This year’s South East Regional Industrial Archaeology Conference (SERIAC) was hosted by BIAG on 21 April at Windsor Boys School. It was deemed a success by the approx. 100 people who attended.

Of the six presentations, the best was felt to be Martin Andrews’ “Illustrating Catalogues: Jabez Hare, Commercial Wood Engraver” although this had at first sight appeared to be of limited IA interest.

Following the main event, people had the choice of watching some archive transport films, going for a guided walk around Windsor, or visiting the Thames Valley and Great Western Omnibus Trust (TV&GWOT) garage and workshops 4 miles away in Fifield. The excellent weather on the day meant that very few people stayed for the films and both excursions were enjoyed by those who went on them.
The TV&GWOT visit followed on from a talk "Preservation of Public Road Transport in the Thames Valley" given by Colin Billington, the Trust's chairman. Participants were treated to a nostalgic ride there and back in a restored 1946 Bristol K6A 55 seat low-bridge double decker which originally saw service between 1946 and 1965 in High Wycombe, Reading and then Newbury. Following use by a Bournemouth company it was bought for preservation in 1972; it has been kept continuously in roadworthy condition since 1990 and was acquired by the Trust in 2014.
As well as the buses, TV&GWOT has restored a waiting room that was originally at Maidenhead Bus Station and now uses it as a meeting and function room.

Further information about the Trust and the vehicles it has in preservation may be found on its website www.tvagwot.org.uk.

SERIAC 2019 is planned for the Mick Jagger Theatre at Dartford Grammar School on Saturday 13th April. The provisional list of topics includes the Ragstone Industry, Brickmaking, Short’s underground Seaplane factory at Rochester, Rochester Bridge, Kent’s Sound Mirrors, and Maintaining old railway locomotives on the Spa Valley Railway. There are unlikely to be any post-meeting visits. Public transport users are probably best advised to travel by train to Crayford (the edge of London travel zone 6) and catch a bus heading towards Bluewater Shopping Centre for the 1½ mile journey from there. Further details will be available closer to the date.

WOOD SHAVINGS

Peter Trout

Woodcote, where I live, is a good starting point for a musing on trees and timber. Woodcote (or uphill) is part of the parish of South Stoke (downhill). These Chiltern parishes are “long strips” stretching from the Thames (fish, osiers), the banks (hay meadows), hillside (various arable), then waste woodland (pasturage, building timber & fuel) all husbanding natural resources.

In time, much of Woodcote’s woodland belonged to “outsiders”, particularly Christchurch College, Oxford. One large wood is appropriately named “College Wood”. Records show a steady waggon flow of building timber and fuel each year to maintain its buildings and keep the Dons and students warm and fed with cooked food.

So much for the small scale – what about industry? The Weald iron industry is well known - it was located there partly because of the timber that was needed to make charcoal. The quantities are staggering - one ironworks/furnace might need (an estimated) 1800 waggon loads of charcoal a year. To produce that amount (whatever a waggon load was!) a huge amount of timber needed to be felled. To produce one ton of charcoal needs four tons of timber which might mean the above works would consume 7000 loads every year, that is - a “forest”.

Much of the wood for making charcoal was coppiced wood. A good example of coppicing is at Stott Park Bobbin Mill near Bowness-on-Windermere which is now in the care of English Heritage.

The foundries had rivals for timber, particularly ship building. A man-o-war might need in excess of 2800 loads! No wonder Admiral Collingwood (2nd in command at Trafalgar) had his pockets full of acorns to plant!
My not (a)musing considerations lead me to Drax Power Station which is now fired by wood pellets. Blood pressure stays my pen!

**Note:** Statistics taken from “The Iron Men” (Ashburton History Press 2015)

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**LONDON DOCKS - CONCRETE SAMPLES**

**Edwin Trout**

Following the talk, we had on the London docks, I thought the attached photos might be pertinent. They are of a sample of concrete laid for construction at the Royal Victoria Dock in 1880, presumably at the time the dock was granted its prefix 'Royal' and connected to the newly built Royal Albert Dock, which extended Docklands eastward. Or perhaps at the junction with the graving dock leading off to the south, which wasn't there in 1878 but formed a part of the new Royal Docks complex. See images from Wikipedia below:
It currently stands outside my window at The Concrete Society in Blackwater, overlooking the Sandhurst meadows.
GOOLE

Peter Trout

What have the following got in common? – Doncaster, Crewe, Eastleigh, Swindon, Neasden. Easy - railway towns – and there are several more!

