

INDUSTRIAL ARCHAEOLOGY NEWS

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THE BULLETIN OF THE ASSOCIATION FOR INDUSTRIAL ARCHAEOLOGY

FREE TO MEMBERS OF AIA



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INDUSTRIAL ARCHAEOLOGY NEWS 131 Winter 2004

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COVER PICTURE

This model of a pre-war Comet aeroplane serves as an inn sign outside the Comet Hotel, Hatfield. The hotel was opened in 1936 and is close to the de Havilland site venue for the AIA Conference

Photo: R J M Carr

AIA Hatfield Conference 2004

The 2004 conference, 'Hertfordshire and the Lea Valley', was held at the University of Hertfordshire's de Havilland Campus in Hatfield on 13-19 August. Thanks are especially due to Tim Smith and Malcolm Tucker with their fellow conspirators Bob Carr and Mary Mills, and of course to conference organiser Tony Parkes. Thanks also to Tony Jervis and John Brown for contributions to this report.

Roger Ford

AIA Chairman Mike Bone welcomed 112 delegates to the 2004 Conference on the Friday evening, after the daytime seminar (to be reported in *IA News 132*). All lectures were held in a curiously designed theatre, which featured easily the worst slide production I have ever seen (and the ugliest ceiling). For the lectures from the next day onwards a 'normal' slide projector was set up and the built-in facilities not used.

Tim Smith gave the introductory lecture on the Hertfordshire area, followed by Dr Jim Lewis on the Lea Valley. A short burst of members' contributions rounded off the evening, first with Derek Bayliss showing slides from the 1970s taken at the Leighton Buzzard railway. Brian Adams followed on the Rafael Salaman tool collection (all of which have now been displaced by mechanisation), then Paul Sowan on the discovery of Reigate stone blocks built into a Roman tile kiln, and finally John Crompton gave a thorough analysis of an early rail trip by Queen Victoria, starting at Watford and foraying via Drayton Manor to Chatsworth and Belvoir.

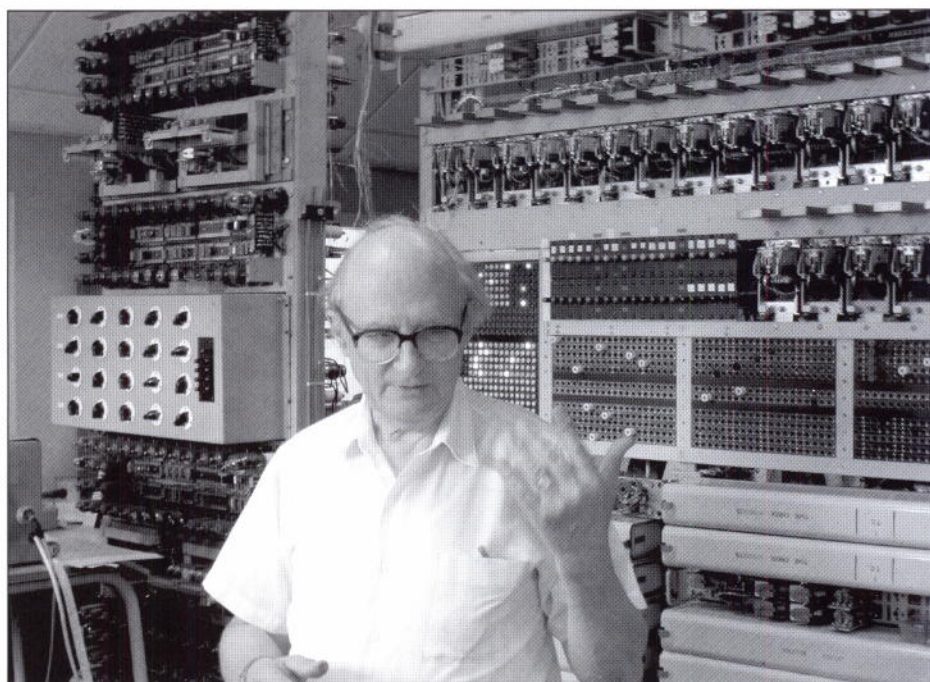
The first of Saturday morning's lecturers were Hertfordshire planning officer Jonathan Smith, on the planning process and IA, and Amber Patrick on

maltings – the area was particularly rich in these, but because the majority were timber-framed, they had a poor survival rate. After coffee, Dr Richard Hills spoke on paper-making in Hertfordshire, which was very much a local industry due to the abundance of water supplies. Then Brenda Buchanan gave an erudite explanation of the early application and manufacture of gunpowder at Waltham Abbey. This closed as a factory at the conclusion of WW2 but continued as a research facility until the 1990s.

There was a choice of three visits on the Saturday afternoon. The Apsley Paper Trail started with a visit to John Dickinson's Frogmore Mill, which still produces specialist papers. We saw paper made from all sorts of vegetable sources, including elephant droppings (euphemistically labelled 'elle pooh'). They have a Foudrinier machine of 1896, installed second-hand in 1907. The afternoon concluded with a wonderful spread of home-made cakes laid on at the beautifully restored Redbournbury Watermill. The second visit was to the Leighton Buzzard narrow-gauge railway (built for sand conveyance), where closed coach no. 12 was reserved for AIA delegates, with ordinary visitors in a separate vehicle. Loco 'P.C. Allen' hauled the train and time was allowed to see Stonehenge works, loading sidings and quarry.

