

# Festival of British Archaeology: 14 to 29 July 2012

The 16-day Festival of British Archaeology (FOBA) this year neatly fills a slot in the run up to the Olympics. A great variety of activity is being organised across London by museums, local societies, heritage sites and specialist projects to get people of all ages involved in archaeology and heritage.

Visit *London Archaeologist* at the Museum of London on **21/22 July**, where we join in a weekend full of ceramic inspired activities for all ages. Bring the family along to try out our pottery puzzles and design challenge. For latest details of all the events in July, visit the FOBA website ([festival.britarch.ac.uk/whatson](http://festival.britarch.ac.uk/whatson)). Here is a small selection of what's on offer for free...

## To 29 July

**Fulham Palace community dig:** dig in the walled garden to help with the restoration. See [fulhampalace.org/](http://fulhampalace.org/)

## Sat 14 July

**Winchester Palace open day:** the remains and archaeology of one of London's largest medieval palaces. See [southwark.gov.uk/info/200023/design\\_conservation\\_and\\_archaeology/653/archaeology\\_in\\_southwark](http://southwark.gov.uk/info/200023/design_conservation_and_archaeology/653/archaeology_in_southwark)  
13.00-17.00, corner of Clink St and Stoney St SE1.

## Sat 14, Sat 21, Sat 28 July

**The Rose revealed:** visit the site of Bankside's first Elizabethan theatre. See [rosetheatre.org.uk](http://rosetheatre.org.uk)  
10.00-17.00, 56 Park Street, London SE1.

## Sat 14 - Sun 15 July

**Billingsgate Roman bath house:** a rare chance to visit the baths beneath a City building See [museumoflondon.org.uk/hrp.co.uk](http://museumoflondon.org.uk/hrp.co.uk), 11.00-16.00, 101 Lower Thames Street London EC3.

## Fri 20 July

**Beneath our feet: archaeology in action:** gallery talk. See [britishmuseum.org/events](http://britishmuseum.org/events) for other talks and lectures throughout FOBA 13.15-14.00, British Museum.

## Sat 21 July

**Churchill's standby Cabinet War Room:** tour the underground rooms from WWII. See [subbrit.org.uk](http://subbrit.org.uk)  
10.00-16.00, Brook Road, Dollis Hill, London NW2 7DZ

## Sat 21 - Sun 22 July

**Roman bath house and Anglo-Saxon cemetery:** family activities, historical trail and Roman site. See [bromley.gov.uk/leisure/museums/](http://bromley.gov.uk/leisure/museums/)  
11.00-16.00, Roman Bath House, Poverest Road, Orpington

## Sun 22 July

**Elsyng Palace:** see excavations underway by Enfield Archaeology Society 11.00-16.00, Forty Hall, Forty Hill, EN2 9HA. See [enfield.gov.uk/museum](http://enfield.gov.uk/museum)

## Sat 28 - Sun 29 July

**Merton Priory:** children's archaeology and block printing demonstrations in the medieval chapterhouse. See [mertonpriory.org](http://mertonpriory.org)  
10.00-17.00, Merton Abbey Mills, Merantun Way, London SW19 2RD.



## Excavations at Oatlands Palace 1968-73 and 1983-4



Rob Poulton, with Alan Cook and Simon Thurley

Spoilheap Publications

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195 pages  
114 b&w and 3 colour illustrations, bibliography, index, downloadable digital supplement

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Reviewed by Richard Gilpin

Created by Henry VIII on the site of an earlier moated manor house, Oatlands Palace was passed on from Tudors to Stuarts, before being comprehensively demolished in 1650. Oatlands shares a place in history with the more famous Nonsuch, which was built at the same time, and which survived for 30 years longer: both were designed and supervised by officers and master craftsmen based at Hampton Court Palace.

The general location of Oatlands Palace has been known for some time, but research excavations between 1968 and 1973 enabled archaeological details of the site to be mapped out. Redevelopment of a housing estate resulted in further rescue excavations in 1983 and 1984. *Excavations at Oatlands Palace*

brings the two excavations together and provides a complete report on the site.

Simon Thurley provides the historical background and topographical framework for the site and its buildings. Details of the building materials used, drawn from documentary sources and the excavations themselves, are followed by an account of the 1968-73 excavations. Written by Alan Cook, who regrettably died before publication, this is the heart of the report, detailing the discoveries and the various areas of the site.

Rob Poulton's description of the 1983 and 1984 excavations is followed by specialists' analyses of the loose finds, including pottery (analysis by LA's Editor, Clive Orton); glass; clay pipes; floor tiles; an altar slab; and the animal bones found on the site.

Despite the available evidence for its phases being limited by lack of historical source material and by the small portion of the site that has been excavated, the authors provide an excellent account of the palace's development, from its foundations as a moated manor, to its demise, a victim of post-medieval politics.

Although Poulton notes that (owing to the compromises required in order to facilitate publication) this report "departs in a number of particulars from what might ideally have been achieved", it is nevertheless an excellent work.

This report will be warmly welcomed by readers who will no doubt forgive the unintended and unplanned delays affecting its publication. Its authors must be commended for unearthing evidence collected using fieldwork methods of 40 year ago, subjecting it to present-day techniques of post-excavation analysis and interpretation and, finally, publishing it.

Perhaps one day a similar approach could result in the publication of the 1970s excavations on the site of Baynard's Castle, on the bank of the Thames in the City of London. Unlike Oatlands, the Baynard's Castle site remains unpublished after 40 years, despite its significant historical resonance and importance.