AIA

BULLETIN OF THE ASSOCIATION FOR INDUSTRIAL ARCHAEOLOGY

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L T C ROLT, FIRST PRESIDENT OF THE AIA

It is our sad task in this, only the second Bulletin of the AIA, to have to record the death of our first President, Mr L T C Rolt. At the foundation of the Association in the Isle of Man last September, Tom Rolt was the unanimous choice as President, and members present at that conference were very conscious of the honour to the Association when such a distinguished pioneer of industrial archaeology as Mr Rolt accepted the invitation to preside over its affairs. In the event, he was only able to take the chair at two meetings of the AIA Council, the second of these being a memorable occasion in February of this year when all the Council members gathered at the home of Mr and Mrs Rolt at Stanley Pontlarge in Gloucestershire. His last public engagement was in the service of the AIA, when he presided over the inaugural meeting at Imperial College in March. Even though his friends were alarmed then to see the physical toll which illness was exacting upon him, they will remember with gratitude the courage and indomitable spirit with which he devoted himself to the end in the cause of industrial archaeology.

Tom Rolt died on May 9 at the age of 64. He was born in Chester in 1910. His own recollections of his childhood and early manhood have been delightfully recorded in the autobiographical essay published in 1971 as "Landscape with Machines". The title evokes the strong sense of enjoyment in the countryside, particularly the "Kilvert country" of the Welsh marches, and in nature generally, combined with a fascination for machinery which matured into a deep engineering knowledge and a skill with his hands which made him an expert motor mechanic and led to a lasting interest in vehicles and their history. The description in this book of steam ploughing techniques is a classic account of a lost craft of the countryside.

It is fortunate for posterity that Tom was able, before he died, to commit to paper his recollections of his career after he struck out as a canal narrow-boat owner and free-lance writer in 1939. While his many admirers will await the publication of these reflections with interest, enough is known about Mr Rolt in these years to make it clear that he should be regarded as one of the outstanding Founding Fathers of industrial archaeology. As a founder member and first secretary of the Inland Waterways Association in 1945, he was amongst the very first people to recognise the extraordinary recreational potential of the British canal network even at a time when it was falling into a demoralised condition of commercial decline, and his writing on this subject together with strenuous campaigning helped to preserve much of the network for the revival which is now taking place. In the early 1950's, a similar situation occurred with the narrow gauge railways of North Wales, which had become obsolete with the closure of the quarries and were rapidly falling into decay. Tom Rolt took the lead in the foundation of the first of the narrow gauge railway societies - the Talyllyn Railway Preservation Society - and the tremendous success of this as a tourist amenity has provided a model for all subsequent railway preservation efforts.

One of Tom Rolt's greatest gifts was his imaginative literary skill and sheer felicity in the use of the English language. This enabled him to win a great reputation as an interpreter of the engineering achievements of the Industrial Revolution and of the lives of the giants such as I K Brunel who had done so much to transform British life and society through their works of civil and mechanical engineering. The success of his many books in this field is a considerable reassurance to those who are anxious about the division of our society into "two cultures", for Tom Rolt managed brilliantly to bridge the gap between scientific and technological expertise on the one hand, and the humane and literary arts on the other. His books, moreover, stimulated a general interest in industrial history and did much to create the public opinion out of which archaeology and a care for our industrial heritage was born.

When industrial archaeology emerged as a well defined area of study in the early 1960's, Tom Rolt was thus once again in the forefront of the activity. He was a long-standing member of the CBA Research Committee on Industrial Archaeology, and became Chairman of the Committee last December. He became a highly respected member of the Council of the Newcomen Society, and one of its Vice-Presidents. He served on committees of the National Trust and the Science Museum, and took an active part in the negotiations to establish the Fund for Technological Preservation at the Science Museum. He consented to join the Advisory Council of the Centre for the Study of the History of Technology at the University of Bath when this was established in 1964, and he attended most of the Bath Conferences on Industrial Archaeology out of which the AIA developed. It was thus entirely appropriate that he should become our first President, and a great honour to the Association that he agreed to do so.

It is impossible in a short memorial notice to do justice to a man of such broad humanity and versatile ability as Tom Rolt. His written works will long endure and continue to give new generations an insight into past engineering accomplishments. His example will remain a stimulus to interest in industrial archaeology and a reminder to stick to the important issues. His friendship will endure as a treasured memory to those who were fortunate to know him well. The profound sympathy of the Association and all its members goes to his wife, Sonia, and to their two sons. We share in their loss, and we trust that the future work of this Association will prove worthy of the inspiration given to it by our first President.

