

# WARWICKSHIRE

## Industrial Archaeology Society

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### EDITORIAL

I particularly enjoy walking and this year resolved to make more of an effort to get out into the countryside. Coincidentally, there were moves within the Society towards publishing some form of guide to the Industrial Archaeology of Warwickshire and this led me to realise how little I really knew of the IA of my local area. I have a few favourite locations that I visit regularly, but apart from these, I probably know more of the significant IA sites on Anglesey than I do of any in the area around Southam.

This is to do with familiarity I suspect. Anglesey is a regular holiday destination, somewhere different to be explored and photographed. Time is limited. In contrast, Southam is familiar and the surroundings can be visited at any time. There is always tomorrow, which of course never comes, while today there is always something more pressing to do. So with an impending change in personal circumstances, I decided to set aside a weekend afternoon as walking, thinking and exploration time, with walking all the canal

towpaths in my immediate area as an initial target.

So what have I discovered? Well, in truth, not much of real IA significance that is not already generally well known. Oxford Canal bridge 129 is written up elsewhere in this Newsletter, while the only other intriguing detail of note is a small long disused excavation and sleeper built wharf behind Wormleighton Grange. Any comments on this would be welcome.

However, I have come to appreciate the distinct atmosphere of the Oxford and Grand Union Canals.

The Oxford Canal, south of Napton Junction, retains its largely contoured course. It has an intimate atmosphere. Meadows slope down to the water, trees overhang the water and the canal feels part of the landscape; indeed with its meandering course it could be mistaken for a river. It seems to belong to an unhurried rural past.

In contrast the Grand Union Canal, heading off from Napton Junction, has a far more engineered feel. The impression is of a waterway cutting through the landscape, imposing itself upon the landscape on its engineer's terms, much like the later railways would do. One senses an industrial monument with a purpose.

As intended, I have learnt something. However, the most memorable occurrence had nothing to do with IA; it was the time spent near Marston Doles watching a barn owl hunting.

**Mark W. Abbott**

### SOCIETY NEWS

#### Programme.

The programme for the remainder of the current season, to July 2004, is as follows:

#### April 8th

Mr. Ken Chapman: *Troth and Hillson: The Langley Ploughmakers*

#### May 13th

Mr. Mike Rumbold: *Some History of the Weedon Royal Ordnance Depot.*

#### June 10th

Dr. George Noszlopy: *The Public Sculpture of Coventry, Solihull and Warwickshire Some Industrial Connections.*

#### July 8th

Society AGM and Members' Contributions.

#### August

No Meeting.

A programme for the meetings from September to December 2004 will appear in the June Newsletter.

#### Subscriptions

Reminders have been sent to members who still owe their 2003/2004 subscriptions.

Thanks to all who have paid promptly upon receipt of the reminder. Please can any outstanding payments be made as a matter of urgency. Cheques payable to Warwickshire Industrial Archaeology Society please.

#### Thanks

The Committee would like to thank all those members who contributed to the February meeting, by speaking on aspects of the Industrial Archaeology of the Stratford upon Avon district of Warwickshire. It proved an informative and enjoyable evening.

# NEWSLETTER

# Meeting Reports *by Arthur Astrop*

## December 2003 Dr. Barrie Trinder *The Industrial Archaeology of the Market Town*

The market towns of Britain were often the 'incubators' in which first crafts and then minor (and sometimes ultimately major) industries were born, nurtured and brought to maturity. It was this aspect of many of our historic market towns on which Dr Trinder concentrated in his December lecture to the Society.

The typical 'market town' often tended to emerge where any cluster of dwellings had some form of communal open space which lent itself to the display and trading of locally made goods and services. Next, around the periphery of this open space, began to be built houses in which the ground floor was a rudimentary form of shop. Some of these houses then began to be occupied by the professions, such as the law and banking. Later, the classic multi-storey merchants' houses started to border the market square, with the ground floor providing a proper shop, the first and second floors offering spacious living accommodation for the trader and his family, and the top floor housing the live-in servants. Many of these merchants' houses survive in market towns to this day and, where they have been conserved and cherished, are elegant additions to the environment.

Dr Trinder pointed out that some trades and crafts were to be found in almost every market town, including milling, tanning, malting, wheelwrighting, saddlery, brickmaking, brewing, shoe making, printing and so on. In other instances, areas centred on market towns tended to specialise, as for example with shoe making in Northamptonshire, furniture making in Buckinghamshire, and clock and watch making in Coventry. It was also important, Dr Trinder suggested, to distinguish between the products of crafts and trades intended principally to serve the town and its locality itself, and the production of 'manufactures', that is, products intended to be distributed and sold over much larger areas, and even in some instances to be sent overseas.

