

Issue 51: October 2017

# Newsletter



*Crophorne Mill by John Mason*

**WORCESTERSHIRE  
INDUSTRIAL ARCHAEOLOGY  
& LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY**

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## MEMBERSHIP NEWS

We are pleased to welcome the following new members,

- Janet Baker – Malvern Link
- Nigel Bullock - Worcester
- David and Carol Coe - Worcester
- Dennis Williams - Leigh Sinton
- Cyril Pulleng - Worcester
- Alan and Virginia Seddon - Colwall

Janet does not have transport so would be pleased to have a lift to winter meetings.

Sue McCurdy

## CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

After 19 years as Treasurer, David Sharman decided to retire this year. In recognition of his work for the Society, supported by his wife Maida, the Committee invited them to become Honorary Life Members of the Society and we are delighted that both have accepted. John Beale (*until recently*) our Vice Chairman, has kindly agreed to be the new Treasurer. I am also very pleased to report that Eileen Porteous has joined the committee as Press Secretary and to help with the summer programme.

Our 2017 Summer Programme finished on a high note with an away-day to Leicester. We are extremely grateful to Mike Hayzelden for his meticulous

planning and execution of visits and once again I hope you will all agree that the programme was a great success. The eclectic mix of venues gave us opportunities to visit sites that were both interesting and unusual. Mike is already hard at work planning for Summer 2018 and he is, of course, always glad to receive feed-back (positive or negative) and suggestions for future summer adventures - so please do get in touch. One of the high spots for me this year was the intriguing small gas-museum in Leicester. This chimed very well with a visit I had made recently to the old Carrickfergus gas works on the outskirts of Belfast. The latter was among the sites included in a "Comfort and Convenience" tour of

Northern Ireland guided by the Association for Industrial Archaeology's President, Marilyn Palmer. Carrickfergus was a small town-gasworks left intact when production ceased in 1967. Now a museum, this is one of only four extant gasworks left in the World (the others are in Scotland, Czech Republic and New Zealand). So this is yet another of the industries that existed in many towns; often in fine buildings that have been swept away and more or less forgotten. It is up to Societies such as our own to identify such passing technologies and work to help record and/or preserve their industrial heritage.

This brings me to another matter - an article by GJO Wallis (President of the Bristol Industrial Archaeology Society): "An Uncertain Future - Industrial Archaeology, a post-war 'ology' ". This article, reprinted in this issue (p24), originally published in Industrial Archaeology News, vol 182, 2017 makes salutary reading since there are so many parallels

with our own Worcester Society. I quote: "...what we do we do well but it is not sufficient to secure our succession.." Attention is drawn to the particular problem for small societies like ours of the ageing membership profile and Wallis considers the options in order to rejuvenate. A number of searching questions are raised that I believe to be highly relevant to our society. The committee will not be complacent, and over the coming months we will focus on the future directions of WIA&HLS as we reconsider the aims and objectives of the founding members and whether these are still fit for purpose. As we embark on our winter programme of lectures and social events (Christine Silvester again has really interesting speakers in the 2017/18 line-up) we also need to consider the options for the longer term future in order to keep our society alive and well for 2018 and beyond.

*Hugh Field, September 2017*

## EDITORIAL NOTE

A number of this summer's visits were repeats of earlier ones for which reports can be found in back copies of the newsletter.

This fact, coupled with the paucity of new material, has prompted us to include a number of articles on industrial sites members had visited on holiday. Please let the editors know if you think this approach is worth pursuing. .

*Michael McCurdy*

## PRODUCTION TEAM

Content:	Michael McCurdy Roger Tapping
Artwork:	John Mason
Layout:	John Beale
Printing:	Pace Print & Design Worcester

## PRESIDENT'S PIECE

### SOCIAL EVENTS:

We have enjoyed dinners at Worcester Golf and Country Club for the last few years and previously we had lunches at various places. It occurs to me that, as we become older, many of us prefer to eat at mid day and this coming year I will organize a lunch in the Spring.

One problem with the Golf Club is that we need to have a table plan and order our food in advance. The table plan means that we tend to be placed with the same people each year. The other problem is that with 50 members and friends the room is crowded and with 60 it is difficult to move around.

I will do my best to sort out a suitable venue for our Spring Lunch.

### DEVIZES CONFERENCE:

*Saturday 28 October 2017  
Devizes Town Hall,  
St. John Street.  
Devizes. SN10 1BZ.*

The programme looks interesting with talks on:

- Food production in North Wiltshire 1660 - 1985
- Bus Services in North Wiltshire and surrounding area 1995 - 1985
- Adventures in Aviation, Some lesser known aspects of the Boscombe Down Industrial Landscape
- The return of the Iron Duke, an early Rubber Machine to Bradford on Avon.

Registration is at 9.30 a.m., The symposium closes at 16.30p.m. The cost of £14 includes morning coffee and afternoon tea. Devizes is a very pleasant town with a choice of cafés and restaurants for lunch.

Booking by post to:

*The Bookings Secretary,  
Wiltshire Museum,  
Long Street,  
Devizes SN10 1NS,  
or by phone 01380 727369.*

### AIA SOUTH WALES AND WEST REGIONAL CONFERENCE 2018:

This is to be held at the Village Hall West Coker, Nr. Yeovil on April 14 2018. We will be hosted by the Somerset Industrial Archaeology Society. Further details when available will be on SIAS website, [www.sias.me.uk](http://www.sias.me.uk)

The location is only about a half hour drive from the sea at Lyme Regis and if enough of us are interested we could travel down on Friday, stay at a seaside hotel and return home on Sunday. We do not yet have the programme for the conference. It could be an enjoyable weekend.

### WINTER PROGRAMME:

I am always looking for speakers for our Winter Programme - If you hear one and think they would be suitable for next year, please let me know?

*Christine Silvester*

## NEW BOOK

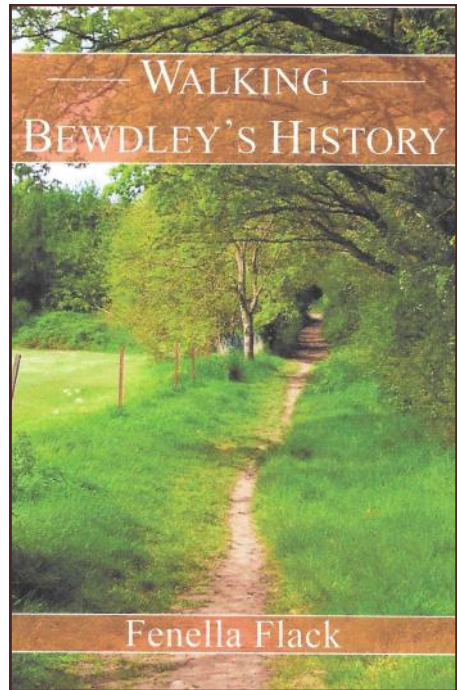
### **Walking Bewdley's History**

Fenella Flack

Published by Flack Publishing  
Publication Date: 09/09/2017  
ISBN: 978-0956496171  
Price: RRP £6.50

The name Bewdley means beautiful place. The town has a fascinating history and it is set in stunning countryside. "Walking Bewdley's History" helps people to explore both.

The book has a summary of Bewdley's history in four sections and has twelve walks. Each walk has written directions and maps and an indication of the length in terms of miles. The shortest walk is half a mile and the longest is just under five miles. There are 117 pages with 15 colour illustrations and 21 black and white illustrations. The book is A6 size and spiral-bound with a laminated cover. It has been designed to fit in a decent sized pocket and to be taken on the walk, but can also be enjoyed by "armchair walkers". The price is £6.50. The ISBN is 978-0-9564961-7-1.



"Walking Bewdley's History" was launched on Saturday 9th September at Bewdley Emporium in Lax Lane, Bewdley. Copies can be purchased at Bewdley Emporium and also at Bewdley's Tourist Information Centre in Load Street.

*Heather Flack*

### **Worcester Archaeology Day 2017**

**Sat 4th November; 10am-5pm at the University of Worcester**

**Programme includes:** Broadway Dig; Fascinating Finds; Ridge & Furrow; Eastham Bridge & Crossings; Palaeolithic Worcestershire; Clash of Cultures? Researching the Romans in the West Midlands

**£20 not inclusive of lunch. A flyer was emailed to members. Or call 01905 766352 or email [explorethepast@worcestershire.gov.uk](mailto:explorethepast@worcestershire.gov.uk)**

## **WINTER PROGRAMME DATES 2017-2018**

ALL MEETINGS ARE HELD AT RGS WORCESTER IN THE LECTURE THEATRE  
7.30pm START. ANY QUERIES OR INFORMATION PHONE CHRISTINE SIL-  
VESTER 01905 354679

### **SEPTEMBER 15th. DR. NAYLOR FIRTH.**

Shipbuilding in the lower Wye Valley. You will be surprised at both the size of the ships produced and when shipbuilding ended.

