

Editorial

'Roman Britain in 19xx' is the section to which many readers turn first when the new *Britannia* arrives. The survey may not be the latest news (some of it inevitably is eighteen months old when it appears in print), but it is comprehensive, and that is its forte. For the past ten years Professor Sheppard Frere has compiled the annual review of work on sites single-handed, with conspicuous success but no small effort, and the Roman Society is deeply in his debt.

The survey in its present form dates back to 1921 when it was first compiled for the *Journal of Roman Studies* by Miss M.V. Taylor and R.G. Collingwood, encouraged by the Administrators of the Haverfield Bequest. Indeed, Francis Haverfield himself was the originator of the idea, giving regular reports on developments in Roman Britain to the British Academy.

In the past seventy years the scale of the report has grown inexorably: 33 printed pages in 1921 to 71 in 1991. But so has its importance as a record. Sadly, a short paragraph in 'Roman Britain in 19xx' remains the only published account of too many pieces of promising fieldwork and excavation.

Professor Frere indicated recently that he would like to pass the burden of compilation to other hands, but to the Society's relief consented to bridge the interregnum while new arrangements were being made. In fact the succession passes to a triumvirate: Dr Barry Burnham is now responsible for Wales, Dr Lawrence Keppie for Scotland and Dr Simon Esmonde Cleary for England. (Their addresses and further instructions are printed in the Notes for Contributors below.) It need hardly be emphasised that they will depend wholly on the goodwill and co-operation of excavators, fieldworkers and discoverers of new finds to announce their results – ideally without prompting!

A call has recently gone out from the Society of Antiquaries, the Museums Association and English Heritage for an entirely new *Annual Compendium* of excavations, multiperiod and on an ambitious scale. Duplication of effort must clearly be avoided, however, and the period societies will need to take stock of the situation soon. The document claims that 'peer pressure' will ensure a stream of contributions to the *Compendium*. Would that it were as easy as that!