

INDUSTRIAL ARCHAEOLOGY NEWS

116
SPRING
2001

THE BULLETIN OF THE ASSOCIATION FOR INDUSTRIAL ARCHAEOLOGY

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INDUSTRIAL ARCHAEOLOGY NEWS 116 Spring 2001

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Current Research and Thinking in Industrial Archaeology: The Pre- Conference Seminar at Manchester 2000

The AIA's traditional pre-conference seminar was held on 8 September 2000 in the hallowed surroundings of the chapel at Hulme Hall, which worked well until the sun came out, since there was no black-out! The organisers apologise for this defect to both speakers and delegates at what was otherwise an extremely successful gathering.

Marilyn Palmer and Peter Neaverson

Our first contributor was **Tim Smith (Greater London Industrial Archaeology Society)** on the weight-loaded hydraulic accumulator and accumulator towers, on which Tim is the undoubted authority. He discussed their development, nature and use and showed slides of the towers used to house them. Around 100 towers survive in Britain but only a quarter of these still contain their accumulators. The adaptive re-use of towers was also touched upon – but what do you do with a redundant accumulator tower?

Paul Sowan (Subterranea Britannica) described some technologically advanced late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century limekilns in the south-east of England, the importance of which have been recognised under the Monuments Protection Programme as high priority candidates for scheduling. Close liaison has been established between the Surrey Wildlife Trust (seeking to improve the kilns as bat hibernation sites) and industrial archaeologists with an interest in the kilns themselves.

Ray Riley and Tony Yoward (Southampton University Industrial Archaeology Group) took us into the realms of structuration theory, using nineteenth-century milling in Portsmouth as a case study. They argued that, as a discipline, industrial archaeology focuses upon artefacts. Yet artefacts are the product of decision-making, but the decision-makers are themselves subject to a variety of pressures, not only at the local but also at the national and international scales. Using structuration theory, which sees decision-makers influenced by top-down and bottom-up influences, the paper endeavoured to bring together all the factors acting upon millers at the time, thereby placing the industrial archaeology of milling in its socio-economic and political context. They argued that the discipline of industrial archaeology would be strengthened if more attention was paid to the environment within which artefacts operate.

Martin Roe (Universities of Leicester and Bradford) and winner of the Student Category in the AIA Fieldwork and Recording Awards, discussed the relationship between surface and underground archaeology on metal mining sites. He argued that many archaeologists have either failed to take note of, or have failed to understand, the underground activity on mining sites and how this might have

shaped a site. Surface remains can be a reflection of underground working methods and can therefore be the key to understanding how and why a site was worked: they can equally be very misleading. This paper asserted that it is necessary in studying the archaeology of mining to consider carefully the symbiotic relationship that exists between the surface and the underground remains.

John Walker (Greater Manchester Archaeological Unit), also, with Michael Nevell, a winner of the AIA Fieldwork and Recording Award, took as his title 'From farmer to factory owner: a model of industrialisation from the Manchester evidence'. In *Tameside in Transition*, they took the new monument types established for the period 1600-1900 which were included in the RCHME/English Heritage Thesaurus of Archaeological Monuments, and tried to relate these to the seventeenth and eighteenth century social structure of the area. The history of the social groupings was followed and the monuments they were responsible for analysed, suggesting it was the wealthier tenant farmers who were the driving force behind the industrialisation of the region. Michael Nevell himself described the recording work being undertaken on canal warehouses in the north-west. This complemented a paper by **Simon Taylor (English Heritage)** on packing and shipping warehouses in Manchester. An examination of the warehouses of the merchant cotton exporters of Manchester, based primarily on first-hand investigation of some of the best surviving examples, has been carried out by EH northern Architectural Survey section over the last four years. The survey has indicated their progressive methods of construction, architectural style and servicing in the face of changing economic factors, both locally and globally, and the impositions of legislation, from the mid-nineteenth century to the First World War.

The seminar closed, appropriately, with a contribution from **Patrick Greene (Manchester Museum of Science and Industry)** on the conversion of Liverpool Road Station, Manchester, into an internationally renowned museum. 15 September 2000 marked the 170th birthday of the Liverpool & Manchester Railway and the 20th anniversary of celebrations that initiated the rescue and conversion process. The first phase opened on 5 September 1983 and now The Museum of Science and Industry in Manchester is one of the largest of its kind in the world. His paper concentrated on the archaeological approach taken to the conversion, which was the subject of his article in *Industrial Archaeology Review*, vol XVII, no.2 (1995). Delegates had plenty of opportunities to visit the Museum in the course of the conference.

The next seminar will be held in Cambridge on Friday 17 August 2001, continuing the theme of current research and thinking in industrial archaeology, and the Editors of *Industrial Archaeology Review* welcome advance notice of potential contributions.

