

## FURTHER MEDIEVAL WALL PAINTINGS FROM BARNES CHURCH

THE SWLAU has been recording the medieval fabric of the parish church of St Mary, Barnes, since the building was severely damaged by fire in June 1978. During the initial investigation fragments of medieval wall painting were discovered on the east, south and west walls of what was the original nave and later chancel of the medieval church. The earliest painting is dated to the 12 c and consists of single red lines on white limewash creating a pattern of ashlar blocks. Following the extension of the church in the 13th c this early design was overpainted by a similar one using a double red line to outline the blocks, in the centre of each being a 6 petal flower. At least 3 layers of the double line pattern were painted before the walls were covered with limewash and black letter script applied to selected areas of the south and west walls.

A blocked Norman door dated to c 1150 and belonging to the earliest phase of the church was found in the south wall close to the present porch door. Unfortunately only the door-arch survived but recently a portion of the loose stone infill below the arch was removed to reveal further wall paintings on the underside of the arch itself. The pattern is of large masonry blocks outlined in a single red ochre line on white plaster separated by a black line from a border of smaller blocks. These smaller blocks are alternately white with umber markings and yellow with red markings, the yellow meant to represent purbeck marble. It has not yet proved possible to remove all the infill as the wall paintings are being conserved *in situ* by Mrs Ann Ballantyne. However, it can be seen that the top of the door arch slopes downwards suggesting there may be a tympanum above an inset door frame. The church is currently being rebuilt and it is intended to conserve and display the paintings in their proper context.

SCOTT McCracken

## THE GODMAN COLLECTION

THE BRITISH MUSEUM has acquired the Godman Collection of Islamic pottery from the estate of the late Miss Edith Godman O.B.E., who wished that the Collection should pass to the Museum. It has been accepted by the Revenue in lieu of Capital Transfer Tax, and has been allocated to the British Museum. Plans are being made for the exhibition of the whole Collection, and its publication. Meanwhile, an extensive selection of the pottery is on temporary display in Oriental Gallery III (near the North Entrance).

The Godman Collection, the most important private collection of Islamic pottery in the world, unites to a remarkable degree great historical importance and superlative works of art. More than 600 pieces in all, it is a typical great 19th century collection and demonstrates the vast opportunities then open to a connoisseur of taste, means and imagination. Frederick du Cane Godman was clearly one such. His enthusiasm most shows itself as all-embracing in the lustre-painted wares, which comprise

both late mediaeval Kashan pottery and tiles and the brilliantly painted and glazed lustre pottery of the late 17th century which first appeared on the Persian market in the 1860s. Much of this he acquired from Monsieur Richard, a fashionable doctor at the Persian Court, who lived in Teheran for many years and whose collection was dispersed in the 1880s. At the same time he also directed his attention to lustre-painted Hispano-Moresque wares, of which he speedily built up an unrivalled collection of armorial dishes and other pieces of world importance. But famous to scholars and possibly even more beautiful is his collection of Iznik pottery, ranging more or less from its beginnings (circa 1500) up to its decline in the mid 17th century. This includes two dated blue and white pieces (1510 and 1529), of prime historical importance, and a complete range of its finest examples many of which are masterpieces of Islamic decorative art and invention, with several showing how the Iznik potters made sets of similar or complementary design. No other large collection of Iznik pottery in the world has ever demonstrated to the same degree the achievements of Ottoman large-scale production for the luxury market.

## NEW BOOK SERVICE FOR ARCHAEOLOGISTS

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## THE SOUTH SEA COMPANY PLATE

A SILVER-GILT covered cup and salver on detachable foot, both engraved with the coat of arms of the South Sea Company, and made in London by Thomas Farren in 1715, have recently been acquired by the Museum of London with the help of outside sponsors. These two pieces of South Sea Company plate, the only two known to date, as well as being fine examples of their period, are valuable symbols of an important topic in English history. The Museum was supported in the purchase of the South Sea Company plate by the National Heritage Memorial Fund, the National Art-Collections Fund, the Goldsmiths' Company and The Pilgrim Trust.

The cup and cover can be seen in the Museum of London's Late Stuart Gallery.