

Books

Southwark Excavations, 1972-74, eds J Bird, A H Graham, H Sheldon and P Townend, *The London and Middlesex Archaeological Society with The Surrey Archaeological Society*. 1978. 2 vols. 619pp. 24pls 249 figs. £10.

ONLY FOUR YEARS after the completion of excavations, the report on work carried out by the Southwark and Lambeth Archaeological Excavation Committee (SLAEC) on seven sites in the borough has appeared. It runs to over 600 pages and represents the work of over 70 individuals who are duly and carefully acknowledged at the beginning. Their combined efforts have been welded together by the four editors who are listed, as above, alphabetically, so that *Southwark Excavations 1972-4* will be listed by posterity and library catalogue cards under 'Bird, J *et al* (eds)' but I am sure that Bird, J, Graham, A and Townend, P would be the first to agree that in that Great Card Index in the Sky, one name will stand firmly at the head, that of Sheldon, H, who must be one of Britain's top half dozen rescue archaeologists and certainly the most modest.

Southwark Excavations consists of two volumes and is divided into three sections (with the second section split rather awkwardly between volumes). The first section (some 40 pages) is by the Anonymous Harvey Sheldon himself, 'The 1972-4 Excavations: their contribution to Southwark's History'. Roman Southwark owed its existence to the presence of an island of sand which formed a suitable terminal for (Roman) London Bridge, the successor, it may be, of a possible ford at Westminster for which Watling Street, both north and south of the river, appears to be making. Harvey discusses the possibility of a bridgehead fort whose existence seems *a priori* highly likely but reluctantly is forced to admit that there is really no evidence for it as yet though both work on the samian by Joanna Bird and Geoff Marsh and on the coins by Mike Ham-merson, subsequently reported on in Part III, suggest that there was occupation earlier than that which has been so far actually attested structurally. However, at the moment, all that can be said is that Stane Street, linking London with Chichester, crossed the area from south to north heading for London Bridge, and that spur roads were constructed from it running south-east and south-west to join Watling Street which originally by-passed London to the south. In the later first century an extensive suburb grew up around these roads, with buildings of timber frame construction with wattle and daub walls. In the later second century the settlement contrac-

ted and decayed, a phenomenon which Harvey Sheldon believes may be detected at other settlements in Britain at this period. His speculations on possible causes include the plague brought back by troops returning from Lucius Verus' Parthian expedition in AD 165 and barbarian inroads, but there may have been local factors of which we are as yet unaware. In the late third and fourth centuries the area recovered though the character of occupation had changed: there were fewer but more substantial buildings built in stone, while part of the site was given over to cultivation. To be able to sketch a history of Roman Southwark is of some significance since the suburb occupied an area of c. 24 ha. (60 acres) — a sixth of the size of Roman London itself and as much as half of the size of several cantonal capitals. Even though of the 24 ha. some 10 ha. (25 acres) were probably taken up by gardens, the comparison is still valid since large areas of many towns in the province were also not built up. However, that said, it is sad that, roads apart, despite the fact that the excavations were carefully conducted, so little in the way of actual structures could be recorded.

The second section consists of the detailed account of the seven excavations. These are as interesting for the way in which they are presented as for what for the most part they have to say. Each report is divided into a number of sections headed by a capital letter: A Introduction, B Archaeology, C Conclusions, D Survey of finds and dating evidence, E Finds, F Organic material. Each section may be subdivided by Roman numerals: thus for the B section, each number represents a major archaeological horizon, while for the E section I is for Roman pottery, II Medieval pottery, etc. Each of these subdivisions may be subdivided thus: E I 1 stamped samian, E I 2 decorated samian, up to E I 8 graffiti. The system has a number of advantages. It ensured that a common format was used for all the reports, this homogeneity being helped by Alan Graham's excellent work in redrawing all plans and sections. Secondly it allowed cross references to be made from one excavation report to another, while all were actually in the course of preparation; finally, the system is 'open-ended' — if in the future a whole new category, or subcategory, of material is reported upon, the new material can be introduced without upsetting the system, by the allocation of new letters and numbers. Like all open-ended systems there are some disadvantages in that it is a little cumbersome and confusing (particularly with the F(eature) numbers used occasionally) and

can give rise to occasional slips, eg Pl. 9 with a wrong reference to 1-7 St. Thomas' St E I 4 (it should be E I 3) and there is no cross reference to the illustration in the text, but on the whole the system works well.

