

# Books

**The Wandle Guide**, by The Wandle Group, ed. Doug Cluett and John Phillips. *Sutton Leisure Services*, 1997. 78 pp., 36 figs., bib. £4.95.

IF THE RIVER Thames has been described as one of London's least-valued and least-used assets, how much more true is that description of the lesser rivers that flow into it in the London area? Some, such as the Fleet and the Effra, have been covered over and have disappeared; some, like the Wandle, have been a focus for industrial uses (now mostly derelict) which do not encourage public access or use. All this has been changing for some time, in the case of the Wandle since the 1970s when *The River Wandle: a Guide and Handbook* was published to draw attention to the historical and scenic attractions of this short river (9 miles long, from Croydon to Wandsworth), and to encourage people to use it.

This new and completely revised version is in two parts: the first is a walkers' guide to the Wandle Trail, which since its inception has become part of an ever-growing network of walking routes in London and its surrounding countryside. This part follows the now traditional 'guided walk' format, with instructions detailed enough to prevent anyone from getting lost, short notes on points of interest as they are passed, and plenty of information on transport, refreshments and toilet stops. Diversions to places of interest nearby are also described. This section is well illustrated by photographs, both current and historic.

The second part consists of notes on The Geology of the River, Archaeology, Ecclesiastical establishments, Historic Houses, Industrial History, and Natural History, which give 'the big picture' into which local points of interest fit. There is some duplication between entries here and in the 'guide' part. The last section reminds us that one of the main current interests in the river is its value as a wildlife habitat and 'corridor' through its urban setting. The book finishes with a short and selective bibliography.

One can find a few faults with this book: there is a distinct lack of maps (perhaps due to the mercenary attitude of the Ordnance Survey?), which would have enabled the reader to find specific locations more easily, and would have given the reader more confidence. Firmer editing might have reduced the overlap between accounts of the same building in the two parts, perhaps allowing space for a little more detail. Finally, although 'Harvard' referencing would be out of place in such a book, some way of linking individual buildings or locations to the bibliography would have been valuable. Nevertheless, this is a very useful book, for residents wishing to explore their locality, ramblers looking for an unusual walk, and those interested in traces of London's industrial history. Perhaps we can see another edition when the Croydon Tramway and its associated works are complete?

Clive Orton

**Medieval Bridges**, by M. Cook. *Shire Archaeology*, 1998. 64 pp., 37 illus., bib., index. £4.99.

THIS BOOKLET is one of the usually admirable *Shire Archaeology* series, and concerns itself with medieval bridges, considering construction techniques, as well as aspects of the cultural, religious and historical background. However, it is primarily concerned with surviving medieval masonry structures. Consequently there is no mention of timber bridges, such as those

excavated at Beverley, Hemmington or London, while Stuart Rigold's pioneering corpus of timber moat bridges is not worthy of mention in the bibliography. The contribution of archaeological research and excavation on the subject of masonry bridges is also understated, with no mention of the work at Norwich Castle, Oxford, or Kingston, to name but a few of the masonry bridges excavated by archaeologists which failed to attract the eye of the author. This is therefore a useful introduction to the study of surviving medieval masonry bridges, but it is not a summary of the full range of archaeological research on medieval bridges; such a volume has yet to be written, although Bruce Watson has probably made a start on that one.

Gustav Milne

**Documenting the Cultural Heritage**, edited by Robin Thornes and John Bold. *The Council of Europe, The Getty Information Institute and the European Foundation for Heritage Skills*, 1998. 57 pp., 8 illus., bib. Free from The Getty Information Institute.

THIS PUBLICATION presents a series of three internationally agreed standards for the documentation of cultural heritage. The first is the *Core Data Index to Historic Buildings and Monuments of the Architectural Heritage*. The example used in this book is of Greenwich, which includes The Royal Naval College, The Queen's House, The Royal Observatory and the park at Greenwich. This site also includes evidence of settlement from the Roman period and a group of Anglo-Saxon burial mounds. To illustrate the use of the Core Data standards, the sample records have used the Queen's House. This sample record documents three different uses; that of a domestic house, a school and an educational museum. It also documents the three principal construction phases. The records are designed to be entered on a computer database and for the information to be internationally accessible.

Likewise, with the second internationally agreed standard, that of the *International Core Data Standard for Archaeological Sites and Monuments*, for which the example used is of Greenwich Park, once a royal park associated with the Tudor palace of Placentia. The third standard is a Core Data standard for identifying cultural objects, otherwise known as Object ID. The samples used in this book are of a painting of Queen Anne of Denmark from the National Maritime Museum and a wooden travelling trunk dated 1660 and John Harrison's H4 maritime timekeeper about which many of us will have read in Dava Sobel's *Longitude*.

The databases are expected to be modified to reflect the requirements of the organisations, as all organisations record archaeological and other information for different purposes and in varying degrees of detail. This enables the organisation to record at a level appropriate to their aims and resources.

The databases are expected to be used with European artefacts, and alteration of the cultural expectations of objects would be required for cult objects from more remote parts of the world. I expect that all collection managers and museum management would benefit from using the layouts suggested for recording the materials in their collections and museums. Documentation is essential for the purposes of identification and protection of archaeological sites, cultural objects and historic buildings, and this book gives internationally recognised criteria to do so.

Stuart Laidlaw