

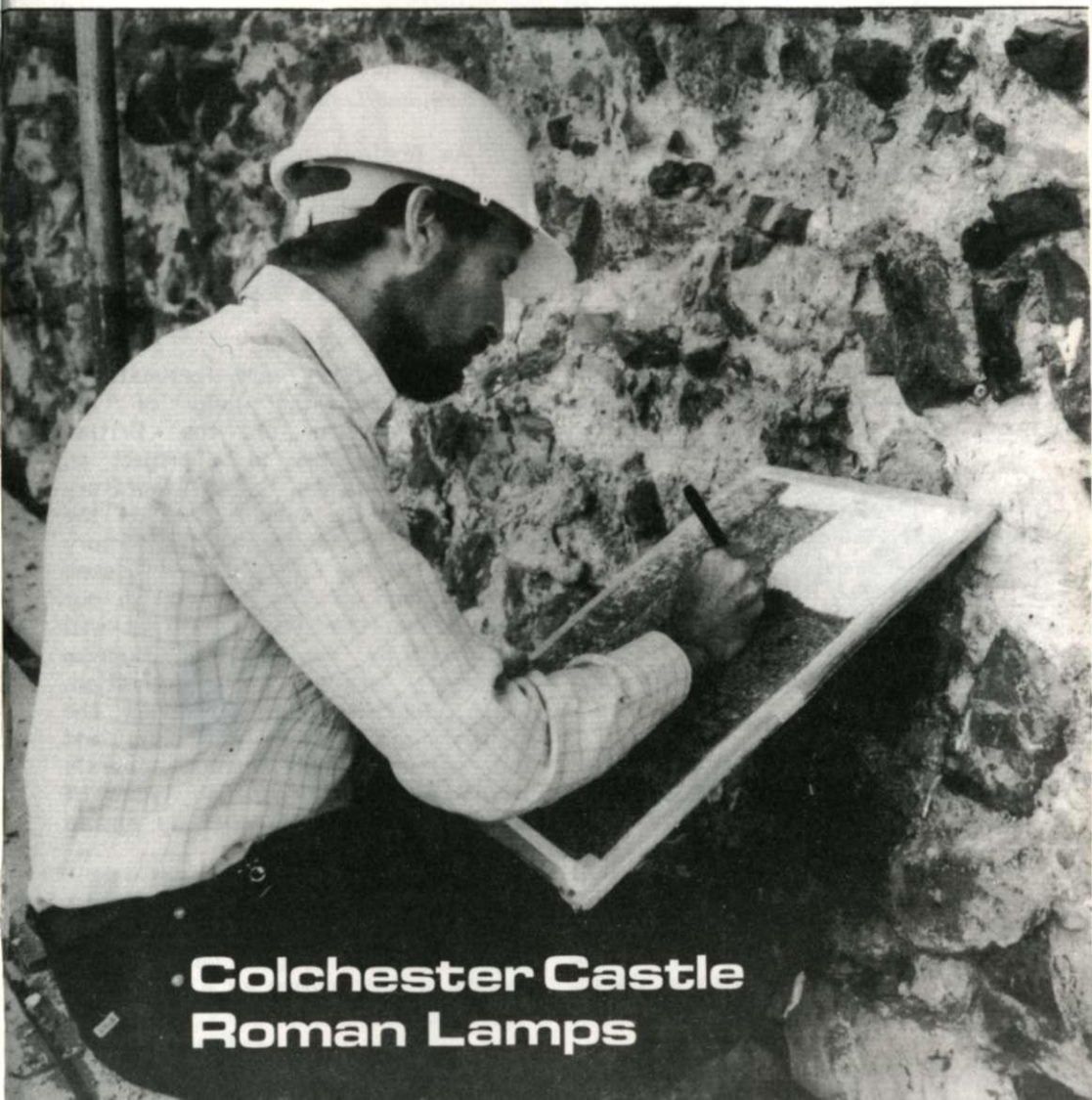


# CATALOGUE

NEWS OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATIONS IN COLCHESTER

Number 14

winter 1984



**Colchester Castle  
Roman Lamps**

# NEW LIGHT ON OLD LAMPS

It is appropriate that this edition of **CATALOGUE** is going out during the pantomime season. We are all familiar with the shape of the lamp used by Aladdin, but many of you will probably not be aware that Colchester has played a part (admittedly a very minor role) in spreading the use of oil lamps, which are mediterranean in origin and which still survive there, to the northern Roman provinces.

