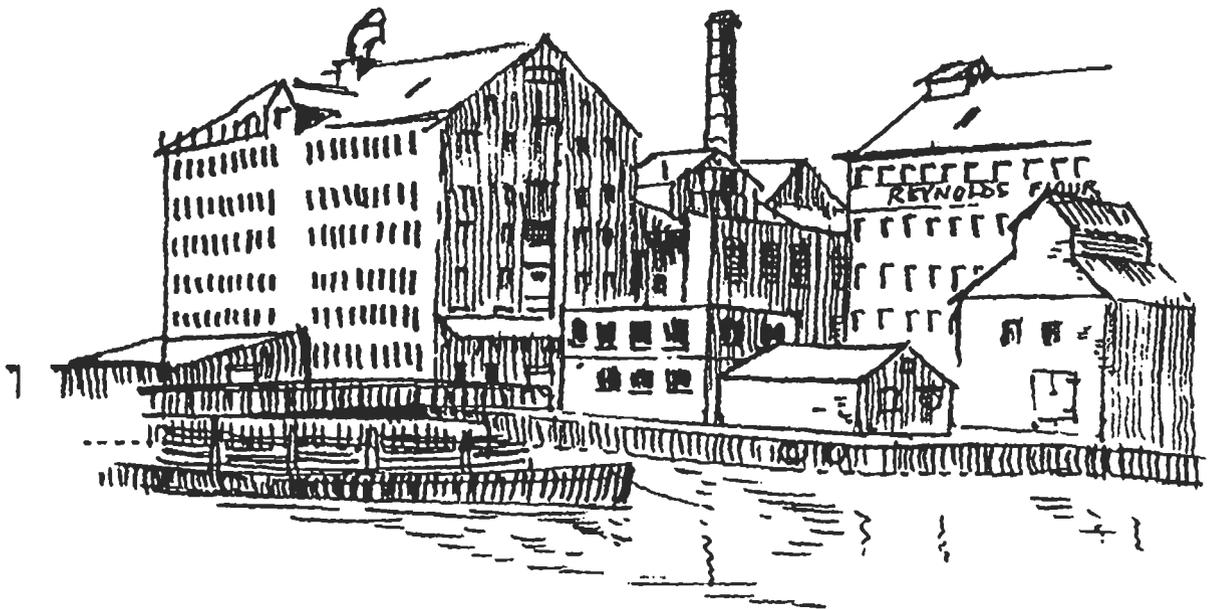


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GLoucester DOCKS
PATRICK LANE. TD.

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Cover Picture: Gloucester Docks by Pat Lane.

N.B. This year there is no editorial. Instead there is an appreciation of The Rev Awdry.

Credits: Thanks are due to Harold Beattie and Ray Wilson for assistance with the production.

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The Rev W V Awdry 1911-1997

Members were very saddened to learn of the death of the Rev W V Awdry on March 21 1997. He had moved to Stroud in 1965 and very soon became a member of GSIA and was our Chairman in 1978-80. We were then honoured that he was our President for no less than five consecutive terms between 1978 and 1994. We were indeed fortunate that he was a very active President and always took the chair at the AGM and presided at the Annual Dinner whenever he was able to. In the late 1970's the Society decided to apply for charitable status and the Rev Awdry steered us through what is an extremely complicated process.

He gave several lectures to the Society and they were not all related to railways. The talks he gave on Scotland including those about General Wade and his military roads were particularly memorable. He led several of our coach visits and edited our first gazetteer of the Industrial Archaeology of Gloucestershire.

Wilbert Awdry spent his much of his life as a parish priest, of course, and he continued with his ministry long after he retired. It was made clear at the Service of Thanksgiving on March 25 1997 just how well-loved and respected he was in that calling. The Society was well represented at the service as indeed it was at a packed Memorial Service in Gloucester Cathedral on September 18 1997.

A third service was held in the Rev Awdry's memory on Saturday 21st March 1998 exactly one year after his death. At a special Evensong service in Rodborough Parish Church Dr David Bentley, the Bishop of Gloucester, dedicated a new stained glass window to the memory of the Rev Awdry and his wife Margaret. Again there was a large attendance including a good number of GSIA members. The window was originally intended to be a memorial to Mrs Awdry who died in 1989. However, it had not been completed when the Rev Awdry died and the window has therefore now become a memorial to both of them. It lies in the south wall and replaces a plain glass window across from the pulpit where Rev Awdry often preached. It was his wish that the memorial should go there.

