

Mosaic

Bloomberg bonanza

A new publication¹ from MOLA reveals that the excavations at the Bloomberg site in the Walbrook valley were even more significant than at first we thought (see *LA 13* no. 9 (Summer 2013) 242–3). It gives details of 405 Roman waxed writing tablets (87 have been deciphered), increasing London's corpus fourfold. Highlights include:

- the earliest dated hand-written document from Britain (8 January AD 57),
- a tablet dated to AD 43–53,
- and the earliest reference to London, dated to AD 65–80.

For more details see www.mola.org.uk/blog/archaeological-research-britain%E2%80%99s-oldest-hand-written-documents-released.

1. Roman London's first voices: writing tablets from the Bloomberg excavations, 2010–2014. by Roger SO Tomlin (2016). We hope to publish a review in a future issue.

Exposing the Curtain

Archaeologists from MOLA have started a detailed excavation of the *Curtain* theatre in Shoreditch, one of Shakespeare's least historically documented playhouses. Evidence for the theatre, revealed through trial excavation at the site of *The Stage* in 2012, indicates that the remains are exceptionally well preserved, surviving to over 1.5m in places. It is hoped that the remains of the *Curtain*, which are about two to three metres below modern ground level, will give more clues about the physical structure and use of the theatre, and shed new light on the cultural makeup of the area and performances in the 16th and 17th centuries. Excavation of elements from the 16th and 17th centuries began in April, and suggest that the theatre may have been rectangular, not octagonal.

Once the excavation is complete, the remains of the *Curtain* will be preserved *in situ*, and artefacts discovered and records taken during the excavation will be studied. A recent find was part of a ceramic bird whistle, which may have been a Shakespearean sound effect, possibly for an early performance of *Romeo and Juliet*. A display of the finds will sit alongside the theatre remains as part of a cultural and visitor centre at *The Stage*, a £750m mixed-use scheme including 33,000 sq ft of retail, over 200,000 sq ft of office space, and more than 400 homes. The development will also feature over an acre of public space, including a performance area and a park. Building works began in Spring 2016 and the site is expected to be completed in 2019. A video about the excavation is available at <https://youtube/la7027fleNU>. For more information, visit www.thestage.shoreditch.com or follow @TheStageEC2 and @CurtainTheatre on Twitter.

Hoefnagel under the hammer

The earliest depiction of Nonsuch Palace is at risk of being exported from the UK unless a buyer can be found to match the asking price of £1m. Culture Minister Ed Vaizey has placed a temporary export bar on *Nonsuch Palace from the South* by Joris Hoefnagel in case a buyer can come forward to keep it in the UK. Henry VIII's Nonsuch Palace in Surrey is considered one of the Renaissance period's most stunning buildings. Built in 1538 to mark Henry VIII's 30th year on the throne and the birth of his son Edward, the palace aimed to rival the opulent residences of the French king Francis I. Flemish artist Joris Hoefnagel's watercolour is the oldest of only six remaining depictions of the palace. He painted the view of Nonsuch during his visit to England in 1568, detailing the decoration of the palace's elaborate South Front. The export licence decision has been deferred until 31 May. This may be extended until 31 August if a serious intention to raise funds to buy the watercolour is made, at the recommended price of £1,000,000. It is not the first time the painting has been taken to market in recent years. In 2010 it was up for auction at Christie's, but failed to meet its reserve and remained unsold; it went on long-term loan to the V&A. The vendor is now seeking a similar price.

Grants from the City of London Archaeological Trust

The City of London Archaeological Trust (CoLAT) invites applications for small to medium grants to support archaeological and related historical work in the City and its environs, as in previous years. The grants will be for one year only from 1 April 2017, and this year's deadline for applications is Friday 23 September 2016. CoLAT will meet to decide the grants in early December.

Application forms and procedures are on the CoLAT website, www.colat.org.uk, which has been recently enhanced. Please note the procedures have been revised for this year. Guidance may also be obtained from the Secretary, John Schofield, john@jschd.demon.co.uk.