Angus Buchanan
Vice-President, AIA

THE INAUGURAL MEETING OF THE AIA

The inaugural meeting was held on Saturday 23 March at Imperial College, South Kensington, London. The Association's President, Mr L T C Rolt, welcomed the 150 or so present and reviewed the circumstances which had led to the formation of the AIA (see 'The Need for Action', Bulletin 1.1). He emphasised that the Association had been formed to advance the interests of industrial archaeology, particularly at a national level, and most certainly did not seek to control the activities of the local and specialised societies that had already achieved so much.

Mr John Smith, the first guest speaker, paid tribute to Mr Rolt's efforts on behalf of industrial archaeology. Although his own involvement with the subject had been mainly through the Landmark and Belfast Trusts (bodies concerned essentially with preservation), he recognised that it embraced also the recording and interpretation of industrial monuments, and ensuing publication. His personal view was that a conserved industrial monument embodied both functional suitability and elegance, displaying these tangibly to the present day in a way that even the best records could not.

Neil Cossons, AIA Secretary, dealt with some of the achievements that could be claimed to date. Industrial monuments so far conserved had been those of intrinsic archaeological importance, and those for which a practical new use could be found. Inevitably, most industrial sites could not be retained : their survival would be in the form of documentary or other recording, and one of the Association's aims was to ensure that the techniques employed for this were of a high standard. Another aim was to offer expert advise to local authority planning departments, which were in the forefront of enlightened official conservation and the adaptive re-use of industrial monuments.

In contrast, John Hume expounded some "non-achievements" of recent years. Processes especially were liable to vanish from the scene with inadequate record : open-hearth steelmaking, Scottish shale-oil extraction, and town gas manufacture were all examples of processes now almost extinct, while in the near future it was probable that (for example) hydraulic power distribution, certain textile processes, and the steam laundry would disappear.

After an interval, the audience was invited to comment on the Association's aims; although one or two speakers queried the purpose of the meeting (feeling that London might perhaps have been a more accessible venue in which to form the Association than the Isle of Man conference at which it had been established in September 1973), no-one questioned the need for a national organisation to represent industrial archaeology.

THREATENED MONUMENTS

Bulletin 1.1 discussed general problems of identification of threats to industrial monuments and outlined some of the forms of legislative protection applied to these monuments. Such protection at the very least provides a trip-wire mechanism at an important stage of the redevelopment planning process, and allows those concerned with this protection to monitor the frequency and form of threat to monuments.

The applications for Listed Building Consent embrace almost every conceivable type of industrial monument but they are most typically associated with those industries which are undergoing major transformation, including contraction in site usage, rationalization, or fundamental changes in operational techniques. Most of the major service industries such as transport, docks, gas manufacture, and water supply fall within these categories as do the heavier industries (iron and steel, coal mining, chemicals, brewing, etc.).

British Rail provides a classic example of most of these characteristics and an examination of some of the recent applications for L.B.C. they have submitted may highlight many of the problems facing British Rail.

British Rail inherited in 1949 a railway network almost all of which is of interest to the industrial archaeologist. Since then some 6000 miles of line have been abandoned, involving hundreds of rural stations, overbridges, viaducts, tunnels etc, and in most major cities the closure of at least one main line station. By no means all these structures were protected by legislation and of those that were, only a minority have as yet been the subject of an application to demolish. However many important structures are more insidiously threatened by neglect or unsympathetic reuse.

Stamford Bridge Viaduct, for example, is currently the subject of an application to demolish. Listed Grade II in 1967, it carries an abandoned railway over the River Derwent at Stamford Bridge some 6 miles east of York. The viaduct consists of 15 red brick round headed arches with a larger central lattice iron arch and was completed in 1847; as such it is by far the grandest viaduct in east Yorkshire. However its engineering significance and architectural merit are the subjects of some controversy. The County Architect's Department regards it as '...not a particularly good specimen .... of Victorian engineering and in particular the inelegant proportions of the arches and the seemingly imposed solution of a central metal span are unpleasing'. On the other hand, an expert on behalf of the Victorian Society suggests that '...the central arch of cast and wrought iron (is) one of the earliest to survive in the North of England .... and the reference to the iron span being an imposed solution misses the essential point that this was the cheapest way of spanning the Derwent and also, technologically, the most forward looking'.

