

EDITORIAL

As outlined in the Editorial of last years BIAS Journal , difficulties were then being experienced in obtaining consent for access to carry out an emergency 'Search and Rescue Dig' , for likely early iron smelting furnaces, in advance of roadworks on the Avon Ring Road at Stonehill. These difficulties were resolved with consent forthcoming from the Highways Authority, and the efforts of the unfunded local volunteers fully justified by the discovery of not only a dateable Romano-British furnace but in a far better state of preservation than any such previously found in South West England, possibly rivaling any in the whole United Kingdom. The preliminary details of that that discovery are set out in this volume.

As this is the last edition of the Journal for which I will be acting as its editor I make no apology for using the opportunity in making its other theme one of indexes - a pet 'Hobby Horse' of mine that I like to ride.

Stored information with misleading or non-existent indexes is, to me, hardly worth the trouble of its storage for all the practical use it can be. It is therefore curious to find the low priority that many repositories of public information appear to place on keeping up with this necessary basic chore. I know that funds are currently very limited but this is precisely the time when priorities become doubly important. One Record Office I have visited recently - 'no names, no pack drill' but I hasten to add not in the immediate locality - seemed completely unabashed that a reference quoted in a standard local historical work published over a dozen years ago was still not yet even listed as existing in any of their accessible indexes. Indeed they seemed quite surprised that I had found the number of what turned out to be a dusty box of items still awaiting to be catalogued.

To at least put our own house in order you will therefore find in this edition a complete list of all articles that have been published in the

23 editions of BIAS Journal since its inception in 1968.

Following on with this theme of indexes making hidden information available for general use is published Martin Bodman's listed abstracts of Industrial Archaeology in 18th and 19th century Bristol Newspapers. Having myself engaged in wading through this type of material for an elusive item I am painfully aware of just what a time consuming and eye straining occupation this can be. Whilst freely admitted by the author to be far from comprehensive I believe you will agree this is a magnificent base on which others can build a really useful database.

The great advantage of this material is that it confirms and greatly extends the information published in annual local street Directories - Bristol is very fortunate in having such an unbroken run of Directories, but these do have the distinct disadvantage for Industrial research in only covering the City area, not the areas just outside, such as Crews Hole, St Philips Marsh and Kingswood where the industrial sites were mostly being located. The equivalent 'County' Directories are generally very limited in coverage for such matters. If therefore one discounts the expected and intrinsic 'hype', these contemporary newspaper advertisements contain much valuable detail on equipment and processes not available from elsewhere.

I gather the abstracts as are published here are purely based on the Bristol (and some Bath) Newspapers as kept in the Bristol Central Library so as well as filling in all the gaps from that particular source, there still lies a major task ahead for someone to do the same 'trawling' for the very many 'Bristol area' industrial references which appear in the equivalent Gloucester Newspapers - an 1834 example of which appears as our front cover this year. Perhaps this task could best be tackled on a 'swops' basis?