

# Mosaic

## HLF grant for Thames Discovery Programme

An outreach project – the Thames Discovery Programme – has been given funding of £421,500 by the Heritage Lottery Fund to add further to our knowledge of the river's archaeology, by investigating what has been characterised as 'the longest archaeological site in London'. The Programme is a collaborative project run by the Thames Estuary Partnership and the Thames Explorer Trust, with support from the Museum of London, English Heritage and University College London. The project will engage volunteers in an archaeological survey of the river foreshore, monitoring twenty sites of particular interest, setting up a website and blog, running community events and holding an annual forum to discuss and disseminate each year's findings.

For further details, see the website of the Thames Estuary Partnership, [http://www.thamesweb.com/news\\_story.php?news\\_id=201](http://www.thamesweb.com/news_story.php?news_id=201)

## Telling the story of the Knights of St John

Another worthy recipient of a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund is the Order of the Knights of St John, whose Clerkenwell gatehouse, crypt and museum are about to have a £3.3 million makeover, having launched an appeal for £1.7 million, to complement £1.4 million from the Heritage Lottery Fund. Alan Borg, the former director of the Victoria and Albert Museum, and the order's official librarian, told *The Times* that one aim of the new museum would be to dispel some of the myths surrounding the order: 'They were not the Templars, who were a quite different order set up to protect Crusaders, and there is no connection whatever with the Freemasons; the Hospitallers were wholly devoted to healing and care, as their descendants are today'.

When the Knights Templar were disbanded in 1309, the Pope gave their property to the Hospitallers, allowing them to build the Clerkenwell Priory that is depicted in Wenceslas Hollar's 1661 view of London, resembling the courtyard of an Oxford or Cambridge college. The church and gatehouse are all that now remains. The church, modelled on Jerusalem's Church of the Holy Sepulchre, like the Temple church, on the Strand, hides behind an anonymous 1950s frontage, but the 12th-century crypt is one of the finest medieval buildings in London. The gatehouse once served as the offices of the *Gentleman's Magazine*, and as a pub, before being re-acquired as the headquarters of the revived Order of the Knights of St John in the 1880s. The new museum will tell the story of the Order from its foundation in 11th-century Jerusalem to the brigade's role as the official first aiders at the 2012 Olympics, now the largest voluntary aid organisation in the world.

## Barbary lion skulls found at the Tower of London

The application of science to archaeological finds was illustrated by an article in the journal *Contributions in Zoology*, which reported that two lions' skulls recovered from the Tower of London moat belonged to Barbary lions, a subspecies of lion from the Barbary (or Berber) Coast of North Africa that is now extinct in the wild. The lions formed part of the collection that made up the Royal Menagerie, set up by King John to receive gifts of wild animals given by other European monarchs, but also to breed animals to give as gifts in turn.

The skulls were excavated in the 1930s; recent radiocarbon tests dated one of them to between 1280 and 1385 and the other to between 1420 and 1480. Western North Africa was the nearest region to Europe to sustain lion populations until the early 20th century, making it a practical source for medieval animal traders. Tests are planned to determine whether the lions were born and trapped in North Africa or bred from captive stock, perhaps at the Tower itself.

## Museum closed

The popular Livesey Museum for Children in the Old Kent Road was closed by the London Borough of Southwark on 29 February, less than five weeks after news broke that it was even under threat. The Leader of the Council explained "The decision to close the museum was taken because the council has been forced to make savings because its funding has been cut by the government. This was a very difficult decision to make." The future of the building, given to the people of Peckham in 1890 by Sir George Livesey, is now in doubt, although the Council says it has no specific plans to sell it off quickly.

## Heritage at Risk project launched

English Heritage launched its *Heritage At Risk* project on 8 July, which will make England the only country in Europe to have a comprehensive knowledge of the state of its protected heritage and the analysis to save this precious and finite resource for the future. The initiative is based on the success of English Heritage's *Buildings at Risk Register*. Published annually since 1998, this *Register* has transformed the approach taken by English Heritage itself, other conservation bodies, local authorities and owners to saving Grade I and Grade II\* listed buildings. The new *Heritage At Risk Register* aims to extend this formula to Grade II buildings, scheduled monuments, archaeology, historic landscapes, parks and gardens, places of worship, conservation areas, battlefields and even designated maritime wrecks, in fact any and every bit of England's protected heritage

which is deemed to be at risk of loss through decay or damage.

## Carpet of stone: medieval mosaic pavement revealed

A mosaic pavement at Westminster Abbey, known as the Cosmati work after the Roman family of marble workers who perfected its technique, has recently been re-exposed. It was laid in the 1260s, when Henry III sent his new Abbot of Westminster, Richard de Ware, for talks with the Pope in Rome. The Englishman saw a newly-installed pavement in the Pope's summer residence, knew it was just the thing for the cathedral which Henry was rebuilding around the tomb of St Edward the Confessor, and arrived home with a ship-load of marble, glass and Italian craftsmen. Henry's tomb, and the saint's shrine, were originally covered in similar work, but all the scraps of marble and glass were picked out as sacred relics by generations of pilgrims.

