

BULLETIN 1.5

1975

MUSEUM DEVELOPMENTS

Herefordshire Waterworks Museum, 'the first waterworks museum in Europe' was opened at Broomy Hill Pumping Station, Hereford on 6 April by Lord Brecon. Not only the two vertical pumping engines installed by Worth Mackenzie of Stockton on Tees at the turn of the century have been preserved, but also the majority of the original 1856 waterworks — filter beds, reservoir, and an Italianate water tower of 1883. The original beam pumping engines were removed some years ago, but the space will be filled with other water works equipment mainly from Herefordshire, including gas, oil, petrol and electric-powered pumps, and a Cornish pumping engine. It is proposed to construct a 2ft gauge railway, of the type used in waterworks to supply the filter beds with fresh sand and removal of the dirty medium, which will convey visitors around the site and down to an inlet point on the River Wye. It is hoped to have the Worth Mackenzie engines (a vertical type of 1895 and a two-cylindered engine of 1906) in steam before long, with the help of a flat-fronted hand-fired Lancashire boiler which survives on the site. But only part of the total complex is presently open to the public and much remains to be done. Offers of help or working parties will be welcomed by J. L. Townsend of Didley Cottage, New Mills, Clehonger, Hereford, telephone Madley 644.

The Kew Bridge Engine Trust launched a public appeal recently to raise £64,000 to develop the Kew Bridge Station to be held on lease from the Thames Water Authority as a working museum of London's water supply. The jewels in Kew's crown are surely the magnificent 100" Cornish engine by Harveys of Hayle (the biggest in Britain) and the Maudslay engine of 1838, converted to the Cornish principle in 1848 and now the only Maudslay engine known to survive anywhere. Most of the original boilers were scrapped soon after pumping ceased in 1944, but with remarkable foresight the Metropolitan Water Board resisted the threatened metamorphosis of their engines into Spitfires, and designated Kew Bridge a museum station. The success and popularity of the steam weekends at Crofton Pumping Station on the Kennet and Avon Canal have encouraged the committee planning the developments at Kew Bridge to get at least some of the monster engines back in steam; when running 'light' even the 100" engine's appetite for steam will be moderate, and a boiler has recently been acquired from a hospital in Berkshire to

provide part of the required steam facility. It is hoped to have the smallest and earliest of the four beam engines (Boulton and Watt, 1820) in steam by October. Further details from the Trust Secretary, Nick Reynolds, 11 The Vinyard, Richmond, Surrey. Telephone 01-948-1577.

The first phase of a new industrial museum at Park Bridge, Ashton under Lyne, Manchester, was opened early in April. In the valley of the River Medlock which flows through Park Bridge are a number of important sites including an engine house thought to have housed a Newcomen engine which drained a coal mine from 1705, and Samuel Lees' ironworks of 1786, which made rollers for textile machinery but itself became a cotton mill in 1886. The new museum which is sponsored by the Medlock and Tame Valley Conservation Association, is in a stable block with a display of old photographs of Park Bridge, an aquarium containing freshwater fish from the Medlock and Tame Valleys and other natural history material. The Society plans to obtain larger premises to display some of the larger industrial items presently in store. It is hoped that the 500 h.p. cross-compound vertical steam engine from Hardman and Ingham's Diamond Ropeworks at Royton near Oldham may eventually be displayed there for it was built at nearby Guide Bridge by Scott and Hodgson in 1912. Just as most of the larger holes in the English countryside are supposed to have been dug by French prisoners of war (perhaps we are ashamed of having worked so hard) so most of the steam engines in mills and factories seem to have been intended for ships of some sort: in this particular case the Scott and Hodgson two-crank engine, with a 12ft diameter flywheel and 14 rope grooves, is locally described as having been built for a tugboat. Further details of the Park Bridge museum project from Mrs Caroline Blane, Westerhill House, Park Bridge, Ashton under Lyne, Manchester. Tel 061-330-1017.

ETRURIA, STOKE ON TRENT

Good news from the Potteries. The City of Stoke on Trent has decided to bring back life to this derelict part of the city. The scheme, which will be done in conjunction with British Waterways and private developers involves land reclamation the establishment of a canal museum where the Caldron Canal meets the Trent and Mersey Canal, and the preservation and restoration to working order of Shirley's Etruscan Bone Mill. The location was visited by delegates to last year's AIA Conference at Keele, and is well known to people interested in Industrial Archaeology. The local