

IRIS: AN UPDATE

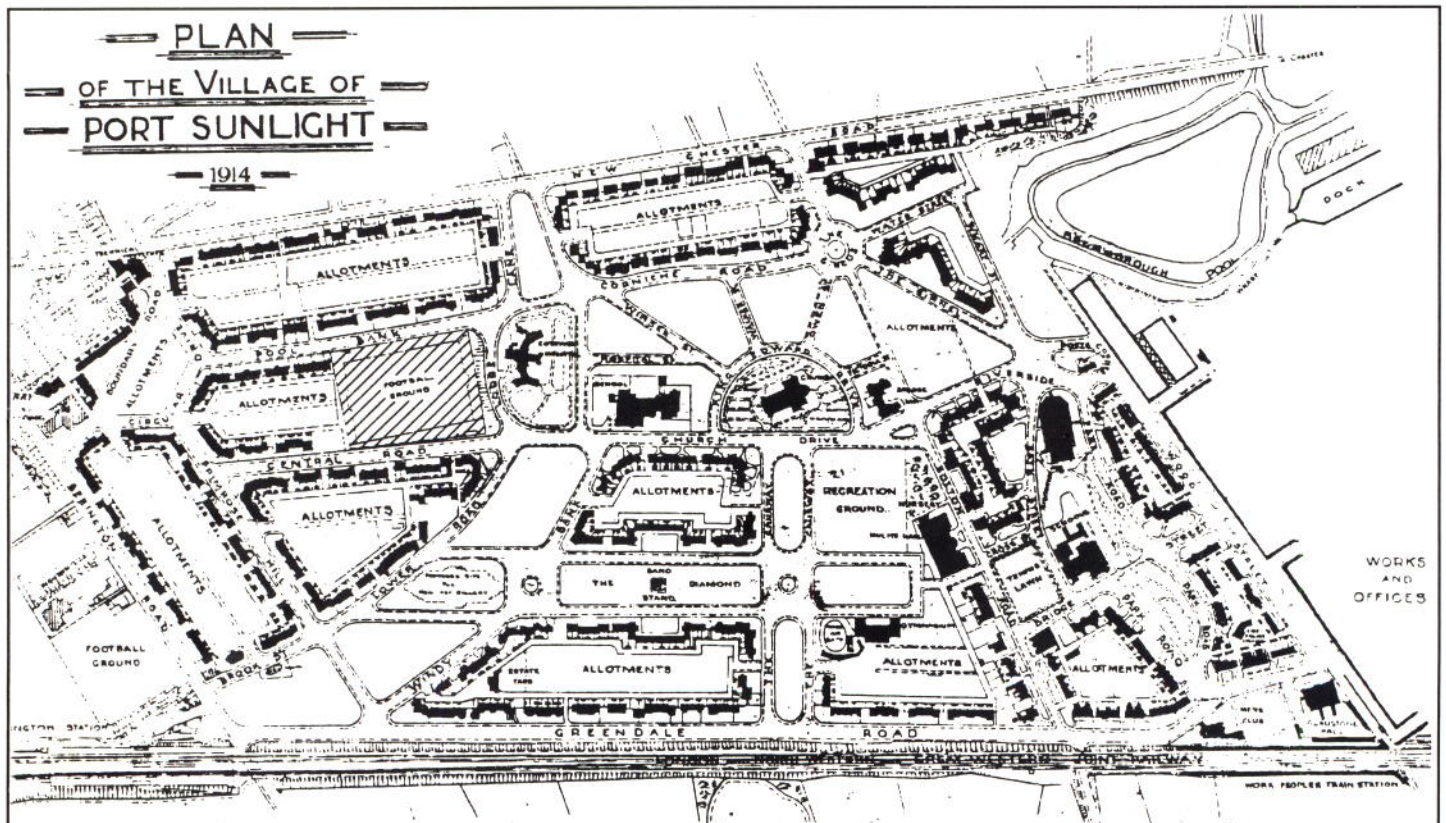
In *Bulletin* 19.3 last year, David Alderton reported the initiation of the Index Record for Industrial Sites (IRIS) project with the appointment of myself as AIA Sites and Monuments Officer and Julie Williams as Research Assistant. Considerable progress has been made since then. The IRIS form was 'launched' at the AIA working weekend in April. The accompanying AIA handbook, *Recording the Industrial Heritage* has been printed. Copies of the handbook and IRIS form, together with a 'Summary form' for tracking progress, and a handout describing the anticipated procedure for anyone working with IRIS, have now been circulated to affiliated societies and Sites and Monuments Records (SMRs). What happens next? Before launching into that, perhaps it is worth recapping on the role of IRIS.

