



BERKSHIRE INDUSTRIAL ARCHAEOLOGY GROUP

BIAG News No 30, Summer 2013

Editor: John Coulson

<http://www.biaq.org.uk>

NEWBURY RAILWAY STATION

Dr David Peacock

The present Newbury Railway Station is over a hundred years old, and there have been proposals to give it some recognition and protection by making it a listed building, though the latest was rejected by English Heritage in July 2012. It was built as part of an extensive redevelopment which took place between 1908 and 1910.

Traffic through Newbury station grew significantly in the late 19th century. When the line through Newbury originally opened in 1847 it was just a branch line to Hungerford. Since then the railway through Newbury had extended to the west, with express trains now coming through regularly; the Didcot, Newbury and Southampton Railway had opened in the 1880s; and the Lambourn Valley Railway opened in 1898.

The station built in Newbury in 1847 was still standing, but had become clearly inadequate. It was described as "ancient and unpretentious," and as a "shed." Just two lines passed between the platforms, and the one roof which covered the buildings and the lines was claustrophobic and smoke-blackened. All of this sat in a fairly narrow cutting.

In May 1906 the Great Western Railway gave the go-ahead for a rebuilding programme which would demolish the old structure, and replace it with something far more extensive. Among those who campaigned hard for the new station to be built was Newbury alderman Stephen Knight, of Holland House, Stroud Green. He died on January 16, 1908, shortly before work on the scheme began.

Work started in 1908. The cutting which housed the previous station was widened to north and south. Work began on the new buildings, which were in vaguely Tudor style, of brick and Bath stone. They were built behind the older ones (while the older ones were still in place and being used). The new buildings were finished in 1909, and the old buildings were demolished between February and May. However the old platforms remained until the following year.

The new ticket office was used for the first time on April 25 1909. The station restaurant ("refreshment rooms") opened in June. It was described in the *Newbury Weekly News*, June 17 1909: "The walls are panelled in fumed oak, and the counter is of similar construction, with a rouge marble top. The windows are filled with cathedral glass of pretty design, and the general effect is one of comfort and convenience... Adjoining the main restaurant is a tea-room, quite distinct..." The first customer paid three pence (3d, or about 1p) for a cup of tea.

On the north side of the station, a new road was built (the modern Station Approach, replacing an earlier access) which opened at the beginning of July 1909. Station Road (south of the railway) was widened and reopened to traffic a week later. The new footbridge, installed in 1908, opened at the same time as Station Road.

The old wooden platforms were demolished and the track relaid in 1910. The south platform was demolished in April 1910, and the north platform at the end of May. As soon as they had been demolished, the two tracks between the original main platforms were replaced, with trains running on the new rails the same day. The overall outcome (which continues to the present) was four tracks between the new main platforms. On June 4, 1910 the *Newbury Weekly News* reported the new station as "practically completed."



According to the *Newbury Weekly News*, "It was in the early part of 1908 that the contract for the new Station buildings was started by Mr A. M. Cole of Plymouth... Satisfactory progress was made, and in a few months there arose a structure of red bricks, relieved with Bath stone dressings... There are commodious and comfortable waiting-rooms on both sides, with up-to-date lavatories. On the up-platform there are refreshment and tea rooms, attractively fitted in panelled oak, with cathedral glass windows, marble mosaic floors, and equipped with every provision for the sustenance of passengers... There is also a telegraph office, which has already been much used. There is a large booking-hall... There are roomy offices for the stationmaster and his staff, also for porters to deal with luggage, cloak-rooms, &c..." (*Newbury Weekly News, Thursday June 4, 1910*).

Work was carried out under the supervision of the GWR's divisional engineer Mr N. J. Taylor. According to the *Newbury Weekly News*, cost in June 1910 was estimated as £70- 80,000. As part of the station rebuilding scheme, in addition to the main platforms, new bays were provided on the north-east (towards Didcot), south-west (Winchester/ Southampton), and north-west (Lambourn).



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South West and Wales Regional IA Conference (SWWRIAC 2013) at Bristol

Brian Boulter

The conference was held on Saturday April 20th in Fry's Club, the former social club of the firm. The 4 storey empty factory, now with a huge "Cadbury's" sign, dominated the acres of sports grounds. As Prof. Buchanan remarked, we were thus surrounded by 20th century industrial archaeology.

