Hampshire Industrial Archaeology Society

Focus

on Industrial Archaeology

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Steamship Shieldhall Charity receives The King's Award for Voluntary Service

The King's Award for Voluntary Service

The Steamship Shieldhall Charity, a group of volunteers based in Southampton operating the heritage steamship SS Shieldhall, have been awarded The King's Award for Voluntary Service for 2024. This is the highest award a local voluntary group can receive in the UK and is equivalent to an MBE. Shieldhall was 'rescued' in 1988 when deemed too uneconomical to run by Southern Water, and purchased for her scrap value of £20k by the charity that still looks after her today. Some 30,000 volunteer hours per year are estimated to be donated by over 100 active volunteers, who in turn are supported by a network of friends and organisations. Today, Shieldhall is recognised by TripAdvisor as 'No 1 of 122 Things to Do in Southampton.'

The Steamship Shieldhall Charity is one of 281 local charities, social enterprises and voluntary groups to receive the prestigious award this year. Their work, along with others from across the UK, reminds us of all the ways fantastic volunteers are contributing to their local communities and working to make life better for those around them. The King's Award for Voluntary Service aims to recognise outstanding work by local volunteer groups to support their communities. It was created in 2002 to celebrate Her Majesty The late Queen's Golden Jubilee, and was continued following the accession of His Majesty The King.

2024 marks the second year of The King's Award for Voluntary Service. Recipients are announced annually on 14th November, The King's Birthday. Representatives of The Steamship Shieldhall Charity will receive the award crystal and certificate from Nigel Atkinson ESQ, Lord-Lieutenant of Hampshire by early 2025. In addition, two volunteers from the charity will attend a garden party at Buckingham Palace in May and June 2025, along with other recipients of this year's Award.

'It is a fitting testament and reward to all the hours of hard work our volunteers put in to not only preserving, maintaining and crewing Shieldhall but also to everything Shieldhall gives back to the community. This includes Police Firearms Training, Ambulance and Fire Brigade rescue training, Coastguard helicopter training, hosting Young Carers awards and days out, providing youth training days and work experience for young students and cadets. As well as providing wonderful days out to our passengers on Britain's largest seagoing steam passenger ship. We look forward to ensuring that Shieldhall remains at the centre of the Southampton community and is 'alive and steaming' for many years to come.'

Martin Phipps – Steamship Shieldhall Chairman

'Getting the King's Award has been a long hard slog. We started the nomination process back in June 2023 and spent six months writing the various nomination sections, and gaining letters of support and nominations from independent organisations. We then had to wait whilst the Lord Lieutenant and the National Assessment Committee carried out their due diligence. We were finally informed, in strictest confidence, that we were to be given the King's Award in October this year. I am sure, like me, that everyone is extremely proud that we have been given this honour. We would not have achieved it without all the hard work and commitment of us all.

Phil Stephens – Steamship Shieldhall KAVS Lead / Trustee

The King's Award for Voluntary Service

There were 281 awards in 2024 covering such fields as mental health, youth, environment, community, arts and heritage. Looking at the full list, heritage is poorly represented and Hampshire can claim two – Shieldhall and Bursledon Brickworks Museum (see page 2). Elsewhere in the country, Leicestershire has The Greater Wigston Historical Society and Heritage Centre, Tyne & Wear the North East Land, Sea and Air Museum (Nelsam) and West Glamorgan the Friends of Oystermouth Castle. Hampshire's other three awards went to Lymington's New Forest Basics Bank (community hub emergency food and household parcels), Lee-on-the-Solent's station of the National Coastguard Institution and Home-Start Basingstoke & Deane.

HAMPSHIRE INDUSTRIAL ARCHAEOLOGY SOCIETY
(formerly Southampton University Industrial Archaeology Group)

Meetings – January to July 2025

January 6	**Marmalade, Spuds, and a Bag of Gold: Gift giving in Tudor Southampton** – *Cheryl Butler*
February 3	**Fareham Chimney Pots** – *Martin Percival*
March 3	**The Antikythera Mechanism** – *Christopher Glasow*
April 7	**Britain's First Space Rocket, Hampshire's Space Rocket** – *Robin Brand*
May 12	**The History of Fort Nelson and the Royal Commission** – *Lewis Sharp*
June 2	**Southampton & District Transport Heritage Trust** – *David Hutchings*
July 7	**A History of Southampton in Buildings** – *Andy Skinner*

Meetings are held monthly on Mondays in the Underhill Centre, St John the Evangelist Church, St John's Road, Hedge End, Southampton, SO30 4AF, commencing at 7.45pm

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The Brickworks Museum receives The King's Award for Voluntary Service

We are very honoured to announce that the volunteers from The Brickworks Museum, Swanwick, Hampshire, have been awarded The King's Award for Voluntary Service for 2024.

The Bursledon Brickworks, the only Victorian brickmaking factory left in the country. It is host to a thriving volunteer community who provide a wide range of skills from welcoming our visitors, giving talks, helping with the collections and keeping the old steam-driven machinery running.

The Brickworks Museum is one of 281 local charities, social enterprises and voluntary groups to receive the prestigious award this year. Their work, along with others from across the UK, reminds us of all the ways fantastic volunteers are contributing to their local communities and working to make life better for those around them.

2024 marks the second year of The King's Award for Voluntary Service. Recipients are announced annually on 14th November, The King's Birthday. Award winners this year are wonderfully diverse and include volunteer groups from across the UK, such as a mental health and wellbeing support network for veterans and their families in Yorkshire; a group preserving a historic 12th century castle in south Wales; volunteers providing English lessons for refugees in Stirling and an organisation providing opportunities to engage in the arts for people with learning disabilities in County Fermanagh.

Representatives of The Brickworks Museum will receive the award crystal and certificate from Nigel Atkinson Esq, Lord-Lieutenant of Hampshire.

Andy Elford, Chair of Bursledon Brickworks Museum Trust said:

"I am always amazed by the depth of knowledge and range of skills that our valued volunteers bring with them when working at The Brickworks Museum. It is our volunteers that really make the museum viable, with many hundreds of hours donated every year. Receiving the prestigious Kings Award for Voluntary Service is the highest accolade possible, representing the ultimate reward for the skills and enthusiasm every volunteer brings to the museum and happily shares with each other and the wider public."

Heritage of Industry tours in 2025

2025 tours are in the planning stage, please visit the website to register interest.

10 – 13 April: ***Industrial Explorer – Leicester & Loughborough.*** More details to follow on website.

12 – 18 May: ***AIA Spring Tour – Catalonia.*** Catalunya tends to value most its heritage that distinguished it from the rest of Spain. So the Romanesque and Gothic architecture, largely built while the rest of the Peninsular was under Arabic Muslim control, is treasured. Since the return of Catalan autonomy from 1979, the industrial heritage has been also valued, since it was also a distinct experience to most of Spain during the C19 and most of the C20. A unique territorial museum system was developed which built on the dispersed and specialised nature of industrial activities in the region, with some 25 separate conserved and interpreted sites, known as the Sistema del mNACTEC, the national industrial museum of Catalunya.

Based in Barcelona - Draft itinerary available on website.

11 – 14 September: ***City Safari – Prague.*** More details to follow on website.

City Safaris **use whatever public transport is available: bus, tram, metro or train which is a great way to gain some understanding of how the area works and may be of historic interest in themselves.**

Industrial Explorer Weekends **are the same but we use a minibus to reach areas where public transport does not go and to give us the possibility of conveniently exploring a slightly wider area.**

Note: Travel to and from the destination is at own expense.

Further information on **Heritage of Industry** tours for 2025, see website at https://www.heritageofindustry.co.uk

Reports on Meetings, June to November 2024

Carol Burdekin

Our **June** speaker was **Graham Horner**, who came along to talk to us about ***The Boscombe Down Aviation Collection***. Graham is a retired Design Engineer and now the visit manager and regular volunteer at the collection. He began his talk by telling us the history of how the collection came into existence.

