

THE ASSOCIATION FOR INDUSTRIAL ARCHAEOLOGY

The year 1991 saw the two usual conferences: the week-end conference, primarily intended for the Affiliated Societies and the annual conference, lasting nearly a week.

The former was held at Ironbridge, in April and was entitled Local Societies and Conservation. On the Saturday morning three societies engaged in conservation work gave brief resumes of their work at Morley Park Blast furnace; Gunton Saw Mill and Twyford Water Pumping Station. Then there was a brief but useful talk on Safety on Sites. Other topics covered during the week-end included the Use of Video in Recording Sites; Recording Machinery; Sites Database; Local Societies and SMRs; Awards for Conservation and Recording; the CBA Regional IA Panels and finally the Case for Preservation In Situ or the Case for Museum Preservation. I certainly found the session on recording machinery valuable but even so would be reluctant to undertake a large complex item. Altogether it was a useful week-end and the social side was not neglected with a dinner at the New Inn and plenty of opportunity to talk to those attending.

The annual conference was held in Dudley and our visits were to the various industrial sites in the Black Country and in Kidderminster, Stourport and to Churchill forge, the latter two having been recent GSIA visits. There is a tremendous variety of industry still surviving and there were visits to chain-making works, lock makers, leather goods makers, etc. The latter make some very high quality goods. Then there were visits to various transport remains: Wolverhampton Low Level Station, the Severn Valley Railway, various car factories (no longer in production) and of course various canals including the Birmingham Canal. Other sites included an old brick works, aspects of the glass industry, Bratch Pumping Station and the Jewellery Quarter of Birmingham. Such a list does not really do justice to the variety and quality of sites we visited. It was a marvellous opportunity to see so many sites within such a small area.

The main lectures included Ron Moss on Black Country Chain-making; Roger Dodsworth on Stourbridge Glass and Mike Glason on Walsall's Leather Trades. There was the usual variety of members's contributions and reports from the Royal Commissions. The excellent Rolt Memorial Lecture was given by Keith Gale on "Researching Iron and Steel, A Personal View".

It was a splendid conference. This year it is our turn to host the AIA Conference. It is being held at the Royal Agricultural College, Cirencester. If you would like any more information on it or the AIA please get in contact with me.

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