There was a good mix of talks., Two, on the Somerset Coal Canal and Brandy Bottom Colliery, featured excavations at the sites to discover the phases in their evolution. Three, on the breweries of Burton on Trent, Crewkerne textile mills and Weymouth's water supply, were concerned with recording and historical investigation. The final talk, on the future of industrial museums, considered why we have them and what their form and function should be. Stewart Burroughs, from the Museum of Bath at Work, suggested that a museum was an interface between the facts and the public.

I considered this in relation to two museums I visited whilst in the area. The Bath Postal Museum, once I had found it under the city's current post office, turned out to be small but beautifully formed. It did deliver facts to me via a range of displays, audio and video presentations. More information was given in the excellent guide book. I learned that the post horn was a system of communicating messages along the route, not just a warning. I also learned that when John Palmer organised the first mail coach run, he leased a coach from Edward Fromont of Thatcham. I can promise members that they will enjoy our visit there later this year. The second museum I visited was "M Shed", the former home of Bristol Industrial Museum. It is intended to show Bristol Life, People and Places but I came away little wiser. There was a Bristol Bus, a Bristol Car and even a piece from Concorde, but with no explanation as to why they were there. It was obsessively politically correct with what was virtually a shrine devoted to the slave trade. Rather like Tate Modern, the best feature was the view from the roof terrace, but even this was spoiled by the flaking paint on the cabs of the Stothert & Pitt cranes outside.

Next year's conference will be in Worcester in April.

IA Preservation Projects undertaken by BIAG Members

Dennis Johnson

I have recently discussed with the National Trust, work done by BIAG in the preservation of a horse wheel at Greys Court, near Henley. This has prompted me to write up two projects undertaken by BIAG.

Greys Court Horse Wheel Preservation and Restoration

In the early 1970's it came to the attention of J K Major that a horse wheel at Shabden Park, Chipstead, Surrey had become unsafe and was in danger of collapsing. Ken Major, an active member of the Berkshire Industrial Archaeology Group (BIAG), and also an expert in animal-powered machinery, arranged for its rescue and re-erection at Greys Court, Henley by members of BIAG.



Horse wheel at Shabden Court showing pump gearing

The two-horse wheel, which drove two pumps raising water from a 488 ft. (150 metres) deep well, was in an open building. The water was pumped into a slate water tank in the roof space of the horse wheel. The horse wheel had two horse arms mounted above an inverted crown wheel, which is itself mounted around a sleeve which revolved around the central pillar of the building housing the machine.

The building was octagonal and made of cast iron. It was designed like a band stand, each corner supported by a cast iron column. The roof system had timber beams on the face, but cast iron support beams.

The horse wheel was dismantled in 1973, transported to Greys Court and re-erected by members of BIAG. Unfortunately, the great weight of the slate meant that the tank was broken during the dismantling.



Dismantling Horse Wheel at Shabden Park (3 Feb. 1973) - photos by G P Pribik

The weight and size of the iron pump rods in the well meant that these had to be cut off just below ground level.



Horse Wheel at Greys Court (most of ironwork in position)



The official opening of the horse wheel (see photo above) was performed on 8 June 1975 by Lord and Lady Brunner, the owners of Greys Court, who donated the property to the National Trust.



Horse Wheel Complete

Greys Court also has a Tudor Donkey Wheel which was used for raising water was from a well 180 ft. (55 metres) deep, also restored by BIAG.

Caversham Road Tram Toilet

The Caversham Public Convenience was built for the use of tramway passengers and others at the electric tramway terminus at Caversham Bridge, Reading, Berkshire. In 1906, the convenience was open from 6 am to midnight.

The cast iron decorated panel structure is partitioned suitable for separate male and female use, and was manufactured at the Saracen Iron foundry of Walter MacFarlane & Co. in Glasgow. The building is made from decorative panels slotted in to cast iron poles, all made at Walter MacFarlane's foundry in Glasgow.

