

VOLUME 5 NUMBER 2 1978

Oral History Seminar In conjunction with the Oral History Society, the AIA is organising a seminar on techniques of sound recording. The topics covered are likely to include where and how to record the reminiscences of elderly people, how to catalogue and store sound archives and how to link such archives with the physical remains to which they relate.

Full details will appear in the next Bulletin, but those interested may like to note the date, Saturday 13th May and the venue, which is likely to be Birmingham which has good access from all parts of the country.

Sirhowy Ironworks Preservation Scheme The Sirhowy Ironworks are located at the head of the Sirhowy Valley in Gwent, a mile north of the town of Tredegar (SO 143101). Production began in 1778, Sirhowy then being the only works in the valley until the construction of the Tredegar Ironworks in 1801. The two were in co-production until 1818 when Sirhowy came under the direct ownership of Ebbw Vale, and up until its closure in 1882 the management of Sirhowy was to be dictated by that of the various Ebbw Vale Companies, both technically and economically. By 1840 there were 4 furnaces in blast, all supplied by hot-air apparatus, but as Sirhowy was concerned solely with the smelting of iron all the puddling and processing of the metal took place at Ebbw Vale. After the closure of the works most of the remaining buildings were extensively robbed for stone and in 1971 land reclamation resulted in the obliteration of over 80% of the original works area. Of the remaining structures the most striking are 3 large support arches built into the remains of a major retaining wall, the stone-built out-fall of a water wheel tunnel and part of a furnace, only the internal lining visible above ground level, which is destroyed just above the boshes.

The present work began in April 1977 with a 7-man Job Creation Team sponsored by Gwent County Council and supervised by the County Planning Department; so far just over 400 square metres has been excavated and recorded in the area above and behind the 3 arches. The major feature so far uncovered is a complex of brick-lined culverts situated above the main arch which runs into a stone-built tunnel 35 metres in length, still containing a cast-iron pipe. Although any functional interpretation has to be subjective at this stage, the most plausible explanation is that the pipe and tunnel acted as a main drain for surface water on the level of the furnace charging area and also possibly took

surplus or discharged water from a water-balance hoist which is assumed, on the basis of an 1870 photograph, to have been situated above the central arch; work beneath the arches should establish the validity or otherwise of this. The other features suggest a system of internal retaining walls, designed to form structural 'boxes' behind the main retaining wall (now almost completely destroyed). These 'boxes' were filled with waste material to the height of the charging level, so carrying it forward to the frontage of the arches. If this is correct then most of the excavated area would never have been visible at the time the works were in production.

It is now hoped to concentrate work on the area in front of the arches which could reveal evidence of the foundations of a fairly late furnace and associated structures as well as that of the water-balance hoist. Excavation is also intended on the still-standing furnace which appears to be a much earlier design than the other and so could provide an interesting contrast between the two.

Although Sirhowy was never an important site in terms of technological innovation its history covers some of the most important years of the iron industry, and it is hoped that excavation, rather than revealing a one-phase construction, will give information relating to the various changes, and processes, during that period.

At the time of writing the project is due to end in March 1978 but an application has been made to the Manpower Services Commission for an extension until September 1978. The work is being carried out in liaison with the DOE, the National Museum of Wales, the Glamorgan/Gwent Archaeological Trust and Blaenau Gwent Borough which owns the site. Capital for the project is being provided by Gwent County Council and the Welsh Development Agency, which has provided grant-aid of £10,000.

The Tredegar Historical Society which was largely instrumental in having the site designated as an Ancient Monument, has been involved in the project from the outset. It is hoped to co-operate with members of the Society in providing interpretation material on the site, as one of the main objectives of the scheme is to help explain the technical and social history of the ironworks by means of static display material. This process has already started with the involvement of the local Primary School which is working on a local history project using the site as a focal point.

The later stages of the scheme will be mainly concerned with the conservation of the masonry and brickwork and with the provision of site finishes and visitor facilities. It is hoped that the completed project will not only add to the body of knowledge of industrial archaeology, but will also prove to be an educational tool, a tourist attraction and a local amenity.