It was in 1917 that Boscombe Down was originally constructed and operated as the "Royal Air Force Station Boscombe Down" and an airfield opened on the site, which had previously been farmland, but purchased by the MOD from the land owner. This was operated as a "Royal Flying Corps Training Depot Station", which trained crews for operational services in France during WW1. When the war ended in 1918, the airfield temporarily became an aircraft storage unit before returning to agricultural use. The site then re-opened under the Air Defence of Great Britain Command [a fore-runner of RAF Fighter Command] as a bomber station.

After the outbreak of WW2, the A&AEE [Aeroplane and Armament Experimental Establishment] moved to the site from its former base at RAF Martlesham Heath in Suffolk, and this marked the beginning of Boscombe Down's long association with aircraft research and testing. Also, for a number of years, the site was the home of the RAF School of Aviation Medicine.

Graham then went on to tell us about the present collection, which is "considered to be the finest in the UK", with an extensive display of model aircraft as well. They also pride themselves that the collection mostly allows access to the inside of the planes where visitors can climb into cockpits to get the full experience. The collection is set out in chronological order from its early beginnings through to the formation of the RFC, RNAS to the birth of the RAF.

In chronological order then, Graham listed some of the more significant achievements which happened at Boscombe Down including in 1945 a new runway was built, in 1946 CATS [Civil Aircraft Testing Station] moved in and, in 1949, an additional runway was added. 1947 a jet engine plane arrived, 1951 there was a non-stop flight to America and then, in 1953, a non-stop flight to Australia. In 1956 Peter Twiss set the world speed record, in 1964 the TSR2 had its maiden flight out of Boscombe Down and 2017 saw the 100th anniversary of Boscombe Down. Graham informed us that amongst the planes on display at present is a Harrier Jump Jet, Hawk T1, Jaguar GR.1, Hawker Hunter, a Hawker Siddeley Andover plus many more.

Graham ended his talk by saying that, over the years, the site has witnessed many significant developments in British Aviation History, including pioneering trials of many aircraft, which have been of considerable importance to our armed forces. In 2001, following the creation of QinetiQ, a twenty-five year Long Term Partnering Agreement [LTPA] was established with the MOD. Because of this, the airfield, and all of the infrastructure at MOD Boscombe Down, have been operated by QinetiQ on behalf of the MOD, with many of the buildings on the site now benefitting from a major transformation programme to improve and modernise the on-site operations and facilities.

After thanking Graham for his interesting, informative, knowledgeable, and anecdotal talk, we are looking forward to seeing him again, when we visit the Boscombe Down Aviation Collection as a group at the end of the month, kindly organised by our Chairman.

At the time of writing, we don't know why our **July** speaker, **Brenda Gilbert**, did not turn up to talk to us about ***Vic Hutfield Gosport's Unknown Engineer***. Fortunately, she had already given the Chairman a DVD highlighting Vic's remarkable life, together with a booklet containing his autobiography, which was compiled by Brenda [Vic was her great uncle] and Wayne Gilbert, and a lot of the information below is taken from that booklet. Unfortunately, for those of you who may be interested in purchasing the DVD, it seems it is not generally available, owing to copyright restrictions.

Victor Ernest Hutfield [1887-1966] was born on the 26th May in Gosport. The 1891 Census says Vic is attending a local school – St John's in Forton Road – and in the 1901 Census says Vic, now thirteen, lists him as a laundry boy. His own autobiography says he worked for an uncle, who was a farmer, and had a farm at Chilworth, for six months. His uncle bought him a new pair of boots which cost six shillings, his pay for the six months. After that, Vic's life started to get a lot more interesting.

Vic was a pioneer in motorcycles [repairing and building them in a cycle shop next to the fire station in Gosport], motorcars and aeroplanes, which must be Vic's greatest achievement, as he built two. The first was for a Naval Officer and, in 1909, he built a monoplane "possibly one of the first aircraft in Britain to fly without an aided take-off". Whilst working with motorcycles, motorcars began to appear, which started him in the motor business. This was in the days when some cars had tillers for steering, rather than steering wheels, and in 1909 Vic opened the first motor repair garage in the Gosport area. During 1909-1911 Vic was the proprietor of Corinthian Workshop, and it was in this workshop that Vic constructed the steel work for an aeroplane. Vic said that "I started to build flying machines round about 1909 to 1910, but the Frenchman, Bleriot beat us to it, being the first man to fly the English Channel, and receiving £1,000 for doing it. The Daily Mail then offered a prize of £10,000 to the first person to fly from London to Manchester. The race was on, but the prize was eventually won by Louis Paulhan in 1910".

Gosport was one of the first places in the country to have an airfield, this was at Fort Grange, and became known as Grange Field. Grange Field was later taken over by the Royal Flying Corps. Vic tells the story of how he built a monoplane from tubing and, as not able to buy an aeroplane engine "we fitted a 24 hp Lascelles radial engine, and a Weiss Propellor". In July 1909 experimental trials took place with the machine lifting and flew across the field, but crashed and broke its propellor. After many months a replacement propellor was obtained, and "a young lad by the name of Lywood, who was very interested in flying, decided that he would fly the machine and he took the controls and, again, the plane lifted and flew a few hundred yards; mainly due to the lightness of this young lad. This lad later became Air Vice Marshall Lywood".

In 1921 at the end of WW1, Vic purchased a Maudslay truck from the War Department, and converted it into a Charabanc, which became the first Hutfield coach, which led to a fleet of "over 700 vehicles throughout the country in its heyday". Between 1934 and 1939, Vic had a very successful farm at Bramdean, and in 1939 Vic gave up the farm, and bought an old military prison in Gosport, which he demolished and built houses [Hutfield Link Road in Gosport is named after him]. At the outbreak of WW2, Vic was seconded to the War Department, and had a large workshop built behind his bungalow, making shafts for naval boats. In the 1950s Vic became interested in motorboats and, in 1951, he decided to give up motoring. He said "There is no pleasure on driving on today's congested roads". Not sure what he would think about the amount of traffic on the roads today, if he was still around!

Sadly, Vic died in January 1966 at the age of 78. He is buried in Ann's Hill Cemetery, Gosport. "His friends and colleagues remembered him as a thorough and practical man, and a first class engineer. He was a special constable in Gosport for 34 years and a founder member of the Gosport Cycling Club which was formed in 1904".

It was a shame Brenda couldn't be with us to give us a first-hand account of her great uncle Vic's achievements. However, it was fortuitous that the Chairman had the DVD to show us containing amazing pictures of early motorcycles, motor vehicles, and aeroplanes, alongside an informative commentary from Brenda, together with readings from Vic's own autobiography.

We were pleased to welcome **Deborah Wheeler** to our **August** meeting to talk to us about ***Whitchurch Silk Mill*** the "UK's oldest working silk mill, a gem of industrial heritage located on the River Test in rural Hampshire". Deborah began by thanking us for inviting her along, and said one of the more frequently asked questions from visitors is what is the mill doing here, and the answer is not sure. If we travel along the A303, most small towns along this route had silk weaving mills, so not unusual to have a silk mill at Whitchurch.

The land that Whitchurch Silk Mill is built on was owned by the Dean and Chapter of Winchester Cathedral. The land was held "by copyhold tenure, an old form of leasehold, which could be passed on to heirs, or sold to a new copyholder".

The mill was constructed in 1800 by a Henry Hayter on a plot of land called Frog Island. "The mill is probably on the same site as one of the four mills recorded in the Doomsday Book". It was originally a fulling mill, which is part of the finishing process of cloth weaving. In 1817 a silk merchant called William Maddick bought the mill and carried our extensive alterations including inserting a middle floor. He also created a mill pond, with a channel across the front of the building connecting it to a mill race. William Maddick then sold the mill to two Manchester businessmen – Alexander Bannerman and John Spencer in 1844. The manager of the mill, William Chappell, purchased the mill from them in 1846, and at this time employed 108 staff including 39 children under the age of 13. William Chappell's sons returned home to help their father run the mill, but it was during a period of economic decline.

