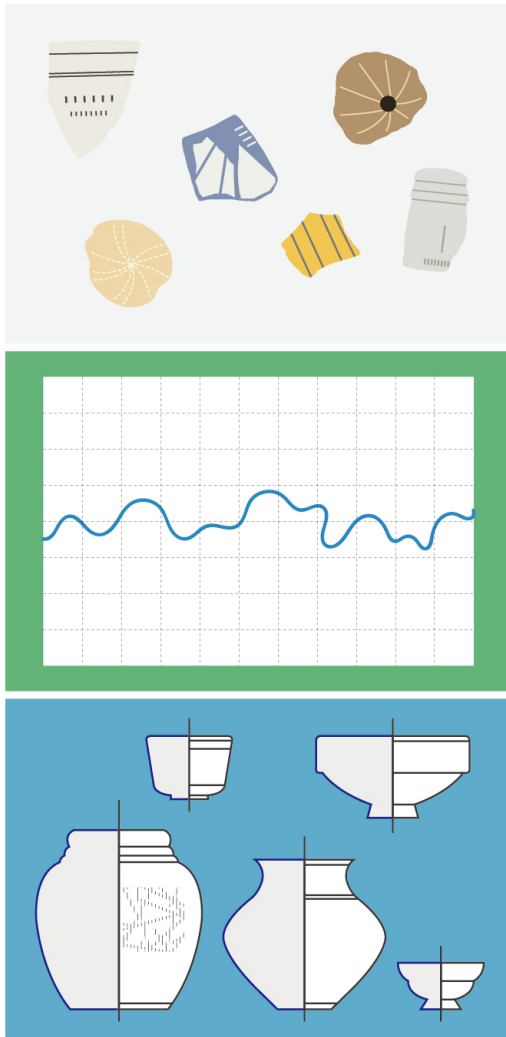


Diagram:

Tseng, S-N. (2024) [Diagrams of three experiments: mudlarking, mapping, and clay vessels].

The experiments offer pathways for deepening awareness of history and the environment through the application of archaeological methods in local exploration. They encourage engagement with hidden traces in Thames artifacts, revealing future possibilities from both spatial and ecological perspectives. Divided into three sections—Mudlarking, Mapping, and Clay Vessels—the experiments interpret the environment, spanning from the vastness of nature to the intimacy of individual tableware. This approach provides a narrative lens to understand the context shaped by time.

History accumulates over time, with stories interwoven through human interactions. These experiments foster a stronger connection to the past, presenting an opportunity to reflect on how human actions have left their imprint on both the land and the objects we interact with. By engaging with artifacts, materials, and geology, individuals can explore the continuity of human experience while acknowledging the transformative power of creative practices. In this way, the past not only remains in memory but actively shapes the future, inviting both reflection and renewal.

01. Mudlarking

(07)

“Over the last 30 years, the mudlarks have made a really important contribution to the study of London’s history through the sheer volume and variety of finds that they have recovered from the Thames foreshore.”

(Meriel Jeater, Curator at the Museum of London)

“Finds can alter our picture of the past. Many of the finds are very small pieces. They are like little pieces in a jigsaw puzzle that help us create a picture of the past. By putting them together we get an idea of what’s going on. They can actually rewrite history.”

(Dr Michael Lewis, Head of Portable Antiquities at the British Museum)



Photo:

Tseng, S-N. (2024) [A photo of the findings from participating in a mudlarking event held by TDP in Wapping].



Photo:

Tseng, S-N. (2024) [A photo of a mudlarking event held by TDP in Wapping].

Bridging the past and present through the centuries-old activity of mudlarking, one can encounter history spanning diverse eras along the foreshore, providing a narrative and immersive way to explore the environment. The Thames River, with its unique characteristics, creates ideal conditions for preserving historical artifacts. Over time, countless objects have been intentionally discarded or accidentally dropped into its waters. Its proximity to the sea causes the river’s water level in London to fluctuate by 7–10 meters with the tides, twice daily. As the murky waters recede at low tide, the exposed riverbed transforms into Britain’s longest archaeological site.

The surface of this intertidal zone is a fascinating assortment of rocks, oyster shells, broken glass, bricks, terracotta tiles, animal bones, sand, gravel, and mud. Within this distinctive landscape lie lost and discarded objects, uncovered by the waves from passing boats and natural erosion. Each find, whether seemingly mundane or extraordinary, contributes a unique insight into London’s history.

This experiment comprises three key parts: conducting fieldwork along the foreshore access points to experience the historical practice of mudlarking and gathering images and fragments from the surroundings; generating routes with OS Maps to document footprints; and transforming these collections into maps and clay vessels. Observing the Thames landscape reveals the geological and geographical significance beneath the surface, showcasing how natural processes have shaped the environment and, in turn, how humans developed their societies along this river. Recording mudlarking routes is especially valuable, as the constantly shifting riverbed—moved by the tides—reveals hidden mud layers that can’t be anticipated by digital maps, requiring in-person exploration. This data could benefit future foreshore explorers.



Photo:
Tseng, S-N. (2024) [The induction documents provided by the TDP staff].

Mudlarking, or searching the riverbed for historical fragments, allows people to engage with local history through these forgotten pieces. Collecting these items for reuse in clay vessels aims to prompt reflection on available resources and the environmental impact of industrialization. Additionally, understanding the periods of historical treasures sheds light on British pottery history, from local material sourcing to technique development, fostering deeper connections with the region's history and spatial context. This layered approach ultimately creates a sense of resonance between people and place.

British pottery spans five main periods: Roman, Medieval, Tudor and Stuart, Georgian and Victorian, and Edwardian. Earthenware from these periods is often found along the Thames foreshore. By examining differences in texture, glaze, and form, archaeologists can create a timeline that reflects technological advancements as well as social and cultural exchanges over time.

III. Three Experiments

Roman pottery includes two primary types: Black Burnished Ware and Samian Ware. Black Burnished Ware achieves its dark color through pebble-burnishing, which involves polishing the surface with pebbles, and contains a clay body rich in black iron ore, mica, and quartz. Fired at high temperatures, it takes on a



Photo:
Laing, L. (2014) *Pottery in Britain 4000BC to AD1900*. [The pottery type of Black burnishing ware].

distinctive dark hue. Samian Ware, on the other hand, is known for its glossy red finish, often decorated with raised patterns created using a technique called barbotine, where slip is used to illustrate animals and other designs around the vessel.



Photo:
Laing, L. (2014) *Pottery in Britain 4000BC to AD1900*. [The pottery type of Samian ware].

Medieval pottery is often identified by its characteristic green glaze. During this period, potters innovated methods to reduce shrinkage and cracking during firing by adding natural ingredients like crushed shells to the clay. This could result in occasional stab marks from the firing process. Coarse Borderware is a prominent example from this era, recognized in London and Kingston wares, showcasing distinct characteristics. These vessels are generally thick-walled and robustly crafted, often surviving as large sherds, which has enabled archae



Photo:
London & Middlesex Archaeological Society (1988) *Surrey Whitewares*. [The pottery type of Coarse Borderware].

-ologists to reconstruct their forms with a fair degree of accuracy.

The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries saw transformative shifts in English pottery and imported ceramics. Borderware became a household staple, distinguished by its off-white clay and glazes in hues of yellow, green, olive, or brown. During this period, salt-glazed stoneware also gained popularity. This technique involves adding damp salt to the kiln during firing—above 1200°C—so that the sodium in the salt volatilizes and chemically bonds with the silicates in the clay, forming a thin, glassy, acid-resistant layer with a distinctive, orange-peel-like surface.

