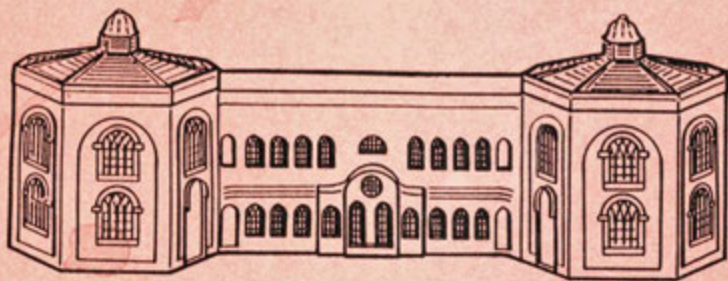


RETORT!

THE BULLETIN
OF THE
WARWICKSHIRE
INDUSTRIAL ARCHAEOLOGY
SOCIETY



SUMMER 1995

ISSUE FIVE

RETORT!

The Bulletin of the Warwickshire Industrial Archaeology Society

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EDITORIAL

There seems to have been quite a gap since the publication of the last issue of Retort!, but this has not meant that the Society has been inactive. The AGM held in May reported a busy year of talks and visits, together with a satisfactory financial position. The range of the Society's interests continues to widen, and the input of several new members has been invaluable.

The Committee - during its annual gathering - felt that the time had come for the Society to put together a gazetteer of sites in Warwickshire, and the preparation of this gazetteer should become the basis of much of the Society's activities over the next two years. This list will inevitably contain mistakes, and will not be a comprehensive record, but it will provide a long overdue starting point to a systematic recording of the county. Having seen a site listed, members - hopefully - will be tempted to go out and record it on the (much feared and little used) IRIS forms. Once again, may I repeat that no-one should fear these forms, and those who have used them have been pleasantly surprised at the ease with which they can be completed.

In order to encourage this process of listing, it has been decided that, for the last half an hour of each of our indoor meetings, an aspect of Warwickshire's industrial archaeology will be taken by one of our members and a simple introduction provided. The text of each of these talks will be recorded and published in Retort!, together with all the sites mentioned. We hope that this can become the basis of the gazetteer. We hope to be able to publish this within the next two years.

Any volunteers who would like to take a particular theme should contact the Secretary or the Chairman.

Martin Green

IA of Warwickshire A layman's introduction

Where exactly are the boundaries of Warwickshire?

One would imagine that the simplest initial task would be to give a clear definition to the geographical area covered by Warwickshire. Unfortunately, the current boundary of Warwickshire - drawn in 1974 - excludes some key industrial areas of the former county. Most obvious is the placement of Coventry within the West Midlands, and it would be difficult to give an accurate description of the industrial archaeology of the area without making considerable reference to Coventry. To overcome this, a fairly arbitrary division has been made which places Coventry within the area to be studied. The main problem then becomes the establishment of a western limit to the area - should it just be the City of Coventry or Meriden and Solihull as well? Should a man-made divide - the M42 - be used instead to provide at least an easily identifiable western boundary?

To some extent, the debate is a distraction from the real task - to provide a survey of the industrial archaeology of the area. As a compromise, we shall take all of Warwickshire plus those parts of the West Midlands that lie east of the M42.

In a manner that is probably true of many English counties, Warwickshire exhibits considerable diversity of landscape and economic experience, and this is reflected in its industrial archaeology. The coal-mining villages of the north of the county provide a distinct contrast with the rural communities of the Cotswold fringe of southern Warwickshire. Larger industrial centres such as Coventry, Nuneaton and Rugby present a very different picture to that found in the more sedate towns of Warwick, Stratford-upon-Avon and Leamington Spa.

How might industrial archaeology be defined?

Industrial archaeology has been given an official definition by the Association for Industrial Archaeology. Whilst the Warwickshire Industrial Archaeology Society had accepted "*the study, recording and preservation of the remains of our industrial past*" as an adequate description of their activities, the Association produced the definitive version:

"Industrial archaeology is a period study embracing the tangible evidence of social, economic and technological development from the onset of industrialisation to the recent past."

What does the subject cover?

