

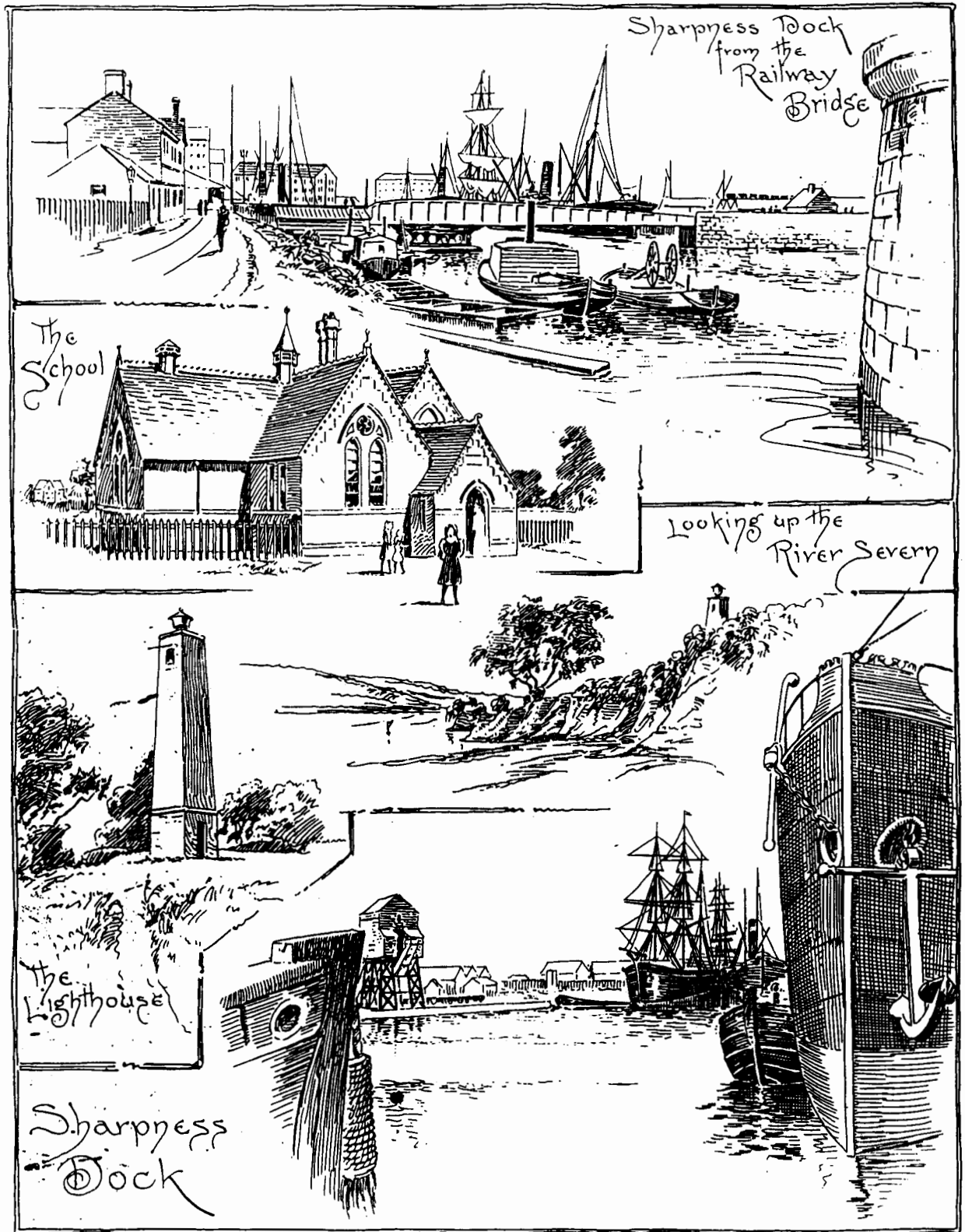
SCENES AT SHARPNESS DOCKS BY SAMUEL LOXTON

Ray Wilson

Loxton was an artist who travelled the Bristol region about the turn of the century making pen and ink sketches of scenes for publication in the local newspapers of the time. The majority of his illustrations appeared in the Bristol Observer between about 1880 and 1920. A number of the original drawings survive at the Bristol Reference Library. Most of the places depicted are in or around the city but occasionally Loxton went further afield as the drawings featuring Sharpness Docks shown here testify. Unfortunately the drawings are not dated and as yet no search has been made for the issue in which they appeared. The drawings are of particular interest to industrial archaeologists as they show two structures at the docks which have long since vanished and few, if indeed any other, illustrations of them exist. These are the old lighthouse and the original coal tip in the main dock.

The five sketches show the following (from the top):

1. A view of the eastern end of the New Docks looking west. The pillar of the high level swing bridge is visible on the right. The low level swing bridge also remains today, but the buildings to the left have been long since cleared. The outline of four of the large grain warehouses can be seen. Only the North Warehouse survives today.
2. The school near the tow terraces of Company housing (Severn Row and Great Western row) is used today as the headquarters of a road haulage firm. This caption gives us the best clue to the date of the sketches as the school was built in 1885 but the building became St Andrew Church around 1900.
3. The lighthouse is shown on the 1880 and 1902 25 inch Ordnance map on the riverbank between the old and the new dock entrances at grid reference S066800255. It is marked as disused in 1903 and had gone by the 3rd edition of the map in 1921.
4. The lighthouse appears to have been about 40 feet (12m) tall assuming Loxton's proportions were correct and that the door is 6ft 6in (2m) high. It is not clear how the lamp was operated.
5. The last picture is looking north east across the main dock. Clearly shown is the wooden coal tip with its chute in the raised position. The tip was built in 1885 and replaced by the end of the century.



SAMUEL LOXTON'S DRAWINGS OF SHARPNESS DOCKS C.1900

Acknowledgement

The author is grateful to staff at the Bristol Reference Library for information on Samuel Loxton. The illustration are reproduced by kind permission of Bristol Reference Library.

Reference

(1) Preece, G.J.P., 1977, Railway and Coal-Drops at Sharpness Docks, Industrial Archaeology Review, Vol 2 No 1 pp 78-84.