

Books

The Roman Villa at Park Street, nr. St. Alban's, Herts by Helen O'Neil. 110 pp, 9 pls., 24 Figs.
Hasprint No. 2 £1.

IT IS MOST REFRESHING, in these days of widespread "rescue" operations, unaccompanied as they so often are by any published Reports, to have in this Park Street Report, a clear, well-organized and scholarly account of an excavation that was indeed a "rescue" operation, most efficiently carried out. The objective before the director of an excavation should always be to add something to knowledge, and Mrs. O'Neil has done just that. She has demonstrated not only that there was a Belgic habitation before the Agricolan house was built, but that the destructive effect of the barbarian raids of A.D. 367-8 was felt as far south as the Verulamium countryside.

One of the most important features of the Park Street Villa is the cellar at its northern end. Such cellars are rare, and it is interesting to note that at the Lullingstone Villa a cellar was similarly included for storage at the same end of the house, again of Agricolan date, even to the round-headed recess in its south wall—an interesting parallel in early planning of a simple farm-house, lasting, as at Lullingstone, throughout the occupation. At the latter villa the coins of both the Valentinian and Theodosian dynasties were abundant, and their total absence from the Park Street house renders the negative argument legitimate, as the author very properly points out, for the cessation of occupation there at A.D. 367-8.

The Report is preceded by a concise exposition, wherein the successive periods are clearly defined and dated, a useful and indeed necessary prologue to the closely reasoned and detailed discussion that follows, and which takes in every aspect of the villa. The villa plan is an excellent example of how a plan should be drawn, clear and easy to follow with the text, the hatching depicting the different periods well contrasted. The sections are reproduced on rather a small scale, though again the hatching is well contrasted; but perhaps they are rather too few—sections convey information, and in many archaeological reports they often give the appearance of being included as of custom rather than as essential concomitants to the reading of the text. But here the cellar sections are very important, though again they could have been reproduced on a larger scale. Two very useful and important items are included, namely, isometric reconstructions and a scientific analysis of the mortars, both by Dr. Norman Davey. Reconstructions, when based upon the evidence, are

of considerable value, as they tend to bring the mind of the reader into a three-dimensional appraisal of a building, and they now increasingly find a place in reports. The study of mortars, with the use of building materials generally, is useful in determining repairs and rebuilding, though in themselves they can scarcely provide dating; but this can be arrived at by associated stratification of datable objects, of which coarse pottery is becoming more useful. In this Report, the contribution on the Pottery by the late Dr. Philip Corder is of great value, for he has been able to concentrate the stratified material in groups, which he annotates very fully with appropriate drawings, logically arranged and spaced, and dated. The same applies to the late Dr. Oswald's comments on the Samian, Dr. Harden's appendix on the Glass, and of course the report on the sixty-nine Coins by the late Mr. B. H. St. J. O'Neil, where the Constantinian coins securely confirm the end of occupation at A.D. 367-8. The appendix on the Relief-Patterned Flue-Tiles by Mr. A. W. G. Lowther is also important, as he has been able, by comparison of similar material from many other sites, to provide datings for certain of the patterns, an additional aid of which archaeologists should always make use.

This Report on the Park Street Villa is a model upon which excavators can base their reports. In clarity, concision, and excellent format, it cannot be too strongly recommended, especially at its very reasonable price.

G. W. MEATES

Archaeology : Discoveries in the 1960s'
by Edward Bacon. *Cassell* £3.50

THOSE OF US WHO recall the thrill of Edward Bacon's *Digging for History* in 1960 were bound to expect much from this "sequel" and we have not been disappointed. There is the same inclusive panoramic prospect and appreciative clarifying style. One wishes that all writers on archaeology who set out to arouse interest and raise questions, had Edward Bacon's talent for satisfying our wish to understand and for providing answers. Seldom does one meet the clarity and cogency of these descriptive articles combined with the gift for keying them into several disciplines involved in archaeological studies.

On this vast comprehensive World canvas recording and illuminating the archaeological endeavours of the last complete decade it is not surprising that the British Isles is assigned only 27 pages out of the total of 266—and indeed all Europe has only 43. There are eleven very clear maps grouped together at

the end which pinpoint all the sites under reference. The seventy-seven illustrations, mostly photographic, add vividly to the text and include four of Alan Sorrell's imaginative reconstruction drawings.

