

Volume nine number two 1982

Is anybody out there listening?

In our Summer 1981 issue (Bulletin 8:3) we appealed for suggestions for a poster to make the AIA more widely known. Eight long months we have waited, but answer came there none, and the prize offered by Council remains unclaimed. The preceding issue, which was devoted, principally, to the future of the Albert Dock in Liverpool, included details of a competition to find the most outrageous proposal which members could devise for redeveloping the Dock. Frivolous it may have been, but we hoped that some readers might put pen to paper to claim the prizes that were on offer. As in the case of the poster, it was left to a Council member, in this case our busy Secretary, to submit the only entry.

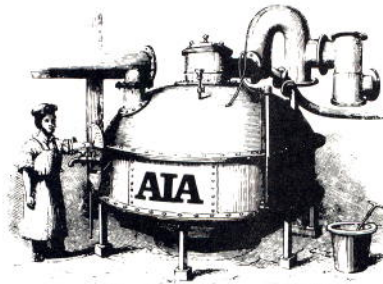
Your Editor will be forgiven if these experiences prompt him to wonder whether anyone out there is actually listening. He is sanguine enough not to expect a steady flow of unsolicited contributions, but if it were not for the efforts of a handful of regulars, David George of Manchester, Paul Sowan of Croydon, Jim Groucott of Llandrindod Wells and Douglas Hague to name just a few, your Bulletin would be reduced to a single sheet. Stuart Smith regularly writes the bulk of the book notices, but cannot hope to see all the new publications, with many of them restricted to local distribution but nevertheless of interest to industrial archaeologists everywhere.

Nearly a thousand copies of each Bulletin go out from Ironbridge, and it is surely reasonable to assume that most will be seen by at least two people. Yet your Council gets no 'feedback' on whether you would like the Bulletin to carry additional features or whether you would be happy to see it fade away altogether. Perhaps you were all too busy recording threatened sites in your own locality to have time for the frivolity of the Albert Dock competition; we cannot know what you would like if we are not told. Are we too solemn? Or too trivial? Would you like more brief reports of events in IA limited to a few hundred words? Or are more substantial features like that on the Albert Dock enquiry more

useful? We are not looking for bouquets; constructive criticism of the Bulletin's content will be as useful to your Council as expressions of approval for the content as it is. John Robinson will be delighted to hear from you, if you would like to send your comments to him at The Science Museum, South Kensington, London SW7 2DD. Any letters worthy of publication might even qualify for one of those prizes which no-one else seems to want!

Are you making the most of your leisure activities?

If you are interested in Old industries . Canals . Railways . Paddle steamers . Farm machinery . Vintage cars . Stationary steam engines . Museum and Conservation projects . Wind and water-mills . Historic aircraft . etc. etc. you must obviously be a member of the AIA



You're not! Good heavens! Drop a note to Stuart Smith at The Association for Industrial Archaeology The Wharfage, Ironbridge, Shropshire TF8 7AW asking for details of membership because otherwise you're missing out on AIA BULLETINS, Booklists, Swapshop, AIA Diary, Local Society news and the opportunity to take part in the annual September AIA Conference

Postscript. We now have a poster, thanks to Roy Day whose graphic skills have earned wide praise for the Bulletin's layout. This is A4 in size, small enough for college and society notice boards and is on orange paper. It is reproduced here and anyone who thinks he or she can provide display space should write to the Publicity Officer, Julia Elton, at 18 Alwyne Place, London N1 or to Stuart Smith at Ironbridge.

Locomotive Named 'Abraham Darby'. A naming ceremony was held on platform 3 at Euston Station on Monday October 19th, when one of British Rail's class 86 electric locomotives — no 86247 — was named 'Abraham Darby' in memory of the four great Shropshire ironmasters who bore that name.