The various panes are filled with a great deal of detail relating to Christian themes and his ministry. The bottom right hand pane contains a lovely representation of, who else but, Thomas the Tank Engine. Thomas is in his shed with another engine and a tall figure, unmistakably the Rev Awdry, is closing the shed door on the engines. In the lower left hand panel the Rev Awdry is seen telling a story to a family group. The location on the south side of the church means that the light shows the coloured glass off well. This is certainly true of the brilliant blue livery of Thomas. The window is indeed a very fitting memorial to the Rev and Mrs Awdry. With so many Thomas 'fans' of all ages it is likely to receive visitors for many years to come. However, it is true to say that even if there had been no 'Thomas' he would still be missed and fondly remembered by very many people.

Ray Wilson

Cover Picture: Gloucester Docks by Pat Lane.

SUMMER VISITS, 1997

Once again the Society's thanks are due to Jim Simmons and Ray Wilson who organised a full programme of local visits and two excursions further afield by coach. The following reports have been compiled by them unless otherwise stated.

Sunday 9 March 1997

Walk in the Ruspidge Valley, Forest of Dean.

Our first excursion of the season took us to the Forest of Dean and the leader was our member Chris Bowen. Our aim was to look at the archaeology of the Ruspidge Valley as related to the underlying geology. This is a unique valley cutting through the rim of the Forest of Dean basin. The rock strata are steeply tilted resulting in the exposure of many different rock types within an unusually short distance. We were interested in the remnants of the old industries which utilised the various rocks.

After meeting at Upper Soudley on the Blakeney to Cinderford road we set off northwards along the track bed of the old GWR (Forest of Dean Branch). First we passed the remains of a long disused sand quarry. Our next stop was at Blue Rock quarry where we left the old railway and scrambled up through the quarry to look at some interesting grooves in the rock face and debate just how the stone had been won. We moved on to the site of Shakemantle Mine, the entrance of which has been lost to quarrying. At Perseverance Mine we could identify a small brick lined drainage tunnel. Nearby we were able to inspect the surface workings of one of the few free mines now operating in the Forest. Our route took us past another former sand quarry and an old sandstone quarry.

We then reached a large tip and incline where we found the masonry base for a winding engine and some iron rollers to guide the haulage ropes. We were now passing over extensive underground workings for iron ore. Our next stop was at the ventilation chimney for the Findall Iron Mine which was connected to Perseverance Mine. The chimney is a fine industrial structure and survives today because of extensive repairs to its base and fire box by volunteers in the mid 1970's. Finally we had a quick look at the site of a limestone quarry and an old ventilation shaft. Back at the cars we thanked our leader for showing us just what an interesting area the Ruspidge Valley is.

Sunday 4 May 1997

Visit to the Newport Area

Our guides for our first coach trip were our friends from the Oxford House Industrial History Society. Robin Williams was responsible for putting together a most interesting and enjoyable programme. We met our hosts at Oxford House in Risca where we were able to visit the Society's museum which has a surprisingly extensive collection of industrial and social history exhibits. Pride of place goes to the complete contents of Edward's chemist's shop which has been moved from Cardiff Docks and reconstructed at Risca. Here one could find all the things one might expect to find in a chemist in the earlier part of this century. Adorning two walls is a rich collection of cast iron boundary markers, mileposts and suchlike relating to the many former tramroads in the district. One of the most unusual exhibits was a device for stuffing the filling into cushions. Every wall seemed to be filled with exhibits.

Every credit to the Society for what they have achieved there. Happily they are now able to open to the public on a regular basis so that local people are able to learn about their heritage in a very vivid way.

Braving the heavy rain we went a hundred yards up the road to see the remains of the Abercarn furnace. This was an early 19th century blast furnace which was identified by two of their members a few years ago. We then came back down the valley to the Visitor Centre at Fourteen Locks on the Monmouthshire Canal. We took a walk down the locks looking at the complex system of side ponds and the remains of earlier abandoned chambers. Of particular interest was a lock with a shelf which it is believed was constructed that way in order to permit two boats travelling in opposite directions to pass.