Only a handful of brass letters remains of the original long inscription, but it was transcribed centuries ago. It names the king, the chief craftsman as Odoricus, gives the date in a tortuous riddle, and then suggests that the world will last for 19,683 years, by adding together the life spans of different animals: "add dogs and horses and men, stags and ravens, eagles, enormous whales."

Careful cleaning and a radar survey have revealed that, although the pavement bears the scars of centuries of repairs and patching, most of it is original: the rich green and plum-coloured porphyry – almost certainly from ancient Roman sculptures and architectural fragments – still bedded in the limestone mortar laid by medieval craftsmen.

For most of the past 150 years it has been covered in thick layers of carpet, intended to protect but in fact just adding to the dirt and staining. Even when the Queen was crowned above it in 1953, the royal pavement was covered over.

A two-year restoration programme will stabilise the pavement, so that a treasure from the middle ages can be permanently displayed in a 21st-century cathedral. (Source: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/science/2008/may/05/archaeology.art>)

## Antiquaries go on tour

A sub-set of the Society of Antiquaries of London exhibition *Making History: Antiquaries in Britain 1707–2007* is to go on tour, thanks to a grant of £300,000 from the Heritage Lottery Fund. It will be hosted by four regional museums: the Sunderland Museum and Winter Gardens, The Potteries Museum in Stoke-on-Trent, Salisbury and South Wiltshire Museum, and The Collection: Art and Archaeology in Lincolnshire. This is a second chance to see it if you missed it in London.

# Diary

## July

18 (3 p.m.) National Archaeology Week. 'Preparing for 2012 – East London archaeology' by Kieron Tyler. Museum of London Terrace Room.

18 (7 p.m.) City of London Archaeological Society. 'The City of London Cemetery & Crematorium – its past and future' by David McCarthy. St Katharine Cree Church Hall, Leadenhall Street, London EC3.

## September

8 (7.45 p.m.) West Essex Archaeological Group. 'Experimental Archaeology: the Butser Experiment' by Steve Dyer. Sixth Form Unit, Woodford County High School, High Road, Woodford Green.

11 (8 p.m.) Kingston upon Thames Archaeological Society. 'Timber Framed Buildings in Surrey' by Martin Higgins. Mayo Hall, United Reformed Church, Union Street/Eden Street, Kingston.

19 (7 p.m.) City of London Archaeological Society. 'Channel Rail Link investigations in the Lea Valley' by Andy Crockett. St Katharine Cree Church Hall, Leadenhall Street, London EC3.

## October

9 (8 p.m.) Kingston upon Thames Archaeological Society. 'Excavations at Hatch Furlong' by Jonathan Cotton. Mayo Hall, United Reformed Church, Union Street/Eden Street, Kingston.

10 (8 p.m.) Richmond Archaeological Society. 'Aldgate, East London, Excavations' by Lorna Richardson. Vestry Hall, Paradise Road, Richmond.

13 (7.45 p.m.) West Essex Archaeological Group. 'Recent Excavations at St. Martin's in the Fields' by Alison Telfer. Sixth Form Unit, Woodford County High School, High Road, Woodford Green.

17 (7 p.m.) City of London Archaeological Society. 'The excavations at Drapers Gardens' by Neil Hawkins. St Katharine Cree Church Hall, Leadenhall Street, London EC3.

## Courses

**Barcombe Roman Villa Project**, week-long and weekend courses in excavation and related skills from 14 July to 8 August. Fees £185 and £70 respectively. Details from Centre for Continuing Education, Essex House, University of Sussex, Falmer, Brighton BN1 9QQ, tel. 01273 678 527, email [si-enquiries@sussex.ac.uk](mailto:si-enquiries@sussex.ac.uk), see [www.sussex.ac.uk/cce/archaeology](http://www.sussex.ac.uk/cce/archaeology).

**Kent Archaeological Field School**, weekend and week-long courses until October. Fees £70 for 2-day courses. Archaeological Training Week 25–29 August. Details from Kent Archaeological Field School, School

Farm Oast, Graveney Road, Faversham, Kent ME13 8UP, tel. 01795 532 548, [www.kafs.co.uk](http://www.kafs.co.uk).

**West Essex Archaeological Group Field School**, 11–15 and 18–22 August at Copped Hall, near Epping, Essex. Not for beginners. Full details from Mrs Pauline Dalton, Roseleigh, Epping Road, Epping, Essex CM16 5HW (tel. 01992 813 725 or email [pmd2@ukonline.co.uk](mailto:pmd2@ukonline.co.uk)).

