

APPAG goes public

APPAG (the All-Party Parliamentary Archaeology Group) held a public meeting on 7 December to present some of the main conclusions from their report, which will be published this January. For personal reasons, I was not able to attend, but I was able to obtain a summary of the meeting.

They proposed a number of reforms, including: making the maintenance of Sites and Monuments Records a statutory duty, Bringing to an end the competitive tendering for archaeological contracts under PPG 16 and granting area franchises instead, and Introducing a Bill to make it a specific criminal offence to handle stolen antiquities.

The report will also call on government departments to work together more effectively in the interests of archaeology. For example, the Department for Education and Science will be asked to end discrimination against archaeology graduates who wish to enter the teaching profession, and the Department for Food and Rural Affairs will be asked to recognise the damage that ploughing and drainage have on the archaeological resource, and to implement measures to achieve more sustainable agricultural practices.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister will be asked to make the protection of archaeology a central plank of the new Planning Bill currently before Parliament, and the Department of Culture, Media and Sport will be asked to ensure continuity of the Portable Antiquities Scheme, and to improve museum funding so that they can continue to undertake primary research and provide adequate conservation, storage and archive facilities for archaeological finds.

Summing up, Lord Redesdale said that it was up to all archaeologists to raise the profile of the historic environment, and to give their active support to the APPAG report's recommendations by writing to MPs and Ministers. "Letters help to draw the attention of the government and parliamentarians to the issues that people care about", he said.

It will be interesting to see what progress can be made on these topics, now that they have been taken up by an organisation that is distinct from the discipline of archaeology itself. The signs so far are not very encouraging; for example, the Scottish Assembly recently turned down an attempt to make SMRs statutory, on the grounds that most of Scotland was already covered.

Apology

We apologise to David Bird that the illustration to his article in Vol. 10, no. 2, was aligned across the page instead of up the page (north to the top). This was due to a misunderstanding between the editor and the printer.

Another step forward

More technically-minded readers may be interested to know that this is the first issue to be produced using our new *PagePlus 8* software (though we did use it for the last *Fieldwork Round-up*). It has certainly made life easier for the editor, and we hope it will help to improve the quality of the production.

Fieldwork Round-up 2002

Contributions to the 2002 *Fieldwork Round-up* should be sent to Cath Maloney, Museum of London, 46 Eagle Wharf Road, London N1 7EE. They should be modelled on the ones in the 2001 *Round-up* and if possible should be sent in on a floppy disk as well as on paper.

Advance notice

The Annual Lecture and Meeting of the *London Archaeologist* will be held at 7 p.m. on Tuesday 20 May in Room 612 of the Institute of Archaeology, 31-34 Gordon Square, London WC1. After the close of business, Jonathan Cotton will speak about 'London before London' (the new Prehistory Gallery at the Museum of London). A formal announcement will be made in the next issue, but meanwhile please make a note in your diaries.