

## *Future of London's Past* revisited

1998 WILL MARK the passage of a quarter century since the publication by Rescue of the truly seminal *The Future of London's Past* that had been written and edited by Martin Biddle with Caroline Heighway. The Standing Conference on London Archaeology is marking the occasion by holding a major conference at the Museum of London on December 6th this year. Professor Biddle will give a keynote address and there will be a sharply-focused overview of the tremendous discoveries that have been made in the City of London as a result of following the policies advocated by Biddle *et al.*

*The Future of London's Past* concentrated on the City, but the policies it advocated were gradually applied throughout Greater London with great effect, and the December conference will also look at the consequential changes in our understanding of man's past throughout the capital and its environs, from the Bronze Age tracks across the wetlands at Beckton and Rotherhithe, to the post-medieval pottery kilns along the Thames from Woolwich to Fulham. And lastly, we will look at the future. Are we at another turning point? What still needs to be done to manage and exploit both the *in situ* and the *ex situ* resource? What are the opportunities, challenges and threats of these post-PRG 16 times, with the strains of competitive tendering taking their toll, and government expenditure limits cutting deeply into the vulnerable world of archaeological scholarship? Keep the date clear in your diary.

Dennis Turner

## Adopt an Object

FOR SOME years, it has been possible for members of the public to adopt an animal at one of our zoos. This year, for the first time, you can adopt a museum object. The Cuming Museum has become the first London-based museum to launch an Adopt an Object scheme. The scheme is designed to bring the Cuming's large and growing number of visitors into even closer contact with the fascinating and varied objects that make the Collection. For anything between £5 and £50 per annum, visitors can adopt one of a range of original historic items, including Queen Victoria's satin shoes and a page from the first folio of Shakespeare's plays. The benefits of adoption include an adoption certificate, a mounted sin by 7in photograph of your adopted object, your name on a special *thank you* board in the museum, and invitations to special museum events. For more information contact Sophie Williams or Annabel King on 0171 701 1342.

## New Gallery at the British Museum

THE WESTON Gallery of Roman Britain, supported by the Garfield Weston Foundation, opens at the British Museum on 17 July. It will display many recent archaeological discoveries that have not yet been on public display. They include the well-preserved early 4th-century building facade from Meonstoke in Hampshire, and the 5th-century hoard from Hoxne, Suffolk, containing jewellery, silver plate and thousands of coins in mint condition. Masterpieces such as the Mildenhall, Thetford and Water Newton treasures will be displayed alongside evidence of everyday life, such as the Vindolanda tablets. Substantial parts of over 200 of these writing tablets dating to AD 95-115 were found at the fort of Vindolanda near Hadrian's Wall. Mainly official documents and letters written in ink upon thin sheets of wood, they are the oldest historical documents known from Britain.

Items of military equipment and commemorative inscriptions testify to the importance and prowess of the Roman army in

Britain, the legions and auxiliary units who conquered and subjugated the country. The Romanisation of art and culture is demonstrated by fine mosaics, glass, sculpture, jewellery, ceramics and coins, which from the beginning of the 4th century increasingly show the influence of Christianity, even though paganism continued to fight for existence.

The new gallery will also provide the opportunity to display the British Museum's most up-to-date research and interpretation of the Romano-British collections, together with the results of its archaeological work, which have added significantly to our knowledge and understanding of the Roman occupation of Britain.

## Project management comes of age in archaeology

THE MANAGEMENT side of archaeology is usually regarded as a poor relation to the 'real' business of excavation or interpretation. With the present need to finish projects on time and within budget, management is obviously an important skill for the site director.

It was particularly pleasing, therefore, to see that Peter Rowsome, author of recent articles on the Poultry excavation, has been nominated as Project Manager of the Year by the Association for Project Management. The award, worth £2000 to the individual winner, is sponsored this year by AEA Technology plc. The winner will be announced on 11 June; we hope to have good news in our next issue.

## Thames Survey goes public at Isleworth

THE THAMES Archaeological Survey held an Open Day for the public at Isleworth on Saturday 7 June. Archaeologists were recording ancient structures on the foreshore, including a possible fishtrap and remains of wharves and riverside defences. The site is thought to be the remains of a medieval ferry point; it could also be the site of an early Roman Thames crossing, or the site of a battle between the Saxons and the Vikings in 1016. With the very low tides that have been occurring this year, new discoveries are always a possibility. There will be another Open Day, in Southwark, in August (see *Diary*).

## British and Irish Archaeological Bibliography launch

THE NEW *British and Irish Archaeological Bibliography* was officially launched on 5 June in the rooms of Dublin Castle. The relaunch of the former *British Archaeological Bibliography* as BIAB represents the official backing of the Heritage Council of the Republic of Ireland, who have become a major part of the service's funding consortium. The *Bibliography* will henceforth comprehensively cover the archaeology of Great Britain and Eire. BIAB succeeds BAB and the *British Archaeological Abstracts*, as the latest in a long line of high quality bibliographical abstracts services for archaeology. All this bibliographic data, from BIAB back to records from 17th-century sources, has now been computerised and will be available in electronic form at the end of 1997. For information contact Isabel Holroyd or Jeremy Oetgen at UCL Institute of Archaeology, 31-34 Gordon Square, London WC1H 0PY, tel. 0171 380 7352, email i.holroyd@ucl.ac.uk or joetgen@ucl.ac.uk, or subscriptions are available from CBA, Bowes Morrell House, 111 Walmgate, York YO1 2UA.

## Tony Clark

WE ANNOUNCE with regret the death in June of Tony Clark, a pioneer in the use of geophysical survey in archaeology, and author of *Seeing beneath the soil*, as well as a leading Surrey archaeologist. He had been instrumental in setting up the Clark Laboratory at the Museum of London Archaeology Service