Hampshire Industrial Archaeology Society

Focus

on Industrial Archaeology

No. 103 **July 2025**

Listed hangar damaged in fire at Old Sarum airfield

Fire Protection Association, 24 April 2025

Emergency services responded to a major fire at a disused airfield hangar in Salisbury on 17 April 2025, resulting in the partial collapse of a building. Attending the incident at Old Sarum airfield were crews from Amesbury, Salisbury, Ludgershall, Andover, and Ringwood fire stations. Dorset and Wiltshire Fire and Rescue (DWFRS) later confirmed that the fire had spread to an adjacent building. As reported by BBC News, the hangar had partially collapsed due to the fire, with flames also engulfing the adjacent restaurant and café. Firefighters used ground monitors and an aerial ladder platform to extinguish the flames.

Footage taken at the scene show large plumes of smoke issuing from the site and, initially, DWFRS expressed concerns over the potential for unknown chemicals, and later added that the smoke plume may contain asbestos due to it being an old building. *(Subsequently, later in April, it was confirmed that no asbestos was found).*

Also at the scene were Wiltshire Police, who released the following statement: "We are currently assisting the fire service in dealing with a large fire at Hangar 3, Old Sarum. Several people have been obstructing emergency workers in an attempt to take photos of the burning building. Enquiries into the cause of the fire are ongoing."

Relief crews from Verwood, Shaftesbury, Blandford, Warminster, Ferndown, Cranborne, Westbury, Redhill Park, and Gillingham stayed overnight, with crews using multiple hose reel jets and main lines to extinguish the fire. By 12.30pm the following day, firefighters had left the scene. DWFRS stated there was still "wisps of smoke rising from the rubble", but the site was handed back to the owner. Crews continued to deal with hotspots with the stop coming in at 7.30pm.

Investigations into the cause of the fire are still underway, with DWFRS noting that they were likely to carry on into the following week. In an update posted on 23 April 2025, the service said: "We are receiving a lot of queries about the cause of the fire. This is a complex investigation, and we are continuing to work with Wiltshire Police to establish what caused this fire. We will of course update the community as soon as we are able," the service said.

It is understood that plans to build 315 new homes at the Grade II-listed site had been approved following an appeal by developer Old Sarum Airfield Ltd. Company director Grenville Hodge told the Salisbury Journal: "We're absolutely devastated. We just won the planning appeal and the first thing we were going to do was repair the hangar. It's just unbelievable. Hopefully, we haven't lost it." Lucy Townsend, chief executive of Wiltshire Council, said: "We're very saddened to see the damage to the Grade II-listed World War I aircraft hangar at Old Sarum, and we will support our partners at Wiltshire Police and Dorset and Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service with the ongoing investigation. We are seeking legal advice regarding any implications for the planning permission."

Old Sarum Airfield website – 1 May 2025: *Progress and updates after the Hangar fire*

We have had a very constructive onsite meeting with Historic England and it was agreed that it appears that considerable parts of the masonry structure of the building were still intact and capable of restoration. We have agreed the first steps, which will be the clearance of the site and a full structural survey of brickwork and have already instructed structural engineers to undertake the structural survey and await its findings. The clearance of debris from the site is a priority, and we are in discussions with contractors to carry out this work.

13 May 2025: ***The first stage in the preservation of Hangar 3 begins***

The first phase is to rebuild the damaged brickwork before constructing new Belfast trusses and a roof covering. Once complete, we plan to house many historic aircraft that operated from Old Sarum, to enhance the airfield's rich aviation history.

June: ***Continued progress in clearing Hangar 3***

We have continued to make good progress in clearing the debris following the fire at Hangar 3. We have prioritised our efforts and have now completely cleared the south side of the hangar to ensure the Air Observation Post (AOP) memorial is free of debris and ready to host the AOP event ceremony on 10 June 2025. During this event, we will see an Apache helicopter and three Austers flying into the airfield on Tuesday morning.

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HAMPSHIRE INDUSTRIAL ARCHAEOLOGY SOCIETY

(formerly Southampton University Industrial Archaeology Group)

Meetings – August to December 2025

August 4	**Taskers of Andover** – *Deborah Wheeler*
September 1	**Members Evening**
October 6	**Rope- and Chain-Hauled Railways** – *Roger Davies*
November 3	**Annual General Meeting and Chairman's Night**
December 1	**Southampton Docks Electric Cranes** – *Jim Beckett*

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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Old Sarum Airfield – Salisbury Journal, 30 May 2025

A person has been arrested on suspicion of arson and has been released on bail after fire ripped through a First World War aircraft hangar at Old Sarum Airfield. Just over a week before the fire, permission was granted for around 315 homes and commercial and leisure facilities to be built at the airfield. The repair and restoration of the partially derelict hangar was a condition of inspector Nick Fagan giving the controversial scheme the go-ahead.

The public inquiry came after developer Old Sarum Airfield Ltd appealed Wiltshire Council's decision to reject the scheme in August 2024. The council's Strategic Planning Committee threw the plans out over highways and access concerns and worries about the site's proximity to the Old Sarum Scheduled Ancient Monument and its surrounding conservation area. But Mr Fagan concluded the scheme would cause "less than substantial" harm to the nearby heritage assets.

On May 21, Wiltshire Council confirmed it had launched a legal challenge against Mr Fagan's decision to allow the appeal. Council cabinet member Adrian Foster said: "The basis on which the decision was made to allow the appeal has altered following the devastating fire to the listed aircraft hangar at Old Sarum Airfield. Following legal advice, in light of the unusual circumstances surrounding this case, we have taken the decision to launch a legal challenge against the planning inspector's decision. We have applied to the court to challenge the decision and we now wait to hear whether it will proceed to hearing."

A spokesperson said: "As the government planning inspector's decision on the application was based on the very finely balanced weight of harm to the historic site being offset by the benefits of the restoration of Hangar 3, we agree totally with Wiltshire Council that following the fire, the equilibrium has now shifted considerably. The hangar will now be a facsimile of the original, albeit using as much original retained material in its reconstruction as possible. Consequently, the original heritage value is much reduced and no longer warrants the destruction of the almost intact perimeter, the setting of the Old Sarum Ancient Monument, the impact on the conservation area and the increased pressure on local infrastructure that an additional 315 houses will bring."

Old Sarum Airfield – a History by Rob Fish, posted on 18 April 2025

As many will now know, last night we lost an important part of Aviation Heritage. Built in 1917, Hangar Three at Old Sarum Airfield was one of the few examples of its kind still left standing in the UK. The airfield itself is one of the oldest continually operational airfields in the UK. But after over 100 years of English weather, the hangar itself was starting to show some signs of age. Two years ago I was able to get the chance to enter the unsafe structure and saw the sad state it had been allowed to get into.

Hangar Three at Old Sarum Airfield is one of three pairs of general purpose hangars built by German Prisoners of War and the Chinese Labour Corps after the site was requisitioned for use by the Royal Flying Corps. Originally called Ford Farm, the airfield was renamed Old Sarum Airfield when the Royal Air Force took over the site when they formed in April 1918.

Structurally, Hangar Three and its counterparts on site are based on a Belfast Truss system. General Purpose Sheds of this construction were a common build style for aircraft hangars at the time due to their quick and easy assembly – each bay is made up of 17 identical trusses with simple masonry walls making up the outer skin. Small buttresses on the outer walls support the weight of the roof and a central column allowed for two bays to be joined together for a larger space. The trusses allowed for a completely clear span within the hangar, ideal for housing the aircraft based at the strip.

Whilst these hangars were only built as temporary structures to see out the end of World War One, when that came at the end of 1918, Old Sarum was one of the few airfields to remain open and, as such, retained its hangars. From early 1921 all the way up to the beginning of World War Two in 1939, the airfield was used by the School of Army Co-operation with a focus on air-to-ground communication.

During World War Two, a number of Air Observation Posts were based at Old Sarum, playing a key role during the war by spotting targets for artillery and naval guns. The airfield itself was attacked numerous times during the war, but did not suffer any significant damage. After the war, the airfield remained operational and a RAF Helicopter Development Unit was formed at Old Sarum. However, not long afterwards in 1971, the airfield ended its life as a RAF base, although the last RAF flying unit based in the hangars, 622 Volunteer Gliding Squadron, didn't fully vacate until late 1979.

Reports on Meetings, December 2024 to June 2025

Carol Burdekin

Our **December 2024** speaker was HIAS Vice-Chairman, **Jim Beckett**, on the subject of ***Pirelli General Cable Works.*** He began by showing a slide of Brunel's ship the *Great Eastern* and explained that it laid the first successful Trans-Atlantic telegraph cable in 1866. The cable was manufactured in London and began a long period of dominance by Great Britain in the manufacture and laying of submarine cables. A young engineer in Italy, named Giovanni Pirelli, owned a successful rubber goods factory in Milan and, in 1879, he began making electric cables. Unhappy about Britain's dominance, he ordered a cable-laying ship from a Sunderland shipyard and began laying cable around the Mediterranean.

By the turn of the century Pirelli was a major producer of rubber tyres and electric cables and he began opening factories abroad. He chose Southampton for his UK cable works and opened it in 1915, making thousands of miles of telephone cables for use by the army during WW1.

Pirelli cable works in Southampton was so successful that it opened a further, larger, factory in Eastleigh in 1928. They were exporting cables as far as Australia, as well as all over Britain.

