WARWICKSHIRE Industrial Archaeology Society

WIAS

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NEWSLETTER

THIS ISSUE

EDITORIAL

I first raised the subject of an example of favourite industrial archaeology in the editorial of the December 2001 Newsletter. The intention then was to prompt members to contribute examples of their own favourite industrial archaeology sites, so that a list of recommended IA could be compiled for those travelling elsewhere in the UK, perhaps on holiday. Sadly, the response to this initiative was poor, save for an excellent short article from Richard Storey describing the malting industry in his home town of Ware.

Not before time this article is reproduced overleaf, using the space normally reserved for the full programme for the forthcoming season. The programme does not appear, because the Chairman, Martin Green, who now has the task of compiling a programme, understandably would prefer only to publish details of confirmed speakers. A couple speakers for 2004 are not yet confirmed, so a programme to December 2003 is included under the Society News heading and the remaining programme will be made available at a later date. Also, since a number of members have indicated that they would prefer a reminder of the programme to appear in each Newsletter, rather than just the full programme appearing in the September edition, this quarterly listing of speakers will continue. I hope this change meets with the approval of all.

Returning to a listing of favourite IA, this is something I would still like to pursue as I am sure many members have knowledge of sites that may be unknown to others. Such an exchange of information is surely one of the potential benefits of membership of the Society. A full article, such as Richard Storey's piece, is not necessarily required. Just a brief list of a few sites of particular personal interest, with perhaps some location directions and a little of what a casual visitor might be expected to see or to look out for. Initially, I envisage a simple A4 sheet published as an insert to a future Newsletter, so please submit some sites for inclusion.

Mark W. Abbott

SOCIETY NEWS

Companion to British Road Haulage History.

As some members will be aware, for six years Richard Storey has been a member of a team of five contributing editors of a pioneering work on the history of road haulage. The project was successfully completed this year when the Science Museum published the Companion to British Road Haulage History. Priced at £39.95, its 437 pages include several hundred cross-referenced entries. It contains in addition an eight page bibliography and 128 photographs. Member Roger Cragg contributed entries on the civil engineering infrastructure supporting modern road transport.

Programme.

The programme for the remainder of 2003 is as follows:

11th September
Dr. Michael Hodder: *The Industrial Archaeology of Birmingham.*

9th October
Mr. John Boynton: *Railways to Stratford-upon-Avon.*

13th November
Regional Survey: A presentation by members of the Society on the industrial archaeology of the Warwick District.

11th December
Dr. Barrie Trinder: *The Industrial Archaeology of the Market Town.*

Details of the programme for the remainder of the 2003/2004 season will be published once all the speakers are confirmed.

Subscriptions.

Members are reminded that subscriptions for the 2003/2004 season are now due. As agreed at the AGM, the amount due remains at £10.00 per member (including partner). Cheques should be made payable to Warwickshire Industrial Archaeology Society please. Prompt payment is appreciated thank you.

Favourite Industrial Archaeology

Richard Storey

Malting in Ware

My favourite piece of industrial archaeology is a whole town, Ware in Hertfordshire, where I grew up. Situated at the crossing of the London-Cambridge road and the River Lea, it developed as one of the major malting centres for the London brewing industry. Barley was grown on the boulder clays of the area and brought down by the road to the maltings, which initially developed mainly along the northern bank of the river. The malt produced was transported along the Lea Navigation to London as were locally made bricks, with grain and manure as return cargoes. Gradually awareness of these activities and their physical manifestations dawned on me. A key experience was the local Festival of Britain exhibition in 1951, where a large sectioned model of a malting gave me some idea of the processes of barley steeping, spreading on the germinating floor and kilning, which malt-making involved. I had left the town before industrial archaeology had begun to take shape as a concept and activity, but when I became aware of it, many memories of the distinctive malting buildings surfaced, prompting observation and recording, photography and reading, to reveal a complex local economy.

Malting was seasonally related to brickmaking, for which suitable clay was available locally and for which the large malting buildings created a special demand; small foundries and metal workers developed locally to meet the demand for tie plates, kiln wire and window grilles. Barge owning and banking were also an integral part of the malting scene; although obviously not so directly related to IA as bricks and metal products, they were important components in this complex local economy with its direct and obvious links to the wider world.

An interesting question, to which I have never found a satisfactory answer, is why brewing developed on a large scale in Hertford (McMullens), but only resulted in a small-scale undertakings in neighbouring Ware. Perhaps being the county town made a difference…. On a recent visit to Ware I was pleased to see that what must have been the smallest brewery in the town, serving one outlet on New Road, still survived, only just, but partly shrouded in sheeting, which suggested there was an intent to restore.

