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Rolt Memorial Fellowship at Bath

Many hundreds of those now actively engaged in industrial archaeology will acknowledge that their palate for the subject was first sharpened by the writings of L T C Rolt. Presidency of the AIA came to Rolt at the end of a very full life engaged both in writing about engineering and in practising it, as readers of the two volumes of his biography will know. As well as playing a role in generating public interest in, and appreciation of, inland waterways, classic motor cars and narrow gauge railways, Tom Rolt wrote a sequence of biographies, notably of Telford, I K Brunel and the Stephensons which are unlikely ever to be bettered, however, much additional source material may become available to future biographers.

To commemorate his outstanding contributions to the history of technology, the University of Bath, which bestowed an honorary degree on Rolt in 1973, will establish a Fellowship in his memory. The first Rolt Memorial Fellow will be appointed this year, and applications are now invited from mature scholars who could use this opportunity to research some aspect of engineering or transport history. The successful applicant, who will normally be appointed for a year in the first instance will have the status of a member of the University, although receiving no salary. The resources of the Fellowship Fund will be available to cover costs of travelling, copying, printing etc, up to a ceiling of £500 per annum. The Rolt Fellow will be expected to bring his work to publication stage with the help of the Fund, and of the research facilities of the University of Bath. His research programme will be under the general direction of the Director of the Centre for the Study of the History of Technology within the University, and he will be encouraged to deliver a public lecture during the tenure of his Fellowship.

Further details are available from the Director of the CSHT, University of Bath, Claverton Down, Bath BA2 7AY.

Applications for the first appointment will close on 28 February 1978.

News items, book notices and general information about Societies activities etc should be sent to the AIA Bulletin Editor; John Robinson, Fund for the Preservation of Technological Material, The Science Museum, South Kensington, London SW7 2DD.

Save 'John & Michael' for Lincolnshire. Steam ploughing and Lincolnshire have been closely connected since 1850 when Lord Willoughby d'Eresby developed, on his Grimsthorpe estates, one of the first successful methods of harnessing steam power to cultivation. Lord Willoughby's steam ploughing tackle was exhibited at the Great Exhibition in 1851 and was seen by John Fowler. Shortly afterwards Fowler developed his own steam ploughing system which became, from 1860 onwards, the most successful system used in the country.

Steam ploughing was readily adopted by Lincolnshire farmers whose large relatively flat fields were ideally suited to this form of cultivation. Surprisingly, none of the Lincolnshire steam engineers developed ploughing tackle and Fowler's system was used almost exclusively. The county at one time had approximately 20% of all the ploughing engines in use in England. It was also the home of the country's largest steam ploughing contractors — Ward & Dale of Sleaford — who in 1910 owned 24 complete sets of ploughing tackle.

In view of its importance to the history of agriculture in Lincolnshire a set of steam ploughing tackle has been high on the 'shopping list' of the County Museum Service, who for some years have been building up a significant collection of machinery, tools and records illustrating the development of agriculture in the area. A complete set of tackle has now been found including the two steam engines, balance plough, the living van and water cart. All are in original condition and, with minor restoration, ready for the road. This set

is unique for its completeness and for its Lincolnshire connections. There will never be another chance to acquire such a good and appropriate set for the County.

The engines were bought from Fowlers of Leeds in 1925 by Mr H Carter of Tydd Manor, Nr Holbeach, and were named 'John' and 'Michael' after his two sons. They were used to on Mr Carter's farms in the Fens until 1945.

They were then purchased by the present owner, Mr H Thorlby of Evedon, Nr Sleaford. Mr Thorlby was one of the last people in the county to use steam tackle and this particular set remained in use until 1965.

Mr Thorlby has now decided to sell the tackle and has had offers from all over the country. He has agreed to give the County Museum Service the chance to raise the money to keep this important part of Lincolnshire's history in the county. The money must be found by 31st January 1978.

The Friends of Lincoln Libraries, Museum and Art Gallery have, therefore, launched an appeal to raise £5,000 towards the total purchase price of £14,000.

Further details may be obtained from Mrs C M Wilson, Museum of Lincolnshire Life, Burton Road, Lincoln. Telephone Lincoln 28448.

Donations should be sent to: Mr J J B Wright National Westminster Bank, 97 High Street, Lincoln.

