

Books

Hidden Depths. An archaeological exploration of Surrey's past

Roger Hunt, with David Graham, Giles Pattison and Rob Poulton.

Surrey Archaeological Society, 2002

177 pages, many colour illus., bibliography, gazetteer, glossary, index. £12.95 plus £2.25 postage and packing if ordered directly.

Hidden Depths is a book about a county, but it's more than that; it is British archaeology and history in microcosm. It is written in an accessible and engaging style and will appeal to a wide range of readers, from the interested inhabitants of Surrey to archaeologists, historians and students of the subject. It is likely to become a work of reference as well as a great read.

The book opens with a useful introductory chapter providing a clear explanation of terminology and methods used in archaeological reconstruction as well as the geological context of the county. It then follows a relatively recent trend of abandoning period divisions and taking themes as the main subdivisions of the book. This works very well, showing the development of aspects of life in a coherent manner rather than plodding through time in a disjointed manner. The themes taken are 'Hearth and Home', 'Food and Farming', 'Religion and Ritual', 'Power and Protection' and 'Markets and Manufacturing'. These titles are perhaps a little laboured, however, the chapters tackle coherent and fundamental aspects of human development of all periods in a balanced manner. Too often, when a book attempts to tackle the entire archaeological

record, they are unbalanced in the weight given to certain periods. It is greatly to the credit of the authors that no periods have been singled out, and it speaks volumes about the archaeology and history of Surrey that there is a great deal to say on each period under all these themes. The chapters all draw on antiquarian and the most recent developer funded archaeology, bringing in historical sources and excellent illustrations to complete the discussions.

The final chapter, 'The Future of the Past' concludes the narrative by dwelling on how archaeology is likely to change in the future and the importance of protecting our historic environment. This is not out of place in a book written for a wide cross section of society and may help place the problems faced daily by archaeologists in front of a wider supportive audience.

The text is well illustrated with artefacts, sites, buildings and people, using photographs and also a large number of very useful reconstructions and maps. In addition to the archaeological and historical narrative, the book also contains a great deal of practical information. There is a very useful gazetteer, which contains details of all local museums (including contact details, visiting times and a potted summary) and also lists places of interest, ranging from castles and palaces to windmills and barrows, all located on one of the many useful maps in the book.

To summarize, buy this book – it's great! It is enjoyable to read, both as a serious work on the
(continued on p. 83)

49. *Ibid.*, 34.

50. *Ibid.*, 35.

51. G. de la Bédoyère *The Buildings of Roman Britain* (1991) 192.

52. *Op cit* fn 17, 47 and 123-7.

53. *Op cit* fn 44.

54. M. Millett, *pers. comm.*

55. The continental examples present some significant differences however: the Dutch sites have provided over 150 altars, and were clearly dedicated to this specific purpose (see M. Hassall 'Britain and the Rhine: epigraphic evidence for Roman trade' in J. Taylor and H. Cleere (eds) *Roman shipping and trade: Britain and the Rhine provinces* CBA Res Rep 24 (1978) 41-48). The large Barzan circular temple was situated in a town and no dedication has been confirmed. No systematic work has yet been done on the dedications, periods of use, size or relationships with settlements or military establishments of such temples (M. Millett, *pers. comm.*).

56. D. Bird 'Roads and temples: Stane Street at Ewell' *London Archaeol* 10, no. 2 (2002) 41-45.

57. Webster cites two Hadrianic coins being found with burnt wood and debris on a floor surface; *op cit* fn 3.

58. See A. Selkirk 'Roman Greenwich: the editor comments' *Current Archaeol* 167 (1999) 441.

county or one to dip into occasionally, lavishly illustrated and useful for people who wish to get more involved with their heritage or simply to visit some of the many places still accessible.

Jane Sidell

Roman and medieval townhouses on the London waterfront – Excavations at Governor's House, City of London

Trevor Brigham with Aidan Woodger

Museum of London Archaeology Service, 2001

158 pages, with black and white photographs and drawings, bibliography and index. £12.95 paperback.

This is the report of the archaeological investigations carried out in 1994-7 by MoLAS on the site of Suffolk House, Upper Thames Street, now redeveloped as Governor's House. The work, which included elements of evaluation, watching brief and excavation, and its results have enabled the authors of the report to add their own new data to the information that Peter Marsden recorded in 1969 from his watching brief during the construction of Suffolk House.

An Introduction (including a plan of the 1994-7 areas of investigation) outlines the circumstances of the latest excavation, and describes the 1969 work done by Marsden, who located the fragmentary remains of a large Roman masonry building on the site and interpreted them as the remains of a substantial Roman townhouse.

Working upwards through the stratigraphy of the site, the main body of the report starts by establishing the natural geology and topography. The prehistoric environment is described, and particular mention is made of a hitherto unsuspected prehistoric marsh with peat deposits that have been dated to the Neolithic period – a great rarity in the City. After a brief introduction to changes in the area during the Roman period, the evidence of waterfront development is described. Covering a period from AD 50 to 120, the report presents this evidence in considerable detail, and records the finding at the west end of the site of a previously unknown substantial timber quay, constructed from squared timber baulks, squared piles and locking bars, and backed by infill to create a wharf.

Evidence of a complicated sequence of structural activity is described covering a period from AD 60 to 400, and it is suggested that it was the creation of a series of level terraces overlooking the river that drove the construction of buildings in the Roman period.

The next chapter covers early, medieval and post-medieval periods, and describes a sequence from AD 1000 to 1700 that is significant for the continuing complexity of the use and re-use of the site. Reference is made to the cartographic record, including maps such as Rocque's 1746 survey, in order to support interpretations drawn from the archaeological evidence.

The chapter of Conclusions discusses the excavators' successful mitigation strategy, in which the developers designed the new foundations of the Governor's House to have minimum impact on the archaeological remains, while MoLAS provided a frame of reference for the continuing excavation work. A substantial appendix provides a set of specialist reports giving detailed analyses of the recorded evidence from the prehistoric marsh to the Roman and medieval periods.

Significant additions to the sum of knowledge about the site that are claimed include the modelling of the underlying topography, the discovery of a number of datable phases of Roman waterfront, an increased understanding of the nature of the main townhouse, and a similar understanding of an important medieval and post-medieval townhouse. The report which is presented as the ninth in the MoLAS Monograph series, is well edited, authoritative and professional, and maintains the high standards that one has come to expect from this source.

Richard Gilpin

Also received

Lost Civilizations. Rediscovering Ancient Sites through New Technology

Austen Atkinson

Pavilion Books, 2002

192 pages, many illustrations, bibliography, index. £25

18 Folgate Street. The tale of a house in Spitalfields

Dennis Severs

Vintage Press, 2001 (2002 in paperback)

275 pages, many illustrations. £10.99 paperback.

Characters of Fitzrovia

Mike Pentelow and Marsha Rowe

Pimlico, 2002

262 pages, many illustrations, bibliography, index. £15