Hampshire Industrial Archaeology Society

Focus

on Industrial Archaeology

No. 104 **December 2025**

Rare D-Day relic rescued from river after 50 years

(adapted from articles by Chris Yandell, Southern Daily Echo, August 23rd and October 2nd, 2025

Part of Southampton's D-Day history has been rescued after sitting partly submerged in the River Test for more than half a century. One of the surviving Whale bridges used by the invading troops was lifted out of the water in a floodlit operation carried out by Associated British Ports (ABP). It took place at Town Quay close to the spot where a huge number of soldiers left for the Normandy beaches in 1944 during Operation Overlord.

The Grade II-listed Whale was hoisted out of the river by a huge crane and lowered on to a lorry. Later it was transported to Marchwood, where it will be restored and put on display. Its new home will be Solent Gateway, formerly known as Marchwood Military Port, where the structure is thought to have been built. Richard Parkinson, Solent Gateway port director, said: "Returning this historic structure to the military community that originally built it for the D-Day invasion is a way of reconnecting with our past and paying tribute to the extraordinary efforts of those who served."

Whales formed part of the floating Mulberry harbours, which enabled the Allies to re-supply troops without having to capture a heavily fortified port. Richard Palusinski, chairman of the Spirit of Normandy Trust, said: "Items like this are a tangible link to the D-Day landings and the battle for Normandy. The remains of the Mulberry harbour at Arromanches are slowly degrading and will eventually be lost altogether, so this project is vital in maintaining a visible link to such an important part of our history."

Historic England had said the reason for moving the Whale to Marchwood is logical, given the port's role, and that Marchwood is an alternative to the location at Town Quay. "It has been demonstrated that its retention to the relic's position at Town Quay cannot be safely accommodated due to the intensive operational requirements of the port. In its current location it cannot be seen or appreciated and its environmental conditions are not conducive to its long-term preservation." It is not clear if the Whale was used in the D-Day landings or held in reserve as a spare. The 81-year-old bridge was installed at Town Quay about 75 years ago and was used by passengers getting on and off the Isle of Wight ferry. It is thought to have fallen into disuse more than 50 years ago.

Southampton City Council had to approve an application by ABP to relocate the Whale and New Forest District Council also had to give it the green light before the transfer could take place. It is planned for the Whale to be displayed beside the entrance, ensuring it can be seen by the public.

Nominations for Top Ten Endangered Buildings 2026 now open!

The Victorian Society is asking the public to nominate threatened Victorian and Edwardian buildings and structures for their list of Top Ten Endangered Buildings to be announced in 2026. This campaign highlights dilapidated and neglected buildings around England and Wales that are in desperate need of help. The media coverage the campaign gains spotlights buildings that might otherwise lie forgotten and decaying. This publicity can alter their fate for the better.

Griff Rhys Jones, President of the Victorian Society, said: "Every year the Victorian Society asks the public to nominate Top Ten Endangered buildings. They get attention, they get press, they get TV and we get new members. They get results in conservation too. But we rely on members of the public to be watchdogs and to have sharp eyes and ears out across the country to find these important targets. Heritage promotes growth. Recycling buildings is the green option. Old buildings make places significant and add value in a way that new often do not. Recently, this government has been turning down requests from Historic England and the Vic Soc for new listings. More in the last eight months than in the last eight years. Never has there been a more important time to publicise great Victorian and Edwardian buildings in peril. Please nominate. Please alert. We need your active support.

To nominate a building or structure email media@victoriansociety.org.uk with the year it was built, its location, whether it is listed, a brief description of its history and/or architecture and the threat it is under, and at least one good photo. Nominated buildings must be in England or Wales and be built wholly or largely between 1837 and 1914. Preference is given to listed buildings. **The deadline for nominations 5th January 2026.**

HAMPSHIRE INDUSTRIAL ARCHAEOLOGY SOCIETY

(formerly Southampton University Industrial Archaeology Group)

Meetings – February to July 2026

January 5	**NO MEETING**
February 2	**Southampton Docks Electric Cranes, part 2** – *Jim Beckett*
March 2	**The Restoration of the Wey and Arun Canal** – *Richard Shenton*
April 13	**Hampshire: Supporting Farming through the Ages** – *Ruth Kerr*
May 11	**Watermills in Hampshire** – *Roger Bird*
June 1	**How Royal Clarence Yard in Gosport victualled the Royal Navy** – *David Verghese*
July 6	**History of Fort Gilkicker** – *Lewis Sharp*

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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Heritage of Industry

We are sorry to announce that Heritage of Industry has ceased running any tours.
We would like to offer many thanks to all our loyal customers for their business over the years.
For more information about AIA events please visit their website: https://industrial-archaeology.org
This website and domain will close down in due course but in the meantime you can see some details of some of our past tours here: https://www.heritageofindustry.co.uk/Longer%20Tours/PreviousLongerTours.htm
Kind regards,
Bill & Sally Barksfield
info@heritageofindustry.co.uk

Derwent Valley Mills, Derbyshire - in danger of losing World Heritage status?

(BBC News Derby, 17 July 2025)

A Derbyshire MP has insisted that "real change" is on the horizon to save the crumbling Derwent Valley Mills from losing its heritage status and falling into further disrepair. Belper Mills, a key part of the Derwent Valley Mills Unesco World Heritage Site, are in "poor condition" having stood largely derelict for decades. The owners of the Georgian mills, First Investments Real Estate Management, are currently awaiting feedback from Unesco on their plans for the site. An application to convert the mills into apartments, as well as ground floor commercial uses, was submitted to Amber Valley Borough Council in 2018 but not determined.

Jonathan Davies, the Labour MP for Mid Derbyshire who recently set up a pressure group in Parliament for World Heritage Sites, said the owners had expressed in recent meetings that they were "confident" they will shortly submit plans to be decided on by the borough council in the autumn. He also said: "If we're in the same position next year then there will be questions to answer. 2025 is a very important year for the mills."

Unesco outlined "grave concerns" about the site, with large-scale development cited as an issue. In a report it wrote: "It appears that the development pressure on the property, coupled with the inability of the management system to safeguard its outstanding universal value, has reached a level that, if not urgently addressed, may confirm an ascertained or potential threat."

It is understood representatives from the body had robust discussions with council officers in Amber Valley in a meeting last year about the prospect of the site's heritage status being taken away before the report was published. The subsequent report was seen as a "warning" that the site is not far from suffering the same fate as Liverpool which was stripped of its World Heritage status in 2021 because of developments perceived to have threatened the value of its waterfront.

Association for Industrial Archaeology Restoration Grants 2025

The AIA has awarded six large grants (up to £30k) and two small grants (up to £10k) for the restoration of industrial heritage sites and machinery under its restoration grants scheme for 2025. As ever, competition for the grants was high this year with some really high-quality applications. The successful projects are as follows.

Large grants:

Underfall Yard Trust, a grant of £30,000 towards the restoration of the Yard's hydraulic pumps.
Chatham Historic Dockyard Trust, a grant of £20,682 towards the restoration of their unique Ropewalk traveller.
London Museum of Water and Steam, a grant of £30,000 towards the repair of the Kew Bridge Standpipe Tower.
Aerospace Bristol, a grant of £23,380 towards the restoration of the Freighter Aircraft.
High Mill Alston CIC, a grant of £30,000 towards the restoration of the historic Mill Building.
Cheddleton Flint Mill Industrial Heritage Trust, a grant of £30,000 towards the restoration of the Mill's historic calcining kilns.

Small grants

National Coal Mining Museum, a grant of £9,630 towards the restoration of the Desco Road Cutter.
Amberley Museum, a grant of £8,500 towards the restoration of a steam crane.

Reports on Meetings, July to November 2025

Carol Burdekin

Our speaker this **July** was **Andy Skinner** who we were pleased to welcome back. I am sure you will all remember that Andy came along to last October's meeting, and gave us a very interesting talk on "Victorian Southampton" etc. Andy has been part of Southampton's Education Team based at the Museum since 2012 and is involved in leading tours around the City, plus workshops etc. The subject of Andy's talk this time was ***A History of Southampton Buildings.***

Andy began by telling us that through its buildings, Southampton has a rich and diverse history, with a large amount of Listed Buildings which are Grade I Listed, and a few Grade II*. Under headings Roman, Saxon and Medieval, Andy began with St Michael's Church, the City's oldest building still in use. St Michael's Church is in the heart of old Southampton, possibly 1070 AD evidenced by the building itself. Dedicated to Archangel St Michael, Patron Saint of Normandy, who is depicted on a post-war stained-glass window in the church. The historian Sir Nicholas Pevsner wrote of the church that it has "perhaps the most beautiful lectern in England".