Since the structures encountered on the seven sites were so disappointing, attention tends to focus on the finds and some of them are worth mentioning specially. Thus from 201-11 Borough High Street come two anthropomorphic medieval pots, one with a naive erotic scene and the other representing a lady with an heraldic gown which probably proclaims her a member of the Clare family. From 1-7 St. Thomas' Street come a Roman 'smith's vase' with hammer, anvil and pincers rendered *en barbotine*; pipe-clay Venus figurines (also found at 93-5 Borough High Street); a fascinating 18th century pit group including a china tankard and chamber pot; wooden writing tablets and associated seal-stones; the remains of fruits such as mulberry, fig, olive and grape, this last particularly important in view of the current interest in the possibility of viticulture being practised in Roman Britain (cf. *Ant.J.* 58 (1978) 162; and *Britannia* 8 (1977) 327-334); skeletal remains of eel, herring, haddock and mackerel; two deep wood lined tanks F28 and 29 (p. 305-6), one with internal divisions, in which a large number of pots, complete or nearly so, were found together with a wide range of organic material. It seems to this reviewer that they could just possibly be *vivaria* or fish stews, attested archaeologically at Pompeii and Timgad (and possibly Caesarea Maritima, un-published) (Daremberg-Saglio *vivarium* 960ff, F. Noack and K. Lehmann-Hartleben *Pompeii* 144), though they are interpreted by George Dennis as being of ritual significance. Finally from 97-9 Borough High Street comes the pipe-clay figurine of a dog and from Toppings and Sun Wharves a glass 'sports cup', the latter consigned to an appendix since the site had already been published elsewhere.

The third part of *Southwark Excavations* consists of eight topics treated on a supra-site basis. They are in order: geology and topography, a gazetteer of Roman sites, samian and other imported pottery, coarse pottery, a brief note on fabrics, a petrological analysis of some mica dusted and 'London ware' pottery, coins and organic data. The remarks that follow are confined to three of the topics only. Firstly the coarse pottery by Geoff Marsh and Paul Tyers. The authors divide the vessels into classes according to function, types (according to some major diagnostic feature) within classes, and forms within the types. This type series comprises some 127 vessels all clearly drawn (in contrast to the rather 'fuzzy' samian drawings). It is (no criticism this) a rather simplified type series (compare the drawings

of over 1,800 vessels, no two of which will be precisely identical, given under the site reports in Part II). A relative chronology for the vessels is provided by their appearance or absence in thirty groups or archaeological horizons (see p. 582, fig. 243). There are a few quibbles such as the use of the word class for what has been described above as type, and the absence of any definition for BB1 and BB2 — a pity since the type series is bound to be used by non-specialists. On the whole however it is a model of what such a report should be. Extremely useful too is the map and gazetteer of kilns in the London area which will have supplied so much of the pottery covered by the type series.

Secondly, brief mention should be made of the coin report by Mike Hammerson, with its interesting, if rather inconclusive, discussion of Claudian copies and its very valuable histograms showing coin loss from Southwark and thirty-eight other Romano-British sites (showing that Southwark fits into the 'Claudian military supply base' pattern). Finally, the organic data by Messrs Dean, Jones and Rixson where, among much else of interest, we learn that cattle bones were from mature animals culled from breeding stock, milk or draught animals, in contrast to the pig bones, which were from immature animals that had presumably been reared for meat.