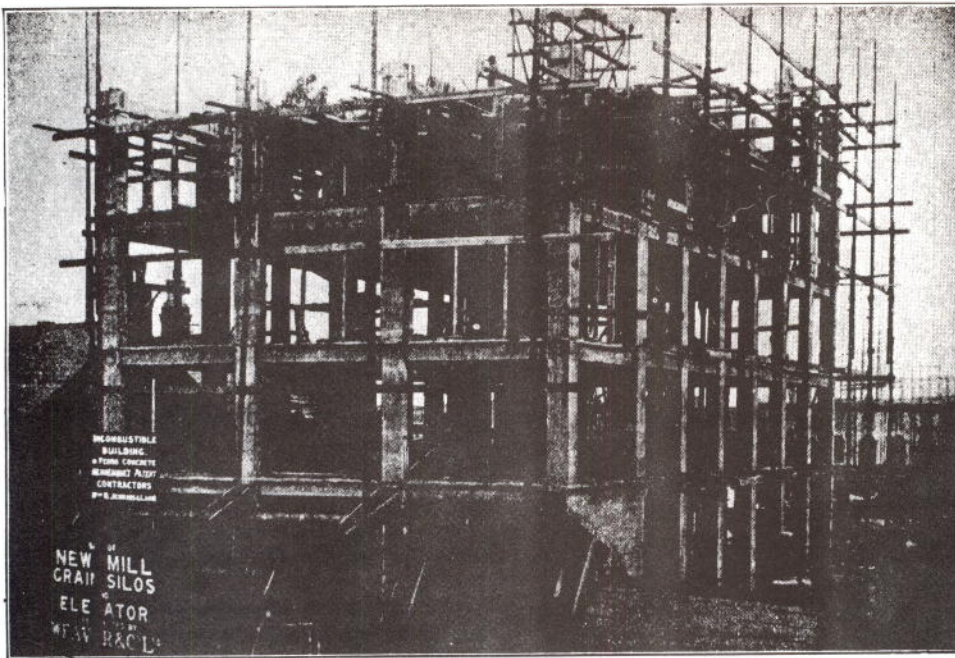
Abraham Darby I perfected the process of smelting iron using coke instead of charcoal at Coalbrookdale in 1709. This opened the way to large scale iron production and made possible the rapid growth of industrialisation. By 1722, under the direction of his son Abraham Darby II iron steam engine cylinders were being cast at Coalbrookdale. It was also at Coalbrookdale that the first iron railway wheels were cast in 1729, to be followed by the first iron rails in 1767. Abraham Darby III was responsible for the casting of the Iron Bridge, erected in 1779, and Abraham Darby IV was associated with the Coalbrookdale Company's period of supremacy in the field of decorated castings; in the Nineteenth Century.

The naming ceremony was performed by Lady Rachel Labouchere, President of the Ironbridge Gorge Museum and a direct descendant of Abraham Darby I. Also present was Michael Darby, Vice-President of the Museum Trust, direct descendant of Abraham Darby I, Sir Peter Parker, Chairman of British Rail and a member of the London Committee of the Ironbridge Gorge Museum Development Trust also attended, and was later presented with a model of Trevithick's Coalbrookdale locomotive of 1802, which had been specially made for the occasion by apprentices from Rolls-Royce at Shrewsbury.

After the ceremony, which took place at 12.15, 'Abraham Darby' hauled the 12.40 to Wolverhampton. On board the train, four girls from the Ironbridge Gorge Museum, dressed in traditional eighteenth century costume, distributed museum literature and complimentary tickets.

John Powell

There is the possibility of a 12 month appointment from Autumn 1982 for a **Community Enterprise Programme Post in Industrial Archaeology** at the Royal Commission on Ancient Monuments in Wales. Interested unemployed people can register their interest and will be kept informed by writing to: Mr D M Hughes, RCAM Wales, Edlestone House, Queen's Road, Aberystwyth, Dyfed SY23 2HP.



Photograph taken in 1896 showing Weaver's Mill under construction

The future of Weaver's Mill in Swansea is in doubt. Recognised as the first reinforced concrete frame building in Britain and completed in 1898 by Hennebique and Le Brun under the direction of Louis G Mouchel (see Bulletins 3:6 and 6:3) poor materials were evidently used in the aggregate, for some of the infill panels can be crumbled by hand. The condition of the warehouse has been deteriorating since it was last occupied several years ago and, later in September the lease changed hands, in what is seen as the first in a series of moves which will culminate in its demolition. The building is listed, but it is unlikely that anyone in Swansea will defend it from the bulldozers, for it is regarded as an eyesore. Its unique status as the first of many thousands of reinforced concrete framed buildings in Britain will probably not be sufficient to save it. While we would hesitate to endorse a recent verdict in *New Civil Engineer* that the Weaver building is 'charmlless and absolutely revolting', it certainly has little to recommend it on aesthetic grounds.

