

## REPORT

### ANNUAL CONFERENCE of the ASSOCIATION for INDUSTRIAL ARCHAEOLOGY

Held at Bath, 11-13 September 1987.

This year's Annual Conference was held in Bath University, and for those able to attend the pre-conference days there was an interesting programme of excursions to sites in the area, and talks in the evening.

The main programme began after dinner on Friday with the introductory lecture being given by Joan Day, entitled An Introduction to the Industrial Archaeology of Avon. This gave delegates some idea of the sites of industrial archaeology to be found in this area. It is perhaps appropriate at this point to mention for at each conference a short guide is produced on the sites to be found locally. This year's guide was produced (appropriately) by Joan Day, and includes 268 sites in the County of Avon, including of course Bath and Bristol, and also sites in the adjoining counties of Somerset, Wiltshire and our own Gloucestershire. Copies of this booklet are still available.

The next lecture that first evening was by Kenneth Rogers, Wiltshire County Archivist, on The West Country Woollen Industry. I particularly enjoyed this most informative lecture.

On Saturday morning there were three lectures: Waterpower in Avon - given by Martin Watts, vice-chairman SPAB Wind and Watermills Section; Engineering Enterprises in Bath and Bristol by Hugh Torrens of Keele University; and finally The SS Great Britain - by Commander Joe Blake. Three very different subjects, but all important aspects of the industrial development of the area.

After lunch there was a choice of three excursions:

- 1) Bath Stone Extraction, Monks Park Stone Mine, Corsham.
- 2) Kennet & Avon Canal, including Bradford-on-Avon and Claverton Pumphouse.
- 3) The Port of Bristol, including a visit to the SS Great Britain.

I had chosen the first, having missed the GSIA outing to a stone quarry, and in many ways this was a fortunate choice (despite the 212 steps down AND BACK UP), as the afternoon was very wet and a stone mine is at least dry, and one does have a very substantial roof over one's head. It was fascinating to see how the huge blocks of stone had been mined in the past, and the equipment used to mine the stone today.

The Conference Dinner was held that evening, with really excellent food. Afterwards came the members' contributions, which always provide opportunity for delegates to give short talks, with slides where appropriate, on their particular projects.

Sunday morning opened with the Members' Forum, and lively discussion ensued on the role of industrial archaeology and what its study should encompass. Then came the Rolt Memorial Lecture - The Lives of the Engineers, given by Dr. Angus Buchanan. This was an excellent lecture which will appear in full in a forthcoming issue of the Industrial Archaeology Review.

Finally must be mentioned the very wide range of bookstalls and displays. These are always worth a look, and there is always plenty to buy. And lastly, but not least, our thanks to Joan Day and Owen Ward for organising the Conference.

Next year's Conference is to be held in Swansea, 9-11 September 1988, with the additional programme from 12 September. The provisional programme looks exciting, and I am sure it will be very good. Why don't you think of coming?

Amber Patrick.