So, what do these have in common? – Goole, Stourport, Shardlow, Ellesmere Port. The latter is the clue for they are all canal towns. They are sited at trans-shipment points between, say, narrow and broad canals or canals and rivers. Rather than simple exchange the original places attracted warehouses, workers and their homes, merchants and services (such as shops and banks).

The classic is Stourport. James Brindley took the Staffs & Worcester Canal to the valley of the River Stour and they met at a lonely spot with one inn. The Company built a small harbour allowing for river and canal craft to enter. Before long a small town sprang up and continued to develop. An IA visit is worthwhile to see the Georgian town and canal features.

Shardlow grew similarly as did Ellesmere Port and some of Thomas Telford’s features remain.

For me, Goole is the most interesting. It is situated at the junction of the Aire & Calder Canal and the River Ouse in Yorkshire. (The Curator of the Museum has lived in the West and East Ridings as well as Humberside but has not yet moved house). Goole is still a thriving port although canal traffic especially “Tom Puddings” ceased 30 years ago (that’s right- Arthur Scargill!). There is a waterway museum with boat trips. (My last trip was one escorted out of the docks by the police – I really don’t know why as there was only my car and the police car there!)

Should I be invited, I would be please to tell BIAG more of the history of this canal town.

BOOK REVIEW

John Dearing

BIAG members appear to have a strong affection for the not quite neighbouring county of Gloucestershire, having visited Sharpness two years ago, Gloucester last year and with the delights of Tewkesbury to come. They will surely, therefore wish to possess an excellent new book, published late last year entitled *Bristol and Gloucestershire Aerospace Industry* (Amberley Publishing, £14.99). The author, Steph Gillett, is a heritage consultant and formerly served as Curator of the Science Museum at Wroughton, Wilts, and oversaw the revitalisation of Newbury Museum. He also just happens to be my cousin!

In just over 100 pages, the author tells the story of an industry that began a little over 100 years ago. Considering what sophisticated machines aeroplanes now are it is fascinating to learn of some of the sites that were converted for their construction in the early days. The Coliseum Works in Bristol used by Parnall and Sons to build over 600 aircraft during WW1 had formerly seen service as ‘an exhibition hall, cinema, skating rink and dance hall’! The book is lavishly illustrated.

As well as three major aircraft manufacturers, Bristol Aircraft. Parnall and Gloucestershire Aircraft, smaller component companies are covered and the stories of such famous aeroplanes as the Brabazon and Concorde are fully explored.

For railway buffs, the same author’s volume on the Somerset and Dorset Railway is also highly recommended.
DIDCOT POWER STATION

John Joyes

Not much left! I couldn’t find a date for the demolition of the 3 towers and stack, but it’s scheduled for “this summer”.

BEYOND OUR BORDERS

Bob Haskins

Beyond Our Border: Number 8 – Day Trip to Wylam, Northumberland

If you’re ever in Newcastle upon Tyne do consider a day trip out to Wylam. A most enjoyable way is by a short railway journey returning by foot and bus. However, before you board your train you must walk down to the River Tyne (the Coaly Tyne) to view the magnificent bridges.
Photograph 8.2  Again looking west but this time taken from the Gateshead Millennium Bridge

The view in photograph 8.2 shows in receding order; the Tyne road bridge that opened in 1928, William Armstrong’s Swing Bridge of 1876 (painted red and white), Robert Stephenson’s (1803 – 1859) High Level Bridge (opened 1849) supporting a rail track above and roadway below, Queen Elizabeth II Metro rail bridge that opened 1981 (the bridge that’s painted blue) and just discernible behind the King Edward VII rail bridge of 1906. Following the construction of the King Edward VII rail bridge a railway loop was formed crossing the Tyne to give a path into Newcastle station from both the east and west, and across the Tyne either from the north or the south without trains to reverse.

Now we’ve looked at the bridges, let’s look at John Dobson’s 1850 railway station with its magnificent porte cochere now sadly sealed by glass and automatic sliding doors no longer able to keep traveller’s in the dry whilst they transfer from their carriage to the waiting train. Ignominiously, it’s now used to house ticket issuing machines and, departure and arrival boards.

