

Carry on Ribblesdale

There is a salutary lesson to be learned from the splendid news that British Rail had decided to keep open the **Settle-Carlisle cross-country Pennine route** for at least the next five years. This is that organised public protest, supported by sound, un-emotive arguments and well-marshalled and collated objections does work.

British Rail announced the closure plans in December 1983 and later widened the scope of the May 1984 Public Enquiry so as to accept more objections. By this date these had risen to over 11,000 and the Transport Users Consultative Committees of Manchester, the North West and Yorkshire, were involved. By the time that BR had realised that the route also involved the North East TUCC, the official list of objectors had risen to 21,000. And so a

decision was made to delay the closure, push ahead with a major marketing exercise for 1985 and a plan for single-line working over Ribblesdale viaduct. But BR insist that long-term, they have no alternative but to go through with the closure procedure, and admit that they have been surprised at the scale of the organised objection. Mr Ron Cotton, British Rail project manager for the line said:

'The closure has now become a national issue. People who have never used or heard of the line are now protesting'.

And writing in the *Daily Telegraph* (5th October 1984) Robert Bedlow, the paper's Estates Correspondent says:

'With the delays to the closure because of the public inquiries the issue could become important in the next General Election in 1987.

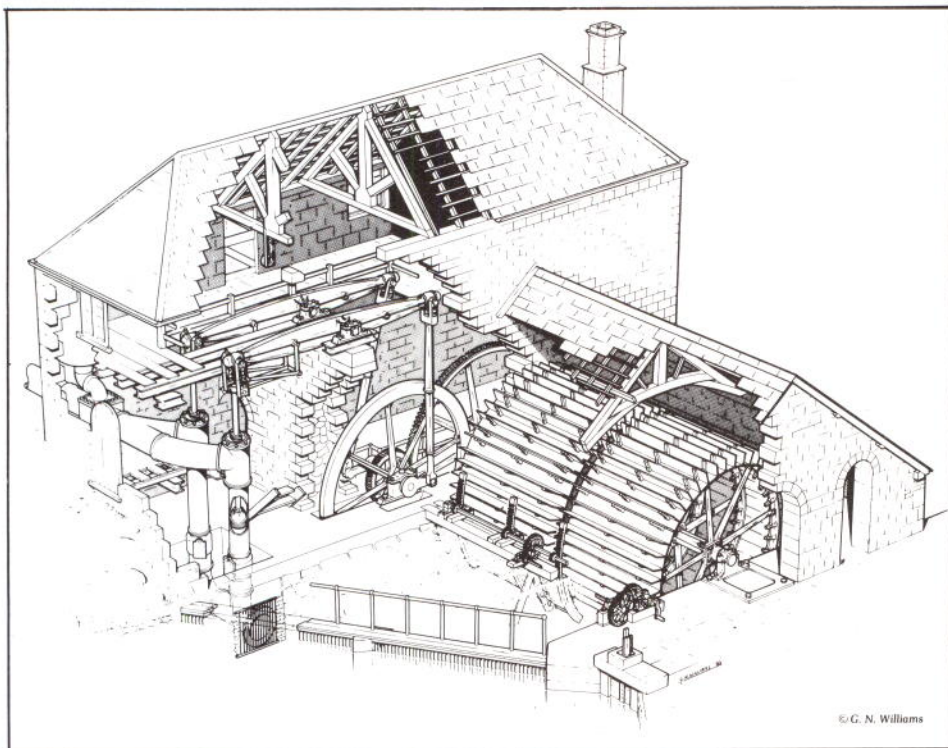
Mrs Thatcher, who has become increasingly aware of the growing conservationist lobby may feel that closure of the line would be politically inexpedient, as it passes through marginal seats.

Among them is that of Penrith, in which the Conservative candidate, Mr David Maclean, received a majority of only 552 ahead of the Liberals in the by-election of July 28 last year, after Mr Whitelaw was created a Viscount. The line closure was a major issue in the election'.

For the last several years the winter issue of *AIA Bulletin* has published a pithy, tongue-in-cheek resume of the previous September's AIA Conference by Douglas Hague. This year it is missing as Douglas was providing the scenario and was himself a principal actor. Together with Hilary and Brian Malaws plus a host of willing helpers, Douglas put on a superb presentation against the backcloth of central Wales and as this splendid picture by John Powell shows, had his audience spellbound whilst inspecting a hushing dam near Cwymystwyth. Thank you Douglas, Aberystwyth now takes its place in our memories of unforgettable conferences.

This last summer has brought to fruition two projects dear to the hearts of those interested in





rehabilitation and conservation plans for the Kennet and Avon canal in the area between Bath and Bradford-on-Avon. The first was the publication of *Claverton Pumping Station (A Definitive Study)* by the small group of super enthusiasts who have been working on the pumping station virtually every spare moment, in some cases, since 1969.

