

# Commentary

By GROMATICUS

THE objects of *The London Archaeologist* are to publish interim excavation reports and other suitable papers on the archaeology and allied history of the London region, to promote co-operation between societies, to provide an independent forum for discussion and to attract more of London's population towards having an interest in the past.

The magazine is completely independent of any one society and is published by the London Archaeologist Publishing Committee consisting of the five officers and five representatives from interested societies in the London region; these latter being elected at an annual general meeting to be held every spring.

Many people including professional archaeologists have given much time, advice and encouragement towards making *The London Archaeologist* a success. We are particularly indebted to Heather Salter, editor of *Coins and Medals*, Andrew and Wendy Selkirk of *Current Archaeology*, and John Horne of the *Kent Archaeological Review*.

A DEVELOPMENT fund has been opened to finance the promotional costs and to cover the store of back-numbers. Many societies have already contributed (see P.20). But most of the contributions were loans. It is hoped that most societies will find it possible to translate all or part of them into grants. The development of *The London Archaeologist* will be retarded until the loans are repaid.

## Towards regionalism?

THE C.B.A. Conference on "The Place and Work of County and Local Archaeological Societies" was held at the Institute of Archaeology on November 9.

Arthur Percival's excellent outline of the role of societies in the 1970s did reiterate an obvious but not often appreciated fact of organisational life — the secret of delegation is "job isolation." His suggested introduction of "History Trails" — rambles to local archaeological and historical sites using specially produced guides — is something that many societies could introduce.

It was apparent that in many parts of the country amicable mergers were replacing a diversity of like societies resulting in economy

and increased efficiency. There was also a suggestion that with the introduction of regional government county societies would become redundant. The conference's reactions to this were varied although there seemed to be a consensus that the county society's traditional publishing role might be taken over by some larger organisation.

## Industrial archaeology

INTEREST in Industrial Archaeology has been growing rapidly in the past decade and an effort is now being made to form a London region group or society for those engaged in this field.

Such an organisation would help stimulate and co-ordinate the work of individuals and groups, eliminating much of the present duplication of effort.

A meeting to discuss the formation of the proposed organisation is being held on Sunday, December 1, at the Science Museum. A report of the decisions reached will be published in the next issue of *The London Archaeologist*.

The advent of such a society or group produces mixed reactions. While it is obvious enough that the Industrial Archaeology of the London region should be studied as a whole and therefore the formation of the proposed organisations should be welcomed, yet it must be greatly regretted that there is no county body covering the same area on to which the organisation could be grafted. With four county organisations laying claim to various parts of Greater London and two more lying on its periphery, the whole situation is both complex and delicate. At present no form of rationalisation appears visible.

AS we go to press, large-scale emergency excavations have just started on the site of the Roman Forum at the corner of Gracechurch Street and Fenchurch Street. The work which is being sponsored by the Corporation of London, the Ministry of Public Building and Works and the Society of Antiquaries, is being directed by Brian Philp. Work will be in progress on the site each day for a period of about four weeks. We are warned that the site is dangerous and visitors are strictly forbidden.