Raising Awareness of Our Heritage

Charlotte Matthews, Head of Historic Buildings and Landscapes at Pre-Construct Archaeology, is collecting photographs of buildings with dates on them, and wants to collect about 200 dated buildings by August 2016. She will publish them on line and give a talk on them on 1 August 2016. This will be a great resource for architectural historians, interested people and visitors. You can help by photographing the façade of any dated buildings with a close-up of the date on them (if not clearly visible), and then

email the photographs to her (cmatthews@pre-construct.com) with a brief address of the building photographed.

Allan Tribe and Jon Finney

Two influential contributors to London's archaeology, Allan Tribe and Jon Finney, died in March 2016.

Allan Tribe, a chartered accountant, served as the Hon Treasurer of both the London and Middlesex Archaeological Society (LAMAS) and the Southwark and Lambeth Archaeological Committee (SLAEC) from the late 1960s to the early 1980s. He brought his considerable personal and professional skills to the service of London's archaeology at a time of great challenge.

If Allan hadn't been willing to shoulder the burden of the financial administration of the new archaeological teams set up by LAMAS and SLAEC (see p. 226), it's doubtful whether they could have been established successfully or have survived the annual struggle to find funds from local and national government sources for the next financial year! Allan's commitment to the cause and sound financial administration never wavered. His service to both LAMAS and SLAEC continued into the 1980s when he moved away from London.

Jon Finney, a town planner, architect and conservation officer, spent his much of his professional life working in Greater London's local planning authorities. I first met Jon in the later 1980s, when, as a keen advocate of archaeology both above and below ground, he offered encouragement and support to the DGLA's West London field team engaged in investigating sites facing redevelopment in built-up areas and mineral extraction on the extensive gravel terraces around Heathrow. Jon was also committed to the provision of an integrated archaeological service for London, which became increasingly difficult to achieve in the years after the abolition of the GLC.

In the mid-1990s Jon became Chair of LAMAS' Historic Buildings and Conservation Committee. His belief in the importance of architecture, his long involvement with London's built environment and his awareness of the importance of archaeological recording both above and below ground made him ideal for this very demanding role. The Committee's work load was heavy, dealing largely with applications for listed building consent referred to LAMAS by the Council for British Archaeology. Often about 50 cases had to be examined at each monthly meeting. Jon studied each case thoroughly, visiting and photographing the major sites, guiding the Committee's deliberations and ensuring that the responses made to London's local planning authorities were clear and cogent. Jon's death leaves a gap which will be very difficult to fill.

Harvey Sheldon

Diary

Please note that most societies anticipate a donation for attendance by non-members.

July

21 (8 p.m.) Bexley Archaeological Group. 'Archaeology and modern paganism' by Ethan White. Bexley and Sidcup Conservative Club, 19 Station Road, Sidcup.

August

19 (7.15 p.m.) City of London Archaeological Society. 'Recent Projects on Ancient Monuments in Greater London' by Jane Sidell. St Olave's Hall, Mark Lane, EC3.

September

7 (8 p.m.) Orpington & District Archaeological Society. 'Saxons at The Adelphi' by Dougie Killock. Christ Church (United Reformed), Tudor Way, Petts Wood.

9 (8 p.m.) Enfield Archaeological Society. 'Life in post-medieval Southwark: finds from recent excavations' by Jacqui Pearce. Jubilee Hall, Parsonage Lane, Enfield.

9 (8 p.m.) Richmond Archaeological Society. 'Mummification in Bronze Age Britain' by Tom Booth. Vestry Rooms, Paradise Road, Richmond.

16 (7 p.m.) City of London Archaeological Society. 'The King's Observatory: The quest for Shene Charterhouse and an old latrine' by Bob Cowie. St Olave's Hall, Mark Lane, EC3.

Conferences

Rescuing and Recording Kent's Lost

Heritage, C.K.A. and Kent Archaeological Society conference at Rutherford College, Canterbury University, Canterbury, at 2 p.m. on Saturday 15 October. Programme to be announced. Non-members tickets £5 (cheques payable to CKA) in September, please send s.a.e. to 7 Sandy Ridge, Borough Green, Kent TN15 8HP.