After Henry Chappell died, in 1877 aged only 48, his wife Adelaide took over the running of the business, which was quite unusual at that time for a woman to run a business as women didn't even have the vote then, and hardly any rights at all. She struggled to keep the mill going, having to re-mortgage etc., but the mill was sold by public auction and purchased by a local shopkeeper and draper, John Hide, for his son James in 1886. It remained in the Hide family until James Hide died in 1955. In 1911, John Hide died leaving James as sole owner, and throughout this period the mill wove silk for Burberry, producing 22 different coloured linings for their famous raincoats.

Silk manufacturers Stephen Walters & Son based in Suffolk then bought the mill keeping it in operation producing silk. The mill then passed to Ede & Ravenscroft Ltd which operated it up to 1985, producing legal and academic gowns. It was then acquired by the Hampshire Buildings Preservation Trust [HBPT] which, after extensive renovation works, opened it to the public in 1990. The mill was then under the management of the Whitchurch Silk Mill Trust to ensure the survival of winding and weaving using traditional machinery and methods.

In 2018 the mill was awarded £2m of lottery funding for major restoration, and is a Grade II* Listed building.

The silk mill building is topped by a large triangular portico under a striking slender turret, and in the centre there is a large clock. The clock was made in 1815 and is known locally as the Waterloo Clock, as it was made by Handley & Moore, a prestigious company in London, to celebrate the Battle of Waterloo in the same year.

To accompany her talk and photographs, Deborah brought along an assortment of silk reels, weaving implements and a variety of fabrics woven at the mill to show us, whilst explaining how the whole weaving process works. Deborah also showed us photographs of various TV dramas and film productions where they had costumes or accessories made at the silk mill. The new blinds at Hinton Ampner House nearby were woven at the mill, and they have also done work for interior designers.

The mill continues to produce silk using the restored Victorian machinery today, and we saw photographs of the weaving machines and an explanation of how it works as follows:-

"The mill was powered by a low breastshot water wheel 5ft 6ins in diameter driving the machinery through line shafting". There are currently 15 looms in total – 10 Tappet looms dating to 1890-1932, 3 Dobby looms dating to the 1950s, and 2 1960s Hattersley looms acquired in 1972. These days the looms are powered by individual electric motors. In addition, there is a warping mill and winding frames also dating from the 1890s".

Towards the end of her talk Deborah explained to us that silk is a natural fibre produced by silkworms, and it is made from cocoons spun by the larvae of the silk moth, which is known scientifically as "Bombyx mori". The silk production process begins with the cultivation of silkworms, and ends with the extraction of silk threads from the cocoons. Whitchurch Silk Mill is the last remaining silk weaving watermill in Europe, and there are only 5 professional silk weavers in the country. There is now only one weaver at Whitchurch, the other left recently, but they currently have 5 interns. Deborah said that it is certainly a challenge to keep this particular craft alive, with a diminishing skill base, supply chain and customers.

We thanked Deborah for coming along, and explaining how silk is made, the weaving process, the machinery involved, and the history of Whitchurch Silk Mill. It is hoped that a group visit can be arranged to Whitchurch next year.

September saw the return of the annual members' evening where things were kicked off by Keith Andrews giving us a photographic tour down the Lumsdale Valley near Matlock. Starting at the site of the upper pond, we travelled down to the site of a bone mill, past middle pond where we saw an image of Pond Cottages. Continuing past lower pond we stopped at the paint and grinding mill. We looked at the now ruined paint mill, the two bleach works, and the disused tramway. We finished at the Speedwell Mill, situated just off the A615.

Following Keith's talk, Jim Beckett showed us a number of short films he took in the 1970s of Southampton during that decade. This showed a number of WWII bomb sites and abandoned buildings which still remained. We saw buildings in the High Street being demolished, with the same happening along New Road. East Street and Canal Walk followed, both of which were hit hard, with advertising hoardings used to screen the sites still in place after more than a quarter of a century.

We ended the evening with an oral history film relating to the construction of the Manchester ship canal, given by the men and woman who were involved in its construction. Lastly we saw a film showing a day in the life of Apprenticed Thames Lightermen, as they worked on moving goods by barge on the Thames in 1963.

[As the Secretary was absent for September's meeting, the above was compiled by the Chairman].

For our **October** speaker, we were pleased to welcome back **Andy Skinner**, who is currently part of the Education Team at Southampton Museums, and he came along to talk to us about ***Victorian Southampton, Steam, Ships and Slums***. Andy said that "It is not overstepping the mark, to suggest that the modern Southampton was born during the Victorian period. This era saw the emergence of new docks, the railways, and a rapid expansion of the town and new municipal structures". During Queen Victoria's reign [1837-1901] Southampton went through a significant transformation, and expansion of the Town, and added that as this was such a large topic, he hoped he would do it justice within his allocated hour.

In 1800 Southampton was a fairly small town, with most people living within its medieval town walls, but gradually moving out towards the suburbs, although still a small spa town with little trade. During Victoria's reign, the population increased from circa 34,000 in 1851 to circa 105,000 by 1900. The Southampton Docks Company was formed in 1835, and in 1838 the new foundation stone for the docks was laid, and Andy showed us an illustration of the event. It was through a Private Member's Bill that an Act of Parliament in 1803 legally allowed the new docks to be built, but this required good transport links. In the 1830s there were two important Acts of Parliament passed, one was the Great Reform Act [1832] and the other, a Municipal Corporation Act [1835], which were both beneficial to Southampton's continuing expansion. Subsequently, the first dock opened in 1842, and the Royal Mail Steam Packet Company operated its services from Southampton, officially designating the port as the packet station in 1843. The structural and economic development of the docks then continued for the next few decades.

The Empress Dock opened in 1890 at a cost circa £250,000 with a huge pageant illustrated by some of Andy's photographs, with Queen Victoria officiating, having come over from her home on the Isle of Wight for the occasion. "A crowd between 25,000-30,000 which used a colour-coded ticket system" for admittance.

The London & Southampton Railway was fully opened in 1840 and with good transport links, with Southampton becoming the "emigrant station for North America and Canada", and also became known as "The Gateway to the Empire" with many emigrants now passing through Southampton on their way to start their new

lives. The name was later changed to the London & South Western Railway. The first railway station was at the bottom of Oxford Street in 1840, and designed by Sir William Tite [1798–1873], an English architect born in London. In 1892, the L&SW Railway purchased the docks for circa 4 million pounds. Southampton became a county borough in 1888 under the Local Government Act, and in 1894 the part of South Stoneham, within the borough, became the parish of Portswood, and in 1895 the parish of Shirley was added.

Circa 1851, hospitals, schools and businesses were all starting to appear, as well as hotels, including the well known South Western Hotel, now known as South Western House.

It wasn't all progress though, as there were still slum areas around the town, particularly in the older medieval parts. Cholera epidemics around 1848, 1849 & 1865 caused great concern, and the Borough Medical Officer published a report on poverty in the town quoting the "population density in the slums as 441.4 per acre". The "Simnel Street, and West Quay Improvement Plan" cleared the area of slums, creating new streets, and James Lemon [1833-1923] improved the slum areas, and started a proper sewage system for hospitals, and workhouses.

Finishing his talk, Andy said that "It is not overstepping the mark, to suggest that the modern Southampton was born during the Victorian period. This era saw the emergence of new docks, the railways, and a rapid expansion of the town and new municipal structures". By the time Queen Victoria died in 1901, Southampton was expanding out of all recognition, and its outlook very bright indeed, but Andy said that even greater changes to Southampton would come in the 20th Century.

