

WARWICKSHIRE Industrial Archaeology Society

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CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

I felt that I could not let this issue of the Newsletter pass without officially recording the Society's – and my own – gratitude to my predecessor as Chairman of WIAS, Mr. Toby Cave. Toby has been the guiding light of the Society since its formation in 1989, working tirelessly to raise the profile of industrial archaeology both locally and beyond, taking responsibility for securing speakers for the monthly meetings, and making his own personal contributions to the recording of the industrial history and industrial archaeology of Warwickshire. I was delighted that he was willing to accept the position of President of WIAS, and we look forward to his continued influence on the Society.

The new committee is made up of the President, the Chairman, the Secretary – Mr. Dennis Crips – and the Treasurer – Mr. Mark Abbott, with the approval of the AGM to co-opt further members. The first decision taken at the recent meeting of the new committee was to issue a members' survey to

ensure that all our information about members was accurate and up-to-date, to discover whether there were any members willing to make a fuller contribution to the work of the Society, and to seek members' views on the future development of the Society. The members' survey is distributed with this Newsletter, and I do hope you will be able to complete this in the near future.

I very much look forward to my new position as Chairman and sincerely hope that the next twelve months will be a happy, busy and successful time for the Society and its members.

Martin Green

SOCIETY NEWS

Subscriptions

Members are reminded that following the agreement of the AGM to retain subscriptions at their 2002 / 2002 levels, these are now due. The amount is £10.00 per person inclusive of partner. A further £1.00 per person is payable at each meeting to help meet the cost of refreshments. Please make cheques payable to Warwickshire Industrial Archaeology Society. To save on postage costs, any payments received by post will be acknowledged by receipt at the subsequent meeting.

Programme

A full programme for the forthcoming season is set out on the back page of this Newsletter. Once again this represents the sole work of the retiring Chairman, Toby Cave, to whom our thanks are due. Two

meetings await confirmation of a speaker and members will of course be advised of developments.

With the election of Martin Green as Chairman at the AGM, responsibility now passes to him for the organisation of the programme. As ever, suggestions of potential speakers are welcome; all the more so if you have personal experience of their ability.

John Turner Festival

The Society has been invited by Southam and District Lions Club to appear in the Hobbies Section of the 2002 John Turner Festival. This will take place at Southam College, Welsh Road West, Southam, on the 1st and 2nd November 2002. Opening times will be 6.00pm to 9.30pm on Friday 1st November and 10.00am to 5.00pm on Saturday 2nd November.

Members Survey

As the Chairman noted in his opening message above, the committee has agreed to issue a members survey form with this edition of the Newsletter. A principal aim of this survey is to update the Society membership records. Currently the membership database contains around 60 names, many of which lack corresponding telephone numbers and e-mail details. In particular, the committee is keen that the Society has an up-to-date e-mail address for all members who have a one, as this is a quick and economical means of communication.

NEWSLETTER

Meeting Reports *by Arthur Astrop*

June 2002 Roger Cragg:

The Stratford to Moreton Tramway

At the June meeting, the scheduled speaker was unavoidably prevented from attending and Roger Cragg came to the Society's rescue. At a mere six-hours notice, Roger was able to bring forward his talk on the Stratford to Moreton Tramway (originally programmed for September 2002), and produced one of his highly professional presentations.

The story of the Stratford to Moreton Tramway started in the early 19th century when William James conceived the idea of a rail connection between Stratford-upon-Avon and London (no less). The 16-mile stretch from Stratford upon Avon to Moreton-in-Marsh, with a branch line to Shipston-on-Stour, was to be the first link in this highly ambitious project. As it happened, it turned out to be the *only* link in the project! James got permission to go ahead but only on condition that where his line ran close to the turnpike road 'no steam locomotives would be allowed!'. Since approximately the first third of his proposed route did precisely that, this was an onerous condition by any standards, and one with far-reaching consequences. Motive power was consequently restricted to horses, which also meant that conventional sleepers could not be used and each rail chair had to be set on its own square stone block. Very many thousands of these blocks were needed to build the line, and astonishingly Roger discovered one, in the undergrowth, and has a colour slide to prove it.

