

# Books

**Wonderful Things. Uncovering the World's Great Archaeological Treasures.** Paul G. Bahn (ed) *Weidenfeld and Nicholson* £25.

AT FIRST glance this glossy publication appears to be yet another in a long line of vaguely thematic coffee table books of main interest to the Christmas gift market. However, this book may offer a little more than the loose collection of pretty pictures expected from such publications.

The abundant photography is very good and dominates the book, but the text is perhaps more informative and challenging than may normally be expected from a publication aimed at the general reader. This is no doubt due in part to the academic backgrounds of the contributors and the editor, who has previously collaborated with Colin Renfrew among others.

The foreword indicates that this book is actually one in a series, another volume of which will apparently deal with items from shipwrecks. This volume is concerned with moveable, although not necessarily portable, objects. According to the editor the selection of items is intended to reflect an archaeologist's, as opposed to a treasure hunter's, idea of 'treasure'. In other words, items that shed light on cultures and their development are included alongside hoards of gold and silver. Each continent is represented although Australasia in particular has only a very short section.

This unusual view of 'treasure' (in the publishing world at least) means that, in the European section

*(continued from p. 115)*

for centuries, there is little evidence for occupation at Cudham Road after the end of the 2nd century AD. It is possible of course that the focus of activity shifted at that time.

The villa has been described as 'a building with an agricultural basis, displaying some degree of romanisation in its structure and plan and belonging to the social and economic system of the province; moreover it should be in the countryside'<sup>13</sup>. Although the excavation revealed no masonry structures *in situ* there is evidence to indicate that such buildings existed nearby. By comparison with known villa sites in west Kent it can be argued that the Cudham Road site was a suitable location for that type of establishment, and on the available evidence the dating of the site compares well with the dates of construction of two nearby

for example, there are entries for hoards of gold and silver from Britain and central/eastern Europe, along with Irish bronze hoards, the Vindolanda writing tablets, the Portland Vase, and the stone bust of the Lady of Elche from Valencia. The somewhat dubious inclusion of Romano-British mosaics rather than superior continental examples, is probably due to the understandable desire of the publishers to maximise sales. It is often the visually least impressive items that hold the most interest for the more knowledgeable reader: the wooden artefacts from the Florida wetlands and New Zealand, or the clay funeral masks from Siberia.

The text, which accompanies the photographs, although very short, helps to convey some of the background to the objects themselves as well as the cultures, which created them. The emphasis is on the value of the cultural or environmental information objects can provide, rather than their monetary or aesthetic value. There is some discussion of the reasons for preservation and/or survival of objects and cultures. Likewise an effort is made to explain the effects of grave robbing, plundering, and treasure hunting both historically and in the present; as well as modern-day burglaries of collections from museums.

This is a coffee table book of wide range, which may help its appeal to the general reader with a slight interest in archaeology but may limit its appeal to those with an interest in a particular period or geographical area. The photographs are undoubtedly the focus of the book but the text holds its own and helps

villas. It seems likely therefore that a Roman villa remains to be discovered in the countryside south east of the village of Downe.

## Acknowledgements

MoLAS would like to thank Thames Water Utilities Ltd, who commissioned and funded the project. Mohinder Kalsi, Juliet Roper and Mike Lang Hall of Thames Water Utilities, and Trevor Puttock of Tilbury Douglas Construction Ltd provided much help on site. I am grateful to the following specialists for their contributions: Louise Rayner (pottery), Jackie Keily (small finds), Lisa Gray-Rees (plant remains), Lynne Keys (slag), Richenda Goffin (quernstones) and Terence Smith (building materials). The illustrations are by Pam Williams and Jeannette McLeish, and the photographs are by Kieron Heard.

13. J Wachter *Roman Britain* (1978) 111.

to provide something to think about after the glossy images have faded.

Alison Nailer

**The Building of London from the Conquest to the Great Fire**, by John Schofield. *Sutton Publishing Ltd.* 3rd revised edition, 1999. 192 pp., 147 illus., £14.95.

THE LONG-TERM value of Dr. Schofield's volume *The Building of London* is clearly borne out by the publication of this revised third edition by Sutton Publishing. The text has been revised to incorporate new discoveries up to 1989 and the bibliography is expanded up to the present. Part of the lasting appeal of this book is its consideration not only of individual structures but also of townscape against the wider backdrop of the development of Roman to post-medieval London.

As the author notes in his preface to this edition, the book is sprung from his PhD research, now fully published in *London Medieval Houses* (Yale 1995). The widening of chronological perspective here, coupled with the author's unparalleled knowledge of London's medieval buildings combines to provide the standard introduction to the structural history of the capital.