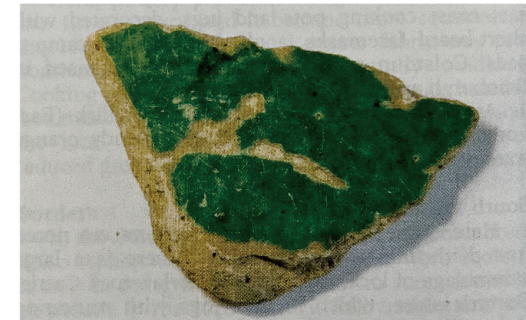


Photo:
Laing, L. (2014) *Pottery in Britain 4000BC to AD1900*. [The pottery type of Tudor greenware].

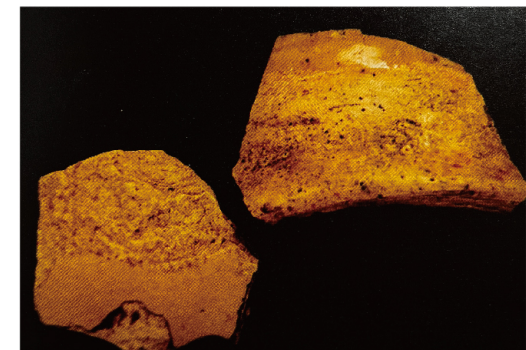


Photo:
Laing, L. (2014) *Pottery in Britain 4000BC to AD1900*. [Two sherds of Midland yellow].

Salt-glazed pottery, a single-firing process, includes a range of subtypes such as brown jugs from Frechen, grey vessels from Westerwaldkreis, and white stoneware from England. Other styles include Scratch Blu

-e, Littler's Blue, and Sewer-pipe ware (or Sewer-tile ware in the U.S.). In Britain, John Dwight pioneered salt-glazed stoneware production in the late seventeenth century, with potting centers emerging in Nottingham, Bristol, Derbyshire, London, and later in Staffordshire and Scotland. These items, often adorned with cobalt blue motifs featuring coats of arms, royal portraits, and antipapal propaganda, introduced Renaissance-inspired aesthetics to English homes.



Photo:
The Metropolitan Museum of Art (n.d.) *Bottle with a Thistle Medallion*. [Salt-glazed stoneware: Bottle with a thistle medallion].

Tin-glazed earthenware, developed in the Netherlands, introduced a white enamel glaze that allowed for vibrant painted decoration. Although blue was the most common color, purple hues derived from manganese were also popular. This glazing technique originated in the East, spreading through Egypt to Italy, where it became a hallmark of fifteenth-century majolica. Early designs featured geometric patterns, along with motifs of leaves, tendrils, flowers, and fruits. The popularity of Chinese porcelain in Europe introduced designs such as the "bird on a rock" and "Chinaman among grasses." By the seventeenth century, the high demand for porcelain led to widespread imitations in tin-glazed earthenware. In the early eighteenth century, polychrome designs—including scenes from history—gained popularity, reflecting an evolving European aesthetic in pottery.

III. Three Experiments



Photo:
Laing, L. (2014) *Pottery in Britain 4000BC to AD1900*. [A Ming dynasty plate with blue underglaze paint from the 17th century and a Delft tile with blue underglaze painting from Holland, dating to the late 17th to early 18th century].

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the Industrial Revolution brought advancements that enabled the production of higher-quality pottery for both domestic use and export. Improved roads and canals facilitated trade, expanding the reach of British ceramics. At the same time, technical innovations in pottery making coincided with increased imports from the Far East, which inspired a new wave of luxury home goods, alongside a wider variety of everyday earthenware products.



Photo:
Laing, L. (2014) *Pottery in Britain 4000BC to AD1900*. [The sherd of Staffordshire slip ware].

Two notable examples from this era are slipware and slip-cast pottery. Slipware, with its intricate swirls or combed patterns, ranged from complex to simple designs, while slip-cast pottery, seen on jugs and teapots, featured decorative reliefs in stoneware or parian porcelain. In the late 18th century, scientific approaches were applied to pottery production, leading to innovations like Mochaware, a refined earthenware with unique, seaweed-like decorations achieved by dripping mixtures—including urine,

tobacco juice, ground iron scale, and hops—onto vessels coated in liquid clay.

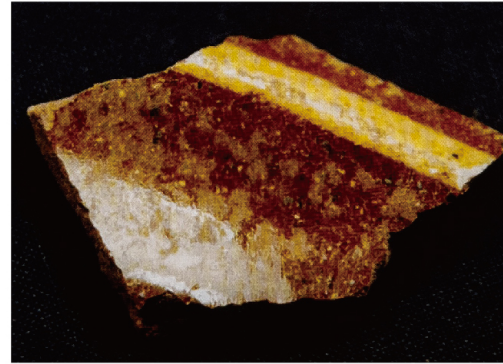


Photo:
Laing, L. (2014) *Pottery in Britain 4000BC to AD1900*. [Silp ware sherd, late 19th century].

