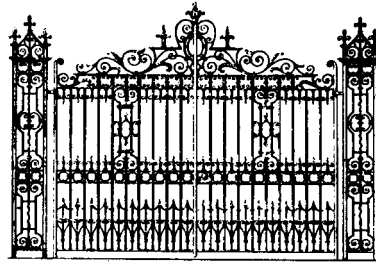


# EDITORIAL



When the Society was founded in 1964, it was fortunate to find an enthusiastic Secretary in Warren Marsh. It was at that time a small group, active in the field, mainly in the Stroud area; journals, visits, lectures, annual dinners, conferences, were all in the future. From this time onwards, for a number of years, the Society owed a great debt of gratitude to British Nylon Spinners, later I.C.I. Fibres, at Brockworth; it provided two early Chairmen, Geoffrey Andrew and the late Bill Robins, and a whole string of Secretaries, Dr. Annis, Mike Eastwood, and Dr. Edwards. Through this initial period it provided an administrative base and enabled a Newsletter to become one of the first achievements.

In September 1970 I was a relatively new committee member, and I note that it was minuted that Dr. Edwards was leaving the district and that Miss Chatwin would be acting secretary until the A.G.M. (note how insidiously one is eased into the position!). I clearly remember my uncertainty as to my capabilities, and the general apprehension in the committee, as to whether it would be possible to operate without a secretary with a commercial back up. So the Society was growing up and learning to stand alone. Since that time, ten years ago, membership has doubled; we have entered the publication field, expect shortly to become a registered charity, and our activities have grown with the years. We can also be said now to represent the whole county rather than a small area of it.

It has been a great pleasure to me to take some part in this progression. I have enjoyed the work I have done for GSIA and the Society has done a great deal for me in return; it has brought many friends, and has always been a continuing pleasure to meet members. Above all, I.A. led me to Ironwork, its history, technology, and design, which has become such an interest, that there are times when it seems likely to take over my life altogether.

In recent years I have been finding that running a business seems to take more, rather than less of my time, and increasingly GSIA matters have meant less of my spare time to spend on research and writing. I came to feel that a new secretary would be a good thing, from both my point of view and that of the Society. There could have been no better time to depart than when Dr. Ray Wilson agreed to stand for nomination as Honorary Secretary. Knowing his enthusiasm and ability, there is no one to whom I would hand over with greater confidence and pleasure.

It has been my responsibility to edit and produce the last eight Journals; Mr Christopher Cox, one of our earliest members, has kindly agreed to edit the next Journal, and your contributions should be sent to him, (see page 1). Our sincere thanks go to Mr Ron Kershaw who took up the considerable task of compiling an index to Journals 1971-79, which will be found in the back of this volume.

At the A.G.M I was honoured to be made Chairman of the Society, which should provide continuity, and I shall do my best to serve GSIA in that capacity.

# VISITS

SWANSEA DISTRICT 27th April 1980

Our guide was the inimitable Ray Bowen whose arrival on the coach at Cardiff ( after having been "moved-on" by the local Constabulary!) was signalled by the usual burst of merriment following his opening sally!

The first stop, after passing the ruins of Neath Abbey, in their incongruous industrial setting was at Aberdulais, where , in close proximity we saw the junction of Tennant's Canal with the Neath Canal, a very tasteful towpath bridge, a multi-arched aqueduct under repair on Tennants canal and a substantial arched viaduct replacing the original Brunel one on the Vale of Neath Railway. Both the aqueduct and viaduct cross the Dulais River just before it flows into the River Neath.

Then on to Llamsamlet and a visit to Smith's Colliery where the local I.A. Society are preserving the engine house which formerly housed a beam pumping engine. Close by passes the Swansea avoiding line built in the first decade of the 20th Century to encourage the use of Fishguard as a port-of-call by Atlantic liners, a project which was killed by the first world war. We were to cross and recross the line several times subsequently.

A brief stop at Foxhole gave us a bird's-eye view of the dereliction of the former copper-working area, with the South Wales Railway viaduct into the city crossing in the middle distance and the barrack like blocks of mid-nineteenth century workers' flats on the skyline. Lunch was eaten in the Swansea Leisure Centre watching the bathers riding the artificially produced waves. The Leisure Centre was built on the site of Victoria Station, and we followed the line of the Swansea and Gorseinon Railway and the parallel Mumbles Tramway along the shore of Swansea Bay as far as Swansea University before turning inland via Gowerton to Penclawdd on the Gower. Here are some remains of the old tin-plate works and the former station, now almost unrecognisable as a private dwelling but for the survival of the edge of the platform. From the tin-plate works a tramway led to the site of an old harbour completely deserted by the shifting channel and only marked by two grassy mounds where the quays stood. Shellfish are still harvested here on the banks of the Loughor Estuary.