At the beginning of WW2, Italians and Germans were arrested as enemy aliens and several of the Pirelli employees were Italian. The British Government decided to send them to Canada on a ship called the *Arandora Star*, but this was torpedoed off Ireland and 805 people were drowned, including some Pirelli workers. The General Manager, however, was among the survivors.

After the war Pirelli Cable Works continued expanding, opening a third factory on the edge of Eastleigh in Bishopstoke. Later, in the early 1980s, a further plant was built next to the Southampton factory which manufactured the super tension submarine cables, which were laid under the English Channel, connecting the National Grid to the grids on the European mainland.

The success could not last forever and, with falling orders and more competition from the Far East, the Southampton factory closed in 1990 and Eastleigh in 2003. Bishopstoke, however, remains. Now, under new ownership it is part of the international cable manufacturers operating under the name of *Prysmian.*

In **January** we were pleased to welcome our first speaker for 2025, **Cheryl Butler**, who came along to tell us all about gift-giving in Tudor Southampton. She aptly titled her talk ***Marmalade, Spuds, and a bag of Gold: Gift giving in Tudor Southampton.***

Cheryl drew on the amazingly detailed records surviving in Southampton's archives listing Tudor gifts given and received in the sixteenth century. "Gift giving was the prerogative of the wealthy – there are no records of the poor giving gifts, they enjoyed the time off from work, and some might benefit from the gifts of clothing from their employer, and donations of food for Christmas feasting. Gift giving was done primarily as a transaction to gain or retain favour with the royalty, local patrons and nobility. Queen Elizabeth's very detailed records of every gift she received survive to this day".

Cheryl began with the then Christmas tradition of the Twelve Days of Christmas, saying that this break would have been most welcome, especially for those workers on the land which, in Tudor times, would have been the majority of the people. All work, except for looking after the animals, would stop, and restart again after the twelve days. Until the 4th century Christmas could be celebrated throughout Europe anywhere between early January through to late September. It was Pope Julius I who happened upon the bright idea of adopting the 25th December as the actual date of the Nativity. The choice appears "both logical and shrewd – blurring religion with existing feast days and celebrations. Any merrymaking could now be attributed to the birth of Christ rather than any ancient pagan ritual". Christmas time, therefore, was an ideal time to offer up gifts and, in return, obtaining favours, a form of bribery. Carols flourished throughout Tudor times as a way to celebrate Christmas and to spread the story of the nativity.

Queen Elizabeth visited Southampton on three separate occasions during her reign, and her gifts were the most lavish, needless to say. Beautifully made gloves were acceptable to the Queen as, apparently, she was very proud of her hands, with their long fingers. She also particularly liked a gift of money. Southampton was fortunate in being a port and close to the Continent, so easier to gift perishable items, especially to those way down the pecking order from the Queen, but still exotic enough to impress, such as oranges, lemons, and damsons etc. Sugar was also a popular present and was given to the Lords of Hertford and Netley, and to the Earl of Pembroke. Marmalade became very popular, and was given as a gift to the Earl of Southampton. At this time marmalade was a thick solid paste made from lemons and bitter oranges, which came from Spain and Portugal. Wine was given to Sir Francis Drake, which was a very popular gift and, when Emperor Charles V visited in 1521, he was also gifted wine at a cost of £5 6s 8d. Cloth and animals were also popular gifts. In general, Town Clerks seemed to have received gifts of cloth, which was then made into livery. The poor received money, food and fuel, and some benefactors did leave money in their wills to Almshouses. You could also expect gifts from godparents – jewels if wealthy, or lesser gifts if poor. Silver was a popular gift to churches.

It seems that "Southampton's merchants had an important edge in gift giving". By controlling the port of entry they were able to access many of the newly-arrived and exotic items not seen before, including the South American potato, and "ornately embroidered bags of gold completed the ideal gift for a Tudor nobleman". It would seem that

the "provenance of this gold" might well have been glossed over somewhat, as "Southampton was also an important base of Francis Drake and other privateer captains".

Cheryl's subject was somewhat different from our normal fare but, nonetheless, extremely entertaining, plus an interesting look at what was going on in Southampton during Tudor times. It was good to have Cheryl back as, if you all remember, she came along to our July 2014 meeting and spoke on "Itchen Village, Itchen Ferry & The Diaper Family" and at November 2021 AGM, Rob showed us a short film produced by Cheryl on "The Sad Tale of Richard Parker".

February's meeting started on a sad note, as the Chairman announced the deaths of two HIAS members. Both Nigel Smith and Martin Gregory died in January, and both were founder members of HIAS. Nigel was also a very active member of the Southampton Tram Project, and Martin at Twyford Waterworks. Martin was also one of the Millers at City Mill, a National Trust Property in Winchester, where they sold their own flour but, sadly, it is no longer a working mill. Nigel's funeral is on the 25th February but, at the time of writing, we have no information about the arrangements for Martin.

The Chairman then introduced our speaker for the evening, **Martin Percival**, a local Fareham resident, who came along to talk to us about ***Fareham Chimney Pots***, and the local area clay products industry. Over the past 10 years Martin has developed an interest in this local industry that thrived during the nineteenth century. Although his talk focused primarily on chimney pots, he also talked about the research that he has undertaken, which included uncovering the story behind the manufacture of the 6,000,000 Fareham red bricks used to construct the Royal Albert Hall in 1870/71, etc.

Pottery was an important clay-based industry in Fareham from the 1780s to the 1900s. Fareham chimney pots are quite distinctive being red clay with a "curtain sway style" around the top, with rarer ones having two or three bands. Just as "Fareham Reds" were a hugely successful product for the local brickworks, Fareham chimney pots, with their unique white slip marks at the top of the pot, were a very popular product for the local Fareham area. Martin went on to explain how the chimney pots were made. The clay was dug by hand from the clay pits before being transported to the mill, where it would be crushed, and pressed ready for the potter's wheel. Apparently, Fareham bricks were also known for their durability.

The biggest pottery was the North Hill Potteries founded by the Harris Family, but they sold it in 1873 to the Sandy Family, who continued to run it as a family business. John Sandy [1859-1923] lived in a house called "The Potteries" between Wickham Road and Old Turnpike, Fareham, on the site of the former clay pits. The garden was terraced to make use of the various levels of clay cutting, and Martin went on to tell us about the Sandy family. John Sandy claimed to be "the largest manufacturer of flower pots in the South and South West of England". He was the son of Richard Sandy, a strawberry grower. Before the Sandy family, Martin talked about Thomas Stares [1793-1832] a manufacturer and the "father of Fareham's earthenware industry". There were other families who owned and manufactured potteries in the area, including "Uplands Pottery" owned by the aptly named Richard Kiln. After WW2, the pottery business declined owing to the shortage of manpower and basic materials.

Fareham Chimney pots were distributed as far as Cornwall, Sussex, Berkshire, Wiltshire, the Isle of Wight, and the Channel Islands. Martin explained that because of the intense bombing of Southampton and Portsmouth during WW2, not so many of the Fareham chimney pots remain in these cities, although Martin did say that there are a lot of imposter Fareham Chimney Pots around. However, there are reproduction Fareham Chimney Pots being made by Mark Pinner at his West Meon Pottery. Fareham Chimney Pots manufacturers have long closed, and the areas they occupied have been built over. However, you can still come across the names of the streets where they were including Kiln Road, Potters Avenue, Kiln Acre, and The Potteries etc., which still serve as reminders of Fareham Chimney Pots' industrial past.

Martin also listed areas for Fareham Pot-spotting in the Fareham area, which include – the High Street, Union Street, East Street, Osborne Road, Wickham Road, Fareham Quay, Wallington, Titchfield, Catisfield, Sarisbury, Park Gate, and Porchester. On the Isle of Wight places include – Ryde, Cowes, Brading and Newport. Further afield in Hampshire, places include Winchester, Alton, Alresford, Gosport and Bishop's Waltham. Wiltshire includes – Marlborough and Salisbury, and in Dorset places include – Weymouth and Poole, and even further afield – the Channel Islands.

Martin finished his interesting talk by saying that there is a "Chimney Pot Walk" on the 25th May at 2pm – Fareham to Wallingford. If you are interested in Martin's walk, then go to www.TheMakersHouse.co.uk . My thanks to Martin for the extra information he provided to assist me in this write-up on "Fareham Chimney Pots" for the next edition of Focus.

Unfortunately, our **March** speaker cancelled his HIAS talk and, after the usual announcements, plus an unusual request from Angela Smith for lock windlasses [!], it was left to our heroic Chairman, Rob Fish, to use his best endeavours to explain to the meeting the history and complicated make-up of ***The Antikythera Mechanism***, which was the topic of this month's talk.

In short, the Antikythera mechanism is an ancient Greek hand-powered orrery. It is described as the oldest known example of an analogue computer used to predict astronomical positions and eclipses decades in advance. The mechanism was discovered by sponge divers off the Greek island of Antikythera in 1900. It is understood as the world's first analogue computer, created to accurately calculate the position of the sun, moon, and planets.

After showing us a map of exactly where Antikythera is with relation to the Greek mainland, Rob filled in some of the background. Firstly, explaining how a diver had reported that he had found a "heap of rotting corpses and horses strewn among the rocks on the seafloor". Other crew members thought the diver was drunk from the nitrogen, as decompression sickness was a big problem around this time with approximately 10,000 dying and 20,000 were disabled, but another diver went down, and returned to the surface with the arm of a bronze statue.

