

Up with the LAARC

FEBRUARY 7 2002 will see the formal opening of the London Archaeological Archive and Research Centre (LAARC) at the Museum of London's Mortimer Wheeler House near Old Street.

The LAARC has been designed to be the home of the London archaeological archive, the finds and records for over 4,000 excavations from all over Greater London over the last 100 years. Proper storage and curation of the archive, however, is only one part of LAARC's role. Just as important will be the research, teaching and public access to the archive. LAARC will be open to all who wish to use it, five days per week including evenings, and two Saturdays per month. The Museum hopes London's local archaeological societies will use the LAARC to research the archaeology from their areas. It has also developed partnerships with the universities in London which teach archaeology, so that students will both learn from the archive and carry out research. Public programmes will include an open Saturday every month for the public to come along and get involved in archaeological activities.

In addition to LAARC, Mortimer Wheeler House is also the home of the Museum of London Archaeology Service, the Museum of London Specialist Services (see pp. 35-7) and the Museum's Social and Working History collections.

For more information about public events at LAARC contact the Museum's box office on 020 7814 5777. For specific information about the archaeological archive contact the archive manager John Shepherd on 020 7566 9317.

Hedley Swain
Head of Early London History and Collections
Museum of London

Happy birthday to MoL

NOT CONTENT with the opening of the LAARC, the Museum of London is celebrating its 25th birthday by planning major improvements to the original building, to make room for new exhibitions and wide-ranging community activities. The overall aim of the Museum's redevelopment will be to retain the essence of the original 1970s building while offering a revitalised space for the 21st century. The redevelopment of the Museum is taking place at the same time as the construction of a striking new building opposite. This will provide the Museum with a new entrance at street level, clearly visible on approach from St Paul's tube station.

The Museum's interior will be reconfigured to an elegant design by Wilkinson Eyre Architects. There will be a bright new entrance hall, an expanded shop and new signage throughout the building. New lifts and staircases will allow easy access for visitors and will connect all levels of the Museum with the entrance hall. The work is being funded by private donations and public grants, with significant contributions from the Corporation of London and the Garfield Weston Foundation. A gallery for special exhibitions, the Linbury Gallery, will be constructed with the generous support of the Linbury Trust.

These improvements, commencing in January 2002, will be completed by mid 2003. For more information, see: <http://www.museumoflondon.org.uk/MOLsite/menu.htm>.

Further Roman revelations at Gresham Street

SIX MONTHS AGO, we reported the finding of the arm of a 1st-century bronze statue on the excavation at 30 Gresham Street. Now the site has produced an even more unusual find,

unique in this country -- the remains of two Roman water-lifting machines. They were found in two deep oak-lined wells, dated by tree-rings to AD 63 and AD108/9 respectively. The earlier well contained a series of wooden containers, which would have been linked together to form a continuous bucket chain. The later well contained a complete copper cauldron, charred wood and sophisticated ironwork from a bucket-chain mechanism; it appears to have been destroyed by fire, possibly around AD 120-130. Both can be matched to contemporary Roman descriptions, and provide answers to important questions about the water supply of Roman London. Both devices, together with a working model and a computer simulation, were put on display at the Museum of London.

(Source: *Archaeology Matters*, No. 15, September 2001).

The cemeteries of medieval London's religious houses

A FOUR-YEAR project, funded by the Arts & Humanities Research Board, has just been launched by the University of Reading, the Museum of London, and the Archaeology Data Service. It will create a database of over 6000 monastic graves excavated from forty cemeteries in Greater London over the past 25 years, containing information on grave construction, grave finds, demographic data, and date ranges. This will be linked to digital plans of each of the cemeteries, making possible a wide range of analyses. The work, which will be carried out by Barney Sloane and Professor Roberta Gilchrist, will culminate in a national conference on medieval death and burial, the publication of a monograph, and the general availability of the data via the Archaeology Data Service.

Images of England

THIS ENGLISH Heritage project describes itself as "creating an internet home for England's listed buildings". The aim is to take a photograph of each of England's c. 370,000 listed buildings, and to link them to publicly-available information about each structure. The project has now reached its next stage, the Public Access Trials. This means that visitors to the website <http://www.imagesofengland.org.uk> can search through all the list descriptions and view the growing image library.

Three levels of searching are available: Quick Search, Standard Search and Advanced Search, though for the last two users have to register on the site. There is a feedback form on the site for users to express their views.

Tebbutt Research Fund

THE FUND was established as a tribute to the life and work of the late C. F. Tebbutt, OBE, FSA. Individuals and groups are invited to apply for grants towards research, including associated expenses, into any aspect of the Wealden Iron Industry. It is anticipated that approximately £100 plus will be available from the fund. Any interested person should write a letter of application giving details of themselves together with relevant information about the research envisaged. Applications should be sent not later than 31 March to Shiela Broomfield, 8 Woodview Crescent, Hildenborough, Tonbridge, Kent TN11 9HD.

David Bentley

WE ANNOUNCE with great regret the death in November of David Bentley, after two years of illness with Motor Neurone Disease. David had worked as an archaeologist in London since 1978, and made an important contribution to the understanding of the topography of the City. He was a good friend of the *London Archaeologist*, both writing articles for us, and advising on aspects of the design of the magazine; we shall miss him.