

several decorative copper-alloy mounts (probably originally attached to leather belts or garments) and a copper ligula or scoop used to extract cosmetics from long-necked bottles. Many men's, women's and children's leather shoes have been recovered, including hob-nailed shoes, sandals and soft one-piece moccasins.

Commercial activities in Roman London are suggested by the presence of iron and copper styli or writing implements, as well as by an enamelled leaf-shaped seal box of copper alloy, which would originally have contained a blob of wax that held together the bindings of a writing tablet or package. Over 40 copper-alloy coins were also found; they will eventually prove a valuable aid to dating the sequence of activity on the site.

The most striking evidence for industrial activity comes from the organic dumps in the Walbrook. A vast quantity of leather waste, principally from shoemaking, has been collected. This is the largest single dump of such material ever retrieved from Roman levels in the City. Quantification and study of this waste should shed light on the range of footwear styles being produced at this time, techniques of

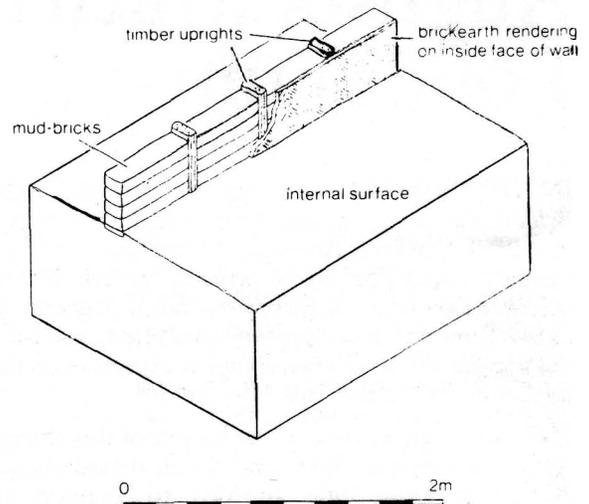


Fig. 5: cross-section through mud-brick/timber wall to show technique of construction.

manufacture and species from the identification of skins. It is likely that this discarded leather originated in a nearby workshop.

Letters

Rescue archaeology needed above ground

HOW MUCH longer will it be before there is proper legislation to prevent listed buildings from being altered, repaired and even demolished without adequate archaeological investigation? A recent letter (see *LA* 6, no. 2, 40) referred to alteration to a 19th century stable block, which incorporated building material from what was probably the earlier timber-framed Harmondsworth Manor House, which went unrecorded.

Two more examples occurred this summer at Ruislip. Both are Grade II timber-framed buildings. New owners started gutting the Old Priory Restaurant without even submitting a planning application. As is part of a range of jettied houses backing onto the churchyard and occupies a central position in the old village, the elucidation of its building history is important to our understanding of the development of the High Street. Across the High Street and quite unconnected, the Swan Inn's ground floor was stripped out; again without planning permission. The local Conservation Group alerted English Heritage who inspected the damage and made a few stipulations about some early walling, but no penalty was imposed and no notes or drawings were made.

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Archaeological bibliographies

In their interesting review of Andrew Fleming's *The Dartmoor Reaves* (*LA* 6 no. 3 pp 82-3), Lesley and Roy Adkins draw attention to the fact that these field boundaries were first demonstrated and published as prehistoric by local workers, but that the publication

was ignored by other archaeologists until the Sheffield academics rediscovered the reaves. One moral the Adkins draw from this event is that it 'highlights the urgency for a well-funded, comprehensive bibliographical service, and the necessity for archaeologists to use it'.

We at the Council for British Archaeology heartily echo the last part of that quotation, but we have to take some exception to the first part. The CBA has provided a comprehensive, though admittedly not 'well-funded', bibliographical service effectively since 1940, firstly with the *Archaeological Bulletin* (later changed to *Archaeological Bibliography*) and then with the *British Archaeological Abstracts*. The Gawne and Somers Cocks publication of the Dartmoor reaves was noted in our 1969 volume as abstract no. 69/447. At that time we had about the largest number of Abstracts subscribers ever, so that conclusion must be that it people were buying Abstracts they were not actually reading them.

That impression was borne out in a survey we conducted in 1986 (brilliantly analysed for us by Dr P W Dixon) which confirmed that 65% of respondents preferred, when looking for information, to ask colleagues or look in the bibliography of a related book or paper. Only 12% conducted a systematic examination of abstracts or serial bibliographies. I fear that the results of this messy way of doing 'literature search' are now to be seen in numbers of inadequate and ill-informed articles that are reaching print.

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