Hampshire Industrial Archaeology Society

Focus

on Industrial Archaeology

No. 99 June 2023

The Association for Industrial Archaeology

The following items have been extracted from the AIA's Winter 2022 "IA News" bulletin and e-bulletins from January and April, 2023.

Crofton Beam Engines: Saving the Archimedes Screw (*IA News*, Winter 2023)

Crofton Pumping Station was built in 1807-09 to supply water to the highest point of the Kennet & Avon Canal. The Crofton Beam Engines are magnificent examples of technology from the age of steam. There is also an example of an earlier technology, based on theories and practice from the ancient world, on display alongside the early 19th century engine house. The Archimedes screw pump on display at Crofton was recovered from the Kennet & Avon Canal during dredging of the Hungerford Basin in 1973. Refurbishment for exhibition was originally undertaken by Sigmund Pulsometer Pumps Ltd of Reading and arrived at Crofton in 2010 where it was installed in a custom-built shelter to offer protection from the worst of the elements. Despite this shelter, the pump was showing signs of distress and had been used as a home by wildlife. By 2019 there were clear signs of decay, making it a candidate for professional restoration. A conservation report confirmed that it needed treatment to halt further deterioration. Funds were raised and a team from the Historic Metalwork Conservation Company carried out the conservation work during August and September 2021. Advice was given on future care and fine mesh was fitted at both ends to keep out any further small visitors looking for a home. Thus, a rare survivor of the early canal age has been preserved for future visitors to Crofton.

New award for Bennerley Viaduct (e-News January 2023)

AIA was delighted to learn that a recently completed project to restore Bennerley viaduct and reopen it for pedestrians and cyclists has been honoured with a Chairman's Special Award at the 2022 National Railway Heritage Awards. The award was presented by HRH The Duke of Gloucester at a ceremony held at the Merchant Taylor's Hall in London in December. Bennerley Viaduct is an engineering marvel, standing 20m above the Erewash Valley, spanning 400m between Nottinghamshire to Derbyshire, the longest wrought iron viaduct in the UK. This Grade 2*-listed structure was built in 1877 by the Great Northern Railway Company and was one of only 25 sites globally chosen for inclusion in the 2020 World Monuments Watch.

Reprieve for London's gas lamps? (e-news January 2023)

We reported in the January 2022 edition of this bulletin on the opposition to Westminster Council's plans to replace some of its historic gas lamps with LED versions. Various bodies joined this campaign, and a dedicated protest group was formed, called London Gasketeers. Some news outlets have reported a U-turn, but a statement from Westminster Council implies that the plans have just been paused while they seek to resolve reliability problems with the existing gas-powered lights.

More challenges to railway bridge infilling (e-news April 2023)

Last year we reported the decision by a local council and planning authority to order the removal of concrete that had been used by the UK Government agency National Highways to infill a railway bridge at Great Musgrave in Cumbria. This controversial practice has been dealt a fresh blow after King's Lynn and West Norfolk council told National Highways it must apply for retrospective planning permission if it wants to retain hundreds of tonnes of aggregate and concrete used to bury Congham Bridge, east of King's Lynn. Campaigners point out that the work blocks a disused railway due to be repurposed as a walking and cycling route between King's Lynn and Fakenham, a project that received £657,000 in government funding earlier this year. Meanwhile, Selby District Council (soon to become part of North Yorkshire Council) is in discussions with National Highways over similar work that has blocked a railway bridge at Newton Kyme.

AIA's 50th Anniversary Conference (e-news April 2023)

AIA's 50th Anniversary Conference will take place at the University of Bath in September. Another institution celebrating its Golden Jubilee this year is the Ironbridge Gorge Museum's Blists Hill Victorian Town, in Shropshire. Amongst the events marking this is a talk about the museum's creation and early days, given by its first Director, Sir Neil Cossons, on 19 July. Ironbridge Gorge Museums have also published a new blog about the history of Blists Hill as part of their celebrations.

HAMPSHIRE INDUSTRIAL ARCHAEOLOGY SOCIETY

(formerly Southampton University Industrial Archaeology Group)

Meetings – July to December 2023

July 3	**Floating Bridges of Hampshire and the Isle of Wight** – *Jim Beckett*
August 7	**Brassey, Locke, Tite: Railway Pioneers in Hampshire and their lasting legacy** – *Dave Allen*
September 4	**The Mills Archive Trust: what is it, what it does and why it is valuable** – *Ashok Vaidya*
October 2	**Constructing the Severn Tunnel, 1872 – 1886** – *Roger Davies*
November 6	**Annual General Meeting**
December 4	**SS Shieldhall: Keeping a 67 year old vessel operational** – *Graham Mackenzie*

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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Spitfire AA810: 'Final push' appeal in peat bog plane's rebuild

(BBC News, Hampshire & the Isle of Wight, 28 April 2023, written by Indy Almroth-Wright)

A group of volunteers restoring a Spitfire pulled from a peat bog in Norway have appealed for help as they rebuild it to fly again. Spitfire AA810 was shot down in March 1942 during a mission to photograph German battleship Tirpitz. Pilot Flt Lt Alastair "Sandy" Gunn bailed out but was captured, imprisoned and later executed after the Stalag Luft III "Great Escape". It is being rebuilt on the Isle of Wight.

The plane, an unarmed Photographic Reconnaissance Unit (PRU) Spitfire, was found in June 2018 by engineer and founder of the Spitfire AA810 project Tony Hoskins after years of research. He said: "This will be the earliest military unarmed reconnaissance aeroplane that will be airworthy. The reason we think it's really special is it's the only aeroplane relating to anybody who was in the Great Escape to survive." The plane's remains arrived at Airframe Assemblies on the Isle of Wight in September 2019 after a small team of volunteers and local residents dug the warplane out of the peat bog by hand. Each piece had to be carried down the mountainside to the village of Surnadal in Norway.

Mr Hoskins said: "We got about 70% of the aeroplane out – it had hit flat onto the ground on top of snow which year on year slowly pressed it into the bog. It had been reduced to 25 inches from 45 inches tall – it was a very flat, squashed Spitfire." Some parts had been repurposed by villagers including its starter motor, which was found powering an electric fence for the cows in the village. Parts recovered were cleaned up and laid out in the village hall and a "show and tell" held for people who had grabbed bits of the wreck over the years to bring their finds in for the team to photograph and record.

Some donated their pieces to the rebuild "but others took them back again", Mr Hoskins said. The plane, which was built at Vincents Garage, Reading, and first flew from Henley-on-Thames on 17 October 1941, was then packed into a van and returned to the UK after 77 years. The parts were first taken to RAF Benson where Auchterarder-born Sandy Gunn had been based. Months of sorting and cataloguing began and once the rights to the wreckage needed were gained the hundreds of pieces were boxed up and taken to the Isle of Wight in September 2019 to be restored to fly again.

Mr Hoskins said: "About 23-30% of the aeroplane is going to be original AA810 that flew on that last day in March 1942. I'm trying to get as many original manufactured parts from other Spitfires and the flight critical parts are brand new." Original parts go through a rigorous period of inspection and testing before being incorporated into the plane. Any new parts are being made through reverse engineering. It will be fitted with cameras which are planned to be fully working.

"I am going all out to fly it by the end of the summer 2024. It is the anniversary year of the Great Escape, it's the year that we hope to unveil a national monument in London and it's the anniversary of the murder of Sandy Gunn. It's a very important thing to me personally for the aeroplane to be finished and flying in 2024."

A company to operate the aeroplane has been formed including a chief pilot with the Spitfire based at a publicly accessible museum at an airfield where it can be seen and flown from. The project is currently looking for sponsors to raise the £1.25m remaining to finish the plane "to the point of it sitting there with a full tank of fuel ready to go and fly", Mr Hoskins said.

"We're looking for individuals or companies that want to help us with the final push to get the aeroplane up in the air by sponsoring a switch or a rudder or the overhaul of something. It doesn't matter how little or how much ... or if people have original Spitfire parts that they would like to see be considered for inclusion in the aeroplane and be happy for us to take for inspection we'd be delighted to hear from them. Sandy Gunn's family have sponsored the rudder pedals. The cowlings are going to cost £50,000 so we have created 500 spaces on the inside panel if people want to have their name in the aeroplane," Mr Hoskins said.

Reports on Meetings, December 2022 to April 2023

Carol Burdekin

After the usual announcements, the Chairman introduced **December's** speaker, HIAS's Honorary President, **Bill White**. Bill's talk was on his very own personal reflections of his life-long interest in Industrial Archaeology. Bill said that the Group has now been going for quite some time, originating out of Southampton University's Department of Extra-mural Studies in 1965.

It was in 1939 that Bill and his sister Barbara were evacuated to Yeovil in Somerset from Southampton, which was being bombed relentlessly owing to its importance in the war effort. They first lived in a house opposite the Railway Station, then Bill's grandfather took a house next door, which was originally used as a Toll House, and could have well planted the seeds for Bill's life-long interest in I.A. After the war, Bill did a two-year course at the Technical College, then a five-year apprenticeship as a bricklayer, and followed that with two years in the RAF. He spent some time in Egypt including about eighteen months alongside the Suez Canal.

By this time it was the 1970s and Bill was firmly hooked on I.A, starting to collect anything appertaining to the subject, examples of which he brought along to the meeting. Whilst browsing in a local bookshop, Bill had picked up a folder of drawings of plans for a house designed by H H Holmes, an architectural student, circa 1920. These were for R J Mitchell [1895-1937], the British aircraft designer, who worked for Supermarine and designed the Spitfire. We were able to have a look at these during the break, although they were quite old now and on the delicate side, so we had to be a bit careful handling them. One of the drawings depicted one of the cooks in the canteen, a Miss Edwards, who was working for Vickers at the time. Bill showed these drawings to one of the "Supermariners", who have their own archive, and Bill kindly let him have some of them for their collection. If you remember, we had a very interesting talk from Dave Key on "Vickers-Supermarine at Hursley" in May 2022.

