

# Books

---

## What happened when

Tim Taylor

*Channel 4 Books*, 2006

320 pages, many illus., index. £20 hardback

Tim Taylor, the producer of Channel 4's popular Time Team programme sets out with the help of his colleagues to catalogue British history chronologically in an accessible format. It starts with the Palaeolithic era, ending at the Victorians, with a few passing comments of the Modern era.

It is commendable that the prehistoric, the Palaeolithic to the Bronze Age, takes up 20% of the book. This part of Britain's history, the innovations from when has possibly had a greater impact on our history than Trafalgar or even the two World Wars, has been too long neglected in schools. Mr. Taylor's contribution goes a little way to redress this imbalance.

Technology is a recurring theme. Flint tools of the Mesolithic to flintlock muskets of the 17th century, hearth fires of the hunter/gatherers to steam fired engines of the industrial revolution, small family groups of wanderers to the massive urbanisation of the land are all brought to the attention of the reader. Although archaeology cannot tell us what people thought unless there are written records, brave attempts are put forward to see the mindset of the people of bygone eras. The thread of technology running through the book reminds that these humans are of the same innovative species as us, with the hopes and strivings for a decent standard of existence, while pointing out that the psychology of the people of one era is not necessarily the same as that of another.

*(continued on page 194)*

---

campaigning on public affairs and conservation policy for London, strengthening holistic approaches to the historic environment in London – historic landscape and townscape aspects as well as archaeology. And third, to promote public engagement and participation with the historic environment, e.g. by hosting public events, publicising issues, promoting means of getting involved, helping to champion local as well as city-wide values and interests, and supporting or promoting projects that people can take part in. One idea which has been suggested is for the Group to facilitate a major London-wide participation project, which might be funded through the Heritage Lottery Fund. This could build on the excellent work undertaken by currently active groups and encourage new participants to get involved, e.g. through an archaeological survey of parks, greens and open spaces across London.

As well as working in partnership with other CBA Regional Groups around London, the Group would also work closely with existing organisations, such as the London & Middlesex Archaeological Society, the Surrey Archaeological Society, the Museum of London, and other groups. The CBA Group would provide a means of enhancing existing arrangements for joint working, and through wider promotional

activities would aim to increase active engagement and thereby expand the membership of all the voluntary groups already operating in London.

The CBA is currently consulting widely with its members and considering the issues involved in setting up a new Group to cover London. An initial business plan is being developed to ensure that the Group would be financially viable and sustainable. Any decision to press ahead is likely to be taken in April 2007 by CBA's trustees and if agreement is reached then the new Group will come into being later in 2007. It would replace and build on many of the current roles of the Standing Conference on London's Archaeology (SCOLA).

Inevitably any new Group will only succeed if it is seen to be adding value to existing efforts, as well as delivering positive outcomes. This will largely depend on the people who will be needed to get behind the Group and are willing to volunteer to help push forward the Group's endeavours.

If you would be interested in getting involved and have some time and skills you could offer to help a new Group, and/or the existing organisations in London, please contact the CBA at St Mary's House, 66 Bootham, York YO30 7BZ, tel. 01904 671417, email [mikeheyworth@britarch.ac.uk](mailto:mikeheyworth@britarch.ac.uk).

Each chapter has subtitles, timelines, key and 'signpost' events, with overviews and comments by the Time Team cast and other experts. The photography is clear and in some instances stunning. It is a bonus that it shows places the general public has access to. The book is complemented with archive images and the vivid illustrations of the programme artist, Victor Ambrus.

The subtitle reads 'everything you need to know about Britain's past since 650,000 BC'. Perhaps not quite, depending on what the reader wants to know. The book is not a definitive guide, but an excellent starting point aimed mostly at the amateur armchair archaeologist or historian. The author has drawn on the knowledge of the Time Team and included 100 events, with 25 on a shortlist as 'signposts' to illustrate the importance of specific changes in this island's history. Whether or not the reader will agree with the personal choices made, the story of British history is presented clearly, logically and entertainingly.

It is an ideal book for dipping in, to check knowledge, to begin a personal foray in a particular era or as quick revision. It is also a rather nice diving board to start children off into the subject of history as a continual process rather than the sporadic and blinkered view of the U.K. school curriculum of history being what makes us 'look good'.

The overall impression is of a light but happy volume and a must for the Time Team fans. That said, the programmes detractors should not dismiss it out of hand as a television spin-off. Mr. Taylor has made a conscious effort to shy away from the myth-and-memory test of school lessons that were coloured with the tales of Henry VIII's wives and not the Reformation, or of King Alfred's culinary disaster but the dismissal of his victory in a battle that made the country English. Indeed, it is an unashamedly personal view of history from people who get grubby looking for it, but it is the richer for that.

Odette Nelson

### **The Last Hendon Farm: The archaeology and history of Church End Farm**

Stephen Brunning, Don Cooper, Elizabeth Gapp, Geraldine Missig, Tim Nicholson Christopher Willey and Jacqui Pearce (ed)

HADAS, 2006

95 pages, many illustrations and photographs, bibliography, £11.99

So what can be done with all those fading,

incomplete, difficult to interpret and unpublished records that lurk in the archives of archaeological societies up and down Britain? This exemplary report from Hendon and District Archaeological Society (HADAS) offers a model of just how much can be extracted, and just how well it can be communicated.