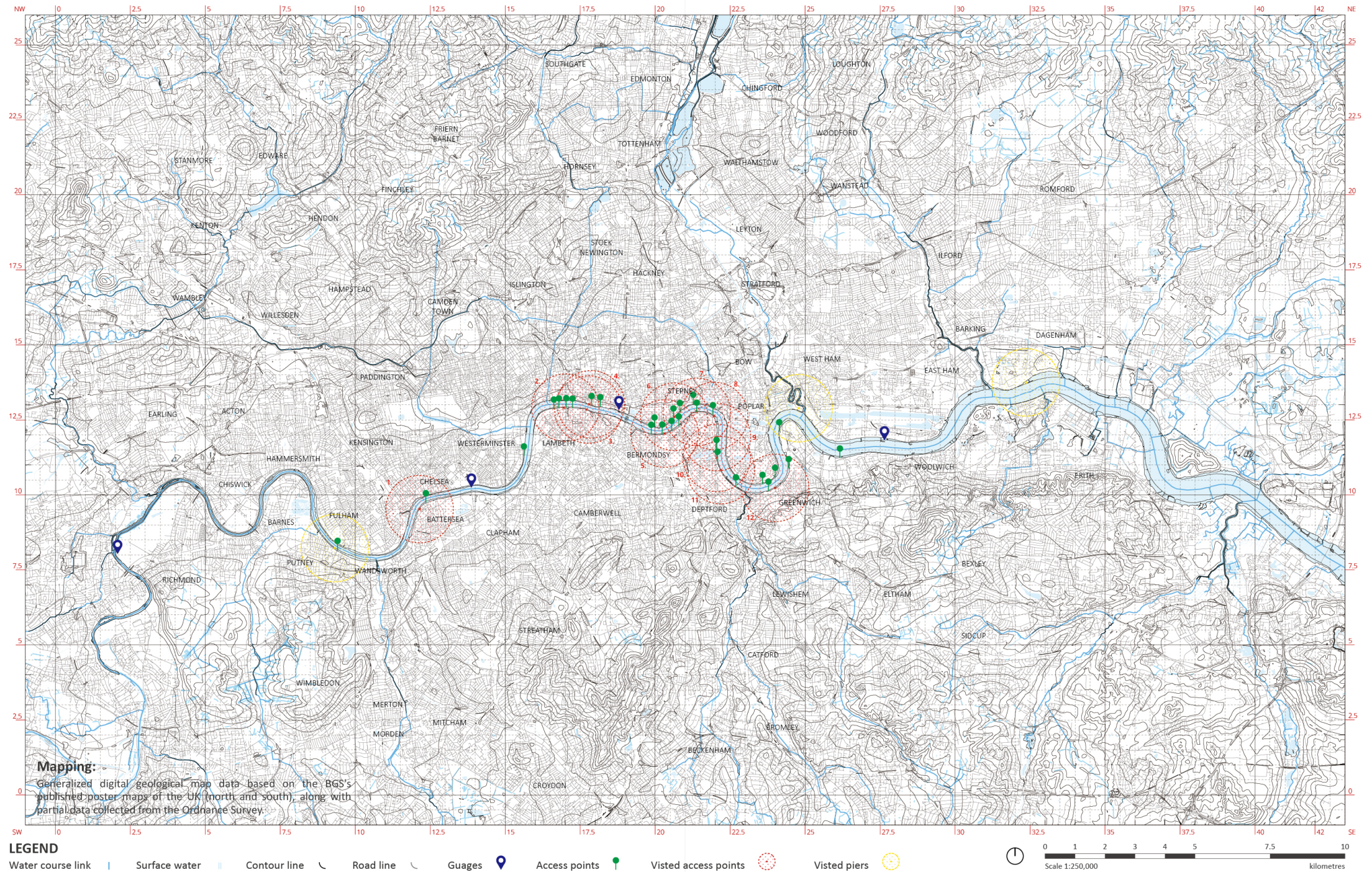


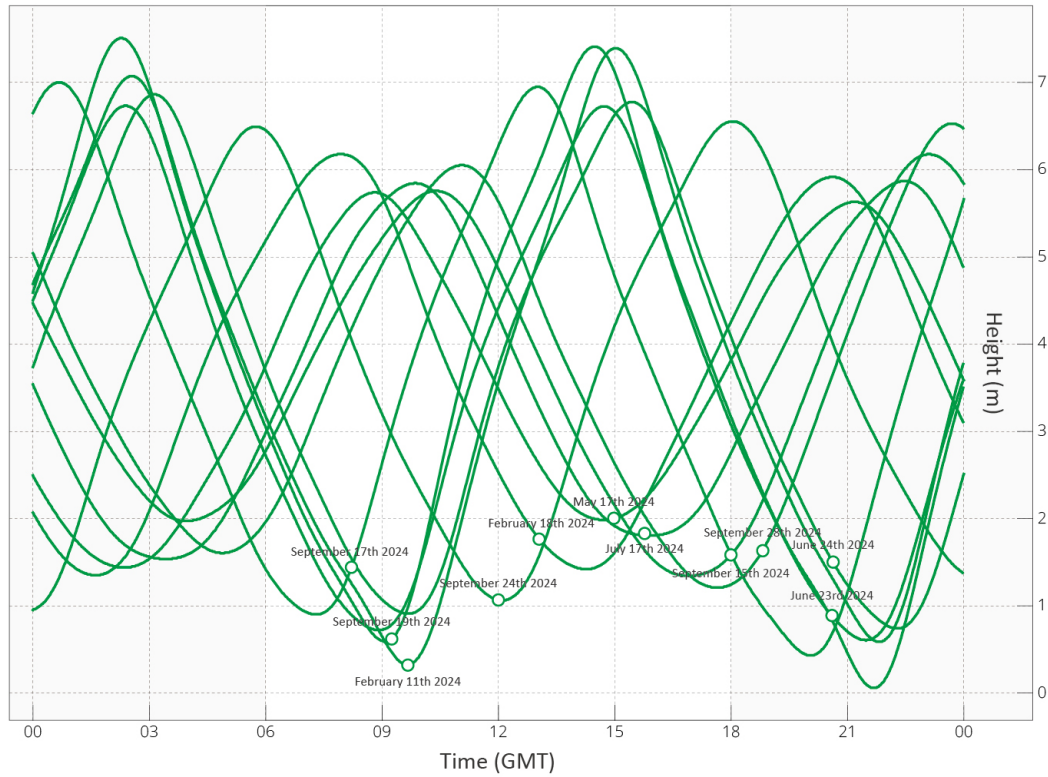
Photo:
Laing, L. (2014) *Pottery in Britain 4000BC to AD1900*. [Assorted blue sherds from a Midlands field].

The development of porcelain marked a major milestone in British pottery, with fine porcelain, typically made from imported kaolin clay, being especially prized. Additionally, transfer printing emerged at the start of the 19th century, enabling intricate designs to be transferred more precisely onto pottery. This technique, based on the underglaze transfer process pioneered by Josiah Spode in the 1780s, became widespread by the century's end. However, it may have first been developed by Ravenet and Hancock at the York House factory in Battersea for enamel production in the 18th century. By the 19th and 20th centuries, transfer printing was common, gradually replacing traditional hand-painted designs.



Photo:
Laing, L. (2014) *Pottery in Britain 4000BC to AD1900*. [19th/20th century transfer print from plate].

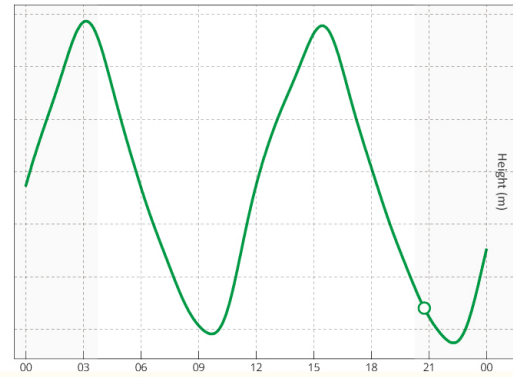




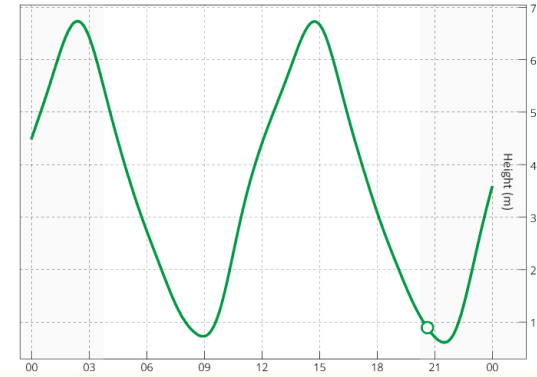
Tides ebb and flow, much like waves that crash upon the shore—at times gently, at others with great force.

III. Three Experiments

1. Battersea Bridge



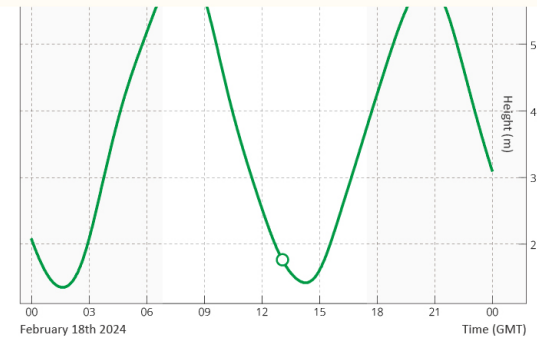
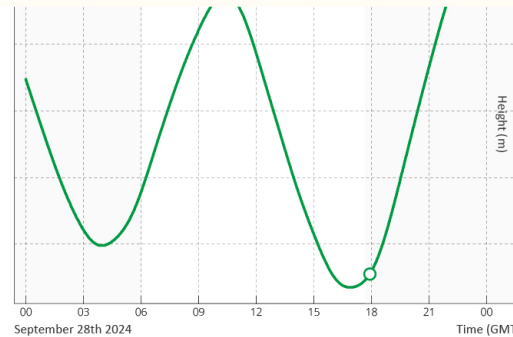
4. Southwark Bridge



Tides Definations

About Tides

The gravitational forces of the moon and sun create areas of high and low water on the earth's surface. As the earth rotates the location of high and low tide changes. The moon has the greatest effect on the water compared with the sun due to its proximity to the earth and the configuration of the sun and moon, whether aligned or offset, has an effect on the tidal range.