Bill showed us other various bits and pieces that he had collected over the years, including a theatre programme signed by James Stewart, and one of four posters picked up in an antique shop during one of Edwin's trips to Cranbrook Windmill advertising the film "Out of Africa" with Meryl Streep and Robert Redford. Bill also brought along some vinyl records and explained that during WW2 the Americans came up with "Armed Forces Radio Services" as a way of entertaining the troops. Amongst these was one by Glenn Miller and his band, who was extremely popular on both sides of the Atlantic at the time.

Bill's love of the cinema was not left out, and he brought along a book he had written with Sheila Jemima and Donald Hyslop in 1996 titled "Dream Palaces" for us to look at. Another one of Bill's I.A books was one of the story of Edwin Rowland Moon, a pioneer aviator, racing driver, and during the war a Squadron Leader in the RAF, and for which he had contributed information.

Bill ended his very interesting talk and reminiscences with an unusual brick he had brought along. It was produced by the London Brick Company for the Royal Wedding in 1981 with Charles & Diana embossed in the middle. Although there were not as many members present as usual, we did have a very entertaining evening with mince pies in the break, it being the last meeting before Christmas. So thanks to Bill for sharing his life interest in I.A with us, who is not only our Honorary President, but has been the SUIAG/HIAS Chairman at least six times over the years.

Our first speaker of the New Year for our **January** meeting was **Jeff Martin**, a member of the Bursledon Local History Group and an archaeologist, who came along to talk to us about the ***History of the River at Bursledon***. Accompanied by some new and old photos, plus maps, we learned that Bursledon has always had close ties to the sea. The Elephant Boatyard which is located in Old Bursledon dates back to when Henry VIII's fleet was built, evidenced by submerged remnants found in the Hamble River. The Elephant Boatyard and the Jolly Sailor Pub were both used in the filming of "Howards' Way, a popular 1980s BBC soap opera. However, before that there is also evidence of Roman involvement, plus a bit later the salt industry, which was an important export for the area, and there is still a lane called "Saltern's". Other pubs mentioned were the The Red Lion, and the Swan, which were on either side of the river providing refreshments for those crossing the river. In the 1700s Bursledon's population was only about 200, but only topped 600 in the 19th Century.

Bursledon was an important shipbuilding area, as it was a safe location, allowing an early warning of a potential attack. It had deep water, plus a plentiful supply of timber. The first Royal ship to be built there was the "St George" in 1338, launched by the then King, Edward III. The "Grace Dieu", which was the largest ship ever built in the 1400s in England, was laid up at Bursledon, and her remains are now a protected wreck in the river today.

An important area, especially in the time of war, as merchant shipbuilders were offered lucrative contracts to build ships for the navy, but also risky, and many went bankrupt. In the 1600s, William Wyatt successfully built an 80-gun ship, and in the 1740s Philemon Ewer [died 1750] was another successful Bursledon naval shipbuilder, and there is a monument to him in the Parish Church featuring a model of one of the ships he built, the "Ansom".

Another successful shipbuilder was George Parsons, who built Nelson's 74-gun Flagship the "Elephant" which Nelson chose in 1801 as his Flagship at the Battle of Copenhagen, due to its suitability for the shallow waters there.

The only way to cross the river in the 1800s was by a wooden toll bridge, now the A27, built as part of a road scheme between Portsmouth and Southampton. By the 1870s the shipbuilding industry had disappeared, and the main industry now was arable agriculture. A railway bridge was built in the 1880s, but had problems with landslips during construction. The railway led to a boom in the strawberry producing industry, but this did cut off many houses from the river which, consequently, changed the landscape. Another industry was coal, which brought that and other commodities to the area using sailing boats from the north of the country down to Bursledon Pool to be distributed, which included taking coal by barge to Botley. Jeff also told us about smugglers hiding their contraband in tombs in the local churchyard.

A photo of Bursledon today showed it divided by the road, but still referred to as a "village" on the River Hamble, and in the borough of Eastleigh, which is close to Southampton. It still has a railway station, a marina, dockyards, and the iconic Bursledon Windmill, built in 1814, replacing an earlier post mill built in 1768. Another important feature is Bursledon Brickworks, which was founded in 1897, and produced the famous "Fareham red brick". Today it survives with the help of volunteers as the last example of a Victorian steam-powered brickworks in the country, now run by Hampshire Buildings Preservation Trust. If you remember, we had a very interesting talk on the Brickworks given by Dr Carolyne Haynes in July 2022.

Our thanks to Jeff for a comprehensive and enlightening talk on the Bursledon River and its surrounds. This was especially interesting to those of us who do not live in the Southampton area, and were not aware about how important Bursledon River had been in the past for its close ties to the sea, and its many riverside activities over the centuries.

Unfortunately Nick Braddock, who was due to come along to our **February 2023** meeting to speak to us on the "King George V Graving Dock", was unwell, but the Chairman has arranged for him to come along to give us his talk next year. It was too late to arrange another speaker, so Rob showed us a very interesting YouTube film which was an oral history of London's Dock Workers focussing on the history of the people who worked on the docks from the 1930s up until the docks closing from the 1970s. The children from the Riverside and Westminster Cathedral Primary Schools, which have links to the docks, explored the history of the docks, and in the process gained skills enabling them to produce an exhibition and oral history based documentary film which we watched.

The children interviewed elderly retired dock workers, as well as the children and relations of the men and women who had worked in the docks during the 1930s until its closure in the 1980s. The film explored their working lives and how the docks had shaped whole communities in this part of London for centuries until they closed.

For hundreds of year, people living along the river in East and Southeast London found work loading and unloading ships, and these workers have had a huge influence on the history of London and on the labour movement. This oral history project produced by the Riverside & Westminster Cathedral Primary Schools, looked at and interviewed local people who were dock workers, stevedores and tally workers etc. Exploring their lives, and listening to their testimonies and learning how the docks had shaped their lives, as well as the local communities. The children also worked with the Museum of London Docklands, historians and actors to further explore their history. The children met, and interviewed, about twenty-four older and retired workers, and the edited interviews have given us a fascinating insight into these peoples' lives, and experiences, which resulted in the children producing a creative and historical record for posterity.

Some of the key dates the interviewees talked about was "The Dockers Tanner Strike" in **1889** when thousands of impoverished unskilled dock workers went on strike for improved wages and better working conditions. This successful strike led to the first Dockers' Union. **1936** saw the "Battle of Cable Street", where thousands of dock workers stood with the Jewish Community in East London to resist a march of the British Fascists led by Oswald Mosley. Throughout **WW2**, the Dockers worked continuously despite the appalling conditions and danger as the docks were targeted by the German Luftwaffe with concentrated massive bombing raids on the docks. In **1948** the National Dock Labour Board was established that improved the condition of dock workers, which included fallback pay in the event there was no work. The Devlin report published in **1967** condemned working conditions in London Docks, and the unions fought to improve the working conditions. In **1972** "The Pentonville Five", dock workers who organised a strike to protect their jobs, were imprisoned in Pentonville under new industrial labour legislation, but under pressure from mass protests, and the threat of a general strike, were released. In **1989** the Government abolished the National Dock Labour Scheme and dock workers lost their security, and it was this that finally led to the end of the docks in London. This, along with other factors including the introduction of containers and container ships which were too large to get up the Thames. Dock work then moved down the Thames to Tilbury, and other ports around the country. By the 1980s the docks had closed, and the areas became derelict and run-down. The last vessel to be loaded left on the 7th December 1981.

What we now know as London Docklands is the riverfront and former docks located in inner east and southeast London incorporating the boroughs of Southwark, Tower Hamlets, Lewisham, Newham and Greenwich. The docks were formerly part of the Port of London and, at one time, the world's largest port. The

Docklands regeneration is now mainly commercial and residential use. This redevelopment has created wealth but has also, understandably, some conflict between the new and old communities in the area.

If any of you would like to look at this film again, or for those who haven't seen it, go to "On the Docks – YouTube" or www.thamesdockers.org.uk and I am sure you will agree that the school children's project was an important oral history exercise, which was well executed, and entertaining.

Our speaker for our **March** meeting was **Neil Kearns** who came along to talk to us about ***Railways around Romsey from the 1950s***. Neil had worked on the railways for over 43 years and was very knowledgeable on his chosen subject, presenting a comprehensive and detailed account of his life on the railways in and around Romsey.

Romsey Station was built by the London & South Western Railway on its line from Eastleigh to Salisbury, and opened in March 1847, serving the small market town of Romsey, and is on the Wessex Main Line at the junction for the Eastleigh to Romsey Line. It became a junction in 1865 when the Andover and Redbridge Railway – also known as the "Sprat & Winkle Line" – which our previous Chairman, Howard Sprenger, alluded to when talking to us about the preservation of the Romsey Signal Box. This joined the earlier route just east of the station before diverging at Kimbridge Junction, a short distance to the north, and on the way to Andover. There is a subway connecting the two platforms, which was added in 1887. The waiting room has a fine selection of old framed photographs to the mid 20th Century and, of course, the Romsey Signal Box, which has been preserved by volunteers and opens twice a month to the public. The Signal Box dates from about 1873, and closed in 1982. The station is a Grade II Listed Building, and the Stationmaster's house was extended to the west in the 1860s with the waiting room on the opposite platform, which was probably about this time. Originally operated by the Great Western Railway, the station was transferred to the South Western Railway in 2020.

