logical horizon which overlay and truncated a pit dated to the early or middle Bronze Age. At the same time both struck and burnt flint exhibited a spatial distribution pattern which would appear to relate to one principal phase of activity. It is therefore argued that the bulk of the assemblage dates to the later prehistoric period, and that it was more or less *in situ* within a contemporary landscape.

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Letters

Medieval Building Stone in London

I WAS SAD to read such a poor article about the "six specimens of apparently identical building stone, all from the St Mary Spital site in London" (*LA* 7, no. 9, autumn 1994). It was a classic example of not seeing the wood for the trees. Digging archaeologists in London ought to be able to identify the principal types of building stone, just as they are expected to know the different types of Roman and medieval coarse and fine pottery, and to recognise floor and roofing tiles and the main classes of small finds.

Reigate stone was one of the commonest varieties of free stone to be used in London between the mid-11th and 16th centuries, and readers of the *London Archaeologist* who wish to know more about it should look at Paul Sowan's useful article on 'Firestone and hearthstone mines in the Upper Greensand of East Surrey' in the *Proceedings of the Geologists' Association* **86** (1975) 571-91, not quoted by Christina de Domingo. Paul Sowan and his colleagues in *Subterranea Britannica* have done much useful work in the last two decades, mapping the post-medieval underground quarries in the Upper Greensand between Juniper Hill (near Buckland) and just to the north of Godstone. The most important medieval quarries must have been in the parishes of Reigate, Gatton, Merstham, Bletchingley and Godstone (west of Brockham and east of Godstone, the building stone dies out), but we have yet to learn when the quarries first went underground. The building stone itself occurs only in beds no more than five feet (*c* 1.5m) thick, and it was back-breaking work to extract it and haul it on sledges up the steep slopes to bell-pits, where it was craned out. The stone itself was then carted over the top of the Downs and down the other side to a wharf at Battersea, where it was stock-piled. Afterwards it was taken to many places up and down the river Thames. It cannot have been transported down the river Mole, which is small and shallow, and follows a meandering course, frequently interrupted by water-mills.

It should also be noted that the quarries near Limpsfield, mentioned in Domesday Book, were not in Reigate stone (i.e. Upper Greensand) but in the Hythe Beds sandstone (Lower Greensand). That stone was certainly used for Anglo-Saxon gravestones (as Bernard Worssam has found), for example at Oxted.

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Boats and waterfronts

ONE OF THE features of recent work on the waterfronts in London has been the recovery of sections of what have been interpreted as reused boats. There is, however, another possible explanation for the occurrence of boat-like sections in the waterfront, namely the use of shipwrights to build the waterfront using the techniques that they use in building boats.

This thought occurred to me when I came across a record of shipwrights being used to make a prison door in the Bishop of Winchester's manor of Southwark in 1415/6 (Hampshire Record Office B1/162 f13). It is, after all, quite logical since they were skilled in making waterproof structures and they obviously had a reputation for making them strong, which must be why they were employed there. Further, they did not cost any more than an ordinary carpenter (8d per day in 1415) though their materials, shipnails, were rather more expensive than ordinary nails.

However, although the bishop spent money quite commonly on repairing his waterfront at Southwark, I have not so far found any example of his employing shipwrights to do that for him. But it must surely remain a possible explanation, though there may be good reasons in particular cases for believing that the structures are reused boats.

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