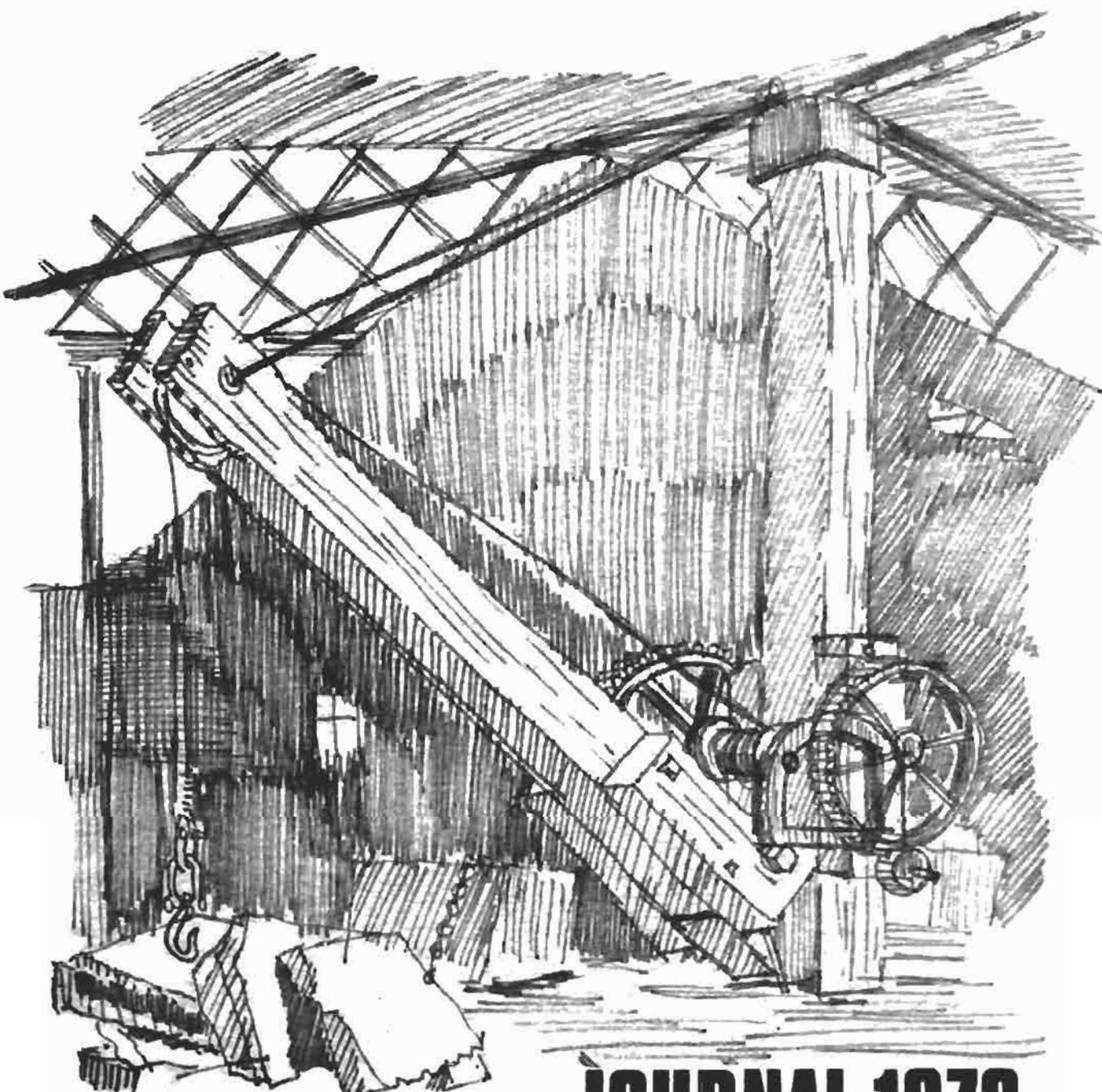


# GSIA



**JOURNAL 1972**

# GSIA

**GLOUCESTERSHIRE SOCIETY FOR INDUSTRIAL ARCHAEOLOGY**

# 1972

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# GLOUCESTERSHIRE SOCIETY FOR INDUSTRIAL

## ARCHAEOLOGY 1971-2

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by the following sub-committee.

