early in 1978, dissatisfaction with the direction that work on lithic material in Britain seemed to be taking spurred me into writing to friends whom I knew to have an interest in 'flints'. I suggested that the time was ripe for the formation of what I called 'The Lithic Study Group' which would, with luck, have some influence on the future course of research in this field. In fact, this displeasure with lithic research was but one facet of a general feeling of unease about the state of archaeology, which seemed to me then to be showing some dangerous trends. So the concern with lithics was, from the start, a concern with a conveniently manageable chunk of a larger whole which was always, in the background. That the field of lithic research could be isolated and scrutinised in ignorance of the wider elements of prehistoric or ethnographic societies was never a premise behind the formation of a study group; indeed, the underlying philosophy was quite the reverse.

My call appealed to those I contacted, and on 8 November a dozen people met in London for the first of what turned out to be five such meetings, the last on 13 June 1979. At these meetings, discussions were led by myself, Roger Jacobi, Elizabeth Healey, Frances Healy, Alan Saville and Hazel Martingell. If the discussions tended to become somewhat remote from my original aims, at least discussion was taking place. At that stage, this was the most important thing. On the last of these sessions, the Group unanimously decided to disband and organise the formation of a constituted society, to be known as the Lithic Studies Society. Since then, the LSS has met several times in London, following a normal pattern of a lecture at 2.00 preceded when appropriate by a meeting of the officers or a subcommittee at 12.00. The Constitution states that the Society's Executive Committee shall comprise the four officers and six ordinary members: this committee has not yet met. However, the four officers have been appointed: Stephen Green as Secretary, Elizabeth Healey as Editor, Alan Saville as Treasurer and myself as Chairman. Some descriptions of meetings already held will be found elsewhere in this Newsletter.

On a notification leaflet, it is stated that the Society 'seeks to advance the international study of lithic industries in the broadest possible context'. What this means is that the interests of the LSS do not stop at flints, flints and flints. Its scope is geographically world wide and temporally not just prehistoric; it draws its subject matter from ethnography, petrology, technology, use and abuse (otherwise known as microwear studies), and typology, to name but a few fields. Its aims are to promote the understanding of flaked stone technology, to emphasise the potentialities of lithic studies, to provide a forum for discussion and communication of research into and ideas about the use of stone for edge tools: in general, to encourage people to think about lithics in broad behavioural and technological terms, and discredit the view of lithicists as itsy-bitsy typological goody-hunters. At heart, the Society is not for lithic specialists, but rather for those with an interest in human society who feel that stones have something to say; 'sermons in stones, and good in everything'.

That the LSS should form at a time when work on stone industries is undergoing a major transformation world wide is clearly not coincidental. The value of the three fields that are promoting this transformation (ethnography and technological and use experimentation) was appreciated by workers in Britain
In the 19th century. John Evans in his well known *Ancient Stone Implements* (1872) and Joseph Skertchly in his neglected memoir on the Brandon industry (1879) show a strong interest in contemporary stone workers and controlled experiments, while Evans, recently dubbed by a Harvard team 'the father of microwear studies', considered the striations and notches on flint tools in attempts to understand their function. The truly behavioural approach of people like Evans and Skertchly was overtaken by a narrow pessimism. R.A. Smith's *Flints* (1926) is devoid of any references to wear studies, replication, ethnography or even stratified assemblages. As its title betrays, *Flints* is no more than a collector's guide to antiquities. Despite more positive studies in the intervening years (by men such as D. Baden-Powell, A. Barnes, R. Clarke, E. Curwen and F. Knowles) the ideas which *Flints* represent still lie behind traditional approaches to stone industries in Britain, in which ill-defined typologies masquerade as attempts at genuine inquiry.

During the greater part of the post-glacial in Britain, a series of distinctive stone industries developed against a background of a complex range and distribution of raw materials. As part of the little understood changes in social and economic organisation that culminated in a highly sophisticated island society at the end of the third millennium BC, these developments in the exploitation and use of a major resource are of the greatest interest. Their story can only be read if stone tools cease to be thought of as collectors' goodies, and instead are treated as but one link in a dynamic system of production, exchange, use and loss. The promise and the problems of lithic studies are peculiar neither to Britain nor to stone artefacts; they are universal. It is in this spirit that I ask you to help us by recruiting membership. Publicity leaflets and application forms are available from the Secretary. The larger we can make our membership, the greater will be the likelihood of our fulfilling a major intention of the Society: to publish a high quality journal aimed at an international market. Some of the (only slightly) less ambitious practical aims are described elsewhere in this Newsletter. We hope they meet with your approval.