

Just for the Record!

The disastrously ill-publicised CBA meeting on recording industrial sites held in London last November looks like having repercussions. Those grass-root industrial archaeologists amongst us (and there are far more than the CBA seem to realise) who have lost faith in the Industrial Monuments Survey can be heartened by the comments of such men as John Crompton, reproduced below, and the infectious enthusiasm of those AIA Affiliated Society members who crowded into the lecture room at Coalport Museum a few weeks ago to spend half their precious discussion time debating the subject.

As Marilyn Palmer reports (also below) local society members from as far apart as Durham, East Anglia and Exeter were more than just concerned about the lack of leadership given by the old established archaeological organisations, and gave many examples of what can be achieved by practical people intent on doing an old-fashioned, honest job-of-work uninhibited by academic considerations. They finally elected a working party to co-ordinate an AIA initiative on the subject.

No one doubts that this will be a difficult task, but, equally, no one doubted that it must be tackled at once, with the dual objectives of producing a workable method of coping with an infinite variety of industrial sites and making all the information collected quickly retrievable to every serious student of industrial archaeology.

As John Crompton makes plain, much good can, indeed **must**, come out of this affair and already one happy outcome is the limited public availability of Keith Falconer and Geoffrey Hay's review. It is a first class document and it is odd to realise that it is due to the CBA's lack of pre-meeting planning (they produced just enough copies for the anticipated attendance) that it is able to arrive on the bookshelves of the industrial archaeology working class.

The Crisis in Recording Industrial Monuments. This shock statement was chosen as the title of a one-day meeting organised by the CBA Industrial Archaeology Committee on Saturday November 7th last. The title might have had a considerable impact if publicity for the event had approached the quality of the title or indeed the contents of the meeting; as it was, some twenty-eight people presented themselves

at Fortress House, including (luckily?) the eight speakers.

Neil Cossons introduced the meeting by outlining the rise, and the decline, of recording as a strong feature on industrial archaeology's activities. He pointed out that early enthusiasms had been side-stepped into preservation activity, as fieldworkers recognised the horrifying rate at which industrial sites and objects had been disappearing in the 1950s and 60s. Thus preservation had become the significant achievement of industrial archaeology, and the objectives of recording had been neglected in consequence. There had never been enough active fieldworkers in recording; there had never been sufficient professional and academic leadership to advise on methods and standards; perhaps the new involvement of the Royal Commission would be able to provide that leadership.

These opening remarks were followed by a series of presentations on what has been, and is being done, in different parts of the land. From a perusal of the programme one would have expected to hear a justification for, progress reports on, and some tips on methods for the recording of industrial monuments. What was even more obvious was (and the content of the talks underlined it!) that almost all the progress has been seen in Scotland and Wales, and hardly any at all in England. The meeting heard from John Hume of the enormous number of sites which had disappeared in Glasgow and elsewhere, many before they could be recorded or even recognised; but it also saw many examples of the recording which had been done in the same areas. Later many more examples from the impressive work of the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland, and the Scottish Industrial Monuments Survey, were detailed by Geoffrey Hay and John Hume respectively. Stephen Hughes gave an impressive report on the work of the Royal Commission on Ancient and Historical Monuments in Wales, chiefly in the Swansea area and bearing the promise of some re-writing of the standard industrial histories; and Douglas Hague spoke in his inimitable manner of the ideas behind the format which had been adopted in Wales for the written and photographic records. Against these solid achievements the presentation of English cases was thin, to say the least. No criticism is intended of Ron Fitzgerald's justification for the recording of Yorkshire mill structures (indeed, what criticism could there be of the author of 'Liverpool Road Station, Manchester', a book

rightly held up as the finest of examples of IA recording), nor of Kenneth Major's obvious diffidence in finding that he was preaching to just a few of the converted, on the value of recording in planning and architecture.