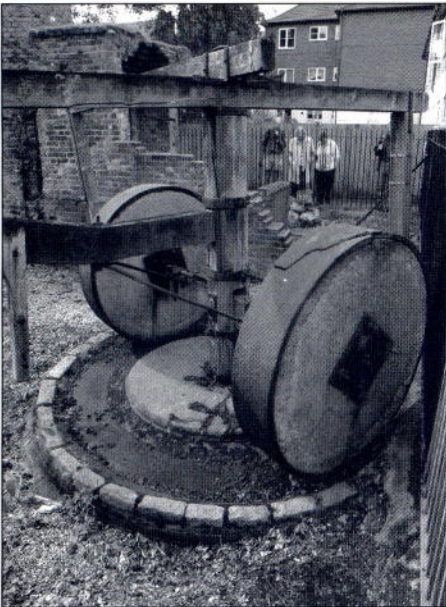
The third trip was to the Ware Maltings, visiting a series of sites on the River Lea. The town of Ware was a major malting centre for the London trade, at one time having nearly 100 malt houses. The annual conference dinner was held in the evening.

As is now traditional, Sunday morning started with presentations of the AIA Awards, reported elsewhere, followed by the AGM when the main change this year was a swap between Mike Bone



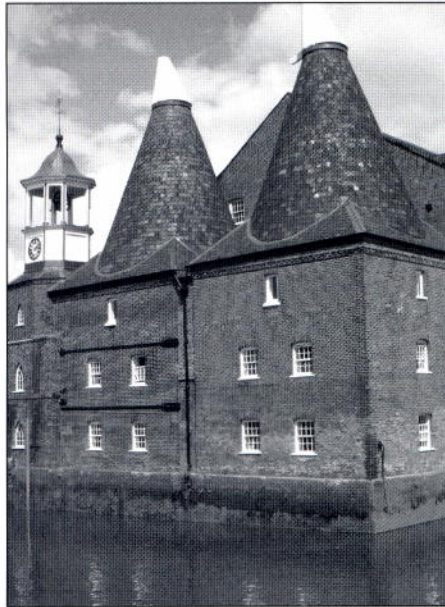
Explanation of the Colossus Mark 2 rebuild at Bletchley Park

Photo: R J M Carr



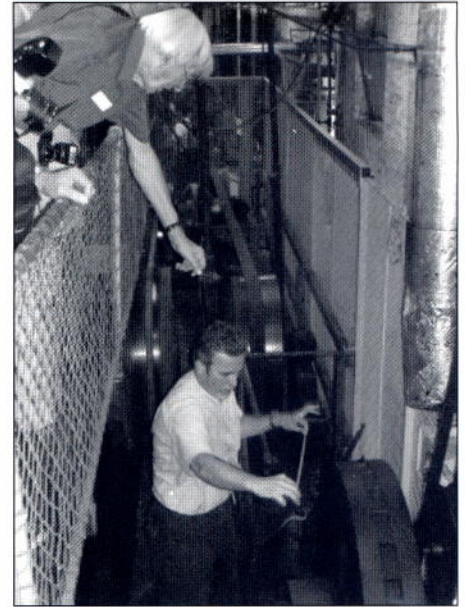
Edge mill at the James Pulham Terracotta Works, Broxbourne

Photo: M Harrison



The Clock Mill, Three Mills, Bromley-in-Bow

Photo: Marilyn Palmer



Colin Bowden takes over by getting the man in charge at Frogmore paper mill to measure the flywheel of the steam engine, since he was not allowed in there himself!

Photo: Marilyn Palmer



The AIA admires Station X at Bletchley Park

Photo: M Harrison



Visiting the King George V Pumping Station at Enfield

Photo: M Harrison

and Prof. Marilyn Palmer – Marilyn now becomes Chairman and Mike becomes Vice-Chairman. Christine Ball was voted onto Council. Dr Alison Sheridan also spoke briefly to remind delegates of the prestigious British Archaeological Awards which are the 'Oscars' of archaeology and are held every two years. They include the AIA Ironbridge Award for the best adaptive, innovative re-use of any historic or industrial building. Details of this AIA-sponsored award are given on the AIA website.

The Rolt Memorial Lecture was delivered by Dr Denis Smith on 'Landscape with Writers: Engineering and the Industrial Landscape in English Literature'. He was assisted by Sonia Rolt, who gave prose and poetry readings to illustrate the lecture. When published in *Industrial Archaeology Review* this should widen members' reading tastes!

On Sunday afternoon one visit went to Waltham Abbey Gunpowder Mills, many of the remains of which were viewed from a tractor-pulled 'land train' (though it is hoped to re-commission the narrow gauge railway that supplemented the site's canal transport system, which has left behind some very fine cast-iron aqueducts. The second tour first saw Whitewebbs Road Transport Museum where, in addition to the vehicles, there is a 200-foot deep well sunk into the chalk, designed to top up the 'New River' by means of two compound beam engines, removed in 1950, though the valve house remains. The remnants of the New River were visited in the grounds of Myddelton House, and then a visit was paid to the Flash Lane aqueduct, constructed in 1820 to shorten the course of the New River by taking it over the Cuffley Brook. The third visit took a walk around the hat-making district of Luton (many of these small manufactories are still going on), with a visit to the Luton Museum which, amongst other interesting things, contains a wonderful Roman hoard of gold and silver