LEGEND

Tide curve | Start time of fieldwork ○

Tide time

(14)



(16)

Spring Tides

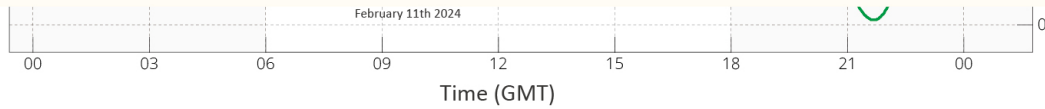
The tides of increased range occurring near the times of full moon and new moon. The gravitational forces of the moon and the sun act to reinforce each other. Since the combined tidal force is increased the high tides are higher and the low tides are lower than average. Spring tides is a term which implies a welling up of the water and bears no relationship to the season of the year.

Neap Tides

The tides of decreased range occurring near the times of first and third quarter phases of the moon. The gravitational forces of the moon and the sun counteract each other. Since the combined tidal force is decreased the high tides are lower and the low tides are higher than average. Neap comes from a Greek word meaning scanty.

Reference

The tide definition and diagram are referenced from information provided by the Port of London Authority.

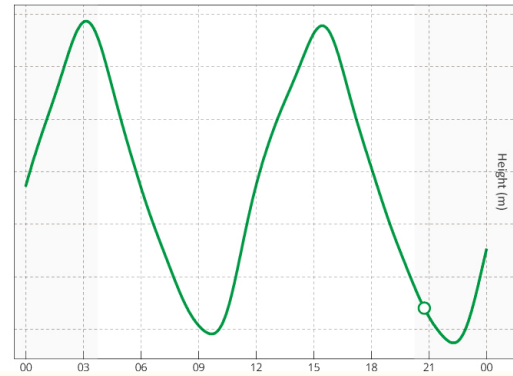


Tides ebb and flow, much like waves that crash upon the shore—at times gently, at others with great force.

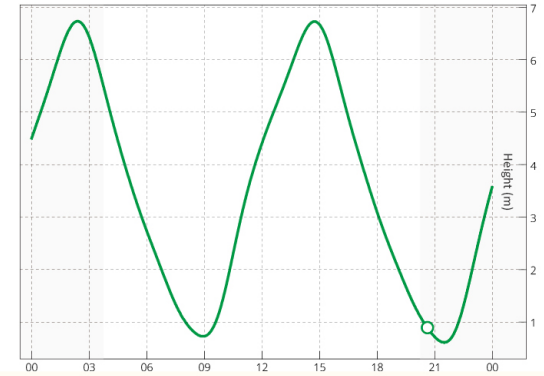
III. Three Experiments

(19)

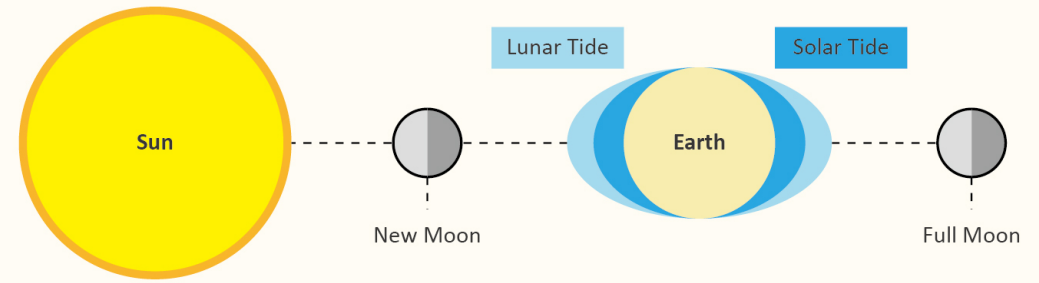
1. Battersea Bridge



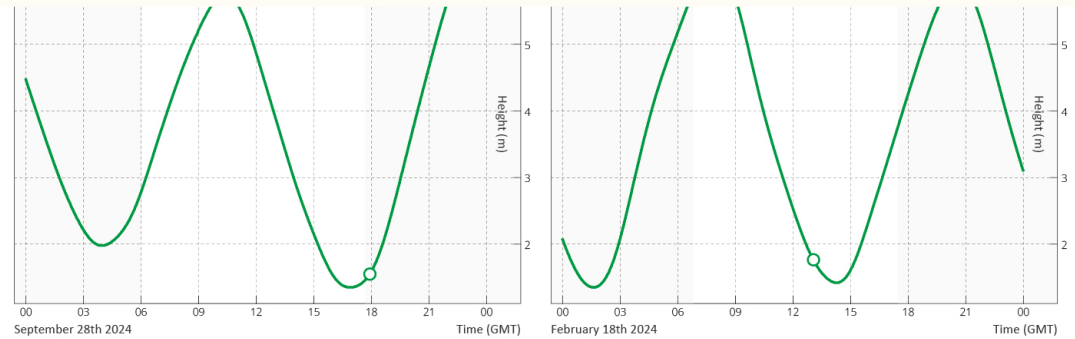
4. Southwark Bridge



(17)



Spring Tides.



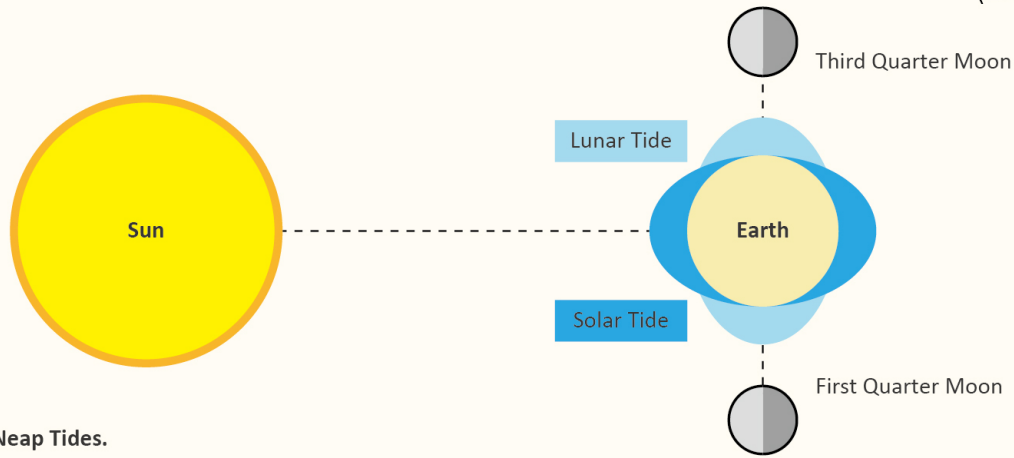
LEGEND

Tide curve | Start time of fieldwork ○

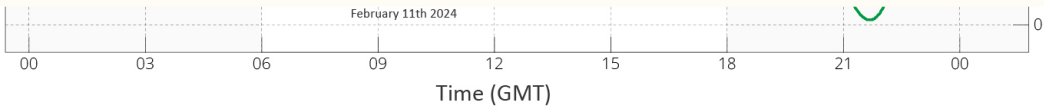
Tide Time



(18)