Money helps of course. The generous use of photographs and historical images, the high production quality and some technical artefact analysis was made possible by a legacy from a HADAS member. But the success of this volume is equally due to the innovative approach taken to get the archives analysed and written up. Local people enrolled on a course in post-excavation analysis with Birkbeck have researched the documentary evidence, unravelled the "bewildering array" of site records and written this account of one of Hendon's three farms, under the tutelage and editorship of MoLAS post-med pottery specialist, Jacqui Pearce.

The problem was a familiar one: a large volume of excavation records, press cuttings, photographs, historical documents and artefacts resulting from the 1960s excavations by the fledgling archaeological society of two areas in the centre of Hendon. In search of Hendon's Anglo Saxon origins, HADAS first investigated the site of Church End Farm before it was demolished to make way for Hendon Technical College. The second set of excavations, of Church Terrace, is being studied by further Birkbeck post-excavation courses and will be the subject of a future volume from the society.

The students/authors clearly had some problems making firm conclusions from the available site records: the approach to recording was changed part way through the excavations making contexts difficult to identify, and a proportion of the artefactual evidence had gone missing in the intervening 40 years. Nevertheless, quite a reasonable job appears to have been made of cross-referencing the various bits of documentation and relating it to artefacts.

Historical and archaeological background makes up the first part of the report, with Hendon and the farm being set in the context of London's hinterland over 250 years. A key conclusion of the study group was the dating of the farm buildings. Whilst documentary evidence supports occupation only back to the mid-18th century, typology of the farmhouse construction, based on period watercolours and pre demolition photos as

# Letter

---

## Segrave Manor

I was intrigued by the reference in 'Waste and its disposal in Southwark' to rubbish being sent from the City to 'the manor of Segrave in the Parish of St Mary Overy, Southwark' (*LA* 11, no. 4 (Spring 2006) 96) and even more intrigued by the source quoted for it (*The Farmers Weekly* 1939). Unfortunately I do not have access to past issues of *The Farmers Weekly*, though I would doubt that it quotes a source for this item, which is a shame.

For there are problems with this. There was no manor in Southwark called Segrave, and there was no parish called St Mary Overy; there was a small parish round Southwark Priory called St Mary Magdalen, which sometimes has the Overy suffix added to it, but not until the 16th century, and the Priory itself had only recently acquired the suffix Overy in 1364 (see *LA* 9, no 5 (Summer 2000) 144).

It is, in any case, very unlikely that anywhere in St Mary Magdalen Parish would be used for dumping rubbish in 1363, since it is largely in the built-up core of Southwark. There is, however, one place in Southwark with a Segrave connection. This is a plot on Bankside towards its western end (the *Fleur de Lys*) which in the 13th and first part of the 14th centuries belonged to the Segraves, though this was hardly a manor

even in the loosest sense of that term (perhaps this was a misreading of mansion). In 1353 when John Segrave died it is described as a messuage and 6 shops but ruined because no one would give anything for it (*Inquest Post Mortems* 10, no. 116). It briefly escheated to the crown (1st April to 28th September) but when the escheator presented his accounts he said there was no income because it stood empty (PRO E136/4/16). John had no sons so the property descended to his daughter Elizabeth Mowbray and they were blamed by their neighbour for causing the area to flood by not repairing their wharf (PRO KB27 Easter 1363 rex 19d). As late as 1375 the bailiff of the Bishop of Winchester's manor was cutting rods of willow in 'Segrave's close' to set against arrears of rent for the property (Hampshire Rec. Off. Winchester Pipe Rol 1375/6). So clearly this was derelict and thus might well have been used for dumping waster, though how that was arranged is hard to say; perhaps permission was obtained from the Bishop of Winchester or his bailiff, for the Mowbrays seem to have abandoned it and eventually it escheated to the Bishop and was reoccupied by 1380 (*ibid* 1381/2 and PRO E179/184/30).

Graham Dawson  
40 Station Road  
Orpington  
Kent BR6 0SA

---

(continued from page 194)

well as the excavation evidence, indicates 17th-century origins.

This was supported by the detailed study of the finds, the account of which represents just over half the report. The description of typologies and dating is smoothly merged with discussion of the significance of particular types of pottery, clay pipes, tiles, bottles, coins or animal bone. Plenty of helpful background to each class of artefact is given without being too dry, so that quite a vibrant picture emerges of comfortably off occupants enjoying the fruits of their various labours. An unusual collection of bird, or sparrow, pots, for example, elicits a fascinating consideration of the form, the origins of the pots, where they might have been placed and what they were used for (either for collecting bird bounties or sparrow pie apparently).

The few quibbles with this volume are hardly substantial ones. The omission of a modern site plan in favour of a few historical maps makes it difficult to understand where the excavations took place and how the buildings related to each other and to neighbouring farms, church and pub. The writing by seven authors is inevitably a bit patchy. The chapter on future work doesn't actually describe any. An index would have been good. This really is the gold standard, though. It's both a readable, well organised and interesting account of a site of local importance, and a benchmark for those with cupboards full of seemingly unmanageable archives.

Becky Wallower

## Also received

### Egypt

Joyce Tildesley  
*BBC Books*, 2005  
256 pp., many figs, bib, index. £17.99