Mosaic

City of London Archaeological Trust

Since its establishment in 1974, the City of London Archaeological Trust (CoLAT) has been funding all kinds of archaeological work in the City of London and its environs; in the 1970s and 1980s there were large grants to help the major excavations of the time such as Billingsgate (1982) and Leadenhall Court (1984). From 1990, however, the Trust has redefined the kinds of projects it will support more closely. Even so, in the last ten years, it has given out just over half a million pounds in support of archaeological work.

The objectives of the Trust are to promote the archaeology of the City of London and its environs by supporting research and other educational or public activities. Applicants can be individuals, groups or institutions such as museums. Examples of projects which have been recently funded include small pieces of research for publication on finds or environmental material, the setting up of reference collections, support for archaeological education, work on the archive in LAARC, and the digitising of back issues of London Archaeologist. The Trust nowadays prefers not to fund any kind of fieldwork, and does not bail out any developer, secular or ecclesiastical, since it follows the guidelines in PPG16 of 1990. It also raises archaeological funds, particularly for specific projects by applying to City institutions.

The management committee of the Trust meets once a year to give out grants, usually in December of each year. The committee is made up of four elements, aldermen (including, currently, two former Lord Mayors), nominees of two committees of the Corporation of London (Planning, and Libraries), and senior archaeologists and historians with knowledge of London (including nominees from the Society of Antiquaries of London and the Council for British Archaeology). Grants made at the December meeting are available for two years from the April following.

CoLAT is in the process of setting up a website, but in the meantime anybody who is interested in applying this year should contact the Secretary, John Schofield, jschofield@museumoflondon.org.uk or at the Department of Early London History and Collections, Museum of London, London Wall, London EC2Y 5HN. There is an application form and guidelines which applicants must follow. The deadline for completed applications this year is Monday 17 October 2005.

Top Award for London Museum

We are pleased to announce that the Petrie Museum of Egyptian Archaeology at University College London won the Classic Museum Award at this year’s Museum’s and Heritage Awards for Excellence. Its collection of some 80,000 objects depicting life in the Nile Valley since prehistory has recently been made accessible in an online catalogue, and the museum runs outreach activities for the public and schoolchildren. See www.petrie.ucl.ac.uk for details.

Roman timber coffin found intact

A Roman wooden coffin, complete with the skeleton of a man aged 'over 25', has been found during building work in Holborn, on a steep side of the River Fleet. Dating from AD 120, it is an unusually early example of a Roman coffin burial, as cremation was the more common burial rite until the 3rd century. The coffin was made of reused oak and contained a wine flagon; the skeletal remains exhibited a form of degeneration that tends to indicate a high-calorie diet.

(source: Salon 110, 21 February 2005)

Rare garden feature opened to the public

The Carshalton Park Grotto (London Borough of Sutton), opened to the public for one day last April, is a rare survival from a major early 18th-century landscape project. Built in about 1724 for Thomas Scawen, it was intended to be seen from the south front of a large mansion that was never completed. Both it and the park passed into public ownership in 1913, when its faced and interior were unsympathetically restored.

Culverts running some 60 ft under and behind the facade tap in to the water-bearing chalk and fill the pool in front of it. The main octagonal room was described in 1895 as having “a domed roof and walls fantastically covered with flints, scraps of Ironstone, shells and the like, and has a tessellated floor of black and white marble”. Only a few detached fragments remain as survivors of the restoration, but the brickwork of the walls demonstrates the quality of the structure.

For further information contact Sutton Heritage Services.