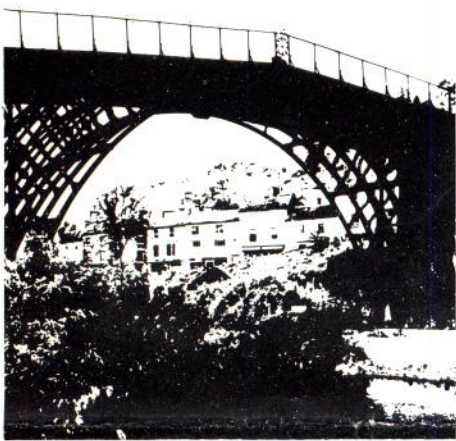


## VOLUME 6 NUMBER 2 1978



The Iron Bridge 1779|1979

**Join in the Iron Bridge Celebrations** The 1979 AIA Annual Conference will be held at Ironbridge, Shropshire from Friday 14 to Sunday 16 September and will be an important part of the Celebrations marking the bi-centenary of the world's first iron bridge.

AIA President Neil Cossons, Director of the Ironbridge Gorge Museum, has just released preliminary details of what promises to be the finest AIA Conference yet and impressive reading it makes. Based on Maw's Tile Works at Jackfield, on the south side of the River Severn and within easy reach of Blists Hill, the Iron Bridge, Coalport China Museum, Bedlam Furnaces and of course Coalbrookdale, the Conference will have the usual lecture, exhibition and field excursion facilities, plus industrial and craft demonstrations and trade stands.

The Maw's Works site contains a lecture theatre, a large exhibition area, catering facilities (where in fact most of the Conference meals will be taken) and ample car-parking space. Tile and pottery manufacture will take place during the Conference period and other demonstrations will include book-binding, blacksmithing, coracle making, clay-pipe manufacture, brick making, the manufacture and decoration of Coalport china and possibly a working bloomery. It is anticipated that the provision of trade-stands will result in survey and preservation equipment and materials being on show, plus of course all shapes and sizes of books.

A country-wide survey of the work of local industrial archaeological societies is to be undertaken in the near future (by an Ironbridge Museum based team supported by the Manpower Services Commission) and the results of this investigation will be presented at the Conference. Conference Transactions are also planned.

Accommodation will be in hotels, guest-houses and in the homes of local people. All **bookings will be made by the Museum Trust** and delegates will be offered a complete range of price levels and categories of accommodation within which they will be able to state their preferences. Accommodation will be available for up to two hundred people.

Although the Conference proper will start with registration at Maw's on Friday afternoon, and traditionally end after lunch on Sunday, a series of pre-conference excursions is being planned for Wednesday/Thursday and post-conference on Sunday. In addition a special **Complimentary Ironbridge Gorge Museum** ticket will be added to each delegates Conference Pack and access to all the Museum's sites will thus be available.

Enquiries should be directed to the AIA's Conference Secretary, Bill Thompson, 71 Albert Road West, Heaton, Bolton, Lancashire BL1 5HW.

**Shropshire, Caving & Mining Club Journal 1977**

Published formerly as the **Shropshire Mining Club Journal**, this new issue has a different cover feature and colour but follows generally the pattern set by previous issues. It contains 44 pages A4 size with 4 pages of maps and diagrams. The principal contents are short articles on the Tar Tunnel as a public show mine; an underground structure at Morsey Green near Ketley; a collection of Shropshire Miners' Ballads; some notes in novels with a mining flavour; Prince Edward Mine, Merioneth; and Archaeological relics by the River Dulas, Clwyd. A special feature in this issue is a list of the principal contents in all previous SMC publications. Price £1.30 (includes postage) and available from the Shop in the Square, Ironbridge, Telford, Salop.

**Archaeological Excavations** will take place next Easter on the seventeenth century blast furnaces at **Rockley, South Yorkshire**, under the direction of Mr David Crossley (Sheffield University) and at **Allensford, Northumberland**, under the direction of Stafford Linsley (Newcastle University) and Peter White (Ancient Monuments Inspectorate).

Both sites provide a good opportunity both to learn excavation techniques and to become

conversant with the main features associated with the furnace and its environment. At Allensford particularly it is hoped that visiting lecturers will attend to discuss other sites and methods.

**Allensford** March 19 for 3 weeks

**Rockley** April 6 for 2 weeks

If you would like to be kept in touch with either excavation, with a view to attending, please write to: Mr P R White, Inspector of Ancient Monuments, Room 224, Fortress House, Savile Row, London, W1.

**Sussex Industrial History. Volume 8** of the Journal of the Sussex Industrial Archaeology Society has just been published and continues their high standard of research by producing articles on watermills, iron making, bridges at Newhaven and pumping plant. There are also reports on current field projects in which the society is engaged. Their excellent newsletter, published four times a year, covers a wide variety of industrial archaeological activities in Sussex.