As well as its Roman, Anglo-Saxon and Medieval past, the city also features remnants of its Tudor, Stuart, Georgian and Victorian past. Unfortunately, no Anglo-Saxon buildings remain as, unlike Roman, they were usually built of wattle and daub with thatched roofs, although there are some clues in the St Mary's area, including a Saxon coin motif. Notwithstanding the Roman and Saxon eras, the town became more visible as an important port when the Normans arrived in 1066, becoming the main connection to their lands in Normandy and in France generally. Unfortunately, a raid on Southampton in 1338 was the beginning of the 100 Years War.

The most famous building in Southampton is The Bargate and, as Pevsner said, *"probably the finest, and certainly the most complex, town gateway in Britain"*. The Shields were added around the 17th and 18th centuries, and were repainted in 1998. The paint has not worn well and they are overdue for re-painting again, which is hoped to be soon. The Bargate was built in the centre of the High Street, being the main entrance to the City's medieval walled town circa 1180 AD and, during WW2 was used as an air raid shelter. It still has its curfew bell, and a later addition is a statue of King George III depicted as the Emperor Hadrian. Much of the Medieval City walls survive, as well as the vaults where the merchants stored their wine.

The Tudor House in Southampton is a very important historic building and is located in the heart of the Old Town. It is a timber-framed building facing St Michael's Square, and was built between 1491 and 1518.

It was during the Georgian period that Southampton became a Spa Town, and a fashionable place to visit with theatres, coffee shops, and coaching inns. The Dolphin Hotel was one such inn and still survives to this day, plus coaches were getting quicker in transporting people around the country.

From the 1820s onwards, it was the railways and the docks which really put Southampton on the map being described as "Gateway to the Empire". It was also described as "Gateway to America" because of the increase in trans-Atlantic travel. The elegant South Western Hotel was built, and many of its original features can still be seen today including the original marble pillars in the former hotel lobby.

By the 1890s Southampton unfortunately was suffering with "slum issues", which resulted in cholera epidemics around 1848, 1849 and 1865, especially around Simnel Street. After an investment in a proper sewage system these problems were addressed.

Andy finished his talk by highlighting buildings erected in more recent times. These included the Civic Centre which was built in 1925 with a variety of styles, which allude to sea and rail. Wyndham Court *"ugliest building in the Country"*, whose residents obviously don't agree with its "brutalist" label, is also a prominent feature.

Thanks to Andy for another interesting talk about Southampton's illustrious past, this time mainly focusing on the Roman, Anglo-Saxon and Medieval periods, where his last talk was mainly on "Victorian Southampton". I do hope we haven't exhausted Andy's repertoire, as it would be good to have him back again, as I am sure there is still a lot more to learn about Southampton's heritage.

We were pleased to welcome back **Deborah Wheeler** in **August** who came along to talk to us about ***Taskers of Andover***.

It was in 1785 that Robert Tasker's father ran a blacksmith's shop in Stanton-St-Bernard in Wiltshire. Robert was the eldest son, and there was a younger son named William but, as the eldest son, Robert would have been brought up to be a blacksmith. Robert was ambitious and left Wiltshire in about 1806. Robert was also a non-conformist with strong Christian beliefs, and when he moved to a cottage in Abbotts Ann, near Andover, he hosted prayer meetings on Sunday evenings. A forge was there owned by Thomas Maslen, and Robert became his assistant, taking over the business in 1809. Robert was a keen businessman, but it seems his non-conformist faith was not that popular which made obtaining work locally difficult, and had to go further afield like Newbury and Southampton to find business.

In 1813, Robert and his brother William started the Waterloo Ironworks in the Anna Valley. The site was built on chalk, and gave access to coal and iron ore via the Andover Canal, and the works came into operation in 1815, named after the Battle of Waterloo. Robert and William went into business with George Fowle, a relative of Robert's wife, Martha.

The Waterloo Ironworks started when farming labourers were finding it difficult and, because of the French Revolution, the rich were nervous. The population was growing and people were leaving the countryside to work in towns. Food prices rose due to the war with Napoleon, and farm labourers' wages were not increasing. It didn't help that companies like the Waterloo Ironworks were producing more and more farm machinery, especially the new threshing machines. In 1830 this led to the "Swing Riots", although it is said that the Taskers were benevolent employers, but this didn't prevent a mob attacking the Waterloo Ironworks smashing windows and destroying equipment.

In 1836 Robert retired at the age of 56, and his wife, Martha died 1843. Robert died age 81 in 1873. By this time William had already taken over and, with the opening of the London & Southampton Railway, the canal was closed and buried to make way for another railway line replacing Taskers Wharf with a series of railway sidings. Two of William's sons took over the business in 1857 and arranged with Clayton & Shuttleworth of Lincoln to sell, and service, their stationary boilers. In 1865 the Waterloo Ironworks built their first steam engine and became known for its production of bespoke steam engines. Henry, William's third son, then joined the business, and it was he who implemented the "Economic" design of "8 horsepower [6.0 kw] engines of 1891". This formed the first series of standard Tasker designs "using steel boiler plates over wrought iron".

After Henry took over, he bought out his brothers, but was then left short of capital and struggled up until WW1 when Henry found new capital via a series of share sales. This resulted in the 1902 development of the "standard class of light" which was "just under 3 long tons or 3.05 tonnes, engine called Little Giant, of which over 300 were made". Post war, Taskers built a series of road rollers but the slump in 1926 inevitably brought about a liquidation, and the last steam engine, a "C Class road roller" left the factory in 1927.

It was in 1932 that the company was revived as "Taskers of Andover 1932 Limited" through the production of semi-trailers, using steel rather than iron. This procedure did not require the services of the Waterloo Ironworks, and that closed in 1937. In 1938, the Air Ministry sent out a tender for a recovery vehicle suitable to carry a fighter plane, which was awarded to Taskers, after a prompt written and costed proposal together with a prototype trailer. This trailer was subsequently nicknamed the "Queen Mary Trailer" after Cunard's RMS Queen Mary. This gained the company 300 orders in the build-up to WW2 and by the end of the war nearly 4,000 had been delivered, adopting the post-war name of "Tasker Trailers".

In 1983, it was sold as a part of a packet of assets to Montracon of Belfast, which resulted in the works being closed and the demolition of the residual buildings in 1984. In the late 1990s Montracon decided to consolidate its brands, which resulted in the end of the Tasker name.

You can still see the legacy of the Tasker name today in and around Andover. These include street names such as Taskers Drive and Foundry Lane, together with memorials. The Milestones Museum in Basingstoke has several preserved Tasker vehicles on display, and a B2 roller, in the collection of the Claude Jessett Trust, being the oldest Taskers roller in preservation.

Our thanks to Deborah for coming along and telling us the story of "Taskers of Andover", who were, for 170 years, a leading manufacturer of a wide range of agricultural implements and machinery, steam and stationary engines, road vehicles, as well as being known country wide for their lorry trailers.

Our **September's** meeting was our annual ***Members' Evening***. After the usual announcements, including Keith Andrews reminding everyone that Sunday 14th September was a FoKAB running day and there would be a shuttle service to Hyde for the Hyde900 exhibition. Also, as it was also Heritage Open Day weekend, Hockley Mill would be open for visitors.

Our first speaker of the evening was **Roger Davies** who talked to us about the restoration of the ***Octagon Lantern Lobby*** at Windsor Castle which, as a structural engineer, he was involved in the restoration work there, following the disastrous fire in 1992. The Lantern Lobby is located in the State Apartments at Windsor Castle, on the site of the old Private Chapel where the fire started. This area combines eight grand oak columns cascading into the central flower feature as illustrated by Roger's slides. Roger began by showing us a slide of a tree, and asked if anyone knew what sort of tree it was? It turned out to be a Glue Laminated Oak used in the restoration work. Roger's slides illustrated a high level of craftsmanship, and a high grade of materials, using sustainable English oak, carved wood plasterwork and gold leaf. The wood was cut with modern saws but finished with hand tools that would have been used by medieval craftsmen to create an authentic look.

The design features a modern design with oak columns and a Gothic inspired lantern ceiling, forming a new processional route connecting the private apartments to St George's Hall, replacing the original Chapel space. This work was completed in 1997 as part of a larger project which restored the Castle's State Apartments and the St George's Hall.

