

A relic of the old Brigade

BRIAN WRIGHT

DESPITE THE ACTIVITIES of numerous 'searchers' on the City of London Thames foreshore in the last few years, interesting and relatively important objects, (at least to certain specialised historians), are still being found as is evident by a recently discovered button. It belongs to the uniform jacket of a fireman of the Phoenix Fire Office brigade and bears an inset design of a phoenix rising from the flames, with the words PHOENIX FIRE OFFICE and the date 1810. The button, which is 3.2 cm (1¼ in) in diameter and has T.SRTZILI, 24 GREAT NEW STREET, FETTER LANE on the reverse, is made of silver plated copper.

During the eighteenth and early nineteenth century many insurance company firemen were recruited from the ranks of the Thames Watermen who operated a 'water taxi' service using wherries. It was not unknown for the occasional item of uniform to end up in the Thames, and in 1753 the London Assurance Company offered a reward of two guineas for the recovery of a silver badge which was lost when the boat belonging to one of its firemen/watermen was overturned.

This button seems to be the only item of a Phoenix firemans uniform, (with the exception of one or two badges), to have survived the disband-

ing of the brigade in 1833 and not even the Phoenix Assurance Company's museum have any original items of uniform. One wonders what other items are coming from this apparently inexhaustable source of artifacts and how many are not being recorded or made available for study.



(continued from page 232)

clarify Francis's role in the development of the English renaissance garden.

We are presently carrying out a measured survey of Beddington Park Cottages in advance of their likely sale and conversion. They are very close to the house and were obviously associated with it, but they have been extensively altered and we do not yet know their original function. Among the cottages is a timber-framed building with a crown-post roof, which was originally single storied but subsequently had a first floor inserted. In another part of the range re-used timbers from another crown-post (or possibly king-post) roof survive.

Acknowledgements

This article is based on a draft report on an investigation conducted by Barry Weston, Douglas Cluett, John Phillips, Nicholas Burnett and Beverley Shew. We would like to thank the London Borough of Sutton, and, in particular, Brian Wilson the headmaster of Carew Manor School, and the caretaker, John Heffernan, whose co-operation and help have made the work possible. Thanks are also due to Ronald Michell for drawing our attention to the Waldstein reference, and to the other members of the Carew Manor Group for support and encouragement. We would also like to thank the Surrey Record Office for making the Warwick Accounts available.