Work on the tramway started in 1824. Wrought iron rails in 15-ft lengths were laid at 4-ft 8 1/2-inch gauge, with the chairs at 3-ft spacing. Between each pair of chairs, the rail had a fish-back profile on its underside. Eventually it became clear that the original estimate of around £35,000 to build the line was inadequate and that another £11,000 would be needed. (*Plus ça change...!*). Two shareholders alone then bravely donated £5,000 each, to make sure the line was completed, and in 1826 it was officially opened. The branch line to Shipston-on-Stour, however, did not materialise for another 10 years.

Following canal practice, any carrier was allowed to use the tramway provided he had wagons of the appropriate gauge, complied with the Company's rules and regulations and, of course, paid the statutory fee. The track was single-line, with passing places at 1/4 mile intervals, and a post was placed at the precise midpoint between each pair of passing places so that there should be no argument as to who should back-off! Predominantly used for

transporting freight, the line typically carried coal, Cotswold stone, lime etc, and the maximum load per wagon was set at 4 tons. By 1853, there was also some passenger traffic, and the journey time from Stratford to Moreton-in-Marsh was a mere two hours!

In a series of slides, Roger highlighted items testifying to the existence of the tramway which can still be seen to this day, including bridges, junction houses, residual track routes and so on. In 1854, the line was leased by the Oxford, Worcester and Wolverhampton railway, and in 1858 passenger services on the line ceased. In 1863, the OW & W line was taken over by GWR, and in 1869 the original tramway company was finally wound up.

To conclude the June meeting, Toby Cave gave a short paper on 'historic concrete structures', illustrating the use of unreinforced concrete in an extremely wide range of applications, from the production of classical statuary and decorative items to a wide variety of buildings. With an excellent series of slides, Toby covered the uses of this very versatile material from lighthouses to viaducts, from humble dwellings to mock castles, and from stately homes to follies. Examples included as widely disparate structures as the 1870 Marine Crescent in Folkestone, a 21-span viaduct in Scotland, a mock-Elizabethan manor in Wales, a 65-metre high tower in the New Forest and a group of Norman Shaw-designed houses in Croydon.

Toby's talk was by way of a trailer to the more extensive one on the Warwickshire Cement Industry which he subsequently presented in July, following the formal business of the Annual General Meeting.

Industrial Archaeology Journal

Thanks to the generosity of Huw Jones, Coventry's Keeper of Industrial History, the Society has been donated a run of the Industrial Archaeology Journal from Volume 1 (1965) to Volume 16 (1981). Although undoubtedly much of the content will now be rather dated, a glance at the accompanying bound index reveals many articles of possible interest to members. This index will be available for inspection at Society meetings and members who wish to borrow copies of this Journal should advise Toby Cave of the relevant dates.

Unfortunately, because of the number of journals involved and the difficulty in keeping track of borrowings, it will not be possible to have the entire collection at meetings for members to browse.

Local Lime and Cement

April 2002 Lyndon Cave:

The Warwickshire Cement Industry

Even before the era of universal DIY, and certainly after it, there can be few people who have not at some time or other found themselves wielding a shovel and following the classic recipe of 'three of sand and one of cement'! From the traditional one hundredweight paper sack (of which only one third was usually used, leaving the remainder to set solid!), to the dainty 1 kg plastic bag of 'readymix' we have all used the stuff, with probably few of us realising that the Romans in their time were doing likewise with a not dissimilar substance.

Since the early 18th century, our County has been a major producer of cement and it was the development of that industry in Warwickshire which Lyndon Cave traced in his address to the July meeting. The origins of the industry in Warwickshire lay first in lime workings, with clusters of kilns around the Arbury Estate and Chilvers Coton being recorded in 1746. Twenty years later kilns were also springing up in the Long Itchington area and by 1800 both lime and cement production were also thriving in the Stockton/Southam areas, with the industry largely controlled by Warwick businessmen with premises near the canal.

Of immense significance to the growth of the industry was the Stockton blue lias ridge, and soon powerful business men like John Tomes and Charles Handley began to appear as important figures in lime and cement production. In the first quarter of the 19th century John Greaves was another powerful player, by which time Southam was already one of the most important areas in the UK for lime and cement production. By that time also, the first patent for 'artificial cement' had been granted to one James Aspdin, now widely acknowledged as the originator of Portland Cement. As often happens with a new technology or process, the military soon became interested and in the 19th century the Royal Engineers played a very important part in the development of cement.

