

POSTERN DISCOVERED AT TOWER HILL

IN RECENT YEARS the Tower of London has been defended by a novel sort of "moat" — the continuous stream of heavy traffic along Tower Hill, which cuts it off from the Tower Hill Underground Station. Whether anyone has been deterred from visiting the Tower by the difficulty of crossing the road, or has been knocked down in the attempt, is an open question, but now that the importance of tourists is recognised, the GLC has decided to build a pedestrian subway, giving access to Tower Gardens from Tower Hill Station.

Excavations in advance (just!) of this work were carried out by the Inner London Archaeological Unit on behalf of the DoE, and unexpectedly revealed the remains of the medieval Tower Postern gate, the exact location of which was previously unknown. The remains, which are remarkably well preserved, consist of a multi-angular tower with an entrance way to one side. Three arrow slits in the tower command the approach to the gate which was protected by two wooden gates and a portcullis, the groove for which can still be seen. The dressed masonry, much of which may have come from Caen, is of a quality to suggest that the tower could have been built from the late 13th century onwards by the Royal masons who were carrying out major alterations to the Tower of London.

The remains are to be conserved and will eventually be displayed in the pedestrian subway.

CHURCH MONUMENTS SOCIETY

WE RECENTLY REPORTED a symposium on Monumental Effigies and the decision to set up a new society (*L.A.* Vol. 3, No. 9, 252). We have since heard that it is to be called the International Society for the Study of Church Monuments, and that its aims are to promote the study, care and conservation of funerary monuments and related art of all periods and countries. This includes not only sculpture in the round or in relief, but also flat memorials, as well as both stained glass and wall painting associated with burials. For too long these forms of memorial have been studied in isolation from each other: brasses in particular have received much more attention than carving in three dimensions.

The Society aims to serve the needs of those actively involved with church monuments whether in a professional or private capacity: it will enable them to meet, notably at a Symposium which will be held every two years; it will keep them in touch with recent publications and research through the medium of a Newsletter. This will appear at least twice a year and will enable members to exchange information and ideas. The annual subscription is £2.50 (individuals) or £4 (institutions), and should be sent to The Secretary, International Society for the Study of Church Monuments, c/o The Armouries, H.M. Tower, London EC3N 4AB.

POST EXCAVATION PHOTOGRAPHY

Specialist post excavation photography of all types.

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EXCAVATIONS AT THE MERMAID THEATRE

DURING THE MONTHS of February to April 1979 the Department of Urban Archaeology of the Museum of London were given the opportunity, during the rebuilding of the Mermaid Theatre, to investigate the north-east corner of Puddle Dock in the hope of discovering the junction between the western return of the land wall and the 4th century riverside wall. Although, as the excavation commenced, it became increasingly obvious that the site did not extend far enough to the north to permit the excavation of the wall, a complete section was followed showing the changing face of the Dock, dating back from the 17th century. At the base of the Section, dug into the initial waterlaid deposit, was discovered the timber baseplates for a front and back braced reveted waterfront structure which turned from the Dock into an east-west alignment to form the river frontage, and can initially be dated, by its use of a chase mortise and secret method half lap joint for the front and back braces respectively, to the late 13th or early 14th century (C. Hewett, *Vernac. Arch.* 4, 18). This type of revetment is completely new to the London waterfront and looks as if it will complete the dendrochronological sequence between the latest phase at Seal House and the earliest at Trig Lane.

PAUL HERBERT

WATERFRONTS CONFERENCE

THE FIRST MAJOR international archaeological conference to be held at the Museum of London was *Waterfront Archaeology in North European Towns*, held on 20-22 April under the joint auspices of the Museum, the CBA and the Nautical Archaeology Trust. The standard of the lectures and the international participation made it a great success, so that the organisers felt confident enough to set up a Standing Conference on Waterfront Archaeology, charged with organising a conference every few years (the next will be in Bergen). The Museum, encouraged by the success of this venture, is now planning a major international conference on *Roman Town Defences* for 1980.

The *L.A.*'s special thanks go to the Museum's Photographic Department, whose display was one of the outstanding aspects of the conference. Many ordinary visitors to the Museum, who would not have had the time or money to attend the conference, enjoyed and benefitted from the photographic display. And that is what these big conferences are all about—the results must be made available to the general public in a form that they can understand, without talking down to them. We have been promised full publication of the conference papers (in the CBA's series of publications) and we await them with great interest.

TESSERA E

Young L.A.M.A.S.: the Hon. Secretary of the L.A.M.A.S. Youth Section is now Mrs. Vicky Woolard, Education Department, Museum of London, London Wall, London EC2.

New course: the University of Leicester is instituting a new one-year post-graduate Diploma in Post-Excavation Studies, from October 1979.