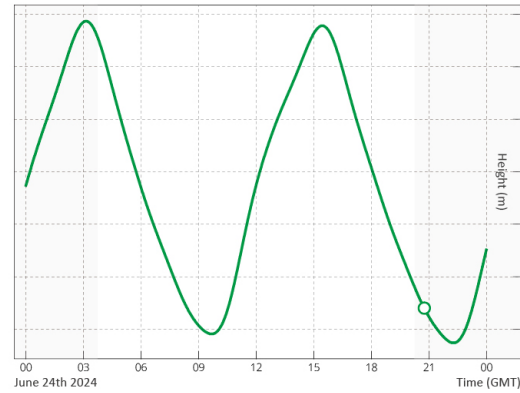


Neap Tides.

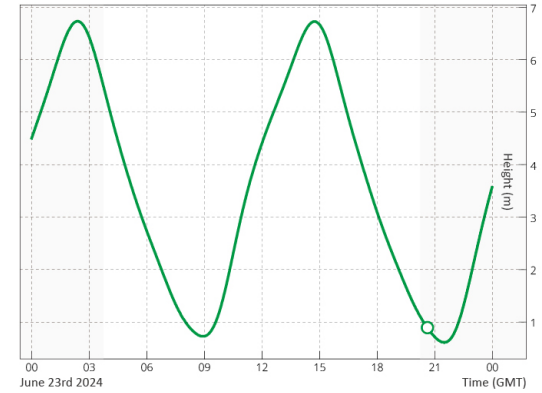


Tides ebb and flow, much like waves that crash upon the shore—at times gently, at others with great force.

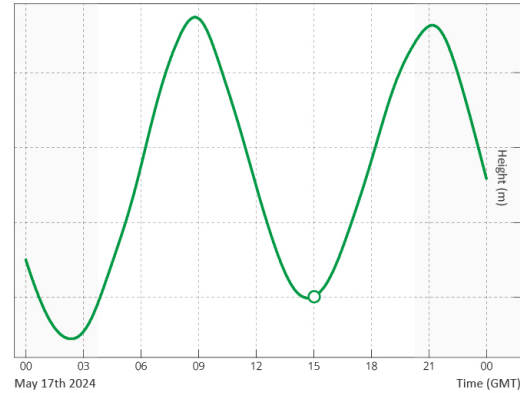
1. Battersea Bridge



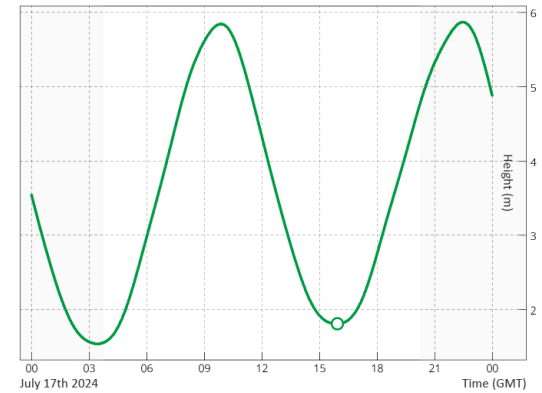
4. Southwark Bridge



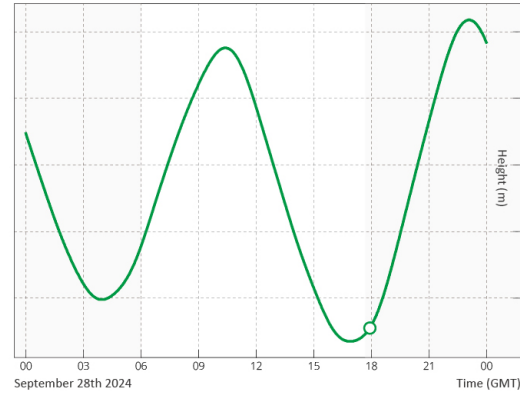
2. Blackfriars Bridge (Thames Beach)



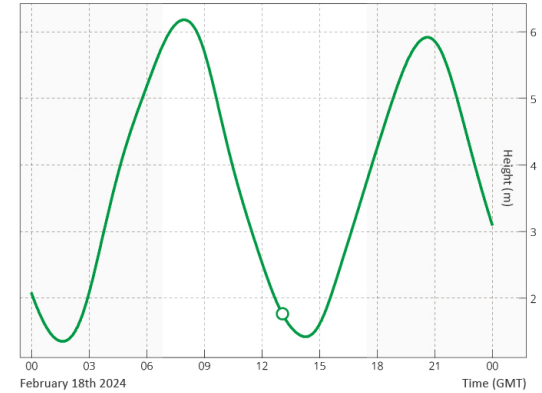
5. Hidden Beach



3. Bankside Beach



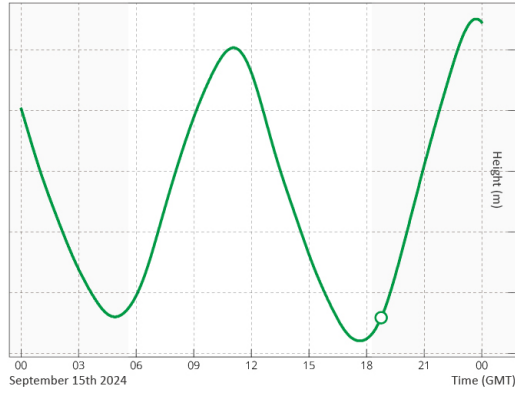
6. Wapping (New Crane Stairs)



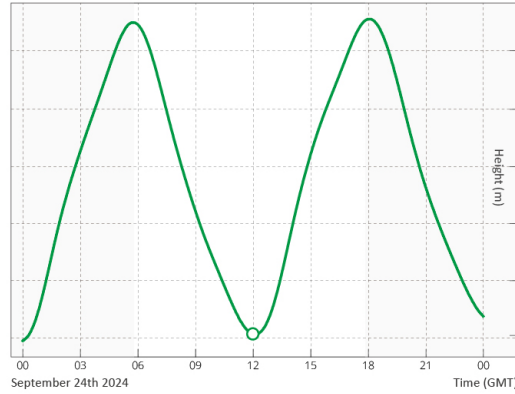
LEGEND

Tide curve | Start time of fieldwork ○

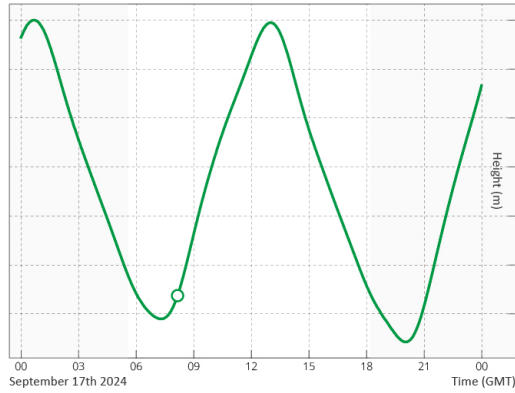
7. Rotherhite (GlobeStairs)