### **OCTOBER 20th. PAUL BARNETT.**

The Severn Rail Disaster. You may recall that Paul spoke to us some years ago about the Purton Wrecks.

### **NOVEMBER 17th. ROB HEDGE**

Rob is from Worcester Archaeology Service and will speak to us on "The History of Urban Gardens, Allotments and Allotment finds".

**DECEMBER 15th. MIKE NAPTHAN** You may remember that Mike stepped in at very short notice when our speaker was unable to come on 28th. April. He will speak to us on the Archaeology of Shrub Hill Station.

This meeting will be held in the ELD Hall at RGS and mince pies, stollen and mulled wine will be served

### **JANUARY 12th 2018. JUSTIN HUGHES.**

Justin is from Worcester Archaeology Service and will speak to us on the Industrial Archaeology of the Lowesmoor Vinegar Works Site.

### **FEBRUARY 16th 2018. MIKE NAPTHAN.**

Mike is an independent Archaeologist and will talk to us about Worcester Castle. (The one at the Cathedral not the one in Castle Street.

### **MARCH 23rd. 2018 (AGM)**

Annual General Meeting followed by DAVID SHARMAN talking about Henry Flager, the Florida Keys Railway and industrial archaeology on a grand scale, with a few diversions on the way. We will also have a sale of industrial archaeology and local history books.

### **APRIL 20th 2018 NEIL WEDGBURY.**

Neil was unable to speak to us last April and his talk will be on 'Underground Austin'. The Motor Works at Longbridge had miles of tunnels under the works during WWII for security of production. You may remember our visit to Drakelow Tunnels, which had a similar function.

## A TRIBUTE TO MIKE WALL

It is almost a year ago that the society lost one of its stalwart members, Mike Wall. Mike had been a member of the society since the early 70's and had served on the committee for many years in particular as editor of the newsletter. Those who have ever been lucky enough to hear one of his church talks will know what sort of character he was. He had the ability to hold everyone's attention with his wit and extensive knowledge, almost bringing the church alive.

Mike lived most of his life in Droitwich with his wife Beatrice and two children although he was born and initially lived in Bromsgrove. His early schooling was severely disrupted by the onset of asthma and he was away from education for 10 to 18 months, all-told. When recovered his parents were able to send him to a smaller school where he must have caught up with his studies as later he gained a place at the King's School. It was here that one of his lady teachers announced that, instead of the usual painting and sketching lessons that term, they would learn about architecture, particularly church architecture. It was the catalyst for Mike's interest in churches. During the holidays he would cycle around the local area armed

with his new school textbook (which he kept all his life) putting his newly-gained knowledge to the test.

Whilst at school, Mike started to collect postage stamps, and he became a very keen philatelist, a passion that he never lost that he shared with another old society member Frank Brown.

On leaving school in 1953, Mike joined the Witco Chemical Company in Union Lane, Droitwich as a laboratory technician where he continued to work until his retirement in 1995 although the company had changed its name by then to Baxenden.

One of Mike's first efforts at writing resulted in two documents on the Houses and Inns of Worcestershire. In these publications he detailed the buildings and all the owners, together with photo-



**Mike Wall as many of us will remember him - leading one of his church visits**



graphs. Although never published, these have been handed to the society for future use if possible.

People who knew Mike would be aware he had many interests and was very knowledgeable across a wide range of subjects; one in particular was vintage cars. While at work he became friendly with a colleague who also had a passion for vintage cars. This resulted on them going off at the weekends to vintage car rallies. This enthusiasm eventually led to Mike buying a Lea Francis, that was subsequently replaced by another, this having been a better model but was in a much worse condition; it had been stored in an old shed and had grass growing through the body. Mike however restored it to a working state, selling it soon after.

Mike's interest in churches never waned. On a short touring holiday in Norfolk about 40 years ago he realised that he had visited more churches in Norfolk than in his own county so he set out to rectify this. Since then he has visited every church in Worcestershire and many others in Herefordshire, Shropshire and Warwickshire. Every time he would take meticulous notes and a photo and had the ability to recall every detail.

While in Norfolk he became aware of the churches being involved in a charity fund-raising cycle ride. He brought this idea home to Worcestershire and over a period of time his effort cumulated in the Worcestershire and Dudley Historic

Churches Trust being formed.

In 1995 he started a series of 'Car Crawls' for the trust which involved the creation of a programme of visits to four churches with afternoon tea provided. When Mike eventually handed on the baton to others they had visited over 130 churches in Worcestershire.

Always looking for new interests, Mike now joined the Worcester Cathedral Welcomers and Guides where he wrote a user-friendly booklet on the monuments of the cathedral. This is now used by new guides on the subject. He also wrote many other church guides including ones on Upton Warren, Elmbridge, Upton Snodsbury, Churchill St Michael, White Ladies Aston, Kidderminster, Oddingley and on the churches of Droitwich all for the Churches Conservation Trust.

A great many clubs, societies and people have benefited from Mike's knowledge and it was a pleasure to see his name mentioned in the acknowledgements of the latest edition of Pevsner's Worcestershire.

When Mike was not writing he loved to relax, either listening to classical music or watching old movies, particularly movies from the Ealing Studio.

Mike led a very full and successful life always supported by his loving family and has been a great loss to our society.

*Robert Arrowsmith*

**CREDITS:** Thank you to Michael McCurdy and Roger Tapping for chasing and selecting content for this newsletter, and John Mason for permission to reproduce his fine painting of Cropthorne Mill on the cover. We visited Fladbury Mill, opposite, in 2011. JB



## 48TH REGIONAL INDUSTRIAL ARCHAEOLOGY CONFERENCE

The 48th. South Wales and West of England Regional Industrial Archaeology Conference was held on 29th April 2017 At the Llanhilleth Miners Institute in Blaenau Gwent

The Miners Institute was restored with money from Restoration and is used daily and has a G.P. Surgery on the lower floor, which is accessed via the car park.

Robin Williams, the president of Oxford House Industrial History Society welcomed visitors to the conference, which was opened by Richard Keen, Chairman of the Association Of Preservation Trusts Wales.

The First Speaker was John Evans who gave us a very interesting talk on his career of 50 years of Bridge Building. His first job after qualifying was on the Severn Bridge and he had a good photographic record. Many of the men working on the site were local to both sides of the river. We saw a good record of the other projects he was associated with all over the world.

The second speaker was Brian Davies who spoke of the Coal Trade to France. John Nixon was involved in the coal trade. He visited France and was appalled at the quality of coal they used in their steamships, which was very poor, for heating water for steam. He supplied Welsh coal for trials - which was accepted and he then supplied coal to France until the outbreak of WWI. We were shown photographs of hundreds of coal

wagons on the docks all marked NIX-ON waiting to travel to France.

The Third speaker was Dr Naylor Firth who spoke to us recently on the Ship-building in the Lower Wye Valley on September 15th. I had thought that the ships might have been fairly small vessels but they were seagoing and manufactured well into the 20th Century.

After lunch we had the most interesting lecture by David Cartwright on Hughesovska and the Welsh Development of the Russian Iron Industry. A relative named Hughes who was a mining engineer discovered that there was both iron and coal in the Ukraine. In an adventure story-like tale a group of Welsh miners set out for Russia — the area was 400 miles from the coast in a totally bare landscape devoid of trees - but they somehow managed to build a railroad and a steelworks, establish mining operations, and set up a village resembling an Army camp. Hughes himself had a very impressive Victorian Villa, whilst the Russian workers lived in what could be described as hovels. The Welshmen all did very well until the outbreak of the Russian Revolution and when they returned to Wales with nothing but their wits. The men could not have been alone because David said that there were children in his class at school with very Russian Christian names.

Robin Williams then gave us a talk on the tramways in the Clydach Gorge - he explained that 200 years ago there was

nothing in the area except a few farms, which made development of coal mining and the steel industry with their associated villages really remarkable. The scars of mining in the area are gradually disappearing; so we should visit and see what remains, while we still have time.