Physical features taken for granted as part of the place where one lived began to stand out in their significance as part of an industry which was in fact in process of deserting the town, despite the construction of one automated malting after the Second World War.

The rectangular brick slabs of the malting buildings were given variety by the different types of cowl: fixed and louvered, the *Chinaman's hat* (an apt term invented by one of my fellow-researchers in the 1960s), and, most attractive of these variants, the subtly curved and tapering rotating cowls, clad in painted corrugated iron and with a projecting wind vane, often with a heart shaped terminal. The horizontal aspect would be punctuated by projecting sack-hoist installations (lucams) and by a variety of cast-iron tie plates, which could be recorded and their legends correlated with local directories. The most exciting IA breakthrough was to recover one of these plates, with a short, hooked rod, from a malting site across the border in Essex and to find that, instead of holding a tie-rod in place, its function was to hold the wire floor of the kiln in tension.

On the ground the surface of the access yards to the riverside maltings was also in evidence: paved strips for the cart wheels between the setts the horses walked on and the round axle-protecting stones at the entrances. The yards themselves fitted into a recognisable pattern, as deep burgage plots, maximising access for numerous undertakings to the main road at one end and the river at the other, with room for narrow maltings or workshops in the yards themselves.

Some of the results of recording went into the *Journal of Industrial Archaeology* and *Industrial Archaeology* and it was a privilege to be able to supply Branch Johnson with material for his Council-sponsored survey of Herts. IA, which resulted in a county volume in the David and Charles series.

Other interests have subsequently eased aside direct concern with IA in Ware and district, but I still visit family there and was recently delighted to discover the statue of the Ware maltman, erected in front of the parish church as a millennium project. Having moved away from Herts malting, it was something of a relief to me when Brown and Clark's works appeared, to document in permanent form a much changed industry.

Further Reading:

1. Mathias, *The Brewing Industry in England 1750-1830* 1959
2. W. Branch Johnson, *The Industrial Archaeology of Hertfordshire* 1970

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Meeting Reports *by Arthur Astrop*

June 2003 Dr. Anne Langley
The Brandon Silk Mill

Rather like pulling one end of a loose thread which gradually unravels, Dr. Anne Langley's original interest in a 'silk mill at Brandon' turned out to be a much longer and more fascinating research project than she could have imagined. The 19th century 1-inch map of Daventry and Coventry certainly showed a silk mill at Brandon but that proved to be only the start of the story. Research showed that there had once been a variety of mills, for different purposes, in and around the same area, and the Domesday Book recorded one in Brandon itself which, in 1086, was 'worth 26 pence a year in rent'.

A map of Brandon dated 1630 shows 'Mr Wilcocke's Mill', and in 1711 it is recorded that a Mary Wilcox (Wilcocke?) had a 'life interest in a fulling mill and mill house at Brandon'. Fulling, as Dr. Langley explained, is a 'consolidating' process in cloth making. Towards the end of the 18th century, the *Coventry Mercury* newspaper advertised an auction of a paper mill at Brandon, and a few years later an estate map dated 1792 showed the millstream, the mill itself, floodgates and outbuildings. By 1828, a Trade Directory was listing George & William Herbert as 'silk throwsters' at Brandon Mills, and such entries continued for the rest of the century.

During that period, the mill was extensively developed, had various owners, and began to employ increasing numbers of workers, including young children. The 1851 census lists Hannah and Fanny Clarke, aged 10 and 13 respectively, living in Stretton-on-Dunsmore and working as 'silk winders'. Dr. Langley found evidence of continuing friction between local schools and local mills over the employment of children by the latter. In 1872, the Stretton school log reveals that two fatherless pauper children (one only 8 years old) were compelled to work at Brandon Mill as part-timers.

Five years later, a Stretton school teacher was writing to the Factory Inspector about children working at the silk mill, and at the same time sending a letter to their parents 'ordering them to send their children to school half-time' By the 1860s, the workforce in the mill was over 100 and in 1867 it was sold by auction, with its particulars being given as 'of 3-storey construction with a 16-ft diameter iron waterwheel, a 12-hp steam engine, and quantities of spinning, winding and doubling machinery'.

In 1877 a Mr Iliffe was listed as a 'silk throwster', with mills at Brandon and Brinklow, employing 150 and 50 respectively, and was clearly running a subsantial business. However, by 1905 the Brandon mill is listed as 'disused' and today its site is the 11th green of the Brandon Wood golf course, with only a very few ruins remaining to be seen.