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Assisted by Mrs P.F.Lebbon.

RESEARCH MATERIAL

Almost any page of the Gloucester Journal will turn up information of the following type. These excerpts are from 1853.

Jan 1st.

## For Sale

A twenty-four horse condensing STEAM ENGINE; cylinder 25½ inches diameter; Stroke, four feet; Metallic Piston. The Engine is a quarter of a mile distant from the Great Western Railway Station and Stroudwater Canal, on the premises of Mr John Bucknall, Engineer, Acrehedge Foundry, Stroud, Gloucestershire, to whom application as to price and particulars must be made.

Jan. 15th.

(Grist Mill, malthouse and Bakery at Pitchcombe to be sold by auction.)

Jan. 22nd.

## Water Corn Mill to Let

To be LET, with immediate possession, SANDFORD MILL, containing three pairs of stones, and situate near the top of the High Street, Cheltenham, with Stable, Cart House, Paddock and c adjoining.

For particulars apply on the Premises, or by letter, No 8 Oxford Street, Cheltenham.

(On third page, a long account of an explosion and loss of life at Ebley Cloth Manufactory)

Jan. 29th.

(Malthouse to let at Newnham, capable of making 3000 Bushels of malt yearly.

Details of paper mills mentioned in GSIA Visits 1972 on a later page, can be found in "The BIAS Paper Mill Survey" by Brian Attwood, BIAS Journal Vol 3 1970. 50p.

The Frontpiece, tailpiece and illustration on page 8 are from the Dover edition of "1800 woodcuts by Thomas Bewick and his school."

## GSIA VISITS 1971-2

LOWER SEVERN NAVIGATION, Friday, 12 March 1971

An excellent talk was given by Mr F W Rowbotham to a full room at the Stroud College of Art, followed on the Saturday by a coach trip down the east bank of the river, across the Severn Bridge, and back to Gloucester along the west bank. This was the second visit to Sharpness Docks, and it is felt that this inland port and company town would be sufficiently interesting for a third visit. What could be the last timber coal-drop in this region was still standing, practically complete, on the bank above the original canal basin that gave access to the river. The following is an extract from the hand-out written by Mr Rowbotham:

"Sheperdine, the Windbound Inn. Until recent years this was the New Inn, but was always known to river men as the Windbound because Severn sailors calling there en route up or down the river, who became temporarily incapable of proceeding, excused their late arrival by saying they had been wind-bound, i.e. held up by adverse winds. Mounting the sea wall which protects vast areas from tidal inundation, we see close before us the disintegrating hull of the once ketch-rigged trow "Water Witch". When plying with grain from Avonmouth to Healing's Mill at Tewkesbury in the early 1930s its master was Mr 'Pegleg' Healing. As the hull shows, the "Water Witch" was a 'built-upon' box trow. Against it lies the keel of the smaller trow "Onward". Out in the river to the left is the artificial reservoir of Oldbury Nuclear Power Station. The Narlwood lights can be seen and we hear the melodious bell of the Ledges buoy. Along the bank to our right is the Chapel House Headland with its stone cottages".

Apart from the remains of the Berkeley wharf site, crossing the River Wye on the cast iron bridge at Chepstow and a discussion about the problems of the Over Bridge at Gloucester, the members made a detailed inspection of the graveyard of river hulks at Lydney and were shown the harbour there which, although the coal-drops have gone, is remarkably intact.

DUDLEY AND STOURBRIDGE, 3 April 1971

Mr Traves, Curator of the Dudley Museum, really made the Society welcome. Straight out of the coach into a comfortable lecture hall, coffee and biscuits, well-produced hand-outs, a talk about the region and finally a conducted tour of the site and objects stored there for the future Black Country Museum. Mr Traves then had to leave for another appointment but the Society were allowed to return to the Dudley Museum to enjoy the excellent mining exhibition there.

In the afternoon, visits were made to local sites from suggestions made by Mr Traves, including canal locks at Pensnett Chase and the Windmill End Engine House at Netherton. The day ended with the superb Glass Museum at Brierley Hill.