As **November's** meeting included our AGM meeting, there weren't so many members present, but about 20-25 members did attend. This year there were three ordinary committee members and one officer up for re-election, and all were duly re-elected. Ivor New confirmed that he would continue, for the time being at least, in the post of the Society's Examiner. The Chairman reported what had been happening during the past year, including the latest on John Christmas's bequest to the Society, and he was also able to confirm that we had a full programme of speakers for 2025. It was decided not to increase the subscription rate for 2024/2025, but the Treasurer said we had to keep an eye on it, as our expenditure was more than our income at present. Keith [Andrews] reported that since we have been sending our notices via email to most of the membership, our postage costs have gone done considerably. Finally our Honorary President, Bill White, thanked the committee for all the work they had put in during the year enabling the Society to function, and then it was time for coffee/tea etc.

After the break the Chairman showed a YouTube film made by two local gasometer enthusiasts, titled "What happened to Gasometers". If members who were not at November's meeting would like to watch this video, or those present may wish to watch it again, this is the link https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5dHellEgqHk

An enquiry from Sheilah Openshaw asking the Society for information on Victorian Engineering found her and her husband attending November's meeting. They were hoping that some of our members would be able to help them in the research they were carrying out on a shipwreck off the Dorset Coast. Sheilah said that this wreck was a "lesser known example of Victorian engineering involving winches, gears, and steam engine etc." During the coffee/tea break, they were able to talk to members to find out if anyone had any information which would assist them, and afterwards Sheilah told me they were pleased with what they had found out, and thanked us for our help.

Pam Moore

Ian Harden reports that he had a phone call on November 24th from Pam Moore to say that she had been taken to Southampton General Hospital the previous day. She has since been fitted with a pacemaker and is recovering in the hospital, with Ian planning to make visits. I'm sure we all wish Pam a speedy recovery.

Listing of London's cabbie shelters — *Rob Fish*

Fantastic news has emerged for London's cultural heritage: all 13 surviving green cabbie shelters have now been listed by Historic England, ensuring their protection for the future. This milestone is particularly significant as it recognises the role these unique structures play in the city's history. With the recent listing of the St John's Wood shelter, the collection is now complete, celebrating a distinctive aspect of London's transportation legacy.

These shelters, originally constructed in the early 20th century, provided cab drivers with a space to rest and regroup between fares. Their charming design not only reflects the architectural style of the era but also serves as a testament to the importance of cab drivers in the city's daily life. By preserving these shelters, we honour the craftsmanship of the past while acknowledging the vital role these drivers have played in shaping London's identity.

The newly listed St John's Wood shelter, conveniently located by Embankment Station, stands as a proud symbol of this heritage. Its protection under Historic England invites both locals and visitors to appreciate the stories behind these structures, enriching the cultural narrative of London. As we celebrate this achievement, we look forward to seeing these shelters continue to serve as a reminder of the city's vibrant history and enduring charm.

South East Regional Industrial Archaeology Conference 2024

Eleanor Yates

Chichester College, Westgate Fields, Chichester, PO19 1SB

Angie and Jim Beckett, Val and David Cheffy, Alison Stott, Barry Duke, Jane Yoward, Eleanor Yates and new member Janet Woodward from HIAS attended a very interesting conference on 12th October 2024, hosted by Sussex Industrial Archaeology Society (SIAS). After Registration and coffee we were welcomed by the Chairman of SIAS, John Blackwell, and the Mayor who is also the Town Crier. And, yes, he did bring his bell.

The first talk was by **Alan H J Green**, a lifelong railway enthusiast. His career as a chartered civil engineer brought him to the railways and his interest has not disappeared. His talk ***By Rail to Chichester 1846-2016*** was very humorous and liberally illustrated with maps showing the arrival of the railway from Shoreham, Portsmouth and Havant, and the London, Brighton and South Coast Railway. Later in the talk the maps showed the demise of the railway network with closures by bankruptcy and disputes and later by national changes in electrification and in the 1960s under Beeching. Between the maps we were shown images of the construction of the railway lines, the stations and signal boxes.

Dr Philip MacDougall, an independent historian with an interest in the 18th Century and navies was our second speaker: ***Portsmouth Dockyard – once the largest Dockyard in the World***. He showed, with illustrations, the development of Portsmouth Dockyard, from its conception under Richard I, needing galleys for the Crusades, through Henry VIII and his European aspirations, the wars with the Spanish and French to the first and second world wars, cable laying to the present day. His interest in dockyard buildings including Rope Walks, Dry Docks and Sail-lofts was fascinating to follow. Many foreign navies' infrastructure are based on British developments in Portsmouth, Chatham and Plymouth.

Our third speaker was **Alan Burkitt-Gray** (GLIAS), whose publications include papers on computing, engineering and telecommunications. His talk, ***Why did Britain's Technological Revolution cool down?*** started with Harold Wilson's speech at the Labour Party Conference "The White Heat of a Technological Revolution". He recounted the slow demise of British technology, much of it based in the South of England, following the closure of the mines and steel works and the developments in Japan, Germany and South Korea. Very depressing, but interesting.

Jim Beckett, from HIAS, was our fourth speaker: ***Bursledon Brickworks from Works to Museum***. His interest in photography and industrial archaeology has led him to a copious knowledge of brickworks, swing bridges and other constructions. The HIAS members at SERIAC had heard Jim talk about Bursledon and the growth of brick making companies in the Southampton area before, but his wide knowledge and interests was fascinating for the whole audience.

The last speaker, **Dr Geoffrey Mead**, is a Sussex man and, following a degree and research at the University of Sussex, has an interest in rural and urban industries. His talk: ***A man may have constant employ*** *– the IA of Southern England: an alternative approach* covered a wide range of topics from flint knapping, the early iron industry in the Weald, Mills and milling and later construction of railways, engines and aircraft. His conclusion that universities could be regarded as modern "industry", with the infrastructure that it creates therefore creating jobs.

After the conference there was the opportunity to walk with Alan H J Green round the Chichester Canal Basin.

Barry says: The Post-conference walk – ***A Basinful of History*** *– was very good including the last "remains" of the Selsey tramway, namely a gatepost, and a walk from the canal basin along the canal to the restored swing-bridge that SIAS had been involved with the repair.*

Jim says: Angie and I thoroughly enjoyed the walk and learnt an enormous amount about the canal. In addition we were fascinated by the bus garage with its amazing roof and the bus station. Both of us are modern bus enthusiasts and we travel hundreds of miles every year on buses all over the UK. I was also very interested in the rough bricks made from waste produced at the local gas works.

The venue was very nice, with lifts, a good auditorium and comfortable seats. The organisers used a roving microphone for the questions, but the speaker needed to be by the fixed microphone at the lectern, and not to walk away, obscuring the view of the screen to half the audience. Having the screen higher up the stand would have improved the situation.

The coffee, tea and biscuits arrived on cue. A good lunch was served in the College canteen. The only negative point was the car park which was at the wrong end of the buildings. Visitors to the sports hall and courts were OK, but getting to the College was a long walk, especially for those carrying display materials and books and mobility issues.

WW2 bunker opened to public in Alderney

(BBC Guernsey News, 22 June 2024)

A German WW2 hospital bunker will open to the public in July, ***Visit Alderney*** has announced. The bunker, off Longis Road, Alderney, is the only one of its design in the Channel Islands. The hospital was built in 1943 by forced labourers under the orders of the German occupying forces and was used by the German army. ***Visit Alderney*** said: "We are excited to be opening the hospital bunker to the public where both visitors and residents can learn more about WW2 in Alderney".

Twyford Waterworks Trust

www.twyfordwaterworks.co.uk

Registered Charity No. 291720

Ian Harden

The open day season continued through the year much in the way it had begun with good attendances and reasonable fortune with the weather. Overall, the number of visitors was approximately three hundred fewer than the previous year's record figure but this is not viewed in any disappointing way. Indeed, over the last decade, the aggregate attendances have increased by around 50% which is most satisfactory.

Significant infrastructure work is in progress on two notable fronts. The repointing work on the chimney had been due for completion by this autumn but, in the course of their labours, the steeplejacks discovered a number of crumbling and broken bricks that require replacement. With this additional work requiring permission, subsequently granted, an inevitable delay has ensued while scaffolding is re-erected. No completion date has yet been advised though some time has been saved by the Trust having suitable spare bricks in store.

