

Commentary by Gromaticus

Look out

It is very easy for students of London's archaeology to become very narrow in their vision. There is just so much archaeology in London (whether defined closely as the historic City, or more widely as Greater London), that it is hard enough to deal with what we have, without the extra work of looking outside. The exception is in the prehistoric periods, when 'London' as such doesn't exist, and we are forced to work with more natural geographical units such as the 'Lower Thames Valley'. But once London arrives, the focus can suddenly narrow down to modern political boundaries.

This is of course a great pity, because the archaeology of London cannot be studied in isolation from that of its hinterland, any more than the hinterland can be studied in isolation from London. There was probably no time in its history when London was totally self-sufficient. Nevertheless, the sheer size of London's hinterland in the middle ages can come as quite a surprise. I've recently been reading *Town and Country in the Middle Ages*, which includes a chapter on urban hinterlands of towns such as Leicester, Nottingham, Norwich and York as well as London. This summarises much work carried out by the Centre for Metropolitan History into various sorts of hinterlands – the migration hinterland (where do Londoners come from?), the trade hinterland (how far are goods regularly traded to and from London?) and the economic hinterland – and contains some surprises. For example, in the early 14th century nearly half (43%) of the immigrants to London came from over 50 miles away. In the early 15th century, debts were owed to Londoners from every English county, indicating very extensive trading links. The production of different crops around London seems to have been zoned, with high value grains and other crops passing through markets such as Henley and Faversham, and livestock coming from even further afield. Much of this evidence comes from the wide range of documents available from the late Middle Ages; it would be very interesting to conjecture, for example, what such patterns would have been like in the Roman period.

Bursaries for students

SCOLA, the Standing Conference on London Archaeology, is offering two bursaries, each of £150, to young students who wish to go on a training excavation in 2006. They will need to be at least 17 years of age by the time they start on the excavation, and will need to live or study within Greater London. Preference will be given to people under 21, and to people studying or having been accepted to study archaeology or a related subject. Successful candidates will need to secure their own place on the excavation, and the money will be paid to the organisers of the excavation. Holders of bursaries will be expected to write a 200–300 word article for the SCOLA summer newsletter.

Applications should be sent to Peter Pickering, Secretary of SCOLA, at 3 Westbury Road, Woodside Park, London N12 7NY, email pe.pickering@virgin.net, by 16 April 2006; they will be acknowledged. Email will be acceptable. Details should be given of the subjects currently being studied and of applications made to universities; the nature of the candidate's interest in archaeology; and which training dig has been applied to, if known. Teachers at schools and colleges, and those organising training excavations, are asked to draw this to the attention of any likely candidates.

Fieldwork Round-up 2005

Contributions to the *Fieldwork Round-up* for 2005 should be sent to Cath Maloney, Museum of London, 46 Eagle Wharf Road, London N1 7EE. They should be modelled on the ones in the 2004 Round-up, and if possible should be sent on a floppy disk as well as on paper.

Advance notice

The Annual Lecture and Meeting of the London Archaeologist will be held at 7 p.m. on Tuesday 23 May at the Institute of Archaeology, 31–34 Gordon Square, London WC1. The speaker will be Bill White of the Museum of London. A formal announcement will be made in the next issue, but meanwhile please make a note in your diaries.