

Post-Medieval Societies all publish journals as well as running conferences and seminars. These con-good opportunity to meet others with similar ferences are often open to non-members and are a interests.

One aspect of archaeology not given sufficient coverage at evening classes is practice and instruction in the techniques of excavation, so it is necessary if excavation is the prime interest, to complement lectures with a week or two on a training excavation. These courses are run by several universities during the summer months and details can be found in the

Council for British Archaeology's Calendar of Ex-cavations, published monthly from March to Sep-tember at a cost of 50p from C.B.A., 8 St. Andrew's Place, N.W.1.

For the newcomer to archaeology the choice is wide, but a recommended course of action is to enrol at an evening class, join a local and a county society and obtain experience by attending excava-tions and assisting in the post-excavation work of processing finds, thus helping at all stages the ulti-mate aim of the archaeologist, to publish and dis-seminate his knowledge.

Letters

LONDON ARCHAEOLOGICAL CENTRE

I WAS VERY DISAPPOINTED to see no expression of support in the last issue for Jeremy Haslam's proposed London Archaeological Centre (*the London Archaeologist* No. 10)—or is the lack of one so self evident that the leaders of archaeology in London feel that there is no need to stress it.

Yesterday I attended the open day at the Southwark sites where it was most noticeable that visitors were both interested in the sites and willing to part with their money for what was, in their opinion, a good cause. It was equally noticeable that their money was being received with open arms. Indeed, I was told by one of the archaeologists there that there is neither enough money to go round the archaeological sites in London nor enough people to supervise them.

Surely then, Sir, something ought to be done. If the official bodies (be they governmental, museum or amateur) are unwilling to do anything, then it must be up *the London Archaeologist* that people will look for a lead in this matter!

It seems inconceivable that whereas in most old towns research committees have been formed to organise and drum up support for local archaeology, nothing seems to have happened in London. In the past I know that there has been a lack of interest but the climate has surely changed in the last five years or so. With all the public media placing an emphasis on archaeology and history, here is a golden opportunity. The visitors to the Southwark sites have shown that the interest and support exists—let someone mobilise it!

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UNDER THE THAMES

IT WAS INTERESTING to read of Wandsworth His-torical Society's mudlarking in the last issue. This has led me to wonder whether they or any other society had ever been able to enlist the help of a sub aqua club for work in the Thames and whether such a venture had been pro-ductive?

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WORTHY OF THEIR SALT

I WAS GREATLY pleased to hear of the decisions by Guildhall Museum to start a summer excavation season and to offer a subsistence allowance of 75p. per day for a minimum of four days. Earlier this year, it was found possible to pay a similar allowance to the full-time super-visory staff at Tooley Street and, at the present time, an allowance of £1 a day is being offered to all full-time dig-gers at Bedfont; these last two excavations are both re-ceiving Department of the Environment grants. At this uncture it may be of interest to note that the D. of E. rate offered at their own digs is now £1.50.

For a long time there has been a delightful air of amateurism (in its best altruistic sense) in London's archaeology—plenty of stout-hearted digging at week-ends with occasional bursts of so-called "full-time" excavating on sites. In the latter case the full-time (unpaid) volunteers usually seem to consist of half-a-dozen peole, part students untroubled by impecuniosity and part, workers of the world using up their annual leave; to these may be added casuals who pop along for the odd day, or even the odd hour: housewives, shiftworkers, etc.

All this is great and glorious, and in the best British tradition but it is not getting the ob done—in London! Elsewhere in the country there exists a thing called "the excavation season" which occurs in summer when students and others are free and the weather is reasonable. Volun-teers are usually given either a subsistence allowance or accommodation and food, while supervisors receive some-thing more. The result—digs done!

Everybody in London has heard of RESCUE and every-body agrees with its sentiments, but where is the urgency and the effort? The organisation of archaeology in London could do with an overhaul because it needs money and a more professional approach to rescue work. To this end I would suggest that Jeremy Haslam's article in the Spring issue be reread (or even read) both by occupiers of arm-chairs and by archaeological activists. We are already beginning to wobble in the right direction but cohesion in particular is lacking—can not some organisation seize the initiative?

Two last points: the public are often generous towards collection tins and I would commend that societies take better care to ensure that the contents go in the direction that the donors intended! Secondly, with the advent of subsistence allowances I would appeal for a standard rate for a standard period in the London area.

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