

# WEAG NEWS

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December 2008

Jonathan Cotton's lecture on 10<sup>th</sup> November

London has been described as an archaeological ring doughnut, with evidence of prehistoric occupation around the circumference but nothing much in the middle, where whatever traces existed have been expunged by Londinium and subsequent phases of building. Several types of evidence of an Iron Age presence exist in many parts of England – hill forts, defended enclosures, settlements with iron working, house clusters, burials, bog bodies, place deposits, etc. Both west and east London have classic Iron Age sites of these types, and work around Heathrow Airport and on the Olympic site is currently adding to our knowledge. From 1600 BC a human presence is shown, and it recovers again between 800 and 400 (the early Iron Age) but rather different features characterise the prehistory of the east and west sides of London. Early historians, like Geoffrey of Monmouth, and antiquarians, like Stukeley, had speculated about the origins of the words *London* and *Thames*. There seems to be a division between concepts of the upper and lower Thames, with Londinium and the River Lee marking the divide. An early form of the word *Thames* means “dark river”, perhaps describing the upper reaches. The historical linguist Richard Coates has proposed a word *Plowonida* (from which *London* is derived) to define the lower river, possibly below the tidal head, meaning “the flooding one”. Reporter Nick Bateson

## FROM GIL GREETINGS FOR WINTER SOLSTICE/SATURNALIA/YULE/CHRISTMAS

*At the turn of the year things can only get better..?? Anyway it gets lighter!!*

**Jan 19 Social evening:** Meet new people. Drinks, Eats, Raffle & Quiz. BRING SOME BOOKS FOR THE SALE 7.30 to 9.45

**Feb 9 Hedley Swain:** Museums and Archaeology

**Mar 9 AGM 7.30:** followed by **Harvey Sheldon** (*if you have items to discuss contact Theresa*).

**EXHIBITIONS:- British Museum**

Babylon. Late nights Thurs. and Fri. £8. From Ishtar Gate to today's damage via Jews, Daniel Jewellery  
Shah Abbas. Coming from February

Royal Academy

Byzantium - Huge show of Art and artefacts 330 to 1453

Wonderful and every day objects - Stuff from Sinai-Takes several hours £10 Or £12

Wellcome Institute (opposite Euston station) Medicine and War 150 years FREE Closed Mon. Late night Thurs.

Natural History Museum Darwin born 1809 (told it is free)

**TALKS RAI 5 pm Society of Antiquaries**

**Dec 10** Iron Age Middens **Feb. 11** Tessa Verney Wheeler, Mortimer's first wife and Archaeologist

**Mar 11** Vale of Pickering **Dec 11** AT THE BM, Babylon Art and Culture

**EMMAS Dec 12** UCL Hospital Cruciform building Mark Hassall "The road to Rome" 7 pm for 7.30

**Birkbeck 7 pm Jan 9** the Catherine Gowland **Jan 30** Steve Dyer Butser

Feb 13 David Hill Peter Reynolds Memorial Lecture

**Prehistoric Society Feb 7** All day Neolithic in Thames Valley at Society of Antiquaries £30/£35

**Oxford Continuing Education (01865 270368) Sat Jan 4** Archaeology of the Holy Land British contribution

Mar 14-15 Stone tools practical session **Mar 27-29** Towns in England 300 AD to 700

Jan 7-9 Religious Architecture 547 to 2008

**HAVE A GOOD 2009**

## News from the Research & Excavation Committee

*Walk from Chipping Ongar to Greensted Church on 23<sup>rd</sup> November*

Thanks to Shaun McClory for organising a most interesting walk. It was snowing/raining at first but, after a strategic stop in a café to thaw ourselves out, the sun came out and the rest of the walk was in glorious weather. A report on what we saw will be in the end-of-year *Newsletter*.

A poster entitled “A local society experience of a geophysical survey”, showing WEAG at work in Wanstead Park and drawn up by John Shepherd and Ralph Potter, will be featured at a one-day conference of the Geological Society on “Recent Work in Archaeological Geophysics”, to be held at Burlington House on Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> December. The conference is likely to be quite technical; cost £25. If you would like to go, email Louise.Martin@english-heritage.org.uk.

*Special WEAG meeting on Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> March at 7.30 pm*

This will be a report-back to the membership on all our recent practical work, featuring Copped Hall and Wanstead Park but also touching upon several smaller projects. It will be open to all WEAG members and to interested friends (cost £1 per member, £3 per friend). The venue will be Wingrove Hall, at the south end of Beech Hall Rd, Highams Park. The poster (see item above) will be on display. More detail in the next *News*.

*Digs at Copped Hall next August*

This is to add to the basic information given in the November *News*. The cost of the Training Dig week (starting 10<sup>th</sup> August), designed for beginners and including basic instruction in excavation and recording techniques, will be £130 for a WEAG member (£140 for a non-member). The cost of the Field School week (starting 17<sup>th</sup> August), which is intended for experienced diggers and will include supervision but no instruction, will be £80 (£90 for a non-member). Please note: in both weeks drinks and biscuits will be provided but you will need to bring a packed lunch.