

LEATHER

Lorraine Mephram

(The cross-references denoted 'CQ' in this paper relate to *Charter Quay, The Spirit of Change*, Wessex Archaeology 2003)

The leather includes fragments of shoes (including complete soles), a large piece of scrap leather, and smaller scraps, possibly waste from shoe manufacture/repair. Most of the leather came from the evaluation trenches north of the Hogsmill, where two main groups can be identified: one within a series of dumped layers behind the medieval waterfront revetments excavated in evaluation trench 34, and one from trench 33. The latter provides a tantalising link to the documentary evidence, which records the presence in the late medieval period of a lane in the Market (postulated to lie on a line passing through trench 33) named *Souteresrowe*, where it was accustomed to sell shoes (see *CQ* p.24).

No complete shoes or boots were recovered, and most of the diagnostic fragments comprise soles. These include both one-piece and two-piece soles, and examples with both rounded and pointed toes. Length of complete soles ranges from 205 mm to 252 mm (larger child and smaller adult sizes); there is one incomplete example of a smaller child's sole. Uppers are more scarcely represented here and are restricted to three vamps (one from a two-piece, front-laced shoe, one from a one-piece shoe of uncertain form and the third possibly from a two-piece shoe of uncertain form) and one example of quarters. Methods of shoe construction are not immediately evident, but separate fragments of rands are present. Apart from the front-laced shoe, evidence for fastening methods is confined to a single toggle fastener made from a single strip of leather with an expanded end.

There is little here which can be closely dated, although the pointed toes on two soles indicate a date range probably in the later 14th or early 15th century, while the front-laced shoe is no earlier than later 14th century. The latter piece, and one of the pointed toed soles, came from one of the dumped layers in trench 33.

Catalogue of diagnostic leather

1. Incomplete, one-piece sole. Surviving length 195 mm; width at widest part 85 mm (waist 43 mm).
Obj No 19, context 2346, build-up within Hogsmill channel, trench 2.
2. Complete, waisted, one-piece sole with rounded toe. Length 235 mm; width at widest point 72 mm.
Obj No 82, context 1096, fill behind revetment 1098, trench 1A.
3. Incomplete one-piece sole with pointed toe; late 14th/early 15th century. Width at widest point 90 mm.
Obj No 83, context 1105, layer associated with revetment 1101, trench 1A.
4. Forepart of two-piece sole and inner sole with rounded toe; tunnel-stitched. Width at widest point 100 mm; length 130 mm.

- Obj No 149, context 3471, peat deposit behind post-line, trench 34.
5. Part of one-piece sole with rounded toe. Surviving length 190 mm; width and widest point 85 mm
Obj No 149, context 3471, peat deposit behind post-line, trench 34.
 6. Rand from round-toed, turn-welt shoe or boot.
Obj No 149, context 3471, peat deposit behind post-line, trench 34.
 7. Complete, one-piece sole with very wide forepart (width at widest part 122 mm) and narrow heel (width 35 mm). Length 215 mm.
Object 253, unstratified.
 8. Complete, one-piece sole with rounded toe. Length 205 mm; width at widest part 90 mm (heel 40 mm).
Obj No 253, unstratified.
 9. Complete forepart and inner sole from two-piece sole. Inner sole worn through on ball of foot. Length 150 mm; width 110 mm
Obj No 253, unstratified.
 10. Vamp, probably from two-piece shoe, with rounded toe. Length 185mm; width at widest part 115 mm.
Obj No 253, unstratified.
 11. Part of upper (quarters), incomplete. Width 200 mm; length 150 mm.
Object 253, unstratified
 12. Almost complete, one-piece sole with slightly pointed toe; some damage to heel. Length c. 215; width at widest part 80 mm.
Obj No 254, context 752, fill of former Hogsmill channel, trench 3.
 13. Part of upper (vamp), possibly from one-piece shoe, with rounded toe. Length 165 mm, width 150 mm.
Obj No 254, context 752, fill of former Hogsmill channel, trench 3.
 14. Complete one-piece, waisted sole with pointed toe (left); late 14th/early 15th century. Length 252 mm; width at widest part 80 mm (waist 35 mm).
Obj No 256, context 3343, layer, trench 33.
 15. Incomplete sole, right match for previous; heel missing.
Obj No 256, context 3343, layer, trench 33.
 16. Heel from two-piece sole, slight damage. Length 75 mm; width 48 mm.
Obj No 256, context 3343, layer, trench 33.
 17. Part of forepart from two-piece sole, toe missing.

- Obj No 256, context 3343, layer, trench 33.
18. Most of vamp from front-laced shoe; late 14th century or later.
Obj No 256, context 3343, layer, trench 33.
 19. Fragment of upper. Surviving length 150 mm; surviving width 50 mm.
Obj No 256, context 3343, layer, trench 33.
 20. Most of small, one-piece, waisted sole; toe missing. Surviving length 123 mm; width at widest part 60 mm (waist 24 mm).
Obj No 257, context 3344, layer, trench 33.
 21. Most of one-piece, waisted sole, with slightly pointed toe. Surviving length 172 mm; width at widest part 67 mm (waist 30 mm).
Obj No 258, context 3445, peat layer behind revetment, trench 34.
 22. Forepart from two-piece sole with rounded toe. Length 125 mm; width 100 mm.
Obj No 272, context 3446, layer, trench 34.
 23. Part of sole; fragment cut from edge of forepart. Length 125 mm; width 35 mm.
Obj No 272, context 3446, layer, trench 34.
 24. Toggle fastener made in one piece with expanded end. Length 128 mm.
Obj No 272, context 3446, layer, trench 34.