There were also instances where one trade or craft literally gave birth to others. The blacksmithing trade, for example, frequently led to the establishment of specialised forges and often to the start of an iron-founding industry in a given locality. In turn, the advent of the ironmonger as a thriving retail trade gave a boost to the trade of the forges and the iron-founders, and there were other instances of a similar kind. To illustrate his points, Dr Trinder showed a large number of excellent slides of market towns, and especially those where buildings originally used to house long-lost crafts

and trades can still be seen, albeit they are now used for quite different purposes.

To follow Dr Trinder's talk, it was appropriate that the meeting should conclude with the showing of a video of one of the oldest crafts of all, namely brewing. It dealt in considerable detail with the history and practice of the Hook Norton brewery which has been in the hands of the same family for several generations. In many instances, belt-driven equipment powered by a splendid horizontal steam engine is still being used but, as its present manager succinctly said, 'Hook Norton brewery lives with its history, but it does not live in its past'. Indeed, as he spoke a computer was visible on a desk in the background!

### Oxford Canal Bridge 129

Amongst the slides shown by Roger Cragg at the February meeting, was one of a curious and very dilapidated wooden footbridge over the Oxford Canal at Wormleighton Grange; Bridge 131A. It can be confirmed that this bridge still stands and is one of a pair of similar structures in the area.

Here, at Wormleighton Grange, the Oxford Canal makes one of its occasional 180 degree changes in direction to detour around Wormleighton Hill and on the far side of the hill to Bridge 131A, stands Bridge 129. This structure is a modern version of its wooden neighbour. Carrying a concrete plaque with the date 1952, blue brick piers support a single girder across the canal, which in turn carries a wood plank walkway, reached by steep wooden ladders at each end. Strangely the girder is not one piece, but apparently jointed at the one-third / two-third span point with substantial riveted fishplates reinforcing the join.

It can further be confirmed that there are now no other such bridges on the southern Oxford Canal in Warwickshire, although broadly similar footbridges do occur elsewhere on the canal system; for example the so called *Black Bridge* behind Flavel's works in Leamington.

The purpose of these two Oxford Canal bridges is a mystery too. No public footpath directly communicates with either, so it is probably reasonable to assume they were built as occupation crossings, despite there being 4 other brick occupation bridges nearby. This is borne out by Bridge 129, where the access ladder on the towpath side crosses the boundary hedge into farmland.

# UK Industrial World Heritage Sites

January 2004 Dr. Anthony Streeten

## *Industrial World Heritage Sites: Successful Nominations and Future Prospects*

**W**orld Heritage Sites are places or buildings of outstanding universal value, and it is the duty of the international community to co-operate in order to protect them. Well over 700 sites have already been inscribed on the World Heritage List, covering cultural, natural and mixed locations, and new ones are being added each year. The first meeting of WIAS in 2004 welcomed Dr Anthony Streeten who spoke briefly on WHS's in general and touched briefly on the 24 listed in the UK, which range as widely as the Giant's Causeway and the Tower of London, to Stonehenge and Maritime Greenwich, and from Ironbridge Gorge to Saltaire.

He then focussed on *industrial* WHS's in the UK, and selected for detailed description the Derwent Valley Mills. This 24-kilometre stretch of the Lower Derwent Valley is rich in industrial sites of genuine world historical significance. The jewel in the crown is undoubtedly Sir Richard Arkwright's 1771 Cromford Mill, where so much pioneering work in the textile industry was carried out, but the string of mills and other buildings along the valley at Belper, Milford, Darley Abbey and Derby are of equal importance.

It was in the Derwent Valley in the 18th century that waterpower for driving manufacturing processes on an *industrial* scale was first truly harnessed, with innovators like Arkwright, Strutt and Evans pioneering the required technologies. It was the sheer scale of the mill buildings designed and erected by such men, together with the methods they developed and the numbers they employed, which transformed the manufacture of textiles forever, and introduced 'factory production' to the world.

The social effects of the new technology as it spread through the valley were immense, and examples are preserved as part of the area being listed as a WHS. The growth of communities of weavers, the use of 'top shops' by framework knitters, the rise in employment of child labour, the emergence of ancillary industries such as nail making, the growth of nonconformist religion and its associated chapels and Sunday schools, all these and other knock-on effects were described by Dr Streeten in his talk.

It is obviously an honour for any country to have its World Heritage Sites listed, but with that honour come responsibilities. Not least the burden to maintain each site and to have an approved management plan for the latter. Obviously, no

WHS can be completely cocooned in isolation. The host country, therefore, must also have a systematic programme of protecting each site against the adverse pressures and encroachments from neighbouring areas, where 'everyday 21st century life must go on' as usual.

Other industrial WHS's in the UK touched on by Dr Streeten in his talk included Ironbridge, Saltaire and Blaenavon. The UNESCO web site for World Heritage Sites is [www.UNESC.org](http://www.UNESC.org) and members are recommended to visit it.