Lunchtime found us at the Newport Transporter Bridge which spans the River Usk. It had been recently restored and is one of only two such structures in the country that are still operational. Unfortunately it is now rarely possible to walk across the high level gantry and we had to content ourselves with free rides in the travelling deck. The bridge will happily take a number of cars but it was out of the question for our 53 seater coach. We had the bonus of being invited up into the control cabin at the eastern end of the bridge. Here we were shown the controls and large winding drum and a grandstand view of the bridge as it trundled back and forth.

Retracing our steps towards Risca we crossed into the Sirhowey valley where we visited Gelli-Groes Water Mill which is a recently restored grist mill. A display of old radio equipment on display commemorates a former miller who lost an arm as a result of an accident at the mill in the early part of the century. He overcame his disability and became very interested in 'amateur' radio. It is understood that he picked up distress signal from the Titanic when she sank in 1911. A wholesaler of candle making equipment and materials occupies another part of the site. We passed through the Tredegar town centre so we could see the huge but very fine town clock made of cast iron. Just outside Tredegar we walked across to the impressive remains of the Sirhowey Ironworks. Here we saw the massive masonry of the charging arches and the large plug of slag and metal plug remaining from the bottom of one of the furnaces.

Moving on to Butetown at the head of the Rhymney Valley we stopped to walk round the estate of three terraces of industrial housing erected in 1802-3 by the Marquess of Bute for the workers at the nearby Union Ironworks. One of the cottages has now been converted into a small museum and visitor centre. Across the road was a garden laid out as it might have been with flowers and vegetables and complete with its Ty Bach!

Returning to Risca we thanked our guides for providing (as usual) a most varied and interesting day in an area that still has a very rich industrial heritage.

Saturday 24 May 1997

Horsley and Newmarket Valleys Walk, Nailsworth

Mills, turnpikes, the food industry, the site of a gaol, engineering and crafts all featured in this very pleasant and little known walk to the west of Nailsworth. About 25 members met in the Newmarket Road car park. We started by admiring Stokes Croft, a fine 17th century house with its elegant shell porch. Nearby was the former warehouse of the wool firm of T M

Newman which flourished between about 1880 and 1963. The building has now been converted into flats. An extra was a visit to the delightful 17th century Friends Meeting House in Chestnut Hill.

Moving off along Brewery Lane we saw the few remaining parts of the Nailsworth Brewery which closed in 1942. We noted that the relatively new flats on part of the site have been named Clissold's Court after the family that started the brewery before 1842. A small clock bearing the name Robert Bragg Town Time Stroud 1866 set in the wall of the Social Club opposite was noted with interest.

We left Nailsworth by means of the Horsley Valley passing by Locke mill and Gig Mill which both now house engineering businesses. Locke Mill had been a brewery in 1802 and later had been both a cloth and corn mill. Gig Mill as its name suggests had been a cloth mill and was later a grist mill. We then came to Ruskin (formerly Millbottom) Mill where a large external waterwheel is on view. Its many uses have included cloth manufacture, corn mill, leather stiffener works and aniline dye works. The mill is now a centre for craft workers. In recent years it has become possible to walk through the old fish farm so we were able to see the remains of Lower Horsley Mill at close range. Nearby we saw a good example of an old tollhouse.

Further up the valley at Hartley Bridge we reached the site of the former mill but only traces of the dam were now visible. We then made the stiff climb out of the valley to the centre of Horsley village. Here we passed close to the site of the old House of Correction opened in 1791 and closed in 1878. After crossing to the Newmarket Valley we came to the site of Nodes Mill. Some of the dam remains but the millpond is now dry and no traces of the building survive. However, a small stone building, recently rebuilt houses two old hydraulic rams that used to pump water to the former Hillier's bacon factory. Most of the factory was demolished a few years ago.

We continued down the valley and looked down on the various buildings of the Lot Mill and its pond. These premises were once occupied by the engineering firm of H J H King & Co. It is reputed that a King water turbine remains in situ under the 19th century stone building. The final site was Prices Mill which was restored in the early nineties and converted to a Doctor's Surgery. It was now only a short walk back to the car park where the leader Ray Wilson was thanked for fitting such a wide variety of interesting sites into the afternoon.

Sunday 29 June 1997

A Walk in Woodchester Park

The industrial archaeology of Woodchester Park may appear to be well separated but it is worth the effort to seek it out. Indeed the surroundings alone make it a very pleasant place for a walk. About 20 members met at the new National Trust car park near Nympsfield village. Our route was about 7 miles but it was taken at a fairly gentle pace with a stop for a picnic lunch. The weather was rather dull but perhaps that was an advantage when we came to the final climb back up the valley to the car park. The Mansion itself was not open that day but we had obtained special permission to view the exterior.