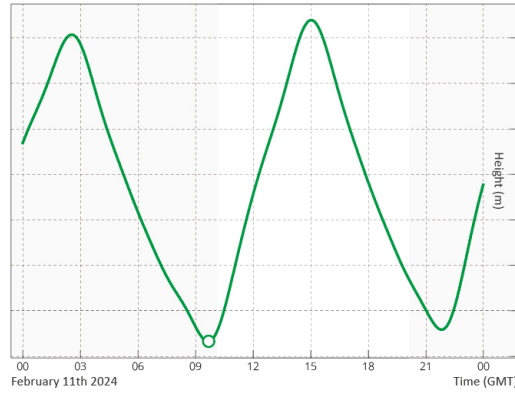
11. Deptford Wharf (St. George's Stairs)



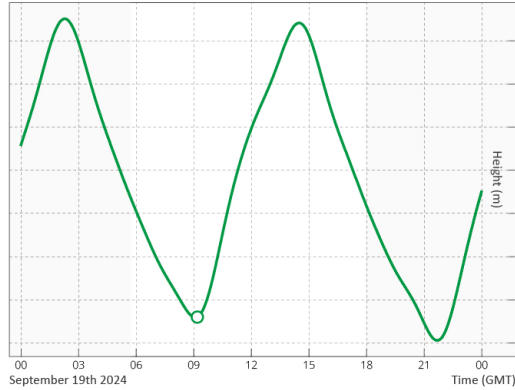
8. Rotherhite (Pegent Steps) / 9. (Acorn Stairs)



12. Greenwich (University of Greenwich)

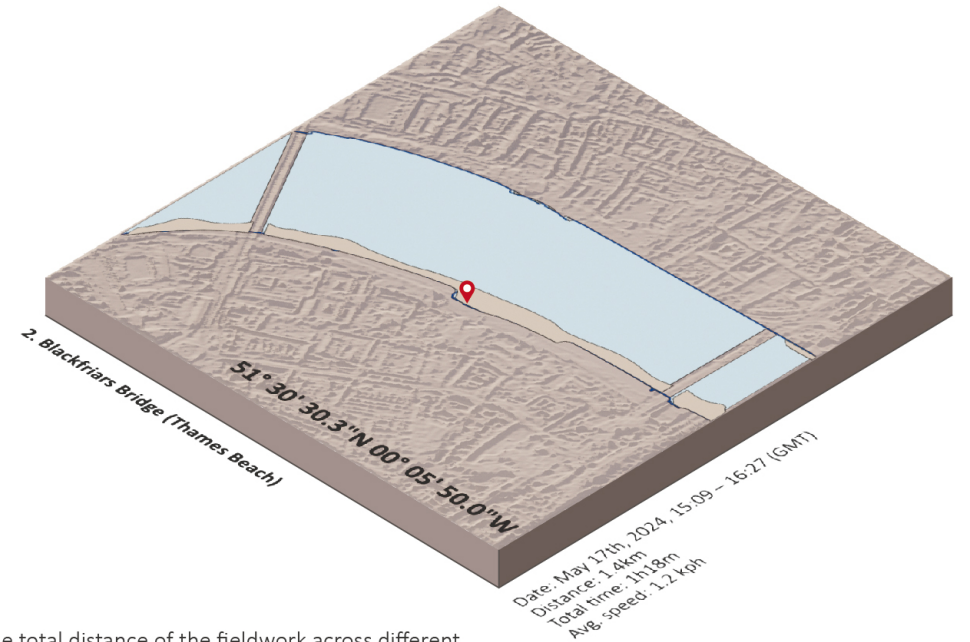
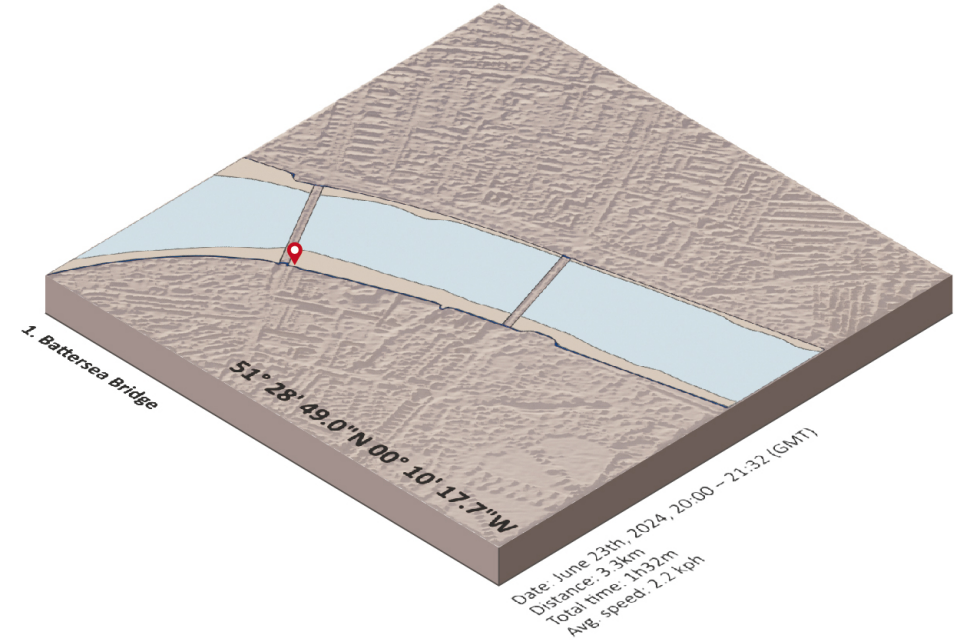


