

the London Archaeologist

THE FIRST YEAR

By THE EDITOR

WITH A FULL year having passed since the first issue of *the London Archaeologist*, it is perhaps an opportune moment to hold a short review of that period with regard to the magazine, especially as the first annual general meeting will not take place until the spring of 1970.

If *the London Archaeologist* has to search for a forebear, it must look to *Kent Archaeological Review*. The idea was conceived when a number of people began to appreciate the large amount of support and goodwill with which the Kent magazine was meeting and naturally enough came to the conclusion that a similar type of publication would be most welcome in the London area.

Because the county societies' boundaries are somewhat blurred (to use an euphemism), it was decided not to associate the embryo publication with any one of them. The same practice as far as possible is applied to relations with local societies, despite the fact that the officers and most of the other people connected with the magazine are officials of such bodies. Again on the same ground of independence no formal link was sought with museums or their staffs.

All the editorial, administrative, distributive and promotional work is done by amateur archaeologists in their spare time; the only paid person is the printer. Such a course has inherent advantages and disadvantages. These are characterised by the tremendous enthusiasm and drive which is forthcoming but which can also be intermittent when the process of earning one's bread must of necessity intervene; in addition, besides the obligations as officials of local societies, there are other things in life which stake a claim to a portion of one's spare time!

The magazine is published by the London Archaeologist Publishing Committee which consists of five officers and representatives of five local societies in the London area; these latter were rather arbitrarily chosen at the magazine's inaugural meeting. An annual general meeting will be held in the spring to which, through a notice in the next issue, all local societies will be invited to send a representative. At the meeting a formal constitution and a set of accounts will be submitted for approval and the election of the five society representatives will take place.

The impact which *the London Archaeologist* has made may perhaps be adjudged from the following information. The print order for each issue has been 2,500, of which at the present moment some 1,800 have been sold. The over-order was considered necessary as the experience of other similar publications showed that unless provision was made a heavy

demand for back numbers as new people came to hear of the magazine would soon exhaust stocks.

Subscription copies come to some 1,300 and over 200 are sold through the five London museums which are in a position to do this. The remainder are distributed through local societies, postal enquiries and at conferences and meetings.

Financially *the London Archaeologist* is in a healthy position and no obstacle to repaying the loans to the Development Fund (see No. 1 p. 20) is anticipated. The Committee have been very touched by the number of individuals who have sent in "a little extra" with their subscriptions or have appended appreciative comments on their renewal forms. The renewals themselves have been arriving in a steady stream together with a large number of much appreciated bankers' orders.

The contents of *the London Archaeologist* have been aimed at providing reports on recent activities together with general articles and items of information. The following facts give an idea of the influence of the magazine: off-prints of articles have been reproduced from Nos. 2, 3 and 4 for local sale; all the tools in the list of equipment mentioned in No. 1 have been borrowed, some several times over; following the publication of his article one author has been asked by a publisher to write a full-length book on the subject; publication of kiln excavation reports has already started bringing in unknown parallels and of course other articles have had their quota of correspondence; the publishing of details of excavations has brought in the volunteers.

In this narration of *the London Archaeologist's* success story there is unfortunately not enough room to mention the very many people who are contributing their time and talent to the magazine. However, I would like to make grateful mention of Stewart Valdar who by designing the layout of the first number and by much worthwhile advice, provided the magazine with a decent launching.

The future of *the London Archaeologist* is uncharted but the Committee hopes that it will develop along the lines that its readers would prefer; a number of suggestions have already been made. Some have been taken up, while others have had to be held over; for example, a question and answer feature has been put into cold storage because of the lack of space. Either the Editor or Lionel Fereday, the Chairman of the London Archaeologist Publishing Committee (779 Great Cambridge Road, Enfield, Middlesex), will always be pleased to hear of suggestions or comments.