

SOMERSET INDUSTRIAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Chairman: M H Jones

Secretary: D J Greenfield

33 Barrow Drive
Taunton

BULLETIN No. 1

May 1975

The Bulletin

This is the first of what is hoped will become a regular newsletter to accompany the society's Programme of events. Its aim will be to record SIAS business and activities as well as to draw attention to members' interests.

The Committee 1975/76

Several changes have taken place following the AGM on 8th. April 1975. Our Chairman, Sandy Buchanan, has stepped down and is succeeded by Mike Jones. Mary Miles has become the society's Field Officer following the retirement of Richard Willey, and the new post of Publications Officer has been filled by Brian Murless. Under the three year rule of the Constitution, both Brian Whiteside and Chris Tilley were not eligible for re-election to the Committee this year, and Derrick Warren and Geoff Harding fill these vacancies. The full Committee now consists of:

Mrs. Marian Ackland (Treasurer)

Sandy Buchanan

David Greenfield (Secretary)

Geoff Harding

Mike Jones (Chairman)

Mrs. Mary Miles (Field Officer)

Ian Miles

Brian Murless (Publications Officer)

Tony Ward

Derrick Warren

Richard Willey

New Subscriptions

The new rates, approved at the AGM, are:

Full (individual) membership	£2.00
Each additional member from the same address	£0.25
Full family membership	£2.50

The rates take into account the recent increase in postal charges, and include one free copy of the SIAS Journal per household. Subscriptions commence from 1st. April.

The Journal

Following successful negotiations with a local printer, it is anticipated that the Journal will appear towards the end of June. In total 10 major articles have been prepared for publication together with 8 shorter items.

Taunton Deane Research & Excavation Committee

SIAS has been invited to nominate a representative to serve on this body and the name of Tony Ward has been submitted. The T.D.R. & E.C. is composed of local councillors, archaeologists and historians who deal with archaeological matters in Taunton Deane.

Bridgwater

Two reports have been prepared relating to industrial archaeology in the town.

The first, drafted by the SIAS Publications sub-committee, presents evidence about Bridgwater Docks. The report has been submitted to the County Archaeologist, Mick Aston, in connection with the County Council's proposals for the conservation and development of the Docks area.

The second report, compiled by Iain Miles and Brian Murless, discusses industrial structures in the former Borough of Bridgwater. The account will hopefully form a section in an implications report being drawn up by members of the Bridgwater Archaeological Excavation Committee.

Nynehead Drive Aqueduct

Considerable progress has been made by Frank Hawtin, ably assisted by a number of volunteers, in the restoration of this aqueduct on the Grand Western Canal (ST 144217). Further assistance is required and those willing to help are asked to contact Frank at Quaking House, Milverton (Milverton 405).

The Rowcliffe Papers

Mr. Couch, of Moger & Couch, solicitors, generously granted SIAS permission to search for documents of IA interest upon the closure of their branch office in Stogumber. This operation, which has involved the sorting of a couple of tons of paper, is well under way, thanks to practical help afforded by Richard Willey and Martyn Brown.

Although further classification of the documents will be necessary before they are placed in the Somerset Records Office, it is already clear that new information about the West Somerset Mineral Railway and the Brendon Hill mines, inter alia, is contained in those documents known collectively as the Rowcliffe Papers (Charles Rowcliffe of Stogumber was Solicitor to the W.S.M.R. and its Secretary from 1856 to 1877).

Programme of Events

It would help the committee, when arranging visits, etc., if you would fill in the attached questionnaire and return it in the enclosed stamped envelope.

David Greenfield.

Chairman: M H Jones

Secretary: D J Greenfield
33 Barrow Drive
Taunton.

Bulletin No. 2

June 1975

Questionnaire

A good number of the questionnaires sent out with the first Bulletin has been returned, and Mary Miles is now collating them. The programme attached has been drawn up based on the results of the questionnaire, and further visits and meetings are being pursued, details of which will be circulated with the next Bulletin. Further information on the SIAS programme, and on those of other societies, is given below. We should appreciate the return of the remaining questionnaires as soon as possible.

SIAS Programme

June 25 A 'Clay' evening - a joint meeting with the Bridgwater & District Arch. Society, relating to the brick and tile industry. Two films will be shown:

'Roofs of Clay', which includes a locally-shot sequence of tile-making;

'Isaac Button, Country Potter'.

Mr. Doddridge, Managing Director of Barham Bros. will give a talk and answer questions. The meeting is timed to coincide with the re-opening of a room at the Blake Museum in Bridgwater exhibiting objects made at the brick and tile works in the town. Following the success of an earlier display arranged by the B & DAS, the County Museum have re-organized the material on a permanent basis, and included the results of additional research by Brian Murless. The meeting, organized jointly with the County Museum and Sedgemoor District Council, will be held at the Arts Centre in Castle Street Bridgwater. There will be no charge, and coffee will be available.

July 7 - Sept 7 'Watchet Within Living Memory'. SIAS members and local residents are again organising an exhibition at the Council Chamber, Swain Street, Watchet, attempting to illustrate aspects of the town's past. Members who are prepared to act as stewards at weekends should contact me.

12 July 12 A Saturday cruise on the Grand Western Canal. Unlike the Somerset length, the GWC in Devon has remained 'wet', and a horse-drawn barge operates between Tiverton and Sampford Peverell. The Nynhead Local History Society is joining us, meeting at the Basin in Tiverton at 2.00pm. The charge will be 75p per head, and members proposing to go should send their money to Mary Miles, Brierly Cottage, Lower Durston, Taunton, as soon as possible. No special arrangements have been made for refreshments. The trip takes about 2½ hours. Children under 5 travel free.

July 20 Survey of Muchelney Toll-house. In keeping with SIAS aims of recording structures relating to the history of industry and transport in the county, a survey is to be carried out of the toll-house at Muchelney, under the direction of Mike Jones. Although this operation is relatively straightforward, SIAS is taking the opportunity of offering the project as a 'teach-in' for those wishing to gain instruction in the techniques of surveying a building. It is anticipated that the survey will be completed in the morning, but for those wishing to 'make a day of it' we are hoping to arrange further attractions for the afternoon.

August 22 Dunster Show. Due to the generosity of Mr. Victor Bonham-Carter, SIAS will be sharing an exhibition tent at the Dunster Show with the Exmoor Society and The Exmoor Press.

September 13 The Brendon mines and the West Somerset Mineral Railway. A whole day meeting led by Mike Jones, including visits to Kennisham Hill mine, Burrow Farm engine house, Carnarvon mine, the Raleghs Cross area and the Incline. There may be an opportunity for underground exploration. Stout boots are essential. No arrangements have been made for refreshments. The Exeter IA Group has been invited to join us on this trip.

September 26 IA and related topics in Cornwall. Mike Messenger, author of 'The Liskeard & Looe Canal', will give an illustrated talk at Weir Lodge, Staplegrove Road, Taunton, the meeting starting at 7.15pm.

October 15 A further visit to the Telecommunications Museum in Taunton.

November 22 The Somerset Coalfield. Further details of this whole-day trip later.

December 6 Clicket deserted village. A whole-day exploratory visit to this site, which is about a mile north-west of Luxborough. Further details later.

David Greenfield.

SUMMARY OF MEETINGS

June 25 'Clay' evening. The Arts Centre, Castle Street, Bridgwater. 7.30pm.

July 12 Grand Western Canal. Tiverton Basin. 2.00pm.

July 20 Muchelney Toll-house, ST 429251. 10.30am.

September 13 Brendon mines & WSMR. Kennisham Hill, Forestry Commission gate, SS 964358. 10.00am.

September 26 Cornwall IA. Weir Lodge, Staplegrove Road, Taunton. 7.15pm.

October 15 Telecommunications Museum, North Street, Taunton. 7.00pm.

SIAS hereby gives notice that all arrangements made by the Society for any person to visit a site or attend a meeting, are made by the Society as Agents for such person and that consequently the Society accepts no responsibility or liability for any injury, loss or inconvenience caused to such person in consequence of his or her visit.

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SOMERSET INDUSTRIAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Chairman: M H Jones

Secretary: D J Greenfield

33 Barrow Drive

Taunton

Bulletin No. 3

September 1975

The Journal

Paid-up members should by now have received their free copy of the Journal. If not, please let the Secretary know.

The Editor, Brian Murless, is most grateful for the comments about the Journal which have so far reached him. The publication has achieved official recognition by being assigned an International Standard Serial Number: ISSN 0307-1723.

Contributors to Journal No. 2 may present material for editing before 31st. December if they so wish.

SIAS is in need of retail outlets for the sale of the Journal throughout Somerset and the Committee would welcome promotional ideas also. It is interesting to note that if each member found the means to sell only ten copies, the basic cost of publication would be covered.

The Programme

Photography. It is not generally known that coloured transparencies, a popular form of photography today, have many limitations when recording buildings for publication and archives. There are also other basic photographic problems besides the kind of film to use, such as the type of camera, the correct lighting and the employment of auxiliary equipment like flash. On 23rd. January, Geoff Tottle will offer some guide-lines as to how members can best approach, photographically speaking, those subjects which interest them.

A Canal Holiday. Frank Hawtin needs no introduction to SIAS members and his experiences on the canals of the Midlands, to be recollected on 20th. February, promise to provide a most entertaining evening.

C.R.A.A.G.S. The Committee for Rescue Archaeology in Avon, Gloucestershire and Somerset is still a relatively new body in archaeology in the South-West. The Committee acts in conjunction with the Department of the Environment and one of its functions is to advise in the allocation of funds to projects concerned with rescue archaeology in the region. SIAS has already indicated its willingness to co-operate with CRAAGS and has applied for grants. Industrial archaeology is at present only represented on the CRAAGS Committee by Will Harris, of the Bristol IAS. His talk, on 19th. March, will present SIAS members with an opportunity to find out in more detail about the work of this new and important archaeological body.

SUMMARY OF PROGRAMME

Fri. 26 September Mike Messenger - The I.A. of Cornwall

7.15pm, Weir Lodge, Staplegrove Road, Taunton

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Sun. 5 October Coal Mine Sites in North Somerset - a tour organised by
Bristol IAS, led by Mr. D L Dowding of the NCB

Meet 11.00am, Kilmersdon Colliery Car-park, Haydon, Radstock. ST 689539.

.....
Wed. 15 October Telecommunications Museum, Taunton

7.00pm, outside the main Post Office in North Street.

.....
Sat. 18 October Tour of Watermills in the Wells Area - a Bristol IAS
visit led by Dr. G. Parker.

Meet 11.00am in the carpark near Wells Bus Station. ST 547455.

.....
Sun. 9 November Bristol IAS 'Dig' at Fussells Site, Mells

10.30am, at site, ST 735488, with lunch and old clothes.

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Sat. 6 December Exploratory visit to Clicket deserted village

Meet 10.00am at Heath Poult Cross. SS 941368

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Fri. 23 January Photography and IA - Geoff Tottle

7.15pm at Weir Lodge

.....
Fri. 20 Febraary A Canal Holiday - Frank Hawtin

7.15pm at Weir Lodge

.....
Fri. 19 March C.R.A.A.G.S. and I.A. - Will Harris

7.15pm at Weir Lodge

SOMERSET INDUSTRIAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Chairman: M H Jones

Secretary: D J Greenfield

33 Barrow Drive

Taunton

Bulletin No 34

December 1975

The Committee

On March 26, 1976 the AGM will take place at Weir Lodge, Staplegrove Road, Taunton, starting at 7.30pm. This meeting will be a particularly important one in the history of the Society. Not only will a new Constitution be put forward for adoption, but there will also be an opportunity for the election of new members to the Committee.

The following brief notes about the Committee are supplied with the express purpose of informing the membership about the present Committee. It is hoped that members will be encouraged to participate in its activities either through election to office or by bringing IA matters to the attention of the Secretary in advance of a Committee meeting. The SIAS Committee will meet on the following dates in 1976

Jan 9; Feb 13; Mar 12; Apr 9; May 14; June 11; Sept 10; Oct 8; Nov 12.

The Committee is composed of eleven members, five of whom are officers. Meetings have been held on average once every six weeks, although interim sessions have been convened when urgent decisions are required. There is one Sub-Committee, that of Publications, which meets infrequently.

Meetings are well attended and agendas full of varied topics for discussion. The meetings are active forums not passive mundane affairs. They have shown that the Committee is very conscious of the needs of its members and at the same time officers are anxious to receive "feed-back" from them.

To detail each meeting of the Committee this year would mean quadrupling the size of the Bulletin. Apart from arranging the programme, topics for discussion at recent meetings have included: an IA museum for Somerset, promotion of the Society and its aims, insurance for members taking part in SIAS activities, rescue projects, and an archive for IA photographs and record cards.

SIAS is justifiably proud of being one of the most active archaeological groups in Somerset. To maintain this achievement the Society needs the continuing support of its members. Any suggestions, information or criticisms will be carefully looked at by the Committee.

The Chandos Glass Cone

The First Duke of Chandos invested in industrial and commercial enterprises in Bridgwater in the 18th century, almost 50 years before the Industrial Revolution really got underway.

Although his investments were short-lived and unprofitable, there survives a number of legacies from the period, the best-known being the building of Castle Street, West Quay. Another lesser known but equally important survival is the Duke's glass cone, the remains of which can be found at Northgate (ST 300373).

Prints and photographs give some idea of the immense structure of the conical stack which was demolished in 1942. Built in 1725, the cone and the buildings surrounding it were only used for a few years in the making of glass. They were used later in the 18th century to house French prisoners of war and in the next century became part of the pottery works of John Browne, the famous brick and tile

manufacturer of Bridgwater. The last time the cone was used as a kiln was about the turn of the century when it was sub-divided in its interior in order to allow the firing of pottery products such as bacon salters, sanitary pipes and garden vases.

SIAS has been granted (through the good offices of Mick Aston, the County Archaeologist) permission to excavate the remains of the cone by Tone Valley Property Ltd. who are re-developing the site. It is hoped that part of the surviving structure can be incorporated into the development project as a permanent memorial to Bridgwater's industrial past.

Frank Hawtin has generously agreed to direct the survey and excavation of the cone. He will be on site from 10.30 on Sat. 13 and Sun. 14 December for an initial appraisal and start. All SIAS members are welcome and your help will be greatly appreciated. Lighter tasks of weed clearance need to be done as well as other excavation operations where training will be given. If you are interested but unable to come on these days, please let the Secretary know so that you can be kept informed of the programme.

SIAS Cards/Notelets

Marilyn Ewens has been commissioned again to produce notelets/cards for the Society, a sample of which is enclosed. The three new cards depict Lower Maunsell Lock on the S & T Canal; the Anglo-Bavarian Brewery, Shepton Mallet; and Snowdon Hill Tollhouse, Chard. There are still quantities of the earlier cards (Cider-mess; High Ham Windmill; Bridge Farm Mill, Williton; Burrow Farm Engine House; Holford Kiln at Pease Bridge Works). The cards are available from the Secretary, price 50p for any 10 cards, including envelopes and postage.

Programme

Thurs. 18 Dec. 7.30pm Members Evening - bring along slides, finds, etc.
Grown & Seeprie, Station Road, Taunton. It would help if those proposing to show slides would let the Secretary know beforehand

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Fri. 23 Jan Photography and IA - Geoff Tottle

7.15pm at Weir Lodge

.....

Fri. 20 Feb A Canal Holiday - Frank Hawtin

7.15pm at Weir Lodge

.....

Sun. 22 Feb Knight's Industries of Exmoor - whole-day tour of sites, eg. mining, proposed railway and general reclamation. Led by Chris Tilley.

9.30am at Porlock Weir.

Books & packed lunch.

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Tues. 2 Mar Admiralty Hydrographic Establishment - a lunchtime tour. Members wanting to go should contact Mary Miles, Brierley Cottage, Lower Durston, as security passes will have to be arranged.

approx. 12 noon

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Fri. 19 Mar C.R.A.A.G.S. and I.A. - Will Harris

7.15pm at Weir Lodge

.....

Fri. 26 Mar 7.30pm Weir Lodge A.G.M.

SOMERSET INDUSTRIAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Chairman: ~~S. Buckle~~ M H Jones

Secretary: D Greenfield

33 Barrow Drive
TAUNTON.

Bulletin No. 5

December 1975

The Chandos Glass Cone, Bridgwater

Frank Hawtin's interim report of investigations at the Chandos Glass Cone, mentioned in the last Bulletin, is given below.

"Thirty-four manhours of work (6% of the potential of the Society) on 13 and 14 December 1975 produced the following:

- 1 All brambles, ivy, etc. have been cleared and burned
- 2 An arc of about $\frac{1}{2}$ of the circumference is standing to a height of c6ft
- 3 Remainder of base is in the form of brickwork foundations still extant
- 4 Base is a 64ft diameter circle
- 5 'Floor' of base at present ground level is a rubble of earth, mortar and brickbats
- 6 Two exploratory cuttings to a depth of 3½ft have not found a firm floor
- 7 Finds to date are pieces of coal, furnace slag, 18-19 cent pottery, molten glass fragments.

Work will re-commence on Sat 17 Jan 1976, with the hope of continuing on 18, 24 & 25 of the month".

Frank stresses that continuation after the 17th does depend on the turn-out on that date, so please try and attend so that this worthwhile excavation and survey can be a success. A garden spade, fork and bucket would be useful.

Summary of Programme

Fri. 23 Jan., 7.15pm at Weir Lodge - Photography and IA - Geoff Tottle.

Fri. 20 Feb., 7.15pm at Weir Lodge - A Canal Holiday - Frank Hawtin.

Sun. 22 Feb., 9.30am at Porlock Weir - Knight's Industries of Exmoor - Chris
Tilley.

Tues. 2 Mar., 12 noon - Admiralty Hydrographic Establishment (contact Mary
Miles as soon as possible).

Fri. 19 Mar., 7.15pm at Weir Lodge - C.R.A.A.G.S. and I.A. - Will Harris.

Fri. 26 Mar., 7.15pm at Weir Lodge - A.G.M.

Sat. 3 Apr., the 8th Annual Conference of Western I.A. Societies - to be held
at the National Museum of Wales. Further details later.

D. Greenfield
P.S. A peaceful & prosperous New Year to all.

SOMERSET INDUSTRIAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Chairman:

M H Jones

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TAUNTON.

BULLETIN NO. 6

March 1976.

8th. Annual Conference of Western I.A. Societies

The following details have been received from the Organisers of the Conference. It will be held on Saturday 3 April, at the Reardon Smith Lecture Theatre at the National Museum of Wales, Cardiff. Assemble at 9.30am, when coffee will be served. The morning and afternoon sessions will be devoted to papers presented by English and Welsh Societies. Godfrey Shove will be representing SIAS with an illustrated talk on Somerset Windmills. A Conference Fee of 40p will be charged to cover incidental costs. Parking will be at North Road, near the castle (within a few hundred yards of the museum). A semi-formal luncheon will be available at the Staff Dining Club of the University College - a substantial meal of soup, main course, dessert, cheese and biscuits, coffee, at an all-in price of £2.10 perhead.

Will SIAS members wishing to attend please contact me as soon as possible, enclosing the Fee and the luncheon charge if required, as bookings must be completed by the end of March.

Journal Two

In response to requests from members, the deadline for contributions has been extended to Monday 19 April. Indications are that the Journal will contain a larger number of illustrations and a greater variety of items than Journal One.

Archives

The Society has now acquired a quantity of cards for completion as part of the National Record of Industrial Monuments. Members are invited to contact the Secretary about the scheme. It should be noted that the record cards are returned to the recorder after being copied; as yet SIAS has no archive of its own, and suggestions are invited as to where the Society should deposit its drawings, photographs and other material of value to industrial archaeologists of the present and future.

Somerset County Museum

A new permanent exhibition is to open shortly in the Lower Wyndham Gallery, Taunton Castle, illustrating aspects of archaeology and history in Taunton Deane. Several SIAS members are at present assisting in the preparation of material on past industries, transport systems and power sources of the district.

The Chandos Glass-cone

The excavations at the Chandos glass-cone, Bridgwater, have reached an interesting stage, with the exposing of a tiled floor at a depth of about 3 feet. Frank Hawtin will be reporting on progress to the AGM. Members are invited to join the dig on the following Sundays: 28 Mar., 11 Apr., 9 May., 16 May.

Mystery at Pinkworthy Pond

On 22 February a SIAS excursion, ably led by Chris Tilly, traced some of the Knight Family's projects on Exmoor. Considerable interest was aroused whilst visiting Pinkworthy Pond. Various theories have been put forward in order to explain the relationships between the Pond, its dam and the adjacent canal-like features.

It was felt by members during the visit that the discussion could be furthered by taking additional levels to supplement those already indicated on the O.S. maps. It is hoped that a SIAS survey party will do this later in the year when present IA commitments have abated.

The AGM

A copy of the revised SIAS Constitution, to be discussed at the AGM, is enclosed for your consideration. As mentioned earlier, Frank Hawtin will be reporting on the Chandos dig, and if time permits other members will be invited to report on projects.

Programme

- Fri. 26 Mar. A.G.M. - Weir Lodge, Staplegrove Road, Taunton. 7.15pm.
- Sat. 3 Apr. Regional IA Conference, Cardiff.
- Sat. 24 Apr. 'A Round of Water Wheels' - five wheels in the vicinity of the North Quantocks, all used for different purposes. Led by Derrick Warren. Meet at the Egremont Hotel, Williton, 10.30am.
- Sat. 22 May Clark's Shoe Museum, Street. Meet at the museum at 2pm.
- Fri. 18 June Industrial Bridgwater - an evening tour, led by SIAS members with specialist interests. Meet at the East Quay end of the telescopic bridge at 7.15pm.
- Mon. 21 June (provisional) Simpsons Brush Factory, Chard. Details to follow.

Looking further forward:

- Sat. 9 Oct. I.A. of Weymouth and Portland - field trip.
- Fri. 19 Nov. The IA of Canals - a talk by Philip Stevens.

BULLETIN NO. 7

April 1976

This Bulletin

As many members have welcomed this newsletter as a means of keeping abreast of IA developments in Somerset, the Secretary and the Publications Officer will, in future, make every attempt to issue it at two-monthly intervals, and would welcome notes, news items and queries for inclusion.

The A.G.M.

The best-ever attendance was recorded at the Society's A.G.M. on 26th March at which the revised Constitution was adopted 'en bloc'. (A draft of the new Constitution was sent to all members before the A.G.M. - anyone requiring copies should contact the Secretary). Encouraging progress reports were received from the retiring officers and the meeting was concluded with an illustrated report by Frank Hawtin on the Society's Bridgwater excavation.

The elected officers and committee are listed below. Also the next two committee meetings are shown in the programme so that members can draw the Committee's attention to items of IA business in advance of those dates.

Officers

Chairman: Mike Jones, 11 Osborne Way, Taunton.

Secretary: David Greenfield, 33 Barrow Drive, Taunton.

(Taunton 3451, ext. 718 during working hours)

Treasurer: Marion Ackland, Silver Street, Milverton.

Publications: Brian Murless, 15 Gordon Road, Taunton.

Field Officer: Mary Miles, Brierley Cottage, Lower Durston, Taunton. (West Monkton 713)

Committee

Sandy Buchanan, 2 Blake Green, Ashcott, Bridgwater.

Iain Miles, Brierley Cottage, Lower Durston, Taunton.

Chris Tilley, 88 Mantle Street, Wellington.

Tony Ward, 32 Jubilee Street, Taunton.

Derrick Warren, 2 The Glebe, Creech St. Michael, Taunton.

Richard Willey, 16 Suffolk Crescent, Galmington, Taunton.

One change has taken place as a result of the elections: Geoff Harding steps down from the Committee and Chris Tilley takes his place.

I.A. Conference

A small contingent from SIAS travelled to the 8th Annual Conference of Western IA Societies at Cardiff on 3rd April. Some excellent and varied illustrated talks were given by contributing societies, and we were ably represented by Godfrey Shove who spoke on the subject of Somerset Windmills. Next year SIAS has the pleasure of staging the Conference at Strode College, Street. This will be the first time that delegates have come to Somerset, and all SIAS members are urged to note the date, 16th April 1977, now so that the 9th Annual Conference will be well-attended and a favourable impression given of the state of IA in Somerset.

P. T. O.

Bridgwater

In accordance with this Society's policy of close co-operation with the Somerset County Council regarding the future of Bridgwater Docks, a delegation from SIAS recently had a lengthy discussion with the County's Assistant Planning Officer. At the meeting SIAS stressed the importance of retaining certain features in the area and expressed its willingness to provide limited assistance in any conservation projects. The immediate task of SIAS members is, of course, the successful completion of the Chandos Glass-cone excavation in the months ahead and two further dates when help is needed are shown below. In the next Bulletin details will be given of two archaeological societies visits to Bridgwater when the excavation will be on view. Our own tour is on 18th June.

Somerset County Museum

On 1st June an exhibition opens in the Great Hall at Taunton Castle on the West Somerset Mineral Railway and iron mining in the Brendon Hills. On a leaflet which accompanies this Bulletin are details of a new book by SIAS member Roger Sellick on the above subjects.

The new gallery illustrating aspects of archaeology in Taunton Deane will be opened to the public on Thursday, 13th May.

Programme

- Sun. 9th May: Chandos Excavations at Northgate, Bridgwater, from 10.30 a.m.
- Fri. 14th May: SIAS Committee meeting.
- Sun. 16th May: Chandos Excavations (details as above).
- Sat. 22nd May: Clark's Shoe Museum. Meet at the Museum at 2.00 p.m.
- Fri. 11th June: SIAS Committee meeting.
- Fri. 18th June: Industrial Bridgwater - an evening tour. Meet at the East Quay end of the telescopic bridge at 7.15 p.m.
- Mon. 21st June: Simpson's Brush Factory, Nimmer Mills, Chard. The scheduling of this visit is now confirmed, when the factory can be seen in operation. Those who wish to attend are requested to return the form below as soon as possible. Meet at 2.30 p.m. at the site.

To: Mrs. M. Miles, Brierley Cottage, Lower Durston, Taunton.

I wish to attend the SIAS visit to Nimmer Mills on Monday, 21st June.

Name Number attending

Address

BULLETIN No. 8.

June, 1976.

Subscriptions

Members are reminded that subscriptions to S.I.A.S. fell due on 1st April, 1976. The rates remain the same as last year:

Full (individual) membership	£2.00
Each additional member from the same address	.25p
Full family membership	£2.50

(Treasurer: Mrs. M. Ackland, Silver Street, Milverton).

Some misunderstanding may have arisen over the issue of one free copy of the Journal per household to S.I.A.S. members. This ruling applies to the year of publication only, i.e. those members who are paid-up for the current financial year will hopefully receive a copy of Journal Two in the autumn. Copies of Journal One (1975) are still available, 65p post free, from the Secretary.

Chandos Cone

Dick Bruce, a regular member of the digging team at Bridgwater, has recently received from his son details relating to the history and excavation of the glass cone at Catcliff, near Sheffield. The Catcliff cone is frequently illustrated in IA publications since it is the oldest surviving example of this type of structure in Europe. It should be noted, however, that until its demolition in 1943 the cone at Bridgwater was approximately one-third taller than its Catcliff counterpart and its diameter at ground level was proportionally larger. The Chandos cone also pre-dates the South Yorkshire example by fourteen years.

The completion of the excavation of the remains of the cone at Bridgwater, could, therefore, provide a new perspective on the history of glass cones and your support is requested on the dates shown in the programme.

Pinkworthy Pond

A further contribution to the study of the Pinkworthy Pond area of Exmoor is contained in a paper entitled 'Soil and Land Use Change on Exmoor' by K. Crabtree and E. Maltby which appears in Volume 119 ('Proceedings', Som. Arch. & Nat. Hist. Society).

Following the interest expressed in the area (Bulletin 6), a S.I.A.S. Survey party will be visiting the area on 20th June.

Dunball Lime Works

It was reported in the Press that the works, near the M5 Motorway at Puriton, were to be acquired for demolition by the Department of the Environment. S.I.A.S. hopes to mount a brief rescue survey to record details of the works and those interested are asked to contact Iain Miles (West Monkton 713 - evenings) to keep informed of the latest developments.

Chidgey's Foundry, Watchet.

With the combined co-operation of the owner, Bill Norman, the Somerset County Council and a grant from the Science Museum, S.I.A.S. has been able to secure for preservation the machinery and tools from this 19th century foundry at Watchet.

A group from the Society carried out preliminary photographic and survey work in May and will assist in the cataloguing of material prior to its removal to the Rural Life Museum at Glastonbury.

Project leader: Derrick Warren (Taunton 442558 - evenings).

P.T.O.

Pump-House, Milborne Port.

This building, which formed an integral part of a Victorian industrial housing development at Newtown, Milborne Port, has interested S.I.A.S. and other societies for some while. However, the owner of the pump-house has successfully appealed against the listing of the structure and its demolition now seems certain.

Water-wheels and Steam Engines

It had been anticipated that the water-wheel field meeting, which was very successfully led by Derrick Warren on 26th April, would have been concluded at Stogursey in order to inspect a small stationary steam engine which Derrick had been instrumental in saving from destruction.

Unfortunately, by the date of our meeting, the engine, made by Tangye of Birmingham, had already been dismantled and removed by a team from the Somerset College of Art and Technology. Those members who were disappointed not to have seen the engine may be re-assured to learn that it will be re-assembled as a feature in the foyer of the S.C.A.T. at Wellington Road, Taunton.

Visiting Societies

This year Bridgwater has become the focus of attention for several archaeological societies. For those members who may not be able to attend our own visit on 18th June, there is a further similar visit by Bristol I.A. Society on 18th July which is to be led by S.I.A.S. (details below).

An additional tour in the town takes place on 28th August when Frank Hawtin will present a further report on the Chandos excavations to members of the Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society.

Programme

Friday, 18th June.	Industrial Bridgwater. Meet West Quay 7.15 p.m.
Sunday, 20th June.	Pinkworthy Pond. Meet on site (SS 723423) at 11.00 a.m.
Sunday, 27th June.	Chandos Excavations at Northgate, Bridgwater, from 10.30 a.m.
Sunday, 4th July.	Chandos Excavations (details as above).
Sunday, 11th July.	Chandos Excavations (details as above).
Sunday, 18th July.	Bristol I.A. Society tour of Bridgwater. Meet West Quay 2 p.m.
Friday, 10th Sept.	S.I.A.S. Committee Meeting.

BULLETIN NO. 9

September, 1976

Secretary: David Greenfield,
33, Barrow Drive,
Taunton,
TA1 2UX.

Summer Activities

Despite the usual 'break' during the month of August, it can be seen from the items below that S.I.A.S. has been far from inactive since the publication of the last 'Bulletin'. Further suggestions for Society projects, however, are always welcome.

Chandos Cone

During recent work at Bridgwater the Society has received valued assistance from Colin Clements and his mechanical excavator. As visitors to the site have seen, the collapsed brick rubble from the 1943 demolition, which filled the central area, has now been cleared.

Frank Hawtin will be leading what may be the last "mass" dig on Sunday, September 12th.

Chidgey's Foundry, Watchet

The inventory of smaller items such as tools and wooden patterns has now been completed and over 300 categories have been noted and labelled by members of the Society.

An unexpected 'bonus' during the clearance of the workshops was the discovery of many miscellaneous objects no longer in common usage, and these will be added to the collection of byegones at the Rural Life Museum. A number of pre-War motor car parts has also come to light and these are destined for the National Motor Museum at Beaulieu.

The materials from the foundry will, for an interim period, be stored until a suitable area can be prepared for their re-erection at Glastonbury.

Rowcliffe Papers

Over a year ago S.I.A.S. began its search for documents of IA interest from amongst the papers of Charles Rowcliffe, the Stogumber solicitor associated with the West Somerset Mineral Railway. Considerable progress has been made but further classification remains to be done prior to the deposition of the papers in the Somerset Record Office.

Interested members are invited to contact Mike Jones (Taunton 5308 - evenings).

Journal Two

Although a sufficient quantity and variety of articles has been received by the Editor to constitute the publication of a second Journal, some difficulty has been experienced in the costings. In common with other aspects of our daily lives the printing industry has been affected by inflation which, for a small society like S.I.A.S., means that the cost of producing a publication the size of the Journal will present a severe strain on the Society's limited finances.

The Publications Sub-committee has been giving the problem careful consideration and will report on their deliberations to the Parent Committee this month.

Combe St. Nicholas

During July S.I.A.S. received a request from the Parish Council of Combe St. Nicholas to investigate, and comment upon, an iron pump on the village green set up to commemorate Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee. Such structures seem relatively common in Somerset: the one at Somerton, for example, was built by the Coalbrookdale Company of Ironbridge.

Unfortunately, an inspection by a small group from the Society could not locate a maker's plate but it was felt that the pump was surmounted by a gas lamp. The Parish Council intends to re-paint the structure in 1977 and any additional information e.g. an early photograph, would be appreciated.

C.R.A.A.G.S.

The Committee for Rescue Archaeology in Avon, Gloucestershire and Somerset (C.R.A.A.G.S.) has made available a grant of £50 to the Society for archaeological work at Dunball Lime Works (Bulletin 8). S.I.A.S. has also submitted a list of projects, which must be of a 'rescue' nature, for possible grants from the Committee during the next financial year.

Local History Library

Many members are not fully aware of the benefits afforded by this institution housed at Taunton Castle. Apart from containing a complete collection of S.I.A.S. publications, including a set of 'Bulletins', the Library has a wide range of literature and can draw upon the adjacent collection of the Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society. Recent additions of IA interest are B.I.A.S. Journal 8 and Somerset and Dorset Notes and Queries (Vol. 30 Part 303). The former contains an article by John Cornwell on the Fussells Ironworks site at Mells whilst the latter has a gazetteer of textile mills in Somerset compiled by K. Ponting using surviving insurance policies.

Chain Gate Mill

The Society visited this mill at Magdalene Street, Glastonbury, in June to examine the premises which are to be demolished. The condition of the surviving buildings was exceedingly dangerous but this did not prevent an outline survey from being carried out.

Programme

There is a possibility that a visit could be organised to a Mine in South Wales, to include a trip underground, during one Saturday in October - anyone interested should contact Mary Miles using the tear-off slip at the foot of the Programme.

PROGRAMME

1976

- Friday, 10th September: S.I.A.S. Committee Meeting.
- Sunday, 12th September: Chandos Excavation at Northgate, Bridgwater from 10.30 a.m.
- Friday, 8th October: S.I.A.S. Committee Meeting.
- Saturday, 9th October: I.A. of Weymouth and Portland, led by Michael Bone (author of the "I.A. Guide to Barnstaple") and John Brown.
Coach leaves Odeon Cinema, Taunton, at 9 a.m. return by 6 p.m.
Fare: Adults £1.20.
Children and Students 60p.
Children under School age free.
Take packed lunch and strong walking shoes. Please use booking form.
- Friday, 11th November: S.I.A.S. Committee Meeting.
- Friday, 19th November: I.A. of Canals - a talk by Philip Stevens, Weir Lodge, Staplegrove Road, Taunton, 7.15 p.m.
- Friday, 10th December: Members Evening - project reports, slides, etc.
Weir Lodge, 7.15 p.m.

1977

- Friday, 14th January: Tin-mining in Devon - a talk by Tom Greaves, who has just completed post graduate studies in the subject.
Weir Lodge, 7.15 p.m.
- Friday, 11th February: The work of the Council for the Protection of Rural England - a talk by a representative - details to be arranged.
- Saturday, 19th March: Coastal I.A. of North West Somerset - a whole day trip visiting Highbridge, Burnham and Brean Down.
Led by Iain Miles. Meet at Highbridge Town Hall Car Park 10 a.m. or Brean Down Car Park 2 p.m.
- Saturday, 16th April: South West Regional I.A. Conference at Strode College, Street. Details to be finalised.

P.T.O.

BRISTOL I.A. SOCIETY PROGRAMME

B.I.A.S. have arranged a series of fortnightly Extra-Mural Lectures at the Bristol University School of Architecture, 25 Great George Street, Bristol. Subjects include the I.A. of the North East, the Newcomen Engine in the West of England, the Bath Stone Industry, the Somersetshire Coal Canal, Tidemills and similar topics. Details of the course, which commences on 10th October and costs £3, are available from the Staff Tutor in Local History, Dept. of Extra-Mural Studies, University of Bristol, 30/32, Tyndall's Park Road, Bristol, BS8 1HR.

Also listed amongst the B.I.A.S. Autumn Programme is a visit to the B.I.A.S. dig at Fussells Works at Mells, from 11 a.m. on Sunday, 21st November - entrance gate on the Mells/Great Elm Road will be signposted.

UNIVERSITY OF BRISTOL

Amongst the courses arranged by the University are the following:-

"John Bowen and the Bridgwater ^{Four} Tour", by S.I.A.S. member Sandy Buchanan. Saturday, 30th October, at Bridgwater Arts Centre, Castle Street. Fee 65p.

"Buildings of the West of England Woollen Industry", by K.H. Rogers. Saturday, 9th October, at Frome College, Park Road, 10.30 a.m. - 6 p.m. Fee 75p (plus coach fare).

"Transport and Communication in the 19th Century Britain", by M. Dowty. 10 meetings from Wednesday, 6th October at the Technical College, Weston-super-Mare. Fee £2.50.

Details of these and all other University Extension Mural Courses are available from the address given earlier.

CROFTON BEAM ENGINES will be in steam 11th - 12th September and 16th - 17th October, 10 a.m. - 1 p.m. and 2 p.m. - 6 p.m. Adults 40p, Children and O.A.P.'s 20p.

BULLETIN NO. 10

November, 1976.

Hon. Secretary:
David Greenfield,
33, Barrow Drive,
TAUNTON, TA1 2UX.

Committee Meetings

Concern has been expressed in Committee about the lack of opportunity which exists for Society members to take an active part in the management of its affairs. Although non-Committee members are kept informed of Committee decisions in the Bulletin, they are debarred from contributing in any way to the discussion which precedes these decisions, and there is a danger that it may be thought that the Society exists for the benefit of the Committee.

Furthermore, the Constitution requires that some members of the Committee must soon retire and that new members be elected. This has two disadvantages: firstly the Society loses the skill and knowledge of retired Committee members, and secondly, Society members who have never served on the Committee are often reluctant to do so, probably because they are not quite sure what is involved. It must also be the case that members who are well qualified and willing to serve on the Committee cannot do so simply because they are not proposed for election at the A.G.M.

In an effort to overcome these difficulties, the Committee has decided to open all its meetings to any member of the Society who may care to attend. Although those who would care to come are invited to take full part in the Committee's discussions on all items of the agenda, they may not vote on formal proposals.

Committee meetings are held in member's houses and have usually been attended by about ten members. The proceedings are fairly informal and usually last for about two hours, concluding with beer and sandwiches. Details of Committee meetings up to the A.G.M. are set out in the programme, and it would be helpful if members who would care to come could let the host member know a day or two before the meeting.

Money Matters

Following the brief reference (Bulletin 9) to the erosion by inflation of our limited resources, the Committee began a soul-searching exercise into our finances. One point to emerge was the need for a small but continuous supplementary income. The method favoured was the collection of waste paper, principally newspapers and magazines. The current price paid for this makes the scheme seem worthwhile. In order to avoid amassing huge stockpiles, it is suggested that members who wish to contribute should bring their paper in boxes, sacks or tied with string to the Chairman's home at 11, Osborne Way, Taunton, during the last week in each month. Alternatively, paper can be given to a Committee member who will forward it.

Journal Two

The production of the Journal forms the largest single item of SIAS expenditure and some members have questioned the need for its continuance whilst others have suggested its publication in a different form. A further difficulty is the link between subscriptions and the Journal (Bulletin 8). The Committee has decided that, subject to a satisfactory price quotation, Journal Two will be published in the first quarter of 1977 and the pledge of one copy per household to current paid-up members will be honoured. However, the appearance of Journals beyond No. Two must be in doubt. There is no simple solution but the next A.G.M. will provide a forum for discussing the whole issue.

Exhibition '77

Next year SIAS proposes to prepare an exhibition illustrating the Society's activities. The Secretary would welcome any suggestions about subjects to be included and possible locations where the material can be displayed.

Clickot

In its issue of 12 August 1944 the West Somerset Free Press published an article by Alfred Vowles entitled 'A Deserted Village'. Mr. Vowles recalls life in the Clickot Valley, visited by SIAS in 1975. He says of Clickot Mill:

'.... the Clickot boys used to tantalise the old miller by letting the water off so they could catch the trout and eels more easily'.

A typescript of the article can be read at the Local History Library, Taunton.

Fussell's Ironworks, Mells

The Secretary recently spent an interesting day at the Bristol IAS excavation of this complex site (ST 738489, some three miles west of Frome), which was visited by SIAS in 1974. SIAS members have been invited to join the 'diggers', who are on site most Sundays, but those wishing to go should check with John Cornwell (Bristol 658256) in advance.

Bridgwater

Further successful exploration of the Chandos Glass Cone has taken place during the Autumn. After the programmed meeting on 12 December, there will be a short break during the Winter months and discussions have commenced regarding conservation of the remains.

Tony Ward has carried out a survey of dockside furniture at Bridgwater (smaller items and structures such as sluice mechanisms which are not marked on Ordnance Survey sheets). A copy of his plan will be forwarded shortly to the County Council.

Demolition has now begun on parts of the former brickworks of Barham Bros. at East Quay. SIAS is particularly anxious to ensure that the three bottle-shaped kilns survive. Members interested in the future of the kilns should contact Iain Miles.

Christmas Cheer

Whilst you are busy counting the cost of food and drink for the festive board this Christmas, you may care to reflect upon this bill, found by a SIAS member amongst the Rowcliffe Papers. The account was for an 'Audit Dinner' held in West Somerset on 22nd December, 1908:

	£.	s.	d.
13 Farmers at 5s. per head	3.	5.	0.
21 Cottagers at 2s. per head	2.	2.	0.
Drinks, Tobacco & Cigars	1.	4.	0.
Rent of Room	0.	5.	0.
	6.	16.	0.

On the subject of Christmas, SIAS cards/notelets are still available from the Secretary, price 60p for any ten cards, including envelopes. The illustrations are Lower Maunsell Lock, B & T Canal; Anglo-Bavarian Brewery, Shepton Mallet; Snow Hill Toll-house, Chard; High Ham Windmill; Bridge Farm Mill, Williton; Burrow Farm Engine House; Hoffman Kiln, Poole Brickworks; Cider Press.

Programme

1976

- Fri. 10 Dec. ~~Members' Evening at Weir Lodge, Staplegrove Road, Taunton.~~
7.15 p.m. Bring along finds, slides, interesting documents, etc.
- Sun. 12 Dec.
10 a.m. Chandos excavation, Northgate, Bridgwater. If the weather looks bad, check with Frank Hawtin (Milverton 405) before 9.30.

1977

- Fri. 14 Jan.
7.15 p.m. Tin-mining in Devon - a talk by Tom Greaves at Weir Lodge.
- Fri. 21 Jan.
7.30 p.m. SIAS Committee Meeting at the home of Mike Jones, 11, Osborne Way, Taunton (5308).
- Sun. 30 Jan.
2 p.m. Tour of Frome led by Mr. R.D. Goodall. Meet at Cork Street Car park, near the Market Place.
- Fri. 11 Feb.
7.15 p.m. The work of the Council for the Protection of Rural England - a talk by the Vice-Chairman of the Somerset Branch, Mr. D. Gibson. Weir Lodge.
- Wed. 16 Feb.
7 p.m. Development of Railways in the Wells Area - a talk by Mr. R. Hayes at the Wells Teacher's Centre, Portway Avenue, Wells.
- Fri. 18 Feb.
7.30 p.m. SIAS Committee Meeting at the home of Iain and Mary Miles, Brierley Cottage, Lower Durston, Taunton (W. Monkton 713).
- Fri. 18 Mar.
7.30 p.m. SIAS Committee Meeting at the home of Mike Jones.
- Sat. 19 Mar.
Coastal IA of North West Somerset - a whole day trip led by Iain Miles. Meet at Highbridge Town Hall Car park 10 a.m. or Brean Down car park 2 p.m.
- Tues. 22 Mar.
7.15 p.m. Victorian Engineering in Central Somerset - a talk by Dr. D. Chapman, Assistant Director of Business Studies at Liverpool University who has been working for several years on industries connected with flax, and engineering companies in the area. Weir Lodge.
- Fri. 25 Mar.
7.15 p.m. SIAS A.G.M. at Weir Lodge.
- Sat. 16 Apr. Annual South West Regional Conference at Strode College. Details later.

BULLETIN NO. 11.

March, 1977.

Hon. Secretary,
David Greenfield,
33, Barrow Drive,
TAUNTON, TA1 2UX.

Form Filling

This issue of the Bulletin is somewhat unusual in that it includes details of a number of events where attendance requires the prior completion of a booking form. If these events are to be successful or even economically viable it is vital that the organisers receive the return form by the date indicated. Members are therefore urged to return the form as soon as possible after the receipt of this Bulletin.

Committee Meetings

Several members accepted the invitation (Bulletin 10) to come to SIAS Committee meetings. Subject to ratification by the new Committee at the A.G.M. this practice will continue and the venues of further meetings are accordingly printed in the programme. Members who would like to attend are reminded to let the host member know a day or two in advance of the meeting.

Journal Two

A satisfactory price quotation has now been obtained for Journal Two and the material is currently being dealt with by the printer. It is not yet possible to announce a publication date but the issue will contain eleven major articles and a similar number of shorter 'Notes and News' items.

A.G.M.

The Society's Annual General Meeting is normally well supported and it is hoped that this year's, at Weir Lodge on Friday, 25th March, will be no exception.

Members will be saddened to learn of the retirement of the Honorary Treasurer, Mrs. Marion Ackland, who has been the able custodian of our finances during the past four years.

Nominations to the Committee can be made both at the A.G.M. and on the enclosed form. Any member may stand for election to either the Committee or to one of the offices of the Society.

It will also be seen from the printed Agenda that one of the items for discussion is the membership subscription. As indicated in earlier Bulletins, difficulties have arisen through the inter-relationship of the subscription and the Journal. The Committee would welcome comments on this important matter at the A.G.M.

I.A. Conference

Information about the Conference on 16th April is given on the enclosed paper, prepared by our Conference Secretary, Sandy Buchanan, from whom further copies may be obtained. Non-members of SIAS are welcome to attend and those who have been to past conferences will testify to the interesting and varied illustrated talks presented by contributing societies.

Exhibition '77

The material for this exhibition will be drawn from two recent SIAS projects: the activities at Chidgey's Foundry, Watchet, and the excavation of the Chandos Glass Cone, Bridgwater. The first venue for its display will be Strode College, Street, on the occasion of the I.A. Conference. This will be followed by a further showing in the Great Hall, Taunton Castle, in May after which sections of the display will be mounted in branch libraries in Somerset.

P.T.O.

Dr. Chapman in Somerset.

Dr. S.D. Chapman, Assistant Director of Business Studies at Liverpool University, will talk to the Society on 22nd March. For those not able to attend on that date or who may wish to learn more about his work on Somerset industries, there is a day-course at St. Dunstan's School, Glastonbury, on Saturday, 19th March commencing at 2.15 p.m. entitled 'The History of the Flax Industries of Central Somerset', the course is organised by the University of Bristol Department of Extra-Mural Studies in conjunction with the Friends of the Abbey Barn Museum. Enrolment may be made at the meeting and the course fee is 50p. Note that the SIAS visit to Highbridge etc. originally programmed for the same day, has been rearranged for Sunday, 20th March.

Sully's Smithy, Bridgwater.

The former blacksmith's shop at Messrs. Sully's at Bridgwater, illustrated at the SIAS 1973 Exhibition, has now fallen into disuse. However, the Bridgwater Civic Society are planning to remove the structure in sections to the warehouse at Bridgwater Docks, as a first stage in its eventual restoration. The B.C.S. would welcome volunteers to assist in the removal operation and those willing to help are asked to contact David Greenfield.

Tin-Mining in Devon

Following the successful introductory talk by Tom Greaves in January, SIAS members are invited to visit surface workings of the tin-mining industry on Sunday, 19th June. In view of the distance involved, the Field Officer would like an indication of the number interested in such a trip, so that transport can be arranged.

Clark's Shoe Factory

On Tuesday, 23rd August, there will be an opportunity for an afternoon visit to Clark's Shoe Factory at Street to observe the various processes of shoe manufacture. The Company require to be informed at an early stage of the number of people who wish to attend. It is regretted that children under 11 are not allowed. Please use the return slip provided to ensure a place on this visit. Clarks have warned that there will be a lot of walking involved.

Apology

The Committee would like to apologise to those members who hoped to hear a talk on the work of the Council for the Protection of Rural England. The cancellation was due, as the media would put it, to circumstances beyond our control but we apologise for any inconvenience caused.

Prof. Walter Minchinton of Exeter University would be interested to hear from any members having knowledge of horse-gearing and gins (Dept. of Economic History, Amory Building, Rennes Drive, Exeter, EX4 4RJ).

1977

PROGRAMME

- Fri. 18th Mar. SIAS Committee Meeting at the home of Mike Jones,
7.30 p.m. 11, Osborne Way, Taunton (5308).
- Sat. 19th Mar. "The History of the Flax Industries of Central Somerset",
2.15 p.m. Dr. S.D. Chapman, at St. Dunstan's School, Glastonbury.
Course fee 50p.

* REVISED DATE

- Sun. 20th Mar. "Coastal I.A. of North West Somerset" whole day visit led by
Iain Miles. Meet at Bank Street Car park, Highbridge (ST320472)
at 10 a.m. or Brean Down car park (ST296586) at 2 p.m.
- Tues. 22nd Mar. "Victorian Engineering in Central Somerset", Dr. S.D. Chapman,
7.15 p.m. at Weir Lodge, Staplegrove Road, Taunton.
- Fri. 25th Mar. SIAS A.G.M. at Weir Lodge.
7.15 p.m.
- Fri. 15th Apr. SIAS Committee Meeting at the home of Sandy Buchanan,
7.30 p.m. 2, Blake Green, Ashcott (566).
Take the turning off A39 opposite Ashcott ~~Farm~~ ^{Town} to 1st turning
on right.
- Sat. 16th Apr. Annual South West Regional I.A. Conference at Strode College.
- Sat. 23rd Apr. "Building Stones of South Somerset", Bristol University
10.00 a.m. Extra-Mural Dept., day-course at the Further Education Centre,
Ditton Street, Ilminster. Details from the Area Principal,
Mr. Taylor (Ilminster 3195).
- Fri. 20th May. SIAS Committee Meeting at the home of Mike Jones.
7.30 p.m.

LOOKING AHEAD

- Fri. 10th June Evening visit to the Blagdon Pumping Engines of the
Bristol Waterworks.
- Sun. 19th June Tin-mining sites day-visit.
- Tues. 23rd August Clark's Shoe Factory.

BULLETIN No. 12

April, 1977.

Hon. Secretary,
David Greenfield,
33 Barrow Drive,
Taunton.

The A.G.M.

A good attendance was recorded at the SIAS A.G.M. on 25th March, at which several important alterations were implemented. Janet Jones was elected Treasurer, replacing Marian Ackland who has, sadly, retired. John Bentley and Geoff Harding were elected to the Committee in place of Chris Tilley and Richard Willey. The full list of officers and committee members is now:

Officers

Chairman - Mike Jones, 11 Osborne Way, Taunton, TA1 4PU. (Taunton 5308).
Secretary - David Greenfield, 33 Barrow Drive, Taunton, TA1 2UX.
(Taunton 3451, ext 718 during working hours)
Treasurer - Janet Jones, 11 Osborne Way, Taunton.
Publications - Brian Murless, 15 Gordon Road, Taunton, TA1 3AU.
Field Officer - Mary Miles, Brierley Cottage, Lower Durston, Taunton.
(West Monkton 412713)

Committee

John Bentley, 5 Compass Hill, Taunton.
Sandy Buchanan, 2 Blake Green, Ashcott, Bridgwater.
Geoff Harding, 19B Chilton Street, Bridgwater.
Iain Miles, Brierley Cottage, Lower Durston, Taunton.
Tony Ward, 32 Jubilee Street, Taunton.
Derrick Warren, 2 The Glebe, Creech St. Michael, Taunton.

The main item for discussion at the A.G.M. was the level of subscriptions. It was decided to disconnect the existing link between the Journal and the subscription, an issue already referred to in previous Bulletins, with the result that an independent Publications Account has been set up. Although Journal 2 will be issued free to members who have paid for the 1976/77 session, any future Journals will be sold to members, albeit at a reduced rate.

Despite this severance, a majority of members present felt that the subscription rates should be increased in order to maintain the commissarial activities of the Society such as the provision of insurance cover, the organisation of lectures and visits, and the issue of Bulletins. The new rates are:-

Individual membership	£2.50
Family membership	£3.00

Please note that there is now no intermediate class of membership for additional individual members living at the same address. A return slip is provided at the end of this Bulletin which can be sent or given to the Treasurer.

Journal 2

As reported in Bulletin 11, the material is now with the printer; it is anticipated that Journal 2 will be distributed to those eligible to receive it with the next issue of the Bulletin.

A Pumping Engine

SIAS has been asked to assist in the restoration of a stationary steam pumping engine, owned by the Wessex Water Authority and housed near Westonzoyland. The project leaders are Geoff Harding and Iain Miles, and those wishing to participate are asked to contact Iain as soon as possible (West Monkton 412713).

Helmets

Quotations have been received for safety helmets, a necessary pre-requisite for many IA activities. SIAS can purchase at a price between £1.09 and £1.39, depending on quantity. Provision is made for ordering on the subscription form.

P.T.O.

Exmoor Guides

The Exmoor National Park Committee is seeking volunteer guides to lead a programme of walks this summer across Exmoor. SIAS has been approached for assistance, and further details can be obtained from the Secretary.

Book Notes

Those who deplore the rising prices of books may be interested to learn that David & Charles, the book publishers, have introduced cheap editions of two books which cover aspects of IA and industrial history in Somerset. They are Robin Atthill's 'Old Mendip' and Helen Harris's 'Grand Western Canal', available at £1.95 each.

In the next Bulletin there will be a full review of 'A New History of Minehead' just published by the Exmoor Press.

Programme

- | | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Fri. 20th May
7.30 p.m. | SIAS Committee Meeting at the home of Mike Jones. |
| Fri. 10th June
* | Evening visit to the Blagdon Pumping Engines of the Bristol Waterworks. |
| Fri. 17th June
7.30 p.m. | SIAS Committee Meeting at the home of Iain and Mary Miles. |
| Sun. 19th June
* | Whole day visit to mine sites in south Devon. |
| Fri. 15th July
7.30 p.m. | SIAS Committee Meeting at the home of Mike Jones. |
| Tues. 23rd August
* | Afternoon visit to Clark's Shoe Factory, Street. |

* These visits require prior application to the Field Officer, who will contact those interested to arrange travel and other details.

BULLETIN No. 13

August, 1977.

Hon. Secretary,
David Greenfield,
33 Barrow Drive,
TAUNTON, Somerset.
TA1 2UX.

Journal Two

Those entitled to a complimentary copy of Journal 2 should, by now, have received it. Orders for additional copies of both journals should be addressed to the Secretary. The prices, which include postage are £1.19 (J2) and £0.75 (J1). Alternatively, copies can be purchased at the new shop in the Somerset County Museum for £1 and 50p for Journals 2 and 1 respectively.

The Secretary welcomes any comments on the second issue and suggestions for retail outlets. Members are reminded that with the severance of the journals from the membership subscription, the financing of future SIAS publications will depend very much upon sales of existing stocks of journals and cards.

Westonzoyland Steam Engine

The Society visit to the Blagdon Pumping Engines in June served as a poignant reminder that engines in retirement still need care and attention.

The SIAS project at Westonzoyland, details of which were circulated to members in May, has made a successful beginning under the leadership of Geoff Harding and Iain Miles. So far the left hand side of the engine has been completely stripped and assistance has been given by the Wessex Water Authority through the provision of a work bench. Although each part must be drawn before re-assembly can commence, the condition of the 116 year old engine is remarkably good.

There has been an encouraging response from members to help but more support is urgently requested. Work parties are held every Thursday evening (7.00 p.m. - 9.00 p.m.) but additional sessions are arranged. Those interested should contact Iain Miles (West Monkton 412713).

Steep Holm

Tony Ward and Brian Murless recently braved stormy seas and nesting herring gulls in order to record the remains of two limekilns on the Island of Steep Holm in the Bristol Channel. Their survey was part of a multi-disciplinary project organised by the Somerset Archaeological & Natural History Society with the co-operation of the Kenneth Allsop Memorial Trust who manage the island.

Apart from the limekilns there are other interesting features on Steep Holm and an illustrated account of their visits will be given by Tony and Brian to SIAS on December 16th.

Calamine Mining

Volume 120 of the Proceedings of the Somerset Arch. & Natural Hist. Society contains a paper entitled 'An Account of Mendip Calamine Mining in the Early 1870s'. Its author, C.J. Schmitz of the University of Bath, has found hitherto unpublished evidence in the Cornwall Record Office relating to the closing stages of the industry in the vicinity of Shipham and Rowberrow. Offprints of this paper are available (price 20p) to callers at the SANHS Office in Taunton Castle.

County Structure Plan

Two members of the SIAS Committee attended a meeting, held at County Hall, Taunton, on 28th June, to discuss the draft version of the County Structure Plan. A valuable exchange of views took place between County Council officials and representatives of various archaeological bodies. The Plan, which seeks to detail the many factors affecting future development decisions within the county, will now be subject to further alterations during the next eighteen months. It was also announced at the meeting that an archaeological panel is soon to be set up, composed of councillors and officers of the S.C.C.

In recognition of the co-operation given by SIAS to the Council, the Society has been granted an area for storage within the warehouse at Bridgwater Docks. For the first time in its history SIAS will be able to place under one roof items of IA interest. This could be a tentative step towards the establishment of a museum of industrial archaeology for Somerset.

Minehead - A New History

Floyd's Stores of Minehead, celebrating their centenary, have sponsored the Exmoor Press to produce a history of the town. The result is a paperback edition of almost 300 pages, liberally illustrated, and covering the period from Domesday to the present. The authors, Hilary Binding and Douglas Stevens, have succeeded in producing a very readable account of the development of the town; of especial I.A. interest are the sections dealing with shipping and the harbour, the development of the transport network and the local industries.

The harbour must obviously figure large in any history of Minehead, and the rise and decline of the port, and the fortunes of the personalities connected with it, are detailed at length. Further sections deal with the setting up of the Minehead Turnpike Trust in the 1760's and the extension of the Railway to Minehead in 1874. The improved state of the roads encouraged the development of the town, with its advantageous position between the sea and Exmoor, as a coastal resort, following the decline of the harbour in the 18th century, and with the arrival of the railway the future of Minehead as a centre of the 'tourist industry' was ensured.

Brian Murless provided the material for the section on the two brick and tile works in the town. Other industries covered include the tannery and lime burning. Reference is also made to iron mining within the manor.

The reader not well acquainted with Minehead must criticise the book for its lack of maps and a street plan to illustrate and clarify the text, but the production is still excellent value at £2.95.

Chidgey's Foundry, Watchet

Since the last report (Bulletin 9) items from the foundry and workshops have been undergoing conservation treatment at the Rural Life Museum in Glastonbury. The importance of the collection in national terms has now been recognised and the items have been inspected by officials from the Science Museum in London. If the necessary finance can be made available it is hoped to display the material at Glastonbury in the not too distant future.

Meanwhile the activities of SIAS at Watchet are shown in our exhibition at Taunton Castle. The Society is particularly grateful to Frank Hawtin and Tony Ward for preparing the displays.

Kennisham Hill Engine House

SIAS has received notification from the Forestry Commission that they intend to demolish the engine house associated with the iron mine at Kennisham Hill (SS 963360). The remains of the structure are in a dangerous state but fortunately, a measured drawing of it has been made by Chairman Mike Jones. SIAS hopes to be kept informed of the date of demolition so that a complete photographic record can be made. The demise of the engine house will leave only one other example of this type on the Brendon Hills: at Burrow Farm (ST 009346). This building was examined by SIAS and reported in Journal One.

Hazelwell Tollhouse, Ilminster.

An application has been received by the Yeovil District Council for listed building consent to demolish Hazelwell Tollhouse at Ilminster (ST 347152). Although the Council's decision is not yet known SIAS has been approached with regard to a possible survey of the building.

Autumn Programme

This year's season of talks, designed to cover the period from September to February, is yet another milestone in the growth of the Society. Each of the talks will be given by a member with a long interest in their subject matter. All the talks are illustrated and although free to SIAS members a modest charge of 20p per talk will be made to others attending. The venue will be Weir Lodge, Taunton, by kind permission of the Education Museums Service.

SOMERSET INDUSTRIAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

PROGRAMME of talks to be held at Weir Lodge, Staplegrove Road, Taunton.
All talks will be on Friday evenings and start at 7.30 p.m.
A charge of 20p per evening will be made for non-SIAS members.

1977

- 16th September. Introduction to Industrial Archaeology - Sandy Buchanan.
23rd September. Development of roads and tramways - John Bentley.
7th October. Brewing in Somerset - Iain and Mary Miles.
21st October. Bridges in Somerset - David Greenfield.
25th November. The Ordnance Survey, 1745 - 1977 - Derrick Warren.
2nd December. The Brendon Hill Iron Mines - Mike Jones.
16th December. Short talks on (i) Taunton - Brian Murless and
Tony Ward.
(ii) The history of Industrial Chemistry -
Dick Bruce.
(iii) A gold mine in Merioneth -
Geoff Fitter

1978

- 6th January. Agricultural Innovation and Social Change in 19th Century
Somerset - Martyn Brown.
20th January. Slate Quarries and Quarry Railways in North Wales -
Chris Tilley.
17th February. The Development of Steam Engine Valve Gearing -
Geoff Harding.

Committee Meetings

- Friday, 9th September. At the home of Iain and Mary Miles, Brierley
7.30 p.m. Cottage, Lower Durston, Taunton.
Friday, 14th October. At the home of Mike and Janet Jones, 11 Osborne
7.30 p.m. Way, Taunton.
Friday, 11th November. At the home of Brian Murless, 46 Holway Avenue,
Taunton, TA1 3AR (ST 236242). Please note
that this will be the home of the Publications
Officer from 1st September.

Trip to Morwellham Quay

Frank Hawtin is heading a party to Morwellham Quay in the Tamar Valley on Sunday, 18th September leaving at 9.30 a.m. and calling at Sticklepath Forge. SIAS members interested in joining this coach trip should contact Frank (Milverton 405) or Tony Herridge at the County Museum (Taunton 3451, ext. 286) as soon as possible.

BULLETIN NO. 14

December, 1977

Hon. Secretary:

David Greenfield
33, Barrow Drive,
TAUNTON.

BRIDGWATER

When items of IA interest have been rescued for preservation it has been SIAS policy to offer them, in the first instance, to the Somerset County Museum. However, the Society has been aware of the acute problems of storage and mindful of the long-term need to collect items to form the nucleus of a future museum of industrial life. The Society has now been granted permission by Somerset County Council to house material in the warehouse at Bridgwater Docks. Committee member Geoff Harding has agreed to become custodian of the necessary keys and an elementary inventory of items deposited. Geoff can be contacted at 19B, Chilton Street, Bridgwater. In Bulletin 15 there will be a progress report on other industrial structures in Bridgwater area.

SOUTHFIELD BRICKYARD

Following a request from Taunton Deane Borough Council, SIAS undertook a trial excavation in August in a field at South Road, Taunton (ST 233242) which map evidence suggested had once been associated with brick and tile making.

Results were sufficiently encouraging to prompt further investigations and these have continued at irregular intervals, under the direction of Brian Murless. Despite the recent inclement weather the foundations of a brick structure have been uncovered, the flooring of which was composed in part of laid brick and also of broken tile fragments in a compact layer of ash. The fill of this structure consisted of layers of discarded brickyard material and domestic waste.

Although trade directories indicate that brickmaking was carried out on this site, and an adjacent yard at South Street, during the last century, historical evidence points to an earlier tradition of clay working in the area.

HAZELWELL TOLL-HOUSE, ILMINSTER

The application for listed building consent to demolish this structure (Bulletin 13) has been rejected. However, the toll-house is unoccupied and SIAS awaits further developments with interest.

TAUNTON ELECTRIC TRACTION COMPANY LTD.

For some considerable time SIAS members have been anxious to record the depot of Taunton Tramways prior to its demolition (it is situated on the line of part of the Taunton Eastern Relief Road scheme). The Society learnt recently that the demolition is not now scheduled to take place until 1980/81.

Meanwhile, a base from a tramway standard, embellished with the company's insignia, has now been presented to the Somerset County Museum. It was used until recently as a lamp standard in Priory Bridge Road, which was not on the original route of the tramway.

POPPLE BRIDGE, NEAR ILCHESTER

John Bentley reports 'Popple Bridge on the Fosse Way (ST 537258), built 1813, has been demolished, and in August a party including SIAS and the Ilchester Archaeological Group investigated the north face of the excavation. Nothing of Roman age was identified, the lowest extant levels being apparently turnpike era, possibly incorporating earlier work. The south face became available at very short notice late in October, but no party could be mustered in time. Work was therefore very limited, but the lower features, including possible Roman work, were roughly cleaned and photographed. Some features recorded earlier by CRAAGS before excavation was complete, were absent, probably due to the pre-1813 bridge, which was slightly south of the present site'.

WESTONZOYLAND ENGINE GROUP

Iain Miles writes 'The SIAS commitment to clean the engine having been completed, a number of the persons involved in the project met in October to establish the Westonzoyland Engine Group. Although this Group is now independent of SIAS, it is hoped that a strong relationship will continue between the two bodies and that the Committee of SIAS will continue to give every encouragement to see the site established as a steam and land drainage museum. The project not only gives an opportunity for anyone interested in the practical restoration of plant and building work to join in, but also those interested in photographic displays, model work and documentation. To date the Group has had a number of items donated by different organisations, including steam pumps and spares from Wiveliscombe Brewery, together with a Lancashire boiler, when arrangements can be made to move it; also a set of bellows from the forge at Dunball Line Works. Subscription to the W.E.G. is £1.50 per person or £2.00 per family, due on January 1st. This is to cover insurance as the SIAS insurance cover will no longer apply to this project'. Iain can be contacted at West Monkton 412713.

PUBLICATIONS

Enquiries about Journal 2 have been received from as far afield as Moscow, Washington DC and Sydney, Australia. Nevertheless, there remain corners of 'darkest Somerset' where the Society and its publications are unknown.

SIAS has begun feeding information into the new Sites and Monuments Record for Somerset now being compiled by Mick Aston (Archaeologist at the SCC's Planning Dept.). This has made the task of publishing gazetteers of the 'check list' type (SIAS Gazetteer No. 1, 1973) less urgent. But there is the need to make available a publication which outlines the aspects in which the industrial archaeologist is interested. This need, and a possible solution, is currently being investigated by the Publications Sub-Committee of the Society.

SOME RECENT PUBLICATIONS

'Victorian and Edwardian Somerset from Old Photographs', published by Batsford at the modest price of £3.95, will be useful as a background source for the study of industrial archaeology. The co-authors, David Bromwich and Robert Dunning, have chosen 141 photographs the majority of which have not been published previously. These include one of a road scraper, a machine familiar

to readers of Journal Two. Also shown are the cast parts of Queen Boadicea's statue in a Frome foundry (1902) prior to their assembly on Westminster Bridge, London. Indirectly the book will be of interest to IA followers since it illustrates the rural nature of the crafts and industries in Somerset. In addition the early pioneer photographers have 'captured' on their glass plate negatives the social climate of a vanished age. The cider-swilling peat diggers, posed near Ashcott (photograph 122) were an intrinsic part of the Somerset scene of yesteryear.

Also published recently in this series was 'Victorian and Edwardian Windmills and Watermills from old photographs' (Batsford, £3.95). Amongst the collection of 137 early photographs of mills and millers put together by J. Kenneth Major and Martin Watts are two local windmills - Westfield (later Heath House) and Vale - and a couple of views of Dunster Lower water mill, including an interesting interior view of the mill at work. It must be said that a few more details of some of the sites, including perhaps a map reference, would have been useful, but the selection not only illustrates the heights achieved in the art of mill-wrighting, but also presents an evocative picture of the social and architectural position of the working mill in its surroundings.

'Industrial Archaeology' Volume 11 Number 4 has now appeared after a long and largely unexplained absence, with a new publisher, Graphmitre Ltd of Tavistock. The journal retails at £4.50 per copy or £16 for an annual supply of four issues. The new format is disappointingly small and the clarity of the illustrations leaves a lot to be desired, particularly in view of the price. (This criticism also applies to the visual appearance of the text). Articles cover IA in Bolton and district, Heath Abbey Ironworks, steam engines, railway and canal coal-drops at Sharpness Docks, the gas market and the coal industry in the Lothians in the nineteenth century, and John Carr, a Georgian bridge builder. Whilst welcoming the re-appearance of this publication it must be said that the product compares unfavourably with a similar journal, namely the A.I.A.'s 'Industrial Archaeology Review'. This will certainly deter those IA enthusiasts who are hard pressed for cash from subscribing.

THE A.G.M.

March 17th may seem a long time away, but members are requested to note the date and give serious consideration to nominations for both the committee and the official posts (details and forms will be appended to the next Bulletin). The Society feels justly proud of its role as an active archaeological body but only new recruits to positions of responsibility will ensure a continuous supply of fresh ideas about SIAS and its work.

PROGRAMME

Some events for 1978 - further details in the next Bulletin.

Fri. 3rd March - 'Bricks without Straw' - Brian Murless.

Weir Lodge, Staplegrove Road, Taunton, 7.30 p.m.

Sat.15th April - S.W. Regional I.A. Conference, Risca, Newport, South Wales.

Sun.30th April - Joint meeting with Bristol IAS visiting Somerset slate quarries.

THE COMMITTEE WISH ALL MEMBERS, "THE COMPLIMENTS OF THE SEASON"

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BULLETIN NO. 15
February, 1978

Hon. Secretary:
David Greenfield,
33 Barrow Drive,
TAUNTON, Somerset.
TA1 2UX.

A.G.M.

The Society's Annual General Meeting, at Weir Lodge, will take place a little earlier than usual on Friday, 17th March. Two officers have indicated their intention of retiring: Mike Jones, who has held the post of Chairman for the past three years, and David Greenfield, Secretary since the Society was set up in 1972.

Any member may stand as a candidate for either the Committee or for one of the offices of the Society. Nominations can be made either at the A.G.M. or on the attached form.

I.A. Conference

Details of the 9th Annual Conference of Western I.A. Societies at Risca on 15th April are given on the enclosed papers. This year S.I.A.S. will again be well represented with talks by Derrick Warren on Chidgey's Foundry at Watchet and the Parrett Iron Works, Martock. Iain Miles will also contribute a talk on the steam engine project at Westonzoyland.

Forms must be returned to the Conference Secretary by 1st April. In view of the distance involved, those members who require, or are prepared to share, transport please contact David Greenfield.

Symposium '78

The Somerset Archaeological & Natural History Society is holding a whole day symposium at Trull Village Hall (ST 215222) on 1st April when a variety of aspects of Somerset's past will be outlined. Speakers include Tony Ward (Somerset Limekilns) and Frank Hawtin (Chandos Glass Cone). The proceedings begin with coffee at 10.00 a.m. and admission is free.