The Recording of Industrial Monuments

The Royal Commissions on Historical Monuments for England and Wales are anxious to obtain records in the form of drawings, photographs and reports on industrial monuments threatened with destruction or decay. They would like to contact anyone who has made such records or is prepared to make them in the future.

The records would be deposited in the Commissions' libraries which are the central archives for records of all kinds of structures. The Commissions will accept either original drawings or copies, and copyright can remain with the owner if desired. A small sum may be paid for such records. This is not intended as a normal commercial payment, but is meant to defray the expenses of the recorder.

The amount paid will not necessarily be a fixed sum but may vary according to the work involved.

Anyone interested in English buildings should get in touch with Eric Mercer, Royal Commission on Historical Monuments, Fortress House, 23 Savile Row, London W1X 1AB, and in Welsh buildings contact Stephen Hughes, Royal Commission on Ancient and Historical Monuments in Wales, Edleston House, Queens Road, Aberystwyth, Dyfed, SY23 2HP.

Exchange and Mart

A machine for cropping the pile of coir fibre doormats is offered by the St Dunstan's workshop for war-blinded ex-servicemen, who believe it was made about 1920 by E W Downs and Sons of Chelmsford. It is thought to have been exhibited at a Belgian Trade Fair, and is electrically driven through a belt. Dimensions are 8½ ft x 4 ft x 4½ ft high, and St Dunstan's may be able to contribute towards the costs of re-erecting it elsewhere.

Enquiries to: Miss Patricia Saunders, Secretary's Office, St Dunstan's 191 Old Marylebone Road, London NW1 5QN. Telephone 01-723 5021.

A netting loom, built as a hand-loom about 1870 by T H Hellier and Son and used for making herring nets for about 80 years is up for disposal at Brixham Museum. In the 1950s it was converted by J H Ackerman of Bridport for power operation, and subsequently used for making sprout nets. It worked about 2 rows per minute by hand, which was increased to 4½ rows per minute when power-operated, and made nets up to 100 yards in length. Dimensions are 10½ ft x 4 ft x 6 ft high.

Enquiries to: R E Taylor, Hon Treasurer, Brixham Museum and History Society, 13 Lindhorpe Way, Brixham. Telephone Brixham 2937.

A boiler for a Yorkshire steam wagon is available at Kew Bridge Pumping Station Museum for purchase by anyone who may be restoring a Yorkshire wagon.

Enquiries to: N F Reynolds, Kew Bridge Engines Trust, Penton Manor, Penton Mewsey, Andover, Hants. Telephone (business) 01-353 1090.

A hydraulic pump from those installed at Tower Bridge in 1893 was offered for sale by tender earlier this year, together with one of the hydraulic engines which lifted the bascules, there were no offers. Any museum which thinks that it could offer a home to one of these monsters

is recommended to contact the

City Engineer's Department, Corporation of London, Guildhall, London EC2P 2EJ. Telephone 01-606 3030.

The cost of moving either item could well run into five figures.

Two steam boilers built in 1907 and 1912 are being disposed of by Smith's Containers of Raunds, Northamptonshire. One of them is of the Lancashire type and the other a Thompson. Both boilers produce 6,000 lbs per hour each and have oil fired rotamisers. These boilers have been working until recently and will be offered free to any organisation that requires them. For further information please contact Mr Williams at Raunds 3311.

A 1915 Type S National Gas Engine No 31743 is on offer to any preservation organisation, museum or individual, who would like to make a home for the engine for the next few years. The bore of the engine is 10 inches and the stroke 8 inches and the whole engine is approximately 9 ft long x 7 ft wide. The weight of the engine is approximately 3 tons and the owner can probably help with lifting at his end. If anyone is interested in having this engine on loan please contact Mr R R Meinertzhagen, 18 Kirby Road, Shrewsbury, Salop, SY3 7AB. Telephone 021 236 1277 (office).

Geoff Wallis of Dorothea Restoration

Engineers Ltd would be interested to hear from any reader who knows of a watermill threatened with destruction from which parts could be moved for re-use in the restoration of another mill. The items particularly required are as follows:—

One pair of mill stones, French Burr, preferably in good condition.