Rob showed us photographs of some of the artefacts recovered, which are now in the Museum of Archaeology in Athens. These items include the youth of Antikythera c340 BCE [before the common era] who has been identified with Perseus, arm outstretched, who, it is said, would have been holding the head of Medusa, but more than likely, it depicts Paris, who would have been holding the "Apple of Strife" ready to award it to the most beautiful goddess, Aphrodite. Another photograph was of the bronze head of a philosopher, part of a life-size statue of a man, together with many other items including jewellery, glass bowls, bronze coins, pottery, a glass chessman board game element and many more objects. So far, the wreck has yielded an estimated 300 artefacts, and previous trips to the site have revealed the ship was packed with valuables before it went down. Excavations are still on-going, and many other items are still being brought up from the seabed and, with modern technology, more information is being discovered about these items all the time.

As to the mechanism itself, of which there are currently 82 fragments representing about a third of the original device, with parts on display at the Archaeological Museum in Athens. Also on display in the museum there is a 1970s reconstruction of the mechanism designed by Derek de Solla Price, and built by R. Deroski, plus a 2009 reconstruction by Michael Wright and a 2011 reconstruction created by the Aristotle University in Thessaloniki.

After Rob's presentation he showed us a video presented by Raven Todd DaSilva, "an awarding winning scholar, archaeologist, and creator of the popular archaeology online educational platform 'Dig it with Raven'", who has written a book titled "The Other Ancient Civilisations: Decoding Archaeology's" which was a Time Team's Book of the Month. It is a journey through 15,000 years of history, and talks about the discovery of ancient civilisations and cultures that may have been overlooked in history class. She includes The Antikythera Mechanism in her book, and explains in the video what it is and how it was such an amazing piece of technology for its day.

Briefly, The Antikythera Mechanism is generally referred to as the first known analogue computer. The quality and complexity of the mechanism's manufacture suggests it must have had undiscovered predecessors during the Hellenistic period. Its construction relied on theories of astronomy and mathematics developed by Greek astronomers during the second century BCE, and it is estimated to have been built in the late second century BCE, or the early first century BCE.

I am sure many members would like to learn more about this amazing piece of very early discovered ancient technology and, along with numerous books written on the subject, there is a lot available on the internet. The group was grateful to Rob for standing in at the last minute, and his gallant efforts to give us some idea about the history and mystery of the Ancient World's most famous astronomical device.

Our Speaker for the **April** meeting was **Robin Brand**, a retired electronics engineer who worked for Plessey, and came along to talk to us about ***Britain's First Space Rocket, Hampshire's Space Rocket***. Robin's talk was based on his research that he did for his book "Britain's First Space Rocket, the story of the Skylark", which was published in 2014 by New Forest Publications. Robin brought along some copies of his book, which were all sold at the meeting. This book is based upon many years of original research by Robin, and contains hundreds of illustrations, some never published before. This book is a comprehensive account for those who are interested in how space science evolved, as well as the history of British technology and space flight in post war engineering history. Robin's talk, like his book, included many photographs from Australian archives which, as mentioned, have never been published before, and Robin included these and some rare video footage in his talk.

It seems that these days, few of us have heard of the Skylark sounding rocket. Yet, in November 1957, it was the first British rocket to reach space and became the basis of Britain's earliest space programme. Over the next 48 years hundreds more were fired, launching into space thousands of instruments that made pioneering observations of the Earth, Sun, stars and galaxies. It was at the end of WW2 that the UK began its missile research programme funded initially by the UK Treasury. Following the end of the war, the "UK performed some of the first tests of the space-capable V-2 rockets" and, as early as 1946, British engineers were developing plans io build the "first crewed suborbital spacecraft". It was since the "founding of the British Interplanetary Society in 1933, the UK has had a strong and influential presence in global space flight efforts, both independently and as a key player in global partnerships".

Robin's first image was of the original design team taken at RAE [Royal Aircraft Establishment] Farnborough in Hampshire. Not only were these designers working on the design of rockets, they also had to design a suitable launch tower as well. The next question was where to launch these rockets from, and it was decided that Woomera in South Australia would be the ideal location, as it was an extensive area, the size of England, and the occasional

rocket is still launched from there to this day. Apart from quite a few sheep stations, the area is largely uninhabited. For the few local people who do live there, shelters were built for their protection during launches. Although, it seems, these were not used much, as the locals preferred to watch the launches from the top of them, rather than be protected from inside them.

It was in the 1950s that Britain's "space odyssey" truly began, and it was at the Woomera rocket site that the British Skylark began a 50-year campaign to deliver small payloads to the edge of space. These sounding rockets, which were capable of travelling at many times the speed of sound, but not entering orbit, proved to be arguably the most successful of their type, and laid the groundwork for bigger and more capable rockets. Robin then showed us a short film of an early Skylark launch.

The SL04 was launched in 1957 and, between 1958-1960, 47 scientific rockets were launched. A different location for the launch of a Skylark rocket was in Sardinia by the newly formed European Space Research Organisation, but it was in Woomera that the majority were launched and, by 1994, a total of 100 had been launched from there. It was in the 1960s that the UK entered the satellite industry. The Ariel programme saw the launch of six research satellites, in collaboration with NASA.

Unfortunately, these days, few have heard of the Skylark sounding rocket yet, in November 1957, it was the first British rocket to reach space, and became the basis of Britain's earliest space programme. Since then, hundreds have been fired, launching into space thousands of scientific instruments. Many of these carried out pioneering astronomical observations in the X-ray and UV spectrum, regions previously unavailable to British scientists.

Robin's talk was a fascinating account of the birth of British rocket technology and space science, telling the story of the Skylark rocket from its origins in the 1950s until its last launch in 2005. The following decades have seen the UK move away from building rockets to building satellites, and we have an international reputation for building excellent satellites. The Skylark was an extremely important part in Britain's post-war engineering history, and we were very pleased that Robin was able to come along and managed to convey its importance in a succinct and entertaining manner.

Our **May** talk was on ***The History of Fort Nelson & The Royal Commission*** and was delivered by **Lewis Sharp**. Lewis is a retired mechanical engineer who worked in the buildings products industry. He is now Secretary of the Palmerston Forts Society and runs their social media. The Palmerston Forts Society was formed in 1984, and "brings together enthusiasts who have an active interest in nineteenth century military fortification and associated artillery worldwide, but particularly within Hampshire".

Located on Portsdown Hill, and just outside the town of Porchester, is Fort Nelson which was named for the neighbouring column and bust of Horatio, Lord Nelson, marking England's most famous naval battle at Trafalgar in 1805.

The end of the Crimean War saw the beginning of a good hundred years of building up our military defences following France's build-up of her military and naval strength under Napoleon III. The first of a new kind of armoured steam powered warship, the *Gloire*, raised concerns as to Britain's capability to repel an invasion. With this in mind, a Royal Commission was set up by Lord Palmerston. Portsmouth, with its Royal Dockyard, was a priority for obvious reasons. Lessons had been learned from the Crimean War where, at Sebastopol, the Russians had held out for about eleven months with fixed fortifications and an underground network of tunnels. The result of this was a string of forts on the coast including Fort Nelson. In the end, and by the time these forts were nearly finished, France had been invaded and defeated by Prussia, so consequently they soon became known locally as "Palmerston's Follies". This was probably a bit unfair, as Portsmouth was Britian's "Premier Naval Dockyard" and building and maintaining the warships was vital to our defences, and also in assisting our growing empire.

Fort Nelson cost about £80,000 to build and went through some design changes during construction, and was substantially completed by the late 1860s. In total, building this massive ring of brick, masonry and earth forts around the coast cost about ten million pounds. Construction was protracted, and Fort Nelson was not fully armed until the 1890s. Lewis showed us an old picture of a group of navvies, mainly from Ireland, who were employed to build the fort, and four to ten million bricks were used, but not all came from the local Fareham Brickworks. A garrison of about 200 volunteers, as well as some regular army officers, would have manned the fort in the time of war. The regular army wasn't big enough and too stretched to be used to man the forts.

The sort of guns used at Fort Nelson were explained in some detail, and we learned that Fort Nelson had its own narrow-gauge railway, and had a brief look at what Fort Nelson would look like from an attacker's viewpoint. In all, we were entertained by an extremely comprehensive history of Fort Nelson, plus other forts, and how the Royal Commission on Palmerston's forts came about. Towards the end of the 19th Century, these forts were out-of-date mainly due to more powerful guns available.

The forts played an important role in both World Wars, where the barracks were used for housing troops waiting to be deployed in WWI on the front line, and as an anti-aircraft ammunition supply deport in WW2. It was abandoned in the 1950s and left to deteriorate and subsequently badly vandalised. Fortunately, the Palmerston Forts Society [PFS] was formed, as mentioned above, and today Fort Nelson is a museum which is home to the Royal Armouries national collection of artillery, and historic cannons. Another attraction is that the fort is set within 19 acres, and "featuring the Ramparts Parade eerie tunnels, restored barracks, museum galleries and Café

1871". There are "over 700 items of artillery from many countries, and spanning 600 years are brought to life whilst sensitively telling the unique stories behind them". One of the attractions is the huge 18-inch, 200 tonne Railway Howitzer, "designed and built by the Elswick Ordnance Company of Newcastle in 1918, as part of a trend to build bigger calibre guns with more destructive shells, it is the world's largest surviving military gun".

Lewis ended his talk by showing us a few "before and after" photos of just what the Society has achieved in restoring Fort Nelson since 1984. The Secretary thanked Lewis for his very interesting, and entertaining talk, and she suggested he comes along again next year, as it seems his talk has scope for expansion concentrating more on the archaeology side of the forts.

