

Mosaic

More Lottery Projects

FUNDED BY £240,000 from the Heritage Lottery Fund, the Bishopsgate Institute, EC2, has just completed a programme of conservation of selected rare books, journals, manuscripts and drawings. The collection contains a rich and varied historical archive, relating particularly to London, and the library is a major academic resource for research into 19th- and early 20th-century radicalism and the co-operative movement. Contact: Alice McKay, tel. 0171 247 6844.

Other projects completed recently outside our area, but nearby, include the refurbishment of Verulamium Museum (£851,200, re-opened March 1999, contact Alison Coles, tel. 01727 866 100), the new Surrey History Centre, Woking (£2.7m, opened March 1999, contact Dr. David Robinson, tel. 0181 541 9051), and the restoration of the original buildings in the Brooklands Museum, Weybridge (£804,000, re-opened June 1999, contact Morag Barton, tel. 01932 859 000).

Grants recently announced show a new emphasis on public parks, with (in our area) £2.5m awarded to Southwark Park, the first urban park created by the Metropolitan Board of Works in 1869, and nearly as much to Pymmes Park, Edmonton. A smaller grant will enable the establishment of a museum at the Foundling Hospital, 40 Brunswick Square.

Roman potters in Moorgate

SEVERAL ROMAN pottery kilns have been discovered in an excavation, funded by MEPC UK, at Northgate House in Moorgate. The site lies in the valley of the Walbrook, which in the Roman period would have been prone to flooding, and was used for industrial activities.

The kilns, which probably date to the early 2nd century, are by far the best preserved to have been discovered in London. Two of them are circular, over 4 ft in diameter, and the floors are pierced with holes which would allow hot air to rise from beneath. In addition to the kilns, pits almost entirely filled with wasters were excavated, together with other structures that would have been used in the production of pottery. The forms produced include lamps, small amphoras, lids, bowls and dishes; many were produced in a special clay, making the objects sparkle. (Information from *Archaeology Matters*, no. 5, June 1999).

New Egyptian Galleries at the British Museum

THE NEW Roxie Walker Galleries of Egyptian Funerary Archaeology were opened to the public on 14 May. Through the

sponsorship of the Bioanthropology Foundation Ltd., they display the British Museum's collection of mummies, coffins, funerary statuettes, amulets and Books of the Dead, in a totally new installation. The displays in the new galleries aim to trace the evolution of the Egyptians' attitudes to life and death, and their expression in the preparations they made for burial. Among the most visually impressive exhibits are the virtually complete burial group of the physician Gaa of the Twelfth Dynasty (c. 1850 BC), and the lady Henutmehyt of the Ramesside period (c. 1250 BC), both of which are shown in context for the first time.

The recent development of sophisticated imaging techniques and analytical studies has greatly increased the significance of Egyptian mummies as a potential source of data on the physique, life expectancy, diet, health and illnesses of the ancient population. With the collaboration of several London hospitals, the Museum has been able to have mummies imaged using a CAT-scanner (Computer Aided Tomography), a technique that has yielded hundreds of images of 'slices' through the body, holding the potential for the creation of 3D reconstructions of what lies within the wrappings. This new information is integrated throughout the new displays.

Blue Plaque for Carter

BLUE PLAQUES marking the former residences of famous historical figures are common in London, but archaeologists are rarely featured. A recent addition is a plaque in memory of Howard Carter, the discoverer of Tutankhamun's tomb, at 19 Collingham Gardens, London SW5. He lived there in the summer months while he was working on his report on the tomb, from 1923 to 1933. Only two other archaeologists have been honoured in this way: Sir William Flinders Petrie (5 Cannon Place, NW3) and General Augustus Pitt-Rivers (4 Grosvenor Gardens, SW1).

Exhibition on the Internet

STUDENTS OF ancient coins may find interest in a new 'cyber exhibition', *The Presveis Project: a currency for Europe* (www.culture.gr/nm/Presveis) (Presveis is Greek for 'ambassador'). Although its aims seem rather political (to demonstrate previous occasions of shared currencies and monetary agreements in Europe), it does contain displays of early Greek coinage, the coinages of Philip II and Alexander the Great, and the coinages of the Roman and Byzantine Empires. It is based on the coin collections of the Athens Numismatic Museum and the British Museum.

Letter

An archaeologist in the 1920s

WHILE LOOKING through some old family correspondence I came across a couple of brief references to an archaeologist's visit to my great grandparents' Hanwell home in June 1927.

I thought fellow readers might be amused to read the rather different accounts of the visit. I also wondered if anyone could pinpoint the archaeologist involved, and say whether the site mentioned was of any significance.

The first extract is from a letter my great grandfather Henry Woollen wrote to his son Wilfred:

"An archaeologist from Acton came to me and showed me some interesting things said to have been discovered in his son's

garden at Studland Road, Elthorne Heights. I think they may be British. He is coming again with some more specimens. In the interim he has been staying at Southampton. He appears to be an enthusiast."

Wilfred received an alternative version from his mother Sarah Woollen:

"Father has met with another funny friend. He paid us a visit on Sunday and I thought he would never go. He stayed nearly six hours. His wife and son called for him with the car, then they had to go without him. He at last went home by train to Acton. He is an Archaeologist. I hope he won't come again."

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