

# Commentary

by GROMATICUS

## The smile on the face of the tiger

ALL ARCHAEOLOGISTS should be aware of the *Code of Practice* recently published by the British Archaeologists and Developers Liaison Group (available from the DUA, Museum of London, price £1 post free). The existence of the Liaison Group, which is a permanent body supported by the British Property Federation and several national archaeological bodies (including the CBA and HBMC), may be a surprise to some readers, while an agreement on a voluntary code of conduct may seem little short of a miracle.

The *Code* is in two parts, spelling out the responsibilities of developers and archaeologists. In brief, developers are to 'seek professional archaeological evaluation of potential development sites', 'Allow both adequate time (and financial support) to permit an archaeologically worthwhile investigation', 'be aware of the desirability of preserving and displaying important structural remains in situ', to donate as many of the finds as possible to an approved museum, and to loan the rest for study, and finally to 'give full consideration to the important need for publication as an essential part of the excavation costs.

Archaeologists, in return, are to 'give developers the earliest possible notice of the need for site investigation', 'Initiate negotiations ... as early as possible' and 'complete the work in as short a time as possible and be fully aware of the importance of adhering to agreed timetables'. They should 'keep the developer informed of interesting discoveries', 'ensure that the contractor's programme is not adversely affected by any archaeological work', help with exhibitions, and acknowledge the developer's support in publications. They should not 'while under contract publicly campaign for in situ preservation', nor 'publicly or through the media bring pressure on developers to alter the conditions of the contract, e.g. to gain further time'. Both

parties are to make agreements as indicated in *Guidelines for the Preparation of Contracts for Archaeological Excavation 1982*, and to bring any problems to the Liaison Group.

That is what it says, but what does it mean? A cynic will see it as the developers' reaction to Part II of the *Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979* (which gave the Secretary of State powers to designate 'areas of archaeological importance' with a statutory right for excavation), making paper concessions to head off more onerous legislation. But it could be argued that if Part II has provoked this reaction, it has fulfilled its purpose while remaining largely unimplemented. I am sceptical about voluntary codes of conduct, and the operation of the CBI's code for gravel extraction has not been encouraging. If a voluntary agreement between two such unequally balanced parties is to succeed, especially when the weaker has one hand (public pressure) tied behind its back, there will have to be an unusual amount of goodwill. Only time will tell: I expect that the Liaison Group will be busy.

A worrying aspect of the *Code* is that it carves up our heritage between the developer and the 'approved archaeologist', with no representation of other interests. Both archaeologists and developers should be aware of other environmental and conservational interests in sites, and the need for professionals and amateurs to work together.

Sensible usage and careful monitoring will be required to determine whether the *Code* works. If it fails to obtain improved conditions for archaeological work, it will at least prove that proper legislation is still needed.

## An apology

IN THE REVIEW of *The Vikings: fact and fiction* in the Spring issue, we gave the author's name as Robin Kenward. It is in fact Robin Place. We apologise to the author and to any readers who may have had difficulty in buying a copy of this book.

## A.G.M. of the London Archaeologist

THE SEVENTEENTH A.G.M. of the *London Archaeologist* was held on 7 May in the Lecture Theatre of the Institute of Archaeology. The following officers were elected - Editor, Clive Orton; Assistant Editors, Barbara Davis and Rhoda Edwards; Secretary, Nesta Caiger; Advertising and Promotion, Betsey Kentish; Subscriptions, Shiela Broomfield; Managing Editor, Nicholas Fuentes - and the auditors were re-elected. Representatives to

serve on the Publication Committee were elected from the Pinner Local History Society, Richmond Archaeological Society, Shooters Hill Historical Society, Waltham Abbey Historical Society and Woolwich & District Antiquarian Society. The account showed a deficit on the year of about £200, due to the cost of the index to Volume 4. After the close of business, Gustav Milne spoke on 'The Roman Port of London'.