The Midlands canal system as a means of transportation of cement and limestone was crucial until towards the end of the 19th century, when the railways took over, but it is interesting to note that some working boats were still being used to carry cement as late as 1940.

In 1910, the first 'combine' of 32 British companies involved in cement production was formed, and such an important industry inevitably had its industrial relations problems. In 1924, a strike of cement workers demanding 1/4d per hour

rise and a seven day annual holiday brought the industry to a standstill. However, the employers stood firm against this outrageous demand, and the strike collapsed.

Lyndon concluded by sketching the history of the industry in Warwickshire in the late 20th century, when once mighty groups like RPCC began to show the signs of distress which led to take-over battles and finally, in 2000, to the acquisition of Rugby Cement by the Australian Ready Mixed Concrete Company.

All the w's.... Parys Mountain Website

Members who read the short piece on the copper mines of Parys Mountain in the September 2001 edition of the Newsletter, might like to visit www.parysmountain.co.uk; the homepage of the *Parys Mountain Underground Group*. Here, the link 'Go Underground' gives access to a comprehensive body of information on this industrial site of world importance.

There are pages devoted to the location, history and unusual geology of the area. Further pages detail how the ore was processed, the use of steam power and the locations of the various steam engines on the mountain; together with photographs of the engine houses in the past and now. All 163 known shafts and adits are described, located with six or eight figure grid references and for the majority, modern photographs are provided. This information is also available to download as a text file for those who wish to study the remains in the field.

Perhaps of more interest to members, given the distance of this site from Warwickshire, are the illustrated Virtual Tours. These give an excellent impression of the important mining features and the surreal landscape of the mining ground.

There is also a link to the informative sister website of the Amlwch Industrial Heritage Trust.

As a whole, this website is a superb example of the positive aspect of the Internet. A bonus is that it presents industrial archaeology in an interesting and accessible manner. Yes, the design of the site may be a little fussy for some tastes and a number of the images suffer from heavy compression, but these are minor points in the face of the sheer wealth of information provided. This is almost as good as visiting the mountain itself and even those familiar with the locality will find something new here.

Mark W. Abbott

Programme 2002 / 2003

2002

Thursday 12th September

Peter Lee: *Railways in the Warwickshire Coalfield.*

Thursday 10th October

Charles Catt: *Why Roads Exist.*

Thursday 14th November

Dr. John Bland: *Coal Mining in North Warwickshire*

Thursday 12th December

Paul Howells: *Restoring the Royal Pump Rooms, Leamington Spa.*

The majority of time at these meetings is occupied by our speaker, followed by refreshments and a subsequent period for questions and follow up material. The final part of the meeting is then usually taken up with a brief contribution from one of our members, often concentrating on an aspect of the industrial archaeology of Warwickshire. We are always keen to have contributions from members or visitors – do not be afraid to put yourself forward for one of these presentations. Occasional additional events will also take place during the year, and members will be duly notified of these.

Please note that this programme may be subject to change without notice. If you are particularly interested in a specific speaker and subject, it is recommended that confirmation of that meeting is sought from a member of the committee.

2003

Thursday 9th January

Peter Coulls: *A Look at the History of Fairground Machines.*

Thursday 13th February

Speaker and Subject to be Confirmed.

Thursday 13th March

Huw Jones: *Coventry's Engineering Heritage*
To be Confirmed.

Thursday 10th April

Alan Cooke: Subject to be Confirmed.

Thursday 8th May

Peter Cross-Rudkin: *Some Warwickshire Eighteenth Century Engineers and Their Work.*

Thursday 12th June

Speaker and Subject to be Confirmed.

Thursday 10th July

Annual General Meeting, followed by Lyndon F. Cave: *Brickmaking in Warwickshire*

WIAS Meetings

Meetings of the Society are held on the second Thursday of each month in the Sixth Form Centre at Warwick School, Myton Road, Warwick, starting at 7.30pm. A map of how to find the Sixth Form Centre at Warwick School is available from the Secretary. Visitors should park in the Junior School / Sports Hall car park. The Sixth Form Centre is next to the car park.

Subscriptions 2002 / 2003

£10.00 per person (or couple).

Cheques payable to Warwickshire Industrial Archaeology Society please.

An additional payment of £1.00 per person is due at each meeting to meet the cost of refreshments.

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