

Commentary

By GROMATICUS

City Trust Fund

IN LAUNCHING the City Archaeological Trust Fund, the Corporation of London have taken a positive step to widen the involvement of people and institutions in the rescuing of the City's heritage (p. 348). Sir Murray Fox, Lord Mayor 1974/75, commends the appeal, "I hope that many more people will agree with me that this special work deserves your support and contributions to it will be of benefit to the nation and future generations".

Naturally enough, I commend to all readers the principle of the Fund and hope that it will draw enthusiastic support; the post-excavation studies of the Department of Urban Archaeology are particularly in need of financial sustenance at the moment. That said, I must declare my uneasiness . . .

In 1855 the City Corporation refused to find £3,000 for Charles Roach Smith's unique collection of London antiquities and to establish a museum (see p. 330). Between 1946 and 1962 the Corporation contributed only £550 towards the work of Professor Grimes which was under the auspices of the Roman and Mediaeval Excavation Council (*The Excavation of Roman and Mediaeval London* (1968) p. 245).

In 1970/71 the Corporation's grant towards excavations was £95 and in 1972/73, the year of Baynards Castle, it rose to £17,000, due to adverse publicity. In August 1973 the Chairman of the Library Committee stated that the Corporation were likely to spend £320,000 over the next twenty years, i.e. an average of £16,000 per annum. (*City Press* 9 August 1973; see also *L.A.* Vol. 2 No. 4 p. 74).

Today

Now, in the winter of 1975 the Trust Fund Leaflet (printed in October) states, "Annual expenditure is currently more than £100,000 per annum and this is the initial target which the Fund has set itself". In addition Sir Murray's preface includes the sentence, "Because of the particular problems facing archaeology in the City, the Corporation has created the City Archaeological Trust Fund to which City institutions are giving their support" — Guildhall Museum no longer exists now that the Museum of London has been funded, in part by the Corporation.

Three points need clarification — firstly, of that £100,000 only £10,000 represents the Corporation's contribution, virtually all the remainder being grants from the Department of the Environment; secondly,

the "City institutions" are, of course, already supporting archaeology through the medium of their rates and the Corporation's contribution; thirdly, the five permanent staff of the D.U.A. are now within the Museum of London and therefore are being funded by the Corporation.

Scepticism

Healthy scepticism is often much praised — I am sceptical! I am just beginning to feel that the Corporation is trying to revert to its old role of a Philistine . . .

The whole tone of the Trust Fund leaflet suggests that the Corporation is trying to lower its present contribution in favour of whatever generosity City institutions and firms can muster in these difficult times.

The times *are* tough and it is obviously going to be extremely difficult to reach the Trust Fund's target of £100,000 per annum. It is not only the matter of the current financial state of the country, because the City institutions and firms, upon whom the success of the appeal must depend, will look for a strong lead from the Corporation itself, the City corporate. A Lord Mayor's patronage alone is not enough to bring success, as other appeals have shown in the past.

Archaeological Reports

There seems to be a spate of reports on development threats, and how and why something should be done about them. It is hoped that two reports, one on Greater London and the other on the Borough of Wandsworth (the first literary fruits of the South West London Team), will be reviewed in *the London Archaeologist* during the coming year, to follow the two already published on the City of London and Kingston.

A very interesting report has recently been produced on the other Kingston, Kingston upon Hull which has been archaeologically overlooked — because it is a medieval town rather than a Roman-founded one? Particularly striking are two reproductions of Hollar's map of Kingston c.1640; the first is a straight copy of the original while the second has blank spaces where development has already or will shortly take place. The comparison is a devastating illustration of the archaeological crisis in the town (copies are obtainable from Hull Museums, 23-24 High Street, Kingston upon Hull, HU1 1NE—56p incl. post).