

Newsletter No. 5

DIARY

VISIT TO CROYDON GASWORKS, SATURDAY NOVEMBER 15th

The visit to this interesting gasworks will be led by Mr A.J. Spackman, and is limited in numbers to 14. Apologies for the short notice of this visit: if you intend to come, please contact Michael Bussell (tel.:01-636-1531 daytime, 01-603-8157 evenings) by Friday evening.

Meet at 10.15 for 10.30 a.m. at Croydon Gasworks north entrance, Waddon. This is on the left, 200 yards south of Waddon Railway Bridge on the Purley Way (opposite Croydon B Power Station) for those coming by car: by train, the nearest station is Waddon Marsh Halt (adjacent to the bridge noted above) on the West Croydon-Wimbledon line; change from Waterloo trains at Wimbledon, or from Victoria trains at Mitcham or West Croydon. The 115 'bus service from Streatham passes the gasworks entrance.

The visit will last about 2 hours. Old clothes are advised.

TOWER BRIDGE SATURDAY JANUARY 10th, 1970

This unique and magnificent bascule bridge is powered by hydraulic pressure, maintained by a trio of steam engines housed in one of the piers. A visit has been arranged, led by Denis Smith, for the Saturday afternoon. Numbers are strictly limited, there being 11 places, so please write beforehand to Denis Smith, 22 Horn Lane, Woodford, Essex, enclosing stamped addressed envelope for reply.

WHITEFRIARS GLASS LIMITED, TUDOR ROAD, WEALDSTONE, MIDDLESEX TUESDAY, JANUARY 20th, 1970

A large part of this company's output of high-quality glass is handmade. The spectacle of glass-blowing exerts a fascination as strong

as that of the potter's wheel, so this should be an absorbing visit. Please write to Paul Carter, 20 Chestnut Grove, Wembley, Middlesex, enclosing s.a.e. if you would like to attend. The time: 2.15 p.m., ending about 4.30.

PLEASE NOTE: the restricted numbers for visits such as those above are usually requested by the firms or organisations concerned, for reasons of safety and to avoid undue disturbance of normal activities. Whenever the number of applicants to attend indicates that further visits would be supported, these will be held as early as the organisation's other commitments permit.

Members are reminded that they attend all such visits entirely at their own risk, and that old clothes are recommended.

NEWS

AN OLD CRANE IN THE CITY

The Capital Patent Crane over 160 years old, featured in Aubrey Wilson's 'London's Industrial Heritage', pp.32-3, is to be preserved for the Museum of London - the new museum which is to incorporate the existing Guildhall and London Museums, and will be housed in new premises east of Aldersgate Street. The crane has been presented by Geo. G. Sandeman Sons & Co. Ltd., who have just vacated the premises in St. Swithin's Lane, E.C.4, which they have occupied since 1805. It is planned to try and include the crane as part of the street setting which will be one of many fascinating exhibits in the Museum. GLIAS may well be asked to assist with the dismantling and re-erection of the crane when the time comes.

Members are asked to notify the Guildhall Museum of any other small items of street furniture, fittings, etc. now obsolete which could be of possible use in this scheme.

Information kindly supplied
by the Guildhall Museum

CONFERENCE: THE FUTURE OF INDUSTRIAL ARCHAEOLOGY
HELD AT THE INSTITUTE OF ARCHAEOLOGY, LONDON, W.C.1
ON SATURDAY OCTOBER 11th

This conference was arranged by the Council for British Archaeology to enable industrial archaeologists to discuss the future of the subject, and in particular to consider the report of a Steering Committee (appointed at the 1968 Bath Conference) which was charged with examining the need for, and form of, a possible national organisation for industrial archaeology.

In its report, the Committee felt that the most urgent tasks for such an organisation were: to provide a national liaison and information service; to promote research projects, including excavation; and to press for a national policy for the preservation of industrial monuments. It was also of the opinion that the CBA (by virtue of its standing and Government recognition) was the most suited body to carry out such tasks, but recommended that the CBA should take steps to make its I.A. Research Committee territorially more representative, reorganise its procedure to speed up the making of recommendations for preservation and listing, and to increase secretarial provision to cope with I.A. matters.

After lengthy and frequently acrimonious debate, the Steering Committee's proposals were approved nem. con. A further resolution calling for the immediate formation of a national society with individual membership was rejected, although with many abstentions.

APPLIED LETTERING...

...in other words cast iron street names, inscriptions, plaques, etc. is being recorded by the Typography Unit of Reading University. A photographic archive is being compiled showing lettering in context, and details of design and manufacture. An attempt is also being made to preserve items of special merit which would otherwise be destroyed. London is rich in such material, and members who have photographs of examples and are willing to loan negatives for copy-prints to be made should contact Dr Twyman or Miss Riley, Typography Unit, The University, London Road, Reading RG1 5AQ, Berkshire.

RECORDING LEWISHAM'S PAST

Noone has yet defined conclusively the relationship between industrial archaeology and local history, but certainly the student of one is foolish to neglect the other. For this reason, the work of the Local History Department of Lewisham Library Service is of interest to us all.

Mrs Joan Read writes:

Lewisham Library Service has a flourishing Local History Department dealing mainly with the London Borough of Lewisham's development. As an Administrative Assistant in this department, my job falls into three main categories: identifying and indexing all visual materials such as maps, photographs, postcards, slides and pictures; lecturing to schools, clubs, etc.; and making a photographic survey of the Borough.

Lewisham, like many other boroughs, is developing very rapidly and many streets are disappearing, taking with them small industries, chapels, churches, business premises, and characteristic Victorian terraces.

