

GSIA



JOURNAL 1975

HONORARY SECRETARY

**Amina Chatwin,
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CHELTENHAM.**



The aims of the Society shall be to stimulate interest in, record, study and where appropriate, preserve items of industrial archaeology particularly in the county of Gloucestershire.

Cover Illustration

This is a sketch of the drying loft and buildings of Sudeley Mill (SP 027281)

GLOUCESTERSHIRE SOCIETY FOR INDUSTRIAL ARCHAEOLOGY 1975.

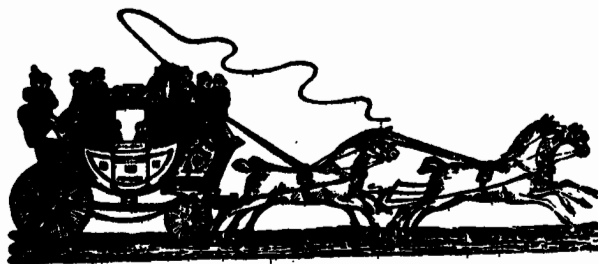
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G.S.I.A. 1975

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EDITORIAL

It is never easy to define Industrial Archaeology. The social and industrial historians of the past often came very near to being industrial archaeologists, but they failed to explain or amplify their histories, by going into the field to find the evidence left by the people of whom they wrote. The 'archaeology' part of I.A. is more that of fieldwalking, interpreting, using the eyes or the tape measure, proving and/or adding to documentary evidence, than of actual excavation; for although clearing is often necessary it is only rarely that excavation is either necessary or desirable.

The coin then has two sides, documentary research and interpretation in the field. Perhaps the whole *raison d'être* of the emergent industrial archaeologist has been the ability to merge the expertise of these two studies and thereby, in a humble way, to give a new dimension to both subjects and engender a new way of looking at history.

We included in our last Journal an article on paper-making at Gun's Mill, but I think we need make no apologies that the main part of this Journal is devoted to paper making in the Winchcombe area. One does not have to have a specialist interest in paper to realise how important it is to all those with an interest in the past. How much documentary evidence would be available to us if clay tablets were still in use? Often the mills which produced the paper have been completely demolished and their only memorial is in the paper that was made on the premises. The history of the industry lies in the watermarks enshrined in the body of the paper itself. How many researchers in other fields ever look for watermarks? - yet they can be an invaluable asset, a document of unknown date with a papermark that can be tied to a certain period of working within a particular firm is roughly dateable. The document may be later than the period of the mark, but it cannot be earlier, and this information has, before now, been used with devastating effect.

The Bristol Industrial Archaeological Society devoted much of their 1970 Journal to paper mills on the Bristol Avon and its tributaries. Now we can record some mills in the north of the county.

Paper has been made at Winchcombe for 250 years and the Society feels honoured that Evans, Adlard & Co.Ltd., should wish to be associated with the Gloucestershire Society for Industrial Archaeology by publishing this history of paper making at Postlip and other nearby mills in our 1975 Journal. We thank the Company sincerely for their great material and financial help in producing this Journal and wish them every future success.

It is heartening in these days of change, to celebrate the continual creation of a product in one place for two hundred and fifty years, in the hands of no more than three families. We are not looking at a fossilised industry, but one that has adapted with the times. The firm has come a long way since Rudder in 1779, said 'fine writing paper is made at Postlip'. Now notepaper is no longer

made here, perhaps anyway in this age of the disposable ball point pen, we no longer deserve 'fine writing paper'. Today output is concentrated on filter paper for various uses, particularly in the motor and aircraft industries, and Evans, Adlard & Co.Ltd., are in fact the only significant makers, in the United Kingdom, of paper for filters to provide sterile air for operating theatres.

It is with the greatest regret that I have to record here, the sudden death in early October of W.G.H. (Bill) Robins. Bill became, in 1964, the first Chairman of the Society, when he was Technical Manager of I.C.I. Fibres, Brocworth, and remained actively engaged on the Committee until 1969, when he moved to Monmouth. Two years ago he spoke at the Annual Dinner, which marked the 10th year of the Society. He recalled the early problems of getting I.A. "off the ground" in Gloucestershire, and the Society undoubtedly owes a great deal to Mr. Robins and his fellow founder members who set us on so firm a footing. I am sure everyone who knew Bill will have very sincere sympathy for his wife Brenda in her sad loss.