## Conferences

**Roman Discoveries in Kent and London**, Council for Kentish Archaeology, Saturday 25 October at The Powell Lecture Theatre, Canterbury Christ Church College, North Holmes Road, Canterbury. Speakers include Neil Hawkins on the Drapers Gardens Hoard. Tickers price £4 from CKA, 7 Sandy Ridge, Borough Green, Kent TN15 8HP (sae please). Website [www.the-cka.fsnet.co.uk](http://www.the-cka.fsnet.co.uk).

## Events

**Crofton Roman Villa, Orpington, special events for children**

**Wednesdays in August**. Find out about the villa and farm, and handle Roman artefacts. Sessions at 10.30 a.m. and 2.30 p.m.

**Fridays in August**. Find out about Roman pots and make your own, Sessions 10.30 a.m. to 1.00 p.m. and 2.00 p.m. to 4.00 p.m.

## Exhibitions

**Jack the Ripper and the East End**, at the Museum in Docklands until 2 November. The first major exhibition to examine the Jack the Ripper murders and their enduring legacy. Stepping back in time to late-Victorian Whitechapel, the exhibition will uncover the human stories behind the sensational reports and explore the lives of the victims, witnesses, suspects and police, and the world they lived in.

**Skeletons: London's buried bones** at the Wellcome Collection, 183 Euston Road, NW1, 23 July to 28 September. Open 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Tuesday to Saturday and bank holidays (open to 10 p.m. Thursday), Sunday 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Admission free. Twenty-six skeletons from the Museum of London's Centre of Human Bioarchaeology uncover 2000 years of history, increasing our understanding of how Londoners once lived, and providing insights into the health, diet, diseases suffered and lifestyle of the deceased. [www.wellcomecollection.org](http://www.wellcomecollection.org)

## Membership

Individual membership of the Council for British Archaeology, which includes six issues a year of *British Archaeology*, costs

£32 p.a.; joint membership with the *London Archaeologist* costs £40 p.a. Payment should be sent to C.B.A., St Mary's House, Bootham, York, YO30 7BZ (01904 671 417).

## National Archaeology Week

**Time Detectives**, Saturday 12 July, at the Institute of Archaeology. Activities for all ages. *London Archaeologist* will collaborate with archaeological contractors including Archaeology South East to bring activities like finds handling, ancient crafts and maybe even geophysics! Also tours of the Institute Collections and Conservation Laboratories, and the Petrie Museum of Egyptian Archaeology. See p. 31.

**Fun and Games at the Museum of London**, 19–20 July. Roman games and soldiers, medieval bowmen, other games and activities.

Tours of the amphitheatre at 12.30 p.m. and 2.30 p.m. (advanced booking required). For information and booking, call Museum of London Box Office on 0870 444 3850 or visit [www.museumoflondon.org.uk](http://www.museumoflondon.org.uk).

**Hidden Secrets** Archaeology Fun Weekend at Fulham Palace, Bishops Avenue, SW6. Be an archaeologist; have a go at a dig, sort and identify some finds. Saturday 19 July 11 a.m. to 2 pm, Sunday 20 July 12 pm to 3 pm. Age 5yrs upwards (children to be accompanied by an adult.) Free, but booking essential. Adults welcome too. More information from [www.fulhampalace.org](http://www.fulhampalace.org) or phone 020 7736 3233 to book. Nearest tube Putney Bridge; buses 14, 74, 220, 414, 430.

**Crofton Roman villa**, Sunday 20 July. Displays on the life of a soldier at 10.30 a.m. and 2.30 p.m., and on home life in the villa at 11.30 a.m. and 3.30 p.m. Entry £2 /£1.

## Practical archaeology

**AOC Archaeology Group**. Contact Melissa Melikian, Post-Excavation Manager (020 8843 7380).

**London Archaeological Archive and Research Centre**. Contact Archive Manager, Roy Stephenson (020 7566 9317).

**Croydon & District**. Contact Jim Davison, 8 Brentwood Road, South Croydon, CR2 0ND.

**Borough of Greenwich**. Contact Greenwich Heritage Centre, Building 41, Royal Arsenal, Woolwich, SE18 6SP (020 8854 2452).

**Hammersmith & Fulham**. Contact Keith Whitehouse, 85 Rannoch Road, W6 9SX (020 7385 3723).

**Kingston**. Enquiries to 020 8546 5386.

**Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd**. Contact Finds Manager, Mairi Gaimster (020 7639 9091).

**Surrey**. Enquiries to Rob Poulton, Archaeological Unit Manager, Surrey History Centre, 130 Goldsworth Road, Woking GU21 1ND (01483 594 634).