The Colchester and Essex Museum houses a very important group of early Roman clay lamps and lamp moulds. These come from a Boudican destruction level in the north of the town, and show that lamps were being made here from the earliest days of the Roman occupation, probably by a lamp-maker who had moved to Britain from the continent to exploit the potential market opened up by the invasion.

The lamps were made in two-piece moulds with an upper and a lower part. Clay was pressed into each half of the mould which was then fitted together. When the clay was dry the mould was taken apart to reveal the complete lamp. This was next dipped in a coloured slip and fired in a kiln.

Early Roman clay lamps are known as picture lamps because of the designs on the top (the discus). The pictures on the lamps from Colchester's factory are well executed and classical in style. They show the goddess Luna (the moon), a barbarian rider, an erotic scene, a winged cupid with a shield, Hercules, a lion, and several other designs.

During excavations in the town we have found many fragments of picture lamps, and even a few complete, or nearly complete, examples. Some were made on the continent and some are products of Colchester's own factory. Even though often only a fragment of a picture is found, designs so far identified include Mars (god of war), Jupiter, an eagle (symbol of Jupiter), Sol (the sun), and Luna.

As Robin Symonds has explained in an earlier edition of **CATALOGUE**, analysis of the fabric of pottery vessels can help to identify the source of the clay and to indicate which vessels are made locally and which imported.

The Trust is very fortunate in having gained the help of the research section of the British Museum Laboratory in a project on Colchester's lamps. The laboratory will analyse the fabrics both of the lamps and moulds from the factory (courtesy of the Colchester and Essex Museum) and of the lamps from our excavations. The techniques that will be used by the British Museum scientists are neutron activation, which identifies and quantifies the elements present in the clay, and thin section, which enables minerals to be analysed. With two types of analysis the results hopefully should be twice as good!

The first batch of samples was collected early in November, and we should be able to give news of the results in next summer's **CATALOGUE**.

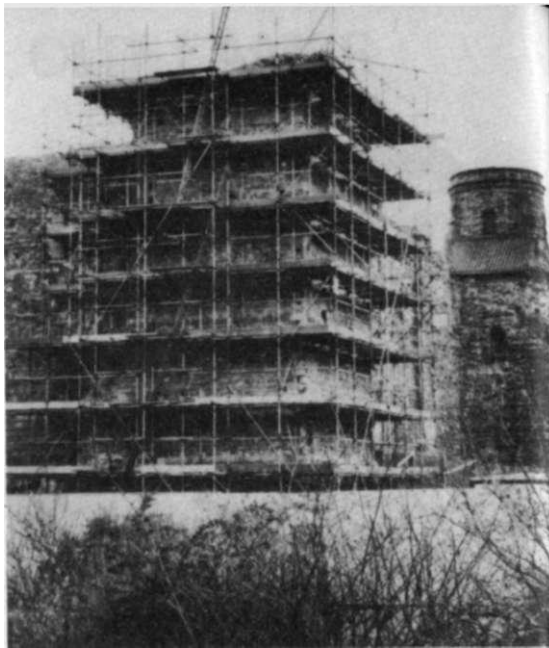
Nina Crummy



\* Picture lamps from Colchester: above, from the factory; below, from our excavations.