In a few hundred words it has been impossible to give more than a subjective and selective account of a work of over 600 pages. It is however much easier to give a general assessment. Harvey Sheldon and his colleagues may not have found their elusive bridgehead fort but they have produced a model report from every point of view. The material presented is often of more than local interest so that it will demand the attention of all concerned with the Roman province of Britain as a whole, while for all those whose interests lie specifically with Roman London it will clearly be of the utmost importance and utility.

MARK HASSALL

London in the Twenties and Thirties from old photographs, by James Howgego. *B. T. Batsford Ltd.* 1978. 112 pp. 121 Pl. £4.95.

JAMES HOWGEGO, formerly Keeper of the Department of Prints and Pictures at the Guildhall in London, has collected 121 photographs of London between the Wars, arranging them under 19 headings. These follow some 6 pages of Introduction, in which the author gives a selective history of the period, as it applies to London. He is careful to say that it is a personal view, and that the photographs are chosen to illustrate this view. Descriptive captions and commentaries are provided for each picture.

I was rather disappointed with the effect of the whole presentation: some of the photographs are of poor quality, and in some cases the subject matter seems lost in the general clutter. The historical portion, in the Introduction, progresses well enough, from November 1918 to September 1939, but the illustrations are static single pictures of seemingly random items. I think this book would have a very limited appeal.

BOB ORTON

Early English Delftware from London and Virginia by Ivor Noel Hume. *Colonial Williamsburg Occasional Papers in Archaeology, Vol II.* Paul Elek, Ltd. (1977) 119pp, bibliog, index, 58pl, 19 Fig. £15.

THE STUDY OF DELFTWARE (i.e. English tin-glazed earthenware) has always looked slightly schizophrenic. On the one hand we have the nice complete vessels, which appear in museums, sale catalogues and books¹, and on the other the broken and usually abraded sherds that are found on excavations. And never, one might say, the twain shall meet. The gap should be bridged, of course, by reports of excavations at kiln sites. But until Francis Celoria's excavations at Vine Lane in the mid 1960s the only finds of kiln waste had been made on building sites, service trenches and the like. Even today, the only fully published pottery from delftware kiln sites in the London area are the relatively late groups (late 17th/early 18th century) from Norfolk House, Lambeth² and some small groups from Montague Close^{3,4}. Vast quantities of pottery from the kilns in St. Saviour's and St. Olave's parishes in Southwark are under study, and publication is eagerly awaited.

Despite its limitations, pottery collected from building sites in the area is well worth publishing, and Ivor Noel Hume's publication here of pottery collected by and for Sir David Burnett (then Chairman of Hay's Wharf Ltd.) from sites in the Tooley Street area between 1954 and 1961 is therefore most welcome. After an introduction to the historical background of the subject, built on the foundations of Rhoda Edwards' documentary survey⁵, we are treated to a dual presentation of the material in the collection. There is first a discussion of the various types produced—tiles, pharmaceutical pots, mugs and so on—lavishly illustrated by examples from the Burnett Collection and elsewhere. Much needed dating evidence is supplied by reference to material found at Noel Hume's own excavation of Mathews Manor, Denbigh, Virginia. In the second half of the book individual representative examples from the Collection are illustrated and discussed in depth. There is thus considerable duplication — level 3 and level 4, one might say — and some pots even appear three times (colour and black-and-white photographs and line drawing). Noel Hume defends himself by saying that differ-

ent readers will want different things from the book (which is fair enough) and that no-one is going to read it cover to cover anyway. Valid as these points may be, the high cost of a lavish presentation of a relatively small amount of pottery must be viewed with some reservation. How much would it cost, for example, to publish at this level the sites at Vine Lane, Montague Close or Mark Brown Wharf, or even some of the smaller sites with evidence for delftware manufacture?

