

Hugh Chapman

THE DEATH of Hugh Chapman in a fall, at the age of only 46, has deprived London's archaeology, and indeed many of London's archaeologists, of a very good and close friend. Hugh was one of the most widely respected and best loved archaeologists in the country, not just London, and this enviable reputation stands out in a profession that is not always noted for its generosity of spirit.

Hugh was perhaps best known as Keeper of the Department of Prehistoric and Roman Antiquities at the Museum of London (a post he held from 1978 to 1988), but his career was far wider. His academic background was a BA in Ancient History at University College London and a PhD in Roman Archaeology at the Institute of Archaeology, completed while he was working for the Museum of London. He joined the old Guildhall Museum in 1969 as a Museum Assistant, becoming Assistant Keeper in 1974, the year he also gained the Diploma of the Museums Association. His excavation at Aldgate in 1972, which produced evidence of a previously-unknown early Roman military site and which was speedily published, was the forerunner of the many excavations carried out by the Department of Urban Archaeology, set up by the Guildhall Museum in the following year. When the Guildhall Museum merged with the London Museum to become the Museum of London in 1975, Hugh joined the Department of Prehistoric and Roman Antiquities, and was promoted to Keeper of that Department in 1978, and also to Deputy Director of the Museum in 1980. Public highlights of his career were the establishment of the London Wall Walk in 1984 (see *LA* 4, no. 15 (1984) 420), still followed by many tourists, and the *Capital Gains!* exhibition (1986-87), now only a fond memory but at the time a high point of London's professional archaeological activity.

If this appreciation makes Hugh sound like a grey museum functionary, intent on climbing the ladder of promotion, nothing could be further from the truth. He was active widely outside the Museum, both in London and nationally, indeed internationally. As a Londoner, he served the Lon-

don & Middlesex Archaeological Society successively as Assistant Editor, Editor and Vice President, and was President of the Society at the time of his death. During his editorship he transformed the Society's annual *Transactions* into a journal capable of publishing the major reports from the many excavations in London, as well as setting up a new series of *Special Publications* for more detailed topics and works of synthesis. On the wider front, he served on the Councils of the British Archaeological Association, the Society for the Promotion of Roman Studies and the Museums Association, and on the Board of the International Committee for Museums of Archaeology and History (ICOM), and was Chairman of the Society of Museum Archaeologists.

In 1988 Hugh left the Museum of London to become General Secretary of the Society of Antiquaries. Here he worked on bringing that institution up to date, in terms of its facilities, publications and organisation, as well as getting to grips with the enormous problem presented by the ever-growing body of archaeological archives held by organisations around the country. But London was not forgotten — he was one of the instigators of the Standing Conference on London Archaeology, which was launched last November.

This appreciation has been culled from the writings of Max Hebditch, Michael Robbins and Harvey Sheldon. To add a personal note, my chief memory of Hugh is as Chairman of the committee which organised the *Capital Gains!* exhibition in 1986 (on which I represented the Department of Greater London Archaeology). He held together and led a very disparate group of us, with conflicting departmental, period and personal interests, to produce an exhibition which will live on in the memories of many. He did so by his respect and care for each individual, which were never over-ridden by his love for archaeology and his desire to convey that feeling to a wide public as possible. For this combination of public and private virtues he will be long remembered and sadly missed.

Clive Orton