Photograph 8.3  Newcastle Station with an annual passenger usage of over eight million

There is an hourly train service from Newcastle to Wylam (£3.00 for a single with a senior rail card) with a journey time of around 18 minutes. On leaving Newcastle station the train crosses King Edward VII bridge offering good but brief views up and down the Tyne. We then enter the short Bensham Tunnel before our first stop at Dunston, famous for the Dunston coal staithes now sadly truncated by fire damage in 2010. Our next stop is the Gateshead Metro Centre, before we depart for Blaydon and our destination Wylam.
The stationmaster’s house is Grade II* listed whilst the footbridge and signal box are Grade II. The station, on the south bank of the River Tyne, was built for the Newcastle and Carlisle Railway and is one of the earliest still in use. The up and down platforms are staggered across the road that leads across the Tyne and into the village.

From the station there is lovely walk following the railway line down to Hagg Bank where the Scotswood, Newburn and Wylam Railway (SN&WR) from Newcastle runs along the north bank of the Tyne past George Stephenson’s cottage through Wylam village over the Grade II Listed West Wylam bridge to join the Newcastle and Carlisle Railway.
The above photograph (8.6) has the Newcastle Carlisle Railway line out of view but tucked below the field edged by the wire and post fence and the bridge. The Scotswood, Newburn and Wylam railway ran across the bridge from right to left and joined the main line at West Wylam Junction, again out of sight but approximately 100 yards to the west (left of view).

Photograph 8.7  View from West Wylam Bridge looking at the main line and the extensive embankment of Wylam Scar

Major civil engineering embankment work was undertaken at Wylam Scar to provide a shelf to support the (N&CR) line as it ran close to the river at this point. The line can be identified above the stone work across the middle of the photograph.

You are now on the track of the 1876 – 1968 (SN&WR) line from Newcastle through North Wylam station, continuing east will take you to the site of North Wylam Railway station (now a popular car park for walkers of the old line) and a little under a mile further you arrive at the birthplace cottage of George Stephenson (1781 – 1848). The cottage is a National Trust property that opens for guided tours, teas and light snacks during the season. You now have a three mile level cinder track walk to take you into Newburn.

Photograph 8.8  George Stephenson’s cottage facing the trackbed of the former Scotswood, Newburn and Wylam Railway

At the end of your walk you may like to drop into The Keelman Pub in Grange Road before catching a number 22 bus back to Newcastle station (free with a bus pass!).

http://www.northofthetyne.co.uk/Newburn-WylamWalk.html#.WpV5zOjFLIU
http://www.dunstonstaiths.org.uk/
https://wylamparishcouncil.org.uk/local-information/wylam-railway-museum.html
http://www.wylamontyne.co.uk/hp.htm
FORTHCOMING 2018 MEETINGS PROGRAMME

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Speaker</th>
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<tr>
<td>17 September 2018</td>
<td>Didcot Railway Centre – its Past, Present and Future</td>
<td>Ann Middleton</td>
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<tr>
<td>15 October 2018</td>
<td>AGM + members’ presentations</td>
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<tr>
<td>19 November 2018</td>
<td>To be advised</td>
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<tr>
<td>10 December 2018</td>
<td>Film Show &amp; Social Evening</td>
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All meetings are held on Monday evenings at the Church Hall of St Mary’s Church, Castle St, Reading RG1 7RD and start at 7.30pm. Access to the church hall is through the right-hand side passage.

**Travel Guidance:** By bus, St Mary’s Church Hall is within a two-minute walk from St Mary’s Butts and a five-minute walk from Oxford Road where many Reading Corporation buses stop.

By car, the Church does not have a car park but there is a public car park in the Civic Centre adjacent to the Church. St Mary’s Church has a web site with a map: [http://www.cofec.org/stmarys.html](http://www.cofec.org/stmarys.html)

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**EDITOR’S NOTE:**

Many thanks to Peter Trout, John Dearing, Graham Smith and John Joyes for their contributions to this issue – we seem to be developing a wider base of members contributing which is excellent news. Also, many thanks to Bob Haskins for his continuing “Beyond our Borders” series and here, there are more to come! The idea is to feature visits of IA interest to sites outside our immediate area and we are keen to encourage any other members who make similar trips to write them up so they can be featured as well. However, nothing from anyone else so far!

We had an interesting visit to British Motor Heritage Ltd in Witney and Combe Mill (near Long Hanborough) on 20 June. We are limited for space in this issue I hope to include some photographs etc in our next one.