On the Diesel House side of the site, the façade has been 'graced' by a temporary pipe bridge linking the Well House with the new Filtration area adjacent to the Rectifier House.

It has been the intention of Southern Water to replace some of the underground pipework for a few years and this summer the Trust was notified of it taking place during our winter closure period. The pumped water is being diverted along a 30cm pipe and carried overhead 35 metres by a large diameter pipe bridge to clear the bridleway and to provide headroom for movement around the main site. It is hoped for the work to finish in time for the 2025 open day season but, should it not, the Waterworks will have an additional visitor attraction resembling the Sittingbourne and Kemsley Railway on a smaller scale.

2025 will be a double cause for celebration for the Waterworks itself and for the Trust. Next year will not only mark the 40th anniversary of the Twyford Waterworks Trust but also the 125th anniversary of water extraction at Hazeley Road. Current thinking is to mark both occasions during one of the summer open days, partly to avoid making the May Spring Rally and Bank Holiday events any busier than they already are. With the June event preceding that month's HIAS meeting, final arrangements may or may not be published in the next edition of *Focus* in time. Members are advised to keep an eye on social and local media as a precaution.

Finally, whilst this year enjoyed many positives, September sadly saw the passing of two well-known volunteers, Jennifer Gregory and Dale Johnson. Jennifer was a mainstay of the welcoming committee on Open Days while Dale stood out from the crowds in more ways than one in his WW2 re-enactment ARP and Home Guard uniforms. Grateful thanks are due to both for all they contributed, they will be greatly missed.

Southampton Tram Project

Angela Smith

On July 20th Tram Project secretary Nigel Smith received notification from John Clark, the Chairman of the Trustees of Solent Sky Ltd, that the tram volunteers must stop all work at the Tram Workshop with immediate effect. This was due, apparently, to insurance issues that mean the Museum is not covered for restoration activities by volunteers under the current museum insurance.

A meeting was sought with the Trustees to see how they could jointly take this forward. On July 26th Nigel and Angela met with the Trustees and Director Alan Jones at Solent Sky to clarify the situation around insurance and responsibilities in working on the tram restoration. It was made clear that due to the lack of insurance cover and proper management control infrastructure, no kind of active work on the trams could be made at this time.

Permission was given to invite the volunteers to attend working parties to help start the process of making an orderly shutdown of the workshop until a longer-term solution is decided. Nigel said that what he proposed would be to continue coming in on Tuesday and Friday mornings as usual to begin the process of clearing the workshop of tools and equipment on show, clearing tables and benches, cataloguing and labelling tram components and putting them into storage, and thoroughly cleaning the floor, Southampton 11 and Lisbon 715 to make the premises welcoming for visitors. This has been ongoing with sufficient tasks assigned to keep everyone employed with something meaningful to do.

Museum Director Alan Jones said "I regret in having to insist that no practical work should be undertaken in the tram shed until we sort out the Health and Safety issues. I fully understand how frustrating this must be."

The problem has not only affected the tram volunteers but also the Police & Fire Museum Trust, whose joint members have carried out sterling work over a number of years to construct various major displays in the museum, plus some members of the museum's own volunteers who carried out duties extra to their normal rôle of looking after visitors. Outside contractors are now having to be employed to cover these tasks – all adding to the Museum's expenditure.

A fifth Model Tram Event in the Museum is being planned for the weekend of June 21/22 2025.

Visit to Boscombe Down Aviation Collection at Old Sarum

Report by Roger Davies

On June 3rd 2024 Graham Horner from the Boscombe Down Aviation Collection (BDAC) gave HIAS a lecture about the collection. Consequently on 29th June HIAS members, relatives and friends crossed the border into the land of megaliths and moonrakers to visit Old Sarum airfield. After watching people jump out of serviceable aircraft, a cup of coffee and lecture we were allowed to look around the collection. BDAC is unusual in that visitors are encouraged to sit in the cockpits (there are some exceptions). It is noticeable how happy that makes some people. Like most aircraft collections there are always too many aircraft to make photography that easy. Reproduced below are some of those that I took during the visit with extended captions which I hope you will find of interest.



'Belfast' Hangar

Old Sarum airfield opened 30th August 1917 and pre-dates both Boscombe Down and Stonehenge (October 1917). Old Sarum was retained in military service between the two wars providing a home for the School of Army Cooperation from January 1921 (moved from Stonehenge) to the beginning of WW2. The army cooperation theme continued until closure as a military base in 1979. BDAC is housed in two of the original WW1 Belfast Truss hangars, more correctly known as General Service Aircraft Sheds. The characteristic 'criss-cross' roof trusses can be seen in the photograph above. The building is listed Grade II*.



BE2b Bleriot Experimental No 2

A non-flying replica of the first aircraft to land at Boscombe Down.

It was built by BDAC volunteers.





Avro 707A WZ736

The Avro 707 series of aircraft were effectively sub size Avro Vulcans and were originally intended to provide aerodynamic data for the design of the Vulcan. In practice the Vulcan design preceeded the work on the 707 series aircraft. WZ736 is the second Avro 707A and was used by the RAE for general research and automatic throttle development. WZ736 first flew on 20th February 1953 and was retired in 1967. This aircraft is on loan from the RAF Museum. For a long while the aircraft was at the Museum of Science and Industry in Manchester and is a recent transferee to BDAC.





de Havilland Comet C2 XK699 “Sagittarius”

The Comet was the first jet powered airliner to enter service in the world. Unfortunately this achievement was marred by tragedy with a number of fatal accidents leading to the grounding of the fleet. An improved version, Comet 2, was under construction at the time. The fuselages of these aircraft had to be reskinned with thicker material and different shaped windows. The loss of confidence in the Comet meant that de Havilland was unable to sell the Comet 2 to the airlines so they were sold to the RAF. XK699 first flew on the 2nd February 1957 and was delivered to the RAF later that month where it joined 216 Squadron based at RAF Lyneham, ‘home’ of RAF Transport Command. In October 1959 it was named “Sagittarius”. It served the country transporting troops around the world until June 1967 when it went to the RAF Museum Reserve Collection at Henlow. In June 1987 it returned to RAF Lyneham as ‘gate guard’. It arrived at BDAC in November 2013.



Sepcat Jaguar T2A XX145

XX145 first flew in May 1974 and was delivered to OCU (Operational Conversion Unit) 226 in June 1974 where it was used to train qualified pilots how to fly a Jaguar operationally. In 1988 the aircraft was transferred to Boscombe Down and joined the Empire Test Pilot School (ETPS) fleet. Fairly quickly she appeared in the famous 'Raspberry Ripple' paint scheme used by British experimental establishments for many years. In 2006 she was retired from flying and then went through a peripatetic period before being 'rescued' by RAF Cosford. In 2023 she was gifted to BDAC.





Hawker Siddeley (Later BAe) Hawk T1 XX154

The Hawk is one of the most successful military jet trainers and has been used throughout the world. In the 'Goshawk' form it is in use by the US Navy. The most famous Hawks are painted bright red and have trailed 'smoke' across many an airshow sky. XX154 is the very first Hawk off the production run and first flew on 21st August 1974 in the hands of Duncan Simpson. As the first aircraft it was used for the test flights that proved the design. It spent its career in various research and development establishments. Its last flight after exactly 45 years of service was rather undignified, it was delivered to BDAC hanging beneath an RAF Chinook. The cockpit photograph is off XX343 and is not in standard configuration as it was used for training test pilots.