Neil went on to talk about the history of the Railways around Romsey, accompanied by a fine selection of photographs of the early steam trains, to the modern ones we see today, plus descriptions of their type and class. South Western Railway now operates a "figure of six" service running from Salisbury to Romsey, and Southampton via Redbridge, then from there to Eastleigh and back to Romsey via Chandlers Ford. The line to Eastleigh via Chandlers Ford resumed regular passenger services in 2003. The Andover Line was a victim of the Beeching cuts in 1964, and the Eastleigh route closed to passengers in 1969, but remained open to freight. The first line through Romsey was opened to passengers in 1847 between Bishopstoke [Eastleigh] and Milford [Salisbury], with the opening of a branch to Redbridge in 1865. A signal box was required to control the new junction and, as mentioned, Romsey Signal Box, now preserved, was built 1873.

Neil also talked about the sort of freight which was carried by these local trains including fresh fruit and vegetables, beer from Strong's Brewery and oil from Fawley, plus Westbury to Salisbury carried coal. Excursions for families at weekends was introduced and, today, some of the old railway line, including through Stockbridge, is now the Test Way footpath. Neil also said that the Romsey line is good for diverting trains from other local lines when carrying out repairs and engineering works. Neil ended his talk by showing us some excellent photographs of the inside of the preserved Romsey Signal Box, informing us that the number of levers in the box was increased in 1884 to eighteen levers, and then after WW1 the box was extended.

As it was a talk on railways, which are always popular, a good number of members turned up, as well as some visitors, who are always welcome, so thanks to Neil for an enjoyable evening.

It was nice to arrive at our **April** meeting in the daylight, after the last few months of dark winter evenings. We had a good turnout for **Stephen Hoadley's** talk on ***Flying Boats: To the Ends of the Empire & Back***, and were pleased to see a few new faces, with one now a new member of HIAS.

The age of flying boats was not that long, barely sixty years, but during their short life it was Southampton and its Empire Flying Boats that led the way in this type of technology. These early flying boats were luxurious, but expensive, so not affordable to all. Stephen did give us some idea of the cost of the air fare, which was, unsurprisingly, high although it seems there were a lot of passengers who were having their air fare paid for them, as they were being sent to the far-flung reaches of the Empire to work. Some space was taken up by the GPO's mail and parcels, which was expensive, but hugely popular, and was subsidised by the Government. This consisted of tons of mail and parcels every year, which kept those working thousands of miles away in touch with family and friends in the UK, and a good and steady income for the owners, Imperial Airways.

Imperial Airways was formed in 1924 by the amalgamation of four smaller companies, after the Government decided that merging these smaller companies would be advantageous in creating something big and strong enough to develop Britain's air service, and counter strong emerging competition from other countries, mainly the USA. In 1936 Imperial Airways began using Southampton as its terminal for a fleet of Short-built "Empire" Flying Boats, each aircraft carrying twenty-four passengers, plus the mail, over eight-hundred miles. Originally flying to Egypt from Berth 101 in the Western Docks, it then went further afield to South Africa, Australia and Asia until, in 1938 a new terminal was opened at berth 108. In 1938 Imperial Airways became BOAC [British Overseas Airways Corporation]. These aeroplanes were able to take off and alight at night owing to a "flare path" on the water.

A flying boat could go about two-hundred miles before needing to be re-fuelled, so consequently a long flight could take up to about eight days. It may seem a long time to us, but the passengers were put up in hotels for the night, and served "proper" meals since the food on board the aircraft was cold, as there were no facilities for cooking or hot water. The hot water was brought aboard at the beginning of the flight in thermos flasks, so a "proper" meal must have been very welcome, as well as the excitement of landing on a sun-warmed stretch of water for lunch or tea. The Captains of the aircraft were highly qualified, some being mariners, but sadly one of the worst accidents was one which killed fifty-eight people. A flying boat's "hull was too weak to withstand hard landings", and flotsam was also a problem.

Stephen's photographs, although excellent, were mainly in black and white, with one or two in colour, but it gave us a good idea of what the Empire Flying Boat looked like, and its later siblings, the Sunderland and the Sandringham. As the larger and stronger of the three, the Sunderland was used in WW2 on submarine patrol in the Atlantic, but was a sitting duck for fighter planes, as it was difficult to hide when re-fuelling or being repaired.

After the war, land planes dominated with their increased range and speed – in other words, technology now bypassed the flying boat, whose time had been fairly short anyway, with only forty-two Empire Flying Boats being built. There were those who were fortunate to have flown in one including well known people like Sir Winston Churchill, and the playwright Sir Terence Rattigan, etc. These people were amongst many who were fortunate enough to experience one of aviation's most romantic periods.

Applause and a big thank you to Stephen for coming along and telling us about the history of the iconic Flying Boat and, although its time was not that long, it did span a time when flying was deemed a luxury. Stephen ended by saying that his interest in Flying Boats was fuelled by his father, who was the architect of the building which now houses the Solent Sky Museum in Southampton.

The largest exhibit is the Short Brothers Sandringham "Beachcomber", which is similar to the Empire flying boats and visitors are allowed on the flight deck, under supervision. It was one of SUIAG's former members, the late John Bagley, who organised the move of *Beachcomber* to the museum when the building was being constructed in 1983, after the flying boat was purchased by the Science Museum. John was responsible for the Science Museum's aeronautical collection. If you are wondering how it was moved inside – it wasn't! The building was constructed around it. Other exhibits are from locally-based aviation companies including a Mk24 Supermarine Spitfire, Supermarine S6A from the 1929 Schneider Trophy and the world's only jet fighter flying boat, Saunders-Roe SR.A/1. Arriving shortly, and to be displayed outside in the car park, is a Britten-Norman Trislander from the Aurigny company, which used to fly to the Channel Islands. See – www.solentsky.org

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John Sydney Christmas

John Christmas passed away at his home on December 26th 2022 and his funeral took place at Portchester Crematorium on Monday February 20th, attended by a number of HIAS and HMG members.

In the Spring 2023 Hampshire Mills Group newsletter, Ruth Andrews wrote:-

"We are very sad to announce the sudden death of John Christmas in late December 2022. John was a long-time member of both **HMG**, serving as Technical Advisor, and of **HIAS**, formerly SUIAG, where he was Project Manager for a long period. His skill and technical knowledge will be sorely missed. He went on all the SUIAG and HMG study tours (holidays!).

John had been ill on and off for quite a long time and had spent several weeks in hospital in the autumn. However, he appeared recently to be fine.

I will miss John. When I first joined SUIAG (now HIAS), knowing nobody, I sat next to him on a coach trip and found him very interesting, and later I joined the 'Heavy Gang' where we coined the phrase 'waiting for Christmas' as he was not the most punctual of gentlemen. He was known for having his car absolutely crammed full of stuff (with the dog squeezed on top!)."

Dave Plunkett writes:- "What a very sad Christmas shock! JC, as he was known to many in Hampshire, was a renowned water engineer of the highest standard in my view. He was immensely knowledgeable on water control issues at mills and it was a joy to discuss the finer points of molinology with him. I had known him for over 40 years and he was always a private man in personal life.

Crux Easton Wind Engine was a late passion for him to which he devoted an enormous amount of time and effort to restore to working order. Lots of mills – water, tidal and wind-powered – as well other IA projects in this county, are proud of the expertise he brought to restore and maintain them. We shall certainly miss him into the future when it comes to maintaining existing restored mills and their machinery".

Angela Smith has researched through the pages of SUIAG/HIAS newsletters since 1973. John's first active involvement was recorded in July 1983 when SUIAG was carrying out excavations at Brownwich Farm and John organised the hire of pumps and a generator. He was elected to the Committee at the November 1987 AGM. The first article about Crux Easton was July 1992. In 1994 he became the co-opted Project Manager on the Committee and I noted that he "worked for Southern Water and had a store shed in the Western Docks adjacent to the sewage works where he kept HMG stores". He ceased to be listed on the HIAS Committee from December 2012, but remained on the HMG newsletter as Technical Advisor up to the Winter 2022 edition.

Twyford Waterworks Trust

www.twyfordwaterworks.co.uk

Registered Charity No. 291720

Ian Harden

Twyford Waterworks has been exceptionally busy since last season, not only from the Trust's point of view but also from that of Southern Water. Several water mains bursts during the winter, uncomfortably close to our end of the supply network, led to the unusual sight of numerous tankers filling up with clean water round the clock for distribution at emergency sites in the affected areas. As a result, the gravel and tarmac surfaces around the front of the buildings suffered considerably and required extensive remedial attention which was thankfully completed shortly before the start to our Open Day season on 30th April.

Combined with the Friends of King Alfred Buses running day on Bank Holiday Monday, we received almost 1000 visitors, a slight reduction on 2022 but, as we knew from experience what to expect, a welcome one under the circumstances. The Hampshire Chronicle published a photographic special shortly afterwards, providing some excellent publicity for the Trust.

Last year a defibrillator was purchased for the site and located on the side of the Kiosk building and a further training session for volunteers has been arranged for mid June. In recent weeks Health and Safety and fire risk reviews have been carried out.

During the winter maintenance period, the steam team had a particularly busy time working to improve the sealing of the water tube end caps on the 1906 Babcock boiler. With 128 caps in total, each with two faces, this was an extremely lengthy task but was completed in good time for the necessary trial steamings in the spring including the annual insurance certification.

The Internal Combustion team meanwhile concentrated mostly on maintenance of the small portable engine collection and overhaul of the engine and gearbox of the Lister Blackstone locomotive on long time loan from Hereford Waterworks Museum. Good progress is being made with reassembly of the refurbished components of the latter and the hope is that it should be back in operation later this summer. When not pressed into duty alongside the IC chaps, the Industrial Railway volunteers have somehow found time for track maintenance and sleeper replacement on the meadow running line.