The local authority intend to use the station site adjacent to the viaduct for a primary school and therefore support British Rail's application, as they are of the opinion '...that it would be undesirable on safety grounds to retain the viaduct on the boundary of the school however securely fenced it might be.' Unfortunately a considerable degree of deterioration has already set in and to put the structure into proper repair would, it is estimated, cost £35,000 with a further £700 per annum in respect of future maintenance, and the justification for spending such sums on this particular viaduct is questionable.

Fewer reservations arise over Howard Street Warehouse in Shrewsbury. While not strictly a railway monument as it was built in 1835 by Fallowes and Hart of Birmingham as the terminal warehouse of the Shrewsbury Canal, it has been in railway ownership for many years and is the subject of a British Rail application to demolish. A heavily classical single storey stuccoed facade masks a surprisingly lofty interior of cast iron columns and massive wood beam roof, a combination which allows a generous covered space with no internal divisions. Indeed the warehouse had a complementary function in its canal days as a market for perishable commodities carried on the canal. Its connection with both the canal and the succeeding railway was severed some years ago but as it was a protected building it has remained virtually intact. The warehouse was first subject to an application to demolish in September 1972, but following representations from many local and national bodies, Shrewsbury Borough Council refused permission. However, a second application to demolish was submitted in July 1973 and although the evaluation of the warehouse remained unaltered the Highways & Planning Committee reversed its previous decision and recommended approval to the proposal to the full Council. It is proposed that the site should be redeveloped as a Post Office sorting station: whether or not the possibility of losing such a lucrative source of rates swayed the local authority's decision is open to conjecture. The building which is featured in J M Richards "The Functional Tradition in Early Industrial Buildings" is the subject of a public enquiry into its fate and the AIA will be represented amongst the objectors. A proposal has also been put forward by the West Midlands Arts Association for converting the building into a theatre.

British Rail's problems are not confined to their redundant properties. The magnificent roof of the train shed of Newcastle Central Station has detiorated to the point of being partially unsafe and British Rail originally proposed to remove the existing wrought iron ribs together with the boarding which forms the roofing, and replace them with steel members of similar, though not identical, section with white plastic-coated steel sheeting for the roofing material. These proposals caused considerable dismay as Dobson's train shed roof, build c.1850 and comprising three 60ft spans with semi-elliptical built-up I-section beams supported on cast iron columns, is one of the most important wrought iron structures still standing. The British Rail proposals were modified in the light of these representations and only those parts in most need of renewal will be replaced by similar steel components resulting in little change to the appearance of the overall structure.

Brighton Station, on the other hand, is threatened by much more comprehensive redevelopment. British Rail submitted an application '... to demolish the forecourt buildings and engine sheds and to develop the site by the erection of new forecourt and station over existing platforms and tracks of sufficient length to provide cover for modern 12 coach trains, new hotel, conference centre and service flats'. The motive in this case would not seem to be replacement of sub-standard facilities but rather maximization of the value of the site. The 'forecourt buildings' referred to would appear to be the rather mutilated original Mocatta station of 1840 while the 'engine sheds' probably refer to the superb 50ft high iron and glass overall train sheds constructed in two curved parallel halves in 1882. So great has been the local indignation that the case is almost certain to go to public enquiry.

An overall roof of completely different scale was recently threatened at Frome. The station itself was built c.1847 of timber throughout in an austere functional classical style and has been tentatively attributed to I K Brunel. Its overall timber roof is constructed on heavy beams, representing a rare survival from the ealiest days of steam. It has now been added to the List of Buildings of Architectural or Historic Interest.

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INDUSTRIAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETIES

A number of universities have flourishing industrial archaeology groups or societies. Southampton University group meet on the first Monday of each month, except in August, at the University. The secretary is J B Horne, Heathermount, Moor Hill, West End, Southampton.

Durham University Group is also well established and the secretary is Christopher Hinde, Durham University Group for Industrial Archaeology, Dunelm House, New Elvet, Durham DH1 3RQ.

The Scottish Vernacular Buildings Working Group has had an informal existence since 1972. It has held meetings on rural architecture (Edinburgh 1972), and on village and urban architecture (Dundee 1973). At Dundee it was resolved that the group should be constituted on a more formal basis, to unite lay and professional interests in the common purpose of stimulating and encouraging the systematic study and recording of vernacular buildings in Scotland. The honorary secretary is Geoffrey Stell, RCAHMS, 54 Melville Street, Edinburgh EH3 7HF.

Abertay Historical Society has a small industrial archaeology group at present involved in the recording of agricultural buildings and water powered sites in the area around Dundee. The acting secretary for this group is D Bruce Walker, 149 Strathern Road, West Ferry, Dundee DD5 1BR.