COVER PICTURE

Grinding wheel and pentrough recorded in 1998 at the Abbeydale Works, Sheffield, where funding has been obtained for repairs (see Regional News, page 15)

Photo: © Crown Copyright NMR

The AIA Ironbridge Award

Winners of the biennial British Archaeological Awards were announced at the Great Hall of Edinburgh Castle on 16 November 2000. The ceremony was opened by Lord Montagu of Beaulieu and the presentations were made by HRH Prince Hassan of Jordan, who is Patron of the Council for British Research in the Levant. One of the awards, the Ironbridge Award, is sponsored by the AIA. The winner this year was the New Lanark Conservation Trust for its work on the No.1 Mill at New Lanark. The following is based on a citation read by Lis Toms before the Award was presented.

It is now generally recognised that archaeology no longer confines its interests to finds and structures below ground, and that the built environment constitutes an important part of the archaeological resource. Buildings of many periods speak to the present generation about the lives, skills and aspirations of past civilisations and previous generations. The built environment provides a document of incredible richness for those who have learned how to read it. The Ironbridge Award brings this sense of buildings as archaeology into the fold of archaeological practice recognised by the British Archaeological Awards.

The current sponsor of the Ironbridge Award is the Association for Industrial Archaeology. It is presented for the adaptive re-use of a building of any type or period which, in the opinion of the judges, best retains the architectural and structural character of the building's former use, whilst providing a new and economically sustainable future. In considering projects, the judges are looking for adaptive re-use solutions for 'difficult' buildings which, because of their structural form or perhaps because of the hardships they have undergone and damage they

have suffered, present abnormal challenges to those who wish to ensure the survival of their contribution to landscape and community.

The judging panel (Chairman John Crompton, with Miles Oglethorpe, Robert Carr, Nigel Sunter and Peter White) have selected three entries for special mention. The architects Buschow Henley have converted a late nineteenth century warehouse in Shepherdess Walk, London, to ground floor commercial space with 50 dwelling units on three and four floors above. The external form of the building retains its outline. The courtyard and dwelling unit interiors combine modern access features with the retention of the major elements of the original building, and the top floor units include roof-top pavilions and 'yards' which promise to recreate the social interactions of suburban streets. The judges decided to recognise this project by commending it highly.

The Stanley Mills on a spectacular site on the River Tay in Perthshire is one of four famous cotton textile mill developments in Scotland dating from the late eighteenth century. Stanley Mills closed in 1989, to be rescued in 1995 when taken into care by Historic Scotland. The Phoenix Trust, which was launched at Stanley Mills in 1997, has undertaken the restoration and conversion of 2 Mills into high quality houses and apartments to plans drawn up by Edinburgh architects Law & Dunbar-Nasmith. The judges commended the Phoenix Trust's work very highly.

Even more famous, both for its site and the utopian experiments of Robert Owen, is another of Scotland's cotton mill complexes, New Lanark. Founded in 1785, it was soon the largest in the world. Mill No.1 was a fine example of Arkwright's classic design, six storeys with three waterwheels. By the early twentieth century it was 'out of repair' and in 1946 the upper two

storeys were demolished on safety grounds. By the mid-1970s, it was in serious danger of collapse. Adaptive re-use has in this case rescued a building of great historical and architectural merit from the brink of disaster. The New Lanark Conservation Trust has drawn together funding from several sources to consolidate the building and restore the upper storeys in a faithful replica of the original form. Its new use is as a high quality hotel, retaining some of the large floor spaces and some of the structural components. Its economic viability already provides an income stream to support the work of the Conservation Trust in other parts of New Lanark village. In forming a partnership with a local college for training in catering skills, it happily reflects Robert Owen's educational principles. The restoration and re-use of Mill No.1 is perhaps the crowning glory of New Lanark Conservation Trust's work in a quarter century of achievement (see photograph, *IA News 114*, page 6). It is a worthy recipient of the Ironbridge Award in this Millennium year.

The AIA Ironbridge Award was presented by HRH Prince Hassan of Jordan to Jim Arnold and Harry Smith on behalf of the New Lanark Conservation Trust. Certificates for the two runners-up were received by Ken Rorrison of Buschow Henley for the Shepherdess Walk warehouse and David MacLehose on behalf of the Phoenix Trust for Stanley Mills.

The next British Archaeological Awards will be held in 2002 and any projects from now until then will be eligible. Details will be available in January 2002 from Richard J. Brewer, Hon. Secretary, British Archaeological Awards, c/o Department of Archaeology & Numismatics, National Museum & Gallery, Cathays Park, Cardiff CF10 3NP. ☎ 02920 573247; Fax: 02920 667320; e-mail: Richard.Brewer@nmgw.ac.uk



HRH Prince Hassan of Jordan presents the AIA Ironbridge Award to Jim Arnold and Harry Smith on behalf of the New Lanark Conservation Trust

Photo: Historic Scotland