IRONBRIDGE GORGE MUSEUM, 2 May 1971

A wonderful sunny day opened with an unexpected bonus in seeing great activity and a number of locomotives in steam at the Bridgnorth headquarters of the Severn Valley Railway Preservation Society. Members then met at the west end of the Iron Bridge, the fares for the day were paid, and at the east end of the bridge we had to split up into groups. Because of the steep and narrow roads in the Ironbridge area, the Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust Limited had decided to run this, their fourth open day, on novel lines. A frequent service of free coaches ran clockwise and anti-clockwise round all the sites with guides on the coaches, and at the sites. A large number of visitors was handled without any difficulty, and very few private cars were to be seen.

The sites in an anti-clockwise tour from the bridge were: Bedlam furnace, the Lloyds beam engine, Coalport china works, Coalport harbour, the Great Hay Canal Incline, with the Tar Tunnel at the bottom, and at the top, the Miners' Walk along the towpath of the Tub Boat Canal to Blists Hill, the centre of the Trust's activities, with a large furnace and storage buildings. Finally, the existing Allied Ironfounders Ltd Museum at their Coalbrookdale Foundry, including nearby the old Darby furnace.

LEOMINSTER CANAL, 23 May 1971

A very wet day did nothing to dampen the ardour of Mr Rhodes Thomas and Mr Parker Oxspring who walked along sections of this little known but unusually interesting waterway, and communicated their enthusiasm to the party. One remembers in particular the ruined aqueducts across the River Teme near Brimfield, and the wharfhouse at the terminus.

STRATFORD-ON-AVON CANAL, 4 July 1971

Major C B Grundy kindly gave up most of his day off in order to walk us along interesting lengths of the canal that he manages during the rest of the week for the National Trust. The basin at Stratford was the start of the day, and included one of the wagons from the Stratford and Moreton Tramway. Members were astonished at the very long aqueduct at Bearley, so comparatively near home but relatively unknown. The Kingswood Junction was a rewarding stop, and so was the drop sluice gate at King's Norton. For a comparison, the party returned over the Grand Union Canal flight of locks at Hatton.

CROFTON BEAM ENGINES & MUSEUM OF ENGLISH RURAL LIFE AT READING

11 September 1971

The day was split into two clearly defined visits, with one or two calls to points on the Kennet and Avon Canal in between. The working beam engine was quite simply magnificent and somewhat awe-inspiring. One had almost forgotten the sight of oiled and polished steel in motion; the feel of floors vibrating to the strokes and the smell of hot oil and steam. Those members who have not yet seen this engine in steam are urged to go on the first convenient day when they are steamed.

The same advice must be repeated for the Museum of English Rural Life, and the excellent tour by the Keeper, Mr A Jewell. Most of the material is in store but interested members could no doubt persuade the keeper to allow them to go where the public are not normally allowed. Practically every rural object one can think of is somewhere in these buildings, together with an excellent library. From a large country house there was, incredibly, a steam lawn mower!

#### INDUSTRIAL SITES BETWEEN WALSALL & BURTON-ON-TRENT, 25 September 1971

This, the last trip of the Society year was rounded off in style by Mr Robert Sherlock (and, if one might say so, by Mrs Sherlock and the children). Mr Sherlock has, over a period of years, recorded sites for Staffordshire County Council, who kindly supported this outing.

The party saw the Canal Basin at Walsall and the fine mill and workers' fireproof housing at Fazeley. The South Staffordshire Waterworks Co station engineer showed members over the really handsome Sandfields Pumping Station and beam engine. Some members will remember the lunch stop at the canal boatmen's pub at Fradley Junction.

The afternoon in Burton-on-Trent was a shock to those who, not so long ago, remembered the innumerable level crossings in the town, and the Bass private railway system hard at work. All this has gone and a lot of the Brewery buildings. Equally a lot remains and in terms of sheer bulk it was a shock to realise just how big and well-built a huge malt-house complex can be, such as those at Wetmore Road. Burton was, and is, a unique town, and well worth making a detour to inspect. Like much else, however, it is changing fast.

I M Parsons

#### VISIT TO THE BRISTOL AND MENDIP REGION

The first full day Society visit of 1972 was on 15 April to the Bristol and Mendip region, led by Mr Brian Attwood and Mr Robin Stiles.