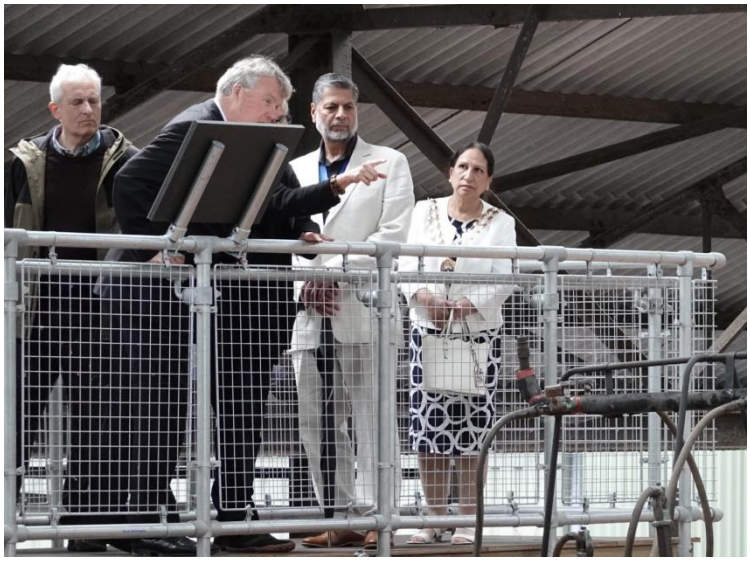
BURSLEDON BRICKWORKS MUSEUM UPDATE

Jim Beckett

As the season comes to an end, it is a good opportunity to recap on changes that have been happening at the museum.

The beginning of the year was marked by the sight of building contractors removing the old corrugated asbestos roofing, which had protected the top of our continuous kiln since the 1960s. The roof material was replaced with a modern alternative containing no asbestos, but one that looks as near to the original as possible. When the work was complete, plans for a major new display were put in hand and a walkway, including a wheelchair friendly access along an inclined way, was constructed. Exhibits showing how the kiln top would have been used to add fuel to the chambers below, and interpretation boards, were put in place. In May this year the new display area was opened by the Mayor of Fareham, in a short ceremony, which involved cutting a ribbon tied across the access way.

All our buildings are GRADE 2* listed, and two of the eight drying sheds were on the "At Risk" register, so something had to be done to rectify this state of affairs. This involved a great deal of work by the management team, as the money to fund the remedial work could not be found, other than by selling some of the museum's land for housing development. This took several years to sort out, but now at last we again have building contractors on site, and work to strengthen the walls and construct a new roof on the two drying sheds is underway.



The Mayor of Fareham opening our new display

Work underway on the drying sheds



Hidden message in a bottle found in lighthouse wall after 132 years

BBC Scotland News, 8 November 2024

Engineers have found a bottle with a 132-year-old message deep inside the walls of a lighthouse in the south of Scotland. The bottle was found inside the Corsewall Lighthouse at the most northerly point of the Rhins of Galloway. The "once in a lifetime" find is understood to be the first message in a bottle ever discovered in a lighthouse in Scotland. Written using quill and ink, the letter dated 4 September 1892 reveals the names of three engineers who installed a new type of light in the 30ft tower.

The 8in (20cm) bottle was found by Ross Russell, a Northern Lighthouse Board mechanical engineer, during an inspection. He spotted it after removing panels in a cupboard but it was well out of arm's reach. The team retrieved it using a contraption made from a rope and a broom handle. But they waited until retained lighthouse keeper, Barry Miller, arrived before they opened it. "My goodness am I grateful for them doing that," he said.

The bottle has an unusual convex base, meaning it cannot stand upright, and it is made of coarse glass, full of tiny air bubbles. It is thought it would have once contained oil. The bottle stopper was cork, which had expanded over time and stuck to the glass, while the wire which held it in place had rusted away. The men had to cut the top off the cork and very carefully drill the cork out.

The note initially seemed too big to pull out the neck of the bottle so they devised a tool using two pieces of cable to twist it through the narrow opening. Mr Miller, 77, told BBC Scotland News his hands were shaking when he opened it. "It was so exciting, it was like meeting our colleagues from the past. It was actually like them being there," he said. "It was like touching them. Like them being part of our team instead of just four of us being there, we were all there sharing what they had written because it was tangible and you could see the style of their handwriting. You knew what they had done. You knew they had hidden it in such a place it wouldn't be found for a long, long time."

What did the letter say?

The lighthouse letter is dated 1892

Corsewall Light & Fog Signal Station, Sept 4th 1892.
This lantern was erected by James Wells Engineer, John Westwood Millwright, James Brodie Engineer, David Scott Labourer, of the firm of James Milne & Son Engineers, Milton House Works, Edinburgh, during the months from May to September and relighted on Thursday night 15th Sept 1892. The following being keepers at the station at this time, John Wilson Principal, John B Henderson 1st assistant, John Lockhart 2nd assistant. The lens and machine being supplied by James Dove &Co Engineers Greenside Edinburgh and erected by William Burness, John Harrower, James Dods. Engineers with the above firm.

Ross Russell, who found the bottle with his colleagues Morgan Dennison and Neil Armstrong, said it was an unbelievable discovery. "The note was just sensational, I was just in utter amazement," Ross said. "Being the first person to touch the bottle after 132 years was just mind blowing. It's a once in a lifetime find."

The engineers had travelled to the 209-year-old lighthouse ahead of a year-long project to check the bearing the five tonne lens rotates on. They were trying to check under the floor to see if that section would be able to hold the lens while it was off its bearing when they found the bottle. The men who wrote the note in 1892 had been at the lighthouse to install a different type of lantern and glazing at the top of the tower. "It was just a strange coincidence to find the note while working on the equipment described on the note," Ross said. He said they planned to replace the note and bottle where they had found them as well as adding another of their own.

Meanwhile a descendant of one of the lighthouse keepers said he was delighted by the discovery. Euan Murray, who grew up 10 miles (16km) from the lighthouse in Stranraer, is the great great great grandson of Robert Murray who worked alongside John Wilson at Corsewall. "I do find it very interesting to see a bit of family history pop up out the blue like this," he said. He added: "It's amazing to think that the work they did back then is still completely relevant today, even in the age of satellite navigation." The Royal Navy chief engineer said: "Ships are still using these lighthouses for safe navigation on a daily basis. All the more apparent because of my career at sea and having passed the lighthouse many times on vessels arriving and departing from around the world. Always a nice sign of home."

Lottery grant funding set to boost heritage sites *(BBC News England, 28 October 2024)*

Thousands of pounds worth of lottery grant funding has been given to a charity to help raise awareness of heritage sites. The Devonshire Association said it has received a £39,936 grant from the National Lottery Heritage Fund to help people to engage with UNESCO projects and sites. It said the money would be used to promote the Dorset and East Devon Jurassic Coast, Cornwall and West Devon Mining Landscape Heritage Site, North Devon Biosphere Reserve, Exeter City of Literature, the Exeter Book at Exeter Cathedral and the English Riviera Global Geopark.

Local Odds and Ends

Hampshire

Historic silk mill picks up heritage award *(Basingstoke Gazette 19 September 2024, via Barry Duke)*

Whitchurch Silk Mill has won a national Engineering Heritage Award recognising its success as a hub of heritage, engineering and craft. The Institution of Mechanical Engineers (IMechE) established the Engineering Heritage Awards in 1984 to identify and promote artefacts, locations, collections and landmarks of significant engineering importance. The Mill produces silk products in its living museum on the River Test's banks using historic machinery, having manufactured silk for more than 200 years. It has operated as a living museum for the last 35 years, is the UK's oldest working silk mill and the only place visitors can see silk weaving.

Proposal for homes at Bursledon Brickworks approved *(Southern Daily Echo, 24 October 2024)*

Twelve new homes, comprising of two and three-bedroom semi-detached houses, will be built on unused land at the Grade II-listed Bursledon Brickworks site. This development supports the ongoing operation of the Brickworks Museum. Planning documents said the museum required "substantial funding" to carry out vital repair and restoration works. "The purpose of developing the land for residential dwellings is to enable the land to be sold to a developer in order to raise significant funds that can enable the works to the listed buildings to take place". The application was approved by Fareham Borough Council at the start of October.

