

those prevailing further downstream in the estuary. Also, and more crucially, such deposition or formation could take place at different periods from those outlined in Devoy's model.

In view of the complexity of studying the river regime along even a limited stretch, and the 'key-hole' nature of excavation in London, it can be extremely difficult in the majority of cases to establish with certainty whether the archaeological sites we are excavating in the floodplain were directly and exclusively influenced by the Thames or should more properly be considered as part of a wider river network. The results from Bryan Road have emphasized these problems outlined above. It was initially considered (before any form of analysis) that the peat horizon could be ascribed to the Tilbury IV stage (a period of peat formation defined by Devoy, falling within the Bronze Age, based on the type site at Tilbury, Essex). The date of approximately 3800 BC for the beginning of peat formation at Bryan Road demonstrated that this was a false assumption. This is further emphasized by the absence of silt and clays within the peat horizon, which is characteristic of Devoy's model. Subsequent analysis of the pollen and molluscs

also indicates pre-Tilbury IV peat formation.

Information from Bryan Road has shown how complex the interpretation of archaeological material is from river floodplain locations. In addition to dating and archaeological interpretation, it is necessary to carry out detailed studies of the associated peats and sediments to attempt to provide a clearer understanding of man's context within the landscape.

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Letters

Brockley Hill

IT IS NINETEEN years ago (to this very month of November) that I last excavated at Brockley Hill, so the excellent paper *Back to Brockley Hill* was not only thought-provoking, but brought back many happy memories of this rural north Middlesex site. It may interest readers to know that the photograph on the front cover portrays the late Philip Suggett, left, with two of his children and the late Gilbert F. Cole inspecting a flagon. These were the excavations carried out in 1952, adjacent to the former Hilltop Cafe, on the east side of Watling Street.

The period 1968-75 witnessed a campaign of intensive excavations, very largely rescue work — hampered by the limitations of amateur weekend activity and, in 1968, an acute shortage of labour! The wholesale destruction of, and extensive tipping on, archaeological features in Field 157 (Fig. 4, Area 3) pointed to the need for adequate full-time professional commitment.

Whilst it is gratifying to report that much of the Roman site has now been scheduled by English Heritage and the former Department of the Environment, a vast tract of land from Area 2, south-eastwards to Area 4, has been damaged by ploughing. Ironically land owned by that learned institution, All Souls' College, Oxford, since the reign of Henry VI. Yes, post-excavation research is to be welcomed, but please remember the inadequate nature of the various excavations from which the material was recovered and do not rule out the possibility of future large-scale work.

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Reigate stone

IN HER interesting article in *LA* 7, no. 9 (Autumn 1994), Ms de Domingo states that Domesday Book records two *Reigate* stone quarries near Limpsfield and that 'transport to London was easy with the River Mole about a mile away from the Upper Greensand quarries...'. I would like to comment on both these points.

Firstly, although DB does record two *fossae lapidu* under Limpsfield vill, it is not certain that these were Upper Greensand quarries. This rock does not outcrop noticeably at Limpsfield but a subordinate manor of Limpsfield is to be found at Willey in Chaldon, currently being studied by Mr Peter Gray. The medieval parish of Chaldon extended across the scarp of the Downs to reach the Upper Greensand beds at a place where they do outcrop notably and have been greatly exploited.

My second point is that the River Mole at Wonham and Flanchford is about two miles from the closest possible medieval quarry sites — those at Colley in Reigate parish. It was much further from others in Reigate and from those in Merstham, Chaldon and Godstone. Limpsfield itself is closer to the Darent.

The Mole is an erratic stream at the best of times and supported many mills and fish weirs, but its usefulness for transporting stone downstream is worth considering. The logistics of transporting stone in medieval times seems to have received all too little study, but the task is not likely to have been easy.

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