

after the first turf was cut for the factory site, until Imperial Airways made it their base and it became the first custom built airport in the world in 1928. During these years aviation was still in a very primitive state compared with today. Pilots, in 1920, still navigated by following railway lines and due to the plethora of railway stations in the south-east they had to have their names on their roofs in white paint.

The book is well illustrated with black and white photographs gleaned from many sources, copies of which are now held in Sutton library. If I have one adverse comment it is that the binding is not up to the standard of the rest of the book. The cover is made of card and remains curved after using the book. Although the gatherings are sewn the cover is only glued and looks as if it might be the first casualty of heavy use.

HILARY ORTON

The Excavation Record: Part 1 Stratification, by Andrew Boddington. *Northamptonshire County Council*. 52pp, 50p.

WITH FINAL REPORTS becoming more condensed because of cost, the detailed records of an excavation need more than ever to form an accurate retrievable archive. This booklet attempts to give a more standard and objective format to such records. For the price it is well produced and illustrated although there are a number of errors in the text. It outlines recording methods (not excavation techniques) which will generate information on site, at Devel II (site note of the DoE's *Principles of Publication in Rescue Archaeology*). These methods are said to be particularly suitable for deeply stratified urban sites

Local Societies — amendments

THE SEVENTH list of amendments to the list of local societies published in Vol. 2, No. 9 is as follows:

Beddington, Carshalton and Wallington Archaeological Society: Sec. Miss D. M. Andrews, 7 Bute Gardens West, Wallington, Surrey.

City of London Archaeological Society: Sec. Mrs. R. I. Pottinger, 16 Woodlands, 34 Southend Road, Beckenham, Kent.

Lewisham Local History Society: Sec. D. J. Dalton, 10a Sydenham Park, SE26 4EQ.

Orpington and District Archaeological Society: Sec. G. Watts, 21 Green Farm Close, Green Street Green, Orpington, Kent.

Waltham Abbey Historical Society: Sec. Miss D. E. P. Dean, 316 Roundhills, Waltham Abbey, Essex.

Woolwich and District Antiquarian Society: Sec. Mrs. S. Parker, 11 Riverview Heights, Eglington Hill, S.E.18.

and are therefore of direct relevance to London archaeologists; indeed much of the system was developed within the Museum of London's Department of Urban Archaeology.

The archaeological sequence is first divided into its component actions, here called 'units of stratification' (our old friend the context, although 'event' might be more appropriate to the study of human development). These have varied origins, as in the cutting of a pit, its weathering and the first fill, but each unit represents a unique past activity and is the basic element about which information is sought. The author then tackles unit numbering, the colour, particle structure and content of archaeological deposits; plans and sections, levels, stratigraphic matrices, photographs and documentation. This is done in a straightforward way with much common-sense advice and helpful ideas. The example of pre-printed record sheets, the appendices on unit description and the visual aids for site use are also valuable. One chart (fragment sizes) is contentious as it considers only absolute size, and not fragment size in relation to the parent object.

As an attempt to reduce subjectivity and inconsistency, the booklet could profitably be read by full and part time archaeologists and newcomers alike. Remember however that this is not the only recording system available and that no two are quite the same, either in the range of data included or in 'standard' terminology. This system seems complex, partly because of the separate recording of related events. For example a post hole may consist of four events (cut, post insertion, packing and decay of post) and theoretically each of these would have a separate context sheet and overlay plan. Too much documentation may lead to human error, and the methodical filling in of context sheets can become a substitute for wider thinking. Such localisation of thought may occur when contexts are recorded largely in isolation. Composite or phase plans seem restricted to the post-excavation stage (Level III) where as developments over time, and spatial relationships across the site, need to be constantly considered during the excavation. Some discussion of the human problems and of the cost impact and computer potential of the system would have been helpful. Northamptonshire's policy statement should definitely be read, but as a stimulus to further thought

GEORGE DENNIS

Also received

The Heraldry of Waltham Abbey, colouring books nos 1, 2, 3, and 4 by Dinah Dean and Raymond Cassidy. *Waltham Abbey Historical Society*. Price 15p + 11p postage from Mr R C Gray, 64 Honey Lane, Waltham Abbey, Essex.