The length of individual chapters, arranged in chronological order, varies according to the survival or recognition of the evidence. Chapter 1 relies heavily on the results of archaeological excavations undertaken by DUA/MoLAS, and provides a starting point for an assessment of building styles and techniques, but also of the range of building materials, particularly stone, employed in the city. The following chapters deal with the development of the city to the Great Fire. The chapters dealing with the medieval history of buildings are full of detail and draw heavily upon the documentary and cartographic sources that are increasingly rich toward the latter end of the book's period of interest.

Unlike so many other books of its type, the author makes it possible for the reader to engage directly with the built heritage of the capital via a comprehensive gazetteer with accompanying map of the principal surviving sites mentioned in the text.

The book is copiously illustrated and provides access to a range of antiquarian prints and drawings of early London in an accessible way. In summary, an essential source for those working on, or studying, the development of the capital from the 1st century to the present.

Andrew Reynolds

**Pilgrim Souvenirs and Secular Badges**, by Brian Spencer. *HMSO*, 1998. 349 pp., many illus., bib. £50.

ONE OF THE great success stories of recent medieval archaeological research in London is the now

legendary *Medieval Finds from Excavations* series, the six previous volumes of which have found their way into the library of any organisation or individual with a serious interest in the subject, and not just in the UK. These catalogues have described closely-dated artefacts of ten recovered from the Museum of London's well-stratified waterlogged deposits encountered in the long-running programme of waterfront excavations on the northern side of the river wall, or from the work of the Society of Thames Mudlarks working on the foreshore to the south. The volumes dealt thematically with a range of finds, and always combined clear illustration with authoritative scholarship. But to say that the final volume in the series, Brian Spencer's *Pilgrim Souvenirs and Secular Badges* also combines clear illustration with authoritative scholarship undersells it. It is a catalogue of some 332 lost or discarded fragments of pewter, upon which Brian Spencer has focused a life-time's perceptive scrutiny to produce a remarkable study of medieval pilgrimage, travel, technology and philosophy. The pilgrim souvenirs are delightful examples of popular culture and provide real insight into the otherwise poorly-represented world of vernacular religion before the Reformation. The badges and ampullae had been mass-produced at over 100 shrines in Britain and continental Europe to which medieval Londoners had journeyed in an age when serious walking, horse riding and dangerous sea crossings were the order of the day. However, for the medieval Londoner, the Canterbury pilgrimage and St Thomas Becket was by far the most popular choice (33%), far outstripping the royal shrine of Edward the Confessor at neighbouring Westminster (a mere six examples).

Nobody but Brian Spencer could have written this volume, and it is just as well this is the last report in the series; it is a very, very hard act to follow.

Gustav Milne

**The Practical Archaeologist: how we know what we know about the past**, by Jane McIntosh. *Thames and Hudson*, 1999. 186 pp., many illus., bib., index. £12.95.

IN *THE Practical Archaeologist*, Jane McIntosh has produced an invaluable and engaging reference guide. She starts by providing an historical overview of the evolution of practical archaeology, tracing its very beginnings right through to its development as a modern academic discipline. The succinct chapters that follow give the reader an insight into the context in which approaches to archaeological method have been shaped, whilst instilling an appreciation of archaeology's many facets. The book concludes with chapters on the systematic analysis of the archaeologist's techniques from pre-excitation to post-excitation and conservation.

The book is beautifully illustrated with an attractive and easy to follow format, which will be familiar to

those who have read Renfrew and Bahn's *Archaeology: Theories, Methods and Practice*. Unlike some other introductory books to archaeology, *The Practical Archaeologist* is particularly good at explaining clearly and concisely the scientific principles of absolute dating, thermoluminescence and radiocarbon dating.

It is hard to find fault with this book; it is a great appetiser for the budding archaeologist. In short, it provides a comprehensive overview of archaeological principles and methods, suitable for A level students, first year undergraduates, or indeed anyone wanting an introduction to the principles of archaeology.

David Green

**Archaeology in the City of London 1907 91: a guide to records of excavations by the Museum of London**, (ed) John Schofield with Cath Moloney. Archaeological Gazetteer Series vol. 1. *Museum of London*, 1998. 340 pp., 54 figs., bib., index. £21.

**Archaeology in Greater London 1965 90: a guide to records of excavations by the Museum of London**, (ed) Alan Thompson, Andrew Westman and Tony Dyson. Archaeological Gazetteer Series vol. 2. *Museum of London*, 1998. 287 pp., many figs., bib., index. £21.

