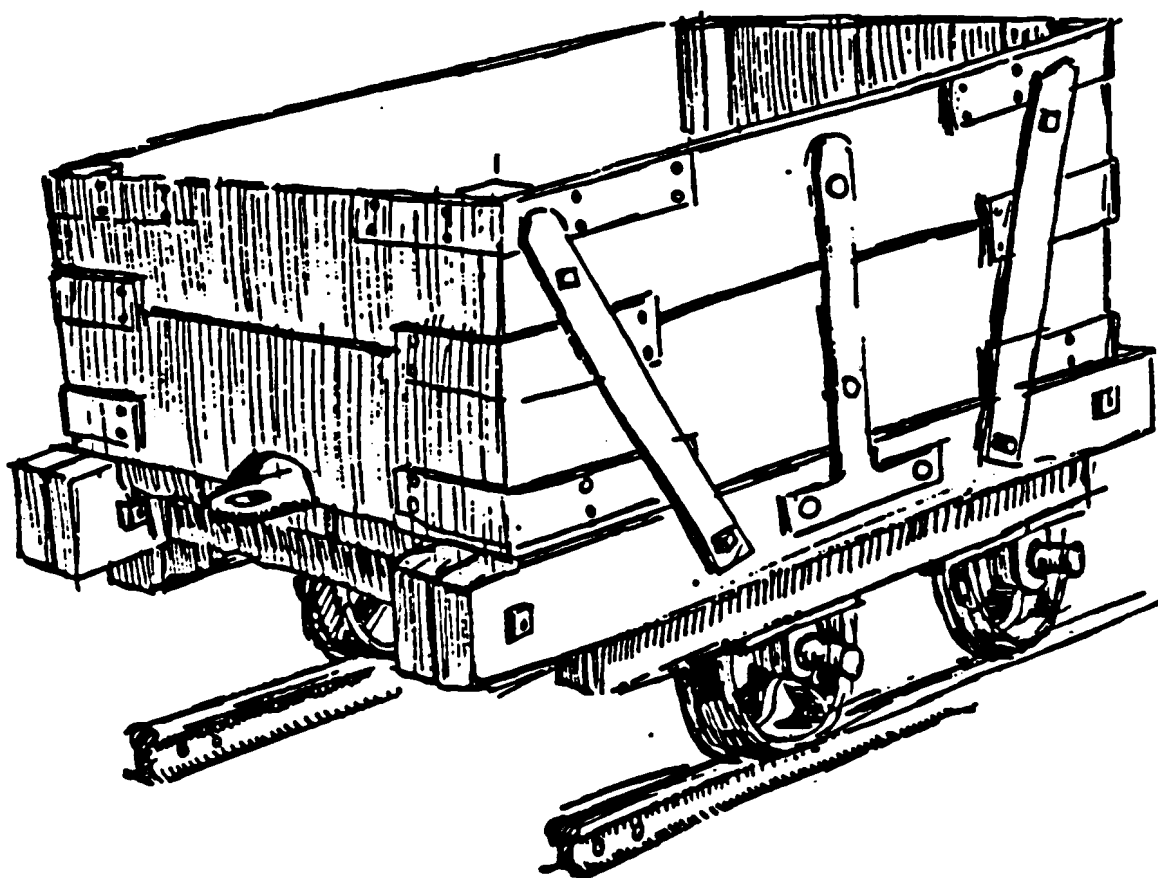


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FOR

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THE AIMS OF THE SOCIETY

To stimulate interest in, to record, to study, and where appropriate to preserve items of industrial archaeology, especially in the County of Gloucester.

EDITORIAL



This is the last issue for which I shall be responsible,* and it is gratifying to be able to end on a fairly optimistic note. Ian Standing's article shows what can be done by persistence to avert action certain to damage seriously our industrial heritage - to say nothing of the effect on wild life - though this is but one skirmish in a continuing struggle. The papers on the rescue of the Cainscross toll-house, the renovation of milestones round Cirencester, and the recovery of cloth-making machinery, all provide reasons for hope. Members of our Society, and the public at large! - must be grateful to those whose dogged effort have brought positive results before it was "too late to do anything".