The Weaver's Triangle. David George has supplied the following note:-

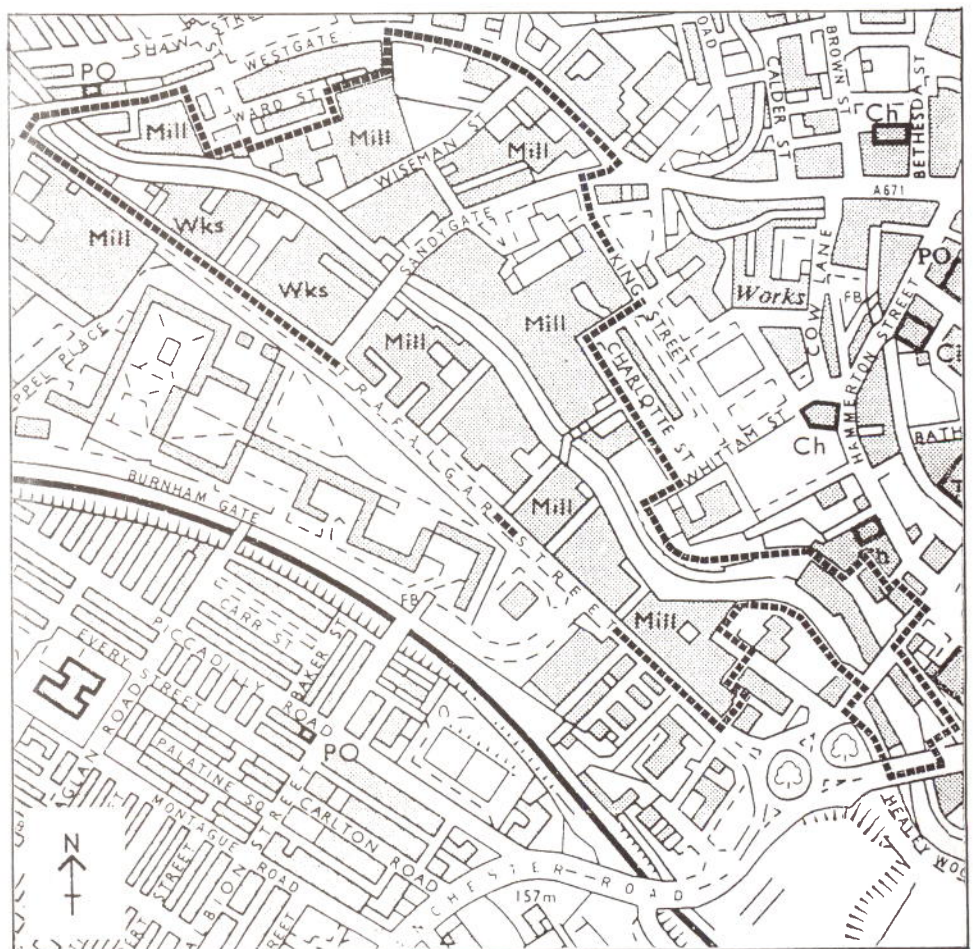
'Burnley was once one of the great weaving centres of the world. Yet it is rapidly becoming transformed. Like most of our Lancashire towns, it has been given some cosmetic treatment at the hands of developers. Many of its thousands of Lancashire looms have disappeared, and numbers of mills have closed down or even been demolished, altering a once grimly impressive skyline.

In looking to the future, Burnley, like other towns of its kind, needs reminders of its past greatness. Just as urgently, it needs, for the benefit of future generations, a constant strengthening of a sense of its own identity. It is very important that the ever-lengthening gaps between generations are closed rather than widened, so that Burnley children will have a chance to learn respect for the ways in which their forefathers earned their bread. For there is no automatic transmission of knowledge from parents to children; where grandfather earned his living as a tackler in a mill, a son may be

fitting together electronic parts in a corner of the same building, and the grandson may be taught the history of the industrial revolution from a not very reliable school textbook.'

So wrote Dr John Marshall in an issue of the *Bulletin for the centre of North-West Regional Studies*. In one area close to the canal stand some fifteen weaving sheds and spinning mills between Manchester Rd and Westgate. In July 1978 the local borough council authorised a study of this area known as the 'Weaver's Triangle'. The results have prompted the

Proposed Weaver's triangle conservation area.



proposed designation of part of it as a Conservation area. Most of the old industrial buildings in Trafalgar Street, Sandygate and Wiseman Street are included.

An Industrial Museum Action Committee (IMAC) has also been formed to convert a combined domestic row and cotton Warehouse in Slater Terrace and to furnish the houses as they would have been set out two or more generations ago. The engine house and boiler house in Slater Terrace would also display textile and other machinery.

The organisers also plan to use a nearby canal toll house as their headquarters and have spent a year making it weatherproof. The Secretary is Mr R Frost, c/o 18 Talbot St, Harle Syke, Burnley, Lancs.

A Further Note on Horsfall and Bickham and the Horbick Car. An outline history of the production of motor vehicles by the Salford firm was given in *Transport History Vol 9* and in a lecture given to the Eccles and District Historical Society (1979). Further information is reported in a Centenary article in the *Salford City Reporter (6.12.1935)* headed 'when motor cars were manufactured in the city'. The firm it is claimed was one of the first firms to make motor vehicles (after the collapse of the British Motor Syndicate) but owing to lack of accommodation and a greater faith in the textile trade, not after 1911. The firm's premises were originally in Orchard Street, Pendleton, where today there is still plenty of evidence of cotton mill buildings and weaving sheds with the North facing rooflights supported on wooden beams and iron columns which have the keyholes for lineshafting, the type of building that was often adapted for motor manufacture in the period of hand built cars.