RAF building given new lease of life

St George's Hall in Calshot, Hampshire, has been transformed following a major revamp. Originally known as St George's Chapel for the servicemen and women based at RAF Calshot, the single storey building was opened in 1919 and holds the title of the oldest RAF church in the country. RAF Calshot was initially a seaplane and flying boat station built in 1913, and latterly a Royal Air Force marine craft maintenance and training unit in use until 1961. New Forest District Council has completed the renovation, which preserved the building's original character, and it will be run as a community facility by Fawley Parish Council.

Wiltshire

Airfield owners' new appeal bid to build on site *(BBC News, West of England, 29 August 2024)*

The owners of a World War One airfield have confirmed they will appeal against a council's decision to refuse a second application to develop the site. Under the proposals, up to 315 new homes and commercial and visitor buildings were set to be built at Old Sarum, Salisbury, Wiltshire. Wiltshire Council rejected the application due to concerns about potential impacts on highways and nearby heritage sites, including an iron-age fort. Speaking on behalf of Blanefield Aviation, Grenville Hodge said: "We will prepare an appeal as quickly as possible". Plans also included employment, commercial and leisure spaces.

The site is one of the oldest operational airfields in the country, dating back to World War One. It is also home to three Grade II listed hangars. Mr Hodge said that Blanefield Aviation would "reinvest most of the money that comes from the development of the houses back into the airfield, which will offer a 'long-term viable solution' for the site." He added: "We consulted with Historic England and Natural England, we did a review of all highways issues, so we made sure that all of the heritage offerings this time was in line with what Historic England wanted." He added that the experts said the "heritage harm is overcome by the heritage benefit".

On behalf of the Save Old Sarum campaign group, who objected to the application, Sarah Champion said the refusal was "very welcome indeed. The application wasn't really a great deal different from the first one," she said.

Blanefield Aviation first applied for permission to develop the site in 2015, with plans to build 400 homes in three areas at the airfield. This was initially turned down by the council in 2018. The applicant's appeal was rejected by the Planning Inspectorate in 2019, and at judicial review in 2020.

The airfield is surrounded by two conservation areas, including the Old Sarum iron-age fort. Mrs Champion said local people were delighted that the council had recognised the potential impact on "the conservation area, the roads and the airfield itself".

The latest application was refused by Wiltshire Council's strategic planning committee on 14 August. At the meeting, councillors also raised the "very poor condition" of the World War One hangar, known as Hanger 3. This partially collapsed during Storm Isha in January 2024. Councillors said they hoped repairs would proceed despite the application's refusal.

Dorset

How did a 2,000 year-old Roman aqueduct grow by 2km? *(BBC Dorset 25 November 2024)*

Archaeologists have discovered one of the longest and most studied aqueducts in the country is actually even longer than originally thought. A team from Bournemouth University has said it has "conclusively mapped" the source of the Dorchester aqueduct for the first time. The aqueduct, first built almost 2,000 years ago, was a vital of Roman life in the Dorset town, supplying water for the public baths, fountains and wealthy households. Now the BU team has established it is, in fact, just over a mile (2kms) longer than first estimated.

Canal Jottings

Our Chairman's birthday cruise on the Chichester Canal

Rob Fish

On the 21st October, our Chairman enjoyed a Fish and Chips Cruise along the Chichester Ship Canal. Canal Boat *Richmond*, one of two barges operated by the Chichester Ship Canal Trust, was chartered by his family as part of his 50th birthday celebrations. *Richmond* is a broad beam boat, and the food was delivered direct to the canal basin by the local award-winning local chip shop.

What is known today as the Chichester Canal is, in fact, part of the former Portsmouth & Arundel Canal. This was opened in 1822 and consisted of a 12-mile canal from Ford on the River Arun to Salterns and a shorter cut from Langstone Harbour to Portsmouth Harbour, connected together by a 13-mile dredged 'bargeway' through the natural harbours and channels between them.

John Rennie FRS FRSE (1761–1822), a civil engineer, was the Surveyor and Engineer for the Chichester Canal. One of his greatest achievements included the Kennet and Avon Canal involving 70 locks.

Intended as a key link in a through route to London via the River Arun Navigation, Wey & Arun Junction Canal, River Wey and River Thames, it was not a success. By the time it was built, there was no real need for an inland route as larger and better ships, coupled with an end to hostilities with France, meant that the coastal route was an easier and cheaper option.

One of the few regular through cargoes carried was gold bullion from Portsmouth to the Bank of England, with armed guards on the barges.

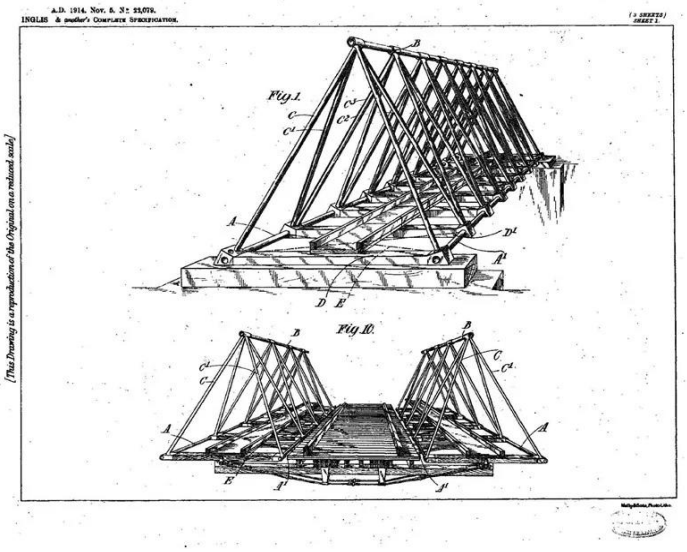
Unusual Bridge Across the Basingstoke Canal Listed (*Historic England, 4 September 2024*)

The Inglis Pyramid Bridge near Aldershot is now listed. © Historic England Archive.

This unassuming metal bridge which crosses the Basingstoke Canal in Hampshire was listed at Grade II on 8th August 2024 thanks to its unusual military history, with an entry name of **Mk1 Inglis Portable Military Bridge (Light Type) over the Basingstoke Canal**, located near junction with Farnborough Road (A325), Aldershot. It is a rare example of this type of bridge and one of the relatively few military structures in England that date from the First World War. It is one of only ten of this patented design manufactured during the war and likely to be the only example still in use as a bridge in England.

This was the first portable bridge designed by War Office engineer Charles Inglis (pronounced Ingalls). Made of lightweight steel, it was quick and easy to construct with little training and could be reused. Soldiers used the design effectively during the First World War, especially in France, and it was hugely influential in developing future military bridges.

Illustration from the 1914 patent application



Inglis bridges were used by the British Army and Allied Forces as far afield as Pakistan and India. The patented design continued to be refined and Inglis bridges were still used during the Second World War before being largely replaced by the stronger Bailey bridge, pioneered by Donald Bailey.

Later versions of Inglis bridges can be found in Monmouth, Wales; on display at the Royal Engineers Museum in Gillingham, Kent; and near Hunterville in the Rangitikei district of the North Island of New Zealand.

The Inglis Pyramid Bridge over the Basingstoke Canal has an extraordinary backstory. Hidden in plain sight, this deceivingly simple structure is a masterpiece of military engineering and was the first version of a type of lightweight bridge which was deployed extensively overseas. The bridge is thought to have been brought back to Aldershot from France and remarkably has been in its current position for at least 60 years. The Aldershot Inglis Pyramid Bridge is owned by the Ministry of Defence and carries services across the Basingstoke Canal.

Lock gate 'finishing touch' for cottage restoration (*BBC Derby, 16 October 2024*)

A crane has lifted a lock gate into place on Derbyshire's Cromford Canal as part of the restoration of a lock-keeper's cottage built by Florence Nightingale's uncle. Volunteers have spent the past five years renovating the Grade II listed Aqueduct Cottage, which is now owned by Derbyshire Wildlife Trust, and this is one of the final parts of the project. The lock gate was donated by the Canal and River Trust and was put on a pontoon at the canal terminus and towed down the canal by a team at the start of September. Harnesses were placed on it and a small "spider crane" with extendable legs moved the gate into position. Aqueduct Cottage was built in 1802 but has stood empty since 1970. It is being refurbished by the trust after £100,000 was raised for the work.

