

EDITORIAL

BIAS JOURNAL 1968-1993

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The twenty-fifth anniversary of the Society and its Journal is clearly an occasion for celebration and, inevitably, one for some reflection. It is, therefore, appropriate that we begin Journal 25 with a review of our successes and failures by Angus Buchanan, a co-founder of the Society and currently its first President.

Angus was also the editor of the early Journals. In his inaugural editorial, he highlighted one of the explicit aims of the new society ... 'to publish the results of its research in the best possible way'. The Journal was to be the primary vehicle towards achieving this objective. The regular appearance was intended to encourage Members to ... 'commit their research to paper and stimulate others to undertake specific project Angus looked forward to receiving ... 'a steady supply of contributions' and, as he writes in his article, this hope has not been disappointed. The BIAS Journal has appeared each year and the list of articles in Journal 24 is evidence enough of the scope and depth of members' contributions over this period.

The editorial in Journal 1 outlined a policy for publication: an emphasis on 'the Bristol region' - the County of Avon was then some six years away - was suggested, but there was also a need to publish items of interest to a more general readership. It was also intended to include a special feature in each issue on a group project and to carry book reviews. Journal 25 has been prepared by a new editorial executive but it is hoped that they have produced a Journal which builds on this policy and is faithful to the BIAS tradition in its choice and presentation of articles.

Coal mining has featured in a number of Journals and is one of those industries to have ceased in the region since BIAS began its work. Mike Chapman revisits the expansion of the industry in the late-eighteenth century in his article on the Priston coal work based upon documents in the Vaughan-Jenkins family archives. Robin Bluhm provides additional information on the Somerset Coal Combination or 'Tale' which featured in Robin Stiles' article in BIAS Journal 20.

Angus Buchanan recalls the return of the SS Great Britain from the Falkland Islands in 1970 and its subsequent restoration in his review article. The Great Britain was but one of many ships to have come to rest on the Falklands, as shown by BIAS member Tony Burton in a memorable BIAS lecture on the IA of that remote place. This now appears in print in Tony's 'Not Just the Great Britain: the Hulks and Wrecks of the Falklands'.

The other mineral industries of the region are featured in James Fussell's piece on Dulcote, whereas Mrs Hammersley provides details on brick makers of Avon from a little-known source, the returns which followed the 1894 Quarry and Checkweigher Act.

Whilst documentary research is crucial to the study of IA, BIAS members have taken part in many practical projects involving excavation and conservation over the last twenty-five years. One such project, the excavation and restoration of the building and machinery at 'Snuff Mills', Stapleton, Bristol, is reported by John Bartlett. It is fitting that Journal 25 contains a report on such a project. Martin Bodman has recently concentrated members' attention on the wealth of material in local newspaper advertisements. Here we include a small selection of his research on the mills at Stapleton. BIAS Vice-Chairman, Owen Ward, has contributed many articles and talks on mills and millstones and here writes on the collection of stones at Willsbridge Mill in Longwell Green.

Local water supply has been a neglected area of IA and BIAS Chairman, Ron Fullagar, redresses this with his study of the supply at Hop House, near Marshfield, in Avon. Whilst corn milling has received ample coverage in BIAS Journals, the other industries related to agriculture have yet to receive such attention. The leather trades were in the mid-nineteenth century seen by one economist as third in importance to cotton and wool and, possibly, more important than the iron industry. Tanning was widespread in cities, towns and the countryside of Avon but has had little notice from local historians and industrial archaeologists. Martin Bodman's article on the Woollard Tannery and its history follows a BIAS evening visit in 1992 and provides our first Journal article on the trade.

Our anniversary issue includes a revived feature on recent archive and museum news. We have asked curators and archivists to let us know of their collections and additions and, in this issue, there is news from the Record Office and Industrial Heritage Centre in Bath and Radstock Museum. The new Building of Bath Museum is introduced and we have an article from Ken Thomas on the archive at Courage's Bristol Brewery.

In Journal 1, Angus Buchanan wrote of the need for our publication to take a national perspective at times and to 'assist such desirable developments as the emergence of a national policy for the preservation of industrial monuments.' Angus reviews the BIAS record in the current issue. In our last article we are delighted to acknowledge our President's personal contribution in this field with Keith Falconer's appreciation of Angus's work on the national stage as a Royal Commissioner.

One feature of editorial policy to change over the years has been the inclusion of book reviews. Their omission has been a matter of debate of late. The current editorial team would like to resurrect a Book Review section in future issues of the Journal. Unfortunately, there has not been time to re-establish contacts with publishers to enable this to happen in the current issue but John Powell, who formerly edited the reviews, has agreed to take on the task again and produce a section for next year's Journal. He would be delighted to hear from any BIAS member who wishes to be considered as a reviewer and would also like to receive suggestions as to which books members would like to see reviewed. There may be scope for including some of the more significant books which have been published since the last review section appeared. He can be contacted at 31 Forester Road, Broseley, Shropshire TF12 5BS, telephone 0952-883475.

It remains to pay tribute to the editors and teams who have produced the BIAS Journal over the past twenty-five years. We have mentioned Angus Buchanan's inaugural role. Others involved have been Brian Attwood, Joe Bettey, Will Harris, Chris Powell, John Powell and Martin Watts. Joan Day guided the executive in the production of most of the back catalogue, which was designed by Roy Day. When Joan retired from the role, Robin Stiles took over the difficult task and produced issues 20-24.

The most important people are, of course, the members who support the Journal and those who write the material. The current executive will be pleased to receive comments on this Journal and on future issues. As to the contributors, we look forward to receiving a steady supply of contributions over the next twenty-five years.