We set off down the valley on the main track but soon branched off to the north to look at Marmontsflat Quarry. Here we could see the marks of plug and feather working on some blocks of stones. Although it is thought that these marks only date back to the 1930's they are nevertheless the earliest surviving remains of the type of working as usually such marks are destroyed by the subsequent operations. There was also considerable botanical interest in this part of the park and a member pointed out examples of the Bird's-Nest Orchid and Angular Solomon's-Seal. On this high ground is one of the best viewpoints but sadly it was not possible to see as far as the other side of the Nailsworth valley this particular morning.

We then came to the Mansion and looked at the scant remains of the outbuildings from the earlier house. Nearby we could look down into the old icehouse cleared by GSIA in 1996. We carried on along the track behind the Mansion and skirted round the old garden belonging to the earlier house. We now came to the five main lakes and stopped to look at the eel trap between Middle Pond and Kennel Pond. Just below Parkmill Pond, the lowest of the five lakes, we looked in vain for any traces of the Park Mill. This was a corn mill and according to documentary evidence had a 33 foot diameter waterwheel in the early 18th century. A second eel trap is situated at the foot of the spillway on the Parkmill Pond dam.

From here it was only a short walk to Collier's Wood where the Woodchester Glass House was situated. The Glass House is a scheduled ancient monument and one of only a handful of scheduled sites in Gloucestershire that are industrial. Unfortunately there are now few visible remains here. However, it is a very important site because of its connection with early 17th century glassmaking.

On our return back up the valley we stopped off at the head of Kennel Pond to look at the so-called Kennels. The single storey is likely to have originally been cattle stalls. At the head of Middle Pond we admired the Boathouse that has been recently restored by the National Trust. The date of this building is uncertain but is thought by some people to be late 18th or early 19th century. On our return to the car park and after we had got our breath back after the long climb we thanked our leader Ray Wilson for an interesting day in extremely pleasant surroundings.

Saturday 19 July 1997

Visit to Northleach Museum

On one of the hottest days of the year about 25 members gathered at the Countryside Collection housed in the former House of Correction at Northleach. In addition to a normal visit to the museum we were very privileged to be allowed a private look behind the scenes in the huge store to the north of the car park. This is crammed full of all sorts of material which of course is not normally seen by the general public. We were very fortunate to have our members David Viner (the curator) and his wife Linda as our guides.

The museum is noted for its extensive collection of agricultural and social history exhibits and the displays in the cells and former court room which tell the history of the prison. It is the home of the very important Lloyd-Baker collection of farm waggons and agricultural machinery. In the museum store we found all manner of artefacts. Some were very familiar and some no one could identify and we had to seek an explanation from our hosts. We were

shown some of the many conservation problems that the exhibits pose. It was one of the hottest days of the year and eventually the heat had got to most of us and a beeline was made to the tearoom at the conclusion of the tour. Here we were able to thank our guides for giving up their Saturday afternoon to come in to 'work' and provide us with a most interesting afternoon.

Thursday 7 August 1997

Social Evening at Cirencester

Sitting around the Hare mosaic in the Cirencester Brewery yard on a perfect summer evening, twenty-seven members relaxed as our guide, Alex Permentiers, gave us a potted history of the town from its prestigious Roman beginnings. Then we inspected Cirencester in depth, starting at the old air-raid shelter, now open as a WW2 museum on summer Saturdays.

Many of the town's buildings have been refurbished to modern standards and utilised for present-day needs. These include the cottage hospital of 1873, now the Register Office, the Congregational Chapel with its war memorial, now a day centre, and the workhouse, now council offices.

Others stand desolately awaiting restoration, like the Brunel GWR station building, which has seen the rise of buses (horse, steam and petrol by the 1920's) and was used briefly as a bus station itself. The sidings and yards have been converted into busy roads and a gleaming Waitrose, where town maps and a mock-up of the former city wall give a token nod to past glories. Standing on the bridge over the ring-road, it was difficult to visualise the old canal basin, wharf and rail links which have been swept away in the last thirty years, all rather sad.