The final talk was by Len Burland and was entitled "The Spiteful Story". It involved a landowner who did not want another landowner to have rights to build a tramroad over his land and at one stage built a cottage in the line of the tramroad — this dispute went on for years. It was understood that the landowner had some rights but I don't

remember any mention of any form of financial compensation.

The Conference closed at 4.40p.m. and there were 5 visits to choose from afterwards. Six Bells Guardian Statue, Monmouthshire Canal 14 Locks, Newport/Rogerstone, Oxford House Museum/Model Railway (Authentic Layouts), and The Spiteful.

Oxford House have a permanent headquarters and have meetings with talks each week. The lectures were drawn from talks given to the members during the year.

*Christine Sylvester*

## WELLAND STEAM RALLY 28, 29, 30 JULY 2017

The Welland Steam Rally has grown over the years and is now more enjoyable than the Three Counties Show. It is always held on the last weekend in July and is well worth the £10 entrance — parking is free.

The Rally has been established for 50 years and used to be at Much Marcle (*where there is still a smaller rally, ed*) and is run by the Ross on Wye Steam Engine Society. The rally will give you a day of nostalgia and sights and sounds for all the family.

You may see steam engines at work, including diggers and cranes as well as the usual road rollers and fairground machines. The Great Welland Railway is a substantial length of standard gauge railway track, which plays host to a full

sized steam locomotive each year.

Early motor vehicles including 4 steam cars and some that you may have driven, also vintage motorcycles, military vehicles and even a re-creation of a pre-WW2 garage. There is even a class for vintage cycles.

The fairground is amazing- just like we remembered including the gallopers and the big wheel. The food court is very well organized with the food trucks in a semicircle and plenty of chairs and tables — each member of the family can choose a different meal.

We had a lovely day and will be there again next year - put it in your diary.

*Christine Sylvester*



This steam excavator has been at Welland Steam Fair for at least the last two years—a truly remarkable and somewhat scary machine ! (John Beale)

## SUMMER PROGRAMME REPORTS

### Abberley Hills and Quarry

Sunday 14th May 2017

At Abberley village we parked outside the village hall, near the school. From the car park we could see two farm-houses and yards built, we were told, on carboniferous soil and with coal deposits which were worked in a small scale way up to the 1920s. Several of the larger farm houses were built of high temperature fired bricks, which usually covered an older wood and plaster framework. Such brick making was made possible by the ready supply of local clay and coal for local brick furnaces. The walk led by Katherine Andrews went out of the village and up on to the ridge, and we found ourselves on the Worcestershire

Way.

Trees were everywhere, and Kate explained that much of the present tree abundance is fairly recent. Up to WW2 the fields and hills were fairly tree-free.



One result of this was a large landslip above Abberley village in the 1950s from a hillside now covered with a mass of trees and vegetation. There was also evidence of a water supply system for the scattered cottages from the time John Joseph Jones of Abberley Hall. The other result of recent tree growth is that viewing anything in the distance is difficult. Near the trig point we had a good and rare view down on Abberley Hall and tower. When we arrived at Shavers End quarry, again it was not possible to see the quarry edges and working areas. The information board was helpful but it was frustrating being unable to view the quarry.

The walk, as a walk or ramble, was superb. Cool air, dappled sunshine, a largely clear and dry footpath, congenial company, with Kate helping us to make sense of what we were seeing. A great start to the summer programme.

*Owen Porteous*

## **Worcester Cathedral Tower**

Friday 19th May 2017

Founded in 680 under Bishop Bosel, nothing now remains of the original Saxon cathedral. The crypt of the present-day cathedral dates from the late C11th and the time of Wulstan, Bishop of Worcester.

A monastery from the 960's until 1540, when Henry VIII dissolved it. Some of the last monks became the first Dean and Chapter. The cathedral was badly damaged in the civil wars, and therefore a major programme of rebuilding was required after the Restoration of Charles II. From the late seventeenth



**Cathedral Roof**

until the nineteenth centuries there were several campaigns to restore parts of the cathedral, but the Victorians from 1854-75 carried out the largest of these. The Tower is the Cathedral's third tower. The first fell in 1175 and the second was taken down because it was unsafe. The present tower was completed in



**Chapter House Roof**

1374. The stone work internally is 14th century in date but the exterior of the tower was re-faced in the 19th century as part of the Victorian restoration. The present tower was strengthened in the late 1980's/early 1990's, to ensure its safety for the next 200 years.

Our morning visit (the afternoon visit was cancelled due to a long memorial service after lunch) took, as expected, well over the hour, with Chris Guy, the Cathedral Archaeologist in charge. Luckily it was a fine day allowing us to access the roof 'leads', so we decided against a climb up to the top of the tower and instead had a visit to chapter house roof, with its fascinating timberwork (only accessible from the cloister roof 'leads'). We had also, gingerly traversed the whole of the North Aisle roof-space. Neither of these excursions are accessible on public tours, so we are grateful to Chris Guy for this rare access and also to parts of his working domain and stores, somewhere above a north aisle/north transept side chapel (one tended to lose ones bearings after squeezing through various twisting passages and spiral stairs).

*Mike Hayzelden*

## **Forest of Dean, Lydney & Harbour (by coach)**

Saturday 3rd June 2017

I was expecting notes from several peo-



**When is the train due?** ( Photo—Michael McCurdy)

ple about this trip but nothing has been sent in yet. So as it was one of the few trips I was able to make, here are a few notes of my own. If other send me contributions I shall print them in the next edition.

After a pleasant scenic journey through the Forest of Dean, via Mitcheldean and the Cannop Valley, we arrived at Norchard, the centre of operations of the Dean Forest Railway. Our knowledgeable guide met us here. The Norchard site was not originally a passenger station, but sidings for Norchard Colliery. It provided an ideal site for the engine sheds, rolling stock, museum and café. Norchard station has two platforms on different levels. The upper platform (as seen above) is the one that is generally used as it is sited on the "main line" through the site northwards towards the current terminus at Parkend. The lower platform is occasionally used for trains starting or terminating at Norchard.

Due to an operational issue with the new coaling stage, the DFR had changed its timetable which meant a longer wait for our train to Lydney Junction. As it





**Derelict Buses at Lydney Junction**

turned out, we would have had time for a return trip to Parkend had we known in advance! However the additional time was put to good use in the café and exploring the excellent museum. Roger was in his element as they had a significant display of telephonic hardware including a Stowger exchange that is still used for internal communications. Our train was hauled by an industrial saddle tank locomotive (I don't take numbers!) recently restored to service and we enjoyed the relatively short and slow journey to Lydney Junction. There is still a connection to Network Rail here and the mainline station of Lydney was just a short walk away, where we found our coach. But before getting on board we had the opportunity to visit a yard by the station, full of old buses in various states of (dis)repair. The yard is run by a company that supplies or hires out old buses for events, filming and other uses. There were a few that looked as if they might be operational, and a few being worked on. But most of the yard was packed with buses of all vintages, most of which were in a very

dilapidated condition and will probably never run again. Nevertheless it was very interesting.

The coach took us to Lydney Harbour where our guide took us on a short walking tour of the harbour. This is a fascinating site but one that has an uncertain future. There were encouraging signs of investment, including new swing bridge. But the outer lock gates are out of action, requiring repair, which means that the harbour is only really

used as a marina, and a not very well appointed one at that.

After quite enough fresh air (it was very windy) we boarded the coach for a short journey to a local craft centre where we had a toilet and refreshment stop before heading home. A thoroughly enjoyable day

*John Beale*

*Photos by Michael McCurdy*

## **Belbroughton Local History**

**Monday 5th June 2017**

We have not received any notes of this visit. If a member who went on this trip would like to write something, we will print it in the next edition.

## **St Anne's Church Bewdley**

**Tuesday 1st August 2017**

I can do no better as an introduction than use Mike Hazeldine's overview. 'Bewdley started its life around the be-

ginning of the fourteenth century and its name is derived from “beau lieu” meaning beautiful place. The settlement at Wribbenhall is much earlier, and is mentioned in the Domesday Day book of 1086.

The parish church of St Anne sits in the middle of Load Street and occupies the site of a former timber-framed guild chapel of C15th. Businesses operated beneath it. The present stone building of 1745 was designed by Thomas Woodward in a classical style.’

St Anne’s welcomed us with an array of brightly patterned kneelers which were a wonderful contrast to the gloomy grey clouds and downpour outside.