# COLCHESTER CASTLE

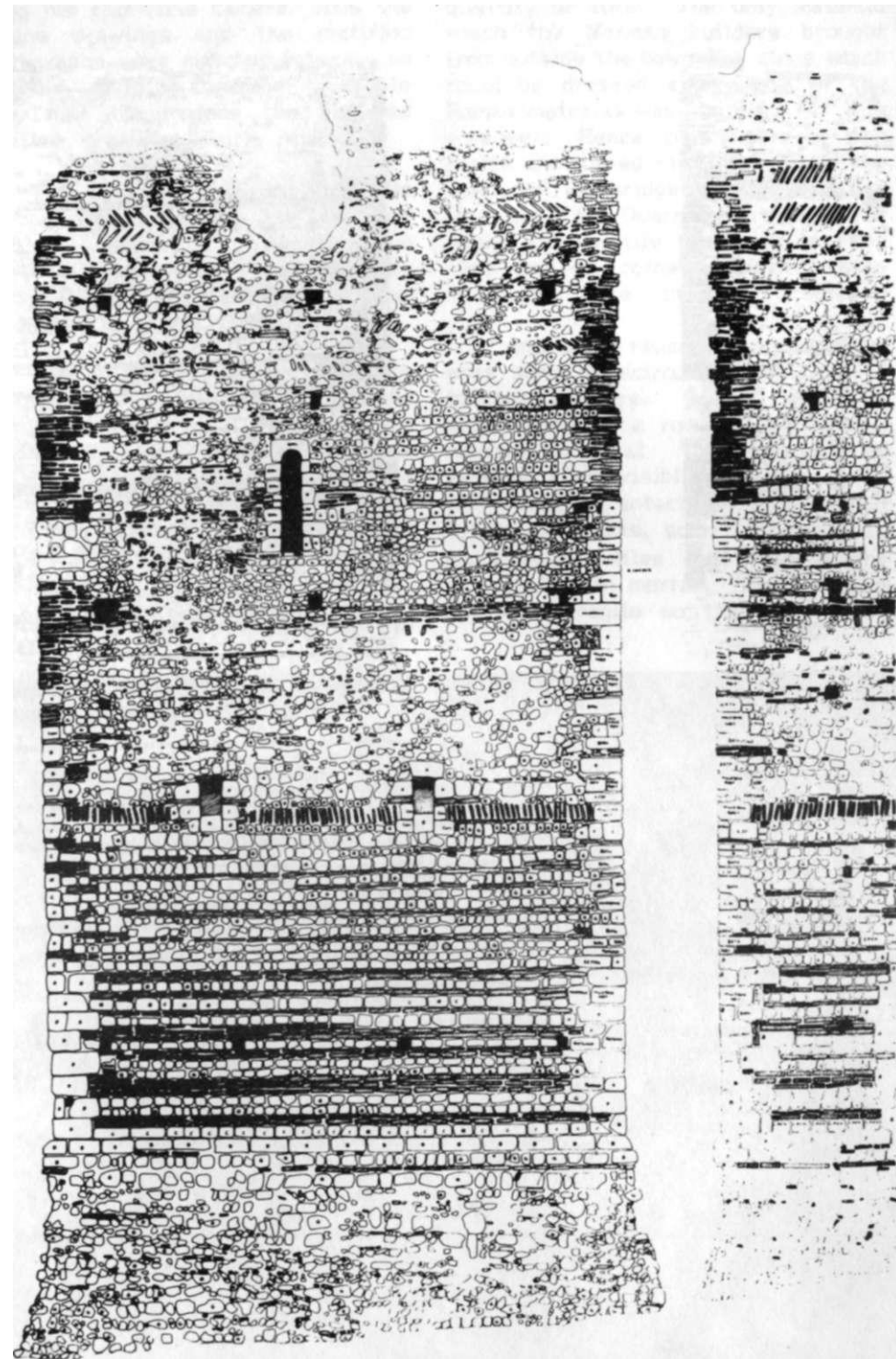
Colchester Castle is showing its age. Centuries of biting winds, knawing frosts, and pecking birds, anxious for a beakful of Norman mortar, have left their scars. The ground at the foot of its walls is littered with lumps of broken stone and mortar whilst the surfaces of much of the surviving stone swell and disintegrate. So severe has been the erosion that in places the original face of the Castle has been whittled back by up to a foot. The Borough Council, alert to the danger, mounted an appeal for funds to restore the Castle and, with the financial support of the Department of the Environment, arranged for the necessary work to begin last summer.



