

Commentary

by Gromaticus

A fresh start

WELCOME TO the new-look *London Archaeologist* to mark the start of Volume 9. From now on, each issue will have a full-colour cover relating to one of our articles; we are also marking this event with a relaunch party, which some of you attended at the Museum of London on 27 July, a new publicity leaflet and four extra pages in this issue. Our aim is not self-congratulation at the completion of another volume, or even the pleasure of our readers (although of course we hope you like the new look), but to increase our readership by presenting a more immediately appealing product. We shall maintain the same high quality inside the covers – (usually) four selected feature articles, plus book reviews, letters, and the latest news. We believe that the time is ripe for a growth of interest and action on London's archaeology, and that we have a part to play in that movement. So please show the *London Archaeologist* to your friends, to members of your local society or evening class, and encourage them to take out a subscription. They may not know what they are missing.

Of course, we are not alone in this movement. As we have seen in recent issues, the Museum of London, for so long the 'sleeping giant' of London's public archaeology, is rousing itself and taking a leading role in making it possible for Londoners to study their own past (see Hedley Swain's article in this issue, pp. 3-5). By the time this is published, we should know whether the Museum's bid for Lottery funding to develop its Eagle Wharf Road store into the London Archaeological Archive and Research Centre (see Vol. 8, no. 8 (1998) 198) has been successful. When it comes to fruition, this project will give Londoners an un-

paralleled opportunity to get to grips with whatever aspect of their local past fascinates them most, from the palaeolithic to the post-medieval.

Not everyone will want, or be able, to travel to Hackney to study their part of London. Local museums are also improving their displays and access to their collections, and a longer-term aim must be to ensure remote access into the computer archives of at least the larger museums. Here the way is being led by the Archaeology Data Service in York, with access to a rapidly growing body of national archaeological data, including especially some very exciting data from Scotland. Where they lead, others must surely follow.

For all this to succeed, there must be changes in the structure of local archaeology, particularly in education, which must move from a 'passive' to a more 'active' mode. The emphasis must become less on the 'what' and more on the 'how to' of archaeology. This is already happening to some extent, witness the highly popular training excavations organised by Birkbeck College, but training will also be needed in the study of finds and of excavation archives. For those who wish to become involved, a more active engagement will then become possible. More than ever before, our own past will be in our own hands.

Round-up and Index

The *London Fieldwork and Publication Round-up* for 1998 is in preparation and we hope to distribute it with the next issue. An Index for Volume 8 is also in preparation by Isobel Holroyd, who has taken over from Daphne Brinklow. Our thanks are due to Daphne for many years' service in this important but often inconspicuous task.

Annual Lecture and Meeting

THE THIRTIETH A.G.M. of the *London Archaeologist* was held on Tuesday 18 May at the Institute of Archaeology, 31-34 Gordon Square. The following officers were elected: Editor, Clive Orton; Assistant Editor, Mairi Gaimster; Secretary, Simon O'Connor-Thompson; Advertising and Promotion, Roy Stephenson; Subscriptions, Shiela Broomfield; Managing Editor, David Gaimster. Tribute was paid to Nesta Caiger, who was standing down after

many years of service as Secretary. The auditor, Tony Snitter, was thanked and re-elected. Two new members were elected to the Publication Committee, representing Surrey Archaeological Society and the Society of Archaeological Students. The accounts showed a surplus on the year, reflecting the recent increase in the subscription rate. After the close of business, Hedley Swain spoke on London's archaeological archive.