The other articles also are of considerable interest. As a former resident in the Stroud area (alas, no longer) I personally was particularly delighted with the accounts of the Nailsworth Railway and the Brimscombe firm of boat-builders. In fact I witnessed the launching into the canal of the last boat built by Abdela Mitchell, as my next-door neighbour was a grandson of a former employee. The papers of Mrs Haine and Ralph Anstis also are of interest, and offer examples to stimulate similar work by others.

Gentle (and Patient) Reader - may I thank you for tolerating the many mistakes in production I have made: for example, the fact that the last issue did not contain my name under the Editorial was not due to modesty, but simply from a hasty oversight. We must all be grateful to those who have contributed articles to the Journal. Finally, may I wish all success to the next Editor, Amber Patrick, who now takes over the hot seat.

* no flowers, by request.

Yours sincerely,

Christopher Cox

Despite the best intentions, errors almost inevitably creep in (undetected!) - and therefore, and for the last time, I apologise for any such mistakes, inadvertent though they be.

If the name or address of any Member is incorrect, would he/she/they please let the Secretary know?

(An appropriate illustration accompanies this note...)



The COUNTY GAOL, though not strictly connected with the history of the city, as being in the county, deserves to be mentioned both on account of the magnitude of its scale, and the important ends it is intended to promote, which are the reformation and recovery of the offender, by solitary confinement and labour, rather than punishment, by cutting him off from society. The building, with four prisons in the county, of much smaller dimensions, cost more than 34,000l. See *Compressed History of the County*, vol. i. p. liii.

VISITS

A Walk in the Forest. Sunday 5 April 1987.



On Sunday 5 April Ian Standing and colleagues led nearly forty members, families and friends on a walk round Bixslade. Leaving the flourishing stone works and Cannop Ponds, we took a steep path up the East Ride of the valley. Despite obstruction from tree-felling and gale-damage, we were able to see various abandoned shafts and levels from coal and iron workings, and the stumps of several 'Napoleonic' oaks. At the head of the valley we saw the still-working stone quarry, and looked into the rather beautiful abandoned quarry which is threatened with becoming a GCC tip.

We then followed the long line of old tramway stone block sleepers and saw more evidence of old workings and more modern free mines.

The adventurous with torches penetrated about 20 yards into the tunnel of David Mushet's Upper Mine and further down saw his Lower Level. We also saw the only free mine still working in Bixslade, with an incredibly steep adit and ingenious pit-head gear. A few steps to one side led us to a smaller quarry; behind its wall of rosy Pennant stone is apparently the remains of a large iron mine and many specimens of ore were collected from the tips.

Throughout the walk we were given all manner of information on the geology, history, transport and methods of working of this once highly productive valley.

All present joined in thanking our guides for a very interesting afternoon.

JRS

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Pembrokeshire visit. 30 May 1987.

A total of 48 members and friends, including 8 from BIAS. went to Pembrokeshire under the guidance of Ray Bowen. The Met Office got its timing wrong, and we had rain practically the whole day.

The first stop was at Stepside (this was a regular resting place for troops on the Irish Road, and the name derives from the 18th century equivalent of "fall out").

Here there are remains (recently conserved) of a mid-19th century colliery and ironworks complex, using coal mined on the spot and iron ore dug out of the adjacent sea cliffs, and brought by tunnel to the bottom of the pit shaft. The winding and pumping engine houses, capped shaft, calcining ovens, blast furnaces and casting houses are well preserved, though a holiday complex

occupies the lower levels with a swimming pool within the casting house walls. An interesting feature was tramway sleeper blocks made from undressed beach boulders.

We then moved through narrow lanes to a point where we could walk through (small) railway tunnels to the holiday resort of Saundersfort, where the railway ran along the main street. The interesting harbour, with a flushing basin, still has a few fishing boats.