Further details of the society are obtainable from A J Hazelfoot, Albion House, Cobourgh Place, Hastings.

**The Greater London Industrial Archaeological Society**

are continuing their series of monographs, and recent publications include W A Cripps & Son, Bermondsey's Last Chainsmith price 65p, Tower Bridge Workshops price 50p, Walton Lodge Laundry The story of an enterprise price 50p, Vincent & Sons Ltd Cabinet-makers, Brick Lane, London 45p, Town Trail No 1 Waterloo to London Bridge 5p, and No 2 Blackfriars to Tower Bridge price 5p. Please add 15p post and package for each booklet, 8p for trails. All cheques/POs should be made payable to GLIAS and publications are obtainable from Adrian Taylor, GLIAS Publicity Officer, 28 Tower Hamlets Road, Walthamstow, London E17.

**Continued use for New York's oldest Pier**

New York's City Landmarks Preservation Commission recently declared the oldest active pier in the Port of New York, dating from 1884, as a historic landmark. The structure is known as Pier A, Battery Park and when completed in 1886 it accommodated the headquarters of the city's Department of Docks. Among its features when opened were a 70ft lookout tower and classical decorations in cast metal. Although now bereft of some of its more notable architectural features, Pier A is still of strategic use as the headquarters of Marine Fire Company No.1, one of New York's specialist teams to combat dockside fires.

**Record before we regret.** The urgency of recording industrial sites before they are swept away or altered beyond recognition is a theme often reiterated at conferences and adult education classes. Too often industrial archaeologists begin to take an interest only when plans for closure of a plant have already been announced, and there is a frantic scramble to collect items of machinery which will disappear into a museum store, there to languish for years while plans for a gallery of local industry are tossed around. When the embodiment of these pious intentions eventually materialises, one or two machines will be proudly unveiled to represent a local industry now defunct; but divorced from their proper context they can hardly communicate much of the impact which a visit to the working factory would have conveyed. Foremost among the published aims of the AIA is to encourage improved standards of recording, and the Seminar which was organised jointly with the Oral History Society in Birmingham on 11 November underlined the importance of working **people** as the most ephemeral and most precious element in industrial history. One of the speakers, Stanley Graham, worked as a lorry driver for twenty years before taking over the running of one of Lancashire's last steam mill engines. He has no sentimental illusions about keeping such mills open beyond their economic life for the benefit of antiquarians. There will be no shortage of hardware by which to remember the Lancashire cotton industry; what Stanley Graham sees disappearing irrevocably all around him are the first-hand experiences of those who worked in the industry at its height in the early years of the present century. Men like 97-year old Billy Brooks who began work as a weaver in 1891 at the age of ten and still recalls vividly the celebrations of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee in 1897. Stanley Graham has photographed every aspect of the weaving process in his mill, and is now coupling this archive with a series of recorded interviews with those who have worked with Lancashire cotton all their lives. He has written the following piece for the Bulletin to underline what he sees as the urgency with which such recording work must be tackled.

*It is the occupational hazard of the amateur that he often has to tell his grandmother how he thinks the eggs should be sucked. I find myself in this position now. There are a few seeds I would like to sow in your collective minds but before doing so wish to assure you that these ideas are not thrust on you in arrogance but proffered in humility.*

*I come into frequent contact with enthusiasts and well meaning amateurs. I should explain that I run a steam engine commercially; in other words we make money and if we don't, we stop. The visitors are impressed by the machine and fascinated by the old-fashioned processes in the factory. The question most commonly asked is "when will it be scrapped?" or "has anyone done anything about preserving it." The artifact rules, OK.*

*How many of the professional Industrial Archaeologists think differently? I know there are many and the number grows all the time, but there are many who don't. It seems to me that there are far too few who have realised that the resources wasting away fastest, are the vast amounts of human experience, lost with the death of old craftsmen and skilled artisans.*

*I can hear the rustle of greying hair as the collective heads shake but is this statement so far from the truth? Walk into any museum in the land and pick out an old machine. Then find the curator and ask him what is known about the machine and its operation. The odds are that you will receive plenty of information about who made the machine and how many horsepower was needed to drive it but nothing about the practicalities of running it. This is true of the published histories. I am sure that the main reason is that the men who wrote the books were not the men who ran the machines.*

*This was understandable in days gone by when the only tools available were the sketch pad and the notebook. Today we have the 35mm camera and the tape recorder and things are better and so books in future will have the practical side as well. Or will they?*