Our next speaker was **Keith Andrews**, and his subject was ***Turntable Ferries***. Keith began by showing us an old photograph from 1997 when he and three friends went on a post A-level trip to Scotland, driving a van kitted-out with bunks. A bit of an adventure from their "sheltered London experiences".

"Turntable ferries are a type of ferry that utilises a central, rotating platform, like a railway turntable, to allow vehicles to drive on, turn around, and drive off without reversing. They are designed for shallow waters and were the original roll-on/roll-off design, with the MV Glenachulish in Scotland being the world's last manually operated

turntable ferry, serving the route between the mainland and the Isle of Skye". They work by lowering the ramp, where you drive on the "dicky bouncy skew ramps", then close the ramp, and turn it round.

Most of Keith's slides were from a book, but some were his own, and he went on to explain the different routes which used turntable ferries in the past. Kylerhea is the place on Skye which is closest to the mainland, where *"the two slipways at either side, Kylerhea and Glenelg, were designed by Thomas Telford, and was the "primary cattle droving route out of the islands"*.

Keith went onto explain that it was not worth building big piers for low traffic, and short crossings with tidal race, so a slipway would suffice for any state of the tide. A comprehensive look at turntable ferries followed and, as mentioned, you can still reach Skye on Scotland's last operating turntable ferry. Running since 1934, the Glenelg Ferry crosses the narrowest stretch of water between Skye and the mainland, and was a busy crossing point before the bridge was built. You simply drive onto the *MV Glenachulish*, where the platform is finely balanced, that with even six cars, it can still be turned by hand, thus avoiding the longer journey via the bridge.

Two short video films followed, the first by a local amateur historian, Paul Whitewick, who went on to explain that he explored the City of Winchester as a lost Roman city. He talked about Iron Age and Roman settlements, and the evidence of their locations, a place where almost nothing remains visible of its Roman past, other than a small fragment of wall, and wonders why? He then tries to trace the line of the medieval walls that still stand today.

The second video came from America and was a Smithsonian Institute film telling the story of a wooden wheel manufacturer – Hoopes in Pennsylvania titled ***The Last Wheel Works***, a wheel maker since the 1900s, before they closed in the 1970s. The first part of the film showed the process from the log being sawn, to steaming and then bending and finishing. The second part showed making the hubs, then moved on to assembling the hubs and spokes etc. Making the steel bands or tyres followed, then cutting for length, welding and compressing to make it tight on the wheel. A fascinating, but time-consuming process, and an interesting look back at how this sort of manufacturing was done in the past.

Our thanks to our two speakers, Roger Davies and Keith Andrews, and to Rob for organising the films.

Our speaker for **October** was one of our own members, **Roger Davies**, a retired civil engineer, who last spoke to us in October 2023 on "Constructing the Severn Tunnel 1872-1886". Roger's subject this time was ***Rope & Chain Hauled Railways***.

Roger started by saying that he was limiting his talk to static steam engines and moving steam locomotives. Rope and chain hauled engines refer to steam powered or other engines which use a rope or chain, which is wound round a drum and then used to haul trains and wagons up or down steep inclines, often in difficult terrains, using either stationary engines or mobile traction engines to pull heavy loads. Often using a gravity incline system where the weight of the descending full wagons pulled the empty ones up. Apparently, Robert Stephenson said that rope railways were quite difficult to operate.

Rope and chain hauled railways developed from early gravity inclines in the 18th and 19th centuries, especially in the mining industry where they were used to transport goods up steep gradients when a locomotive was impractical. The technology progressed from hemp and natural fibre ropes to steel cables, and from human or animal power to steam and later electric engines.

Beginning with the Stockton & Darlington Railway (1825), it being its 200th anniversary this year with Locomotion No 1 built by George & Robert Stephenson, which pulled the first steam-hauled public train. This was accompanied by a photo of Brusselton Engine House, now disused. The Brusselton Incline was a section of the original Stockton & Darlington Railway between Witton Park and Stockton in County Durham and used to transport coal from the collieries to the docks on the Tees. Whilst largely meant for goods traffic, it also transported passengers up and down the incline between 1825 and 1858. The first passenger-only rope-pulled engine was the Canterbury & Whitstable Line (1830), and Roger showed us a painting which was done to commemorate its Opening Day. Then the Cromford & High Peak Railway (1831), and the Camden Incline, used steam powered stationary engines.

Roger went on to talk about numerous rope and chain hauled railways in some detail accompanied by gradient graphs, and photos where available.

These included the Liverpool & Manchester Railway (1830), a photo of Edge Hill Engine Station rope winding equipment, Liverpool & Manchester Railway (1836 and 1849) rope incline operated, and the London & Birmingham Railway (1837-1840). Most unusual was the London & Blackwall Railway (1840), which was fairly flat and extended to Fenchurch Street 1844, and carried about two and a half million passengers a year. Apparently, the London & Blackwall Railway Minories Station had a lot of problems with their hemp ropes. Most railways were started with an Act of Parliament, but in the north east it was different and a lot seemed to have gone bankrupt, with the Pelaw Main Railway owned by the Birtley Iron Company. Under Nationalisation, the rope and chain hauled railways were incorporated into the coal board, and not into British Rail.

Away from the north and London, Roger talked about the Hayle Railway in Cornwall 1837, and the Taff Vale – Pwllrhebog Incline (1863), the wire being connected to a steam engine.In the early days of the Industrial Revolution, rope and chain hauled systems were especially useful over steep inclines. The Middleton Top winding engine house at the summit of the Middleton incline in Derbyshire has been preserved, and the ancient steam engine

inside, which was used to haul the wagons up, is often demonstrated now to visitors. The Bowes Railway on the outskirts of Gateshead, which opened in 1826, is *the "world's only preserved operational standard gauge cable rail system"*. The Cromford & High Peak Railway, which opened in 1831 with grades up to 1 in 8, is a visitor attraction, so we are still able to see this amazing evolution of early freight and passenger transport.

Roger's talk was not only interesting and informative, but technical as well with his gradient graphs which accompanied each subject. So I am afraid this write-up has not done it the justice it deserves.

At the beginning of our **November** meeting, we had our AGM. This was attended by about 30 members. It was the end of Rob Fish's tenure as Chairman, and Jim Beckett was elected as our new Chairman. Rob is now Immediate Past Chairman, and Jim will serve for the coming three years. Angie Beckett was re-elected as Treasurer, as was Barry Duke as the SERIAC representative. Barry has said he only wants to serve for one more year. Ivor New said he will continue as Examiner until he moves out of the area. The membership seemed happy with the accounts etc., and the way the group has been going over the last year, and it was decided not to put the subscriptions up for another year. It was also decided not to have a HIAS meeting in January, the reasons being that it is getting more and more difficult to find speakers although, saying that, we nearly have a complete programme for 2026, thanks to the sterling work of Rob Fish. Also, the first Monday in January is fairly soon after the Christmas and New Year festivities and possible bad weather. We then had a break for coffee/tea etc.

After the break Rob said that, for the time being, we have retained quite a few of the more technical books, which have almost been catalogued – so far 669 titles. This is now available online, and he went on to explain to the membership how this can be accessed. This website will have a link to the main HIAS website.

To end the evening, Rob showed us a conservation project on YouTube, which was a bit different from what we normally see, as it was a restoration project of a Chateau in France.

The restoration of the Château de Purnon, which is situated north of Poitiers, was begun, surprisingly, by a couple from Australia. After working and studying overseas the couple, Felicity Selkirk and Tim Holding [he being an ex-Australian politician], they were looking for a new adventure and came across the semi-derelict 105-room Chateau nestling in the French countryside abandoned, neglected, and on the path to ruin. They purchased the property in 2020 when the property was in "grave peril", and immediately started the urgent works needed to restore the roof and facades. The project is to bring the Chateau back to its 18th Century design, which included replacing the 19th Century zinc guttering with copper, restoring the original roof structure, and making extensive repairs to the facades and interiors. This process has been documented extensively in a book called **"Château Reawakening"** and the work supported via private funding, donations and a 2022 French National Heritage Award, which I believe is worth up to 60% of the cost.

The couple risked everything to try and save the 18th century French château, and its outbuilding and surrounding grounds, but they never imagined the scale of the work involved, or the "blood, sweat and tears" it would take, or the cost. Apparently, the first stage of works to save and restore the exterior was about "2.8 million euros". If anyone wants to see more of this restoration work, go to YouTube, as the couple have documented their progress in some detail, and makes interesting watching.