Westonzoyland Engine Group

Iain Miles reports that restoration work on the engine continues slowly, but surely. The left hand cylinder is almost reassembled now and painting is taking place. The most significant advance has been the commencement of work on the boiler and flue as this is where most effort will be needed. The forge is also progressing well, in the hands of Tony Ward.

It is proposed to open the station to the public on the afternoons of Saturday, Sunday and Monday of the Easter weekend. Admission will be 10p per person and the idea is to show the public what is happening at the station. The engine will not, however, be in steam, yet!

Following Easter, the building will receive attention as weather permits and hopefully the roof will be made watertight.

Bridgwater

Although the Society has long been concerned about the future of a number of industrial structures in Bridgwater, considerable time and effort plus the necessary finance have to be spent before preservation can be secured. Often delicate negotiations have to take place and S.I.A.S. has been reluctant to publish any information which might prejudice the outcome of such talks. However, a progress report is timely at the close of the S.I.A.S. year.

The base of the Chandos Glass Cone is the subject of current discussions between the Somerset County Council and the developers of the Northgate site. A scheme for the guardianship of the structure has been drawn up and the S.I.A.S. Committee expressed their approval in October, 1977. It now remains for the developers to give their blessing before conservation work can proceed.

Across the River Parrett other talks have centred on a brick kiln at the former yard of Barham Brothers. Difficulties arose over access to the kiln and the replacement of tiles which had been broken by vandals. The area around the kiln, kindly earmarked for preservation by its owners,

U.B.M., has now been fenced and a quantity of suitable tiles has been rescued by the S.C.C. from the disused lineworks at Dunball.

The future of the Telescopic Bridge is less certain. Although no longer used by rail traffic it remains the responsibility of British Rail. Essentially two-thirds of the structure are intact and apart from its own merits, it is important as an item in the Victorian industrial complex at Bridgwater. Fortunately, the measured drawings relating to the bridge have survived and can be consulted at the Somerset Record Office.

Owing to economic factors re-development of the Docks must be regarded as a long-term aim but at the moment Mick Aston is undertaking a detailed study of its history. This has involved researching material in Bristol and London which includes information linking I.K. Brunel with Bridgwater. Members will be kept informed of any publication arising from Mr. Aston's studies.

Charlton Viaduct, Shepton Mallet

Application was made by a national brewery company to demolish the embankment adjoining the railway viaduct at Charlton, Shepton Mallet (ST 628435). The arched viaduct was built in 1874 and once carried the lines of the Somerset and Dorset Joint Railway connecting Bath with Evercreech.

S.I.A.S. was not alone in its opposition to the proposal and the Society now awaits the publication of a revised scheme by the company concerned.

Kennisham Hill Engine House

The Forestry Commission has now carried out its intention (Bulletin 13) to demolish the remains of the engine house. Before this took place trees in the immediate vicinity were felled allowing an uninterrupted view of the structure. Mike Jones made a photographic record at that juncture.

Dunball Lineworks

During 1976 the Society received through C.R.A.A.G.S. a grant of £50 in order to undertake archaeological work at Dunball, Puriton (ST 317409). Considerable difficulties over access and insurance prevented the work from taking place until January of this year under the direction of Iain Miles. The site has now been acquired by the Department of the Environment which intends to demolish many of the structures, serious deterioration of their condition having occurred in recent years.

The disused lineworks once formed part of a small industrial complex which extended eastwards from the River Parrett along the Polden Hills. Activities in the area began during the 1840's and were eventually to include a range of materials and products: bricks, cement, lime, manure and salt. The various works were inter-connected by a rail network of standard and narrow gauge lines; water access was afforded by wharves on the Parrett, and the King's Sedgemoor Drain which bounds the area to the south.

S.I.A.S. members have made a photographic record, in colour and black and white, of surviving structures and machinery. Measured drawings were also made, particularly of the lime kilns on the site. The works was operated by John Board whose company was renowned for the manufacture of bricks and tiles at Dunwear, Bridgwater. The Bridgwater and District Archaeological Society has also been active at Dunball and it is hoped that an article on the area can be compiled for a future number of the S.I.A.S. Journal.

Bathpool Swing Bridge

The Society received a request from the Somerset Inland Waterways Society to support their opposition to the proposed replacement of Bathpool Swing Bridge (ST 253261) over the Bridgwater & Taunton Canal with a fixed footbridge giving a clearance of 4ft. 6in. (1.37m). The Committee felt that the expenditure by the S.C.C. on the canal both at the Maunsell Locks and on the section between Huntworth and Bridgwater, would be largely wasted as the proposal implied that cabin cruisers would not be able to use the waterway. Accordingly, the Chairman has written a letter to the S.C.C.'s Chief Executive Officer stating this and other reasons for objecting. The Council has deferred its decision on the matter.

County Structure Plan

S.I.A.S. has been sent a further publication setting out the summary of replies made by organisations, public bodies and others to a questionnaire about the issues raised by the County Structure Plan (Bulletin 13).

In the Architectural and Historic Heritage section, the responses generally favoured priority being given to the safeguarding of areas of national importance. The Plan should also, in the words of the summary "have a presumption in favour of retaining all other buildings and areas of architectural and historic interest". This latter statement goes some way towards meeting the anxiety expressed by S.I.A.S. that structures of county, rather than national, importance were frequent victims of re-development schemes.

Parrett Iron Works

These works, near Martock (ST 445187), are a unique survival of the type of buildings which housed the various operations of the flax industry of central Somerset and the engineering trades associated with it.

During the first half of the 19th century a mill for the manufacture of snuff was located on the site. By 1859 George Parsons had constructed "extensive mills used for flax dressing. The proprietors have also erected an extensive iron and brass foundry, and, in addition, steam engines of considerable power, and all descriptions of agricultural implements are manufactured" (Harrison, Harrod & Co., Directory, 1859).

Similar operations were carried on at the Parrett Works until well into this century, the foundry and engineering side under William Sibley & Sons and rope and twine making by G.H. Smith.

Dr. S.D. Chapman of Liverpool University has taken a particular interest in the flax industry and he gave a talk to the Society in 1977. His research is, as yet, unpublished but a number of plans and other items relating to the Parrett Iron Works are deposited in the Somerset Record Office. Early this year S.I.A.S. learnt of the impending sale of part of the Works and, fearing that demolition and/or insensitive alterations might result, mounted a rescue survey under the direction of Derrick Warren.

The survey concentrated on three structures: the chimney, the mill and the manager's house, all of which are largely constructed of the local Ham stone. The chimney is an unusually decorated feature at the Parrett Works and resembles an Italian campanile. The manager's house also contained noteworthy features, namely a large safe, and a fireplace which had originated from a building much earlier in date. The mill has an impressive northern facade with iron framed windows and a bell tower. Internally it has an iron spiral staircase which also serves as a fire prevention system, the newel being a vertical water pipe with hydrants at each of the four storeys. A water-wheel, 16ft. in diameter and 9ft. 2in. wide, is still in situ bearing the name of its maker, George Parsons. Other iron features such as the roof supports of the mill also suggest a local origin.

SOMERSET INDUSTRIAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - 17th March, 1978.

Nominations for Committee and Officers:-

Chairman

Treasurer

Secretary

Field Officer

Publications Officer

Committee (^{max}~~minimum~~ of 6 to be elected)

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This form can be sent to the Secretary, 33 Barrow Drive, Taunton, or handed to him at the A.G.M.

BULLETIN 16

APRIL 1978

HON. SECRETARY
M.H. Jones,
11 Osborne Way,
Taunton, TA1 4PU.

The Annual General Meeting

The meeting held this year on 17 March marked the end of the long period of dedicated service given to the Society by David Greenfield, who retired as Secretary, a post he had held since the Society's inaugural meeting on 17 January 1972. His constant endeavours have been principally responsible for obtaining for the Society the recognition it has received during the last few years. His careful attention to detail and his ability to foster good relations with those with whom he has had to deal will be much missed.

The following Officers and Committee Members were elected:-

Chairman: Derrick Warren, 52, Stoke Road, Taunton. (Taunton 86957).

Secretary: Mike Jones, 11, Osborne Way, Taunton, TA1 4PU. (Taunton 5308).

Treasurer: Janet Jones, " " " "

Publications: Brian Murless, 46, Holway Avenue, Taunton, TA1 3AR.

Field Officer: Mary Miles, Brierley Cottage, Lower Durston, Taunton.
(West Monkton 412713)

Committee Members: John Bentley, 5, Compass Hill, Taunton.
Mike H. Clarke, Bullifants, Bishops Lydeard, Taunton.
Geoff Harding, 19B, Chilton Street, Bridgwater.
Chris Tilley, 24, Hamber Lea, Bishops Lydeard, Taunton.
Tony Ward, 32, Jubilee Street, Taunton.
Ken Williamson, 6, Kitts, Wellington.

No contentious matters were raised during the meeting, but there was much discussion following a suggestion from Derrick Warren that the Society as a whole should get together more often on an informal basis. The suggestion was adopted and it was agreed that these meetings would be held from time to time at Weir Lodge or at a place of interest on Summer evenings.

Informal Society Meetings

Members are reminded that they have the right at any time to attend Committee Meetings and take full part in discussion, but not vote. As Committee Meetings are usually held in Members houses it would be appreciated if prior notice of your intention to come could be given to the host Committee Member.

As mentioned above, Derrick Warren's proposal for informal meetings was enthusiastically reviewed at the A.G.M. The first meeting will take place at Weir Lodge at 7.30 p.m. on Friday, 21 April: Derrick Warren will start the ball rolling with some slides, but it would be a great help if others could bring slides with them so that they may be shown. The subject of the slides is not important, any tenuous connection with IA will do. What is important is that members should come, and not feel that what they have to offer is of no interest to anyone else. We do want to see your slides and hear anything you may have to say, so please try to come.

As a further step, and in order to encourage us to find out something of the IA of Somerset for ourselves, we are arranging evening "fossicking" trips in the Summer in different parts of the county. The idea is to walk over a small area, not being given a guided tour, but seeing for ourselves what there is to be found there. The first such visit has been arranged for the evening of Thursday, 25 May, details overleaf.

It is the Committee's intention that meetings and visits will take place on different evenings of the week, wherever possible, so that no one may be permanently prevented from attending because, for example, they always go to their existentialist philosophy club on Wednesday evenings.

Subscriptions

These are now due for the year commencing 1 April 1978. The rates are unchanged at

Individual Membership	£2.50
Family or Corporate Membership	£3.00

Please return the slip provided at the end of this Bulletin to the Treasurer in order that details of your membership may be kept up to date.

A new Membership Card is being prepared and will be sent out in due course as a formal acknowledgement of receipt for subscriptions.

Parrett Iron Works

As a result of the survey carried out in February by several members at this site, the mill, chimney, manager's house and weir keeper's cottage have been listed by the DOE as buildings of special architectural or historical interest (grade II). This makes it most difficult for the owner to alter or demolish these structures without first obtaining approval from the Department, so they are to some extent protected. This is a very worthy result of an enjoyable day's work.

Summer Programme

This has not yet been fully worked out, but the following dates are firm:-

Friday, 21 April: 7.30 p.m.: Members meeting, Weir Lodge.

Sunday, 30 April: Visit to Somerset slate quarries; Leader Chris Tilley. Meet at 1015 a.m. Longforth Road car park, Wellington. Bring packed lunch.

Saturday, 6 May: Visit to the Brendon Hills Mines for the Exeter IA Group, led by Chris Tilley and Mike Jones. SIAS members welcome. Meet at the Raleigh's Cross Inn 1030 a.m. Bring packed lunch.

Friday, 19 May: 3.30 p.m.: Visit to Fox's Mill, Uffculme (working steam engine etc.). Please let Mary Miles know if you are coming. (West Monkton 412713).

Thursday, 25 May: fossicking visit to Enmore Castle (underground passages) and Spaxton area. Meet at 6.45 p.m. at the car park in front of County Hall, Taunton, (corner of Park Street and the Crescent) with a view to sharing cars. Elderly clothes suggested.

Saturday, 3 June: Day trip to Lundy Island. Tickets, price £4 per head, should be obtained from Mr. A.F. Langham (Lundy Field Society), 17 Furzefield Road, Reigate, Surrey. There will be a coach from Taunton to the boat, fare £1.25. For details 'phone J. Dawson in the County Planning Department (Taunton 3451).

Sunday, 4 June: Day visit to Mells area, leader Chris Tilley. Meet at 1030 a.m. (place to be arranged) to trace the Downhead railway, and at 2.30 p.m. to see the BIAS excavators at Fussells Iron Works, Mells.

Saturday, 5 August: Day visit to M-Shed, Bristol's new Industrial Museum, with trip by narrow boat round the docks. Further details later.

Book Review

Exmoor in War time 1939-45 by Jack Hurley
The Exmoor Press 1978. 117 pp. illus. £1.95.

If the scars of battle heal quickly, and physical traces of war are soon obliterated, it will come as no surprise to learn how great was the impact on Exmoor and its people of the second world war. From 1939-45, Exmoor probably suffered an influx of "visitors" greater than during all the years since, and an account of their stay has now for the first time been ably chronicled by Jack Hurley in this new well illustrated book from the Exmoor Press.

The story is told in thirty seven chapters, and in each, local events are skilfully highlighted against the backdrop of the national struggle against Nazi Germany. The passage of time has undoubtedly lent enchantment to those days of rumour and anxiety, so that what were then matter of national importance have now become merely risible. What visions of esoteric mystery are now evoked, for example, by such an august body as the Wild Herbs Committee: and what problems of etiquette must have been faced in the Minehead Home Guard unit by the presence in their midst of Private the Earl of Cromer.

Inevitably Exmoor's war has had to be described from the standpoint of the local residents, so that this is very much a book for the social historian, rather than for the military historian or archaeologist. From the chaotic first arrival of evacuees in 1939, through an account of the swinging fines imposed by Minehead magistrates on those who contravened blackout regulations, to the final stand down parades of the Home Guard, Mr. Hurley weaves a skilful tapestry of incident and anecdote. The Official Secrets Act prevented the publication at the time of any account of military activities on Exmoor, and the dispersal of the participants means that any surmise made then must for ever remain unverified. Nevertheless it is to be regretted that there is, for example, no reference to the exploration in 1941 by the Canadian Royal Engineers of Blackland Mine near Withypool, as part of the assessment of Britain's mineral resources potential in case the Battle of the Atlantic should have been lost, an account of which was officially published soon after the war.

It may be that the serious historian will be deterred by the lack of an index, and that some general difficulty will be experienced by the problem of reading the picture captions as a result of the narrow centre margins, but leaving aside such trifling points of adverse criticism, the book provides an informative and amusing addition to the library of the History of Exmoor. It will undoubtedly bring back memories to many who lived in West Somerset during the war, and will make history live for those too young to remember.

Bulletin 17

Items intended for inclusion in the next Bulletin will be gratefully received by Mike Jones, but he would like them before Saturday 22 July please.

SOMERSET INDUSTRIAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

ADDENDUM to Bulletin 16.

HON. SECRETARY
M.H. Jones,
11, Osborne Way,
Taunton, TA1 4PU.
5308.

As a result of the Committee Meeting on 7 April it is now possible to amplify some of the matters mentioned in Bulletin 16.

1. Chris Tilley's 'phone number is Bishops Lydeard 432019.
2. The next Committee Meeting will be held on Friday, 2 June at John Bentley's house, 5 Compass Hill, Taunton. Parking space is limited, but there is space available in Osborne Way, a nearby cul-de-sac.
3. The visit to Mells area on 4 June. The meeting place is at the cross roads on A361 about one mile east of Doultong, grid reference ST.665434 on OS 1" sheet 166 (Frome).
4. Summer programme: further evening fossicks have been arranged as follows:-

Wed. 21 June to Chard

Tues. 18 July to Lilstock

Thur. 24 August to Pawlett

Fri. 15 September to Creech St. Michael/Ham.

For all these evenings, please meet at 6.45 p.m. at the car park in front of County Hall, Taunton (corner of Park Street and the Crescent) with a view to sharing cars.

5. **Bristol visit 5 August: meet at 1130 at the 'Great Britain' car park (AA signposted). Bring sandwiches and entry fees: narrow boat trip not guaranteed. The visit will end at about 1730.**



Hon. Secretary
M H Jones,
11 Osborne Way,
Taunton, TA1 4PU.
Tel. Taunton 5308.

Winter Programme 1978-79

The following programme of evening meetings and lectures has been arranged. All lectures and members' evenings will be held at Weir Lodge, starting at 7.30 p.m., except for those on September 15th and October 25th.

- | | | |
|-----------------------|---|--|
| Friday, 8 September | - | L. Armitage - The Story of the Wool Industry in Somerset. |
| Friday, 15 September | - | Evening Fossick at Creech St. Michael and Ham. |
| Friday, 13 October | - | G. Fitton - Copper and lead in Snowdonia. |
| Wednesday, 25 October | - | Social Evening - see below for details. |
| Friday, 10 November | - | R. Haden - Street tramways. |
| Friday, 8 December | - | Members' evening - please give the Secretary some idea of what your contribution will be for these evenings. |
| Friday, 12 January | - | R.A. Gilson - Buildings of South Somerset, with particular emphasis on industrial buildings. |
| Tuesday, 23 January | - | Members' evening. |
| Friday, 9 February | - | J. Day - The Bristol Brass Industry. |
| Thursday, 22 February | - | Members' evening. |
| Friday, 9 March | - | C.A. Buchanan - Textile mills on the Wilts-Somerset border. |
| Friday, 23 March | - | Annual General Meeting. |
| Friday, 6 April | - | To be arranged. |

In addition, SIAS members may like to know that a whole day tour of the parish of Luxborough is being conducted by Mr. E.F. Williams for members of SANHS on Saturday, 30th September at 1100 a.m. SIAS members are invited to join this tour, which is of a parish which abounds in remnants of interest to them, such as the abandoned village of Clicket, old quarries, lime kilns and some of the mines of the Brendons. Meet on a patch of waste ground at SS.985374 and bring sandwiches and drink.

Fossicks

The first fossick was on Thursday, 25 May at Enmore Castle and Willoughby Farm. The evening was pleasant, and the fossick was attended by more than two dozen members of the Society. Enmore Castle was constructed at a time when, following the example of Horace Walpole at Strawberry Hill, things Gothick were much in vogue. It was built by the Egmont family in imitation of a mediaeval castle, and some idea of its original appearance, ca.1760, may be gained from the attached copy of a contemporary engraving. During the

nineteenth century, the building proved to have been too grand in its conception, and much of it was demolished down to ground level. But the subterranean portions remain, and they were the object of the first part of the evening's visit. At a time when it was fashionable to be eccentric, the Egmonts caused the stable block to be constructed, mainly underground, about a hundred and fifty yards to the NE of the "castle", and to be connected to the porte cochère at the castle entrance by means of a long passage which passed round two sides of the building, and which, being below ground, and covered with soil and vegetation created the illusion of a dry moat round the castle. In addition, there is an extensive range of cellars, some of which are connected to the passage to the stables, and one of which contains a long serpentine stone lined trough sunk into the floor, apparently connected by a wall duct to the back of a small fireplace in the corner, the purpose of which could not be determined. There is no doubt that the purpose of the range of subterranean passages would become more intelligible if the whole were to be properly surveyed.

The party then moved a mile or so to the north to the ruins of Willoughby Farm, which while not apparently of any industrial interest, do prompt the question "What was the purpose of these clearly non-agricultural buildings?". The ruins resemble a Georgian imitation of the great hall of a mediaeval palace, and were constructed on a fairly lavish scale internally. The general feeling was that here was Somerset's first night club, erected rather in advance of public taste, and that it soon failed. There may be other, more prosaic explanations of these ruins, but no one present could convince us of their validity!

The evening of 21 June was wet, cold and windy for the fossick to Chard. It is hardly surprising that only a handful of members came, but their ardour was well rewarded, for much was found that was new even to the Chairman, who spent his boyhood in the town. It suggests that fresh eyes can often see something that is easy for the habitué to miss, and demonstrates the worth of the fossicks. Much of what was found on that wet night will be revealed in the next SIAS publication.

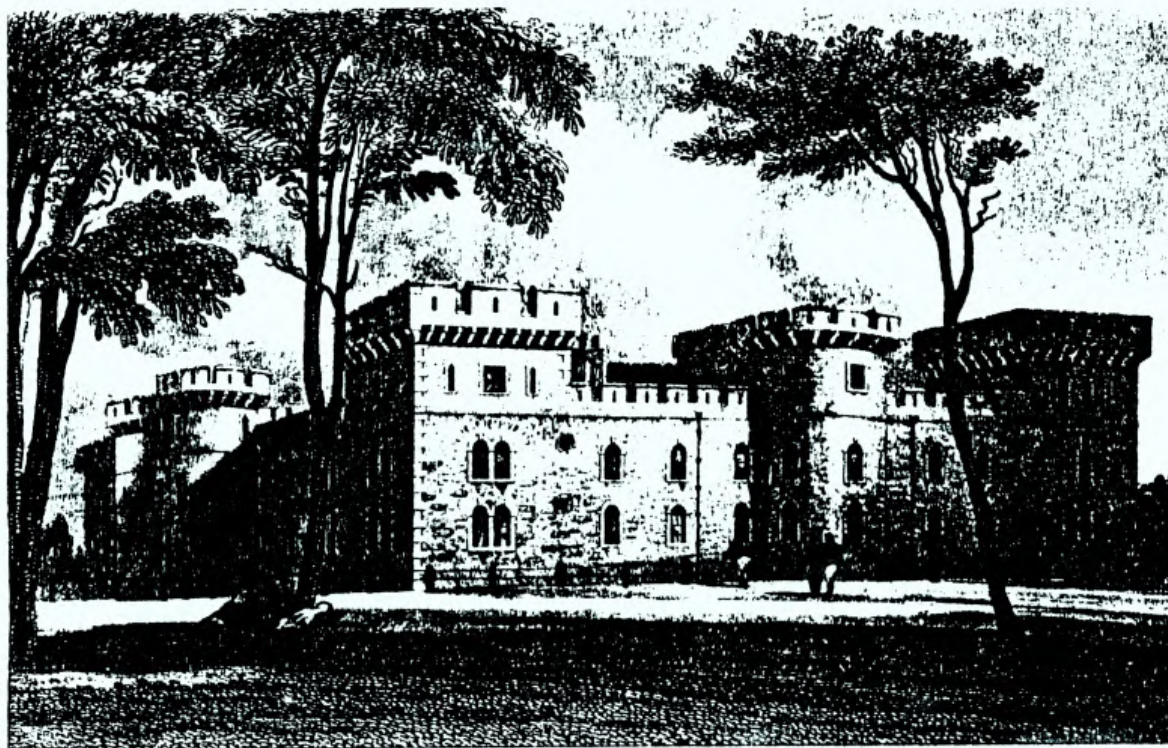
On a blustery evening in July about a dozen members visited Lillstock to look at the remains of the harbour and hamlet there. What had until then been considered to be a tidal harbour basin was felt to be a storage pond for sluicing out the bed of the "harbour" outside, of which the breakwater gradually emerged from the receding waters of the sea as the evening progressed. A little way to the east a good example of an anticline was found, as well as a prominent fault in the strata of the cliffs. The lime kilns, the *raisons d'être* of this little harbour, are still reasonably well preserved, but the cottages, one of which was reputedly an ale house, have largely disappeared.

Society visits

These have been held in April, May and June. In April Chris Tilley led a visit to slate quarries in West Somerset, a visit which was well attended in spite of the foul weather. Tracebridge, "that impressive hole" as it has been aptly named, was seen first, followed by Okehampton and Treborough.

In May there was a visit to the Brendon Hills iron mines, organised on behalf of members of the Exeter IA Group whom we were very pleased to see. It was quite routine until the descent to the first level of Carnarvon pit, when an over enthusiastic visitor accidentally caused a slight fall of debris which was sufficient to trap an adventurous SIAS member beyond it. A rescue from the air shaft was quickly organised and all ended well, but the incident highlighted the dangers that can sometimes attend the most innocuous visits, and underlined the need for the most thorough precautions in these circumstances.

Fox's Mill at Uffculme was visited in May, and because it had to be in working hours, it was not perhaps as well attended as might otherwise have been the case. Nevertheless about a dozen members came, and enjoyed a pleasant



Engraved by J. H. Sturt

ENMORE CASTLE,
SOMERSETSHIRE

Designed by J. H. Sturt

step back into the early years of this century when puttees were woven on looms driven by steam, and the magnificent horizontal steam engine that powered the mill then, still powers it today. Long may it continue to do so.

On 4 June Chris Tilley led a Society visit to the Mells area. The Downhead quarry railway was traced from its commencement at the quarries, where some surprise was occasioned at finding fishplates in the undergrowth, to its terminus at the East Somerset Railway at Cranmore. Here the opportunity was taken during the lunch break to look at the impressive collection of standard gauge locomotives and rolling stock there. During the afternoon the party visited the site of Fussells ironworks at Mells that is being excavated and conserved by a dedicated group of BIAS members led by Robin Stiles. Among their finds recently, have been what appear to be tuyères, and this has given rise to the idea that attempt may have been made to make steel on this site.

Work in progress

Southfield Brickyard, Taunton

Since the last report, much excavation has been carried out and another area uncovered. The exposure has been extended of features noted earlier, such as the "drain", and the area of marl which has been discoloured in a manner that suggests the application of some form of heat. A detailed contour survey of the field is being made, and it is hoped that this may reveal features, such as filled clay pits, which are not shown on large scale maps of the area.

Leather dressing premises at Yeovil

Mrs. Lewis, Secretary of the Somerset branch of the CPRE asked the Society to lend its weight to prevent the demolition of part of a listed leather dressing at Yeovil. It was agreed that a measured survey should be made and by kind permission of the managing director, this was arranged one Saturday morning. Although London had for some time been the centre of the leather dressing industry, as Yeovil's glove production increased in the 18th century, it was found to be more economical to dress skins there. The subject of the survey was the four storey drying shed in the factory in Eastland Road which was started by John Ryall in the 18th century, and it is hoped to publish the drawings of this handsome building in due course.

Photographic Survey of the West Somerset Railway

A sub-committee has been formed, under the chairmanship of John Bentley, to plan and carry out the photography of all the lineside structures of the WSR. It is expected that the work will be carried out during the Autumn of this year.

Destruction of the British Industrial Heritage

Dr. Angus Buchanan sent the County Archaeologist a questionnaire which was passed to SIAS to deal with about the destruction of industrial monuments in Somerset during the last ten years. This was answered fairly fully by the Publications Sub-Committee at very short notice. It was found, for example, that more than 100 "significant" industrial monuments are known to have been destroyed or have had their machinery removed in the last 10 years. To the question "list the 20 most significant industrial monuments remaining", members may like to know, and will doubtless disagree with, the list that the sub-committee proposed, which was, not in any order of priority:-

Bridgwater docks area.

Parrett Iron works.

High Ham windmill.

Westonzoyland pumping engine station.

Frome railway station (Brunel trainshed).

Boden's lacemill building, Chard.

Anglo-Bavarian Brewery, Shepton Mallet.

Westport Canal basin warehouses, etc.

West Somerset mineral railway track.

Snowdon toll house, Chard.

Charterhouse and Priddy lead smelting sites, including Smitham Chimney.

Bridgwater and Taunton Canal.
West Somerset railway.
Fussell's ironworks, Mells.
Nynehead aqueduct, Grand Western Canal.
St. Audries gas works.
Fox Brothers woollen mill, Wellington.
Gants corn mill, Bruton.
Cutsey model farm, near Taunton.
Moorewood new colliery, Benter (engine house).

In Brief

WEA Lecture

Frank Hawtin is giving a series of 10 weekly lectures at Weir Lodge, Staplegrove Road, Taunton beginning at 7.30 p.m. on 5 October, 1978 on "Man and the landscape : the Industrial Scene in Somerset". The fee for the course is £4.00.

Inland Waterways Association Excavation

The IWA are carrying out an excavation at Loudwells on the Grand Western Canal and would welcome expert assistance or labourers on the second full weekend of each month at the site.

Marsh Bridge, Dulverton

David Greenfield, who compiled a note for Journal Two on this bridge (SS 90702896) reports that it is to be given a concrete deck. This operation will involve the temporary removal of the lattice girders so those wishing to photograph the structure in its present state should do so shortly.

Industries on the Parrett

Brian Murless, our publications officer, has recently been assisting Bridgwater teachers in the preparation of a folder, for use by school children, about the River Parrett. Information is requested on the following grist mills:- Haselbury Plucknett Mill, Gawbridge Mill, Bow Mill, North Perrott and Pykes Mill. If any member can help, please send details to Brian Murless, 46 Holway Avenue, Taunton, TA1 3AR, and he will pass the information to the compilers of the folder.

IA Conference

One hundred and twenty delegates attended the 9th Annual Conference of Western IA Societies held at Risca, Gwent, on April 15th. Somerset interests were ably represented by Iain Miles whose illustrated talk on the Westonzoyland Pumping Engine project was well received.

Several important issues relating to industrial archaeology emerged from the Conference.

Firstly, two talks dealt with the practical and financial aspects of conservation of industrial monuments at Whitecliffe, Gloucestershire, and Sirhowy, Gwent. The problems which have arisen, and the lessons learnt, could equally well apply to the conservation of the remains of the Chandos Glass Cone.

Secondly, John Powell, of the Bristol IA Society, stressed the need to inform a wider audience about industrial sites and structures. BIAS has done this through the publication of four "Walk-about" - leaflets offering guided tours around Bristol. The SIAS Publications Sub-committee has, independently, had similar thoughts about popular IA literature. Six members are at work on contributions towards such a publication to take the form of a series of guided tours by car and on foot.

Thirdly, the host society, Oxford House, opened its museum to conference delegates. Although modest in size, the well presented displays reflected the divergent interests of the Society's members and it is understood that the establishment of this museum formed a focal point for the membership. Oxford House IAS is the same size, numerically speaking, as SIAS but has clearly succeeded in creating a club atmosphere.

The date for next year's conference has still to be announced but it will be held at the University of Bath under the auspices of BIAS.

Social Evening

At the suggestion of Iain Miles, the Committee has arranged a social evening at 7.30 p.m. on Wednesday, 25 October, 1978 at the Candlelight Inn, at Bishops Wood. (grid reference OS 1" sheet 177 ST.255129) about seven miles south of Taunton. For those who may not know, this is rather more a restaurant than a pub, and it serves good food at reasonable prices. It has been arranged that a dining room there, seating about 22, will be made available for the evening at no cost, and members and wives are cordially invited to choose a meal from the normal menu which ranges from about £1 for chicken and chips to £3.00 for a T-bone steak, with duck at about £2.50. There is an adequate range of wines and beers and gateaux etc. served from a trolley or other sweets to order. As it is essential to know how many people are coming, would you please complete the attached slip and return it to me as quickly as possible. Mrs. Bulley, the cook, would like some idea of how many will order steak or duck, but as we obviously cannot make up our minds six weeks beforehand what we should like for dinner, it would be perhaps be helpful if you could say that you would not like one or the other and we can approach the problem from that end.

Bulletin 18

Items intended for inclusion in the next Bulletin will be gratefully received by Mike Jones, but he would like them before 31 October, 1978 please.

Book Review

The Waters of Exmoor by N.V. Allen
The Exmoor Press 1978. 64 pp., illus., 90p.

From a trickle of water oozing from the upland peat to frenzied torrents tumbling over the boulders of some wooded valley down to the sea, the course of every river of Exmoor National Park is here carefully described in richly flowing prose.

Never boring, rarely repetitive, Noel Allen has created a series of marvellous word pictures which precisely convey the atmosphere of the high moor in all its moods from misty tranquility to violent and windswept desolation, as well as the contrasting tranquil scenes of the lower wooded valleys of that same countryside.

It is apparent from the writing that the author has walked all the waters here described from source to sea in the recent past, so that this book may be used both as a guide, and, in some cases, as a warning of areas to be avoided. The reader may care to ponder on the distance that the author must have traversed in order to produce the sixty closely packed pages of text. Nor is the descriptive writing confined to the waters themselves, but much detail and anecdote of the country through which they pass is also included, so that this is at once a book for the walker, ornithologist, naturalist, historian and tourist.

(continued overleaf)

By way of introduction a note has been included on fishing Exmoor streams by James Connell and H.B. Maund, and for industrial archaeologists there is a fine chapter on the applications of the power derived from the streams, contributed by the Chairman of SIAS, D.W. Warren. In the space of **eight** pages he deals comprehensively with the application of water power to mills, farms, mines and quarries, the generation of electricity, and other, rather more esoteric uses to which water power has on occasion been put.

The book is illustrated by black and white photographs of scenes on the rivers and, on the endpapers, by carefully measured and executed drawings of waterwheels at Brushford and Exford by Derrick Warren. There is, in addition, a helpful map.

It is clear that the decision about the size of type face occasioned the publishers some difficulty, and the compromise that has been reached, presumably in order to keep the cost of the book below £1, is unsatisfactory: the main portion of the book, on the rivers themselves, has been printed at a size which is unacceptably small and gives the impression of being a mere footnote to the two introductory chapters.

With this exception, "The Waters of Exmoor" is a book for which author and publisher deserve congratulation, and which should be in the pocket of every serious visitor to this lovely part of England.

* * * * *

If you intend to come to the SOCIAL EVENING on Wednesday, 25 October please complete this form and send it to M.H. Jones, 11 Osborne Way, Taunton, TA1 4PU, Tel: Taunton 5308, before 30 September.

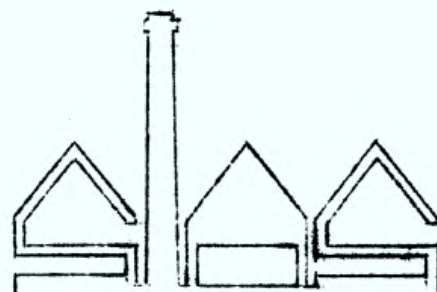
From: Name

I should like to come to the Social Evening and will be accompanied by other persons.

Please delete one or both of these sentences:-

I/We am/are unlikely to order duck.

I/We am/are unlikely to order steak.



Hon. Secretary
M H Jones,
11 Osborne Way,
Taunton, TA1 4PU.
Tel. Taunton 5308.

Mick Aston - an appreciation

Members will be sorry to learn of the resignation of Mick Aston as Archaeologist in the County Council's Planning Department.

When Mick was appointed to the post, the first of its kind in Somerset, in March 1974, he set himself the seemingly impossible task of establishing an efficient archaeological inventory of the county. He leaves us with a Sites and Structures Record of which we can feel justly proud.

In his work with local archaeological organizations Mick has inspired all with his limitless energy and enthusiasm as well as introducing a new approach to the past in the form of Landscape Archaeology. This Society has particular reason to be grateful to him for his advice, always frank and freely given, and in particular, of course, for his assistance with the excavation of the glass cone at Bridgwater.

Another aspect of Mick's work, to advise the County Council on archaeological matters, has also borne fruit with the creation of an Archaeological Panel of councillors and officers. The County Structure Plan reflects his endeavours through the inclusion of an Architectural and Historic Heritage Section.

We all wish him well in his appointment as a tutor in Local Studies at Oxford. Nevertheless, Mick's post will allow him the opportunity of furthering his Somerset studies, particularly in the field of deserted medieval settlements, an area in which he has already made a major contribution to our understanding.

Southfield Brickworks

One of a number of further discoveries made at this excavation is a linear feature resembling a ditch about 7 metres long containing a black tacky substance resembling pitch. It has been suggested that this could be a product of the burning of wood, a suggestion which would accord with Brian Murless' theory that at least part of the area was used as a primitive kiln. Two examples of the material have been sent for analysis to see if the suggestion is confirmed.

Bridgwater Dock

Thanks to Geoff Harding's efforts in making the doors easily operable, the Society's storage area in the warehouse is now in full use, and the sorting and classification of the pottery finds from the excavation of the Chandos glass cone will soon be started there.

The accounts, not only of the excavation but also of the historical background to the glass and pottery works, are now being prepared for publication.

A further stage has been reached in the protracted discussions about the future of Ware's Warehouse here. Sedgemoor District Council have invited representations about the future of this listed building. One suggestion is that it may be used as a leisure centre which may include a museum of industrial life. This proposal is favoured by the Society, and our Chairman has so informed the District Chief Planning Officer.

Correspondence received

From time to time, the Society receives enquiries from the County Library about industrial structures. Recently, for example, a letter was passed to us from Australia enquiring about a cast iron bridge at Nyncehead. In spite of the rather vague reference in the letter, David Greenfield was able to provide the correspondent with useful information: a copy of his note may be seen in the local History Library of Taunton Castle.

The South West Wales I.A. Society is at present excavating at Scotts Pit, a colliery with a Cornish beam engine house dating from about 1815-20. One of the finds was a number of bricks impressed with "H. Leigh, Combwich" (sic.). The dating of these bricks was a matter of some importance, so that it is fortunate that Brian Murless, through his research into the Somerset brick industry, was able to show not only that the place referred to was Combwich in Somerset, but that Henry Leigh made bricks and tiles there at least as early as 1819.

Following the publication by Jack Coulthard and Martin Watts of their "Windmills of Somerset" a photograph came to light of a windpump not referred to in that volume. This was at Creech St. Michael, and research by several members has now established that this windpump was at ST274254 and was probably used to drain the stretch of railway line which passed through a brick invert under the Chard canal at Creech. After the abandonment of the canal, the invert was filled in and the line laid on level ground, rendering the windpump unnecessary.

The West Somerset Railway photographic survey

A group of SIAS members under the chairmanship of John Bentley have been photographing lineside structures on this railway for record purposes. Most of the work has now been completed.

Fossick to Creech St. Michael

It was a risk having an evening fossick as late as 15 September, but although it was completed by moonlight it was thoroughly enjoyable. Things seen included the ruins of the aqueduct and bed of the Chard canal crossing the river Tone, the paper mill with its recently truncated chimney stack and the old watermill at Ham, complete with a line of ducks waddling across the top of the weir. The party was ordered out of a field by an irate young rustic who was not in the least deterred by reference to public rights of way on the definitive map in the custody of the County Council! He did however bow to the weight of opinion and allow the party to progress to the next field without further hindrance, and so, by moonlight, the party concluded the evening in bibulous fashion.

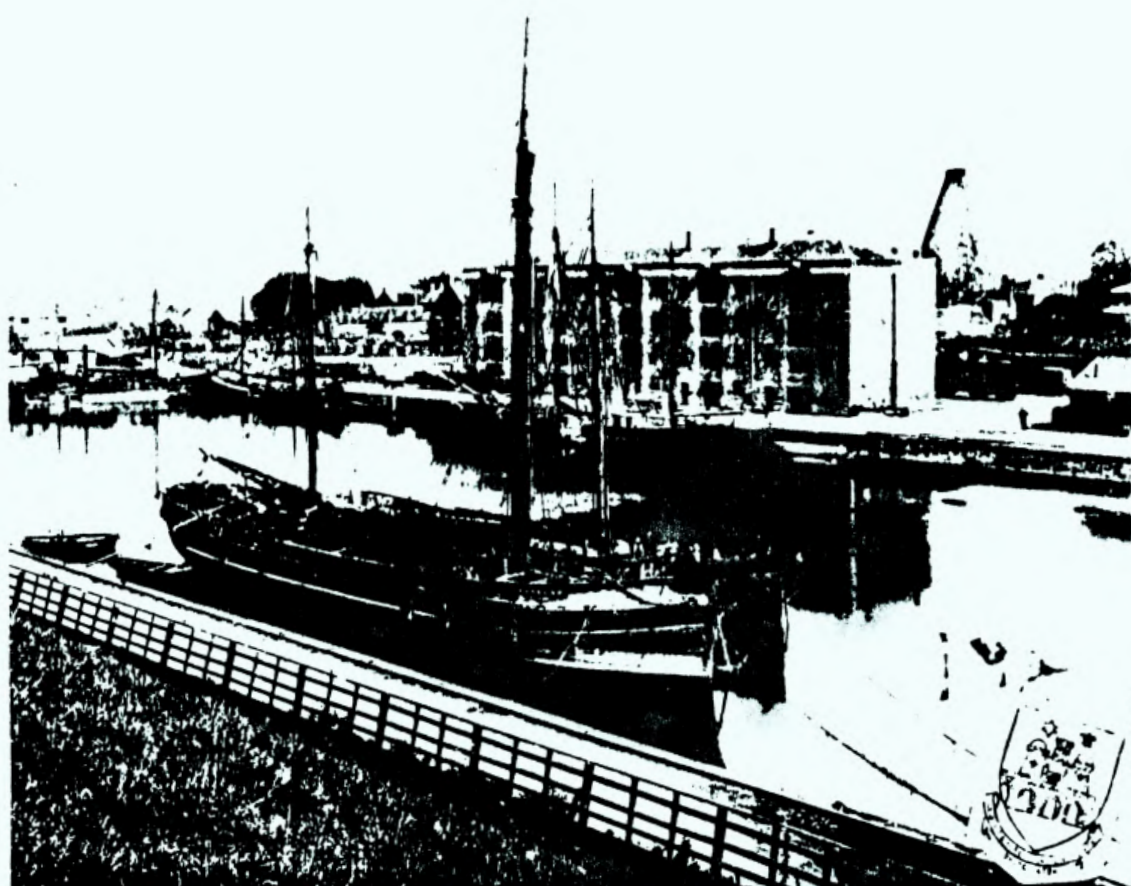
Fossicking is fun! Come again next year.

Social Evening

About two dozen members of the Society enjoyed a reasonable meal and pleasant company at the Candlelight Inn at Bishops Wood on 25 October at the Society's first formal social evening. There were no speeches, no singing, and as far as can be ascertained, no obvious signs of inebriety.

Winter Programme

It has been found necessary to move R. Haden's talk on "Street Tramways" to the vacant date of Friday, 6 April, 1979 at Weir Lodge.



Bridgwater Dock ca. 1905
showing Ware's warehouse and
the Chandos glass cone,
from a picture postcard.

Next Bulletin

Contributions for this Bulletin have only been received from members of the Publications Sub-Committee. Anyone is welcome to contribute on any matter of IA interest, whether or not it has to do with Somerset. Indeed notes and articles will be welcomed.

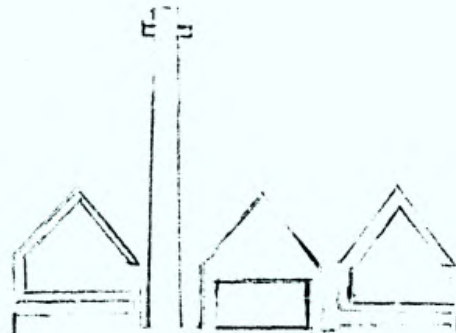
Send them to the Secretary please, by 13 January, 1979.

Western IA Societies Annual Conference

This will probably be held on 24 March, 1979 at the Town Centre, Keynsham. It will be organised by the Bristol IA Society, from whom details will be received in the New Year.

The Committee wish all members a very Happy Christmas.

* * * * *



Hon. Secretary
M. H. Jones,
11, Osborne Way,
Taunton, TA1 4PU.
Tel. Taunton 5308.

West Coker Rope Walk

On Saturday, 4th November, following a request for help from Martyn Brown of the Glastonbury Rural Life Museum, a party of fourteen gathered at the West Coker Rope Works of Messrs. Job Gould & Son Ltd. to dismantle and put into store machinery and equipment which was obsolete and which had been given to that Museum.

As it is hoped that eventually an industrial museum will be created in Somerset, it had been decided that only one complete set of rope walk equipment be taken so that it might eventually be reassembled as a complete walk, albeit in a fore-shortened version. This equipment not only included two twisting machines - which had to be partially dismantled and then carefully lowered down two flights of narrow stairs - but also all the ancillary equipment: bridges, gates, stretchers etc. Also removed was a braiding machine, cord ball winder and even specimens of the cord once used. As the team of members was so good the job was completed by lunch time and that afternoon everything was packed into our own transport and taken to Ware's Warehouse. In order to facilitate re-assembly a full photographic record was taken prior to dismantling.

Even if it had not been a working expedition it would have been a rewarding visit. The four rope walks were on the two upper floors of the 100 yd. long building whilst part of the ground floor is occupied by the present firm which, although now using nylon cord, is still using the original machines made in the last century by G. Sibley of the Parrett Iron Works (see Bulletin 15). Although the working parts of most machines are of metal, their frames are of oak. They are also no longer powered by steam but instead two massive oil engines are used. Thus we were afforded a rare chance to see what is virtually a working museum.

Otterhead Acetylene Gas Plant

Having had permission from the Wessex Water Authority to remove the plant, first described in a SIAS newsletter in 1973, seven members ventured forth on Wednesday, 27th December. Contrary to expectations they found the task of dismantling much easier than anticipated. The job was completed in an hour and a half and all the parts conveniently placed for collection by Wessex Water, who have undertaken to transport them to Ware's Warehouse. One other member found the working party sheltering from the torrential rain in the Holman Clavel Inn, when the serious business of the day commenced.

Safety At Work

In view of the nature of some of the work carried out by members and the often hazardous and dirty conditions of the places visited, it is strongly recommended that for their own safety they should have anti tetanus injections. If members have already had them they should ensure that the 'booster' or reinforcing injection is given every five years.

Chandos Glass Cone

Whilst the future role of this scheduled ancient monument remains uncertain, feverish activities have been taking place regarding the publication of the material from the excavation of 1976-7. An agreed policy, worked out between the SIAS Committee and those members most intimately involved, divides the publication into three parts.

Firstly, it is planned that a comprehensive report of the excavation and the historical background should appear in a national archaeological journal. Secondly, a summary of these aspects in a popular style will be printed in future SIAS journals commencing this year with details of the works during the glass-making period of the 18th century in issue Number Three.

Thirdly, a specialist pottery report, by Terry Pearson of CRAAGS, will form part of a monograph to be published by the City of Bristol Museum. This publication is being produced for an international conference on western European ceramics to be held at Bristol in September. In the preparation of his report Mr. Pearson has been greatly assisted by the work of members Bill and Betty Osborn who undertook the unenviable task of washing and sorting the thousands of pottery sherds recovered from the site. We owe them our thanks.

Meanwhile Lyonel Cornish, Frank Hawtin and Brian Murless mounted a successful expedition in search of the remains of another glassworks. Their journey, in October of last year, took them to Stanton Wick in Somerset where they sought advice, as to the location of the site, from a cobbler who had lived and worked there for over half a century. Our members were directed to a field of about five acres, to the south of Glasshouse Farm (ST 614618) which had recently been ploughed. Not only were there large areas of discoloured soil, ranging from fine black loam through orange and grey clay to ash, but there was also ample evidence of glassmaking activities, large quantities of glass waste and slag and necks and bases of 18th century bottles being found.

The life of this works (c. 1658-1815) was of course much longer than that of the Bridgwater glasshouse although the evidence recovered was very similar. Those interested in further details of the Stanton Wick glasshouse should consult a typescript on this subject by B.J. Greenhill at the Somerset Local History Library.

Westonzoyland Pumping Station

WEG recently announced their opening hours for 1979 for anyone interested in visiting their project at Westonzoyland (ST 340328). The station is open on the first Sunday in each month from April to October (inclusive) during the afternoons from 2 - 5 p.m. On the Sundays and Mondays of the Easter, Spring and Late Summer Bank Holidays, the station is on view from 11.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. On these occasions a number of activities will be taking place for which a small charge will be made. For further details contact Iain and Mary Miles (West Monkton 412713).

Silk Mill near Evercreech

On Saturday, 18th November, a party of members visited Albion's Vale Farm, near Evercreech (ST 659378). With the permission of the owner they explored part of an underground leat and located gearing from this mill both above and below ground.

Most of this site is now only visible as a series of earthworks which cover the remains of an extensive range of buildings including cottages for the workers. The use of the premises was changed in 1861 when the silk mill became a flax and tow factory. Many questions about the operation of the works are unanswered and it is hoped that later this year a number of exploratory trenches can be dug across the site.

Burrow Farm Engine House

The demolition of the engine house at Kennisham Hill (Bulletin 15) has drawn attention to the fact that its sister at Burrow Farm (ST 009346) is now the only surviving example of this type of structure on the Brendons. The Exmoor National Park has set up an advisory panel on archaeological matters and this body is keen to preserve the remains at Burrow Farm. SIAS is co-operating in this aim through the application to grant-aid institutions for financial assistance towards its preservation.

Publications

Following almost a year of discussions within the Society about future publications, it has been decided not to proceed with the proposed gazetteer mentioned in previous 'Bulletins'. Accordingly, the Publications Sub-Committee is now preparing a third journal to be issued during this year. Members are reminded that there will again be a 'Notes & News' section in the journal for shorter factual items. However, contributions of any length will be gratefully received by the Editor, Brian Murless. Potential contributors are invited to contact Brian during the next month (Taunton 77158).

Ivor Collis and Louis Kelting

Members will have been saddened to read in the Press of the recent deaths of these two gentlemen, both of whom in their own way have assisted the cause of industrial archaeology in Somerset.

Any member who studies a particular building or industry will at some stage visit the Somerset Record Office with its collections of Tithe maps, deposited plans of canals and railways and other essential primary sources.

Mr. Collis, formerly the County's Archivist, was the prime mover in the transference of Somerset's archives from a small office in the Shire Hall to the present purpose built structure in Obridge Road, Taunton.

Mr. Kelting was interested in steam pumping engines long before the phrase 'industrial archaeology' was coined. Whilst Chief Engineer to the Somerset River Authority he became concerned with the preservation of these engines which once performed valued service in the Somerset Levels. It is a fitting tribute that the work which he initiated is being perpetuated by others at Westonzoyland.

New Appointments

Ian Burrow is shortly to take up his appointment as the archaeologist at the SCC's Planning Department following the resignation of Mick Aston.

Chris Tilley has become Press Officer for the Society and recent announcements in the local press have brought an influx of 'new blood' to SIAS talks.

Parish Surveys in Somerset - Number Two - Luxborough, Edward F. Williams, 26pp., 4 maps; 75p by post or 60p to callers at the Somerset Archaeological & Natural History Society's premises, Taunton Castle, Taunton.

Luxborough is a West Somerset hill-country parish with three hamlets, several isolated farms and many enclosed fields, a pattern of settlement which is probably far older than the 16th century documents which first record it. The present survey described this settlement pattern and its evolution, along with its individual farms, houses, cottages, roads and bridges. It deals too with a distinctive system of irrigation channels on the hill-slopes, and with the iron mines and associated industrial development of the 19th century.

Programme

- Tuesday, 9th March - C.A. Buchanan - Textile Mills on the Wilts-Somerset border.
- Friday, 23rd March - Annual General Meeting, Weir Lodge, Taunton. 7.30 p.m.
- Saturday, 24th March - 10th Regional Conference of Western IA Societies at Keynsham Leisure Centre. 10.00 a.m. Details from John Powell, 22 Penrose, Whitchurch, Bristol, BS14 0AQ.
- Friday, 6th April - R. Haden - Street Tramways (postponed from 10th November, 1978).

The Mendip Society

This Society has kindly invited members of SIAS to attend their lectures and walks. Those that may be of interest to us are:-

Saturday, 10th February, lecture by Joan Day on "Water powered industries around Mendip" at 2 p.m. at Combe Lodge, Blagdon near Bristol.

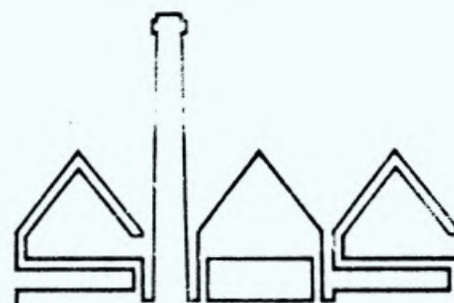
Sunday, 8th April, "Lead works and mines explained", an afternoon trip to the Charterhouse lead works starting at 2.15 p.m., led by Bob Burgess, BIAS member.

For details of membership etc, write to the Secretary, Don Richmond, Zennor, The Lynch, Winscombe, Avon, BS25 1AR.

SOMERSET INDUSTRIAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

BULLETIN 20

MAY 1979



Hon. Secretary
Sandy Buchanan,
2 Blake Green,
Ashcott,
Bridgwater,
TA7 9CF.
Tel. Ashcott 566.

Programme

- Friday 18th. May Fossick at Westford. Turn right off A38 at Rockwell Green, West of Wellington. Meet at County Hall 6.30 p.m. or Westford (ST124204) at 7.00 p.m.
- Wednesday 23rd. May All members are invited to a meeting organised by the South Petherton History Group at 8.00 p.m. in the Methodist Church Hall, corner of Palmer Street & St. James Street, South Petherton. Dr. Chapman will talk on the Somerset Flax Industry and the Parrett Works.
- Sunday 10th. June Fossick at Frome. Meet at 2.00 p.m. in the main car park, North West of the Market Place (ST777481). If members wish to make a whole-day excursion they may wish to visit the East Somerset Railway at Cranmoor in the morning.
- Friday 15th. June SIAS Committee Meeting 7.30 p.m. at Dene Court, Bishops Lydeard (ST174281).
- Saturday 7th. July Day Coach Trip to Ironbridge (see below).
- Thursday 19th July Fossick at Watchet. Meet in car park off Wain Street (ST072433) at 7.00 p.m. (6.30 p.m. at County Hall).
- Saturday 4th. August Picnic/Barbecue at Wheal Eliza, Exmoor. Meet at Simonsbath (SS773392) 11.00 a.m. Stout walking shoes etc. advised. Weather check to Chris Tilley, Bishops Lydeard 432019.
- Tuesday 14th. August Fossick at Crewkerne. Meet at car park off Abbey Street (ST440099) at 7.00 p.m. (6.30 p.m. at County Hall).

P. T. O.

Annual General Meeting

The Society's A.G.M. held on Friday 23rd March was the shortest in living memory. Mike Jones had told the Committee that he was unable to continue as Secretary and Mary Miles had also indicated that she wished to relinquish the post of Field Officer. Mike conducted the business of SIAS with a degree of professionalism which subsequent Secretaries will find difficult to equal. Mary held the post of Field Officer since 1975 and was responsible for the interesting programme of visits and lectures which we have come to take for granted. They have both been successful in bringing the work of the Society to the notice of a wider public and in establishing its reputation as a responsible and authoritative body. Happily, their retirement is only partial and they will both continue as active members.

Derrick Warren, who served with distinction the office of Chairman from 1978, has accepted the post of Field Officer. John Bentley was elected Chairman and, being unable to find an alternative candidate, ~~Sandy Buchanan found himself elected Secretary.~~

The names and addresses of the new committee are given below:-

Chairman: John Bentley, 5 Compass Hill, Taunton. (Taunton 2191)

Secretary: Sandy Buchanan, 2 Blake Green, Ashcott, Bridgwater,
TA7 9QF. (Ashcott 566)

Treasurer: Janet Jones, 11 Osborne Way, Taunton, TA1 4PU.
(Taunton 5308)

Publications: Brian Murless, 46 Holway Avenue, Taunton, TA1 3AR.
(Taunton 77158)

Field Officer: Derrick Warren, 52 Stoke Road, Taunton.
(Taunton 86957)

Committee Members: Dick Bruce, 13 Northfield, Bridgwater,
TA6 7EZ

Mike Clarke, Bullifants, Bishops Lydeard,
Taunton.

Geoff Harding, 19B Chilton Street, Bridgwater.

Mike Jones, 11 Osborne Way, Taunton, TA1 4PU.

Iain Miles, Brierley Cottage, Lower Durston,
Taunton.

Chris Tilley, 24 Hamber Lea, Bishops Lydeard,
Taunton.

Subscriptions

These are now due for the year commencing 1 April 1979. The rates remain unchanged at:-

Individual Membership	£2.50
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Family or Corporate Membership	£3.00
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Please forward your Membership Card to the Treasurer with your subscription. Your card will be returned as an acknowledgement of receipt.

Regional I.A. Conference

Eleven SIAS members were amongst over 100 delegates at this year's Annual Conference of Western I.A. Societies held at Keynsham on 24th March. They heard Derrick Warren ably represent the Society with an illustrated history of the Parrett Works near Martock. It is hoped to include a summary of this talk alongside a drawing of the chimney at the works in Journal Three.

These conferences are invariably interesting and socially enjoyable. Next year the conference will be organised by the Gloucestershire I.A. Society, although the date and venue have not yet been fixed. More immediately, another I.A. Symposium has been planned at Dartington Hall on Saturday 17th. November. All members are invited to attend. Further details from Prof. Walter Minchinton, Dept. of Economic and Social History, Exeter University, Exeter, EX4 4RJ.

Geology and the Mendip Mineries

SIAS members are invited to join the field trip organised by the Somerset Archaeological & Natural History Society on Saturday 23rd June. The party will be led by Mr. D. Briggs. The meeting place is at Longbottom Lane, $\frac{1}{2}$ mile South of Shipham (ST446566) and the walk begins at 11.00 a.m.

Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust

As you will have read in the Programme on Page 1, Derrick Warren has arranged for a coach trip to this unique complex of open air museums. The party will visit the site of Abraham Darby's iron foundry at Coalbrookdale and its associated museum; Blists Hill with its blast furnaces, coal mine, canal and incline; Coalport and its museum; the Bedlam Furnace and the Ironbridge itself. The latter, of course, is two hundred years old - having been built by Abraham Darby III in 1779. The coach will leave Silver Street House, Taunton, next to Silver Street Motors at 7.45 a.m. and pick up at Bridgwater Lido at 8.15 a.m. Packed lunch advisable. Please book your seats directly with Derrick. Inclusive cost (coach and all visits):-

-	Members	£3.00
-	Members' children	£2.50
-	Non-members	£3.60

Somerset Inland Waterways Society

S.I.W.S., to which SIAS is affiliated, offers a number of outings which will be of interest to some members.

Sunday 1st July - a walk beside the Rivers Parrett and Isle starting from Langport car park at 2.30 p.m.

Sunday 2nd September - coach visit to Semington Lock and a cruise on the Kennet and Avon Canal to Trowbridge and back on board the Joseph Priestly.

The inclusive cost of the coach, cruise and lunch will be £4.50.

A bar will be open throughout the cruise, selling Real Ale!

Coach leaves Taunton 9.30 a.m. picking up at N. Petherton, Bridgwater, Dunball Roundabout, Street and Glastonbury. Bookings by 12th August to Mrs S. Lewis, 18 Lonsdale Road, Cannington, TA5 2JS.

Westport Canal

S.I.W.S. also reports that the Wessex Water Authority has now dredged the entire length of the Westport Canal. Only the basin remains to be cleared. Fences have been erected and the banks seeded where necessary.

Chapel Allerton Windmill

Although renovation of this important industrial monument was overdue, concern has been expressed by local villagers over the decision to paint the stonework of the mill white. There is some evidence that the building was originally plastered, and would therefore have been white. The principal justification for the paintwork, however, has been the need to render the lias stone weatherproof. The interior woodwork has also been treated for woodworm. The mill is still owned by Bristol City Council but it will soon be handed over to Sedgemoor District Council who will administer the property in collaboration with Allerton Parish Council. It is intended that the interior of the mill will^{be} opened to the public on a regular basis and a descriptive leaflet will be prepared. (Source: Allerton News, April 1979).

Camden Works Museum

Members who attended the regional I.A. conference at Keynsham will hardly need reminding of the interesting new museum which has been established in Bath. Those who did not attend may find the following information useful.

The museum in Morford Street houses the entire stock-in-trade of J.B.Bowler, a Victorian brass founder, general engineer and aerated water manufacturer who set up in business in Bath in 1872. During almost a century of trading virtually nothing was thrown away, so that visitors can see an unique collection of hand-tools, lathes (in working order), bottles, paperwork and a thousand and one other items relating to every aspect of the firm's activity. Everything is displayed in settings that re-create as fully as possible the original premises in Corn Street.

The museum building itself has quite a history. Originally built as a Real Tennis court in 1777 it has, in its time, been a malt-house, pin factory, charity school, light engineering works and a luggage factory.

Admission for adults is 40p (25p. for children and O.A.P.s). The museum is open from 2.00 - 5.00 p.m. daily except Mondays, Christmas, Boxing Day and Easter Sunday. Parties are welcome at other times by prior arrangement. Telephone (0225) 318348.

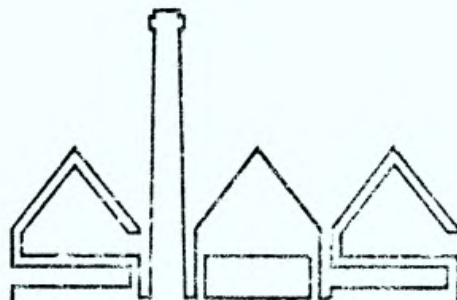
Publications

The Publications Officer would like to remind members that contributions for Journal Three are now due. The Secretary will also be pleased to receive information suitable for inclusion in future Bulletins. He would also be delighted for any offers of help in the preparation of these Bulletins.

SOMERSET INDUSTRIAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

BULLETIN 21

OCTOBER 1979



Hon. Secretary
Sandy Buchanan
2 Blake Green,
Ashcott,
Bridgwater,
TA7 9QF.
Tel. Ashcott 5660

Programme

- Sunday 21st. October Field trip to Dulverton and area. Meet in the town square at 11.30 a.m. Picnic lunch. Leader - Derrick Warren.
- Wednesday 7th. November SIAS Dinner at Hall Farm, Stogumber 8.15 p.m. Numbers are limited so please book well in advance, and not later than 3rd. November via Derrick Warren ('phone Taunton 86957). The cost will be about £4.00 per head. Because the proprietor is not licensed to sell alcohol, please take your drink(s) with you.
- Friday 9th. November Frank Hawtin will give an illustrated talk entitled "Navigating the Staffs. and Worcs. Canal". Weir Lodge, Taunton at 7.30p.m.
- Saturday 17th. November Day Conference organised by Prof. Walter Minchinton on "Principles and Purpose of Recording in Industrial Archaeology". Assemble 10.30 a.m. at Dartington Hall. Please 'phone the Secretary for further information.
- Sunday 25th. November Field trip along the Bridgwater - Taunton Canal. Assemble at the top lock, Firepool Taunton at 9.00 a.m. Depending on the weather and the stamina of the party, this expedition will either traverse the whole length of the canal (approx. 15 miles) and return by train (4.34p.m. from Bridgwater) or walk to Charlton pumping station and return to Taunton by the river path (approx. 8 miles). Leader - Sandy Buchanan. Picnic lunch.
- Friday 7th. December David Greenfield will give an illustrated talk on "Somerset Bridges Re-visited". Weir Lodge 7.30 p.m.

Sunday 9th. December

Visit to Bath and the Camden Works Museum. Assemble 11.00 a.m. at Avon Street Car Park (cross Churchill Bridge, bear left and take 2nd. right turn). Angus Buchanan has kindly agreed to lead a walk round some of the I.A. sites in the city before lunch. Following a picnic or pub lunch the party will visit the Camden Works Museum to view the J.B.Bowler collection (see Bulletin 20) and a display of exhibits from the Somerset and Dorset Railway.

There will be a meeting of the committee on Friday 2nd November at the home of Iain and Mary Miles at Durston at 7.30 p.m. Non-members of the committee will be welcome, but please ring West Monkton 412713 to inform our hosts beforehand.

It is hoped to arrange a Members' Evening in the Christmas period and a ramble to "freshen up" after the festivities. Further details will be announced later.

Summer Activities

The events which were organised for the period from mid-May met with a varied response from members. The fossick to Westford was quite successful. The party visited the pumping station with the pumps of 1886 still in situ, and then walked through the mill complex towards Prowses Mill before returning to the water system which originally served the Tonedale Mill of Fox Bros. Having arranged the fossick at Frome in the middle of the petrol famine, only one member was foolish enough to make the journey. However, we hope to make fresh arrangements for a trip if only because Frome probably has the greatest concentration of I.A. sites in Somerset.

More than twenty members turned out for the evening fossick in Watchet which was very rewarding, even for those members who had visited the port on several occasions previously. Neither the picnic at Wheal Eliza nor the evening fossick at Crewkerne attracted large numbers, but those who did attend enjoyed the outing and the company.

Ironbridge Gorge

Brian Murless reports on the visit which took place on Saturday 7th. July.

A dozen members, in three cars, visited Coalbrookdale during the week which saw the 200th anniversary of the Iron Bridge's construction. Access to the various industrial monuments, spread over some six square miles of the Severn Gorge, proved both easy and economical. Not only did we find free car parking but also provided, without charge, is a regular coach service between the sites.

The SIAS party began their tour at Blists Hill Open Air Museum where a Victorian industrial community is being faithfully re-created and includes a tollhouse, early pithead gear and two pumping engines named David and Sampson. The Shropshire Canal, with the impressive Hay Inclined Plane, links these features with another museum at the former Coalport China Works. Here the

visitor can view the various workshops and study a display of Coalport china, arranged according to styles, artists and uses, within the 'hovel' or outer shell of a brick-built kiln.

A few days prior to our visit the Prince of Wales had opened the Museum of Ironfounding in the Great Warehouse of the Coalbrookdale Company which is situated close to the iron furnaces of the Darby family. This museum illustrates the technological history of iron from prehistory to the present, treating what is literally heavy subject matter in an attractive and educational way with numerous exhibits ranging from an early 18th century graveyard memorial to a washing machine with steel components produced in 1979.

Appropriately, the day's excursion ended at the Iron Bridge which symbolises more than any museum the importance of the Ironbridge Gorge in the history of the Industrial Revolution.

Future Programme

Your committee and individual officers of the Society give a lot of time and thought to the programme but it seems obvious that not all their suggestions are received with favour. We do hope that you will inform the Secretary or any member of the committee if you have any recommendations to make for field trips or for lectures. We also hope that you will demonstrate your support whenever possible by attending some of the functions which have already been arranged.

Brickmaking at Creech St. Michael

Brian Murless is now quite accustomed to finding bricks left for identification on his front doorstep. Frequently such objects are inscribed with the name of the maker and the location of the brickyard. One recent example deposited was stamped 'SAVIDGE, CREECH'. On the tithe map for Creech St. Michael, dated 1839, the site of the later brickyard was partly owned by a certain Elizabeth Savidge. Victorian trade directories indicate the following brickmakers: J. Savage (1861-66), Richard House (1872), Robert Sharp & Son (1883). The yard had fallen into disuse by 1904 but the name survives in Brickyard Farm (ST278253).

An Opportunity For Study

A fact not often appreciated by visitors to most museums is that the items on display form only a fraction of the whole collection. The Somerset Rural Life Museum is no exception in this respect and in addition to objects held in reserve there are notes and tape recordings on many aspects of agriculture and rural industries. Martyn Brown, the Keeper, is keen to encourage any SIAS members who have the time and inclination to study this material at Glastonbury. Drawings and articles which might result would, of course, be considered for inclusion in a future SIAS journal.

Milestones

On a recent excursion to sites on the Bridgwater - Taunton Canal I was dismayed to find that the white-painted, stone milestone which stood outside the lock keeper's cottage at Lower Maunsell had disappeared. I gathered from the occupier of the cottage that a lorry had backed into it. On the same day I failed to locate the 2 mile stone near the Crossways Bridge (happily still there) - although the tall undergrowth may just have buried it. A reversing lorry has destroyed the milepost beside the tollhouse

at Walton on the A39. In other words, the destruction of I.A. sites and monuments continues. The need to record even the most permanent looking objects of I.A. interest is an ever-present duty for members of the society.

News from other Societies

The South East Somerset Archaeological Society has two meetings of special interest to SIAS members. On Sunday 4th. November David Greenfield will give a talk on Bridges; and on Sunday 2nd. December Miss J. McGrath will give a talk on Milestones.

The Annual General Meeting of the Westonzoyland Engine Group will be held on Friday 23rd. November at 7.30 p.m. at the Engine House. In the past year, writes Iain Miles, the pumping station has become the home for a number of old boilers. Vertical, horizontal and locomotive boilers can now be seen on the site. The latter, which is portable (in the sense that it can be moved), was used to sterilize soil in a nursery. The horizontal steam engine, made by Wills of Bridgwater and employed at Major's Brickworks, should be working again by the Spring. The vertical boiler which was acquired from West Coker is also receiving attention preparatory to it being put to use again. Always concerned to raise money to support the venture, WEG has invited donations for its Boiler Fund. Those in excess of £1 will receive a splendid certificate instead of a receipt. Visitors and helpers are always welcome on Thursday evenings and Sunday afternoons. Further details of the group's work are available from Iain Miles, Brierley Cottage, Lower Durston, Taunton.

Cheese Cloth Bandage-Cutting Machine

Martyn Brown approached the society to see if we could help to preserve this machine which was about to be scrapped by a firm in Wells and for which there is no room at the Rural Life Museum. An advanced party of SIAS members have established that this is a project that we can manage and examined two more machines which are likely to be offered to us. We are planning to remove the bandage-cutting machine to the society's store in Ware's warehouse before the end of October. The machine is heavy and will have to be partially dismantled. Any members who can spare time on Saturday 20th October - particularly if they are experienced mechanical engineers - will be most welcome. Please ring the Secretary for details.

This project emphasises once again the need to have a permanent site on which the machines and tools of Somerset's industries can be displayed. In the present financial climate, the prospect does not appear promising but we must keep this long-term objective in view and try to save as many items of interest as possible for posterity.

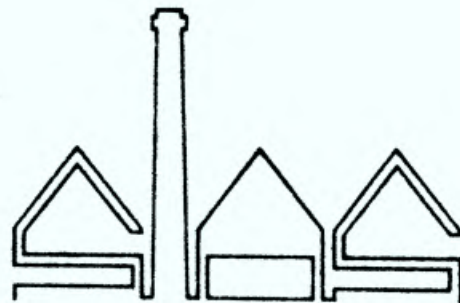
Taunton Tramway Depot

As this Bulletin goes to press I have been informed that these premises have been vacated and that there will be a brief opportunity to carry out a survey before the building is re-developed. I hope to give more details of this in the next Bulletin.

SOMERSET INDUSTRIAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

BULLETIN 22

JANUARY 1980



Hon. Secretary
Sandy Buchanan
2, Blake Green,
Ashcott,
Bridgwater. TA7 9QF
Tel. Ashcott 566.

Programme

- Friday, 18th January Dick Bruce, a committee member of SIAS will give an illustrated talk entitled, "A Chemist's Approach to Industrial Archaeology". Weir Lodge, Taunton at 7.30 p.m.
- Saturday, 2nd February A working party at Ware's Warehouse, Bridgwater Docks. This party will continue the work of preserving and re-assembling machinery in the Society's store under the guidance of Geoff Harding. This is an important project which requires little in the way of skill. Members and friends are advised to wear old clothes - protective gloves will be available. Meet at the warehouse 10 a.m. and bring picnic lunch.
- Friday, 15th February George Watkins, a national expert on steam engines, will address a meeting held jointly with the Westonzoyland Engine Group on the subject of "The Somerset Drainage Engines". The talk will be illustrated with slides. Weir Lodge, Taunton at 7.30 p.m.
- Saturday, 16th February Coach trip to visit the steam engines at Kempton Park and Kew Bridge. This has been arranged by WEG, but SIAS members are invited to attend. The approximate cost will be £2.50 per person. The coach will leave Bridgwater at 7.30 a.m. and return for approximately 10 p.m. Numbers on the visit to the Kempton Park engine are limited, but alternative visits to Hampton Court and Kew Gardens are possible. Please book through the Secretary of WEG - Mrs. Mary Miles, Brierley Cottage, Lower Durston ('phone West Monkton 412713)
- Saturday, 1st March Working party at Ware's Warehouse, Bridgwater. Same arrangements as for February 2nd - from 10 a.m.