The Teesside Industrial Archaeology Group from 1 April 1974 became known as the Cleveland Industrial Archaeology Society. The secretary is David M Tomlin, 8 Loweswater Crescent, Stockton, Cleveland TS18 4PY. The society has as its territory the new county of Cleveland and overlaps into the new North Yorkshire county.

East Lothian Antiquarian Society has a number of enthusiasts who in June arranged an outing to Leadhills and Wanlockhead area. The lead mines of this area were by far the largest in Scotland. Gold was also worked in the area.

The former Historical Metallurgy Group is now the Historical Metallurgy Society. The honorary secretary is K C Barraclough, 19 Park Avenue, Chapeltown, Sheffield S30 4HW. The annual subscription is £1.50. Mr Barraclough is also honorary secretary of the Sheffield Trades Historical Society. This has a local membership of around 140, and the society has in its care the Top Forge at Wortley and the Blast Furnace at Rockley. The annual subscription of this latter group is only 65p.

With effect from 4 May 1974 the Lincolnshire Industrial Archaeology Group has become a Sub-Committee of the Society for Lincolnshire History and Archaeology (SLHA). The IA Group was originally formed as a section of the Lincolnshire Local History Society but soon achieved a high degree of independance, with its own subscription, officers and committee.

During 1973/4 the Lincolnshire Local History Society and the Lincoln Archaeological Research Committee decided to merge under the name of the Society for Lincolnshire History and Archaeology, and the constitutional position of the IA Group came into question. It was considered desirable, in view of local government reorganisation and other changes, that there should be a single voice to speak on all aspects of history and archaeology in Lincolnshire, and as the Group were satisfied that their publications and activities would not suffer from the change they agreed to join the new Society.

The SLHA has an Executive Committee and three Sub-Committees, for Local History, Archaeology and Industrial Archaeology respectively. Most committee members of the old IA Group have been elected to the new IA Sub-Committee, and the Secretary of this is Mrs C Wilson, Museum of Lincolnshire Life, Burton Road, Lincoln LN1 3JY.

The new Society will have a quarterly newsletter and an annual journal, 'Lincolnshire History and Archaeology'. These will include IA news and articles: the quarterly 'Lincolnshire IA' will no longer be published separately. However the IA Sub-Committee intends to continue the publication of individual booklets such as the 'Industrial History of Stamford' and 'Boston as a Port', and a booklet on Sleaford should be published this summer.

The subscription to the SLHA is £2 per annum and should be sent to the Society's Secretary, SLHA, 25 Westgate, Sleaford, Lincs.

The Chairman of the IA Sub-Committee is Dr Michael Lewis of Hull University, and the Publications Officer is Neil Wright. Mr Wright has left Boston and his new address is 74 Alexandra Terrace, Lincoln, LN1 1JE, whence copies of the Group's publications may be ordered.

APPEAL FOR MINING DOCUMENTS

Plans, and other documents which record old mineworkings, are being urgently sought in an appeal recently launched by the Secretary of State for Energy. It is hoped that more detailed knowledge of old workings will help to prevent disasters such as occurred when water from an abandoned shaft burst into a new coalface.

Here is an instance where Association members, as a result of research or conversation may be able to make a most valuable contribution. Information should be sent to:

The Secretary, Appeal for Old Plans,
Box 999, London SW1P 4QJ.

CONFERENCE ON INDUSTRIAL ARCHAEOLOGY 1974

The conference will be held at Keele University, Staffordshire from Friday 13 to Sunday 15 September 1974. Conference details are being dispatched separately to all members; those who have attended past British IA Conferences; and those others who have notified Michael Bussell of their interest in attending.

The 1975 conference will be held in Durham from 12 to 14 September.

MEETING AT THE DOE

Earlier this year, the Association's Vice-President and Secretary met Mr D C Haselgrove, the recently-appointed Under-Secretary, (Archaeology), and several of his senior colleagues at the Department of the Environment. Although the main purpose of the meeting was to outline the Association's aims, there was a wider discussion on the role of both the Department and the AIA in conservation and recording work. The importance of a harmonious relationship between the Association and the Council for British Archaeology was generally accepted, it being noted that the CBA had already contributed much to the development of industrial archaeology. Further meetings are planned with the new Director of the CBA, and also with the Royal Commissions on Historical Monuments to discuss the recording of industrial monuments.