With the open day season now well under way, future dates for your diaries are June 4th, July 2nd, August 6th, September 3rd and October 1st.

Southampton Tram Project

Angela Smith

Well, as Robbie Burns said to a poor mouse, "the best laid plans o' mice an' men often go awry". And this has certainly happened with the tram project recently. With the organisation of our third Model Tram Event at Solent Sky on the June 17/18 weekend being ably put together by our volunteer Paul Coles, all that remained to be done was try to paint some lining-out on Car 11 and perhaps be able to remove, even temporarily, some scaffolding around the end facing the workshop door. The paint on the outside panels between the roof and top of the lower deck windows needed a lot of repair work after many years of neglect, and this was coming on well recently, even to the point where transfers, printed by Paul, for ornate end lining was applied.

And then came the bombshell. Alan Jones, Director of Solent Sky Museum, announced on May 11th that Britten-Norman had decided that the Trislander owned by the museum, which was stored at HMS Daedalus airfield, needed to be moved to the museum "soon". They had offered to dismantle it, move it to the museum and reassemble it free of charge. The move had been known about for a few weeks, but Alan apologised to us that things had moved faster than he thought. The only problem was that, to site it behind the museum in the car park, two 40ft containers with the museum's archives were stacked on top of each other and had to be moved first. And the only place available was where our tram store shed was sited alongside our workshop.

Things then happened very quickly. From May 12th our work parties began moving the stores, shelving, cupboards, etc, into any spaces we could find in the workshop. A 40ft container was purchased for us and craned into the small car park behind the workshop on May 15th at the same time as the store shed was mostly demolished. Help was given by a couple of 'heavies' to move long baulks of timber into the container. We have now cleared the front of the workshop to enable the tram event to take place safely, but then it will be gradually moving everything into the container. The two museum containers were moved and we now await the Trislander.

In the previous report I mentioned our Lisbon tram 715 was hired last June by Netflix for a major film. We had been asked not to publicise this but, as the release date is August 11th, I feel it is safe to reveal that it is a spy thriller akin to James Bond called *Heart of Stone.* The lead character is Rachel Stone played by actress Gal Gadot, with co-stars Jamie Dornan and Bollywood's Alia Bhatt. It was Alia who was filmed inside 715. Trailers on YouTube show a frantic car chase in Lisbon on the hilly tram route No. 28 which 715 was built for, ending with a motorbike crashing into a car. I guess the clip in 715 will be a 'blink and you'll miss it' sequence!

Grant awarded for Bursledon Brickworks' roof

Press release by Carolyne Haynes, Museum Director

Work is well underway on replacing the roof sheets over the kiln and should be complete by the end of March, weather permitting. The Museum has spent years trying to resolve the issue and has at last been successful. After liaising with Historic England, we were advised to put the kiln on the At Risk Register. This opened up potential grant funding which we were successful in applying for. Historic England is paying for 80% of the roof repairs and Hampshire County Council is providing the matched funding. As it is part of the Grade II* listed curtilage, the new roofing material will look very like the original fibre cement – just a different, less dangerous fibre. We are also improving the drainage from the roof to control the water that is currently pouring onto the main courtyard. Thanks to the volunteers who undertook the massive task of clearing all the timber that had collected on the fuelling floor over the years, ready for work to begin.

The new roof should be good for a further 30 years and help to preserve the kiln into the future. It is one of the few remaining Staffordshire Kilns left in the country. More properly known as a Staffordshire Transverse arched Continuous Kiln, it was built with twelve separate chambers set in two rows of six, back-to-back. Built of brick, each chamber was constructed with a barrel-vaulted ceiling. The use of arches as the main construction meant that they didn't have to use mortar to hold the bricks in place. Arches are inherently strong once the last, or key, brick is in place. Continuous kilns were economic to run. Unlike intermittent kilns they never went out and the heat from the chambers that were firing was used to pre-heat the chambers waiting to be fired.

Fuel was dropped in from the fuelling floor above every fifteen minutes or so. Three chambers were fired at a time and the fire rotated round the whole kiln on a day-by-day basis. It took roughly 14 days to complete a whole cycle. Once a burning chamber had reached the right temperature it was allowed to go out. A slow process of cooling followed, bringing cold air in from a chamber that was being emptied.

The kiln at Bursledon originally had a brick structure on top with a double pitched roof over the fuelling floor. This made the working environment very hostile, as each time the fuelling holes were opened, the kiln workers breathed in hot gases that were released. In the 1960s the pitched roofs were replaced with a big open-sided pitched roof. This covering included a small amount of asbestos, which was a popular roofing material at that time, but sixty years later started to break down and threatened to contaminate the fuelling floor below, hence the need for the repairs.

(Thanks to Bursledon Brickworks volunteer Jim Beckett for forwarding this item)

This item caught your editor's attention while watching BBC Breakfast on Sunday May 28th

Printing museum collection seeking permanent home in Norwich

BBC News, Norfolk, 26 May 2023 *(Debbie Tubby and Mariam Issimdar)*

A permanent building is being sought to house one of the country's largest collections of printing presses, typesets and printed material. The Norwich Printing Museum has been homeless for four years, with most items stored at a Norfolk farm. It was previously housed at Norwich's John Jarrold Printing Museum, and included artefacts from the early Jarrold print works. The museum was eventually demolished for housing in 2019. A few items from the collection are on show at the Blickling Estate, in north Norfolk.

Paul Nash, chairman of the Norwich Printing Museum Trust, said the building being sought had to be very large. "It has to be a good industrial sort of building and it has to have good access to bring large machinery in," he said. "And it has to have a very strong floor because we have a lot of heavy machinery, about 150 tonnes of machinery we think".

The collection boasts items not just related to the letter press, the most common surviving printing process, but also lithography, engraving and more modern techniques which are dying out, like a photo-type setting and digital typesetting.

Museum volunteer, Gerry Morris, was 15 when he started a six-year apprenticeship as a compositor – someone who sets type. "It's a slice of history that we can't afford to lose because once it's gone, it's gone," he said. "It spread literacy across the world from 1450 and, okay, we have modern-day media, but we should never forget the beauty of the original craft".

Before printing was mechanised, monks would inscribe words by hand, in the form of manuscripts, or hand-written books, usually for the church or a rich lord. By the 1400s, movable type was invented, and the art of printing began. Among the collection are individual letters made from wood

The first presses, made in Germany, were based on a wine or screw press, according to Mr Morris. By the time of the Industrial Revolution, printing presses were produced from cast iron. When compiling a word, lead letters would be placed next to each other, placed left to right and upside down, 'p' and 'q' would be quite complicated, hence the phrase, 'mind your Ps and Qs'. Once all the words were assembled, a quoin or wedge would keep them together, which some believe the term "coining a phrase" originated.

Most of the collection was part of the former John Jarrold Printing Museum which closed in 2019 in Norwich.

Fifty years of Focus

Angela Smith

Well, almost! The first Southampton University Industrial Archaeology Group newsletter was dated October 1973, and this one is No. 99. I thought it might be of interest to look back at that edition, duplicated on foolscap paper with 16 pages.

However, before delving into the pages of SUIAG Newsletter No. 1, here is a short explanation for the benefit of all our more recent members about other publications. SUIAG was formed in 1969 after a three-year Extra-Mural course was held at Southampton University under the direction of Dr Edwin Course, and was followed by a second three-year course which I attended. To add to the interest of the lectures, it was decided to involve the class members in some practical work recording the remains of industrial sites in Hampshire.

These were begun in 1968 and published as offprints by the Proceedings of the Hampshire Field Club, each one being led by a member with knowledge in the subject, and all the volunteers were listed. The subjects were *A Gazetteer of the Water, Wind & Tide Mills of Hampshire* (1968 – Monica Ellis), *The IA of Hampshire Roads* (1969 – David Viner), *A Gazetteer of Hampshire Breweries* (1970 – Michael Tighe), *A Gazetteer of Brick & Tile Works in Hampshire* (1971 – Bill White) and *A Gazetteer of Hampshire Aerodromes* (1972 – John Bagley). I note that in the Mills survey Martin Gregory is the only person listed who is still a member today. I took part with an office colleague in the Roads survey while on the first year of our course, submitting a report on the A31 between Romsey and Winchester, with Bill White also listed as surveying parts of the A32 and A337.

Future surveys were considered but not carried out. It would be an interesting project to update all the surveys. This was considered by the Committee some years ago but the idea was abandoned as impractical.

A far more ambitious project was suggested in 1973, a survey of Industrial Archaeology in Hampshire. A large number of members were involved and it was published by SUIAG as *Hampshire Industrial Archaeology – a Guide* in 1975. This was followed by *Farewell to the Floating Bridges* (1977 – in conjunction with Southampton City Transport), *Water and Wind Mills in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight* (1978), *100 Years of Southampton Transport* (1979, written by SUIAG member John Horne and published by Southampton City Transport), *Shipbuilding in Victorian Southampton* (1981), **Seaplanes and Flying Boats of the Solent* (1981), **Ice & Ice Houses through the Ages* (1982), *A Souvenir of Southampton Docks* (1982 – reprint of a 1930 guide owned by Bill White), *The Itchen Navigation* (1983 – revised from an earlier independent small booklet), a fully revised **Guide to the Industrial Archaeology of Hampshire and the Isle of Wight* (1984), **The Changing Railway Scene in Hampshire* (1991), **Hampshire Farmsteads in the 1980s* (1994) and *Twyford Pumping Station* (1997, written by Dr Edwin Course, layout and typing by Angela Smith and published by SUIAG offshoot Twyford Waterworks Trust). Those annotated * are still available. The annual *Journal* began in 1992.