Our **June** talk was given by **David Hutchings** on ***Southampton & District Transport Heritage Trust***. The S&DTHT was established in 2001, and drew members from other groups including Southampton City Transport enthusiasts' 7164 Group and the Solent Transport Trust. The Trust is dedicated to the preservation of former Southampton buses, and other vehicles from around the local area. David was accompanied by two of his colleagues from the Trust, Carol and Tony.

David said that the Trust provides an opportunity for many to get involved with the preservation and operation of Southampton's heritage transport. The activities of the Trust revolve around the preservation and restoration of vehicles together with social meetings of members and their guests. "The Southampton & District Transport Heritage Trust (S&DTHT) is one of four separate and operationally independent bus preservation projects in Hampshire and West Sussex that are administered by the Working Omnibus Project Limited (WOMP). The others are the City of Portsmouth Preserved Transport Depot (CPPTD), Medstead Depot Omnibus Group (MDOG) and the Stedham Garage Group".

The story of Southampton Motor Bus Services began in 1919, as an adjunct to Southampton Corporation Tramways. The route ran from the Clock Tower to Winchester Road [St James Corner], and went via Bedford Place and St James Road. At some point in the mid-1930s Southampton Corporation Tramways became Southampton Corporation Transport. The last public tram service ran on 31st December 1949. After Southampton achieved city status in 1964 the operator was renamed Southampton City Transport. In 1986, as a result of deregulation, it became Southampton Citybus, an arms-length company that was sold to the staff in 1993. It continued trading as Southampton Citybus until it was bought by First Bus in 1997.

After the First World War, Southampton buses were run on petrol, but in the 1930s after diesel engines were developed, they ran on diesel, and more and more routes were added. A new bus garage was then opened in January 1932 next to the tram depot in Portswood – which increased their storage capacity – and general garage facilities.

David showed us photographs of some of the renovated buses in their collection, together with a brief history on each one. These included Guy Arabs 222 – GTR 484 and A.E.C 366, and there is a picture of these on their website www.sadtht.co.uk seen together taking part in the "Farewell to Southampton Red Buses Event" in Above Bar on Sunday 19th February 2023. There are eighteen preserved buses at the Medstead Depot, a purpose-built bus garage, which includes ten former Southampton City buses. S&DTHT also has an educational bus, M504 PNA, which is an ex Greater Manchester North vehicle.

The Trust relies on funding from donations, and has received no lottery money, or from the local authority. It has an event coming up on the 28th September this year titled "Southampton Classic Bus Spectacular" which will be a large gathering of former Southampton Corporation and Hants & Dorset buses from the past, and will use the same historical routes from the City Centre.

David ended his talk by showing us some bus memorabilia including original bus tickets, a bus request stop sign, a leather bag used for change when issuing bus tickets, a model bus, and a metal push "stop" button. David's talk was informative, and colourful, with many photographs of gleaming renovated buses, although he did say at the beginning that he mainly gave his talk to people in "care homes"!

[As the Secretary was absent for December's meeting, Jim Beckett provided his own account]

❖ ❖

Plans unveiled to 'save the Whale' *(from Southern Evening Echo, 12 March 2025)*

Plans to save the 'Whale' at Southampton's Town Quay have been unveiled. Associated British Ports (ABP) has applied for planning permission to transport the rotting relic to Marchwood Port, carry out restoration work and put it on show to the public. Most of the Whales were built at Marchwood, which played a pivotal role in the build-up to D-Day. In relocating the structure, ABP will be returning the Whale to its origins.

According to Historic England, it is not clear if the Whale was towed to Normandy in 1944 or was held in reserve as a spare. It was installed at Town Quay about 75 years ago and used by passengers getting on and off the Isle of Wight ferry. The planning application cites "strong public interest" in saving the Whale, but says Southampton City Council is not in a position to acquire and maintain the historic structure.

ABP aims to retain ownership of the Whale and embark on the long-term preservation of the "nationally important" asset. If the scheme goes ahead, it will be lifted out of the water, taken to Marchwood on a flatbed trailer, and displayed on a plinth near the entrance of Marchwood Port where it can be seen by not only visitors (to the port) but also members of the public. An information board about the D-Day landings will be clearly sited.

Obituaries

Dr Martin Gregory

Dr Martin Gregory died on 28th January 2025 aged 88 soon after the death of his beloved wife Jennifer on 10th September 2024. Martin went to school at Altrincham Grammar followed by Wadham College, Oxford. Jennifer was up at Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford, at the same time and, luckily, Martin's sister was in the same college so he was able to visit them both.

After Oxford Martin worked briefly at Methuen as a publishing editor. Following a visit to Winchester College about using the new physics curriculum being published by Methuen, the head offered him a post and from 1962 to 1999 he taught in the Physics department at Winchester College.

Science at Winchester was taught in Flint Court from the 1870s. It proved so popular that more space was needed and, in 1903, work began on Science School, believed to be the first major building dedicated to school science in Britain. Fortunately, it has been on the same site ever since which is why it has been able to retain so much of its old equipment. Martin used to create exhibitions and short films about the early days of physics teaching. His interest in the history of industry and technology goes back to the 1960s and he has researched both Stirling and steam engines, building models of both.

This led him to be an early member of SUIAG (later HIAS) where his knowledge of Industrial Archaeology made him a valuable Chair, Secretary, member and editor of the annual Journal since 2002. Bill White remembers him as often knowing more than the guide or speaker!

From 2005 to 2016 he was President and director of the Twyford Waterworks Trust and he and Jennifer continued to volunteer on Open Days. His guided tours were both entertaining and educational and he was central to the 'Return to Steam' Project for which he supplied everything for the display boards across the whole site and wrote the guidebook. I remember him telling me about the work involved in obtaining the grant from the National Lottery Fund to begin the Project. I should include his starring TV role when BBC's *Antiques Roadshow* visited the waterworks.

He was a volunteer miller at the City Mill in Winchester and remembered doing a food hygiene course for them, which he hoped might help in the kitchen at home. Jennifer and he did a lot of shopping at the Farmer's Market and the quality of their food was important.

He was also an officer of the International Sewing Machine Collectors Society (ISMACS), a society for sewing machine enthusiasts and collectors. It held international meetings and auctions for many years and now offers articles on the history, types, restoration and valuation of sewing machines, as well as a journal which Martin edited, and links to other related sites. Martin's collection of sewing machines, which he sold recently, was world class and he used to complain about the cost of shipping machines to Japan and America.

His kindness and extensive knowledge will be missed by his children, Paul and Katharine, and his grandchildren, of whom he was immensely proud, and by his many neighbours and friends in Winchester College, ISMACS, City Mill, HIAS and TWT.

Eleanor Yates, Publications Officer, HIAS.

(Leslie) Nigel Smith (1950 – 2025)

Nigel, an only child whose parents also had no siblings, had Scottish ancestry on both sides of his family, with his mother from the Edinburgh area resulting in many holidays being spent in his 'Auntie Nan's' cottage in Linlithgow alongside the Edinburgh to Glasgow main railway line, hanging over the low garden fence watching the steam trains go by. Later, his father would drive him to nearby collieries to see the tank engines.

His paternal grandfather was from Glasgow, whose elder brother became General Manager of Glasgow Tramways in 1937. Nigel remembered the Glasgow trams, which finished in 1962, and in particular one long rural route which was 'fast and swaying'. His grandfather initially worked in Clyde shipbuilding but then joined the Merchant Navy to eventually become a chief engineer. It was while based in Liverpool that Nigel's father was born. They later moved to Southampton when his grandfather joined the Southern Railway cross-channel ferries, so Nigel was Southampton-born in January 1950. His father worked at Poupart Ltd, a fruit & veg importer in Southampton, who became a Company Director. Nigel's first holiday 'job' was stacking in the warehouse.

After an 'average' school career he joined the Ordnance Survey in November 1967, initially as a Cartographic Assistant, before moving to a Grade IV course in March 1968 after receiving the necessary O-level grades. Training was in a large room in a late 1800s building that used to be the Dock Workers Labour Exchange in Albert Road South, which subsequently became the Atlantic Hotel and then turned into apartments … the very same Atlantic Mansions across the road from where the Southampton tram project was moved to in 2020! Nigel was on the committee of the 'Under 25 Club' from 1972, taking his place behind the bar on Saturday nights and preferring 60's music. He worked on 1:50,000 mapping and, after promotion, was sent on a computer course in 1981 which changed his career, being part of the original Digital Mapping team and later a new large dataset called Topo96. He was also involved in the capture of Welsh and Gaelic names into Ordnance Survey data, and retired in 2003.

About 1971 he had joined the 1:25,000 section where Angela worked and they soon discovered a mutual liking for steam engines. On one occasion Angela's brother, Barry, had arranged a visit to Otterbourne Pumping Station,

near Winchester, which was about to be taken out of use. It still had a mothballed beam engine and a working triple expansion steam engine, and Angela asked Nigel if he would like to accompany them, so they had a half day's leave from work. That was their first 'date', and also became a great friendship between Nigel and Barry.

Barry and his friends were involved with the Mid-Hants Railway Watercress Line in its earliest days from 1973 and they were investigating the purchase of a steam railway locomotive. Nigel booked a room for a meeting in the O.S. Under 25 Club which resulted in the purchase of West Country Class 34105, 'Swanage'. This began a long association with the railway, working on steam engines – the first being a 2-6-0 numbered 31874 which was restored at Alresford from the spring of 1974. Nigel and Angela, having married in August 1975, lined out the loco and tender over the winter of 1976/77. With more time being spent on trams after 1977, most loco work was confined to lining-out when engines were almost ready to run, sometimes being given only a couple of weeks' notice before the launch date. They also lined out the first Wine & Dine carriages named Fern and Orchid, in Pullman fashion.