**Post-war Archaeology in the City of London 1946 72: a guide to records of excavations by W F Grimes held by the Museum of London** (ed) John Shepherd. Archaeological Gazetteer Series vol. 3. *Museum of London*, 1998. 92 pp., 52 figs., bib., index. £8.

THE PUBLICATION of comprehensive records of archaeological investigations in London throughout the 20th century is a very welcome sight. Now that has been produced, it would be easy to overlook the considerable work involved in translating data from so many archaeological events into three lucid and intelligible volumes. The difficulties of making disparate and sporadically concurrent data sources articulate and accessible are immense and the results here are admirable. Published to facilitate access to the Museum of London Archive these three volumes also form part of a long-term national aim to eradicate the publication backlog in archaeology. First, a quick overview of their respective contents.

Volume 1 -- *Archaeology in the City of London 1907 91: a guide to records of excavations by the Museum of London* (edited by John Schofield with Cath Moloney) -- is concerned with sites of 1907 to 1973 excavated or observed by staff of the former Guildhall Museum which became part of the Museum of London in 1975. Also, sites of 1973 to 1991 excavated or observed by the Department of Urban Archaeology (DUA) from 1975, noting that the DUA in turn became part of the new

Museum of London Archaeology Service (MOLAS) in 1991. Post-1991 work is not covered. Describing itself at one point as 'large, complicated and comparatively well-ordered' (p. 15) -- which seems fair -- the sheer volume of work in the City when presented in one volume is quite something to see.

The second (volume 2) -- *Archaeology in Greater London 1965 90: a guide to records of excavations by the Museum of London* (edited by Alan Thompson, Andrew Westman and Tony Dyson) -- is a guide to most of the records of archaeological investigations conducted by the Museum of London's former Department of Greater London Archaeology (DGLA) and by some of its contemporary and predecessor organisations between 1965 and 1990 (and mainly from 1972 to 1990). The work of the Passmore Edwards Museum (later Newham Museum Service) in five north-east London boroughs along with the work of the Kent Archaeological Research Unit in four south-east London boroughs is not included, which, though a bit frustrating in terms of the broader picture, is fair enough, but it would be useful, perhaps, to see those areas recorded in companion volumes.

Finally, volume 3 -- *Post-war Archaeology in the City of London 1946 72: a guide to records of excavations by W F Grimes held by the Museum of London* (edited by John Shepherd) -- concerning the post-WWII work of William Grimes and the Roman and Medieval London Excavation Council (RMLEC) in the City is also the fifth volume to be published on the Grimes archive. Two of the four -- St Brides church, Fleet Street (Milne 1997) and The Temple of Mithras, Walbrook (Shepherd 1998) -- have been published, the other two concerning Roman and post-Roman Cripplegate are here said to be in preparation.

Overall, the three volumes form a sort of interim statement for London archaeology. I found the introductory sections as interesting, in their way, as the site gazetteers. Forming a sort of historiography for 20th-century archaeology in the capital, it was fascinating to read about the development of response, research and recording strategies. The excitement of Grimes work is beautifully relayed. The 1954 photograph of the head of Mithras (on p. 20 of volume 3) seems doubly poignant -- both for the archaeology and the archaeologists. On a London-wide scale, practical considerations -- predominantly rates of destruction and development in the City giving access and opportunity, along with a pronounced period focus on Roman and medieval archaeology -- have led to a sizeable imbalance in geographical and chronological archaeological coverage. It's always the case, and comprehensive details of work undertaken such as these volumes are invaluable in that they clarify precisely what information we have and what information we lack, as a profession and an academic discipline.

# Letter

I READ WITH great interest the Autumn issue, in which there were three articles about which I would like to comment.

First, the article on the excavations in London Bridge Street, Southwark. The small tenements which were said to occupy the site of the excavations in the mid 14th century and which were acquired by the Hospital in 1507 actually lay along Borough High Street and were in the parish of St. Mary Magdalen, whereas the area of the excavation lay within the parish of St. Thomas' Hospital. It is difficult to know the precise layout of the hospital in the middle ages, but it seems most likely that the areas excavated lay within the hospital buildings, and that the grave slabs were therefore reused within the hospital rather than in an adjacent secular tenement (though whether that would have been any consolation to the deceased is another matter).