Miscellaneous news items from around the UK

Stolen milestone found installed as garden ornament *(BBC News Derby, 25 August 2024)*

A historic milestone stolen from the side of a road has been recovered after racking up several hundred miles itself. The Grade-II listed milepost, originally installed south of Idridgehay, near Belper in Derbyshire, was reported missing in early August.

Members of the Milestone Society spotted the cast-iron marker – put in place in the 19th century to show travellers they were four miles from Wirksworth, nine miles from Derby and 135 miles from London – listed in the lots of a completed auction in Welshpool, Powys, in Wales. Derbyshire Police's rural policing team picked up the trail from the auction and tracked down the milepost to its new owner, who had installed it in their garden in Derby. It had been bought in June in Cumbria and then listed for sale – but who took it in the first place remains a mystery.

PC Daniel Tomlinson said: "I've been with Derbyshire Police for 11 years but it's the first time a theft of a milestone has come across my desk. I spoke to the auction house and luckily the gentleman that had purchased the milestone lived in Derby to install in his garden as he thought it looked nice. We were able to go down and visit him, he had no idea that it was listed and shouldn't have been in the auction. We've arranged for it to be uninstalled from his garden and passed back to Derbyshire County Council."

It is now due to be reinstalled in its original location, after completing a journey of at least 400 miles. Rob Westlake, chairman of the Milestone Society, said: "The theft of milestones isn't uncommon, so it's great that this one was spotted. This is a huge good news story for our society, it will be a lovely moment to see it back in position." The investigation into the original theft remains ongoing, police added.

Saving a 50-year old road sign from the skip ***(****BBC News, Birmingham & Black Country)*

When a tired old road sign disappeared from the spot where it had sat for almost 50 years on the M6, it sparked a social media buzz. The information sign for Keele Services in Staffordshire is believed to be one of the oldest signs of its kind in the network, dating back to the mid-1970s. With so many people asking where it had gone, National Highways worker Matt Sparks launched a personal mission to rescue the piece of highways history from the scrap heap. Thanks to his efforts, the sign now has a new home at the Aldridge Transport Museum.

Devon harbour area given heritage status

A Devon waterfront area has been recognised for its contribution to Britain's maritime history. Bideford and the River Torridge now have Heritage Harbour status, the Maritime Heritage Trust said. It follows campaigning by ten local charities, led by Bideford-based Way of the Wharves. The charity said the new status would bolster "preservation and development" of the waterfront "from Appledore to Torrington". This would help "bring to life stories of the maritime history of the whole Torridge Estuary", it added.

In the 16th century, Bideford was Britain's third largest port and has since been a channel for industries including timber, emigration, pottery, coal, gravel, fisheries, agriculture, energy, tourism and enterprise, Bideford and River Torridge Heritage Harbour (BARTHH) said. The harbour remains a "thriving shipyard", it added.

Torridge District Council said Bideford, Northam and Appledore were "built on the maritime economy" and to be listed alongside Exeter, Bristol, and Ipswich as a heritage port was a "fitting achievement". The group behind the campaign is made up of a number of different charities, organisations and councils which have created a website to record their work. The Maritime Heritage Trust said this status "emphasises the great value in sensitively developing historic buildings, wasteland, mooring and maintenance facilities for both local and visiting historic vessels".

Catch-up time . . .

Congham Bridge infilling :

Unlike the good news last time that the infilling of Great Musgrave Bridge in Cumbria resulted in National Highways being instructed to remove the concrete filling, in Norfolk the Planning Inspectorate has overruled a West Norfolk Council order that 100-year-old St Andrew's Lane Bridge on an unclassified road in Congham should be similarly treated and granted permission for the 2021 concrete infill to remain on the former King's Lynn to Fakenham railway line.

The Planning Inspector stated: "The harm to the value of the heritage asset is regrettable but needs to be balanced against the asset's overall low significance and the fact that the bridge is preserved, albeit buried". Retrospective planning permission would now be granted.

A photograph taken from what was originally the Midland & Great Northern Joint Railway cutting underneath shows just the stone bridge wall with terraced grass 'steps' down to the bottom. Dating from 1926, the bridge is one of only six built to M&GNJR engineer William Marriott's designs, which featured unique curved wingwalls.

Elsewhere, National Highways has lodged a planning application for the infilling of one span of Ulverscroft Road bridge in Leicester, which was built by the Great Northern Railway in 1882.

(Information gleaned from 'New Civil Engineer' August 2024 and 'Heritage Railway' August 2 – 30, 2024)

Hampshire Industrial Archaeology Society

(formerly Southampton University Industrial Archaeology Group)
(Registered Charity No. 276898)
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HIAS Insurance terms – Please note:
Members are not covered for Personal Accident but are covered for third party liability

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Twyford Waterworks Trust: Contact - Ian Harden, 31 Melville Close, Lordswood, Southampton, SO16 8DE

Huge heritage survey underway to catalogue Hampshire's archive *(17 Sept 2024)*

The Hampshire Archives Trust (HAT) has been painstakingly carrying out a survey of scores of groups and organisations and is working hard to create a comprehensive catalogue of all the fascinating stores of information that are held across the county.

Its chairman David Livermore set up the initiatives he wanted the Trust to take a more proactive approach to fulfilling its mission of making Hampshire archives more accessible to the public. The trust then commissioned a survey to establish the extent and nature of groups' and organisation's archives and their needs. This encompassed the extent and nature of their archives, the degree to which they were catalogued, digitised and their accessibility to the public, as well as how they were managing them.

The questionnaire went through no less than 11 iterations in Excel format prior to transfer to an online format for piloting with a representative sample of six organisations and groups. David said: "We are most grateful to our guinea pigs who helped us through its development." Its extensive research exercise established that there were at least 200 organisations in Hampshire which were likely to have archives which would be of help to researchers, ranging from those interested in the Basingstoke canal through to the extensive archives of Winchester College or Farnborough Air Services.

As HAT already had extensive contacts with, and knowledge of, the Hampshire record offices, these were excluded from the survey. The survey, launched on July 19, approached over 180 organisations, and at the time of writing they had received 44 sets of responses to over 30 questions in the survey.

As part of the survey, visits were made to Farnborough Air Sciences Trust (FAST) and the National Aerospace Library. They hope to achieve a 25 per cent response rate. Hampshire Archives Trust would welcome further responses.

FRIENDS of KING ALFRED BUSES

New Year's Day, Wednesday 1 January 2025
Several of our *King Alfred* buses will be operating over the former routes in Winchester from about 9:30am.
Programme and timetable available on the day.

May Bank Holiday, Monday 5 May 2025
All our *King Alfred* buses from the 1950s, 1960s, 1970s, and earlier!
joined by other preserved buses will be operating around the city and beyond from Winchester Broadway in the
Original King Alfred Buses Running Day.
A souvenir programme and timetable will be available on the day and to order in advance from the website *kingalfredbuses.org.uk*

All rides are free but please buy a programme to help us cover the cost of staging these events.

My thanks to the contributors for items used in this issue, and to Rob for printing the photo pages distributed to those members not receiving *Focus* by email. Other articles have been extracted from websites, magazines and regional newspapers. The next *Focus* is planned for June 2025, so the final deadline will be the May meeting, please, if you want to pass items in person. My contact details can be found on the previous page.

Angela Smith



A message from Solihull member Philip Brown on the subject of the canal path at Millbrook

I was very interested to read Peter Oates' thoughts in Focus No.101 about the lineside footpath between Southampton Central and Millbrook stations and look forward to hearing more.

In the meantime, if it is of any interest, I attach a postcard view of the shore by Millbrook station which shows a substantially constructed path raised well above the beach. The card is postmarked August 1923.