(T C Horsfall, one of the partners was something of an innovator in grinding wheels and tools and as a member of the Salford Citizens Association for the improvement of unwholesome dwellings etc, produced housing reports.)

A total of some 2000 vehicles were made and apparently the 20/24 Landulette was a favourite with Indian Princes, whilst the Horbick Minor was clearly ahead of its time. Mr S Cook of Gorton remembers, at the age of 78, how they were fitted with White and Poppe engines and tested round a track in the yard.

In 1965, the successor company Horbick Diesels (now of Kenyon Lane, Prestwich) appealed unsuccessfully for the loan of a Horbick which could be used as a model. Back in 1935, two at least were known to exist and one took part in the London – Brighton rally that year. Works manager Mr Jacobs was most helpful with information and press cuttings, whilst the owner David Southern closely guards the remaining photos, drawings and catalogues relating to the cars. Is it too much to hope that one day a replica will be constructed and the history of the company represented in local museums? **A D George**

Industrial Archaeology at Plas Tan y Bwlch.

Over the past few years surveys, in varying degrees of detail, have been carried out at the following sites:

Prince Edward Gold Mine, Rhiw Bach Quarry, Lliwedd (Cwm Erch) Copper Mine, Cyfn Coch/Berth Llwyd Gold Mines and Dolfrwynog Turf Copper Mine.

The intention is to eventually publish (most of) these surveys – meanwhile interested parties may consult the records at Plas Tan y Bwlch, the Snowdonia National Park Study Centre, Maentwrog. References to historical material relating to these sites (other than the obvious sources) would be welcomed.

Peter Crew and Merfyn Williams

Maurice Barbey, technical secretary for the past 10 years of the **Institution of Civil Engineer's Panel for Historical Engineering Works**, has had to tender his resignation from the post because of ill-health. The PHEW records and evaluates historic structures throughout Britain and has done much to alert the civil engineering profession to the significance of its own history and the debt owed by present engineers to those who preceded them. But for the Panel's efforts, many structures still surviving would have been swept away.

Barbey spent his working career with the railways as a civil engineer, and was District Engineer for the Hull and York districts. He devised the system of assessing a structure's relative importance on a 'points' basis and which has not yet found general acceptance. Experience has shown that structures as disparate as, say, a wrought iron viaduct and a canal tunnel cannot be adequately evaluated on a purely numerical score, and the criteria on which such monuments are assessed is not satisfactorily reduced to an arithmetical formula.

Recently he has had the satisfaction of editing and seeing into print the first of a projected series of ICE historical publications, entitled **Civil Engineering Heritage: Northern England**. He will continue as a Panel member representing the Yorkshire area; his successor as technical secretary will be Bryan O'Loughlin.

Apart from their intrinsic value, early showcards and posters often show valuable contemporary details. This Clark's 1915 advertisement is a good example.

Historic Calender. The History of Advertising Trust is not as well known as it deserves to be. Established as an educational foundation and a registered charity, it exists to promote a serious interest in the history of advertising and to act as an archive for the Advertising Association and for the industry as a whole. It is currently campaigning to raise the necessary funds to take over premises in Finsbury which the City University is willing to make available for an archive and study centre. A regular reminder of its aims is provided by the excellent series of calendars, all based on historic advertising material, that the Trust commissions each year. Initially these were purchased mainly by the advertising industry itself. Last year's calendar was devoted to railway advertising, and the resultant interest from railway enthusiasts helped to make the Trust's work more widely known. The 1982 calendar features famous advertising symbols of past campaigns, including the Guinness toucan, the Michelin man and the lifeboatman who used Lifebuoy soap. It is produced to a

high standard on heavy cartridge paper, in the expectation that it will perhaps be saved, and a royalty on each sold helps the Trust's funds. The price is £4.95 post-free and it can be obtained from: George M Harrison, History of Advertising Trust, 53 Goodge Street, London W1P 1FB. A history of the advertising industry was recently published by William Heinemann, written by Dr Terry Nevett and entitled **Advertising in Britain – A History** it highlights the enormous influence that advertising and marketing have had on the economic and social advancement of Britain. The price is £12.50 plus £1 for postage and copies are available from bookshops or from HAT at the address above.

Mining History Computerised. The beginner in mining history, often finds great difficulty tracing any more than the most scant information relating to mine sites, of whatever period. Beyond the obvious geological and local-history publications, however, the determined searcher ultimately reaches the point where he can think