Very different from all these quick-fire cornucopias of records and achievement was the contribution of Dr Peter Fowler, Secretary of the (English) Royal Commission on Historical Monuments. His role was not to list the achievements of survey officers, but to initiate discussion on how his organisation could best assist in solving the crisis which seemed to be overwhelmingly an English one. He charted the progress by which the RCHM had moved towards being involved in industrial sites — the abandonment of a terminal date, the appointment in 1978 of a Commissioner representing IA (Angus Buchanan), the acceptance of responsibility for the Industrial Monuments Survey and its staff in 1980, and the publication of Ron Fitzgerald's record mentioned above. This ought to be an on-going process, though with the continuing restrictions on funding and resources, a good deal would depend on the participation of amateurs whose records reached the levels of expertise required by the Commission. He hoped that the Commission would be able to encourage these standards by providing facilities and guidance on the writing up of records (and their publication through HMSO), and possibly by attaching volunteers to expert survey staff to 'learn the trade'. There was a warning too: Dr Fowler felt that IA had problems because it tried to be different from mainstream archaeology and history, and that if the task of recording is ever to be tackled successfully, IA will have to get itself organised!

This was the only individual contribution which led on into a question session, and there was quite a discussion on the present state of the National Monuments Record, and the best formats for writing up and depositing records. The occasion was marked by the publication, at £2.75 per copy, of 'The Recording of Industrial Sites: a Review', edited by Keith Falconer and Geoffrey Hay on behalf of the CBA IA Research Committee. This deals with three levels of recording, namely, 'location survey', 'survey sheet recording' (with several different sheet formats designed by different groups for different purposes), and 'detail surveys' (with examples of written, sketched, photographic, and measured drawing records); and rounds off with general guidance on methods of recording, compilation, and deposition of

the results. From this publication, and from the discussion, it emerged that the CBA IA Record Cards had failed through one reason or another to produce a satisfactory systematic record of industrial sites, and that decisions were being made not to encourage it any further, nor to support it in future with any of the scarce resources available to the Commission.

This was undoubtedly a most important meeting, and it was quite disgraceful that it should have been so poorly publicised, and so badly attended (the writer received notification four days before the event — luckily he had already planned to be in London, for less pressing purposes, on the right day); Peter Fowler's criticism was well justified in the circumstances. Why is it — I ask as a member of AIA — that members of the CBA committee did not pass on information through the AIA Council, on which they also serve? We recognise that the present government seems to be developing a policy of very short consultation periods (witness the debate on the new Historic Monuments quango); clearly, it is necessary that all institutions pull together. One point which took nearly all the participants by surprise was news that the DoE wished to speed up the rate of 'listing' buildings so that the process is complete by 1984 — a significant date? It is also apparent that the assumption of responsibility for the Industrial Monuments Survey by the RCHM will mean changes in the way the IMS operates. Peter Fowler made it clear that these changes could be beneficial through improved resources and co-operation in formulating policies and standards. Others may feel that the planned demise of the CBA record card will be, in spite of its shortcomings, a retrograde step. Whatever the viewpoint, it is clear that this meeting will prove to have been important and successful only if it leads to more meetings (with fewer lectures and more discussion time, please) out of which a policy for recording can develop, or at which a policy can be imposed by those who will lead IA through the crisis in recording which we all acknowledge.

John Crompton

Affiliated Societies. Over 30 local industrial archaeology societies are now affiliated to the AIA, and it now represents a far wider spectrum of IA interests throughout the country than ever before. A questionnaire will shortly be circulated which, among other things, will try to determine the total membership of societies affiliated to AIA.

A working weekend was held at Ironbridge from 26th — 28th March and Societies were invited to suggest topics for discussion. These included the financing of societies, and preservation schemes, co-operation with other local history societies, procedures relating to listed buildings and methods of recording industrial sites and buildings. A full report of the discussion will appear in the next AIA Bulletin, but there were several practical issues raised in the concluding forum on which society representatives can take immediate action.

1. It was agreed that David Palmer, assisted by members of the Council, should draw up a recording proforma or checklist of points to note when recording industrial sites or buildings. There is possibly no one standard scheme that can be used but society representatives thought that the AIA should suggest how they could begin. David would be grateful if societies which have already devised their own record card would send him a copy at

the address below.

2. AIA will produce a list of grant sources available for privately sponsored preservation schemes, and this will be available to affiliated societies. The AIA would like to hear of the use societies are making of the Manpower Services Commission schemes. If your society has used the resources of MSC, would you write a brief account of the successes and drawbacks you have experienced for publication in AIA Bulletin for the information of other societies?
3. It was also suggested that the contents of local society journals and other publications should be made known to affiliated societies who might wish to purchase one another's journals. Would you therefore let me know what you have published recently, with a brief survey of contents, the price and from whom the journal can be obtained?
4. A list is being produced of members of AIA who are prepared to lecture to local groups on IA topics. This was intended to be confined to individual members of AIA, but if secretaries of affiliated societies would like to suggest additions to the list from among their own members, they are asked to contact David Palmer

Regional Conferences are proving increasingly popular. They are held on a single day basis once or twice a year in a growing number of regions in England and Wales.