P.T.O.

- Friday, 7th March Committee Meeting at the home of Brian Murless, 46 Holway Avenue, Taunton. Non-members of the committee welcome, but please ring Brian at Taunton 77158 beforehand.
- Friday, 28th March Annual General Meeting - an important date in the calendar for SIAS members. Come to the meeting and say what you think SIAS should be offering to its members. If you cannot attend, send your thoughts via the Secretary. It is hoped to offer a programme of films with an I.A. flavour when the business of the meeting has been concluded. Weir Lodge, Taunton 7.30 p.m.
- Saturday, 19th April Eleventh Annual Conference of Western I.A. Societies. The Gloucestershire Society is acting as host for this conference which will be held in Gloucester. As on previous occasions, there will be a number of contributions from member societies. In addition to a talk on the Gloucester Docks, there will be a guided tour of the area. A buffet lunch will be available on board the barge "Semington". The price, inclusive of buffet lunch, morning coffee and afternoon tea will be £3 per person. A reduced fee of £2.75 per person will be accepted from those who book before 29th March. Let us send a good delegation from SIAS. Forms and further information from the Secretary.

Since the publication of the last Bulletin there have been a number of activities organised by the Committee. Generally, attendances have been disappointing and the Committee has been giving considerable thought to the situation. They are urgently looking for ways of improving publicity and considering new activities which will give added purpose to the Society. There is no shortage of work to be done on worthwhile projects. There has been no decline in the threat to industrial monuments, although SIAS has undoubtedly helped to create a more sympathetic attitude within many organisations, both public and private. If you know of a building or site that is likely to be destroyed or radically altered either record what you possibly can by means of sketches or photographs, or ask the Committee to try and mount a full-scale survey.

The following 3 items are reports of the Autumn Field Trips :

Dulverton (21st October)

On a bright October morning the SIAS party was guided round Dulverton by Derrick Warren. He showed the site of an edge-tool works which still has the frame of an iron overshot water wheel with rim drive cast by F. Parkin & Sons, Exeter in 1890, outside the single storey building. Having followed the main mill leat off the River Barle, the party looked at the old woollen and crepe mill which is now a laundry. The upper mill or town mill was a corn mill which originally had two water wheels. Having examined the town bridge and more-or-less deciphered the stone on its northern face, the party walked up stream to Marsh Bridge to view the cast iron work of Hennet and Spink which is now - sadly - being replaced.

The Bridgwater-Taunton Canal (25th November).

The brave souls who ventured on the Society's route-march along the tow path of the County's only real canal, were rewarded by a dry day with a following wind. The gradient was mildly downhill. There was plenty of interest to industrial archaeologists - the junction with the Chard Canal at Creech St. Michael, the Charlton Pumping station - now in poor condition - the several lock gates from upper Maunsell downwards and a surprising number of mileposts which gave the mileage to the original junction with the Parrett at Huntworth. The Crossway swing bridge happily survives at this point and a few yards beyond a cast iron mile post indicates that there are two miles to go to the Dock and floating harbour. Perhaps the most spectacular stretch of the canal is the last mile in a deep cutting through the outskirts of Bridgwater. The party enjoyed a rapid review of their pedestrian achievement by courtesy of British Rail who whisked us back to Taunton in ten minutes.

Bath (9th December)

No doubt the cost of petrol as much as the dubious weather explained the poor attendance for this most interesting day. In spite of showers Dr. Buchanan showed us a number of interesting sites. These included Green Park Station which linked the Somerset and Dorset's line to Evercreech Junction with the Midland Railway's line to Mangotsfield. We then visited the Dredge Suspension Bridge, which is of an unusual design aimed at spreading the stress on the suspension arms more effectively, and walked back towards the city along the towpath of the Avon Navigation. We inspected the first flight of locks on the Kennet and Avon Canal and the splendid iron bridges cast at Coalbrookdale but erected by the local firm of Stothart and Pitt. The party returned to the heart of the city in search of an elusive pub lunch.

In the afternoon we visited the Camden Works Museum. Set in a Real tennis court, this Museum houses the collection of the Bath firm of J.B. Bowler which consisted of light engineering, plumbing and foundry work and an aerated water-bottling plant. The arrangement of the exhibits is excellent and provides a good model for the kind of industrial museum which many of us wish to see established in Somerset. For SIAS the visit was doubly appropriate because a temporary display of photographs and exhibits illustrated the working of the Somerset and Dorset's railway line from Evercreech Junction to Bath.

Cheese Cloth Bandage Cutting Machine

A small but enthusiastic team of volunteers dismantled this machine at the premises of Clares Carlton in Wells and transported it to the Society's store at Ware's Warehouse. One of the urgent tasks facing the society is to re-assemble the machine and ensure that it is preserved in very good working order.

Taunton Tramway Depot

As mentioned in the last Bulletin, these premises have been vacated and a small SIAS team secured permission to survey the building. Very little of I.A. interest has in fact survived, but a photographic record has been made.

Telescopic Railway Bridge, Bridgwater.

As many members will know, this bridge which is certainly unique in Somerset, was very badly vandalised before a preser-

vation order was placed on the surviving structure. The engine house and track on the east side of the river which allowed half the bridge to be pulled back when tall-masted ships wished to proceed up to the Bridgwater Quays, were destroyed. There is virtually no prospect of the bridge ever being restored to its original condition. The County Council is considering purchasing the bridge and using it as a temporary road bridge to serve the projected Town Centre Distributor Road until a new road bridge can be constructed across the R. Parrett. This use of the telescopic bridge will require that the existing timber deck will have to be replaced and the main span have to be fixed.

The initial problem concerns the statutory requirement that the bridge should be opened if a ship determines to exercise its right to proceed to the Town Bridge. The County Council will not purchase the bridge unless it can carry out the strengthening work specified, which will make it impossible to fulfil the statutory obligation which still relates to it. Consequently, an amendment is being sought to the original Act and SIAS has been approached and asked to support the County's initiative which will ensure that this interesting monument to the age of steam will not be allowed to fall down. Having discussed the matter recently, the Committee of SIAS is prepared to support the County Council on condition that the future of the bridge is ensured when its function as a temporary road bridge has ended, and that any items of interest which may have to be dispensed with during the strengthening process are properly preserved.

Lead condensing flues at Charterhouse

These 19th century flues have given cause for concern over several years. They are certainly the most easily accessible example of this kind of structure on Mendip. The impact of the elements and visitors has put the survival of the flues in jeopardy. The cost of repair work is very high but the Mendip Society has recently taken an initiative to organise teams of voluntary workers. Any member of SIAS who would like to take part in this enterprise should contact the Secretary for further details.

Welsh Mines Society

David Bick has informed us that a society for those interested in Welsh metal mines and minerals was discussed at Dylife on 10th June, before visiting Cyfartha and Bacheiddon. He believes that a useful purpose would be served by beginning with a low-key approach in which an informal society meets occasionally and circulates a newsletter to keep members in touch, the frequency (hopefully twice a year) depending on cash and materials available.

He has offered to act as general factotum for the time being. Please forward anything suitable for publication relating to Wales - news, comments, discoveries, developments, etc. The annual subscription is 25p plus S.A.E. The next meeting is at Cwmystwyth, date to be arranged. His address is The Pound House, Newent, Glos.

Hon. Secretary
C.A. Buchanan
2, Blake Gardens,
Ashcott.
Tel: Ashcott 566

What the Papers Say

Of the variety of documentary sources available to the industrial archaeologist local newspapers are, in some ways, the easiest to consult. Although those printed during the last century often broadcasted national and international news, numerous items of provincial interest can be found. Only on rare occasions has some devoted student compiled an index to the bound volumes but a relatively unaltered layout over a number of years in most papers can assist the searcher.

Recently Brian Murless looked at a lesser known organ of journalism, the 'Yeovil Times' for the year 1849. In some respects life seems to have changed little, talking points of that time including the increase in juvenile crime and the doubtful morality of a religious sect on the Quantock Hills. For the most part the value of these weekly issues to the I.A. enthusiast lies in the chance references contained in sales notices. The local character of contemporary industries is reflected in the transfer of businesses such as leather dressing yards, examples from Barwick and Star's Lane, Yeovil being particularly informative. There was also a case of yarn theft at East Coker. The Bristol and Exeter Railway completed the first stage of the Yeovil-Durston Railway and set up its carriage sheds at Bridgwater.

Much of the information is necessarily fragmentary but if copied and filed away it can be retrieved at some future time to illuminate wider research into a particular place or topic. Patience can be rewarded by an item that draws several threads of I.A. interest together. For example, in the Yeovil Times of 18th December, 1849, Messrs. Cockey & Sons, bell founders of Frome, are linked with the brewery at Oakhill near Shepton Mallet. The reason for the co-operation was the erection of a gasometer for the village by the Frome firm and paid for by the brewers. The completion was concluded by a feast for the workmen.

Rural Workshop at Newtown, Buckland St Mary

The buildings are a good example of a small 19th cent. rural workshop serving the local community, for it was a smithy, wheelwrights, millwrights, carpenters, cabinet makers and undertakers shops and sawmill. In its heyday there were 20 people employed and so far it has been found to have been in the ownership of two related families STONE & GRABHAM. It is hoped to give a more complete account of its history, buildings and products in a later bulletin.

Bishop Brothers Foundry, North Street, Wellington

In 1837 William Bishop established a smiths shop on half a perch of land at North Street. With only one other foundry in Wellington, at Champford Lane, there was a great demand locally for engineering skills. By 1875 Bishop Brothers were able to advertise themselves not only as founders but also as gasfitters, millwrights and manufacturers of steam engines, boilers and iron tanks. The Fox family commissioned sluice gates for their mill at Uffculme

in 1885 and an iron balustrade for the grandstand of the Wellington Rugby Club (1889). Many other examples of the work of Bishop Brothers survive in and around Wellington.

The works closed in 1979 and the site is due for redevelopment. However the owners - the Westcott family - were concerned that nothing of value should be destroyed and SIAS, through the Somerset Museum Service, were asked, at very short notice, to see if there was anything of IA value and, if so, salvage it. It was decided that at the same time a photographic record be made of the buildings and anything that remained of the blast furnaces, smithy, etc.

One door was found to have been barred for many years and, under circumstances reminiscent of Howard Carter and Tutankhamun's tomb, when forced open a treasure house was revealed. It was the pattern makers shop containing shelf upon shelf of pitch pine patterns and showed the wide range of products made by the foundry over the years - from railings, drain covers and lamp posts to segments of waterwheels, bearing brackets and gearing of all sizes. There was also one for a unique three sided milepost.

These patterns together with a miscellany of 'rubbish' far too interesting to be cast away made up five four-ton lorry loads which were taken to Ware's Warehouse at Bridgwater for sorting and storage. The many documents were deposited with the County Records Office.

PROGRAMME

- | | |
|--|---|
| Thursday 8th May
7.00 pm | French's Tannery in Tancred Street, Taunton,
to view Beam Engine.
Leader Derrick Warren. |
| Saturday 17th May
10.30 am at the site | Charlton Pump House (ST 287 261) on banks of
Bridgwater-Taunton Canal about $\frac{3}{4}$ m East of the Canal
Bridge at Creech St. Michael. The purpose of the
visit is to survey the site.
Leader Derrick Warren. |
| Sunday 8th June
Depart County Hall
Taunton 8.30 am | Morwellham Open Air Museum.
The party will travel via Sticklepath to visit
Finch's Foundry (1000-1130). Picnic lunch on
Dartmoor and visit Gunpowder Mill. Arrive Morwellham
at 2.00 pm approx. Travel in own cars - please
contact the Field Officer, Derrick Warren, if you need
transport.
Leader Derrick Warren. |
| Saturday 14th June
2.00 pm at Ware's
Warehouse | Exeter I.A. group to visit Bridgwater Docks area.
SIAS members invited to join.
Leader Sandy Buchanan |
| Tuesday 17th June
7.00 pm in town square | Ilminster. An evening fossick which will include a
visit to Rose Mill.
Leader Derrick Warren. |
| Friday 11th July
7.00 pm in Central
Car Park | Langport & Thornley Mill. An evening fossick
Leader Sandy Buchanan |
| Thursday 17th July
at 2.30 pm at site | Beer Quarries (SY 214 894)
This is an underground visit and members must have
stout footwear and a <u>torch</u> and, if possible, should
bring safety helmets. |

Renewal of Membership 1980-81

To the Hon. Treasurer, Mrs. J.C. Jones, 11 Osborne Way, Taunton, Somerset TA1 4PU

Please renew my/our* enrolment as individual/family/Corporate* member(s) of the Somerset I.A. Society.

I enclose cheque/PO for £

Individual member	£2.50
Family/Corporate	£3.00

BLOCK	Name (Mr/Mrs/Ch)
CAPITALS	Address.
PLEASE	

Tel: No.	Post Code
----------	-----------

I am particularly interested interested in the following aspects of I.A.:-

Signed.

*delete as necessary

Hon. Secretary,
C.A. Buchanan,
2, Blake Green,
Ashcott
Bridgwater
Tel: Ashcott 566

*Subscription for 1980-81
not received yet!*

Journal Three

The Society is pleased to announce the forthcoming publication of its third journal this Autumn. Owing to the steep rise in printing costs it is regretted that a charge will have to be made to members but as a token of their loyalty each member is to be allowed up to 3 copies at the PRE-PUBLICATION PRICE of £2 which INCLUDES POSTAGE.

The Journal records the work of the Society during the past three years - excavations at the Chandos Glass Cone, Bridgwater, and Southfield Brickyard, Taunton; surveys at the Parrett Iron Works and Silk Mills Canal Bridge plus other contributions on Chidgey's Foundry, Watchet, Wells Turnpike Trust and Westonzoyleland Pumping Station. The Society also welcomes articles by two new contributors: Robin Bush, Deputy County Archivist, and Steven Minnitt, Keeper of Archaeology at the County Museum. Photographs (14) are included for the first time alongside 13 figures and text making an estimated total of 50 pages (A4 size) and printed by offset lithography. Members are advised that this is a LIMITED EDITION and are urged to complete and post the ORDER FORM at the end of this bulletin without delay.

Wanted!

In order to meet the demand for back numbers which follows the publication of a new journal, would members please hand in to the officers any unsold copies of Journals One and Two; the Treasurer would be grateful for any money from sales. The Society is also seeking someone from amongst its membership to become Stock Officer. This post would entail taking charge of the Society's stock of cards, journals and posters, and making a record when items are taken away to be sold.

Charlton Pumping Station

On a glorious day in May, four members turned up to survey this structure adjacent to the Bridgwater - Taunton Canal near Creech St. Michael (ST 273255). Although the whole site was in a dangerous state the party uncovered many points of interest. The three-storeyed pumping house, together with a boiler house and chimney base, were built of local brick and had features similar to those at the well-known Crofton Pumping Station in Wiltshire. In 1905 the buildings housed a beam pump (barrel 2ft.5in.; 7ft. stroke; 13 strokes per minute), a low pressure condensing engine, and boilers which were fixed in 1871 and 1876. In temporary use (1900-1) was a duplex pump by Tangyes of Birmingham which was replaced by two locomotive boilers working with a centrifugal pump. The boilers (140 lb. p.s.i.) were installed in 1901 and the pump could deliver 125,000 gallons an hour. The water was taken from the River Tone into the Canal but a later extension to the pumping house, on its south side, was probably associated with equipment used to fill the water troughs on the railway lines which run between the canal and the river. Full advantage was taken of the weather to make a photographic record as well as the measured survey. One view that eluded the group was an elevation of the pumping station seen from the farther bank of the canal. (There was no convenient crossing point and the fields on the other side were under cultivation). The problem was ingeniously solved by the Field Officer who hailed a passing dinghy and a somewhat reluctant Secretary was ferried across the canal to take the required photographs.

Well Engineered!

Congratulations are in order to Mary and Iain Miles on the birth of their second son, Thomas James Brindley.

Mr. T.C. Bryant of South Wales has forwarded to S.I.A.S. a copy of his article on the Brendon Hills Iron Mines which appeared in the Journal of the Wessex Cave Club, Vol. 16, No. 180 for March 1980. In addition Mr. Bryant has sent a set of maps which identifies each site. The article is a valuable contribution to the published work on the mines as it describes and locates the shafts and drifts. It also makes the important point of how dangerous the mines have become in recent years. John Bentley has given a collection of negatives of shots he took on the Taunton to Minehead line in 1970 and Fred Willes has donated film relating to the S.I.A.S. survey of Bishop Brothers Foundry undertaken earlier this year. All the above material will form part of the Society's Archive about which more will be said in a future bulletin.

Preserved for Posterity

Under an arrangement between the Somerset County Council and U.B.M. Mac Ltd., one of the three kilns at the former Barham Brothers Brickworks at East Quay, Bridgwater, is to be preserved. Once the final details have been agreed the area around the kiln will need to be fenced and materials salvaged from the other kilns for use in its restoration. Dr. Ian Burrow, Archaeologist at the Planning Department is co-ordinating activities.

Mills with Somerset connections

In recent months Brian Murless has visited two mills outside the county which have links with its past.

Culmstock Mill

This three-storeyed stone structure was once associated with the woollen industry and was at one time owned by Fox Brothers of Wellington and no doubt operated along similar lines to their other Devon mill at Uffculme. During the 1870's a brick extension was constructed and a double iron water-wheel installed, remains of which can still be seen. Local knowledge suggest that the bricks, from Thomas of Poole, and the wheel, probably from Fred Bros. of Champford Lane, Wellington, were brought together on trailers towed by a traction engine. The present owner of the mill has retained the old line shafting and has set up a weaving business.

Carew French Mill

Situated on the south bank of the Carew River, about 5 miles east of Pembroke, it is the only tidal mill remaining in Wales. Although a woollen mill is recorded in 1558 on the site, the present three-storey structure dates from the early 19th century and has been used, at various times, for grinding barley meal, bone meal and corn. An agreement dated 12th July, 1804, between James Bernard of Crowcombe Court, and Owen Griffith, states that the mill was let at 16 guineas per annum, payable half yearly, also yielding for young fat hens or pullets every Christmas. The mill is still owned by the Trollope-Bellow family who are directly descended from the Carews of Crowcombe.

Visits

During May, in response to many requests, another evening visit was made to French's Tannery, Tancred St, Taunton, to view the beam engine. Although partially dismantled it is, however, safe and the management are conscious of the need for its preservation. Like so much else today it is a question of money. We were joined, for this visit, by members of Weston Zoyland Engine Trust.

One Sunday in June five car loads braved lowering skies and proceeded to Finch's Edge Tool Works at Sticklepath. Here there is a fine exhibition on waterpower and also one telling the history, and showing the products of the firm. The works themselves have been restored and put into working order but the feel, smell and looks of a real work place has been lovingly preserved. The water wheels, trip hammers, grind stones and forge were put into motion and their workings demonstrated. A picnic lunch was eaten amidst the monolithic ruins of the old (gun) Powder Mills near Postbridge with the remainder of the day being spent around the quays and mines at Morwelham. A fascinating area with its canal, inclines, hydro-electric power station and museums but very much a tourist honeypot during the season. However we tried to consort ourselves like Industrial Archaeologists not grockles but there was some searching for cream teas!!!

A most interesting Thursday afternoon in July was spent in the Beer Quarry Caves where, from these vast caverns, the fine white building stone has been quarried since the 14th Cent. Only limestone is now quarried opencast but it is hoped that stone quarrying will recommence shortly. Being summer, the caves were unfortunately without their bat population. We were unexpectedly joined by a large contingent from the Oolitic Mines Group who were able to inform us knowledgeably about this particular form of quarrying.

Fossicks

In spite of the poor summer weather two evening fossicks were held and fortune, in the shape of two glorious sunny evenings after torrential daytime rain, favoured the good and brave turnout of members. At Ilminster, Rose Mills, once the house of the Chard Lace Company, was visited first and where great interest was evinced in the original Armfield Turbines and generators still in situ. After that a long walk took in Hazelwell Tollhouse, Day Foley's Collar Works, the old brewery and gas works, Dowlish Mills, Herne Hill tunnel and incline of the Chard Canal and sundry items including street furniture made by Denning & Co. of Chard. Langport was equally interesting especially the building originally housing Stuckey's Bank and the Parrett Navigation with its old wharfage and the locks at Langport and further upstream at Thornly Mill. These walks engender a thirst and both evenings were rounded off most pleasantly in a local pub.

Book Reviews

Chard History Group are to be commended on their latest publication "Chard in 1851". The date of course being that of the census from which most of the facts have been painstakingly culled. The bare bones of fact have been clothed, not only by research into many other sources but by the intimate knowledge of Chard and its people by the authors. It clearly details how all stratas of society, lived, worked and died and although it is most fascinating to those who know Chard and who can inter relate with names and places it is also of great use as a social history and a picture of any small rural industrial towns of that year in the last century. The authors are also fortunate in being able to draw on the diary of a local farmer, Arthur Hull, the comprehensive extracts for that year giving a very human picture of life in this small town. It is a great pity that the reproductions of the photographs in the text are so poor and am I alone in finding graphs and tables difficult to appreciate? However these are tucked away at the end. All in all great value at 80p.

D.W.W.

Book News

Three recent publications of related interest to I.A.S.:-

Brooke, L.E.J., 'The Book of Yeovil' (revised edition), Barracuda Books, £10.50.

Clinker, C.R., 'The West Somerset Railway', Exmoor Press, £1.50.

Sutton, B., 'A History of Shoe Making in Street Somerset', Ebor Press, £4.95.

ORDER FORM

To: Mr. C.A. Buchanan, Hon. Secretary, S.I.A.S.,
2 Blake Green, Ashcott, Bridgwater TA7 9QF

Please supply ... copy/ies of S.I.A.S. Journal Three at £2 per copy (post free)

(Cheques should be made payable to S.I.A.S.)

Name

Address

.....

SOMERSET INDUSTRIAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY - AUTUMN PROGRAMME 1980

- Sunday 14th September Burrow Farm Engine House. A visit arranged by Frank Hawtin for the Exmoor Society; SIAS members welcome. Meet at Naked Boy Stone (ST015 345) 10.30 a.m.
- Thursday 2nd October Taunton Cider Company. Numbers limited to 35. If you wish to attend please book through Hon. Treasurer, Janet Jones at Taunton 75308. Meet in the Company's car park at Norton Fitzwarren, 7.15 p.m.
- Saturday 11th October Day Conference at Dartington Hall organised by Prof. Minchinton on Museums and I.A. £5.75 inclusive charge for coffee, lunch and tea. Further details from Sandy Buchanan, Ashcott (0458) 210566.
- Friday 17th October Vernacular Architecture; an illustrated talk by Ron Gilson. Weir Lodge, 7.30 p.m.
- Sunday 26th October Mendip Mines and Quarries. A field trip led by Geof. Fitton. Members wishing to go underground should have protective headgear, lights and strong footwear. Picnic and/or pub lunch. Meet Axbridge town square, 10.30 a.m.
- Saturday 22nd November Tiverton Walkabout. A visit led by Alan Voce to see sites of I.A. interest in the town including the museum. Picnic or pub lunch. Meet at the Grand Western Canal car park (SS963 123) at 11.00 a.m.
- Wednesday 26th November Bristol Channel Shipping; an illustrated talk by John Earle, Curator of the Blake Museum, Bridgwater. Weir Lodge, 7.30 p.m.
- Friday 12th December Members' Evening. Bring your slides and see what members have been doing in their spare time! Weir Lodge, 7.30 p.m.
- Friday 30th January Advanced Notice for 1981 diaries. Mr. David St. John Thomas, the well-known authority on the railways of the South West will give a talk on the Great Western Railway in the South West. This has been arranged in conjunction with the Railway and Canal Historical Society and the Newcomen Society. Weir Lodge, 7.30 p.m.

Note: Meetings held at Weir Lodge in Staplegrove Road, Taunton are by courtesy of the Somerset Schools Museum Service.

CAF/4.9.80

Journal Three

Following the announcement and details of the third journal in the last bulletin, there has been a most encouraging response by members who have placed orders with the Hon. Secretary. The Publications Committee were hoping that the journal would appear by Christmas but due, as they say, to circumstances beyond our control, this has not been possible. However, the offer, to members only, of up to 3 copies at the pre-publication price of £2 each (post free), still remains open.

David St. John Thomas

On Friday, 30th January, members will have a rare opportunity of listening to Mr. St. John Thomas on the subject of the Great Western Railway in the South West. Attendances at Society talks have been in decline but it is hoped that this trend will be dramatically reversed for this well-known railway authority. Guests are always welcome to attend and members are asked to promote this event as widely as possible.

Roadside Survey

One of our projects in 1981 will aim to record in a comprehensive manner roadside features such as milestones. All members may participate and no previous experience or qualifications are required. On Friday January 9th, members will be shown illustrations of the types of features to be recorded. The area to be covered will at first be limited to within the boundaries of Taunton Deane. Participants will be equipped with notes for guidance over specially selected routes and will have several weeks in which to carry out the exercise. On Friday, April 3rd, material will be handed in at a second meeting and an opportunity provided for the discussion of the results and for comments on the project. A trial run, carried out by the organizers a few months ago, proved to be a great success: a most enjoyable outdoor activity yet one which has an underlying purpose.

Trusts

It is heartening during these straightened economic times to learn of groups which are promoting industrial archaeology through the formation of trusts. In Avon the Brunel Engineering Centre Trust aims to secure the repair and restoration of Temple Meads Old Station whilst a similar body is concerned with industrial remains at Saltford. During this year the Westonzoyland Engine Group achieved charitable status and is now known by the initials W.E.T. In Bridgwater the first tentative steps have been taken towards the establishment of the Somerset Historic Buildings Trust. This body has, as its first objective, the repair of Ware's Warehouse, Bridgwater Docks, and its re-use subsequently as a leisure complex including an I.A. museum.

Frome Station

Concern has been expressed about press reports that Frome Station, with its unusual overall roof, is to be demolished. The Society is watching events closely and has made contact with other interested bodies.

The Old Highway

A large number of photographs have been made available for study by the County Surveyor, and will be deposited at the Somerset Record Office in due course. The majority show the Bristol-Exeter road, the A38, from Bedminster Down to Whitehall, prior to the improvements carried out between 1924 and 1928.

The series is numbered sequentially but some are missing of the road south-west of Taunton. No further details accompanied the photographs and the identification of some 300 views was undertaken by John Bentley and David Greenfield. The task was completed over three months and was successful in virtually every case, the sites being plotted on the 1904 Ordnance Survey maps at 6 inches to 1 mile, and the National Grid References noted. The prints are of postcard size and are mostly of excellent quality.

Stock for Sale

Dick Bruce has become the Society's first Stock Officer and takes charge of our cards, journals and posters. Members wishing to take items for sale should first contact Dick at 13 Northfield, Bridgwater (tel: Bridgwater 423325).

Of Grave Concern

Beckington Churchyard (ST 802517) contains three fine examples of cast-iron graves. Although other Somerset churchyards have some ironwork the Beckington group are exceptional and are thought to be associated with local foundry families. Any information about similar memorials would be welcomed.

Back Numbers

Revised prices of Journals One and Two are £1 and £1.50 respectively (postage included).

Chard History Group

This small but active group report that a turbine in the former sawmill at Cricket St. Thomas is at present undergoing restoration and should be visible to the public next year. They have also discovered a fire plate at Wambrook Old Smithy inscribed "TPD 1858" and a limekiln, in good condition, at Shaggs Flood which pre-dates the Enclosure Act of 1814. One further success has been the rescue of a damaged milestone with the co-operation of the local Divisional Surveyor.

Burrow Farm Mine Engine House.

For some years consideration has been given to the possibility of conserving the structure of Burrow Farm mine engine house on the Brendon Hills. The demolition nearly two years ago of the only other surviving engine house at Kennisham Hill has caused attention to be focussed more sharply on what is now the only surviving mine engine house in West Somerset, and further study and up-to-date costings have been made. Appeals to grant aiding bodies having met with no success, the Exmoor Society has launched an appeal for funds to carry out the necessary work. The engine house is thought to have been constructed in 1879 by Henry Skewis, the Cornish mines captain who then had charge of the management of the Brendon Hills iron mines. It was constructed to a typically Cornish plan and it is likely that it housed a 25" beam pumping on the site of the pre-mediaeval surface workings in about 1860, but had only worked intermittently until in about 1877 the discovery of larger bodies of ore was thought to justify the expense of a permanent engine installation. Like all other mines on the Brendon Hills, Burrow Farm closed in September 1883 when the Gilchrist-Thomas basic steel making process superseded the need for the phosphorus free Brendon ore. Thus the remaining structure is typically Cornish, and although lightly built is still basically sound. Urgent conservation is needed however, if the structure is to be kept standing: this would consist of rebuilding the uppermost parts of the walls and stack, pointing all walls inside and out, the insertion of lintels over window openings, and the repair of the masonry to these openings. The cost at present is estimated at £6000, but this is likely to be reduced by the most generous offer by Somerset Scaffolding Ltd to lend, free of charge, the necessary scaffolding. At present the fund stands at about £800. All contributions will be gratefully received by the Exmoor Society: cheques should be made payable to the 'Burrow Farm Mine Engine House Fund', and sent to the Exmoor Society, Parish Rooms, Dulverton, Somerset TA22 9DP.

S.I.A.S. was formed nine years ago partly as the result of work on the Brendon Hills and the Society has taken a special interest in the engine house ever since. The Committee felt that the Society should support the appeal fund by an initial donation of £50 with an equivalent sum to be given during the next financial year.

Rope Walk at West Coker ST 512136

On Saturday 6th December five members descended on this most interesting site and carried out a survey. It wasn't that the survey was all that complicated but a building well over 300 feet long takes a lot of measuring especially as one member could rarely stand upright! Production ceased twelve years ago and as the building's only obvious value is its tiles then it is under threat and should it go then so too will the last such in Somerset. However, it is now drawn and photographed and thanks to its owner, Mr. Daws, a complete set of rope making machinery has been offered to the Museum service. This will complement other machinery taken from the works of Job, Gould, also in West Coker, last year. This coming summer a party of strong men (or women) will be wanted to help move this to Ware's Warehouse. But anybody who can should come, if only to see it.

Dartington I.A. Conference Saturday 11th October

The theme taken this year was I.A. and Museums. This covered the display of I.A. relics in their original working environments, the re-creation of these on special sites or in museums and the restoration and preservation of sites themselves. The speakers came from widely diverse organisations ranging from the commercial (Tolgus Tin) through County Museums and on site developments (Morwelham) to individual entrepreneurs (Otterton Mill) and I.A. Societies (Risea & Claverton Pump House). From all these one point emerged very clearly. People want to see the past at work and are prepared to pay for it but, and it is a very big but where I.A. Societies might be concerned, displays have to be professionally mounted (even down to such detail as type face on notices), to be able to hold the public's interest for long enough to warrant their money and their time in getting there and that all displays must be adequately staffed both for the giving of information, security and for the public's protection where working machinery is involved. Admirably organised by and under the able chairmanship of Prof. Walter Minchington it provided a most instructive day; in superb surroundings with good food and stimulating company.

Book Review

The Batsford Guide to the Industrial Archaeology of Central Southern England. C A & R A Buchanan, Published by B T Batsford Ltd, 1980. 208pp illus. £14.95

Industrial archaeology is an interdisciplinary study embracing within its scope the history of technology, archaeology, social and political history, and, of course, economic history; outlines are blurred, boundaries indistinct. Perhaps it is for these reasons that IA's appeal is so wide-spread both at professional and amateur level. To be successful therefore, a general book on IA must appeal to different interests and different intellects, to professional historians, to the educated amateur and the observant visitor all at the same time. This book succeeds for precisely these reasons. It neither delves too deeply nor does it merely skim the surface; it does not pose more questions than it answers, but it leaves scope for further research. A general introduction sketches the industrial background of the four counties of Gloucester, Avon, Wiltshire and Somerset, and draws attention to the natural features that shaped their industries. Similarly, each county is prefaced by a brief coherent introduction, and this is followed by a more detailed exploration of sites of interest to be found in the towns and villages of each county. Many up-to-date photographs as well as plans and drawings amplify the text, and a county map broadly indicates the sites, while grid references in the text enable precise identification to be made. A brief bibliography and index round off the whole. As one may expect from Batsfords, this is a well designed and produced book that is a pleasure both to handle and read. The price? Well, for just over two hundred pages of text and photographs, dear but not expensive.

M.H.J.

Book News

Two recent publications of related interest to I.A.:—

McGarvie, M. 'Bowlinggreen Mill', Avalon Leatherboard Co.Ltd., £4.95.

Maggs, C. 'The Taunton to Barnstaple Line (Devon & Somerset Railway)', Oakwood Press, £2.10.

Visit to Taunton Cider Co. Thursday 2nd October

A very full house of members accepted a most kind invitation from the Taunton Cider Company to visit their factory at Norton Fitzwarren on the evening of 2nd October. After a film showing the art of the cider maker and, incidentally, the craft of cooperage, we were taken on a conducted tour of the factory where every stage of cider making and packaging was explained. Afterwards we were entertained to a lavish buffet and we were able to more than sample the various products of this very old and local industry.

Winter & Spring Programme 1981

Thursday Jan. 1st. Ramble over Brendon Hills (including up the incline).
1030 am. Meet Raleigh's Cross Inn. ST 039344.

Friday Jan. 9th. Briefing on Milestone Survey. (See Note).
7.30 pm Weir Lodge.

Friday Jan 30th. Talk on Great Western Railway. Mr. St.John Thomas
7.30 pm Weir Lodge.

Friday March 20th. Annual General Meeting. 7.30 pm Weir Lodge.

Friday April 3rd. De Briefing on results of Milestone Survey
7.30 pm Weir Lodge.

Sunday May 3rd. All day walk Haytor Granite Railway - Bovey Tracey -
Stover Canal. Stout shoes - packed lunch.
Meet Car Park SX 760768. Liaise with Derrick Warren
Taunton 86957 over transport.

Annual General Meeting

The Society's A.G.M. held on Friday, 20th March was both well attended and lively with reports and debates on last season's activities. We welcome two new members to the committee and thank those retiring for their services. Although the officers remain at their posts for another year both the Chairman and Hon. Secretary have indicated that they intend to retire in 1982. Please give careful consideration to these future vacancies so that a smooth transition can take place next year.

The names and addresses of the new committee are given below:-

Chairman: John Bentley, 5 Compass Hill, Taunton. (Taunton 72191)

Secretary: Sandy Buchanan, 2 Blake Green, Ashcott, Bridgwater,
TA7 9QF. (Ashcott 201566)

Treasurer: Janet Jones, 11 Osborne Way, Taunton, TA1 4PU.
(Taunton 75308)

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Committee Members: Dick Bruce, 13 Northfield, Bridgwater, TA6 7EZ.

Tony Bull, Austen Cottage, Charlton Adam, Somerton.

David Greenfield, 33 Barrow Drive, Taunton, TA1 2UX.

Geoff Harding, 19B Chilton Street, Bridgwater.

Iain Miles, Rose Cottage, Lower Durston, Taunton.

Tony Walford, Upton Bridge Farm, Long Sutton, Langport.

Subscriptions

There has been a slight increase in the subscription for 1981-2 but there is a new concessionary rate for senior citizens. Membership is due for renewal on 1st April, 1981 and a tear-off slip is included at the end of this bulletin.

Please forward your Membership Card to the Treasurer with your subscription. Your card will be returned as an acknowledgement of receipt.

Parish Surveys

The third completed parish survey by the Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society - Carhampton - compiled by Mrs. J. Dixon, and prepared for publication by Mr. E.F. Williams, is now on sale.

Carhampton is a parish of contrasts, embracing steep wooded slopes inland, and a flat coastal plain. The pattern of settlement and tenure has tended to reflect this contrast. Distinctive features in the parish have included a series of deer parks which formed part of the Dunster Castle estates, and a chain of World War II pill boxes along the coast. Copies of this and earlier surveys - Wambrook and Luxborough - cost £1.00 each to callers, and £1.25 by post, from SANHS Office, Taunton Castle.

Westonzoyland Pumping Station

The station will be open on Spring and August Bank Holidays (Sundays and Mondays 11 a.m. - 5 p.m.) in addition to the first Sunday afternoon in each month. Two special events will be held to celebrate the 150th Anniversary of the Station and of land drainage by steam in Somerset.

Easter Sunday and Monday (11 a.m. - 5 p.m.) The Wessex Stationary Engine Club will be holding a small display of their engines at the station. Adults 25p, OAPs 10p and members of W.E.T. admitted free.

Saturday and Sunday, July 25th/26th (11 a.m. - 5 p.m.). The Association of 16mm. Scale Modellers will exhibit their portable live steam layout at the station. (Admission price to be arranged). S.I.A.S. members are welcome to come along to these events and to see the restoration of the station in progress.

Summer Programme

- Friday, Apr. 24th. Committee meeting to be held at 2 Blake Green, Ashcott. Would non-committee members attending please ring Sandy Buchanan first (Ashcott 201566).
- Sunday, May 3rd. Walking the Haytor granite railway and Stover Canal. Meet Haytor car park (SX765771) 10.30 a.m. Stout shoes and packed lunch. Ring Derrick Warren (Taunton 86957) - he will try and arrange for those needing lifts and transport sharing.
- Thursday, May 28th. Evening fossick around Castle Cary preceeded by visit to hair weaving works of Donne & Sons. Meet Market Place, Castle Cary (ST641324) 6.45 p.m. or Higher Flax Mills C.C. 7.00 p.m.
- Tuesday, June 23rd. Evening fossick around Minehead including ~~visit to pottery.~~ Meet 6.45 p.m. on Esplanade opposite Hobby Horse Inn. (SS974463).
- Tuesday, July 7th. Evening fossick around Milborne Port. Meet 6.45 p.m. in the Square (ST678186).
- Sunday, Oct. 4th. Unique Social event. By West Somerset Railway Pulman Car from Bishops Lydeard to Minehead and return including four course lunch (there is a bar!) £8.75 per person inclusive (£7.75 children). Leave Bishops Lydeard approx. 12 noon, return approx. 4.00 p.m. Ample car parking. Early acceptance please with £2.00 per person reservation fee would be appreciated (to Derrick Warren). It is hoped to get a full coach of 26 persons.

Into View In '82

The last major exhibition of the work of S.I.A.S. and its members was in October, 1973. Next April the Society has been invited to mount a display at the Somerset County Museum in the Great Hall of Taunton Castle. A sub-committee has been formed consisting of Sandy Buchanan, David Greenfield and Geoff Harding, and they would welcome suggestions about items for inclusion.

Adios Amigo

Members will be sad to learn of the departure of Frank Hawtin for the warmer climes of Spain. Frank's tireless energy and enthusiasm for industrial archaeology is well known and his work on the Grand Western Canal was at a time when IA was not generally recognised as an academic discipline. In 1972 Frank was instrumental in the formation of S.I.A.S., became its first chairman, and began the happy relationship between the Society and Weir Lodge. Within S.I.A.S. he encouraged "fresh blood" amongst both officers and committee and his active participation included the direction of the Chandos Glass Cone dig (1976-7) ably supported by his wife Pippa. We wish them both a long and contented retirement.

Gas Heaters at Bathpool

Following an enquiry from the Archaeology of Building Services Group, the Society examined eight gas heaters suspended from the roof trusses in All Saints Church, Bathpool. Amongst our investigating team was Mr. David Gledhill of South West Gas, who is currently researching the history of the gas industry in Taunton and district from 1820 to 1950. He was able to identify the heaters with their large globes as products of Radiant Heating Ltd., of Birmingham and they date to c.1920. (Mr. Gledhill has kindly agreed to address the Society: please see programme). During the conversion to natural gas in the early 1970s, most of these types of appliances were destroyed. When, as is likely, the church is declared redundant, S.I.A.S. will endeavour to find the heaters a good home.

Roadside Survey

Eleven members participated in the Society's first-ever roadside survey which examined features chiefly along routes radiating from Taunton. Some fifty milestones were recorded together with fourteen boundary stones. In addition details of eight tollhouses were noted, two of which had been moved physically from their original locations; Other miscellaneous objects recorded included large boulders, a cast iron pump and a well-head. Follow-up activities will check various editions of O.S. maps for further features and a search amongst the Minutes of the Taunton Turnpike Trust should obtain dates for some of the road re-alignments noted by our observers. Clearly in a limited operation of this nature S.I.A.S. is able to demonstrate its effectiveness in recording objects which are rapidly disappearing from the sides of our roads. Next year the Society hopes to expand this work throughout the county and more information about this project will be given in the January number of the 'Bulletin'.

Summer Activities

The expedition to Dartmoor at the beginning of May was affected by the appalling weather conditions of the moor itself. The leader, Derrick Warren, wisely reversed the order of visits so that the party could see the remains of the Stover Canal in tolerable weather. A three miles circuit included the canal basin, towpath, lock gates and the wharf at Teignbridge where ball clay was once loaded on to barges. Although the party returned to Haytor for lunch it was decided to abandon the walk to the granite railway. However, a small group of brave souls, human and canine, braved the elements to see the remains of this remarkable transport system. The evening fossicks were generally less well supported than in previous years. Those members and friends who did turn out, however, were rewarded by seeing a number of interesting sites which are usually missed by the casual visitor. Mrs. Osborn conducted a small party round Minehead and indicated sites of I.A. interest in the town and the area round the harbour.

In Castle Cary the party enjoyed the walk round Higher Flax Mills and other sites associated with John Boyd and the horse hair industry. Two small buildings of social significance were noted - the famous lock-up, which was being restored, and the tiny fire engine house near the town pond. Another small party toured Milborne Port and visited the church, ball court and buildings associated with the town's leather industry, before walking to the late 17th. century brick mansion of Ven House. The tour was completed by a visit to the early 19th. century housing estate at Newtown. A short drive took the party to Milborne Wick to see two mill sites, and finally to Waterloo Crescent (ST 664222), a remarkable curved terrace of artisans' dwellings.

Bridgwater Docks

Visitors to this area of Bridgwater will have noticed several changes in recent months. The decking of the Bascule Bridge has been removed to a compound for inspection and repairs to Ware's Warehouse are continuing with the immediate aim of re-roofing the building by the end of September. Alongside the inner basin the first phase of the housing scheme is under way. Unfortunately work in connection with this latter development led to the disappearance of lengths of Barlow rail which supported the level crossing gates where the branch line to the docks crossed Northgate. Despite desperate efforts by Geoff Harding to locate them, the rails were dumped at the Saltlands refuse tip and immediately buried. Representation is being made to the County Council to try and ensure that similar rails still standing do not suffer the same fate.

Underwood Quarry

The Society has written to the Chief Planning Officer of Mendip District Council about the limekilns at Milton Hill, near Wookey Hole (ST 539471), which could be threatened by the County Council's proposed extension of Underwood Quarry. The Dep Department of the Environment has set up a local inquiry to resolve the problem and S.I.A.S. has been invited to present evidence to it.

West Monkton

~~Former S.I.A.S. Secretary, David Greenfield, was a major contributor to West Monkton's~~ "Then and Now" exhibition held in June. His research brought together maps, prints, paintings and documents relating to the parish and numerous photographs from private collections. Needless to add, the IA featured prominently especially the history of Bathpool Mills and the Tone Navigation. Stimulated by his discoveries, David hopes to unearth further information for eventual publication and display.

12th Regional Conference of Western I.A. Societies

The following account has been abridged from the copious notes submitted by S.I.A.S. Chairman, John Bentley, who along with one other member represented the Society at the Worcester conference on 11th April. The day started badly with the promised coffee (after a long drive from Taunton) failing to materialise due to staff difficulties. Things rapidly improved, however, and the chairman for the day, Kenneth Hudson, stuck rigidly to his promise to keep strictly to time - several speakers were 'cut off in their prime', which was good for them and also for the audience, as the chairs were to a design originally developed for the Spanish Inquisition! The morning session consisted of talks on Severn Steamers and Trows; Herefordshire Farm Buildings and the Coombeswood Interchange Basin and the Dudley No. 2 Canal. After lunch, Christopher Powell, of B.I.A.S. spoke on 'Industrial Housing in Avon', tracing the various shapes from the 18th century "Rookeries" - crowded clusters of mean houses infilling available space at the rear of burgage plots with accesses often only 1 metre wide - to the late 18th/early 19th century "proto-suburbs" in the coalfields consisting of a loose scatter of small blocks of cottages - many possibly of DIY construction. Then came mass stereotyped industrial housing on a grid-iron street pattern; at first often back to back but gradually improving from the 1840s, with gardens appearing and with floor areas of some 65 square metres, compared with 90 square metres in modern times. By the 1880s, housing approached middle-class standards. John Wells, of Oxford House, rounded off the day with 'Valley's Industrial' (sic). This was a series of superb photographs of the South Wales valleys, showing the largely industrial rail network and the industries it served. Both railways and industries have now almost vanished and this was a delightful record of what was commonplace a few brief years ago. The final discussion centred on the problem of conserving at least something of our earlier 20th century industrial heritage. In the past 6 months, 200 twentieth century buildings had been listed - mostly because they were designed by fashionable architects and without regard to intrinsic merit,

if any. Local ministry inspectors require 'cast-iron' documentary proof of historical interest for any industrial monument of any age - this means association with at least one really famous name, and never mind what it was for or what developed from it! Quite apart from the difficulties of protecting anything even if it has been listed, the cost of administering any effective pressure group would be high, with at least one full-time individual to run things. Not surprisingly, no firm strategy was formulated.

Journal Three

By now, those members who placed their order for our third journal should have received their copy. We apologise for the inordinate delay but hope the wait was worth while. In response to requests for future issues, the Editor draws attention to the small print inside the cover which states: "It is hoped that the publication of this Journal will encourage others to contribute to further numbers". There is still a wealth of unpublished material on aspects of IA and the Publications Sub-Committee is on hand to advise reticent contributors. Meanwhile, the Society would be grateful for any help with sales of Journal Three which retails at £2.50 (post free and cheques, etc. payable to 'S.I.A.S.').

The following system of contact should ensure ease of distribution:

- (a) Quantities of copies for sale at conferences, exhibitions and other events - ring Dick Bruce (Bridgwater 423325).
- (b) Copies requiring the addition of Society membership details - ring Sandy Buchanan (Ashcott 210566).
- (c) Single copies only - ring Brian Murless (Taunton 77158).

Parish Surveys

The fourth completed parish survey by the Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society - Whitestaunton - compiled by Mr. R.W. Carter, with assistance from Miss M. Parmiter and Mr. P.J. Wood, is now on sale. Whitestaunton lies on the Blackdown Hills in the extreme South of Somerset. The fieldwork undertaken for this survey was rewarded by the discovery of a previously unsuspected hill-fort, which is recorded in the publication along with Roman remains, a reconstruction of the late medieval layout of the parish, and turnpike roads. Copies of this and earlier surveys - Carhampton, Lusborough and Wambrook - cost £1.00 each to callers, and £1.25 by post, from SANHS Office, Taunton Castle.

Book News

Five recent publications of related interest to I.A.:-

Bezzant, N. 'Out of the Rock', William Heinemann, £10.50 (includes Somerset Quarries).

Harrison, J.D. 'The Bridgwater Branch', Oakwood Press, £1.80.

McGarvie, M. 'Castle Cary', Avalon Industries, £1.50. (An attractive, illustrated account concerned mainly with the hair cloth industry).

SANHS, 'Steep Holm: A Survey', Taunton Castle, £4.50 (includes sections on IA and military history).

St. John Thomas, D. 'A Regional History of the Railways of Great Britain: Vol.1, The West Country' (new edition), David & Charles, £9.50.

Committee Meetings

Because of the timing of the 'Bulletins' it is not always possible to include details of committee meetings. Members are reminded, however, that these meetings are 'open' by arrangement with the host, and in the first instance should contact the Secretary about dates and venues if they wish to attend.

Working Parties

During the winter months SIAS is likely to be asked at very short notice to provide working parties to move machinery or survey buildings threatened with "development". We also have machinery and materials in Ware's Warehouse in Bridgwater which urgently require sorting and maintenance work. If you would like to be involved in work of this nature please let the Secretary have your name and 'phone number so that he can contact you quickly if and when the need arises.

Westonzoyland Engine Trust

Work continues apace at the engine house in spite of a record number of visitors through the summer. The fly wheel has now been fixed to the Wills Engine. A visit from the boiler inspector is now pending and it is hoped that the Easton Amos engine will be turning again by the force of steam in time for the Easter Bank holiday 1982.

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There is still plenty of work to do and members of SIAS who wish to contribute to this project in any way will be most welcome.

Autumn Programme

- Sunday 4th October Social Event: Industrial Archaeology in Comfort. A return trip from Bishops Lydeard to Minehead on the West Somerset Railway in the Pulman car. The charge of £8.75 per person covers the cost of the return journey and the 4-course lunch. There will also be a bar available. Depart Bishops Lydeard station at 12.00 noon. Reservations, with a booking fee of £2.00 per person should be made to Derrick Warren, 52 Stoke Road, Taunton, as soon as possible, and not later than Friday 25th September.
- Tuesday 27th October Lecture: The Industrial Archaeology of the Gas Industry by David Gledhill. Mr. Gledhill is an authority on the history of this vital industry both nationally and locally. Weir Lodge, Taunton, 7.30 pm.
- Friday 13th November Committee Meeting. A number of officers of SIAS have indicated their wish to retire at the end of this year. Any member who is willing to take on some responsibility for the organisation of the Society is invited to attend this meeting at 11 Osborne Way, Taunton (75308) beginning at 7.30 pm.
- Saturday 14th November Field Trip: The Mills of the Chard Area. This will include visits to Clapton Mill (ST414064) where the party should assemble at 10.30 am., Small and Tidmus Lace Mills (ST 335049) at 12.00 noon. Picnic or pub lunch. Nimmer Mill (ST 322108) brush factory at 2.30 pm and Hornsbury Mill at 4.00 pm. For those who have been to Nimmer Mill there can be a short tour of Chard I.A. There is a fee to be paid for entry to ~~Hornsbury Mill and the associated museum.~~ For an additional charge a (cream) tea will also be available here.
- Friday 20th November Lecture: The History of Photography with special reference to Fox Talbot by George Parker. Dr. Parker is a national authority on the development of cameras and photographic techniques and this talk, which will be illustrated with slides, should have a wide appeal. Please do your best to publicise it amongst your friends who have an interest in photography. Weir Lodge, Taunton, 7.30 pm.
- Friday 11th December Members Evening: An opportunity to show slides and talk about your interest in Undustrial Archaeology. Weir Lodge, Taunton, 7.30 pm.
- Friday 1st January Ramble: A refreshing walk with an I.A. interest to start off 1982. Meet at Charterhouse on Mendip, down the lane to the East of the old school (Somerset LEA Outdoor Activity Centre) (ST 505556) at 11.00 am.

SIAS - THE FIRST TEN YEARS

On 17th January, 1982, the Society celebrates its tenth anniversary. It is perhaps an appropriate time to take stock of what the Society has achieved and indeed, not achieved, since a small band of kindred spirits first met at Weir Lodge a decade ago. Looking through committee minutes and back numbers of the 'Bulletin' it is possible to trace over fifty projects undertaken on behalf of the Society. These mostly take the form of measured surveys and photographic records of industrial structures but in 1976 and 1977 archaeological excavations were mounted. Some of this work, but by no means all, has been recorded in our three journals but as yet there is no official S.I.A.S. archive. During the past ten years many individual members have carried out research but here again the fruits of their labours are not fully available to a wider public. There are two major difficulties. Firstly, the pleasure of finding a reference in a document or discovering, say an unrecorded site, has to be set against the discipline of writing up. We are, after all, a voluntary society whose primary aim to enjoy ourselves though with an underlying serious purpose. Secondly, it is always difficult to know when, and in what form, to publish; in the age of the micro-chip and microfiche the printed page is not necessarily the automatic first choice when communicating information. Photographs are a particular headache especially as many members have used slides rather than negative film as a means of making a record. There is a need for policy of copying all material before the evidence fades away, is attacked by fungi or is thrown out by an unsympathetic relative! On the hardware side the tools of various trades and sometimes their products have been saved from destruction; S.I.A.S. is not the only group collecting, but amassing material is not an end in itself. The project at Ware's Warehouse could provide an answer in terms of display space in a meaningful context. With regard to public relations the Society has made real progress; advice has been asked, though not always taken, by local authorities and others and our views are respected. On controversial subjects such as alteration and demolition of industrial buildings, S.I.A.S. has not hesitated to become involved seeking to adopt a realistic and pragmatic approach to these problems. The Society has also taken major steps on its own spawning the Westonzoyland Engine Group (now W.E.T.) Finally one thread that can be traced throughout the history of our Society is the loyalty of our members; even today there are many "faces of 1972" still with us and to them we give a special vote of thanks.

A CALL TO ACTION!

S.I.A.S. is quite a small society, but there is still a lot of hidden talent among the members. Few, if any, of us are fully-fledged experts on anything (though we all learn a little as time goes on!), but we do need some more keen amateurs who are prepared to take a more active part in SIAS. If you feel able to help in any way, do please tell somebody on the Committee, - we can't winkle you out if you just hide away in the background! In particular, new Committee members will be most welcome. Don't wait to be nominated, as probably nobody knows you are ready to stand! It is bad for SIAS, and for the officers themselves, if the same people are left to do the same jobs year after year - different members will have fresh ideas, and perhaps other contacts, and a few new brooms are needed to sweep away the cobwebs. Members willing to become Publications Officer, Field Officer, or even Chairman, would be particularly welcome, and if elected (which is extremely likely!) would receive the willing help and advice of the outgoing holder of the post, should they so wish - it can be a bit daunting taking on a job with no clear idea of what is wanted! But don't be deterred from joining the Committee just because you don't feel ready to take on any more than that. Do come and talk about it before sticking your neck out, if you feel a bit doubtful. The Committee is chiefly composed of fairy godmothers (and godfathers - not of the criminal variety) ever ready to transform you into a junior administrator, or even an apprentice financial wizard.

John Bentley, Chairman.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Since the publication of the last Bulletin, the S.I.A.S. Committee have been hard at work preparing a Spring Programme which is both wide-ranging and exciting. There is truly something for everyone interested in industrial archaeology and members are asked to give their support to as many of these events as possible. Please make a note of them in your new diary.

Two Important Speakers

Rarely does a society have the opportunity of being able to listen to two lecturers who are noted authorities in their own fields. However, on 5th February, 1982, Helen Harris will talk on the Grand Western Canal. Her book is the standard work on this subject which is close to the hearts of many members who have explored the route of the canal and recorded surviving features. On 5th March, 1982, C.R. Clinker will describe the development of the broad gauge railway network in Somerset. Mr. Clinker is well known for his major revision of E.T. MacDermott's 'History of the Great Western Railway'. It would be appreciated if members could advertise these talks as widely as possible - as always non-members of S.I.A.S. can attend for a small charge.

A.G.M.

This event will be particularly important as a number of officers have indicated their wish to retire (SEE 'A Call to Action'). In addition to the business meeting there will be a quiz (with a book token of £5 as a prize) and wine and cheese (free of charge).

Out-Of-Doors

Please refer to the programme for times and venues.

Limekilns

The County Council have withdrawn their application to extend Underwood Quarry (Bulletin 27) and the immediate threat to the limekilns has therefore passed. But three other kilns at Evercreech complete with ramp running to the site of the quarry, are in urgent need of surveying. The County Archaeologist has invited the Society to undertake this task in view of its knowledge of the subject. Members without a specialist interest are required to assist with measuring tapes and ranging poles.

Telescopic Bridge

This Bridgwater structure has "grown up" with S.I.A.S. over the past ten years, its "official" vandalism being a cause celebre in the early 1970s. Its physical existence is now more secure as the bridge will shortly be adapted to carry road traffic. Before this happens members can investigate and record this most unusual piece of engineering under the expert guidance of David Greenfield.

Ware's Warehouse

The Society's long-term aim of establishing an I.A. museum for Somerset took a further step recently when the idea received official backing from the County Council. Members will have seen in the Press the County's acquisition of a combing machine, from the works of Fox Brothers of Wellington, which will hopefully be on display in the projected museum. S.I.A.S. has yet to prepare a full inventory of its own collection and a number of items at Ware's Warehouse need to be sorted and conserved. Please join our first working party - the wearing of old clothing is advised and, if possible, a safety helmet.

In Preparation

Two projects are not included in the programme because of uncertainties of access and timing. These are surveys of lead mining evidence at Charterhouse on Mendip and the former Arnold's brewery at Kingston Road, Taunton. If you are interested in either or both of these ventures please contact the Secretary who will then notify you when details become available. As with all surveys the larger the number of volunteers, skilled or otherwise, that attend, the shorter will be the time needed to complete the tasks in hand.

SWITCHED ON! - A CENTENARY

On the 26th September 1881 a tannery at Godalming in Surrey, which had used its waterwheel to generate electricity found it had a surplus. In addition to lighting the streets of the town it offered its surplus for sale to the public, thus becoming the first public 'Power Station'. In the same year Norwich and Chesterfield installed town lighting whilst successful demonstrations of street lighting were held in London and the wider applications of electricity - power and heat - were explored. Receiving the Royal Assent on 18th August 1882 the Electric Lighting Act empowered local authorities and public companies to generate and supply electricity for sale.

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Growth was rapid and 'firsts' followed one another in quick succession:-

- 1882 Steam power had been used in Holborn, London, to generate electricity but Brighton, on 12th January, was the first to provide a permanent public supply. Hastings and Eastbourne followed shortly afterwards. Trafalgar Colliery in the Forest of Dean installed a small electric pump underground. Displays of Lighting were held at the Crystal Palace.
- 1883 In August a quarter mile length of electric railway opened in Brighton. Then in September a system using overhead trolley wires was laid between Portrush and the Giants Causeway in the North of Ireland.
- 1885 An electric tram ran on the promenade at Blackpool.
- 1889 A public tramway service was opened at Northfleet, Kent.
- 1891 Saw the start of use of electricity in the kitchen. A British invention - the electric cooker, - was followed in the same year by the electric iron and 'an electric cooking apparatus which boils a pint of water in twelve minutes'. 1889 had seen, in America, the first power driven equipment in the home - an electric fan. In 1904 an Englishman, Cecil Booth, invented the vacuum cleaner, 1908 saw the electric washing machine, 1910 the dishwasher and 1913 the domestic refrigerator.
- 1894 The first pumped storage hydro electric station in the world opened at Lynmouth, N. Devon. appeared.

Thus, within the space of three decades, appeared the recognisable ancestors of all the present day gleaming 'servants' of the modern home.

MERCIA CINEMA SOCIETY

Films and film stars have for long been a popular form of research but now at last the old cinema houses are recognised as worthy of recording and in fact over 20 are now listed. The Mercia Cinema Society was recently formed so that information and details of the fast disappearing 'dream palaces', which were once such a feature of life throughout the country, could be collected and collated on a national basis with eventually a museum devoted to the subject. It has received a grant from the W. Midlands Arts Council to help forward its aims and would like to receive information, pictures, posters or simply reminiscences of any cinema. Derrick Warren has details.

RIVER ISLE

The recent visit to Nimmer Brush Factory prompts a suggestion for a pleasant short walk of about 3 miles (see attached sketch map) which would show clearly the intensive use to which the headwaters of this river was put. The old Mill and Wadeford Mill were for corn but Court Mill was once a fulling mill whilst on the site of the present trout Fishery. Puddleigh Mill was originally a woollen mill, then latterly, until the early 1900s, a lace factory. Nimmer Brush Factory was, until about 200 years ago, a corn mill. It would be interesting to hear if any other small stream in Somerset was put to such good use within such a short distance of its source.

REPORT OF SIAS AUTUMN ACTIVITIES

1. On 27th October David Gledhill gave an illuminating address on the development of the gas industry in Taunton. In 1816 Taunton was one of the first towns in the country to have a gas light company. Although this venture soon failed, a more successful company was set up in 1820 which purchased land in South Street. From this site, gas made from fish and animal oils, was piped to the town centre and East Reach to provide lighting. In 1823 the same company introduced gas metres in the town. Gas derived from coal was first produced in Taunton in 1834 and in 1845 the Taunton Gaslight and Coke Company began to produce coal gas at Tangier. The success of this new company was due in part to the opening of the Bristol and Exeter line in 1842. The lecture was illustrated by two excellent films, one of which recorded the production of coal gas from horizontal retorts in a small gas works in the North East of England. A lively question and answer session concluded this informative evening.
2. On 20th November Dr. George Parker gave a lavishly illustrated account of the development of photographic techniques and equipment from the days of Roger Bacon in the middle ages to Wells Carnival in 1981. His talk centred on the crucial developments of 1839 and 1841 when Daguerre and Fox Talbot developed the daguerreotype and calotype processes respectively. The future of photography lay with the British process which enabled

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several copies to be taken from one negative. Frederick Scott Archer developed a wet collodion process ten years later, and this enabled Roger Fenton to make a photographic record of the Crimean War. Within twenty years a dry process made photography more accessible to the public. When celluloid sheet was used as a base for sensitised chemicals instead of glass plates the practice of photography became really popular and Eastman's camera became a household item in many parts of the world. In the twentieth century films and cameras have become more versatile and efficient but Dr. Parker clearly demonstrated that there was not much that had not been considered and tried in the world of photography before 1900. Industrial Archaeologists are heavily dependent on cameras and film to record our recent past. It is of more than passing interest to be made aware of the archaeology of our own tools of trade.

3. On the 14th November, the Field Officer, Derrick Warren, led one of the Society's most successful field trips. The day started with a visit to Clapton Mill, near Crewkerne, where the owner, Mr. Lockyer, gave a brief historical introduction to corn milling on this site. He pointed out that the novel feature of the mill was the water wheel which could be driven either as an overshot wheel by water from the leat, carried by a cast-iron trough on brick pillars, or as a Breastshot wheel by the Waters of the River Axe. The Mill was built to power four pairs of stones but only three pairs had ever been worked. These all turned, unusually, in the opposite direction to the sun. Armfield roller plant was installed in 1923. This was originally powered by a gas engine but in 1931 a Ruston and Hornsby engine was installed. This, together with the water wheel, is used today for grinding corn. Mr. Lockyer gave the party free access to the mill and willingly answered questions. Whilst some purchased bags of flour produced at the mill others noted the old direction post on the other side of the road and the Wayford Parish boundary stone set in the wall. After one or two wrong turnings, the party re-assembled at the Perry Street Works of John Small and Tidmus Ltd., South of Chard. Although the original mill building has been changed almost beyond recognition and the mill pond in-filled, the party was shown round the works by the enthusiastic managing director, Mr. Lewis. In one workshop modern German knitting machines were producing rolls of plain net at a rapid speed but the finest plain net in the world is now the product of antique knitting machines, manufactured in Nottingham in the last century. Although not actually working over this particular weekend those machines in the lower workshop together with the dedicated work force, have given the firm a world-wide reputation and full order books in a time of general recession. After lunch the party visited the brush factory at Nimmer Mill. Powered by a water wheel, which kept the belt drives turning throughout our visit, this factory produces high quality shaving, hair and clothes brushes. Mr. Young patiently demonstrated the way in which these brushes were produced from such raw materials as badger hair (at £250 a roll), ivory, wood and plastics. We left by the "dry" ford which was suitably swamped as Mr. Young raised the sluices above Nimmer Mill but arrived safely at Hornsbury. Here the party enjoyed the variety of exhibits in the museum and browsed around the mill shop. Industrial Archaeology is all too often concerned with destruction and neglect. On this day's outing we had proof positive at each site we visited that the aims of I.A. are not incompatible with efficient and profitable enterprise.

WISHING ALL MEMBERS A HAPPY CHRISTMAS

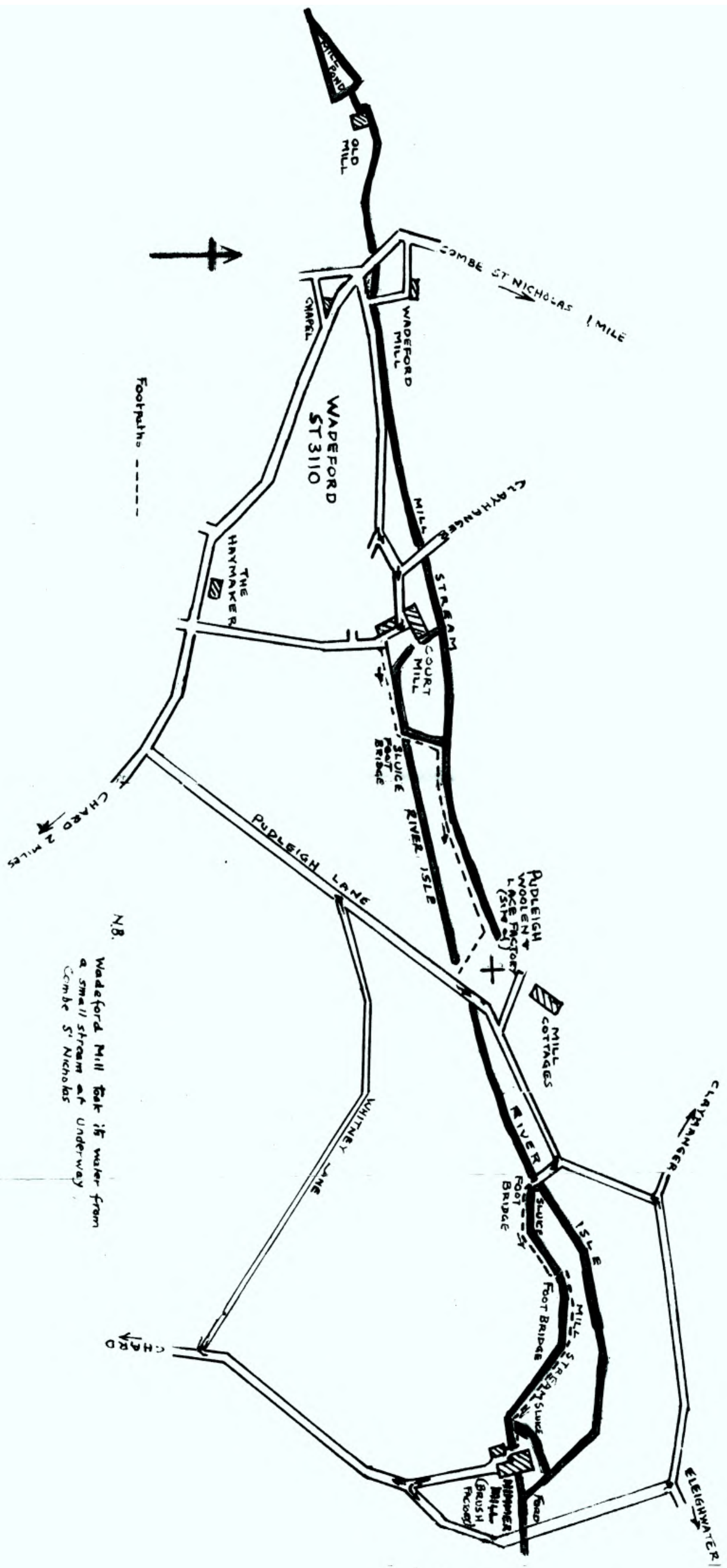
AND A

PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR

W I N T E R P R O G R A M M E 1982

- Friday 1st January 1982 Ramble: A refreshing walk with an I.A. interest to start off 1982. Meet at Charterhouse on Mendip, down the lane to the East of the old school. (Somerset LEA Outdoor Activity Centre) (ST 505556) at 11.00 am.
- Sunday 10th January: Workparty: Sorting and renovating the Society's acquisitions in Ware's Warehouse, Bridgwater. Meet at 10.00 am. Old clothes and safety helmets if possible.
- Friday 5th February: Lecture: Helen Harris will give a talk on The Grand Western Canal. Weir Lodge at 7.30 pm.
- Saturday 13th February: Workparty: Excavation at the East end of the telescopic railway bridge, Bridgwater. Meet at 10.00 am.
- Friday 5th March: Lecture: Charles Clinker will give a talk entitled An Illustrated Tour of the Great Western Railway in Somerset Sixty Years Ago. Weir Lodge at 7.30 pm.
- Sunday 14th March: Workparty: Survey of Limekiln at Evercreech (ST 644388). Meet at 11.00 am on the site.
- Friday 19th March: Annual General Meeting - Followed by a Social Event including Wine and Cheese. Weir Lodge at 7.30 pm.
- Monday 26th April: SIAS Exhibition at Castle Museum, Taunton.

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N.B.
 Wadeford Mill took its water from
 a small stream at Underway,
 Combe St Nicholas

At the Annual General Meeting of the Society held at Weir Lodge on Friday, 19th March 1982 the following Committee members were elected:-

Chairman	Mrs. M. Miles	Rose Cottage, Lower Durston, Taunton. Tel. West Monkton 713
Secretary	Mr. S. Buchanan	2 Blake Green, Ashcott, Bridgwater, TA7 9QF. Tel. Ashcott 210566
Treasurer	Mrs. J. Jones	11 Osborne Way, Taunton, TA1 4PU. Tel. Taunton 75308
Publications Officer	Mr. D. Warren	52 Stoke Road, Taunton. Tel. Taunton 86957
Field Officer	Mr. D. Greenfield	33 Barrow Drive, Taunton. Tel. Taunton 77155
Publicity Officer	Mr. T. Bull	Austen Cottage, Charlton Adam, Somerton, TA11 7AR. Tel. Charlton Mackrell 3320
Committee Member	Mr. J. Bentley	5 Compass Hill, Taunton. Tel. Taunton 72191
Committee Member	Mr. R. Hayman	18 Winslade Close, Taunton, TA2 7HA. Tel. Taunton 83109
Committee Member	Mr. B. Murless	46 Holway Avenue, Taunton, TA1 3AR. Tel. Taunton 77158
Committee Member and Minute Secretary	Mr. T. Walford	Upton Bridge Farm, Long Sutton, Somerton, TA10 9NQ. Tel. Long Sutton 224
Committee Member	Mr. T. Ward	2 Ethpark Grove, Taunton, TA2 7DA. Tel. Taunton 83089.

Stock Officer (Ex-Committee)	Mr. D. Bruce	13 Northfield, Bridgwater, TA6 7EZ. Tel. Bridgwater 423325
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The next meeting of the Committee will be held on Friday 28th May at 46 Holway Avenue, Taunton, by courtesy of Mr. B. Murless.

Current Research

Following a note in Bulletin 28 on the history of electricity, David Gladhill, a S.I.A.S. adviser on power supplies, has come across an article entitled "Early Electricity" in S.W.E.B. News for September 1981. It was written by Peter Lamb, a senior engineer, and an extract is quoted below.

The most enthusiastic individual and definitely the leading pioneer of the time (late 1870s) in the South West, was Mr. H.G. Massingham, of Bath. He was not an engineer but owned a chain of boot and shoe shops throughout the West Country.

He was so impressed with the special lighting display which he witnessed at Bristol Cathedral in November 1878, that he hired the engine and generator and removed them to Taunton, where he set up a demonstration of 12 arc lamps in 1880.

It was next reported in December 1886 that he had signed a seven year agreement with Taunton Corporation to light the streets of the town by the Thomson-Houston arc light system (AC). However, tradition has it in Taunton that supply was commenced on 12th December 1885.

A small station was established in his boot and shoe premises in Corporation Street. Power was obtained using locally-made steam engines, 40 h.p. driving Thomson-Houston dynamos and the arc lamps were supplied via overhead wires. The Taunton Electric Light Company was thus established, and thereby became the first public supply in the South West - the Castle Hotel being one of the first consumers.

