

Commentary

By GROMATICUS

GBA Group 10

REPRESENTATIVES from some 40 societies and museums attended an inconclusive meeting called by C.B.A. on the 10th February to consider the reconstitution of Group 10 (officially Greater London, Essex and Hertfordshire). The Group was at one time quite a flourishing concern but collapsed when its Secretary emigrated to the north.

There seemed a general disinclination to consider reconstituting the Group on its old lines mainly because of the lack of spare finance and talent. The three county organisations felt that a light harness over the area was required rather than the setting up of yet another organisation.

The area covered by the Group raised a number of difficulties because of the overlapping of county society boundaries. One suggestion which should be very seriously considered, was the amalgamation of Group 10 with Group 11A (Kent and Surrey).

This would mean that interests on both sides of the lower Thames would be brigaded together. While there would be little in common between, say, parts of Surrey and Essex, nonetheless there are certain potentialities in the proposal. For example, a co-ordinated study of early riparian settlements would be extremely valuable. Further, five counties should be able to produce a really well-run summer training school of the type being set up elsewhere.

Importance of Pottery

ARCHAEOLOGY may be said to be the study of past peoples by the examination of their remains. Of these the most often encountered are the sherds of their pottery, which reflect the changing tastes and conditions of a period.

Until recently the study of pottery from London has been oddly neglected; this shows most of all in the Romano-British period. Since the war there has only been Kathleen Kenyon's *Excavations in Southwark* which has to be treated with some slight caution as it draws mainly on the Jewry Wall site at Leicester for its parallels—the time lag for changes of fashion in an up-country cantonal capital could easily be of the order of 10 to 20 years.

A further difficulty encountered is in the comparison of Romanised native ware which does not easily tally with neighbouring sites. Kenyon mentions this

in her summary—"The difference evident between places geographically so close as Verulamium and Southwark emphasises the need for more regional studies of Roman coarse pottery, and stresses the light the variations can throw on the preceding native cultures."

Published groups from the City and the surrounding (R-B) countryside are at present virtually unknown. However, the dozen or so recent excavations in the London region should produce some published R-B groups within two or three years.

Magazine Policy

IN VIEW of these sorts of considerations and in order to stimulate comparisons from other sites, a substantial proportion of this issue and a portion of the Summer one are being devoted to a report on the Roman pottery factory at Highgate Wood. This promises to be a site of considerable importance and Tony Brown and Harvey Sheldon envisage excavating there for a number of years.

To continue this policy of fostering the study of pottery, *The London Archaeologist* will be publishing in a limited form reports from two other sites of later periods. In the Summer issue there will be an article by Brian Bloice on the south bank 17th/18th century tin glaze kiln sites, and in the Autumn it is hoped to have a report by Marion Canham on the Medieval kiln recently excavated at Kingston.

Vigorous Progress

MANY readers will have received through diverse channels more than their fair share of application forms for *The London Archaeologist*. Although some of these forms will have undoubtedly suffered various indignities, their very number will have impressed upon the recipients that the magazine's promotional campaign has been both vigorous and far-reaching. The success of the campaign by a team led by Joyce Andrews and Brian Bloice may be measured by the fact that it has been found necessary to print an extra 500 copies, making a total of 2,500 for the first issue.

The evident support for *The London Archaeologist* has meant that it has been possible to increase the print area. Lest the additional weight be thought to be too onerous, an element of a gravity-removing nature has been diffidently introduced (as Kai Lung would have said) on page 37.