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HIAS Journal

The 2025 HIAS Journal was successfully published thanks to Howard Sprenger stepping in as Editor after Martin Gregory's sudden death earlier this year. At the moment we have two possible articles for 2026 and there is a request from the Chairman for more articles.

Please contact Howard Sprenger at howard@sprenger.family or write to him at:-

Chi Argel, 7 Manor Close, Blisland, Bodmin, PL30 4JY

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South Wales and West of England Regional Industrial Archaeology Conference 2026

Provisional arrangements have been made for the 2026 SWWERIAC. It will take place at Avoncroft Museum of Buildings, near Bromsgrove, on Saturday 18th April.

More details to be announced later.

This is about as far north as it is possible to get in the region but we make no apology as it is a really interesting venue and very close to the M5.

(Information from Dr John Beale, Chair of the Worcestershire Industrial Archaeology and Local History Society [WIALHS]).

(With thanks to the Somerset Industrial Archaeological Society for the information)

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Mill Trust in repair claim council row

Natalia Forero, Southern Daily Echo, July 12 2025

Hampshire Building Preservation Trust (HBPT) has filed a dilapidation claim against the county council for failing to meet its repair obligations after ending the lease of the Bursledon Windmill. The Trust aims to reopen the mill to the public after closing its doors last year following the end of the lease with Hampshire County Council (HCC). In 2014, the county council transferred its museum interests to the Hampshire Cultural Trust (HCT), which started managing the mill under a sublease from the county council and with annual grant support from both Eastleigh Borough Council and the county administration. The lease agreement between the building preservation trust and HCC required HCC, as the tenant, to keep the mill and other buildings on the site in good repair. Additionally, HCC was responsible for maintaining all machinery and sails in a condition suitable for flour production. However, the mill closed its doors to the public in April 2024 after the Hampshire Cultural Trust ended its sublease with the county council.

Chair of the HBPT, Peter Goodship, said that the relationship between Eastleigh council and the HCT over the running of the Mill "was less than perfect" and eventually the council decided to withdraw its annual grant to HCT. As a result of the withdrawal, the HCT notified the HCC of its decision to terminate the sublease and close the mill to the public at the end of March 2024. Following the HCT notice, HCC gave up its lease with HBPT at the end of October last year. Mr Goodship said that when a lease finishes, the normal procedure for landlords is to seek compensation from a tenant, which represents "the cost of putting the premises back in good condition". In the late 1980s, HBPT restored the windmill after the lease was transferred to the HCC. Restoration works included repairing all timber machinery and reinstating the mill sails, enabling the mill to produce flour for many years to come. However, he said that the HCT, during its sublease, decided to cease flour production due to safety concerns and remove the sails from the mill. Despite a public appeal to fund the production and installation of new sails, the HCT decided not to proceed and stored the sails in the car park. According to Mr Goodship, the claim is aimed at recovering the cost of restoring the premises to good condition, including the reinstatement of the sails and the replacement of a fence damaged by a delivery van that hasn't been replaced. However, the amount of the claim has not been revealed.

Historic England online hub brings local heritage to life

From British Archaeology, September/October 2025

Historic England has launched the Local Heritage Hub, a new digital platform that invites people across the country to explore the history of where they live. Unveiled during this year's Local History Month, the service brings together nearly 400 dedicated pages for counties, cities, districts, and major towns across England. Each page features a mix of aerial photographs, archive material, listed buildings, blogs, videos, and podcasts, offering fresh ways to connect with local heritage. Designed to help people "see familiar places in unfamiliar ways", the hub aims to unlock hidden histories and encourage new conversations around the places that matter most to communities. "With this new service, we hope people across England will be able to explore hidden histories, reconnect with their surroundings, and feel a sense of pride in their local area," said Duncan Wilson, chief executive of Historic England. The hub reflects growing public interest in local heritage. According to Historic England, 71% of people want to see more recognition of heritage in their area, while 58% say it enhances their daily lives. Claudia Kenyatta and Emma Squire, Historic England's directors of regions, said: "Local history is full of surprises… With the Local Heritage Hub, we're excited to bring those moments of discovery to more people throughout the country."

The hub will continue to grow, with new places and materials added over time. It can be accessed by searching any English county, city, or major town via the Historic England website. https://historicengland.org.uk/local/

Wrongly loaded digger "caused rail bridge collapse" *(BBC News Gloucestershire, 26 November 2025)*

A 133-year-old foot bridge on the Dean Forest Railway was pulled down when a volunteer loaded a digger on to an engineering train incorrectly, an investigation has found. The Grade II-listed wrought-iron structure at Lydney, Gloucestershire, collapsed on Thursday 14th August this year. The bridge is believed to be the last surviving piece of infrastructure from the historic Severn and Wye Railway and its restoration was only completed in 2019. The Rail Accident Investigation Branch (RAIB) found the eight-tonne digger had been loaded by a railway volunteer who had not completed the necessary training and misjudged the height of its arm. The task of moving the digger required a qualified operator to load it on to the wagon at Lydney Junction and offload at its destination.

The RAIB report found that when the volunteer with the relevant additional training qualification was delayed, another who had only passed their theory test agreed to load the digger but previously had only loaded a six-tonne digger. On these occasions they always rested the digger's bucket on the raised deck at the end of the open wagon. Had the bucket been stored on the lower deck, the 8-tonne digger would have cleared the bridge without incident.

Since the incident, the Dean Forest Railway said structural engineers have now examined the bridge and are in the process of producing a detailed survey. The RAIB do not give recommendations as part of the safety digest, but did identify causal factors for the incident. As such, the railway said they have ensured that processes and procedures have now been reviewed and updated as required as a result of the incident.

Twyford Waterworks Trust

www.twyfordwaterworks.co.uk

Registered Charity No. 291720

Ian Harden

As the Trust's momentous 125th anniversary year open day season has drawn to a close, the Trust's volunteers and officials are now able to take a well-earned breather and enable all departments to commence winter maintenance at a manageable pace. Although the aggregate attendance was very slightly lower than the previous year due to less co-operative weather and more local events clashing, there were several high spots to note. August, traditionally a quieter month, bucked the trend with an attendance of 315 helped in part by additional Southern Water publicity while the October rally attracted a record attendance of just over 500. How is not quite known but no one was arguing. Good weather that month certainly helped and the car park volunteers were just grateful of the extra space resulting from the recent departure of contractor's accommodation that had been resident in one corner for several years.

Steam could not be raised in July due to insufficient volunteer availability but this allowed closer inspection of the steam plant by visitors with access to areas normally out of bounds. An impressive turn out by members of Basingstoke Classic Car Club in September coincided with a unique experiment for the Trust, substituting a brand of biofuel to power the boilers in place of steam coal. Recently observed in use by Steam Team volunteers at Crofton Pumping Station, solid Rapeseed briquettes by the trade name of Green Dragon Farm grown fuel from Nottinghamshire was found to work very well. Thus a potential alternative has been found for consideration as and when coal of a suitable grade at a realistic price is no longer available.

Across the site, a new set of finger post signs for visitors has been installed replacing the handmade versions that had become life expired. In the workshop, overhaul of the Lister Blackstone loco is progressing well with the rolling chassis now over 75% complete and it is expected to be operational in time for the start of the 2026 open day season as will alterations to the patio area around the wildlife pond.

Behind the scenes, the Trust's officers are continuing with the aim of attaining Museum accreditation in the coming years to help raise the profile of the organisation in the areas of governance, improving the prospects of funding application success, visitor confidence and so forth. Representatives from other regional organisations are advising the Board on all aspects of the application and their assistance is greatly appreciated.

On past experience the new open day season for 2026 will soon be upon us commencing no doubt on the Bank Holiday weekend of May 3rd and 4th 2026. Details will be confirmed in due course via the usual media sources.

Southampton Tram Project

Angela Smith

After the flurry of activity ending the first half of the year, culminating in another Model Tram Event at Solent Sky on the weekend of June 7/8 – which was not a good choice of date, but quite well attended and the numbers compared favourably with last year – then it was "what shall we do now". A decision was made to start at the top of Car 11, repairing the upper saloon ceiling where there were cracks and deteriorating paintwork from all of its various moves over the years. This is an on-going task fitted in with other things. Car 11's new truck has received its yellow lining, copied from a photograph of Southampton 45 at Crich about 40 years ago.



