

SURREY

Runnymede Bridge, Egham. TQ 018 718. Surrey County Archaeological Unit. (D. Longley, S. Needham, R. Poulton, M. O'Connell). The construction of an oil trap associated with the new bridge offered the opportunity for further exploration of the extent of Late Bronze Age occupation in the area, this time to the west of the A30 embankment. A three week excavation of an area 4m x 17m successfully located the occupation surface previously established in 1976 and 1978, the three sites now suggesting activity covering at least one hectare. 1980 proved to be equally prolific in artifacts and evidence for post-set structures. Noteworthy among the finds were a complete antler cheek-piece and a socketed bronze knife, as well as the shoulders of a sword. Further evidence for metalworking includes lead crucible residue and clay mould fragments, while other crafts may be indicated —antler working and pottery manufacture.

After completion of the LBA horizon Surrey Archaeological Unit stepped in to sample the underlying levels which yielded features associated with Neolithic material probably comparable to that recovered in 1978. Finds included a polished stone axe, the third from the site.

The two phases were separated by sterile silt, but this was considerably thinner, and the Neolithic level correspondingly shallower, than experienced in 1978, which should hold some interesting implications for the changing topography.

Limited salvage recording was possible by courtesy of the contractors, Bovis Ltd., in their excavations for a complementary oil trap on the opposite side of the embankment. A few timbers of LBA character had been extracted with soil from deep down in their hole, but it was not possible to establish a context for them. The site lies 125m south of the excavated stretch of LBA waterfront. Recording of the upper sections confirmed the line of an old river channel and stratified finds should help date its final silting within late-and post-medieval times.

Epsom. TQ 207607 & 206606. Nonsuch Antiquarian Society (S. Nelson) investigated two sites in the High Street (106/110) and South Street (41) in advance of large scale developments. In the High Street a small complex of buildings was recorded representing a continuous development from the mid 17 c. although material connected with an earlier chalk spread may indicate the floor of a large medieval structure (?barn) on the site. Reigate stone and chalk blocks built into several late 17 c. walls were noted and a piece of carved slate, in a foundation level, was undoubtedly brought with rubble from Nonsuch Palace in the process of demolition in the 1670s. In South Street the ground plan of a timber-framed, central-chimney house of the late 17 c. built gable-end on to the street was recorded. Site watching over the rest of the site has revealed many wells and cess pits of 18 and 19 c. date at the back of the South Street properties. One large pit (2.5m x 3.5m) made of dressed Reigate stone blocks, presumably also reused from Nonsuch Palace, contained a large group of material dating to about 1720/30 probably discarded from a public house.

The Old Vicarage, Reigate. TQ 2570 5036. Holmesdale Archaeological Group. (D. Williams). Excavation, begun in 1976, of the Old Vicarage was completed. This proved to be a c 1200 hall-house. This was subsequently extended and demolished finally in 1847. Pottery and other finds were prolific. Processing continues in the Club Museum on Monday evenings.

What is it?

THIS IS THE FIFTIETH issue of the London Archaeologist and to mark this event we are holding our first competition. The picture below shows an archaeological discovery made in the City of London in the past few years. We invite readers to identify it and to suggest its function. Is it an anti-Roman elephant trap? A mediaeval candy-floss machine? You tell us. There will be a prize of a copy of The Cambridge Encyclopaedia of Archaeology for the first correct identification and reasonably accurate interpretation received by the editor (c/o Institute of Archaeology, 31-34 Gordon Square, London, WC1). For obvious reasons, present and past members of the staff of the Department of Urban Archaeology are not eligible to enter. Suggestions and photographs for future competitions will be welcomed, if readers like the idea.

