

## THE ASSOCIATION FOR INDUSTRIAL ARCHAEOLOGY

This year (1992) your society hosted the annual AIA Conference. It gave us the opportunity to show off to the 130 or so delegates some of the diverse industrial archaeology sites in the county. It also enabled us to show that although Gloucestershire may now be important for its scenery (the Cotswolds and the Forest of Dean) it had a long and important industrial past, with some of the sites being found in most attractive settings.

The conference was residential and was held at the Royal Agricultural College, Cirencester. This turned out to be a splendid location, not only because of the attractive buildings and surrounding countryside but also because the accommodation, conference facilities and the food were excellent. The conference itself ran smoothly and that was due to the tremendous efforts on the part of GSIA members, whether it was showing delegates to their rooms on arrival, or giving lectures or guiding the tours, or just as importantly, working behind the scenes. My thanks to them all for making the conference such a success.

Our President, Rev. Awdry opened the proceedings on the Friday evening and then David Viner gave the introductory lecture on "The industrial Archaeology of Gloucestershire". It was a splendid introduction to the sites we were to see over the coming days. Then followed excellent reports from the three Royal Commissions on Historical Monuments - England, Scotland and Wales, and from English Heritage on the work they had been undertaking during the past year.

The Saturday morning started off with lectures: David Evans on Listers; Ian Standing on the Forest of Dean and Hugh Conway-Jones on Gloucester Docks. After coffee there were Members Contributions, including the sound of a Lister engine, on tape of course.

Saturday afternoon, and delegates had a choice of visiting Gloucester Docks, Cheltenham's Ornamental Ironwork and Leckhampton Quarries. Despite a little rain everyone enjoyed their visit.

In the evening we attended a reception hosted by Cotswold Countryside Collections Museum at Northleach. There was plenty of time to see the excellent exhibits of farm equipment and experience the goal! Afterwards there was the Conference Dinner at which the Fieldwork and Recording Award was presented to Adam Sharpe, Rose Lewis, Chris Massie and Partners with Nick Johnson, the Cornwall County Archaeologist for their work on Cornish engine houses. Peter Hughes received the award for the most enterprising fieldwork for his study of the 'abbey-like' structure at Ty Mawr at Ynys-y-Pandy.

Sunday started with the AGM and then the Rolt Memorial Lecture was given by Barrie Trinder on "The Archaeology of the Food Industry in Britain 1660-1960."

After lunch the main programme ended, but many delegates stayed on to go on the afternoon excursions to either the Stroud or the Cirencester areas. In the evening Tony Langford gave a talk on "The Steamboat builders of Brimscombe."

On Monday two coaches set off to visit the Forest of Dean with Stan Coates as our guide to Guns mill, Dark Hill Iron Works, the Whitecliff Furnace at Coleford and finally the Angidy Valley. It was an excellent day and the sites were well worth visiting with Stan as our guide. In the evening Lionel Walrond gave us a talk on the Stroud area.

Tuesday, and we were off to see some of the sites Lionel had shown us the night before. We went through Minchinhampton to Balls Green and then to Longford's Mill, some details of which feature elsewhere in this Journal. Then it was on to Egypt Mill for coffee and then on to Dunkirk Mill. After lunch we visited Stanley Mill and were able to view the interior. Then it was onto Ebley Mill and we ended our day at Chalford.

The Tuesday evening lecture was on Gloucester Docks and was given by Hugh Conway-Jones. Then next day, Wednesday, we visited Berkeley Nuclear Power Station, now being decommissioned. Then after an excellent lunch we went round Sharpness Docks and finally on to Gloucester Docks.

The Wednesday evening lecture was given by Arthur Price on his work on recording Cotswold Stone Quarries. It was excellent. The last day we went to the Forest of Dean again and Ian Standing was our guide. First stop was Bullo Pill then on to Haie Hill tunnel and to the Dean Heritage Museum. This received the President's Award from David Alderton on 29.12.92. After lunch at the Speech House it was on to the Cannop Valley and an exploration of Bixslade. So ended our AIA Conference.

Many of the sites will be known to society members but it was good to show them to those who were not so familiar with them. And, even if one did know them it was a pleasure to go round with all our excellent guides and learn something new.

Besides the annual Conference the AIA organises a working weekend each spring at Ironbridge. In 1992 there were papers on Listing and Scheduling, the Monuments Protection Programme and TICCIH, to name a few of the excellent talks.

If you are interested in coming to either conference please contact either myself or Ray Wilson.

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