Many years ago we "inherited" parts of one end of 'Preston' Car 87 (double-deck with flat roof and balconies) which the City Museums acquired from a site south of Romsey even before Car 57 was rescued. These had been stored in a building nearby and we were told that the building was to be demolished, so we had to set up working parties to move the parts into our container sited in Captain's Place, close to Central Bridge. Mainly it is the sturdy bulkheads from one platform, doors and inner bulkheads from upper and lower saloons, plus a few other odds and ends. We also have one stair. The balcony roof, floor and platform seem to have disappeared.



If Car 11 is ever to move out of the tramshed on the rails we now have, safety is the priority. There is an anchor in the floor at the back of the shed where a cable can be used, but we have been given instructions to get the 'front end' brakes working. First job was to find what parts we had. The cast iron item (above right) is called a Peacock gear (upside down) and is what is underneath the platform where the brake staff fits, and a chain is wound round the centre and attaches to a rod going to the levers which activate the brakes at that end. It took a lot of head-scratching and lying on the floor under the platform to work out what was going on! We're not quite there yet.

The gate to Southampton's covered reservoir……..rediscovered – Part 1

Southampton's early water supply was a municipally controlled system established in 1290 by the Franciscan Friars, who piped water from Colwell Spring in Shirley (close to Hill Lane) to their friary and the town. In 1420, the system was transferred to the town council, making it one of the earliest municipally owned piped water systems in Britain. The infrastructure included underground elm and lead piping, watering points, and a structure called Conduit House, which collected and distributed water and is still a surviving part of the system today opposite the Mayflower Theatre.



Colwell Spring (Conduit Head) – Sept 2021



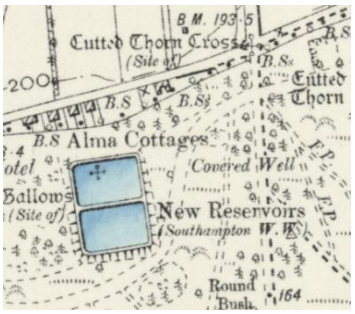
Conduit House – Feb 2025

Rapid population growth in the late 18th and early 19th centuries led to concerns about the adequacy of the town's water supply. As the importance of the town as a port grew it, so did its demand for water. The existing spring fed reservoirs on Southampton Common were becoming inadequate to meet the demands of the growing population.

The need was further highlighted when Southampton experienced a *public health* crisis in the first half of the 19th century. In poorer areas, there was a lack of clean water, poorly built and overcrowded housing, and no proper sewers. Deadly diseases such as tuberculosis and typhus were common.

In 1849 cholera came to the town with some 200 people dying, mostly in Simnel Street, Back of the Walls and Kingsland. Further outbreaks in 1865 and 1886 led to 41 and 100 deaths respectively.

A few remedies were considered, including the sinking of an artesian well on the Common. Consequently, in 1835-36 an agreement was made between the council and a London engineer, Thomas Clarke, who began boring the well in early 1836, this wasn't very successful. In 1838 another contract was agreed, this time with John Collyer, a local plumber and member of the town's waterworks commission. Again, the expected flow of water never justified these expectations, and Collyer soon abandoned the scheme. It was then taken on by yet another partnership. The borehole eventually reached a depth of 1317 feet, but with only moderate success in terms of water supply, and by 1845 the scheme was stopped.



Under the powers of the Southampton Waterworks Amendment Act 1850 a pumping station was set up at Mansbridge to take water from the River Itchen and transfer it to a pair of reservoirs on Southampton Common. Construction of these reservoirs started in 1851 and originally consisted of two separate reservoirs, by 1895 these became one single covered reservoir to reduce maintenance costs.

Grazing of livestock was common on Southampton Common up to at least the mid-19th Century, and to keep livestock and ensure the safety of the public these two reservoirs were fenced. This is where we find the gate dating back to 1853, said to be Southampton's oldest piece of dated street furniture still in its original position.

There was concern when, back in about 2015, the gate was removed as part of a security upgrade and its whereabouts were unknown. Roll the clock on to 2025, and in a chance post on social media someone was asking for information about a gate they had found in their mother's garden. While several suggestions as to its origins were made the writer immediately recognised it and reach out to the owner. After a couple of emails and a telephone call it was donated to Twyford Waterworks and collected the very next day.

The gate itself contains two large shields, one on each side. On the front is the crest of "Southampton Water Works" and the other the initial "J.L M 1853" and showing the maker(?) as being Saunders Southampton.







The shield on the back was a puzzle which the writer solved back in 2013. The initials stand for Joseph Lankester, Joseph was the 627th Mayor of Southampton, standing from 1852 until 1853. Lankester, as many will know, was a well established local family who owned a chain of ironmongers shops in the City as well as an iron foundry. He died on the 21 July 1857, and is buried close to the nonconformist chapel in Southampton's Old Cemetery, also on Southampton Common.

The gate is currently undergoing restoration by a specialist company in Dorset, and it's hoped will be back on public display at the Waterworks shortly.

Robert Fish

Bursledon Brickworks Museum Update

Jim Beckett

2025 saw visitor numbers improve on the previous year. As normal, the museum opened on Wednesdays, Thursdays and Sundays with a number of special events, especially with traction engines steaming, very well attended. The last event before the winter closure will be Christmas Special Steam Up on Sunday 23rd November.



Two of the eight drying sheds on the site were becoming derelict, with Historic England pointing out that they needed considerable structural refurbishment so that they were no longer at risk of collapsing. In order to fund these repairs the Brickworks Museum Trust and Hampshire Buildings Preservation Trust sold a portion of land for housing development. The drying sheds have now been restored and the hope of the Trustees is to let spaces, so that the rents can be used to support funding of the museum in the future.

My ongoing task, as a volunteer, is that of sorting and cataloguing our most important archive collection: that of the late Martin Hammond. Martin, an architect by profession, spent his entire life studying bricks, brick-making and, in particular, brick kilns. He was arguably the most knowledgeable person in the country on the subject and, at the museum, we have all of his drawings, notebooks, correspondence and photographs. He was the person to contact should any advice be required concerning restoration of the brick-built parts of industrial buildings, and his help was given freely to The National Trust, Crofton Pumping Station, Blists Hill and Ironbridge, to name but a few. His interests also extended to non-brick related IA such as involvement with the Waverley paddle steamer restoration.

Hampshire and Isle of Wight Beam Engines in the USA

This is an extract from an article that appeared in the Autumn 2025 edition of the Newsletter of the Trevithick Society and is reproduced here with the kind permission of its author, Dr Damian Nance.

Almost a century after Henry Ford began to import British beam engines to exhibit at his museum in Dearborn, Michigan, and 67 years after Leighton Wilkie did the same for his display in Des Plaines, Illinois, three more British beam engines were brought to America in 2023 by Jeff Wynn, a broker in Texas, for a client in northern Idaho. One of the three is a Woolf compound engine originally from the Otterbourne Pumping Station in Hampshire and another is a grasshopper engine from Cowes on the Isle of Wight[1]. (For completeness, the third is from Henwood Pumping Station, Ashford, Kent.) The precise whereabouts of the new arrivals and what plans are in store for them have not been disclosed, but the intention is for the Otterbourne engine to be re-erected in Iowa[2].

Otterbourne Engine

The surviving Otterbourne engine is one of four Woolf compound engines (A-D) built by James Simpson and Co at their Grosvenor Engine Works in Pimlico, London, in 1895 for the Otterbourne Waterworks and Pumping Station between Southampton and Winchester. According to George Watkins, who visited the site in 1938 and 1969[3], two of these engines were removed in the 1930s to make way for vertical and horizontal shaft steam turbines built by W.H. Allen and Co. of Bedford in 1936.



He estimated the remaining pair to have had 28½-inch high-pressure cylinders (4-foot 9-inch stroke) with slide valves and 38½-inch low-pressure cylinders (7-foot stroke) with drop valves. These dimensions are supported by other sources, but Peter Ellis, who photographed the site in September 1970[4] *(Figure 1)*, estimated the diameter of the cylinder-pairs to be 2-foot (5-foot stroke) and 3-foot (7-foot stroke), respectively, and notes that both cylinders were lagged with blue steel.

The low-pressure valves were operated by cams on a layshaft, with the high-pressure valves worked by an eccentric from same shaft. Both engines made use of a surface condenser. The flywheels were 18 feet in diameter and, unusually, cast in three segments, each with two spokes, and were worked at 16 rpm. The cast iron beams were 23 feet in length (Ellis gives 23 feet 4 inches between nose pins) and both engines drew water for urban supply from wells using 21-inch (5-foot stroke) lift pumps (buckets) and 17½-inch (7-foot stroke) force pumps (rams) driven off the beam near the crank.