Returning to Newsletter No.1, October 1973, my editorial at that time explains a bit about how it started. It was typed on a small electric typewriter on to stencils and copied on a hand-cranked Roneo duplicator which, incidentally, I still possess. Over the years the technology was upgraded, but it is still duplicated on a Risograph which scans and cuts the stencils then churns out the copies straight away. Much less expensive than photocopying. Colour pages are, however, photocopied, currently by our Chairman, Rob Fish.

"Yes, at last a 'victim' has been found to have a bash at producing a newsletter for the group. How long this will last depends on YOU, the members. During the past six years I have been fan club secretary to an American singer and this also involved compiling and printing a monthly bulletin, so my experience of this kind of work is strictly amateur. However, changing over to this type of publication is quite a step up as the two are vastly different. Whereas with the fan club bulletin I could rely mostly on the activities of the "star" to fill up my pages – though with a membership ending up with nearly 500 I was never really short of material – but the IA newsletter will depend on members' articles if it is to succeed. That is supposed to be a big HINT!"

For those who are wondering, the American singer is Jack Jones. He was almost unknown in this country when I joined his fan club in 1966, run from the U.S. with a lady from Essex by the name of Jane Crittall ... yes, the famous window and door frame manufacturers ... distributing the American bulletins. Due to pressure of work she handed over to a lady in Hull at the end of 1966 and, foolishly, I offered any help. I say 'foolishly' because in March 1967 I found myself having taken charge with all of 6 members to look after. Along with a colleague from the Ordnance Survey, things began to change as we advertised the club, pestered radio presenters, produced our own monthly bulletins and eventually persuaded Jack to come over in February 1969 to appear on radio and TV. By 1973, with those 500 members mentioned earlier, I decided it was time to hand over to a group of people who could run it much better than I could (my office colleague having married and moved elsewhere in 1971).

My own interest in I.A. really came about because of geology. The University ran an extra-mural evening course in the subject which a neighbour persuaded me to join in the autumn term of 1965. Like the I.A. courses, they also ran 'weeks' and 'weekends' away to places around the country. In 1967 it was at Keele University, along with the I.A. course. We all met up for dinner, and there was a bar as well which led to some late and merry evenings. 'Nuff said to protect the guilty! It was here where I met Dr Edwin Course and Bill White and started to learn about industrial archaeology. Also some of the geology field visits included such things as the potteries with some of their kilns still intact and we had a visit to Wolstanton Deep Pit in Stoke-on-Trent, descending to something like ¾ mile with a train ride at the bottom. As there were 3 young ladies in our small group, it was reported that a message had to be relayed to the working face to ask the miners to get dressed!

The following year my brother and I booked a canal cruise. Now, I can't remember why, but maybe there was something we'd seen on TV about canals which we fancied. Anyway, we hired a 23ft boat from a company in Stone for two weeks in August. My brother had just completed his first year at Southampton University studying Mechanical Engineering – his Mathematics lecturer was one of SUIAG's current senior members, Dr Keith Lloyd. The I.A. week in 1968 was advertised as a *Study Tour from Birmingham to Gloucester by Boat and Coach*, which was at the beginning of June. I thought this was a good opportunity for me to learn about handling locks and other canal things. The basic idea was that a commercial narrow boat which normally carried coal was hired (and cleaned out), fitted with chairs, and each day we would navigate a stretch of canal, go off by coach to explore IA things, hotel overnight (two were used – Birmingham and Cheltenham) and back on the canal the next day. [It is worth noting that during the weekend stay at Birmingham, Mick Aston and his Birmingham University colleague Eric Grant, having completed their first-year as post-graduate students, gave us a lecture about IA in the Black Country on the Saturday evening and accompanied us on Sunday's excursion around the city.] So we travelled almost all the distance from Gas Street Basin in Birmingham to Sharpness Docks. In between were all sorts of IA visits, too many to mention. This all got me 'hooked', so when the second three-year IA course began I 'jumped ship' from geology to enrol, also taking part in subsequent 'weeks' and joining SUIAG.

So, in March 1973, having carried out the handover of the fan club, I had a typewriter, duplicator, ink, stencils and a load of foolscap paper. I spoke to SUIAG Secretary John Horne about the possibility of starting a newsletter. Hence the October No. 1 edition was mostly written between us. The title *Focus* didn't appear until the December 1976 edition when some nameless person suggested it was an appropriate title as mostly people only took photographs and didn't do any physical work like other societies seemed to do. Of course, that was going to change significantly.

Right, preamble out of the way, what can we find in the 16 pages.

Twyford Pumping Station:

At a meeting on September 5th a Trust was set up to administer the proposed Public Utilities Museum at Twyford Pumping Station. The Trust is now awaiting news from the Southampton Council's Water Committee to hear if the temporary halt to demolition is to be made permanent and permission granted for a lease.

Blanchard's House, Bishop's Waltham:

Unless you haven't attended a meeting for some time, you must know that Blanchard's house (or, to give it its official name, Claylands House in Clayland Road) probably won't be standing much longer. It was suggested that our group could record this historical building and our Chairman*, at the September meeting, decided we should make a mass descent on the place on Sunday, October 14th ... all day if you can make it. The idea in mind was that two or three people could do a general survey of the house while everyone else did detailed work on small parts, then all the drawings would be put together by a draughtsman.

What and where is Blanchard's house? The company of Messrs. M.H. Blanchard originally had its works in Lambeth, but following clay samples taken from this site just to the NW of Bishop's Waltham and the liquidation of the clay company formed, Mr Blanchard based himself here in the last quarter of the 19th century. His house, built beside the terra-cotta, brick and clay works, was a showpiece for his product. There is a very fine coat-of-arms over the main door.

(* the Chairman was one Mr W.C.F. White)

The Southern Industrial History Centre has begun work:

1 – Its first task is to prevent the destruction of important exhibits and research material.

2 – Its second task is to find a site where this material can be displayed.

3 – and its third task will be to establish permanent and temporary exhibitions.

Already a substantial amount of material has been collected – steam and gas engines, brick making equipment and craft tools.

Possible sites are being actively investigated and the lawyers are constituting The Centre as a charitable Trust.

Fire destroys racecourse grandstand:

Fire recently destroyed most of the grandstand of the old Stockbridge race-course, which was situated to the south of Danebury Hill. The Hampshire Chronicle noted that "the grandstand was last used in 1898 by the Bibury Race Meeting, which later moved to Salisbury. The course was closed because part of it was on land which belonged to a woman who disapproved of horse-racing".

Did any member see or photograph this long-disused structure?

On a later page:-

LATE NEWS: September 30th:- Further to item on page 6 regarding the fire at Stockbridge racecourse grandstand, your editor and a friend tackled a barbed wire fence and crossed a cornfield inhabited by sheep and pheasants to investigate. They found signs of a small fire having taken place in fallen timbers from the roof, but the building itself is of brick and still quite recognisable, although greenery covers a lot of the front. Only about half of the wooden roof is intact and the floor under the seating part has gone. The racecourse itself has completely disappeared through farming.

[Note that the meeting was on Monday October 1st and the visit was made by Nigel – then my boyfriend – and I on the Sunday morning. Most of the newsletter had already been duplicated with only a couple of pages left to complete, so the 'late' item was hurriedly added].

First find your tramcar (written by John Horne and edited)

To think of tramcar preservation is to think of Crich, where the Tramway Museum Society has built up one of the world's finest collections of working tramcars. The first car owned by the TMS (and by the Light Railway Transport League before the TMS was established as a separate body) was Southampton 45, one of those Edwardian antiques which were still running in this City when the tramways finally closed in 1949. Southampton Corporation helped the preservation movement to a good start when they repainted 45 and sold her to those pioneer enthusiasts for only £10.

The tramways were such an important and well-remembered part of the City that no major museum project could describe the past life of Southampton without reference to them. As a static exhibit a "restored" car would be a fine centrepiece for any local collection which may be formed. Full restoration with traditional materials and methods would be unnecessary for such a project.

But first, find your tramcar. If 45 cannot come, where would we look? Not so far afield as you might expect. Near Romsey, there is an open-top car complete with ruby-glass ventilators and many fittings. This is car 57, still showing her wartime grey livery and the name of Mr Baker, the then Manager.

At West Wellow there is at least one "dead body" of a three-window car which, though itself beyond repair, would yield many useful parts. There is another example at Netley. Perhaps members know of other tramcars doing duty as sheds or houses? A number of Bournemouth cars are said to survive in the Ringwood area.

Longer articles covered Canals in the south of England, three pages about the fantastic 'week' in Durham and reports on the past four meetings – two of which were Members' slides and ciné film as guest speakers were difficult to find in those days – all written by myself. John Horne wrote about a group visit to London to places like Kempton Park Waterworks, Young's "Ram Brewery" stables, the 250ft high M.A.N. gasholder at Battersea which almost everyone ascended in spite of a blustery wind, Syon Park Garden Centre where the former Clapham Museum exhibits were taken and the Croydon Corporation Waterworks at Addington Wells where a hand-fired Cornish boiler was in use. John also supplied a two-page article on the steam beam pumping engines at Addington.

The final item, again authored by myself, was something that could have been an amazing addition to Southampton's heritage, which some of those of us in SUIAG became involved with. It's a 1½ page article, but I'll just pick out enough to give you an idea what it was all about.

Southampton Terminus Transport Museum?

Over a year ago the Southampton & District Society of Model Engineers hit on the idea of restoring the Southampton Terminus Station in Terminus Terrace to use as a club workshop / meeting place and to set up a museum. There is ample room in the three-storey building to house a number of clubs. The station is listed as a building of historical importance and cannot be demolished without notice being given. The current reorganisation of local authorities and planning departments could be a chance to put the case to the "new" planners. Perhaps the amateurs should get together and produce an idea to catch their imagination.