As stated in the handbook, the aim of IRIS is

to contribute to the enhancement of the 'existing records in county Sites and Monuments Records and the National Monuments Record, where industrial archaeology is, at the present time, significantly under-represented'. The IRIS form has therefore been designed as the basis for recording the existence and nature of industrial period buildings and archaeological sites. It is currently restricted to England, reflecting its funding from the Department of National Heritage. The form is intended for use by volunteers, particularly of the Association's affiliated societies, but also by anyone willing and able to take part. Completed forms will be passed to local SMRs, the AIA Sites and Monuments Officer and the National Monuments Record (NMR).

The NMR is the national register for information on historic structures, monuments and landscapes, including those relevant to industrial archaeology. SMRs provide more detailed

local registers for research and planning purposes. The importance of the latter was stressed in the government's Planning Policy Guidance 16: *Archaeology and Planning* (PPG 16). However, due to the limited number of industrial archaeological sites currently in the SMRs and NMR, the system outlined in PPG 16 is failing to protect many sites. It is therefore essential that the imbalance is quickly redressed. Several moves are currently being made to rectify the situation. In 1990, the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England announced its intention to enhance the National Archaeological Record (part of the NMR) by including sites up to 1945—the previous cut-off date was 1714. Subsequent RCHME programmes of 'rapid survey' have been and are currently being, carried out. Within its Monuments Protection Programme (MPP), English Heritage is also in the early stages of reviewing the country's stock of sites

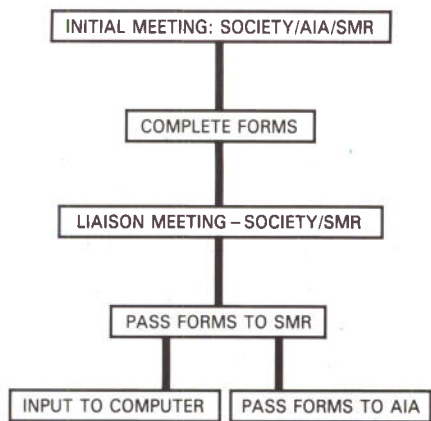


PRESSURE ON PORT SUNLIGHT 2

Plans for Port Sunlight's Pool Bank housing estate (reported in *Bulletin* 19.3) have been conditionally approved after a local inquiry. In a detailed report, the inspector said that the proposed infill development would enhance the character

of the area. It would provide a finished appearance to the existing housing block, while not unacceptably reducing the total amount of open space in the village. The above 1914 plan shows the proposed development site, the Foot Ball Ground indicated by cross hatching.

Port Sunlight Heritage Centre



Flow diagram showing the anticipated procedure for each society involved in completing IRIS forms.

relating to industry for the purposes of selecting monuments for statutory protection under existing legislation.

The AIA's Sites and Monuments Initiative for England is aimed at contributing to this enhancement of national and county registers by making use of the knowledge and expertise of volunteer groups and local societies. The IRIS form has been designed to encourage links between local societies and SMRs and to provide a standard format for passing information about industrial sites to the SMRs, the AIA, and the NMR.

The intention is that the form be completed by volunteers ready for input into the relevant SMR computer system. The IRIS handbook has been written as a guide to the manual completion of the form. This includes a list of site terms, based on the RCHME's own thesaurus, that allow structured interrogation of information that will be held on computer. The AIA also intends to create a central index to the IRIS data, allowing the AIA to monitor progress, to comment on the nature of the stock of industrial remains, and to assess research and conservation priorities.

