

Commentary

by GROMATICUS

The big T

TWO REPORTS HAVE recently been published concerning the problems of tourism at historic locations. The first (Stonehenge) faced a problem of increasing numbers and how to cope with them, the second (Greenwich) was a belated recognition of their potential importance to the local economy and a desire to stem the (probable) fall in numbers.

At Stonehenge, HBMC has grasped the nettle avoided for so long by the DoE, and has gone for a long-term solution. Their proposals include a new visitors' centre and car park, about ¾ mile away, approach to the stones by foot (with a mini-bus service for the less active) and closure of the nearby road (the A344), at a total cost approaching £3m. The idea of a full-size replica (*Foamhenge*) has been rejected: the aim is to do justice to the site itself, even at the risk of some local opposition (to the road closure).

Rate-capped Greenwich, by contrast, has an unenviable task. Despite being the local authority for one of the most attractive groups of historic buildings in London, it is relatively powerless. It owns none of the main buildings, and has little to say in factors which detract from visiting Greenwich – the timing of the boat services and the state of the rolling stock on the rail link, for example. It must do what it can with 'environmental' improvements and better sign-posting. We wish their efforts well, but feel that the real answer might be for someone to market 'the Greenwich experience' as a packaged whole.

One question which neither authority tackled is why people visit historic sites. Among the many reasons, one that has been recently advanced is that tourists are getting away from their own environment, which they perceive as drab, boring or

unpleasant, as much as visiting somewhere else. If so, there could be considerable scope for 'internal tourism' – promoting our own local sites and buildings to ourselves – which would not only foster local pride but avoid some of the cultural problems of mass tourism. 'A tourist saved is a tourist earned' could be a potent slogan.

Reprints

THERE HAS BEEN a hiatus in the production of reprints from *the L.A.* since we changed printers a year ago. We are now able to resume this service to readers and authors, and can offer two styles of reprint – (i) produced by our usual printer, on our usual paper and to our usual format. There is a large element of 'fixed cost' but extra copies are cheap: in other words, only a long print run (say 500 or more copies) is really viable, (ii) on thinner paper, and either reduced to A5 or increased to A4 format. These are charged on a 'per copy' basis and are more economical for short runs. We are producing reprints of recent articles on Streatham and Uxbridge for the Department of Greater London Archaeology, Museum of London, by the first method, and of two less recent articles on Kingston pottery (for the local society) by the second. We have also produced a reprint in A5 format of Liam Kefrey's recent article on draftsmanship, which we are selling ourselves. The price is 10p per copy, plus 20p for postage and packing for every five or less than five (e.g. 5 copies cost 70p, 6 copies £1, 10 copies £1.40 and so on). They can be purchased from the Subscriptions Secretary.

An Apology

SOME COPIES of the Winter issue were inadvertently sent out with two blank pages. If yours is one of these, please return it and we will replace it free of charge. We apologise for this oversight.

Annual Lecture and General Meeting

THE ANNUAL MEETING of the *London Archaeologist* will take place on Friday May 31 at 7 p.m. in Room G6, Institute of Archaeology, 31-34 Gordon Square, London W.C.1. Refreshments will be provided from 6.30 p.m. This year the lecture (open to the public) will be 'Palaces of London' by Peter Curnow of the Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission. Before the lecture, the annual reports and accounts will be presented. The proceedings will include the election of officers and the

election to the Publication Committee of the six local authority representatives, whose nomination should be made in writing not less than 14 days before the A.G.M. to the Chairman, c/o 7 Coalecroft Road, S.W.15.

Local Societies are invited to send one representative with voting powers to the A.G.M.; individual subscribers and their friends will also be welcome to attend.