Taunton claims to be the first permanent supply in the country, rivalling Brighton, by saying that Brighton was not completely successful. This, however, is not born out by national documents. Taunton's installation had its problems too, and within a few years it was found necessary to acquire new premises and build a larger central station at St. James Street.

Footnote: Last month these premises were demolished and the site rased to the ground.

Council for British Archaeology

On Saturday 20th March, C.B.A. Group 13 held a meeting entitled "Archaeology in the South West 1981" and two contributing speakers had an industrial archaeological theme. Iain Miles spoke of progress at Westonzoyland Pumping Station and Brian Murless described the project to restore Ware's Warehouse at Bridgwater Docks. During the day a number of S.I.A.S. cards and journals were sold; members who are attending summer gatherings where the Society's publications could be put on sale can obtain supplies from Dick Bruce (tel. Bridgwater 423325).

Underwater I.A.

The members who turned up to investigate the remains of the Telescopic Bridge in February encountered problems of standing water but it was felt ('felt' being the operative word) that enough survives in the eastern section of the bridge to warrant careful treatment when the structure is altered later this year.

Evercreech Limekilns

The small party of S.I.A.S. members who surveyed the limekilns at Evercreech were rewarded by the impressive nature of the evidence: three large kilns, two of which were of a different date to the third. Adjoining them were a group of associated buildings and the strata of limestone was clearly visible in the quarry nearby. It is thought that the kilns were comparable with any built in Somerset, in terms of size, and they will unfortunately be demolished as part of a light industrial development. A photographic record was also made and there exists locally a shot of the kilns in operation when they were owned by the Mead family.

Roadside Survey

Impressed by the results of the 1981 survey in the Taunton area, John Bentley and Brian Murless set out to investigate any roadside features along routes radiating from Ilminster. Using a refined technique, a considerable distance was able to be covered in the space of a few hours and although the work is incomplete, early returns are again impressive. Apart from evidence directly associated with the Ilminster Turnpike Trust such as milestones and tollhouses, there were a number of other features including cast-iron rural district posts, Highway District stones and monoliths of uncertain purpose.

The Next Bulletin

Although this will be the thirtieth issue, the supply of notes and articles has, in the past, been left to a handful of members. The Association for Industrial Archaeology has had a similar problem which prompted the question from the editor of its bulletin "Is anybody out there listening?" Points of information about I.A. in Somerset or elsewhere and comments on the work of the Society are particularly welcome. They should be sent to the (new) Publications Officer by the end of July.

Summer Programme 1982

- | | |
|----------------------|---|
| Thursday 20th May | Taunton's I.A. A walk led by Brian Murless - 7.00 pm
Canal Road (by market entrance) (ST 227253). |
| Sunday 13th June | Somerset Windmills - a short tour: leader Sandy Buchanan.
Meet at 12.30 pm in the Public Car Park, Walton Hill
(ST 467 350) or 2.00 pm at High Ham Windmill (ST 433 305).
The party will proceed to Ashton Windmill, Chapel Allerton
(ST 414 503) later in the afternoon. (40p entrance charge
at High Ham). |
| Thursday 17th June | Wells area I.A. An excursion by car and on foot led by
Sandy Buchanan. Meet 7.00 pm in car park behind George
& Pilgrim at Glastonbury (ST 499390). |
| Sunday 4th July | A day out in the Porlock/Dunster area led by Derrick Warren.
Meet 11.00 am car park nearest mill at Dunster (SS 988434).
Packed lunch and hopefully a cream tea at end!! |
| Tuesday 6th July | Bridgwater I.A. Led by David Greenfield. Meet 7.00 pm
end of East Quay (ST 300372). |
| Saturday 14th August | Exeter Maritime Museum and some adjacent I.A. features.
£1.70 adults 85p children. (If party of 20+ then £1.35
and 70p) Meet 2.00 pm museum entrance. |

If anyone wishes to share transport to any of the above please contact David Greenfield.

During September, on a date to be announced, there will be a trip to the Kennett and Avon canal and Crofton Pumping Station. This will mean a packed lunch and car-sharing arrangements organised by David Greenfield.

S.I.A.S. members are reminded of forthcoming events run by the Westonzoyland Engine Trust.

Open days Spring Bank Holiday Sunday/Monday 30th/31st May.

Model Narrow Gauge Railway Weekend Saturday/Sunday 26th/27th June.

On the Saturday evening there will be a Bar B Q. Real ale, hot potatoes. Bring own main food and utensils. For camping please contact Chris Tilley on Taunton 432019.

Open days August Bank Holiday Sunday/Monday 29th/30th August. Someone is usually on site most Sundays.

Volunteers wanted on Saturday 22nd May to help move railway lines on Dartmoor, contact Ian Miles.

S.I.A.S. members have been kindly invited to the talks organised by the Great Western Railway Society. These are held at the Black Horse Hotel, Bridge Street, Taunton. All are at 7.30 pm and are illustrated.

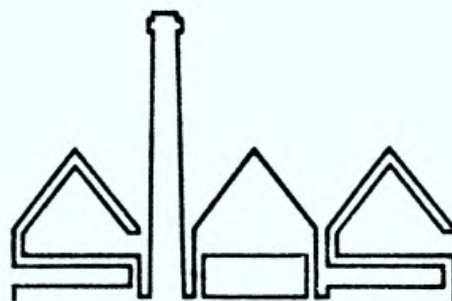
21st May	Egyptian Railways	R. Roberts
18th June	The Metropolitan Railway	D. Kiddle
16th July	Steam in the '50s Wales & West	W. Maidlow
17th September	Signalman's Adventure	A. Vaughan
12th November	Steam in the South West	S. Peerless
10th December	Out and about on the S & D	D. Milton

Links with the Past

Do visit the SIAS Exhibition in the Castle Museum, Taunton. It is open to viewing Tuesdays - Saturdays each week until Friday 28th May. The Exhibition illustrates some of the work done by SIAS over the last ten years. The linking theme of the exhibition is the work of Somerset's Iron Foundries and their contribution to the industrial development of the County.

SOMERSET INDUSTRIAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

BULLETIN 30
SEPTEMBER 1982



Hon. Secretary
C. A. Buchanan
2 Blake Green
ASHCOTT
Bridgwater TA7 9QF.
Tel: Ashcott 210566.

The Summer Programme

Your Field Officer, David Greenfield, reports that the Summer's programme of events produced a mixed response from members - some visits attracting family car-loads, others a handful of enthusiasts.

The May meeting, a Taunton walkabout led by Brian Murless, was one of those occasions when each member was able to throw some light on one aspect of Taunton's past of which the others were unaware. June had two contrasting visits. The first was to Somerset's best-known windmill sites at Walton, High Ham and Chapel Allerton, enabling a comparison to be made of the different styles and states of preservation. A few days later, Sandy Buchanan led a small party through the seamier but more evocative areas of Glastonbury and Wells. Derrick Warren's trip to Dunster and Porlock in July was another day of interest and discovery for the family, with the accent on water-power. An evening walkabout in Bridgwater a couple of days later, uncovered yet more features of the town's former activities. The August visit to the Exeter Maritime Museum was bedevilled by the weather, alleviated somewhat by the appearance of Bridgwater's Brunel Dredger in steam.

David should be congratulated on producing such an interesting programme for the Summer. Members who have ideas or requests for field trips or visiting speakers should contact him directly at Taunton 77155.

The Telescopic Bridge, Bridgwater

Further to the item in the last Bulletin it can be reported that a contract has now been let by the County Council for the conversion of the old telescopic railway bridge into a fixed road bridge. The traverser pit at the eastern end of the bridge has been excavated by the contractor, under the watchful eye of SIAS members, and all items of interest have been saved. The rails on which the sections of the bridge travelled will be left in situ, buried beneath the road construction, to await re-discovery by future industrial archaeologists. The ballast-box at the east end of the retracting section is currently being emptied, exposing a selection of iron artefacts placed there in 1907 to provide counter-weight. These include short lengths of railway rail, broken castings and miscellaneous wheels.

Footnote: Having spent two hours sifting through a heap of badly-rusted cast iron from the above-mentioned ballast-box a small but thirsty team of SIAS workers adjourned to the Fountain. They emerged refreshed just in time to witness the arrival of the Parrett bore - an event which more than compensated for the earlier effort!

Evercreech Limekilns

Although, sadly, we must report the destruction of the limekilns at Evercreech which were surveyed earlier this year by SIAS members (Bulletin 29), the publicity which we secured in the process has been quite productive. Two residents of Evercreech who had worked at the limekilns were able to make interesting statements about their experiences there.

Mr. Charles Hartnell worked at the kilns between 1923 and 1939 for $5\frac{1}{2}$ days per week which earned him a wage of 27s. 6d. When he finally asked for a rise he was given the sack. He remembers this without remorse because he considers it to have been the best day's work which he did. He quickly found new employment in the construction of new runways at Yeovilton Aerodrome with a substantially higher wage and without the acute discomfort associated with work in a limekiln. His wife still recalls how he used to come home with smarting eyes and lime burns round his neck. Apparently the most effective medication for the burns was cold tea. If he did not return home white and burning from the lime he was likely to be black and gritty as a result of moving sacks of anthracite.

The kiln was filled with alternate layers of limestone and anthracite (or culm). The layers were between 15 inches and two feet thick and it might take three or four days to fill the kiln. After the calcining process was complete the lime was extracted from the kiln in lumps which were then loaded on to an elevator feeding the crusher. After going through the crusher the lime was bagged and between twenty and thirty tons per day would be produced in this way. The kilns and the adjacent quarries gave employment to about twenty people in all. The lime was used principally in the making of mortar, only a small proportion being used as fertiliser.

From Mr. Paddy Woodborne was learnt something about the history and ownership of the limekilns. They were apparently set up by Humphrey Mead of Drayton who owned limekilns near Langport in the 1890s. Mr. Mead established a partnership with his nephew and the grandfather of Mr. Woodborne. The latter became the manager of the limekilns at Evercreech. In 1935, five years before his death, Mr. Woodborne handed over the management of these kilns to his two sons and they continued to operate them until 1956. In this time a number of changes took place. The horse-drawn waggons were replaced by a stationary diesel engine and the crusher, which was made at Belper in Derbyshire, was originally powered by steam and then by diesel until 1952 when electric power was introduced.

Before 1935 the lime was placed in jute bags - eleven of which held one ton. In the early days the Somerset and Dorset Railway was used to transport the lime but gradually a local transport firm took over this traffic and it was carried by road mainly to Poole and Bournemouth where it was used in mortar. There was no hydrated lime produced at these kilns.

After 1956 the kilns were operated by Slocombe and Hall of Weston-super-Mare for whom Mr. Slade (of the builders' merchant firm at Evercreech Junction) acted as manager until 1962. The kilns have not been used since that time. The original company traded under the name of Mead & Sons, stone and lime merchants and should not be confused with the Evercreech Lime & Stone Co. Ltd., which had a plant near Evercreech station.

The Coming of the Iron

Somerset County Council's proposal to re-use the route of the old Durston to Yeovil railway, between Cartgate on the A303 and Alvington, as a road to by-pass Montecute has encouraged SIAS Field Officer, David Greenfield, to research the history of the rival transport systems in this area.

The opening ceremony for the new road could never match the scale of feasting and speechifying which greeted the arrival of the first, lavishly garlanded train along this line into Hendford on a stormy October day in 1853. At the celebratory banquet, C. A. Moody M.P. declared that, "This district has laboured under great disadvantages from a want of that speedy and cheap communication which is given to others; and certainly such is the area of this part of the county that it ought not to be left without a railway."

The spread of railways brought improvements and benefits to most but it is perhaps ironic that it sounded the death knell of the transport system which had carried Britain into the industrial age - the Turnpike roads; ironic in that road has now superseded rail to a great extent. Since the first turnpike authority was set up in 1663, travellers along the main roads from towns such as Yeovil, Ilchester and Ilminster, paid tolls to the local turnpike trust and these helped to finance the repair of the roads in those areas. Conceived during the period leading up to the "Railway Mania" of the 1840s, that mirrored a "Turnpike Mania" less than a century earlier, the Durston - Yeovil line was originally intended to have been a branch from the main line of the Bristol & Exeter Railway Company to Weymouth. In the event the B. & E. R. Company decided on the more modest project of a line to Yeovil. The "Yeovil Branch" received its Act in 1845.

The proposed line caused concern not only to the local turnpike trusts but also to Lady Georgianna Fane who objected early in 1845 that the railway would intersect her Brympton estate. The Company's engineer, one I. K. Brunel, was able to assure her Ladyship that they would "take such measures as she should suggest to make the line ornamental instead of a deformity." Other problems developed as construction commenced. Wells at Brympton and Houndstone ran dry as a result of the nearby railway cutting. The town watchmen of Yeovil asked for, and were granted, an additional shilling (5p) in 1846 on account of the number of navigators or navvies in the town. Quarries which had been opened to supply stone for the roads now became suppliers of railway ballast, and many landowners were able to offer suitable stone to the contractors. The bill for the extra wear and tear on the roads, however, had to be footed by the turnpike trusts.

Heavy financial commitments in their other schemes caused the B. & E. R. Company to cease work on the line in 1849. By that time broad gauge lines had been laid as far south-east as Martock. Three years were to pass before "an easier money market" enabled work to proceed again. Further complaints were made about the state of the roads but nothing could now halt the "coming of the iron" and the line was duly opened on October 1st 1853.

In the years that followed, the pattern of road traffic movements altered, the roads now tending to act as feeders to the railways. With the heavy long-distance traffic being carried by the railways the turnpike trusts gradually closed down. The Yeovil and Ilchester Trusts were dissolved in 1874; the Ilminster Trust in 1879. Many

relics of these three trusts can still be found alongside their roads. Several tollhouses and more mileposts can still be identified.

In 1964 it was the turn of the railway line to close as road transport became more competitive again. Cartgate railway bridge was demolished during road improvements on the A303, and in the course of these works an impressive section of the original turnpike road was revealed beneath the approaches to the bridge. Lengths of old broad gauge rail have been converted to a new use, serving as fence posts along parts of the line. The fine bridges which carried the railway over and under roads and streams are, for the most part, to be converted in a sympathetic manner to their new role in the County Council's scheme.

Autumn Programme

- Friday 15th. Oct. "Collecting Weights" - Richard Willey talks about his hobby and brings examples of types of weights and measures used in former times. 7.30 p.m. Weir Lodge, Staplegrove Road, Taunton.
- Friday 22nd. Oct. SIAS Committee Meeting, by courtesy of John Bentley at 5 Compass Hill, Taunton, 7.30 p.m.
- Sunday 31st. Oct. Crofton Pumping Station in Steam and the Kennet & Avon Canal. Meet at the bottom of Caen Hill flight of locks, 2 miles West of Devizes just North of A361, (ST 976 615) at 11.00 a.m. The party will proceed to Crofton for 2.00 p.m. (entry charges - £1.00 adults; 50p. children and £2.00 family). Time and light permitting the party will proceed to the nearby Wilton Windmill. If you intend going on this trip please ring David Greenfield in good time so that the sharing of transport may be arranged if necessary. (Taunton 77155).
- Friday 12th. Nov. "Redler v. the G.W.R." - Brian Murless and David Greenfield will give a talk on the legal battle between the G.W.R. and the miller of Bathpool Mills in 1902. The dispute throws light on the working of both the Railway Company and the Bridgwater - Taunton Canal. 7.30 p.m. Weir Lodge.
- Thursday 18th Nov. "A Survey of Britain's Railways before Nationalization" - Lt. Commander Rupert Nicholl, R.N. will give a talk illustrated by colour slides which will delight all railway enthusiasts. This talk has been arranged in conjunction with local railway societies. 7.30 p.m. Wyndham Hall, Taunton.

(Programme continued overleaf)

- Sunday 21st. Nov. The Grand Western Canal and Industrial Sites round Wellington: a field trip led by David Greenfield. The trip will involve about three miles of walking and members are advised to wear stout, waterproof footwear and bring a packed lunch. Meet in the car park behind the Sports Centre in Wellington (ST 131 208) at 10.00 a.m.
- Friday 3rd. Dec. Members' Evening: this is yet another chance to prove your point, brag about your holiday or air your pet theory. Bring your slides, artefacts, etc.
7.30 p.m. Weir Lodge.
- Sunday 2nd. Jan. Walk in the New Year (1983) with a circuit on the Blackdown Hills. Waterproofs and picnic lunch; distance about $4\frac{1}{2}$ miles.
Meet 10.00 a.m. Castle Neroche car park (ST 272 157).
-

The Committee of SIAS hopes that you will enjoy the programme of activities which it has devised for the Autumn. If you have any suggestions for field trips or talks please tell one of the Committee members. The Publications Officer will be delighted to include news items relevant to the interests of the Society in the next and subsequent editions of this Bulletin.

A Joint University of Bristol Department of Extra-Mural Studies and Taunton Branch of the W.E.A. course on the Industrial Archaeology of Somerset is being held on Wednesday evenings, 7.30 - 9.00 at Weir Lodge for ten weeks beginning Wednesday 29th. September.
Tutor: C. A. Buchanan Course Fee £10.00

BULLETIN 31
NOVEMBER 1982

Hon. Secretary
C. A. Buchanan
2 Blake Green
Ashcott
Bridgwater TA7 9QF
Tel: Ashcott 210566

As the prospect of Journal 4 appearing in the near future is unlikely it was felt that a fatter bulletin was required. This time it has been managed but to keep it up many more short articles, snippets of news, etc, are wanted. It is up to members to supply them. How about some letters - perhaps a really contentious one is needed to start an avalanche! A VERY HAPPY CHRISTMAS to everyone, but when winter comes can spring be far behind?! Spring means the AGM and election of officers - volunteers (or conscripts) are wanted to fill vacancies so there are four months for thought!

Magic Lantern Slides

Dr George Parker, who addressed SIAS last year on the History of Photography has drawn attention to a famous manufacturer of magic lantern slides who had his workshop in Friarn Street, Bridgwater, between 1880 and 1914. The first reference which can be found in Kelly's Directory to this establishment is in 1889 and the last in 1910 when the address is given as 32 Friarn Street. The Directory for 1914 makes no mention of the firm or the proprietor.

The workshop was set up by Frederick York and a book entitled The Photographic Studios of Europe by H. Baden Pritchard, published in 1883, describes the premises. Frederick York had the rare distinction of accompanying Queen Victoria's son, Prince Alfred, on a voyage to the Cape of Good Hope and Natal. Because the young prince was interested in photography, "Her Majesty commissioned a gentleman well skilled in the art" to accompany him. On board H.M.S. Euryalus the Prince and Frederick York worked together "indefatigably" to secure pictures of the places visited.

On his return to the United Kingdom, York set up his laboratory and workshop in Bridgwater. "Here, at this busy little town on the River Parrett (sic), where it is said every bath brick in the world is made, Mr York produces all those charming lantern slides, or transparencies, that have made many a Christmas party jolly, and changes, for an hour at least, those sorry little urchins of workhouse and infirmary into bright and happy beings. Here, in this big brick building, is the fountain of delight and amusement to thousands; here is concentrated at this moment the essence of pleasure soon to be diffused throughout our Kingdom and Colonies. If giving pleasure to others is indeed the highest form of happiness, then must Mr York be a happy mortal, for during the past ten years an average of 50,000 slides has been annually produced in Bridgwater."

The article goes on to describe the workshop which employed fourteen assistants, male and female, and "takes up every nook and corner of a large house." His slides or transparencies were all "made in the camera, and with wet collodion, being toned with bichloride of platinum. His cameras are "solid, roughly-made apparatus, constructed by a carpenter on the premises, and every sized plate has its own camera." At the back of the building were two yards - the lantern yard and the printing yard. The article goes on to describe the apparatus and chemical processes used in some detail.

Apart from the flimsy evidence contained in the trade directories it has not been possible to find anything about this interesting establishment. Possibly some reader of this Bulletin can throw more light on the subject. Surely an establishment which once entertained the Empire cannot have sunk entirely without trace!

The Sad Story of Barlow Rail

The high cost of providing and maintaining track was an ever-present problem for early railways. Barlow rail was an attempt to provide a cheaper form of track, eliminating the use of sleepers or longitudinal baulks by resting the rail directly on, or bedded into, the ballast. It was of wrought iron (Bessemer steel was not produced until 1860, and open-hearth even later), and samples measured are 12" wide x $4\frac{3}{4}$ " high, but sections did vary slightly, and weights per yard are variously quoted between 88 and 99 lbs, some small differences probably being different assessments rather than genuinely different sections. South Wales Railway drawings from the 1850s, preserved at Paddington, show iron ties rivetted to the rails at 12' centres. The rails are also 18' long, and 5" deep, so a different section from that measured. Rail joints were made using saddles under the rail which were a close fit to the inside, the assembly being rivetted together - thermal expansion seems to have been ignored, and may be one of the causes of the problems found in practice. Ballast was supposed to be packed right up into the hollow interior of the rail, although this could not be done effectively.

Barlow rail was first used in 1849 on the Midland Railway, but Brunel was a major customer, using it on the South Wales Railway and the West Cornwall Railway, both built at the start of the 1850s. It was little used on the Great Western, as it was not invented soon enough! Brunel severed his connection with the Bristol and Exeter Railway just in time to prevent its use between Taunton and Yeovil (see Bulletin 30).

Unfortunately, maintenance proved expensive, and it was almost impossible to keep the rails to line and level, so that derailments were quite frequent. Consequently, use was discontinued quite soon, and large amounts, both new and second-hand, became available for other uses. Curiously, it was selected for use on at least part of the initial 110 mile length of the Buenos Aires Great Southern Railway in Argentina as late as 1865. Possibly it was going cheap!

Level crossing gate posts at Bridgwater Docks were built up from Barlow rail, and SIAS intends to rescue the last of these when it is removed for roadworks shortly - it will go to the Blake Museum for the time being.

On a more major scale, this rail formed the most important constituent of Clevedon Pier, being supplied from stocks in South Wales. A lesser amount was also used in Eastbourne Pier. Reports have come in of its use for fencing in Wales and Argentina, small bridge decks on Dartmoor (10 $\frac{3}{4}$ " wide only) and at High Wycombe plus one found at Devizes by a keen-eyed SIAS member during our trip on 31st October, and strengthening of a barge at Lydney; several in answer to an enquiry in New Civil Engineer inspired by their article on Clevedon Pier. This included a drawing showing columns built up from two Barlow rails rivetted back to back, reproduced from the paper in the 1871 Proceedings of the Institution of Civil Engineers describing the pier's construction in 1868, but on visiting Clevedon the shape was found to be considerably different, and the weights per yard of 70 and 80 lbs quoted from the same source are equally suspect! The Clevedon and Bridgwater rails are of similar section to the drawing of the 90 lb rail used in Argentina, and measurement of the cross sectional area gives a similar figure. As Clevedon Pier, the Argentinian railway and the Bridgwater post are of similar dates, these rails probably came from the same source in South Wales.

The Great Western Society is building a small broad-gauge layout at Didcot, and this will include a short length of Barlow rail track with a trolley standing on it. This rail has the same overall dimensions as the Clevedon sample, but a slightly wider rail-head and a flatter base.

Researching Bridgwater Docks

In view of the interest shown by various authorities in Bridgwater Docks it might be imagined that a considerable body of information exists about its history and development. However, in his research during the past year into the subject, Brian Murless has had to probe many unpublished sources, and articles in local newspapers over the past 150 years. The picture which emerges is of a small dock complex that, from its inception, was plagued by the problem of silting from the river. Brian has laid to rest the myth that the design of the docks was from the drawing board of I. K. Brunel, details having come to light about its 'true' creator, a relatively unknown engineer called Thomas Dawe Maddicks. Extending the maritime theme a little wider, 'new' facts have been discovered about the bridges across the Parrett, especially an earlier Town Bridge, founded at Coalbrookdale, and Somerset Bridge which, in its original form, caused inadvertently two tragedies and a scandal. Subject to certain technicalities being overcome, it is hoped that the Somerset County Library will publish Brian's text, accompanied by suitable illustrations, in 1983.

Ware's Warehouse, Bridgwater

Members will be saddened to learn of the failure, earlier this year, of the Ware's Warehouse Project and the voluntary liquidation of the Somerset Historic Buildings Trust Limited. Despite the appointment of responsible and experienced persons as trustees, and the goodwill of the local authorities, it was found that a number of financial and legal problems were insuperable. S.I.A.S. was particularly concerned about one aspect of the scheme, namely the proposed creation of an industrial archaeological museum within part of the warehouse. Whilst the demise of the project is clearly a major setback to one

of the Society's declared aims, its failure contrasts sharply with the success of other restoration projects in the dockland area such as work on the Bascule and Telescopic Bridges. The complete revitalisation of the docks is still many years ahead and it is to be hoped that further attempts will be made to give this prominent listed building a new and suitable role.

A Limekiln in Thurlbear Wood

During October S.I.A.S. were asked to advise on a limekiln in the reserve of the Somerset Trust for Nature Conservation. Thurlbear Wood lies in the south-eastern part of Taunton Deane, an area once economically important for the extraction of white lias limestone, known locally as Thurlbear Stone. Such stonework, fashioned in the 15th century, can be seen in Thurlbear Church and although its use in vernacular buildings is widespread, the stone is liable to decomposition through weathering. Lime burning in the district dates from at least the 17th century and the burners could slake their thirst at the Limekiln Inn, now sadly converted to a private dwelling. The kiln (at ST271210) is of the low, squat type, built of the local material, with two relieving arches. Although this sort of kiln is still a fairly familiar sight in West Somerset, the majority in Taunton Deane have been destroyed. This woodland kiln serviced a small quarry which is still visible on its north-eastern side and both features are conveniently sited in relation to tracks and minor roads. The structure was probably erected in the 1850s when the wood formed part of the Portman Estate; it is shown on an Ordnance Survey map of 1886 but had become disused by 1903. At this latter date there was extensive development of a quarry on the eastern edge of Thurlbear Wood, in the parish of West Hatch, which included a kiln in association with a tramway. S.I.A.S. carried out on a measured survey and photographic record of the Trust's kiln and a report is in preparation. Apart from some damage by the roots of young saplings, the kiln is virtually intact and should form an attractive feature within the nature reserve.

Parrett Works

It is hoped that the urgently needed repair work on the chimney will be started next year! Nicholas Sloan, the owner, says that £1,000 plus will be needed and that he will be attempting to arrange this sum over the winter. The Committee has authorised the donation of £50 towards this work. This elegant chimney is well illustrated on the back cover of Journal 3.

Domestic Lighting

During the second quarter of this century an unusual form of lighting - ~~SILVER LIGHT~~ - was sometimes installed in isolated country houses not on the electric or gas mains.

The lighting fitments in the house were identical to that for gas - ceiling or bracket lights using a jet and incandescent mantle and controlled by taps. However, instead of coal gas, vapourised petrol was used, which gave a very bright, white light.

Two gallons of 100 octane petrol was put into a sealed chamber (this gave 2-3 weeks lighting). A tower approximately 20 ft high housed a 5 cwt

weight which was wound up by a small hand winch every day. Its descent was regulated by a clockworklike mechanism which, in the sealed chamber, slowly rotated two spoon shaped-paddles. The petrol was picked up in the spoons, trickled back along the hollow arms of the paddles as they turned and was so vapourised. This vapour was then put under pressure in another chamber by the weight and from there it was fed around the house. The last one seen working was on Dartmoor shortly before it stopped in the early fifties because of difficulty in obtaining the required petrol. It is also believed that Jamaica Inn, on Bodmin Moor, had a similar plant and that it ceased at the same time. There is no record of one in Somerset. The description of the plant is necessarily vague as it relies on recollections only. Somewhere there must be old trade journals which would illuminate the subject.

Chard Canal

There has always been speculation as to why the Chard Canal was built at that late stage (1842): when the railways were already the acknowledged form of transport and when so many technical and physical difficulties had to be overcome in its construction. Was there some special reason which made a canal seem more convenient and economic than a railway? The transport of heavy bulky material could be the answer and could that envisaged material have been coal? And away from Chard!

Perhaps the following extract gives a clue and is from "Rambles round Chard with a Hammer" by John Jones which was published in Chard in 1860. The brackets are the editor's.

"... the Reservoir on our right is made in and on the same clay (Blue Lias) ... and had we time to follow this lane (Chaffcombe Lane) on our right we should be able to inspect what traces now remain of the futile search for coal, which doubtless you have heard was made near Chard some years ago. The Lower Lias formation abounds in bituminous matter not unlike some kinds of coal in appearance, and this probably led to the belief that good coal must underlie these bituminous beds. Had the true nature of geological succession been as well understood then as now, or had some competent practical geologist been consulted, the attempt would most likely not have been made ... You will at once understand that the treasure, if it existed, is too far down in the crust of mother earth to make its extraction a profitable speculation. One can scarcely help picturing out the changes which a dozen coal mines would produce in this wide valley, now but thinly inhabited. Steam engines, factories and mills would stud the country round, giving employment to a busy population ... We pass on beside the Chard Canal, now apparently in its old age, and likely soon to bow before the last novelty - the Railway."

Shire Books

Members who attended Richard Willey's excellent talk on Weights and Measures will have seen the useful publication on the subject by J T Graham issued by Shire Books. Members of S.I.A.S. may not be aware that the Westonzoyland Engine Trust is now a major agent for Shire Books and stands to make a substantial profit from the sale of their publications. In a year in which

WET is aiming to raise £1,000 towards the erection of a workshop and interpretation centre at the pumping station, members of S.I.A.S. may wish to widen their reading and benefit the Trust by placing orders for Shire books through the Secretary or directly to Tony Ward at 2 Ethpark Grove, Taunton (83089). Shire now publish a wide range of specialist books, many of which are of particular interest to industrial archaeologists and all are very modestly priced!

Winter Programme

- | | |
|--------------------------|---|
| Sunday, 2nd January | New Year's walk - A circuit on the Blackdown Hills about 4½ miles - waterproofs and packed lunch.
1000 a.m. Castle Neroche Car Park (ST272157). |
| Friday, 7th January | Pearsall's Silk Mill - a guided tour of the Tancred Street, Taunton, works, starting at about 1000 a.m. * |
| Friday, 28th January | Telescopic Bridge, Bridgwater - Richard Fish, who designed the conversion works currently in progress, will talk on the history of the bridge and its future.
7.30 p.m. Weir Lodge. |
| Sunday, 6th February | A fossick to Yeovil/Sherborne area led by Sandy Buchanan. Meet at the old Yeovil Central Station car park 10.00 a.m. |
| Wednesday, 16th February | An evening visit to the Golden Hill Brewery, Wiveliscombe (Exmoor Brewers) * |
| Friday, 25th February | Settle and Carlisle - an illustrated talk by Philip Stevens. 7.30 Weir Lodge. |
| Friday, 11th March | The Textile Industry in Somerset and Wilts. The national authority on the woollen industry of the South West, Kenneth Ponting will give an illustrated talk.
7.30 p.m. Weir Lodge. |
| Saturday, 12th March | A Chard walkabout. Derrick Warren will lead a walk of about 4 miles. Stout shoes needed.
2.00 p.m. Boden Street, Chard, car park. |
| Friday, 18th March | AGM - all members are urged to attend to discuss the future of the Society.
7.30 p.m. Weir Lodge. |
| Saturday, 26th March | Annual South West Regional I.A. Conference to be held this year in Exeter. No details available at present except that David Greenfield and Brian Murless will present one of the papers. * |

* Visits marked with an asterisk - members wishing to go please contact David Greenfield (Taunton 77155) for further details.

BULLETIN 32

MARCH 1983

Hon. Secretary
C. A. Buchanan
2 Blake Green
Ashcott, Bridgwater
TA7 9QF
Tel: Ashcott 210566

In Bulletin 31 it was hoped that members would contribute more to future numbers. So far the reaction has been good. In this number there is a letter which is sure to give food for thought and such was the response to the short piece on Domestic Lighting that a full account of Air Gas can now be given. Please keep it up. Those two summer chores, lawn mowing and potting, being about to commence have prompted a potted history of lawn mowers! Richard Fish had unfortunately, because of illness, to cancel his talk on the Telescopic Bridge, Bridgwater. This will now be at a date to be announced later. Some members managed to attend a most instructive weekday visit to the old established Taunton firm of James Pearsall in Tancred Street. For those who could not come a history of the firm was supplied and is published here.

Industrial Archaeology on Diskette

The County Council Planning Department has recently installed a mini computer for use with the Sites and Structures Record of archaeological sites and buildings. Over the next two to three years all the data currently held on record sheets will be transferred to the machine. It will then be possible to retrieve information in a whole variety of ways (e.g. by type, date, parish, land use, etc) giving archaeological research in the County a powerful new tool. A temporary archaeological post, funded by the Department of the Environment, has been created to do the work under the watchful eye of Dr Ian Burrow, the County's Field Archaeologist. For the technical minded the computer is an Interdec Superbrain II with two drives for 5-inch diskettes.

Many of the entries already transferred reflect the work of S.I.A.S. members, e.g. information about corn mills supplied by Derrick Warren or about lime-kilns by Tony Ward. A few weeks ago Brian Murless was able to view the machine in action and noted the simple way in which entries can be corrected and updated.

Somerset Mines Research Group

Anyone concerned with mining in general and in Somerset in particular might be interested in joining this group. They exchange information, arrange field trips and excursions and publish a newsletter. Contact Andy Bowman, 4 Jubilee Street, Taunton, TA2 6JA.

Lawn Mowers

Stroud in Gloucestershire was, in the early 19th Century, a main centre of the woollen industry and it was here that Mr Edwin Budding was employed installing machinery for shearing the nap of cloth. This machinery consisted of rotating blades cutting the nap against a fixed blade and in 1830 Edwin Budding had the idea that this principle could be used for cutting grass.

Two years later, under licence, Messrs Ransomes, Sims & Jefferies of Ipswich manufactured the world's first lawn mower - a great advance over the scythe and shears! The next big step came in 1869 with the development of side driving wheels which made mowers much cheaper. Many of the larger machines were pulled by horses (on finer lawns they had to wear thick leather pads over their hoofs) but in 1893 the Leyland Company, under Summer's patent, produced one powered by steam and weighing $1\frac{1}{2}$ tons! Ransomes produced a large petrol engine mower in 1902, and also a smaller 20" mower. There was then a competitive demonstration at Eaton Hall near Chester against the Leyland steam mower, the result of which sealed the fate of the steam models. In 1914 a Mr Worthington of Shawnee, USA, patented his idea of ganging together a number of side wheeled mowers which greatly facilitated the cutting of large areas of grass, such as golf courses. The final innovation came in 1926 with Ransomes (again!) mains electric mower.

(condensed from The Surveyor)

Bath Bricks - A Rival Product

According to an article which appears in the British Brick Society's newsletter, the old brickyards at Walkeringham were, until early last year, used for the drying of silt from nearby rivers. Originally the mud of the Trent was taken to the yards at West Stockwith but when they closed the process was transferred to the Walkeringham site. Boats left West Stockwith Lock on a falling tide, loaded about twenty-five tons of mud at low tide then waited for the tide to rise in the mouth of the River Idle. After returning to the lock the loads were then taken by horse-drawn narrow boats up the canal to the Walkeringham yards. The wet muddy silt was then left outside to dry, washed, cleaned, ground to a fine texture and eventually put through a silk sieve. The very fine powder, suitable for cleaning silver, was then put in paper bags ready for despatch. At one time there was a regular order for Australia and New Zealand but production eventually ceased due to lack of demand.

Air Gas

Air or petrol gas burnt little oxygen, contained no carbonic or sulphuric acid thereby making it innocuous to plants and paintwork and with no deposits in pipes or burners, was non poisonous and non explosive, could be used for heating and cooking as well as lighting and had a "pleasant smell".

There were two types of gas - that containing 1.5-2.0% petrol vapour to air (low percentage gas) and that containing over 5.0% (high percentage gas). Any mixture between 2.0-5.0% had to be avoided as this was highly explosive!

The apparatus for the PRAED Safety Lighting Non-Explosive Gas, NATIONAL Gas, SILVERLITE and PREMIER Lighting made low percentage gas whilst AEROGEN (this Company still exists in name at Alton, Hants) made it on the high percentage principle.

All types of plant could be either weight or engine driven although the latter was more expensive as the engine would consume approximately 12% of gas produced and had also to have a large gas holder to provide for times when the engine was not running. Low percentage gas had to use larger bore pipes and its burners had to be gauze packed to prevent flashback, whilst both low and high percentage systems had to have a safety chamber between burners and plant and had to avoid over sharp bends in the piping.

Two weight driven types of plant can be described.

1. A weighted wire cord wound round a drum revolved an axle on which were three eccentric wheels operating an air pump by means of endless chains: air was driven through three valves into a vapourizing chamber where it combined with petrol vapour supplied through a carburettor. The gas then passed into a small gas holder, the rising of which automatically applied a brake to a flywheel on the axle so that as the storage increased, the action of the machine was retarded or stopped; starting again when gas was drawn off. The petrol tank was outside the building housing the equipment, and, so long as the tank was kept filled and the weight wound up, there was a regular supply of gas. This was manufactured by the Premier Lighting & Engineering Co.

2. Figures 1 and 2 illustrate the general principles for another type of air gas producing plant.

'A' is a fixed circular iron casing supported, with its gearing, on a stand. The casing is divided by a diaphragm 'C' into two compartments, 'D' and 'E', the former being the mixing or carburetting chamber and the latter the gas chamber. 'F' is a drum rotated by the shaft 'a' and gear 'b'. This drum is a series of hollow coils, usually four, each making several turns spirally around it; a portion of the coils is shown exposed at 'd'. A cross section of this coil drum is shown in Figure 2. The outer ends of the coils 1, 2, 3, 4 open into the carburetting chamber, 'D', Figure 1; the other end of each turns down into the small chamber 'e', formed by enlarging the end of the axle of the drum.

The casing is filled with 100 octane petrol to the level indicated and the outer ends of the coils dip in succession into the petrol as the drum rotates in the direction shown by the large arrows. Each coil, as it passes through the petrol, picks up a certain amount and this is carried around inside the coils, as shown by the small arrows; as the petrol goes round the air is driven before it through the coil and becomes mixed with it, issuing from the chamber at 'e', as air gas, into chamber 'E'. Surplus petrol drops back and returns to the carburetting chamber via a small passage 'f'. The air gas in 'E' is drawn off through a valve 'g' to a small receiver (sometimes a small gas holder).

Air is admitted into the carburetting chamber 'D' through a one way valve 'H'. Petrol is pumped in through opening 'i' from a tank; the pump being worked from gear 'b'.

The little power needed to work the plant is supplied by a heavy weight and a system of pulleys as shown at 'G'. The weight is shown by dotted lines at its lowest position. It is wound up by handle 'k', the wire cord at the same time being wrapped round the drum 'l'.

When gas was being used the weight 'm' falls gradually and turns the gearing. As soon as gas ceases to be taken the pressure which develops in the casing 'A' is sufficient, by setting up extra friction, to stop the action of the weight, when gas ceases to be made. Gas production is thus automatic except for the winding up of the weight and the supply of petrol.

About 1500 cu ft of low percentage gas was produced from 1 gal of 100 octane petrol, whilst a gallon produced 500 cu ft of high percentage gas. A cubic foot of the latter burnt for 1 hour giving about 14 candle power; $1\frac{1}{2}$ cu ft gave 16-20 c.p.; 2 cu ft 22-25 c.p.; 3 cu ft 35-40 c.p.; 6 cu ft 100-110 c.p.

There are two confirmed instances of Air Gas being used in Somerset - a bungalow near Halse and at Shawford Mill (Rhode) where during the 1939-45 War high grade petrol was obtained from the nearby U.S. air base. There is also a report of an extant plant in Devon which will be investigated during the summer.

Sources:

The Modern Plumber and Sanitary Engineer 1920, Chapter IX.
Harmsworth Encyclopedia 1922
Notes on Shawford Mill - John Olive
Members D Gledhill, I Miles, B C Pooley, C Tilley and T Clarke (BIAS)

"A Somerset Camera, 18-- ? - 1914"

A collection of photographs of the County is being compiled by Martyn Brown for a publication by Dovecote Press. He would be very interested to hear from members of SIAS with collections of photographs pre 1914 on all subjects, but particularly industry, mining and transport. Daytime phone: Glastonbury 32903, or evenings Wells 74687.

Unusual Drains

An eagle-eyed fieldworker in West Somerset recently spotted what he considered to be a quite remarkable drain constructed of bricks. They were, in fact, culvert bricks, specially designed for drains of various diameters, e.g. 16 bricks would be needed for a 24 inch drain, 30 bricks for a 42 inch, etc. There is an illustration of these interlocking bricks in the catalogue of William Thomas & Co Ltd of Poole, near Wellington. Thomas notes: "These culverts are self-fitting, and form compact and substantial drains of great strength, for the conveyance of sewage or water. They are decidedly preferable to pipes, especially in the larger sizes, and are used largely by County and Borough Surveyors with most satisfactory results." The catalogue dates to 1891 and an accompanying price list indicates that the bricks were sold at 45s. (225p) per 1000.

History of the House of Pearsall

Over the years much has been written on the history of James Pearsall & Co Ltd, but it is only within the last few years that certain undisputed facts regarding the history of the founder came to light.

It is known that James Pearsall was born 8th March, 1770, in Kidderminster and died 20th August, 1846, in London.

James left Kidderminster 16th February, 1787, after the death of his mother and his movements and activities from this date to about 1795 are obscure but he had by this time established a warehouse in Broad Street, London, and sold thrown silk to the weavers of Spitalfields. A considerable business was also available to him from the sale of silk used at the time for making ladies purses which were very fashionable. This is the firm's first connection with netting.

Pearsall formed a partnership with a Mr Green in 1802. Nothing is known about the latter except that by 1820 the Post Office directory omitted his name from the title. The 1830 edition of the same publication shows that he had taken into partnership John Spencer (b. 1812). John, however, was destined for the Ministry and left in 1834 to study at Glasgow University.

After the death of James the elder, a partnership was established between George Rawlinson (of Taunton) and Henry Clay Hextall (of London) and the title changed to James Pearsall & Company.

According to a certain history of the Silk Industry, written during the early part of this century, it was stated on good authority - "that Taunton shares with Derby, the honour of being the first place at which the making of thrown silk from fine raw silks was carried on in England after its introduction from the Continent". There is, however, some reason to doubt the absolute accuracy of this statement as we know that Sir Thomas Lombe built a silk mill at Derby in 1719, whereas early reference to the Silk Industry, in the annals of Taunton is in 1781, when Messrs Vansomer and Paul, Silk Mercers of Pall Mall, London, purchased a large brew house in Upper High Street, together with certain water rights. In 1790 this Taunton factory employed about 100 hands.

The origins of George Rawlinson are not at all clear but it is known that he came to the West Country during the very early 1800s and for a short time worked with John Heathcoat who, like G. R., moved from the Loughborough area as a result of the Luddite Riots during the Industrial Revolution.

It is believed that he established his factory in Tancred Street, Taunton, around 1816 and carried on his work of processing silk, mainly for the lace trade. Hence, the present name - Lace Factory. No doubt George Rawlinson's business connections with James Pearsall prompted him, on the death of James, to form a partnership with H C Hextall, in London, leaving his younger son, William, to carry on the management of the Silk Mills, whilst his elder son, Samuel, devoted his attention to the London end of the business at 145 Cheapside. This arrangement continued until 1881 when the Taunton factory, on the death of William, was taken over by employees Stanway and Summerfield, who became the proprietors. In 1895 they were succeeded by Messrs Calway and Drillion and in turn, on the death of the latter in 1925, the firm's style was altered to Calway and Son. Frank junior, in addition to his business activities, made a considerable name for himself in local affairs, eventually becoming the Chairman of the County Council.

During this period the Rawlinson/Hextall partnership and descendants thereof, carried on the London business and in 1922 a private limited company was formed. 1926 saw the firm of Calway and Son amalgamated with James Pearsall & Co Ltd, under the Chairmanship of H W Rawlinson.

During World War II, production at Taunton was mainly concentrated on Surgical Sutures and Pure Silk for winding for electrical wire covering and in 1945 we found modern synthetic yards in our midst with obvious potential uses. This eventually led to the production of netting twines which were sold to Bridport Industries Ltd, of which group Pearsalls became a subsidiary in 1960. The group amalgamated with Joseph Gundry & Co Ltd in 1964 and Bridport-Gundry Holdings Limited was formed in 1971. At this juncture the principal products were: Surgical Sutures, Braided and Twisted twines and cords, fine thrown yarns for weaving and sewing threads, and thrown and dyed viscose rayon for the trimmings trade.

A hand crab by Murch & Culverwell, Bridgwater

On 4 December 1982 a small hand powered debk crab was rescued from the yard of T R Brown, boat repairers, at Totterdown, Bristol. To the uninitiated this machine is a small hand winch, intended for deck mounting on a ship for raising cargo from the ship's hold, with warping drums (conical drums) on the outside of the frame to wrap ropes around for 'warping' the vessel alongside a wharf.

The maker's plate is cast on the frame of the crab and can be clearly read. The machine weighs approximately 100 cwt and was set in concrete on the boatyard quay, a compressor and drill being required for its rescue. It was recovered as a joint venture by members of SIAS/WET, and has been placed on display at the Westonzoiland Pumping Station, where members of SIAS are welcome to view it.

Mr John Maxwell and the Bridgwater firm of Kellands are to be thanked for their help in providing transport and the compressor needed for the project.

SIAS FIELD TRIPS

New Year Ramble, Sunday, 2nd January 1983

Whether hangovers were prevalent amongst the membership of SIAS can only be surmised but there was a small turnout for this event. A small party of six adults, one child and two dogs - soon to become three - enjoyed the tramp through the fields and woods to the west of Castle Neroche. Brief sighting of deer and buzzard encouraged some, the hospitality of the Candlelight at Bishopswood others. The main discovery of the walk, however, was the grist mill at Buckland St Mary. This made the climb through the muddy terrain entirely worthwhile. A splendid day in almost springlike weather.

Yeovil and Sherborne, Sunday, 6th February 1983

A grey day with a biting cold wind did not deter a party of about a dozen from doing a perambulation of Yeovil, starting along the line of the railway which once linked Yeovil Town and Hendford Stations. Various tannery and glove-making sites were noted, together with the original premises of Pittard & Petter. The demise of Aplin and Barrett's famous creamery was regretted but the thoughtfulness of British Rail for re-routing inter-city 'expresses' through Pen Mill Station was much appreciated.

After lunch, the party drove to Sherborne where Graham Bendell proved himself a splendid guide. A visit to the Castleton Waterworks, where a group of enthusiasts are working on the cast iron water wheel in the original pump house, was followed by a tour of Mr Stewart's beam engine at the town gasworks. The beam engine was carefully removed from a pumping station belonging to the Southampton Corporation near Winchester. It is now in pieces and the problems of restoration make those of WET seem very modest in comparison. Finally, Graham took us to view a grist mill south west of the town, which is being restored by the boys of Sherborne School. In spite of the bleak weather this was a fascinating day in which a wide range of industrial archaeology was on view.

Chard, Saturday, 12th March

A dry re-run of a walk almost washed out some years ago. Twenty members and friends saw the relics of the woollen, lace and engineering trades, the canal basin, the fine little GWR station and also visited Snowdon Toll House and Snowdon Quarries and caves where stone was worked from the 13th Century. During the walk the knapped flint and sandstone was seen in many buildings.

SIAS - The Next 10 years

The following is a letter from Tim Walford writing as an individual member. After outlining the activities and achievements of the past 10 years he continues:

Industrial archaeology can have two main forms: paper studies/records, etc, or physical activities on sites - recording, rescue, conservations, etc. Inevitably the 'paper' activities have dominated since the other involves much greater effort and cost. The question is: Should SIAS change its balance? SIAS has a quantity of artefacts in Ware's warehouse, under cover and secure but not catalogued or exhibitable as they are now; something will have to be done with these items soon. (Very soon! It is expected shortly that the Society will be given notice to remove them as the Ware's Warehouse Museum project has collapsed. Whatever eventually happens the Society has to find a new store. Ed.) It is my opinion that SIAS will continue at its current membership (and financial status) unless it makes a determined effort otherwise. The public is increasingly aware of old items or topics but in an inactive manner - many more would probably be interested in SIAS activities not essentially in a passive way. Probably most of those who are prepared to crawl round derelict buildings, etc, are already doing so but many would be interested in visiting a well presented site/exhibition if they can do it as an outing for the kids, etc, while on holiday.

Unless the public interest is increased there is no possibility, for financial reasons, of any really serious conservation or museum-type activity. If Ware's Warehouse has to be evacuated what do we do with items there now? We don't have a suitable building, etc. If we are to maintain the objectives and obligations to our donors we must find a building and this cannot be done on paper only type activities since they won't attract the paying public. More can and should be done on the paper side, for example, by publishing many private studies and cataloguing those already published - but major publications are expensive and with low sales to specialists only they don't

sufficient money to fund a building. Hence we have to be more attractive or accessible to the public. In short, we need a Museum Centre, although I don't like that name! It should enable the proper storage, conservation, cataloguing and exhibition of artefacts. In reality this means a weather-proof building of some 1,000 sq ft minimum in a readily accessible place, preferably near a centre of population/tourism and, if possible, near to a known IA site.

The foregoing all sounds very daunting but other societies have overcome this hurdle and passed to greater strengths. The Westonzoyland Engine Trust is a local example - it thrives, but the difference is that it has a focus where work and exhibitions can take place. SIAS has much broader interests than the single main subject of WET (steam pumping), because of this it may be harder for SIAS to set it up, but the appeal to the public is likely to be much greater in the long run. The Museum of Rural Life at Glastonbury is an example of successful broad interest project - may be SIAS should promote the Museum of Industrial Life. What do members think?

(The above views are not those of the Committee but are intended to provoke comment - and to get anyone with a suitable building to come forward!)

Tim Welford

AGM, 18th March 1983

For our AGM there was a good attendance and although there was lively discussion on finance and the remaindering of Journals 1 and 2, any decisions were referred back to Committee. Urgent action was sought for the storage and preservation of artefacts at present in Ware's warehouse as was the question of their custodianship.

Election of officers: Chairman: Mary Miles, Hon Sec: Sandy Buchanan, Hon Tres: Janet Jones, Field Officer: David Greenfield, Publication Officer: Derrick Warren, Publicity Officer: Tony Bull.
Committee: Ann Ronan, John Bentley, Roy Haymen, Brian Murless, Tim Walford.

Following the AGM members partook of wine and cheese and their minds were stimulated by a quiz set by Ian Miles and won by Ann Ronan. (It confirmed my ignorance and/or loss of memory! Ed.)

YOU ARE REMINDED PLEASE THAT SUBSCRIPTIONS ARE NOW DUE

Summer Programme, 1983

Sunday, 15th May

Devon drive about led by Derrick Warren visiting sites in S Devon and finishing with the Haytor Granite Railway. (An alternative for part of day for 'younger' members could be a trip to the S Devon Railway.) Meet 1030 a.m. Station Road Car Park, Buckfastleigh SX 74156613.

- Sunday, 22nd May Wellington walkabout led by Mrs Gillian Allen, author of The Book of Wellington. Meet 2 pm at Wellington Museum, Fore Street (next to Congregational Church) ST138209.
- Thursday, 2nd June Evening fossick in Shepton Mallett led by Sandy Buchanan. Meet 6.45 pm at Police Station car park ST617435.
- Saturday, 11th June Crewkerne and environs - an afternoon walk led by Derrick Warren and Sandy Buchanan. Meet at South Street car park, Crewkerne ST 442 097
- Sunday, 26th June A whole day trip to include Claverton Pumping Station (Kennet and Avon Canal), Shawford Mill and Murtry Aquaduct (Dorset and Somerset Canal). Claverton PS will be pumping (adults 6Op, children and OAPs 3Op). Meet 1030 at the Market car park, Frome.
(Claverton will also be pumping 1st/2nd May, 29th/30th May, 25th/26th June, 30th/31st July, 28th/29th August and 1st/2nd October.)
- Wednesday, 6th July Evening fossick in Highbridge, led by Ian Miles. Meet 6.45 pm at Market Street car park ST320 472.

Any SIAS members with transport difficulties or transport to offer, contact David Greenfield (Taunton 77155).

In addition to the above programme members may be interested in two items organized by the Inland Waterways Association.

- Sunday, 8th May Brian Murless and David Greenfield will lead a river and canal side walk in Taunton (a repeat of last year's walk). Meet 1130 at the Brewhouse Theatre.
- Saturday, 21st May Tony Haskell (Deputy County Planning Officer) will lead a dock and riverside walk in Bridgwater. Meet 1100 at the docks.

Work Programme

Somerset County Council is currently revising the list of buildings of special architectural or historic interest, and three inspectors are working their way round the county, parish by parish. SIAS has been invited to submit details of buildings which it feels should be considered for inclusion on the list. Any member who wishes to assist in the preparation of these details should contact David Greenfield.

This summer it is hoped to help preserve and restore the 25' ft diameter water wheel at Combe House Hotel at Holford. This will involve two or three days of cleaning and painting. Those prepared to work contact David Greenfield. A meal will be provided by the proprietor. VERY old clothes!

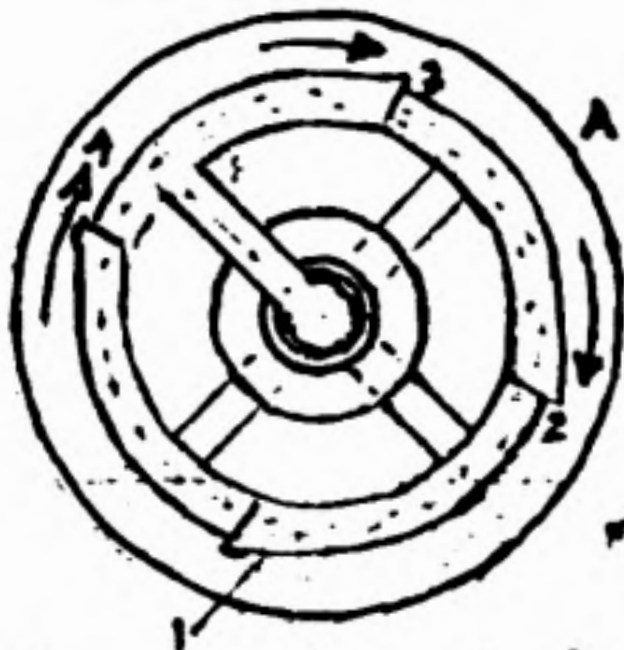


Fig. 2

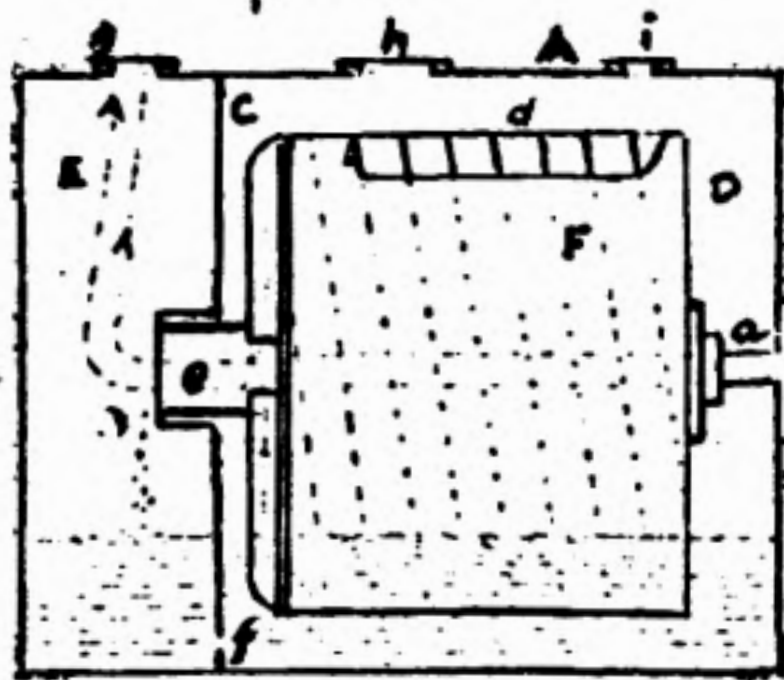
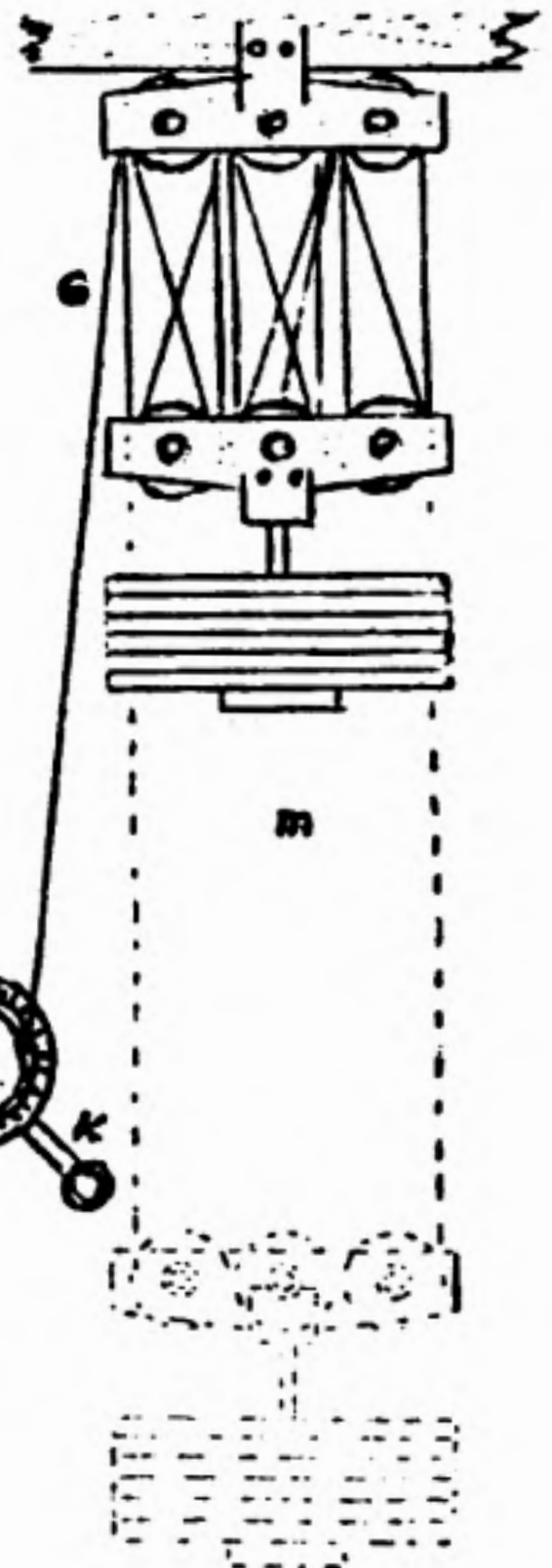


Fig. 1



Bulletin 33
August, 1983

Hon. Secretary:
C.A. Buchannan,
2 Blake Green,
Ashcott,
Bridgwater, Somerset.
TA7 9QF
Tel: Ashcott 210566

Editorial

Great difficulties would be met in producing a further Journal but the Committee have decided that every effort should be made to publish the work of the Society and of its individual members. This is to be done in the form of printed monographs, illustrated when appropriate, the first of which is now being prepared. By the occasional inclusion of a subject with a greater appeal to a more general public it is hoped to make them a financially viable proposition. Of course the bulletin will continue. In this issue John Bentley has contributed the most interesting piece on Blue Anchor Sea Defences.

Yesterday's Heating

In Bulletin 27 reference was made to redundant overhead gas heaters at All Saints Church, Bathpool. The building is about to undergo a change of use and David Gledhill, our local expert on the history of the gas industry, has rescued two of the heaters. After refurbishment they will be put on display at the Bristol Industrial Museum for approximately six months. A number of regional gas authorities have set up museums and David has kept a watchful eye for possible exhibits, particularly domestic appliances such as the radiators, or more correctly space heaters, which he acquired from the Congregational Chapel at Norton Fitzwarren. Like other smaller items of gas 'furniture', they had been manufactured and/or repaired in Taunton Gas Works. Also of interest to members will be the fact that David has chosen the History of Technology course as part of his studies towards an Open University degree. He is hopeful that his original research on the gas undertakings in Taunton Deane can be incorporated into this course, and has promised S.I.A.S. a copy of this thesis when completed.

Gasholders have been in the news recently: the one at North Hill, Minehead will shortly be dismantled as will one of the two remaining at Tangier, Taunton. This latter example has a particularly interesting history having once serviced the R101 airship before being relocated. It is understood that a gasholder in Norfolk has been opened up and converted into an industrial museum.

Yet Another Milestone

The fourth season of surveys has literally reached the end of the road, having been carried out by John Bentley and Brian Murless using techniques refined from the methods employed in previous years. All known or probable turnpike routes, radiating from Bridgwater, Chard, Ilminster, Minehead, Taunton and Wiveliscombe, have now been covered. Over 300 wayside features were recorded ranging from boulders with possible prehistoric associations to cast-iron boundary markers of local authorities which ceased to exist after 1 April, 1974. One unusual discovery was the gravestone of a so-called witch near Crewkerne.

Before considering further policy, John and Brian intend to publish a limited edition of the results. This will probably take the form of a gazetteer tabulating finds along each route accompanied by historical notes on the roads themselves. Much of this information promises to be of an original nature illustrating the development of the road network in Western Somerset from the 18th century to the present day. As well as documentary evidence deposited at the Somerset Record Office, the privately held records of the Chard Turnpike Trust have also been examined.

Blue Anchor Sea Defences

The massive sea wall protecting the Blue Anchor Hotel was designed by Carey & Latham, Consulting Engineers, of Victoria Street, London, for Mr. Lysaght of Old Cleeve, and built by Cochrane & Sons, also of Victoria Street, in about 1920. Storm damage to this wall early in 1983 highlighted the unending problem of sea defences at Blue Anchor generally, and prompted these notes. In Holland, where they have legendary small boys to push their fingers into holes in dykes and so prevent further damage, immediate action of a practical kind might have been taken. The British are more phlegmatic, and the parties who were, or might prove to be, financially involved elected to discuss the situation while the wall fell down completely, so that the cost of rebuilding will now be many times greater than a mere repair bill! For almost all of Blue Anchor beach, the B.3191 road runs immediately behind the shore, and sea defence has therefore been a County Council responsibility since 1889, but the extreme east end, by the hotel, remained a private problem.

The earliest detailed map of Somerset, by Day & Masters, is dated 1782, and shows the coast road already in its present position, as nearly as can be determined at 1 inch to 1 mile scale. It had been turnpiked in 1765, and Greenwood's map of 1822 shows a toll bar near Blue Anchor Hotel. The first 1 inch to 1 mile Ordnance Survey map was published in 1809, and all three of these maps have been compared with the 1960 OS map to see whether any changes in the coast line are apparent, but the survey errors far exceed any possible change; high water mark between Minehead and Watchet seems to be little changed over most of its length, but low water mark is certainly now much closer inshore, confirming the drastic lowering in beach levels.

The first known sea defences dated from about 1859, when an embankment and (improved?) road were constructed by driving two rows of timber piles and filling behind with clay and shingle. Evidently the first length did not include the vicinity of Pill Bridge, half-way along the 'sea front', as in 1868 D & T Stevenson, Civil Engineers of Edinburgh, sent a drawing and estimate for similar elm piling to G.F. Luttrell Esq. following storm damage extending for 300 feet both east and west of the bridge. The new piling extended the earlier length further east. Somewhat surprisingly, in view of later events, the beach levels near Pill Bridge were much the same then as in 1899, over 30 years later.

Neither the Luttrell family, up to 1889, nor the County Council, seem to have bothered to maintain the piling, so by 1898 it was in a very dilapidated condition, and Case & Grey, of Norwich, were engaged to prepare a report; this recommended the construction of 11 'Case' groynes 400 feet apart, and extending 450 feet seawards from mean-tide level, to collect sand and shingle, so raising the beach level. The Council did nothing, and the sea showed no more respect for it than for Canute some 900 years earlier! A storm on 12th January, 1899 did serious damage, and the County Surveyor, W.J. Willcox, although well into his 60's, hurried from his office at Bath to carry out a chilly mid-winter survey at the handy scale of 1 1/4 inches to 1 chain (= 66 feet). This survives, and interestingly shows the 'probable' line of the old piling. This time, the Council didn't even have a chance to act, as a further storm on 12th February left the situation even worse!

Back to the drawing board! Mr. C.A. Brereton, of Sir J. Wolfe Barry & Partners, was called in to advise. He wasted no time, his report being presented on 10th March, 1899. Between Pill Bridge and the Blue Anchor Hotel, the road had been almost destroyed, and a masonry sea wall was recommended, with foundations carried down to the solid clay below the beach. Pill Bridge, which was only about 10 feet wide between parapets, was abandoned, and the road moved some 50 feet further inland. Further west, damage was less, and comparatively minor repair, combined with a dwarf wall, was recommended. The reconstructed road was 20 feet wide, with a 10 foot 'cess or path' on the seaward side. New groynes

'to arrest the travel of the shingle and collect the beach' were recommended, but not built. For all this, the initial estimate was £9,000 to £10,000; by June, the tender price of Mr. G. Butter, of Barry, was £17,770 although the sea wall ended up only 2,250 feet long instead of the 3,080 feet recommended. To the west of the wall, however, concrete and stone pitched slopes replaced the piling and dwarf wall originally recommended.

Expenditure of £3,020 between 1903 and 1905 kept things going until June, 1908 when the continuing drop in beach level (the groynes had been omitted!) threatened to undermine the sea wall, and a protecting apron against the toe had to be built for £450 - with an extension the next year for £464. Until 1915, further maintenance cost a few hundred pounds only, but by then extensions to the sea wall, more underpinning (i.e. apron etc.), and repairs to Pill Bridge outfall were needed; these works were completed in 1917 for £4,214. Due to wartime conditions and pruning of estimates, this work had been rather inadequate, and remedial measures cost a further £3,626 by January, 1922.

By 1919, the beach level generally had dropped 13 feet below the level in 1899, and seemed set to go on dropping. Everything that had been done was clearly quite inadequate, so on the advice of Mr. Carey, of Carey & Latham, who was giving advice about the Hotel wall at the same time, timber stockades and groynes were built to trap shingle, the sea wall again extended and further apron built to protect the toe of the older lengths, carried out concurrently with the other repairs already described for a further £32,852. The denudation of the beach was blamed on Minehead breakwater, which was deemed to obstruct littoral drift.

The County Council was by then becoming disenchanted with this enforced foray into sea defence work, in spite of a 25% grant from the Ministry of Transport (because it was classed as roadworks!) from 1921 onwards. Rather than pour good money (i.e. the £32,852 just mentioned + substantial further sums annually for ever) after bad, the Council sought to abandon the road, plus the low-lying land immediately to the south, to the sea. To the relief of the Great Western Railway, who would have inherited a serious problem overnight, this was found to be illegal, so the battle had to go on.

Meanwhile, the beach level had also been dropping to the west, and seizing the bull by the tip of his tail, defences of gorse, 2 feet thick, held down by wire netting and strengthened by mats or groynes of brushwood, were constructed. As the sea was quite capable of floating large concrete slabs bodily out to sea, it is not surprising that this provided only a temporary respite, although its flexibility would have helped.

It would be tedious to list the escalating maintenance costs over the next few years, involving further lengths of sea wall, more underpinning, and so on, but other methods began to be used also, with some success. In 1928, expanded steel grillages were built near the east end; these were open at the upper (shore) end, but closed all the way back seawards. Shingle rolled over the top of the steel mesh, fell in, and was trapped when washed back by the undertow. This was more successful than the earlier timber stockades, and was extended as need and money dictated. By 1936, the shingle traps were wearing out, and were gradually replaced by an improved pattern higher up the beach. Just so long as the steel framework between the bays, to which the mesh was anchored, did not deteriorate too badly, and the cost of steel did not rise too high, the system worked well - but the supply of shingle eventually began to give out as beach levels below the traps continued to drop. The old timber stockades, completed in 1923, were allowed to decay, being finally declared a danger to shipping in 1950!

By the mid 1950's, this golden age was over. Steel was in very short supply, and also expensive. Furthermore, some of the steel framework was beyond repair. The Dutch had the answer! Sand was dozed up to the top of the beach, hardcore added to the height of the old steel

mesh, and covered with coarse stone pitching. This was then liberally grouted with hot mastic asphalt to prevent water getting in and lifting the pitching or washing out the sand. Although the initial cost was higher, maintenance was greatly reduced, and by 1968 all the steel shingle traps had been replaced. Some sympathy is, perhaps, due to the digger driver who, feeling hot and tired at low tide, drove his machine down to the water's edge one sunny day. Refreshed and reinvigorated after his paddle, he found that his digger was hopelessly bogged down - the Canute problem again!

Some of the grouted stone pitching is now showing signs of age, and the cost of maintenance is starting to rise ...

Programme

Fri. 30th Sept. "19th Century Wellington" - Mrs. Gillian Allen.
7.30 p.m. Those members who toured Wellington with Mrs. Allen
Weir Lodge in May will know the enthusiasm for, and knowledge
 of the subject of what promises to be an entertaining
 talk.

Sun. 16th Oct. Day out in Clevedon and district - led by David
 Greenfield. Meet 10.30 a.m. at the pier, Clevedon
 (ST40Z 718).

Fri. 28th Oct. 'The Odd 1/4 inch' - Richard Antliff and David Hartland
7.30 p.m. of the Great Western Society on Brunel, broad gauge
Weir Lodge (and Barlow?).

Fri. 18th Nov. "The Telescopic Bridge" - Richard Fish will give
7.30 p.m. his talk which was postponed from January. The
Weir Lodge transformation from railway to road bridge is now
 complete.

Fri. 9th Dec. Members' evening - bring slides, artefacts and results
7.30 p.m. of research to astound your fellow members! Beat
Weir Lodge Brian Murless's slides of the industrial past of
 the N.E. to be shown.

Members may be interested in the following events:-

Sat./Sun. "Yesterday's Farming" - heavy horses, vintage tractors,
3rd/4th Sept. steam engines, etc. Bath & West Showground 10 a.m.
 each day (adults £1, children/O.A.P.s 50p).

Sun. 11th Sept. Extended Grand Western Canal horse drawn boat excursion
 from Burliscombe to Tiverton. Coach from Taunton
 and return, lunch at Sampford Peverell, and boat
 £10, children £8.50. Details and reservations from
 Mrs. Sylvia Rymell, Hon. Sec. W. Country Branch
 I.W.A., Lyewater Farmhouse, Lyewater, Crewkerne,
 TA18 8BB.

Fri. 7th Oct. A Victorian Magic Lantern Show - arranged by Westonzoy-
7.30 p.m. land Engine Trust. Mrs. West, head of Food and
Bridgwater Arts Fashion at Brunel Technical College, will give a
Centre show of early slides with some of a moral tone!
 Tickets £1.00, available from Mary Miles (West Monkton
 412713).

BULLETIN NO 34
NOVEMBER 1983

Hon. Secretary
C. A. Buchanan
2 Blake Green
Ashcott, Bridgwater
TA7 9QF
Tel: Ashcott 210566

EDITORIAL

In May 1977 SIAS had a project to clean an old steam pumping engine at Westonzoyland. The project outgrew SIAS and eventually a healthy offspring emerged in the shape of the Westonzoyland Engine Trust. With the enthusiasm of its members overcoming seemingly overwhelming difficulties this year has seen a milestone in its history. In August the Easton and Amos Engine was once more in steam and W.E.T. deservedly received congratulations from near and far. Now it is the turn of SIAS to add its congratulations, good wishes for the future and the promise of continued support. There will be a steaming on 1st and 2nd January 1984 - everyone is cordially invited to attend but there will be a small charge to non members of W.E.T.

