

Books

Saxon and Norman London, by John Clark. *Museum of London*, 1989. 48 pp., illus., £3.95.

RECENTLY archaeology had been providing more and more clues to help with the decipherment of some of the obscure details of the Saxon and Norman periods in London, and that is enough justification for this expanded and rewritten version of a booklet published as recently as 1980. Closely following the format of the popular *Pitkin Guides* it is, presumably, aiming at a similar market. However, there is a big price gap and it remains to be seen whether the Pitkin buyers will rise to the bait.

It is to be hoped that they will. Despite the brief to fit a quart (or more) into a half-litre jug, the story is clearly told and the graphics designed to match. One or two of the photos (notably the cover) are particularly fine. The booklet is attractive and there seems to be a refreshing lack of destruction by over-designing.

The justifiable claim that archaeology has provided additional clues since 1980 mustn't, of course, lead to the belief that every question has been answered. The 5th century is as obscure as ever: more obscure, perhaps. Even the famous letter from the Emperor Honorius on which so much has been pinned for so long has had doubt cast upon it. Presumably the author accepts the subsequent refutation of the doubt,

for he maintains the traditional line: a certain amount of distancing might have been in order, but removal of the letter would leave a rather large vacuum.

One can always pick holes but I can't personally believe the wide, user-friendly stairway up to the door of the White Tower in the (beautifully photographed) reconstruction model. I also can't resist pointing out a tiny lost opportunity. Why, when mentioning the proximity of the Prior of Lewes' house in Bermondsey to the probable location of that of the Earl of Surrey and hinting that there may actually be an identity, does the author not point out that the de Warennes were the patrons of Lewes Priory and had a castle at Lewes? It would have given the author's hint a bit more thrust.

It is a pity, too, that, in the small print at the end – presumably provided by the museum administrators and not by the author – the implication is made that only the London and Middlesex Archaeological Society publishes full accounts of archaeological material from the London area. Why the role of the Surrey Archaeological Society has been ignored, only the bureaucrats can tell us. It is to be hoped that, if there is to be a reprint at any stage, this mistake will be rectified. It is almost worth a correction slip.

Dennis Turner

Excavations & Post-Excavation Work

City, by Museum of London, Department of Urban Archaeology. A series of long term excavations. Enquiries to DUA, Museum of London, London Wall, EC2Y 5HN (01-600 3699).

Croydon & District, processing and cataloguing of excavated and museum collections every Tuesday throughout the year. Archaeological reference collection of fabric types, domestic animal bones, clay tobacco pipes and glass ware also available for comparative work. Enquiries to Mrs Muriel Shaw, 28 Lismore Road, South Croydon, CR2 7QA (01-688 2720).

Greater London (except north-east and south-east London), by Museum of London, Department of Greater London Archaeology. Excavations and processing in all areas. General enquiries to DGLA, Museum of London (01-600 3699 ext. 241).

Local enquiries to:

North London: 3-7 Ray Street, London EC1R 3DJ (01-837 8363).

South-west London: St. Luke's House, Sandycombe Road, Kew, Surrey TW9 3NP (01-940 5989).

Southwark and Lambeth: 6-8 Cole Street, London SE1 4YH (01-407 1989 or 403 2920 – office – and 928 0778/9 – finds).

West London: Town Mission Hall, Mission Square, Pottery Road, Brentford, Middlesex (01-560 3880).

Hammersmith & Fulham, by Fulham Archaeological Rescue Group. Processing of material from Fulham Palace. Tuesdays, 7.45

p.m.-10 p.m. at Fulham Palace, Bishop's Avenue, Fulham Palace Road, SW6. Contact Keith Whitehouse, 86 Clancarty Road, SW6 (01-731 4498).

Kingston, by Kingston upon Thames Archaeological Society. Rescue sites in the town centre. Enquiries to Marion Shipley, Kingston Heritage Centre, Fairfield Road, Kingston (01-546 5386).

North-east London, by Passmore Edwards Museum. Enquiries to Pat Wilkinson, Passmore Edwards Museum, Romford Road, E15 4LW (01-534 4545).

Surrey, by Surrey Archaeological Unit. Enquiries to David Bird, County Archaeological Officer, Planning Department, County Hall, Kingston, Surrey (01-541 8911).

Vauxhall Pottery, by Southwark and Lambeth Archaeological Society. Processing of excavated material continues three nights a week. Enquiries to S.L.A.S., c/o Cuming Museum, 155 Walworth Road, SE17 (01-703 3324).

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