The S&DSME received sympathetic views from Southampton City Council, especially the museum quarter. Naturally it would be to their advantage to have an eyesore restored when it is seen by practically all travellers using the continental ferries from the Eastern Docks. But the stumbling block is British Rail, which gave it a firm but evasive "No".

The "downtown" area of the city is the "visitors'" Southampton – the old walls, Bargate, Tudor House, Maritime Museum, God's House. Everything in a nice little area, but not taking very much time to "do". All over the country now public authorities are waking up to the fact that tourists want something different in the way of museums ... take Beamish, Ryhope and Monkwearmouth Station which we visited during our week in Durham, and there's Coalbrookdale, West Dean Open Air Museum and others. What about Hampshire and Southampton? Only a fight is keeping alive the hope of preserving Twyford Pumping Station. It's the ships which Southampton is famous for, so you do your trip round the docks in one of the boats, sit in Mayflower Park, look at the museums and that's just about it.

There was a bold idea to which the public was invited to comment and a plan drawn up. Anyway, it all fell through so we're stuck with a casino and platforms used as a car park.

Fifty years ago the members of the Southampton University Industrial Archaeology Group were a really active bunch with bold aspirations. Offshoots were formed – Hampshire Mills Group, Tram 57 Project, Twyford Waterworks Trust and even being involved at the outset to preserve SS Shieldhall with quite a few of us volunteering for the watch-keeping duties while the ship was still owned by Southern Water. Fortunately these are still in existence, but the group's 'Rescue & Restoration Section' had to come to an end a few years ago partly due to a lack of projects but also the cost of insurance, an ageing volunteer force and now, sadly, the loss of the Project Manager, John Christmas. Some members of the Committee have been around for more years than we care to remember and, after 50 years of producing the newsletter, I wonder how much longer I can continue. It may only be twice a year but, with so little input from the general membership (apart from Ian Harden who is always on the lookout for interesting items), finding suitable material takes time. Think about it!

Ian Harden's website browsing . . . . .

Gwynedd slate mine seeks young workers as demand rockets *(by Elen Wyn BBC Wales,11 January 2023)*

Welsh Slate is expanding its operations at Penrhyn quarry near Bethesda, Gwynedd, and reopening two quarries in Blaenau Ffestiniog. It will mean 29 new jobs in a part of Wales where slate has been a big employer since the 13th Century, when roofing slate was first quarried there. "In the long term we are looking for even more," the company said. Its director, Michael Hallé, said the company needed young people to apply for jobs.

"We work with local colleges and schools, and we've got programmes to encourage apprenticeship schemes," he said. "We need youth coming into the quarry."

Plans to extract 250,000 tonnes of Penrhyn purple slate were approved in November, extending the life of the quarry to the end of 2035. Ten of the new jobs will be at Penrhyn, which already employs 115 people. The remaining 19 jobs will be at the Ffestiniog and Cwt y Bugail quarries, near Blaenau Ffestiniog, which reopen at the end of January after being closed for more than a decade.

"There's a huge demand for slate here in the UK and all over the world," said Mike Ford, operations manager at Penrhyn quarry. "We currently export 40% of our roofing slate to Australia, we need to expand to keep up with the market demand." Mark Briggs, who has been splitting roof stones at Penrhyn quarry for 26 years, said he is proud to see Welsh slate on roofs around the world. "It's good to see our slates on buildings in places like Australia, slate from Wales. From little Bethesda." But he said "not many young people want to work in the quarry anymore. "It's too much hard work," he said with a smile. "Most of our staff are local people," said Mr Ford. "They come from Bethesda, Bangor and Caernarfon. We have established a partnership with Ysgol Dyffryn Ogwen and Coleg Menai to try to expand the skill base here in Penrhyn."

Plans to turn historic mill into affordable housing approved

Cornwall Council has applied to convert Loggans Mill in Hayle into 16 apartments. The authority's sub-area planning committee unanimously approved the plans, as well as an application for listed building consent. The Grade-II listed building, which dates back to the 1850s, had fallen into disrepair. The committee heard the building was in a poor state and that the internal floors had collapsed. Last year Cornwall Council had to erect scaffolding to prevent any external collapse.

It prompted a campaign led by local people and councillors to save the building. Various uses have been considered over the years, including converting it into a hotel. Plans to use it for housing were proposed in a project in 2017 and were revived by the council last year. Under the new proposals, the former mill will be converted into eight one-bedroom apartments and eight two-bedroom apartments. These will all be affordable and offered for rent by the council's own registered housing provider.

Historic windmill in Norfolk restored

A project to restore Grade II listed Billingford windmill, near Diss in Norfolk, back to its former glory has been completed after five years of work. It was the county's last commercial mill powered by wind. The five-storey structure was built in 1860 and features traditional patent sails that operated until they became damaged in 1956. Donors and volunteers raised more than £70,000 to repair it. Martin Wilby, from the Norfolk Windmills Trust, said: "We're not going into commercial flour-making but the sails will turn round, the stones will grind and now it's been restored, it'll be here for generations to come."

. . . . . and a couple of items found by Rob Fish

Union Chain Bridge set to reopen….

Union Chain Bridge is set to reopen 24 May 2023 following a £10.5 million overhaul. It is thought to be the oldest vehicle suspension bridge in the world still in operation and links Scotland and England. The 137 metre bridge, which dates from 1820 and crosses the River Tweed four miles upstream of Berwick-upon-Tweed, was dismantled in October 2020 as part of a £10.5 million overhaul.

A funding package for repairs, which followed serious concerns about its condition, was put together by local authorities on both sides of the border, Museums Northumberland and the Friends of the Union Chain Bridge. The rescue package, which included £3.14m from The National Lottery Heritage Fund, came seven years after a proposal to close the bridge because of a lack of funds to maintain it, at which time it was placed on Historic England's Heritage at Risk register.

The Union Chain Bridge was built by retired naval captain Samuel Brown and was completed in 1820. It cost about £7,700 to construct and replaced a "perilous ford" further downstream. Although work on Thomas Telford's Menai Bridge in Wales started before it, the Union Bridge was completed first, making it the longest iron suspension bridge in the world when it opened.

Until the 1970s it existed with little maintenance but the entire deck was replaced in 1974. The bridge was closed to motor vehicles for several months during 2007 due to one of the bridge hangers breaking and in December 2008 the bridge was closed to traffic as a result of a landslide.

New trial at the Swanage Railway is underway

A new trial heritage diesel rail service between Wareham and Swanage is underway. Trains between the stations were axed in 1972 when British Rail passenger trains between Wareham, Corfe Castle and Swanage ceased and the branch line was controversially closed, with most of the track lifted the same year.

Since the move, train travel between stations Wareham and Swanage have been impossible, but Swanage Railway announced a new trial service which will finally connect the towns by rail after 50 years. The service will operate from April to September 2023 and tickets for the service will also be available from mainline train operating company South Western Railway.

From here, its passengers can add tickets for Corfe Castle and Swanage to their main line tickets. Swanage Railway will be using its restored and upgraded 1950s heritage diesel trains to operate the eleven-mile service – one mile of which will be on the Network Rail main line from Worgret Junction and directly into Wareham station.

The trial service will operate on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays from April 4 to September 10, with the first train departing Wareham at 11.19am and the last train leaving Swanage for Wareham at 4.20pm. This gives visitors the opportunity to spend four hours in Swanage or Corfe Castle. The timetable is subject to change on special event days.

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A couple of local Letter Boxes in the news

from "In Your Area" (edited from an article by Abigail Donoghue, *14 January 2023*)

A table letterbox used at Queen Victoria's holiday home has been discovered in Surrey. The 140-year-old post box was found in a cottage with a Christmas card inside it. Dating back to the 19th century, the wooden box was formerly used at Osborne House, the Isle of Wight holiday home used by the monarch during her reign.

Featuring the royal 'VR' cypher, the round letter box was built for Queen Victoria and her husband Prince Albert to be used in their East Cowes country retreat. And now it is set to go up for auction with Hansons Auctioneers at the end of the month after being found by a Surrey family.

Charles Hanson, owner of Hansons Auctioneers, said: "It's a first-class find fit for a queen dating back to circa 1880. We can only imagine the tone and content of the notes the queen must have placed inside but one thing we can be certain of is that she enjoyed sending letters and cards. I wonder what Queen Victoria would have thought about postal costs rising from a penny in the 1800s to 95p for a first-class stamp today. Her profile is featured on the Penny Black, the world's first adhesive postage stamp issued in 1840."

The item, which has an estimate value of between £4,000 and £6,000, was found during a routine visit to the home of an antique collector. Chris Kirkham, associate director of Hansons London, said: "I discovered it during a routine home visit at a cottage in Surrey. I was called in to assess items gathered by a keen antique collector over a lifetime. It was purchased decades ago by the seller's grandfather. He lived on the Isle of Wight. We understand he acquired it at a Carisbrooke sale which offered items relating to Osborne House in 1944 or 1945. The Isle of Wight is home to Carisbrooke Castle Museum. It was founded in 1898 by Princess Beatrice, Queen Victoria's youngest daughter. The Princess died in 1944 and a sale of items took place around that time."

Information from the Hansons website gives the height of the wooden letter box as 37cm with the base diameter as 19cm, and is kind of a rich chestnut colour. The sale was at Hansons' London showroom on January 28th and achieved a price of £14,500. The former owner said, "My grandfather collected amazing objects and was fascinated by antiques and collectibles. It's hard to part with family heirlooms, but this royal item deserves to be seen and enjoyed". The website does not reveal the purchaser's name and also says that it had to be collected from Etwall, Derbyshire (where Hansons is based) rather than being at the London showroom.

Memorial post box

Around 150 years later, a new type of post box is being manufactured for bereaved communities to send "Letters to Heaven". This initiative was started by crematorium and cemetery company Westerleigh Group, which owns 37 quiet and rural sites around the country, after a nine-year old girl, Matilda, suggested it to her mother, the Nottingham site's memorial advisor. The idea was that people could send letters to their loved ones who have passed away and to feel more connected. Matilda appeared on BBC's *The One Show* and Prime Minister Rishi Sunak presented her with a Point of Light award at an International Women's Day reception at 10 Downing Street. The Nottingham box was such a success that a second one has been placed at the company's New Forest Crematorium outside New Milton, and was unveiled in March. The site manager said, "Feedback has shown that the process of writing a letter, or perhaps a birthday card, to a lost loved one has already brought therapeutic comfort to many people." The box is based on the Royal Mail's 'box on a post' design, painted white.

Finding the Southampton Floating Bridge engines

Angela Smith

In April 2001 Nigel and I took a short break in Cornwall because we abandoned our planned annual volunteering visit to the Tramway Museum in Derbyshire due to our regular B&B being on a nearby sheep farm (owned by the parents of *Blue Peter's* Simon Groom and seen in a number of episodes of *Peak Practice* – the film crew turned up one day when we were there), as this was during the major foot & mouth outbreak. A trip to Cornwall outside the main tourist season seemed ideal – and all those mine engine houses kept on beckoning.

I had contacted Kenneth Brown, a local IA author and a leading light in the Trevithick Society, and a meeting was set up for our last full day to visit a couple of preserved sites with him.

On our first day we visited Poldark Mine museum, which was originally named Wendron Forge Museum in 1972. An ancient tin mine was discovered on the site so it was renamed in 1975 after the TV series, some scenes – including underground – having been filmed at the museum. It was sold in 1988, then there were two subsequent owners which resulted in a decline in popularity and eventually falling into administration, closing in 2019 due to an ongoing dispute with the Duchy of Cornwall which claimed ownership of the underground portions and demanding payment. The museum was originally based on the Wendron Forge, but expanded to include mining engines and an underground visit.

In 1973 the two engines from Southampton floating bridges 8 and 10 were acquired from Kemp's yard in Bitterne, where the floating bridges had been taken. Southampton Museums had declined Mr Kemp's earlier offer. At Wendron Forge Museum they were put on external display, with No. 10 fitted for running on compressed air.

No. 8 Woolston floating bridge was delivered in 1896 by Day, Summers & Co of Northam Iron Works, Southampton. The boiler was on one side of the roadway and the engines on the other. The engines were overhead grasshopper type, compound and jet condensing with cranks at 90º. The cylinders were 9¼″ and 16½″ diameter by 3′ 3″ stroke. A major overhaul took place in 1946, but the hull was declared unsafe for further service in June 1961 and was sold to Kemp's yard at Bitterne Manor. Mr Kemp appreciated the historic value of No.8's engines and in March 1962 offered them to the Southampton Art Gallery & Museums. The Committee accepted them but unfortunately the transfer did not take place and it was not until 1973 that a home was found for the engines at Wendron Forge. The engine was not restored but kept clean, apparently the last surviving example of an overhead-beam marine grasshopper compound in the world.

Day, Summers & Co Ltd also built No. 10 bridge which was delivered in October 1928 to replace No. 7 bridge which sank in March of that year. It was fitted with centre-pivot compound beam engines. Very few beam engines were built in the 20th century and this example of 1928 must have been among the very last for any purpose, let alone marine. Repairs were carried out to the bridge in 1961 and it became reserve bridge upon the arrival of the new No. 12 diesel vessel in 1964. It was towed to Kemp's yard in July 1967.

So we were eager to see the engines, but couldn't find them. Before departing the museum I asked a guide where they were and was told, "They've been sold and gone to east Kent". After leaving the museum we passed a nearby restaurant car park where we noticed a very large tarpaulin covering something, had a peek underneath and saw some sort of engine but didn't investigate further.

Three days later we met Kenneth Brown, who guided us round two engine houses, and asked him about the floating bridge engines going to Kent, only to be told they had not been taken there and were currently stored in the car park near the museum! The sale had fallen through and the Poldark Mine museum owner didn't want them as they "didn't fit in with the type of exhibits appropriate to Cornwall".

So, on our return to Southampton, we contacted Alastair Arnott at Southampton Cultural Services and supplied him with the grid reference. He applied for an emergency Science Museum grant and within a week or so the two engines were installed at the Southampton City Museums' Collections Management Centre in City Industrial Park by the western docks .....

..... where they still reside, having blocked up the access to Unit 29 now for 22 years. Our Vice Chairman, Jim Beckett, has arranged to visit the Collections Centre later in June to photograph the engines for inclusion in his July 3rd HIAS talk on *Floating Bridges of Hampshire and the Isle of Wight*.

(The information on bridges 8 and 10 has been taken from *Farewell to the Floating Bridges*, written by SUIAG member John Horne – assisted by Group members, staff of Southampton City Transport and the City Archivist among others – and published in 1977 jointly by Southampton City Transport and the Southampton University Industrial Archaeology Group to commemorate the closure of the floating bridges and the opening of the Itchen Bridge).

Anniversaries for flying boat at Solent Sky

The Sandringham flying boat *Beachcomber* has already been mentioned in Carol's meeting reports, but it is worth mentioning that it is celebrating three anniversaries this year – built in 1943 as a Sunderland, purchased by Ansett Airways in Australia (1953 after conversion at Belfast in 1947) and transported on a self-propelled army barge from Lee-on-Solent to Southampton Eastern Docks in March 1983 prior to reassembly in the Museum.

Miscellaneous news items from around Hampshire

. . . . . including a number of items from the pages of the Southern Daily Echo

Tributes paid Hythe stalwart (February 6 2023)

Retired Ordnance Survey employee Graham Parkes, who died aged 77 on January 14th, was a former member of New Forest District Council and Hythe & Dibden Parish Council. He was also the Chairman of Waterside Heritage, which is based at Hythe's former railway station. Cllr Alex Wade from the parish council said that Graham "cared very deeply about Hythe's conservation area and the parish's unique and charming architecture. He has been at the forefront of educating us on all the fascinating history and heritage of where we live. He chaired Waterside Heritage and wrote several books".

The Waterside area **Herald**, in its 16th February to 9th March edition, said that Waterside Heritage was seeking new volunteers as Graham "virtually ran the society and the Heritage Centre single handed and no single volunteer could possibly cover the range of activities that Graham did".

I should add that both Nigel and I knew Graham from our Ordnance Survey days. He made very good use of the archive map library! There is a Facebook site for retired staff and Graham received a good number of comments. I have been a member of Waterside Heritage for maybe a couple of decades and the AGM was due in March but, apart from a message to members about Graham's passing, nothing has been heard since. Back in the days when SUIAG used to do summer outdoor visits, in June 1998 Graham conducted us round Hythe talking about the history and pointing out features on buildings which even we locals had never noticed. The fish & chip shop, a café and the *Lord Nelson* did good business from the 40 or so members! *(Angela Smith)*

Volunteers mark golden anniversary of line's handover (February 16 2023)

A group of around 50 of the original volunteers who helped rebuild the Watercress Line following the closure of the railway in 1973 gathered at Alresford Station where one of the last trains to run on the line, Hampshire Unit No. 1125, was on display at the platform to commemorate this special occasion. The last Hampshire Unit departure from the station was at 8.21pm on February 4, 1973. On Saturday February 4 2023 the horn was sounded at 8.21pm to mark the historic occasion. *(Thanks to Barry Duke for forwarding this item, but he forgot to say what the newspaper was).*

Waterfront Proposal (March 3 2023)

Daedalus Waterfront is a new proposal to redevelop an abandoned site at HMS Daedalus. The plans, if approved by Gosport Borough Council, would create hundreds of homes and job opportunities while creating an attractive place for people to visit. From 1914 to 1996 the Royal Naval Air Station Lee-on-the-Solent or HMS Daedalus has been the home and workplace for thousands of people. First used as a seaplane base during the First World War, it later became the main training establishment of the Fleet Air Arm. The armed forces left the site in 1996, which led to the decay of many historic buildings. Part of the site has already been developed.

The proposal would deliver 350 homes including affordable housing, modern employment and light industrial space. Central to the vision is the restoration of historic buildings including First World War hangars. These will be the gateway to the project and home for an upgraded Hovercraft Museum. *(Plan received approval)*

Save the Romsey Fire Brigade Museum (April 24 2023)

An urgent fundraising appeal has been launched to save the Fire Brigade Museum in Stockbridge Road, Romsey, from permanent closure after being told to leave its premises at Timsbury by the end of May. It needs to raise £150,000 to find a new home for its 22 fire engines and more than 1,000 artefacts, and the current location is far too small for what is needed. It opened during the pandemic and has no funding. The National Lottery prioritised funding for existing museums so the museum had to be self-funded and rely on donations. Museum director Antony Hurle served in the London Fire Brigade for 20 years and suffered from PTSD. He launched the museum in 2021 to support people who had similar experiences in the emergency services. It supports 11 people and has 20 volunteers.

He said, "We have exhausted all funding streams and, despite warm words, there is little interest in practical help from local authorities." Mr Hurle explained that he wants to move into a unit in Romsey Industrial Estate, but this would cost £95,000 up-front and a planning application. Within five to ten years a purpose built museum could be constructed, including a safety centre which would provide realistic quality training in subjects such as road safety, cycling proficiency, first aid, fire safety and much more.