On the way to Bristol clear light and full sunshine gave fine, if distant views of Gloucester Cathedral and the Severn Bridge. Interest continued driving down the Avon Gorge beneath Brunel's suspension bridge and past the Hotwells to the Cumberland Basin, where our guides for the day awaited us.

The main object of the tour was to visit a group of paper mill sites, mostly no longer in operation, on the south side of the Avon, where the clear water coming off the Mendip plateau, down the Rivers Yeo, Chew, and Avon, had been the original factor giving rise to the paper making industry in the area.

Of the paper mill sites visited, the first stop was at Rickford near Burrington Combe, where the original mill pond is now an ornamental lake. The mill house still remains, but more eye catching, is a small

Waterworks building, cupola topped, of lively Edwardian character.

The next paper mill site was seen at Compton Martin where there was a also a fine cast iron pump beside the road.

Later, at Chedder, a building obviously made to house a continuous process paper machine, was easily distinguishable by the ventilation construction at the top of the roof.

At Wookey Hole, St Cuthbert's Paper Works, a building with an ornamental facade and two heraldic stone lions, is still in use, specialising in high quality industrial, security and photographic papers.

One of the most interesting paper mill sites, Wookey Hole Mill, W S Hodgkinson and Co, will shortly close, though at the time of the visit it was probably the largest existing hand made paper mill in the world, producing, among other things, deckle edge notepaper and specially treated paper for currency notes. An old building alongside the stream in front of the main mill, has the typical layout of an early paper mill. First mention of a mill on the site dates to 1610.

Another old mill visited was at Sherborne, Litton, where members entered what appeared to be a delapidated stable, and passing through the building to the other side were surprised, on turning, to see a superb early stone doorway, with a pointed pediment, of great quality. This building is thought for a short time to have been a button factory. Nearby lies a large moss covered water wheel axle.

The paper story was brought up to the present by a drive round the St Anne's Board Mill, Bristol. A large modern industrial complex used for producing high quality folding boxboards. The mill has its own mechanical pulp mill and the coach threaded its way round piles of timber which is supplied from the New Forest and the Forest of Dean. From the site there was a good view of the Crewe's hole area, a famous industrial centre of the 18th and 19th centuries.

Good variety was added to the day by a visit, in the morning, to the Blagden Pumping Station. Mr P Skinner, Assistant Mechanical and Electrical Engineer of the Bristol Waterworks Company, explained the system, which places a dam across the Blagden Lake valley and allows the water into two tanks, well stocked with trout, which is then pumped to the Barrow treatment works near Bristol.

There were originally four Compound Beam Engines erected by Glenfield and Kennedy of Kilmarnock between 1902 and 1905, surely some of the latest Beam Engines in the country. Of these two now remain, recently restored by the Bristol Waterworks at a cost of £2000.

These impressive engines each had a horsepower of 170, and the six horizontal boilers consumed  $8\frac{1}{2}$  tons of coal every 24 hours to work two pumps. The beam engines were replaced in 1949 by electric pumps.

After skirting the Charterhouse lead mining area there followed a

fine scenic drive down the Cheddar Gorge particularly beautiful in the Spring sunshine.

Later, crossing the Mendips, it was at one time possible to see both Bath and Bristol at the same time, and on another occasion there was a distant view of Wells Cathedral. The sunshine and clarity of the day certainly added to its pleasure. Two high trotting horses were an unexpected sight, and ten cart horses in a field, something seldom seen today.

In the afternoon Priston Grist Mill was visited where flour has been milled for over a thousand years, and is still stoneground from the finest quality wheat. Founded in Anglo-Saxon times it was recorded in Domesday book. The owner Mr J R Hopwood showed the party over the mill, which was particularly interesting as it is seldom possible to see one in action today. A pitch back water wheel works two pairs of stones through the usual pit wheel and wallower. The present stones were bought before the first world war, stored and never used. Now after more than fifty idle years they have found their way to Priston and are grinding for the first time. There is an unusual method of disengaging the Spur nuts by means of a lever rather than the usual screw system.

On the first floor there was a good view of the damsel, often not readily accessible. A coarse, simple, solid and beautiful mechanism, which came in with the middle ages, was on the way out by the end of the 18th century, and is today an enlightening glimpse into the past.