The church has very little in the way of adornment. The east wall has a very attractive coloured glass window all the others being plain. There was one memorial to a previous incumbent. War memorials and testimonials were noticeably absent. An attractive modern spiral glass chandelier was eye catching.

Had it not been for the stitchers of St Anne’s whose craft had created wall hangings and kneelers it would have been a rather colourless church.

The plain interior was complimented by the Lord’s table rather than a solid altar. Substantial changes had been made, noticeably the pews were no longer boxed and the side galleries had been removed leaving only the west end gallery intact.

Initially St Anne’s was a chapel of ease with the mother church being Ribblesford.

Heather’s local history talk began with the Mortimer family who were the landowners of the land on the west side

of the river (where St Anne’s is situated) and was a gift from the king.

Edward IV granted a charter to Bewdley in 1472 and it became a royal manor. In the year 1483 Richard III was responsible for the new bridge. Bewdley thrived under the Tudors and continued to be a royal manor.

Prince Arthur (whose tomb is in Worcester Cathedral) spent six months of the year in Bewdley and the remaining six months in Ludlow where the administrative body (the council of the Marches) met.

Bewdley thrived and the Civil War had little impact on it. However, the building of the canal at Stourport bypassing Bewdley saw a shift in its fortunes. Even the coming of railway in 1850 could not restore its circumstances.



St Anne’s Church, Bewdley



A noticeable citizen was Stanley Baldwin, born in 1867, later to become a noteworthy prime minister.

Tickenhall rebuilt in 1456 was the prince's residence and this where his proxy marriage to Catherine of Aragon took place in 1499. It was here that his body lay en-route from Ludlow to Worcester. When the manor was sold to Joseph Tangye (1826-1902, an engineer) it became a private residence.

Wribbenhall, on the east side of the river, is recorded in the Domesday Book as being in the manor of Kidderminster.

It would have been good to visit the church in Ribbesford where Edward IV's coat of arms is displayed and where there are windows by William Morris. Sadly the weather inhibited any further investigations especially to Tickenhall Palace now apartments and much changed from its medieval past.

*Eileen Porteous*

## **Tower visit**

Following Heather Flack's presentation, Robert Carlyle, the captain of St Anne's team of bell ringers, led those of us who felt fit enough up the tower. 36 steps led us into the ringing chamber, where Robert explained some of the complexities of bell ringing.

The "tunes" performed on the bells are known as methods, e.g. "Plain Bob", "Grandsire" etc. The ringers follow a chart with rows of numbers corresponding to the number of bells being rung and the sequence. On each row the sequence changes, e.g.

123456,

214365,

241635,

426153, etc.

Two coloured lines track the position of bells 1 and 2. A full peal must be 5040 changes on seven bells or 40320 on eight bells. Ringing typical tower bells, such as St Anne's, a peal will take about 3 hours, though the actual time can vary, depending on how many bells are being rung and the weight; heavier bells taking longer to ring. We were full of admiration for the energy and concentration it takes to ring a quarter peal, let alone a full peal, no wonder they proudly record the date on which they successfully complete a peal.

St Anne's has eight bells, which were cast in 1780 by Thomas Rudall. The heaviest bell weighs approximately 15 cwt and the lightest 5 cwt. They are made of copper and tin (*bronze?*). In 1985-6, to make the tower more stable, they were rehung lower in the tower at a cost of £17,000.

When the bells were sent to Taylor's of Loughborough\* the task of removing the largest bell, the tenor, proved to be a very tricky operation. The mouth was too large to go through the square hole in the floor of the belfry. By tilting it sideways 3 men were able to lower it with block and pulley to the ringing room, where, with it hovering in mid air they manhandled it towards the west window, where a crane was waiting to lower it into a lorry. This happened on a Sunday morning after the service. I'm sure they had a curious crowd of bystanders watching with bated breath as 15cwt of copper and tin swung precariously through the tower window.

Some of the St Anne's ringers joined Robert to give us a brief demonstration of different methods, following which Robert led us up to the next level of the

tower where the bells were hung. They were in the up position in preparation for ringing. At the next level we were able to look down on the bells. With fingers in our ears we watched as one of the team in the ringing chamber rang the lightest bell, the treble. At the end of a ringing session all the bells hang downwards.

We then completed the climb to the top of the tower and were rewarded by splendid views over Bewdley. The heavy rain clouds had passed over and it was a beautiful day. Looking down we could clearly see the medieval roof-lines of which Heather had spoken. We were surprised to see that some houses on the edge of the town actually looked down on the church tower.

In all we had climbed 107 steps and it was well worth the effort, thanks to Robert and his team of ringers.

\* many readers will remember our visit to Taylor's, where we saw the bells from Old St Martin's, which were there to be retuned. *Sue McCurdy*

## **Leicester (by coach)**

Tuesday 15th August 2017

### **Leicester Gas Museum**

This museum proved to be a small, quirky, unusual and varied collection of items related to the Gas Industry in a listed building, run entirely by volunteers and originally opened in 1977, as the John Doran Museum. I was advised that they had few volunteers, so it was only Janet Armstrong, (my only contact at the end of the 'phone and email) who was a veritable one-woman show. The

collection had interest for everyone, many appliances being bizarre, with a short life, but others being recognisable as of the type once found in our own homes! The 1920's kitchen, stuffed with typical gadgets, with taped commentary was too popular for all of us to get a chance to hear it all in the allotted time. Notes have been précised from the museum guide.

This fine brick building, with its clock tower dates from 1878, when town gas was first made here. It was the gate-house to the gas works (British Gas and National Grid offices are still on the site). The museum collection was begun by gas engineers collecting (rather than scrapping) beautiful old appliances, when the UK was converted from town gas to natural gas in the 1970s. East Midlands Gas Board chairman, John Doran, saw its potential and decided to create a museum.

Manufacturing gas from coal: Town Gas was prepared by heating and baking coal in a closed retort. The gas was then distributed by a large pump which was known as the "Heart of the Gas-works" - the large red metal object in the entrance of the museum. By-products of town gas production included aspirin, saccharin, soap, ink, essences of perfume, coke, tar, ammonia, clothes dye, nylon and plastic. In wartime the essential ingredients of TNT were also made.

Lighting: In 1799, William Murdoch installed gas lighting in the Soho engineering works in Birmingham. When a Manchester cotton mill owner ordered Murdoch's gas lights for his factory in 1805 the invention took off, but he did make a fortune as it was not patented. It was Frederick Windsor who pro-

duced gas at a central factory and installed gas lighting in Pall Mall in 1805 for the celebration of King George III. In 1812, he formed the Gas Light and Coke Company, which was given powers to lay gas mains in the streets of London. Gas pipes were then called barrels as they were made from old musket barrels, from the Napoleonic wars, slotted into each other. The more efficient gas mantle was development in 1887 and though electric light had been invented in the 1880's gas remained much cheaper than electricity.

Space Heaters 1850's and onwards: In 1851, the first heater that imitated the coal fire using glass and firebrick was produced and in 1852 asbestos fibre was added to the firebrick. In 1882, these features were combined by Leoni



to produce the first successful gas fire. In the 1950's "convector" gas fires were introduced with a heat exchanger reducing heat previously lost up the chimney. This improvement in efficiency attributed and aided the introduction of the "Clean Air Act" of 1956.

Hot Water & Washing 1850's onwards:

The "Geyser" for heating water was invented by Benjamin Maugham in 1868, which heated water as it flowed into the bath, but was extremely dangerous because the heat couldn't be regulated and it didn't have a flue. In 1931, the development of the Ascot gas water heater provided a safer and more practical method of heater water for domestic use. Gas was used to heat the water in the first manual washing machines and was used to power all sorts of labour-saving devices, including the early washing machine / dish washer combo and many examples of the gas-powered iron on display.

Gas Gadgets: Of unusual interest in this collection is a gas radio, one of only four that were made, powered when gas was used to heat thermo-couples to produced a small electric charge that powered the battery.

Gas Cooking: Early in the C19th the Aetna Iron Works produced a grid iron fitted with holes for the gas to escape for frying. The gas cooker was developed in the 1830's, with a main oven and grill above plus boiling rings. In 1838, James Sharpe the manager of the Southampton Gas Works began to offer gas cookers for sale out of his works, but it wasn't until the 1870 that gas cookers were extensively marketed by companies hiring out stoves to consumers. By 1923, the automatic oven thermostat or 2"reglo" was introduced.

Upstairs in the museum were displays of the scientific equipment for metering and testing the quality and calorific content of the gas supply. Other exhibits included the underground service installation of pipework, as well as models of production plants and other displays.

