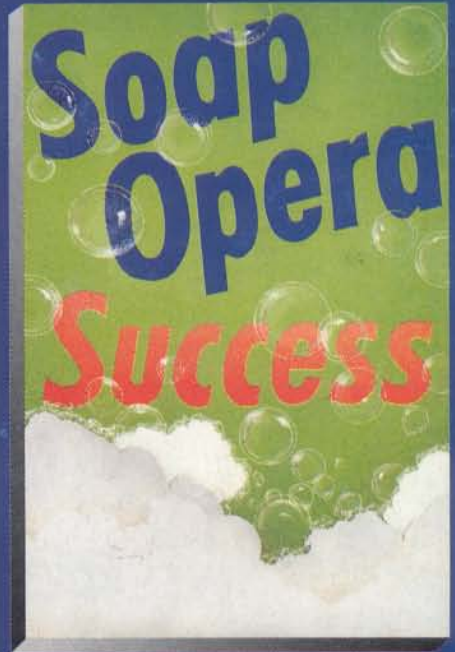
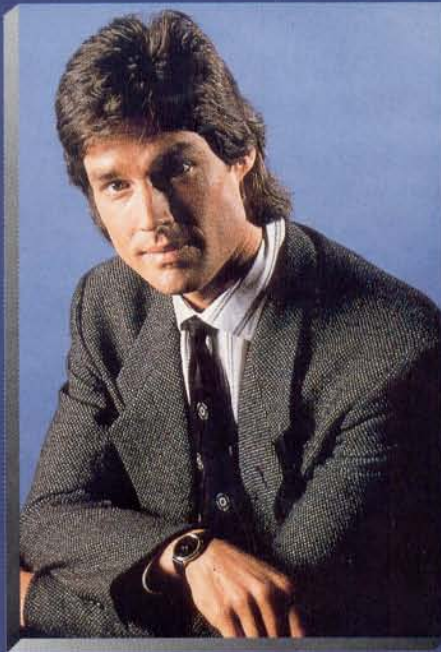