One 12 x 4 ft high breast or overshot water wheel with shaft and pit wheel, in any condition (similar size may do).

Remainder of drive and hurst frame for above.

3 ft high 'table' hurst frame, preferably 4 ft diameter.

Stone feed-hopper frame, damsel, and other associated small parts.

Screening, hoisting, elevating, and conveying equipment of traditional design in any condition.

Offers to G J O Wallis, 7 Fourth Avenue, Bristol BS7 0RN.

Four iron archimedean screws which formed part of the flour conveyor system at Evegate Mill in Kent are available to mill enthusiasts. The present owner of the mill, Mr Childs, would be glad to hear from anyone who would like to acquire them for further use; his address is: Evegate Mill, Smeeth, nr Ashford, Kent.

Kenneth Major, managing a millmarket?

Some time ago he wrote a short feature for 'Industrial Archaeology' in which he volunteered to act as a clearing house for offers and wants in respect of waterwheels and associated machinery. His article 'Wanted! Waterwheels' appeared in 'Industrial Archaeology' Vol 7 pp 325-7 and suggested that information should be sent to him, c/o Wind and Watermill Section, Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, 55 Great Ormond Street, London, WC1. Perhaps this proposal bears repetition here, now that so many more watermills are being actively restored.

Obituary

Dr Diane Freeman died on 15 August 1977 as a result of a car accident. Dr Freeman was a Staff Tutor at the Open University and a member of the Association since its early days, attending the annual conferences regularly. She served on the Council from 1974 to 1975. Her published papers included among their topics Armfield turbines in Hampshire, working class housing in Portsmouth and John Joice and Son, Coach-builders of Basingstoke. Her doctoral thesis, accepted in 1976, was 'A History of Corn Milling ca 1750-1914, with special reference to South Western and South Central England'. Her contribution to 'Agrarian History' on 18th and 19th century milling is likely to appear shortly. We extend to her family the sympathy of the Association on their sudden and sad loss.

The Severn Trow Preservation Society

A society has been formed to aid in the preservation and restoration of the *SPRY*, one of the very last Severn trows in existence, which has recently been raised from the river at Worcester and is at present in dry dock at Saul. The *SPRY* was built in 1894 at Chepstow by William Heard for William Davies, a stone merchant of Tiddenham, Gloucester. Originally built as a sloop rigged trow, she was altered to a ketch rig in 1913. Two years later she was removed from the customs register, though, after being cut down, she continued in use for many years as a towed barge. The *SPRY* ended her active life as a workshop at Worcester and eventually sank there in 1967. The Society raised her last September with the intention of restoring her to her original rig; it will, however, take a great deal of work and money to achieve this aim and the Society is appealing both for funds and for experienced people, willing to help in the restoration. The first stage is to raise the £400 needed to purchase the *SPRY* from her present owners. Donations and requests for further information should be sent to:

The Secretary

The Severn Trow Preservation Society
23 Ditton Road
Surbiton, Surrey

Please enclose a stamped addressed envelope.

Barge into France

A familiar sight until recently on the River Severn and Lower Avon was the Dutch-built steel motor barge *PISGAH*, built in 1927 and brought to England in 1929 to trade between Avonmouth and Pershore. *PISGAH* frequently used to load grain at Avonmouth, brought in from Canada and the USA, and convey it for milling at Pershore via the Severn, the Gloucester and Sharpness Ship Canal and the Warwickshire Avon. Her destination at Pershore was the splendid red brick Victorian flour mill on the waterside which, until the disastrous fire in 1976 (see Bulletin 4:2), used to generate its own electricity with a huge Tangye oil engine. The tidal reaches of the Severn are hazardous to navigate at the best of times, and on the exposed stretch below the Severn Bridge *PISGAH* used sometimes to 'hitch a lift' from a larger more powerful vessel going up to Sharpness before proceeding on her own on the more placid inland stretches beyond. Her wheelhouse was made collapsible in order to negotiate the low bridges on the Warwickshire Avon, and another hazard was the insufficient depth of water at certain times of the year; the photograph shows her crew winding the vessel



into one of the locks on the Lower Avon Navigation during one dry summer in the 1950's.