*Mike Hayzelden*

## Richard III Exhibition

In August 1485 King Richard III was killed at the Battle of Bosworth, and buried by the Grey Friars, a Franciscan holy order, in their church. Although the well known local story was that King Richard's bones were thrown into the river by a monk at the time of the Reformation.

In August 2012, archaeologists uncovered not only the Greyfriars Church, but a skeleton with battle wounds and a curved spine. The skeleton was exhumed and the process of formal identification began. Experts from the University of Leicester used DNA analysis to link the skeleton to Richard III's descendants. Carbon dating of the bones dated them to 1455-1540, which coincided with Richard III's death. After careful scientific examination, the University announced in February 2013 that the skeleton found was indeed Richard III.

Those of us who went to the exhibition found this a fascinating presentation. Both the history (through modern digital projection) and the scientific research method, particularly that of DNA tracking of the ancestral line to two modern day descendants.

## Cathedral

St Martin's was rebuilt and enlarged between the 13th and 15th centuries and became the "Civic Church" with strong links with the merchants and guilds with the Guildhall adjacent. Just over 100 years ago there was a Victorian restoration and partial rebuilding, including the addition of a 220ft spire. The diocese of Leicester was re-established in 1927 and the church was

hallowed as Leicester Cathedral. In 2015 the mortal remains of King Richard III were reinterred with dignity and honour within the Cathedral.

## Guildhall

This rivals the Commandery in Worcester for its magnificent timber hall, which we were unable to fully appreciate because of a function within, though the rest of the building was open to the public.

The great hall itself was built about 1390 as a meeting place for the Guild of Corpus Christi, a small but powerful group of businessmen and gentry. Over the next hundred years the Great Hall was extended and the two wings at either end were added. By the end of the 14th century the corporation of Leicester had begun to meet in the Guildhall. When the Guild was dissolved in 1548 the Corporation bought the buildings for the sum of £25 14s 4d. In 1632 the Town Library was moved into the east wing and is the third oldest (*public?*) library in the country. The Great Hall was often used as a courtroom, the ground floor of the West Wing was refurbished as the Mayor's Parlour with a Jury Room above.

After restoration in 1926, the Guildhall was opened to the public as a museum.

## Wigston Framework Knitters Museum:

The final stop on our visit to Leicester was the Wigston Framework Knitters Museum. It is a little gem.

The original building dates from the late 17th century and is thought to have been a farmhouse. Later it became a



**Leicester Guildhall**

master framework knitter's house. More recently it appears that the front part of the house may have been a shop. At the rear is a cobbled yard with a water pump. The brick floor of an earlier framework knitting workshop is visible in the garden. There is also clear evidence of a number of extensions up to the Victorian era.

The museum concentrates on the last 2 families of framework knitters. Joseph Truman bought the property in 1880 and built a 2-storey workshop in 1890. This was very late in the history of such a cottage industry, but is evidence that he had weathered the recession of the 1850s and a good living could still be made by specialising in gloves and fancy stocking tops.

One of Truman's daughters married another framework knitter by the name

of Carter. When the last master hosiery, Edgar Carter, died in 1952, his workshop, containing all the tools of his trade and his remaining stock, was locked and remained as a time capsule. His two unmarried daughters continued to live in the house. That too is now something of a time capsule and as we were shown round several cries of "we had one of those when I was a child" could be heard.

The sisters had some modernisations done and what at first appeared as though it might have been a table top with some strange cut outs at one end, turned out to be the cover for the new bath, which was installed along one side of the kitchen. On the opposite wall was an Aga cooker. It seems their father had made a reasonable living.

In 1983 the property was bought by the

local council and let for a peppercorn rent paid annually, in the form of a pair of gloves given to the mayor. It was opened as a museum.

We were given a demonstration of the types of knitting by a young man from the Ruddington Framework Knitting Museum, near Nottingham, who was spending time at Wigston. He demon-

strated the working of a diamond pattern used for the tops of socks.

I am very pleased that Mike organised this particular visit. It is a museum I have long wanted to see, having learned that my 3x great grandfather was a framework knitter in Burbage, near Hinckley.

*Sue McCurdy*



Wigston Frameknitters Museum

## Events at the Hive that may interest members:

**26/10/17 4 weeks 7pm: Discover More about Archaeological Finds (£45)**

**1/11/17 5 weeks 2pm-4pm: Introduction to Archaeology (£45)**

**2/11/17 and 7/12/17 at 10am: First Steps in House History (£5)**

**22/11/17 2pm-3:30pm: Civil War in Worcestershire (Behind the Scenes) (£6)**

For all of these events and short courses, places need to be booked in advance. This can be done through The Hive website [www.thehiveworcester.org](http://www.thehiveworcester.org) and going to the Explore the Past page of the events section where you can book and pay online.

## Angel Place

Carl Jukes and I have finally cleared the backlog of members (and others) wanting to attend this walk, after 4 years of visits. We began the 'inside' or 'above' Angels walk to try and cover places we had to miss out, each year, to fit it all in. Even so there are places that we only had access to for one year such as the hop warehouse, or only for ourselves on the recce (Co-op multi-storey car decks), or even never managed to gain access, at all, like Tower House. For all of you who missed out on the Co-op, here are some notes & photos.

## Co-op (as was), Angel St.:

This was the former site of the Theatre Royal, but even this was built, in 1805, on the site of an earlier Angel St. Thea-



The Theatre Royal in the 1920's

tre of 1779. In 1874 the Theatre Royal was rebuilt, reopening on 18th January 1875, but razed to the ground by a fire in 1877. Rebuilt again, it reopened on 26th October 1878. Its final reincarnation was a rebuild of 1903, opening on January 19th. In 1910, with the addition of projection equipment it also showed films. After a couple of fires, it hung on, losing money, till it finally closed in 1955, after which it lay derelict.

In 1957/8 the theatre was demolished and the site lay vacant until 1959, when the car distributors, Colmore Depot bought the site for £12,500. It was built as a showroom on the ground floor facing Angel Street. Its façade was set back from the Victorian frontages as the new Worcester Development Plan proposed a dual carriageway from London Road across to St. Johns. The only bit ever built was the City Walls Road, but the 'road improvement line' was enshrined in planning for post 1960's buildings. (The shop opposite, next to Shakeey's was also set back – you can see it above the recent single storey shop extension – as also is the current bus station layout, intended as part of the dual carriageway, but later used for buses).

The Colmore Depot lasted until the 1970's (? – not sure before my time here), becoming first a KwikSave then a Somerfield and finally, when they were bought out, a Co-op, which itself closed last year, not long after Carl & I gained access. Colmore Depot also had an entrance at the side off Angel Place with a large car lift (still in use by the supermarkets as a goods lift) at the rear (looming over Berkeley Almshouses – couldn't be done today!) taking vehicles up to a service floor, where new purchasers could have their car serviced. The enclosed





**The Former Co-op Building as a branch of Kwik Save**

*(Photo Changing Face of Worcester [www.cfow.org.uk](http://www.cfow.org.uk) )*

service bays at the rear have been used as the supermarket's stores. The first floor frontage is only one room deep (12' or so), just a staff room and security office and the deck remains open behind.

The top, open floor was (still is) laid out as a car park for vehicles awaiting collection, but is now inches deep in guano!

*Mike Hayzelden*

## CHANGING FACE OF WORCESTER

Tudor House is home to the Changing Face of Worcester project. The Haynes brothers, who had built up their collection over many years, gave the collection to Tudor House to digitise and archive, so that it could be freely available via the internet, for anyone to access for their own research purposes. Over the past 5 years, some 8,500 of them have been digitised. The photos are loaded onto the website ([www.cfow.org.uk](http://www.cfow.org.uk)) and the originals placed for safe keeping with the

Hive.

The project team meets weekly to tag each image with key descriptions of the content, including date, social aspects, transport, dress, significant buildings, etc. Tagging will make the images easier to search for and find. If you would like to be involved, maybe you have an knowledge of Worcester's past, please contact Tudor House Museum or John Jordan, via email: [jayjayworces-ter@hotmail.com](mailto:jayjayworces-ter@hotmail.com) .