Once again the Committee wish all its members a very Happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year but with a plaintive cry from the Treasurer! Please, please pay your subscriptions. Some, who shall be nameless, are two years in arrears, yet still the Publication Officer sends out the Bulletins!

The article on Gliddons is extracted from an excellent publication of theirs on the occasion of their 150th anniversary.

A Family Business

For a century and a half the name Gliddon has been synonymous with agriculture and engineering, having built up a trade that now stretches across Somerset to Cornwall from the base at Williton.

But the family's business story started on the other side of Exmoor in what in 1833 was referred to as "the distant neighbourhood" of Barnstaple. There John Gliddon was in business as an ironmonger at 75 High Street. After meeting his future wife, Christiana Baltus, and marrying her he decided to sell up and move to Williton.

No one knows for sure why he made the move but he established himself quickly enough and, in a loaned gig, returned to Barnstaple to collect his wife. Today the distance is an hour's drive but at that time the journey was rough, long and tiresome.

John Gliddon must have prospered steadily at the Bank Street premises which, with much modernizing, still house the company today. By the time his three sons were old enough he was able to send them off to an academy at Axminster and John Wesley Gliddon went on to attend a public school (later to become Blundell's) at Tiverton.

Perhaps this financial success was due to John Gliddon's wide scope as a tradesman and engineer. He carried out his intention of branching out from the chores of a run-of-the-mill village blacksmith.

He started selling ploughs and washing machines and by 1859 he was manufacturing his own kitchen ranges which were sold nationally.

One of his sons, Benjamin Gliddon, was meanwhile serving his apprenticeship with H. Beare and Sons, of Newton Abbot, where not only was he successful professionally but also as a family man - marrying the boss's daughter.

By the time John Wesley returned from the Crimea Wars he found his younger brothers, Benjamin and Henry, helping their father in an expanding business. Alas he died at a young age due to war related illness in 1880 and his father outlived him by a year.

Benjamin Gliddon now took over the helm of the company helped by his brother Henry.

Trade took a step into the twentieth century when Benjamin's son, Arthur Henry Gliddon, returned from a four-year apprenticeship with the engine makers, Richard Hornsby and Sons, of Grantham.

With his experience the family business was able to spread over a wider range of services. Although modes of transport were being revolutionized, first with the bicycle and then with the car, the turn of the century saw a host of British companies vying for the market in horse-drawn implements.

Names like Massey Harris, Ransomes, J. and F. Howard, Bamfords, Deering, Bamlett, Harrison and McGregor were all purchased and supplied by J Gliddon and Sons.

Franchises were loose or non-existent until the tractor manufacturers came along 30 years later. The mechanized workhorses at the turn of the century were the traction engines which, bought complete with a threshing machine, cost about £550.

That was the price in 1895 when J. Gliddon and Sons sold a Marshall 6 h.p. traction engine, with eight inch diameter cylinder which worked at 158 r.p.m., a winding drum with steel rope, and a threshing machine with chaff cleaner.

The heavy engineering, and the castings for the stoves and the saw benches, was carried out over the hill at Watchet where the firm had a foundry employing about 30 men. On days when the furnace was lit the men from Williton would cycle over to help with the casting.

Back at Williton the new age of motoring began to attract business. A pump at Bank Street would supply the rare motorist with Russian petrol at one shilling and three pence a gallon.

The farriers at High Street had to make way for cars and motorcycles. Their own boss Benjamin Gliddon was the first owner of a car in the village.

The 'twenties and thirties' bring us into the living memory of Arthur Henry Gliddon's son John who now, at the age of 73, is still a mainstay of the company. He, with his brother Arthur Laity Gliddon, who died in 1965, saw the firm into the tractor age, met Harry Ferguson and took on the franchise for his hydraulically equipped machines.

Centralized industry saw the closing of the Watchet Foundry but a growth in the retail trade saw Gliddons buy W. Tarr & Sons hardware shop in Minehead.

Invited by M.F. to enlarge their agricultural dealership, J. Gliddon & Sons returned to that 'distant neighbourhood' of Barnstaple and bought the long-established firm of M. Squire & Son.

That was 27 years ago. A quarter of a century later the Williton firm has taken another step into another county. In 1982 when Jeffrey Engineering pulled out of Launceston, in Cornwall, J. Gliddon and Sons moved in and took over the Massey Ferguson franchise.

John Gliddon has seen the expansion of both the Williton premises, and now his son David and his nephew Ben Gliddon have taken over the helm of the company.

What changes will come about in the next 150 years?

Buckland St Mary Rake and Gate Manufactory

Further to the mention of a small rural workshop at Newtown, Buckland St Mary, in Bulletin No 23, the following endorsement was found in the 1886 catalogue of C. Allen & Sons, Tone Foundry, Taunton:

Buckland St Mary Rake and Gate Manufactory

C. Allen & Sons

Dear Sirs,

Replying to yours, the one horsepower vertical engine I bought from you in 1876 has given me every satisfaction, being so strong and so simple that a lad can manage it, and do a lot of work with it, and it burns very little fuel. I use it for driving the saw bench you made for me and I can cut 11 inch stuff with 80 lbs of steam without any difficulty.

Yours truly,

L. C. Dicks

A Visit to Clevedon and District

The field trip organized by David Greenfield to Clevedon on a potentially stormy day in mid-October was a great success. The rough seas explained in part the collapse of Clevedon Pier - erected in 1869 - but we found that we could still gasp in admiration at what an imaginative engineer could do with a job lot of barlow rails.

The small museum and shop at the landward end of the Pier provided a welcome haven from the wind and an interesting range of exhibits and goods for sale.

After a brief excursion round Dial Hill, which gave us a comprehensive bird's eye view of the town, we returned to the centre to look round the remains of the terminus of the GWR branch from Yatton. The platform of Clevedon Station is still recognizable amongst the blackberry bushes, but none of the superstructure survives. The party looked round for traces of Weston, Clevedon and Portishead Light Railway and positively identified some sections of its route through the town.

As we moved out we made a brief stop to look at the substantial remains of the retort house and associated buildings of the Clevedon Gas Works. We parked for lunch at the Clevedon Pumping Station which stands to the east of the motorway at the bottom of the steep incline over Twickenham Hill. This elegant collection of buildings was erected between 1901 and 1904 and consists of an engine house, boiler room and a very fine chimney. Although the original steam engine was replaced in 1948 by electric pumps, a diesel Lister engine is also housed in the building for stand-by duties. The two round arches of the original boiler room indicate where the coal was brought in by rail. Outside, the building is crowned by a wooden lantern and the coat of arms of the Clevedon Water Works Company is carved into the stonework above the main door.

Our guide led us across the moors to the Chelvey Pumping Station which still houses a superb but rusting triple expansion engine which was erected on the site by the Lilleshall Company in 1924. It ceased working in 1956. The 300 h.p. engine drove deep well and surface pumps. The engine is an inverted vertical type with cylinders 500 mm, 900 mm and 1400 mm. It normally operated at a speed of 22 r.p.m. For a full account of the site and its history see Peter Skinner's article in BIAS Journal Volume 12, 1979.

The rusting engine appears to be surviving in relatively good order but it presents a challenge to those local bodies - including SIAS - who are interested in the preservation and restoration of machines now obsolete.

Issues of preservation were raised again by the final port of call on this field trip. The site of one of the glass cones which were established in Nailsea at the end of the eighteenth century has been cleared by youngsters employed on a MSC-funded scheme under the supervision of SIAS member, David Pollard. Although a modern bungalow now sits incongruously in the middle of the site, sufficient masonry has been uncovered to demonstrate clearly the foundations of the glass cone. It is to be hoped that the newly-exposed walls of this interesting structure do not suffer the same depredations from the weather and from vandals as the base of the glass cone in Bridgwater has had to sustain.

This was a varied and stimulating excursion and it is a matter of regret that more members of SIAS did not brave the elements to support this venture into an area which might still claim to be Somerset.

Sandy Buchanan
17 November 1983

Letters to the Editor

Sir,

Bridgwater and Taunton Canal Traffic in the C20

I refer to a paragraph in Journal 2 (1977), p. 43, in which the then editor appeared to draw conclusions which because I was the source of the information may be considered to have been attributable to me.

Since the publication of the note I had hoped to have substantiated the suggestion I am about to make by reference to records of others parts or elsewhere but I have been unable to find time to do so. Although no one has raised the point with me I do feel that the facts which I submitted bear another and much more rational interpretation.

Consider the Day Book entry of the Bridgwater Dock Office for January 10th 1906 being typical of those where a named vessel is included. It reads:

1906	Jan'y 10	2.00	Barge 5	J Mead	Draft 3ft coals for Day of Creech X Ark.
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In Journal 2 the Ark (along with two other vessels named) is referred to as a barge (no reference to substantiate this) and a suggestion that she was possibly a converted coasting vessel.

I submit that a much more likely interpretation is as follows. At 2.00 on 10th January 1906 Barge No 5 belonging to J. Mead entered the canal, loaded to a draft of 3 ft with coal transhipped from The 'Ark' and bound for Mr Day of Creech St Michael ('X' being short for 'ex-'). The 'Ark' was probably a coaster having previously arrived at Bridgwater via the Parrett with a cargo of coal from S. Wales (?) - an interpretation applicable to the other named vessels also.

Perhaps someone of investigatory ability will substantiate, or refute, my suggestion in this last sentence.

C. A. S. Honor

Rolling bridge at Bridgewater

I was intrigued recently to read an old copy of the 'Illustrated London News' which contained an article reporting on the completion of a 'rolling bridge at Bridgewater'. The article described the operation of the movable parts of the bridge which allowed vessels to pass along the river. At one end, a platform on wheels moved sideways, enabling the main span to be withdrawn clear of the navigation.

So far, the account faithfully describes the original action of the Telescopic Railway Bridge, currently in the news following its conversion to a road bridge, and described in Brian Murless's book on 'Bridgwater Docks and the River Parrett'.

However, there the resemblance ends, for the bridge is reported as being built of large timber trusses, at the end of an earthen causeway, 2300 feet long, constructed in the River Derwent by 'refractory prisoners'! Also the article is dated April 1851, and records the completion of the bridge in 1849, 20 years before construction of the Telescopic Bridge started!

In fact this particular bridge was built at Bridgewater in Van Diemen's Land (now Tasmania), to carry the road between Hobart and Launceston. It would be interesting to discover whether this bridge still exists or whether its replacement still operates on the same principle.

David Greenfield

Book Review

BRIDGWATER DOCKS AND THE RIVER PARRETT by Brian J. Murless;
Somerset County Library, 1983 (£2.75)

The publication of this book by the emeritus Publications Officer of SIAS is a welcome addition to the slowly growing library of works on Somerset's recent history. Members of SIAS have long been conscious of the unique character of the Bridgewater Docks area in the county's industrial landscape. Brian Murless's text provides a full explanation of not only the surviving features but also of those many elements which have now disappeared from this area. He has brought together a fascinating collection of historical material which indicates both the local and the regional factors which influenced the development of industry and commerce on the Rivers Parrett and Tone, and particularly within the Borough of Bridgewater.

The broad treatment of his theme will appeal to a wider readership. The book will be of interest to local historians and industrial archaeologists as well as to scholars and students in Somerset's schools and colleges. They will all find a lot of new information together with inspiration and sources for further study. The work will, however, also appeal to any person who has an interest in the local environment and who pauses to question why it is as they find it today. Local residents will particularly enjoy the pictures and anecdotes which many will be able to relate to the lives of their own relatives. The ubiquitous breeds of railway and canal enthusiasts will find much of interest to their respective areas of study.

The book has an attractive lay out and the very high quality of line drawings and the reproduced photographs is remarkable for a modestly priced publication such as this. It is a credit to the printers.

Two criticisms may be reasonably made. The omission of references to opinions and sources quoted in the text will prove infuriating to future scholars, but sadly, footnotes are deemed to be unnecessary in books aimed at a popular readership. The other omission is of statistical tables which could have indicated the rise and fall of commerce in Bridgewater - and the variety of its content - much more clearly than has been possible in the written text.

However, these are relatively minor quibbles which do not detract significantly from the overall excellence of the book. The Author deserves our thanks for compiling this valuable study and the County Council, through its Library Service, is to be commended for embarking on publications of this nature. There is scope for many more studies on similar themes and it is to be hoped that the County's initiative will be maintained. It is also to be hoped that the County Council will continue its efforts to re-vitalize the Bridgewater Docks area and heed in particular the comments in the penultimate paragraph of the last chapter, on page 47. It can certainly count on the support of SIAS towards this end.

S. Buchanan

G.W.R. Magazine

Avon-Anglia Publications announce that they are re-printing selections from the Great Western Railway Magazine. These will take the form of facsimile re-prints, issued quarterly, "specially edited to offer the best material in the most useful and readable form and covering a wide time span." Each issue will contain approximately 64 pages. Issues are planned for December 1983, March, June and September 1984.

Prices are: Issue 1 alone	£5.95 + .45 p&p
Issues 1-4 (subscription)	£4.50 + .45 p&p
Issues 1-4 (advance sub)	£18.00 post free

SIAS members are entitled to a 10% discount on the above prices. Further details from David Greenfield.

Media Men

A series of television programmes, likely to be shown on Fridays at 10.30 p.m., early in 1984, concerns the people, places and events associated with the River Parrett, from its source across the Dorset border to the Bristol Channel. Recently an eight person production unit from HTV visited the area shooting footage and conducting interviews. At Westonzoyland Pumping Station, steam was raised especially for the camera; Iain Miles had an opportunity to explain the history of the site and the trust created to preserve it. Brian Murless, in armchair conversation with the presenter, placed in perspective the importance of Bridgwater's maritime past as well as describing some once familiar products of the town's former brick and tile works. It is hoped that one programme will be given over in its entirety to Bridgwater and that the whole package will be "networked" - television jargon for nationwide viewing.

PROGRAMME -JANUARY-MARCH 1984

Friday, 27 January
7.30 p.m. Weir Lodge

"From Pillar to Post" - Mrs Rosemary Berry, a national authority on letter boxes, will give what promises to be a fascinating talk on this aspect of postal history.

Friday, 17 February
7.30 p.m. Weir Lodge

"S.S. Great Britain" - Captain Hugh Gardner of the S.S. Great Britain project will give an illustrated talk on the history and future of the ship, as a prelude to a proposed SIAS visit to the site in the spring.

Saturday, 25 February

Visit to the mason's yard at Wells Cathedral, followed by an inspection of the West Front restoration work currently underway (by kind permission of the Wells Conservation Centre). Meet at the West Front, 10.00 a.m.

Friday, 2 March
7.30 Weir Lodge

"The Village Engineer - W. H. Pool & Sons in particular" - Derrick Warren will talk about these worthies and notables.

Friday, 16 March
7.30 Weir Lodge

AGM, followed by BSQ (Brain of SIAS Quiz).
In accordance with tradition, extending back through the mists of time to 1981, the questions will be set by last year's winner, Ann Ronan. There will be a prize for the winner (I expect). Nominations for Officers and Committee should be sent to the Hon. Secretary.

Sunday, 25 March

SIAS member David Pollard is striving hard to complete his plans to open a Bath Stone Quarry Museum at Corsham. However, he has kindly agreed to ease up for a couple of hours to show us round the site, which includes underground workings, machines, tools, etc, etc. Time permitting afterwards, a visit could be made to the Fox-Talbot Museum of Photography at near-by Lacock. Members wishing to go on this visit should contact David Greenfield (Taunton 77155) nearer the time, when details of directions, travel arrangements, time, etc, will be finalized.

BULLETIN NO 35
MAY 1984

Hon. Secretary
C. A. Buchanan
2 Blake Green
Ashcott, Bridgwater
TA7 9QF
Tel: Ashcott 210566

EDITORIAL

The AGM has come and gone and once again the Society can muster a full complement of officers and committee. A farewell was said to Mary Miles as Chairman and in her place a founder member and, it can be said, one of the bricks with which the Society was built - Brian Murless - was elected. It had long been felt that there should be a Vice Chairman and this year Tim Walford has been elected to that office. Two new faces are welcomed on to the Committee - Margaret Anderson and Stan Farrer, whilst Ian Miles is received back into the fold to keep the family name going. The final list of officers and committee is as follows: Chairman, Brian Murless; Vice Chairman, Tim Walford; Hon Sec Sandy Buchanan (2 Blake Green, Ashcott, tel: Ashcott 210566); Hon Treasurer, Janet Jones; Field Officer, David Greenfield (tel: Taunton 77155); Publications Officer, Derrick Warren; Publicity Officer, Ann Ronan. Committee: Margaret Anderson, Stan Farrer, Ian Miles, John Bentley, Roy Hayman.

After the business of the AGM was concluded there was a brain teasing quiz thought up with devilish cunning and research by Ann Ronan and won by a whisker by Sandy Buchanan. During this, wine and cheese was distributed as encouragement and restorative!

Mr Daws, owner of the last Rope Walk in Somerset at West Coker, died recently and once again I.A. in Somerset might be the loser. When the Society carried out a survey of the property in 1980, Mr Daws indicated that he would like the machinery to be eventually taken into care and consequently the Society kept an eye on the property. However, a well meaning act by others not only listed the building but its contents, which meant that the Society could not remove them. Now that Mr Daws is dead and the property to be sold, the Society is helping Somerset C.C. and Yeovil D.C. to ascertain what exactly was in the building by way of machinery, etc. We have a drawing and photographs but should anyone have more then they are urgently required. Please contact the Field Officer. This machinery would have complemented the twine and rope making machinery previously removed from the premises of Job Gould in West Coker.

All items stored at Ware's Warehouse at Bridgwater had to be removed in the New Year when conversion of that building into flats, etc, commenced, and were dispersed to various temporary 'homes'.

The rope macking machinery is at present at Upton Bridge Farm, Long Sutton, awaiting cleaning and conserving before its eventual removal for display at Brympton D'Evercy.

Richard Hayman, son of member Roy Hayman, contributes a truly fascinating article on a far too little-known local worthy: Andrew Crosse of Fyne Court, Broomfield, whose 200th anniversary it is this year.

End of the Road (Part One)

Spring growth in the hedgerows and on the grass verges heralds the termination of another season of roadside surveys by John Bentley and Brian Murless. With techniques refined still further from the experiences of previous years, it has been possible to cover greater distances with relative ease. Apart from some "infilling" in the north of the County, the turnpike trust routes traversed are those from Crewkerne, Ilchester and Yeovil plus the rambling roads of the Langport, Somerton and Castle Cary Trust (see Sandy Buchanan's article in S.I.A.S. Journal Two).

Taking into account details already on file, John and Brian have effectively worked on all known trust routes in West and South Somerset though it must be stressed that historical research is far from complete. This represents well over half of the total mileage of such routes in the County (post 1974 boundaries) and it has been decided to publish the accumulated evidence before proceeding. Whilst day-to-day expenditure on items such as film and petrol have been met by the surveyors, printing, by whatever means, can result in formidable costs. An application for grant aid is in the pipeline and other sources of funding are being explored.

One of the academic questions still to be satisfactorily answered concerns the date of features such as milestones: whether, in fact, they can be associated with the turnpike trust era or were set up by some subsequent authority such as a highway board. In South-East Somerset there are a handful of stones giving mileages to certain places, together with inscribed pointing hands. These have been classified as direction stones and from the style of the lettering probably date from the 18th century. In the areas being studied, former trust routes are marked, for the most part, by stones with cast-iron plates. Although these cannot be ascribed to a particular trust, the plate shapes are distinctive. Interestingly, the Ilchester Trust, a relatively small authority at the crossroads of routes in that part of Somerset, appears to have adopted the plate shapes of two neighbouring trusts, the Yeovil and the Langport, Somerton and Castle Cary.

Milestones rarely give distances to more than two, normally local places but two inscribed stones which list London and elsewhere have been recorded. One is on the A.30 east of Crewkerne (ST 45501055) and the other is on the old A.303 outside the Town Hall, Ilchester (ST 52162269). As an aid to problem solving, the minute books of the trusts, where they exist, are of limited help though there are some excellent deposited plans at the Somerset Record Office showing proposed new roads or improved sections. It is hoped that the intended publication on the development of Somerset roads (part one) will inform as well as stimulate discussion on the management of the highways during the past two centuries.

The Thunder and Lightning Man

Although Andrew Crosse is not a familiar name in the annals of Science, and his reputation as an experimenter tends towards the black magician, he was no dilettante in the growing discipline of electrical studies. It is particularly difficult to assess his achievements as a scientist, partly because of the scanty nature of his various notes and observations, and partly because of later biographers' preoccupation with the sensationalism of his famed aberration - the inadvertent creation of insects, now known as the Acari Crossoi.

Andrew Crosse was born at Fyne Court in July 1784 his family's ancestral home. His father died in 1800; and on his mother's death in 1805 he

inherited the family estate and settled down to his lifelong researches. In 1807 he began his work on electro-crystallisation, prompted initially by a visit to the recently discovered Holwell Cavern in a limestone quarry near Broomfield. His aim was to discover whether the agonite crystals were formed through electrical attraction, and accordingly he placed two electrodes in water taken from the cavern and placed the whole apparatus in complete darkness so as to simulate the conditions of nature. Much later he was to stress that "The chemist is a humble imitator of nature; to create or annihilate is not in his power". The crystals duly began to form.

At about this time he constructed his monumental network of copper wires, suspended on tall wooden posts (one of which is still extant), strewn across the grounds of Fyne Court. Its purpose was to draw in the electricity from the atmosphere. The grid, consisting of over a third of a mile of wire, was connected to a generator in his laboratory. Under certain weather conditions he could collect enough electricity to charge and discharge his batteries twenty times per minute! At other times charging the batteries entailed 200 vigorous turns of a 20 in. cylindrical dynamo. The potential power was at its greatest when thunder clouds were present, or in persistent fog or driving rain. Crosse could adequately control his energy source and could direct the power to fuse together wires, decompose liquids and fire inflammable substances; by administering small shocks alleviate the symptoms of rheumatism; and safely discharge the excess power to earth. His ability to conjure flashes of lightning along the copper wires, and to recreate thunder claps in his laboratory was inevitably, in these god-fearing days, seen as a sinister eccentricity by the local people. They nicknamed him the Thunder and Lightning Man, a name that lingers on in Broomfield today.

Crosse gave only two public lectures during his career, both of which won acclaim. At Garnerin's in London in 1814 he lectured to an audience which included Shelley and his wife to be, Mary, and it is thought that from hearing and seeing Crosse she began to model the celebrated Doctor Frankenstein. At the annual conference of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, in Bristol in 1836, he startled many of his eminent contemporaries with the range and extent of his research into voltaic batteries, electro-crystallisation, and atmospheric electricity; and aroused not a little professional jealousy. Among his friends were George Singer, from whom he received much encouragement, and who quoted from Crosse's experiments in his legendary "Elements of Electricity and Electro-Chemistry" published in 1814; and Michael Faraday who was always generous in his admiration for Crosse and his work.

But most of his friends were sadly missing when, in 1837, he suddenly became the most despised man in Europe. Crosse had conducted an experiment, aiming to produce silica crystals by his previously successful electro-crystallisation process. 2 oz of powdered flint and 6 oz of potassium carbonate were fused together in a furnace, then reduced to powder and dissolved in boiling water. Hydrochloric acid was added up to super saturation point. The fluid was then allowed to drip on to a porous stone of iron oxide kept electrified by two platinum wires. Nothing happened for 14 days. But slowly several small white excrescences began to throw out filaments until, on the 28th day, several perfectly formed insects began to move around on their legs. Over 100 insects eventually formed. They could move freely from the fluid in which they were formed; they could feed, and when they congregated ova were produced. Fortunately they were all killed off by the first frost.

Crosse, being a careful experimenter, repeated the experiment taking great pains to ensure that nothing had contaminated his equipment. The insects

still appeared. A report was dispatched to the Electrical Society in London who in turn invited a Mr W H Weeks to repeat the experiment. The same results ensued. By now the incident had surfaced in the press, and Crosse became the victim of universal hatred. He was decried as "reviler of our holy religion" and "disturber of the peace of families". His crops were burned, his livestock were killed. He was denounced from the pulpit as a devil worshipper, and for a while it was dangerous for him to leave Fyne Court. A local priest even conducted an exorcism of the grounds. In fact he was devoutly religious and had many times considered taking holy orders.

Few of his friends supported him. Notably Michael Faraday made an impassioned plea to the Royal Society for Crosse's discovery to be properly investigated, for he too had conducted the experiment with the same result. But the ageing recluse was turning into an embittered old man. He took no part in the continuing debate on the Acari Crossii, and confined himself to his laboratory, comforted in his last years by his second wife, Cornelia, his eventual biographer. Andrew Crosse died at Fyne Court in 1855, in the same room he had been born in 71 years earlier. He is buried in Broomfield Church.

The creation of the Acari Crossii has never been satisfactorily explained, nor is it ever likely to be. It is as much shrouded in speculation as the nature and extent of his other scientific discoveries. His achievements will never be fully recognised, nor even guessed at. But for those who believe in portents it might be worth noting that his gravestone has twice been struck by lightning.

Richard Hayman

SIAS Programme

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|---|---|
| Sat, 12 May
1030 a.m. | Visit to the "S.S. Great Britain" project at Great Western Dock (off Cumberland Road), Bristol. A follow-up to the recent talk by Captain Hugh Gardner. Meet in the Project car park (follow "S.S. Great Britain" signs). Entry: Adults £1.00; OAPs and children 5-15 50p; under 5 free. Visits to other I.A. sites in the area can be arranged for members wishing to make a day of it. |
| Tue, 15 May
7.00 p.m. | Evening fossick to Somerton, led by Sandy Buchanan. Meet at West Street car park ST 489 285. |
| Tue, 5 Jun
7.0 p.m. | Evening visit to Mr Arthur Luckes's private collection of agricultural machinery at Luckes's depot, Priory Bridge, Taunton. Meet in Market car park. |
| Sat, 30 Jun
(travel and
timing details
to be arranged) | Whole day visit to the Black Country Museum at Dudley, West Midlands (joint visit with Westonzoyland Engine Trust). This is an open-air museum where "you can live and breathe Black Country traditions and soak up the atmosphere of local history ... ride on the electric tram and see life in the growing village ... take a narrow boat into the famous Dudley Canal tunnel and watch demonstrations of local skills and crafts". Entry is £1.60 for adults, 85p for children and OAPs; canal trips (subject to availability) a further 80p and 50p. |

If there is sufficient support from SIAS and WET members it may be economical to hire a coach. All members interested please contact David Greenfield, as soon as possible, for details.

Wed, 11 Jul
7.00 p.m.

Evening fossick to Street, led by (you guessed it!) Sandy Buchanan. Meet at North car park ST 482 366.

Any offers of lifts or problems with transport to SIAS events, please contact David Greenfield (Taunton 77155).

SUBSCRIPTION REMINDER

Subscriptions for 1984-85 were due on 1 April 1984. Rates: £3.00; for families £4.00; OAPs and under 18 £1.00. Please send to the Treasurer, Janet Jones, 11 Osborne Way, Taunton.

.....

The Treasurer

Please find enclosed subscription to S.I.A.S. for 1984/85 £_____

NAME:

ADDRESS:

SIGNED _____

BULLETIN NO 36
SEPTEMBER 1984

Hon. Secretary
C. A. Buchanan
2 Blake Green
Ashcott, Bridgwater
TA7 9QF
Tel: Ashcott 210566

EDITORIAL

Everyone - including the Publications Officer hopefully! - now being refreshed after their holidays can look forward to a very full winter programme and the publication of S.I.A.S. Survey No 1.

The intriguing sketch of S.I.A.S. at work (cleaning the bandaging machine at Westonzoyland) is by Anthony Michaelis but there is no prize for naming the sitters! During the summer a dedicated band of workers, organized by Janet Jones, spent several days cleaning and preserving the twine and rope-making machinery now stored at Upton Bridge Farm, Long Sutton.

John Bentley has contributed a Section to the West Somerset Museum on Blue Anchor's sea defences including a series of photographs taken over the past eighty years.

The museum, owned and run by the West Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society, is going from strength to strength and next year moves to its permanent home in Townsend House, Minehead. (This year it has been housed at the Old School, Allerford, and closes on 28 September.)

The account of the Society's visit to the Bath Stone Museum, Corsham, in March was held over from Bulletin 35.

The notes on the Budleigh Salterton pebble bedswere contributed by Margaret Anderson.

Ice Houses

An unexpected bonus for those SIAS members who participated in the fossick round Somerton on the damp evening of 15th May, was a visit to the ice house at Somerton Randle (originally Somerton Erleigh). As a result of an impromptu request from Derrick Warren, Mrs Vaughan Lee kindly left the comfort of her home to show our bedraggled party some interesting structures in the grounds of Somerton Randle House. These included a beautifully maintained ice house (ST 499 284).

Ice houses were common features in most substantial residences before the development of the domestic refrigerator. The ninth edition of the Encyclopaedia Britannica (1881) contains the bold statement - 'An ice house, to supply ice for domestic use during the summer months, is one of the desirable adjuncts of a country residence.'

The most important requirement for the successful storage of ice was a dry atmosphere. As a consequence, all designs for ice houses had to incorporate devices for ventilation and drainage. Dampness was a bigger problem than heat and it was generally recommended that ice houses should be situated in the open, away from trees and, for preference, cut in well-drained rock and soil such as chalk, limestone, sand or gravel. There had to be an effective drain at the bottom so that water from melting ice could escape. Some commentators recommended that doors and air vents should be opened in the evening and closed in the early morning in order to keep the atmosphere in the ice house as dry as possible.

In order to construct a dry, well-ventilated and well-drained container for ice, builders had the choice of a variety of designs and it is likely that every structure which met these basic requirements also included features peculiar to itself. The Engineer's and Mechanic's Encyclopaedia (1849) maintained that 'In England and France the common form of ice-houses is that of an inverted cone, or rather of an hen's egg, with the broad end uppermost.' The metaphor of the egg seems to be a helpful way of describing some of the local ice houses. The dimensions of this design varied according to the quantity of ice required but it was not unusual for them to be between twenty and thirty feet high and twelve to fifteen feet in diameter at the widest point. About two thirds of the height was probably sunk in the ground, although the requirement for a drain from the bottom of the ice house made a hillside situation preferable.

The inner wall of the ice house was normally built of brick, with a cavity between it and the outer wall of stone. Access to the interior was through a door fitted in the northern side which led into a short corridor with a set of outer doors. The domed roof of the ice house was covered in soil and planted with shrubs which provided shade. An aperture on the side opposite the entrance was sometimes incorporated to improve ventilation. Care was taken to shade both of these openings. The bottom drain was made airtight by means of a siphon to prevent warm air from entering the house from below.

The ice house had to be filled in the winter when ice could be obtained from local rivers and ponds. Andrew Ure, in his Dictionary of Arts, Manufactures and Mines (1837), describes how the ice house was filled. 'A clear day should be selected for charging the icehouse; but before beginning to fill, a quantity of long dry straw should be laid on the bottom crosswise; and as the ice is progressively introduced, straw is to be spread against the conical sides, to prevent the ice from coming into contact with the brick or stone work. The more firmly compacted the ice is, the better does it keep; with which view it should be broken into pieces with mallets before being thrown in. No layers of straw should be stratified among the ice, for they would make its body porous. Some persons recommend to pour in a little water with the successive layers of ice, in order to fill up its small crevices, and convert the whole into one mass.'

'Over the top layer a thick bed of straw should be spread, which is to be covered with boards surmounted with heavy stones, to close up the interstices in the straw. The inner and outer doors should never be opened at once ...'

The ice from the ice house was used to cool drinks and perishable foodstuffs stored in the home of the owner. The distance of some of these structures from the main house could hardly be described as convenient. For example, at Shapwick House the ice was stored more than half a mile away (ST415 396). In these circumstances it seems unlikely that small quantities of ice were rushed to freshen the drinks of the household on a hot summer's day. Provision was made to store fresh meat, fish and game in the domed top of some ice houses, although in these cases it was prudent to use iron wire frames to prevent the depredations of vermin.

The collection of information about the ice houses which survive in the County and the recording of their dimensions and design may fall within the category of 'Social Archaeology'. However, I would see it as a justifiable activity for SIAS to undertake and shall be most interested to hear from members who know of other examples in our area.

Sandy Buchanan

(I am grateful to Ann Ronan for drawing to my attention several sources of information on this subject.)

A party made up of more than 20 SIAS members and their families and friends was welcomed by David Pollard and led down the 160-odd steps beside the now rail-less incline of the entrance to the spectacular labyrinth formed by the mainly nineteenth century underground workings of the Pickwick, Traveller's Rest and other quarries, some of which are gradually being made ready so that the public will be able to see how and where the quarrymen laboriously cut out the blocks of Bath stone. For nearly two hours members learned about the extraction of the stone, from the hacking out of the top few inches with a pick until a thin saw (razzer) could be used and the first stone (risk stone) removed from the new workface (breech) and the valuable large blocks sawn out. In the winter these were stored underground as their high water content would have meant ruin if they were exposed to frost. From the evidence of 'chob' holes in the roof it was possible to see how often the cranes had to be moved and set up again, and the grooves worn by ropes on the sides of the shafts showed where the horse-gins had hauled the stone to the surface before the opening up of the railway incline.

Here was another, intriguing world, with another specialist vocabulary, and with the evidence of changing techniques and technological innovations scored on the walls and roof. The early phase when the blocks were hacked out could be identified, then came the introduction of the long hand saws which left their distinctive marks, and finally the circles on the roof showed where mechanical saws had been used. Many of the tunnels are made narrow where the waste stone (gobs) has been stacked in worked-out areas, but when some of the quarries were used as an ammunition store in World War II the spoil was removed from them. It is in this part of the complex that the underground section of the Museum will be housed, and a workface complete with a restored crane will be on view.

Above ground, in the pouring rain, David Pollard briefly pointed out the position of the Mason's Yard and the surface workface, as well as the car park and the other amenities that will be essential when, in the near future, the Bath Stone Museum has been transformed from a vision into a reality.

Limekilns at Castle Rocks

The three kilns (ST 096285) built of the local sandstone, once formed part of an economically important rural industry which fed off the large masses of conglomerate limestone in the north-east of Wiveliscombe Without and the adjacent parish of Fitzhead. They rank amongst the most impressive structures of their kind to survive in the County where numerous examples have been destroyed in recent years¹.

Quarrying of the Romano-British encampment had begun by the end of the 18th century² but it is not until 1834 that evidence emerges of a limekiln on site. The kiln, together with a cottage, the quarry and coppice, stretched over four acres forming part of a tenement known as Osbornes or Kings³. The tenant was William King, probably the same person listed in a trade directory, four years earlier, as a limeburner at Ford⁴. It seems unlikely that the property, owned by Richard Beadon, was sold at that date but on Christmas Day, 1837, Wiveliscombe-born John Featherstone joined King in a seven year lease at an annual rent of £46.9s.4d for the whole tenement of eight acres. William Frederick Beadon and others put up for auction, in 1938, their Wiveliscombe and Fitzhead estates, of which Kings was a small part. Seven other quarries with limekilns were offered for sale along with the Town Mills and a grist mill at Cotcombe plus many other settlements⁵.

The purchaser was the Rt. Hon. Alexander Lord Ashburton who paid £50,000 for two extensive lots including Kings, the sale details being concluded in 1840. Shortly after, the Tithe Map reveals a second kiln at Castle Rocks, one of the pair which face west⁶. Interestingly, another kiln had been established to

the east of the ancient camp in Hydon Wood, on Lord Ashburton's land, and mentioned with the quarry in the schedule is a 'Rubble Heap'. This confirms the practice, reported over sixty years later, that on the site the limestone pebbles were extracted from a 'tough calcareous sandstone matrix' which also contained grit and smaller quartz pebbles⁷. Fuel at this time may well have included furze and coppiced timber, all the kilns in the area being in or near woodland. But the limeburner relied upon the importing of culm or anthracite dust from Wales. This would have reached Wiveliscombe either along the Minehead Turnpike from the coast to the north or via the Taunton and Wiveliscombe Trust roads from the canals to the south.

The association of Featherstone and King had ended by 1851 when the former was described as a farmer as well as a limeburner⁸. Ten years later he had been joined at the Castle by William Smith and John White who worked in the quarry⁹. It was possibly about this time that the third, south-facing, kiln was built in a style characteristic of the area¹⁰. During the 1860s and 1870s the Featherstones became 'agricultural seed, corn, manure and lime merchants' in addition to retaining their farming interests with business premises in High Street, Wiveliscombe¹¹. In 1873, Edward Jeboult singles out the Castle, Tipnoller and Goulds kilns as supplying 'excellent agricultural lime' for the neighbouring parishes¹². The Devon and Somerset Railway had been opened as far as Wiveliscombe in 1871: this may have meant easier access to fuel but could have also heralded the decline of locally produced lime. However, in 1883 a kiln was still in operation when, on Wednesday 22nd August of that year, members of the Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society visited Castle Rock Quarry on the occasion of their 35th Annual Meeting. The lime was said to be 'a very valuable commodity in these parts' and the sandstone and grit were used for road mending¹³. Eminent persons discussed whether the limestone was from the Carboniferous or Devonian Era but no conclusions were reached, despite a workman bringing them a tray of fossils to examine.

The three kilns and quarry are clearly shown by the Ordnance Survey who mapped them in 1887¹⁴. Henry Ashelford was farming and limeburning at the Castle by 1889 and continued working there until at least 1894¹⁵. Jeboult, in a new volume published in 1893, repeated his statement about the excellence of the product¹⁶; even if this is not considered to be an unrevised text, the end of limeburning was in sight. In 1911, a local historian stated 'Until recently, lime kilns at Tipnoller, and especially at the Castle, had considerable custom, but the import of Welsh lime has of late years practically closed them'¹⁷. No doubt changing patterns in manuring played their part and the lime industry itself was better organized with multi-kiln works such as Dunball¹⁸. During the final years three photographs (at least) were taken which purport to relate to a limeburning family at Castle Rocks. They provide an unusual form of documentation and a rare glimpse of workers in a defunct local industry¹⁹.

Brian J Murless 6/84

Notes and References

- 1 Three large kilns were demolished at Evercreech in 1982. See SIAS Bulletin 29 (May 1982) and Bulletin 30 (September 1982).
- 2 Collinson, J., The History and Antiquities of the County of Somerset (Bath, 1791) Vol 2, p 488

- 3 Somerset Record Office, DD/AS 7 Part, Sale Catalogue, 1834 15 September.
- 4 Pigot & Co's Directory (1830)
- 5 S.R.O., DD/AS 7 Part, Sale Catalogue, 1838 13 and 14 September.
- 6 S.R.O., Wiveliscombe Without Tithe Map and Award, 1842.
- 7 Ussher, W.A.E., The Geology of the Quantock Hills and Taunton and Bridgwater (London, 1908) p 47.
- 8 S.R.O., Census Returns, 1851.
9. S.R.O., Census Returns, 1861.
- 10 Ward, A.P., A Limekiln near Fitzhead, J.S.I.A.S., 1 (1975) pp 39-43.
- 11 Post Office Directories (1866 and 1875). N.B. No evidence for limeburning at the Castle appears in S.R.O., Census Returns, 1881.
- 12 Jeboult, E., A General Account of West Somerset ... (Taunton, 1873).
Tipnoller Quarry is at ST 097293 and the Goulds, Eastern and Western, are in Fitzhead Parish.
- 13 Winwood et al, Castle Rock Quarry, P.S.A.N.H.S., Vol 29 (1883) pp 39-42.
- 14 O.S. 6 in. 1st Edition (1888) Sheet 69 NW.
- 15 Kelly's Directories (1889 and 1894).
- 16 Jeboult, E., A Popular History of Somerset (Taunton, 1893) p 158.
- 17 Hancock, Wifels' Combe (Taunton, 1911) p 4.
- 18 S.I.A.S. Bulletin 15 (February 1978).
- 19 Museum of English Rural Life, Pool Collection, Photograph Nos 35/5234, 5235 and 5243.

The belt of Budleigh Salterton Pebble Beds stretches from near Budleigh Salterton to Watchet.

They appear to have been deposited in a pluvial period in a semi-arid continental environment. Heavy, probably seasonal, rain fell on fairly distant mountains and rivers deposited the material in a cuvette.

The southern part of the belt has materials apparently from Brittany, and the north part, between Exmoor and the Quantocks has well rounded material including much Carboniferous Limestone probably from the Bristol Channel and South Wales areas. Round Burlescombe there appears to have been a gentler flow from the west.

There is an outcrop of Carboniferous Limestone at Burlescombe but I found no suggestion that this was carried north to the Milverton area.

A combination of materials from the west and north would account for the red sandstone and Carboniferous Limestone pebbles respectively and presumably the lime content of the matrix also came from the north.

Sources: British Regional Geology. South-West England. Third Edition, 1969
Shorter, Ravenhill & Gregory. South-West England.

Book News

Exmoor villages by Berta Lawrence. Exmoor Press £3.00 from bookshops.
The book of 120 pages describes 60 villages in the National Park against a background of natural history, historical and literary associations. There are 40 photographs and is an ideal book for car, pocket or bedside.

G.S.I.A. has just published its 3rd Edition of 'Industrial Archaeology of Gloucestershire'. It lists, in 33 pages, 126 I.A. sites and 18 museums, with 23 photographs and 3 maps. It costs £1.50 (+ 25p p.p.) and is available from Hon Sec, Dr R Wilson, Oak House, Hamshill, Coaley, Dursley, Glos, GL11 5EH.

Programme

1984

Friday, 28 September
7.30 p.m. Weir Lodge

Dr Michael Atkinson, a National authority on nineteenth century mining, will give an illustrated talk on 'Mines of Dartmoor'.

Friday, 19 October
7.30 p.m. Weir Lodge

'James Green, 1781-1849'. Brian George of the Exeter I.A. Group will present the results of his researches into the life and works of the civil engineer, James Green, erstwhile Engineer of the ill-fated Grand Western Canal, and first Bridge Surveyor for the County of Devon.

Saturday, 27 October
1030 Hambrook lay-by
(just off M32, junction 1,
ST 637786)

I.A. of the Kingswood/Keynsham/Saltford area, led by Will Harris. A whole-day trip tailored to suit members' tastes, but to include mines, mills and tramways, and a visit to the BIAS working party at Saltford Brass Mill. Further details of programme and meeting place from David Greenfield.

Friday, 9 November
7.30 Weir Lodge

'History of Technology: Its Coins and Medals'. An illustrated talk by Dr Anthony Michaelis, formerly Science Editor of the Daily Telegraph.

Friday, 23 November
7.30 Weir Lodge

Miss Mary Gryspeerdt, Keeper of the Rural Life Museum, Glastonbury, will give an illustrated talk on 'Women and Agricultural Change During Two World Wars'.

Friday, 7 December
7.30 Weir Lodge

Members Evening - your chance to give an illustrated talk.

1985

Friday, 18 January

'The SIAS Roadside Survey'. Brian Murless and John Bentley will report on progress.

Friday, 8 February
7.30 Weir Lodge

Ann Ronan will talk on 'Printed Sources for Illustrating I.A.', and will bring original documents to illustrate her theme.

Friday, 22 February
7.30 Weir Lodge

'Ben Norman, who was instrumental in the formation of Watchet's Museum, will give an illustrated talk on 'History of Watchet Harbour'.

Saturday, 16 March
Strode Theatre, Street

16th South West Regional I.A. Conference. All day - we are the hosts. Details later.

Friday, 29 March

AGM. Details later.

Saturday, 6 October 1984

Day conference on Roads organized by Exeter I.A. Society. Details from our Secretary.

Saturday, 3 November 1984
Pumping Station

Westonzoyland Engine Trust AGM, 2 p.m.



SIAS
AT WORK
840708

Hon. Secretary
C. A. Buchanan
2 Blake Green
Ashcott

Bulletin No 37
January 1985

Tel. 210566

Editorial

To coincide with the publication of S.I.A.S. Survey Number One it was decided to produce a new card. Drawn by Mike Jones, it shows the former milestone at Godfrey's Corner on the B and T Canal. The cost of printing being what it is nowadays, the price to members will be 6p each - otherwise 7p.

Although the Rope Walk at West Coker is to be developed, hopefully its general appearance will be preserved. It is also hoped that eventually the Society will acquire a full set of rope making machinery to complement that it already possesses.

Also at West Coker Job Gould Ltd are making available to the Society one of their old braiding machines, manufactured by George Parsons at the Parrett Works, Martock, in the 1870s. Until a couple of years ago these machines were in regular use.

The fine camponile chimney at the Parrett Works has now been made safe and repaired by its owner, S.I.A.S. member Nick Sloan, who is to be congratulated on his dedication to the preservation of his part of these fine buildings. It is hoped to arrange a visit there in the spring.

John Bentley and Brian Murless have now completed the first part of their mammoth task of the Milestone Survey of Somerset. With the aid of grants, the results are to be published shortly. The 'tome' (there is no other word suitable!) will not be for sale but will be for research and record purposes only.

Put out by H.T.V. before Christmas, the pictorially beautiful but otherwise woolly series by Clive Gunnell on the River Parrett was enriched by the concise detailed contributions made by Ian Miles on the Westonzoyland Engine Trust and Brian Murless on the brickmaking industry of Bridgwater.

During renovations at Crowcombe House (c. 1792) some most unusual bricks were recovered. They were slightly larger than normal bricks, were made of clay reinforced with hair and had not been fired. Research into the type of hair, etc, is underway.

Friday, 29 March, sees our A.G.M. held at 7.30 at Weir Lodge. Would all members make a special effort to attend as their views on proposed projects, visits, talks and the general organization of the Society are urgently wanted? Also, and this is equally important, anyone willing to serve on the Committee, undertake any work or be in any way more active please make their wishes known. Don't wait to be asked! After all

the talk there will be the usual brain-teasing quiz whilst supping wine and nibbling cheese.

Extra copies of S.I.A.S. Survey Number One 'The Bridgwater and Taunton Canal' by C. A. Buchanan, are available to members from the Secretary at £1.00 plus 20p P and P. £1.25 plus 20p P and P to non members.

16th Annual Conference of Western Industrial Archaeological Societies

This conference will be held at Strode Theatre, Street, on Saturday, 16 March 1985.

The programme will include illustrated talks on Gloucestershire cast-iron firebacks, Cornish beam engines, a unique coal mine ventilating furnace in Avon, old maltings in Cirencester and Salisbury and the drainage of the Somerset levels.

As the host society we hope that there will be a substantial presence of SIAS members at this conference, which on past performance should be both informative and enjoyable.

The inclusive charge of £4.50 for enrolments received before the end of February 1985 (£5.00 thereafter) will cover the cost of morning coffee, buffet lunch and afternoon tea. Further details are available on request from the Conference Secretary, Sandy Buchanan, 2 Blake Green, Ashcott, Bridgwater, TA7 9QF.

Grandad's Roadworks

I have been reading the Surveyor's Report Book for Chard RDC, covering the years 1909-16, which recently turned up in the Divisional Surveyor's Office. The time was interesting - Somerset County Council had only an elderly architect, Mr Willcox, serving as a part time County Surveyor until H. T. Chapman was appointed in 1908; as soon as he had obtained an office, and had managed to buy Mr Willcox's maps of the county, he set about improving the standard of road maintenance, carried out by the District Councils - mostly by contract - and started surface dressing "Main Roads" (those which the County paid for) with tar and chippings. Motor cars, and even lorries, were increasing in numbers, and the 20mph speed limit was observed about as scrupulously as the various speed limits today. Damage to road surfaces was reported frequently, not only by fast cars but by traction engines and their trailers, often overloaded with flint for road mending! Horse-drawn traffic could also misbehave, usually when descending hills, when the surface could be damaged by 'dragging' - use of a skidpan placed under one rear wheel of a cart. Unfortunately as much, or more, damage could be caused by applying the brake, so locking a rear wheel, which then cut into the road. Sometimes both were used together - a dangerous practice, as the cart became unsteerable, and the back could swing round and topple over, though no such accident is reported here. The ideal method seems obscure!

The earliest document is a letter lying loose between the pages, which I cannot resist quoting in full:

Chillington
July 17th 1906

Dear Sir

Baggs Engion is leaving this morning about 4 oclock. Sir Claridges Horses are leaving to day they have Finished as I am told I have 2 men butting the Banks in the main Roads to day and I am about the Roads repairing the roads what the Engion and the timber Carrages have done they have broken in the Cross way bridge again Mr Small done it I am sending on Mrs Stephens a few vegetable if she will except them as you have no garden I remian your Truly. Old Sam Matthews

The only other personal touch about the Surveyor, Reginald Stephens, is in his report of 21st June 1915, "I wish to thank the Council for permission through the Chairman, for allowing me to be absent today, so that I could go to London to see my Brother is off to the Front (the Dardanelles)." His bad grammar is not usual, and was probably due to stress. His own last Report, on 16th August 1915, contains no reference to his impending departure: the "Interim Surveyor", Frank Nicholson, reports on 23rd October 1915, "Since taking up my duties last Monday, I have made a tour of inspection ..."

'Water-bound' roads were very susceptible to weather. Not only were they damaged by 'washing' - water flowing over the surface - but dry, summer weather caused surfaces to become loose and break up, particularly if composed of flint or gravel. The addition of limestone as a binding agent helped, but a granite or basalt road was best, though expensive.

Defective drainage was a never-ending problem - usually somebody else's fault - and took up a lot of the surveyor's time. As high hedges shaded the roads, so that they did not dry quickly after rain, hedge 'shearing' was an annual summer operation. Rolling by steam roller (exceptionally a borrowed heavy horse roller) was started in the autumn when the roads were softer, ready for the spring; 'metal' (road stone) was spread first, to make up for loss due to wear and tear. Five rollers were used in 1909, the number rising to 8 or more - if obtainable from Eddison's or elsewhere - as the years went by, but the war created shortages. Heavy traffic caused rutting, and the surface had to be scarified by special tines attached to the roller to enable the new material to knit in properly. 'Siding' was also carried out in autumn, and again towards spring, clearing the mud and detritus from the ditches and edges of roads before anything else was started - if labour was available, which was seldom the case once war started - and the surveyor could be back in square one if soil slipped on to the road. A cutting at Dinnington was particularly troublesome in this respect.

The new-fangled surface dressing with tar, blinded with chippings (probably flint, which punctured car tyres with monotonous regularity) was initially used on the Main Roads, but soon spread to district roads, mostly in villages where the dust was a major nuisance. Tarring of the Crewkerne - Chard road (now A.30) started in July 1910, to a width of 9 feet, at an estimated £62/mile for a four mile length, or £70/mile for 2 miles. This was aided by a meagre grant from the Road Board, which tended to behave

as the bureaucratic equivalent of Scrooge, hoarding its funds from licence fees and petrol tax. (Winston Churchill finally seized this buried treasure, and used it for other purposes in the financial crisis in the 1930s.) By the end of 1911, more ambitious plans were in hand to widen the future A.303 from between 10 and 11 feet to no less than 15 feet, and by 1916, in spite of the war and a further change of county surveyor, a ten-year plan was launched for widening the most important roads to 18 feet - this involved a 3 foot widening on each side using 3 to 4 inches depth of local flint, and then surfacing the whole road with basalt or granite.

It was important not to use 'ordinary' tar, as supplied by town gasworks, as this poisoned the 'washings' from the road, killing fish - and other animals. Tarring had 'to be done with Tasco, Tarvia or with Tar prepared according to the Road Board regulations'. Reginald Stephens recommended the RDC to purchase a Tar Spraying Machine from Phoenix of Chard, who were well known makers in 1913, with a range of models priced from £25 to £100. The council seem to have rejected the idea - they preferred to get their work done by contract, in spite of the County Surveyor's disapproval.

For the financially orientated, I include a few brief details:

For 1913/4, estimates were; Main Roads £6245, or £80.6/mile.
District Roads £4797, or £24.23/mile.

By 1915/6, the Main Roads estimate had risen to £8465, but was reduced by the county to £7751.

The Interim Surveyor, Frank Nicholson, reported on the Main Roads in the District in April 1916.

"The total length of main road is 78½ miles. The length newly coated up to March 31st is 12,034 lineal yards, or 6.84 miles with a superficial yardage of 51,211. The length rolled represents 9% of the whole; or, in other words, requiring a life of 11 years for new coatings.

The average cost per sq yd for rolling worked out at 1.43d. The total average cost per mile for maintenance being £80.12."

He adds comments on the size of the Road Board grant, and of having to use flint instead of basalt in consequence.

Eleven years for a main road coating may have been fairly realistic - both traffic and road maintenance were very different from today - but one feels that the odd overloaded traction engine and trailers could well upset the whole plan! There had been typical problems reported in March 1912,

"Chard to Crewkerne Main

Just after the frosts gave out and (in consequence this road being soft) Messrs Anderton & Rowland - Amusement Caterers - hauled their goods over this road with Traction Engines - the road was considerably damaged - I

got the County Surveyor to come and inspect, and he instructed me to dig out the weak spots and fill up with big stones - and then to apply to County for the money expended."

Even today, damage after heavy frost can be a serious problem, especially on chalky subsoil, and you can't claim against the road users!

Traction engines also needed water, one called Shamrock being caught by Reg Stephens in September 1910 at Forest Gate Bridge, Honiton Main, "standing on this bridge taking water, contrary to Bye Law 5 of the County Council, the weight of engine was $12\frac{3}{4}$ tons, and she had 3 empty trucks attached to her, and was en route to Buckland St Mary after Flint." The owner was fined £1, with 13/- costs.

Motor cars were posing a quite new problem - speed! This produced a need for warning signs. In 1907, Mr Willcox had dissuaded the County Council from paying for erecting 'regulation red triangle danger signs' offered free by Somerset Automobile Club (although the council did consent to accept cost of maintenance once in position), but by 1911 Reg Stephens's report "with regard to Motor Danger notices" at Winsham and Merriott states that "Somerset Automobile Club will provide notices for these spots if they are paid for them." Those at Winsham are still there, iron castings by Wills of Bridgwater.

Strangely, footpaths were already being surfaced with 'asphalte' in 1909 - it may have been too slippery for horses on roads, as well as costly. At Hinton St George, the footpath was 'pitched', quite a high-class form of construction, but every time one stone worked loose, the local children soon had a large hole! It was asphalted.

Public Utilities were a nuisance even then. Chard Borough arranged for a new water supply system in 1912, which involved digging up all the streets and (hopefully) reinstating them properly. There seems to have been no serious trouble - perhaps the whole thing fell through. Post Office engineers were a persistent thorn in the flesh, often erecting telegraph poles in awkward places without consultation or clearance from the highway authority, but they appear to have got the message in the end!

Reg Stephens worked from his home in Ilminster, but the number of business callers increased until this ceased to be practical, and after pressing for some time, he eventually got authority to hire a room as an office at "2/- per week, £5-4-0 per year" in 1913. The Gas Company laid on a supply, and he provided his own furniture. Frank Nicholson, however, was provided with an office in Chard. He also managed to acquire a small second-hand car, and asked the meeting in June 1916 to make him an annual allowance, reminding the members that they hadn't seen fit to reimburse his removal expenses - "practically £30" - when he was appointed. Although he got his allowance, he reports two months later, "The Petrol Control Committee has allotted me $\frac{1}{2}$ Gall petrol per week. I asked for an honest low minimum of 3 Galls per wk." He appealed, but unless the succeeding Report Book turns up, we shall never know the outcome!

My thanks to Pat Green for drawing my attention to this most interesting record of a period when cars were a rarity.

John Bentley

Spring Programme

Friday, 19 April
7.30 Weir Lodge

"The History of Gas Lighting",
an illustrated talk by S.I.A.S.
member Devid Gledhill.

Friday, 3 May
7.30 Weir Lodge

"The Wells Turnpike Trust", an
illustrated talk by Sandy
Buchanan.

Bulletin No 38

April 1985

Hon Secretary
C A Buchanan
2 Blake Green
Ashcott
Tel 210566

Editorial

The AGM held on the 29 March had a lengthy discussion on the finances of the Society. Two main points arose.

- a. In early March it became apparent that the fresh print run of the Bridgwater and Taunton Canal would soon be sold out and the decision had to be taken whether or not to reprint. It was decided to produce an additional 500 copies as the cost of these would not be much above that for 250 (the projected requirement). This has seriously depleted the reserve funds.
- b. Over the last two years general expenditure has exceeded income and this state of affairs could not be allowed to continue. There have been dramatic increases in printing (this does not include cost of the B&T Canal), postage and insurance. It had previously been agreed that members should receive SIAS surveys free of charge.

The remedies decided upon are these:

1. the subscription, which has remained static for four years, should be raised as follows:

Members	£5.00 (this one sub now cover the whole family)
Students and OAPs	£2.00;
2. those who have not paid the current year's subscription by the time the autumn bulletin is published will be automatically removed from the mailing list;
3. there can be no further SIAS surveys until either sales of the B&T Canal have replenished the coffers, or a sponsor or sponsors of some sort can be found.

It was felt that ordinary members should make a concerted effort to either sell the surveys themselves or find suitable outlets.

The Officers and Committee for 1985-86

Chairman B Murless, Vice Chairman and Minutes Sec T Walford, Hon Sec S Buchanan, Hon Tres Janet Jones, Field Officer D Greenfield, Publicity Anne Ronan, Publications D Warren.

Committee: Margaret Anderson, P Daniel, S Farrer, M Jones, I Miles.

Bridgewater Rolling Bridge

In Bulletin No 34 (Nov 1983), I made reference to a 'rolling bridge' at Bridgewater in Van Diemen's Land (now Tasmania). John Bentley has been able to throw some light on this bridge, with the help of his correspondents in Tasmania.

Construction of a long causeway across the River Derwent began in 1831, by convict labour. When this had reached a length of 2,300 feet in 1836, piers were employed to carry vehicles and stock across the remaining channel, about 530 feet wide.

In 1847 the Bridgewater Bridge Commission contracted with James Thomson and James Blackburn for the erection of a timber 'rolling bridge', which could be drawn clear of the navigation to allow vessels to pass. The bridge was opened in April 1849, the first vehicle to cross being Mrs Cox's mail coach. The toll for a stage coach was 3/-. The 'Illustrated London News' reported that the embankment and bridge works were the largest ever attempted in the Australian colonies. (Both Thomson and Blackburn had been transported as convicts, and both were to become pillars of the establishment in the colony after being granted their free pardon in about 1840.)

The causeway was widened in the 1850s to accommodate a railway line, with a separate railbridge to one side of the road bridge. In 1892 the original road bridge was superseded by a swing bridge. This bridge and the railbridge were replaced by a concrete lifting bridge combining road and rail facilities in 1946 - apparently there is some stonework from the earlier road bridges still extant.

I am grateful to John and his correspondents for their help, and for giving me an opportunity to see an excellent article on the history of the bridge in 'Early Tasmanian Bridges' by Roy Smith.

David Greenfield

On the Road Again

With the material from Somerset Roads, Phase One now lodged at the printers, work has commenced on the remaining roads in Eastern Somerset. Once again the historic turnpike routes have been used as a basis for the study; there are approximately 100 of these in the area under consideration compared with about 130 in Western Somerset. The principal trusts are those of Bruton, Frome, Shepton Mallet, Wells and Wincanton with portions of nine others.

Fieldwork this year has been hampered, for the first time, by ice and snow and generally poor lighting conditions. In addition, John Bentley and Brian Murless have had to travel an average in excess of 100 miles per session since most of the roads are some distance from their Taunton base. Nevertheless, set against these difficulties is the experience gained in recent years which has resulted in planning the whole exercise in order to obtain a greater degree of efficiency and economy, i.e. more routes covered in less time. On several forays they have been accompanied by SAIS Field Officer, David Greenfield, who has acted as chauffeur and knowledgeable guide.

To date considerable progress has been made on the more rural sections which have been given priority because of impending spring growth in hedges and on roadside verges. Over 300 features, ranging from smaller items such as milestones through to substantial structures like tollhouses, have been recorded. It is hoped that a summary of this evidence can appear in a future Bulletin.

Brick from Crowcombe House

One of these hair reinforced bricks was sent to the County Analyst and the hair has been found to be that of goats!

Beer Quarry Caves

The caves at Beer which members visited some years ago are now opened to the public and for anyone who missed our visit are well worth seeing (avoid a wet day in the summer!). Within a mile is a beautiful Elizabethan Manor House - Bovey House - which is now a hotel and does cream teas from Easter onwards! If you ask nicely they might allow you to see the circa 1830 tread wheel (15 ft diam) which drew water from the 130 ft well.

Membership

It is hoped that a full list of members will be published in the next bulletin.

SIAS Bulletin - Book Review

MEN OF IRON The History of the McArthur Group by H S Torrens
published privately by the company at Bristol 1984

Few commentators would consider that Bristol was an "iron town" but this is precisely the image which emerges from Hugh Torrens's study of the McArthur Group. A telling extract from letters written by a commercial traveller of the Dowlais Iron Company in 1823 concluded that he could obtain no orders on the South Coast between Plymouth and Gosport "till the influence the Bristol men have in these markets is done away with". Iron was bought from the blast furnaces of Shropshire and the Black Country, as well as from South Wales and Scotland, and cast, forged and rolled into a wide variety of goods for sale in the South West and overseas. For example, McArthurs regularly supplied the Cornish engineering firm of Harveys of Hayle with bar iron and iron tools. The business also dealt in tin, zinc and copper products. Geographically, Bristol - with its maritime industries and commercial links overseas - was well placed to develop this business.

Dr Torrens sketches the McArthur family's connection with the iron industry from the establishment of the Dalnotter Iron Company in 1769 on the North bank of the Clyde, through the purchase of Acramen's iron foundry and edge tool works in Bristol and Chew Magna in 1839, to the establishment of McArthur (Steel and Metal) Ltd in 1945 and the subsequent expansion of the group through amalgamation and take over down to the present day, when it remains one of the largest family-controlled businesses in the country.

The narrative is somewhat disjointed - but this is largely explained by the fact that when the Company's offices were moved from Marsh Lane to Gas Ferry Road, it was decided to abandon all the older records of the firm. The Author has shown great ingenuity in tracking down a wide range of source material - all of which is clearly indicated in the footnotes at the end of each chapter. The text is lavishly illustrated with pictures (some coloured), photographs and letter-headings. Complex family connections are clearly explained with the help of several geneological tables.

Like all good books, this study raises as many questions as it answers. The detailed research that has gone into it opens up fascinating links with a

host of individuals and enterprises, such as those of John Loudon McAdam and James Nasmyth. The business historian and the industrial archaeologist will both acquire understanding and enjoyment from a close study of the text. I have but one minor quibble. Having spent much time and effort persuading students to spell the town of Bridgwater correctly it is strange to see that James Nasmyth's Bridgewater Foundry at Patricroft is consistently misspelt!

Sandy Buchanan

Westonzoyland Steaming Days

May	Sun 5th, Mon 6th, Sun 26th, Mon 27th
June	Sun 2nd, Sat 29th, Sun 30th (11 a.m. - 5 p.m.)
July	Sat 6th, Sun 7th (11 a.m. - 5 p.m.)
August	Sun 4th, Sun 25th, Mon 26th
September	Sun 1st
October	Sun 6th

All between 2 p.m. and 5 p.m. except where otherwise stated

G.W. 150

Members will recall that Richard Antliff of the Great Western Society talked to us about the work of that Society some time ago. The local branch of the Society is running a coach trip to Didcot Railway Centre on Sunday, 19 May. Richard will be on hand to point out the projects featured in his talk. There will be steam trains in action, commemorative exhibitions, demonstrations, model, etc. Cost is £9, to include coach and entry to Didcot. Reductions for children and OAPs.
Contact Mr D Brabner (Taunton 72403)

SIAS Programme to end of 1985

Sun, 12 May from 10 a.m.	Working party, led by Sandy Buchanan in clearing and conserving the bandage-cutting machine, stored at Westonzoyland Pumping Station. All tools will be provided.
Tue, 14 May 7.00 p.m.	Evening visit to the Parrett Works, Martock (ST445 187). Meet <u>there</u> at 7.00. Members who have seen it before will be able to appreciate the work member Nick Sloan has done.
Sat and Sun 1 and 2 Jun from 10 a.m.	Working party, led by Dr Ian Burrows - trial excavations in the Thurlbear Limekiln (ST271210). Members intending to go please contact David Greenfield (Taunton 77155) for details of parking, directions to the site, etc.
Sun, 9 Jun 2 p.m.	Navigation and land drainage upstream of Langport. Visits to sites of interest, led by David Greenfield. Meet at the central car park Langport (ST420267).
Sun, 23 Jun 2 p.m.	Afternoon visit to Stoke Moor Pumping Station, near Wedmore, plus Cheddar and Axbridge sites, led by Iain Miles and Sandy Buchanan. Meet at the Pumping Station (ST458492).
Sun, 7 Jul	Whole day visit to mining sites on Dartmoor, led by Dr Michael Atkinson. This is a follow-up to Dr Atkinson's talk to SIAS last year. Members intending to go contact David Greenfield before 1 June - it is hoped to arrange mini-bus transport.

- Wed, 10 Jul
7.00 p.m. Evening visit to Burrowbridge area, including inspection of Tim Morgan's collection of agricultural by-gones. Meet at the large lay-by on A361, between Burrowbridge and Lyng (ST346295)
- Tue, 16 Jul
7.30 p.m. Evening visit to Sheppey's Cider, Bradford-on-Tone. A charge of £1.50 per head will be made to include cider tasting. Members interested contact David Greenfield, before 1 Jul.
- Sat, 14 Sep Whole day visit to Big Pit Mining Museum, Blaenavon. A joint meeting with Westonzoyland Engine Trust. Members interested please contact David Greenfield before 1 Aug - with sufficient support a coach can be arranged. Approx cost £7, including coach, admission to surface and underground. Deduction for children and OAPs.
- Fri, 20 Sep
7.30 Weir Lodge "Archaeology from the Air". Dr Ian Burrow, the County Archaeologist, opens the lecture season with an illustrated talk based on air photos of sites, with an IA interest.
- Sat, 28 Sep
2 p.m. Afternoon tour of Weston-super-Mare led by a member of the Weston Civic Society. Meet at Millrose Car Park, Knightstone Road (between Grand Pier and Marine Lade).
- Fri, 4 Oct
7.30 p.m. Weir Lodge "Off the Rails". Stan Farrer will give an illustrated talk on railway accidents through the years.
- Fri, 11 Oct
7.30 p.m. Weir Lodge Brian Murless and John Bentley will give their talk on the "Roadside Survey", postponed from last January.
- Fri, 8 Nov
7.30 p.m. Weir Lodge "Postal History", a talk by Mike Jones, illustrated with items of IA interest.
- Fri, 22 Nov
7.30 p.m. Weir Lodge Short presentation by SIAS members, illustrating their research during the current year.
- Sun, 24 Nov
10 a.m. Morning visit to Vale's Farm, near Kingston St Mary (ST235295), by kind permission of Mr R Mead, to see the farm wheel and his collection of agricultural implements.
- Fri, 6 Dec
7.30 p.m. Weir Lodge Members evening.

SUBSCRIPTION REMINDER

Subscriptions for 1985-86 were due on 1 April 1985. Rates: £5.00 (covering whole family; OAPs and under 13 £2.00. Please send to the Treasurer, Janet Jones, 11 Osborne Way, Taunton.

October 1985

Editorial

Some years ago an old Douglas sidecar circa 1920 was 'rescued' and last year was sold for Society funds. It now transpires that it has caused some excitement amongst Douglas aficionados. It had always been supposed that the Douglas 'house colour' was blue but with the finding of this sidecar in its original colours it has been proved to be green. The proud owner is keeping us informed of progress in its restoration. Another example of knowledge gained by I.A. members having good eyes and being acquisitive! Which goes to prove that nothing should be thrown away or discarded, whether it be an object or information, without first finding out if somewhere someone can make use of it.

S.I.A.S. Surveys

Members will be pleased to learn that S.I.A.S. Survey Number Two, on Handcock's Brewery, Wiveliscombe, is well in hand and will, hopefully, be ready for Christmas. Number Three, detailing the history of electric lighting in Taunton, will be published in April 1986 to coincide with the centenary of Taunton's first public lighting by electricity, whilst Number Four, which will be about the Chipstable firm of W. H. Pool & Sons, will appear later in the year.

Somerset Roads in Print

The Society is pleased to announce the publication of Somerset Roads, Phase One written by John Bentley and Brian Murless. It was stated in a Bulletin earlier this year that the results of their research and fieldwork would not be for sale. However, a limited edition is now available due to a widespread interest shown in the project, the close co-operation of the Somerset County Council, and a generous grant from the Maltwood Fund of the Royal Society of Arts.

Sub titled 'Legacy of the Turnpikes', the work gives a brief history of 130 lengths of road in Western Somerset once administered by 22 different turnpike trusts. This section is linked to a gazetteer listing over 500 surviving items of roadside interest ranging in size from boundary posts and milestones to substantial structures such as bridges and tollhouses. The whole is complemented by 8 maps showing the turnpike routes and the location of the roadside features.

Copies can be purchased at S.I.A.S. meetings for £3.50 or for £4.00 (post free) from the Chairman, Brian J. Murless, 46 Holway Avenue, Taunton TA1 3AR.

During August there was correspondence in the Daily Telegraph relating to the apparent demise of the British milestone. It was effectively concluded by the following letter from Brian Murless as Chairman of this Society.

'SIR - Having recently carried out a comprehensive survey and record of milestones in Somerset, I feel able to shed further light about the disappearance of such features from our road sides.

Although traffic damage, vandalism and wartime exigencies have all played their part, I can confirm that the chief culprits are the small-scale, insidious road alterations such as widening and kerbing which have brought

about their demise. There is unlikely to have been an element of maliciousness in their destruction but rather than indifference, a lack of appreciation that even humble and seemingly insignificant objects like milestones contribute to our roadside heritage.

Those responsible for highway management and improvement such as divisional surveyors and district and county planning officers have received copies of our survey and the best examples are being listed by the Department of the Environment Inspectorate.'

Limekilns in Taunton Deane

Further information has emerged about limekilns with which the Society has been associated. The three kilns at Castle Rocks (ST 096285), investigated by members last year (Bulletin 36, September 1984), have now been listed by the Department of the Environment. S.I.A.S. is grateful to Audrey Mead for the following reference to social activities at the site, printed in the Somerset County Gazette for 19 April 1873.

'On Good Friday there was the usual gathering of poorer classes at Castle Limekilns to roast their potatoes and poach their eggs and cook their rashers of bacon on the burning limestone in the kiln. Dances and other rural games afterwards took place on the plateau. A lad named Carr, about 10 years of age, while skirting the cliff fell over a distance of 30 feet. He suffered a compound fracture of the leg.'

It has recently been learnt that Taunton Deane Borough Council has made a grant of £1,000 to Mr Farrington towards the cost of restoration of the Castle Hill kilns. The work, which is to start in the autumn, will cost an estimated £5,000 and involves repairing and repointing the arches and buttresses and rebuilding part of the parapet wall.