PISGAH was continuously engaged in this run from 1929 until 1972 and to her owners must go some of the credit for keeping the Lower Avon Navigation open, which was frequently in danger of closing. Five years ago, it was decided that she was no longer economic in this traffic. Help was at hand in the guise of new owners who had her extensively converted as a holiday boat and she now operates as a charter boat on the French waterways based at Marseilles les Aubigny, the former junction of the now defunct Canal du Berry with the busy Canal Lateral a la Loire. Her usual circuit includes a passage of the Canal de Briare, which was started in 1608 and can claim to be the first summit canal constructed in Europe, discounting Roman canals, and crosses the Loire on Gustave Eiffel's magnificent aqueduct. Countless abandoned industrial buildings are passed during the journey and the scenery is generally of a very high order. The nearest railhead to her base is Nevers, to which there are frequent rail services from the Gare de Lyon in Paris.

PISGAH has been converted so as to retain as far as possible her working profile. She is small by Continental barge standards, and can sleep up to 12 people, although as few as five can hire her. Rates to organisations such as the AIA are from £300 per week depending on the size of the group; the hire charge includes all fuel costs and calor gas, and the wages of two

full-time crew. Having already distinguished herself as the last working vessel on the Lower Avon, *PISGAH* has now embarked on a new lease of life when over 50 years old, opening up this little-known but richly interesting sector of the French canal system to holiday-makers. Further details of this unusual enterprise are available from her operators, A J and C J Ryle, Barge into France Ltd, West Lodge, Umerslade, Hockley Heath, Warwickshire, telephone Tanworth in Arden 2431.

The Maryland Historic Trust is a State Agency created in 1961 to guide preservation activities. It fosters preservation through its direct association with historical properties. Under its acquisition programme the Trust may buy or receive properties by bequest. When restored such properties are open to the public or are occasionally re-sold onto the market. The Trust maintains a continuing inventory of the State's historic sites and provides technical advice and information on preservation to private and public agencies and to individuals. Through its association with local and County historical groups, the Trust encourages public awareness of the importance of historic preservation. If you are interested in learning more about historic preservation in the USA or about the Trust in particular, then please contact them at the Department of Economic and Community Development, Shaw House, 21 State Circle, Annapolis, Maryland 21401, USA.

The Industrial Archaeology of Scotland 2. The Highlands and Islands. *John R Hume. Batsford. 1977. £7.50.*

The second part of the Batsford/Keith Falconer IA survey of Scotland. An 82 page introduction followed by a Gazetteer divided into counties and parishes and containing 121 illustrations. Each entry has a map reference and short historical description. Particularly relevant to those interested in communications in the Highlands.

The Industrial Archaeology of the British Isles. 1 The West Midlands. *Fred Brook. Batsford. 1977. £6.95.*

The first volume in the Batsford IA survey of England and covering Hereford/Worcester, Shropshire, Staffordshire, Warwickshire and the West Midlands including Birmingham and the Black Country.

After a 25 page introduction defining the region and dealing with its main industries, there is a Gazetteer again divided into counties towns and individual districts. Maps, grid references and 71 illustrations, many full page. **English Brickwork.** *Ronald Brunskill and Alec Clifton Taylor. Ward Lock, Martin Morgan and Scott. £6.95.*

A historical survey of English brickwork, an illustrated historical sequence of brick buildings and a comprehensive glossary.

Workshop of the British Empire. *Michael S Moss and John R Hume. Heinemann Educational Books. £12.50.*

A history of the engineering activities of the West of Scotland divided into industries with a section on the techniques of surveying and obtaining further information. It contains old photographs, engineering drawings and illustrations from catalogues of the time.

Antique Cast Iron. *Michael Owen. The Blandford Press. £3.75.*

Concentrating of the work of the Carron and Coalbrookdale companies this book draws freely on photographs of a collection of firebacks in a collection at Bath and on Kendrick catalogue pages.

Railway History Sources. *C R Clinker. Avon Anglia Publications and Services. £1.00.*

A brief but relatively comprehensive guide to railway archive material deposited in various Record Offices.