L'AUDIOMENSILE PER IL TUO INGLESE

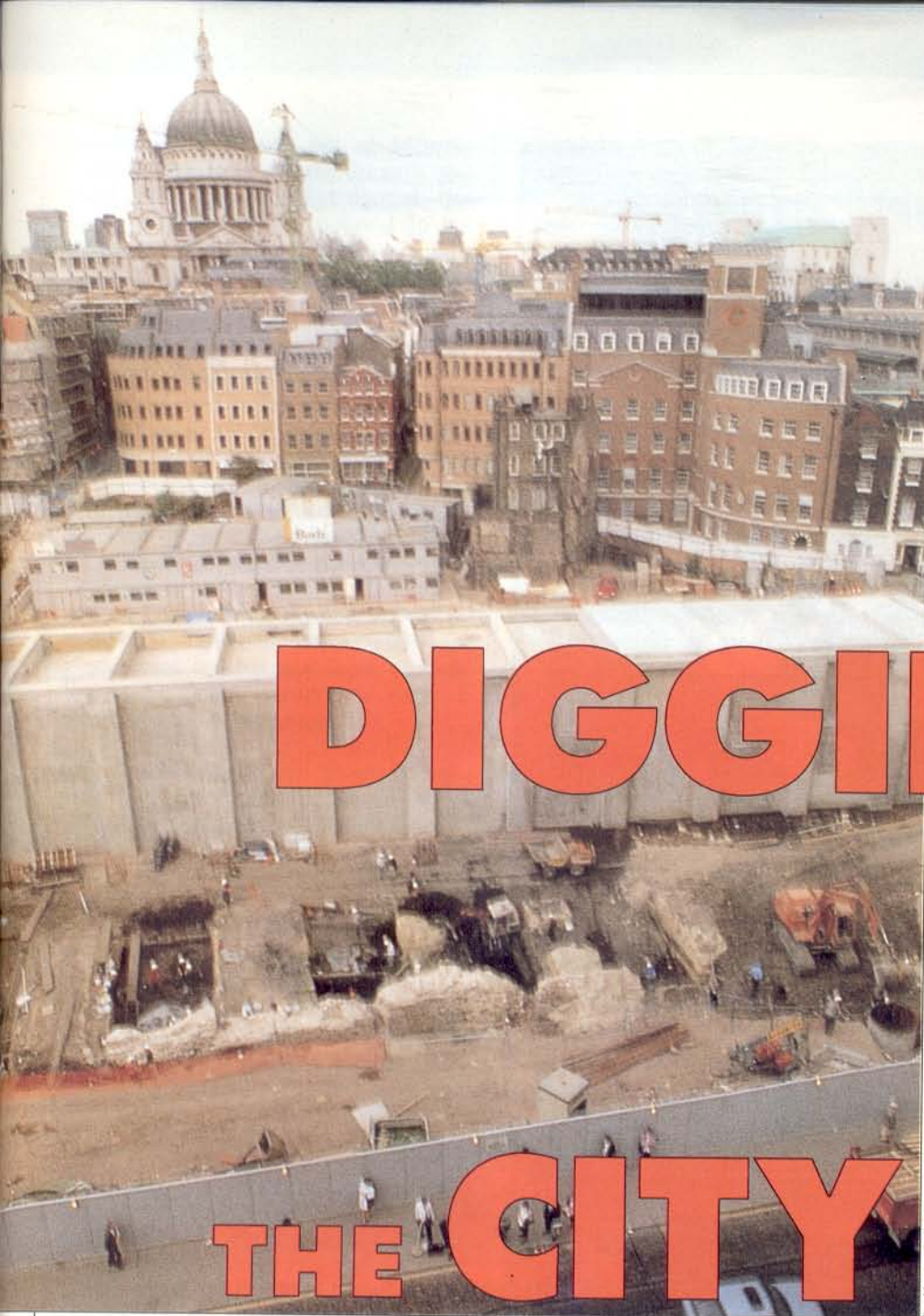
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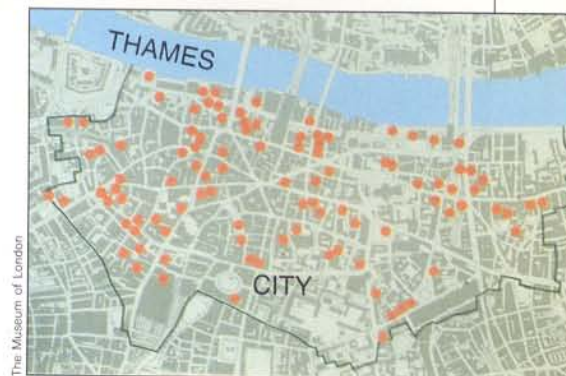


DE AGOSTINI - RIZZOLI PERIODICI

MENSILE - SPED. ABB. POST. GR. III/70



Left: excavation of a 13th century city wall. The dome of St. Paul's is in the background. Below: sites excavated in the "Square Mile" of the City during 1989.



DIGGING IN THE CITY

Case medioevali, insediamenti sassoni, tombe, un intero anfiteatro romano. La Londra underground si è recentemente rivelata una miniera di tesori, ma i fondi scarseggiano...

by Rory O'Moore



Speak Up speaker Standard English
John Maloney Standard English

Presented¹ with a deep hole² in the ground³, most British people will look down it. Pedestrians will even stop in the street to watch workmen⁴ repairing a broken pipe⁵. For the last few years there has been more than the usual amount⁶ of hole-gazing⁷ in the City of London and with good reason. Never before has there been so much to look at. The intensive re-

development⁸ of London has unearthed⁹ a huge¹⁰ number of finds¹¹. Archaeology is no longer seen as the rather eccentric science of digging¹² muddy¹³ holes; instead it has the full¹⁴ support of the developers themselves.

Medieval houses have been found on the south bank¹⁵ of the Thames, a Saxon settlement¹⁶ has been found under what is now Covent Garden and the Strand.

Viking docks¹⁷ have been identified, burial pits¹⁸ from the black death¹⁹ have been excavated and — most exciting of all — a Roman amphitheatre has been discovered by the Guildhall in the City. John Maloney of the Urban Archeology department at the Museum of London, describes how the amphitheatre was found.