## AN UNCERTAIN FUTURE?

*The following article by Geoff Wallis, President of BIAS, is reproduced in full, by permission. It recently appeared in the INDUSTRIAL ARCHAEOLOGY NEWS No 182. Your committee recognises the issues described and would recommend you read it and let us know what you think—as we clearly have similar issues.*

### **Industrial Archaeology, a post-war 'ology'?**

During the 1950s and 60s post-war period of clearance and reconstruction much traditional industrial plant was lost as industries such as coal mining, ship-building and textile manufacturing declined, or were modernized, resulting in great social, economic and landscape changes. At the same time, disposable income and leisure time were increasing for most people, and the ability to travel grew with the widespread ownership of faster, more reliable cars and improved roads.

Driven by nostalgia and a concern that evidence of Britain's pioneering industrial past was being lost for ever, interest in local and industrial history developed, and 'industrial archaeology' was born. In the words of an early member of BIAS, Michael Bussell, to whom I am indebted: Thus began the discovery period, what the late and splendidly eloquent IA pioneer Kenneth Hudson described at the time as 'the honeymoon period' for IA, when we were literally discovering IA sites, both derelict and working. These discoveries were then enthusiastically shared via conferences and newsletters

of local societies for IA and the like that came into being, stimulating further enthusiasm and recruits to the cause.

My own conversion to industrial archaeology came at this time. In 1969, I was a new aero- engineering apprentice at the Rolls-Royce Technical College in Filton, Three RR engineers, Ian Broom, Ron Plaster and the late Roy Simmons, had just discovered the redundant Crofton Pumping Station near Marlborough, Wiltshire, and were determined to

save it. They advertised for youthful help and I soon found myself in the beam engine's cramped underground condenser-cistern scraping off a century-thick layer of sticky black steam oil. Gazing up at the ancient engine I fell to wondering how the enormous, heavy parts had been designed, made, moved into the countryside before the canal was completed and hoisted into the top floor without modern lifting gear. I was hooked, and spent four years restoring both beam engines to working condition and then joined the newly-formed Dorothea Restoration Engineers Ltd. The company were pioneers offering practical conservation services initially to the new industrial museums, then to owners of traditional wind and water-mills and to anyone with historic machinery or structural architectural metalwork. The 1960s were exciting, energetic, innovative and commercially risky. We felt that we should preserve as much as we could and that with enthusiasm and energy we could make a difference.

During its fifty years BIAS members have achieved much, working on their own, as a society, and with other groups. A vast amount of research has been carried out on subjects as diverse as chocolate, computers and church bells, resulting in hundreds of live presentations and over two hundred papers in the annual Journal which has become known for its consistent high quality and ranks among the best in the country. Summer programmes of visits have been made to interesting and important sites in and around the region. Our Bulletin has publicised reports on hundreds of sites, their activities, successes and needs, whilst also reporting threats, opportunities and triumphs. The Society has 'offered an informed opinion' on many conservation and development matters, and campaigned on occasions. Members have been involved in many practical preservation projects including on industrial buildings, mines, canals, bridges, and pumping stations. The preservation of sites with no perceived economic future was catered for by the establishment in 1980 of the Avon Industrial Buildings Trust. Soon over £1 million was being spent on the reconstruction of Midford Aqueduct, and the Trust is currently developing a similar-sized conservation project on Bristol's Brunei Swivel Bridge.

The Society's achievements will rightly be celebrated during this fiftieth anniversary year, but the world has changed. The last fifty years has seen a general increase in prosperity and a growing expectation that for most people this will continue. However, political and economic uncertainties at home

and abroad have spawned a degree of scepticism, nervousness, and an aversion to risk. The fear of terrorism and litigation following injury has added to feelings of insecurity, although in recent years mitigated by formalized assessment and management of risk, and curbs on the excesses of the claims industry. For industrial archaeologists, the tightening of legislation has resulted in increased bureaucracy, raised insurance costs, and reduced access to sites, particularly working sites, even under escort.

Possibly the most dramatic change over the last half century has been the digital revolution. Home computers and portable devices now shape our lives as we rely on e-mails, social media, internet shopping, and leisure activities such as viewing down loads and playing interactive games. The internet has become a primary source of information, advertising and advice, rivalled only by a proliferation of radio and TV channels. With better computer-animated graphics and immersive technology (3D headsets) cyber-land is beginning to replace the real world, and the 'Internet of things' is allowing us to work remotely. Messages are not just delivered into our homes but into our consciousness with increasing efficiency. This can be a great threat to our specialised interest which risks being squeezed out, but it is also a tremendous opportunity if we engage with it fully and ensure we remain visible. The media needs interesting content and we have it in abundance.

The 2012 Olympic Games opened with a graphic portrayal of Britain's industrial history, and a vast amount of material

about our industrial, maritime and transport past can be found on the media, including YouTube videos and television programmes. The interest in industrial history has never been greater, but experience through the media is 'second-hand' and relatively transient. Viewers are not necessarily motivated to develop a deeper interest, attend meetings or get involved in practical conservation.

Overcoming this inertia is one of the main challenges facing the Society now, and more so in the future. The intensity of modern life, especially the pressures of employment, has driven many to consciously seek a work-life balance. Leisure time has to be used efficiently, so activities such as shopping, sport, cultural interests, hobbies, volunteering, and visiting historic sites must compete with each other for attention, time and money. Shopping has been revolutionized by the creation of ever-larger shopping malls with integral facilities for eating, entertainment, and easy parking: a free all-weather experience for the whole family. The retail offering is glitzy, focussed on each season, perceived as convenient and good value for money. It has set the standard to which heritage offerings now have to aspire, and voluntary societies need to be similarly 'consumer orientated' to survive.

Change is the one constant in the natural realm - decline and death are endemic, but so is rebirth, the glorious antidote to annihilation, and the bringer of hope. Humankind may be locked into a cycle of birth, growth, maturity, and death but we have the ability (and duty) to guide the present, influence the future and promote the survival of what we believe

to be important. Organizations are subject to life-cycles too. As in the natural realm, organizations mature and decline, but life-cycles can be managed, and this we must do if we value our cause.

### **Maturity or Decline?**

The Society fulfils its objectives through its activities and publications. The Journal is published regularly and is of high quality, but with a few notable exceptions most of the papers are from older contributors, often describing their life's experiences. This is admirable, but the Journal would be enriched by papers of a more Google images contemporary nature, and will inevitably decline if younger authors are not actively encouraged to contribute. The programme of lectures and visits is varied, informative, interesting, and generally well-supported by a core of perhaps fifty members. The Bulletin is packed with well-illustrated and attractive news of past and prospective events. What we do, we do well, but it is not sufficient to ensure our succession.

When I was appointed President of BIAS in April 2015 I asked members what they considered to be the most serious threat to the future of the Society. There was a consensus that it was the ageing profile of the membership. Clearly encouraging next generation and inspiring them to action were fundamentals of the Society fifty years ago, and are arguably more critical now than ever, as the average age of the membership has risen, inevitably energy has waned, and the pace slowed. A generation gap has developed which has discouraged younger people from joining the Society, participating in activities, catching our vision, campaigning,

preserving, and providing succession. The Society has, in short, unwittingly become introverted. As one respondent observed: 'Each BIAS lecture/activity should have a clear purpose, along the lines of 'what do we want to see happen as a result of the presentation?' Currently most of them appear to be for entertainment rather than action. Is that what we want? Information rather than inspiration?'

### What are our options?

**(1) Continue as we are.** BIAS has a reasonable number of members, events are fairly well attended, people enjoy the activities, and the bank balance is healthy. In the short term, there is no need to change, but the Society will probably be inactive and unsustainable within 20 years, and is likely to close down before its centenary.

**(2) Wind up the Society.** Voluntary societies have natural life-spans and do not last for ever. If outreach, engagement and rejuvenation are not attempted or prove unsuccessful, the Society will eventually become quiescent, so it is perfectly honourable to wind it up. We don't like to think of the demise of anything, but we have to recognize that a well-managed death may be the best we can achieve

**(3) Establish a new Society.** Industry and its history are interesting, important and ever-changing, and people are endlessly curious, so if BIAS ceases to exist another organization might subsequently be created to take its place. We have the option of founding that organization ourselves, funding its early days and encour-

aging younger people to run it, focussed on the subjects that interest them. A core of no more than perhaps half a dozen enthusiastic people would be required to start a new society, and the effect on the present operation could be dramatic.