In 1973 Nigel began attending the meetings of the Southampton University Industrial Archaeology Group with Angela. One of his earliest tasks was to help assemble and staple the first group newsletter, started by Angela, in October of that year. Talk about being dumped in at the deep end! He was also getting involved with some active restoration of a different nature. One of the first tasks he remembered was at Eling Tide Mill when clearing mud from the archway under the bridge was necessary so that work could commence on the wheels and machinery above. He was also mixing up mortar for Bill White who was repairing the brickwork in the archway at low tide. Later the Hampshire Mills Group was formed and the active members, 'The Heavy Gang', were called upon to do all manner of rescue and restoration work, but mainly on mills. Nigel was a full hands-on member.

The SS Shieldhall was another project partly initiated by Nigel, following Southern Water's announcement that the sludge ship was to be withdrawn. It just happened that on Friday June 21st 1985 SUIAG was holding a barbecue at Mike and Jay Inge's house at Eling. Nigel Overton of Southampton Museums, who was overseeing the tram project and also a SUIAG member, was also present so Nigel and Angela had a long conversation with him about the possibility of preserving Shieldhall. This resulted in members of SUIAG being enrolled, as well as the local branch of the World Ship Society, to start a volunteer group to try to rescue the steamship from possible scrapping. For 3 years the ship needed to be manned 24 hours a day at dockhead, so Nigel and Angela have memories of 12-hour night watches and then going straight to work the next morning.

The City Council acquired Southampton Tram No. 57 in 1975 and then found they had no money to do anything with it. John Horne, who was SUIAG Chairman at that time, and Bill White gathered together a few members and friends to try to rescue the scheme. The history of the Tram Project has been well documented in the pages of *Focus* over the past fifty years, with quite a few people involved during that time, in several locations, and with four trams to look after. It's been a real team effort and throughout that time Nigel has been the secretary. The project has had its ups and downs but, throughout this time, and right up to the end, Nigel's was a voice of measured calm and careful reason, wisely urging caution when things haven't been going well. Apart from being involved with the Southampton Tram Project since 1977, Nigel and Angela also volunteered in the workshop at the National Tramway Museum in Derbyshire between 1984 and 2019, only ceasing after Nigel's almost total sight loss in 2020 due, it is believed, to a change in eye drops for his inherited glaucoma.

Nigel had a number of health issues over the past 20 years including prostate cancer in 2013 and, in 2016, kidney cancer was diagnosed and he was given "perhaps 7 years". With a variety of medication and cancer treatments, plus side-effects to put up with, then a spread of the cancer to other parts including his lower spine, a late-on hip replacement, all through this he did not complain – well, not much – and continued to be as active as possible. After being treated for pneumonia in hospital at the end of December, he was recovering well but then caught pneumonia again in the hospital. However, his wish was to be taken home where a hospital bed had been installed, so he spent his last 4 days there, passing away on January 24th, 9 days after his 75th birthday. It was heart-warming to see so many of his friends at his funeral on February 25th, from the various organisations he had been associated with.

Assembled by Angela Smith from various sources

Phil Turner (1939 – 2025)

Phil Turner, who has been active in Hampshire's heritage since the 1970s, died on 22nd May after a short battle with cancer. Before his early retirement in 1993, for more than a decade he was Assistant County Planning Officer, and was supportive of many SUIAG/HIAS projects, including the excavations at Brownwich Farm and the Southwick Brewhouse restoration.

Phil was a member of the Hampshire Mills Group for many years, and supported Twyford Waterworks Trust both as a volunteer on Open Days, and as Treasurer. He was an enthusiastic champion of Whitchurch Silk Mill, being a Director there for 9 years.

Phil attended parts of the University of Southampton Field Study trips, in particular, when one was based in his home area of Warwickshire, and one in Shropshire, another location he knew well.

He was involved with Hampshire Buildings Preservation Trust since its inception, and until recently was its Treasurer, and joint Editor with Pam Moore of its Annual Report.

Phil's enormous delight in the heritage of our county will be greatly missed.

Pam Moore

Twyford Waterworks Trust

www.twyfordwaterworks.co.uk

Registered Charity No. 291720

Ian Harden

The year to date has been one of marked contrasts to put it mildly with January proving a particularly sad time with the passing of two key members of the Trust, Martin Gregory and Tim Moth. Martin's contribution over the years has been immense with his wide ranging historical and technical knowledge proving invaluable in such areas as the Return to Steam project and as a tour guide to name but two. A fuller obituary appears elsewhere in this newsletter. Tim Moth as lead Steam Engineer was instrumental in restoring steam operation at Twyford in the 1990s. His meticulous approach enabled the Hathorn Davey engine to operate initially on compressed air before bringing one of the Babcock boilers back into use to make steam operation possible. His legacy remains with us to the present day with much of what we can demonstrate to visitors.

Regular site and equipment maintenance progressed as usual during the winter and spring, most notably including repairs to stop seepage around a mud drum door on the 1906 Babcock boiler. Around the site, the life-expired finger post signs have been replaced and a new wildlife hedge planted around Waterworks House to provide, in time, more privacy for the residents. Never idle for long, with the Hereford Waterworks Museum Lister Blackstone locomotive completed, the Industrial Railway department has commenced the overhaul of another LB loco late of Bolton Fell peat works in Cumbria.

The now traditional start over the May Bank Holiday weekend was once again very successful and was capped by double page photographic coverage for the Trust in the Hampshire Chronicle of Sunday's proceedings with FoKAB being similarly favoured for their flagship running event in Winchester the following day.

This year marks 125 years since drinking water extraction commenced at Twyford Waterworks and the double anniversaries of this and 40 years since the establishment of the Twyford Waterworks Trust were marked at the June open day. Representatives of the Trust and Tania Flasck, Southern Water's Director of Water Operations at Otterbourne, made speeches highlighting 125 years of the Waterworks and 40 years of the Trust with special tribute being made to Dr Edwin Course whose efforts led to the listing of the site by English Heritage and made subsequent restoration possible. A toast was proposed, appropriately with drinking water, for the next 125 years at Twyford Waterworks followed by the cutting of a special 125th anniversary cake produced inhouse. Southern Water had kindly sponsored a special exhibition covering the history of the site and staff from their publicity department laid on complimentary displays and games for younger visitors. Further excellent publicity appeared shortly afterwards courtesy of the Southern Daily Echo in Southampton.

The celebratory events of the June open day were also a tribute to Phil Turner who had passed away shortly before. As Assistant County Planning Officer at Hampshire County Council involved with historic buildings, his background advice on many topics during the early years of the Trust was invaluable to the Board.

Southampton Tram Project

Angela Smith

Decembers' tram report ended on a rather despondent comment with "all work" having been banned by Solent Sky Museum's Director and Trustees since July. However, there was one positive note when the museum's Director, Alan Jones, sent a Purchase Order to Alan Keef Ltd in Ross-on-Wye in December to carry out the necessary work on 11's hybrid truck to enable the body of the tram to be united with it by June, when the 5th Model Tram Event was scheduled to take place. Team members had partially dismantled the truck in its container earlier in the year and begun a repaint to accessible parts, but this work had ceased in the summer so it was reassembled for Keef's who collected it on January 15th.

There was little to do at the tramshed but to continue cleaning and sorting stores once the temperature improved. But one task that did need to be undertaken was to refurbish the 4 tram jacks and ultimately check if they would actually do the job of lifting the tram body. All the boxes and stores under 11 had to be moved out of the way so the 'tidy' tramshed once again became a tip! Extra sleepers were acquired as this was going to be a "belt and braces" job. Another item we needed is called balata belting to fit between the top metal bearer bar of the truck and the wooden underframe of the tram. An enquiry to an old friend at Crich brought a welcome message that a firm in Romsey could supply a roll of this rubber-based product. I made an appeal at the March HIAS meeting for a couple of lock windlasses to join the two we already had, to operate the tram jacks as all 4 needed to be wound up or down at the same time. I contacted former member Jon Sims who was able to lend his.

Practise lifts were carried out at the end of March and the great day arrived – May 21st – when the truck returned and, over 3 long, hard, days the work was carried out by Alice Basey and Andy Brimble from Alan Keef Ltd, plus tram members Paul Coles (Chairman) and myself who had been cleared by Alice to undertake manual labour, complete with all safety gear. Following the successful outcome of this monumental task, we have now got permission to continue with the restoration work provided we comply with H&S precautions and carry out Risk Assessments, supplied to the Director, when necessary. So a successful outcome all round.

From SUIAG newsletter "Focus" No. 15, January 1981

Tram Jacks *John B. Horne*

As well as accumulating tram cars the "Tram 57 Project" is also putting together a useful quantity of equipment. Among the recent additions is a set of 4 tower jacks, 6ft high affairs with elevating screws and reduction gears designed to turn rotary hand-cranking (quite a lot of it) into a lifting force suitable for raising the body of a tramcar off its truck. When we were given these jacks we appreciated that they were fairly old: just how old became apparent after some gentle research among the bound volumes of Committee Minutes which are kept by the Reference Library and by the City Record Office. It seems that on 3 March 1919 the Tramways Manager reported to his Committee as follows:-

"Our present arrangements for lifting cars for re-wheeling and truck repairs leave much to be desired. It is now done by hand jacks and 4 men wind these for 20 minutes before the car is raised and similar delay occurs in lowering. I have obtained a quotation from Messrs Youngs, the well-known Birmingham firm, for a complete set of quadruple hydraulic jacks with which a car is lifted in 5 minutes and lowered in one. The price is £285 and I shall be glad if you will authorise the purchase. These jacks are used on a large number of undertakings, Hull having recently ordered a fourth set. It is essential that we should improve our depot plant in order to carry out the truck overhauling required."