On November 13th 1952 there was a serious failure of the 1813 (John Rennie) waterwheel driven pumping mechanism . . . it is reported that a log jammed the waterwheel feed . . . resulting in some seventy oak teeth being stripped flush with the iron rim of the pitwheel. Following this disaster British Transport Commission (by then owners of the pumping station) withdrew any regular maintenance from the plant and installed a 6 inch centrifugal pump driven by a Lister diesel engine to ensure that the statutory water level in the canal was complied with. In January 1969 however the British Waterways Board accepted a report by the Kennet and Avon Canal Trust that work should be carried out jointly by the Trust and the Engineering School at Bath University to try to restore this pumping facility. Work started immediately, with the Trust providing money for materials, and Bath University providing the engineering expertise and student labour under the supervision of John Butt, who was then employed by the University School of Engineering, and had previously worked on the pump whilst employed by the GWR prior to 1948.

Bath University did sterling work in those early years but, as is the way with students, they graduated and went away, making continuity of work difficult. However during this initial period the British Aircraft Corporation at Filton, north of Bristol had also become involved and in 1972 Derrick Dudden, an engineer with Rolls Royce Aero-Engines, who are virtually integrated with BAC on the Filton site, became Claverton Restoration Manager, whilst volunteers from the Kennet and Avon Trust members were added to the workforce.

After that what had started as a simple mechanical restoration project, involved virtually every engineering, building and conservation discipline until triumphantly, in February 1976,

despite flood conditions on the River Avon limiting the waterwheel speed to three revs per minute, *'A fine flow of water emerged into the Kennet and Avon Canal some 47 feet higher'*. This delightful little book sets the scene for the supply and construction of the John Rennie pump in 1809-1813. Tells briefly the years between commissioning and the 1952 accident and concentrates, quite logically, on the restoration story from 1969 to date. It is an on-going project with the pumphouse now open to the public every weekend from April to October (and working at least once every month) and now providing money (from admission charges and publication sales etc) for other projects on the Kennet and Avon canal, notably the enormous task of restoring the flight of seventeen locks near Devizes. It describes each aspect of the restoration programme, has a technical description of the site and its equipment and an Appendix which discusses the accuracy of the James Watt Linkage mechanism controlling the vertical path of the piston rod cross head. Nineteen photographs, and seven line drawings, including the one shown above, are included in the 72 page booklet, which can be obtained from The Kennet and Avon Canal Trust, The Wharf, Couch Lane, Devizes, Wiltshire SN10 1EB at £1.25 plus 28p p/postage.

The second notable occasion this summer was the official re-opening on Sunday July 1st of the stretch of the Kennet and Avon canal passing through Dundas Aqueduct and which means that the K and A is navigable once again from the beginning of the 'cut' at Bath through to Bradford-on-Avon and beyond although of course the biggest obstacle remains, the famous Devizes flight of locks which probably will not be open until 1987.

Halton Chemical Industry Museum Project. It is perhaps surprising that at a time of growing public interest in the past and a growth in the number of museums concerned with industry, there is no museum devoted solely to the Chemical Industry. The Science Museum in London has a section on the heavy chemical industry, but whilst Northwich has its Salt Museum, St Helens its Glass Museum, the neighbouring towns of

Widnes and Runcorn (encompassed by the 'Borough of Halton) have no centre to record the massive contribution that they made to the industrial development of Great Britain.

During the late nineteenth century, entrepreneurs capitalised on the advantages which the region offered in terms of the availability of raw materials and an excellent transport infrastructure, to make it the dominant alkali producing area in the country. This dominance continued into the present century, although a far broader range of chemicals are now produced in the Borough. Perhaps the lack of any permanent record is one reason why this considerable contribution has been so undervalued.

