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1. Formerly called Notting Hill; B. Weinreb and C. Hibbert (eds) *The London Encyclopaedia* (1983).
2. F. Sadarangani and J. Leary, *Archaeological Desktop Assessment of Vicarage Gate House, Vicarage Gate, Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, W8* (2003); E. Wragg, *Assessment of an Archaeological Excavation at Vicarage Gate House, Vicarage Gate, R.B.K.C., W8* (2004) PCA unpublished reports. (Site Code VGH 03)
3. There is an anomaly between the contours shown on the OS map and the actual height of the site.
4. P. Moore, T. Bradley and B.J. Bishop, 'A Late Bronze Age Burnt Mound Site at the Phillimore's, Campden Hill Road, Kensington', *London Archaeol* **10**, no. 7 (2003) 179–186.
5. T. Bradley, 'Archaeological excavations at Sir John

- Atkins Building, Campden Hill, Kensington', *Trans LAMAS* forthcoming
6. I.D. Margary, *Roman Roads in Britain* (1955).
7. T. Bradley, 'An Archaeological Excavation at the Site of the Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial Fountain', *Trans LAMAS* forthcoming.
8. E. Howe, 'A Romano-British Farmstead at St Mary Abbots Hospital, Marloes Road, Kensington', *Trans LAMAS* **49** (2000) 15–29.
9. A. Douglas, 'Saxo-Norman Buildings in Kensington', *Trans LAMAS* **52** (2001) 113–26.
10. B. Bishop, 'Lithic Assessment' in Wragg *op cit* fn. 2.
11. F. Pryor, *Farmers in Prehistoric Britain* (1998).
12. M. Lyne, 'An Assessment of the Pottery' in Wragg *op cit* fn. 2.

## Letter

### Medieval measurements

The following comments refer to the article by Peter Huggins in the Autumn 2005 issue.

The medieval rod or perch was certainly in use as far back as the Anglo-Saxon period, as has been established by Warwick Rodwell and Birthe Biddle, amongst others. It is when you look at the relationship between it and other measurements of the period and later, that you find there is one that goes beyond coincidence, starting with the smallest, the *nail* (2¼ inches) up to an *ell* (45 inches), and rod or perch (198 inches), the smallest dividing into and the others dividing by a *span* (9 inches), a measurement arrived at as the distance between the little finger and the thumb. The *ell* is a measurement in the Statute of Henry I in 1101. In a Statute of Edward I in 1303 an inch is measured by three grains of barley.

The division of the rod into thirds, mentioned in the article, can be seen on the tomb slab of Hugues Libergier (architect) in Reims Cathedral, showing him holding his staff. Divisions can be seen marked on its upper end; going by the scale it could well be a third of a rod. This would solve the problem highlighted in the article.

It is worth considering that the span went out of use, and that the measurement of a foot came into being as the norm, possibly by the start of the 14th century if not earlier – it certainly occurs in a Statute of Edward I (1303). The major problem is

deciding what is actually stated in comparing these measurements against the modern equivalent; as it can be seen, the early ones were based on body measurements, so that when we see a modern measurement of an older structure given in feet and an excess of inches, is it because the inches are in fact an error of comparison between the two? After all, we are dealing with buildings, and over a considerable length they would surely not bother with inches.

This brings us to the problem at Mucking with the shorter rod; surely this is a case in point where the rod at that time was a multiple of a measurement. Was their actual foot or span smaller than we are led to expect here?

The length and width of the dock can be divided by the *span*! Regarding the actual beam sizes, would not this be down to the available wood?

The use of geometry for laying out buildings is well established, it is worth obtaining a copy of the British Museum publication *Masons and Sculptors* by Nicola Coldstream. It shows examples of rotating squares, which are drawn from Mathes Roriczer's 15th-century *Booklet on Pinnacles*, showing how to rotate squares, etc.

Regarding the laying-out of the building, surely this would follow the normal practice of stringing out a datum line and marking off post positions; the same would then apply when trenching for a beam slot, the sleeper beam and the upper structure raised as one.

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