Affiliated society and regional conference secretaries are asked to let the liaison officer know about these and other activities of interest generally to AIA members, on a regular basis for publication in AIA Bulletin. The deadlines are the last days of February, May, August and November for publication and distribution two months later, so please do give AIA members plenty of notice of your activities.

Marilyn Palmer

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Burton-on-Trent, Staffs.*

David Viner, a member and Curator of the Corinium Museum of Cirencester, has sent in the following report (April 1982):— The conservation of Cotswold buildings has now a well-established tradition of local authority involvement and in recent years the range has extended to buildings of IA interest.

Cirencester Town Station. Since Cotswold District Council's application to demolish this listed building was refused after a public enquiry in 1979 (at which the Society was represented) the Council has undertaken over £20,000 worth of remedial work to the roof and upper floors, and the major part of the building has now been let off as a small printing works.

Opened in 1841 and almost certainly designed in Brunel's office, Cirencester Town Station was built as a tall, narrow building, intended as a vertical complement to the horizontal overall roof, which disappeared as early as c.1874. As a result, the station now looks odd to many observers, particularly as it seems doomed to stand in a sea of tarmac forming the town's not altogether successful bus station.

However, it now appears to be safe for the next five years at least, and any future re-development of the site must include consideration of this interesting building, which remains one of the earliest surviving Brunel-period structures on the ex-GWR system.

Research into the history of the branch is continuing, including measured surveys of the



Cirencester Town station

station building completed last year.

Cirencester Workhouse and Lock-Up. Meanwhile, a substantial conservation programme has recently been completed on one of the town's more neglected historic buildings. The former workhouse in Querns Lane (formerly Workhouse Lane) has been converted into the headquarters building of Cotswold District Council, and was opened by new local resident HRH Prince Charles in May 1981.

Less happy has been the history of the 'dumpling house' or lock-up in the grounds of the workhouse. It is a simple ashlar-faced stone structure with a distinctive domed stone roof and provided two lock-up cells, with a ground floor area of 24 sq metres. In construction it is believed to be 18th century although this part of the story remains elusive; the lock-up originally stood elsewhere in Cirencester, doing service for overnight and casual wrong-doers in the days before a town police force.

When the workhouse was opened, it was moved to the new site to serve as a 'refractory ward' or punishment cell for inmates; and in later days, it served as the mortuary for the hospital.

Largely because of its condition and anticipated costs of repair, the Council reluctantly applied for permission to demolish the lock-up, which was quickly refused by the Department of the Environment. In the meantime, a new housing block has been constructed close by and this now presents a problem of preservation to the authority. Accepting the decision, the Council has been seeking a new use for this interesting building, compatible with



The punishment cell

its position and history — perhaps a small interpretation centre for the conservation project as a whole?

At its March 1982 meeting the authority accepted the tender of John Hopkins & Sons, master masons of Tewkesbury, to restore the lock-up for c.£8,000 and a fund-raising campaign is currently under way. Comments from readers on the use and preservation of lock-ups elsewhere in Britain would be welcomed by David Viner for comparison and possible inclusion in the exhibition.

Underground Canals and Canal Mills. Stephen Hughes Industrial Archaeological Investigator for the Royal Commission on Ancient and Historical Monuments in Wales would be interested in collating information on examples of these types of Industrial Monuments both in Britain and overseas.

Two parts of an article by him on the



Tower Bridge, and its associated machinery, is on the itinerary for one of the field trips for this September's AIA Conference to be held at Imperial College, South Kensington from Friday 10th to Sunday 12th. GLIAS are organising and late bookings **will not be able to be accepted.** So act now and get yours in to Brenda Innes, GLIAS, 9a Upper Park Road, Bromley, Kent, telephone 01-460 1416. The total fee for everything is £48 00. There is a non-residential fee of £30.00 and **all** bookings with full conference fee **MUST** be with Brenda by Wednesday 30th June.