With the development of the roundabout on the south side of Caversham Bridge, the Public Convenience was considered by Reading Borough Council to have reached the end of its useful life and it was closed. The year was 1980, and alternative uses were then considered, but none were found to be suitable. It was donated by Reading Borough Council to the Chiltern Open Air Museum, dismantled by volunteers with help from the Berkshire Industrial Archaeological group in 1985. Repaired and re-erected professionally in 1987-1991. It was finally opened in 1992 to provide public toilet facilities for the Museum.



Caversham Road cast iron Public Convenience in original position

Caversham Road Public Convenience re-erected at Chiltern Open Air Museum



Thanks to the Chiltern Open Air Museum for the illustrations.

Post Script:

In 2012 I discovered a cast iron gentleman's toilet on the East Somerset Railway at Cranmore Station, near Shepton Mallet. This had a gentleman's toilet made by the same foundry as that in Caversham Road.



East Somerset Railway, Cranmore Station Gent's Toilet



East Somerset Railway, Cranmore Station Toilet
Manufactured at Saracen Foundry of MacFarlane, Glasgow

EDITOR`S NOTE:

Thanks to Graham Smith for suggesting reproducing the article on Newbury Railway Station, and also to Brian Boulter for his write-up on SWWRIAC 2013. Particular thanks to Dennis Johnson for producing the article on early BIAG preservation projects at very short notice!

FORTHCOMING SEPTEMBER - DECEMBER 2013 MEETINGS PROGRAMME

30/9/13	OLD INDUSTRIES IN READING	David Cliffe
21/10/13	ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING	
18/11/13	THE WONDERFULLY WEIRD WORLD OF TRANSIT MAPS (How different countries approach the mapping of their railways)	Mark Ovenden
16/12/13	NORTH DEVON CLAY RAILWAY (Torrington & Marland Light Railway)	Dennis Johnson

The following dates have been identified for the Spring/Summer 2014 meetings –please reserve them in your diaries now! – 20 January, 17 February, 17 March, 14 April & 19 May. All meetings are held on Monday evenings and will start at 7.30pm.

Travel Guidance: By bus, the westbound Route 17 bus services stop at the end of St John`s Hill. The nearest eastbound stop for Route 17 is outside the Prudential offices to the north east of the Watlington St bridge over the Kennet. Both stops are about 5 minutes` walk away.

By car, it is easiest to approach by travelling westward along London Road from Cemetery Junction and then turning right into Watlington Street just before the petrol station. Car parking facilities are available at the rear of the site via the entrance in South Street.

Watlington House has a web site with a map: www.watlingtonhouse.org.uk

VISITS – SUMMER/AUTUMN 2013

Saturday 7 September Visit to Bath

Bath at Work Museum, Lansdown Road. 10.30am – 5.00pm.

There are nearby bus stops on Julian Road & Lansdown Road for the Number 2 bus from the city centre and the Lansdown Park & Ride. The Lansdown Park & Ride is recommended for car drivers. Exit the M4 at junction 18 on to the A46 to Bath. The Park & Ride is signposted from the A46/A420 junction, 3 miles south of the M4, (Postcode: BA1 9BJ).

Postal Museum, Northgate Street, 11.00am - 5.00pm

For further details and to book, contact: Peter Trout, 01491 682002

Saturday 21 September. Industrial Heritage of Reading Walk

For BIAG members, led by Peter Trout. Starting at Queen Victoria's statue, Town Hall Square at 6.00pm., followed (optional) by a meal at Sweeney Todd's.

Sunday 20 October Postal History: From Pillar to Post

Discover 350 years of London's postal history from the coffee houses of the 1600s to the electronic communication of today.

All GPO walking tours start at Farringdon Station, and are led by trained and accredited guides for Clerkenwell and Islington and the City of London. Walks include the story of Victorian postal reform, the growth of the GPO, the post underground and the development of post boxes and telephone kiosks.