The Leicester and Swannington Railway.

C R Clinker. Avon Anglia Publications. £2.50.

A history of one of Britain's earliest railways which serviced very many industrial premises in the Leicester area.

Change and Decay. *Marcus Binney and Peter Burman. Cassell and Co. 1977. £3.75 (paperback)*

A three part book dealing with (a) a survey into the condition of churches today (b) methods of restoration, conservation and fund raising, and (c) possible uses for redundant churches catering for the needs of the communities they exist in. **Class and Community.** *Alan Dawley. Harvard University Press. 1977. £11.95.*

Subtitled 'The Industrial Revolution in Lynn', this is a study of the effects of the transition from cottage industry to organised factory life on the People of Lynn, Massachusetts, during the 19th century.

Life and Tradition in Northumberland and Durham. Frank Atkinson. J M Dent. 1977. £7.95.

Divided into chapters dealing with landscape, industries, folklore and people, this volume on the North East uses many examples from Beamish Open Air Museum.

Windmills of England R J Brown. Robert Hale. 1976. £5.00

A book on windmills written in what has come to be recognised as the 'approved industrial archaeological pattern', a practical section on the machinery, a chapter on preservation and restoration and a county by county gazetteer.

Seaside Piers Simon Adamson. Batsford. £3.95.

The rise and fall of the seaside piers with chapters on the architecture, construction, financial background and the social aspect of these very British institutions. A gazetteer gives useful industrial archaeological information on existing structures.

Digging by Steam Colin Tyler. Argus Books. £5.00.

A companion to 'Ploughing by Steam' this is the second of three publications on the history of steam cultivation. It deals particularly with the now legendary broadside diggers of Thomas Garby.

Scotland. I Donnachie, J Hume and M Moss. Moorland Publishing Company. 1977. £4.20.

A volume in the Historic Industrial Scenes series featuring the pictorial presentation of distilling, textiles, mining, fishing and the engineering and metal trades. There is a bibliography listed by trades and a geographical index.

Cirencester as it was. D J Viner. Hendon Publishing Company. 1976. £1.30.

A pictorial study of the Cotswold town in the period before the first World War.

An Encyclopaedia of Locks and Builders' Hardware. Josiah Parkes and Sons, Willenhall. £1.25.

A 1968 reprint of a history of locks and general background information aimed at Josiah Parkes's Distributors but providing a good general study and bibliography of one of the Black Country's traditional trades.

Old Cotswold Photographs. D J Viner. Hendon Publishing Company. 1977. £1.00.

Basically a social historian's picture book divided into agriculture, traditions, trades, crafts and the way of life of a rural community.

The Caverns and Mines of Matlock Bath. Roger Flindall and Andrew Hayes. Moorland Publishing Company. £1.10.

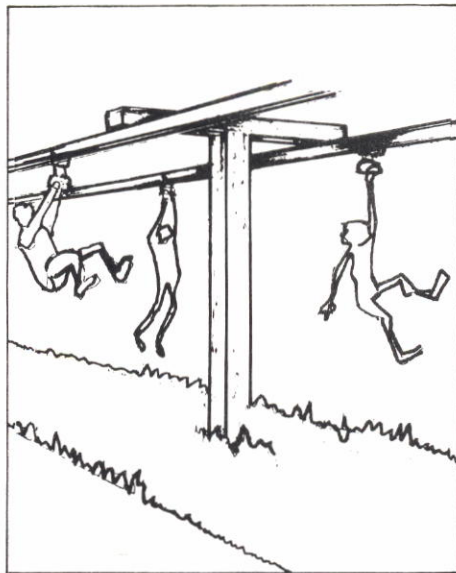
There are a bewildering complex of caves lying beneath the area round Matlock Bath, most of which have been known for upward of 175 years. Part One of this series deals with the Nestus Mines and the Rutland and Masson Caves.

Through London by Canal. British Waterways Board. 1877. 45p.

A description of the Regents Canal from Paddington to Limehouse. Contains many illustrations, a glossary and a short book list of London's Canals.

