

Friederike Hammer 1934–2023

In the hot summer of 1976, Friederike Hammer drove down the ramp into an open basement next to the Department of Urban Archaeology's GPO Newgate Street excavation (GPO75). On her way out, she observed the archaeologists at work and, intrigued, stopped to ask what they were doing. Having trained in Fashion and Graphic Design in Germany, perhaps it was the unconventional bohemian life that she once led in Munich (1956–68) living in a large garden shed with husband Klaus, that attracted her to the scantily-clad archaeologists and their ramshackle collection of wooden site huts. Soon after, she joined the team as a full-time archaeological volunteer.

Rapidly mastering the art of complex urban stratigraphic excavation, Friederike became an indispensable member of the field team. Her natural eye for detail and an innate ability to create order from chaos led to a career-long fascination with the single-context recording system, the Harris Matrix, and post-excavation processes. This new-found love led to her gaining a *Diploma in Archaeology* at the University of London Department of Extramural Studies in 1981.

Unerringly generous in every aspect of her life, for many years Friederike refused to accept a full-time contract feeling that someone needed the job more than she did and took a volunteer's weekly travel allowance. Only in 1983 was she persuaded to accept a salaried contract when she supervised the large excavation at 5–12 Fenchurch Street (FEN83).

In subsequent years she progressively moved into analysis and publication, patiently mentoring countless archaeologists along the way,



and was instrumental in the post-excavation phase of the massive Fleet Valley project (VAL88) and the production of the Interim Report in May 1993. The same year Friederike completed her MPhil degree: *'Post-Excavation and Publication Methods in British Archaeology today'* at the University of York, and was a regular contributor to the *'Interpreting Stratigraphy'* conferences held between June 1993 and February 1997.

Her study – *Industry in north-west Roman Southwark: excavations 1984–8* (2003) – detailed and drew together several unpublished sites in Southwark,

looking at an extensive sequence of Roman metalworking workshops and hearths, from late 1st to late 4th centuries AD.

Although Friederike retired from MoLAS in 1998, retiring was not in her DNA. She promptly donned a colourful new hat and became the dedicated database manager for *'Corpus Vitrearum Medii Aevi'* (CVMA): an international research project dedicated to recording medieval stained glass. Its website bears testament to her incredible devotion to the job for over a decade: <https://www.cvma.ac.uk>.

With an insatiable wanderlust, she and Klaus travelled the world together: exploring the El Rocio festival (Andalusia); La Gomera when few tourists knew it; and the Yugoslav and Greek Islands. Later, touring around Morocco and Ethiopia, they drank tea with the Tuaregs in Niger, and greeted the chief of a tribe in Burkina Faso. They camped in the Caribbean islands playing golf in Tobago; and danced at the carnival of Trinidad. Russia followed and later still they travelled to Malaysia and Borneo; three times to China, Cambodia, and four times to parts of India. Ignoring the differences of religions and political opinions, they found wonderful hospitable people and made friends everywhere in the world.

Friederike was a wonderful friend and colleague and a truly incredible inspirational woman who in her quiet unassuming way gave so much to archaeology. She was loved by all and will be much missed: it truly was Kismet when she decided to drive on to the GPO site all those years ago, for which everyone lucky enough to have known her will be eternally grateful.

Ian Blair