

## BIAS NEWS and NOTES

Edited by Joan Day

Only with a strong and representative society can BIAS hope to have any influence on issues of importance in local industrial archaeology. More and more frequently we need to consult our members who have detailed knowledge of a particular place or subject and so it is highly desirable that the membership should grow as it has done during 1973. We now have a total of 213 members, inclusive of our family members and four industrial members, an overall increase of almost 20% on last year's figures.

The society has been concerned with a number of conservation issues during 1973. The most important question for Bristol has been the future of the City's dock area as highlighted by the publication of the Casson report early in the year, an issue dealt with elsewhere in the Journal. Another important event was the closure of the last two of the North Somerset collieries. When coalmining was about to finish at Kilmersdon and Writhlington during September the Museum Trust of the Somerset and Dorset Railway Circle publicised their proposals for the preservation of Writhlington pit-head gear and railhead. It was hoped that these could be included as a feature of their railway museum site at Radstock. BIAS gave its support to these plans at meetings between the National Coal Board, the Norton-Radstock local authority, the landowners and the Museum Trust. There the scheme was endowed with goodwill from all quarters, but little financial encouragement. We now await proposals from the Museum Trust for raising the large sum required to put their plan into practice.

The museum planned for the oldest West-Country paper-making site, established in 1610, is in a more fortunate financial position. The tourist complex at Wookey Hole formerly owned by the Hodgkinson family has now been acquired by the Madame Tussaud's organisation. They intend to make an additional tourist attraction by forming a museum of papermaking at the mill premises which only ceased the commercial production of hand-made paper last year. BIAS members, in conjunction with the Centre for the Study of the History of Technology, have been asked for assistance in the project and Brian Attwood, the BIAS expert on the history of paper-making, reports very favourably on the proposals.

On a smaller scale but still concerning an industrial site of importance, BIAS has been involved in an attempt to secure the future of remains at Kelston brass mills. There, the outer shells of two coal-fired

brass-annealing furnaces survive from the mill built by Warmley's William Champion in the late 1760s. After he was made bankrupt in 1769 the premises were taken over by the Bristol brass company who built similar furnaces at other sites which they owned. Only those at Saltford and Kelston have survived until the present day, the remains of an annealing technique in early coal-fired muffle furnaces, which appear to have been unique to this area. The recent felling of trees at the Kelston mill brought to light plans to develop a boating marina at the site, and while this may serve to make the furnaces more easily accessible, it was felt that some official protection was needed for these important industrial monuments. The Department of the Environment is now giving consideration to the BIAS application for the site to be scheduled under the Ancient Monuments Act.

### FICCIM & AIA

Important national developments in industrial archaeology have occurred in the past year. The First International Congress on the Conservation of Industrial Monuments (FICCIM for short) was organised by Neil Cossons, founder-member and first secretary of BIAS. It was held at Attingham Park in Shropshire, conveniently situated for Coalbrookdale and the Ironbridge Gorge Museum which had itself been formally opened with considerable publicity in March 1973. The Congress took place at the beginning of June and was attended by about 60 delegates with strong contingents from Sweden, West Germany and North America. It was significant because it showed a growing awareness to the industrial heritage amongst nations with varying traditions, and also because it indicated a range of common problems on which thoughts and experiences could be shared. There were some interesting differences of approach, and the anxiety of some of the foreign visitors to conserve the total community of obsolete industrial sites was a useful reminder that there is more to industrial archaeology than machines and mills. The experiment in international consultation was thus a great success and will certainly be repeated.

Another notable innovation has been the establishment of a national organisation for industrial archaeology in Britain. This was set up at the National Conference on the Isle of Man in September, when recommendations to this effect made by the Steering Committee appointed at the 1972 Conference in Strathclyde were considered and confirmed. A Council was appointed with Mr. L. T. C. Rolt as its Chairman and Dr. Angus

Buchanan as its Vice-Chairman, and the first business is to arrange a Public Meeting in London on 23 March 1974 to launch the "Association for Industrial Archaeology". All existing industrial archaeological societies will be invited to send representatives to this meeting, and it is hoped that BIAS, the Committee of which expressed some concern at the ability of the Isle of Man Conference to take such an important decision, will be well represented at this meeting. There have been differences of opinion in the past about whether or not a national organisation is necessary, but there are some quite specific tasks for the AIA to do such as organising the annual conference, and once it is operating smoothly it will be able to perform a valuable service in co-ordinating activities and in taking initiatives in national preservation policy.

Owen Ward writes:-

Shortwood Brickworks still stands beside the disused railway near Mangotsfield; but it has not worked for over a year and although the equipment and machinery is nearly all in situ and kept in running order, it is never to be used again. The buildings are themselves standing on the best deposit or a large area of clay which has given the brickworks its reputation, and are to be demolished within a couple of years so that the clay can be worked. The present owners, the Ibstock-Cattybrook company, are actively interested and extremely co-operative in plans prepared by members of the Centre for the Study of the History of Technology at Bath University, for records of the whole site to be made. Paul Elkin of the Bristol City Museum, is also interested in the site, and was instrumental in arranging for the University to make the survey. So far a certain amount of historical data has been collected by Dr Buchanan, mainly from Mr. G. W. Bryant, who retired as Managing Director of the works in 1973. A number of visits have been paid to the site, and a series of photographs taken under the sympathetic guidance of the foreman on site, Mr. Joe Jacobs, who has worked there all his life. The photographic survey is due for completion (it has to be done in borrowed time) at half-term. Meanwhile, plans for a film of the whole process, including all the moving equipment at Shortwood, are well advanced. The works concentrated almost exclusively on a high-quality brick, but they were made in a number of shapes, including subtly curved and angled ones for tapered factory chimneys. Where almost every course is different. Most of the process can be followed through today, the few gaps will, it is hoped, be filmed at Cattybrook, where brick-making is still in progress, and where some of the machinery has, in fact, been taken.

Museum Acquisitions:

Amongst other odds and ends a small but interesting assortment of papers and samples connected with a Bridgwater brick and tile company have recently been

acquired by the Bristol City Museum Technology Collection. The company was founded in 1857, and at one time boasted the title of the "Bridgwater Plaster, Cement, Lime, Whiting, Putty, Brick, Tile, Pottery, Marble and Enamelled Slate Works", or more simply "Barham Bros, Bridgwater". There is one sheet of letterhead carrying, as was not unusual, a tiny bird's-eye view of the works, but other documents illustrating the buildings are limited to two drawings made as late as 1952 by R. L. Styles of continuous kilns, (compare Donald Young's article on a brickworks at Weymouth, *Industrial Archaeology*, Vol.9:2) and a crayoned tracing by T. W. Styles of a circular beehive kiln with no date. There is also a set of some 30 photographs taken earlier this year when the site, now a builder's yard, was already becoming derelict. There are several illustrated catalogues and an engrossing little octavo notebook labelled "Kiln-book". This listed the produce of five kilns between August 1950 and March 1953, from which it is apparent that vast numbers of simple roof tiles and bricks were processed together with a regular supply of chimney pots. Barham Bros own smoke-preventing pot was among them, and so were Poole's patent tiles. From May 1950 the coal consumption was also noted in the book (in a different hand) including occasionally the source of the coal. The most entertaining exhibit is a wrapper from a bath-brick: there was very little that could not be cleaned, polished or refurbished with Barham's bath-brick, given time and elbow-grease. The closure of the works was so recent that we can hope that some more physical records or memories of the works may turn up; Paul Elkin would be glad to know of them. It is understood that Bridgwater Council are investigating the possibility of retaining one of the firm's kilns in situ on the redeveloped East Quay site in Bridgwater.

Steam Engines:

How many steam engines were installed in the Bristol area during the eighteenth century? Research in recent years has suggested that a far greater number of engines existed on a national scale than previously was thought possible, and now Dr John Robey of Stafford is making a careful assessment of all references to eighteenth-century steam installations throughout the country. At present his sources reveal a total of about 1,800 separate engines and the number is still growing. An addition to his already-impressive list of references for the Bristol area was contributed by BIAS when details were sent of the steam-engine symbols shown on *Benjamin Donn's Map of the Country 11 miles around Bristol*, of 1769. A reduced-size facsimile of this map is now available from the new shop at the Bristol City Museum, but the small size makes it difficult to distinguish all of the fifteen colliery-pumping engines shown on the original which can be inspected in the city Archives Office. Other engines not shown by Donn are known

by Wasborough, Boulton and Watt and others at various manufacturing sites in the city bring the local total known so far to some forty engines, but further research should enable this figure to be increased. If BIAS members could send any information they may have on relevant sources of information to the secretary, it would assist Dr Robey in his work of compiling national statistics, and also give a more accurate picture of local development in the use of steam which could be published in a future Journal.

to have existed at the time he drew his map, for instance, the Newcomen engine at the South Liberty Collery, Ashton Vale. Neither does he show the two engines operating at William Champion's Warmley Works in the late 1760s. One of these was used for recycling the tail water from waterwheels, thus augmenting the rotative power needed by the brass works on the site. It replaced an earlier engine with a 48' diameter cylinder built by Joseph Hornblower for Champion in 1749. Later rotative engines installed