It is inevitable that one should look in detail at the United Kingdom chapter in which there is a masterly summary of the development of Fishbourne as elucidated by Professor Barry Cunliffe's work there, a detailed recapitulation of R. E. Birley's findings at the Roman site on the south bank of the Tay at Carpow in Perthshire, and Sir Ian Richmond's excavations at Inchtuthill. This chapter goes on to the Lower Medway dig not far from Allington and the Kentish ragstone quarries believed to have supplied most of the building material for Roman London. Later it deals with Peter Marsden's work in Southwark and refers to Stane Street as well as to the Roman boat he uncovered at Puddle Dock. Provincial sites include that of the Palace of the Kings of Wessex at Cheddar excavated by Philip Rahtz, where the buildings covered two acres by the River Yeo.

At a later capital—Whitehall!—the rebuilding of the Treasury in Downing Street enabled the Ministry to have P. E. Curnow and H. J. M. Green direct excavations and study from 1960 onwards. By arrangement with the contractors this team of archaeologists were able to establish much of the past of those complex sites behind the Treasury's Victorian frontage, which was retained. May I add, all too briefly but most fervently, that I have become convinced that in Edward Bacon, Cassell's have just the author to devise the much-needed book on London's Archaeology with particularly explained details of recent methods in field, laboratory, and in "experimental archaeology" of which he writes so understandingly and effectively.

E. LIONEL FEREDAY

A Topographical Map of the County of Middlesex by John Rocque, 1754. Facsimile published by Edward Stanford for the *London and Middlesex Archaeological Society*.

£1.00 (including packing & postage) from Hon. Librarian, L.A.M.A.S., Bishopsgate Institute, 230 Bishopsgate, E.C.2.

ANY FACSIMILE publication must be judged on its value to the user, its quality of reproduction and its price. This reprint from an original in the British Museum of the first large scale map of Middlesex, on a scale of two inches to one mile, is not expensive and the reproduction, while uneven, is reasonable. The area covered is the ancient county, from Staines to the River Lea and from South Mimms to Hampton Court, with parts of the adjoining counties. While Rocque's map is not accurate in the modern sense, its historic value is considerable, giving as it does an impression of land use and the development

of Middlesex in the middle years of the 18th century. Often, for example, the first dated reference to a building is its appearance on Rocque's map. As a Frenchman, Rocque was continuously confused by place names, and often makes enjoyable variations. However, care must be exercised over names when using his maps and it is a surprise to find Stoke Newington and Newington Butts transposed, for example in the present instance. Printed originally on four sheets this facsimile is now issued on two sheets that mounted will make a map 55in. by 40in. overall.

JOHN ASHDOWN

Recent Journals

Transactions of the London and Middlesex Archaeological Society. Vol. 23 Part 1 (1971). Editor: Lawrence Snell.

THIS PART which has just 100 pages, contains a high content of archaeological reports. Peter Marsden continues his serial summary of *Archaeological Finds in the City of London 1967-70*, by describing important discoveries from the Thames of medieval and later ships, one with a cargo of bricks. Peter Marsden also contributes a report on excavation work in Southwark at Borough High Street, Southwark Street, Park Street and Bankside Power Station. These are followed by a full report by Harvey Sheldon of the excavation in 1969-70 of the 4th century Roman settlement and the earlier Colchester Road at Old Ford, on the extreme eastern edge of Middlesex. Iain Walker contributes further discussion of the Westminster and London Tobacco-pipe Makers' Guild and the part is completed with a description of one of the side effects of the London plague of 1625 on Southwark and by A. L. Rowse's 1971 Stow address.

Sussex Archaeological Collection, Vol. 109 (1971). Editor: F. W. Steer.

THIS IS AGAIN a regrettably slim volume for Sussex, having just over 100 pages, but the well balanced contents range from the Mesolithic to the 17th century. The following are included: Richard Bradley writes on the Iron Age Promontary Fort at Belle Tout, near Beachy Head, Eric Holden discusses the Long Man of Wilmington following the recent resetting with concrete blocks of this hill figure and Derek Renn reappraises the form of the keep at Pevensey Castle. Chantry records from East Grinstead, 18th century traffic routes, the monuments of a Brighton chapel, an assessment made of the effect of weather and flood on a manor of Battle Abbey in the late Middle Ages, and the volume concludes with a re-interpretation of the origin of the port of Newhaven and the drainage of the Ouse levels.

JOHN ASHDOWN.