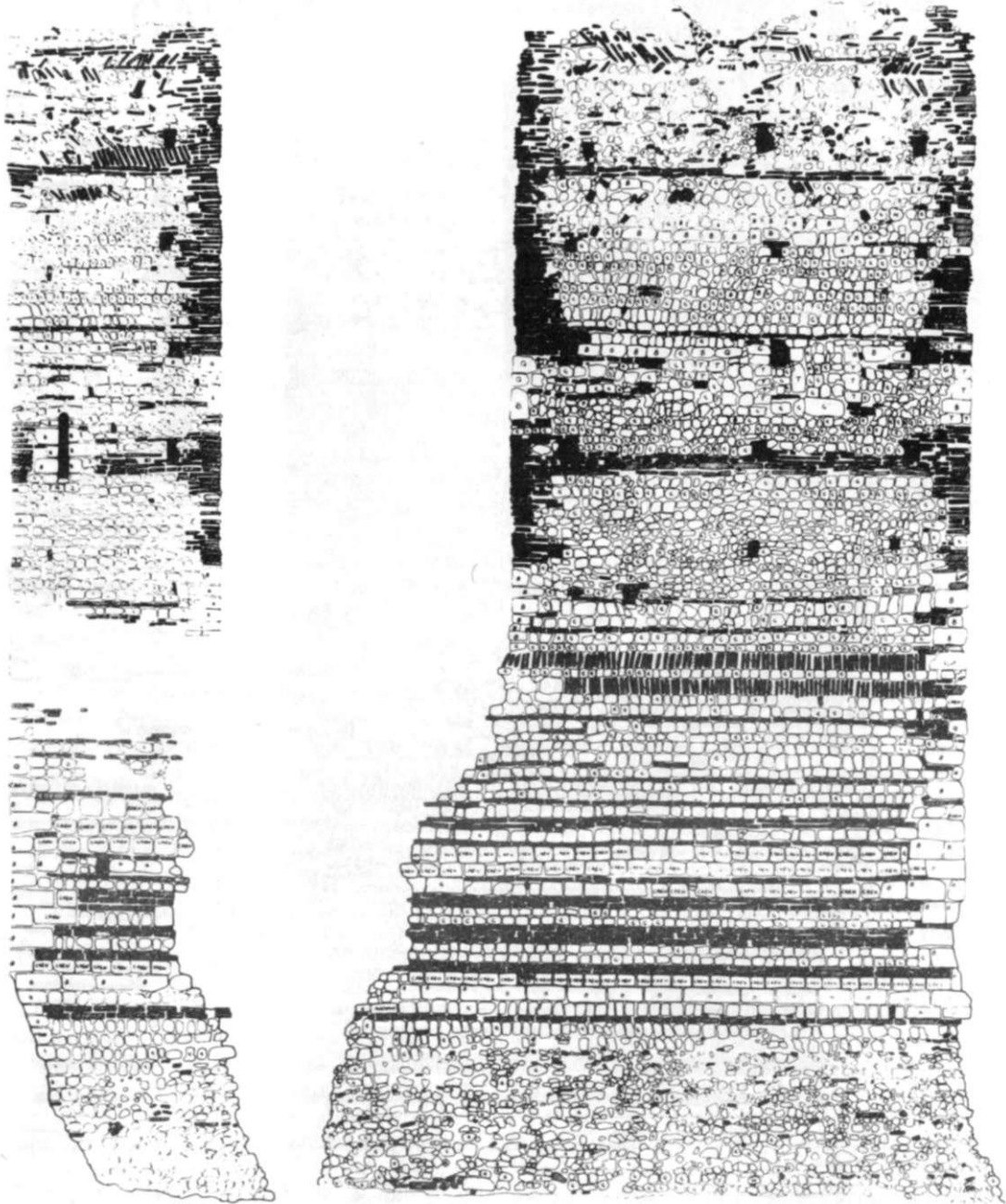
**\* The scaffolding at the north-west tower of the Castle.**

