

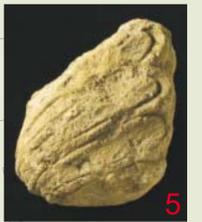
# Archaeology and the Restoration Project



Forbury Gardens has a long and interesting history. Evidence of its past is both visible around you and buried under ground.

Digging trenches for cables and pipes, laying new paths and building can all cause damage. So archaeologists from Wessex Archaeology were asked to watch the work in progress and keep an eye out for finds and features uncovered during the restoration.

Anything significant was cleaned and recorded, then either protected by reburial or removed to safety.



# Earlier Investigations



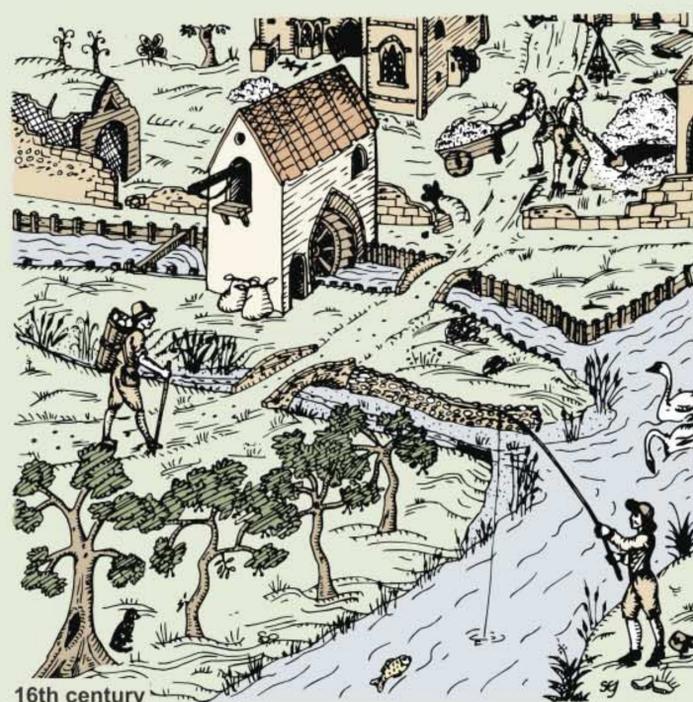
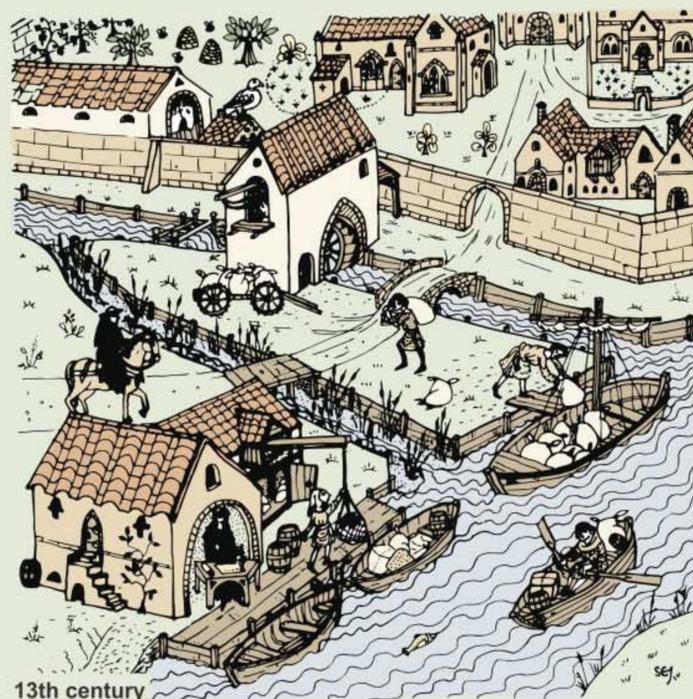
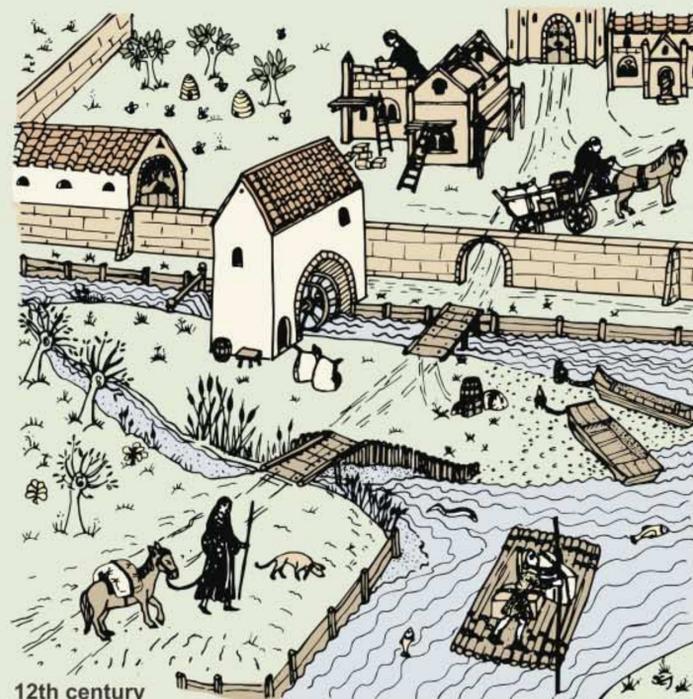
We already know quite a lot about the Abbey, its waterfront and Forbury Gardens because of the archaeological excavations that have been done since the 1960s.

This information has given us a picture of how the Abbey and its waterfront developed during the medieval period.

The excavation of the waterfront uncovered a sequence of preserved timber wharves dating from about 1200 to the present day. Interesting objects were found where they had been lost in the river: metalwork and pottery, but also leather shoes, belts and other items preserved in the waterlogged conditions.



The archaeological record shows graphically how the buildings were damaged and the building materials re-used after the dissolution of the monasteries.



# 1,000 years of history in the Gardens



Forbury Gardens was the outer precinct of the Abbey and the site of several annual fairs. It probably contained buildings associated with the Abbey and a cemetery to the north of the Abbey Church.

Forbury Hill may be the site of a Viking fortification built when the Danes seized Reading from the Saxons. The earthwork was probably re-used briefly when King Stephen built a castle there in 1150 during his battle for power against Queen Matilda.



During the English Civil War the Abbey precinct wall was fortified and the hill was used as a gun emplacement. A ditch and a rampart were dug across the remains of the Abbey.



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