The cost can only be justified by appeal to the usefulness of the book. The elegant presentation *does* make it easy to read and the information accessible and easy to digest. There are mistakes—in the Appendix on the enigmatic Aldgate pottery, Noel Hume completely misinterprets the stratigraphy of Peter Marsden's Bastion 6 site, by assuming four layers with concurrent numbers (E.R. 1352-55) lie in a direct stratigraphic sequence. But a great virtue is that the arguments are presented in such a way that the effects of changing one of the basic premises (eg. the stratigraphy at Bastion 6) can easily be followed through to the conclusion. Certainly, I am finding the book very useful in my attempt to disentangle the evidence relating to the earliest delftware production in the Aldgate area, and my initial scorn at the "coffee-table" presentation, soon turned to gratitude. I note however that my copy is still less thumbed than, say a *Lamas Transactions*, partly I am sure out of exaggerated respect for the glossy format, and is still just fit to grace a coffee table.

To sum up, this is a useful if lavish presentation of an interesting but unfortunately mainly unstratified collection of delftware, marred only by a price which even these days is quite ridiculous. But every serious student of delftware will need to at least have access to a copy.

CLIVE ORTON

- 1 F. H. Garner & M. Archer, *English Delftware*, London, 1972.
- 2 B. J. Bloice "Norfolk House, Lambeth: Excavations at a Delftware Kiln Site, 1968" *Post Med. Arch.* 5 (1971) 99-159.
- 3 G. J. Dawson & Rhoda Edwards "The Montague Close Delftware Factory Prior to 1909", *Res. Vol. Surrey Arch. Soc.* 1 (1973) 47-62.
- 4 C. R. Orton "Medieval and Post-Medieval Pottery (from the Bonded Warehouse, Montague Close)", in *Southwark Excavations 1972-4, Joint Pub. No. 1 L.A.M.A.S. & S.A.S.* (1978) 282-4.
- 5 Rhoda Edwards "London Potters circa 1570-1710", *Journal of Ceramic History* 6 (1974).

London's Industrial Archaeology. Number One, 1979. Greater London Industrial Archaeology Society. 80p (by post £1) from Peter Skilton, 20 Commonwealth Way, Abbey Wood, London, S.E.2.

ALL READERS OF THE London Archaeologist already know that home grown magazines are best, and the new *London's Industrial Archaeology* again proves the point. While GLIAS is not new to pub-

lishing, having issued a number of useful publications over the last few years, production of this annual journal breaks new ground for the society. Number One comprises 34 A4 pages enclosed in a stiff card cover. The articles, naturally reflecting the current interests and research projects of members of GLIAS, include the first part of a discussion by David Perrett of the use of the stationary steam engine in London (with a list of steam engines known to be *in situ* in 1978), and part of the recorded interview made at an Enfield Brickworks in

1977 by Pauline Roenisch. Other papers describe the former Limehouse Lock and winch, the Brunel engine house at Rotherhithe, Eel traps at West Drayton, and the former Lifeboat storeyard in Poplar.

A good balance of subjects, which I am sure can be continued in the future, and the new Journal is a venture that is warmly recommended for support to all interested in London's past and present.

JOHN ASHDOWN

Letters

COAL AND WINE DUTIES MARKERS AT STAINES

I AM pleased to be able to report that the Coal and Wine Duties obelisk which formerly lay prostrate and abandoned beside the railway line between Staines and Wraysbury (TQ 018738) (See my letter on p.148 of the Spring '78 issue) has received attention. The archaeology section of the BP Research Centre at Sunbury has carefully repaired the tall iron obelisk and, with the cooperation of British Rail and of the local authorities, re-erected

it at the north-west corner of the Lammas grounds, beside the B376 (Staines-Wraysbury) road at TQ 026720. This happens to be the site of a missing "City Post", the roadside type of Coal and Wine Duties marker. A purist might, I suppose, object to placing a railway marker beside a road but any such criticism is countered by the great advantage of having the obelisk splendidly restored and re-erected in a safe situation where it is easily visible.

May one hope that something may now be done to improve the state of the other iron obelisk in Staines on the railway embankment off Thames Street (at TQ 036713) which, although standing, is overgrown and very rusty.

