

BEGINNING ARCHAEOLOGY IN LONDON—6

Evening Classes and other Study Courses

BRIAN BLOICE

FOR THOSE with an enquiring mind who wish to take the study of archaeology further than digging and pot-washing, London offers an extremely rich, and for the newcomer, possibly a confusing variety of study courses. All these courses are available in the evenings, usually require no previous qualifications or experience in the subject and are open to students of over 17, or in the case of University Extra-mural classes, over 18.

Faced with the problem of which course or courses to enrol in, it is important to decide what is required, how much time is available and to what depth it is wished to pursue the subject. Courses vary in their content from those designed as an introduction to archaeology to those which require a three or four year committal to obtain a certificate or diploma.

Basically archaeological courses fall into five categories, four being provided by the London University Extra-mural Department. The first three, under the title of University Extension Courses, are mostly held in the Inner London area.

The Diploma in Archaeology provides an opportunity for students who wish to tackle the subject at a fairly advanced level. The scheme of study consists of four one-year courses with an examination at the end of each year. A further requirement is at least four weeks practical work in the field during the period of four years.

Course 1 The Archaeology of Palaeolithic and Mesolithic man.

Course 2 The archaeology of western Asia.

Course 3 Prehistoric Europe.

Course 4 either a) Egyptology b) Prehistoric Britain c) Roman Britain.

Students not wishing to sit an examination may enrol for places on these courses and, except for course 4, may take them in any order.

The Certificate in Field Archaeology which has recently been introduced provides a three year course for students seeking practical instruction in archaeology. The courses combine lectures and demonstrations of fieldwork with a study of man in South East England.

Course 1 Prehistoric Period.

Course 2 Romano-British Period.

Course 3 Post-Roman Period.

Non-Diploma Courses which do not usually entail an examination, are intended for students wishing

to study a particular subject at University level. Normally they call for student participation by way of discussion, reading and individual work. These courses are often the only way to obtain the most up-to-date knowledge on a chosen subject. Courses this year include Roman Archaeology, Roman Pottery, Recent Discoveries in Ancient Egypt and Archaeological Techniques.

University Tutorial Classes are also provided by London University in co-operation with Institutes of the I.L.E.A. or with branches of the W.E.A. These classes are mostly held in the Outer London area. Under the guidance of highly qualified and experienced tutors, classes meet for study in a small friendly group in which students and tutors share a growing understanding of the chosen subject.

Details of all the above courses may be found in the free prospectus issued by the Extra-mural Department of London University from 7 Ridgmount Street, W.C.1.

Courses at I.L.E.A. and other Adult Education Institutes and Colleges. Apart from the University, other colleges and institutes run many courses in archaeology. It is wise to ask for details of these courses before enrolling as they do vary in the depth to which the subject is taken and also in the approach to the subject. However, many of these courses are of particular value to the newcomer to archaeology and provide an excellent introduction. Details of the courses in your own locality may be obtained by applying for a free prospectus from the nearest Evening Institute or College of Adult Education running courses in archaeology, the location of which can be found in the I.L.E.A.'s publication *Floodlight* obtainable from most bookstalls at 5p.

Similar courses in allied subjects such as Local History are available, as are ones in Heraldry, Ceramics, Architecture, Palaeography, Church History, Statistics and Geology. Details of these and many other courses can be found in the prospectuses mentioned above.

As well as evening classes there are many other opportunities to acquire knowledge in archaeology, most local and country societies hold a winter lecture programme, the county societies publish journals, usually annually, which contain studies of local history and excavation reports. Specialist societies such as the Greater London Industrial Archaeology Society hold conferences and field visits. At a national level the Prehistoric, Roman, Medieval and

Post-Medieval Societies all publish journals as well as running conferences and seminars. These con-good opportunity to meet others with similar ferences are often open to non-members and are a interests.

One aspect of archaeology not given sufficient coverage at evening classes is practice and instruction in the techniques of excavation, so it is necessary if excavation is the prime interest, to complement lectures with a week or two on a training excavation. These courses are run by several universities during the summer months and details can be found in the

Council for British Archaeology's Calendar of Ex-cavations, published monthly from March to Sep-tember at a cost of 50p from C.B.A., 8 St. Andrew's Place, N.W.1.