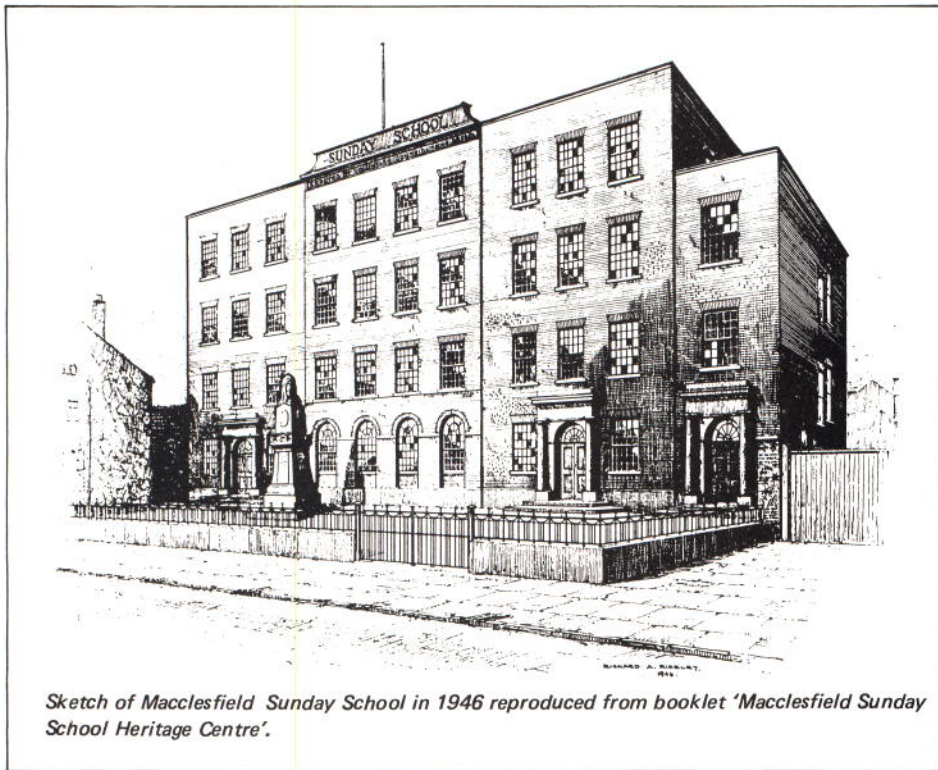
In an effort to repair this historical omission, a Research Team was appointed in February 1982 to study the feasibility of establishing a chemical industry museum in Halton. They were sponsored by the Manpower Services Commission and aided by gifts from local industry, the Institute of Chemical Engineers and the Society of Chemical Industry. In the absence of any existing collection of records and artefacts it was necessary to visit all the chemical firms in the area and embark on a systematic search of records in local libraries and the County Records Office. The team also collected material which had been in private hands particularly, rare photographs. It was found that virtually no chemical plant survives from the first hundred years of the industry; even material of great technical interest is being scrapped at an alarming rate, a fact which lends a sense of urgency to the Museum's work.

This is situated in the Old Town Hall, Victoria Square, Widnes and contains a permanent display on the history of the Chemical Industry in Widnes and Runcorn. It also features temporary displays which change every month or so. Travelling displays are also placed with local industry, libraries and information centres, usually staying for about a month. School parties form a large proportion of the Museum's visitors and are given guided tours, slide talks and video displays. The Museum has helped in the making of a programme for the Open University about the Alkali Industry, and more recently has contributed to the programme on the Chemical Industry for the BBC series 'All our Working Lives'.

We are open to the public every week day from 2 - 4.30 pm, but welcome enquiries from enthusiasts at any time. If you are unable to visit us you can write c/o Municipal Buildings, Kingsway, Widnes or 'phone 051-424-2061 ext.149. We would appreciate any help with documents, maps, photographs or artefacts.

Elections for the Council of the AIA, held at the Association's annual general meeting at Aberystwyth, resulted in only one change. Julia Elton (GLIAS) did not stand for re-election and her place was taken by Pam Moore (Southampton University Industrial Archaeology Group) who can be contacted at **6 Prestwood Road, Hedge End, Southampton, Hampshire.**

C B A Industrial Archaeology Committee. The current constitution of this committee includes Michael Robins (Chairman), K A Falconer (Secretary), Owen Ashmore, Angus Buchanan, Neil Cossons, Edwin Course, John Crompton (AIA Representative), Douglas Hague, Steven Hughes, Michael Lewis, Keith Reedman, John Robinson, John Stengelhofen and Peter White.



Sketch of Macclesfield Sunday School in 1946 reproduced from booklet 'Macclesfield Sunday School Heritage Centre'.

Macclesfield Sunday School Heritage Centre.

The only museum in the country devoted entirely to the silk industry is in the process of being established in the former Sunday School (opened 1814) in Roe Street, Macclesfield. Charles Roe, a notable Macclesfield industrialist erected the town's first silk mill in 1743-4. Besides the silk museum, it is planned that the building will house meeting rooms, information centre, archive store, library, exhibition gallery and tea room. In addition, the assembly room (occupying the entire two top floors and built to accommodate over 2000 children) will be used for conferences, public meetings, etc.

The wider aim of the scheme is that it should create a social, cultural, and educational centre for Macclesfield and a focal point for visitors. Besides the silk industry heritage and several fine mills and interesting terraces of weavers' housing, the town and its immediate neighbourhood has much to offer visitors interested in industrial history and kindred subjects. It is on the edge of western gritstone fringe of the Peak District, the early working environment of James Brindley: Buxton and all that its limestone hinterland can offer is only eight miles away; Alderley Edge (Copper mines and Nether Alderley Mill) is only four miles to the west, and Styal about six. The Macclesfield Canal runs through the eastern outskirts of the town (at 518 ft OD) and the North Staffordshire Railway terminated there before being joined end on to, and appropriated by, the LNWR.

