EXCAVATIONS AND MEDIEVAL ENGLAND: THE EXCAVATION INDEX (Fig. 8)

Since 1978 the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England (R.C.H.M.E.) has been conducting a thematic survey of archaeological excavations carried out in England. The survey has four main objectives: to compile a list of all excavations undertaken in England, to locate the original records relating to them, to locate the finds from them, and to indicate which have a published report.

The survey began in the North of England in 1978, and has been compiled on a county by county basis. With the completion of surveys for Greater London and Suffolk in 1989, the Index has covered the whole of England. Work has now begun on updating those counties first compiled, prior to initiating a programme of annual maintenance. Now that initial coverage has been completed, it seems appropriate to draw to the attention of those engaged in research the potential of this national archaeological database.

At the time of writing in May 1991 the Index includes over 25,000 excavations, ranging from rare instances of excavation during the medieval period, through the antiquarian explorations of the 18th and 19th centuries, to the present day. Of these, over 6,500 excavations are noted as having produced material and/or structures of medieval date (c. A.D. 1066–1539). In addition, 2,400 excavations include evidence dating from the early medieval period (c. A.D. 450–1066). The survey has located the archives from over 13,000 excavations (53% of the total) and finds from over 14,000 excavations (57% of the total).

The information contained in the Index has drawn on the records of the former Ordnance Survey Archaeology Division, now incorporated into the National Archaeological Record (N.A.R.) of R.C.H.M.E., and the County Sites and Monuments Records, as well as a wide range of publications, and information derived directly from excavators, societies, museums and other institutions. These other sources have greatly increased the number of
This figure illustrates the contents of two records on the Excavation Index as they would appear in a catalogue format. Various fields of the entry employ abbreviations, and lists of abbreviations used are printed with the Index. In this example: BSHRC = Bulletin of the Sutton Hoo Research Committee; EM = Early Medieval; GUILF = Guildford Museum; INT = Interim report; LB = London Borough; MD = Medieval; MFT = Marc Fitch Trust; NAR = National Archaeological Record (unique site number); NOT = Note; PRN = Excavation Index Primary Record Number; PSIA = Proceedings of the Suffolk Institute of Archaeology; REP = Report; SAL = Society of Antiquaries of London; SAM = Scheduled Ancient Monument; SAU = Suffolk Archaeological Unit; SFCC = Suffolk County Council; SHT = Snape Historical Trust; SMR = Sites and Monuments Record; SURAC = Survey Archaeological Collections.

(Crown copyright: Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England.)

recorded excavations noted in national and county records, and have added details on the location and content of the archives and the finds locations, information which has never before been recorded systematically.

The N.A.R. provides a microfilming service for archaeological archives which are of national importance, unpublished, or at risk. It houses an expanding collection of records on microfilm which is available for public consultation. One function of the Excavation Index is to assist in the identification of archives which may be appropriate for microfilming. An example of this has been its recent heavy use by R.C.H.M.E. and English Heritage to help identify unpublished state-funded excavations conducted before 1973, and the subsequent copying of the original archives.

The Index has considerable potential for anyone undertaking research. The following information is intended to help those wishing to know in greater detail what the Index has to offer. Each excavation is entered separately in the Index. The excavation record gives
locational details, followed by the type and period of the remains uncovered, the name of the
director(s) of the excavation, the sponsoring and funding bodies, the location(s) of finds, the
location(s) and contents of the archive, and the nature of any publication. The contents of
two records on the Excavation Index as they would appear in a catalogue format are
illustrated in Fig. 8.

The index is computerised and consists of 72 fields of information. It can be consulted
via a terminal in the Public Search Room (N.A.R.) of R.C.H.M.E.'s London office, and
on-line retrieval is possible for any field or combination of fields. Alternatively, a wide range
of printout options is available to order. A nominal charge is made to cover the cost of
printing and postage. Further details of the Excavation Index are available from The
w1x 2jQ. Tel. 071 973 3148.

R.C.H.M.E.

THE ROME/SIENA CONFERENCE, 1991

The 34th Annual Conference of the Society was held in Rome and Siena from 12 to
17 April 1991. The opening lecture on Friday 12 April was given by Dr Richard Hodges on
'Medieval archaeology in Italy'. On Saturday morning Dr Bryan Ward-Perkins gave a
lecture on 'The transition from antiquity to the Middle Ages' after which Dott. Stefano
Coccia gave a guided tour of standing medieval buildings in Rome and Dr John Mitchell and
Debbie Hodges led a visit to some early medieval churches of Rome. On Sunday Drs Hodges
and Mitchell led a trip to Monte Cassino and San Vincenzo. On the Monday morning Dr
Helen Patterson delivered a paper on 'Medieval pottery studies in Italy' and the conference
then departed for Siena, via Mole di Monte Gelatto, where Federico Marazzi gave a guided
tour. In the evening Professor Riccardo Francovich and the Provincia di Siena hosted dinner
at La Loggia in Siena followed by a lecture by Dr Hodges on 'Montarrenti: uno scavo per
l'Europa'. On the Tuesday Dr Hodges led a tour from Siena to Montarrenti where Professor
Francovich and Dott. Roberto Parenti led conducted tours of the hilltop settlement. Lunch
was provided by the University of Siena at Rocca San Silvestro, after which the conference
was conducted around the university's excavations of the medieval mining village and
associated mines. On returning to Siena the conference was given dinner at La Loggia
followed by a lecture by Gian Pietro Brogliolo on 'Excavations in Brescia (Provincia di
Siena)'. On Wednesday morning the conference was given a guided tour of medieval and
renaissance Siena by Dott. Parenti and then departed for Rome. The conference was jointly
hosted by the British School at Rome and the University of Siena and the Society is greatly
indebted to the staff of both institutions for making the conference a great success. The
outstanding contribution of the Provincia di Siena to the funding of the conference is also
greatly appreciated. A final word of thanks goes to Dr Hodges and Professor Francovich who,
as Local Secretaries, made the Rome/Siena conference one of the most enjoyable and
stimulating meetings held by the Society.

ALAN VINE