For the newcomer to archaeology the choice is wide, but a recommended course of action is to enrol at an evening class, join a local and a county society and obtain experience by attending excava-tions and assisting in the post-excavation work of processing finds, thus helping at all stages the ulti-mate aim of the archaeologist, to publish and dis-seminate his knowledge.

Letters

LONDON ARCHAEOLOGICAL CENTRE

I WAS VERY DISAPPOINTED to see no expression of support in the last issue for Jeremy Haslam's proposed London Archaeological Centre (*the London Archaeologist* No. 10)—or is the lack of one so self evident that the leaders of archaeology in London feel that there is no need to stress it.

Yesterday I attended the open day at the Southwark sites where it was most noticeable that visitors were both interested in the sites and willing to part with their money for what was, in their opinion, a good cause. It was equally noticeable that their money was being received with open arms. Indeed, I was told by one of the archaeologists there that there is neither enough money to go round the archaeological sites in London nor enough people to supervise them.

Surely then, Sir, something ought to be done. If the official bodies (be they governmental, museum or amateur) are unwilling to do anything, then it must be up *the London Archaeologist* that people will look for a lead in this matter!

It seems inconceivable that whereas in most old towns research committees have been formed to organise and drum up support for local archaeology, nothing seems to have happened in London. In the past I know that there has been a lack of interest but the climate has surely changed in the last five years or so. With all the public media placing an emphasis on archaeology and history, here is a golden opportunity. The visitors to the Southwark sites have shown that the interest and support exists—let someone mobilise it!

57A Gressenhall Road,
S.W.18.

W. H. SMITH

UNDER THE THAMES

IT WAS INTERESTING to read of Wandsworth His-torical Society's mudlarking in the last issue. This has led me to wonder whether they or any other society had ever been able to enlist the help of a sub aqua club for work in the Thames and whether such a venture had been pro-ductive?

18 Howmic Court,
Arlington Road,
Twickenham.

R. A. WILDMAN

WORTHY OF THEIR SALT

I WAS GREATLY pleased to hear of the decisions by Guildhall Museum to start a summer excavation season and to offer a subsistence allowance of 75p. per day for a minimum of four days. Earlier this year, it was found possible to pay a similar allowance to the full-time super-visory staff at Tooley Street and, at the present time, an allowance of £1 a day is being offered to all full-time dig-gers at Bedfont; these last two excavations are both re-ceiving Department of the Environment grants. At this uncture it may be of interest to note that the D. of E. rate offered at their own digs is now £1.50.

For a long time there has been a delightful air of amateurism (in its best altruistic sense) in London's archaeology—plenty of stout-hearted digging at week-ends with occasional bursts of so-called "full-time" excavating on sites. In the latter case the full-time (unpaid) volunteers usually seem to consist of half-a-dozen peole, part students untroubled by impecuniosity and part, workers of the world using up their annual leave; to these may be added casuals who pop along for the odd day, or even the odd hour: housewives, shiftworkers, etc.

All this is great and glorious, and in the best British tradition but it is not getting the ob done—in London! Elsewhere in the country there exists a thing called "the excavation season" which occurs in summer when students and others are free and the weather is reasonable. Volun-teers are usually given either a subsistence allowance or accommodation and food, while supervisors receive some-thing more. The result—digs done!

Everybody in London has heard of RESCUE and every-body agrees with its sentiments, but where is the urgency and the effort? The organisation of archaeology in London could do with an overhaul because it needs money and a more professional approach to rescue work. To this end I would suggest that Jeremy Haslam's article in the Spring issue be reread (or even read) both by occupiers of arm-chairs and by archaeological activists. We are already beginning to wobble in the right direction but cohesion in particular is lacking—can not some organisation seize the initiative?

Two last points: the public are often generous towards collection tins and I would commend that societies take better care to ensure that the contents go in the direction that the donors intended! Secondly, with the advent of subsistence allowances I would appeal for a standard rate for a standard period in the London area.

7 Coalcroft Road,

N. M. FARRANT