*This state of affairs was first brought home to me by the necessity to obtain information on the practical running of steam engines. This was forced on me by the fact that I found I had one to run and practical help was thin on the ground. Always a great believer in the written word I went to the library and put in my requests. Books flowed in with monotonous regularity from Boston Spa and I soon became an expert on the design, construction and indicating of steam engines, especially the indicating. I could write a thesis on the traps contained in the thousands of words written on indicating.*

*Formulae and mathematics abounded but I was no nearer the actual day-to-day nitty gritty information that I needed. At this point I started using my head and went out and found myself a genuine, 100%, copper-bottomed, hairy-backed steam engineer. A few meaningful interviews with him resulted in two things, first I found out all I wanted to know. Second, I found I had made a firm friend mainly by listening and paying him the compliment of trusting his experience.*

*All this was a fair time ago and as I haven't had a runaway or a crop of hot bearings it looks as though my informant might have done a good job. My search for knowledge had whetted the appetite for history that had long been suppressed by the need to earn a living, and I began to think that it was perhaps time I did something about the things I considered to be*

*wrong instead of just moaning about them. I started to photograph the people in the mill using their skills in the old processes which have almost died out. This developed into a large 'folio and was well received by certain men of quality who persuaded me to go a stage further and add tapes with people describing in their own words what they were doing. The result is a clear, factual description of how to do these jobs. It would be possible to learn the basics of the job from this material. This would seem to be to be the ideal way of doing the job. It has cine film beaten because you can spend as much time looking at one particular frame as you want without loss of quality. Anyone who has ever tried to do this with cine film will vouch for the fact that the loss of definition is such as to make this difficult.*

*This then is the axe I want to grind. I believe that a lot of the time, effort and money that at present goes into the collection and preservation of artifacts could more usefully be employed in saving the old skills for posterity before some of them vanish completely.*

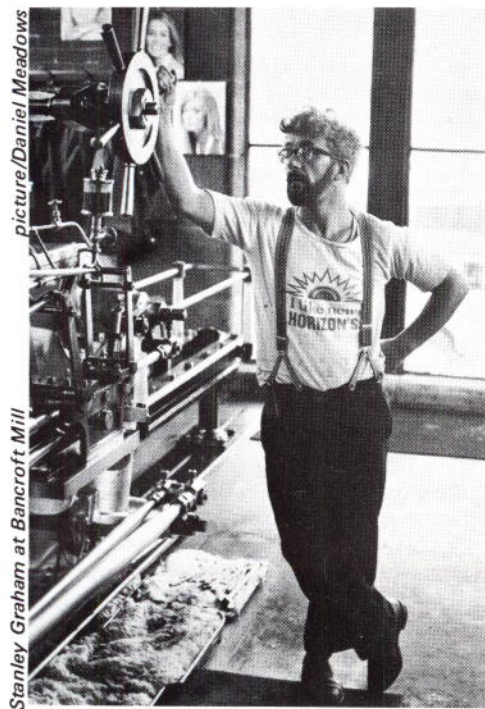
*I admit to being biased. I find the detached, objective role very difficult but I believe I have something to offer. I am sincere and my work is practical and cost-effective. It also has the great merit that it is based on a wide experience of the people and machines I love so much. Another small point in its favour is that up to now it has cost no one else a penny; I have supported the costs myself. Hopefully this may change in the future. A lot depends on the reception given to it.*

*I believe we have a great opportunity to do good in this field. I also believe that historians in the future will find it very hard to forgive us if we miss out. The buck stops here.*

#### Editor's note:

The recording project described above was mounted in the nick-of-time, as it turns out. In the few weeks since Stanley Graham's words were written, it has been announced that the unit in Barnoldswick will weave out before the end of 1978. The last steam mill in Pendle will thus follow so many other Lancashire spinning and weaving mills into oblivion — except that in this case photographic and sound records of the work of the mill will survive it at the Department of Regional Studies, University of Lancaster and at the Science Museum.

**Aerial Archaeology**, a new journal published by the Committee for Archaeological Air Photography (Anglian region). Volume 1 1977 was published at £3.75 per copy but by affiliation which costs £3.00 per annum, one can receive all copies of the journal published in that year. The journal contains reports of the committees for archaeological air photography and surveys interpretation and results. There is an article on air photography and industrial archaeology by John H Boyes in Volume 1 which points out several interesting uses of air photography including the surveying of rivers and associated river improvements and the location of vanished windmill sites. It would also seem obvious that photography would be extremely useful in tracing the routes of abandoned canals, railways and other transport systems. Further details of the journal are obtainable from Mr S G Upex, Hon Librarian, Committee for Archaeological Air Photography (Anglian region), 6 Highgate Green, E lton, Peterborough, Cambridgeshire.