Is not the [KATOR] more likely to refer to the age of the deceased at death or the date of death, than to an offer of indulgence (could a layman offer such?). The chroniclers seem to have greatly exaggerated the effects of the 1212 fire: excavation has shown that the Chapter House survived as a substantially late 12th-century building till the end of the middle ages, and the 12th-century elements of the north transept chapels and the doors to the cloister walks are still extant, the latter implying that the north wall also survived. That the east end was rebuilt shortly after the fire, which also affected London Bridge, suggests that the fire was mainly to the east of the Priory which is probably where the hospital lay.

Second, on Chris Phillpotts' analysis of medieval town houses. Although there obviously was a move of ecclesiastical town houses to the Strand area in the 13th century, this was also the period when most of the ecclesiastical town houses were built in Southwark; Christ Church Canterbury's in the first decade of the 13th century, which is probably also the date for Battle Inn rather than the late 12th century; St. Augustine's in 1215; Beaulieu c1275; Lewes 1277 (the stone building may be earlier but it did not belong to Lewes then, see *SyAS Bulletin* 330, June 1999); St. Swithins, Winchester 1299; Hyde Abbey 1305 and Waverley 1309 (though it did have some land by the second quarter of the 13th century). In fact outside this period of c 1200-1310, the only houses founded were in the 12th century with Winchester Palace and Merton Priory's house (which they had sold off by the middle of the century) and a house of Totnes Priory to which there is one reference in 1432. The secular house, however, shows a very different pattern.

Although it appears obvious that access to the riverside would be valued for these town houses, there is evidence that no high premium was placed on it. For example, Battle had sold off the riverside access to their inn by 1314, and though they retained an easement over it, this does not suggest that they felt it was very important. Apart from St. Augustine's and Winchester Palace, none of the others had direct access to the river. Perhaps they were content to use the public landing places, and this might apply to Fastolf too, for despite the discovery of a possible dock associated with his house, in 1447 he imported material *via* the

public landing place at *Le Watergate* near London Bridge, from which they were taken to his house by road, and we only know this because he hired horses and carts from the Bridge House for it so appears in their accounts.

I have reservations too about the statement that the layout of the buildings at Kennington does not suggest ceremonial sequences of rooms. Though it did serve as a retreat from Westminster under Richard II, this was because, as King/Duke, Richard had other palaces to serve for ceremonial purposes. When the Duke of Cornwall was not also King, Kennington did have this ceremonial purpose, and this is especially pronounced in the late 1330s when, for a short time, it became the centre of royal government in the absence of Edward III in France, and Parliament even met there (Dawson *The Black Prince's Palace at Kennington, Surrey* (1976) p. 172 and 174).

Since there was a lack of extant door positions, it is difficult to be sure how access to the Duke or King was arranged, but entering from Kennington Lane one presumably had to go (see *ibid* fig 7) through the outer court with its stables and kitchen block and then through the Great Garden into the Hall, from which the favoured would be allowed access to the Great Chamber block and ultimately to the privy chamber or the privy garden, which does not seem so different to Winchester Palace. That the buildings are not joined up does not rule this out, since early royal palaces such as Clarendon are similar in that respect and must have had these layers of access.

I feel that it is important to study access in these buildings as Chris has, since they are social artefacts not just pieces of architecture.

Finally, in John Clarke's interesting article on Alfred he argues that the fact that the Danes could move unimpeded upstream in 893 suggests that London Bridge had not then been built (I am not sure that this advance was by river, and one version specifically mentions marching). This is a strong argument, especially if you accept that the bridge was built to prevent such incursions. But the events of 1052 would suggest that it is not conclusive. In that year Godwine returned from exile in Flanders and his fleet anchored at Southwark below the bridge until the tide came in, when they proceeded through the bridge. Though this never developed into open warfare, and Godwine's men probably controlled the south bank and he had some support in the City, it was not an unopposed move since the royal fleet was stationed just above the bridge, and the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* says the King also had great land levies besides his shipmen. Martha Carlin has indeed suggested that the bridge actually predates Alfred (*Medieval Southwark*, p. 9-12); as she points out it is odd, if Alfred built it, that such a major achievement is not mentioned by Asser though the same point could be made about its absence from the *Chronicle* whenever it was built unless it was part of the events of 886.

Graham Dawson  
40 Station Road  
Orpington, Kent BR6 0SA

This being a review I would like to have at least one qualm. But, bar more useful introductory notes to the subject indexes, I have none. Will the volumes be available as Internet publications? There's a value-added aspect to the introductory sections that it

would be nice to see accessible on the Web. A cursory glance at the MOL and MOLAS sites indicates they don't yet hold this data. It's invaluable stuff -- I hope it goes up there, or somewhere accessible, as soon as possible.

Isabel Holroyd