E. N. MASSON PHILLIPS.

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Excavations & Post-Excavation work

City, by Museum of London, Department of Urban Archaeology. A series of long term excavations. Enquiries to Alison Balfour-Lynn, DUA, 71 Basinghall Street, E.C.2. (01-236 1946).

Brentford, by West London Archaeological Field Group. Excavation and processing. Enquiries to 71-72 Brentford High Street, Brentford, Middlesex. (01-560 3880).

Croydon & District. Processing and cataloguing of excavated and museum collections every Tuesday throughout the year. Archaeological reference collections of fabric types, domestic animal bones, clay tobacco pipes and glassware also available for comparative work. Hon. Curator, Croydon Natural History & Scientific Society Ltd. Museum Building, Croydon Biology Centre, Chipstead Valley Road, Coulsdon, Surrey. (01-660 3841 or 22 43727.)

Fulham, by Fulham Archaeological Rescue Group. Sandford Manor, Rewell Street (New Kings Road), S.W.6. Excavation work in grounds of 17th century house, traceable back to at least 14th century, hopefully will find medieval and earlier occupation. Enquiries to Excavation Director, C. E. Oliver, 18 Albany Court, Ashburnham Road, Ham, Richmond, Surrey. (01-948 2633) or K. Whitehouse.

Fulham Palace, Bishops Avenue, Fulham Palace Road, S.W.6. Examination of existing buildings and research work has revealed earlier buildings underneath. Sundays Enquiries to Keith Whitehouse, 86 Clancarty Road, S.W.6. (01-731 0338).

Hammersmith, by Fulham Archaeological Rescue Group. Processing of post-medieval material from Sandford Manor and medieval material from Fulham Palace. Tuesdays, 7.45 p.m.-10 p.m., at Fulham Palace, Bishops Avenue, Fulham Palace Road S.W.6. Contact Keith Whitehouse (see Fulham).

Inner London Boroughs, by the Inner London Unit. Several rescue sites in various areas. (01-242 6620).

Kingston, by Kingston-upon-Thames Archaeological Society. Rescue sites in the town centre. Enquiries to

Marion Smith, Kingston Museum, Fairfield Road, Kingston (01-546 5386).

North-East Greater London, by Passmore Edwards Museum. Enquiries to Pat Wilkinson, Passmore Edwards Museum, Romford Road, E.15. (01-534 4545).

Putney, by Wandsworth Historical Society. Two acre site at junction of Felsham Road and High Street lies on Roman and medieval settlements. Alternate weekends. Enquiries to Nicholas Farrant, 7 Coalecroft Road, S.W.15. (01-788 0015).

South West London Boroughs by the South West London Unit, excavations and processing. Enquiries to Scott McCracken, 21 Harbut Road, Battersea, S.W.11 (01-223 2478).

Southwark, by Southwark and Lambeth Archaeological Excavation Committee. Several sites from the Roman period onwards. Enquiries to Harvey Sheldon, S.L.A.E.C., Port Medical Centre, English Grounds, Morgan's Lane, S.E.1 2HT. (01 407 1989).

Surrey, by Surrey Archaeological Society. Enquiries to David Bird, County Archaeological Officer, Planning Department, County Hall, Kingston, Surrey. (01-546 1050 x3665).

Vauxhall Pottery, by Southwark and Lambeth Archaeological Society. Excavation at weekends only. Processing of excavated material continues three nights a week. All enquiries to S.L.A.S., c/o Cuming Museum, 155 Walworth Road, S.E.17. (01-703 3324).

GENERAL EXCAVATIONS

The Council for British Archaeology produces a monthly Calendar of Excavations from March to September, with an extra issue in November and a final issue in January summarising the main results of fieldwork. The Calendar gives details of extra-mural courses, summer schools, training excavations and sites where volunteers are needed. The annual subscription is £3.30 post-free, which should be made payable to C.B.A., 112 Kensington Road, S.E.11.