In addition to providing such a definition, the Association has also gone to considerable pains to identify the range of activities that may be included within industrial archaeology. This has been part of a process of trying to establish a systematic record of all industrial sites in the country. This is the Index Record for Industrial Sites or IRIS. The Society's contribution to this record has been modest (to say the least), and it is the desire to contribute more fully and more effectively to IRIS that has prompted this attempt at a preliminary survey of the county's sites. The hope is the various articles in Retort! on local sites will be the catalyst for a burst of activity as others note the errors and deficiencies in the list.

Some aspects of the industrial archaeology of Warwickshire have been covered expertly elsewhere; others have been hardly touched at all. Of the former group, the county's windmills and watermills have been painstakingly researched and listed. Railways and Canals have also tended to attract a fair degree of attention, with almost every railway branch line seeming to deserve a volume of its own. On the other hand, there is little written, for example, about the brick-making or cement industries of the county, and the work of many local ironfounders remains largely unknown. It is the aim of these articles to take an area of activity, provide a simple introduction, and to list those sites that remain. We hope that they will indicate the diversity of Warwickshire's industrial activities, and present the material in a very simple and accessible way.

There are various ways that the activities included within industrial archaeology can be classified. The Association for Industrial Archaeology has provided a comprehensive list, but as a means of keeping the subject within manageable proportions - and as a way of focussing on Warwickshire industry - the following simplified list might be adopted. Should you feel that there are glaring omissions, please let me know, although I might ask you to provide some information on the industries concerned!

Warwickshire's Industrial Archaeology A list of activities

1. Extractive industries
2. Power - wind, water, steam
3. Transport - road, canal, rail, air - and Communications
4. Textiles
5. Iron and steel
6. Engineering
7. Cycle and motor
8. Miscellaneous manufacturing e.g. needles; watches.
9. Agriculture and agriculturally-based industries e.g. tanning; brewing; timber.
10. Public utilities - water, gas, electricity supply; waste disposal.
11. Distribution - wholesale and retail
12. Industrial communities e.g. housing; recreation facilities

1. Extractive industries

A useful starting point is to take those activities associated with the geological make-up of the county. One of the great dangers of this is to drift into a complicated geological history of the area, but we are mainly concerned with the outcome of the geological past rather than its causes.

A simple surface geological map would show a broad band of limestone running NE-SW in the south of the county (including the Cotswold fringe), the clays and sand and gravels occupying the Tame and Avon valleys, and a central block of harder sandstone, together with the volcanic rocks and coals and shales, in the northern half of the county. An easily accessible introduction to the geology of the county can be found in the Warwickshire Museum in Warwick, where a tape-slide show is available for visitors. (Similarly, younger industrial archaeologists can gain a great deal from the booklet 'Windows on Warwickshire', which covers many features of Warwickshire's past and present, including its industrial history.

Evidence of the quarrying of rocks for building is relatively scarce. Most of these quarries have long since closed down, and, apart from the man-

made undulations and holes in the ground, the main reminders of their existence lie in the buildings of which they were constructed. A greyish, pale Keuper sandstone was quarried at Warwick, and many of the town's finest buildings, including Warwick castle, are of this stone. Unfortunately, it has variable resistance to weathering, and evidence of necessary replacement and repair can be found in the town. The stone used for many buildings in the Kenilworth area was a reddish-brown Permian sandstone, whilst red sandstone was also used for many of Coventry's earlier buildings. Further south, the Blue Lias blue-grey coloured limestone was used in the Binton/Bidford area (with quarries at Temple Grafton and Wilmcote), although foreign visitors probably take little note of this in the gable ends of Mary Arden's house at Wilmcote. A pale White Lias was used in villages such as Harbury and Lighthorne, and the stone is still quarried on a modest scale near Lighthorne, mainly for facing stone. The Oolitic Cotswold limestone can be found in the south of the County, e.g. at Long Compton. Finally, the honey-coloured ironstone can be found in villages close to Edgehill - e.g. Radway, Ratley, Tysoe and Kineton.

In the north of the county, there is considerable evidence of more extensive mining and quarrying. The coal measures run broadly N-S, but they are exposed in the north and much deeper further south. The shape of the coal measures has been likened to a curved garden trowel thrust into the ground from north to south. The coal is mixed with a variety of sandstones, mudstones and shales to form the "productive coal measures. Seams are of variable thickness, with the thickest being the "Seven Foot". At certain places, these coal seams have come together, and the Victoria Colliery in the Hawkesbury area achieved fame in the last century for possessing the world's thickest coal seam.