The museum's Facebook site includes this message from May 7th:-

Tomorrow is our last opening day before closure (for now) so please make sure you pop in to say *au revoir* to our wonderful collection. Please do keep encouraging everyone you know to sign our petition for financial support and donate to our gofundme if you can. But for now – "we'll meet again, don't know where, don't know when, but we'll meet again some sunny day". (Well actually we do know, as we are out at shows and events throughout the summer and we expect to be open by the autumn, once a new suitable premises has been secured). https://www.facebook.com/FireBrigadeMuseum/

Canal Jottings

£400,000 restoration project for Chesterfield Canal's missing link *(Derbyshire Times, 29th March 2023)*

A mile-long section of Chesterfield Canal that is landlocked and virtually empty of water is to be restored. The project at Renishaw will involve rebuilding the overflow weir, the installation of a temporary pumping system to supply water from the River Rother to the canal and the resurfacing of the towpath to make it suitable for pedestrians and cyclists. A further 915 metres of towpath would also be resurfaced to provide a circular 2.5km route incorporating the Trans-Pennine Trail. Picnic benches, signage and cycle stands would also be installed.

The proposals, which are subject to planning permission, have been drawn up by Derbyshire County Council and Chesterfield Canal Trust. Volunteers from the canal trust will be carrying out the restoration which is expected to cost around £400,000 with the council contributing £200,000, the trust providing £150,000 and the remaining £50,000 being funded by the Inland Waterways Association. Work on the restoration is anticipated to start this summer.

Peter Hardy, chairman of the Chesterfield Canal Trust, said: "We know that local residents are keen to see the re-watering of the canal around Renishaw and this project has been made possible thanks to the close cooperation between the trust and Derbyshire County Council. It's also thanks to the enthusiasm of local people who will join with us to create an area they will be proud of for walking, cycling, fishing and watersports."

Chesterfield Canal was built in 1777 and stretched 46 miles, providing navigation between the River Rother at Chesterfield and the River Trent at West Stockwith. The section in Renishaw was re-routed in the 19th century with the building of railways. This latest project is part of a wider ambition to make the whole route from Chesterfield to Kiveton navigable with nine miles yet to be restored.

Preston Tram Bridge to be replaced with funding from Levelling Up bid

(from 'Waterways', Newsletter of the Inland Waterways Association, Summer 2023)

After campaigning by local community pressure group Friends of Tram Bridge, Preston City Council has included the replacement of the old tram bridge in its Levelling Up funding bid in 2022. IWA member Nigel Hardacre has helped the group by joining the committee and organising and leading several heritage walks around the closed bridge and the route of what was once the Lancaster Canal's horse-drawn tram road (plate-way), which ran from 1803 until its closure in 1862. It connected both ends of the Lancaster Canal and was only designed to be temporary until enough funds could be raised to build 5 miles of canal to connect both ends. The railway age quickly followed and the canal link was never built. We will await the release of designs for the new bridge, having held a competition last year with designs proposed by schoolchildren in Preston and students at local colleges and universities.

Railway note

Isle of Wight resident recognised in New Year's Honours List

(Isle of Wight News, 30 December 2022)

Peter Jardine a volunteer at the Isle of Wight Steam Railway, was honoured with an MBE for his services to the Heritage Railway. Pete is a long-standing volunteer and employee at the railway who has masterminded the restoration of the line's iconic Victorian carriages. Back in the 1970s, the railway started collecting grounded carriage bodies from across the Island where they had seen use as beach huts, garden chalets and farm stores. In 1981 Pete and his team of volunteers started work on the first of these, IWR 46, which had originally been built for the North London Railway in 1864. When it entered service in 1986, it was rightly celebrated for the quality of its restoration.

Over the last 40 years Pete has led the complete restoration of nine carriages, winning many Heritage Railway Association awards along the way. The Isle of Wight Steam Raiway now has a magnificent rake of Victorian 4-wheeled carriages, recreating a bygone era of rail travel on the Island.

Pete can still be found working in the carriage and wagon workshop on most days, his main focus being the next Oldbury carriage – IWR First 21.

Ex First Bus boss takes to road amid driver shortage (BBC Bristol, 22 December 2023)

The former managing director of First Bus is back behind the wheel driving buses around Winchester. James Freeman retired from his role leading the company last March after almost 47 years in the industry. He has now joined Stagecoach as it battles a nationwide bus-driver shortage that has seen thousands of weekly services cut this year. Mr Freeman began his career in 1974 as a bus conductor before going on to graduate from the University of Southampton with a degree in history. Prior to joining First in 2014, he held senior positions with Reading Buses and Stagecoach. He has previously described the bus industry as his "lifelong passion" and has seen significant changes since his career began with obtaining his licence on a Bristol double-decker with a crash gearbox. Before retiring, Mr Freeman managed around 1,800 staff operating in and around Bristol, Bath, Wells and Weston-super-Mare

Hampshire Industrial Archaeology Society

(formerly Southampton University Industrial Archaeology Group)
(Registered Charity No. 276898)
Web site: www.hias.org.uk

Honorary President: Bill White, 98 Forest Hills Drive, Townhill Park, Southampton, SO18 2FY

Officers:
Hon. Chairman: Rob Fish, 14 Wiltshire Road, Chandlers Ford, Eastleigh, SO53 3EZ
email: *robertfish@robertfish.net*
Hon. Vice-Chairman: Jim Beckett, 14 Pennard Way, Chandlers Ford, Eastleigh, SO53 4NJ
email: *jim.beckett@talktalk,net*
Hon. General Secretary: Carol Burdekin, 10 St Michael's Gardens, Winchester, SO23 9JD
e-mail: *hiassec@gmail.com*
Hon. Treasurer: Angie Beckett, 14 Pennard Way, Chandlers Ford, Eastleigh, SO53 4NJ
email: *angelabeckett@talktalk.net*

Committee:
Keith Andrews *(Membership Secretary)*, 13 Ashley Close, Harestock, Winchester, Hampshire, SO22 6LR
email: *hpdn.ka@ntlworld.com*
Barry Duke *(SERIAC representative)* 86A Roman Way, Farnham, Surrey, GU9 9RQ
email: *barry-duke@sky.com*
Andy Fish *(Book Library)* 234 Honeysuckle Road, Southampton, SO16 3BP
email: *andyrfish@aol.com*
Angela Smith *('Focus' newsletter)* 3 Stag Gates, Blackfield, Southampton, SO45 1SR
email: *Lnigel.smith@btinternet.com*
Eleanor Yates *(Publications/Displays)* Danesacre, Worthy Road, Winchester, Hampshire, SO23 7AD
email: *eleanor.yates@ntlworld.com*

Invited Member: Martin Gregory *(Journal)* 20 Christchurch Road, Winchester, Hampshire, SO23 9SS
email: *jenmargregory@btinternet.com*

DVD Library: Rob Fish (details above)

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): membership@ss-shieldhall.co.uk
Membership Secretary: Barry Quest, Feather Tor, 6 Manor Gardens, Horrabridge, Devon, PL20 7UQ
Southampton Tram Project (formerly Tram 57 Project):
Nigel Smith, 3 Stag Gates, Blackfield, Southampton, SO45 1SR *Lnigel.smith@btinternet.com*
Twyford Waterworks Trust: Contact - Ian Harden, 31 Melville Close, Lordswood, Southampton, SO16 8DE

The Big Steam Adventure

Angela Smith

This was one of those TV series which seem to be regularly cropping up these days with 'celebrities' taking us around the British Isles. This one involved former BBC chief political correspondent and *Strictly* contestant John Sergeant (apparently the team leader) with *Doctor Who* and *All Creatures Great and Small* actor Peter Davison (who didn't appear to know if he was actually enjoying the journey) and "chief fixer-upper" Paul (Piglet) Middleton from the North York Moors Railway, star of the recent *The Yorkshire Steam Railway* series.

In four episodes broadcast in April/May on Channel 5, John 'tasked' the team to travel from London to the Scottish border at Berwick-upon-Tweed using only steam-powered transport. There was the usual bickering about who was going to drive what but they all seemed to get their fair share.

In the first episode, I was surprised to see that the first mode of transport was to travel west along the Thames and under Tower Bridge in none other than a vessel that has not long left Southampton, the steam tug *Challenge.* There was the obviously planned scenario as they approached close to the bridge and wondering if it would be lifted in time ... of course it was! It was nice to see our former neighbour in the docks doing what she does best.

Also in this episode was a vintage bus which Peter was looking rather nervous about driving. John tells him, "If you can operate the Tardis, you can cope with this sort of thing". Obviously there were a lot of steam locomotives, including Piglet taking them to his home railway. There were ancient steam cars, the original 'Thomas the Tank Engine' and a replica Victorian 21-foot steam launch on the River Ouse at York which was travelling too slowly for the team's liking. The final leg was travelling from Whitby in an uncomfortable steam lorry, a stop at Beamish and a visit to the Tanfield waggonway before a final steam car across the border.

Solent Sky Tram Event 2023

Southampton
Tram Project

Supported by the TLRS

Saturday & Sunday 17th & 18th June 2023

Help the trams celebrate their birthdays !



Southampton 11
is 100 Years Old

Southampton 38
is 120 Years Old



Opening Times
10:00 to 17:00

On street parking is available outside the museum.
Please note that council parking meter charges apply.

Model Tramway Layouts and Sales Stalls

Museum Admission Charge
Adults £12, Children £8, Family Ticket £25

www.solentsky.org

www.facebook.com/Tram57Project

Albert Rd S, Southampton SO14 3FR, UK

My thanks to the contributors for passing on items used in this issue. Articles have been extracted from various websites, magazines and regional newspapers. The next *Focus* I am planning is for December 2023, so the final deadline will be the November 6th AGM meeting, please
You can email me at Lnigel.smith@btinternet.com , or my address is on the previous page.

Angela Smith