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Cyfartha canal level remains Merthyr Tydfil. SO 0430-0536

subject of underground canals were published in Volume 5 of the *Industrial Archaeology Review* and were preceded by the appearance of an article by the same author summarising the known number and probable origins of such canals (*Journal of the Railway and Canal Historical Society, Volume XXVII, No 2, 1981*). Stephen Hughes has much unpublished material on underground canals all over the British Isles and will be publishing a further article in the *RCHS Journal*. This will summarise known details of all the canals and examine the reliability of sources of information for the Welsh canals of the 1740s and 1750s that probably preceded the widely publicised underground complex at Worsley. Help would particularly be appreciated in listing or recording the extant remains of such features or of locating original sections or plans. He would acknowledge information on any other examples and can be contacted at: Royal Commission on Ancient Monuments in Wales, Edleston House, Queens Road, Aberystwyth, Dyfed, SY23 2HP.

There was someone out there listening. Our appeal in 9/2 brought a prompt and heartening response from Tony Brewis, Editor of the internationally known publication *Mining Magazine* who admitted to experiencing the same feeling at times. With a circulation of 10,000 and an estimated readership of 45,000 spread worldwide he says 'You'd think there would be some who would write in and comment. Well **some** do, but for the most part the silence is deafening'.

The well-known saying, 'It takes a busy man to tackle an extra job' seems to be proved right again for Tony, apart from taking the trouble to give us a small measure of moral support, sent us a fascinating piece about a mining 'museum' in South America which we reproduce below:

At the site of the section of Panamerican Highway which runs between Vallenar and Copiapo in Chile, there is a sign erected by the local regional tourist board inviting travellers to visit Chanarcillo, which lies some 14 km east of the main road. There, it announces, is a

large silver deposit discovered in 1832 by a woodcutter, Juan Godoy. (Sr Godoy was either lost, or a very efficient woodcutter, as there is not a tree to be seen anywhere in this desert locality). 'The resulting mines', it says 'played a significant part in the national economy until the year 1888, when they were inundated. Today, Chanarcillo shows its interesting ruins to visitors: come to see it'.

In practise, what the visitor now finds is not only a fascinating historical site, with innumerable adits running into the mountain on at least six vein systems (Chanarcillo is sometimes referred to as 'The Swiss Cheese') the foundations of old processing plants and smelters and the clearly-discernible street layout of a ghost town which once housed over a thousand workers and their families, but a very active and thriving present-day operation run by the Compania Minera Rio Huasco.

Some 140 men are brought by bus from the towns of Frierina, Vallenar and Copiapo (ie in some cases from over 100 km away) to live in the mine camp on a bachelor basis from Monday to Saturday. The men work a two-shift system, and for the time being virtually all mineral treated is reclaimed by front-end loaders from old surface waste dumps. The mineralised area is divided into a number of separate claims and the ore to be processed is fed to one of a number of crushing and screening plants located around the hill, from which it is trucked to a stockpile area where material from each section is stored separately, to be treated in the processing plant on a toll basis.

The plant has six ball mills of various sizes which operate in closed circuit with cyclones, the overflow going to a two-stage flotation circuit. Tailings pass to a settling pond whence water is recovered for re-use, while the concentrates pass to open-air pans to dry off in the sun.

The average daily throughput of ore is said to be 160 t.

Some 28 t/d of water are required to support the operation, of which 12 t is obtained from a pump installed in one of the old shafts, and the other 16 t is brought by tanker lorry a distance of 72 km from Copiapo. The old workings have been effectively dewatered to a depth of 400m, but re-entry to most of the underground sections is not possible principally because of the extensive damage done over the past century by earth tremors.

There is, however, abundant surface material still available to support the current level of operations for some time to come.

Furthermore he has promised us the odd picture and threatened us with news of a 1904 compressed air measuring device made by Fraser and Chalmers of Erith and now reposing in a Johannesburg museum. We are delighted and resuscitated.

Welsh Mines Society. Those interested in the mining history of Wales may wish to join the Welsh Mines Society which is concerned with all aspects of mining and its related industrial archaeology. Membership now stands at 117 and the Secretary, David Bick, of the Pound House, Newent, Glos GL18 1PS would be happy to supply you with details of the Society on receipt of a stamped addressed envelope. Membership of the Society is only £1.00 and for this one receives a fascinating newsletter.