

# Books

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**Introduction to Archaeology.** ROBIN PLACE

Newnes 1968 paper back 15s., hard back 21s.

MANY who read *The London Archaeologist* will be new to archaeology and will want to know more about the wider background. It is appropriate in this first number of London's own archaeological magazine to welcome Robin Place's most recent book, coming as it does from the hand of a local prehistorian and lecturer, who under another name is well known to London's evening students.

The author's contribution to the high level of informed opinion among amateur archaeologists in London must be a large one and her lectures have provided a stepping stone to the Diploma in Archaeology for many. The title "Introduction to Archaeology" means in this context prehistoric archaeology and an early warning is sounded for the reader on the excavation of prehistoric sites "People who want to find out about the past do not *have* to dig. They can attend evening classes; they can help in museums; they can, above all, read." It might be added that they can join their local archaeological society and subscribe to *The London Archaeologist*.

Mrs. Kenward, as many will know her, writes in an easy conversational manner which enables her not only to frequently break off to enlarge a description or recount a story, but also to range widely in time and place in the earlier chapters. "Why study the Past; Re-

constructing the Past; Bringing the Past to Life" followed by chapters on excavation, the chance discovery and dating present a perspective view of fossil man and our prehistoric communities. The curiously named Chapter 8 "Holidays in the Past" is in fact a very readable anthology of the British prehistoric monument which the reader may visit, ranging from caves to tombs, henges and hillfort. The final chapter "Has the Past a Future" skates smoothly over the delicate ground of much current controversy but the reader will doubtless be pleased to see that there will "always be room for that British institution, the amateur archaeologist." The newcomer is recommended to this book as an aid to survival.

The publishers have served their author well and have produced a compact, well styled and printed volume. The small number of text figures are well chosen and a group of plates of major prehistoric sites adds value, as does the appendix of books for further reading. This feature should enable most of the points made in the main text to be followed up including the more important references indicated by footnotes. While it is regrettable that a book entitled "Introduction to Archaeology" should exclude the Roman, Saxon, Medieval and later periods of study, this aspect of the title is no doubt a publishers' requirement. Interestingly enough Industrial Archaeology does creep into the appendix of further reading.

**Discovering London.** Macdonald with London Weekend Television. 1968. 1. *Roman London.* Grace Derwent. 2. *The Conqueror's London.* Derek Brechin. 3. *Medieval London.* Kenneth Derwent. 4. *Tudor London.* A. R. Robertson. Paper back only, 5s. or 21s. in box wrapper. First four books of an eight volume guide. A special map is also promised.

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## DEVELOPMENT FUND

DONATIONS towards the development of *The London Archaeologist* are most welcome. We have big plans but we need the help of friendly groups and individuals who share our enthusiasm. Donations of £5 each have been received from Lewisham Local History Society, Lewisham Local History Workshop and Enfield Archaeological Society.

Loans have been received from the following:

London and Middlesex Arch. Soc. (£50); Southwark and Lambeth Arch. Soc. (£25); Southwark Arch Exvn. Cmte. (£25); Thames Basin Arch. Observers Grp. (£25); City of London Arch. Soc. (£15); Clapham Antiquarian Soc. (£10); Wandsworth Historical Soc. (£10); Woolwich and District Antiquarian Soc. (£5); Holborn Soc. (£1).

OUR second choice cannot be welcomed with the same enthusiasm. In fact this series of small booklets is a disappointment and shows signs of hurried completion. This has resulted in misprints, mistakes of fact and a simplification of history. Partly no doubt this springs from the need to accompany a popular television programme and the desire to reach an uncritical

readership. It must also show a reliance on out of date published sources.

To comment on the work of four writers collectively is perhaps unfair and indeed differences of approach are evident. It is this perhaps that makes Mr. Robertson's *Tudor London* the most enjoyable to read but this is at the sacrifice of the discovery aspect. In each volume, places to visit are hidden in the indexless text and this will make use in "the field" difficult, as will the absence in the present books of good maps. These could have been provided in place of the remarkable lists of travel information.

The line illustrations are the key to the understanding of these volumes and in many cases show their origin in those in M. and C. H. B. Quennell's *A History of Everyday Things in England*. One result of this approach is that Beaumaris Castle in Wales illustrates the concentric castle instead of the Tower of London, Hedingham Castle keep in Essex is used instead of London's own great Norman keep, the White Tower. The photographic plates redress the balance but a policy of using London's own monuments where possible would seem desirable in *Discovering Lon-*

*don*. Was it a desire to increase the London context that converted the gold medallion of Constantius I minted in Trier into coins of Hadrian minted in London?

Should the reader be puzzled by the names of the distinguished consultants noted in the introduction, he may be assured that the staffs of the London and Guildhall Museums entirely disclaim responsibility for the contents of these volumes.

Having suggested that these booklets are not for the committed or knowledgeable Londoner and are not to be used as reference works, will they succeed in introducing others to discovering London? This is of course the real objective and, included with a desire to emulate B.B.C. publications, no doubt one of the aims of the publishers. Perhaps these booklets with their unfolding story of growth, the rulers, the famous and even the discomforts of the ordinary people will be a starting point for the unfamiliar reader and set him walking through London streets and visiting London's museums. Walking is the only way to discover London and if these booklets stimulate just that, they will have achieved something that they set out to do.

JOHN ASHDOWN



Routledge & Kegan Paul

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## The Excavation of Roman and Mediaeval London

W. F. GRIMES Professor of Archaeology, University of London

"We are treated not only to a description of all the important post-war discoveries in London, but also to a lively insight into the mind and problems of the working archaeologist. This is archaeological method at its best and must lucid." — BARRY CUNLIFFE, *New Statesman*.

10 x 7½ ins., 288 pp. Line Drawings and 32 pp. plates £3 3s.