Stanley Graham at Bancroft Mill  
picture/Daniel Meadows



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**Degree Studies in IA** A new degree course offered at King Alfred's College, Winchester will include industrial archaeology as an optional third year topic. Details of the new course have been supplied by Dr Martin Doughty, Lecturer in History at the College, who has written to reassure us that the lack of opportunity for IA studies at undergraduate level deplored recently by Dr Angus Buchanan is steadily being rectified:—

*"Following Dr Course's remarks on the status of Industrial Archaeology as an academic discipline in institutions of further education (Bulletin 5:3), members of the Association may be interested in noting a new development at King Alfred's College, Winchester. King Alfred's is a College of Higher Education offering degree courses validated by the Council for National Academic Awards. Commencing in September 1978, King Alfred's is offering a BA Hons Joint Degree in History Main Subject with Archaeology Associated. In their second year all students will take a course on Technology while in the third year, students taking Archaeology will be offered a choice of specialising in Classical, Medieval or Industrial Archaeology. The Industrial Archaeology offered at King Alfred's involves a general treatment of the archaeological effects of the Industrial Revolution, and then proceeds to consider in detail the archaeology of transport developments in nineteenth century Britain. Students taking these courses will devote over a third of their archaeology course to discussion of Industrial Archaeology, and will, in addition, have the option of undertaking a 10,000 word dissertation on an industrial archaeological subject. Industrial Archaeology is fully integrated within the joint degree structure in a manner directly comparable to the traditional archaeology.*

*In the current situation of the teaching of Industrial Archaeology the new degree at King Alfred's will make an important contribution, both in terms of the availability of Industrial Archaeology for the student, and also in terms of defining and developing the relationship between this subject and traditional archaeology on the one and the Main Subject History on the other.*

*The new Associated Subject course in Archaeology at King Alfred's, it should be pointed out is making history in another sense in that it is the first course of its kind to be validated by CNAA. It is expected to recruit 15 students for this degree in 1978-79, and to increase the number to 20 or 25 in subsequent years."*

Further information on the course is available from **Dr Martin Doughty**, Lecturer in History **King Alfred's College, Winchester SO22 4NR.** Telephone 0962-62281.

## WELSH FOUNDRY HISTORY

**John Mills and Co (Llanidloes) Ltd, Railway Foundry.** J B Groucott writes: The present Works site has been occupied since the early 1860's, having removed there from another part of the town of Llanidloes, shortly after the Llanidloes and Newtown Railway opened (1858). The firm was then engaged in general engineering, particularly in the field of providing machinery for metal mines in Wales and elsewhere. The present range of buildings within the Works site (SN 956854) includes those built by William Thomas when he moved there. He made the bricks and cast the window-frames himself, a very necessary self-sufficiency exercise in an area then far-removed from the main manufacturing centres. The cast window frames are the fairly typical 19th-century round-headed type, while the roof of the main central workshop they light has an open timber roof also typical of that era.

The Company maintained the locomotives of the Llanidloes and Newtown Railway in the early years of the railway's existence, prior to the completion of the connection northwards from Newtown; it seems that before the present Works was occupied, the locomotives were moved across the town to the old works, by the well-known process of laying rails before the engine to enable it to progress through the streets under its own power, a method known well in railway history in the last century. The new Works however, had a siding laid in direct to the Works, maintained by the Railway company; the last waggon out (in the year before the whole Moat Lane — Brecon line closed, 1962), was a ferry-waggon carrying one of the firm's present products, the 'Oilautic' press, to a customer in Italy. All traffic now goes by road, but there remains in partial use an internal narrow-gauge railway of about 600mm gauge, using hand-propelled trucks. Standard-gauge rails however can still be seen in the Works yard area.

There is in the Works yard, a hand-operated crane, manufactured by Lloyds and Fosters of Wednesbury, dated 1866; this was formerly in the Blacksmith's shop. In one of the shops there is also an overhead travelling crane, the rails for which are supported on cast-iron columns very similar in appearance to those seen as pier-columns on the Brynwrn bridge at Newbridge-on-Wye. These sets of columns were cast at the Works, and as a jobbing foundry it would probably be the custom to retain patterns of such items for a very long time. However, the foundry side of the business has now ceased altogether, and all necessary components are fabricated; the former foundry is now occupied by a firm of aluminium casters, BSK Ltd.

There was formerly an association with the South Wales coal industry through Lord David Davies of Llandinam, whose Ocean Coal Company collieries used metal pit-props at the turn of the century; these were sent back to be straightened at the Railway Works, by rail naturally, and this in fact led to the firm developing the present manufacture to the 'Oilautic' presses used widely in industry of all types. The general engineering side of the business has declined, but in former times ironwork was produced for such local