Figure 1**:** *One of the two 1895 Simpson and Co Woolf Compound engines (ca. 28½-inch/38½-inch) in situ at the Otterbourne Waterworks and Pumping Station in Hampshire (photo by Peter Ellis, September 1970). https://gallery.jalbum.net/en/browse/user/album/886569*

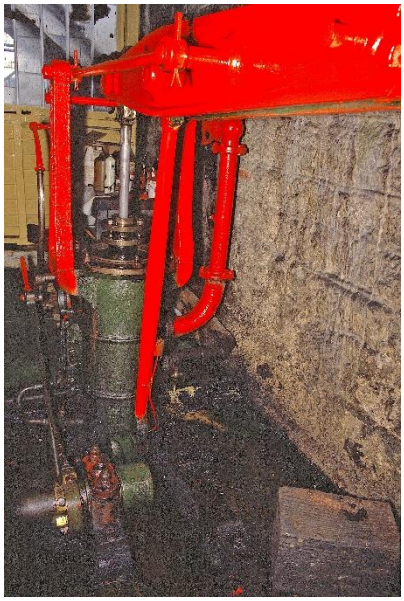
The pumps and connecting rods were of steel and the capacity of each engine was 1.25 million gallons per day. Steam was supplied at 60 psi by five 7-foot by 30-foot Lancashire boilers built by Danks of Netherton, near Dudley, Worcestershire, in 1925/26. The steam plant, which also included two inverted vertical triple expansion condensing engines with 18-inch, 24-inch and 56-inch cylinders (18-inch, 31-inch and 54-inch according to Ellis) and a 4-foot stroke, built in 1926 by Worthington Simpson in Newark-on-Trent, Nottinghamshire, was superseded by diesel electricity in about 1971 and later scrapped.



Figure 2*: *Otterbourne Woolf compound engine disassembled in outside storage at the at the site of the former Sherborne gas works in Dorset (photo courtesy of Chris Allen, April 2004).

For many years, however, one of the Simpson Woolf compound engines was kept disassembled in open storage at the site of the former Sherborne gas works in Dorset, from whence it was acquired by Preston Services and sold to Road Steam, David and Michele Goddard's traction engine and locomotive boiler workshop in Wiltshire *(Figure 2)*, the private museum of which serves as the base for the Brown and May Trust.[5] From here it was purchased by Texas broker, Jeff Wynn, in 2023 and shipped to America for a private collector in northern Idaho.

Shambler's Wharf Engine



Another engine to have made its way to northern Idaho in 2023 is a single cylinder non-condensing grasshopper beam engine built by J.P. Almond of North Shields in Tyne and Wear[6] *(Figure 3)*. The engine's date is unknown and is variably cited as ca. 1860[7] and 1870s?[8] Installed to operate a winch at the shipyard of E. Cole and Sons at Shambler's Wharf in Cowes on the Isle of Wight in 1885, the dismantled engine had been for sale with Preston Services in Kent since its removal in 1996.

According to Watkins,[9] the flywheel is an early simple type with wrought iron arms cast into the rim and boss, and the engine is generally of mid-19th century design with a more modern slide valve and valve chest. In Cowes it had operated a geared slipway winch for repairing vessels with a speed reduction to the hauling cable (which pulled the vessels out of the water on a carriage on rails) of about 288 to 1. Steam was originally supplied by a small Lancashire boiler, but after this was condemned in the 1950s, it was driven by an air compressor used for portable tool drives. The engine's cylinder is 12 inches in diameter (2-foot 3-inch stroke) with a slide valve and was run at 50 rpm with a steam pressure of 60 psi, generating some 8-10 horsepower.

Figure 3*: *J.P. Almond 12-inch grasshopper engine in situ at the shipyard of E. Cole and Sons at Shambler's Wharf in Cowes on the Isle of Wight, where it was installed to operate a winch in 1885 (photo courtesy Chris Allen, June 1990).

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A flurry of items from BBC News Cumbria and North East

Two 'modern-day' industrial archaeology items from Sellafield, Cumbria:-

Vacuum found in nuclear vault never meant to open *(28 April 2025)*

A vacuum cleaner was among radioactive waste retrieved from a nuclear store which was never intended to be reopened. Sellafield's Pile Fuel Cladding Silo has been a locked vault since waste stopped being tipped there in the 1970s. The nuclear site said it had solved the "challenging puzzle" of how to take waste from a building designed never to be emptied, with 18 three-metre-cubed stainless steel boxes already filled with waste.

The Electrolux vacuum cleaner was believed to have been used to suck up radioactive dust during the facility's operational life in the 1950s and 60s. The chief operating officer said: "The vacuum cleaner is a great example of how challenging it is to clear this silo. We don't know for sure what's in there – they didn't keep accurate records in those days.". A modern-day vacuum cleaner is also playing a part in the waste removal job, sucking up dust created when waste is dropped into storage boxes. It will eventually be consigned as waste itself, joining its 1960s predecessor.

Robotic arms could aid nuclear 'glovebox' clean-up *(27 July 2025)*

A development in robotic technology could be the answer to cleaning up hundreds of nuclear devices collected over decades. The nuclear plant at Sellafield has built up a stack of 700 gloveboxes – sealed containers with built-in gloves that allow operators to handle radioactive materials. Some are up to 60 years old, vary in size and shape and still contain contaminated materials like pipework and valves. A team of robotic experts has developed a dexterous mechanised arm that can be fitted inside an active nuclear glovebox to help tackle the challenging task of cleaning up and disposing of these devices. Developers proved the robotic arm could successfully carry out a complex series of tasks safely, meaning the technology can now be deployed to legacy gloveboxes to accelerate decommissioning. A spokesman for Sellafield, which opened in 1947, said some of its older labs contained gloveboxes dating back decades, taking up space and posing "a potential hazard to workers and the environment".

Destruction of historic kiln *(3 August 2025)*

The destruction of a 19th century country brick kiln has caused mixed emotions. The structure, which stood close to the site of the former Kepier Hospital near Durham, was demolished in late July, according to photographer David Wilkin. Durham County Council said its planning enforcement team was investigating. A 2019 City of Durham Parish Council document included the structure in a list of "notable unlisted buildings" in its conservation area.

Ushaw Moor resident Richard Turner said he enjoyed taking his dog for a walk past the kiln and had thought "it would always be there", but Frank Lee from Cumbria, who had been a regular visitor, said it had been falling apart for years. He said he was surprised the kiln had stood for as long as it had and that he used to play there in the 1940s as a child and it was "disintegrating" even back then. Mr Turner said "It is part of our industrial heritage like mining and it should be protected".

Rural 17th Century farmhouse gets Grade II listed status *(4 August 2025)*

The farmhouse, known as Mullender, in the remote valley of Swindale in the Lake District, was awarded the status by Historic England in July saying it was a "good example of a modest Westmorland farmstead". The Lake District National Park Authority said the structure's new status introduced an "extra layer of protection above normal planning rules".

Funding for cattle bridge and kiln repairs *(28 August 2025)*

Funding has been awarded to prepare plans for repairs to a limekiln and an old stone cattle bridge. The two structures are both located in the Lyth Valley in the Lake District and are suffering from decaying stonework.

The Grade II listed limekiln is set within a triangular enclosure and is thought to have been built in the 18th or early 19th Century. The kiln is said to have survived "reasonably well" because work had previously been carried out to repair one of its walls. However, it is now covered in vegetation and tree growth and is suffering from damaged stonework.

Inman's Bridge was built in the 19th century as an access for livestock and passes over the River Gilpin. Historic England has provided a grant to pay for a feasibility study into how the features can be brought back into good order. The organisation said the Countryside Stewardship grants also allow the landowners to carry out work to preserve the structures. The bridge's condition is declining and is the only one of its kind in the area. Similar bridges have either collapsed or were replaced with metal and concrete structures.

Dig uncovers secrets of first public railway *(14 November 2025)*

An archaeological dig has been taking place on a section of the original Stockton and Darlington Railway Line at Preston Park, Stockton-on-Tees, which was in use between 1825 and 1852. Among the finds are stone sleepers and clues about how the line was dismantled in the mid-19th century. Dr Emma Watson, who is leading the project, said it had been thought that only timber sleepers were used east of Darlington, but the team discovered eight broken stone sleepers with their original markings which indicated they had also been used on that section of the track. Evidence of what was carried on the tracks was found, mainly coal, coke and limestone. The team also uncovered metalwork which helped them understand how the track bed had been dismantled in 1852.