As only wholemeal flour is produced, there were no dressing machines in use. Two iron weighing machines, one of which was elaborately ornamented with wheat and flowers, were a good example of the use of ornament on functional objects.

What macabre industry is carried on in Keynsham? How many people noticed, when passing the cemetery, a driveway with a notice "Garden of Rest" followed at the next turning with a signboard proclaiming 'so and so's' "Bodyworks"?

Passing through Bristol there was an excellent view, on the high ground near St Mary Redcliffe, of the arched base of the last remaining glass cone in the city, now in process of becoming part of the dining room for a large restaurant. Not perhaps an ideal method of preservation, but nonetheless much to be commended, and infinitely better than the complete loss of the monument.

At Priston Mill many of the party had stocked up with flour and bread at the produce shop and on the return journey it seemed likely that these iron rations might be needed rather sooner than expected. Soon after reaching the motorway, the coach burst a tyre, blowing out part of the side panelling, which necessitated a replacement coach from Churchdown, and an 11 30 pm arrival at Cheltenham. However, the day was extremely well organized, the breakdown taking place within a few yards of a telephone on the only four level motorway interchange in Europe.

A. Chatwin

CONFERENCE OF WESTERN INDUSTRIAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETIES

MARCH 25 1972

The Gloucestershire Society for Industrial Archaeology held the third Annual Conference of Western Industrial Archaeological Societies in Cheltenham at the Gloucestershire College of Art and Design on Saturday March 25 1972. In previous years the Conference had been held in Bath and Cardiff. Professor J R Harris head of the Department of Economic and Social History of the University of Birmingham was Chairman for the day, and during the morning introduced four speakers from the GSIA.

Mr C H A Townley spoke on the Toll roads which grew up in the 18th and early 19th centuries in the Stroud, Tetbury and Bristol area of the county, and showed slides of mile posts and Toll Houses still to be seen.

Miss Amina Chatwin, who is doing research on Tewkesbury Manufactures, gave an illustrated talk covering the Malting, Leather and Clothing industries of the town from Medieval times to the 19th century. One of the most interesting manufactures of the town was stocking frame knitting, introduced early in the 18th century, it prospered rapidly until the 50 frames in use in 1714 had become 600 only fifty years later.

Professor D G Tucker of Birmingham University spoke of the problem posed by a steam engine drawn by William Taylor, and thought possibly to have been used at the Redbrook Copper Works in 1798. It utilised a most unusual double action chain drive on what appeared to be a Newcomen engine. Both Prof Tucker and Mr George Watkins, who was present, said that in their experience the design was unique.

The morning ended with the well known local author Mr D E Bick speaking, in his usual entertaining style, on Leckhampton Hill, its quarries, railways, and limekilns.

After lunch papers were given by visiting Societies.

Mr J K Lewis, Chairman of the Oxford House Industrial Archaeological Society, Risca, Mon, talked of "The Penllwyn Tramway", tracing its course, with slides, up the Sirhowy valley.

The South East Wales Industrial Archaeological Society showed an historic film of the old method of Tin Plate rolling in west Wales. The extraordinarily complex processes of rolling steel sheet, and of pickling, washing, annealing, tinning and polishing, many of which processes had to be done several times at different stages of the work, were all clearly shown.

Mr Gwilliam of the Worcester and District Industrial Archaeological and Local History Society, surprised many of the audience by explaining that in Victorian times Worcester could boast the largest vinegar works in the world. The firm of Hill Evan and Co covered seven acres, had its own mill, cooperage, distillery and was fully equipped with all the processes to make Wine, Cider and Vinegar. Dandelion, Elder, Cowslip and Damson wines sold at 9d

a bottle and cider at one old penny a pint. Mr Gwilliam also showed some interesting slides of old prints of McNaught's carriage factory, which won a prize at the Great Exhibition, and continued to make carriages until they turned over to motor cars.

The day ended with Mr Southway of the Bristol Industrial Archaeology Society giving a history of the Bristol coalfield.

On the previous day fifty members of the GSIA gathered at the Moor Court Hotel, Amberley, for the Annual Dinner.

Professor Harris in proposing a toast to the Society, praised the enthusiastic and dedicated work of amateur industrial archaeologists throughout the country, and said that it was only in the years to come the contribution they were making to the recording of economic history would be appreciated.