10. Rotherhite (Dog and Duck Stairs)

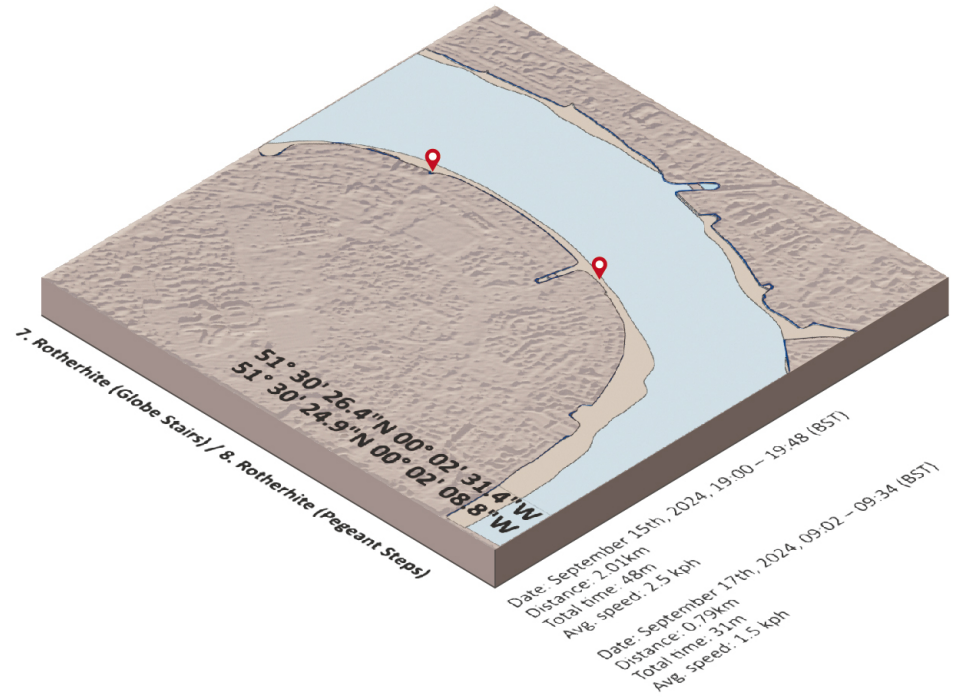
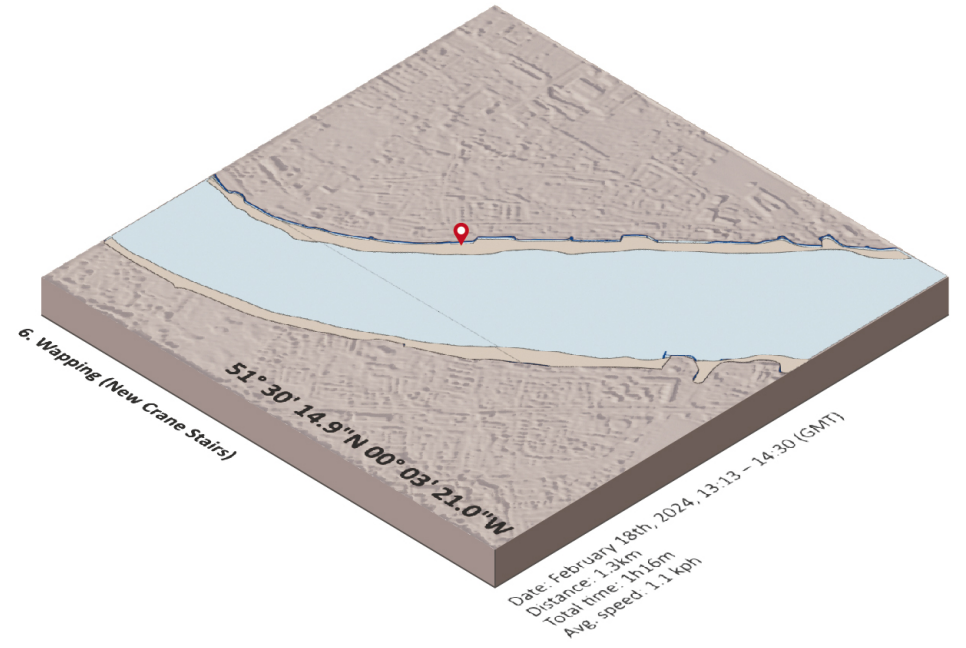
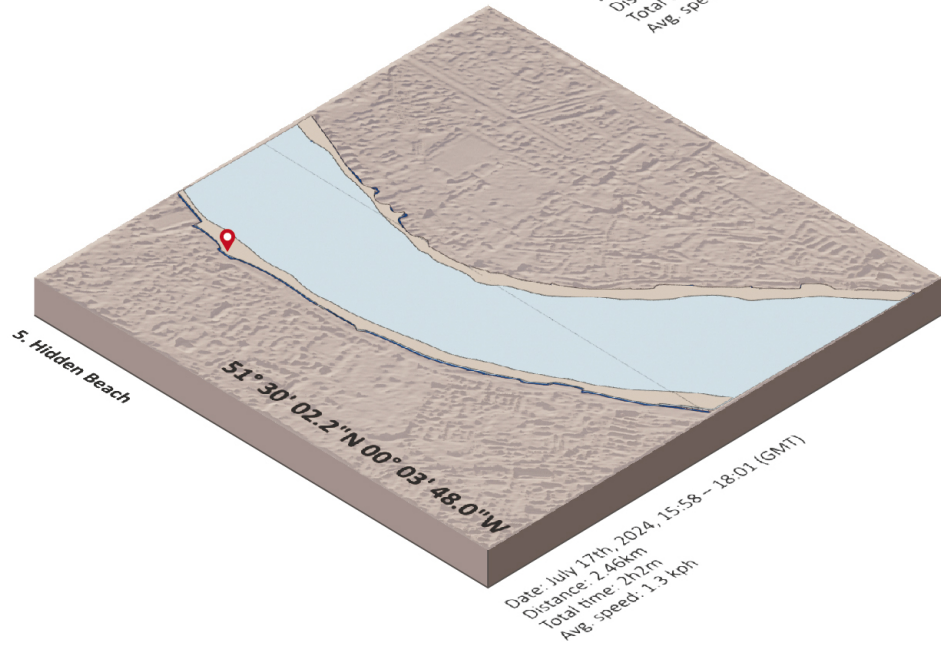
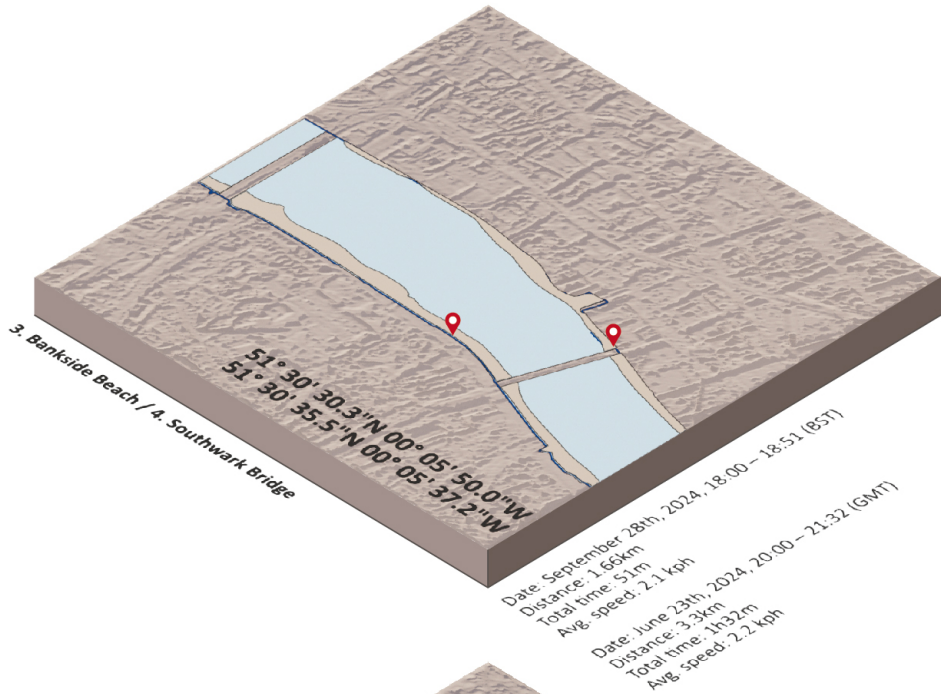


