

Books

The Coal Duties of the City of London and their Boundary Marks by Martin Nail. Published by the Author. Copies are obtainable from the author, c/o 123 Hookfield, Epsom, Surrey. Price 50p. post free.

THIS IS A very useful and interesting report of a search which Mr. Nail began in 1963 while at school and which he carried on while he was an undergraduate at Cambridge. It involved him in several hundred miles of travel and a great deal of documentary research, the results of which he has now made available in the form of a provisional report.

Dotted along the boundary of the Metropolitan Police District are over two hundred stone and cast-iron boundary marks set up by the Corporation of London under the Coal and Wine Duties Continuance Act of 1861, 24 & 25 Vict. Cap. 42. By this Act the Corporation was authorised to collect duties on wine and coal brought into that area.

Mr Nail's report consists of 26 foolscap pages of typing and three pages of illustrations in duplicated form. The chief contents are a historical survey of the Coal Duties and the relevant Acts of Parliament, a description of the different types of boundary marks, a list of over 200 marks which he has seen and photographed, and a comprehensive list of the sources of information available. It is an excellent guide for anyone who wishes to delve into the subject. A vast amount of details still await extraction from the records of the City of London and publication in book form on the subject of the Coal Duties and the purposes for which they were used, so there is still plenty of work to be done.

MAURICE BAWTREE

Underwater Archaeology a nascent discipline. Unesco Museums and Monument Series. Paris 1972. Available in U.K. from H.M.S.O. and Government Bookshops. Paperback £3.30. Hardback £4.50.

A History of Seafaring based on Underwater Archaeology. Edited by George Bass. Thames and Hudson. £6.00.

THE EXCAVATOR of a royal palace is often thankful for the discovery of a collection of ceramics in the drains, as in most cases all artifacts will have been removed when the building went out of use. By contrast the excavator of a suddenly sunken ship may find not only part of the vessel intact, but its contents in place as well. Even in the more normal events of excavating a wreck site, the valuable object can lie undisturbed alongside the commonplace one in the sea bed. The underwater diver has shown

during the last decade the richness and interest of wreck sites around the British Isles, but the active interest of archaeologists and protective interests of the State have been slow to react. At last it looks as if legislation now before Parliament, will remove historic wrecks from the clutches of the Merchant Shipping Act of 1894, and enable a measure of protection to these important sites to be achieved. Should we not give the same protection, and gain knowledge, from the wreck of Charles II yacht *MARY* as we would give to a contemporary listed building? Much has in fact been achieved in recent years by a dedicated few among free divers, by exploration, recording and teaching archaeological methods to divers. Much has been destroyed through premature removal, both in ignorance and for the sale room.

These comments are prompted by the publication of two excellent introductions to the present state of underwater archaeological research on a world scale. Such modern research has moved a long way from its first working ground, the Mediterranean. The potential field can range from ships that hit Australia, because no one told them it was there, to the river rapid sites of inland Canada. From our point of view the discoveries in the rivers and seas of N.W. Europe have been more than impressive.

The Unesco book, is by its nature intended for the specialist, but will be useful to the general reader particularly as it provides a summary of existing knowledge. It is divided into two parts, the first with 11 papers on particular sites (the salvage of the Swedish Warship '*VASA*'), or regions (Eighteen Mediterranean wrecks investigated between 1900 and 1968), and the second part of 15 papers on techniques and method (*Vermetus* dating of changes in sea level, and the uses of sonar). The British Isles does not figure prominently in these pages but significantly the editing owes much to Honor Frost and Angela Croome of the London based Council for Nautical Archaeology. The authors include such well known names as Dumas, Bass, Crumlin-Pedersen, Franzen, Peterson, Frost and Van der Heide, and the papers range in subject and period from Swiss lakes and Mexican wells to wrecks in the Americas and sea level changes in the Black Sea. Photography, survey, photogrammetry, conservation and magnetometer prospecting are some of the subjects covered in the second part.