The programme of repairs to the outer faces of Colchester Castle began in September 1983, the first phase being concerned with the north-west tower. Throughout the preceding month, the Colchester Archaeological Trust made detailed stone-for-stone drawings of the tower. This was done to produce records for two purposes. Firstly the drawings provide a permanent record of the walls before repair. This is necessary because, inevitably, parts of the faces will have to be replaced and other parts will be obscured by new mortar and stones. Secondly, the drawings can be used by the contractor to ensure that his repair work is a faithful copy of what he replaces. A bonus is that this work provides an opportunity to study the fabric and character in a way not possible before.

The drawings were prepared at a scale of 1:20 using photographs and outline plans supplied by the Department of the Environment and the Photogrammetric Unit of the Institute of Advanced Architectural Studies at the University of York. The outline drawings are at a scale of 1:20 and show some tile and the main dressed stones, ie the stones forming the quoins, the window and door openings, and the top of the foundation-plinth. These drawings were compiled at York using stereo photographs and plotted with the aid of special equipment. The dressed pieces account for less than 10% of the total. The remaining stone and tile has been drawn with the use of the photographs which, in York, were 'rectified' to remove the effects of parallax and reproduced at a scale of 1:50. In Colchester, the photographs were enlarged to 1:20 by a printer







using his flat-field camera. Thus the outline drawings and the rectified photographs were matched in scale so that they could be combined to enable the Trust to produce the required detailed drawings fairly quickly.

The detailed drawings prepared by the Trust indicate the type of each stone. Authoritative identifications were supplied by Martyn Owen of the Geological Museum in London.

Almost all the stone and tile used to build the castle was obtained from Roman ruins, either free-standing or buried. In effect, the castle represents a massive sample of Roman building materials. Most of the Roman stone is septaria but there is some Kentish rag and a very small

**\* Roman hypocaust stacks in the Castle walls.**

quantity of tufa. The only material which the Norman builders brought from outside the town was stone which could be dressed since none of the Roman material was suitable for this purpose. Hence the angles in the castle are turned in Barnack from the north of Cambridgeshire, Caen from Normandy, and Ouar from the Isle of Wight. (Roman tile was used to form right-angled corners when these materials were in short supply.)

Among the reused Roman material were some semicircular tiles used to construct pillars. Several of these were found in a row. Also it was discovered that the groups of vertical tiles visible half way down the walls are intact parts of Roman hypocaust stacks, some containing as many as six tiles still held in the original Roman mortar. These stacks are very fragile so that they must



parts of the walls these battlements are very clear; unfortunately they are extremely difficult to detect in the northwest tower. The current renovation work has enabled the relevant parts of the walls of the tower to be examined at close quarters but no clear traces of the missing structures have emerged. The most likely explanation is that when the battlements were added, the walls of this tower and at least one other (the southwest one) were a few feet higher than the walls elsewhere. To help resolve this problem, a series of about 90 mortar samples has been taken in the hope that the mortars of the two phases (ie before and after the addition of the battlements) can be distinguished. The samples will be examined by John Evans at Northeast London Polytechnic.

The castle has been repaired many times in the past and it is part of the purpose of the Trust's recording work to plot the extent of these for the record. The northwest tower seems to have been restored at least twice before. Most substantial was the work of 1947 which involved patching and repointing on a scale comparable with the current operation. (The 1947 episode was the first stage in an annual campaign of repairs lasting until 1957.) In addition to this work, two of the quoins have been partly rebuilt, one very substantially. No clear record seems to survive of this work but, to judge from old photographs, it appears to have happened some time before 1920 and some time after at least 1863, if not 1892.

The second phase of the work is expected to start in spring when the southwest tower is to be encased in scaffolding. We wait with bated breath to see what this will reveal.

Philip Crummy

## DOWN IN THE POTTING SHED

The team of pottery processors beavering away in the sheds on the old Culver Street site entered phase two of their work programme at the end of the summer.

