

Mosaic

London Archaeology Seminars

LAST YEAR saw a new series of London Archaeology Seminars organised by the Museum of London Archaeology Service and the Museum of London. The series sought to include key issues in the furtherance of archaeological knowledge in London, feedback on some of MoLAS's and the Museum's major projects and also to address new developments and procedures in London archaeology.

London Archaeology Seminars began in May 1994 with a stimulating discussion by Ian Hodder of Cambridge University on "objectivity in Archaeological Recording", and was followed in June by a seminar led by Martin Millett of Durham University entitled "Contextualising Roman London". In July, Roberta Gilchrist of East Anglia University and Vanessa Harding of Birkbeck University considered "Research Issues for the study of London's Monastic Houses" and, later that month, Martha Carlin of the University of Massachusetts described her research into food production in medieval London. The series was completed with Margaret Murphy and Jim Galloway speaking on their research into "Feeding the City" at the Centre for Metropolitan Research.

Drawing on some of the major research and publication projects now being undertaken by MoLAS, there were seminars on: "The Late Devensian/Early Flandrian site at Uxbridge", led by John Lewis the principal author and Alan Pipe the MoLAS palaeozoologist; "London's Prehistoric Landscape", led by Jane Sidell, the MoLAS Environmental Section manager; and on the multi-disciplinary "East London Roman Cemeteries" project, led by the principal authors, Bruno Barber and David Bowsher.

There were also timely introductions by Jon Cotton of the Museum's Early Department, to the proposed design and objectives of the Museum of London's new Prehistoric Gallery, which opened to the public in late November last year, and also to the Roman Gallery, due to open in early 1996, by Jenny Hall from the Museum's Early Department.

The series also included workshop sessions on techniques and procedures used by MoLAS, with "the Why and How of Post-excavation Assessment" led by Penny Bruce, Jane Sidell and Angela Wardle; and "the Art and Science of Spot-Dating" with Roy Stephenson and Robin Symonds.

This year the programme continued with "Ancient woodland management", by Damian Goodburn, MoLAS; "The Roman culet dump from Guildhall Yard", by John Shepherd, Museum of London; and "The Use of Geographic Information Systems in the East of the Walbrook post-excavation project" by Tim Williams, Central Archaeology Service.

Speakers will be announced for the following dates: 9 August; 6 September; 4 October; 1 November and 29 November. The seminars will be held in the Museum of London, 150 London Wall, London EC2Y 5HN, at 5.00pm.

Anyone wishing to receive information about the seminars is invited to contact Nick Merriman, Head of the Early Department at the Museum (0171 600 3699), or Taryn Nixon, Head of Operations at MoLAS (0171 972 9111).

New Exhibition at the Museum of Mankind

FOR THE Briton the notion of African weaponry is often associated with the Zulu *assegai* and battles such as Isandhlwana and Rorke's Drift. For the Frenchman, notions of *sabre*- and *allarh*-wielding Tuaregs descending on *la Legion* may more immediately spring to mind when one speaks of African arms

and armour. Certainly these conventional types of military paraphernalia are well represented at the Museum of Mankind's new exhibition *Power of the Hand: African Arms and Armour*, but these are only two minor aspects of a diverse assemblage united by the British Museum's Ethnography Department. Every region of Africa is represented: from the Savanna Empires of the 19th century, to the military traditions of Ethiopia, to the Asante of Ghana, the Zulu of southern Africa, and the nomads of the Sahara.

For the archaeologist there are few materials of direct interest, although a single case dedicated to blacksmiths and the development of metallurgy in Africa is thought-provoking for any prehistorian. As an Africanist archaeologist I drew many lessons from imagining the metal remnants of the many composite weapons and armour on display: such knowledge of traditional martial technology would no doubt be also of relevance to British prehistorians.

The exhibition is accompanied by an excellent and well-illustrated book by Christopher Spring (*African Arms and Armour* (1993) British Museum Press, £19.95) and is scheduled to run through the Autumn.

Kevin MacDonald

Rejoicing in Redbridge

THE OLDEST building in the London Borough of Redbridge celebrates its 850th anniversary this year. The Hospital Chapel of St Mary and St Thomas of Canterbury was founded by Adeliza (Adelicia), Abbess of Barking, soon after AD 1140 as a hospice for aged and infirm brethren. Although Barking Abbey was dissolved by Henry VIII in 1539 and later demolished, the Chapel survived – probably because of its function then as a chapel-of-ease and almshouse.

A few years ago a society of Friends of the Hospital Chapel was formed to help with the restoration of the Chapel. In celebration of this anniversary, the Friends are arranging events and activities during 1995 to awaken interest and participation in the life of the Chapel (see Diary).

For information, contact The Friends of the Hospital Chapel, Peel House, 8 Eastwood Road, Ilford IG3 8XB, tel. 0181 597 8036.

Joan Barker

JOAN, WHO was the Secretary for 12 years of the West Essex Archaeological Group and had for many more years undertaken a variety of voluntary work in the archaeology department of the Passmore Edwards Museum and latterly the Museum of London, passed away in February. She helped organise and took part in several excavations by the Group and made valuable contributions to the publication of its reports, as well as assisting in fieldwork run by Waltham Abbey Historical Society and the Harlow Museum. She was a keen member of the Prehistoric Society, attending many of its conferences, and regularly went to CBA Group 7 events; she was also a representative for WEAG at symposia of the Essex Archaeological & Historical Congress and at Essex History Fairs. Her cheerful and well-organised help was much appreciated by those she worked alongside, while the forthcoming volume on Medieval Household finds and particularly the one on Dress Accessories (produced at the Department of Urban Archaeology), for which she undertook much of the typing, owe a great deal to her dedication. Her company and her contributions to archaeology in the City and Greater London across all periods represented will be greatly missed.

Geoff Egan