

Mosaic

CHAUCER HOUSE CONTINUES

READERS may by now be familiar with SLAEC's longest running site, Chaucer House, which has already appeared three times in our pages (vol 2, no. 14, 359 and 372; vol 3 no. 2, 39). To bring the story up to date, we have been given the following report of work in 1976.

Roman: Further examination of the topography of the site shows a slope off the Flood Plain gravels from +1.10m OD at the south west end of the site to -0.20m at the north east end, over a distance of c. 100m. The margin of dry land lies approx. halfway, c. 50m north east of the probable line of Watling Street. Beyond this the land was waterlogged during much of the Roman and medieval periods. There may have been a recession of the water, marked by dumping of 2nd century occupation material on a dry land surface. A succeeding higher water level resulted in further clay deposition and erosion of earlier deposits in the later Roman period.

Over 80 posts, probably early Roman, were cut into the clays and were sealed by later Roman waterlaid deposits. Their function is uncertain though some might be part of raised buildings or platforms. Further excavation of the ditches cut into the dry area (see 1975 report) has now revealed four 1st and 2nd century drainage ditches sealed by soil dumped in the 2nd century. A later Roman ditch, perhaps marking a boundary, was cut into this deposit. North-east of this ditch, presumably as far as the waterlogged area, was evidence for land usage, probably agricultural, well into the 4th century. The female inhumation recovered in 1975 has been provisionally dated c. A.D. 430±70.

Medieval: Two walls of a chalk walled building with a floor of yellow sand have been provisionally dated to the 14th or 15th century. There were two phases of hearths within the building, both made of roof-tiles set into a grid pattern. A circular burnt patch on the later hearth suggests that a brazier may have stood there. Ash and fine charcoal were raked across the floor. Several rubbish pits and drainage ditches were also found.

Post-medieval: Behind buildings on the street frontage were 16th-17th century dumped soils and pits, some of which contained evidence of tanning.

HENDON EXHIBITION

ARCHAEOLOGY in Action was the title of an exhibition staged by the Hendon & District Archaeological Society at the Church Farmhouse Museum, Hendon. It was opened by the Mayor of Barnet, Councillor Andrew Pares, on February 19th. The exhibition covered the Society's activities since the previous exhibition in Spring 1974.

In the "dirt-archaeology class," material excavated from a corner of the churchyard of St. James the Great, Friern Barnet, was displayed. This included some fine brass coffin plates. The Woodlands site in the Golders Green Road was a follow-up of a previous dig in an effort to trace a postulated Roman road. This was not found, but a medieval pebble surface containing sherds from the 13-14th century was located.

Two cases were devoted to finds from the two year excavation at Church Terrace, Hendon, close to St. Mary's Church. This covered material from late 3rd/early 4th century to a pit of late 18th century date.

A whole room was devoted to finds and photographs of the current excavation at West Heath close to Golders Hill

Park. The prolific Mesolithic finds have been provisionally dated to about 6200 B.C.

Field walking, the work of about 20 members, was featured in one large case. Examples of chance finds brought to the attention of the Society were in another case. Both of these covered a wide period of time and some posed unsolved questions.

Whilst the London Borough of Barnet is not very rich in Industrial relics, the Society is currently recording the farms in the Borough and this work was shown together with photographs of street furniture. Closely allied to Industrial archaeology are the survey of Parish Boundary Stones and the recording of the Dissenters Burial Ground at Totteridge.

In 1974 the Society was asked to aid in the proposed updating of the Borough's Statutory List of Buildings. This work took 3 months and involved 30 members. To round off a series of panels of photographs of outings, lectures and the early history of the Society was presented.

The exhibition attracted a total of 2007 visitors during the six week period, which visits included a number of school parties.

Details of the Society may be obtained from Mrs. Brigid Grafton Green, 88 Temple Fortune Lane, London, N.W.11. 7TX.

ANTIQUITIES ON THE THAMES FORESHORE

THE MUSEUM of London and its Department of Urban Archaeology take a keen interest in antiquities found on the Thames foreshore. Reciprocal co-operation has existed for several years between Museum staff and some searchers. The Museum would now like to extend this relationship on a more regular footing and to establish new links with others. No claim is being made on objects discovered on the foreshore; all that is asked is that they should be made briefly available for study and recording for the benefit of future generations (and occasionally for conservation). In this way the finder will get as accurate an identification as possible.

Searchers are therefore asked if they would report any antiquities they find (or have already found) to the Museum of London¹.

The Museum is interested in finds from *all* areas of the foreshore; in the case of the City and the corresponding south bank, maps dividing the foreshore into numbered areas have been prepared. It would be appreciated if searchers would use this numbering system in reporting their finds². At present studies of kiln material, lead bale seals, knives (especially with cutlers' marks) and marked clay pipes from the foreshore are in progress; information about any such item will be very welcome.

1. Tel. 01-600 3699; ask for:
prehistoric and Roman — Miss J MacDonalld or Mr. H. Chapman; medieval and post-medieval:—Mr. B. Spencer, Mr. J. Clark, Mrs. P. Glanville or Mrs. R. Weinstein.
2. Maps are available from the Museum of London, London, London Wall, E.C.2. The Duty Officer at the Museum during working hours at weekends can deal with enquiries about foreshore material.

TESSERA E

THE NEW Director of the Museum of London will be Max Hebditch, at present Deputy Director. More in our next issue.