The Manager was duly authorised to purchase his hydraulic jacks but the Department seldom threw anything away and continued to find use for the old set. At the end of 1949 the trams finished but the jacks continued to be used for lifting bus bodies and were not finally discarded until the tramways workshops were demolished in late 1979/early 1980 and the move made to the new and very modern workshops at Portswood where such things would have looked very out of place.

Through the kindness of the Chief Engineer, Mr Bell, the jacks were donated to the Tram 57 Project and a variety of other equipment was passed on Steptoe-fashion to our friends in the Mid-Hants Railway Preservation Society. Included in the equipment taken to Ropley for the Mid-Hants was a special hydraulic jack for pressing gear pinions onto tramcar axles. You never know when you might want to do this. It's best not to throw good equipment away!

Just how old our tram jacks are is difficult to say: a photograph inside a Liverpool tram shed shows identical equipment in use in 1899. As we have seen, it was considered obsolete in 1919. Fortunately our standards of productivity in the 57 Project are not demanding and we are most happy to have this vintage equipment for further use.

From SUIAG newsletter "Focus" No. 16, July 1981

Nigel Smith

(A drawing of a canal lock windlass was shown on page 2 asking if members could guess what it had been used for on June 16th, then to turn to page 12 for the answer).

Those of you who have the January "Focus" may have guessed that the windlass was used to operate the Tram Jacks at Millbrook 'tramshed'. At our working party on June 16th, the reconstructed lower saloon frame of 11 was jacked up to place sleepers underneath (3 high, 2 piles at each end). The frame had been resting on 4 small, light blocks and more permanent, higher and safer support was needed. Winching 4 jacks up and down took a total of about 3000 turns and were found very easy to use due to the gearing and the relatively light weight of the frame … it will probably be a different story when the tram is finished!







2025 in the tramshed at Solent Sky

Left: Martin Petch demonstrating winding a tram jack with a lock windlass in March *(Ian Harden)*
Centre: 21 May 2025, Paul Coles and Angela Smith with the truck in the tramshed *(Chris Smith, Solent Sky)*
Right: 23 May 2025, Car 11s tram body united with its truck *(Alice Basey, Alan Keef Ltd)*

Heritage Open Days in September

Heritage Open Days – the country's largest festival of history and culture – runs from **12th-21st September** and an exciting programme with thousands of events and experiences is already taking shape including some locally. The free festival is brought to you by the National Trust, supported by players of the Peoples' Postcode Lottery, and delivered by thousands of local organisations and volunteers. Each year it brings over a million people together to celebrate their heritage, community and history.

From historic houses to factory floors, museums to music halls, churches to mandirs, and greenhouses to graveyards, a diverse array of places, spaces and community groups will offer up free events for all this autumn.

Liam Montgomery, Heritage Open Days Marketing & Projects Manager, said: *"For many, architecture is about more than just buildings; it's really all about people, and the ways we interact with the world around us. This year's festival is a great opportunity to delve into the rich tapestry of local stories across England. It's an open invitation to explore, learn, and be inspired by people and places."*

Founded in 1994, Heritage Open Days has been making history and culture more accessible for more than 30 years. Last year over 2,350 organisers and 41,700 volunteers ran 5,427 events across the country, attracting one million visits. Around one-third of visitors had not visited a heritage site/event in the past year while 82% of festival-goers said their visit made them more proud of their local area.

There's still time to get involved. Local organisations, community groups and enthusiasts have until 14th August to register their events by visiting the Heritage Open Days website.

For further information and to register your event, visit www.heritageopendays.org.uk

Mailbox

From Dave Perkes on his Facebook site (tram group volunteer)

(To put our readers in the picture, Dave travelled extensively in India by motorbike during the late spring and this is one observation, on a trip with a friend, which is of IA interest)

VILLAGES AND CANAL RIDE

We left Patna after 10 am and rode out of the city. We did stop by the roadside. Mike remarked how easy it had been. That did not last long as we were soon caught in a mass of trucks going both ways down the two-lane road. Once clear of that jam we had another at a narrow underpass barely wide enough for a Tata Truck. We stopped a few times at villages along a canal.

The canal was built by the British in 1874 with locks. Lock 6 was almost complete with closed gates at the upside. The lock design was almost identical to those found on the British canal network. Lined with dark red brick, the lock was significantly wider than those on British waterways.

The canal links the Ganges at Patna to the Sone River at Dehri. The Sone River is the second largest tributary of the Ganges, the width is a maximum of 5 kms at Dehri.

We followed the canal for most of the ride to Derhi. The Sone bridges; road and rail are over 2kms long. The Hotel Laxmi International was just off the Highway. It was decent place to stay and only 1500 rupees per night.

I took an afternoon walk to the river and bridge, then into the town. I called into the large Coffee House. Mike joined me there and we had meals of Paneer Pasanda and veg rice.

From Alastair Arnott via email 2 June 2025

(Alastair was formerly of Southampton City Museums who was overseeing the tram project. After retirement he and his wife Gill moved to Gondrin, west of Toulouse, France, in a wine-growing area)

Dear Angela,

Thank you very much for your recent message and the accompanying photographs. You should be very proud of uniting the truck and body of car 11. It is really the prototype of all modern trams, using small-diameter high-speed motors, and is technologically very important.

There is some interesting industrial archaeology round here, but not much. There is a flight of two locks just down the road – part of the Midi system – and a very interesting pante or incline elsewhere. In a few days we are off to see a Watt steam engine. At the French version of traction engine rallies there is often a portable engine, some of which were imported from Britain and others French-made, but as yet I have not seen an actual traction engine.

I think it is true to say that there are no railways left in the Gers although most of the buildings and bridges survive. Our local station is now a gîte and the track bed for some distance in either direction has been nicely converted to a cycle track. This was a branch line of the Chemin de Fer du Midi, one of the seven pre-nationalisation railway companies in France and one that pioneered electrification. There are quite a number of vintage cars and a few veteran ones around, though, including ones that I had not heard of.

I will try to keep you informed of anything exciting on the preservation front.

Keep up the good work

All the best,

Alastair & Gill.

IWA supports campaign to protect route of the North Wilts Canal in Swindon

Inland Waterways Association, Avon & Wiltshire Branch. Published 14 January 2025

The restoration of the Wilts and Berks Canal is an ambitious 70-mile project to recreate a cross-country navigation network. Opened in 1810, along with the North Wilts Canal in 1819, the Wilts & Berks Canal was formally abandoned by Act of Parliament in 1914. It has always been known by the shortened form of the county names to reflect the wording in the original Act of Parliament. After abandonment, ownership of the Canal was returned to adjacent landowners and local authorities, and some sections of the canal were sold. The main line route of the Canal runs from Abingdon on the Thames to Semington on the Kennet & Avon Canal; there were branches at Calne, Chippenham, Longcot and Wantage, and the North Wilts Canal runs from Swindon to Cricklade.

The Wilts and Berks Canal Trust has been making great progress on several fronts, with backing from partner organisations and help from the IWA's Waterways Recovery Group. For example, in Swindon, new sections of canal are being built by developers as part of Council planning conditions. There is much good work being done in Swindon, so this planning proposal is particularly disappointing and sufficiently serious that IWA has objected to the plans for the redevelopment of the Oasis site. This site is just north of Swindon Station where the North Wilts Canal is planned to be restored to link up to the Thames and Severn Canal route at Cricklade. As the national campaigning body promoting restoration of the waterways network, IWA supports the vital work which the Wilts & Berks Canal Trust, which is an IWA corporate member, is doing.

The plans for the Oasis site ignore the needs for reserved routing for the re-establishment of the Canal through this part of Swindon. Permitting this development as proposed would preclude through restoration for several generations, thereby denying the residents of Swindon of the multiple advantages that a restored Wilts & Berks Canal would bring them. It would also be a serious setback to plans to reconnect Swindon to the rest of the national waterways network.

Objecting to the proposal, IWA has written: "*We urge the Planning Committee to reject these applications until modified (in a comparatively minor degree) to permit the eventual rebuilding of the canal through this area. We understand that the developers have been aware of this opportunity for over a decade but seem to have ignored the needs of a restored Wilts and Berks Canal in the detail of their plans. It is therefore for the planning authority to protect this route. The current plans should be rejected until they incorporate an effective future route for a restored canal*."

The proposals include 700 homes, and it is well established that canals can be an excellent feature in new developments giving the community walking and wheeling routes; potential for water sports, being adjacent to a leisure centre, and helping nature recovery by creating a blue-green corridor for wildlife. IWA hopes that the Council will seize this opportunity not just because it will enable Swindon to be well connected by water again but also because of the benefits to local people and their physical and mental health.

This case shows the importance of vigilance by local people and organisations. Waterway supporters are encouraged to report any such threats to restoration to their local IWA Branch, IWA's Chesham office or the relevant local restoration society.