At the limekiln in Thurlbear Wood (ST 271210) members stripped off, on what proved to be the hottest weekend in June, to carry out a successful 'keyhole' excavation across the bowl of the kiln. This operation, under the direction of Dr Ian Burrow, the County Council's Field Archaeologist, was in order to examine the condition and construction of the kiln. The bowl was built using the local lias rather than fireclay bricks and although no evidence was forthcoming for an outer masonry lining, a compact orange clay layer was discovered and measured. A full report is in preparation but meanwhile discussions are taking place amongst interested parties on a programme of restoration. The importance of the kiln, as a surviving example of this type of structure in the Thurlbear area, has recently been emphasized by the 'landscaping' of property outside the woodland which once contained other kilns and quarries (Bulletin 31, November 1982).

Pumping for Posterity

As the result of a good working relationship between S.I.A.S. and W.E.T., a mini water-wheel and trough was rescued from a site near Manor Farm, Heathfield (ST 158272). The wheel was cast by G. H. Harris of Wadebridge, Devon, but the trough is of local origin - from the foundry of Ford Brothers, Gas Street, Wellington. The likely date for its installation is some time in the 1890s, and from G. W. Harris's catalogue of that date the wheel and pump would have cost £30. 10. 0. The surrounding structure is probably contemporary since two types of brick recovered are stamped 'B. R. SLAPE/CROFORD/WIVELISCOMBE'. Benjamin Rogers Slape and his three sons were brickmakers from c. 1861 until c. 1894.

Having been removed to Westonzoyleland, the next step will be the restoration of the wheel and trough, a project to be led by Roy Haymen. It is hoped that both will feature in a working display in a corner of the picnic area currently

being created by W.F.I. members. Because the farm remained a family concern for many years it will also be possible to add a social history about water pumping to the IA data outlined above. Both societies are most grateful to Mr and Mrs D. Brownish for the help afforded in securing these items for posterity.

More on Blue Anchor Sea Defences

Since my article in Bulletin 33, some earlier information about Blue Anchor has been found among the Luttrell papers in Somerset Record Office (DD/L, 2/12/66).

In August 1817, Robert Anstice reported to Minehead Turnpike Trust, advising the construction of a sea wall, presumably to repair damage to the road along the strand. This was duly built, from Blue Anchor Hotel at least as far as Pill Bridge, and according to his drawing was a masonry wall with a slightly curved batter to the face. Total height was 10 feet, including 4 feet of foundations below ground level; the thickness tapered from 2'6" to 1'6" at the crest. 'Spring tide level' is shown some 9" below ground level. Behind the wall, pebbles were placed up to crest level, a depth of just over 6 feet, to form the road. No parapet or railing is shown. The top width is shown as 11 feet, but is possibly not intended to be the full limit of the pebble backing.

In 1825, counsel's opinion was sought regarding the rights and liabilities of the various parties involved, landowners, the parish, the Commissioners of Sewers, and the Surveyors of the Highways. Whether this was in connection with the initial building of the wall, or for later repairs to the sea defences is not clear, but in any case all was not well.

On 24th December 1831, Chas Chilcott, who was Surveyor to the Turnpike Trust, wrote to Rob Leigh Esq., 'On looking over my Turnpike papers I found a copy of Mr Anstice's section of the Sea Wall built on the Blue Anchor strand, with his report thereon both of which I have inclosed as requested -

It is very certain that he was employed by the Trustees to survey the place and to give his opinion as to the best means of protecting the road against the sea, an order for which I think you will find entered in the minutes of the Trustees at that time.

He was also there more than once to inspect the work as it went on, and strongly recommended the uniting the pebbles at the back of the wall by a strong Lime Cement or grout, in order to let the waves breaking over the Wall pass freely off, for want of which the loose pebbles were driven from the Wall by the force of the waves and the Wall washed down by the backwater. It was always my opinion that this should have been done and estimates were given in for that purpose but the cash could not be conveniently raised.' Had the pebbles been converted into what would amount to a lime concrete, the strength of the whole would have been far greater - it seems hardly surprising that this rather puny wall, with no rear support, failed rapidly. In 1834, Mr Hancock, proprietor of a lodging house somewhere between the hotel and Pill Bridge, intended to go it alone and repair the breach in the wall along his frontage, but seems to have been persuaded to contribute to the general repairs over the whole length. There is a draft agreement, liberally amended, regarding the work and the apportionment of cost, but the final version is not among the papers, so we don't know just what was done, or who paid what! There is, however, a poster inviting tenders for design-and-build contracts:

Against the Sea

Any Person or Persons, inclined to Build a WALL, or to make any other sufficient protection of the TURNPIKE ROAD, at BLUE ANCHOR, in the Parish of OLD CREEVE, in the County of Somerset, against the BRISTOL CHANNEL, viz. from the SLIP, near the COAL YARD to Mr JAMES ROLES, to PILL BRIDGE, (a distance of about HALF a MILE,) or any part thereof, will send Tenders for performing the same by the Rope, Perch, or Foot, to Mr THOMAS PEARSE, Mr WILLIAM LANGDON, or Mr GEORGE WINDON, all of OLD CREEVE, near Taunton, (the Surveyors of the Highway) before the 20th Day of MAY next; on which Day the Surveyors will attend on the Spot, by 11 o'clock in the Forenoon, to enter into Contracts.

The Tenders must state whether the protection is to be by a WALL, PILING, or otherwise, and if by a new Wall, of what Height and Thickness, and how high to be Puddled with CLAY, and whether, or not, it is intended to replace, or repair the present WALL, or any, and what part, or parts thereof; and the measure in length, of the parts which each Contractor proposes to undertake.

OLD CREEVE, 11th April, 1834.

WHITEHORN, PRINTER, WATCHET.

There were 4 separate breaches in the wall at that time, totalling 477 feet in length, and arguments dragged on through the summer as to what should be done - wall repairs or piling - until the imminent onset of the equinoctial gales, by which time the appropriate season for wall building was over! There is no information as to the final outcome, but the breaches were probably bodged up somehow, if only to render the road usable. As stated in the previous article, timber-piled breakwaters (not necessarily the first such attempt) were constructed about 1859, and the remains of these were surveyed by the County Surveyor after the first of the storms in 1899, no trace of any sea wall being then apparent. The lack of cash in 1817 was no doubt still a problem in 1834, and it seems virtually certain that a new, stronger and more costly design of wall would not have been selected.

As mentioned in Fulletin 35, the present sea defences are showing their age; modern research has shown that near-vertical sea walls, such as the 1899-1903 wall at Blue Anchor, tend to cause the foreshore to become denuded, and this certainly occurred here. Those who have visited the site recently may well have noticed the latesterial length of large rocks laid in front of the wall near Pill Bridge outfall to break the force of the waves and reduce scour, and details have kindly been supplied by the County Surveyor, Mr F. D. J. Johnson. Preliminary tests on scale models of this rock armour were carried out by Hydraulics Research Ltd at their Wallingford laboratories, and, as predicted,

the performance of the jet length is proving most encouraging, with a build-up of beach material at the toe. Further lengths will be added in 1986, (avoiding the holiday season!).

Although this new protection has yet to stand the test of time, after nearly 200 years of costly and frustrating attempts to solve the problem, we can now genuinely hope that a long-term answer has been found.

Keinton Tramways - 'The Preposterous Railway' by David Greenfield
Reprinted from 'The Visitor' Issue 19, June 1985

It appears that two Keinton men, Frank Pitman and Charles Matcham, had formed a syndicate in about 1890 with half a dozen Bath business men, to promote the 'Somerton Keinton Mandeville, Castle Cary and Evercreech Tramway'. This was to be laid along the south side of the road, starting from the bottom of Horse Mill Lane in Somerton, passing over Cary Bridge, up Snap Hill to Christian's Cross, past Kingweston, through Keinton Mandeville, Lydford, Lovington, Alford and Clenville, to join the Great Western Railway at Cary Station, and then over Ansford Bridge and Arthur's Bridge to Evercreech Junction. The promoters were not very specific about the means by which the trucks and carriages were to be drawn (passengers and animals would be carried as well as coal, stone, etc.), although it was intimated that horses would be used up Snap Hill, with steam or electrical power for the remainder of the route. The Tramways Act of 1870 gave power for tramways to be laid in the verges beside roads, so that the promoters needed to buy no land as a conventional railway company would have had to do. Nor were they compelled to erect fences, hedges or other screens to shut out the view of moving trains. This obviously made the venture an inexpensive affair, estimated to cost only £20,000 for over ten miles of tramway.

Pitman was a shopkeeper and Matcham owned quarries in Keinton. Both stood to gain financially by the expected lowering of freight transport costs to and from the stations. Pitman carted several hundred tons of groceries, etc, annually along the road from Cary Station. Several thousand tons of Keinton stone were carted away to the stations, principally for paving in Winchester, Sherborne, Gillingham, Blandford, Sturminster Newton and Swindon.

Initially the local road authorities were in favour of the scheme; they saw it as a means of reducing the damage caused to roads and bridges by the heavy quarry traffic. However, one public employee was vehemently opposed to the scheme. From the very start William Willcox, the County Surveyor, considered it to be little more than an attempt by speculators to make money at the expense of the locals. He 'heartily prayed that the Board of Trade will never pass this preposterous railway along our County Roads'. He seems to be the first person, outside the Syndicate and their supporters, to realise that this was not to be a pretty little horse-drawn passenger tramway, nor a narrow gauge mineral railway. It was in fact intended that goods, trucks and carriages would run onto the line direct from the Great Western Railway at Castle Cary, making the line in effect a siding into the Keinton quarries, using steam locomotives of the type employed for shunting at Cary Station.

Once this became known, the County Council and the Shepton Mallet Highway Board protected their interests as best they could, by having Clauses inserted in the Parliamentary Bill which would force the promoters to strengthen the bridges on route and impose a speed limit on rail traffic. The Board of Trade Inspector was concerned about the narrowness of the road through the villages and insisted that the line be doubled at various points so that traffic could meet the rail traffic travelling on the correct side of the road. The

promoters' Engineer met Williams to discuss the details of these doublings, but found him to be 'completely prejudiced against the whole scheme, calling it an "utter abomination"'.

Early in 1893 another voice was raised against the scheme. John Huntley Thring owned much property in Alford, including Alford House which he let out to genteel tenants. The tramway would pass close in front of the gateway and park of Alford House, to the danger and nuisance of his tenants there. He felt that it would 'render the house unlettable, that is for persons who wanted to come into the country for the enjoyment of country life'. He did concede that perhaps they might get someone from Lancashire to take it! He also considered that improved communication between Cary and Somerton was unnecessary anyway: 'I can only recollect going about three times in my life to Somerton; it is the most out of the way place there ever was'.

Ranged on the side of the promoters were several public figures, notably Henry Hobhouse MP, of Hadspear House, and Charles Colston, MP for South Glos., who owned land at Lydford. They felt that improved communications would improve the lot of the wretched villagers in the region. Also supporting the scheme was the progressive Robert Neville Grenville of Butleigh Court, who intended running a siding from the tramway through his land to his farms at Kingweston. However, he admitted that he was in favour of steam tramways almost anywhere, and was sorry that this one did not pass directly in front of his lodge. The GWR were also keen to see the success of the project, as a mutually useful extension of their line from Cary Station into the surrounding country.

Despite the opposition the promoters got their Act in 1893, and construction had started by April 1894 when the Highway Board's Surveyor, R. Moody, was finding the Contractor, Henry Jackson, evasive in the matter of making new depots, or dumps, for road stone where the tramway line ran through the original depots. They had 'just commenced work on the east side of Cross Keys by taking out the hedge at the side of the road leading from Rubbery Lane towards Wheathill'. By June, Jackson had made eight depots between Keinton and Cross Keys and had 'put in the foundation from Rubbery Lane, Cross Keys, to Wheathill', but nothing had been done towards making new depots on this latter length. In August, Moody gave instructions for road stone to be tipped on the tramway where no depots had been made. Work must then have stopped on the tramway, for in June 1895 Moody was told to cut the thistles and weeds' on the Tramway beside the Main Road, Lydford'.

The idea of running the line from Cary to Evercreech seems to have been dropped fairly early on. In 1896 deviations of the line around Keinton and Lydford villages were proposed, ostensibly to avoid the narrow parts of the village streets but incidentally getting the line closer to the quarries. However, no more construction work seems to have been carried out, and in May 1897 the question was raised as to whether the rails and sleepers obstructing the old stone depots could be pulled up - 'there is only a very small length laid as yet'.

It is not clear from the correspondence whether any other lengths had been built. Perhaps other sources and even photos exist which can throw more light on the scheme and the fate of its promoters. Frank Pitman, the Keinton shop-keeper, mentioned to the Select Committee that the scheme was his idea originally, aimed at opening up the district, which was 'very rich in mineral wealth as well as stone. There were valuable coal beds there. It is the centre of a very good coal bed. It has not been proved - only that geologists are unanimous on

the point'. William Wilcock was no doubt heartily relieved that the tramway scheme was not extended into a coal-mining venture.

I leave the last word to the Chairman of the Select Committee. During a discussion concerning the disasters likely to befall horses, travelling along a quiet country lane, being suddenly confronted by a train of rattling trucks drawn by a locomotive belching steam and smoke, he retorted, 'We all have our opinions about the convenience or nuisance of a tramway along a public road, but Parliament has settled long ago that we are to put up with these modern inconveniences and we have to train our horses to it'.

Plus ça change ...

Research Evening

For those uncertain as to how this event, scheduled for 22nd November, differs from the traditional Members' Evening, in December, a short explanation is in order.

Whilst over the years there have been projects undertaken collectively by S.I.A.S. members, the bulk of work into aspects of industrial archaeology in Somerset has remained in the hands of individuals. Hopefully, the evening will demonstrate what research is 'in the pipeline' perhaps with the prospect of an article or book appearing under the Society's imprint. There will also be an opportunity to discuss promising areas for future study and those experts amongst our number will be able to offer guidance to those about to embark upon a topic or would like to begin but lack the confidence, particularly with regard to the documentary sources at their disposal.

Heil

Two stalwart members of Exeter I.A. Group, Roger and Sue Eckersley, have deserted Exeter for Taunton and have opened a wine shop at 175 Staplegrove Road. We wish them every success and hope to see them at our meetings.

and Farewell

In May, representatives from the Society attended a presentation to Philip Stevens, the County Museums Officer, and he will shortly be joined in retirement by his wife Val, who has been Organizer of the Somerset Education Museums Service. We are particularly grateful to them both for allowing the Society to hold its meetings at Weir Lodge (see elsewhere). We are happy to learn that Philip and Val will continue to live in Somerset and that they hope to have more time for I.A. related activities.

Newer members of S.I.A.S. may not appreciate the immense contribution of Tony Ward to the life and work of the Society in its early years. As one of our founder members Tony led the way in encouraging the recording of sites of industrial archaeological interest. His work in the fields of brickmaking and limeburning in particular has given us a legacy on which others can build. With the creation of the Westonzoyland Engine Group (later W.E.T.) Tony plunged his skills, energy and enthusiasm into assisting that organization into maturity. We wish him well in his new life in South Wales.

Please note further details

Sunday, 2nd November
10 a.m.

Morning visit to Volis Farm, near Kingston St Mary (ST 235 295)
Basically 'model' farm buildings, (plans available), erection 1870s by Lord Fortman, with later adaptations. Water wheel, milling and barn machinery, lofts, etc; also old tools and implements.

SIAS

1985

Fri, 11 Oct 'The Roadside Survey' - Brian Murless and John Bentley
7.30 Weir Lodge

Fri, 8 Nov 'Postal History' - Mike Jones
7.30 Weir Lodge

Fri, 22 Nov Short presentation by SIAS members, dealing with
7.30 Weir Lodge projects carried out during the year.

Sun, 24 Nov Visit to Mr Dob Mead's farm at Kingstone St Mary
10.00 a.m.
Volis Farm

Fri, 6 Dec Members' Evening
7.30 Weir Lodge

NOTE: Wed, 27 Nov - SIAS members are invited to a meeting of the local branch of the Concrete Society, for an evening of films, talks, etc, about the raising of the 'Mary Rose', to be held at the Wyvern Club, Mountfields, Taunton, starting at 7.30 p.m. Further details from David Greenfield (Taunton 77155)

1986

Mon, 20 Jan 'Electrical Installations since the First World War' -
7.30 West Monkton* by SIAS member Roy Hayman

Wed, 5 Feb 'Taunton and Environs, 1870-1940' - an illustrated talk
7.30 West Monkton by Nick Chipchase, using old photos and postcards.

Mon, 10 Feb 'Somerset Numismatics from the 17th Century' - Steven
7.30 West Monkton Minnitt, Senior Keeper at the County Museum, will give an illustrated talk on coins and trade tokens.

Wed, 19 Feb 'Wartime Airfields of the Blackdown Hills' by
7.30 West Monkton Mr J S Hill.

Sat, 1 Mar 'Industrial Buildings in Bridgwater' - a joint site
2.15 p.m. East meeting with the Somerset Archaeological and Natural
Quay, Bridgwater History Society.

Mon, 3 Mar 'Rural Water Supply' by SIAS member Derrick Warren
7.30 West Monkton

Fri, 21 March AGM. Time and place to be announced later.

* Meetings at West Monkton will be held in the large Committee Room at the Village Hall (beside the A361 in Monkton Heathfield)

Editorial

The Society can look back on the past year with some satisfaction. Besides a very full programme of winter talks and summer visits, a major excavation (from the point of view of material to be moved!) was commenced at the Smokey Bottom Mine Engine and Winding House on the Brendons under the direction of Mike Jones. Roy Hayman is leading a party restoring a small waterwheel and pump which was removed by W.E.T. from a farm at Heathfield and which will eventually be set working at Westonzoyland and where, incidentally, the restoration of the bandage cutting machine, etc, was continued during the summer.

The hopes of the Society that Somerset would one day have its own Industrial Museum were brought that much nearer this year. The Society has been asked to mount an exhibition at Taunton Museum on Steam in Somerset, to incorporate several exhibits already held by the museum. A more detailed report will appear in the next Bulletin after the Gallery's official opening on the 22 March.

There are hopes that an I.A. Society might be formed in Dorset, bringing together several small groups which already exist. To this end there was a very well attended meeting at Dorchester on 18 January chaired by Professor Minchington. We wish them every success and have offered any help within our resources.

There is an ambitious list of projects proposed for the coming months and any member wishing to help would they please contact the project leader.

Smokey Bottom Engine House - Brendons (SS977 352) - Spring - Excavation with pick and shovel - Mike Jones Taunton 75398

Waterwheel restoration - Westonzoyland Pumping Station (ST342 323) - spring and summer - Roy Hayman Taunton 83109

Stapley Silk Factory - Churchstanton (ST188 135) - March - Clearing, Survey and Photography - Sandy Buchanan Ashcott 210566

Malthouse, Hillfarrance (ST164 246) - summer - Survey and Photography (six maximum) - Derriek Warren Taunton 86957

Ever since the Society was formed in 1971 it has been fortunate in having had the use of a room at Weir Lodge for its indoor meetings. The room is now used for other purposes so we have had to look for alternative venues. We are at present using the large community room at Monkton Heathfield but should anyone know of anything more convenient (and/or cheaper!) please contact the Secretary.

Whilst on the subject of Weir Lodge the opportunity must be taken to say 'thank you' to Doris Argyle who was such a help to the Society in the early days and whose retirement from Weir Lodge was remembered in a small presentation made to her by the Society in December.

17th S.W. Regional I.A. Conference

This year it is being held on Saturday, 12 April, at the Bristol Polytechnic under the auspices of Bristol I.A.S. A full days of talks, lunch, etc, at £8.50 (before 24 March), £8.50 thereafter. Full details and reservations from Tim Clarke, B.I.A.S., 41 Grove Avenue, Coombe Dingle, Bristol BS9 2RP.

Unfortunately the Southern Region Regional I.A. conference is being held on the same day at Southampton and the theme Sea and Ship. Any defectors can obtain details from Mrs P Moore, 51 Porteous Crescent, Chandlers Ford, Eastleigh, Hants SO5 2DG.

Apology

The publication sub committee regret the delay in the publication of SIAS Survey No 2, but certain things are beyond their control.

Taunton's Last Tannery

During December members carried out a photographic survey of the Tancred Street premises of E and W French (ST 231246) prior to demolition. Although the internal partitioning of most structures had been effected in recent times, the varied uses of brick, stone and timber on the exteriors demonstrated the piecemeal development of the site from at least the 18th century onwards¹. The beam engine² which was probably installed at the works in the 1840s has been dismantled for re-erection in Cornwall. The offices and an adjoining terrace are listed as being of special architectural or historic interest. The former contains a datestone "W.F. (William French) 1829", whilst the latter illustrates the infamous artisans' housing of the last century, this particular block being known as Court No 2 or French Hay Place³.

References

- 1 Bush, R., Jeboult's Taunton (Barracuda Books, 1983) 39-40
- 2 SIAS Journal No 1 (1975) 46-47
- 3 Wood, J., Plan of Taunton (1840)

Wedmore Brickworks

In response to our member Tim Mergan's request for further information regarding one of his ancestors, the Chairman has unearthed the following details. The works at Brickyard Farm, Wedmore Drove (ST 439480) were reputedly begun by John Tenkin c 1830. Although living in the Parish, Tenkin does not appear as a brickmaker on the Tithe Map (1838) but can be found in later trade directories (1859-61). Other makers who can be traced from this source are Charles Savage (1872-1883), G. Harris (1889) and Henry Harvey (1894-97). Harvey advertised himself as a 'brick, tile and drain pipe manufacturer' but probably produced the usual wide range of brickyard goods as a pavement block inscribed 'HARVEY/WEDMORE' (with a reversed 'D') was discovered at East Brent some years ago. Frederick Mergan, a local corn dealer and miller (steam), is believed to have served an apprenticeship with Harvey and had acquired the necessary skills and business acumen to manage the brickyard by 1902. The OS 25 in scale map of the following year clearly marks the works with a kiln, a rectangular structure in plan and undoubtedly of the updraught type. The yard was possibly in decline since it is thought to have closed by 1906. Bricks from this latter period survive and are boldly stamped 'MORGAN/WEDMORE'.

Roadside '86

With the final season of fieldwork approaching its conclusion, attention now focuses on the publication of Phase Two of the Somerset Roads project which covers the eastern part of the County. Slightly less routes than in Phase One were examined and fewer features recorded but the companion volume promises to equal in size that of its predecessor with a similar and hopefully improved format. The reason for this is that more historical information has come to light as the result of research by John Bentley at the Somerset Record Office and elsewhere. The opportunity has also been taken to revise and augment Phase One material and an addendum will be published.

Whilst it was perhaps inevitable that some features would be destroyed since the appearance in print of 'Somerset Roads, Phase One', two modest but positive steps have been taken towards preserving our roadside heritage. At the entrance to Cethelstone Manor (ST 18213168) the milestone of the Bridgwater Trust has been re-erected and its cleaned and painted plate now shows a previously unrecorded foundry mark (Harford & Co., Bristol). The recumbent stone outside the 'White Lion' public house at Blagdon Hill (ST 21121827) has been set upright and its inspection, though defaced, is intriguing ("To 7/6/ MILES") and suggests that its original position was elsewhere.

The Gunpowder Mills Study Group

The Gunpowder Mills Study Group which was formed in March 1985 held its second meeting of the year in London on 12 October. We decided to continue as an informal group with conveners but as yet no committee and officers. Continuity is provided by our decision to meet twice yearly for the reading of papers, exchange of information, and exploration of sites, and by our common efforts to produce first a gazetteer and then a bibliography on the subject of gunpowder production. Any information which could be contributed by members of SIAS towards either or both of these projects would be most welcome.

Evidence of powder mills in the old county of Somerset is so far limited to Littleton (ST 556637), Woolley (ST 749688) and Moreton (ST 561595), and hence under the Chew Valley Lake), but it is possible that other sites were used for this purpose before being put to other manufacturing or agricultural use, or falling into decay.

The literature for this area is at the moment confined to Robin Atthill's early survey, 'The gunpowder mills of North Somerset' in The Countryman (1971), pp 134-39, B J Buchanan's 'Comment on the manufacture of black powder' in the American Journal of the Society for Industrial Archaeology, 2 (1976), pp 75-80, and the detailed account of the Woolley Mills by B J Buchanan and M T Tucker, 'The manufacture of gunpowder: a study of the documentary and physical evidence relating to the Woolley powder works near Bath' in the Industrial Archaeology Review, Vol 5, No 3 (1981), pp 185-202.

If SIAS members knew of any other sites in early deeds or current folklore which could be explored, or of any published or unpublished notes and surveys, then such information would be welcomed by the Study Group as providing useful additional material on this subject.

Lead Condensing Flues at Charterhouse-on-Mendip, April 1982

In September 1981 SIAS was invited by The Mendip Society to survey the lead condensing flues at Charterhouse before restoration work was started by a community enterprise team. By the time that the Society was able to respond to this invitation, at Easter 1982, the restoration work had commenced. However, the fact that much of the vegetation which had covered the flues had been removed helped to make our survey both easier and more informative.

The attached plan is the product of one day's labour by a small team of SIAS members under the leadership of Derrick Warren. It clearly shows the zig-zag pattern of the flues which were designed to condense any lead which escaped as vapour during the smelting process. At intervals the flues would have been cleaned and the lead-bearing soot reclaimed for smelting.

The site was developed about 1850 to re-smelt the lead slag left by previous generations of lead smelters. It was a relatively short-lived venture as demand for British lead was undermined by cheaper imports in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. The last lead smelting works to operate, the St Cuthbert's Cuthbert's Works at Priddy, stopped production in 1908.

The survey by SIAS still leaves unresolved a fundamental problem. At which end of the flues was the furnace sited? Presumably, there was a chimney at the other end. In the absence of more detailed written evidence this question can only be answered by an archaeological dig.

'Tales of Watchet Harbour' by W H (Ben) Norman
Published 1985 by the authority price £3.95

What a delightful book: and how fortunate we are that Ben Norman has taken so much care with its writing and production.

'Tales of Watchet Harbour' is, as its title suggests, a book of reminiscences, of folk lore, and, yes, of myth and legend. It does not set out to be a dry academic history, and although it includes tables, lists and statistics, these are by way of being 'petits fours' at the end of the meal rather than one of the main courses.

As Dr Greenhill observes in his introduction, "'Tales of Watchet Harbour' is not only very good reading, it is a useful contribution to the maritime history of South West Britain". In six chapters the formal history of the harbour is traced from 914 when Decuman and his cow arrives from Wales, to the recently revived harbour trade of today. This is illustrated with plans, engravings and photographs, many of which have not been previously published, as well as with lively cartoons by Derek Quint. It is in his leavening of history with anecdotes that Ben Norman excels: how William Dashwood, Collector of Customs in the late seventeenth century spent much of his time assisting the brandy smugglers so that 'Watchet had grown exceedingly rich and had as large a trade as Minehead': of the struggles of fishermen and traders to persuade the Earls of Egremont even to repair the harbour: of the vain efforts by the fishermen to halt the nuisance of the anti-aircraft range at Doniford, established in 1925, after which large chunks of shrapnel frequently rained on the town.

The last four chapters concern themselves less with history and more with tradition: of the Watchet hobblerers who engaged in fierce competition for engagement to pilot ships into harbour and berth them: of Watchet ships, shipbuilders and owners: of the fishing industry and the lifeboat, always a source of tales of heroism and self-sacrifice. The last chapter deals with sailors, shipwrights and other local characters, such as Bob Williams who sowed some sweepings from a ship of Danzig wheat and reaped a fine crop of a new weed which soon came to be known as 'that bloody Watchet weed'.

No, this book is not an academic history: it is a jolly good read, but packed full of names, dates and places as it is, an index would have been a very worthwhile addition to a thoroughly enjoyable book.

Letters

The Editor

Sir,

Bulletin No 39 made reference to members "stepping off" at Thornbear Hill in last June. In view of the publicity and controversy that has recently been generated by a theatrical production at the Brewhouse Theatre can we read a new meaning in any allusion to "steaming" at Westenzoyland?

CURIOUS
(Name and Address supplied)

Westenzoyland

Workshop progress continues. The Trust hopes to be in a position to order the roof steel shortly with a view to manufacturing the five main trusses followed by erection during the summer. If a suitable covering can be obtained (whether clay or concrete tiles or a patent material in sufficient and cheap quantities!), some roofing may be carried out by the start of next winter. The Trust would welcome ideas and help!

Work has also progressed with the Tangye engine (ex Fairfield House) and this machine, whilst on a temporary mounting, should be running at Easter.

Open days are as follows:

30-31 March; 4-5, 25-26 May; 1, 28-29 June (Model Railway Display); 6 July;
3, 24-25 August; 7 September; 5 October.

Open 2-5 p.m. on those dates

SIAS Programme - Spring 1986

- | | |
|--------------------------|--|
| Sat, 1 Mar
2.15 | Joint meeting with Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society - 'Industrial Buildings at Bridgwater'.
Meet at East Quay, Bridgwater. |
| Mon, 3 Mar
7.30 p.m. | 'Rural Water Supply' - Derrick Warren.
West Monkton Village Hall. |
| Wed, 19 Mar
7.30 p.m. | AGM - West Monkton Village Hall.
<u>Please make an effort to attend.</u> Wine and cheese
will be provided by the Society but would each member bring
a plate of 'finger' food. Could they also bring some small
object for others to identify - the more difficult the better.
No prizes but could act as talking points (as though that was
really needed!) There will also be a short entertainment. |
| Sat, 12 Apr | 17th Regional I.A. Conference - to be held this year at the
Bristol Polytechnic. Details from Sandy Buchanan. |
| Sat, 26 Apr
2 p.m. | Lime kilns at West Hatch, led by Margaret Anderson. Meet
at Kiln Farm (ST 277220) (off A358 at the Nags Head, towards
West Hatch, $\frac{3}{4}$ mile, on right). |
| Fri, 16 May
7 p.m. | Evening visit to Honiton, led by Robin Stanes
Meet at St Paul's Church. |
| Sun, 18 May
9.30 a.m. | Drainage of the Brue and Axe Valleys, led by Iain Miles.
Meet at the large lay-by between Lyng and Burrowbridge
(ST 346294) |
| Sat, 14 Jun | Whole day visit to Poole and District, led by Bill Hines.
Those who are interested contact David Greenfield (Taunton 77155)
to arrange time and car sharing. |
| Tue, 8 Jul
7 p.m. | Evening visit to Hemyock, led by Derrick Warren.
Meet at the Catherine Wheel Car Park. |

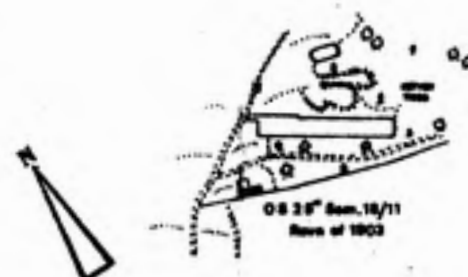
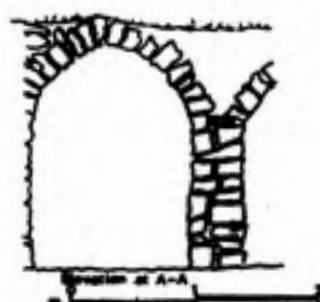
'IRON BRIDGES IN SOMERSET'

<u>BRIDGE</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>DESIGNER</u>	<u>MANUFACTURER</u>	<u>BUILDER</u>	<u>CLIENT</u>	<u>DETAILS AND GRID REFERENCE</u>
Bridgwater Town Bridge	1797	Coalbrookdale Co		C Co + J Parry	Bridgwater Corp	75' span cast-iron arch. Replaced 1883 (301371)
Load Bridge	1814	R Anstice	R Downs	Downs + J Burt + T Tinney	County of Somerset	Masonry bridge widened by cast iron. Iron replaced 1935. (467258)
Nynehead Court Drive Bridge	(1816)	Coalbrookdale Co		-	A Sanford	Proposal for cast-iron 120' span. (137224)
Burrowbridge	(1824)	P Ilett	-	-	?	Proposal for cast-iron 65' span. (357304)
Mark Iron Bridge	1824	?	R Downs	Downs ?	?	10' span, cast-iron ribs + buckle plates. Widened 1924. (376479)
Footbridges at the Basin, Wellington	1831?	?	Bishop Brothers	?	?	Four wrought-iron footbridges, 6' to 15' span. (127204-126206)
Silk Mills Canal Bridge	1833	J Green	?	?	Grand Western Canal	13' span, cast-iron ribs + roadplates. Demolished 1977. (206257)
Trefusis Canal Bridge	1833	J Green	?	?	Grand Western Canal	At Silk Mills, but still extant. (166232)
Bascule Bridge, Bridgwater Docks	1841	?	?	?	Bridgwater and Taunton Canal	33' span cast-iron, double bascule. Replaced 1907. (298375)
Burst Bow Bridge, Martock	1849	R Carver	E Murch	Murch + G Pearce	County + Martock Turnpike Trust	18' skew span (16' square), cast-iron ribs + arched plates. Redecked 1975. (457184)
Creech St Michael Bridge	1848	R Carver	E Murch	Murch	County	Masonry bridge widened by cast iron. (273253)
Marsh Bridge, Dulverton	1866	?	Hennet & Spink		County	30' span wrought-iron lattice girder. Redecked 1979. (88 907289)
Lanton Main Road Railway Bridge	1869	?	Hennet & Spink		Cheddar Valley Railway	Two 24' skew spans (15' square), wrought-iron plate girder + brick jack arch + cast-iron edge beams. (510481)
Nynehead Canal Footbridge	1869	Bishop Brothers		Bishops	Milverton Highway Board	30' span wrought-iron footbridge. Renewed 1950s. (137223)
Telescopie Railway Bridge, Bridgwater	1871	F Fox	Lloyds Foster	Warburton	B & E R Co	Wrought-iron plate girder. One traversing land-span 82', one retractable river span 125', one fixed river span 82'. (300374)
Tone Railway Viaduct, Waterrow	1873	?	?	?	Devon and Somerset Railway	Four 100' spans, wrought-iron lattice girders. (053246)
Mill Bridge, Baltonshorough	1879	?	J Blake	J Blake	Wells Highway Board	18' skew span (15' square) wrought-iron joint + brick jack arch. (535347)
Bridgwater Town Bridge	1883	?	Brettell (Worce)	G Moss	Bridgwater Corp	75' span wrought-iron arched lattice girder + troughing road plates. (301371)

The above list of bridges was prepared a couple of years ago by David Greenfield to accompany a talk. It contains a representative selection of structures known to have used, or where it was proposed to use, cast iron or wrought iron as a structural material.

References to other such bridges would be welcomed.

Lead Condensing Flues
Charterhouse on Mendip
April 1982

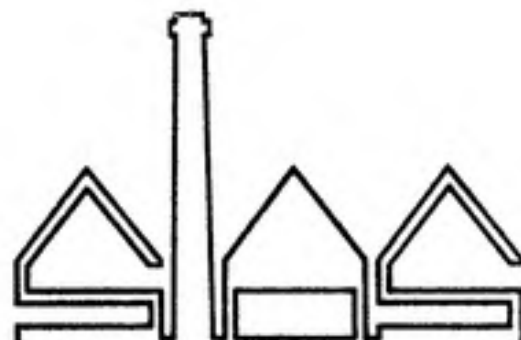


- Legend
- a flues
 - b collapsed flues
 - c visible line of flues
 - d entrance (when flues were low)
 - e blocking walls (used as a store)

Scale 1:200

SAS 1982

BULLETIN NO 41



Secretary: Mr S Buchanan
2 Blake Green
Ashcott, Bridgwater
TA7 9QF
Tel: Ashcott 210566

MAY 1986

Editorial

Congratulations to Mary Miles on her 'Hancock's Brewery' which is going - in all senses of the word - well and to David Gledhill and Peter Lamb on their 'Electricity in Taunton' hot from the press. SWEB and Taunton Deane have jointly mounted an exhibition in Taunton Library to mark the centenary of electric street lighting in Taunton which was inaugurated on 1 May 1886. Here it is appropriate to voice the Society's appreciation of the contributions made by CEEB and SWEB in the publication of 'Electricity in Taunton 1809-1948' - it was total.

Being the third booklet under our imprint these are now beginning to look like a series.

Wheels of Power Gallery

On 22 March a new chapter in the history and development of Somerset museums was made with the opening of the first ever industrial archaeological gallery at the Somerset County Museum in Taunton Castle. It was a fresh venture too for the SIAS sub committee, which included WET members; their labours produced a working script and suggested illustrations for inclusion in this permanent display.

Entitled 'Wheels of Power', the gallery introduces the visitor to the basic types of steam engine at work in Somerset during the 19th and early 20th centuries. These ranged from the portable engines which found favour on farms to the massive beam engines used for pumping and winding in the County's mines and providing the motive power in the factories. Examples of the ubiquitous horizontal engine are exhibited 'in the flesh' and shortly it is hoped that machinery patterns, recovered by SIAS from the former Bishop Brothers Foundry at Wellington, will be mounted on a wall of the gallery. There will also be a restored Newton dynamo joining the collection, a pertinent reminder in this year of celebrations, of a Taunton product, originally powered by steam, which played a vital role in the early history of electrical generation.

Firepool Pumping Station, Taunton

British Rail is anxious to make a decision on the future of the derelict Firepool Pumping Station adjoining East Yard at Taunton Station. SIAS has been asked for its opinion on the potential of the building in an Industrial Archaeology context, and a sub committee has been formed to see what possible options exist. There are not any even embryonic proposals at the moment and costs and legalities may

ve insuperable obstacles to any positive outcome.

irepool has many IA associations dating back over the centuries and was important to Taunton long before the Bridgwater and Taunton Canal was opened in 1827. The lock into the canal and the canal bridge at the northern end of Firepool Weir have recently been restored by British Waterways, and it is just possible to see the alignment of the Grand Western Canal which the railway superseded. The limekilns which form the base of the Pumping Station are not later than 1842, which was the year that the Bristol and Exeter Railway came to Taunton. At this time it was proposed to bring limestone from Curry Mallet via the Chard Canal, and fuel to burn it was brought by barge from Bridgwater after being shipped from South Wales.

The Pumping Station was built in about 1870 to service Taunton Station and was used for the locomotives and for all the many other essential purposes associated with a busy station and depot. The wrought iron tank holding 63,400 gallons was built on top in 1877.

In 1889 the Pumping Station was remodelled and remained in use until steam locomotives were withdrawn in the 1960s. Apart from forming a vertical focus in an otherwise somewhat flat complex of IA features, the shell of the building, irrespective of its contents, forms a triple exhibit in itself. As well as the limekilns, associated with the days when water transport dominated, and the pumps and tank which supplied the railway, the bricks (except a few courses of Staffordshire engineering brick) are by William Thomas of Poole, West Buckland, who proudly used a picture of the building to illustrate their 1905 catalogue.

ANN RONAN

(My thanks to Brian Murless for supplying historical information and to Sandy Buchanan for including many useful facts in his SIAS Survey Number 1)

Very Much Appreciated

The Maltwood Fund of the Royal Society of Arts has generously awarded SIAS a grant for the publication of 'Somerset Roads, Phase Two'. This relieves our Society of the financial burden of printing costs and Ordnance Survey royalties, and follows a similar award made for the 'Phase One' material. Maps, photographs and text are now being assembled for the new (companion) volume which should appear in time for Christmas!

Committee Members, 1986-1987

Chairman	Mrs A Ronan	Taunton 52737
Secretary	Mr S Buchanan	Ashcott 210566
Treasurer	Mrs J Jones	Taunton 75308
Publications Officer	Mr D Warren	Taunton 86957
Field Officer	Mr S Farrer	Bradford-on-Tone 473
Publicity Officer	Mr B Murless	Taunton 77158
Vice Chairman and Minute Secretary	Mr T Walford	Long Sutton 224
Committee Members	Miss M Anderson	Taunton 442345
	Mr P Daniel	Taunton 85758
	Mr R Hayman	Taunton 83109
	Mr M Jones	Taunton 75308
	Mr I Miles	Taunton 412713

The West Somerset Railway. A history in pictures with an account by C R Clinker.
Revised and enlarged by Christopher van den Arend.
Published by The Exmoor Press, £2.50

Although basically a re-casting of the 1980 edition, this new verison is much more than that. Christopher van den Arend has not only added a most readable description of a trip down the line in its heyday, but has amended and updated the whole. Most photographs now appear close to the relevant text, instead of being grouped together at the end, and whilst the majority appeared in the 1980 edition, a number of fresh views, ranging from broad gauge to modern, have been added.

The book is about the railway, not locomotive stock details, and with no tables or statistics to spoil the very real enjoyment of the reader. The historical details, provided to so eminent an authority as C R Clinker, are above suspicion, barring any undetected misprints! Nevertheless, your reviewer feels bound to point out the odd slip-up, if only to prove he has read it. The frontpiece, inherited from the first edition, still miscalls the 'Bridgwater and Taunton Canal' the 'Grand Western'; this is hardly relevant to the book, but some SIAS members will undoubtedly spot it! Page 7 describes a curiously ambiguous rental agreement for the Minehead Railway, 'of not less than £2,000 per annum or at more than 50 per cent of gross receipts when this provided a higher amount', probably following the original wording!

The description of Bishop's Lydeard station on p. 11 owes something to Alice through the Looking Glass - the Up and Down sides have got very mixed, but fortunately the adjacent photograph reveals the true state of affairs. There is also a minor misprint at the end, on p. 69; Stogumber re-opened just 20 years later than stated.

The view on p. 42 of broad gauge cross-sleepered track at Minehead is particularly welcome, showing that bridge rail on longitudinal baulks was by no means universal, although the earlier views at Watchet show it there, as would be expected with Brunel and Brereton as engineers. For SIAS members rather than the general public, the water fountain at Minehead, shown on p. 51 is now quite a rare survival; originally with an iron cup suspended upside down on a chain from the bracket at the top, it was a standard product from Macfarlane's of the Saracen Foundry, Glasgow.

The whole production is much better than the first edition, with print that is exceptionally clear, and photographs well reproduced; the early 'Floods at Williton' on p. 25, from a very difficult original, is an excellent example of what can be achieved with skill and dedication.

Binding, H., and V. Bonham-Carter, Old Dulverton and around, The Exmoor Press, 1986, £2.75

To anyone in search of value for money in literature this compact, A5 size publication fits the bill most successfully having 88 pages and over 100 photographs. Many of the illustrations appear for the first time between covers and the printer must be congratulated in reproducing these vintage photographs of variable quality to such a high standard.

The authors have performed a valuable function in drawing our attention to an area of Somerset not well endowed with local histories but which, nevertheless, attracts countless visitors each year, particularly those exploring the Exmoor National Park. The text begins with a potted history from early times which is followed by a necessary introduction to the landed families who dominated the economic and social lives of the nonulace for several centuries. The authors managed to avoid the pitfalls of the 'boring' traditional genealogies and the reader is led on quite naturally to the remainder of the book - words and pictures chiefly portraying the

Victorian and Edwardian scene in this part of West Somerset.

It is a graphic description of a pre-Great War society, now lost for ever: a self-sufficient community of small shopkeepers and workshops supplying the needs of agriculture. But the signs of the irrevocable changes to come are present; Harry Tout was the first man in Dulverton to sell two-gallon cans of petrol and George Bowbeer Fisher was an early user of electricity by means of a steam driven Compton generator. Thankfully the writers have also collected anecdotes and we are told of the bushes near the Lamb Hotel where, as a small boy, Ivan Kemp used to hide in fear of Sir Gilbert Wills's black valet, who rode a fast motor-cycle into town!

For the industrial archaeologist there are several features of note, not least the four mills in Dulverton whose power source was the leat from the River Barle. Whilst still in its infancy SIAS became involved in a project at Town Mills and this interest has continued through the researches of Derrick Warren, a contributor to the book.

It may appear churlish to criticize such a well written record but the authors should take care of too much reliance on trade directory evidence, particularly in Chapter 3, since this source is notorious for inaccuracies. On the illustrative front the group photographs would benefit from the further identification of the sitters before their names are irretrievably lost. The 'around' of the title refers to the villages of Bury, Brushford and Exebridge which share the last 8 pages - surely the four photographs surrounding the one nebulous caption 'Old Bury' (p. 81) are victims of an editorial error? However, we can hopefully look forward to a supplementary publication as the authors tell us that it became impossible to use more than a tenth of all the information they received.

Coxes Bridge Dye-Works, Ilminster

The 1839 tithe map shows a small site on the north bank of the River Isle which included two substantial industrial buildings and several small cottages. The site was served by a leat some 350 m in length taking water from the river about a weir whose remains can still be seen. With the exception of the tail race the leat has completely disappeared, much of it buried under spoil dredged from the river. It passed through one of the buildings and would have provided water for the various dyeing processes and presumably powered a water wheel in the building itself.

By 1890 the site was probably derelict with no trace of the two large buildings though the 25" map of that date records the cottages still remaining. By 1903 the cottages had gone and at present there is no structure remaining above ground, the area being covered by a small wood containing mature trees.

A series of digs by a SIAS working party has found the stoned roadway leading into the site but attempts to uncover the foundations of the building or ascertain their exact position, though yielding a good deal of 18th and 19th century domestic pottery, roofing tiles, slate, etc, have met with limited success so far. The digs continue. Watch this space.

See extract of Tithe Map on page 5.

Other activities

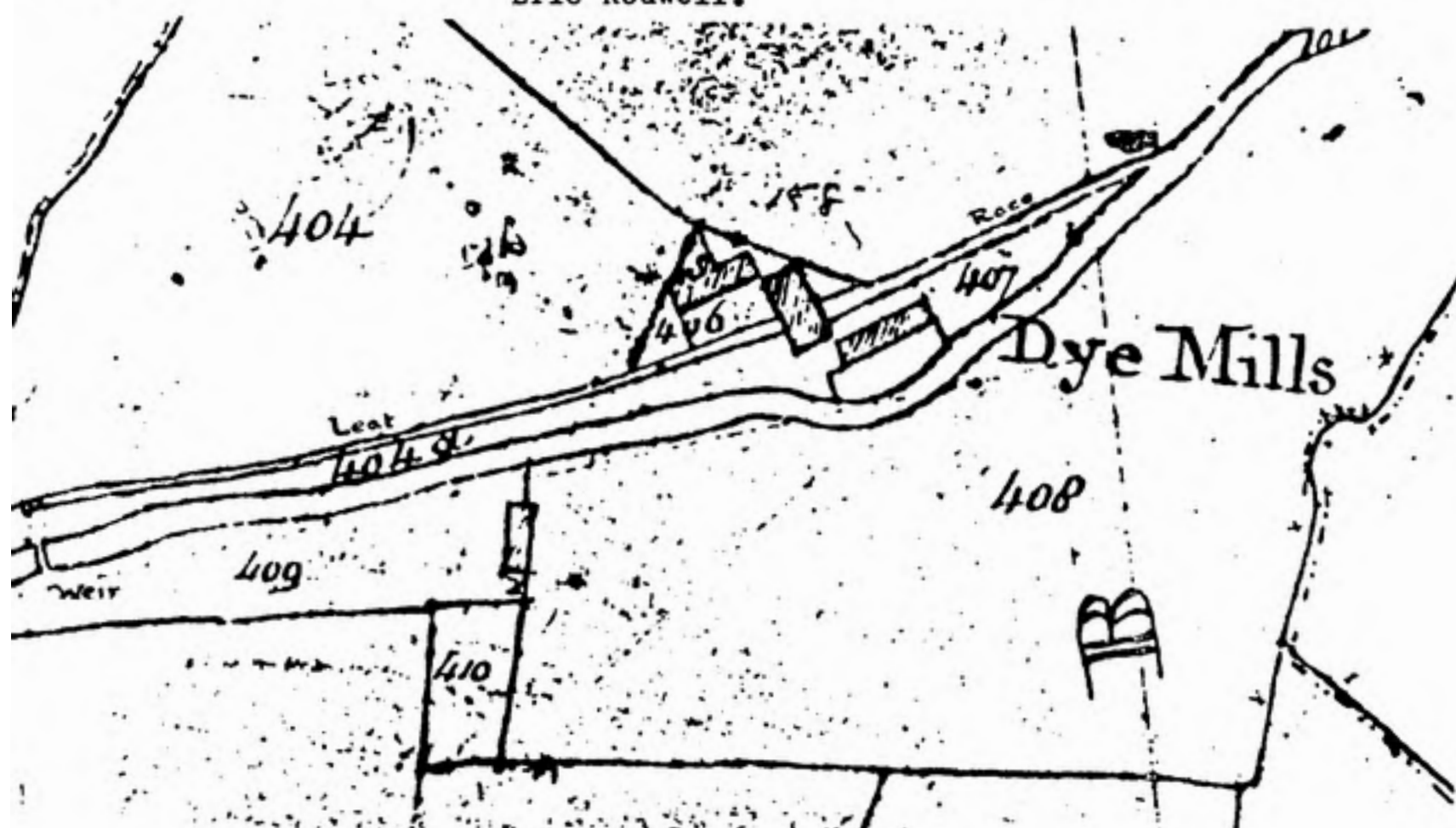
Two surveys have been completed, the results of which will appear in later publications.

On Sunday 4th May, a party led by Sandy Buchanan visited the Stapley Silk Mill site and carried out a ground and photographic survey. The whole site is up for sale with planning permission for development on the southerly part.

Six o'clock on the evening of Tuesday 29th April saw a party at Tengore Lane limekilns, near Long Sutton. With the help of a fork-lift tractor, wielded by Jim Walford, a tramway skip was retrieved for Westonzoyland. Trail blazers with hooks cleared vegetation for the more delicate tape holders and photographers who recorded the very interesting remains before possible removal to provide building stone. The several surveyors hope that, on this occasion, their surveys will marry up !!!

Additional Programme

- Tuesday 22nd July. 7.0pm. Evening visit to Watchet led by Ben Norman. Meet Market St, car park near the museum.
- Sat. 13th Sept. 2.0pm. Dye Mills, Coxes Bridge led by Stan Farrer. (ST363165) 1 1/4 miles N of Ilminster. Then Crimson Hill Tunnel, Chard Canal.
- Sat. 27th Sept. Dartmoor Mines. Whole day visit led by Mick Atkinson. Members intending to go please contact Stan Farrer, (Bradford on Tone 473) before 1st Sept. It is hoped to arrange a mini-bus.
- Sat. 11th Oct. 2.0pm. Visit to Tracebridge quarries, Ashbrittle, led by Eric Rodwell.

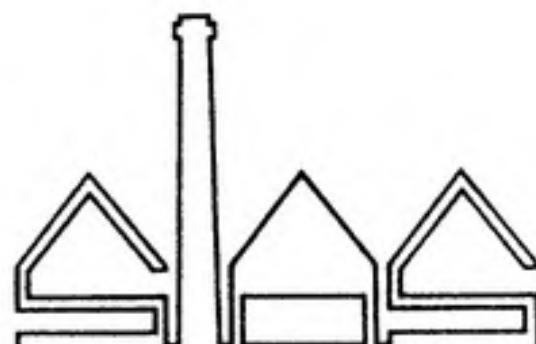


SUBSCRIPTIONS ARE NOW DUE

Subscriptions for 1986-87 were due on 1st April 1986. Rates:- £5.00 (covering the whole family), OAPs and under 18 £2.00. Please send to the treasurer, Janet Jones, 11, Osborne Way, Taunton.

SOMERSET INDUSTRIAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

BULLETIN No 42



Hon. Sec.: C.A. Buchanan,
2 Blake Green,
Aschott,
Bridgwater,
TA7 9QF

AUGUST 1986

AUTUMN PROGRAMME

- Sat. 13th Sept. 2.0 pm Dye Mills, Coxes Bridge: (SI 363165) 1½ miles N of Ilminster on road to Curry Rivel. Then Crimson Hill Tunnel, Chard Canal. led by Stan Farrer.
- Sat. 27th Sept THE MINES OF DARTMOOR: Whole day visit led by Mick Atkinson. Members wishing to go please contact Stan Farrer (Bradford-on-Tone 473) by 1st September. It is hoped to organise a minibus.
- Wed. 8 Oct. 7.30 pm THE WEST SOMERSET RAILWAY: Christopher van den Arend. West Monkton Village Hall.
- Sat. 11 Oct. 2.0 pm Visit to Tracebridge Quarries and industrial hamlet. led by Eric Rodwell. (SS 025212) Turn right off A38 at the top of hill beyond Beam Bridge Hotel. Follow signs for Greenham and the Ashbrittle.
- Wed. 22 Oct. 7.30 pm FROM PILLAR TO POST: Rosemary Berry. A history of letter boxes. West Monkton Village Hall.
- Wed. 12th Nov. 7.30 pm AN EXMOOR SYMPOSIUM (see page 3). West Monkton Village Hall.
- Mon 24th Nov. 7.30 pm SIAS PROJECTS EVENING: Short presentations by members illustrating their own researches during the year. West Monkton Village Hall.
- Mon. 8 Dec. 7.30 pm MEMBERS EVENING: Bring those holiday slides of the Ffestiniog with you! West Monkton Village Hall.
- Meetings at West Monkton will be held in the large committee room at the Village Hall (by the A361 in Monkton Heathfield).
- Sat. 21st Sept 11.00 am BIAS meeting at Firepool. Led by Sandy Buchanan. SIAS members welcome.
- Sat. 25th Oct. Whole day symposium on WEST COUNTRY FOUNDRIES at Dartington. Details from the Secretary.

SMOKEY BOTTOM ENGINE HOUSE

Two further digs have completed the excavations and Mike Jones will present a report and survey in a future Bulletin.

HALSE MALTHOUSE

Mary Miles was recently asked by the Conservation section of Taunton Deane Borough Council for advice on a malthouse at Halse which was the subject of a planning application for conversion into two dwellings. The site has proved to be most interesting and Mary has asked that SIAS be allowed to make a proper survey of it before work commences.

The malthouse is of cruciform shape, with the main malting floors running north-south with a kiln at the south end. To the west is a loading bay, while to the east is another kiln with a narrow lean-to running down the main line of the building. It is most unusual to find a house with two kilns and, whilst it looks as though the eastern kiln is a later addition, it does not appear to be much later and the whole structure has some features not seen anywhere else locally. The tiles on the kiln floor are made of stone and the holes taper down to the fire below instead of up. It would seem from this that some sort of hair cloth or frame must have been placed over the stones to stop the barley from dropping into the fire below. The short stairs down to the kilns can be lifted up on hinges to reveal shutes for shovelling the malt down to the first floor of the main house. On the ground floor 'windows' to the second kiln room have hinged boards enabling them to be lifted up so that barley can be shovelled into a steep-tank which runs round two sides of the kiln fire. There is also an odd system of piping water into the steep-tank which allows for small hand basins (? for washing hands) in the wall.

There is a datestone in the end of the malthouse - notorious things, as they may be replacements or simply indicate when renovation work was done. However, this one seems to tie in nicely. It reads "IH,DW,1768." (the DW is a later addition). The site was owned by the Hancock family, who were major landowners in the parish, and John Hancock seems to have been the maltster. The nearby New Inn was also owned by the Hancock family, with a tenant landlord. Dr Dunning has kindly pointed out to Mary references to the Hancocks malting in the parish - firstly in 1790, when John the Younger and Richard are called maltsters in a deed, and secondly when John the Younger drew up a list of effects for insurance against the feared Napoleonic invasion in 1803, mentioning 50 bushels of malt. Mary has looked at the Tithe map of 1840 which shows the outline as at present, and YES there is a vague connection with Hancocks of Wiveliscombe, but it would not seem likely that malt from this site would have been sent there, though it may be possible that the family link did give William Hancock the Elder ideas!

Local knowledge indicates that the house was last used as a malthouse before the Second World War, since when it has been a battery house for chickens and an apple store. Four names recorded on the first kiln with the date 1935 are recognised as being farm workers at Blake Farm, which was finally sold out of the Hancock family in 1948.

There are some interesting questions raised by the site - why two kilns for a start? Volunteers are needed to carry out the survey. Please don't be shy - contact Mary on West Monkton 412713 and offer to help. Taunton Deane seem keen to see it done, and are even talking about the possibility of having one kiln preserved. This should be a good opportunity to shown them what we are capable of as a society and perhaps encourage them to contact us more readily in the future.

TENGORE LANE LIMEKILNS

The survey will be published in Bulletin No. 43

HILLFARRANCE MALTHOUSE

This survey has been deferred to a later date.

EXMOOR SMYPOSIUM

The next issue of the Exmoor Review has an IA theme and, through the good offices of Mr V. Bonham-Carter, four SIAS members have contributed. John Bentley has written about Exmoor roads, David Greenfield on selected Exmoor Bridges, Mike Jones on mining, and Derrick Warren on wagon works. Much of the material used in these articles is to be published for the first time; the talks on Wednesday 12th November will allow the authors to show photographs, outline their interests in their subjects and to give further details on each.

RIVERSIDE SCARE

A few months ago correspondence in the Somerset County Gazette suggested that the warehouses on the north side of the River Tone opposite the Brewhouse Theatre were under threat of demolition. SIAS were concerned since the buildings are not only of architectural interest but also they are linked historically with the Tone Navigation and the adjoining canals. The Society has been unable to substantiate the claim that the warehouses are in danger and there has been no application so far for redevelopment.

YOUR COMMITTEE AT WORK

There are some members who may feel a little remote from the workings of the Society and there are those who may consider that not enough information, emanating from Committee discussions, finds its way into Bulletins and other publications. Committee meetings are, of course, open to all (by prior arrangement with the Secretary) and follow the familiar agenda of many similar bodies, including reports from officers on routine business such as finance and the Society's programme of events. However, the meetings are also filled with a host of miscellaneous but relevant items of IA interest, some of which are never recorded beyond the official minutes. It is hoped that from time to time these subjects can be made more widely known both in the Bulletin and at the start of each SIAS gathering.

As SIAS is not an overtly political body, seeking rather to influence others by its expertise in cases where industrial structures are at risk through demolition or drastic alteration, a cautious, sensitive approach is adopted by the Committee. The harsh glare of publicity and confrontation is rejected in favour of a 'softly, softly' diplomatic stance. The result has been that over the years the Society has been respected and consulted by local authorities and others and members have gained access to structures, where permission would not normally be granted, to carry out surveys and other IA work. It is not surprising, therefore, that SIAS nurtures these more delicate situations in Committee, and lengthy delays often ensue before the full facts reach a wider audience.

A current example where tact and limited publicity were initially required concerns the Firepool Pumping Station. Closely reasoned arguments in Committee were followed by the setting up of a special sub-committee under the chairmanship of Tim Walford. Though under great pressure in terms of timing, a discussion document entitled Firepool and Somerset's Industrial Heritage was produced. This was not intended for general circulation but equally it is not classified and a copy will be made available for inspection by SIAS members. The document marks another chapter in the Society's

declared aim to establish an IA interpretation centre for the County in a suitable building and locality. This Autumn the talks enter a critical phase with the consideration by the local authorities of our costed and carefully considered (and, we believe, viable) proposals. Any SIAS member who would like to see a copy of the feasibility study should contact Tim Walford (Long Sutton 224) or Ann Ronan (Taunton 52737).

Pumping stations form the basis for two further courses of action: the first, at Westford near Wellington, is a late Victorian structure which once served the community by providing its water but has now become redundant. Because of interest in the building and its internal machinery SIAS was asked to attend a meeting with the Wellington Town Council and the owners, Wessex Water Authority. A report on the pumping station and its history has been prepared by the Society, principally through the expertise of Iain Miles, to assist future decisions. Whatever the outcome, it is anticipated that SIAS will become involved in a comprehensive survey at the site.

The other pumphouse, at Charlton, Creech St Michael, has historical connections with the Bridgwater and Taunton Canal and the former Bristol and Exeter (later Great Western) Railway. Since work was carried out by members in 1980 (see Bulletin 24) the condition of the structure has deteriorated but nevertheless the site is still of IA importance. Despite a series of correspondence and meetings over the years on this issue, doggedly pursued and organised by David Greenfield, the Society has been unable to attract support on safeguarding the site either at national or local level. But all is not yet lost since there is now a SIAS representative on the B. & T. Canal Users Advisory Group which meets to discuss matters relating to the waterway.

More promising has been the response to the Society's expressed concern over the long-term future of the incline of the West Somerset Mineral Railway. When SIAS was founded in 1972 one of our first reports dealt with the industrial remains on the Brendon Hills and the apparently conflicting aims of landowners and visitors. Since that time views have been modified but our participation and interest in the area have been maintained. John Bentley represents us on the Exmoor N.P. Archaeological Advisory Group which is currently examining the practicality of heritage trails. Similarly, Mike Jones has furthered our knowledge of the iron mining industry with his excavation of the engine house at Smokey Bottom. Perhaps surprisingly, the incline itself has never been surveyed in any detail - this presents a suggestion for a future project.

DOWN IN BRIDGWATER

The important contribution of Somerset foundries to the nineteenth century industrial developments in the County has been a recurring theme in the researches of SIAS members. Mileposts, steam engines and waterwheels illustrate the diversity of the castings, yet little evidence has so far been forthcoming on the founders themselves or their financial backers. One family emerging from the shadows, however, is that of the Downs and their association with the Bridgwater Iron Foundry at Eastover; the site eventually became the premises of the Bridgwater Motor Company (ST 303371).

The name of Richard Down is linked with the widening, in iron, of Long Load Bridge in 1814 (1) and an early trade directory lists him as an iron founder (2). By 1826 he had manufactured the bridge at Mark which still

bears his inscription and characteristic spherical topped railings (3). Three years later he is noted on a deposited plan as the owner of the foundry (4) the occupiers being Brown, Watson and Company. It seems probable that Richard's true profession was that of architect and surveyor (5) and the foundry side was vested in the capable hands of Edward Murch (6). Apart from casting Patent Fountains (8) Murch continued the bridge building tradition (8) and his name was retained in the title of the company until at least 1875 (9).

Meanwhile another Down, Edwin, was also practising as an architect (10) with an office in the Cornhill where he advertised as an agent to the Exchange Assurance Company (11). He was responsible for the classical design of the Baptist Church in St Mary Street in 1837 (12) and on the strength of this achievement is given a brief entry in a national dictionary (13). Bridges were to feature in his career since in 1839 he became involved in the design and construction of the new Langport Bridge for the Parrett Navigation (14). The last directory entry for Edwin appears in 1852 (14) but a later reference is made to a Robert Down of Eastover (16) and interestingly 'Down House' is shown on the Ordnance Survey to the north-east of the foundry in 1887 (17).

With the exception of Mark Bridge the only other cast-iron products by Richard Down to have been noted are two horse-drawn rollers, more correctly known as plain field rollers. One is in private hands and the other is used to prepare a County Council owned cricket pitch in Bridgewater. If, as seems likely, the Down imprint had ceased by 1839, then these rollers are a remarkable and unusual legacy of this local family.

(These notes have been compiled by Brian Murless with assistance from David Greenfield and Tim Morgan.)

- 1 Somerset Record Office, Q/A 144
- 2 Pigot & Co., London and Provincial Commercial Directory (1822-23)
- 3 Bentley, J.B. and Murless, B.J., Somerset Roads .. Phase One, Western Somerset (SIAS, 1985), photograph opposite p. 32 and details p. 98.
- 4 Somerset Record Office, Q/RUp 108
- 5 Pigot & Co., National Commercial Directory (1830)
- 6 Ibid.; entry reads 'Brown, Watson, Murch & Co.'
- 7 Somerset County Gazette, 1837 4 Feb. et seq.
- 8 Greenfield, D.J., The County Bridge Papers, J.SIAS, No. 2 (1977) 27-30
See also Greenfield, D.J., Iron Bridges in Somerset, Bul.SIAS, No. 40 (1986)
- 9 Post Office Directory (1875); the company was at that time known as Murch and Spence
- 10 Pigot & Co., National Commercial Directory (1842)
- 11 Somerset County Gazette, Directory of Somerset (1840)
- 12 Pevsner, N., South and West Somerset (Penguin, 1958) 96
- 13 Colvin, H., A Bibliographical Dictionary of British Architects. 1600-1840 (John Murray, 1978)
- 14 Somerset Record Office, D/RA 3/3/11
- 15 Slater & Co., National Commercial Directory (1852-55)
- 16 Harrison, Harrod & Co., Post Office Directory (1859)
- 17 Ordnance Survey Maps, 1/500 scale, Sheet 50.T1.22 (1887)

THE KINGS BROMPTON WAGON WORKS

At the beginning of this century most villages could boast a blacksmith whilst many had a wheelwright, but few could match the workshops of the tiny Brendon Hills village of Kingsbrompton. For here, at Higher Rock, was the smith, wheelwright and carpenter shops of John How & Son, famous for their wagons not only locally but as far away as Hampshire and Wales. John How probably took over the existing blacksmith and wheelwright

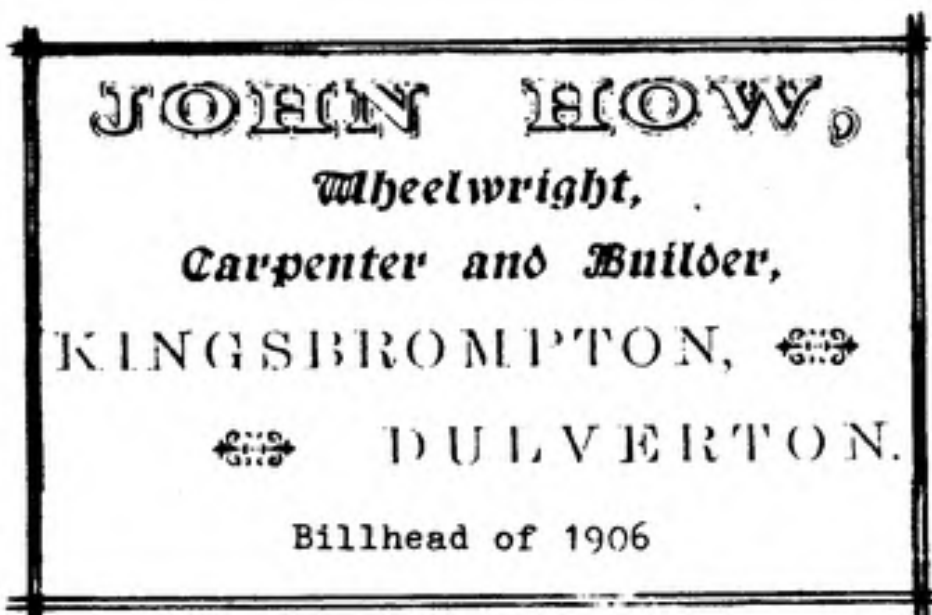
business of William Escott but the exact date and circumstance is not known. Joseph How succeeded his father and was in turn succeeded by his three sons, Ronald, John and Ernest. Following their retirement the firm has closed and the works is standing silent after nearly 150 years which, with its machinery and tools, encapsulates a past era.

A few account and day books of the firm's early days have survived and the first recorded activity is for the 31st October 1852 "going to Coombe drawing wood. Men 2/- a day". This entry is noteworthy, for the skill of the wheelwright lay not only in the use of tools, but in his choice of wood. Standing oak, ash or elm would be chosen, cut, hauled out and sawn into suitable sizes - in those days all sawing had to be done laboriously by hand in a saw-pit. The planks and baulks of timber would then be stacked for seasoning, one year for every inch of thickness, although craftsmen like John How would date some of these planks and let them season for as long as he deemed necessary for their future specific use.

In 1871 John How had a staff of four but by 1877 he was employing seventeen. He must have been a reasonably good employer as amongst the accounts are listed "days work at Watchet. Treat for the men 1/-" and "13 quarts mild ale 1/1". He was also a builder, and having an uncle who was a master mason, the firm achieved such high standing that in 1877 they were carrying out extensive work for the Luxborough Estate and in 1879 were engaged in rebuilding and restoring Kingsbrompton Parish Church. It was, however, for the quality of their wagons that they were gaining a widespread reputation, and from an account book it is possible to list the variety of wagons that were produced during one year, 1873-74, with their prices:

1873 April 24th	New cart	£7.10.0
April 26th	New barrow for Mr Dawes	10.6
June 16th	New two-horse wagon	£12. 5.0
Sept. 9th	Two new currys (a light two-wheeled cart)	£12. 0.0
Sept. 19th	New timber carriage	£16.10.0
Sept. 29th	New broad-wheeled cart (putt)	£5.10.0
Nov. 16th	New timber carriage	£9.10.0
	Extra for broad wheels	12.0
1874 Feb. 11th	New one-horse cart	£3.10.0
April 28th	New wagon	£13.10.0

At the turn of the century a new paint shop was built adjoining the wheelwrights shop and an extensive two-storied machine and carpenters shop replaced older and smaller buildings. It was then that a Ruston & Hornsby



14 single cylinder oil-gas engine enabled the firm to power a racksaw, circular saw, band-saw (made by Stenner & Gunn of Tiverton), lathe, planer, and even a blower for the hearth of their smithy. A generator provided the works with electricity but for lighting only. Besides the iron tyres for the wheels the smithy made all the bolts required, as well as the swivels for the four-wheeled wagons and the swords for the putts (a sword was a curved, perforated iron stay that facilitated the tipping of a putt's body). The hearth was large with a curved brick hood and, after the introduction of the power blower, had twin tuyeres.

Although the workforce did not increase appreciably, the fame of their products did, and there were contracts with Messrs Curtis & Horn of Oxford and Banbury, who were supplied with a wide range of wagons including flat-carts with drop sides and putts of a much larger design than those for local use, and Fred Smith of Basingstoke. The trade with Wales was mainly for milk floats and included the Meadow Dairy of W. Meach and Bowens of Llanelli. There is a story that a vehicle was supplied to Lloyd George, but certainly it was in Wales that the firm incurred a bad debt of £500 - a vast sum in those days for a small firm to lose. All through this period two new wagons were dispatched each week from the station at Dulverton. With the decline in use of the horse-drawn wagons the firm concentrated its activities on building work, carpentry and undertaking, and the last new wagon, a putt, was built just after the 1939-45 war. There is an interesting sidelight to the firm's undertaking business. They had no hearse and it was usual for an ordinary farm wagon to take the coffin to the church. Long after tractors had superceded horses one local farmer retained a horse and wagon so that when he died he might be taken to the church in the traditional style.

The site has been visited by representatives of the Somerset County Council, Somerset Museum Service (who have listed the tools), Exmoor National Park Authority and the Exmoor Society. The owners are most sympathetically inclined towards preservation in some form but many aspects, including financial, have to be considered before the eventual fate of the buildings and/or tools and machinery can be decided. The Society is being kept informed.