The Thames and Hudson volume is more in the coffee table style, but is an excellent example of how

the traditional approach to a subject can be filled out by new knowledge. It is in fact a beautiful and useful book and does provide for the general reader, in its text and pictures a world survey of work on underwater wreck sites up to the early 1970's. Put together in proven Thames and Hudson pattern of a chapter, written by a specialist, linked to an illustrated section, it contains twelve parts. These range from Egyptian, Greek and Roman ships and installations to Byzantium, the Vikings and the ships of Medieval Italy and Northern Europe. In Chapters 10 and 11 Alexander McKee and Mendel Peterson discuss respectively British post-medieval shipping and the ships of the Atlantic trade. In chapter 5, Peter Marsden discusses the ships of the Roman period in Britain, and in particular those from County Hall and Blackfriars. In fact the colour photograph of Blackfriars Railway Bridge makes an enjoyable contrast to the harbours of Ancient Corinth! The authors make full use of drawings, reconstructions, contemporary painting and engravings and the artifacts found by underwater research.

Rather less expensive to obtain is George Bass' *Archaeology under Water* originally published in the "Ancient Peoples and Places" series in 1966. This was reissued as a Pelican a couple of years back and was 40p last time I looked. The paperback provides a short introduction to underwater archaeology based on Mediterranean work but attempts to cover a wider field. A revised edition is really needed. For current work in the British Isles reference should be made to the *International Journal of Nautical Archaeology* of which Volume 2 Part 1 appeared in March.

JOHN ASHDOWN

Chinese Exhibition

NEXT SEPTEMBER an exhibition of nearly 400 of China's finest archaeological treasures will be on view for some four months at the Royal Academy; with one or two exceptions all of the objects have been discovered during excavations from 1949 onwards, with the majority being found since the Cultural Revolution of 1962.

The exhibition whose sponsors include *The Times*, is first of all going to Paris in May and then will later come to London where it is expected to rival the exhibition of Chinese art held in the Royal Academy in 1935. From experience of the Goya exhibition the organisers expect that with proper planning of the larger rooms in the Academy, it will be possible to absorb a constant stream of visitors and so do away with the queue problems which marred the Tutankhamun exhibition. There will be a catalogue similar to the Tutankhamun one retailing at under £1; admission prices, opening and closing times will also be similar to that exhibition.

Recent Journals

Surrey Archaeological Collections. Volume 68 (1971)
Editor: E. E. Harrison. (Issued to members)

THIS ISSUE of Surrey's transactions has some 207 pages and contains ten articles, seven short notes and several glossy plates to enliven this volume. While certainly essential reading for those interested in ceramics, in addition the articles range over Iron Age Surrey; monumental brasses; the Inns of Croydon; the 1710 general election; vine growing in 18th century Cobham. R. T. Mason also describes the medieval timber-framed house at Greens Farm, Newdigate.

The pottery reader can start with Iron Age Surrey; work through Stephen Moorhouse's analysis of two post-medieval pit groups from Farnham Castle; consider Dennis Turner's sequence from 199 Borough High Street, Southwark, and finish with Felix Holling's important preliminary exploration of the medieval and later pottery industry of the Hampshire-Surrey borders. This latter paper illustrates examples, tied to kiln sites, of the fine white fabric, green and yellow glazed vessels so typical of Tudor and Stuart times and equally well known to London archaeologists. An excellent volume.

Post-Medieval Archaeology. Volume 6 (1972).

THIS DOES NOT contain articles of direct London interest but attention is drawn to Atkinson and Oswald's "A Brief Guide for the Identification of Dutch Clay Tobacco Pipes found in England". This is available as an offprint at 35p (post free) from W. Davey, Esq., Thatch Cottage, High Street, Chrishall, near Royston, Herts.

JOHN ASHDOWN

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING the London Archaeologist

THIS WILL take place at 6.15 p.m. on Friday 18th May at Church House, Dean's Yard, S.W.1.

The annual report and accounts will be presented. The proceedings will include the election of officers, and also the election to the Publishing Committee of the five local society representatives whose nominations should be made in writing not less than 14 days before the A.G.M. to the Chairman, Montague Chambers, Montague Close, S.E.1.

Local societies are invited to send one representative with voting powers to the A.G.M.; individual subscribers to the magazine and their friends will also be welcome to attend. A copy of the agenda will be circulated to all societies known to be interested in *the London Archaeologist*.

Following the A.G.M. Dr. John Alexander will give a lecture on "Bedfont and Southwark—Two Institute of Archaeology Training Excavations".