



**SOCIETY FOR  
INDUSTRIAL  
ARCHEOLOGY**

**N E W S L E T T E R**

**S U P P L E M E N T A R Y I S S U E N U M B E R N I N E**

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**PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS TO THE ANNUAL MEETING**

**By Dianne Newell, President 1977-78**

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It occurs to me that after all the people have been thanked, and the inventory of past activities has been held up for all of us to feel pretty good about, that something is missing. Something important is not getting much attention. We do not ever talk at our meetings about how to tackle a fundamental problem of our discipline: WHAT ARE THE PURPOSES OF OUR RESEARCH? WHAT CAN WE REALLY CONTRIBUTE TO AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE PAST?

Many among us "cut our teeth" on the works of Kenneth Hudson, R.A. Buchanan, and others. Certainly these people attracted me to the field at a time of great frustration with my own attempts to examine the "material culture" of the brewing industry. An entirely new dimension was added to my work, as it was, I know, to the work of others. We found out from them how to identify, classify, and in general, appreciate industrial remains. Implicit in these early manuals was the promise that someday we would know what our inventories and our measured drawings actually explained. And somehow we continue to wait for "someone" to tell us what all the material we collect actually means.

Those of us who attended the first meeting of the SIA in 1972 will remember how excited we were to get together with "commrades" and leave our relative isolation. We were even somewhat controversial, what with the historical archeologists saying we'd never fly, but saying it less politely.

We have grown a lot since then; we have grown intellectually and have had a modest impact on a number of professional and preservation organizations. To a great extent, however, when we regard industrial archeology as a scholarly discipline, we usually do so only in terms of relating physical remains of historical industry to a general interpretation of the processes of industrialization.

*P.T.O.*