The museum scheme, therefore, can act as a focus for such varied heritage. The first phase involves the restoration of the building, an exhibition which relates the history of the Sunday School and the town, an information centre and tea room. It is hoped that the last two will be opened by summer 1984. Work, meanwhile, proceeds on the silk museum, which will be a permanent exhibition describing the silk industry in the town; it will be supported by research and educational facilities. It is hoped to open the first phase of the museum by Spring 1986.

The principal future aim is to restore the fine assembly room in a manner in keeping with its

former elegance. This will include the restoration of the organ, built by Samuel Renn of Manchester in 1837 (later extended by Alexander Young in 1882). This work is estimated to cost over £25,000 and will be made possible with the aid of pipework taken from another Renn organ in St George's Church, Hulme, Manchester, now closed. This organ, Renn's largest and most important, was built originally for the Chester Cathedral Festival in 1829, being transferred to St George's soon afterwards. It is unfortunate that it could not be preserved in its entirety since it had outstanding musical qualities (Sayer, 1974).

The Macclesfield Sunday School Heritage Centre had its origin in 1979 with the establishment of the silk Heritage Project funded by the Manpower Services Commission. In 1980, the Friends of Macclesfield Silk Heritage was formed as a support and co-ordinating group. In 1981, the Macclesfield Sunday School Heritage Trust was established and an Appeal to complete the Heritage Centre formally launched. Current estimates for completion are approximately £400,000. Grants have been obtained from the Department of the Environment, Macclesfield Borough Council, Cheshire County Council, English Tourist Board and North West Museum and Art Galleries. £226,000 is sought by Public Appeal. Further details including an attractive and informative Appeals Leaflet and a separate booklet (from which much of the information here is taken) can be obtained from the Macclesfield Silk Heritage Appeal Fund, 1 Canal Street, Macclesfield, Cheshire SK10 1JG (Tel: 0625 616880 or 25560).

Associated with this imaginative project, is the preservation of Paradise Mill on Park Lane, a typical Victorian silk mill which housed the last handloom weaving business in the town, closed as recently as 1981. The building still contains 28 hand silk looms with Jacquards, a remarkable survival from the late nineteenth century. The building is now opened to visitors, afternoons 2-5 (Tuesday-Sunday). Enquiries to Paradise Mill, Park Lane, Macclesfield, Cheshire SK11 6JT

(Tel: 0625 618228).

Derek Brumhead

References

- Sayer M (1974). Samuel Renn: English Organ Builder, Phillimore.
 Chaloner W H (1951, 1952). Charles Roe of Macclesfield, an eighteenth century industrialist. Trans Lancs and Ches Ant Soc, Vol.62, Vol.63.
 Davies C S (1961). A history of Macclesfield. Manchester Un Press.

Statutory Protection of Historic Machinery.

The CBA Industrial Archaeology Committee has become increasingly concerned about the fate of historic machinery, especially on sites otherwise protected under the Town & Country Planning Acts. These Acts would seem to give little, or no, protection of the machinery within a building, but such machinery can be protected under the 1979 Ancient Monuments Act. This Act specifically allows for the protection of machinery, deemed of national importance, provided that it cannot be detached from the site without being dismantled.

The Committee has therefore resolved to compile a list of machinery that might be eligible for scheduling under the Ancient Monuments Legislation and to submit the list to the Historic Buildings & Monuments Commission. The Committee is seeking assistance in the compilation of this list and its Honorary Secretary would welcome suggestions of items for inclusion on the list.

In the first instance, these suggestions should, if possible, be accompanied by an illustration with a short description giving some technical and historical details and a preliminary assessment of the installation's merit stressing its significance in a national context (eg earliest surviving . . . , least altered . . . , only example . . . , etc). Substantiation of the candidate's claim to significance would be especially welcome.

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Dorothea Training Workshop. This new training workshop has recently been established in Bristol to combine the skills and experience of Dorothea Restoration Engineers and the facilities and labour resources of the Brunel Engineering Centre Trust. The workshop has been approved for funding under the Manpower Services Commission Community Programme and will be housed in the vaults of Bristol Old Station beneath Brunel's original Engine Shed.

The work of DRE is now well-known throughout the country by individuals and groups involved in many aspects of the preservation of Industrial artefacts and also by Museums, Trusts and Local Authorities.

The BECT, established in 1981, has a 99 year lease on the whole of Brunel's surviving Bristol Station at Temple Meads. A full programme of repair and conservation work is currently underway on the building which will be partially opened to the public in 1985 as part of the 150th anniversary celebrations of the Great Western Railway.

The Dorothea Training Workshops will be available to undertake commissions for clients who may be faced with difficulties in funding works on a commercial basis. This is due to the