Local Odds and Ends

Hampshire

Historic bus to be restored *(Southern Daily Echo, 29 April 2025)*

A historic 1950 Leyland Olympic bus is set for a three-year restoration project. The bus, JAA 708, was fully restored and relaunched in 2012 but was severely damaged in a fire in late 2023 *(see Focus 101, July 2024)*.

Friends of King Alfred Buses (FoKAB) announced that the bus left Winchester and to go to the Scottish Bus Museum in Lathalmond, Fife, for restoration. The project, led by Andrew Crockett, will see the monocoque chassis-less HR40 Leyland Olympic restored to its full glory. FoKAB chair, James Freeman, said: "We are really delighted to entrust this big undertaking to Andrew. Having worked on three of our other vehicles to an incredibly high standard, we know he has the commitment and capability to make this rebirth happen."

The restoration project has a budget of £500,000, with £250,000 already raised through private commitments.

Hydrant cover makes a splash *(Southern Evening Echo, 25 April 2025)*

A 130-year-old fire hydrant cover has been rescued from the scrap heap and given a new home at a Hampshire museum. The cast iron cover which used to be on Bugle Street, Southampton, is thought to be one of the oldest dated fire hydrant covers in the UK. It was believed to have been lost when new hydrant equipment was installed earlier this year. However, it was tracked down to a maintenance yard at Otterbourne Water Treatment Works and has now been given to the SeaCity Museum in Southampton. The hydrant cover weighs 8lbs, measures 12 by 8 inches and has the year 1896 embossed on the front.

Andy Skinner, learning and engagement officer at the SeaCity Museum, said: "It's wonderful news. We're so pleased that the hydrant cover was found because Southampton is uncommon in having dated covers and the 1896 hydrant cover is one of the oldest and certainly one of the most historically significant." Dr Maria Newbery,

curator of maritime and local collections at SeaCity Museum, added: "The hydrant cover will be on display in our Southampton Stories gallery." Mike Parker, regional operations manager at Southern Water said: "We're glad to have saved the hydrant from the skip and passing it on to the museum is brilliant to be part of. It can now safely be on display as part of Southampton's rich Old Town history."

Red Wheel for Hovertravel *(National Transport Trust 'Transport Digest', No 159 Summer 2025)*

Hovertravel, the world's longest-running commercial hovercraft operator and the only year-round scheduled passenger hovercraft outside Japan, has been officially recognised by the National Transport Trust with the unveiling of two prestigious Red Wheel plaques at its Southsea and Ryde terminals. Founded on 24th July 1965, Hovertravel began operations with two 38-seat SRN6 hovercraft leased from the British Hovercraft Corporation, offering services between Ryde, Southsea and Stokes Bay. Today, Hovertravel operates two 12000D hovercraft – *Solent Flyer and Island Flyer* – completing the journey in under ten minutes.

Surrey

Mine tunnels confirmed around giant sinkhole site *(BBC News, Surrey, 5 June 2025)*

Engineers working to repair a giant sinkhole collapse in Godstone High Street, Surrey. have confirmed they have discovered a network of Victorian sandmining tunnels around the site. They say the eight-metre (26ft) deep tunnels may "provide a clue" into what may have caused the street to collapse in February. Authorities told a public meeting in the village that they "hope to have the road reopened during December this year".

Lloyd Allen, infrastructure manager at Surrey County Council, said: "Currently, we're investigating the Victorian tunnels, plotting them to see the extent of them and where they go. There's a lot of reconnecting services and redoing water mains, gas mains and electric cables".

West Sussex

Historic Southdown Bus Joins Amberley Museum's Fleet *(AIA's IA News No. 209, Spring 2025)*

Amberley Museum in West Sussex has recently welcomed a new addition to its historic fleet – a 1939 Dennis Falcon bus, formerly part of Southdown Motor Services. This bus, bearing the number plate FUF 181 and affectionately known as No. 81, has a storied past and represents one of the last peacetime purchases by Southdown before the outbreak of World War II. The acquisition and transport of this significant vehicle were made possible thanks to a generous donation by David Mulpeter, who also covered the cost of its heavy transport to the museum.

It was put into storage during the war and re-emerged in March 1946 to assist with relief workings, then assigned to the 31F route between Worthing and Ferring before being transferred to Portsmouth depot and later on the Hayling Island routes, from where it was retired in 1956 after the new Hayling Island bridge opened.

The bus then changed hands several times before entering preservation in 1968. The Southdown Omnibus Trust, a registered charity, is dedicated to preserving and showcasing the rich history of Southdown Motor Services. The Trust's collection spans vehicles dating back to the First World War. These vehicles are housed in three replica Southdown bus garages at Amberley Museum. Through careful restoration, the museum aims to bring No. 81 back to its former glory, allowing it to continue telling its remarkable story.

Miscellaneous news items from around the UK

Hundreds of listed buildings surveyed by volunteers *(BBC News Derbyshire, 27 January 2025)*

Volunteers have helped to survey 500 Grade II listed buildings in Derbyshire using an app that launched a few months ago. The Derbyshire "Buildings at Risk" initiative, which aims to protect endangered heritage buildings, was introduced to the public at an event in Belper on 24 October 2024. Derbyshire Historic Buildings Trust (DHBT) received a £207,000 grant from The National Lottery Heritage Fund for the project, which asks volunteers to report the conditions of buildings using an app.

The Trust said it was a "remarkable achievement that 500 buildings had been surveyed so far, but added it still needed help. The scheme is being piloted in Amber Valley, before extending to Derby city and the wider county. DHBT thanked "each and every volunteer who has given up some of their valuable time to help make this possible", but said there was more work to be done. The Trust said: "However, although this is a huge cause for celebration and means we are now over halfway through the survey project for Amber Valley, we still need your help." It is appealing for volunteers to help survey buildings in Idridgehay, Alderwasley and Kedleston, and all their surrounding areas.

Mobile Cinema lost in fire *(National Transport Trust 'Transport Digest', No 159 Summer 2025)*

A Bedford-chassied mobile cinema, once owned by Sir William McAlpine and a Transport Trust restoration award winner in 2011, was lost in a fire which destroyed a hangar at Bicester Motion on the night of 15th May. Its trailer was also lost. It was the last remaining of seven built in the mid-1960s to promote technology around the UK. When Sir William owned it, its purpose was to promote *The Flying Scotsman*, also in his care at the time.

Also lost was a 1949 Fordson 7V being used as an outdoor catering vehicle.

Mills

Blue plaque for Woodbridge Tide Mill benefactor *(BBC News, Suffolk, 4 June 2025)*

The woman credited with saving one of the last working tide mills in the country has been honoured with a blue plaque. Jean Gardner bought the Grade I listed Tide Mill in Woodbridge, Suffolk, for £7,300 at an auction in May 1968 after hearing a lecture on its plight by local historian, Norman Scarfe. She then oversaw its restoration before gifting it to the town in 1977. Four generations of Mrs Gardner's extended family were at the ceremony for the unveiling alongside guests from the community. The chair of the Woodbridge Tide Mill Museum, John Carrington, said: "We are grateful to the work of the Woodbridge and Melton Society in securing this lasting tribute to the lady who saved the Mill."

(Members of SUIAG visited the mill during the May 1970 "week" based in Ipswich)

Hockley Mill sold for £50,000

Late in April several members of HIAS/HMG noticed a listing on an auction site notifying that Hockley Mill, Winchester, was going to auction on 8th May with a Guide Price of £150,000. The HMG had a number of items stored there including compressors which came from the estate of John Christmas. Eleanor contacted the neighbours, Winchester City Council, National Park Authority and the agents while Dave Plunkett notified The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB) as the mill was listed Grade II in 1984. The Open Day on May 11 went ahead as planned. Photographs showed the internal mill machinery and the external wheel was mentioned. No planning advice had been sought for the mill with buyers needing to make their own enquiries.

Obviously the mill did not sell then as another auction site shows it was sold later in May for £50,000.

Durley Mill for sale *(Southern Daily Echo, 5 May 2025)*

Grade II listed Durley Mill, set within five acres of glorious grounds on the banks of the River Hamble, is up for sale at £1.95m. The description quotes "With a wealth of character reflecting its period origins, including a water wheel room with mill works, the property is historically significant, with parts of the building dating back to the 17th century, and the site referenced in the 1083 Domesday Book."

Canal Jottings

Melksham Link Canal *(IWA e-news 5 March 2025)*

The Inland Waterways Association has formally objected to a housing development application that threatens to permanently block the proposed Melksham Link canal restoration project. While it acknowledged the need for housing, a healthy, thriving waterway network should not be the price that has to be paid for new homes.
The Melksham Link is a crucial initiative to connect the Kennet & Avon Canal near Semington to the River Avon at Challymead. This restoration would allow boats to navigate through Melksham, past Melksham Gate Weir, and eventually connect to the historic canal line near Forest Farm before joining the Thames and Severn Canal.
The Wilts and Berks Canal Trust is optimistic about securing planning permission for the Melksham Link this year. However, the Berryfield developer has deliberately objected to the canal scheme to clear the way for their housing development, disregarding both the Melksham Neighbourhood Plan and the Wiltshire Council Local Plan.
Blocking the canal route would deprive Melksham of significant potential tourism, leisure, and employment opportunities that would accompany a restored waterway, including canalside hospitality venues, marinas, and retail establishments.

Maritime

***Challenge* in need of repairs for anniversary** *(from Ships Monthly, March 2025 – with thanks to Andy Fish)*

The steam tug *Challenge*, built in 1931 by Alexander Hall of Aberdeen, has launched a campaign to raise funds for repairs to her air pump and condenser so that she can attend the 85th anniversary of Operation Dynamo at Dunkirk in May. The work will be done in-house by the team of volunteers, but they need over £3,000 for the materials.