Then followed a run of several miles miles up the Swansea Valley, through Clydach, with a sight of the Mond Nickel Works, to Abercraf to visit Hen Neuadd Furnace. Of the furnace itself only part of the conical lining survives, but the adjacent charging house, built into the hillside completes a classic design of 18th century charcoal blast furnace.

To regain the Neath Valley we followed a realigned and much improved road to join the A4104 to Gyn Neath. The improvement in the road is due to the opening up of vast open-cast coal mining, reaching a depth of 600 ft. In the Vale itself traditional mining still continues. A run down the Vale brought us quickly past Neath Abby to the M4.

N.C.FERRY

#### STOURPORT, STAFFS, AND WORCESTER CANAL. May 17th.

Thirty two members visited Stourport-on-Severn in Worcestershire and explored some of the features on or close to the southern part of the staffs. and Worcs. Canal.

First stop was at the old power station where we had special permission to inspect the plant installed from 1926, officially made redundant in 1978, and now due to be demolished.

The lunchtime stop was taken in the idealistic setting of the canal basins and we resumed with a tour of the basins led by the Worcs. I.A. Society. Inconsiderate parking behind our coach was soon remedied by the stronger members of the party and there must have been one or two very bemused drivers when they returned to their cars!!

Harry Townley was our guide in the afternoon which started with a visit to Stourton Junction with the Stourbridge Canal. An interesting feature here was the split footbridge of the type normally associated with the Stratford Canal. Other stops were made at Ashwood Basin, Bratch Locks, Bratch Pumping Station and Black Delph Locks.

R.WILSON

#### STAFFORDSHIRE 8th June.

Forty-five left Stroud and Cheltenham for Stoke-on-Trent, where we were joined by our guide Mr Bernard Hardman for a visit to the Chatterley-Whitfield Mining Museum. Here, equipped with safety helmets, cap lamps and respirators, and divested of all means of ignition, down to electrical watches, we were dropped in parties of ten, down a 700ft shaft. to the old colliery workings.

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There is an interesting display of equipment and faces set up to represent different stages of mining development from the most primitive, wholly manual, to the most modern fully mechanised, (with Dowty props). Even walking along the relatively smooth, clean walkways, with fair (!) headroom, without noise, dirt, or moving machinery, it was possible to get a fair flavour of what mining is like.

The first afternoon visit was to Millmeece pumping station, where we saw horizontal pumping engines and their boiler plant, which were working until the end of last year. The bus driver won his GSIA qualification by taking us through impossible lanes to Offleybrook Mill, water powered corn and feed mill, in very good working order, which is still in regular use.

J.R.SIMMONS.

CANAL TRIP 28th June.

The cruise on the Gloucester Packet, from Gloucester to Sharpness Docks and back, was again very popular. Neville Crawford led an interesting tour round the docks at Sharpness, and a brief stop was made at Purton to inspect the remains of the fascinating array of old Severn Trows and barges, now sadly rotting on the foreshore.

The draw for the Whitecliff Quilt was made on the return journey; it was won by Mrs Sargeant of Cinderford, and raised £721.

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VISITS Continued from page 28.

WEST LONDON 19th July.

We were indeed fortunate to see the two largest working steam engines in the world at Kempton Park Pumping Station and within weeks of their retirement! David Perrett of GLIAS also took us to Wimbledon Windmill, Brunels Three Bridges, Hanwell Locks on the Grand Union and Hanwell Viaduct. There was even the opportunity of a lunchtime visit to Kew gardens.

HEREFORD 28th September.

Mr Inett Homes led this visit with a "difference". We visited the modern pumping station at Broomy Hill, before visiting the museum at the old pumping station, after lunch. The more intrepid members who climbed 110ft up the water tower enjoyed a fine panoramic view over the city. The latter part of the tour was concerned with the remains of the Hereford and Gloucester Canal and iron "grave stones".

DAY VISITS

These proved as popular as ever. Saturday morning visits were made to Stanley Mill, Stonehouse Mill and Coaley Mill. We are grateful to Mr Marshall and Mr Goring respectively, who showed us round.

Two Sunday mornings were spent in the Stroud area. Harry Townley led a small party from Brimscombe Port along the canal to Chalford. Members of Stroud Rambling Club guided us underground in Balls Green Stone Mine, where two cranes remain in-situ.

R. WILSON.