

# Mosaic

## POSSIBLE MESOLITHIC HEARTH AT WEST HEATH, HAMPSTEAD

THE CLOSE of the 1977 season at the West Heath Mesolithic Site<sup>1</sup> (dug by the Hendon & District Archaeological Society) was enlivened by the discovery of a hearth — the first major feature to be uncovered. It lay in the north-west area of the site on the western side of what is proving, so far, to be the area of densest occupation.

The hearth appeared in the lower levels of the trench as an area (approximately one square metre in extent) of blackened soil rich in charcoal and burnt flint. The depth of the hearth on its western edge was about 100mm—the bottom 20mm of which appeared to be red and burnt. The hearth was covered by 150mm of soil containing struck flakes, blades, and one tool. There was some burnt flint and a few charcoal flecks but, otherwise, there was no evidence of burning in these upper levels.

Samples are to be taken for TL and C14 dating and magnetic measurements. Since the laboratories concerned will not be ready for the material until the spring, it was felt that danger from erosion and, more particularly, vandalism, indicated that the hearth should be lifted. This was done under the instruction and supervision of Mr Paul Burford of the Conservation laboratories of the Institute of Archaeology. The area around the hearth was excavated and it was crated *in situ*. The surface of the hearth was covered with metal foil and the interstices filled with polyurethane foam which was left to harden for 18 hours. The hearth was cut from the parent soil by pulling a wire hawser through with a 1½-ton winch.

Metal strips were inserted behind the wire and were subsequently used to raise the hearth vertically in its wooden frame. It was then gently lowered on to its fact on to metal rollers for ease of transport. The bottom surface (now uppermost) was covered with polythene sheeting to slow down the rate of drying. Prior to removal, the magnetic north was marked on the surface on quick-drying plaster let into the polyurethane foam. At the same time a section of plaster was levelled for subsequent magnetic measurements.

It is hoped that this hearth will enable positive dating to be obtained from the site and the results are awaited eagerly.

Daphne Home Lorimer

1 Lorimer, D. H. "A Mesolithic Site on West Heath, Hampstead—a Preliminary Report" *London Archaeol.* 2, No. 16 (1976) 407-9.

## 48 HOUR SLIDE SERVICE

ARCHAEOLOGICAL lecturers, in particular, will be interested to learn of a swift colour slide processing service offered by Kodak for an additional fee of only 65p. Exposed film taken in person to Kodak's London Office at 246 High Holborn, is normally processed and ready for collection within 48 hours; the office is approximately 100 yards east of Kingsway and the Underground station of the same name.

The film should be taken up to the first floor reception desk which faces the top of the stairs, where it should be handed in; it may be necessary to ask for the "professional service". The film should be presented in the usual yellow paper bag, but the *only* wording to be written on it should be the name of the photographer on the reverse; there is no need for any address.

The fee of 65p. per roll of film must be paid in advance and a receipt will be issued. This must be produced when collecting the processed slides. Additionally, it is necessary to sign for the receipt of the slides in a slipping book kept at the reception desk.

## NEW TRUSTEE FOR THE L.A.

READING Roy Canham's tribute to John Morris in our last issue, you may not have realised that John Morris had been one of *the London Archaeologist's* four trustees. His place has now been taken by Edward Sammes, who will be known to many as the author of *Discovering Regional Archaeology—South East England* and by fewer, but more closely, as a leading light of the Hendon and District Archaeological Society. He also served on the Publication Committee of the L.A. until his recent retirement and move to Berkshire. We are glad to welcome him back in this new role.

## WALKS IN TOWER HAMLETS

TO MARK Jubilee Year, the Tower Hamlets Arts Committee have published two leaflets to guide visitors around two of the more interesting and historical parts of the borough. Those who do not know the area may well be amazed at the wealth of historical buildings still remaining, despite the depredations of bombing and redevelopment, and at the wide range of historical associations.

The first, *A Walk along the Waterfront*, starts at Tower Hill, and takes us via St. Katharine's Dock, Wapping High Street, London Docks and Shadwell to Limehouse. Some of the buildings you pass are well known, like the Ivory House at St. Katharine's Dock, Hawksmoor's churches of St. George's in the East and St. Anne's Limehouse, and the 'Prospect of Whitby' and the 'Grapes'. Less familiar may be the handsome enclave of Wapping Pier Head, Oliver's Wharf (a converted tea warehouse), St Katharine's Foundation and many other reminders of the 18th and 19th centuries. The historical associations have a rather sinister air — like Jacob's Island (where Bill Sikes lived) and Execution Dock.

The second walk, *Down and around Lemn Street*, takes us around the area south of Whitechapel High Street, and evokes the atmosphere of this commercial quarter in the 19th century. We are shown the sites of Ragged Schools, Sailors' Homes and other products of Victorian philanthropy, many alas now demolished. Industry is represented by massive warehouses, historic Trade Union offices, and the old Tenter Grounds, used in the 16th century for processes in cloth-making. Nor is leisure forgotten, with many pubs and a surprising number of theatres and music halls — the Garrick, Wilton's, the Royalty/Royal Brunswick, Alie Street and the Half-Moon. Associations of the area range from Thomas More to Jack the Ripper.

Either walk could make a very interesting and unusual society outing. With one of these leaflets, perhaps supported by some background research, not forgetting the recent excavations in Shadwell, one could really bring these areas to life.

## TESSERAE

**Moving:** the C.B.A. has moved to 112 Kennington Road, S.E.11 (01-582 0494).

**Moving:** the West London Archaeological Field Group has moved to 71-72 High Street, Brentford (01-560 3880).