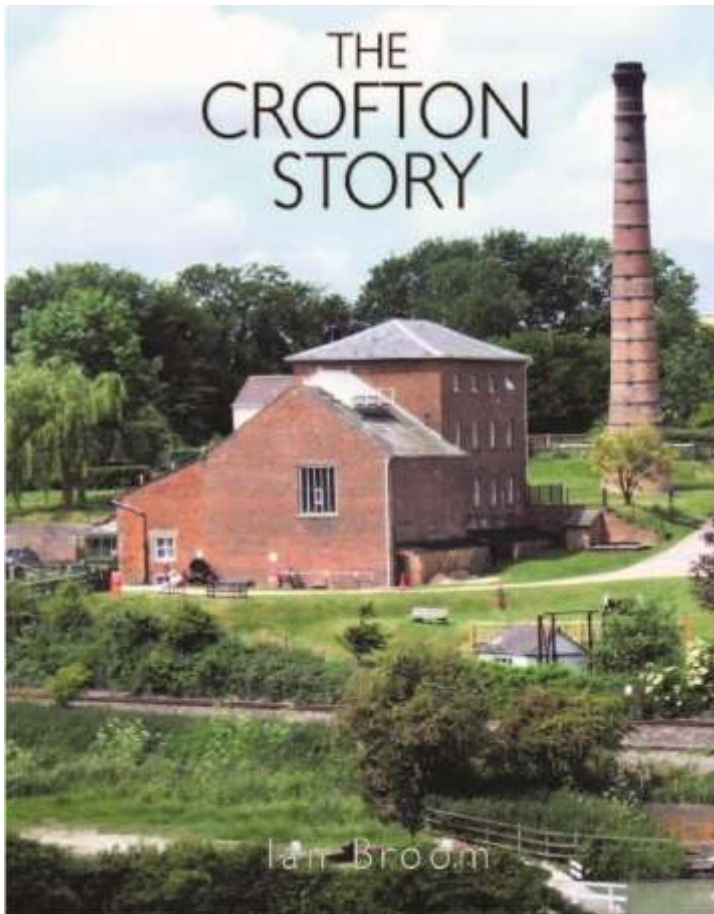
Start, 11.00 am, *Walk lasts around 2 hours.* **Cost & Booking:** £7 per head, £6 for concessions (60+).

No need to book, just turn up and meet your guide who will be wearing a City guides badge.

St Bride's Printing Museum, London

Peter Trout plans to lead a visit to St Bride's Printing Museum with former BIAG member Ben Weiner hosting the tour. For further details and to book, contact: Peter Trout, 01491 682002

Annual subscriptions for BIAG for 2013 are now due. Please send cheques for £20 made payable to "BIAG" to the Treasurer, PETER PRIBIK, 6 HAREFIELD CLOSE, WINNERSH, WOKINGHAM, RG41 5NP.



THE CROFTON STORY

The History of Crofton Pumping Station

by Ian Broom

Crofton Pumping Station near Great Bedwyn on the Kennet and Avon Canal is an important piece of the industrial archaeology of the canal age. It houses the oldest working steam engine in the world still in its original engine house and still doing its original job of pumping water into the summit level of the canal. Pumping started in 1809 and continued until 1959, when following deterioration of the top of the chimney the engines were retired. The engines and boilers remained in place and have now been restored to full working order by an enthusiastic band of volunteers.

Quoting extensively from original records this new book charts the history of the building of the pumping station, its Boulton & Watt engines, the engineers and enginemen who kept them working for 150 years and the painstaking work needed to restore them to working order.

Ian Broom was an original member of the group who restored the engines and boilers and now acts as one of the volunteers who man the station on the regular steaming days organised by the Kennet & Avon Canal Trust.

NOW PUBLISHED

BY THE WILTSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY
(41 Long Street, Devizes, SN10 1NS)

Price £14.99 (paperback) - if collected from either the Wiltshire Heritage Museum in Devizes or from the café at Crofton Pumping Station (otherwise plus £1.50 p&p)

Editor`s Note: If any BIAG members would like to buy a copy of this book, I would be happy to act as postman to save the p&p charge since I visit Crofton regularly. Please see me at a BIAG meeting (or contact me by phone/e-mail).

For general BIAG business, please contact the Secretary: PETER TROUT (Tel: 01491 682002)
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Submissions to BIAG News are welcome in any format. Please send your contributions with an IA theme such as articles, letters, pictures, jokes, cartoons, cuttings from journals etc. to:

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