Congratulations to R.Howard Pullan on his appointment as Engineer to the County of Gwent. He will be greatly missed in Gloucestershire especially by the GSA. Treasurer since the inception of the Society, Chairman October 1970 - 72, he has been an unfailing source of strength to the Society throughout the whole time. His work as Gloucester Engineer and Surveyor has covered a period of great change in the City, and he must have played a very large part in creating the exciting Gloucester we see today.

Mr. Pullan did much to further the preservation of Over bridge. In his capacity as Planning Officer he was instrumental in having Gloucester Docks made a conservation area, and has recently taken an active interest in the future plans for this section of the City.

We shall miss Beryl too, especially at our social functions, for I never recall seeing Mrs. Pullan without a smile and boundless enthusiasm for whatever project happened to be in hand. It is good news that even when the family moves westwards, probably in a few months, Mr. and Mrs. Pullan hope to keep in touch with the Society whenever possible.

Mr. J.E. Tyrer is now living in Oxfordshire and has therefore had to leave the Committee. He and his wife hope to join in some of our outings from time to time. Mr. Tyrer has had the considerable job of organising the excursions over the last two seasons and we are very grateful to him for all the work he has put into this unenviable task. Our thanks go also to Mr. N.C. Ferry who took over the last few outings of the summer and is now arranging those for next year.

The Editorial does not necessarily express the views of the Committee.

The Secretary will be pleased to receive articles for inclusion in the Journal or applications for membership. Correspondence should be sent to:-

Miss Amina Chatwin, 6 & 7, Montpellier Street, Cheltenham, GL50 1SX

VISITS

EXETER. April 20th.

The first full-day excursion of the 1975 season took 42 members of the Society to Exeter and the Exe estuary.

A couple of hours were spent among the 70 or so boats on exhibition in the Exeter Maritime Museum. These range from a Severn coracle to a Danish-built steam tug and include specimens from all over the world.

Led by Professor Walter Minchinson, of Exeter University, the party then toured historic parts of the city before inspecting old limekilns by the river bank. After walking along The Strand at Topsham with its Dutch houses, they were able to visit the Topsham Museum through the kindness of its founder, Miss Holman.

The day ended with stops at Lymstone Quay and Exmouth Harbour.

On the previous weekend, a small party of members visited the Abbey and New Mills of Tubbs, Lewis and Co. at Kingswood and Wotton-under-Edge.

PORTSMOUTH. May 11th.

Thirty-two members were joined by friends from the South Wilts IA Society for a visit to the Portsmouth area.

In view of the historic importance of the great dockyard it was natural that the greater part of the day was spent with naval and military relics. The first, Fort Widley, was one of a chain of forts along Portsdown Hill built in the 1860's to defend the harbour against possible French land attack after invasion forces had been landed elsewhere. The whole fort is low-lying, surrounded by a deep ditch, and contains a labyrinth of underground passages, magazines and gun emplacements, which were thoroughly explored.

After lunch there followed a visit to Eastney Pumping Station which was built in 1868. Because the lower sewers terminate well below sea level, the waste water has to be pumped into storage tanks at a higher level before it can be pumped out to sea on the ebbtide. The station was successively powered by two sets of beam engines, three Crossley gas engines dating from 1904, English Electric motors in 1922, six Allen Diesel engines, which are still kept in reserve and a post-war diesel system. After viewing a preserved pair of 1887 Watt engines which ran until 1955 and the various gas, diesel and electric motors the party was conducted on a tour of the whole plant. At the control panel the levels in the various drains and tanks, with the flows and operation of the score or so pumps were shown by coloured lights diagrammatically.

The day ended with a visit to Southsea Castle Museum in a fort built by Henry VIII in 1539. Apart from the many models of warships, particularly interesting was the original Block-making machinery invented in 1806 by Sir Marc Brunel - the first example of mass-production in the world.

The guide was one of the society's own members Mr Ray Peel.

Note. The City Museum and Art Gallery, Museum Road, Old Portsmouth PO1 2LJ, has now published a booklet "Eastney Pumping Station".

FOREST OF DEAN. June 28th.

Mr Ian Parsons led some twenty members to the Forest of Dean where they surveyed the course of the Severn and Wye Railway and its associated tramroads from Churchway via Wireystock and Lower Lydbrook to Bishopswood.