REFERENCE TO LETTERS ON PLAN

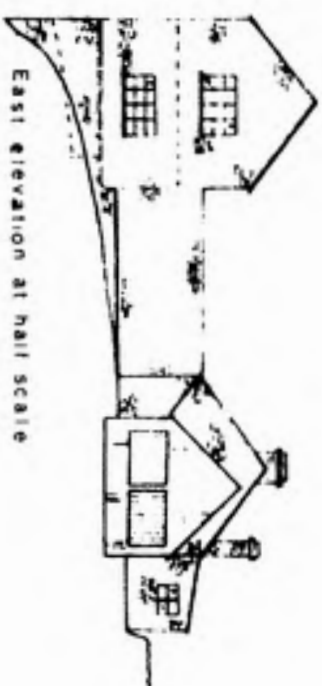
- | | |
|--|--|
| A. Cart shed/garage. Timber. Corrugated iron roof | k. Planer |
| B. Engine Room. Wood partition | l. Band saw |
| C. Machine shop. Brick. | m. Wood lathe |
| D. 1st Floor. Carpenters shop. Brick. Boarded and slate roof | n. Metal guillotine with six foot handle |
| E. Open lean-to. Corrugated iron roof | o. Thread cutter |
| F. Smithy Stone. Slate roof | p. Screw-operated metal punch |
| G. Wheelwrights shop. Stone. Slate roof | q. Hand-turned pillar drill |
| H. Paint shop. Timber. Corrugated iron roof | r. Anvil |
| J. Paint store. Stone. Slate roof | s. Water trough |
| K. Ironwork store. Stone. Slate roof | t. Hearth |
| a. Ruston-Hornsby 14 single-cylinder oil-gas engine | u. Brick hood |
| b. Lister twin-cylinder diesel engine | v. Double tuyeres |
| c. Cooling tank | w. Supposed line of air pipe from engine-worked blower |
| d. Exhaust from Ruston-Hornsby | x. Iron tyre plate |
| e Lay shafting on hanger bearings | y. Work-bench |
| f. Position of former racksaw | z. Sliding door |
| g. Sawdust pit | a'. Position of former hand bellows |
| h. Tunnel for taking out sawdust | b'. Fireplace |
| i. Electric switchgear | c'. Double-hinged door |
| j. Circular sawbench | |

THE KINGSBROMPTON WAGGON WORKS

OF J. HOW & SON

SS954 313

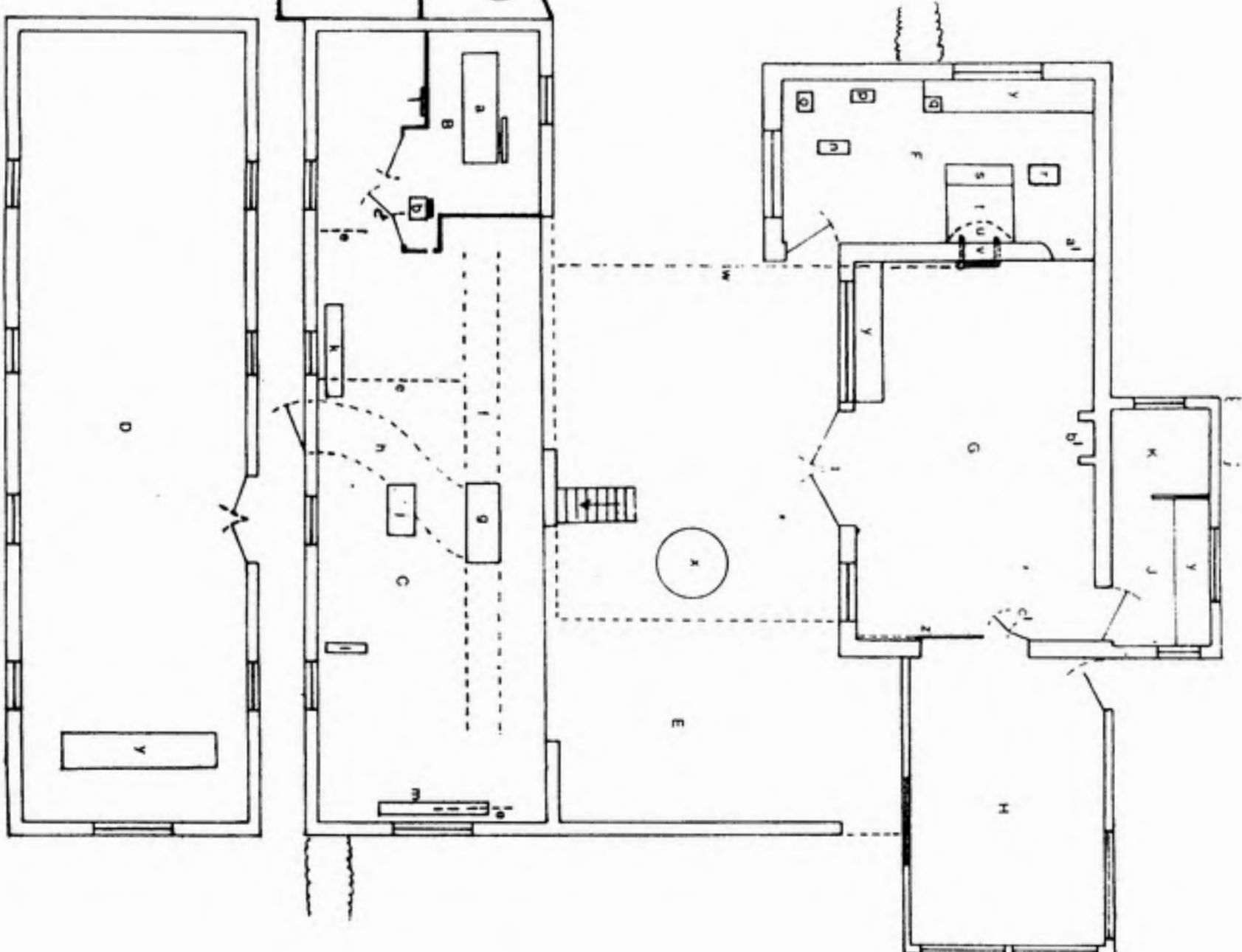
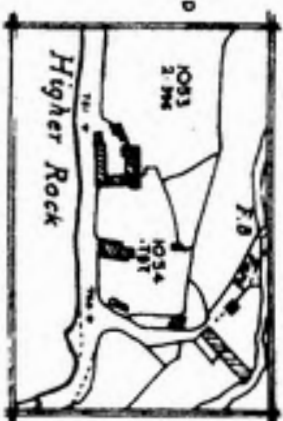
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East elevation at half scale



Location map
OS 25-1903

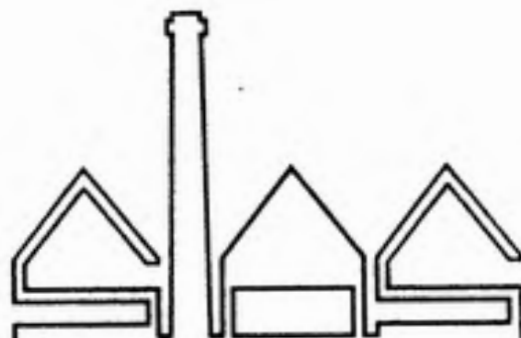


SOMERSET INDUSTRIAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

BULLETIN No 43

DECEMBER 1986

Hon Sec: C A Buchanan
2 Blake Green
Ashcott
Bridgwater
TA7 90F



EDITORIAL

It was hoped that this bulletin could announce the publication date of "Somerset Roads, Phase Two", which covers Eastern Somerset. All the material for inclusion was completed at the end of August but due to technical problems "beyond our control", as they say, there has been a production delay. SIAS Survey No4 has also met with problems (there are not enough hours in the day for the type setter and graphic designer!) and will now come out in the New Year. To somewhat make up for these shortcomings this Bulletin has been made a BUMPER CHRISTMAS EDITION - keep it to read after the Christmas Pud as an alternative to the box.

FIREPOOL

Following the publication in May 1986 of SIAS's proposals suggesting that Firepool Pumping Station be converted into an Industrial Heritage Centre there was much interest among councillors and officials of all the relevant Local Government agencies. This resulted in a request for conducted tours of the site, to be given by SIAS, so that Councillors/Officials could assess its potential. On Saturday, 27 September, a working party of members cleaned around the pumps, made safe the remaining staircase and cleared all the brambles outside. Then on Thursday, 2 October, over 40 people were shown around the site, most seeming keen to do something with the building along the lines suggested by SIAS.

On Wednesday, 8 October, the Committee had a meeting with Mr Dawson and Mr Minett of the County Museum Service to assess the aims and objectives of an IA Museum. Mr Dawson thought we should think big but SIAS Committee members felt it right to press for, initially, limited objectives. SIAS suggested the right way forward was a feasibility study to answer in more detail matters of organization, finance, etc, etc, and a meeting was arranged with County and Taunton Deane Officials for 30 October. However, at that meeting, it became clear that as there was little support from the Museum Service for the building becoming a County IA Centre, a canal orientated multi use complex would be favoured with commercial interests being brought in. To this end, a further meeting was convened at Firepool on 11 November, with, amongst others, Mr Haskell, Mr Dawson and Mr Chris Goss. Mr Goss has, in another part of the country, sympathetically developed an industrial site as a restaurant whilst retaining its IA context and with additional exhibits. Although this would be less than SIAS had hoped for it would ensure the saving of the building itself as an IA monument. Tim Walford is the indefatigable chairman of the Sub Committee.

SHEDDING FURTHER LIGHT

The autumn talk on the West Somerset Railway by Chris van den Arend may have an archaeological sequel. The railway originally terminated at Watchet where the usual facilities had been constructed by 1862. With the extension to Minehead in 1874 the engine shed became a redundant feature although its design is known from photographs taken during the 1860s and its location is recorded on early maps (Somerset Record Office, DD/WY, Map of Watchet, 1862). In January preliminary discussions will take place between SIAS, the WSR Association and the Railway Company to explore the possibility of excavating the engine shed site at the foot of Govier's Lane.

SIAS WINTER PROGRAMME, JANUARY-MARCH 1987

Mon, 12 Jan 7.30 p.m.	Shot Towers. Prof Walter Minchinton, West Monkton Village Hall
Mon, 26 Jan 7.30 p.m.	South Somerset Water Mills. Ron Gilson, West Monkton Village Hall
Mon, 9 Feb 7.30 p.m.	Tangye's Ltd - 100 Years of Engineering Craftsmanship - Mike Cannon, BIAS - West Monkton Village Hall
Wed, 25 Feb 7.30 p.m.	Mines of the Blackdown Hills (Iron and Whetstone) Robin Stanes. West Monkton Village Hall
Sat, 28 Feb 2.15 p.m.	Early Somerset Malting Kilns - What is known? A joint meeting with SANHS. SIAS member Mary Miles is one of the speakers. To be held at the Wyndham Hall, Taunton Castle
Sun, 8 Mar 10.30 a.m.	Visit. Williton Signal Box (WSR) and S and D Museum at Washford. Meet in Williton Station Yard.
Wed, 18 Mar 7.30 p.m.	IA of the Lake District. Mick Atkinson. West Monkton Village Hall
Mon, 23 Mar 7.30 p.m.	AGM West Monkton Village Hall
Sat, 11 Apr	18th Regional IA Conference at Newport, Gwent, organized by Oxford House IA Society. Registration fee £1.00 and those requiring lunch £5.00, bookable at least two weeks in advance.

DYNAMIC DUO

As anticipated in Bulletin 41, a Newton dynamo has arrived to join the collection of exhibits in the Wheels of Power Gallery at the Somerset County Museum. For an appreciation of historical background of this dynamo, made in Taunton at the Rowbarton works of Francis M Newton, members should consult SIAS Survey No 3. (Additional copies are on sale price £1.50 to members.) This particular model was powered by a Petter oil engine, another Somerset product. But before both items could be displayed an existing generator at the gallery had to be moved into store, yet again demonstrating the need for an IA Museum with adequate space.

COMING SOON

This spring it is hoped that the Taunton Deane Research and Excavation Committee will be carrying out an archaeological excavation at the former tannery in Tancred Street, Taunton (ST 231246). The dig promises to reveal early evidence of tanning since the older of the two tanneries which operated here was started in 1772. In a report assessing the archaeological potential of the area, the Deputy County Archivist, Robin Bush, suggests that the stream which flows through the site may have determined the location of earlier industrial activity, possibly in connection with the production of cloth for which Taunton was famous from the early 13th to mid 18th century.

LIME KILNS IN STOKE SAINT MARY

Only three lime kilns in Somerset are Listed Buildings: Castle Lane, Ford, near Wiveliscombe (ST 095284); Northhay, near Halse (ST 138294) and Stoke St Mary Parish on the minor road south of the A358 near the Nag's Head Inn (ST 277220).

The last of these is a pair of kilns of unusually late construction, with the initials of the owner, George Small, and the date 1906 inscribed on it. It was in production until 1939 at a time when lime burning was becoming concentrated in larger units, and small vernacular kilns, such as this one in local Lias limestone and one at Langport, were rarely still in use. It is also of value as an example of a rural industry that was so important in this part of Somerset, serving farms as far away as North Petherton.

Lime Kiln Cottage, on the neighbouring plot, must have been a convenient bonus for housing the kiln master. The cottage is older than the kilns, appearing on the 1889 Six Inch to One Mile O.S. map.

Mr Clarke, the kiln master's son-in-law, who now lives in the Cottage, knew the kiln in production for many years and has described the limestone being brought down the slope from quarries (now filled in) in the adjoining field. Culm was brought from the road via a lane to the south and through the gate to the same field, just by the kiln bowls. The limestone and culm were tipped in daily at the top to keep the kilns alight continuously. Mr Clarke was unable to describe the lighting up process as he never knew it happen in all the years he was familiar with the kilns.

At weekends, when the kilns burnt down lower, the glow could be seen at night and at times (when it was going to rain) the fumes blew down round the Cottage. Mr Clarke has tales of potato baking, tramps warming themselves and even of lowering a boy into the kiln for a lark.

The lime was extracted daily from the grating below, being in blocks like the original limestone. The jangling of horse brasses could be heard from 6 a.m. as the farmers' carts lined up to be sure of their lime when demand exceeded supply. Three hogsheads of lime delivered to Commander H E Gore-Langton, RN, at Hatch Park cost 8/- in 1919.

DEPOTS.

HIGH STREET,
NORTH TOWN,
EAST REACH AND
TOWN MILLS,
TAUNTON.

ALSO AT

TEIGNMOUTH, GREECE HATCH,
DORSET, NORTH CERRY,
ATHLETIC, SOMERSET,
CHARLTON MACKRELL,
UFFCUMBE, TIVERTON,
TIVERTON JUNCTION,
SANDFORD PEVERELL,
CUMSTOCK.

QUARRIES AND LIME KILNS AT
STOKE ST MARY

HEAD OFFICES:

45 & 46 HIGH STREET,

TAUNTON.

J. EDWARD SMALL & SONS, TAUNTON.
Telephone No 169A

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George Small & Sons Ltd
COAL, CORN,
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FERTILIZERS AND FEEDING STUFFS ACT, 1906. We hereby declare that all Cattle Feeding Stuffs not specially described as pure may be treated with more than one substance or soil. For complete analysis see back of voucher.
Messrs. SMALL & SONS, Ltd. give no warranty, express or implied, as to quality, productiveness or any other matter, of any seed they send out and will not in any way be responsible for the crop, if the seeds are not sowed on these terms they are to be at once returned.

The blocks on lime were taken to the fields in putts or two wheeled tipping carts and slatching was done by putting the lumps in heaps with a covering of soil. The moisture turned the lime to a powder which could then be spread.

The kilns were constructed of squared, coursed Blue Lias limestone. The arches and facade are in generally good condition, though there are a few cracks and ivy covers much of the facade. The initials "G S 1906" are inscribed on a tablet on the facade. There are metal safes, now doorless, in the left hand wall by each kiln, where the books were kept. The pentice porches of corrugated iron which protected the arches and approaches to the kiln are still in situ. In front of the kilns is a platform where the carts and, later, lorries backed in for loading. The top of the kilns, approached through the field are covered with scrub. The southern bowl is filled with rubble, but the northern one is more open and the firebrick lining is visible.

The kilns were set into the hillside, taking advantage of the site for bringing in limestone from the field above and loading the lime into vehicles at road level. They were set back from the road, now among bushes and trees, and are barely visible to passers-by going either to or from the Nag's Head. The short approach is wet, there being a spring on the neighbouring plot, supplying water to Ashe Farm downstream.

The site was owned by the Church Commissioners and recently came up for sale. In 1985 a Planning Application was made for the erection of a blacksmith's workshop immediately in front of the kilns. The application was turned down by Taunton Deane Borough Council, as was the subsequent Appeal to the Department of the Environment. This was partly on the grounds of its unsuitability in a rural area within the Blackdown Special Landscape Area. The plans for the workshop were also considered to be detrimental to the setting of the kilns as a Grade II Listed Building, being unsympathetic in scale, form and materials and obscuring the kilns. The plans also required the filling in of part of the approaches up to the level of the loading platform and adjoining it. The execution of Taunton Deane Borough Council's suggestion of turning the site into a low key interpretation scheme with an information board would be welcomed by SIAS.

Margaret Anderson

POSTERS

Do you know of any suitable place where a poster (A4 size) could be fixed to advertise SIAS talks? If so, please contact the Publicity Officer for a supply of specially designed sheets to which the relevant details can be added.

NEW APPOINTMENT

Congratulations to David Greenfield who has become a member of the Panel for Historical Engineering Works of the Institution of Civil Engineers. This Panel has built up a considerable library of records of civil engineering works of interest, some of the information being made available to the public in the form of regional guides. Two books, both in paperback, have been published: the first covers Northern England and the second, Wales and Western England, 'Western' being defined so as to include Avon, Gloucestershire and North Wiltshire. Anyone interested in further details should contact David direct. Meanwhile, we can look forward to a future volume in the series which will include Somerset's important engineering features.

S P E C I F I C A T I O N

OF

JOSIAH EASTON

LOCOMOTIVE STEAM CARRIAGES, &^c

A copy of the above patent was presented to the library of Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society by Mr John Easton in August 1904, and this was kindly drawn to my attention by David Bromwich.

The Specification sets out to achieve two things:

to provide a rack railway for ascending gradients;

to provide locomotives and carriages able to travel both on the railway and on common roads.

With 160 years of hindsight, criticism is easy, but somewhat unfair. In spite of a massive and costly use of stone blocks, which would need very precise trimming there is no positive control of the precise relative levels of rail and rack, as lime mortar moves. With the short wheelbase, and the rack wheel well ahead of this, the effect of any minor inaccuracy or settlement would be magnified, and meshing with the rack would be uncertain. Vertical curves at the top and bottom of gradients would have increased the problem. As drawn, the rack wheel can be disengaged on the level by lifting the lever on which it is mounted, but no provision exists for disengaging the drive to the carrying wheels on gradients, when the rack system is propelling the engine at only 8/11 times normal speed - a simple modification to the gearing would, of course, solve this, but at the expense of the desirable lower gear!

Flat wrought iron strips as running rails tend to curl up at the ends, and when used on top of timber on early American railways, tended to come loose from time to time, and impale oncoming trains. Any slight imperfection, or wide gap between stones, would encourage this effect, but the anchoring arrangements are substantial, although costly and difficult to form accurately - maintenance wouldn't be too easy either. The horizontal guide wheels bear on the naked vertical sides of the stones carrying the rack - with the low speeds likely, this might not cause too much trouble! A system of guide wheels, bearing against wooden running rails, was demonstrated on Wimbledon Common by Prosser in 1845 (Pictorial Times, Oct 4, 1845). Easton blandly ignores the problem of steering his engine on common roads - the local turnpike trust would hardly have welcomed it anyway!

Josiah Easton, primarily a land agent and surveyor, of "Heal Cottage in the Parish of Braford" (sic), near Taunton, was 64 at the time. In 1811, he had submitted plans for a floating harbour at Bridgwater. He had also taken an earlier part in mechanical engineering, acquiring the rights of a hydraulic engine invented by the Montgolfier Brothers, of air balloon fame, some time between 1815 and 1820, and patented an improved version. This seems to have been a joint venture with his fifth son, James, who also surveyed a projected London Northern Railroad from London to Peterborough in 1825, George Stephenson being consulting engineer. Robert Stephenson was in South America throughout 1825-26, so the Eastons cannot have consulted him during that period, nor can Robert have been directly involved with the design or construction of the original locomotives for the Stockton & Darlington Railway.

James had other railway interests as well at about that time, making experiments on the relative tractive force required on canals and railways, and publishing a table in January 1825 showing resistance on the level and on gradients, with the costs of working locomotives. He visited many colliery railways, gathering data for this and other studies. Much of the work on the patent may well have been his, and the sheet of drawings is of considerable interest as drawings of locomotives of that time in their original state are virtually non-existent; such engines as survive are like the Irishman's pick, with few, if any, original components, and much subsequent alteration. The patent is not concerned with the design details of the locomotive itself, and this was probably copied from existing designs or locomotives with a minimum of modification. Dendy Marshall's 'History of Railway Locomotives down to the end of the Year 1831' seems to show only three likely sources, although this is not necessarily exhaustive:

Blenkinsop & Murray, with roughly the same general layout, including a rack system;

a locomotive working at Clandown Colliery, near Radstock, in 1825, of which no details survive;

Robert Stephenson & Co., who had tested the first locomotive (Locomotion) for the Stockton & Darlington Railway at their Newcastle works on the evening of Sept 12, 1825, just one month before the patent was deposited.

Easton's drawing shows a locomotive very similar to Locomotion in some ways, but also with considerable differences - it could well be based on this. Virtually nothing is known of Locomotion's original boiler, although Brian Reed surmises that it was egg-ended, like Easton's drawing. Reed believes Locomotion's original boiler to have been about 4 ft diameter and about 10 ft long. Piston stroke was 24", and the wheels 4 ft diameter. The wheelbase was about 5'3". Easton's drawing has the same boiler diameter and piston stroke, but the wheels are only 3'3" diameter, with corresponding reductions in wheelbase (4'5") and boiler length (8'10"). As the smaller wheels would give greater tractive effort, these changes could have been made solely for this reason, although the shorter boiler would be even more inadequate.

To deal with inequalities in the track, Locomotion's rear axle ran in a tube, pivoted laterally, providing 3-point support and allowing all four unsprung wheels to remain in contact with the track. This would have interfered with the gearing normally used to connect the two axles, and probably accounts for the use of coupling rods, not previously tried on any locomotive, and probably incorporated at a late stage in construction. Easton retains the traditional method; he was probably unaware of the proposal to use coupling rods, but with other gears necessary anyway, one more wheel may have seemed the logical method to illustrate.

Easton's wheels are cast iron, with 12 spokes; Locomotion's original cast iron wheels were probably similar, although the number of spokes is unknown - the same 12-spoke arrangement is likely, especially as the later "plug" wheels had 12 corresponding ribs. Sadly, Easton omits to show the connection between wheel and connecting rod - perhaps wisely, as these wheels proved a dismal failure on Locomotion! No attempt is made to show any valve gear (although the safety valve is prominently displayed); Locomotion did not have slide bars, shown by Easton, but relied on a maze of rods reminiscent of those on beam engines; Easton may have regarded these with contempt, or else felt his drawing would be made too complex.

For information on the Easton family, I am deeply indebted to Dr J Easton and Mrs Mary Miles, as well as Brian Murless. Members of this local family later

set up the firms of Easton & Amos of London, and Easton & Johnson of Taunton, whilst other sons of Josiah were involved with the drainage of the Somerset Levels, so the engineering tradition was maintained, although there seems to have been no further involvement with railways.

John Bentley

Reference has been made to the following:

C F Dendy Marshall; A History of Railway Locomotives down to the end of the Year 1831 (Locomotive Publishing Co 1953)

Brian Reed; Loco Profile 25, Locomotion (Profile Publications, 1972)

Brian J Murless; Bridgwater Docks and the River Parrett (Somerset County Library, 1983).

AS 1825 DWT 15 871287
EASTON'S SPECIFICATION

Scale of Feet

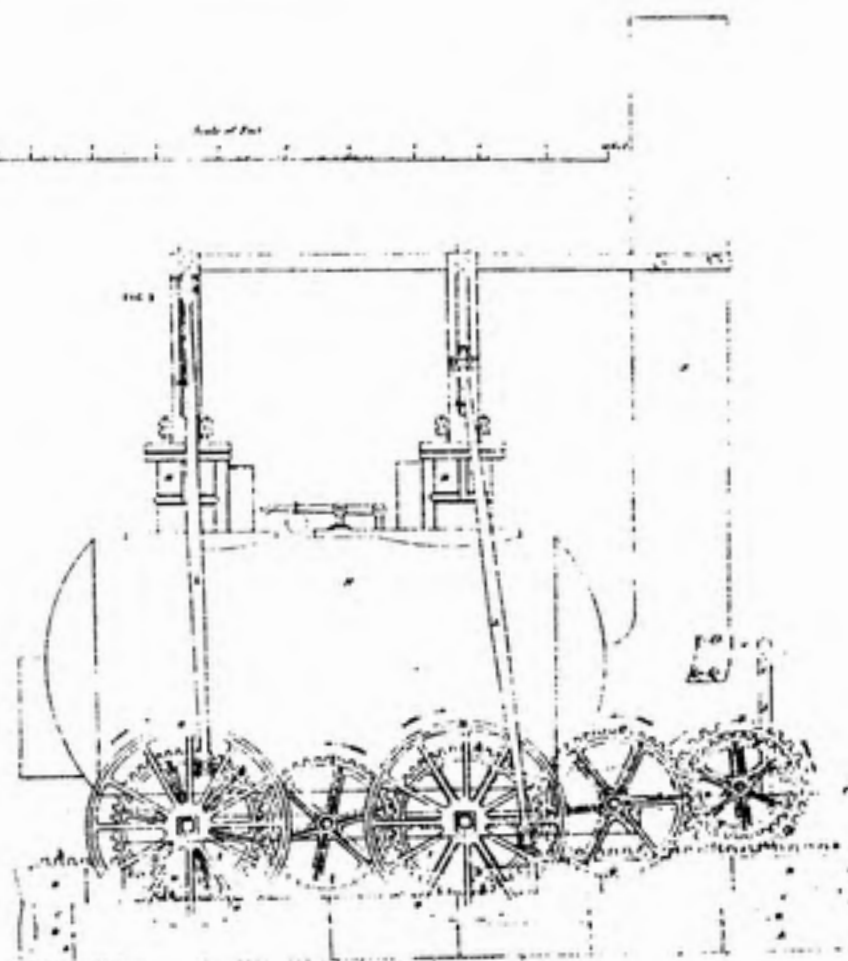
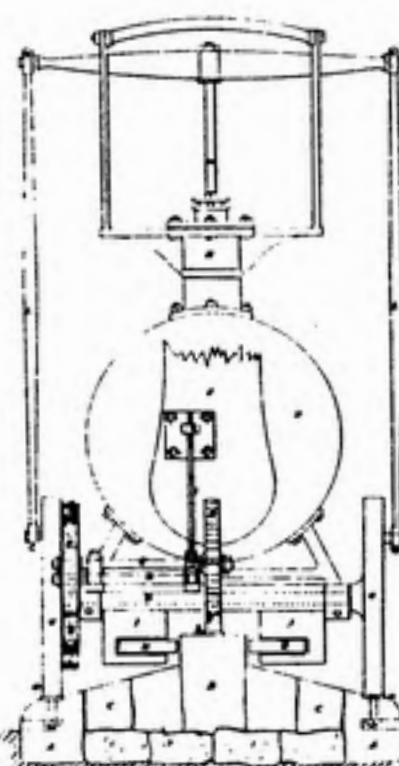
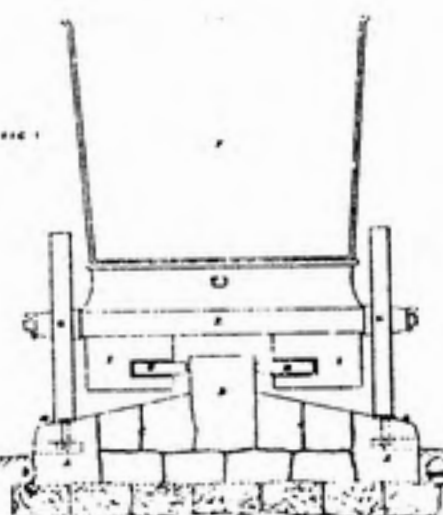


FIG 1



The vertical drawing is an elevation

Locomotive: Profile Drawing of a Locomotive and its Components

Drawing from the British Library

THE KINGSBROMPTON WAGON WORKS

In his article on the Kingsbrompton Wagon Works (SIAS Bulletin 42), Derrick Warren referred to the building side of John How's business, siting work for the Luxborough Estate and Kingsbrompton Parish Church. To these examples can be added work on at least two bridges in Kingsbrompton. The minute books of Dulverton Highways Board record that John How's tender for rebuilding Bryant's Bridge (SS 961315) was accepted in 1864. Four years later the Board accepted a tender of Thomas and John How in the sum of £17 10s. for building a new bridge at Pulhams Mill (SS 956310).

David Greenfield

The tender of 1868 (when John How was 31) naming Thomas and John How has almost certainly answered the question of who preceded John How in the business. In the 1851 census Thomas How was listed as Master Mason and was most probably John's uncle. The following is an extract from a letter from Mr Gordon Hayes of Taunton who writes: "Mention is made of the delivery of new wagons by train from Dulverton Station and it was my father, a farmer and near neighbour of the Hows who, with his horse, transported the wagons to the station. I hold the records of these 'journeys to station', the first recording I have in 1936, but I believe he was doing this work a long time before that. The cost in 1936 was 5/- (five shillings) and the last recording of 'journey to station' was Feb 9th 1950 and this was charged at £1.00 - inflation! My father also did all the haulage with horse and cart for various jobs around the area; 'sand and cement to vicarage', 'journey to Venne House for gate posts', 'journey to Dawes Farm with grit' and when the large racksaw had been in use for a day or two, then hauling away the sawdust from the pit. It was about 1950 that John How decided to acquire transport on their own."

D.W.

WERE YOU THERE?

On Saturday, 12 May 1973, SIAS held a whole day meeting at Tracebridge Sawmill with the aim of recording the buildings and machinery. If you know of any member or ex member who may have taken photographs of the mill in the 1970s, prior to its untimely demolition, please let the Committee know. Eric Rodwell, the Society's guide for our Tracebridge visit last October, would appreciate any pictorial evidence of the site and the Society can arrange for duplicate slides and prints to be made.

Back in those early days Chris Tilley and Mike Messenger took a particular interest in Somerset slate quarries, which includes Tracebridge, and presented a paper to the regional IA conference which the Society hosted in Street in 1977. The researched information is still at hand and Mike hopes to publish it in the 'Review' of the Association of Industrial Archaeology. SIAS receives copies of this publication as part of its subscription to that body and members may borrow them on request to the Secretary.

SIAS AT WESTONZOYLAND

One of the continuing themes of recent years has been the amicable relationship built up between the Society and the Westonzoyland Engine Trust on subjects of mutual interest. At the pumping station's steaming days in 1986 visitors were particularly pleased to view the Tangye engine in motion. Its working life in Somerset began at Fairfield Estate Sawmill, Stogursey, from whence it was rescued, in 1976, on the initiative of SIAS. After nine years of static display at the Somerset College of Art and Technology in Taunton and a brief sojourn in a Devon museum, the Tangye has found a new role. The talk on 9 February should provide some valuable background information about the company which manufactured it.

A busy programme of SIAS commitments elsewhere has inevitably brought some delay to the restoration of the water-wheel from Manor Farm, Heathfield (see Bulletin 39, erroneously numbered 38). Nevertheless, the larger parts have been cleaned thoroughly and painted and two sets of tasks remain. The first involves brazing and lathe work to worn and damaged parts before the top coat of paint is applied; the suggested colour scheme is grey with details picked out in black. The second job is the preparation of the site in the pumphouse garden prior to the wheel's re-erection.

During 1986 SIAS placed on loan at Westonzoyland the hydraulic ram which originally pumped water to Cutsey Farm, just north of Taunton Deane Services on the M5 motorway. The ram has had a long association with the Society and its history will hopefully be recalled in a future bulletin.

WESTFORD PUMPING STATION

The SIAS report on the pumping station (ST 123204) was submitted in August 1986 to the interested parties: the Somerset County Museum, the Conservation Section (Taunton Deane Borough Council), Wellington Town Council, the Wessex Water Authority. At a meeting the following month, the Town Council, whose role in the matter was of crucial importance, declined to become involved in either the purchase or the restoration of the structure. Although a listed building, it now appears almost inevitable that the station will be demolished and the site sold for residential development. Certain items of internal equipment will be preserved by Wessex Water's heritage section and at the time of going to press, the Society is mobilizing a working party to make its own record of the premises. The report, reproduced in its entirety below, gives the basic architectural and historical details.

"The Westford site, which finally fell into disuse about twenty years ago, is characteristic of a small High Victorian water supply pumping station. It owes its situation to the springs which provided the water which was fed in to ground tanks, where it required a minimum of treatment (chlorination) before it was distributed to the town.

The building itself, which is of local red brick, while not ornate or overly fussy, has features and details typical of those that enhanced and dignified late nineteenth century public buildings. On the front elevation the arched windows either side of the main door, behind miniature arcades with stone pillars, are reminiscent of the Abbey Mills Station of the Metropolitan Main Drainage scheme of a couple of decades earlier, while the shape of the octagonal chimney is sympathetically echoed in the small extension to that end of the building.

The complex has survived more or less complete from its construction in 1886 by the local water company, but in its present form it demonstrates the continual up-dating of equipment from its inception until the 1930s. The two original ram pumps of 1886 by Glenfield & Kennedy, together with their shafting and recording equipment, are in situ. In the first instance they were driven by steam engines, but their place was taken by two 1935 Ruston 6xHR diesel engines. In later years small electric pumps were installed. It is likely that gas engines were an intermediate source of power after the steam era, but there is no firm evidence on site to support this supposition.

While none of the equipment is unique, it is interesting to see the progress of evolution under one roof. Diesel engines as a power source have been largely superseded for stationary purposes and although the internal combustion engine was of almost as much significance as steam in industry, unfortunately it has not been so well represented in preservation. The site had direct relationship with both water towers at Rockwell Green, and the station and towers have recently received the attention of the Panel for Historical Engineering Works (Institution of Civil Engineers).

This good example of a late nineteenth century small town public utility enterprise has a unity and cohesiveness between its internal and external features. Any building of this date shows signs of age, and recent maintenance has necessarily done no more than maintain the status quo. Taking these points into consideration, the building is basically sound: roof slates would need rehangng, window frames and some other items of woodwork are rotten and need replacement, and a degree of hacking out and repointing would be needed on the main structure and on the chimney. There is no reason why both sets of engines and pumps could not be restored to 'light running' order.

The layout of the buildings has not been changed since the days of the steam plant which it originally housed, so for education purposes a good 'feeling' of the steam age persists. The chimney, boiler house, coal store, office and pumps are easily identifiable. Even the Ruston diesel engines are sited in a similar location to that where the steam engines would have been."

IT'S FOR YOU

Following the enthusiasm and dedication of Rosemary Berry towards Somerset's pillar boxes, members may care to take up the challenge to find the County's oldest telephone box. The Department of the Environment is to list the best examples of the early types of telephone kiosk as being of special interest. The only surviving example of the K3 model, designed by Giles Gilbert Scott and introduced in 1929, at London Zoo, was formally protected in a ceremony last summer by Lord Elton, Minister of State with special responsibility for the heritage.

DARTINGTON IA DAY, 1986

On Saturday, 25 October, several SIAS members attend the 8th Annual IA Day at Dartington, sponsored by the Devon Centre for Further Education and Exeter IA Group and organized by Walter Minchinton. This is always an enjoyable event, held in the attractive surroundings of Dartington Hall, with the opportunity to meet friends from other groups in the South West and South Wales.

This year's theme was **FOUNDRIES**. There were well-prepared and illustrated presentations on the history, premises and products of foundries past and present in Somerset, Poole, West Cornwall and Newport (Gwent). There was an interesting dissertation on the surprising absence of a well-developed foundry industry in Plymouth, apart from the Dockyard. An unusual video was shown of traditional Japanese iron making, which has been recorded by the present day association of the steel industry whilst the last remaining practitioners of the historic methods were still alive. Brian Murless and Derrick Warren made the SIAS contribution on Somerset Foundries.

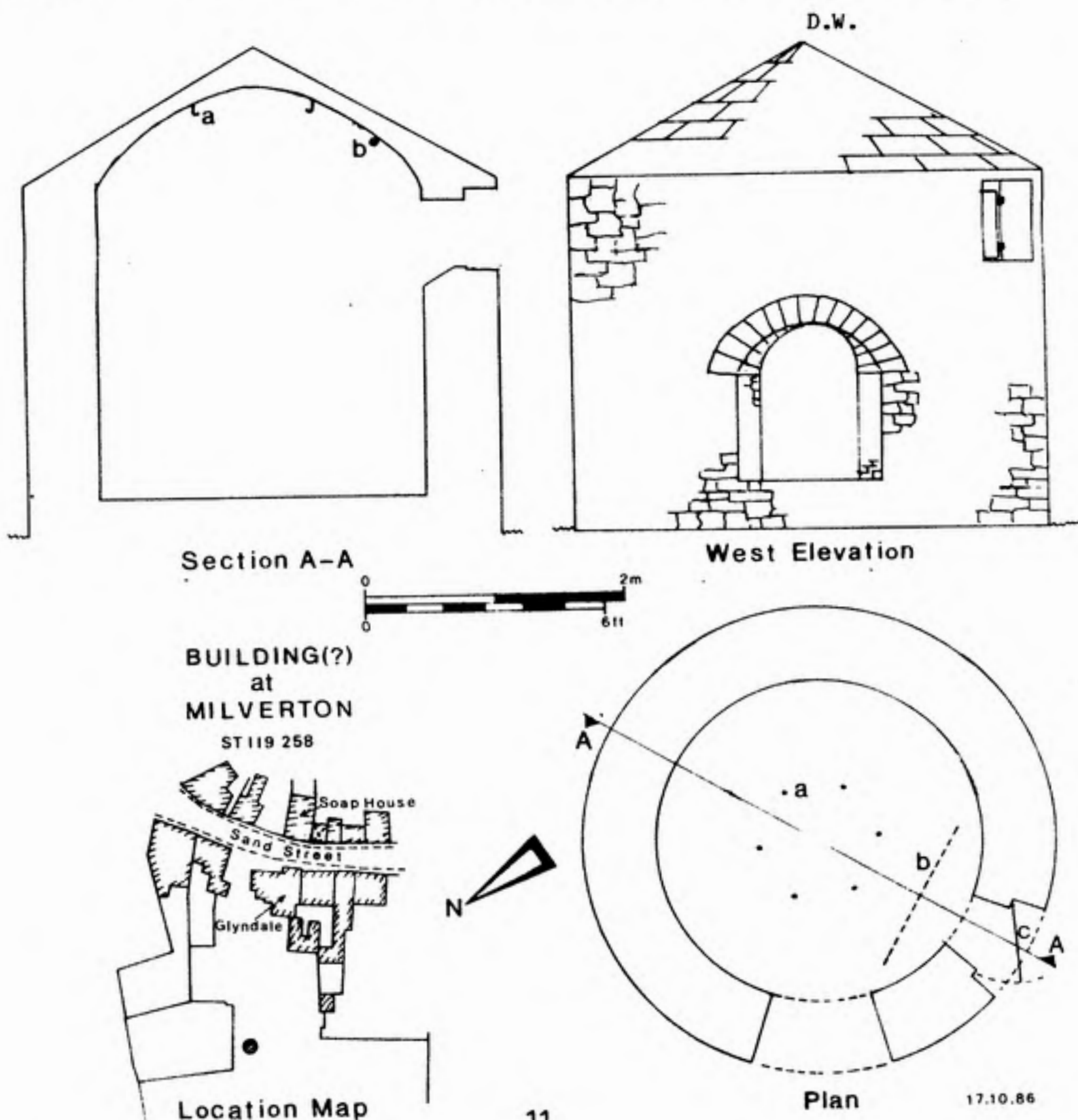
This was a stimulating day enjoyed by all who attended. The next Dartington IA Day has been fixed for 3 October 1987 on the general theme of **AGRICULTURE**, the SIAS contribution to be made by Sandy Buchanan. Make a note of this in your diaries. It is commended to those who have not attended before, as a rewarding day out in good company with good food and an unusual location. The approximate cost for registration fee, morning coffee, three course lunch and afternoon tea will be £6.50.

R.E.

ASHES TO ASHES

A housing development on a farm off Sand Street, Milverton, will result in the destruction of an unusual circular structure built of local ragstone with a slate roof - see drawings. It has a domed brick ceiling in which are several hooks^(a) as well as a suspended iron rail or bar^(b). The only window or hatch is immediately under the eaves and, until recently, had a hinged iron door. The small stone arched doorway collapsed several years ago and was rebuilt with a brick arch. Originally the floor level was much lower than at present but was filled in by the farmer to protect livestock. It has not been dated and its purpose remains in doubt. There are no signs of smoke on the inside which might have indicated a smoking house, whilst its openings are in the wrong direction for it to have been a larder or ice house. It is like a very large ash house and it could have had connections with a dwelling on the other side of Sand Street called Soap House, ash for potash being an essential constituent in soap making. But in that case why the hooks?

The developers intend rebuilding the structure in a more 'convenient' position but this is considered by SIAS a futile exercise and it was decided to record it by both measured drawings and photographs whilst in its original position.



GUNPOWDER

Following our enjoyable trip to sites on Dartmoor back in September culminating in a visit to Powder Mills, a short note on gunpowder making would be in order.

Gunpowder is a mixture of saltpetre, charcoal and sulphur, all of which were prepared separately and then incorporated by mechanically grinding and crushing the ingredients into an intimate mixture. This, in a damp state, underwent further processing, pressing, corning and then drying. Samples were taken for testing, and at the entrance to the Dartmoor Powder Mills the proofing mortar survives. Basically the strength of explosion was measured by the distance on the force of the fired projectile.

The layout of the Dartmoor Mills is typical for the period early to mid 19th century and the visible remains included incorporating mills with a central wheel pit and other buildings associated with raw material refining, drying and packing for distribution.

Naturally the process was hazardous and minor explosions were common. Buildings were spaced out to lessen damage and trees often planted to absorb shock. Danger buildings were normally constructed with a lightweight roof so that any explosion went up and not out.

Different grades of powder were produced to satisfy the various markets and as the 19th century progress, more modern higher explosives were developed and gradually the production of black powder diminished. Production in Devon and Cornwall had ceased by the end of the 19th century, finally brought to an end by the mining slump.

Apparently Britain's last works ceased producing in 1976 at Ardeer. The small quantity still used for firework manufacture, sporting powder and slate quarrying is imported.

An interesting point is that the use of powder for blasting rocks was imported into Britain from Hungary in the 1670s, first in Staffordshire, and afterwards its use was noted in Somerset, and then Cornwall.

I would like to finish with a story to illustrate the hazards of the industry - I'm afraid it appeals to my slightly warped sense of humour!

I can't remember now which works it was supposed to have happened in, but it went as follows: a little fire started in a small processing vessel in one building. One of the brighter men working there thought to pick it up, and rushed out of the building to throw it into the water of a canal outside. Unfortunately, in the canal was a boat being loaded with gunpowder in barrels! The fire was thrown right into the boat with disastrous results!

Iain Miles

Reference was made in Bulletin 41 to the survey of a pair of limekilns at Tengore Lane, Long Sutton (ST 453260) and the Society is pleased to publish a plan and elevation of these in this issue. Brian Murless has enlisted the help of a number of interested persons and carried out some initial research into the history of limeburning and quarrying in the Parish of Long Sutton which has resulted in this well-documented report. Ed.

The basic geology of the area is that of the Lower Lias of the Jurassic period (1) but because of the presence of clay with the limestone and the low lying moorland in the southern part of the parish, the sites of kilns and quarries fall between the 50 ft and 100 ft contours. Economically the working of the limestone was not so important as on Mendip but it made a vital contribution to local employment not only in Long Sutton but also in the neighbouring parishes of Huish Episcopi and Somerton and in those adjoining the east such as Charlton Mackrell, Keinton Mandeville and Street. When John Strachey wrote his projected county history in the 1730s, he remarked "Of Stone used by the Masons for building and walling there is an Excellet Blew Lias Dug in the Cornfields near Somerton and all thereabouts ..." (2)

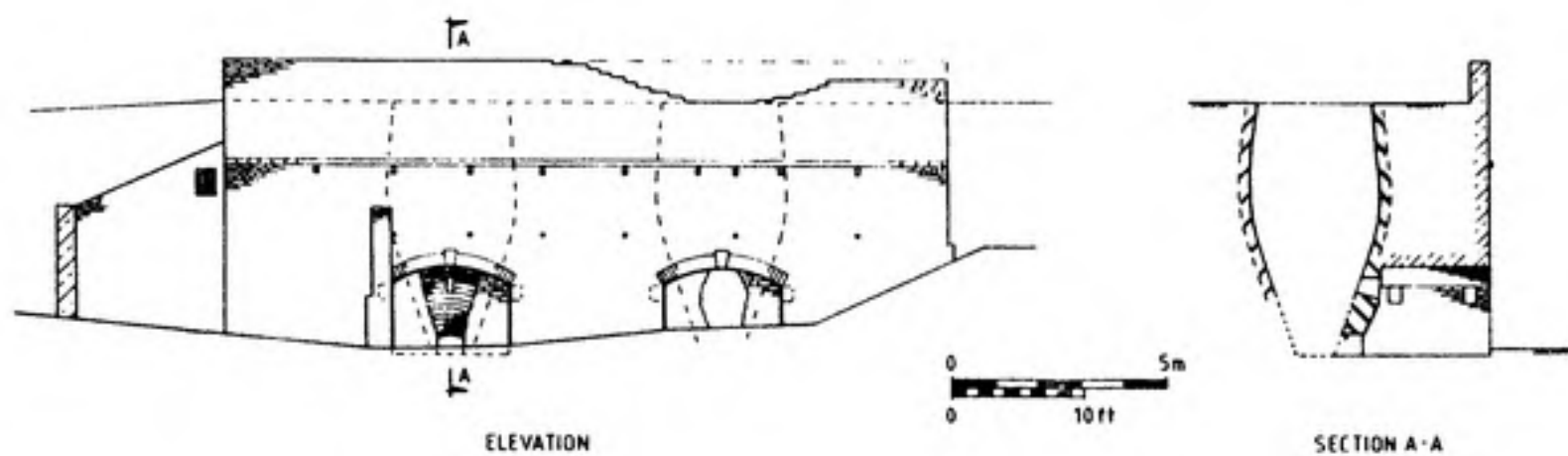
There was also limeburning at this time since a contract of 1754 between the Lord of the Manor of Long Sutton and James Bryant, a local thatcher, relates to "All that Cottage and Garden at Upton and a small Piece of Arable Land whereon a Lime-kiln formerly or lately stood" (3). Although the exact location is uncertain the kiln was sited close to Tengore Lane.

By the 1840s a quarry had been established at Knightlands Lane (ST 472254), the forerunner of later more extensive excavations in that area (4). The same source reveals a "House, Garden, Limekiln and Knoll Pits" at the premises still known as the Limekiln Inn on the A372. At least two of the publicans combined beer retailing with that of limeburning (5). A quarry at Long Sutton, operated by Searle and Foot, was noted in a national statistical survey as having supplied stone for the court house at Ilchester (6). It appears that until the last quarter of the 19th century quarrying remained on a small scale and the workings were shallow giving rise to a number of unexplained earthworks on Ordnance Survey maps.

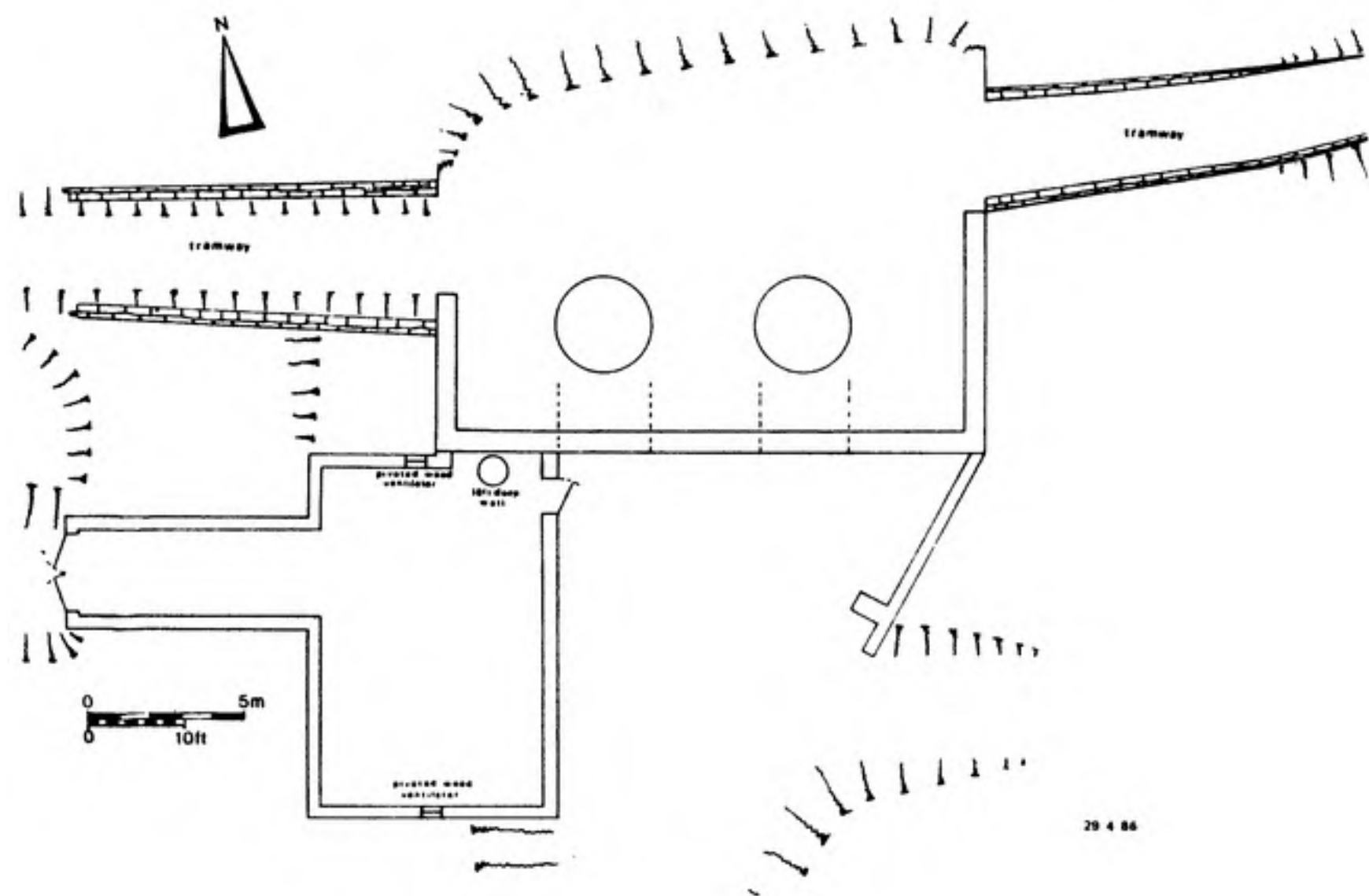
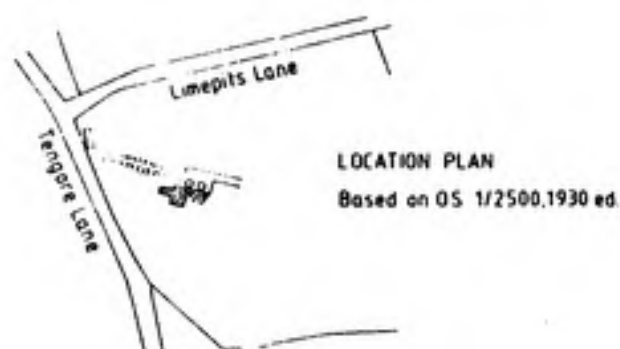
Tengore Lane was particularly well situated to provide good access for the fuel and the distribution of the lime and limestone. The Lane runs diagonally NW-SE from the main Langport-Somerton turnpike (the present B3153) to another road of the Langport, Somerton and Castle Cary Turnpike Trust (now the A372) which roughly bisects the parish from west to east. The third major road, the Martock turnpike (B3165) provided a vital north-south link (7). The navigable River Yeo, which, for much of its length, forms the southern boundary of the parish allowed the entry of culm from South Wales. Goods were brought by small (5-7½ ton) barges, worked in pairs, to a wharf at Load Bridge. Following the rebuilding of Langport Bridge in 1841 river traffic, especially by boats owned by the Langport firm of Stuckey and Bagehot, was considerable (8). The opening of the Yeovil to Durston railway in 1853 enabled coal from the Somerset coalfield to be imported for use in the limekilns.

Locally the loads of culm (pronounced 'cullum' by the older inhabitants) were recalled as having been stored in a shed or 'Cullum House' adjacent to Load Bridge. The Tithe Map confirms the existence of this building. Over a century later there was a villager still alive who remembered hauling this commodity from the shed to a limekiln at the top of St Stephen's Hill (9). The kiln, with its quarry alongside (ST 470286) was only demolished in recent times.

The site examined by SIAS was one of three known developments along Tengore Lane involving limeburning and quarrying. The most westerly site, on the Huish



LIMEKILNS, TENGORE LANE, LONG SUTTON
ST 453266



Episcopi side of the parish boundary (ST 445273) was the earliest and had an historical connection with the Church of England (10). Three kilns were probably in operation in the 1850s but had become disused by 1885 (11). A pair of kilns at a similar roadside location with an adjacent quarry (ST 450269) were part of the trading empire of Bradford and Sons and form an eastward extension of Pibsbury Quarries. These kilns had a relatively short working life, from the 1850s to the 1920s (12).

It seems possible that the two kilns in the survey were contemporary with those of Bradfords' both in terms of erection date and lifespan. Together with a quarry they occupied approximately half of a 7 acre field and are shown as operational in 1903 (13). Two tracks radiated to Tengore Lane from the top and grates of the structures with access to Limepits Lane via a circuitous route to the rear of the quarry. There is no map evidence for a tramway but this is not unusual as such features were often only temporary. Nevertheless, the scale of working along Tengore Lane at all three sites marks a radical departure from the old system described earlier towards a more systematic exploitation of the natural resources. Commenting on a similar operation at this period at Charlton Mackrell, P. A. Anthony wrote "the thin beds which are near the surface, and are from three to six inches in thickness, (are) used for kerbing, channelling and building stone, whilst certain of the lower and thicker beds are burnt for lime ..." (14).

Oral tradition asserts that the kilns were associated with the Bridgwater firm of Barham Brothers, perhaps better known for their brick and tile products but which originated as manufacturers of plaster and cement in 1857 at their East Quay premises. Notepaper from the turn of the century advertises "Works at Langport for Hydraulic Lime, Flags, Paving, Etc." (15). As early as 1866 they had owned a quarry at High Ham for plaster stone (16) and during the 1920s were trading under the title of The West of England Portland Cement & Lime Company Ltd (17). From the little documentary evidence which has so far become available, it seems probable that after the Great War Barhams developed the Somerset lime trade side of their business from a base at Charlton Mackrell and had close connections with other lime and stone companies from Huish Episcopi to Street (18).

It is hoped that in due course further research can be undertaken which could result in the publication of a map and gazetteer of limekilns and quarries in the Langport- Somerton area.

Brian Murless

Sources

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- 6 Mineral Statistics of the United Kingdom (HMSO, 1858)
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- 11 Ordnance Survey Maps, 25 in, sheet 73.1 (surveyed 1885)
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- 14 Anthony, P A, The New Route to the West of England, Great West Rail Mag.
Vol 17, No 9 (Sept 1905) 158
- 15 SIAS Archive
- 16 Post Office Directory (1866)
- 17 Minute Book for General Meetings (1924-50) per Mr J Lawrence
- 18 Somerset Record Office, DD/BHM, bought ledger No 15

THE EXMOOR REVIEW, 1987 - EXMOOR PRESS £2.25

The current (1987) Edition of the Exmoor Review is of particular interest to those concerned with Industrial History. Four profusely illustrated articles have been contributed by SIAS members. John Bentley examines the development of trackways and roads through and around Exmoor, while David Greenfield details some of the more interesting bridges. Then there is the fascinating history of the Brendon Hill Incline on the West Somerset Mineral Railway by Mike Jones who includes stunning colour photographs of the remains of this stupendous feat of railway engineering.

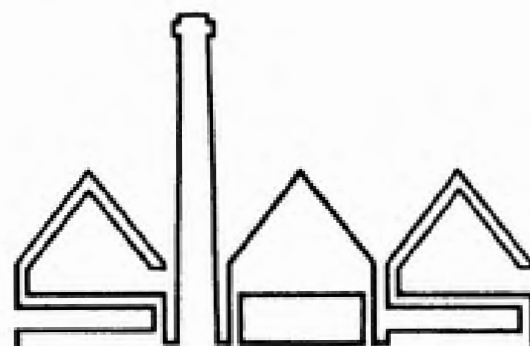
But, as always, the Review is full of fascinating facets of Exmoor life. Schoolboy memories of travelling on the 'toy' Lynton and Barnstaple Railway. The story of Barlynch Priory with tantalising extracts from a school note book written by one William Nicholas in 1500 - a 16th century Adrian Mole! - two articles about those great naturalist writers, Richard Jefferies and Henry Williamson, the authors of which give interesting and opposing view of Jefferies's style. All in all, the Review is an excellent buy for Christmas.

Finally, a thank you to the many contributors and WISHING EVERYONE A VERY HAPPY CHRISTMAS AND A PEACEFUL AND PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR.

SOMERSET INDUSTRIAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

BULLETIN No 44

APRIL 1987



Secretary: C A Buchanan
2 Blake Green
Ashcott
Bridgwater

EDITORIAL

Happily, the projected formation of a Dorset IA Society has become a fact and their first newsletter has been received (Hon Sec Brenda Innes, Hawthorn Cottage, Cann Common, Shaftesbury, Dorset SP7 0DN). It is anticipated that our two Societies will liaise closely.

There are already two ways in which our members can help DIAS. Peter Stanier (49 Breach Lane, Shaftesbury SP7 8LF) is compiling a Bibliography of IA references to Dorset and would be pleased to receive old or new references in books, journals, newspapers, etc. Please give author, book or journal title, date, page number, etc, and, if possible, a brief summary.

DIAS also propose to compile a Gazetteer of IA sites in Dorset and would be grateful for any information on any IA site known to SIAS members. Ideally this information should include grid reference, brief description and history and whether the public has any access, i.e. can it be seen from a road. B and W photographs or drawings would be appreciated (chance would be a fine thing!) Please send to Peter Stanier, address as above. However any information is wanted however brief and even if it duplicates their existing list. If Somerset is anything to go by then DIAS have a lot of catching up to do on recording.

ELECTRICITY IN TAUNTON

How many members are aware of the latest addition to Taunton's street lighting? At the north end of the Parade's central reservation and opposite the SWEB shop is a 'new' lamp standard. Set up by Taunton Deane Borough Council, it is an authentic replica of the arc lamp standards which gave Taunton its first electric lighting in the 1890s. All dimensions and details of the standard bracket and globe are correct but not the lighting - arc lamps are now out!

KINGSBROMPTON WAGON WORKS

Somerset County Museum Services had hoped that with the assistance of the Worshipful Company of Wheelwrights the works and buildings might have been preserved in their entirety and opened to the public. Unfortunately this cannot be achieved and the site will be developed. However, the Somerset Museum Service still hope to acquire many of the machine and hand tools so that in the future a woodworking and wheelwrights shop can be re-created.

INDUSTRIAL IMAGE

An exhibition of 150 years of industrial photography entitled 'Industrial Image' is to be seen at the Watershed Gallery in Bristol from the 20 June until 23 July. Although the exhibition is primarily from a photographic

point of view the photography, which ranges from the building of Hungerford Bridge in 1845 to a Plessey micro chip being tested in 1985, gives a fascinating record of industrial and civil engineering. It opened at the Photographers Gallery in Covent Garden during the winter and is now on tour. Being funded by the Arts Council it is free.

BRIDGING THE THAMES

"Messrs Hennett, Spink & Else of the Bridgwater Iron Foundry have undertaken the contract for the erection of the new iron bridge over the Thames at Hampton Court" The firm's involvement in bridgeworks in Somerset seems to have been limited to fairly small-scale jobs, such as Marsh Bridge, Dulverton (SIAS Journal 2, page 47), so that this low-key announcement in the Bridgwater Mercury for 19 April 1864 of their involvement in a relatively prestigious contract came as something of a surprise. Further investigation revealed an even more remarkable fact. Reporting on the imminent completion of the Hampton Court Bridge, the Illustrated London News for 1 October 1864 recorded that Hennett, Spink & Else had also recently completed the rebuilding of the old bridge at Walton-on-Thames.



Unfortunately, both bridges seem to have been universally condemned for their ugliness; when the Hampton Court Bridge was replaced in 1933 it was reported that "few will be found to lament its disappearance from the beautiful surroundings adjoining its site. It has been cut down by the modern method of cutting iron with oxy-acetylene flame, and the old iron will, no doubt, find its way into the blast furnaces to emerge again as steel for use in some other structure."

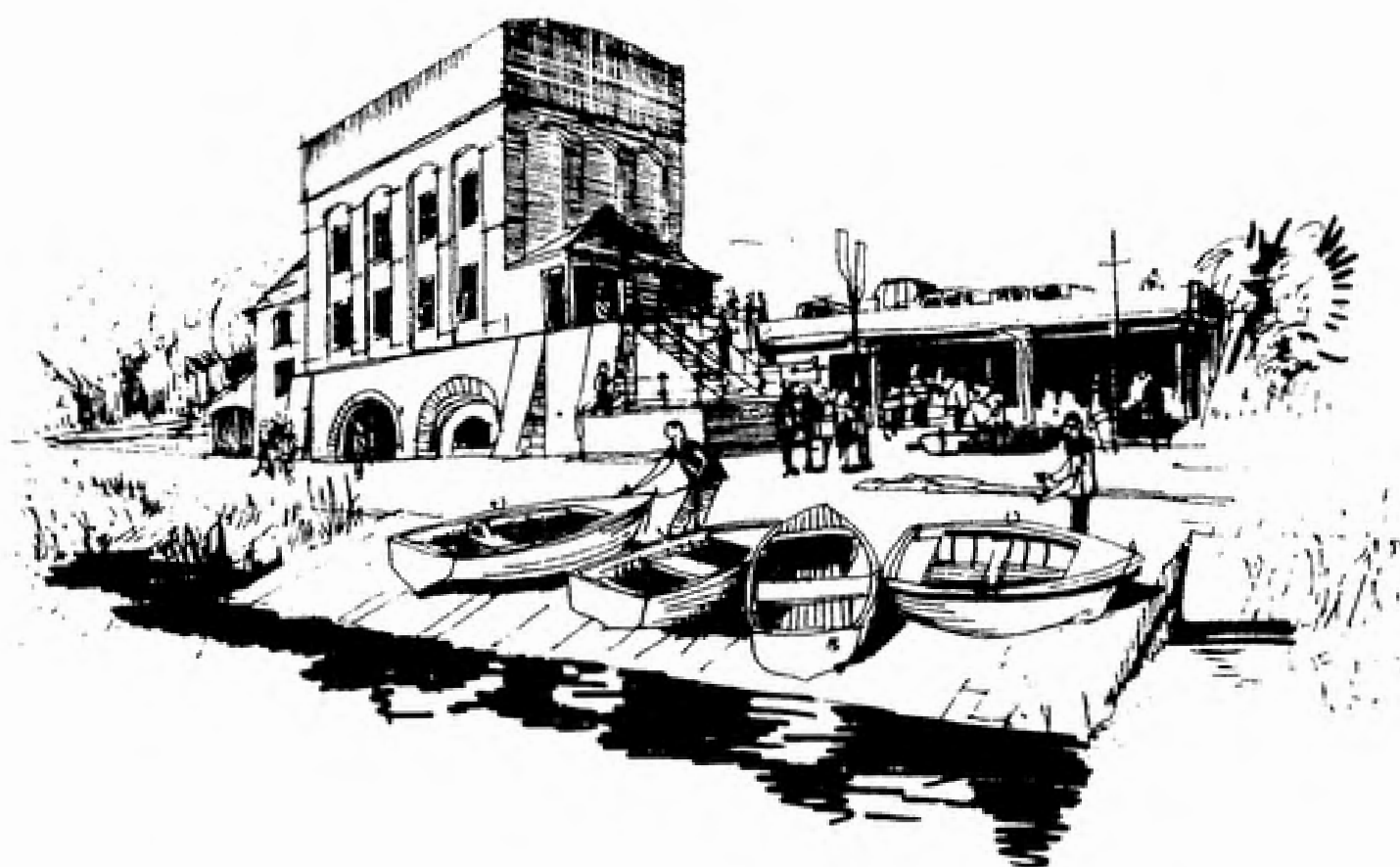
(From the programme for the opening of the new bridge.)

Investigations into the structural form of the two bridges, and how Hennett, Spink & Else came to be involved with them, are continuing.

David Greenfield

PROGRESS AT FIREPOOL

"Mr Goss remains very keen to convert the Firepool Pumping Station into a restaurant cum canal 'terminal'. The County Council, through its B and T Canal Advisory Sub Committee (which includes a SIAS member), continues their keen interest in the building and that part of the canal. Mr Haskell, Deputy County Planning Officer, prepared some sketches of a possible development which were presented to their Committee in December and which have also appeared in the Somerset County Gazette. One of these is reproduced in this Bulletin. SIAS continues its watching brief, at a high level, on how the building will be converted and is also taking an interest in what IA exhibits/displays can be sympathetically accommodated. Although detailed conversion plans are being prepared the formal agreement has not yet been sealed between the developer Mr Goss, the County Council (who will probably retain the head lease) and British Rail



While SIAS members may be disappointed that the County Museum's Service felt unwilling to support exclusive use of the FPS for an Industrial Heritage Centre, it must be said that the building has probably been saved by our actions and that the surrounding area should be substantially improved. Provided the conversions are done in a sympathetic manner it will have been a well worthwhile exercise.

Tim Walford

SOMERSET ROADS, PHASE TWO

The Society is pleased to announce the imminent publication of the companion volume of 'Somerset Roads' by John Bentley and Brian Murless. Once again SIAS is grateful for the generous support, in the form of a grant, that it has received from the Maltwood Fund of the Royal Society of Arts.

The content for the second phase, covering Eastern Somerset, is similar to that for Phase 1 except that the somewhat fuller historical data has been included along with an improved layout to the Gazetteer and some larger scale maps of the urban areas. An updating of the earlier work has been added and the brief introductory section repeated, so as to make the new book complete in itself, since many readers are likely to be without the previous volume which is already out of print.

Although the overall area covered by Phase 2 is a lot smaller than Phase 1, the latter included the Somerset Levels and much of Exmoor, so that turnpike roads were more thinly scattered. Fourteen additional trusts with 100 lengths of road are included and, together with the extra information on Phase 1 routes and finds, results in a publication of equivalent size and format.

Copies will be on sale at SIAS gatherings for £4.00 or by post at £4.50. Orders should be sent to Brian Murless, 46 Holway Avenue, Taunton, Somerset TA1 3AR with cheques made payable to SIAS.

TALBOT COLLECTION

The late George Frederick Talbot was born and educated in Taunton and spent his working life in the town. The rapid changes of the post-war years which resulted in the virtual wholesale redevelopment of the county town, awakened in Mr Talbot an interest in old photographs of local views. He acquired a remarkable collection of prints, some of which were published in 1975 in a book 'Taunton, Yesterday and Today'.

Earlier this year the Talbot family contacted SIAS for advice regarding the future of the collection. Through the good offices of Mr David Bromwich the Society was able to give these photographs, some of which depict aspects of industry and transport, a new and publicly accessible home in the Local History Library.

If any members have items of possible archaeological or historical interest which they feel could be of value to future scholars, the Society will only be too happy to advise and where necessary put them in contact with the experts.

SOMERSET OIL

At the Society's Members Evening considerable interest was expressed in a slide, taken from a postcard dated 1925, which was entitled 'West Somerset Oil Fields - Retort at Kilve'. The site (ST 145443) is one of three in the area, the others being a chapel and a limekiln, which is undergoing conservation. Unfortunately the interpretation board for the retort house has already been vandalised but reproduced below, courtesy of the County Council, is the original text which, it is hoped, will lend added enjoyment to members visiting this unusual industrial survival.

SHALE OIL

In 1916 it was discovered that the shales (a sedimentary rock similar to slate) along the Somerset coastline were rich in oil. Detailed explorations confirmed that oil-rich beds reached a depth of about 300 metres (1,000 feet) and covered some 8,000 acres, from Watchet to the

River Parrett estuary, extending inland for a distance of up to 2 miles. It was calculated the the reserves were some 5 million gallons.

By 1924 when the SHALINE COMPANY was formed to exploit the 'oilfield', it was reported that "... the commercial development of the shale deposits will lead to the establishment of an important industry in Somerset". These expectations of an oil boom were never realised as, although several hundred barrels of oil were distilled, protduction costs were found to be too high to make the oil economic. The fundamental problem was the sheer amount of shale that had to be minded or blasted away before refining could take place, followed by the removal of large deposits of slag. Brief attempts at reviving production were made in the 1940s but since that time the oil industry has moved on to off-shore drillings, especially in the North Sea.

OIL RETORT HOUSE

The oil extraction retort structure dates from the mid 1920s and is built of red brick, roughly 2.15 metres (7 feet) square on plan, 4 metres (13 feet) high, surmounted by a cast-iron chimney. Four rails bind the sides together and each side has a number of ventilation holes. The remains of a fire box survive, although now mostly in-filled. On the east side is an opening reached by a short flight of steps and in this area evidence of intense heat and slag deposition is apparent. This hole was probably covered by a door and used to scrape the spent shale from the retort.

In such retorts the crushed shale was loaded at the top into a cylindrical structure of cast-iron which was then subject to intensive heating. This produced a chemeical raction breaking down the organic compounds in the rock which contain the oil. The liberated compounds, in a gaseous state, are collected, condensed and upgraded into a liquid product that is roughly equivalent to a crude oil. This is then refined into the final product. The chimney on the top of the retort would have been used to collect and remove the unwanted vapours.

The Oil Retort House is a Grade II Listed Building of Special Architectural or Historic Interest.

TENGORE LANE LIMEKILNS

Following his article in the last bulletin, Brian Murless was particularly grateful to receive from David Greenfield a transcript of an article in the 'Western Gazette' for 9 February 1906, which is worth quoting in its entirety.

"NAVY SERIOUSLY BURNT IN KILN A navvy, who goes by the name of Jonsey, and who has been working on the new railway near Langport, was found on Sunday moring on the top of Paul's lime kiln at Upton in an unconscious condition with his arm very much burnt. Two navvies, named Thomas Clarke and Frank Stone, found the man at the kiln and pulled him away. They reported the occurrence to PC Treeby and conveyed the injured man to the Workhouse. On Sunday afternoon the man was still unconscious, and Dr Johnson did not think he would recover. The unfortunate man had 4s 6d in his pocket."

Sadly the doctor's prognosis was correct and the report of the inquest was published in the subsequent issue of the same newspaper. Apart from the reference to the 'new railway' (the GWR's Langport to Castle Cary line, completed in 1906), the article also reveals the name of a limeburner or limekiln owner not previously noted and the accident may not have taken place at the site surveyed by SIAS.

