

Standing Conference on London Archaeology

WHEN IN April 1992 the responsibility for providing archaeological planning advice to London Boroughs was transferred from the London Archaeological Service to the new Planning Advisory Section of English Heritage, concern was expressed that the new arrangements might fall short of those previously provided. To meet these concerns a new forum has been set up under the title Standing Conference on London Archaeology, sponsored by the Society of Antiquaries, the Council for British Archaeology, the London & Middlesex Archaeological Society and the Surrey Archaeological Society.

SCOLA's aims are to: (i) advance the study and practice of the archaeology of London and its region, (ii) provide a forum where matters of concern to London archaeology can be discussed and (iii) promote the conservation of archaeological remains in London and its region. One of its first projects is to prepare a research report on London archaeology which will summarise current knowledge and assess the value of existing research agendas for London. The report will point the way to a more comprehensive research framework, which can provide a standard against which the practice and resourcing of future work — conservation, investigation, education and publication — can be measured.

SCOLA will be composed of the Standing Conference, which will meet at regular intervals, and an Executive Committee to administer the Conference. SCOLA will work very closely with the existing local archaeological liaison groups in London. It is hoped that the local groups will form the base of an integrated approach to the continuous review of London's archaeology. Membership will be open to any organisation concerned with the archaeology of London and its surrounding region. SCOLA is actively seeking funds and any donation will be gratefully received. For further information please contact the Secretary at: Flat B, 231 Sandycroft Road, Kew, Richmond, Surrey TW9 2EW.

Making tracks in Bermondsey

A THREE-WEEK evaluation of a small part of a very large housing development at Bramcote Grove, SE 16, carried out by the Museum of London in March, revealed deep prehistoric peat deposits, probably of Bronze Age date. Within the peats was discovered part of a timber trackway, aligned north-south and made of logs pegged down with pointed stakes. It is hoped that further work will be possible.

Re-opening at Hampton Court Palace

THE KING'S Apartments at Hampton Court Palace were re-opened by Her Majesty the Queen on 8 July, marking the completion of a six-year restoration project which followed a serious fire at Easter 1986. At a cost of £10m, the Apartments have been restored to their original state, and the interiors refurbished exactly as they were in 1700. It had originally been decided to rebuild on a like-for-like basis, but on the basis of new information that came from the reconstruction itself, it was decided to undertake a more historically accurate restoration.

The Textile Conservation Studios at Hampton Court Palace have spent the past five years repairing and restoring two badly damaged Throne Canopies, as well as eight major tapestries, making the King's Apartments the leading tapestry gallery and tapestry collection on show in this country. The Palace had also obtained seven late seventeenth century copies of the Acts of the Apostles cartoons by Raphael from the Ashmolean Museum (the originals are in the Victoria and Albert Museum) for the

Cartoon Gallery, so that the Gallery now looks exactly as William III perceived it.

Royal Armouries to move to Leeds

DAVID MELLOR, Secretary of State for National Heritage, has announced that the Government is committing £20m to the new Museum for the Royal Armouries, at present located in the Tower of London. The new museum will form the centrepiece of a major inner city regeneration project at Clarence Dock, Leeds, where the Leeds Development Corporation is working closely with the Royal Armouries, the City Council, British Waterways and the city's business community to ensure the success of the new museum.

The Royal Armouries began to develop a new long-term strategic plan for the museum in 1989. The key was the development of a new museum outside London to overcome the chronic shortage of space inside the Tower. A move will enable both the Armouries and the Tower to create much enhanced displays and facilities for visitors. The Royal Armouries will continue to have a strong presence in the Tower, and will concentrate on its history as a working arsenal and visitor attraction over the last 900 years. In Leeds the Royal Armouries will tell the wider stories of the international development of arms and armour in a series of displays on the subjects of ware, sport, hunting, personal protection and show.

Part-time qualification in conservation

A ONE-YEAR part-time course, leading to a Certificate in Historic Conservation, is being made available by the University of Oxford Department for Continuing Education, in conjunction with the Oxford Polytechnic School of Planning. Candidates will study one unit a term for three terms of ten weeks each and submit a dissertation. Unit one considers historic landscapes and the development of medieval architecture, unit two architecture of the 16th to 20th centuries, and unit three is concerned with the evaluation and recording of historic buildings. The teaching will be on Monday mornings. Successful completion of the course will also qualify the student for admission to the MSc/Diploma course with appropriate exemptions.

British Museum acquires Tudor silver

THE BRITISH Museum has recently made two important acquisitions of Tudor silverware. The first is the 'Armada Service', a set of twenty-six silver dishes, each with a gilded rim engraved with the arms of Christopher Harris of Radford, Devon. They bear London hall-marks for 1581, 1599, 1600 and 1601. According to a family tradition, the service was made from New World silver captured from Spanish treasure ships after the Armada and presented to Sir Christopher Harris for services rendered. It is the earliest known surviving set of English dining silver. Purchase was made possible by a grant of £900,000 from the National Heritage Memorial Fund and the tax concessions available on private sales to museums.

The second is the 'How Cup', a silver-gilt standing covered cup bearing the London hall-marks for 1514. It is a part gift from Mrs G. E. P. How, with help from the Goldsmiths' Company and the National Art Collections Fund. Both it and the Armada Service can be seen in Room 35 at the top of the Main Stairs.

Tom Hume

THOMAS HUME, who was the first director of the Museum of London from 1972 to 1977, died in June. He saw the difficult procedure of merging the former Guildhall and London Museums through to a successful opening of the new museum in 1976.