Justin Rancliffe

John Maloney: *Now the amphitheatre, its existence was a presumption quite²⁰ simply on the basis that Londinium was the capital of the Roman province of Britannia and its status would have necessitated the existence of an amphitheatre which wasn't just a place where gladiators fought²¹,*

GLOSSARY

- 1 presented - davanti a.
- 2 hole - buco.
- 3 ground - terra.
- 4 workman - operaio.
- 5 pipe - tubo.
- 6 amount - quantità.
- 7 hole-gazing - osservazione di buchi.
- 8 redevelopment - risanamento.
- 9 to unearth - dissotterrare.
- 10 huge - enorme.
- 11 find - ritrovamento.
- 12 to dig - scavare.
- 13 muddy - fangoso.
- 14 full - completo, totale.
- 15 bank - riva.
- 16 settlement - insediamento.
- 17 docks - banchine.
- 18 burial pits - fossa.
- 19 black death - peste nera.
- 20 quite - molto.
- 21 to fight (-fought-fought) combattere, lottare.

it was, if you like, the social nub²² of the town in many ways. Various historians and archaeologists had speculated on the likely²³ site of the amphitheatre, but although²⁴ very many locations were suggested we found it in a spot²⁵ where nobody had, in a sense, the foresight²⁶ to suggest that it might be found and a spot which in, with the benefit of hindsight²⁷, seems blindingly²⁸ obvious. Because it's actually²⁹ next³⁰, right next, to the Roman fort.

Rescue archaeology

Over the centuries each major phase of rebuilding in London, whether caused by disaster or economic growth³¹ has stimulated interest in archaeology. The Great Fire of London in 1666, the Blitz during the Second World War, and the office development boom in the late 1960's have all in turn³² increased archeological activity.

More recently, "fast-track"³³ building methods and tighter³⁴ control of redevelopment programmes has led³⁵ to a more cooperative relationship between archaeologists and the developers. This acceptance by the capital's builders of archaeological investigations as a normal part of most development work has been the most significant factor in "rescuing"³⁶ the archaeology of the City of London.

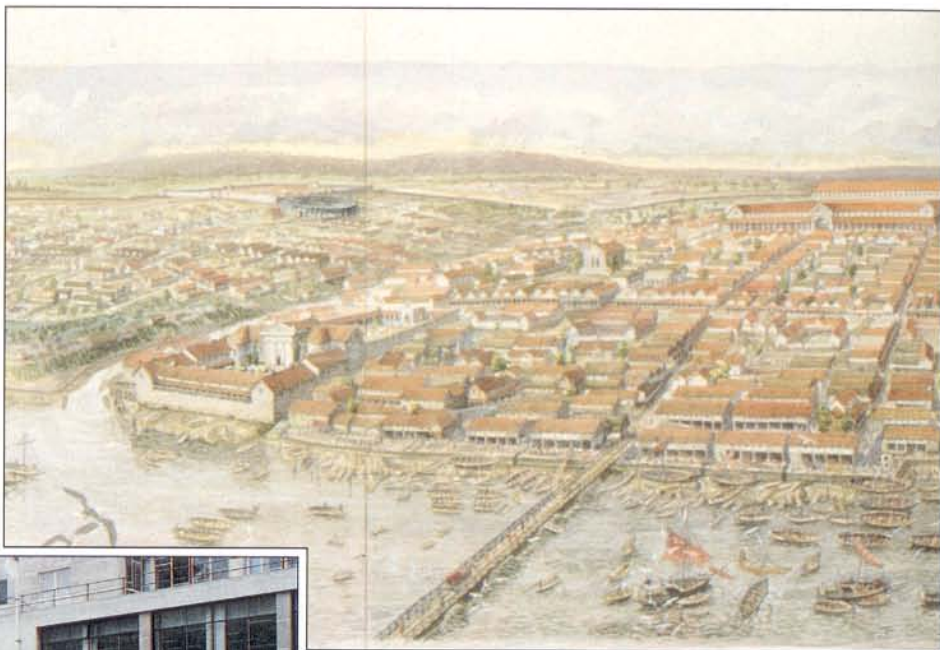
JM: *We rescue the archaeology in the City, we don't dictate³⁷ where we*

dig, we dig according to³⁸ where redevelopment is going to take place and archaeological deposits are going to be destroyed. One of the great drawbacks³⁹ of this country is that there is no state archaeological service at all and all governments have always been extremely wary⁴⁰ of legislating for the protection of archaeological sites⁴¹. All we could do really was attempt to, in effect, "coerce"⁴² I suppose is as appropriate a word as any, the developers. We were able to persuade them really because it was clear that their scheme was going to be destroying the archaeology.