Phase one involved the division of the famous (or would infamous be more appropriate?) twelve and a half tonnes into manageable groups according to fairly broad fabric descriptions, then cataloguing and quantifying them. In phase two, these fabric groups will be subdivided into narrower types, and the vessels from which they come identified.

The beginning of phase two was marked by the start of a Manpower Services Community Project, with five people taken on to complement the team of volunteers and YOP's. These new workers have all become specialists in the more technical aspects of pottery processing, such as separating fabric types with the aid of a microscope, entering the data from the catalogue into the Trust's micro-computer, selecting, drilling and pulverising samples for chemical analysis, and illustrating selected vessels for publication.

Now that technology is upon us, a guide-book (or companion to potters) has been produced, called 'Cataloguing Pottery at Colchester'. This contains detailed descriptions of the pottery types and many illustrations of the forms already identified. This means that now,

having broadly catalogued all twelve and a half tonnes in just over a year, we can begin again, with informed eyes.

Robin P. Svmonds

## CASTLE PARK

A new sewer is being laid in the Castle Park. The trench for the pipe is about a quarter of a mile long and will, in effect, slice through the northern half of the Roman town. Work began in November and almost immediately important Roman remains were exposed. These included the base of the Roman town wall, the town ditch, the rampart, house foundations, and a tessellated pavement. The project will last several months and is potentially of great archaeological interest. More next newsletter.....

Philip Crummy

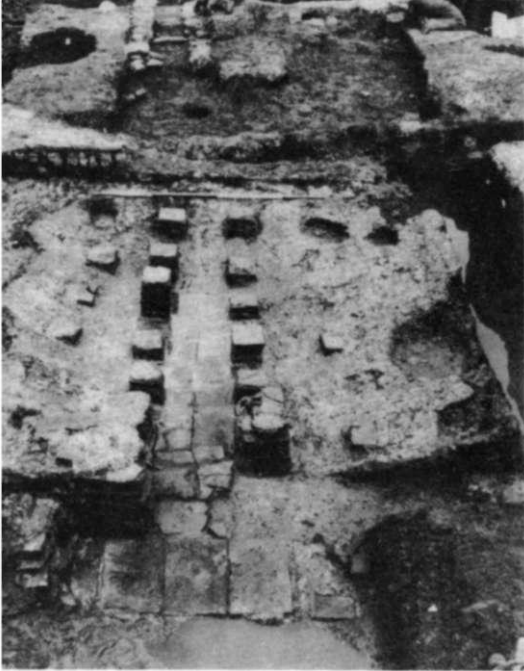
## RECENT MEETINGS

In July a coach party of the Friends of Colchester Archaeological Trust, supplemented by a few Friends of Ipswich Archaeological Trust, visited Framlingham Castle and Norwich. Members may remember summer of 1983 (can you ever forget it?) - well, the Norwich trip took place on

**\* Example of a Roman hypocaust system at Middleborough, showing hypocaust stacks still in position.**

have been placed in position more or less as the hypocausts were being robbed. Indeed, the picture emerges generally that although an enormous quantity of Roman material was used, it was nevertheless obtained in small amounts at a time. As a new source was discovered so the materials from that source were almost immediately put in place. This is why, for example, the hypocaust tiles tend to occur in the same row and why the column tiles were all laid down together.

It is known that the construction of the castle was stopped temporarily at the level of the first floor and the walls, as they stood at that time, were topped with a series of battlements. In some



one of the more hot and humid days. Energy was definitely at a low ebb, but, undaunted by the heat, Brian Ayers of the Norfolk Archaeological Unit split the coach party into two and prepared to lead not one, but two tours round the city, one before lunch, and one after! (And then he had a lecture to give in late afternoon to another group!) The heat and Brian's staggering pace proved too much for some of us, so he kindly trimmed his proposed itinerary down to take our flagging feet into account. Even so, he managed to describe the origins and development of Norwich, and his own excavations there, with admirable clarity. For those who were unable to come to Norwich, I can highly recommend Brian's popular booklet on excavations in Norwich, **Digging under the Doorstep** (publicity leaflet enclosed).