## AIA Conference

**N**otice has been received of the 2004 AIA Annual Conference. This year it is to be held at the De Havilland Campus of the University of Hertfordshire, Hatfield, and will feature the industrial archaeology of the Hertfordshire and Lea Valley area. The dates are somewhat earlier than is usual; Friday 13th August to Thursday 19th August, with the main part of the conference occupying the weekend of 13th, 14th and 15th of August.

The provisional programme is varied and interesting, with emphasis upon the important local industries of malting and gunpowder. However, other less obvious industries are not forgotten with a visit, for example, to the Leighton Buzzard Railway; a once important transport system for local sand quarries and a lecture on watercress growing in Hertfordshire.

Aviation is perhaps the only local industry not well represented in the programme. Hatfield is of course the former home of De Havilland, who built the world's first commercial jet airliner; the *Comet*, a design that still lives on in essence in the RAF's *Nimrod* maritime patrol aircraft. Since there is nothing left of De Havillands in Hatfield, this is not surprising and a scheduled visit to the RAF Museum and its newly opened Claude Graham White building does something to redress the balance.

Full details and a booking form for the Conference are available from the Treasurer. Any WIAS Member, whether individual an AIA member or not, can attend the Conference, as the Society is affiliated to the AIA. However, it should be made clear that the cost to attend the full Conference on residential terms is high; almost £600, although there is this year a 'first timer's discount' of £25 for the conference weekend or £50 for the full week. A welcome innovation that will hopefully encourage new attendees.

# Members' Presentations

## February 2004 Members' Evening

### *Some Aspects of the Industrial Archaeology of South Warwickshire*

Returning to the theme of the November 2003 meeting, namely the growing importance of our Society publishing data on its own behalf, chairman Martin Green reviewed recent decisions by the Committee regarding the Society's Gazetteer. Recognizing that the latter can never claim to be totally comprehensive it has been decided to re-title it accordingly, and it will now appear under the heading *A Guide to the Industrial Heritage of Coventry and Warwickshire*. Its contents will be arranged by 'district' (as distinct from by industry) so that anyone can quickly and conveniently identify the sites to be found within a given area.

While it is obviously important to decide what to include in the Guide, it is equally important to know what to exclude. In the latter category will largely fall what may be termed 'social' archaeology, such as hospitals, prisons, schools, Town Halls, housing etc. Exceptions could be made, however, where any outstanding historical connections with such structures are found to exist. Practical help from Society members in compiling text for the Guide will be vital, and to assist in that respect the Committee proposes to prepare a typical sample 'paragraph', and a sample 'chapter', to show the type of format to be aimed at. Members are also urged to provide illustrations to accompany their text where appropriate, ideally in the form of colour slides but others formats can also be accommodated.

As an example of the type of 'guide to IA sites' which can be produced based on the use of relatively short paragraphs of text, Martin cited that compiled by members of the Alcester & District Local History Society. This piece of work covers IA sites to be found in the Lower Arrow Valley, Warwickshire, and in approach, format and coverage is very close to that envisaged by our Committee for our own Guide. For members without access to the Internet, printouts of this piece of work by the Alcester group are available from Martin.

The meeting then moved on to consider 'The

Stratford District' as one of the most important to be covered in our Guide. This area is surprisingly large, as a proportion of the County as a whole, and the diversity of IA sites within it is extensive, ranging from the rural/agricultural to the intensely industrial and including a variety of different types of transport and early forms of power generation. Contributions by members on sites to be found within the Stratford District included a talk by John Brace on stone field markers of the type used when ridge and furrow farming was practiced, and examples of different designs of 'sheep washes'.

Peter Chater contributed a talk on aspects of the Edgehill Light Railway which operated from 1919 to 1925. Covering the 5 ½-mile stretch Burton Dasset/Edgehill, the line handled the output of an ironstone quarry and part of its route passed over what is today the site of CAD Kineton. Roger Cragg then took a broad sweep over selected bridge, aqueduct, windmill, watermill, rail and canal sites of archaeological interest in the Stratford District, illustrated as always by some of his excellent slides.

The meeting also saw a most interesting video on the Charlecote Mill which is still working and producing flour. This video included some fine close-up shots of the gear transmissions between the waterwheels and the millstones, also to auxiliary belt-driven processes, thus giving dramatic illustration of the immense power which can be produced by a controlled flow of water.

#### **VuePrint**

In response to questions about the slide shows run via an LCD projector at the February meeting, the application used is called VuePrint. This is an image viewer and basic image editor, with extra options to keyboard control, or automate, the showing of a specified selection of images on screen. VuePrint is available for download from [www.hamrick.com](http://www.hamrick.com). Unregistered, the programme runs in demo mode and applies a watermark to all images shown. The web site details the cost of registration.

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