The photographic survey means scanning reports, minutes, local papers, etc. for changes which are taking place and then following this up

by contacting industries and firms directly for (1) permission to photograph the premises and machinery, and (2) permission for the Archivist to inspect the company's archives with a view to their preservation by the department. This is proving valuable in preserving the Borough's history.

Street surveying is accomplished on 35mm film, taking always the name of the street first, followed by long shots of the street, then, if the street is terraced, a shot of a typical house, front side and back: if it happens to have houses or shops of differing architectural types, then they must all be photographed individually. These are then catalogued with the district, street, number or firm followed by the description of the item, e.g. Machine shop - Churchill planer, and finally the date. They are stored in strips of four or five negatives in steel cabinets.

Needless to say, all street furniture, fire marks, property marks, etc. must be noted and photographed.

Recently I have had to photograph the local gasworks which has closed for the manufacture of gas, but is being retained as a store. Taking each 'house' in turn, the exterior has been recorded, and then the interior, with machinery being dealt with as it occurred. Not knowing enough about machinery, I have endeavoured to take the name of the machine, e.g. Widlake pressure recorder, or the use of the machinery, e.g. No. 4 transmission booster, etc. - but I feel there might perhaps be some general talks on old or obsolete types of machinery which would help someone like myself to identify items that should be more fully covered. (Any opinions? Any volunteers with specialist knowledge? MNB)

Having watched the film on the West Ham engines made for the Lea Valley Survey, might I add that my job took me recently to photograph a very large stained glass window which had been erected by an engineering firm in 1907 to portray their achievements. I was particularly interested in Catford and Deptford, but I noticed several other achievements such as the Lea Valley, and would be pleased to forward details of this to anyone interested.

(Mrs Joan Read, at the Manor House Library, Old Road, S.E.12, tel.:01-852-5050, would be glad to advise anyone about to undertake this type of work in their own area. MNB)

PROJECTS

One of the aims of the Society is to stimulate recording, and I am glad to report that the two specific items mentioned in the last Newsletter are to be recorded by members.

The Canal Winch, Narrow Street, Limehouse: undertaken by Messrs M. L.W. Salzer, 2 Oldfield Road, Bexleyheath, Kent and J. Hopton, 55 Bexley Lane, Sidcup, Kent.

&

The Wooden Wallcrane, Scotts Wharf, Rotherhithe: undertaken by John Cresswell, 85 Tierney Road, S.W.2. Mr Cresswell would like an assistant.

Nobody has yet come forward however to investigate the Public Baths & Wash-houses, which could prove a most interesting and rewarding study. Volunteers please.

More easily undertaken perhaps by two or three people working together are these two projects:

Metropolitan Police Telephone Boxes: there were originally 650 or so such call-boxes, but these are now disappearing with the advent of the P.C. equipped with two-way radio. Would someone care to investigate how many types of boxes there were, whether measured drawings and detailed photos exist, and if the location of all these boxes has been plotted on a map. Let us make certain that this unique feature of London street-furniture is fully documented before it is too late.

Suburban Railway Station Ironwork: the bulk of London's suburban railway stations were built between 1860 and 1880, and one of their more interesting and pleasing features was often the platform canopy roof, with its supporting iron columns. Currently British Rail are demolishing many local station buildings, in an effort to reduce maintenance costs and rates. However enough currently remains to provide a most worthwhile recording project for someone who wants to get out-and-about with a camera. Good examples exist at Primrose Hill, Harrow & Wealdstone, Woodgrange Park, etc. Is anyone interested in documenting this aspect of railway architecture?

Postscript to the above: Acton Central Station, Churchfield Road West, W.3. British Rail have applied for permission to demolish the station buildings of this North London Railway (now L.M.R.) station. The buildings are typical of about 1870, worthy of record. So anyone taking up the above project should perhaps start here!

Paul Carter
(who would like to hear from
anyone interested in these
projects: address on page 5/2)

SOUTHWARK GAS-ENGINE

Preparatory work has started on this gas-engine at British Steam Specialties Ltd. prior to dismantling the engine for removal to the Iron-bridge Gorge Museum in Shropshire. John Cresswell is currently producing a measured drawing and photographing the engine, and members of the Manor Secondary School Archaeology Society, Ruislip have carried out general cleaning work. Would any volunteers with special knowledge of moving heavy equipment please contact the Secretary, Paul Carter (address page 5/2).

SOCIETIES

HENDON & DISTRICT ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

by Brigid Grafton-Green

As a result of the publication of "Industrial Monuments of Greater London", the Hendon & District Archaeological Society has decided to carry out further research into the eight monuments listed in their borough of Barnet. These range from a 19th century mill complete with sails at Arkley, in the north, to an 18th century toll house beside the Spaniards Inn on Hampstead Heath in the south.

Each member of the Society's Research sub-committee has taken one monument for study. On the basis of their reports, the Society hopes to draw up a programme for recording these monuments and to form a small team for this work.

The society has already received an assurance from the developers that the two pairs of Belfast Roof timber hangars, dated c.1917, at Hendon Aerodrome are to be retained for the R.A.F. Museum, "not only because of the valuable space that they provide, but also because of their historic interest and appropriate background to displaying the history of the R.A.F."

The next issue of the Hendon Society's Newsletter will carry a request to all members for further suggestions for industrial monuments in the area that are thought worthy of record. Two have already been suggested - a brewery and an early cinema.

FOOTNOTE

No doubt most of you have seen the poster on L.T. stations advertising their booklet 'London's Industrial Archaeology'. A copy of this booklet is enclosed, further copies from the Secretary Paul Carter (please send S.A.E.). The attractive poster, which depicts the undershot waterwheel at Merton Abbey, costs 12/6, and is obtainable from the Publicity Officer, London Transport, 280 Old Marylebone Road, London, N.W.1

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