Cecily Hill, however, has survived with its 17th and 18th century houses, Tontine building and Gothic 19th century barracks, now used by a computer firm! Moving on, the Friends Meeting House of 1673, Weavers Hall of 1425, 18th century school and St John's Hospital, together with the parish church, indicate wealthy benefactors, the importance of the wool trade and continuing civic pride. Water has also helped to shape the town, with the River Churn, its many culverts and mills, and the Abbey fishpond.

In the Abbey grounds, we sat in the twilight on the terrace of the 18th century Abbey House, on the site of the previous Tudor mansion (itself demolished in 1965 and replaced by ugly flats), looking at the paving slabs marking the outline of the abbey, demolished rather earlier by Henry VIII.

A moment of panic followed when our guide found the park gate locked for the night, but fortunately he found another way out onto the Market Place! More demolition here, of the centre two rows of houses in 1830, and signs of prosperity, old inns (the Fleece and King's Head), the Victorian Corn Hall and Bingham House (previously the Library). The latter together with an assembly hall elsewhere in the town were donated by Daniel Bingham.

Down Cricklade Street, we discovered more traces of industrial history. The Maltings was turned into modern flats in 1984, while the foundry which made parts of the stage for the London Palladium operated until the late 1950s. The gasworks of 1813 has vanished, but the

old waterworks (1882 - 1930's) still proudly bears its name, though by now it was difficult to see details and members gladly hailed the last port of call, the Twelve Bells. Thanks were given to Alex Permentiers on behalf of members by Alan Garnett for a very instructive and enjoyable social evening.

Sheila Maddock

Thursday 14 August 1997

Visit to the Mythe Waterworks, Tewkesbury

A full party of 30 members met at the Mythe Waterworks just north of Tewkesbury for a comprehensive tour which included the new extensions. Our guides Mrs Anne Bartlett and Mr John Wright first gave us an introductory talk in an old filter house which is destined to become Severn Trent's museum. Mrs Bartlett outlined the development of the site from 1867 when it was started by the Cheltenham Water Company although it was some years before the supply actually reached Cheltenham. The site has seen major expansions in 1941, 1964 and 1991. Part of the recent work has been the provision of attractive brick cladding dressed with artificial stone to cover the stark concrete facade of some of the earlier tanks and buildings. This has certainly improved the appearance of the site both from the main road and the river.

On our tour we first viewed the old and new intakes from the river. The Severn Way footpath has had to be carried on a cantilevered section to get past the new intake works. This affords a good view both of the works and Telford's Mythe Bridge a little upstream. We then saw the different stages of filtration that are employed to remove all sizes of particulates. Finally we saw how chlorine is added as a statutory requirement to the water when it leaves the works to protect it from bacterial action on the way to the consumer.

We returned to the museum where light refreshments had been kindly laid on (coffee and orange juice, not bottled water!). Ray Wilson gave a vote of thanks to our guides for a most interesting visit.

Sunday 7 September 1997

Painswick and Cranham Mills Walk

The popularity of Painswick at weekends and the limited car parking in the town made us decide to meet below the well-known hill fort known as Painswick Beacon. It was then a very pleasant mile walk back to Painswick. On the way we passed Catsbrain Quarry which is currently the home to a firm of architectural reclamation specialists. We looked down on a bizarre collection of statues, fireplaces and all forms of building materials. On the way into Painswick we passed close to the imposing Gyde Orphanage designed by Percy Richard Morley Horder and built about 1913. This is a large Cotswold style house entered through an archway. We then looked at the Gyde Almshouses, 10 semi-detached Cotswold style cottages by Sidney Barnsley also of about 1913. Of an earlier date is the very fine Gyde Barn which lies close to the main road.

We were now close to our main objective, the Painswick Stream and its mills. First, however, we looked at the site of Zachariah Powell's mill which lay on a tiny tributary to the main

stream. No remains were apparent at the site and we moved on to the site of Upper Baylis's Mill. There are no remains of the mill which ceased operation about 1865 but near Highgrove House (formerly two mill cottages) we could make out the position of the dam and extensive millpond. We also noticed that some small scale excavation appeared to be going on in the millpond. At the head of the millpond are the ruins of a circular wool drying stove. The building stands no higher than five feet maximum and is in urgent need of conservation. Fortunately there is a complete wool drying stove in Kemp's Lane back in Painswick. We followed the footpath along the stream until we reached Damsell's Mill which bears a datestone of 1674. This was a cloth mill in 1820 but converted to a corn mill by 1867. The millers house dates from about this time. The buildings were converted into a dwelling in 1968. At the rear two brick arched openings lead to the large extant breastshot waterwheel. The owners very kindly allowed us inside to inspect the waterwheel.

