

Commentary by Gromaticus

The martyrdom of St George's

So what did happen at St George the Martyr (see p. 168)? Despite the concern expressed by London's archaeological bodies, and some fears that vital opportunities may have been missed, the details are still unclear. The site is a key one for the understanding of Roman Southwark, being situated on the apparent edge of the settlement, where the roads from Kent and Sussex converge. The antecedents of the present (18th-century) church are also of great interest; for example, was there a Saxon origin?

In theory, all these issues were known before the work started, but the budgetary constraints involved in the HLF funding meant that they could not be addressed to the extent that many would consider adequate. In particular, there appears to be little if any resources available for post-excavation work. The only exception seems to be for the Tudor terracottas (see p. 168) – as their discovery was unexpected, English Heritage may contribute to the work on them.

Those of us who can still remember the days before PPG16 will experience a sense of *déjà vu*, but we have to remember that this was not a commercial development, and that there were no obvious sources of the extra funding that would have been needed for a more thorough excavation. The archaeology is not the only thing to have suffered; the church fabric has not been repaired to the extent and richness that it deserves, and plans to display the finds locally must be in doubt. This raises the question of how such archaeological work is to be funded in general; the 'developers' cannot be expected to pay, and none of the obvious grant-giving bodies seem to fully allow for such situations in their terms of reference.

A further question that comes to mind is – how well is PPG16 working? Do evaluations actually provide enough information for decision makers? Probably much of the time the answer is 'yes', but here is a high-profile site where the system has failed, and archaeological voices have been raised. How many lower-profile sites suffer a similar fate without the recognition and fuss that this one has incurred? I wonder.

New committee member needed

Because we recognise that our subscribers are the lifeblood of *London Archaeologist*, we're keen to get a new face on the Publications Committee who can manage subscriptions and finances for us. We're looking at ways to streamline some of the functions carried out by our current Treasurer/Subscriptions Secretary, who will be standing down at the AGM next May, so we may be able to fashion the tasks to fit an interested candidate. The Treasurer/Subscriptions Secretary is an officer of the Publications Committee, which meets quarterly to decide on editorial and management issues. With some exciting changes coming up, we're looking for someone with ideas and enthusiasm for archaeology in London, plus the efficient approach and eye for detail that the role requires. If you think you might be interested in joining us, get in touch with the Treasurer/Subscriptions Secretary, Shiela Broomfield (01732 838 698 or s.broomfield@dial.pipex.com) for an informal chat.

Reader Survey

Many thanks to all the readers who completed survey forms. You've given us a clear picture of what you want from *LA*, as well as some excellent ideas for enhancing the magazine. A task force is working on a plan to develop the magazine for the future, so that it remains an essential resource for those new to archaeology in London, as well as to the surprising number of you who have been subscribers from the beginning thirty-eight years ago.

Fieldwork Round-up

The Fieldwork and Publication Round-up for 2005 is being distributed with this issue. Please contact the Subscriptions Secretary if you have not received your copy. Our thanks go to Cath Maloney for collating the Fieldwork Round-up, and to Isabel Holroyd and Gustav Milne for the Publications section. Please let us know of any omissions.