In September the Friends of Colchester and Ipswich Trusts joined up again for a trip to Orford. We were lucky in having Keith Wade of Suffolk County Council's Archaeology Section (and secretary of the Ipswich Friends), and John Fairclough of Ipswich Museum as guides to the castle and church. Keith then led us off into the wilds of the Suffolk marshes to visit the small derelict church at Iken, the site of an early Saxon monastic settlement. A stone cross dating to the late 9th or even 10th century has recently been discovered in the church, apparently set up by the Danes in remorse for their sack of the monastery.

In November we went on a tour of the 50' and 100' contour lines south of Colchester. Not surprisingly we came across quite a few churches (and old church sites) during the afternoon. Those who think that Essex is flat should look at the siting of our village churches (and

at the meaning of the village names), for their builders took advantage of every small hill, river bank and marshland hummock to help the churches dominate the surrounding farmland. At Peldon we were met by the Rector, Canon Lendon, who kindly gave us a short talk on the history and architecture of the church and pointed out that Pisa is not alone in having a leaning tower! We ended the afternoon with a very welcome tea at the Hare and Hounds at Layer Breton.

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#### DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

In the coming year there will be a slight alteration in the programme of visits. In the past we have always had the AGM, one full-day, and four half-day outings each year. Just for a change, in 1984 we will try a new format. There will be the AGM in January, a half-day outing in March, a special evening event in June, a three-quarter day outing in July, a weekend trip in September, and a half-day outing in November. As the weekend trip is a new venture, we will need to know well in advance how many members are interested (see below for details), and if the number is too low, we will substitute another half-day outing.

##### January: AGM

For several reasons the 1984 AGM will be not only in two parts, but on two days. The business meeting will be on Saturday 14th January at 11 a.m. at 12 Lexden Road. The afternoon session will be on Saturday 28th January at 2 p.m. in the Methodist Church Hall, Maidenburgh Street (just off the High Street near the Castle). The speakers will be Professor John Wilkes, Chairman of the Trust, and Philip Crummy, Director of the Trust. The meeting

will also be the occasion of the presentation to the town, in the person of the Mayor of Colchester, of the two recently-published volumes of **Colchester Archaeological Reports!** one on the Roman small finds from excavations in the 1970s (by me), and the other on the excavations at Lion Walk, Balkerne Lane, and Middleborough (by Philip).

##### March: Sutton Hoo

In 1983 work started on 'The Sutton Hoo Project', a joint venture by the Society of Antiquaries and the British Museum under the directorship of Martin Carver. There will be a coach trip to the site on Saturday March 24th, leaving the War Memorial at the Castle Park at 12.30 p.m. prompt (so early lunch or picnic on the coach). Martin has kindly agreed to meet the Friends and describe what has been done so far and what his future programme will be. We will also visit Woodbridge Museum to see a display of photographs and plans from the earlier Sutton Hoo excavation. We will then move on to Ipswich to see Keith Wade's excavation at Blackfriars, where he has found not only the expected monastic buildings, but also Saxon defences and occupation levels.

As the site at Sutton Hoo is on private land, Friends wishing to come in their own cars are advised to phone me (Nina Crummy) on Colchester 41051 or 210255 about two weeks before the trip, to receive directions on where to meet up with the coach.

##### June: exhibition preview

From June to September 1984 there will be an exhibition in the Castle Museum to present to the public the major discoveries made by the Trust during the 1970s and 1980s. This will not only allow many of the best finds to be displayed,

but will also emphasise the importance of the structures found during the excavations, for example, the buildings and defences of the Roman fortress (the position of which was only discovered in 1973), the Anglo-Saxon huts found at Lion Walk and Culver Street, and the large Roman house outside the town walls at Middleborough which contained the Mosaic of the Wrestling Cupids. The exhibition will be a joint effort by staff of the Trust and the Museum, and the Friends of the Trust are cordially invited to a first night preview on Thursday June 7th at 6.30 p.m. Tickets are limited, so please send in the appropriate enclosed slip in good time if you would like to attend.

