

# One into two

Clive Orton is handing over the mantle of editor of *London Archaeologist* after 40 successful years in the post. Due to changes in the field of archaeology, in technology, and in the time people have for voluntary activities, LA decided at its AGM in May to elect two joint editors in future to split the role between them. In our occasional side by side interview series, Becky Wallower salutes Clive's contribution and introduces the first joint editors, Jenny Hall and Diana Briscoe, probing their experience, interests and priorities for LA, and for London's archaeology.



**LEFT** Clive Orton, presented at the AGM with replica Cheam jug and Staffordshire posset pot reading 'Clive Orton ~ Gromaticus ~ 1976–2016'

**CENTRE** Jenny Hall with a large bronze vessel, one of the exceptional finds discovered on the Drapers Gardens site in 2006.

**RIGHT** Diana Briscoe, keeper of the Archive of Anglo-Saxon Pottery Stamps

**Clive Orton** took on the editorship from LA's first editor, Nick Fuentes, for the summer 1976 issue – the first to feature an artefact on the cover. Working for the Department of Greater London Archaeology, from a desk at the Institute of Archaeology, he gradually switched to the academic side, becoming professor in quantitative methods in archaeology in 2001, and Emeritus Professor on retiring early in 2008. Over 40 years he has edited 195 issues through several generations of technology, attended hundreds of meetings, represented LA on numerous bodies and maintained the highest standards in every aspect of his professional and voluntary work. Although he steps down as editor, he will still be writing *Gromaticus* for us, and will support the joint editors during the transition, as Editor Emeritus. So we won't be letting him go just yet...

**Jenny Hall** is a name known to anyone interested in London's archaeology and the Romans in particular. As a senior curator at the Museum of London for more than 30 years, she was responsible for the creation of the current Roman gallery, launched in 1996, and the hugely successful High Street Londinium exhibition, based on excavations at Poultry, in 2000. She has published widely, co-edited important festschrifts for Harvey Sheldon and John Clark, is an Honorary Lecturer at UCL, and is involved with the Roman Finds Group (RFG). On retirement, she produced Roman London, a website for Greater London's schools, with the London Grid for Learning and is currently leading the RFG educational project involving short films in which leading finds specialists introduce themes and objects to undergraduates and new learners.

**Diana Briscoe** acquired her earliest archaeological experience field walking with her grandmother, the illustrious early 20th-century archaeologist Grace Briscoe. Her mother Teresa Briscoe, who met Diana's father during the 1947 Lackford cemetery excavations, created the Archive of Anglo-Saxon Pottery Stamps [AASPS]. Diana has continued to maintain and update the archive, and has expanded it to include Roman pottery stamps from Britain. While pursuing her professional career as an editor of commercial non-fiction books, she took a second BA in History and Archaeology at Birkbeck, and last year completed her PhD at the Institute of Archaeology under the supervision of Clive Orton. She has been named an honorary research assistant at the Institute, working with Andrew Reynolds and Stuart Brookes.

**What has been the most interesting or important achievement of the past 25 years for you?**

**JH:** It has to be the launch of the Roman gallery – the culmination of the work of the previous 20 years. It ushered in a new approach, with emphasis much more on bringing life to exhibits through interpretation, rather than dry typological displays of objects.

**DB:** Taking on the AASPS from my mother. I'd always been involved on the periphery, but I've been able to develop it as a resource, cast more stamps, make it more accessible.

**Other than the spread of developer-funded excavations, what do you think has changed most in London's archaeology over that period?**

**JH:** The huge impact archaeology has made on the public – especially through museums – has been exciting. Using archaeology properly brings the past to the present, it fires imaginations. And the media now know that new discoveries make great stories.

**DB:** Probably the effect of the large scale rebuilding of so much of London. Redevelopment has increased new discoveries and evidence immensely.

**Name your favourite London site/find.**

**JH:** The Drapers Gardens' Roman bronze cache was astonishing. There is literally nothing like it in Britain in terms of size, scope, completeness... I just couldn't stop grinning when I first saw it. Gresham Street's Roman water lifting mechanism runs a close second though, as we were able to build a fantastic working replica.



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**ABOVE** Jenny with school children operating the replica Roman water lifting mechanism.

**DB:** The Bloomberg site looks like it will produce some great evidence once it's published. And of course the Covent Garden excavations because they gradually revealed the site of Lundenwic. St Martin in the Fields was also interesting as a transitional site bridging Roman and Saxon occupation.

**What are your hopes for archaeology in London over the next 25 years?**

**JH:** I would like it still to be there, still being found, for a start and to have a high profile. There's so much new work to be done on the people behind the archaeology too – new technologies in fields like osteoarchaeology are not just revealing more detail about those people, but making that more real for 21st-century observers.

**DB:** I'd hope that it continues to be excavated and published properly, and that it can continue to enthuse the public, perhaps through things like interaction with schools and use of social media.

**You've taken on the challenge of editing LA so you must believe it's important. Why?**

**JH:** Because it brings key excavations together in one place, often providing a useful summary in advance of full publication. And it enables everyone in different disciplines to keep in touch with archaeology across London.

**DB:** Because it does what it says on the tin – it focuses on archaeology across London in an accessible and less stodgy form than some. The mix of content is excellent I think.

**What do you like most about it?**

**JH:** The features are good for the breadth they cover, with new discoveries and specialist views given a bit of space not easily found elsewhere.

**DB:** I subscribe to – and read – 10 or 11 publications, and LA is often a welcome relief. Favourite aspects would be the design, the spread of content, and the more digestible bits like Gromaticus.

**And least?**

**JH:** Diary, I guess, as I get that information elsewhere.

**DB:** I'm not keen on prehistory, so articles on flints and ditches wouldn't be the first thing I turned to.

**What's the biggest challenge?**

**JH:** Clive is just such a hard act to follow – maintaining that standard will take some doing. I'd also like to make sure we keep LA topical and relevant.



**ABOVE** One of the stamped pottery fragments in the AASPS curated by Diana

**DB:** It may be keeping and extending the readership. We'll also have to work at getting interesting articles coming forward, and forming good links with the units and other contributors.

**How do you think the joint editor setup will work?**

**JH:** It should work well as we have complimentary skills. I'll hand over articles to Diana in edited form and she'll manage the layout and production side – a typical set up in many publishers really.

**DB:** It should be fine. I enjoy laying stuff out, making it work as well as possible. We'll need to figure out the best way to coordinate who does what when, but Clive will help us for a while, thank goodness.

**Anything you'd like to see developed within the magazine in the future?**

**JH:** We've talked about potentially commissioning longer articles – a synthesis of work in a particular area or on a theme, perhaps.

**DB:** Maybe we could look forward a bit as well as covering completed work – upcoming digs, new initiatives?

**Do you have any tips for authors?**

**JH:** Try to enthuse the reader. Of all the ways of putting a point across, the most effective will be the one that's actually interesting. Imagine you're talking to the reader.

**DB:** Keep it clear. Don't obfuscate or try to use complex or technical language when something simpler will be clearer for a wider audience.

**What's your first message for readers?**

**JH:** I hope we can live up to your expectations and needs. And please do give us feedback – we're open to suggestions on anything from anyone.

**DB:** Hang in there and keep ideas and articles coming in. If you enjoy something, tell us; if you'd prefer more or less of something, let us know.