Lower Sizergh Bridge *(New Civil Engineer, September 2025)*

An historic 35m-span suspension bridge on the River Kent in the Lake District's National Trust Sizergh Castle estate, thought to date between 1862 and 1898, had received major refurbishment in 1987 and repairs in 2016 after flood damage. In January 2024 parts of the main suspension cable sustained damage caused by a very large piece of debris during Storm Isha. The impact of the debris was vastly out of proportion to the level of the flood, imparting a force sufficient to plastically bend a 40mm-diameter wrought iron bar. Repairs were focussed on conservation and safety rather than bringing the bridge up to modern standards. Off-the-shelf elements were used for the repair rather than trying to replicate the original parts, as a nod to the structure's evolving form.

Local Odds and Ends

Hampshire and the Isle of Wight

Historical fort explorers stopped by injunction: A listed 19th-century fort has been placed under legal protection after "repeated trespasses by so-called urban explorers". Spitbank Fort, a hotel, is now protected under a five-year injunction, which prohibits unauthorised individuals from entering, occupying, or remaining on the privately owned fort. It comes after the "urban explorers" caused damage to the Grade II-listed structure and raised "significant safety concerns", a spokesperson for the hotel's law firm said. The injunction, which was granted within 24 hours of the application being filed, equips the owners with the legal means to prevent future trespass and safeguard the listed site for five years. The spokesperson said that the fort had become a "magnet for thrill-seekers and social media adventurers". *(Southern Daily Echo,18 July 2025)*

Campaigners welcome bid to save ancient buildings at risk: Campaigners are celebrating a potential breakthrough in their bid to save two surviving relics of Lymington's famous salt industry. The New Forest National Park Authority has received an application to restore a pair of waterfront barns and transform them into homes. The Grade II-listed buildings at Creek Cottage, Lower Woodside, are in a poor state of repair. The two buildings represent the only salt barns left in the Solent area. The statement says the applicant intends to carry out "sympathetic and very necessary repairs" to give the barns a bright future. A detailed planning application has now come forward to convert the barns into two residential units. *(Southern Daily Echo, 7 August 2025)*

Repair funding for at-risk 18th Century building: The John Pounds Community Trust has been awarded £485,200 towards the restoration of the Treadgolds building in Bishop Street, Portsea. Built using surplus dockyard materials, Treadgolds has seen life as houses, an ironmonger, shop and warehouse but needs urgent repair work to its roof. The John Pounds Community Trust has already successfully converted part of the building and courtyard for community use. The charity said grant funding would cover the replacement of defective roof coverings and lead gutters, repairs to rooflights and chimneys, as well as the installation of natural insulation to support climate resilience. The reroofing will enable a wider renovation scheme to progress. Supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, it is aimed at securing the sustainable reuse of the entire Treadgolds building as a community creative hub. *(BBC News, Hampshire & Isle of Wight, 7 August 2025)*

Archaeology dig uncovers naval shipyard secrets: A preserved 18th-century shipyard slipway was uncovered during a recent dig at Buckler's Hard on the Beaulieu River in the New Forest. Mary Montagu-Scott, chairman of the Buckler's Hard Shipyard Trust, said: "This dig has exceeded all expectations as so much of the structure has survived, preserved under the mud and soil. This will give a greater understanding of how the largest 64 and 74-gun ships were built and launched across the bend in the river." The summer excavation, led by the University of Southampton's Centre for Maritime Archaeology, uncovered a timber slipway structure believed to date back to the 18th century, along with iron nails, copper plate and nails, ceramics, clay pipes, glass and other artefacts. The site has now been back-filled to protect the remains. *(Southern Daily Echo, 13 September 2025)*

Engine shed and station listed to mark Railway 200: Two local preserved railway lines are among seven sites that have been Grade II-listed to mark 200 years of the modern railway. Havenstreet Railway Station on the Isle of Wight closed in 1966 but was reopened in 1971 as part of the Isle of Wight Steam Railway and retains many original features including the lever frame, ticket counter, furniture and ticket window. Swanage engine shed and turntable, and nearby Northbrook Road Purbeck stone overbridge, have also been listed. The steam locomotive engine shed is a rare surviving example, built in 1885 when the rail network in England was being completed. The turntable pit is also a rare example on the British railway system since so few survive, and it is still in working order. The designations by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport mark 200 years since the Stockton and Darlington Railway opened on 27 September 1825. The other listed railway sites are Woody Bay Station in Devon, Sheringham Station and Weybourne Station in Norfolk, and Cleveland Bay Proto-Railway Station in County Durham. *(BBC News, Hampshire & Isle of Wight, 24 September 2025)*

Theatre and former town hall to be auctioned off: Grade II-listed Ryde Theatre was originally used as Ryde's town hall after it was built in Lind Street between 1829 and 1831. It was damaged by fire in 1933, alterations and repairs were made afterwards and it was converted into a theatre between 1990 and 1991. The Isle of Wight Council sold the building in 2010 and agent Savills said it could be used in several ways, including as a boutique hotel, leisure destination, residential apartments or mixed-use. The building has a guide price of £650,000, ahead of the auction on 9 December. *(BBC News, Hampshire & Isle of Wight, 24 November 2025)*

Wiltshire

Investigation into fire at airfield closed: An investigation into a fire at a Grade II*-listed World War One aircraft hangar has been closed after "all lines of enquiry" were "exhausted", police have confirmed. The blaze gutted one of the hangars at the historic Old Sarum Airfield in April. The building was completely destroyed, alongside an adjacent restaurant and café. One person was initially arrested on suspicion of arson but was later released with no further action taken.

In a statement on Salisbury Police's Facebook page, Det Sgt Toni Nugent said: "We know this fire caused concern in the community, particularly as it destroyed a listed property. The fire report could not determine whether the fire was started deliberately or accidentally." Det Sgt Nugent thanked the "many people" who had shared footage of the incident, adding: "We followed all relevant lines of enquiry but could not identify any further suspects." She said while the investigation had dropped for now, the force would "of course investigate" if any new information came to light, and urged anyone with information to contact police.
(BBC News Wiltshire, 30 October 2025)

Brewery buildings conversion given go-ahead: Most of the industrial buildings on the former Victorian Wadworth brewery site in Devizes were demolished last month to make way for 102 new homes, with only the iconic red brick listed Wadworth building, White Lion pub and adjacent buildings remaining. Wiltshire Council has now given consent to change these into 23 new apartments, a house and commercial space, which developers hoped, alongside existing plans for the site, would create a new "cultural quarter" for the town. This would be on the northern portion of the site which, along with the revamp of the historic Assize Court as the new home for Wiltshire Museum to the west, would have the "regenerated heritage buildings at its heart". The plans include re-using specific artefacts from the site such as copper vessels, engines and brewery equipment, as part of the designs. *(BBC News Wiltshire, 21 November 2025)*

Miscellaneous news items from around the UK

World of Glass saved *(St Helen's Star, 24 September 2025)*

The **World of Glass** in St Helens has been saved after an "incredible" campaign, delighting locals and supporters alike. News of the centre's survival has sparked a wave of positive reactions across social media, as residents celebrate the preservation of a key part of the town's history. Many people highlighted the venue's importance, with one lady saying she is "looking forward to watching Johnny Vegas on 13th November supporting the cause. Others praised the venue's staff and unique experiences. Another lady said "We haven't got much for the children in St Helens, but that's certainly one my grand children love especially the sensory room.

Papplewick Pumping Station *(BBC News Nottinghamshire, 6 November 2025)*

A £580,000 repair project which finished last year has returned the Victorian steam-powered pumping station to a "wonderful condition". It has now been removed from Historic England's list of Heritage at Risk structures after being added to the register due to extensive structural issues, including degradation of its main chimney.

The Long Shop Museum, Suffolk *(BBC News Suffolk, 8 November 2025)*

Another museum which has been removed from the Heritage at Risk register is The Long Shop Museum at Leiston in Suffolk. The Victorian workshop was built in 1853 for the manufacturing of steam engines and agricultural machinery and it was the first purpose-built flow assembly line anywhere in the world. The museum received £1m from the Museum Estate and Development Fund as well as £350,000 from Historic England. The money was used to carry out roof and window repairs which were "in a very poor condition". The car park has also been upgraded: sewers and drains have been replaced.

