

1. Only three highly disturbed walls of the cesspit survived. Part of the west and east walls and all of the north wall had been removed for the main north south drainage pipe for the goods yard. It seems possible that this cesspit can be associated with the workshops, although no evidence survived to connect them.

Just to the rear of Houses 3, 4 and 5 a well was located. Constructed of brick, it had an internal diameter of 0.75m and an external diameter of 1.20 m. Although the well was only excavated in part (and its full depth not dug), it is known that its construction pit predates the buildings whose walls overlaid the well pit.

Below the terraced buildings a very thick deposit of garden soil was found covering the whole of the excavated area. How and why it arrived there is not known but pottery taken from this material dates from the 17th century.

The lowest levels excavated consisted of a series of tipping layers the uppermost of which proved to be the fill of a feature cut into the natural sand and gravel, the bottom being very irregular and possibly

represents a quarry.

Conclusion

Although the excavation did not supply any information for the Roman cemetery and fort or St. Clare of the Minors, it did provide a unique picture and environmental study of one of the late developing areas of the City just outside its eastern limits during the 17th century and later.

Oswald's study of London clay-pipe manufacturers⁶ shows that the majority were situated on the poor outer fringes of the City. Harrow Alley with its row of badly constructed terraced buildings with associated cesspits certainly indicates conditions of comparative poverty—distinct, for example, from the development of the corresponding area to the west of the City. The outskirts of Aldgate were clearly never a favoured district and its slow growth is one reason for the survival of the site.

A preliminary search for published accounts of similar industrial sites of this date has not, so far at least, revealed any valid comparisons in London or elsewhere.

6. *Ibid* 171, 210-16.

Letters

ROMAN URN FROM CAMDEN

I WAS particularly interested to see in the article "Roman Camden" by Brian Robertson (Spring edition of *the London Archaeologist*, p.253(4) the references to three cinerary urns discovered at Grays Inn Road.

I have in my possession a further example found there in 1937 which proved, after enquiries made of Brian Robertson and the Museum of London, to be hitherto unrecorded.

The urn is of dark brown fabric with incised band and "fingernail" decoration high on the shoulder. It can be ascribed to about the second half of the 1st century A.D.

The measurement of the vessel are:—height 12½ins. (31 cm); maximum diameter of body 11ins. (28cm); internal diameter of everted rim 5½ins. (14cm); base diameter 4½ins. (12cm).

A label on the base reads—ROMAN CINERARY URN FD. OP. GRAYS INN ROAD ON JULY 2, 1937.

28 Rothesay Avenue,
Wimbledon Chase,
SW20 8JU

DAVID LEWIS

ARCHAEOLOGY IN THE CITY

THE TANTALISINGLY brief article in the Spring issue of *the London Archaeologist* by Brian Hobley, on "The City of London Unit: first year of operations" gave a splendid picture of an organisation battling against the considerable odds which face those who excavate in London.

I was struck by the virtual absence of any mention of priorities for excavation and research, the case for which *The Future of London's Past* made such a powerful plea. How, or on what criteria, are sites in the City chosen for excavation? Is a choice in fact made, or is it the aim of the D.U.A. to excavate every site which becomes available?

What, indeed, are the "agreed and defined objectives" which are mentioned in Mr. Hobley's article (para 2).

The idea of priorities or objectives for excavation of necessity requires there to be an overall programme of research, carefully worked out to include a wide range of parameters (from topographical to environmental). Mr. Hobley's article, however, seems to concentrate rather more emphasis on purely organisational matters, and appears to leave out entirely any mention of the fact that archaeological excavation is only one amongst a number of methods of enquiry whose aim is to answer historical questions.

For what is archaeology, and for why is publication . . . ?

28 Tory,
Bradford-on-Avon,
Wiltshire.

JEREMY HASLAM,
Urban Archaeologist for
Wiltshire.

Mr. Hobley's comments on this letter will be published in the next issue.

BOOKS

Due to various circumstances, "Books" has been held over until the next issue.