The repairs were successfully carried out and *Challenge* sailed to Ramsgate to join other vessels to make the crossing to Dunkirk on May 21st, returning to its base at Sun Pier, Chatham, on the 26th.

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Firefighters train on steamship *(from press release, Solent Steam Packet Ltd)*

Fire crews from Redbridge, St Mary's and Hightown fire stations carried out a rescue exercise on *SS Shieldhall* in early June. The training involved firefighters performing a rescue of a person stuck beneath the deck onboard in Southampton docks with the crews working together to lift the casualty using their rope rescue skills and equipment. Redbridge Station Manager, Andy Piper, explained: "These training exercises are invaluable for our teams, as they allow them the opportunity to practice their skills in real-life settings beyond the fire station, ensuring they are prepared to respond effectively to similar incidents and help save lives." He thanked the ship's team for allowing the crews access to their facilities in order to conduct this vital learning opportunity.

Catch-up time . . .

Crooked House appeal *(BBC News, Birmingham & Black Country, 2 February2025)*

The Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) has said owners of the UK's wonkiest pub need to take accountability and rebuild it after it was destroyed in an arson attack. An appeal will look into whether owners, ATE Farms Limited, should heed South Staffordshire Council's enforcement notice to rebuild The Crooked House pub within three years. But CAMRA called the appeal, set for 11 March, "insulting" and said it delayed a "much-needed" outcome for the iconic pub, in Himley, near Dudley. The BBC has contacted ATE Farms for comment.

On 11 February a further announcement said the enquiry had been postponed following an appeal to the High Court. South Staffordshire Council said the High Court's decision meant it would now have to delay the planning enforcement public enquiry until after potential criminal proceedings had concluded. A further BBC News item on 1 April said that the firm linked to the ex-owner of the Crooked House pub – Himley Environmental Ltd, which owns the 15-hectare Oak Farm Quarry and landfill site adjacent to the pub – had been wound up voluntarily on 13 March and gone into liquidation with debts of £1.2m.

Six people arrested last year were released from bail last July, but remain under investigation.

On 29 April it was reported that a local councillor said the three-year rebuild doesn't actually start until the appeal has been heard and it rules in the council's favour. "We know the owners will try and do what they need to do to delay the appeal in the hope that it all gets forgotten and we're not intent on doing that."

Twyford Waterworks marks 125th anniversary



Twyford Waterworks celebrated its 125th anniversary at the June Open Day.

HIAS and TWT member Ian Harden, 2nd from left, with colleagues cutting the cake.

Open Days are held on the first Sunday of each month until October.

Historic crane returns to Somerset & Dorset

(Heritage Railway, Issue 334, July 4 – August 1 2025)

A crane which started life transferring barrels of beer from a private industrial railway to the Somerset & Dorset main line has been resurrected at Shillingstone station on the North Dorset Railway. Binegar station in Somerset was the terminus of a 2ft 6in gauge railway which exclusively served a brewery in Oakhill two miles away. The line was built in 1904, when the brewery was producing between 2000 and 2500 barrels a week.

Oakhill is a source of spring water from the Mendip aquifer, noted for its purity, having percolated through limestone for thousands of years, and in 1767 a brewery was founded to take advantage of this water supply. Inits heyday, the brewery was a major producer and its most famous beer was its award-winning Invalid Stout, which laid claim to restorative properties thanks to the quality of the water used in the fermentation. At its peak, Oakhill was making more stout than Guiness.

At Binegar, the line terminated within a goods shed, with the standard gauge running alongside the shed's open front. The hand-operated crane was sited in this shed, transferring barrels from the narrow gauge to standard gauge wagons. The outbreak of the First World War saw a heavy tax imposed on British beer to discourage drunkenness. Sales of untaxed Irish Guiness overtook those of taxed Oakhill Stout, and the brewery ceased operating in 1921, the main brewery building was largely destroyed by a fire in 1925, and a new owner moved all brewing to nearby Shepton Mallet.

At Binegar, the transfer shed remained in use, but only for storage, until the closure of the station in 1966. The crane was rescued by the Somerset and Dorset Railway Trust in 1991 and taken to its depot at Washford, on the West Somerset Railway, where it remained until the trust's lease came to an end. A new home was needed, and in spring 2023 the NDR became the new host of the Binegar crane, which moved to Shillingstone station on long-term loan. A team of volunteers took on the restoration and refurbishment which was completed last year. In early June, foundations were laid and a support structure was bolted into place. The crane was finally lifted into place at the end of the station's loading dock on June 10.

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

CONTACTS FOR ASSOCIATED GROUPS

Hampshire Mills Group: *Acting Secretary:* Eleanor Yates – see above *www.hampshiremills.org*
The Solent Steam Packet Ltd (S.S. Shieldhall): Craig Hesketh *membership@ss-shieldhall.co.uk*
Southampton Tram Project: Angela Smith – see above *www.facebook.com/Tram57Project/*
Twyford Waterworks Trust: *www.twyfordwaterworks.co.uk*
Contact - Ian Harden, 31 Melville Close, Lordswood, Southampton, SO16 8DE

Former ferry generator room being converted to museum and merchandising shop

(from THE HERALD, Hythe, No 476, 26th June – 17th July 2025)

Since early September 2024, work has been ongoing by volunteers from the Hythe Shed (at the Pier) to convert the dilapidated former Hythe Pier and Ferry generator room at the pier entrance to a museum of photographs and artefacts from the history of the Hythe Ferry, Hythe Pier and its iconic railway. It will also be the outlet for Hythe Pier Heritage Association (HPHA) merchandising and an information bureau. The building, which hadn't received any attention for decades, was used as a storeroom for items that had nowhere in particular to be stored or indeed any purpose, and was home to an untold number of arachnids and other insects and vermin.

Originally dating back to the time of the building of the pier, electricity generating equipment was installed in 1921/22 to supply power to the new tramway and any surplus to neighbouring properties in and around the village. This equipment was sold off in 1933, when the owners of the pier decided to take power from the local supply company off the national grid. At the outbreak of WWII, precautionary emergency generating equipment was procured and installed.

This was sold to Marine Services Limited during the 1980s. The museum/shop facility was inspired by the late Allan Fairhead, founder of the Hythe Shed (at the Pier), and the conversion has been painstakingly carried out; the craftsmanship of the volunteers a tribute to Allan's vision. The opening of the museum and shop is expected by the end of June.

Trislander arrives at Solent Sky Museum

After many months of waiting, Trislander G-RLON, built by Britten-Norman Aircraft at Bembridge on the Isle of Wight, was finally transported to the car park alongside Solent Sky Museum on April 19th. A dedicated team of volunteers is now refurbishing the aircraft where, eventually, it will be open to visitors who will be able to sit in the pilot's seat. It is an 18-seater which flew from Southampton to the Channel Islands, was retired in February 2017 and stored at the HMS Daedalus airfield. (https://www.facebook.com/solentskymuseum/)

FRIENDS of KING ALFRED BUSES

NEXT EVENT

Sunday 14th September 2025
Heritage Open Days Grand Display and Running Day
Winchester Broadway and St Catherine's Park & Ride.
The whole King Alfred Collection will be on display side-by-side at St. Catherine's from 10:00 to 12:00.
Free King Alfred Bus Services from 1200 to 1700.
Full fleet in operation.

Southampton & District Transport Heritage Trust

EVENTS

Saturday 12th July: City of Portsmouth Depot Open Day, Portchester
Our friends at the CPPTD will be having an open day at their depot at Wicor near Portchester to celebrate the 90th anniversary of the Leyland TD4.

Sunday 20th July: Alton Bus Rally and Running Day
The Alton Bus Rally and Running Day returns again on the third Sunday in July, which is on the 20th this year. This event will be taking place at Alton College, Old Odiham Road, Alton, GU34 2LX.

SOUTHAMPTON CLASSIC BUS SPECTACULAR – Sunday 28th September
Join us for the largest gathering of former Southampton Corporation and Hants & Dorset buses from yesteryear operating historical routes from the City Centre. Enjoy the soundtrack of Southampton again with the sound of Guys AECs, Leylands and Bristols.
The event will be based in the heart of the City Centre at Pound Tree Road.

LATE NEWS

On 05/07/2025 11:33 BST Robert Fish wrote:

As some will know 10 years ago the original 1853 gate from the covered reservoir on Southampton Common was removed to install new security fencing and was lost. All enquiries as to where it went drew a blank. Thought to have been scrapped, I was never convinced so have been looking out for it ever since (sad I know!)

On Wednesday I saw a post, which I know others saw as well, of the reverse shield asking for information as it had been found in someone's mothers garden, and I reached out. Sadly, and not unusually, despite standing there for 160 years only 2 people recognised it (Dad and I). On Thursday morning I was contacted, and in the evening I went over to collect it and it will be taken to Twyford – not easy and it is very heavy. It is thought to be the oldest dated piece of street furniture in the City (although the gas column is dated and older, as if they are dated, are the two gas lamps, so depends on the definition used).

Makes a change at the moment to find history, rather than it being lost.

My thanks to the contributors for items used in this issue. Other articles have been extracted from websites, magazines, regional newspapers, etc. The next *Focus* is planned for December 2025, so the final deadline will be the November AGM meeting, please, if you want to pass items in person. My contact details can be found on the previous page.

Angela Smith