John Coulson

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**DATES FOR YOUR DIARY**

**AIA Conference, University of Nottingham – Friday 31 August to Tuesday 4 September**

Please note this replaces the previously billed conference in Caithness from 22 to 27th June which is going ahead with a different sponsor.

The Nottingham conference will include visits to the only remaining bell foundry in the UK (Taylor’s of Loughborough), rotative beam engines at Leicester and Papplewick together with other local places of interest. For further details, see [https://industrial-archaeology.org/conferences/annual-conference](https://industrial-archaeology.org/conferences/annual-conference).

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**A Guided Tour of the Great Exhibition 1851 – Friday 7 September at 7.30pm**

Crofton Beam Engines (near Marlborough) are presenting a talk by David de Haan (Hon Secretary of the Association for Industrial Archaeology). From plans, catalogues and prints, the layout of the 1851 Exhibition has been reconstructed, making it possible to visit stand after stand in the order the Victorians would have seen them. If you come to this talk, you will be able to say that you did visit the 1851 Exhibition after all!

Tickets £10.00 including a light supper. (NB: advanced bookings only as there is limited seating)

Contact: [crofton.manager@katrust.org](mailto:crofton.manager@katrust.org)
FORTHCOMING BIAG VISITS

Excursion to Tewkesbury – Saturday 11 August 2018

A day excursion to Tewkesbury with opportunities for a guided walk around the town and its environs, a pub lunch at a local hostelry, followed by an afternoon guided walk looking at the rivers Severn and Avon and an excursion to view Mythe Bridge before leaving for an evening meal and social at The Crown Inn in Kemerton.

The plan is to drive either individually or in shared cars down to the long-term car park in Church Street, Tewkesbury to receive a brief and relevant hand-out material. It is then proposed we follow a guided walk around the town, stopping for a pub lunch, followed by an afternoon stroll down the rivers River Severn and Avon to view Mythe Bridge (designed by Telford). Individuals may if they wish plan their own day on what they wish to see and for how long they take at each site. Either way, we can meet for lunch, but should depart late afternoon for Kemerton for an evening meal and social in the Crown Inn before our departure home. The provisional itinerary:

- 08.30 Depart Reading/Newbury for the long-term car park in Church Street, Tewkesbury (SO888322).
- 10.00 Arrive Park & Ride (the all-day fee is £3.20) to receive a brief, local brochures and literature.
- 10.15 Guided Walk Part I
- 13.00 Pub lunch break at the Tudor House Hotel
- 14.30 Guided Walk Part II
- 18.00 Return to the long-stay car park for departure to Kemerton (GL20 7HP).
- 20.30 Depart for home.

Tewkesbury Information Centre: [http://www.visittewkesbury.info/](http://www.visittewkesbury.info/)
The Crown Inn: [http://thecrownkemerton.co.uk/](http://thecrownkemerton.co.uk/)

Please contact Bob Haskins if you are interested [contact@biag.org.uk](mailto:contact@biag.org.uk)

FORTHCOMING GLIAS EVENTS

The Greater London Industrial Archaeology Society (GLIAS) Have now kindly agreed to include details of BIAG events in their Diary so, in future, we will also include details of their planned events:

Walks:

A series of free guided walks, looking at the industrial and social heritage of different areas of London. To reserve places on any of the walks, please email [walks@glias.org.uk](mailto:walks@glias.org.uk) to get details of the meeting points. Anyone without email can apply by post to the secretary. There are only a limited number of places available on each walk. The walks all start at 2.30pm. Non-members are welcome.

- 4 August Sat MILE END, led by Martin Adams
Lectures:

GLIAS regular lectures will be held at 6.30pm in the Gallery, Alan Baxter Ltd, 75 Cowcross Street, EC1M 6EL. The Gallery is through the archway and in the basement at the rear of the building. There is a lift from the main entrance.

For general BIAG business, please contact the Secretary: GRAHAM SMITH (Tel: 01635-580356) 114 SHAW ROAD, NEWBURY, BERKS, RG14 1HR or email secretary@biag.org.uk

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:

JOHN COULSON (Tel: 0118 9402526) 3 THE CRESCENT, CRAZIES HILL, READING, RG10 8LW or e-mail newsletter@biag.org.uk (please note new e-mail address)

July 2018  Printing and distribution: Bob Haskins