

Mosaic

IRON BRIDGE GORGE VISITED

AMONG THE HIGHLIGHTS of the joint Southwark and Lambeth Archaeological Society and Morley College Ceramic Circle recent three-day study tour to Shropshire, organised by Brian Bloice and Jim Cox, was the lecture on "The Ceramics of the Iron Bridge Gorge area," given by Miss Gaye Blake-Roberts of the Victoria and Albert Museum.

The talk ended a very busy first day in which the party visited the Rowley House and Clive House Museum in Shrewsbury; Much Wenlock village for its museum, priory and other historic buildings; Benthall Hall (a 16th century stone-built mansion) and the nearby land-drain pottery works; Brosley clay tobacco pipe factory (now derelict); and Buildwas Abbey.

Next day, a stimulating on-site lecture at the Roman town of Viroconium (Wroxeter) by Dr. A. W. Houghton, was followed by a visit to Coalbrookdale where the party saw the remains of the first coke-fuelled, iron-producing furnaces, and some half-timbered cottages being restored to house a working blacksmith. Further along the route were the derelict bottle kilns of the first Coalport porcelain works. After this, at the extensive Blists Hill open-air museum, Wendy Waterson guided the visitors around such exhibits as beam engines and minehead winding gear.

Visits were made on the last day to the old flax mill at Ditherington, Longdon cast-iron aqueduct (1796), Lilleshall Abbey and finally Bantock House museum, near Wolverhampton.

DEMOLITION OF FULHAM POTTERY

THE FULHAM POTTERY, a scene of archaeological activity for the last three years, is now to be demolished; the buildings are to be replaced with offices and showrooms. This follows a decision by the Department of the Environment overruling the local council, who had opposed the redevelopment, considering it to be inappropriate. The 19th century bottle kiln, one of only two remaining in London, is to be preserved as a museum, but not the listed buildings which surround it.

The Fulham Pottery and Cheavin Filter Company Ltd., who are developing the site, claim it could be a centre for pottery enthusiasts from all over the country and hope to run special courses in conjunction with the local education authorities.

ST. HELEN'S BISHOPSGATE

THE CLEARING of the site around St. Helen's uncovered for the first time for some hundreds of years the whole of the south elevation of the church and particularly the south transept.

The transept is reckoned to have been built around the middle of the 13th century and the outline of two lancet windows was traceable in the west wall. One of these has now been opened up completely and glazed. With the other, the right hand side has been partially opened, revealing traces of other windows within this second window; it cannot at the moment be opened completely owing to the presence of a large 17th century monument, on the inside, to Rachel Chambrélan, daughter of Sir John Laurence, Lord Mayor in the year of the Plague, 1665.

On the south wall of the transept is a large 17th century pointed window, but beneath this, stripping of the masonry has revealed the lower half of what would appear to have been three lancet windows similar to those on the adjoining west wall but a little smaller. Higher up is the outline of

another lancet matching those in the west wall. These smaller lancets would appear to be later than the larger ones.

On the main south wall of the church, just to the left of the transept, two relieving arches have been discovered, the purpose of which is, at present, uncertain.

THE SALT TOWER

PART OF the Tower of London is undergoing extensive treatment for severe damage to the stonework. The Salt Tower, first built in 1240 was used as a salt store in the Middle Ages and the soft limestone absorbed large quantities of salt which has attacked the stone, forcing the closure of the tower to visitors. Above the storeroom are dungeons, with walls covered with graffiti by medieval political prisoners.

Scientists from the Government sponsored Building Research Establishment at Garston, Herts, estimate the old ground floor storeroom may contain as much as 70lbs. of salt per ton of stone. For some years, unsuccessful efforts to stop the decay concentrated on sealing in the salts. Now an attempt is being made to leach the highly corrosive salt out of the stone by using clay poultices.

Meanwhile the upper storeys of the tower are being put to good use. By kind permission of the Department of the Environment, Southwark and Lambeth Archaeological Society are storing pottery there while the City of London Archaeological Society are processing the material from their excavation at Milk Street last year.

THE LONDON TRANSPORT COLLECTION

SYON PARK, Brentford, is now the home of the London Transport Collection of buses, trams, locomotives and rolling stock. The collection was moved from the now closed Clapham Transport Museum and is housed in the half-acre exhibition hall. It is hoped this home will be a permanent one. In addition to the twenty six vehicles on display, a large selection of tickets, photographs, maps and posters evocatively portray the development of London's transport system.

The exhibits include a 1929-built replica of Shillibeer's horse omnibus, used to start London's first regular horse bus service between Paddington and the Bank of England in July 1829, and the very first London trolleybus built by AEC in 1931.

The collection is open daily (except Christmas Day and Boxing Day). Admission 25p, children 15p.

TESSERA E

Under-Secretary for Archaeology — a new post has been created to implement the new government proposals for rescue archaeology. (grants to be increased to £813,000 p.a.) The new Under-Secretary is Dennis Haselgrove who is also Chairman of the Archaeological Section of Fulham and Hammersmith History Society.

Tower of London restoration — the original entrance at first floor level into the White Tower has been reopened by the Department of the Environment. The public will shortly be able to enter the building through the entrance using an oak staircase which is nearing completion.

Cyclops found — according to an official report from Sofia (mentioned in the *Sunday Express* on 12 August, 1973) Bulgarian archaeologists have found a complete skeleton (5ft. 11ins.) of a mythological cyclops; the skull has only one eye socket which was placed directly over the nose. Suggestions that the skeleton was Martin Bormann's have not been confirmed.