The June meeting concluded with a report by WIAS member George Sayell on the latest position regarding *Miranda*, the cast-bronze mermaid which once graced the forecourt of the AP factory in Leamington Spa and which mysteriously vanished one night. Apparently Monsieur Pierre Haneuse, a French documentary maker, is interested in filming a 'life' of *Miranda's* sculptor and as a result of his researches the file on her theft has been 'reopened'. M. Haneuse has traced the sculptor's widow, now in her 70s, and discovered that she still has the molds from which *Miranda* was cast. A campaign is being planned to reawaken interest in *Miranda's* disappearance with the hope that eventually she may be rescued from her kidnappers.

Society Website

Thanks to the efforts of member Peter Riley, the Society now has a world wide web presence at www.warwickshireias.org. At the moment this is a fairly low key presence, but at least the Society now has a website. This is something which the committee were keen to develop, but lacking the time, and what is more important the necessary skills, our grateful thanks are due to Peter for taking the initiative and making an excellent job of creating the site.

The address was the subject of much trial and error to find something that flowed well, but was not already reserved. All the obvious variants have already been taken, although perversely, none seem to be in use. The *.org* suffix is generally used by charities and non-profit making organisations, so is entirely apt for the Society.

Content is one of the keys to a successful website, especially updating the content on a regular basis. It is initially hoped to achieve this by posting successive Newsletters and previous editions of the same and by keeping a changing gallery of photographs of local IA. Which is where members can help. A supply of images of Warwickshire IA is needed, either transparencies or negatives. If you can help with these please speak to Peter Riley or Mark Abbott. We can arrange the necessary scanning and would prefer to do so to maintain consistent picture quality. Thank you in anticipation.

Mark W. Abbott

Local Brickmaking Overview

July 2003 Toby Cave

Brickmaking in Warwickshire

It is a curious fact of brickmaking that from its beginnings, even up to the present, it has remained an industry based largely on the use of relatively simple technology. Despite the fact that today its output is measured in multi-millions, the brickmaking industry has largely either resisted, or has not proved to be appropriate for, the use of any of the really advanced technologies. Even its use of automation and mechanisation is fairly modest compared with other high-output industries.

This was the starting point for our President's address to the Society's July meeting when he took a broad sweep over his subject and reminded us that the origins of brickmaking lie in the basic application of sweat and muscle. 'Brick works' originally sprang up wherever a suitable supply of clay, however small, had been found. Clay was dug in the autumn to be used in the following spring, and when enough bricks had been made they were simply piled up in 'clamps', covered with brushwood, and the latter was then ignited. Some days, or even weeks, later (and following regularly replenishment of brushwood), the bricks were deemed to be 'done'. Consistency of quality could hardly be guaranteed!

Brickmaking was an occupation that carried very little prestige, and censuses show that those engaged in it often tried to disguise that fact by registering as maltster/brickmaker, farmer/brickmaker etc. In order to counter 'cheating', standard sizes for bricks were eventually needed, and by the early years of the 19th century something which was just about recognisable as a brickmaking industry began to emerge. Patents associated with the trade began to appear, most of them based on minor modifications to existing practice, and in 1841 a major step forward appeared in the form of wire-cutting to length clay which was extruded in standard section. One man and three boys could now produce a steady 1000 bricks per day.

Gradually brickworks proper began to appear, kiln development progressed, and with the arrival first of the canals, and then what is more important, the railways, the national demand for bricks soared. A typical Victorian railway bridge would call for at least 300,000 bricks, and as the railway network expanded it proved to be a major customer for the country's brickmakers. Better furnaces were developed but the industry remained reliant to a very great extent on sheer muscle power. Clay mixing was still regularly performed by 'treading' and it was not uncommon for children to be given time-off school to work in the trade. In 1871, an Act of Parliament was introduced to regulate and inspect the brickmaking industry, the working conditions within which were officially described at the time as being 'hard for men and cruel for children'.

In the late 19th century, Websters of Coventry was considered to be the largest and most advanced brickworks in the UK, with five kilns operating and an output of a least 600,000 bricks per week. In fact, an output of 1,000,000 bricks per week was at one time contemplated. Finally, Toby gave a summary of the subsequent rationalization and changing structure of the British brickmaking industry. The meeting ended with a short video of the Oak Farm Brickworks in the Black Country where the various skills and crafts required in the production of specially shaped handmade bricks are still employed, and the only concession to mechanisation appeared to be the use of wheelbarrows!

Further Reading, *Malting in Ware***, Continued**:

3. Brown, *Steeped in Tradition. The Malting Industry in England since the Railway Age* 1983

4. Parker, *Nothing for Nobody. A History of Hertfordshire Banks and Banking* 1986

5. C. Clark, *The British Malting Industry since 1830* 1998

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