

The 1968 Bath University Conference

The conference was organized by the Centre for the Study of the History of Technology at Bath University of Technology, and was held at Northgate House, Bath, on 1st-3rd November, 1968. It was attended by 65 members from all parts of Great Britain, and also from Sweden, the USA, and Eire.

The main business of the Conference was a discussion of the theme: "The Future of Industrial Archaeology." This theme was introduced by Dr R. A. Buchanan in his opening address to the Conference, and was developed by the three main speakers on the Saturday morning, Dr E.R.R. Green, Mr. W. K.V. Gale and Sir David Follett. Each of these speakers made personal statements, but they were also able to represent particular points of view on the subject under discussion. Thus Dr. Green spoke about the CBA and the universities, Mr. Gale put forward the point of view of the Newcomen Society, and Sir David Follett gave an account of museum policy towards industrial archaeology. There was a wide-ranging discussion of the views expressed by these speakers, and on the following morning Mr. L.T.C. Rolt had the task of drawing together the diverse strands of this discussion in his concluding address. In the course of doing so Mr. Rolt presented the case for the formation of a national organization to promote the interests and objectives of industrial archaeology.

At the final session of the Conference a Resolution was formulated and passed unanimously. It read as follows:-

This Conference resolves to elect a steering committee of six members, with power to co-opt further members, to:

(a) discuss with the CBA and other interested bodies the possibility of strengthening the industrial archaeological functions of the CBA, or:

(b) consider the Formation of a Council for British Industrial Archaeology to promote the interests and objectives of industrial archaeology.

and to refer back to the members of this Conference and to the societies represented here when they have done this.

The Conference proceeded to elect the steering committee by a secret ballot, with Dr. Marie Nisser and Mr. Robert Vogel acting as tellers. The members elected were: Dr. R.A. Buchanan, Mr. L.T.C. Rolt, Mr. J.K. Major, Mr. N. Cossons, Dr. P.N. Jarvis and Professor Minchinton.

A Field Party to visit the principal industrial archaeological sites of central Bristol was held on the Saturday afternoon. It was led by Mr. Neil Cossons and included Old Temple Meads Stations, Redcliffe Shot Tower (in process of demolition), Cumberland Basin, and the storehouse of the City of Bristol Museum Technology Department at Upper York Street. There was also an opportunity in the programme for an exchange of information about current work in industrial archaeology through slides, films, and reports.

Angus Buchanan