Unfortunately, at the end of the lunch stop the coach refused to start, and despite valiant endeavours this delayed us for more than two hours. However, if you have to sit for a couple of hours in a stationary coach on a wet day, you couldn't do better than to have Ray Bowen with you! Here, as throughout the trip, we were given a comprehensive and entertaining account of the industrial, transport, national and social history of this fascinating area, often called Little England beyond Wales.

When we became mobile again, we went to Pembroke Dock to see the upper reaches of Milford Haven and we visited the dockyard area with its magnificent buildings, and saw the last of the large shipbuilding and repairing graving docks (used by flying boats during the War). We also saw the remains of the ferry and railway installations, the site of the Great Eastern's berth, etc.

After a visit to one of the barrack-forts built to defend the dockyard (mounting 9" rifled muzzle-leading guns), we went over the new bridge via the ancient up-river part of Haverfordwest back to the motorway system, and home to (dry) Gloucester.

Altogether this was an interesting day in a fascinating area which most of us did not know from the viewpoint of industrial archaeology: and with a guide, who must, in addition to being highly knowledgeable, be the most entertaining "in the business".

JRS

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Visit to East London. Sunday 12 July 1987.

A full coach with 51 members and friends met David Perret of the Greater London I.A. Society at the Kirkaldy Experimenting and Testing Works on Southwark Street, now preserved as a Materials Testing Museum: A massive machine, designed by David Kirkaldy and made by Greenwood & Batley of Leeds in 1864 was moved to the present building in 1873. Here, relying in part on the hydraulic power system, it provided a materials-testing service (up to 300 tons) for all kinds of industries, as recently as the investigation into the Comet disasters.

Through rapidly changing areas, with demolition and developments, and glimpses across the river of the warehouses being converted into £250,000 plus residences, we went to Rotherhithe. After a look at the 1908 road tunnel, with a portal made of a section of Greathead shield we walked to Hope Suff-erance Wharf, an early preservation scheme with housing and craft workshops - we actually saw a man making armour! Ad-jacent to the riverside Knot Garden, a concrete viewing area adorned with knots in steel-reinforced hemp cables, is the pump house, originally the boiler house, for the Mark Brunel Tunnel. Though the tunnel is now part of the Underground railway system, the pump house has been restored and an un-usual vertical spindle compound engine by the local firm of J & G Rennie is being installed.

After lunch we walked (with some difficulty) through a construction area, with demolition and development all round, to the last remaining area of the Surrey Docks which still has water. This is part of the Greenland Dock, on the side of the late 17th century Howland Wet Dock, and is being retained for recreational purposes; we noted a new small lock into the river being constructed.

We then drove through the Blackwall Tunnel to the Abbey Mills Pumping Station. This 'Cast Iron Cathedral' was built as part of Bazalgette's sewage scheme in 1865-8 to lift the Northern Outfall flow about 40 feet on its way to Beckton works. The beam engines for which this magnificent Victorian-Gothic structure was built were replaced about 1930 by vertical spindle electrically-driven centrifugal pumps, which are themselves now historic items: many of the brass nameplates have been polished into illegibility. The very large cast-iron pipework, which presumably also dates from 1930, is quite remarkable. We also saw the storm-water pump-house where centrifugal pumps of about 1910 have fairly recently been con-verted from gas engine to diesel drive.

A walk starting on an embankment on top of the outfall sew-ers led us along the rather confusing waterways of the river Lea to Three Mills. Here there are two old corn mills, re-built 1776 and 1817 (the third mill was removed for the Abbey Mills pumping scheme). The mills operated partly on river flow and partly on tidal water. One mill has been restored and is used for industrial purposes - it has 3 rather derelict wheels visible; the other mill is apparently in poor condition internally, but has 4 wheels.

Finally we stopped in Spitalfields and had a short walk round the old silk-weaving area and the adjacent markets. There are some fine old buildings, with weaving garrets, many still in use for the clothing trade (and mainly in poor con-dition). We probably saw them just in time - the area is likely to be the next target for the property developers ...

We dropped David Perret on the Embankment with many thanks for a fascinating, varied and thought-provoking day.

JRS

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