Moving on we came to the scant but interesting ruins of Oliver's Mill. Next was the site of Tocknell's Mill although nothing now remains of the buildings. We then entered Cranham and noted the parish boundary stone at the side of the entrance drive to Tocknell's Court. The first mill on the Painswick Stream in Cranham is Eddel's Mill. This was once a cloth mill and later a corn mill. The footpath through the field gave us a good view of the mill from the side and then the path goes up onto an embankment of the extensive mill pond to give us further views of the site.

From here it was only a short walk across the fields to Sutton's Mill which was formerly a corn mill. Our members Mrs Myatt and her daughter Miss Snell live here and they welcomed us with orange squash and the chance to sit down for a few minutes. We were also able to look inside the very interesting mill house and some the outbuildings. There then followed a fairly steep uphill section up the minor road until the main road was reached near the Royal William public house. We walked up past the pub and followed the tracks across Painswick Hill past the Iron Age fort again and so made our way down to the cars. Ray Wilson was thanked for making the arrangements and leading the walk.

Sunday 28 September 1997

Visit to Derbyshire

The second coach outing of the year took us northwards. An exceptionally good run on the Motorways meant that we arrived some quarter of an hour early at Duffield on the A6 just north of Derby. Here we met our guide Dudley Fowkes of the Derbyshire Industrial Archaeology Society and formerly the County Archivist for Staffordshire.

The first part of the morning was taken up with a tour of the area with a very detailed running commentary from our guide. Our route took us on up the A6 where a number of very fine cotton mills we pointed out. We stayed on the A6 and followed the River Derwent to Cromford where we passed by the Arkwright Mill complex and the terminus of the Cromford Canal. At Lea Bridge we saw Smedley's Lea Mills which is a very fine complex. We then continued past the National Tramway Museum at Crich and Wingfield Manor, a fine ruin in the care of English Heritage, eventually arriving at Heage.

Here we left the coach and walked across the fields to the Morley Park Blast Furnaces which date from the late 18th century. Both are fairly complete and they have had a good deal of conservation carried out on them in recent years. They form a very impressive monument despite the recent road which runs immediately to the rear. We took our lunch in the Golden valley by the line of the Cromford Canal. We also found that the Midland Railway Centre have recently laid down a narrow gauge line in the vicinity. This is not yet open to the public but we had a preview when a small maintenance train came along.

The greater part of the afternoon was spent looking at industrial housing. Firstly it was only a short walk to some attractive early examples in the Golden Valley by the side of the Cromford canal. Here we were in earshot of the steam locomotives running on the track at the Midland Railway Centre at Ripley. We then moved across to walk round Ironville, the extensive model village laid out by the Butterley Company in the 1830s and 1840s.

Finally, we took a walk round the town of Belper where we looked at the industrial housing erected by Strutt in about 1790. We thanked our guide for a very interesting day and joined the early autumn traffic queues on the motorway. Happily they were not as bad as they might have been and we were soon back in Gloucestershire.

Saturday 18 October 1997

Visit to Oldbury Power Station

About 20 members attended the Society's first visit to Oldbury Power Station. The previous visit to an operational nuclear power station had been in March 1989 when we went to Berkeley Power Station just three years before it ceased generation. The contrast between one of the first and one of the last Magnox stations was very noticeable.

Oldbury boasts a large visitor centre equipped with 'hands-on' exhibits designed to amuse and inform all ages! Here after coffee we were given an introductory talk and shown lavish video on how nuclear power is produced. We then split into small groups and were shown round by our knowledgeable lady guides. Each tour took in the viewing gallery looking down on the pilecap where we could see some refuelling operations taking place. We also visited the turbine hall, the cooling ponds and the control room. One of the main differences between Berkeley and Oldbury is that the reactor pressure vessels at Berkeley were made of steel while Oldbury has reinforced concrete vessels. We were able to go into the cable gallery to see the ends of the large number of steel cables that provide the pre-stressing for the vessel. An added bonus was the splendid views over the Severn Estuary and Vale of Berkeley that we had from an upper storey of the reactor building.

Back at the visitor centre there was a further opportunity to play with the exhibits and ask any further questions. We thanked our guides and left having had a most interesting and informative morning.