For obvious reasons, digging in the City presents more problems than ex-

cavating in the countryside. Although few sites of interest have actually been lost through redevelopment (The Museum of London has excavated over 400 sites since 1974), digging in an urban environment⁴³ is fraught⁴⁴ with difficulties.

JM: *You have to bear in mind⁴⁵ that because London has been occupied so intensively over such a long period, because of the intensity and nature of that occupation the Roman and Saxon and Medieval remains in particular have been very badly served by digging for new foundations, for basements, for cellars⁴⁶, for wells⁴⁷. So it's extremely rare to find the groundplan⁴⁸ of any building at all surviving⁴⁹. It's in*



Above: reconstruction of Roman London at the height of its prosperity in circa AD 130. At top right, the vast basilica-forum. Left: excavation of the Temple of Mithras.



REDA/G. Wright

GLOSSARY

- 22 nub - nucleo, punto centrale.
- 23 likely - probabile.
- 24 although - benchè.
- 25 spot - punto.
- 26 foresight - preveggenza.
- 27 with the benefit of hindsight - con il giudizio di poi.
- 28 blindingly - incredibilmente.
- 29 actually - in realtà.
- 30 next - vicino.
- 31 growth - crescita.
- 32 in turn - successivamente, a loro volta.
- 33 fast-track - superveloce.
- 34 tight - rigido.
- 35 to lead (-led-led) condurre, portare.
- 36 to rescue - salvare.
- 37 to dictate - decidere.
- 38 according to - a seconda di.
- 39 drawback - svantaggio.
- 40 wary - cauto.
- 41 site - luogo.
- 42 to coerce - costringere.
- 43 environment - ambiente.
- 44 to be fraught - essere carico, denso.
- 45 to bear in mind - ricordare, tenere in mente.
- 46 cellar - cantina.
- 47 well - pozzo.
- 48 groundplan - pianta.
- 49 to survive - sopravvivere.
- 50 jig-saw - a incastro.
- 51 to throw (-threw-thrown) away - gettare via.
- 52 downturn - diminuzione.
- 53 backing - sostegno, appoggio.
- 54 employed - impiegato.

effect a jig-saw⁵⁰ puzzle where about 60 per cent of the pieces have been thrown away⁵¹ already, you've lost them and you've only got a bit here and there.

Recession and redundancies

The current economic recession in Britain and the consequent downturn⁵² in property development in London has had a severe impact on archaeology: without backing⁵³ from the developers there are no excavations. As a result over 150 archaeologists employed⁵⁴ by the Museum of London were made redundant⁵⁵ at the end of last year. "Economic recession and government indifference force archaeological cutbacks"⁵⁶, read⁵⁷ the press release⁵⁸ issued⁵⁹ by the museum.

JM: Suddenly⁶⁰ we were faced with no work on site virtually, I mean at the moment we've got 13 people on site. We were faced with absolutely minimal work for four months or so and no income⁶¹ and because we have no safety net⁶², although there is other work that we could and would like other staff to do we don't have the wherewithal⁶³ to get it done⁶⁴. And because there's no state archaeological service at all, we were not able to react immediately to that crisis and therefore⁶⁵ we've had to make ourselves just over 100 staff redundant. I mean, it is disgraceful⁶⁶ really that an organization that is devoted to an important environmental⁶⁷ matter, an important cultural heritage⁶⁸ matter, should be dependent on the vagaries⁶⁹ of the commercial market for its survival.

55 to be made redundant - essere licenziato.

56 cutback - riduzione.

57 to read - dire.

58 press release - comunicato stampa.

59 to issue - emettere, distribuire.

60 suddenly - improvvisamente.

61 income - entrate.

62 safety net - rete di sicurezza.

63 wherewithal - mezzi, soldi.

64 to get it done - per farlo.

65 therefore - di conseguenza, perciò.

66 disgraceful - vergognoso.

67 environmental - ambientale.

68 heritage - eredità, patrimonio.

69 vagary - stravaganza.

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