Among the industrial sites visited en route were the Churchway sidings which served Northern United Colliery; Bilson Junction where a few courses of stones are all that remain of Cinderford's first station; Trafalgar Colliery with its ¼ mile tunnel through Serridge to Strip-and-at-it Colliery; Wireystock Bridge, tunnel and cable incline between Arthur and Edward Colliery screens and the pitheads; Lydbrook wharf and the Upper and Lower millponds of Bishopswood Ironworks.

Despite the Forest's two thousand years of industrial activity

based on iron ore, timber and coal, it was most striking how quickly abandoned sites had become overgrown within the space of a very few years. Only the evidence of contemporary maps and plans explains the significance of the scanty physical remains on the ground.

The Chairman of the Society, Mr Neville Crawford, thanked Mr Parsons for the considerable research he had undertaken to provide a wealth of information about the places visited which had made the day so enjoyable.

HEREFORDSHIRE July 12th.

When Mr Inett Homes led a visit to Herefordshire, it was a day with a difference. The emphasis was on the industrial archaeology of agriculture.

The first call was at a farm near Ledbury with a large three storied granary and three hop kilns. These are a prominent feature of the Herefordshire landscape, but only began to appear in the 1850's; earlier kilns were contained inside other buildings and their existence was not apparent from outside.

During the 18th and 19th centuries irrigation schemes were a not uncommon feature on many farms. By their use it was possible to sow a second crop in the summer after the first had been gathered in. Some schemes continued to supply water until after the second world war, but succumbed to the regulations banning the use of open water supply channels to TT attested herds. The remains of two large and complex schemes were visited, at Day House Farm, Kingsland and Court of Noke farm. Both farms had derelict water wheels which were used to power threshing boxes, chaff cutters and other machinery.

Also seen were the site of a private gas works at Shobden Court, Shobden and Pembridge churches and a water pumping station at Burton Court containing a disused but intact waterwheel. An unexpected bonus was the opportunity to see the exhibition of authentic historical costumes at Burton Court. Mr J. Tyrer thanked Mr Homes for a most enjoyable and instructive day and was warmly applauded.

N.C. Ferry.

There was also a trip through the Dudley Tunnel which was reviewed on an earlier occasion in a previous Journal.

DINNER

N.C. Ferry.

The Annual Dinner of the Gloucestershire Society for Industrial Archaeology was held on March 14th at the Fleece Hotel, Gloucester, in aid of the Reg. Morton Memorial Fund.

The chief guest for the evening was Mr Michael Darby, Vice-President of the Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust, and himself a descendant of Abraham Darby who first used coke to smelt iron at Coalbrookdale in 1709.

Mr Darby recalled how the museum was started in 1959 to commemorate the 250th anniversary of Abraham Darby's innovation and now embraced a number of sites along a three-mile stretch of the Severn Gorge including five blast furnaces ranging in date from 1638 to 1840. Thanks to the enthusiasm of Reginald George Morton, a founder member of the Museum Trust, who died in 1972, a 42 acre derelict site on Blist's Hill is being developed as an open-air museum with coal-mining exhibits including a drift mine and a shaft mine with a working steam winding engine; a canal and an inclined plane down to the river.

Now the opportunity had arisen to acquire from Walmsley's of Bolton, who are the last producers of wrought iron still working, all the plant necessary to make wrought iron. Two puddling furnaces, are being made available with a steam hammer and steam-powered rolls. "Use is the best form of preservation" said Mr Darby "conservation on such a scale was previously unheard of". A "Reg Morton Memorial Fund" has been launched to cover the cost of setting up the iron works complex.

Mr Darby concluded by stressing the importance of the scholarship involved in research and preservation being made available to the general public, even if not all visitors could comprehend everything - like the lady who looking at a beam engine confessed "I don't know what it is, but I think it's a winepress!".

Miss Amina Chatwin, Hon. Secretary of the Society moved a vote of thanks. She spoke of Mr Morton's invaluable work on the history of metallurgy and his researches into the technology of iron smelting, particularly in Roman and Medieval times. She recalled also Mr Morton's unflinching help and encouragement to all those who were interested in his subject. She was delighted that the Society, through the dinner and donations, had raised £50 for the fund.