

# Commentary

By GROMATICUS

## On Cabbages and Kings — and other ephemeral things

IN THE *Bulletin des Amis d'Orange* for the section on transitory events there is the rather charming title of 'Ephemerides'. It would perhaps be a good idea to have such a heading in the *London Archaeologist* for events are moving so fast and in so many ways that few situations are static for any length of time.

With regard to archaeological units (and the like) there are now six — City, Southwark, Inner London (North), South West London (see p.236) and mini ones at Brentford and Staines. With the exception of Southwark, all have come into being as recognisable organisations within the last year. Incidentally, Surrey Archaeological Society together with the DoE must be congratulated on the formation of the South West London 'Team'.

For an example on the excavations front, Tim Tatton-Brown published in the last issue (p.197) his thesis that a defensive riverside wall did exist on the south side of the Roman city. An apparent piece of such a wall was subsequently found in the late autumn (this issue p.232) and now as the magazine goes to press a long length of the proven wall has been discovered under what appears to be the north wall of Baynards Castle.

## The Departure of Roy Canham (p.236)

THE LONG sojourn of Roy Canham in London has been marked not only by his directing the excavations at Brentford, Shepperton and London Airport, but also by his invaluable support in so many ways to the excavations and fieldwork of other people all over the region. In addition, many other aspects of London's archaeology, including the *London Archaeologist*, owe much to him.

Roy Canham's characteristic unselfishness and good sense will be greatly missed by the many London archaeologists, full and part-time, to whom he has given so much help and encouragement over the years. It is to be hoped that a successor will be speedily appointed, lest the long vacuum which followed his predecessor's migration to Keele University, be repeated.

## A Roman Epic

AMONG THE "ephemera" which must be mentioned are the excavations on the Roman pottery site at Highgate Wood. Old established readers of *The London Archaeologist* have been able to follow this Roman epic since the spring of 1969. Some of them may have doubtless wondered if it would ever end, but it has — with this issue.

Considering the large numbers of excavations in the London region over the last ten years or so, there have been very few good dated pottery groups published. Indeed, there have been very few properly published reports either. Excavation without publication is, of course, a waste of effort and time, but one of the acknowledged inhibitions has been the lack of local pottery dates. Perhaps the interim publication of the dated groups in this issue will help to galvanise into action some of the reluctant dragons of archaeology, of whom I am one — regrettably!

## Seminar on Recording

THE OPEN one-day seminar on 'Recent Developments in Archaeological Site Recording' organised at the end of September by Guildhall Museum's Department of Urban Archaeology was a very successful venture.

In his opening address Tom Hume, the Director of the new Museum of London, made the important point that the Governors of the Museum (representatives from the City, G.L.C. and DoE) have accepted responsibility for the archaeology of the whole of the Greater London area. Although it was hoped that this would occur, the sceptics among us were doubtful.

The lecturers at the seminar were Philip Barker, Martin Biddle, Edward Harris and Philip Rahtz. It was particularly interesting to hear of Philip Barker's methods at first hand, but I am doubtful whether they are really applicable to emergency urban archaeology.

Brian Hobley must be commended for arranging the seminar which was very valuable, not only for its stimulating content, but also because it brought together both full and part-time archaeologists. May we have some more, please?