

panied by a representative selection of preserved material can be of great educational value; they depict an important aspect of our past, and offer comparison with things as they are today.

The enthusiast's motivation is quite simply the pleasure he gets from his interest in old machinery. That is not to be derided, unless it becomes an overriding obsession. (In the 18th century, the word "enthusiasm" was sometimes used as a synonym for possession or even hysteria!) Indeed, some degree of enthusiasm is an essential nourishment for everyone concerned with the study of the past, if their activity is not to wither away in dull aridity; and the authorities of today are often the enthusiasts of yesterday. But it is important that the enthusiast should not without further ado adopt the label of "industrial archaeologist". The tag should not be regarded as an elasticated one that can be stretched to cover any conceivable involvement with the industrial past. (Maybe the fault lies with some writers. It is galling to see those who attend traction engine rallies or ride a preserved steam railway described in the Press as industrial archaeologists; if this is true, anyone who visited Baynard's Castle excavations was a medieval archaeologist, and the crowds at the Tower of London in high summer are all really architectural historians . . .)

So what is each likely to find in the new magazine? It would be quite unfair to dissect the first issue and deduce the future from its entrails. But equally the contents cannot be ignored as giving no guidance.

The three principal articles, each 2-3 pages in length, are devoted to early talking machines (phonographs, etc.); to a reprint of a 19th century account of Bradbury's of Oldham, makers of sewing machines and cycles; and to the history of valves. (Readers of *the London Archaeologist* will be interested to see illustrations of a Roman pump circa 300 B.C., looking incredibly modern.)

There are notes on the National Musical Museum at Brentford and the Broadwater Collection at Tunbridge Wells, whose Brian Jewell edits *Veteran Machines*; on early units of measurement (useful when researching in trade documents—1 firkin of

soap=64lbs., did you know?); and on a 1930's Beatty washing machine of unbelievably hideous appearance but some social interest. (Perhaps the ugliness of much early domestic machinery can account for its neglect in favour of the elegance of the steam locomotive or the colourfully quaint vintage car?) There are letters, and an impassioned account of the indifferent neglect of the world's largest reproducing organ in Southborough, Kent.

The first part of a Directory of Mechanical Writing is published, and the Editor appeals for more information from readers to make this and other directories into really comprehensive records. Admittedly "an attempt at the impossible," this first listing contains entries of varying quality. Twenty eight lines on the Blickensderfer Company are impressive, but surely there is more to say about IBM than the rather terse "Electric typewriters have been built by IBM since 1933"?

This issue therefore probably contains something of interest for everyone concerned with old machinery. It is clearly not intended to cater for the transport buffs, but then they are already generously fed by the magazine world. Equally, one must not expect exhaustively-detailed treatment of particular items, because space prevents this in a magazine which will be looking for a wide readership.<sup>3</sup> Towards preservation the attitude is sensible: "it is not suggested that we should overwhelm ourselves with a lot of old junk".

*Veteran Machines* seems then to be setting a middle course, between the Scylla of indiscriminate generality and the Charybdis of obsessive pedantry. This is good, for there is definitely a need to maintain contact between the specialist authority and the more generally-interested enthusiast. If it can achieve that, tempering the unrestrained excesses of each, the magazine will be playing a worthwhile role.

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### Postscript

The above article was at proof stage when it was learned that *Veteran Machines* ceased publication after only two issues had appeared. What was written as a review has perforce become an obituary.

The reasons for such a brief life are a matter for speculation, not to be pursued here. But it must be regretted that the magazine did not survive long enough for us to judge whether it was achieving the aims set for itself in the first issue.

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3. The magazine does however carry an advertisement for what sounds like a lengthy volume on the history of the typewriter. Details of Wilfred Beeching's 284 page *Century of the Typewriter* from: British Typewriter Museum, 137 Stewart Road, Bournemouth.

## Local Societies

The third list of amendments to the list of local societies published in Vol. 2, No. 9 is as follows:

**Enfield Archaeological Society:** Sec. Mrs. J. Ledran, 53 Hawfinch Walk, Chelmsford, Essex.

**Holborn Society:** Sec. Miss J. M. Warren, 3 Belvedere Court, Catherine Road, Surbiton, Surrey.