CONSERVATION CORPS SUMMER RESIDENTIAL TASKS, 1974

The following provisional residential tasks have been arranged for volunteers of the National Conservation Corps for summer 1974. Bookings for these tasks should be sent to the National Conservation Corps, Zoological Gardens, Regents Park, London NW1 4RY, from whom booking forms can be obtained. Each task booking should be accompanied by a 50p booking fee. Volunteers attending residential tasks are asked for a contribution of 25p per day as a donation towards the work of the organisation. Accommodation varies from tented camps to hostels and schools. A good sleeping bag is essential for all tasks. Joining instructions are issued no later than one month before the task is due to begin and contain details of the work, what to bring with you and travel arrangements.

IRONBRIDGE GORGE Shropshire	Work continues on this historically important industrial archaeological site. The main task will be clearing the top of old blast furnaces at the Blists Hill Open Air Museum. There will be opportunities to learn skilled crafts such as bricklaying and joinery and the possibility of working with a blacksmith
17 - 31 August 2 - 16 September	

TOWER BRIDGE OBSERVED

A small exhibition under this title is on display at the Science Museum, South Kensington, London SW7 until mid-September. London's best-known industrial monument is depicted in the architect's original sketches, in photographs taken during the bridge's life, and in recent paintings that capture the unique character of its interior spaces. The exhibition is open Monday - Saturday 10 - 6 and Sunday 2.30 - 6.

ORIGIN OF INDUSTRIAL ARCHAEOLOGY

Michael Rix sends the following note: "During the break at the AIA inaugural meeting back in March, I was in conversation with a fellow member. He dismayed me with the news that he had come across the use of the term Industrial Archaeology earlier than my article in the Amateur Historian of 1955. I asked him for particulars. He said the date is 1951: the publication, 'History Today': an article entitled 'Birmingham': the author, Michael Rix."

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

The Old Metal Mines of Mid-Wales, Part 1 (Cardiganshire - South of Devil's Bridge), by D E Bick, published by and obtainable from The Pound House, Newent, Gloucs, GL18 1PS, 75p.

The following four booklets are obtainable from the Department of Economic History, University of Exeter, Devon EX4 4PU, and were prepared by the Department and the Exeter IA Group. Secretaries of local IA Societies may like to note that a 20% discount is available on orders of ten or more of a particular title. The guides by Chitty and Bone have been commended in the current (American) Society for Industrial Archeology Newsletter as an example to other industrial archaeologists of what is needed for every district:

A Guide to Exeter's Industrial Archaeology, Michael Chitty, 30p

Tidemills of Devon & Cornwall, Walter Minchinton & John Perkins, 30p

Barnstaple's Industrial Archaeology, Michael Bone, 30p

Industrial Archaeology in Devon, Walter Minchinton, 40p

CONSERVATION AREAS

During 1973 584 new conservation areas were designated - the highest annual total since designations began late in 1967. In all there are now more than 3,000 conservation areas in Britain. Of particular industrial archaeological interest is the recent definition of the Ironbridge and Coalbrookdale Conservation Area as a Conservation Area of outstanding importance. In addition a new area has been added to this Conservation Area embracing the upper parts of the town of Ironbridge extending downstream as far as Bedlam Furnaces. The area itself is still something of an anomaly within the overall context of the Gorge, as various sections of the Gorge which have vital visual implications for the Conservation Area itself are unprotected. Of particular concern is the section downstream from Ironbridge covering Jackfield and Coalport which at present is particularly vulnerable to inappropriate building modifications and demolitions. It is hoped that eventually the whole of the Ironbridge Gorge area including Coalbrookdale and extending from Albert Edward Bridge in the west to Coalport Bridge in the east will be designated as a Conservation Area.

CONTRIBUTIONS INVITED

The AIA Bulletin exists principally for the exchange of information between members. Details of recording and conservation projects, events, major sites threatened or demolished, etc., are welcomed. Local and specialised societies are invited to send information on current activities and society publications. All such material should be sent to Michael Bussell, 23 Fitzgeorge Avenue, London W14 0SY.

AIA Bulletin is published six times a year by the Association for Industrial Archaeology. The Association was established in September 1973 to promote the study of Industrial Archaeology and encourage improved standards of recording, research and specialist survey and research groups and bodies involved in the preservation of industrial monuments, to represent the interests of Industrial Archaeology at a national level, to hold conferences and seminars, and to publish the results of research. Further details of the Association and its activities may be obtained from the Secretary, Association for Industrial Archaeology, Church Hill, Ironbridge, Telford, Salop TF8 7RE, England (095-245-3522).