Carpet Museum closure "like a bereavement" *(BBC News Hereford & Worcestershire, 20 November 2025)*

The Museum of Carpet, in Kidderminster, Worcestershire, has operated for 13 years and houses an extensive collection of objects, archives, books and photographs relating to 300 years of carpet history. Its closure was announced on 18th November and the chairman said revenue could no longer match the museum's running costs. He said: "In the last four or five years we have really struggled and we're about £30,000 to £50,000 short. Basically, the business model we have for keeping the museum going produces a demand on us in terms of what would be staff, utilities and general running costs for the building. It comes to about £100,000 for the year but generating income to match that has been very difficult over the years." The museum's reserves had gradually been run down and they have had to decide as a business model it is not financially viable any more. Despite the announcement The Carpet Museum Trust would still keep going and would look after the collections, hopeful that the museum could reopen again in the future.

Gas works unearth ancient marker stone under road *(BBC News Cornwall, 24 November 2025)*

A largely forgotten piece of history has been uncovered during gas pipe replacement works. Wales and West Utilities said workers exposed a granite marker stone buried beneath the road surface in Greenmarket in Penzance, Cornwall. The find has been identified as the site of the Borough Cross, which once marked the exact centre of the town. The original Borough Cross, which now stands outside Penlee House Gallery and Museum, was moved to make way for road widening in 1829, and a granite marker was embedded in the road to keep the historic centre visible.

Canal Jottings

Wey & Arun Canal Extension

The Wey and Arun Canal was an important strategic link between Littlehampton on the English south coast and London, joining the Rivers Wey south of Guildford and the Arun at Pulborough, a distance of almost 37km. The arrival of the railways caused it to decline and it closed eventually in 1871. In 1970, a group of enthusiasts formed what would eventually become the Wey and Arun Canal Trust with the long-term aim of restoring the whole canal. Considerable progress has been made in the last 55 years and the most recent step forward is the receipt of planning consent, after a five-year battle, for the Rooks Hill project. This involves extending the canal a further 800m south from the recently restored section at Birtley Green in Surrey. This will be done in three phases, which will include a new bridge, a new cut and a new lock. The first phase, the bridge, is costed at £286,000, for which fundraising is underway. *(AIA e-news Bulletin, July 2025)*

Monmouthshire & Brecon Canal's Future in Doubt

Whilst the dry spring and summer of 2025 has forced the temporary closure of many locks and stretches of canal in England, one Welsh canal is facing an even more uncertain future. The Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal runs for around 56km (35 miles) from Newport to Brecon, and is celebrating its 225th anniversary this year. It was built to transport iron and coal to Newport docks. Now run by the Canal & River Trust, it is facing a severe water shortage. 80%-90% of its water needs come from pumping supplies from the nearby Wye River but Dwr Cymru (Welsh Water) has placed limits on the amount of water that can be extracted from the river due to environmental concerns. A temporary agreement is in place between the two organisations but the Canal & River Trust faces having to pay commercial rates for pumping water from the river unless they can come to a long term arrangement with Welsh Water. The Welsh government said it recognised the value of the canal butany arrangement between the Canal & River Trust and Welsh Water would be a "commercial decision" in which it should play no part. *(AIA 'IA News' No. 210, Summer 2025)*

Historic Canal to be restored with £6.4m *(BBC News Gloucestershire, 4 November 2025)*

The money will be used to reinstate the "missing mile" of the Stroudwater Navigation, which was originally filled in during the 1960s to allow for the M5 motorway to be built. Stroud District Council and the Cotswold Canals Trust want to create an accessible towpath from Stroud to Gloucester which will act as a "wildlife corridor". The grant, from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, should take two to three years to complete but restoration work on the canal has been underway since 2006. More than 700 volunteers have worked on it so far.

Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust started environmental improvements along the route including work on new wetland habitats, hedgerow planting and restoring a traditional orchard. The Trust wants to preserve the waterway's heritage by keeping some original features. This latest grant brings the total of National Lottery investment into the Cotswold Canals Connected project to more than £16m. The main work on the project is set to start at the beginning of next year.

Grade II-listed goods yard renovation *(BBC News Derbyshire, 12 September 2025)*

Progress of work to transform a historic goods yard on the edge of Derby city centre into homes and commercial space has been revealed. Friar Gate Goods Yard, which was built in the 1870s as the main goods depot for Great Northern Railway, was left derelict for nearly 60 years. The restoration has revealed the original railway tracks and timber cobbles.

The developer's managing director, James Dickens, said: "It will be special. This building has got a soul and an identity. Local people have got a real connection to it, which is why it needs to be a public building. I want people to maintain that connection for it to stand the test of time going forward."

Plans for the site include 276 houses and a four-storey apartment building containing 49 apartments. The bonded warehouse will become a mixed-use public space, including a gym, coffee shops and a restaurant. It was essential for the history of the warehouse to be preserved.

Mr Dickens added: "That's why I wanted the site. It wasn't for the houses around it, it was for the warehouse itself. I really believe this is one of the top three landmarks in the city."

"We're all quite invested in it and some of my site team have really taken the project to heart, which is why we selected them for the project. We find something pretty much every day. We've uncovered the original rails that came into here. There were two train tracks that came into the building and four that approached the building itself. We're going to make a feature of those, obviously.

"There's timber cobbles, because there were horses dragging the carriages in, and it was obviously softer on their hooves. There's all sorts of weird and wonderful things that we find as we go through it. We've got a water tank that we thought originally served the building, but actually it was to feed the headers of the engines."

The assistant manager of the project, Tony Austin, said: "The only challenge was the curved houses to match the corner of the bonded warehouse. We wanted to do it a little bit quirky, something that stands out. Not just a house, but something you look at and remember."

The entire £80m project is anticipated to be completed by the end of 2028.

Hampshire Industrial Archaeology Society

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HIAS Insurance terms – Please note:
Members are not covered for Personal Accident but are covered for third party liability

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Twyford Waterworks Trust: *www.twyfordwaterworks.co.uk*
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The Society for Industrial Archeology (USA)

Angela Smith

It's strange how things occur out of the blue. In the spring I was on a cruise to the Western Mediterranean, prompted by my neighbour who suggested I needed a break after Nigel's death in January. Since 2006 we had cruised almost every year with UK company Noble Caledonia which specialises in 'small ship' cruising. Their own two ships carry 118 passengers. I wasn't hopeful of finding something I liked at short notice but fortunately they had one cabin for sole use on the *Hebridean Sky* on this 8-day cruise focussing on archaeology. It appeared that this itinerary had not appealed to the British, so it was advertised in the USA concentrating on universities and colleges. There were 19 passengers from the UK and the rest were Americans. At the obligatory 'Captain's Welcome Dinner' I found myself seated at a table for two with a youngish American lady and we began discussing our interests. One of the companies involved with the USA tour was called the Archeological Institute of America Tours (AIA) so I said we had an AIA in the UK and explained all about it. As luck would have it, I had recently received the latest emailed AIA bulletin, so forwarded it to her straight away. Whether or not this had anything to do with an item in the summer *IA News* I'll never know, but there was an article about the American equivalent which included information on what their SIA does.

The Society for Industrial Archeology (SIA) is the premier organization for industrial heritage, history, and archeology in North America. Since its founding in 1972, the SIA has built a dedicated community of people and organizations – our members and supporters – interested in these topics. This open, diverse, and distinguished group gathers regularly to share new information about the development, history, and preservation of industrial heritage sites at conferences and tours, through our publications, and as part of other types of programs. SIA programs support new and original studies that advance knowledge in the field of Industrial Heritage, including the identification, documentation, analysis, interpretation, and preservation of cultural resources that are associated with the history and development of industrial society. The SIA encourages participation by both avocational and professional members, and by other people and organizations that are engaged in the stewardship of industrial heritage resources. Our activities include an annual conference, an annual tour, a newsletter, and a refereed journal. For more information on the SIA please go to our website at https://www.sia-web.org/.

FRIENDS of KING ALFRED BUSES

New Year's Day, Thursday 1 January 2026
Several of our *King Alfred* buses will be operating over the former routes in Winchester from about 9:30am.
Programme and timetable available on the day.

May Bank Holiday, Monday 4 May 2026
All our *King Alfred* buses from the 1950s, 1960s, 1970s, and earlier!
joined by other preserved buses will be operating around the city and beyond from Winchester Broadway in the
Original King Alfred Buses Running Day.
A souvenir programme and timetable will be available on the day and to order in advance from the website *kingalfredbuses.org.uk*

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

My thanks to the contributors for items used in this issue. Other articles have been extracted from websites, magazines, regional newspapers, and especially the BBC News 'red button text'. The next *Focus* is planned for June 2026, so the final deadline will be the May meeting, please, if you want to pass items in person. My contact details can be found on the previous page.

Angela Smith