

The London Archaeological Research Facility

FOR SEVERAL issues, articles have been appearing in *London Archaeologist* that have been supported by the *London Archaeological Research Facility*, and this seems a good time to tell readers what the Facility is and what it does. It is based at UCL Institute of Archaeology, and its aim is to encourage research into the development of London by promoting closer cooperation between the principal archaeological agencies in London. Its chairman is Professor James Graham-Campbell, and the secretary is Gustav Milne, both on the staff of the Institute, while the other members of the Advisory Board are drawn from a variety of institutions including the Museum of London.

It facilitates work on museum archives and collections, and encourages student field work on sites in London, particularly building recording projects. It also encourages the publication of that research by providing editorial services and artwork as required. In addition, it promotes conferences on subjects of importance to the study of London's past. In the first two years of operation, the Research Facility has mounted projects in collaboration or cooperation with:

the Museum of London
the Museum of London Archaeology Service
Royal Commission on Historical Monuments
English Heritage
Cultural Heritage Resources
the British Archaeological Bibliography.

Building surveys

Work on St Bride's church and St Vedast church has already been published in *London Archaeologist* (Vol 7, no 6 and Vol 7, no 3 respectively). Other work includes a survey of St Thomas' church in Southwark for Cultural Heritage Resources, recording at the Guildhall and St James' Clerkenwell in cooperation with MOLAS, at Westminster Abbey in cooperation with the Department of Photogrammetry and Surveying at UCL, and at St Bartholomew the Great as part of a long-term research programme on London's medieval buildings.

DATUM: a database for University and Museum

Since 1973, many sites in the City have been excavated by Museum of London Archaeologists. Unfortunately, there is insufficient funding to support all the necessary research on this important material. The DATUM scheme helps students from University College (as well as one from Durham University) to prepare dissertations on groups of excavated material selected by the Museum as in need of study. Summaries of the reports are then prepared for publication. Six students worked on London material in 1992-3 and seven in 1993-4. Several reports have already been published in *London Archaeologist*, and it is intended to continue to publish about one per issue.

London Archaeological Abstracts

The Research Facility has started a programme of compiling an annual series of abstracts on published material from London: this is a very useful research tool for those trying to work with such data. This new initiative is being undertaken in cooperation with the *British Archaeological Bibliography*, based at UCL. The first set of abstracts compiled by T J Gostick (a UCL graduate) for the Research Facility was published in 1993.

Foreshore survey

Archaeology students from UCL have begun a surface survey of the Thames foreshore in London, an area where material

ranging from prehistoric deposits to the remains of 19th-century shipyards are being recorded. The work can only be conducted at low tides, and has already shown that the foreshore is being eroded at an alarming rate. In 1993 the Research Facility also compiled a report for the *Royal Commission on Historical Monuments (England)* on recording standards for archaeology in the inter-tidal zone.

TIDES: the Thames Inter-Disciplinary Environmental Study

This programme brings together scholars in many fields, including archaeologists, sedimentologists, geographers and hydrologists, to chart the evolution of the Thames and the Thames Valley over the last 10,000 years. The work is being promoted initially through a major conference which was held on 6 May 1994 on the theme of the Thames over the last 10,000 years. The event was jointly sponsored by UCL's *Archaeology and Ancient World Studies Committee* and the London Archaeology Research Facility. It is intended that the papers of this important multi-disciplinary gathering will be published.

For further information, contact Gustav Milne (Hon. Sec.) London Archaeological Research Facility, c/o UCL Institute of Archaeology, 31 Gordon Square, London WC1H 0PY.

New galleries at the British Museum

TWO NEW galleries at the British Museum were opened to the public on 26 July. They are: Europe, 15th to 18th centuries (room 46) and Europe, the 19th centuries (room 47). Among the highlights of the former are the Museum's collections of Venetian glass, Italian maiolica and medals, Elizabethan and Huguenot silver, and 18th-century European porcelain, including Meissen, Sevres, Capodimonte and Chelsea.

The latter includes the Museum's collection of Wedgwood ceramics and the work of the Victorian designer, Christopher Dresser, as well as the Portland Font, Sevres porcelain ice-pails, and the world's most comprehensive group of botanical jewellery. The redisplay was enabled by a gift from the Chao family of Hong Kong.

The 20th-century gallery (room 48) remains devoted to changing displays of European and American glass, ceramics and metalwork. Particular strengths of the collection include Continental Art Nouveau, German and Austrian applied arts from the Wiener Werkstatte to the Bauhaus, and Russian revolutionary porcelain.

Horniman Museum prepares for its centenary

IN PREPARATION for its centenary in 2001, the Horniman Museum is undergoing a major programme of rebuilding and refurbishment. Already, the Living Waters Aquarium brings alive the world's underwater environments and poses vital questions about their future, and the new Music Room uses the latest interactive technology to explore the Museum's collection of musical instruments. The displays which show the different ways in which people live around the world are currently being redeveloped, and finally the Natural History collections will be redisplayed by the year 2001.

Despite all this activity, the Museum remains open daily (10.30 a.m. to 5.30 p.m. on Mondays to Saturdays and 2 p.m. to 5.30 p.m. on Sundays) and admission is free. For further information contact Horniman Museum and Gardens, London Road, Forest Hill, London SE23 3PQ, tel. 081 699 1872 (recorded information on 081 699 2339).