**(4) Rejuvenate.** If we want the Society to outlive us we need to recognize the mature nature of the organization, rejuvenate and implement a succession plan. We need a courageous, radical and visionary reassessment of: Our constitutional aims/objects. What can the Society do to serve the interests of the IA heritage of the Bristol area in the future? The BIAS constitution, drafted in 1976, may need to be amended. Our activities. How can we best fulfil our (revised) constitutional aims? How can we influence those who control the preservation and re-use of sites? What will they need? What will attract, inspire and retain BIAS members of the future? What activities are currently of interest to working-age people, families and young people, and the recently-retired? leadership. What skills do we need on the Committee? Where are these skills, how can we engage with the people who have them, and eventually co-opt them? Renewed vision We need to develop a clear vision of what we are trying to achieve and, how we plan to do it.

The following is far from coherent or complete, but a starting point for discussions and action by the membership and leadership:

- Encourage advocacy and practical conservation projects. Active involvement attracts the interest of all age-groups and offer huge

potential for growth in the Society whilst also popularising, publishing, and protecting sites; ·

- Recognise that the Society's future will be concerned with today's industries not limited to our traditional studies; ·
- Engage with younger people by providing first-hand experiences tailored to their needs and interests. These might include site visits, practical conservation work, and engaging, inspirational presentations;
- In our research and publication place, more emphasis on the social and economic history of industry, and less on its hardware. Focus more on people and their achievements; ·
- Make awards to recognize and encourage good conservation, successful reuse of industrial sites and volunteer achievement. This will encourage good practise and publicize the Society;
- Change the Society's name. Bristol Industrial History Society might be a better name than BI-AS, which has unfortunate connotations and focusses on 'archaeology'; ·
- Revise the Constitution to encompass wider aims.

### **Delivering change**

It is always easier to analyse the past and present than to determine a wise, practical strategy for the future, particularly in an organization that relies on the goodwill, energy and time of volunteers. Clearly the priority is to recognize the need to act. The Society's leadership

needs to take the initiative in developing a new vision, and ensure that members buy into the process of change, as it is they who will have to deliver it. The Committee should consider establishing a 'development group' with executive powers to define the needs, the options and deliver the new initiatives. A strategy for rejuvenation should contain not just generalities but specific projects with clear objectives so that progress can be monitored. Inviting suitable individuals to take on specific tasks is often the best way of motivating people and securing help.

The regeneration process may be protracted and divisive, and will demand strong leadership, but change can also be exciting and rewarding, and if successful will reinvigorate the Society. More importantly it will promote better study and preservation of the industrial heritage of the Bristol region, which is what the founders of the Society envisaged.

### **Succession-planning and rejuvenation, can it work?**

I have two examples from my own experience. Above I explained how I came into conservation from the aircraft industry, initially as a volunteer and then a professional. After two decades directing Dorothea Restorations Ltd, my business partner and I started to plan our succession. Exiting from a small owner-run company is difficult because the expertise is perceived to rest with those who are due to depart, leaving a potentially fatal deficit, so we had to plan our exit. We advertised for a 'manager aspiring to director' and soon appointed a capable younger person who we trained over the succeeding years to replace us. The

Company was sold successfully and continues to thrive. A different but equally successful strategy has been adopted by the National Heritage Ironwork Group. Established in 2009 by mature practitioners, the council of management made a policy decision to involve younger people as some of the founders approached retirement. Mid-career practitioners and professionals were invited to fulfil key roles under the chairmanship of one of the 'founding fathers'. This offered welcome opportunities to the newcomers whilst relieving the older generation of some of the workload. Successful regeneration has been achieved over about five years and has reinvigorated the Group.

### Sowing seeds

The generalization that 'young people are only interested in computers is not true. Many voluntary organizations such as traction engine and historic vehicle clubs, canals, volunteer railways, and many museums have a healthily mixed-age following. The National Trust offers working holidays for older teenagers, the SPAB Mills Section encourages youthful involvement with their annual 'Young Millers' Day' and English Heritage's well publicized family activities are popular. However, creating interest in newcomers can be a diffuse, often frustrating process wherein people may be active

for a limited time and then move on. This may be discouraging but can bear fruit later and we must expect this delay.

### Conclusion

It is reported that more people are joining than leaving BIAS, but membership stood at around 400 a decade ago. The average age of the active membership of the Society is now over 65, and rising. A number of key activists have sadly passed on in recent years and are greatly missed. Regrettably this depletion will inevitably continue, making outreach to younger people more urgent with every passing year. We need to work out how to do this, take bold, strategic decisions, inspire younger participants, and encourage them to take on tasks and leadership roles.

The whole thrust of our BIAS@50 celebration must be to look forwards. Of course we must celebrate our achievements, showcase the dedication of our forebears, and demonstrate how we have made a difference. But more importantly we must also inspire the next generation with enthusiasm and energy, engaging people of all ages. In summary, we must celebrate the last 50 years, inspire the next 50 years and create a future for BIAS.





## OUT OF THE BLUE COMES THE WHITEST WASH

Many of you will recognise that advertising slogan for Reckitt's Blue. You may also remember the little bags of blue powder which were added to the final rinse of the laundry as an optical brightener. My Grandmother used a wet "blue bag" to reduce the pain of a bee sting.

The ultramarine blue powder was produced in Backbarrow, a small village, not far from the southern end of Windermere. I remember well, driving through Backbarrow, on the way to visit family when I was a child. The factory was on both sides of the road. Everything was blue, the walls, the road, even the workers' clothes, hands and faces. Health and safety was much less strict in those days.

My sister and I would implore Dad to slow down so we could see the "blue men".

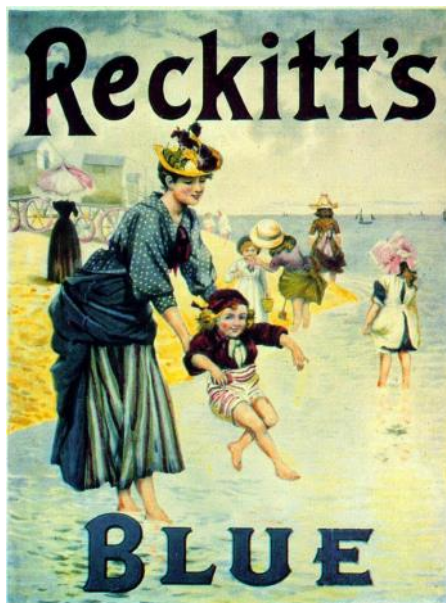
There had been a mill on the site since Tudor times. Originally a corn mill, it has had a number of reinventions, producing, among other products, bobbins, iron, gunpowder, wool, dye and cotton. Prior to the construction of a weir up-

stream of the building, the river Leven, which flows through the village could produce 200 brake-horse-power. This attracted cotton masters to the village. However, recruiting staff was difficult in such a remote rural area. The problem was soon solved by transporting pauper children from Liverpool, Manchester, London and even as far away as Bright-

on. Their home parishes were only too pleased for them to become "apprentices", as they were a drain on the meagre parish resources. The children, some as young as 7, worked very long hours. The government commissioned a report on the conditions of working children and the Backbarrow mill was one of those chosen to be inspected. This led to a bill which, alt-

hough it did not limit the working hours of children, did make it illegal to employ children under the age of 7 or transport children over such long distances.

In 1868 one of a series of fires caused severe damage to the mill. It was rebuilt, but the owner decided to relocate to one of the large Lancashire cotton mill towns, where it was easier to re-



cruit workers.

In 1890 the mill and adjacent workers accommodation was acquired by Johannesburg Eggstorft, whose father had set up an ultramarine blue pigment factory in Hull for James Reckitt and Son. Ultramarine blue is used in a number of industrial processes, including the laundry product known as "dolly blue". The company was so successful that it was taken over, in 1928, by Reckitt and Coleman Ltd. In 1941 the factory in Hull was destroyed by German bombs and the carton packing department was moved to Backbarrow. The factory was the major employer in the area. Often three generations of the same family would be working there, on average 50 women in the packing department and 40 men producing the blue pigment.

Although business was still booming, in 1982 the factory closed unable to comply with the evermore strict environmental standards. In 1984 the main building was converted into a very pleasant hotel. Michael and I stayed there recently and were pleased to see that the owners of the property were keen to display the building's industrial heritage. Making the most of the pleasant sheltered river valley and proximity to the lakes, the surrounding land has been converted into a leisure club and self-catering apartments. The former packing department is now the "Lakeland Motor Museum, where there is also a comprehensive display about the industrial heritage of the Levens valley.

