

Who writes, wins

The deadline has passed, and the nominations for the London Archaeological Prize 2004 have been received. Now it's the task of the judges to read the nominated publications and decide on the winner, in time for the prize to be awarded in October. As one of the judges, I face this task with both relief and disappointment, and for the same reason: the small number of nominations. At least, there will not be too much extra reading to do in the next few months, but there is a touch of regret that not more nominations were made, especially by people who were not connected to the publications in some way.

This train of thought led me back to the question of what, and whom, are these publications (and any others) for? Yes, archaeologists have a duty to publish their findings, but for whom, and in what format and on what medium? This debate has been going on since at least the 1970s (remember the Frere Report?) and shows no sign of going away. Indeed, with the new opportunities offered by digital media, it has if anything intensified. The weight (literally) of publications coming to us for review is enormous, and no-one can expect to read more than a small part of it in depth. So how does each reader find the information that they want, that is peculiar to their needs? Is the answer to go digital, making searching (potentially) easy, or does that put us on a perpetual treadmill of hardware and software up-upgrades? This route also raises difficult questions of quality control: reports published in hard copy can be refereed, but anything can be

put on the web. For example, I carried out a web search when preparing the note on the Mithras Temple for *Mosaic*, and found a wide range of up-to-date, out-of-date and downright wacky websites.

These issues are, indirectly, having an effect on the content of the *London Archaeologist*. In the last year or so, professional archaeologists, who have promised us articles, have been finding it more and more difficult to meet their deadlines. At the same time, it is becoming easier to post interim reports of major excavations on websites (see, for example, the Pre-Construct Archaeology website, reported in *Mosaic*), achieving greater immediacy than we could hope for with quarterly publication. This suggests that our focus may have to shift slightly. Over the years we have published several reports based on work done by students for undergraduate or master's dissertations, the most recent being by Don Cooper on birdpots in this issue. Students have the opportunity to step back, take a wider view, and put recent (and older) discoveries in context, and the best of them are doing just that. With the MA in the Archaeology of London at UCL Institute of Archaeology, as well as courses at Birkbeck, there are good prospects for a series of high-quality contributions from these sources in coming years. In the slightly longer term, we can expect independent research at the LAARC to start to yield interesting and publishable results. We will do all we can to encourage anyone who has done interesting work on the archaeology of London to publish it.

Annual Lecture and Meeting

The thirty-fifth AGM of the *London Archaeologist* was held on Monday 24 May at the Institute of Archaeology, 31–34 Gordon Square. The following officers were elected: Editor, Clive Orton; Assistant Editor, Marit Gaimster; Secretary, Monica Kendall; Advertising and Promotions, Roy Stephenson; Subscriptions, Shiela Broomfield; Managing Editor, David

Gaimster. Stephen Miller was re-elected as Auditor. Three members (Rose Baillie, Richard Gilpin and Peter Pickering) retired from the Publication Committee, having served for three years. Stuart Brookes, Tim Carew and Bethan Featherby were elected in their place. Tim Carew spoke on 'A platform and trackway in the Bronze Age Wetlands at Beckton, east London'.