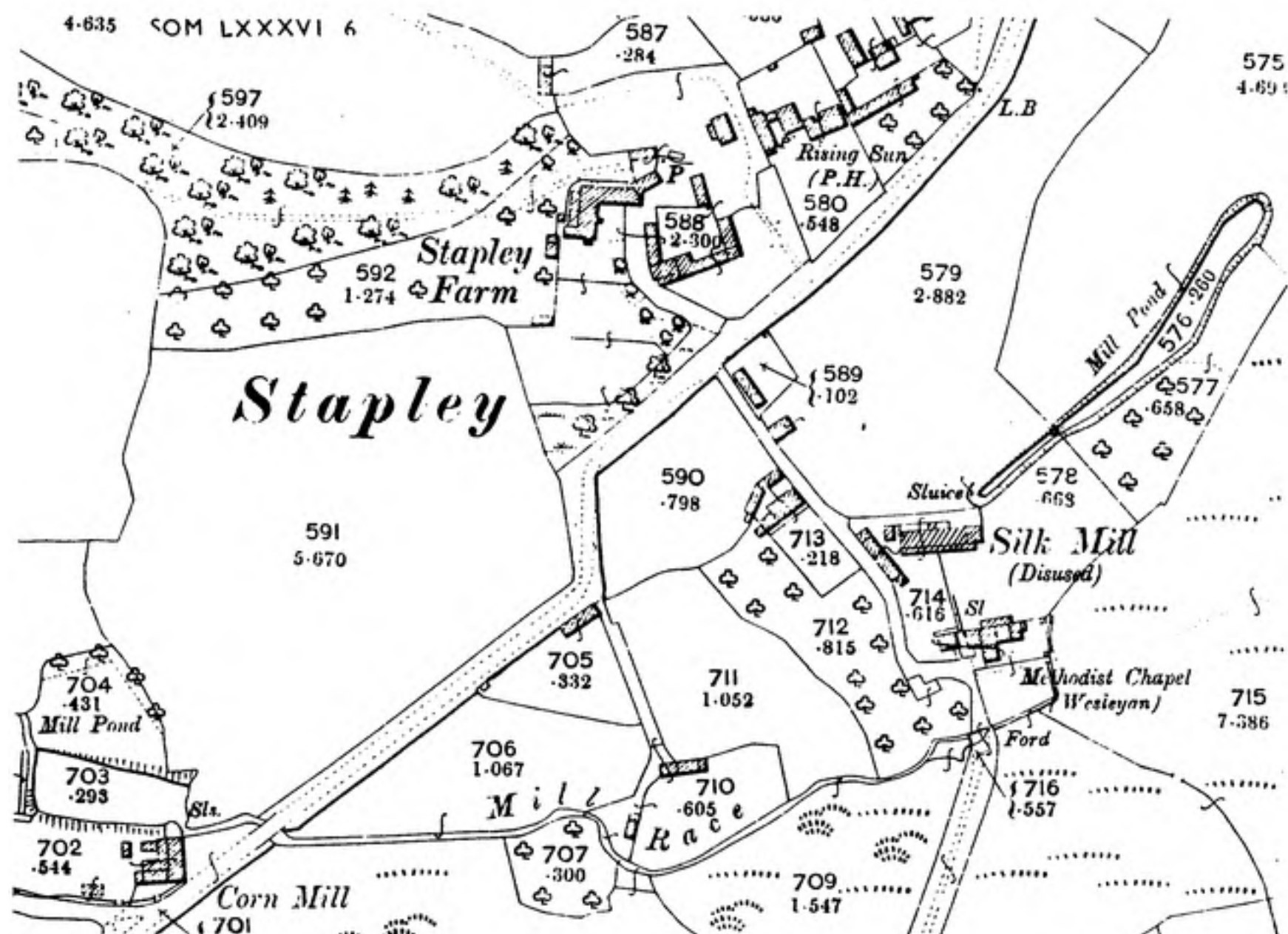
Evidence from newspapers seems to indicate that deaths at limekilns were

not uncommon though the cause was likely to be asphyxiation rather than burning. Probably the worst case was at Holcombe Rogus in 1726 when five men died in local kilns. (See also SIAS Journal No 2 pp 37, 38. Incidentally, my grandfather was killed in this way. Ed.)

SIAS SUMMER PROGRAMME, 1987

- | | | |
|---------------------------|---|---|
| Sat, 25 April
2.0 p.m. | A | A Wells Walkabout led by Sandy Buchanan.
Meet at the Wells Museum (N side of Cathedral Close) |
| Fri, 15 May
7.0 p.m. | B | Eastwood Manor Farm, East Harptree. ST576553
1850s model farm, fishponds, etc. Refreshments.
Charge £1.20 per head. The farm lies
approximately two miles NW of Chewton Mendip
on the B3114. |
| Sun, 7 Jun
11.00 a.m. | C | All day visit to Portland (quarries and
railways) led by Peter Stanier, DIAS (joint
visit with DIAS)
Meet at viewing point near Portland Heights
Hotel on main road into Portland. SY690731
Please bring lunch and arrange own transport,
but anyone requiring a lift should contact
Stan Farrer (Bradford on Tone 473) |
| Tue, 23 Jun
7.0 | D | Evening 'fossick' to Lilstock and Stogursey led
by Derrick Warren. Meet at the car park,
Lilstock ST 172453 |
| Tue, 7 Jul
7.0 p.m. | E | A Tiverton tour led by Alan Voce. Meet at
the Grant Western Canal Basin on the eastern
side of Tiverton. |
| Wed, 22 Jul
7.0 p.m. | F | Cutterne Mill, Evercreech. A visit for all
the family. 17C watermill in process of
restoration. Museum.
Adults 80p Children 50p. Followed by a
barbecue in the grounds. Bring own food
(steak, sausages, etc).
Cooking facilities provided.
Situated on the A371 (Castle Cary-Shepton Mallet)
near Evercreech Junction. ST 644365 |
| Sat, 5 Sep | G | All day visit to Merthyr Tydfil (coal, iron,
railways) led by Richard Hayman.
Those interested should contact Stan Farrer
(Bradford-on-Tone 473) re transport and
catering arrangements. |
| Sat, 12 Sep | H | SANHS have invited us to join them on a visit to
the Bath Stone Quarries. By coach leaving at
1 p.m. from Taunton Castle. Contact John
Bentley for prices and places. |

Mention was made of a silk mill at Stapley, in the Parish of Churchstanton on the Blackdowns, as a result of a short talk on the silk industry in Somerset given to SIAS members in the autumn of 1985. As a consequence, Derrick Warren and I visited the hamlet of Stapley on 2 January 1986. We called on Mr D M Day at Rosemount, Factory Lane, who readily gave us permission to look round the remains of the industrial buildings which survived on his land. A small working party subsequently carried out a survey of the site on 4 May.

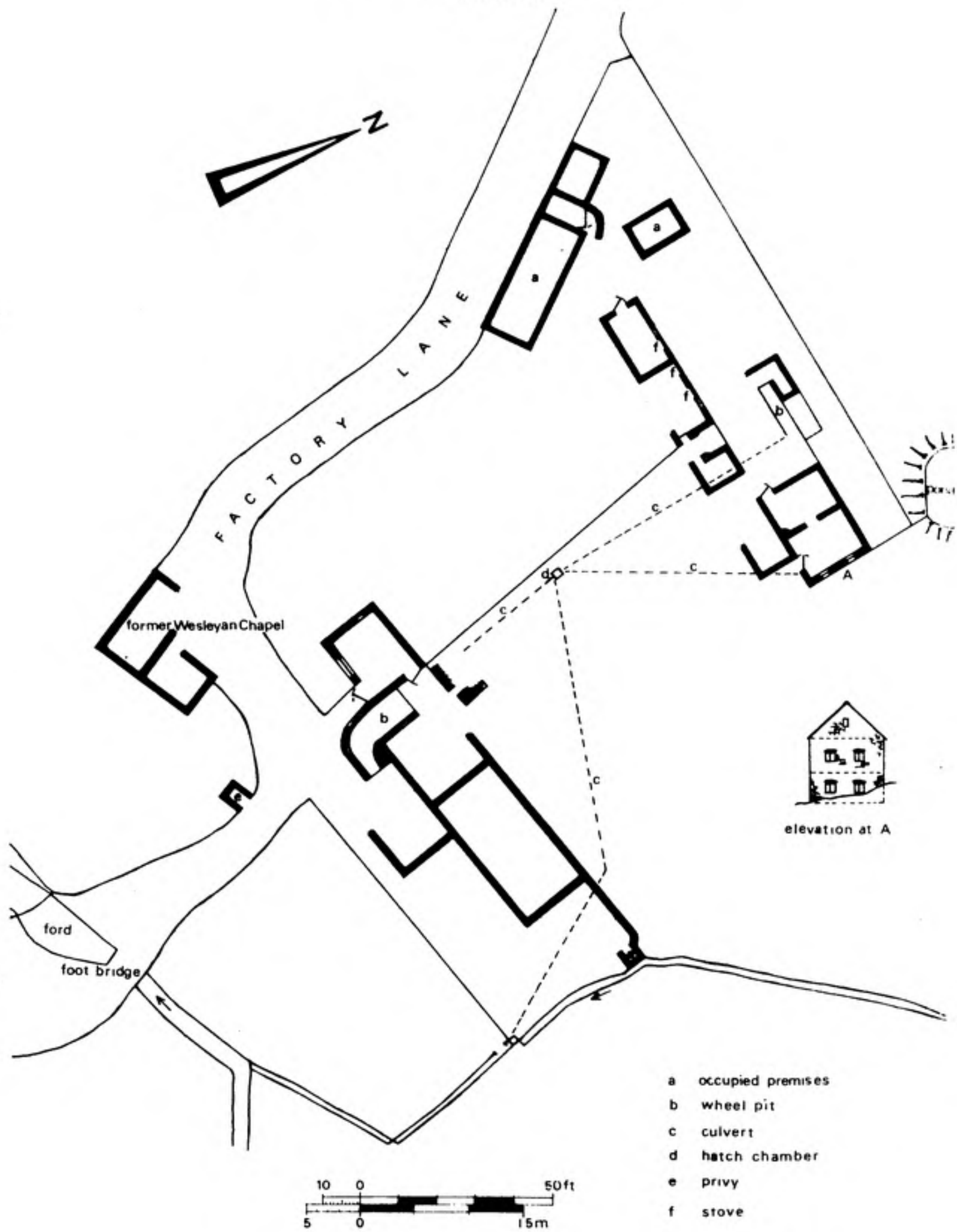


The silk mill site occupies the lower slopes of a deep valley cut by one of the streams which flows into the River Culm. To the north east of the buildings is a long, narrow mill pond in which Mr Day found lampreys twenty years ago. This pond supplied water to two levels of buildings. The higher level still retains a two-storeyed building which appears to be basically sound, although the first floor had been removed. A piece of graffiti inside bears witness to a William Moore November 20th 1908. To the west of this is a wall which contains evidence of chimneys and stoves at regular intervals. These suggest that dye works and textile finishing processes may have been carried out here.

The watercourse below this range of buildings is carried down the steep slope to another group of buildings which are mainly overgrown and ruinous. Two stone-arched culverts carry this water. Half way down the hill they diverge,

STAPLEY SILK MILL

ST 188 136



with one passage going directly towards the wheel pit below and the other in a south-easterly direction where it re-emerges below the walls of the building and rejoins the stream. Presumably, this latter channel was used when water had to be diverted from the wheel below.

Apart from the wheel pit, which has been used as a convenient dumping ground for old car parts and garden rubbish, only one building at the west end of the range is substantially intact. To the east of the wheel pit the walls have been reduced to no more than four feet in height and some have been removed completely. Below these ruins is a small stone-arched footbridge - partly collapsed - and across Factory Lane the ruins of a single privy and a tiny Wesleyan Methodist Chapel.

Mr Day kindly lent me a copy of a typescript History of the Hamlet of Stapley compiled by Mr E F Berry in 1959. This states that the silk mill was originally used for the manufacture of serge, a fact confirmed by other documentary evidence. Mr Berry writes:

"The silk mill now a ruin was in its day a very busy place and of considerable importance to the life of the district. It was a lofty structure of several floors. At times it was reputed to have employed 150-200 hands. The bales of raw silk were brought from Taunton by means of horses and waggon and after going through several processes was taken to the winding room near the top where it was bound on bobbins and then packed and returned to Taunton by the same means of transport. It was then sent to manufacturers of silk goods. It has been said that in those days English ladies wore more pure silk, also that the water at Stapley was exceptionally good for the processing. Richard Chard, father of Alfred and Frank, used for a time to walk to Taunton and back, weekly, to fetch the employees' wages. The late Mrs M A Gill who died at Rosemary Lane, Clayhidon, was, I think, the last person who had worked at the mill and could remember when it was fully employed. She was at the time of her death aged 94 years."

He goes on to say that the silk mill closed down in the early 1880s and that the Wesleyan Chapel was replaced by the present mission room about 1904. The two buildings have a significant juxtaposition. The silk mill was owned by the Lawton family and John Lawton, who died in November 1890, was an enthusiastic Wesleyan. His father, Samuel Lawton, is said to have converted the house in Factory Lane into a chapel for the convenience of those of his employees who could not travel to other, more distance places of worship.

I am indebted to Mary Miles for drawing my attention to an advertisement on the front page of the Taunton Courier of 5th November 1812. This confirms that there was a serge mill on this site although it was "Erected within a few years". The notice lists the machinery then present in the building, including fulling stocks, gig mill, shearing frames, jennies and looms "requisite for the making and finishing of Superfine Broad Cloth".

The same advertisement goes on to describe a Grist Mill, served by a mill pond "which is considerable". This mill was said to be "situated about fifty yards below the factory, received its water from thence, and has a fall of about seventeen feet, which might be greatly increased at a small expense, and, were the two falls ever to be united in one, which might easily be effected, and made upwards of fifty feet, would be capable of doing an immense quantity of work".

Was the hint contained in this notice ever taken up? Certainly, the lower mill in Factory Lane would have had an enviable head of water

and the width of the wheel pit suggests a very substantial source of power. It is reasonable to surmise that this lower mill was the grist mill referred to. When it was incorporated in a silk-throwing factory there would have been a need for a new corn mill in the valley. We know that such a mill was constructed in about 1843 by Samuel Vincent. This pretty building with its sun dial is still occupied as a private residence.

Silk spinning or throwing developed in Somerset from the latter half of the eighteenth century, partly to provide employment for female labour in rural parishes and partly to replace the woollen industry which was in slow decline. The potential buyer of these premises in 1812 was asked to apply to Samuel Yeats, Esq., at Monksmill near Wotton under Edge, Gloucestershire. Perhaps the said Mr Yeats was seeking to concentrate his production in a more profitable situation. Certainly the woollen industry continued to thrive in his county long after it had become virtually extinct in Somerset - Fox Brothers notwithstanding. Whatever the reasons for the change of use of these premises, the relative prosperity of such silk throwing manufactories as Stapley is fairly certain until the late nineteenth century. By this time unfettered competition from Continental producers and changing fashions led to the slow demise of the industry in Somerset. Both the archaeological and documentary evidence suggest that this romantically situated silk factory was in production for about seventy years between 1812 and 1890.

Sandy Buchanan

EXCAVATIONS

At Smokey Bottom engine house on the Brendons the dig will recommence with the better weather whilst it is hoped to complete that of Brunel's Broad Gauge Engine Shed at Watchet in April. Full reports in due course.

OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE FOR 1987/88

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Secretary	Sandy Buchanan	Ashcott 210566
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	Mike Jones	Taunton 275308
	Bob Mead	Kingston St Mary 222
	Mary Miles	Taunton 412713

ACETYLENE STREET LIGHTING IN NORTH PETHERTON

"Auction Announcement. The Old Gas House, Mill Street, North Petherton. An interesting old stone and tile industrial building with outline planning permission for conversion and extension to a residential dwelling. A rare opportunity indeed." This advertisement in a local paper of the 20 February 1987 prompted the following brief survey and research, although the site had long been known. No plant remained but no change had taken place to the building except for a short 2 ft wooden extension at the east end (not shown on plan) and where there was slight evidence of the building having had double doors.

By 1906 acetylene gas plants were being widely used to provide lighting for country houses and other establishments not near town gas mains. Otterhead House and Moredon House, North Curry, being two local examples. To what extent acetylene gas was used for street lighting is not known but North Petherton is the only place to be documented in this area.

The plant for the North Petherton Rosco Acetylene Co¹ was sited just off Mill Street, close to St Mary's Church (ST 290 329). The building that was utilized was an outbuilding of Town Mill and was of local ragstone with Bridgwater pantiles. The eastern end of the building was heightened to accommodate the 8 ft diam x 10 ft high (approx)¹ gas holder.

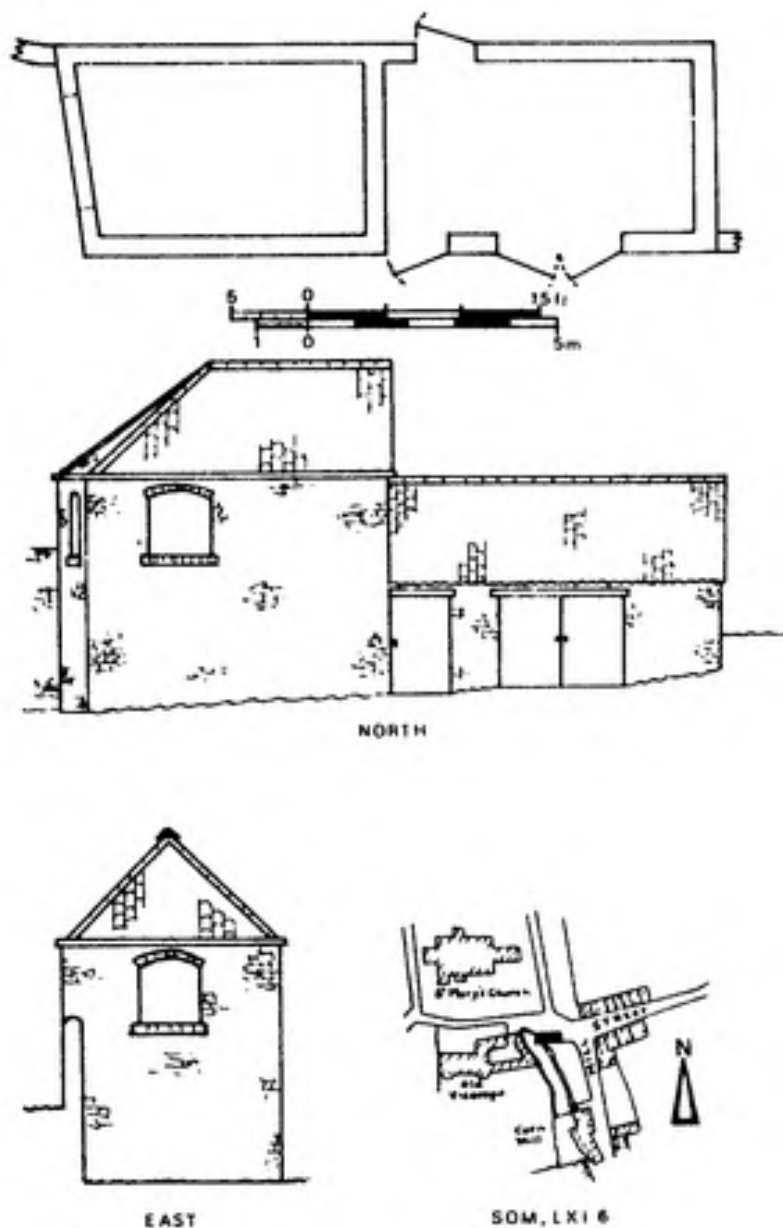
"The street lamps were lit by the new acetylene gas for the first time on Thursday last (20th Sept. 1906, and proved most satisfactory."²

It is said that there was a surplus of gas produced and that this was used to light a chapel and a terrace of cottages. From October to March the street lamps were lit from dusk to 10 pm whilst the spent carbide was sold to farmers as fertilizer. The plant was run by Mr Henry Rogers and later with his two sons William (Ruggy) and John, who was the lamplighter. A Mr Scott was "manager" during the 1920s but it could not have been a full time occupation. The users of the gas supply are reputed to have been the shareholders of the company. There are many questions yet to be answered. However, by 1931, the town gas supply of the Bridgwater Gas Co had been extended to North Petherton as had electricity supplied by the Bridgwater/Light Co and so, after 25 years, the Carbide Gas Co, as it had now become, could no longer compete and closed.³

/Electric

Notes on Acetylene Gas

Acetylene gas (C_2H_2), as used commercially, is a colourless, evil-smelling and poisonous gas discovered by BERTHELOT in 1862 and made commercially viable in 1888 by WILSON's method of manufacturing Calcium Carbide. This was supplied



23.7.87

to users in air-tight drums and, because of its explosive nature, a licence of 5s was required in Britain (1906) if more than 2lb was stored. The gas was manufactured in a generator, the carbide being added gradually to a much greater volume of water. After being washed the gas was fed into a separate gas holder, large enough to hold 24 hours supply and weighted to give a pressure of three inches of water. The gas then went through a purifier, either being exposed to a large area of dry bleaching powder (the most common method) or being passed through sulphuric acid. It was then dried by being passed over layers of calcium chloride before entering the main pipes. Special burners were used in the lamps in which two jets of flame were directed at each other giving an intensely white light. Each lamp consumed about 0.7 cu ft of gas per hour and gave about 16 to 20 candles. The cost of acetylene gas in 1906 was equivalent to that of town gas at 5s per 1,000. ft.

Figs 1 and 2 Generator.

A. hopper for carbide;
B. valve; C. rod allowing
valve to open when gas is
reduced in the collector D;
E. grid beneath water;
F. pipe for gas;
G. lever for adjusting
valve; H. pipe for adding
water; J. draining cock;
K. water seal; L. cock.

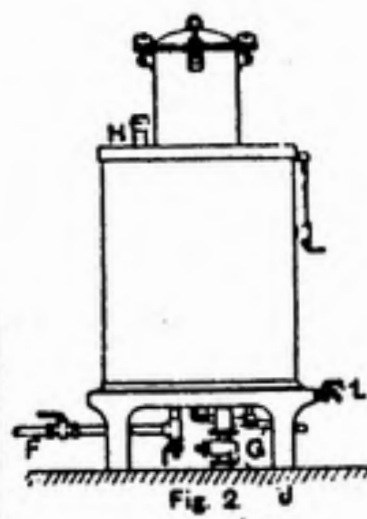
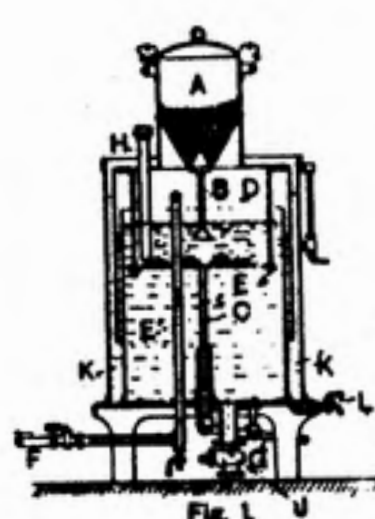
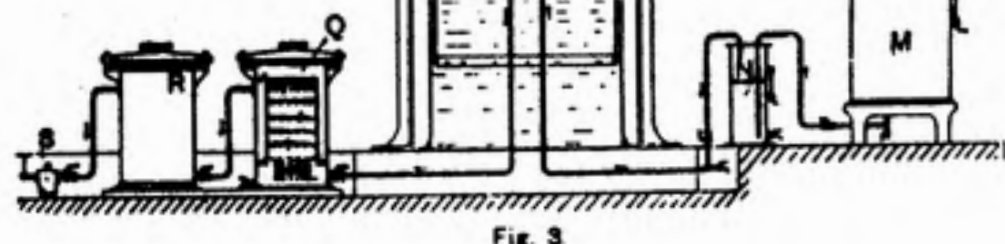


Fig 2 Plant.

M. generator; N. washer;
P. gas holder; Q. purifier;
R. drier; S. pressure
governor



References:

1. Contemporary picture postcard
 2. Bridgwater Mercury 26th Sept 1906
 3. Bridgwater Mercury 9 Sept 1931
 4. Lewis. Acetylene 1900 and others.
- Diagram from Harmsworth Encyclopaedia c 1910

My thanks are due to Miss M C Siraut of the VCH for information and to Brian Murless for the dates of the newspaper references.

Derrick Warren

SUBSCRIPTIONS ARE NOW DUE

Subscriptions for 1987/88 were due on 1 April 1987. Rates: £5.00 (covering the whole family), OAPs and under 18 £2.00. Please send to the Treasurer, Peter Daniel, 20 Shoreditch Road, Taunton.

OAKHILL MALTINGS

By the time you read this the last malting in Somerset will have taken place, as the final batch of malt was processed over the Christmas period at Oakhill. The Oakhill Brewery was founded in 1767 by Messrs Jordan & Billingsley. In 1889 the business went public and to celebrate this a grand dinner was held inside a 500 barrel vat. The firm had depots at Bath, Bristol, Cardiff, Devonport, Manchester and London, thus Oakhill Invalid Stout became famous over a wide area, even being recommended by the "Lancet"! Its reputation was recalled by a local man who bought his ailing and strictly teetotal grandmother a case of half a dozen bottles, with orders to drink a bottle with each meal. A couple of weeks later he visited her and enquired how she was getting on. "Well" said the old lady, "I can't say I like it, but I've nearly finished the first bottle - I take a dessert-spoon after every meal, just like you said"!

In its heyday the Brewery produced 2,000-2,500 barrels per week, and this was transported to the railhead at Binegar at first by a pair of traction engines, and after 1904 by a 3' gauge railway-line with two engines. The line was dismantled in 1919, and all effects sold to the contractors then constructing Barry Docks.

An interesting, and somewhat ironic survivor is the Brewery's 1856 Shand Mason hand-drawn fire engine which was operated by 16 men, and is now preserved by the Somerset Fire Brigade. In 1915 a disastrous fire effectively ended the brewery. During the blaze thousands of hops shot into the air and exploded, described by the Managing Director's youngest son as "the best firework display i have ever seen". The Brewery was rebuilt, and taken over by Bristol United Breweries. It then passed via Georges to Courages, the present owners of the site. The malthouse block beside the road was probably built in the middle of the 19c, as an old insurance document refers to it as "old but in good repair", in 1899. A second block was built beside the first in 1890, reputedly with the labour of prisoners from Shepton Mallet Jail. Both were traditional floor maltings, and supplied other breweries at Shepton Mallet and Bristol, as well as the Oakhill owners. Apparently there was a fire in the maltings (a common hazard) in 1924, causing £10,000 worth of damage, and the company was struggling to overcome this when the second fire became the final nail in the coffin. However, the maltings were rebuilt (again on traditional lines) having 6 kilns and 6 growing floors, capable of producing 750 tonnes; and were undoubtedly the reason the new owners were interested in the site.

In 1961 a modernization scheme was introduced by Georges with the object of producing enough malt for the whole of the Georges Group. The 'modern' method chosen was the Saladin Box, actually developed at the end of the 19c. This was cheaper in manpower, and processed the grain in a much shorter period than the traditional method. It became popular in Britain after the Second World War. Saladin was an assistant of the Frenchman Galland who had developed the Pneumatic Malting Appartus in 1873. One of the earliest of these Pneumatic Maltings was built by J Brutton at Yeovil, and is illustrated in "Malt & Malting" by H Stopes (1885). Since 1972 a total of 17 staff have been running the maltings, producing a batch of 45 tonnes every 48 hours, irrespective of time of year. The staff work in shifts, so that each consists of 2 men, with a foreman either present or on call.

The process starts with the Head Malster who purchases the barley grain at market in Bristol and Salisbury, and from samples sent through the post. Oakhill liked to buy about 1,000 tonnes of "Maris Otter" winter sown barley as it becomes ready to malt earlier than the spring sown varieties. The balance was made up of suitable spring sown varieties of which "Triumph" is the current favourite. Varieties are never mixed in malting. It is impossible

to make good quality malt from poor raw material, so the malster's skill in choosing the grain is vital. Each year there is a malting barley trade between the UK and the continent, the direction depending on who had the more favoured season. Oakhill has never purchased from the continent, and only exceptionally has bought more than a few small lots from East Anglia. Purchases were made mainly from Hants and Wilts, with smaller amounts from Devon, Dorset, Berks, Hereford, Oxford, Gloucester, Cornwall, and not surprisingly from the prize-winning area around Porlock in Somerset.

When the grain arrives at the Maltings various checks are made before it is accepted. These include moisture content, quality (especially in comparison with the original sample) weevil infestation, and that the grain is still 'alive'. Once accepted the grain goes through a dryer which dries it down to 12% moisture, and cools it prior to storage in a bin in one of the two silos. Between them the silos hold 6,660 tonnes. Before the second barley store was built in 1972 additional storage space at the old brewery and Charlton was used, necessitating much sack handling. The average duration of storage is 6 months from harvest, with little new crop processed before November to avoid 'dormancy'.

Before use the grain is screened, the dust going for animal feed. It is then plunged into 2 circular steepers for each 45 tonne batch, with a fine spray playing on the descending grain in an attempt to keep down dust. Oakhill has four steepers, holding $22\frac{1}{2}$ tonnes each, and uses them in pairs to produce a batch. (As a comparison, the largest in the country have a capacity of 450 tonnes.) The grain is steeped for 45-60 hours, during which time it is twice drained for 10 hours at a time. The drained steepers have air blown through them for 10 minutes every hour to remove carbon dioxide during the 10 hour dry periods. At the end of steeping the grain holds 45% moisture.

The barley is now transferred to the Saladin Box where it is germinated for 5 days. The box is a large oblong vessel, concrete sided, with a perforated metal floor. A fan blows unidified air upwards through the growing grain to keep it moist and remove carbon dioxide. Temperature is a vital part of the process, and although barley is processed here all year, hot humid nights do produce great problems! At one end of the box is a mechanical turner on rails, which can be run up and down the whole length of the box with the spirals rotating, to turn the grain every 8 hours. The spirals break up the growing rootlets which would otherwise interweave into a dense mat, causing air problems. Also on the turner is a sprinkler system to water the grain if needed. Oakhill had three boxes, making a batch of grain every second day - five days in the box, one day for cleaning.

By the third day the roots have formed, and if the grain is split, the growing shoot (acrospire) can be seen halfway along the grain. When ready the grain's endosperm should feel creamy when rubbed in the fingers, not rubbery or gritty, and the acrospire should be three quarters along the grain. Problems with the Saladin Box system are rust, mould, and flaking paint, due to the damp, warm atmosphere.

From the box the grain goes to the kiln where it is finally dried to 2.9% moisture. Oakhill produced only ale malt (as opposed to lager), and the oil-fired kilns took 36/7 hours. (Some modern kilns can complete the job in only 18 hours.) The kiln has no mechanical turner.

9,000 tonnes of barley were bought per annum, yet only 7,040 tonnes of malt produced. The apparent loss is made up in various parts of the process - removal of stones, straw, weed seeds and dust on coming into the maltings, drying for storage, removal of corns and rootlets, respiration during steeping and germination, and loss of moisture during kilning. The by-products, barley screenings, malt culms, and malt and barley dust go for

animal feeds, the rootlets being a medium protein food.

Courages have always had to buy extensively outside, as they never produced even half of their total requirements from their two maltings. They will retain the maltings at South Milford, Yorkshire, which supplies John Smith's Brewery at Tadcaster with ale and lager malts, using huge rotating drums for germination. Oakhill's output was divided equally between Courages, Bristol, and Berkshire Breweries, but produced only 12% of Courages total needs nationwide. It would have been possible for Oakhill to produce all of Bristol's needs, and still have some for Berkshire, but in fact supplied only 66% of Bristol's needs as brewers prefer to take malt from more than one area or malting because barley quality varies both seasonally and regionally. Oakhill has been overtaken by a number of events mainly related to size and age. Whilst the 1961 rebuilding had made it more efficient, it did not compare with the capacity and cost effectiveness of the most modern. With high overheads in relation to capacity, it was a candidate for closure by Courages, who have themselves been subject to a recent takeover. It seems odd, therefore, that with its demise it leaves only two malthouses in the whole of the South West, both traditional floor maltings!

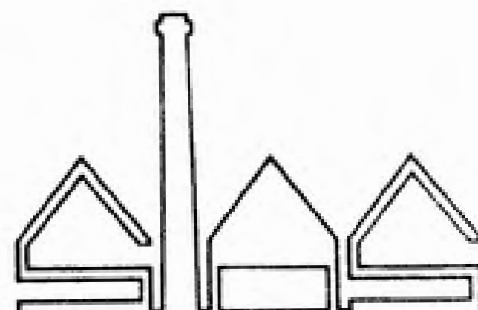
In compiling the above I gratefully acknowledge the assistance and advice of the Oakhill Head Maltster, Mr Jim Elliott, who generously gave of his time and knowledge at what must have been both a busy and a sad time.

Mary Miles

To help the Field Officer and/or organisers could members HOPING to attend any of the visits this summer please tick the appropriate box(s) which correspond to the letters on the programme and return this slip to Stan Farrer 15, Jefferies Way, Stonegallows, Taunton.

A ☐, B ☐, C ☐, D ☐, E ☐, F ☐, G ☐, H ☐.

Name _____



BULLETIN No 45

SEPTEMBER 1987

Hon Sec: C A Buchanan
2 Blake Green
Ashcott, Bridgwater
Ashcott 210566

EDITORIAL

Compared with 1986 this year, so far, has seen little corporate activity by the Society for, with the exception of the restoration of the water wheel and pump, there have been no projects, rescue digs or surveys. Perhaps this is just as well for it gives the project leads a chance to write up their reports and draw up the results of the past surveys for publication in the Bulletin.

However, this is not to say that individual members have been idle. John Bently has been researching the life of Richard Anstice who was Surveyor to the County of Somerset at the turn of the 18th/19th centuries, whilst Derrick Warren has carried out a measured survey of the Westford Pumping Station.

During the year Brian Murless has been reading, on microfilm, copies of a local organ of Victorian journalism, the BRIDGWATER TIMES AND SOMERSET COUNTY CHRONICLE. This exercise was begun in an attempt to discover more about the origins of the Somerset Concrete Industry which is closely allied commercially to limeburning, quarrying and brick and tile making. So far the 1850s have been covered and much worthwhile information has emerged not only about this subject but on communications and other industries.

Apart from supplying short pieces in this (The Parrett Iron Works and Shapwick Windmills) and other Bulletins, Brian is anxious to share his findings with others. He hopes to present an assessment of the value of newspaper evidence to industrial archaeologists as part of the Members Research Evening on 9 December.

The future of that early example of the use of concrete, Castle House in Bridgwater, has been of great concern to David Greenfield who contributes a short piece on it in this Bulletin.

Stan Farrer, our Field Officer, has once again drawn up an excellent and varied series of winter talks and lectures and it is hoped that members will solicit the attendance by friends and acquaintances who are not necessarily interested in IA in general.

SOMERSET ROADS

If any member is willing to donate or even sell back to the Society a copy of Somerset Roads, Phase 1, the authors would be most grateful. Meanwhile, Phase 2, details of which appeared in the last Bulletin, is over half way towards being a sell out.

PARRETT IRON WORKS

Members will be aware that the Society has taken a keen interest in the history and surviving structures of the Parrett Iron Works near Martock (ST 445187). Less is known about its precursor, George Parsons's flax mill and foundry at West Lambrook but the Bridgwater Times for 23rd February, 1854 gives as fascinating detailed account of its destruction by fire. It perhaps also, by implication, goes some way towards explaining the reason for the sophisticated fire prevention system installed by Parsons at the Parrett Works.

EXTENSIVE CONFLAGRATION AND LOSS OF PROPERTY

On Wednesday evening week a fire broke out on the premises of Mr Parsons, West Lambrook, in the parish of Kingsbury (Episcopi), and nearly the whole of the premises were burnt to the ground. The farm and buildings are very extensive, Mr Parsons being a renter of 1,000 acres under Lord Portman. An iron foundry for the manufacture of agricultural implements has lately been erected, and it is supposed a spark from the chimney fell on some flax, an immense quantity of which was spread in the surrounding buildings, and ignited it. This was about five o'clock, and in a few minute the whole was enveloped in flames, the fiery glare of which could be seen for many miles round, appearing close to Langport, although more than six miles off. Most of the machinery was destroyed, being fused; a thousand bushels of wheat ready for the miller were burnt, and thirty-one cows, some in calf, nineteen calves, and £1,000 worth of flax were destroyed. A fire engine from South Petherton was soon on the spot, and succeeded in saving the dwelling house, and fortunately the wind kept the flames in a contrary direction to the new barton, or the loss would have been much greater. Mr Parsons was from home, and it is not yet known whether he is insured.'

EXMOOR WRITERS, Victor Bonham-Carter (The Exmoor Press, 1987), 48 pp, ill £1.95 (ISBN 0 900131 551)

That admirable series by the Exmoor Press, The Microstudy, which has brought Exmoor and its history to such a wide reading public, is now being supplemented by a new series on Exmoor writers, of which this is the first volume. It heralds a new approach by presenting not only those writers whose names are a household word but those who are little known, if at all, beyond the bounds of this region. Jefferies, Blackmore and Williamson are each well known to most readers by a single title - Red Deer, Lorna Doone or Tarka the Otter. Their detailed, albeit brief, biographies, besides giving an insight into their lives, will hopefully stimulate the reading of their other works, whose subjects are not necessarily connected with Exmoor. All the other writers discussed, Noel Allen, Hope Bourne, Jack Hurley, Bertha Lawrence, Phoebe Rees and A L Wedlake, clearly shown their wide knowledge and love of the Moor and its people. Their styles differ widely and all will not appeal but all deserve to be much more widely appreciated and read. It will be interesting to see which authors Victor Bonham-Carter includes in subsequent volumes.

D W

HALSE MALTHOUSE

The SIAS survey took place in November 1986. David Greenfield and Derrick Warren were responsible for measuring and drawing up, with tape holding assistance from Bob Mead and Mary Miles. Photographs were taken by Iain Miles. Mike Clark and Sid Biesley came along with their memories of old Halse, and we were pleased to welcome Mike Bone from BIAS who helped with suggestions about how it all worked.

Derrick's drawings show the plan as described in SIAS Bulletin 42 (Aug 86). Briefly a cruciform shape, with two kilns at the south and east sides, a loading bay on the west. The narrow lean-to running along the east wall to the kiln may have been a granary originally, or even an additional malting floor, though Sid Biesley can remember it being used to store cider for the near-by New Inn. The building is apparently c 1750.

It has uncoursed rubble walls of red Devonian sandstone, all over 2' thick. The main malting floor roof is of double Roman clay tiles, slates are hung on the other roofs. All eaves have exposed rafters with no guttering. Starting on the ground floor, the main floor has nine brick piers running along the west side - these are post 1930. The main beams holding up the ceiling are all marked '192' except that at the extreme south which is marked 'IW 192 D'. At the north end is a pair of double doors; at the opposite end is a narrow doorless entrance to the south kiln. There is no pedestrian access from the floor to the east kiln or loading bay on the west.

The east kiln is the most complete. In the centre is the 5'6" square 4' high brick fireplace, with an arched ham stone lintel over the stoke-hole. A small iron door hinged on the right, and with a latch on the left, opened to reveal a long grate 1'3" wide, 2'7" deep, consisting of five fire bars. Above the fireplace rises an inverted truncated cone extending to fill the whole ceiling area (see Section A-A) constructed of lath and plaster supported by lengths of timber at 1' intervals. Inside this structure, and rising almost to ceiling height is a heat diffusing chamber consisting of bricks evenly spaced out to allow hot air to be distributed evenly inside the cone (and so avoiding a 'hot spot' in the centre immediately above the fire). Running behind and to the left of the fireplace was a brick wall with red quarry tiles on the floor. The latter were marked 'Savidge Creech', and Brian Murless has advised that this dates them to the 1850s and 1860s. This was the steep, fed with water in some way through the water pipe at 'f' and trough at 'h'. Just outside the steep, joining at the east wall, is a drain. The two windows marked 'q' are hatches with top-hinged shutter openings, used in the removal of grain from the steep. It is possible that the reason for this unusual position of the steep was to utilize some heat from the fire, as grain soaked in warm water will germinate quicker.

The south kiln is similar, but the steep only ran along the west wall, and had lost its walls, only a brick floor and ridge outlining its position. At 'v' the wall in the corner was gently scooped out; Sid remembers this was where the coal was stored. The plasterwork over the fire hole is marked 'IK 1899', and the initials 'IH' have been burnt into the wood along the base three times. Recorded on the plasterwork are four names, said to be farm workers at Blake Farm, with the date 1935, the estate

carpenter's name with the date 1944, and the name of a Women's Land Army lady with the same date! Steep wooden stairs lead from this kiln to the first floor.

The piped water system on the ground floor is of interest. The trough and water pipe in the east kiln are connected to the basin on the east side of the side of the entrance from the south kiln to malting floor. The basin on the other side of this entrance seems to have been connected with the basin in the west wall by a pipe, the latter basin having also a wooden plug allowing it to drain into the low gutter running through the loading bay (see Section B-B).

On the first floor of the malthouse there are eight brick piers similar to those on the ground floor. The stairs from the south kiln give the only access from the ground floor. There is an opening into the bay, but it is clear from the blocked window on the ground floor directly below, that the solid platform 'k' is a later addition. Stairs lead from 'k' to the top floor. The ceiling of the first floor malting floor has several small squares set in at the west end, each held by two wooden swivel catches. They must have been used to drop grain from the floor above, a device common in traditional floor maltings. The only beam to be marked on this floor is that at the south end 'F 3 W'. On the east side of the malting floor a door gives access to the first floor of the lean-to which is slightly lower in level. The north end of this floor has collapsed. At the south end of it a short wooden staircase gives access to the drying floor of the east kiln.

The top floor of the house was used for grain storage, perhaps of both the barley and the malted grain, the large wooden bins still surviving. The roof has seven trusses, placed directly on the wall plate, the first four running N-S marked 'VI', 'V' (definitely a replacement), 'IIII' and 'III'. A short set of stairs drop down to the lean-to. Two sets of stairs, hinged at the top, drop down to the two kiln drying floors, slightly lower than the storage floor. When lifted up these stairs revealed sloping shutters which could be used to drop the dried grain onto the first floor below.

Both kiln drying floors had perforated hamstone tiles, $3\frac{1}{4}$ " deep, as described in Bulletin 42. These varied in size considerably, the dimensions of one of the larger being 2'8" across, and 2'3" in length, having eight holes in each of five rows. A narrow brick ledge ran around the inside of the kiln walls, and could have been used for supporting the haircloth frame. (Sid remembers horsehair mats on frames.) Both kilns have cowls in the roof, that on the east being the most complete.

The top floor of the loading bay had access both by stairs from the platform below, and a doorway to the storage floor. A trap door (1) for sack hoist was set in the floor, with a suitably strong beam directly overhead.

With Mike Bone's help, and using Stopes' formula that the capacity of the kiln was never more than $\frac{1}{4}$, never less than of the growing floor(s), calculation was made that both the ground floor and first floor of the house were used for growing grain. It is possible that one of the lean-to floor could be included, but not both. The blocked window in

in the east kiln ground floor may point to this. As both kiln drying floors discharged the malt to the first floor, it seems the first floor of the lean-to could have been used for storage of the finished product, or the malt could have been bagged and hoisted back up to the top floor for storage at the north end.

One way the malthouse worked could have been along these lines. The barley was brought to the loading bay, raised to the top floor and stored in bins until needed. It was then brought down to one of the ground floor steepes where it was soaked in water until swollen. The steep was then drained, and the maltster got into the steep to shovel the grain through the hatches onto the malting floor.

The grain was grown on the floors, in the traditional method of heaps, and the small hand basins were utilized to sprinkle - a technique favoured in the West Country. When ready for firing, the grain was heaped on horsehair cloths over the drying floor of one of the kilns. After drying, the malt was shovelled out through the shutes to the first floor level where it was bagged and stored either in the lean-to or on the top floor.

The Halse house has several oddities. Why two kilns, for instance? The usual form was one kiln at one end of the growing floors. 1 Why was the steep placed around the kiln fire rather than the more usual siting at one end of the growing floors? Part of the answer here may be that the siting of the steep was a later alteration - the small squares set in the ceiling of the first floor may have been utilized as shutes for the barley to go into a steep originally sited at the north end of the floor (those who visited Hancocks at Wiveliscombe will remember the similar arrangement there.) The hinged wooden stairs/shutes and piped water supply to basins are also unusual features. Perhaps the reason so many experiments were tried in one building lies in the owners.

The Hancocks of Halse, in common with other 'gentlemen farmers' of the time were keen to improve husbandry. John the Younger grew and improved strains of potatoes and examined soil in drains to test seeds for fertility. His son helped to found the Bath and West Agricultural Show. Were they carrying on the tradition of John the Elder (1712-1803) who built the malthouse? The family today remember him as 'having made his money as a maltster'. His innovations must have been successful. At the end he was accorded a full ceremonial funeral.

There are references to the family living in Halse from at least 1635 (1). The earliest Land Tax Assessments (1766) show William, Thomas, Phillip and John all owing land, and from 1788 John's estate included the New Inn with a tenant landlord. The earliest direct reference to malting was in 1790 when John Hancock the Younger and his brother Richard (children of John the Elder) were called maltsters in a deed (2). In 1803 John the Younger listed 50 bushels of malt in an insurance list against the expected Napoleonic invasion (3). The 1840 Tithe Map shows the site with the same outline as the survey, and lists the owner as Richard Hurford (son of the previous Richard and also owner of the New Inn) and the occupier as John.

It is named as a malthouse, and the Apportionment makes it clear that the family were major landowners in the parish. The census gives further details. In 1841 John Hancock, aged 65, is described as 'Maltster & Farmer' and Thomas Bailey, aged 55, and his son John, aged 25 both as 'Malster'. Richard is shown as of 'Independent means'. The Bailey family were clearly doing the physical work. Thomas was described on the 1851 census as 'malting labourer', his son does not appear, having apparently moved to West Buckland where his eldest children were born (and incidentally where another farm malthouse was situated). The Hancocks are called farmers or landowners. In 1861 Thomas Bailey, now 76, 'formerly malster' and his son John, 45, 'malster' appear, John having returned to Halse some 4-6 years previously. John Donne Hancock, John's son, is described as farmer and maltster. The 1871 census mentions both John D Hancock and John Bailey in similar terms, Thomas Bailey having apparently passed on. There are no mentions of malting on the 1881 census, the last one available at present, John Bailey's widow Mary being described as a farm servant, their son James not appearing. Local directories proved unhelpful, the Hancock family being referred to as gentlemen.

There is a gap in information until early this century. Sid Beisley remembers the maltster being Frank Cornish who worked on the farm from the age of 13 (with no holidays!), dying in 1963 aged about 63. His son Harry was the estate carpenter - dying at the age of 22 from 'painters poison' - lead poisoning. Both Cornishes had a predilection for cider, and this led to one of Sid's earliest memories of the malthouse. The ciderhouse was situated in the complex to the east of the malthouse, and the cider barrels were stored in the locked lean-to of the malthouse. The men were only allowed cider in the summer months. As a small child, Sid was tempted on his way home from school on winter afternoons into the malthouse, where he was squeezed down into the store with empty cider mugs!

Sid left school in the 1930s and worked for the farm, mainly with the horses. One job was to deliver the steam coal to the south kiln, and he can remember delivering sacks of grain to Wiveliscombe which he feels were for the Wiveliscombe Brewery Malthouse. At this time he says the Halse malthouse was used for drying corn, not malting, and that it was important for this during the Second World War.

It is not known when the last actual malting took place. The farm was finally sold out of the Hancock family in 1948. For a while it was used to store apples which were barrelled up and sent to Wales. The building has also been a chicken battery house.

The malthouse would have been capable of producing quite a large quantity of malt, especially if the two kilns were used to keep a rolling programme. The Hancocks could produce plenty of barley on their considerable acreage to supply it. The question remains, who was using it? The answer that the family brewed their own beer to supply family, servants and farm-workers (though some were undoubtedly part paid in cider), even supplying the New Inn, does not really account for the size of production capable at this site. That John Hancock 'made his money as a maltster' seems to agree with the feeling that here was a business, malt being produced for sale to brewers and perhaps private families wishing to brew at home.

Not simply a case of an entrepreneur farmer using an occasional surplus to advantage. John's innovations were not, apparently, taken up by others despite his success. The survival of the malthouse in such a complete form until now is surprising, its use of horsehair cloths in this century perhaps unique.

Mary Miles

1. Somerset Records Office, DD/DV 12/2
2. " " " DD/DV/3
3. " " " DD/SF 3934

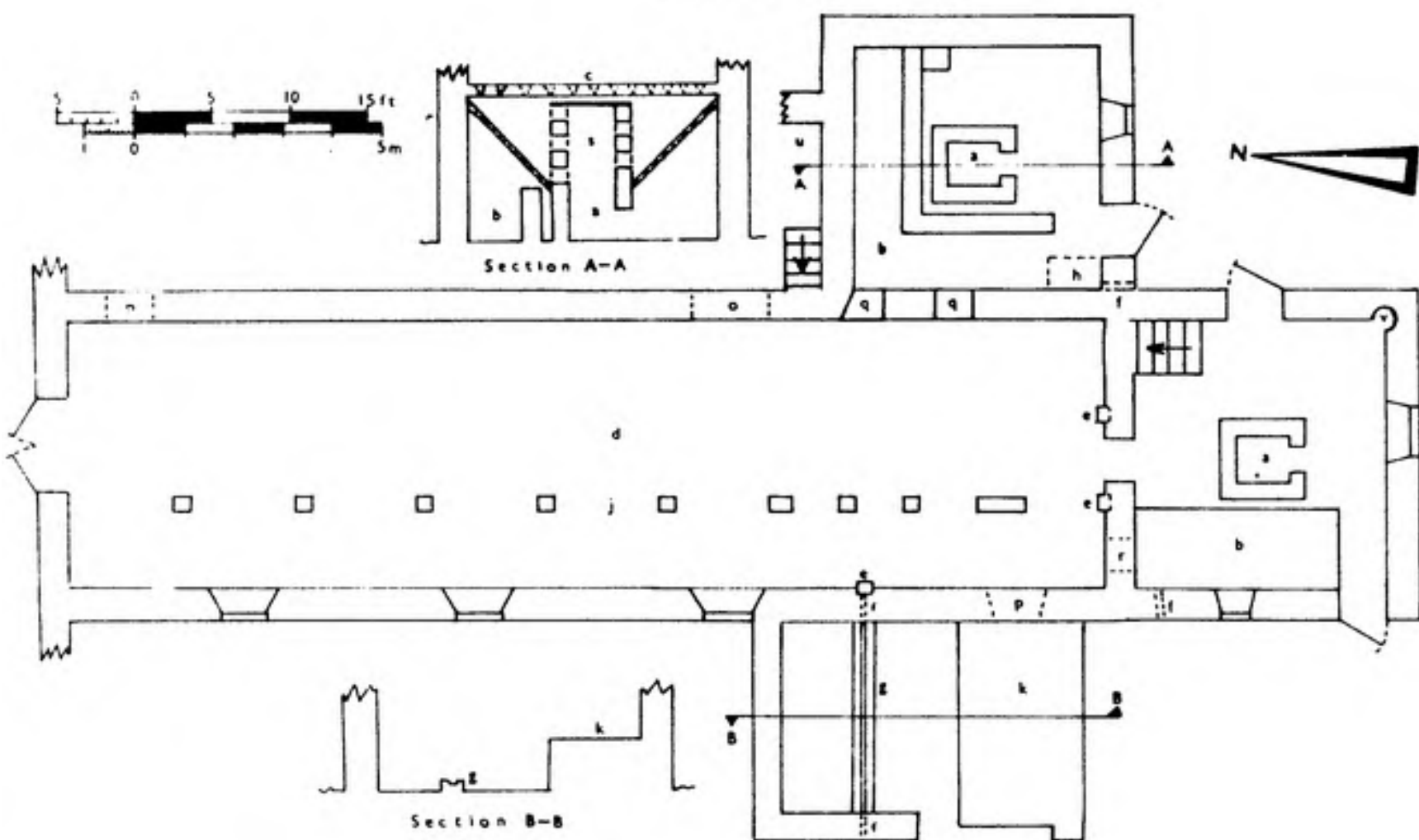
(I am indebted to Dr R Dunning for supplying me with the three references above.)

LEGEND

- a. Fireplace
- b. Steeping cistern
- c. Kiln floor
- d. Malting floor
- e. Basin 6" deep 2'10" above floor level
- f. Pipe 3½ diam
- g. Gutter formed by half 3½" pipe
- h. Trough
- j. Brick piers
- k. Platform sloping up to 1st floor
- l. Double trap-door for sack hoist
- m. Wooden bin
- n. Hinged step
- o. Blocked door
- p. Blocked window
- q. Hatch 2'8" high 2'2" above floor with top-hinged shutter opening on to malting floor
- r. Blocked hatch 2'3" high 4'0" above floor
- s. Heat diffusing chamber
- t. Weatherboarding
- u. Collapsed lean-to of two stories
- v. Coal recess

MALTHOUSE AT HALSE

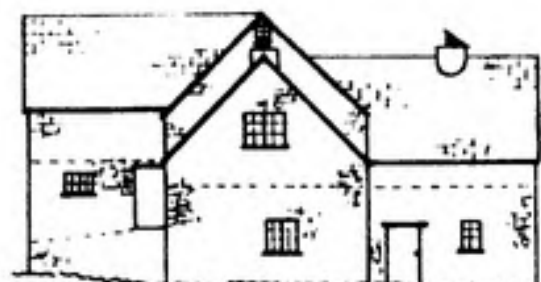
ST 140 280



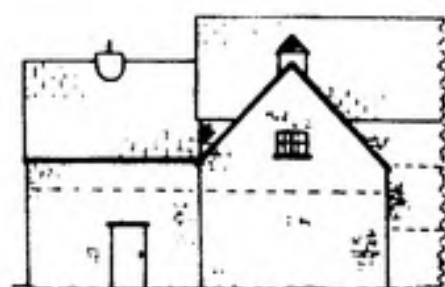
ELEVATIONS AT 1/2 SCALE



West



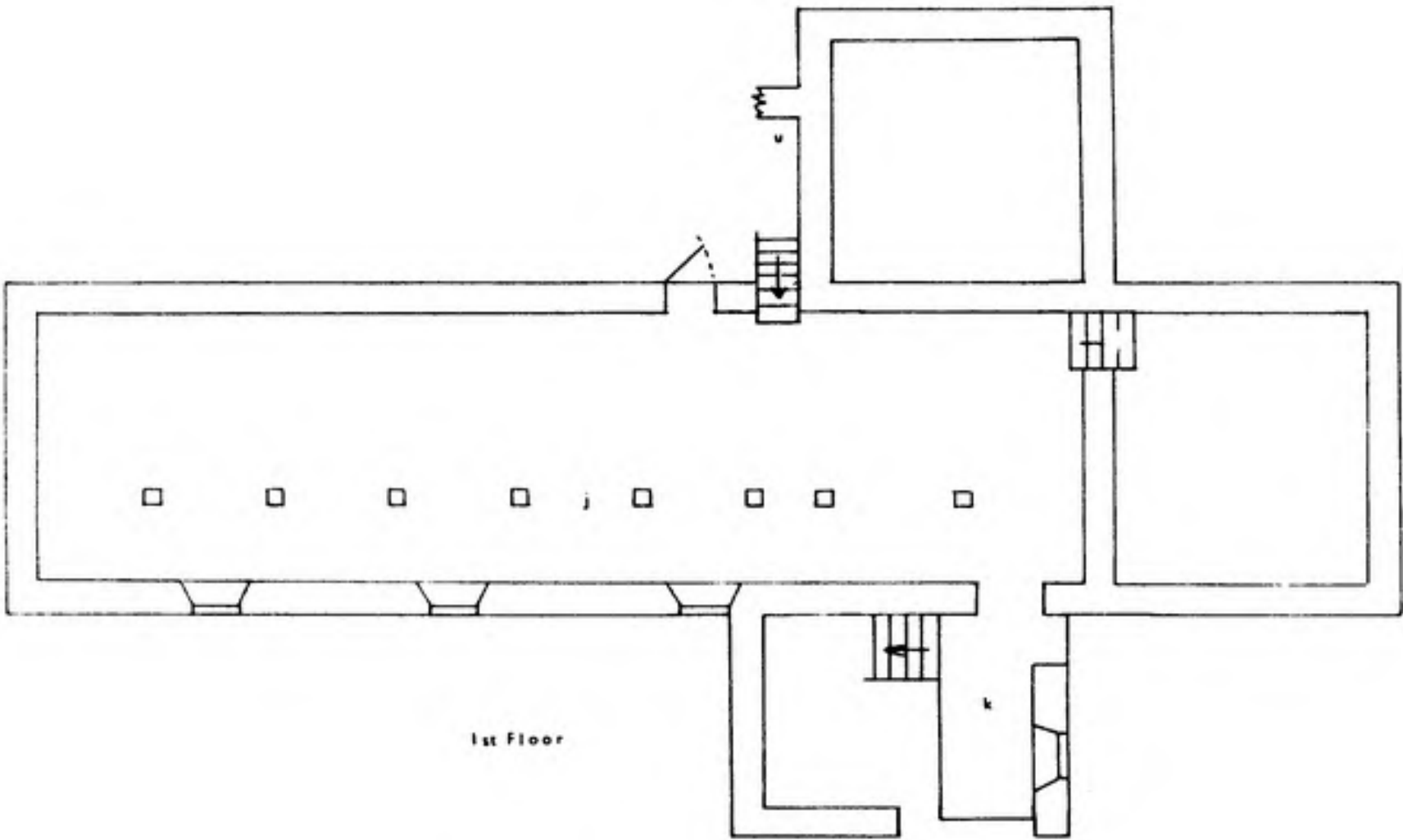
South



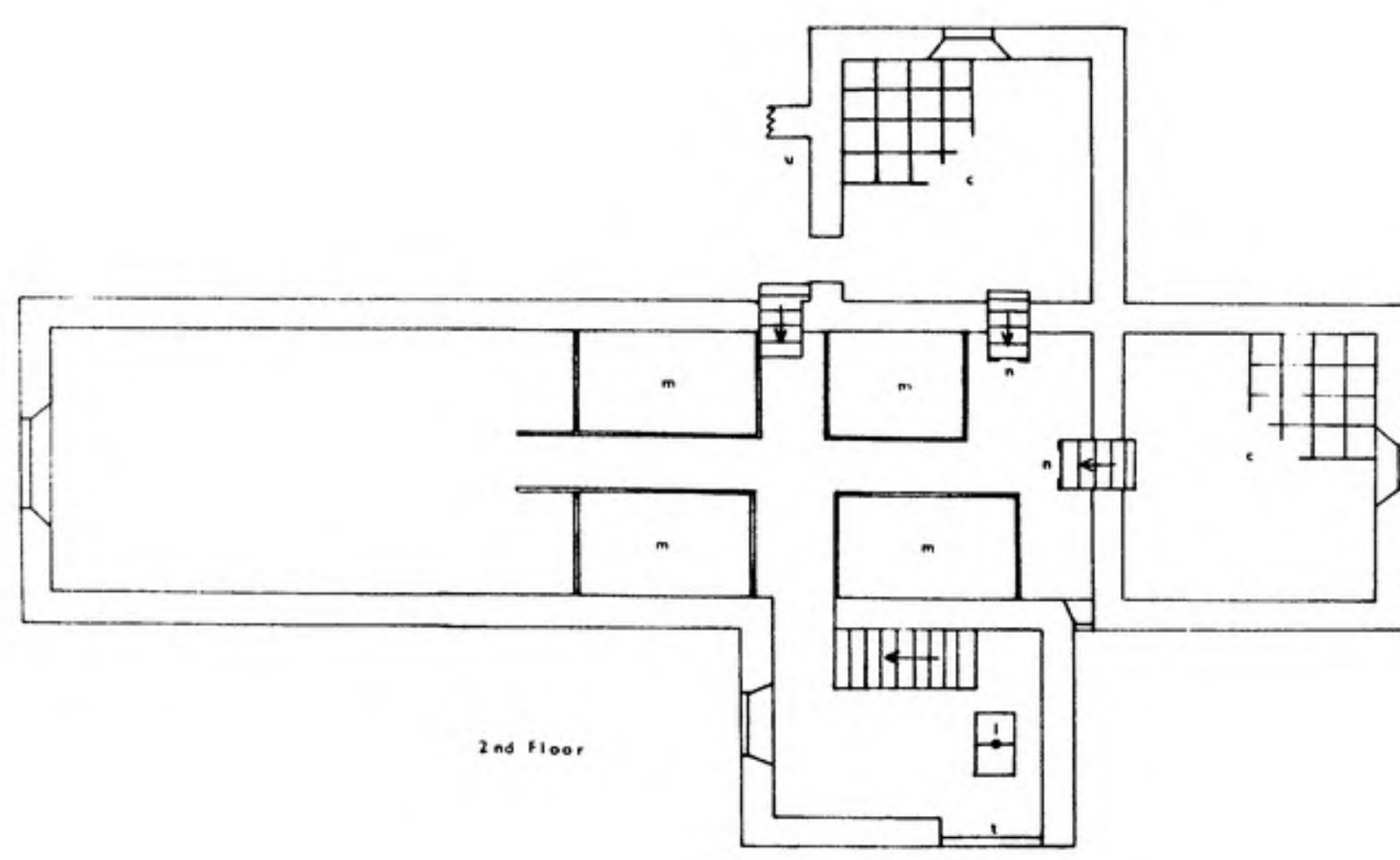
East



Location Plan
Som LXIX 4



1st Floor



2nd Floor

LIMEBURNING IN SOMERSET

Over the years SIAS members have been involved in a number of surveys of limekiln and associated research into the historical background to limeburning.⁽¹⁾ Other work on the Somerset limeburning industry has been published in BIAS publications.⁽²⁾ In addition the Sites and Monuments Record of the County Council Planning Department lists some 500 limekilns in the county, mostly based on information extracted from 2nd edition OS maps by A P Ward.⁽³⁾

It is clear from the studies carried out so far that there is a wide diversity in terms of kiln ownership, use, size, age, raw materials and fuel. It is probably because of this diversity that in spite of all the information that has been collected so far, there has been no attempt to produce a comprehensive general account of limeburning in Somerset. This seems a great pity because limeburning and its associated quarrying was one of the most widespread extractive industries in the county in the early mid 19th century and some attempt to draw all the scattered information together ought to be made. It may be, of course, that the industry is too diverse to make much sense of over the county as a whole and smaller areas may be more appropriate. Nevertheless, it is necessary to start somewhere and what I have set out to do below is to prepare a sort of check list of the major questions and issues that seem to me to require answering. I do this with the hope that it will provide further questions and diversions; that it will serve as a framework for further studies of individual kilns or groups of kilns; and also that it could eventually form 'chapter headings' of a future SIAS Survey on Limeburning in Somerset (though we may be up to Survey Number 99 by then!)

These then are the main questions and issues that I have identified:

1. Uses. Why burn lime at all? What were the major uses of lime - Building and agriculture, certainly, but were there any others? In what proportions were they and how did this vary with time? Although it was widely used in agriculture, was the beneficial effect fully understood? Why were some limes more sought after for building than others?⁽⁴⁾
2. Chemistry. What is the chemistry of the basic process? What limitation does the chemistry imposed on the construction of kilns?
For instance, I understand that for the limestone to decompose effectively it is necessary for the carbon dioxide to be removed quickly - hence a good through draught is important.⁽⁵⁾
3. Distribution. Limeliks are generally sited either on the lime-bearing outcrops or, more rarely, where there were particularly suitable transport facilities, such as ports or canals. Are there any kilns that do not fit this pattern? What geological outcrops in Somerset were used for limeburning? It wasn't just obvious limestone deposits since in parts of West Somerset lime-bearing conglomerates and even calcareous sandstones were used.⁽⁶⁾
Are there any limestone outcrops that were not used?
4. Commercial Status. It might be useful to think in terms of clarifying kilns into three groups according to their commercial status, namely:

- (i) 'Farm' kilns, or more generally, 'own-use' kilns, i.e. those erected and operated by a farmer or builder for their own use. Generally worked intermittently. Would include most farm kilns and also kilns erected specifically for a particular building project. (7)
 - (ii) 'Commercial' kilns. Lime sold on a commercial basis but associated with some other occupation, such as farming, inn keeping, etc. This type of kiln can generally be traced through trade directories. Probably worked continuously but may be intermittently.
 - (iii) 'Industrial' kilns. Where kilns were part of an industrial complex created specifically to produce lime. In later years of course this would include steel plated tower kilns and modern horizontal kilns as well as the more traditional kilns. Is this a reasonable division and is it possible to assign all kilns to these categories? If it is, it might be useful in explaining differences in construction, size or chronology. For instance, is it true to say that most farm kilns were not brick lined, or did industrial kilns only develop where there was rail access?
5. Chronology. Is there a general chronology of limeburning in Somerset, or is it too diverse and dependent on local factors such as enclosure of land, construction of transport routes, etc? When did commercial and industrial kilns develop? Were certain geological outcrops exploited earlier than others and if so why? Indeed, is it possible to date most kilns?
 6. Fuels. What fuels were used and how did this vary with time and place? Coal (Culm, or Welsh anthracite) was first used on the coast, was its use elsewhere associated with the spread of river navigations, canals and railways? When did the use of birchwood die out, were any woods coppiced especially for limeburning?
 7. Transport of lime. How far was lime transported for agricultural purposes? Were there practical limits to this? Lime was never carried by sea because of its effect on wooden ships⁽⁸⁾, but what about its effect on wooden carts? In what form was it sold? How was quicklime protected from rain? What is known about the prices of lime?
 8. Types of kiln. Is there a pattern in terms of size, construction, shape, etc? If there is, does it relate to age, commercial status, or location? Are there recognizable localized types, perhaps built by a single builder? What about primitive kilns of the 'hollow-in-ground' variety⁽⁹⁾; have any been recognized in Somerset? Why were kilns often built in pairs?
 9. Operation of kilns. How early were kilns operated, how were they lit, how were they filled? What was the difference in operating methods between continuous and intermittent kilns? There are still people about who remember working limekilns and their recollections will be essential in answering these sort of queries; but it ought to be done soon before it is too late.

That then is my checklist of issues to be investigated. I am well aware that for many limekilns it will be impossible to discover much information but recent articles in the Bulletin by Margaret Anderson and Brian Murless

have shown what can be done. It is only by further local studies of this sort that it will be possible to appreciate the industry as a whole and, practising what I preach, I have been looking at limeburning in parish of Corfe, the result of which will be in a future bulletin.

References:

1. Bathpool, West Monkton - SIAS Bulletin No 1
Dunball, Puriton - SIAS Bulletin No 15
Evercreech - SIAS Bulletin Nos 29 and 30
Castle Roche, Wiveliscombe - SIAS Bulletin Nos 36 and 38
Thurlbear Wood, Orchard Portman - SIAS Bulletin Nos 31 and 38
Firepool, Taunton - SIAS Bulletin No 41 - Ann
Tengore, Lane, Long Sutton - SIAS Bulletin Nos 43 and 44 - Brian Murless
Stoke St Mary - SIAS Bulletin No 43 - Margaret Anderson
Newland, Exford - SIAS Journal No 2 - D W Warren
Holywell Quarries, Fitzhead - SIAS Journal No 1 - A P Ward
Milverton - SIAS Journal No 1
2. E Taylor, Limekilns on Mendip, Bristol Industrial Archaeology Society Journal No 18, 1985
3. W Minchinton, A Limekiln Miscellany, The South West and South Wales, Exetyer 1A Group, 1984
4. B Norman, Tales of Watchet Harbour, 1985 - Smeaton apparently specifically requested Watchet lime when building the Eddystone Lighthouse.
5. Information received from Dr Stafford Linsley, Univer of Newcastle-upon-Tyne.
6. Geology of the country around Taunton and the Quantock Hills, British Geological Survey, 1985.
7. Large building often had kilns erected solely for the purpose of providing lime for their construction, e.g. Bowes Museum, 1869, quoted in F Atkinson, Industrial Archaeology of North East England, 1974.
8. K Hudson, Industrial Archaeology - A New Introduction, 1963 - burnt lime corrodes timber.
9. A Rentrick, Industrial Archaeology, 1972 - these sort of kilns were known as 'Pye-kilns'.

PETER DANIEL

W.E.T. COACH TRIP

A trip is being organized to the Mid Hants Railway and the Hollycombe Collection. It will take place on Sunday, 20 September, as on this day the Mid Hants will be holding its 10th anniversary celebrations and the Hollycombe Collection their narrow gauge railway event. The Mid Hants line offers an interesting run through the Hampshire countryside from Alton to Alresford with a loco depot at Ropley providing an interesting break in the journey. The Hollycombe Collection includes traction engines, steam driven galloping horses, narrow gauge railways and extensive gardens.

The cost will depend on numbers going. If you are interested please ring Keith Hooper on Street 42137 during working hours as soon as possible.

CIRCULAR STRUCTURE AT MILVERTON

The use of this structure was in doubt (Bulletin No 43) but when it was demolished traces of blackened lime plaster was discovered on the interior surfaces demonstrating that it was used as a curing house, the iron doored window being to allow the smoke to escape when required. The ash from the smouldering wood, as a by-product, could have been used in soap making. Incidentally, its re-erection has been most skillfully and sympathetically done and I take back my previous remarks on this matter.

D.W.

CASTLE HOUSE IN QUEEN STREET. BRIDGWATER

Castle House, in Queen Street, Bridgwater, is an interesting 'showcase' of cement and clayware products. If its reputed date of c 1851 is correct, then this represents a very early, and innovative, use of these materials. The building, listed Grade II, is currently the subject of a planning application for conversion to a wine bar; it seems likely that the external facades, which include a variety of precast concrete blocks, will remain, but that the interior will be gutted. Some of the floors appear to consist of lightweight concrete over horizontal, reinforced brickwork panels, supported on reinforced brickwork beams, an intriguing and possibly unique form of construction. Brian Murless is researching the Board and Ackerman families, particularly their involvement in the cement industry and their connection with Castle House.

David Greenfield

SIAS AUTUMN PROGRAMME, OCTOBER-DECEMBER 1987

Wed, 14 Oct	South Somerset Water Mills.
7.30 pm	Ron Gilson
Wed, 28 Oct	Building The National Waterways Museum.
7.30 pm	Tony Conder
Wed, 11 Nov	John Heathcoat and Tiverton.
7.30 pm	Alan Voce
Wed, 25 Nov	Gunpowder - A Forgotten Industry.
7.30 pm	Brenda Buchanan
Wed, 9 Dec	Members evening.
7.30 pm	

All meetings will be held in West Monkton Village Hall.

Other meetings

Sat, 3 Oct Dartington IA Day

Sat, 14 Nov Symposium on Iron Mining on the Brendons.
Minehead
With the Exmoor Society

Sandy will have details of both meetings.

WINDMILLS AT SHAPWICK

In conclusion to his article in Journal 1 on the dramatic demise of a post mill at Shapwick, Sandy Buchanan commented 'The fact that we know more about the ancient structure than about its successor is a little ironic.'¹

The successor referred to was a stone tower mill in the same parish said to have had a working life of only about 24 years². The mystery surrounding this windmill has now been partly uncovered by the discovery that it too met an untimely and similarly sudden end.

'On Monday night, a wind grist mill, the property of George Warry, Esq, was destroyed by fire and a quantity of wheat and potatoes were consumed. The property is insured at the office of Mr Baker, the agent of the West of England Insurance Company.'³

Perhaps in time further evidence will appear on the amount of compensation paid and the reason why this mill was never reconstructed but remained as a few courses of lias blocks.⁴

Sources:

- 1 Buchanan, C A, Shapwick Windmill, Jnl Som Ind Arch Soc, 1 (1975) 16-17
2. Coulthard, A J and M Watts, Windmills of Somerset (Research Pub Co 1978) 58-59
- 3 Bridgwater Times 1856 30 October
- 4 Watts, M, Somerset Windmills (Agraphicus Pub, 1975) 7-8