What then is next? Having carefully designed the form and handbook the next step is to use them. In the first instance we are concentrating our limited resources on establishing contacts and getting paper forms completed and copied to the local SMR and the AIA. Initial contact with local societies and county SMRs will be through mailings and attendance by the AIA Sites and Monuments Officer at events such as the Council for British Archaeology industrial archaeology panel meetings, SMR working parties, and regional industrial archaeology

AFTER BEFORE THE COPPER KING

Bulletin 19.4 carried a story about the discoveries of early mining remains at the Great Orme Copper Mine. The *Bulletin* aims to be topical and varied, succinctly keeping readers abreast of news. It is therefore pleasing to see the mainstream press following our specialist interests as closely. As issue 19.4 was dropping through members' letterboxes, *The Independent* was scooping our lead story with newer discoveries.

The paper reported the discovery of north-west Europe's oldest copper mine known to date, in County Kerry, south-west Ireland. This is a region well noted for prehistoric metal mining, with many copper-bronze finds from all periods of the Bronze Age. Mount Gabriel in particular, in west Cork, has extensive evidence

conferences. The end product of all this effort will hopefully be direct contact with interested parties. With this established, it is anticipated that, for each society using IRIS, the procedure summarised in the flow diagram will be followed.

For each society, it is hoped that an initial meeting can be set up with their county SMR officer and the AIA Sites and Monuments Officer. This meeting should aim to cover items such as appointing a society coordinator, identifying individual compilers, establishing the

AIA - Index Record for Industrial Sites

Box 1		Box 2			
SITE NAME		IRIS NUMBER			
Address:		Part of:			
District/Borough:		Associated with:			
Parish/Township:		SMR no:			
		NMR no:			
Box 3					
NGR1 [] [] [] [] [] [] NGR2 [] [] [] [] [] []					
Box 4					
Class:					
Site Term:					
Site Significance: L / R / N / I < . 1700 . 1750 . 1800 . 1850 . 1900 . 1950 . >					
At Risk? : In use / Partly in use / Disused			Fixtures? Y/N/U		
			Machinery? Y/N/U		
Site Details:			PRIME MOTIVE		
			POWER		
			Muscle		
			Wind		
			Water		
			Hydraulic		
			Steam		
			Pneumatic		
			Electric		
			Combustion		
			None		
SITE COMPONENTS					
No	Component Term	Period	Form	Importance	Status
				H / M / L	L / S / G / N
				H / M / L	L / S / G / N
				H / M / L	L / S / G / N
				H / M / L	L / S / G / N
				H / M / L	L / S / G / N
				H / M / L	L / S / G / N
				H / M / L	L / S / G / N
				H / M / L	L / S / G / N
				H / M / L	L / S / G / N

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IRIS FORM ver 2

for mining of surface copper beds. Mainly worked from 1700-1500BC, these mines are preserved in upland blanket peat. However the new finds have now pushed the date for Irish mining back to 2200BC. A 'Copper Age' can therefore technically be identified in Ireland, sandwiched between the established Stone and Bronze Ages.

The *Bulletin* article on the Great Orme Mines has also attracted some comment which should be passed on to readers. This is that in describing current events at the Great Orme, insufficient attention had been given to pioneering prior work at the site. It should be acknowledged that the prime mover behind modern exploration of the Great Orme's many copper mines has been Duncan James. From the early 1970s, with colleagues, he explored,

cleared and mapped extensive workings. Early in 1976 he found tools and geological evidence to suggest a Bronze Age date. Invited to present his findings to the Wales group of the Council for British Archaeology, his photographs clearly showed mining spoil entombed below some thirty centimetres of solid stalagmite. Extensive fire-setting was also found to have been used in the hard rock mine, but iron tool marks were absent. This, James argued, was sufficient evidence in itself for a pre-Roman date.

Unwilling to submit any bone tool finds to destructive radio-carbon dating, James painstakingly collected fire setting deposits over the next few years. The resulting single-sample analysis in 1985 confirmed his argument for a Bronze Age date for the Great Orme mine.

Paul Sillitoe