1066: Interpreting the Norman Conquest in 2016, by the Royal Armouries at the Tower of London, 14–16 October. The conference is intended for a general audience; subjects will include the background to the Conquest, arms and armour, architecture, landscape, government, aristocracy, the church, society, the Bayeux Tapestry and the task of studying the period today. Contact: bookings@armouries.org.uk or call 0113 220 1888.

Exhibitions

Fire! Fire! at the Museum of London from 23 July until 17 April 2017. An interactive exhibition to commemorate the 350th anniversary of the Great Fire of London. Admission: adult from £8 online, child aged 5–16 years from £5 online (under 5s go free),

Festival of Archaeology

16 – 31 July 2016

The 26th Festival of Archaeology again this year runs over 16 days in July and features over 1000 events nationwide.

Londoners will find a broad range of activities being organised by museums, local societies, heritage sites and specialist projects across the capital for all ages. Among the highlights of early listings:

- Burlington House Lates reveals Georgian and Victorian contributions to and history of the Society of Antiquaries and other learned societies
- Museum of London looks at what science tells us about archaeology and artefacts in a Poo and You event for families...
- ...while MOL at Docklands will be viewing local archaeology and history through an interactive walk



featuring real museum objects

- lunchtime talks at Rainham Hall examine results of recent excavations
- the Institute of Archaeology is organising a host of free, fun, family activities in their day-long world archaeology festival
- Kingston Museum uses touch, hearing, sight and smell to sense history and archaeology.

Events are being registered right up to the start date, so check the festival website for latest details and timings: archaeologyfestival.org.uk.

concessions from £6.40 online. See preview p 250.

Membership

Individual membership of the Council for British Archaeology, which includes six issues a year of *British Archaeology*, costs £36 p.a. Visit: <https://shop.britarch.ac.uk/>.

Open days

Crofton Roman Villa, Orpington, 27, 29 and 31 July, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. An exhibition on the archaeology of Hayes with artefacts and displays from the Neolithic and Bronze Age sites and the Roman Bath House. Entry: Adults £1.50, Concessions £1.00. Tel.: 01689 860939, email: crofton.romanvilla@gmail.com, web: www.the-cka.fsnet.co.uk.
Crofton Roman Villa, Orpington, Wednesdays and Fridays throughout August. Children's activities at 10.30 a.m. and 2.30 p.m.; up to 8-year-olds on Wednesdays, up to 13-year-olds in Fridays. No booking needed. Children need to be accompanied. Entry £4 per child, adult carers free.

Short courses

Kent Archaeological Field School. Short courses throughout 2016, including excavation training weeks 8 to 12 August and 3 to 11 September. Details from the Kent Archaeological Field School, School Farm Oast, Graveney Road, Faversham, Kent

ME13 8UP, or visit www.kafs.co.uk.

Sussex School of Archaeology. Day schools and longer courses throughout 2016, day schools usually cost £40. Details from Sussex School of Archaeology Limited, Unit 12, Mays Farm Selmeston, Polegate, East Sussex BN26 6TS. Telephone 01323 811785 or visit www.sussexarchaeology.org.

West Essex Archaeological Group

Excavation Taster Weekends at Copped Hall, near Epping, aimed at complete beginners, 16–17, 23–24 and 30–31 July. Also Five-Day Field Schools, ongoing excavation of Tudor mansion at Copped hall, near Epping, 13–17 and 27–31 August. For details and bookings of both courses, visit www.weag.org.uk.

Practical archaeology

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

London Archaeological Archive and Research Centre. Contact Archive Manager, Francis Grew (020 7566 9317).

Croydon & District. Contact Jim Davison, 8 Brentwood Road, South Croydon, CR2 0ND.
Borough of Greenwich. Contact Greenwich Heritage Centre (020 8854 2452).

Hammersmith & Fulham. Contact Keith Whitehouse (020 7385 3723).

Kingston. Enquiries to 020 8546 5386.

MOLA. Contact Karen Thomas, Head of Archive (020 7410 2228).

Pre-Construct Archaeology. Contact Finds Manager, Märit Gaimster (020 7639 9091).

Surrey. Enquiries to Rob Poulton, Archaeological Unit Manager, Surrey History Centre (01483 594 634).