*Sue McCurdy*

Picture Credit: [www.historyworld.co.uk](http://www.historyworld.co.uk)

## INDUSTRIAL ARCHAEOLOGY PROVENÇAL

On a recent holiday in Provence, we were pleased to see that the French also show an interest in their industrial past. Not far from our hotel in Avignon was the rue des Teinturiers, ( Dyers' Street) but locally nicknamed "rue des Roues" (Street of Waterwheels), four of which still exist as a testament to the past. The street overlooks the Canal de Vaucluse, water for which was diverted from the river Source in the Middle Ages and runs through the walled city like an artery. Initially the canal was used for drainage, but textile manufacturers soon realised the potential of the area, with a ready source of power for their mills. A number of other industries also flourished there from the 14th to the 19th

centuries.

Initially wool and silk were produced, but from the 17th to the 19th centuries cotton fabrics, typical of Provence were made, having been banned from the rest of France. They were very colourful, inspired by designs from India, and became known as les indiennes, although they featured sunflowers, mimosa, lavender, olive branches, lemons and cicas, all seen in abundance in the area. The street name commemorates the most intense industry of the area, the dyers.

The tourist office produces an excellent map explaining the history of the area.



**Waterwheels at Isle sur la Source**

The cobbled street, shaded with plane trees, is a tourist magnet. 25 kilometres east of Avignon is Isle sur la Source, another place with evidence of its industrial heritage. The quaint old part of the town is, as its name suggests, on an island. Today its main industry is tourism. Antique shops and cafes proliferate. However we were most interested in a self-guided walk taking in all fourteen of the surviving water wheels. They were powered by the river Source, the source of which was the picturesque spring, Fontaine de Vaucluse, 7 kilometres to the east. Probably powering corn mills in the first instance, they were later used to produce wool and silk. Most were established by royal decree in the early 1800s. Records show that in 1885 there were 17 silk and woollen mills in the small town, employing around 300 people.

The excellent guide gives details of the date and original owner of each mill. Most are in various states of disrepair, broken, and/or covered in waterweed. However some are still turning although apparently not connected to any machinery.

Sadly, a visit to this very interesting area is probably not an option for our society, but for individuals who wish to visit we would thoroughly recommend travelling by train. Eurostar runs a through service to Marseille, via Avignon at certain times of year. The journey takes about 6 hours, so with a check in time of 45 minutes, no waiting around to collect luggage and arrival close to the city centre, it's probably as quick as flying and much more comfortable. Bon voyage.

*Sue McCurdy*

## HAYTOR GRANITE TRAMWAY

On a recent holiday in Devon we came across a splendid piece of Industrial Archaeology which is worth wider appreciation.

The Haytor Granite Tramway was built about 1820 to convey granite from Dartmoor 10 miles to the Stover canal for onward transport to the developing cities of England and beyond. At its height it employed about one hundred men and closed in 1858.

The tramway is very unusual in that the track was constructed of granite sections shaped to guide the horse-drawn wagons much along the lines of plateways where longitudinal L-shaped metal plates were used to guide and support wheels of wagons. The gauge was 4ft 3inches (1,295mm) and at junctions some form of "tongue" guided vehicles in the required direction. None of the tongues survive consequently it is not clear if they were made of wood or



The route across the moor

iron. The trackway was engineered to closely follow the contours of the land and comprised several branches on the moor leading to a main line down to the canal. There is evidence that a number of alterations were made over the years as different sections of the moor were quarried. Significant sections remain in existence, mostly, but not entirely, within the Dartmoor National Park. Parts of it are easily accessible being only a few minutes walk from Haytor visitor centre where it crosses the Manaton road and they are well worth a visit.

Over the last few years, as part of an on-going improvement programme, National Park staff have been clearing accumulated debris around the tramway and have significantly improved both its visibility and accessibility. It is now an easy walk to follow the tramway for over a mile across the moors into one of the quarries.



Ventiford Basin

*Michael McCurdy*



## NEW BOOKS

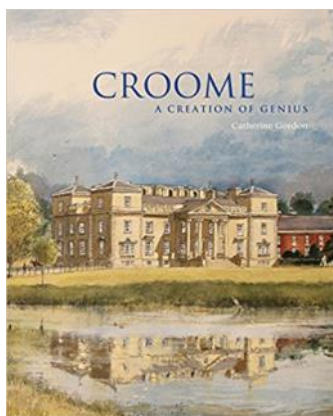
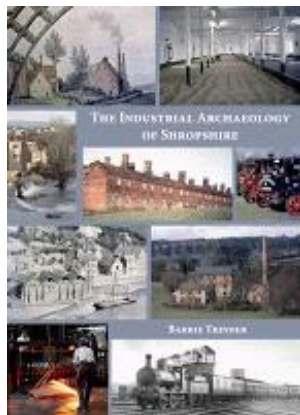
### **The Industrial Archaeology of Shropshire by Barrie Trinder**

Paperback, 304 pages

Logaston Press

ISBN 978 1 910839 05 8 Price £15

This is a completely revised and updated edition of *The Industrial Archaeology of Shropshire*, first published in 1996.



### **Croome: A Creation of Genius by Catherine Gordon**

Paperback: 208 pages

Scala Arts & Heritage Publishers Ltd (Pre-order for 31 Jan. 2018)

ISBN: 978-1785511158 Price £20

A new perspective on the extraordinary transformation of Croome, the visionaries who shaped it, and its impact on the cultural life of Georgian Britain.

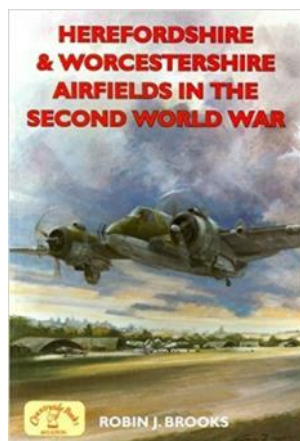
### **Herefordshire & Worcestershire Airfields in the Second World War by Robin J Brooks**

Paperback: 256 pages

Countryside Books (1st August 2017)

ISBN: 978-1853069840 Price £13

This illustrated book gives a full account of the part played by the region's airfields during the last war including Berrow, Defford, Madley, Pershore, Shobdon, Wolverhampton and Worcester.



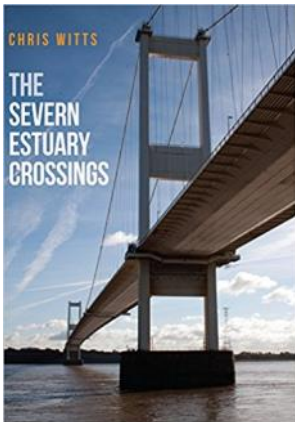
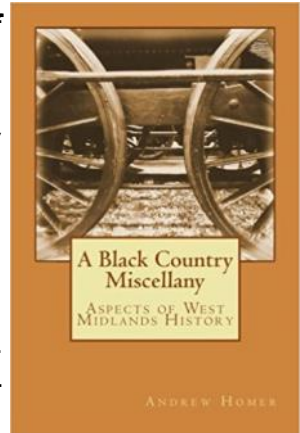
## **A Black Country Miscellany: Aspects of West Midlands History by Andrew Homer**

Paperback: 156 pages

CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform (7 Nov. 2016)

ISBN: 978-1519573605 Price £8

“Excellent, readable and very informative book. Last saw the author in an antiques shop in Bewdley, the time before that he was at the Black Country Living Museum in a white wig and frock coat - he was Mr Newcomen, talking about his steam engine! “ (Online review, Philip Baldwin)



## **The Severn Estuary Crossings by Chris Witts**

Paperback: 96 pages

Amberley Publishing (15 Aug. 2017)

ISBN: 978-1445669021 Price £15

The story of the tunnels, ferries and bridges that have crossed the Severn estuary. With a wonderful array of rare and unpublished images, Severn expert Chris Witts celebrates this phenomenal feat of engineering.

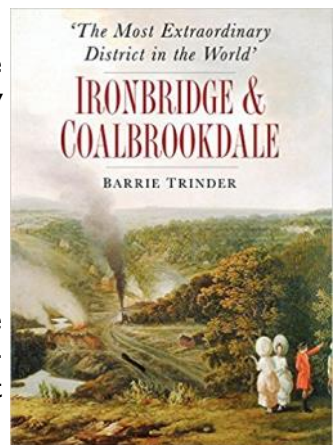
## **The Most Extraordinary District in the World: Ironbridge & Coalbrookdale by Barrie Trinder**

Paperback: 148 pages

Phillimore & Co Ltd (1 Aug. 2017)

ISBN: 978-0750983693 Price £17

A new edition brings new understanding of the gorge itself and the industrial monuments preserved there and new insights for the specialist historian.





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