John Taylor, mining entrepreneur and engineer 1779-1863. Roger Burt. Moorland Publishing Company. 1977. £2.00.

A bibliography of the most influential person in British metal mining during the first half of the nineteenth century. Playing a similar role to John Percy in metallurgy, John Taylor helped to bring together practical mining practices and the scientific principles of geology.



Monorail Handslide: A recent exhibition at London's Serpentine Gallery in Hyde Park put forward a number of proposals for brightening areas of urban dereliction and arresting the downward spiral of loss of confidence, vandalism and urban decay which often follows where a once-flourishing industry is progressively run down, to the detriment of the surrounding area which will have become economically dependent upon the continuation of that industry. Some of these schemes, which were produced in response to a competition sponsored by a Sunday newspaper, would require lavish expenditure, and this at a time when the local authorities which would have to implement them are still under severe financial pressure. At least one idea, however, deserves further mention as being based on readily-available materials which would otherwise go for scrap. Julian Brafman of Harrow suggests that lengths of disused railway line could be lifted and erected on simple overhead pylons to form a 'monorail handslide'. Julian Brafman describes his proposal thus:—

"The two extra long slides of my proposed handslide system are intended to stretch a child physically. The anthropometric design will allow a child of any size to drop off the slide at any point quite safely. Any handpiece abandoned in the middle of a slide would free-fall, through gravity, to the end of the slide. At that point the track raises up the steps and the monorail starts again; thus a continuous loop is formed. The monorail is fitted with a variety of handpieces to cater for children of different sizes and includes a safety loop to carry physically handicapped children. The system is designed to make use of disused railway parts and thus the monorails consist of inverted railway tracks fitted to a 'T' section made from wooden track sleepers."

Here is an opportunity for the marriage of 19th century railway technology with that of the modern skateboard. For surely several of the rugged components of the skateboard lend themselves to adaptation for the handslide. In particular the carrying wheels and bearings would require to possess the same qualities of resilience and resistance to weather which make the skateboard a more expensive craze for the average parent to indulge than was the hula-hoop or the yo-yo. Further details of the Monorail Handslide from Julian Brafman at 15 Alicia Avenue, Kenton, Harrow, Middlesex.

A Selected Bibliography on Adaptive use of Historic Buildings. Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation & National Park Service. US Department of the Interior, Washington. 1976.

This bibliography is concerned with the adaptation of historical buildings for new uses. The list is not comprehensive, but provides a broad range of information on the subject.

Entries include author, title, publisher, date and place of publication, and in some cases pagination. It is arranged alphabetically under author or body responsible for publication.

Obtainable from:—
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation, National Park Service, US Department of the Interior, Washington, DC 20240.

Public Works Historical Society: A society with the above title exists in America for the study of public works in general. Their headquarters are at:

1776 Massachusetts Avenue, NW,
Washington DC, 20036

and as part of their programme they publish a series of essays on engineers and engineering projects in America. Essay No.5 published in September 1977 is on John B Jervis and the Old Croton Aqueduct which brought water from the Croton River to the centre of New York. This Aqueduct was constructed in the 1830's and Jervis was the 'practicable' engineer who saw to its construction. For further details of the Society and its publications write to the headquarters.

Canadian History of Science and Technology

Bulletin issued quarterly contains details of preservation technology, science policy and sociology of science and technology and a history of medicine of Canada. Its format is similar to our own AIA Bulletin and contains similar material for the Canadian field, although more biased towards science and technology. The Editors are R A Jarrell, (York University) and Norman Ball (Public Archives of Canada) and for further information, write to the Editor, HSTC Bulletin, Department of Natural Science, Atkinson College, York University, Downs View, Ontario, Canada, M3J 2R7.

Professor John Butt's telephone numbers were given in Bulletin 5/1 as (041 552) 4400 and 1482. These should have been (041 882) 4400 and 1482.

AIA Bulletin is published 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, publication and conservation. It aims to assist and support regional and specialist survey and research groups and bodies involved in the preservation of industrial monuments, to represent the interest 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 Membership Secretary Association for Industrial Archaeology, The Wharfage, Ironbridge, Telford, Salop TF8 7AW England (095-245 3522).