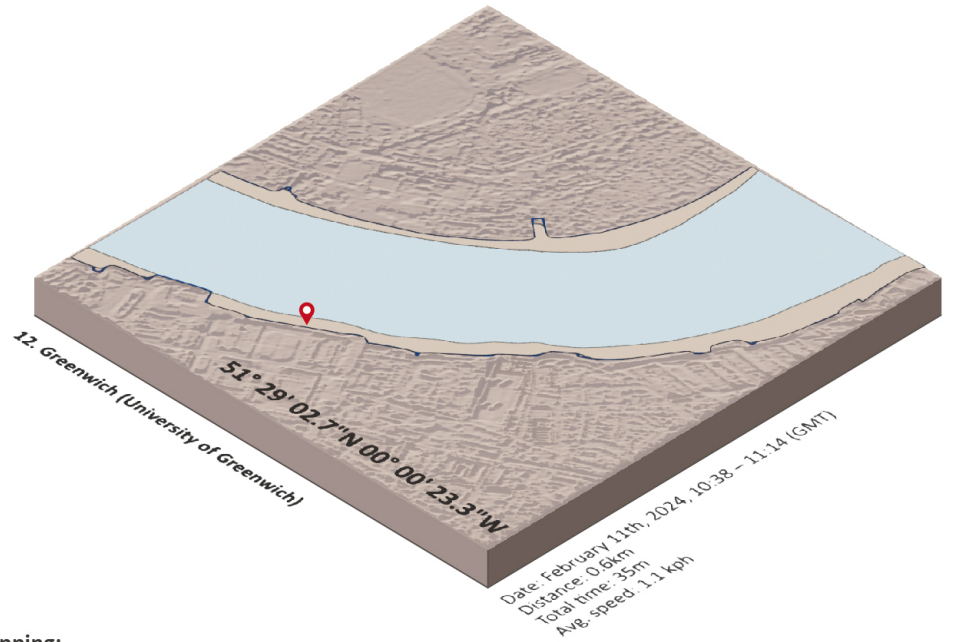
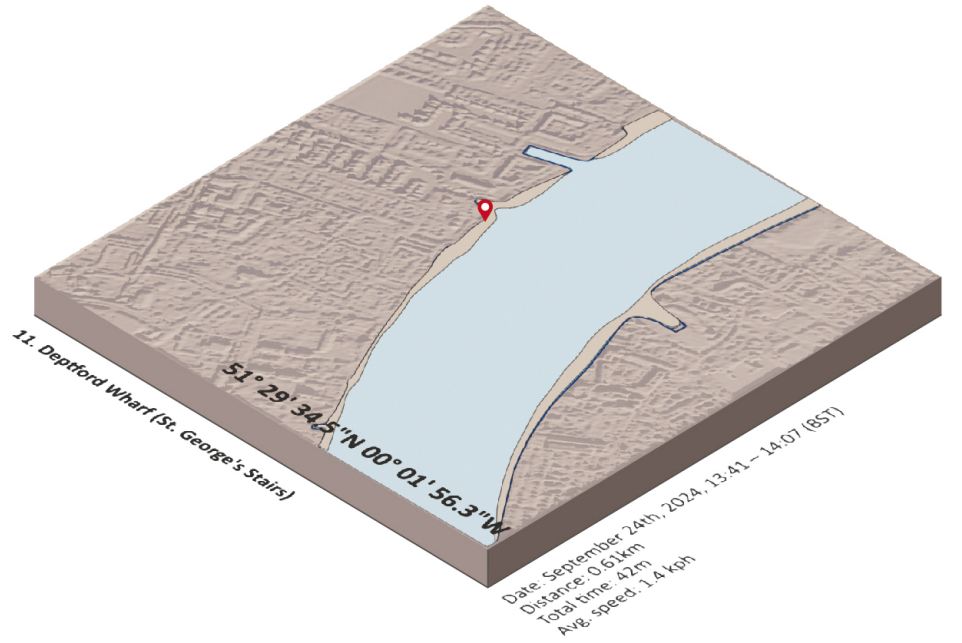
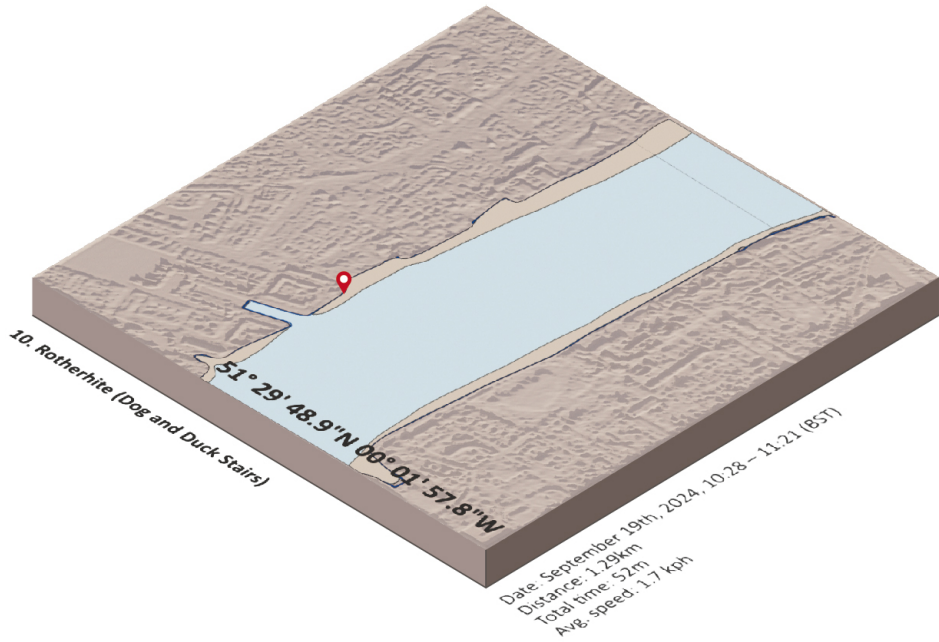
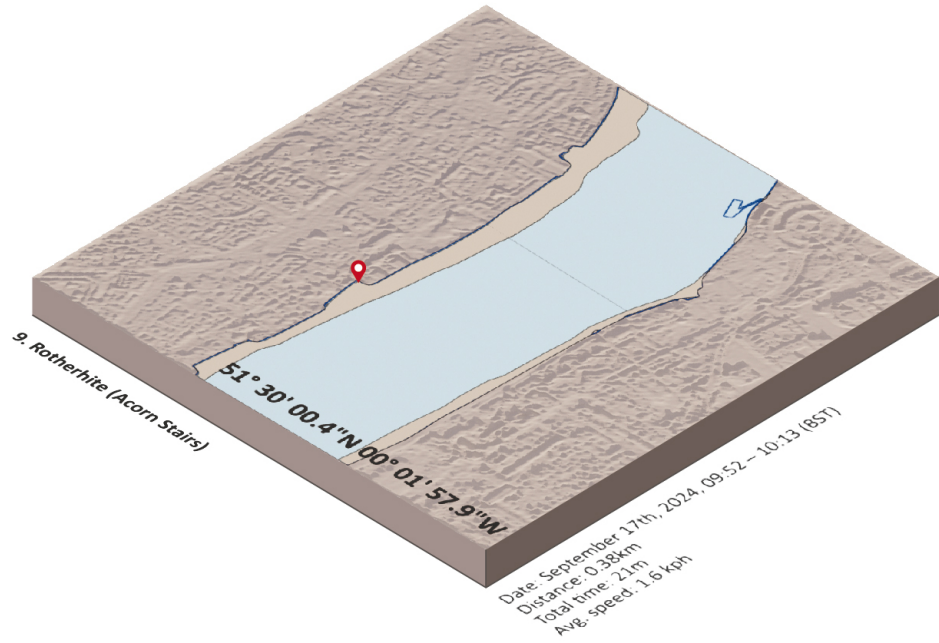
Charts:

The charts are arranged in a west-to-east order, with data sourced from the Port of London Authority.



The total distance of the fieldwork across different locations is approximately 19.1 km, but this does not include additional distances, such as those involved in investigating available access points before conducting the fieldwork.





Mapping:

Generalized digital geological map data based on Google Satellite imagery, created using QGIS software.