##### July: Springfield, Great Dunmow, Thaxed, plus!

Over the past few years the Essex County Council's Archaeology Section, now led by David Buckley, have been excavating a complex of sites discovered as cropmarks at Springfield on the outskirts of Chelmsford. Last year, rather to Dave's surprise, they came across some early Anglo-Saxon houses and burials in the area of a Bronze Age ditched enclosure. Work in 1984 will concentrate on discovering the extent of the Anglo-Saxon occupation of the site. On Saturday July 28th there will be a coach trip to Springfield, leaving the War Memorial at the Castle Park at 10.30 a.m. After the visit to Springfield we will go on to Great Dunmow for lunch, and then do a lightning tour of Thaxed, Great Bardfield, Finchingfield (said to be the prettiest village in Essex), and Wethersfield, before stopping for tea (and a look at the steam engines for those interested in industrial archaeology) at the Colne Valley Railway Centre outside Castle Hedingham. We should be back in Colchester at about 5.30 p.m.

September: Wessex and Bath weekend

Provided that enough members of the Friends express an interest, I hope to arrange a visit to Bath and Wessex to take place from Friday 14th to Sunday 16th September. Accommodation would be at Bath University, and the total cost of the weekend would be about £45 or more (lunch not included). A suggested programme would be: Friday 14th, coach to leave Colchester about 8.30 a.m., arrive at Bristol for lunch, in afternoon visit S.S. Great Britain, go on to Bath for dinner, and tour round the town in evening. Saturday 15th: visit to Bradford-on-Avon (Anglo-Saxon church & medieval barn), Avebury, Salisbury (lunch), Windmill Hill, Woodhenge, and Stonehenge. I would hope that someone from the Trust for Wessex Archaeology would be our guide for the day. Sunday 16th: tour of Winchester (led by Winchester City Archaeologist?) and lunch, back in Colchester by 5.00 p.m. Friends who may be interested in going on this trip should fill in the appropriate enclosed slip and send it to me (Nina Crummy) at 12 Lexden Road, Colchester, so that they can be kept informed of price and final details over the next few months.

November: churches

Details of this trip will be in the summer edition of **CATALOGUE**; the churches visited will include Inworth and Copford.

Nina Crummy

The FRIENDS OF COLCHESTER ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST has been formed to provide a means of keeping interested members of the public informed about the archaeological work going on in and around the historic town of Colchester. The Friends provide the funds to publish **CATALOGUE** - the newsletter of the

Colchester Archaeological Trust. Friends receive two newsletters a year, attend an annual programme of lectures on the previous year's progress, are given conducted tours of current sites and can take part in a regular programme of visits to archaeological sites and monuments in the area.

The annual subscription rates are as follows: Adults £1.50, Children and Students 75p, Family membership £2.00, and Institutions £1.00. Those who live too far away to attend meetings or go on trips can receive newsletters only at a reduced rate of £1.00. Subscriptions should be sent to Brenda May, Honorary Treasurer, Friends of the Colchester Archaeological Trust, 5 William Close, Wivenhoe, Colchester, Essex.

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Officers of the Friends are:  
**Chairman:** Colin Bellows, Honey Pot Cottage, Honey Pot Lane, Wix.  
**Treasurer & Secretary:** Brenda May, 5 William Close, Wivenhoe.  
**Editor of CATALOGUE:** Philip Crummy, 12, Lexden Road, Colchester.  
**Friend's representative on the Trust's Executive Committee:** Gabrielle Chadwick, 171 Wivenhoe Road, Alresford.  
**Social Secretary:** Nina Crummy, 12 Lexden Road, Colchester.

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**CATALOGUE 14**  
Photographs - Alison Colchester  
Drawings - Bob Moyes  
Artwork - Terry Cook, Nina Crummy  
Editor - Philip Crummy

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**Cover: Bob Moyes drawing the walls of the Castle.**

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