

Tower of London Exhibitions

TWO SMALL but interesting exhibitions at the Tower of London opened on 15 April and will run until the end of the year; both are located in the White Tower. They are called the *Domesday Book* and *2000 Years of Tower History*.

The Domesday Book exhibition has been organised by the Public Record Office and the Tower of London, and is displayed in the superb Norman chapel of St. John the Evangelist. This is the first time that any of the Domesday Books have been exhibited outside the Public Record Office. The Domesday Book was never a single volume; it was originally bound into two volumes called the *Little* and *Great Domesday Books*, and later divided again into five volumes.

The centre piece of the exhibition is the display of two of the existing five volumes of the Domesday Book, which was compiled in the reign of William the Conqueror (1066-1087) and his son William Rufus (1087-1100). Other displays in the exhibition show different types of materials used in the making of public records, and some of the early storage cases used to keep public records in since the Norman conquest of England. The Little Domesday Book, though smaller, contains more detail about English life in the 11th century than the Great Domesday Book. The Little Domesday Book covered only the counties of Essex, Norfolk and Suffolk, and was produced before the Great Domesday Book. The Domesday Books were compiled to see who was available for military service with the central government, and to provide an overview for the king as to who and for how much the inhabitants of the land could be taxed. It is interesting to note that a survey of the London area and other major English towns were not included in the Domesday Book surveys.

The dim lighting of this exhibition could be improved, but it is probably not possible to do this, due to the harmful effects that strong light would have on the organic material on display. This exhibition is well worth visiting when at the Tower of London.

The Tower of London a 2000-year History comprises fourteen paintings by Ivan Lapper, a very competent historical illustrator, with accompanying written commentary by Geoffrey Parnell, Keeper of Tower History, which show the site of the Tower of London from AD 40 (just before the Roman occupation of the London region) until AD 2000. The paintings represent the many different architectural and historical phases of the Tower of London site at approximately 150 to 200 year intervals. They show the current understanding of the historical changes that have taken place at the Tower site. The evidence that they have been based on is forty years of archaeology and historical document research work undertaken by the Tower of London historical staff.

This exhibition should be visited for the informative overview of the historical architectural setting of this very important group of buildings and structures that is now the Tower of London. The Tower and its site is now one of the best understood historical sites in England. The 2000-year History exhibition is accompanied by a very well presented illustrated guide book.

Craig Meredith

Conservation Award winners

TWO OF THE Conservation Awards for 1999 went to London-based work. A Special Commendation in the Award for Conservation went to the Museum of London Conservation De-

partment and the Museum of London Specialist Services for the public excavation, conservation and presentation of the Roman stone sarcophagus from Spitalfields (see *LA* 9, no. 1, 3). The Student Conservator of the Year Award went to Jane Davies, of the Royal College of Arts/Victoria & Albert Museum Joint Course, for her investigation into the process of *cuir bouilli* leather and its conservation treatment.

The Awards are organised by the Museums and Galleries Commission and supported by English Heritage and the National Preservation Office.

Institute of Historical Interpretation

LAST YEAR (*LA* 9, no. 2, 64) we reported the foundation of this new body (also known as the *Historical Interpretation Forum*), with the aim of facilitating co-operation and communication between the heritage industry, educationalists, historians and live interpretation groups. Membership of the group is now open to individuals with an interest in heritage, public history, academic history, living history or live interpretation, and it has published the first issue of the Journal of the Institute of Historical Interpretation. For membership enquiries contact the Membership Secretary, Ellen Muirhead, Lower Farm, Longstowe, Cambridge CB3 7UP, email skmob@aol.com.

National Monuments Record Centre opens up

THE NMR is an indispensable resource for anyone seeking to understand their local heritage. It contains over 12 million items, including aerial photographs, maps, plans and drawings. The new Study Programme enables groups of all kinds to unlock this resource. Half-day visits can be arranged for local societies who are working on, or would like to begin research projects, at a fee of £45 per group (up to 10 members; extra members £5 each). Weekday and some Saturday bookings are available. For further information contact Jane Golding at: The Gallery, National Monuments Record Centre, Kemble Drive, Swindon SN2 2GZ, tel. 01793 414 735, email jane.golding@rchmne.co.uk.

The Centre is also making its services available *via* the Internet. Two that have recently become available are MIDAS and the NMR Thesauri. The on-line version of MIDAS (*Manual and Data Standard for Monument Inventories*) offers: examples showing how to apply the standard to everything from local history projects to academic research, email connections letting you contact the MIDAS team for advice and assistance, and the ability to register the details of your inventory project on-line. The Thesauri contain over 10,000 entries, and are powerful tools for the compilation of heritage inventories and for the thematic searching of the National Monuments Record. They allow you to: check the definition of an unfamiliar archaeological or architectural term, call up an on-line introduction to the construction and use of a thesaurus, see how different terms relate to one another, and contribute suggestions for new terms based on your experience. These services can be found on the NMR pages of the English Heritage website <http://www.english-heritage.org.uk>.

New tree-ring dating service

A SCHEME TO make tree-ring dating available to the general public has been announced. A postal service is offered from £16 per sample, or on-site services from £40 per sample. Services are offered on a 'no date - no fee' basis, and estimates and advice are free.

Details can be obtained from: Tree-ring Services, 8 Grosvenor Road, Chiswick, London W4 4EH, tel./fax 020 8747 1645, website <http://www.tree-ring.co.uk>.