The outcrops of coal in the north were the first to be exploited, but as these became used up, deeper mines became necessary, and pumping for drainage became a priority. The Warwickshire coalfield was amongst the first to use steam power for this purpose. The second Newcomen engine to be used for this purpose was installed at Bermuda in 1714.

One of the speakers at our regular meetings, Mr. Alan Cook, has given the Society a valuable insight into the history of the Warwickshire coalfield. He lists the various collieries in operation since the mid-nineteenth century as follows:

Name	Date opened and closed	
Griff Clara	1891 - 1955	May
Griff No. 4	1888 - 1960	July
Haunchwood: The Tunnel	1891 - 1967	April
Haunchwood Nowells	- 1945
Ansley Hall	1878 - 1959	November
Arley	1901 - 1968	March
Baddesley	1850 - 1989	March
Birch Coppice	1875 - 1986	December
Kingsbury	1894 - 1968	June
Dexter	1927 - 1965	
Alvecote	1877 - 1950	
Pooley Hall	1897 - 1965	
Hawkesbury	- 1946
Newdegate	1898 - 1982	February
Exhall	1857 - 1948	September
Binley	1909 - 1963	February
Coventry/Keresley	1917 - 1991	October
		Private re-opening 1995
Daw Mill	1964	

As can be seen from the list, from a situation of very high activity at the beginning of the twentieth century, there is now very little mining of coal in Warwickshire. Daw Mill and the recently re-opened Coventry Colliery at Keresley represent the only surviving pits in 1995.

The Warwickshire coal is not a high quality coal, having a low calorific content. It has been used for domestic purposes, for driving steam engines, and to turn turbines and generate electricity at power stations. The Homefire plant at Keresley takes coal and provides further compression to drive out volatile gases to produce smokeless fuel.

Brick-making was an important industry in Warwickshire, and a host of small brickworks were created to provide the county's most popular building material. In addition, there were some important larger concerns, particularly in the Nuneaton and Coventry areas. The surviving brickworks of the county in production are the Baggeridge brickworks at Kingsbury and the Webster-Hemmings concern at Coventry. Remnants of the industry can also be found at a number of locations e.g. Napton and Fenny Compton. The products of the industry are, of course, all around us, and local brick collectors

list a large number of different Warwickshire bricks amongst their collection e.g. Cashmore of Warwick, Haunchwood of Nuneaton, Cherry Orchard of Kenilworth. The different clays used in production, and variations in firing procedures, produces a range of shades and colours. The Carboniferous Enville clays were used at Coventry, the Permian Ashover red clays at Kenilworth, the Triassic Keuper Marl at Leamington, and the Jurassic Middle Lias clays at Napton. The Baggeridge company also supplies high-quality blue bricks from the Staffordshire border, whilst several of Rugby's houses are constructed of a yellowish brick from a local pit worked in the 19th century.

Some of the most dramatic evidence of quarrying in Warwickshire can be found in the Nuneaton area. The ridge of hard quartzite rock, with bands of diorite running through it, extending north west from Nuneaton, has been extensively quarried since about 1840. The quartzite and diorite are today used for roadstone. Huge pits have been opened up around Hartshill and Tuttle Hill, with both the quarries themselves plus the spoil heaps surviving as evidence of extensive quarrying activity. Most spectacular is the spoil heap at Judkins quarry at Nuneaton - known locally as Mount Judd.

The other industry with significant evidence remaining is the cement industry. The Blue Lias stone is the essential raw material for this industry, and it occurs in a broad NE-SW band across the south of the county. This has led to a number of quarries being established - at Newbold and New Bilton, Southam, Stockton and Bishop's Itchington. The Rugby and Southam works still operate, being part of Rugby Cement.

Finally, glacial deposits of sand and gravel have been exploited in various parts of the county e.g. Charlecote, Kingsbury and Middleton, Ryton and Wolston, and Packington. In many cases, all that remains is the water-filled pools and landscaped surrounds to the pits. For example, Kingsbury Water park is essentially the water-filled remains of pits. