

# Commentary

By GROMATICUS

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## SURREY APPOINTMENTS

THE FORTHCOMING appointment of a field officer by the Surrey Archaeological Society will be a major event in the archaeology of the London region. Surrey County Council who are providing generous financial support for the post, must be heartily congratulated for its ready realisation of the archaeological problems in the county. If only other county councils and similar bodies would follow the example of Surrey.

This position of Field Officer is in addition to that recently created by Surrey Archaeological Society with substantial financial help from the Department of the Environment to assist with the programme of motorway observation and rescue work in Surrey where the M23 and M25 routes (see opposite) are cutting large swathes through the county (and later on into London).

Surrey Archaeological Society has obviously played a substantial role in the promotion of these appointments and is to be commended for its initiative. Those people who decry county societies and those county societies who maintain a passive attitude to the present archaeological situation can both learn lessons from Surrey.

## SOUTHBANK

THE PROSPECT of a London borough appointing its own field officer must have seemed a pipe dream to many people, but not only has this now occurred in Southwark but a permanent unit has also been established. Harvey Sheldon who will be well known to readers of *The London Archaeologist*, has been appointed Fieldwork Officer to the Southwark Archaeological Excavation Committee. Southwark Borough Council who have always taken a very enlightened view in archaeological matters, are providing the full financial backing for the post.

At the same time the Council is also contributing funds to run a small full time unit for part of the year. It is expected that the rest of the necessary finance will come from the Department of the Environment and other sources in the form of grants in aid of excavations in Southwark and elsewhere, e.g. Old Ford and the M23/25 motorways.

It will be interesting to see if the example of Southwark is followed by other London boroughs. As a possible candidate for similar treatment, Westminster immediately springs to mind. Although the Department of the Environment has done extensive work on the sites of a number of public buildings, there is obviously much more that could be done.

A number of other London boroughs where the potential is already known, could well afford a full-time field officer. For example, in Wandsworth where the Council is currently considering the creation of a museum, recent work has indicated a large number of sites of all periods, particularly in the important areas close by the river. Wandsworth Historical Society has done much of the ground work but of itself cannot provide the sort of cover that a professional could, preferably attached to the museum.

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESURGANCE

THE SUMMER HAS seen a unique event in the archaeology of the City—four sites being excavated simultaneously (see p.360). This has been most gratifying to many who have been worried about Guildhall attitudes. At long last there seems to be a dawning realisation that archaeology matters and is worthwhile. The effort in manpower and monetary terms which has been expended in the last three months, shows what can be done and has given an indication of what still awaits to be uncovered.

Of course excavation is not, or rather should not be, the end of the affair. Since archaeological excavation is a form of controlled destruction, subsequent full publication is essential. It must, therefore, be hoped that the new zest in Guildhall Museum's excavation programme will be matched by sufficient resources to produce a *full* publication of the work undertaken, rather than the sundry interim reports which have characterised City archaeology in recent years.

All this merely underwrites the need for a research unit to be established in the City—to excavate, to do the necessary historical research and, above all, to do to publish not only the present and future work, but also that of the past decades. If Southwark can partly support a permanent unit, then surely the City Fathers can do better!

Work has now started on the special survey being commissioned by RESCUE on archaeology in the City and it is hoped that it will be in print before the year's end. If the impact of the survey has the same sort of effect that previous ones produced by RESCUE have had, then we can expect to see a great change of heart in the City of London.

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## LATE PUBLICATION

The Editor regrets the extremely late issue of this number which has been due to production difficulties.