

PORCELAIN FROM FULHAM

ONE OF THE HIGHLIGHTS of the Fulham Pottery exhibition (see Vol. 3, No. 16, 448) was a blue and white fine stoneware vase in the Chinese style, by John Dwight in c. 1675, which was excavated at the Fulham Pottery in 1979. Dwight was the first to attempt porcelain production in England, and this is amongst his earliest — and less successful — efforts. In fact the 'recipe' of true Chinese porcelain remained a mystery until the 18th century. This is a waster, the glaze and cobalt decoration having blistered. The height is 5in (125mm). We are grateful to the Fulham Pottery Ltd. for allowing us to use a photograph of this vase for the cover of this issue.

MORE COMPETITION IN ARCHAEOLOGY

A RECENT DEVELOPMENT in archaeology has been the use of competitions to publicise and reward the excellent work, especially that of amateurs, up and down the country. First came the BBC's 'Chronicle' Award, first made in 1977, followed by the Lloyds Bank/CBA Schools Award and the Lloyds Bank Fund for Independent Archaeologists in 1978. These are still going strong, and even expanding, and this year there is a special prize for the teacher who has shown the most initiative in carrying out archaeological fieldwork with a group of students. The school projects in particular show how much valuable fieldwork can be done without actually digging — something that shouldn't need saying but does sometimes get overlooked.

This year, Surrey Archaeological Society will run a similar competition for local societies and amateur groups in their county. To commemorate the late I. D. Margary, the Society will make an annual award of £50 to the group or individual in Surrey which, in the opinion of the judges, has, over the preceding year, carried out the most worthwhile and interesting project in one or more of the following areas: field walking, site surveying and interpretation, excavation, re-assessment of existing archaeological material, documentary research related to archaeology.

Entry will be restricted to non-professional members of the Society or of an affiliated group and projects must have some relevance to archaeology in the county. The award for the first year will be made at the 1982 Symposium of the Excavations Committee when finalists will be expected to mount an exhibition and to give a ten minute talk.

Entry forms and full details may be obtained from Dr. D. G. Bird, County Planning Department, County Hall, Kingston upon Thames.

FROM ROMAN VILLA TO BOATING LAKE

ONE OF THE MORE enigmatic sites in south London is the Roman 'villa' at Beddington (just west of Croydon for those who don't know the area). It was discovered in 1871 while ditches were being dug for a sewage farm, and an excavation revealed the ground plan of a Roman bath-house, with stone walls and a tiled floor. The whole area then became part of the sewage farm, and the building was lost from view. The construction of a new Sewage Treatment Works in the late 1960s, and the introduction of more modern methods of treatment, meant that much of the land was no longer needed (except in case of emergency). Sporadic small excavations and chance viewing revealed the presence of other buildings, presumably also Roman, near the bath-house, and a general scatter of Roman material. However, some of these were not recorded and none was large enough to elucidate the layout and function of the site, so in the early 1970s an area of some 30 acres around the known building was scheduled as an Ancient Monument.

That would have been the end of the story, except that

the site, and much of the rest of the land surrounding the treatment works, is situated on gravel. A recently completed survey showed that large quantities of gravel could be extracted from the area and that, because clay underlies the gravel, a series of lakes could be formed in the resulting pits. This would mean the destruction of the bath-house and any associated buildings, as well as any archaeology of other periods. The authorities concerned — the Thames Water Authority, GLC, and the Boroughs of Croydon, Merton and Sutton, have therefore invited the South-West London Archaeological Unit to investigate the site before extraction takes place. The initial funding will come partly from these bodies, as part of the site survey, and partly from the D.o.E. The first phase of investigation is scheduled to last for nine months and volunteers will be welcome (see Excavations).

After the investigation, what then? If substantial and displayable remains are found (which seems unlikely after a century of sewage farming), the plans could be modified to allow for public access and viewing. Once the gravel is extracted and the lakes formed, they will be used to improve the quality of the effluent before it is discharged into the River Wandle. There are various recreational possibilities — fishing, boating and bird-watching have all been suggested, but it will be many years before these plans come to fruition.

PINNING DOWN THE PAST

ONE OF THE LARGEST and liveliest archaeological societies in the London area is the Hendon and District Archaeological Society, and it comes as a surprise to realise that it is only 20 years old this year. To mark this happy event, the Society has mounted an exhibition, *Pinning Down the Past*, in the London Borough of Barnet's Church Farm House Museum, Hendon.

The exhibition gives a fascinating picture of archaeological investigation in the late 20th century. Straightforward 'dirt' archaeology is well represented, with displays on several small excavations as well as two large ones — the long-running and important mesolithic site at West Heath, Hampstead, and the apparently never-ending Romano-British pottery kilns at Brockley Hill. Modern scientific aids are well represented, with magneto metric survey, radiocarbon dating and microscopical analysis of edge wear on flints all yielding useful results. Other conventional activities include a study of the history of Edgware, a survey of local almshouses and industrial archaeology, taking in the former Hendon aerodrome and the Schweppes factory for example.

There are also a number of special projects. A survey of all farms in the area, back to mediaeval times, reminds us of the rural roots of this recently urbanised area, as well as posing several problems for further research. This is a line that could be usefully be explored elsewhere in Greater London. 'Spin-offs' from this project include studies on milk production in Finchley (where the Express Country Milk Supply Co., later to become the giant Express Dairy, was founded) and on the Finchley hay trade. Artefact studies deal with delftware and the history of the pin, and there is a churchyard recording project from Friern Barnet.

Finally, every successful society has a flourishing social side, here illustrated by many outings to places of interest and by a Roman banquet, with authentic food, costume, decor and entertainment, held for Christmas 1979. All in all, an exhibition to be proud of, and perhaps just a little jealous of too.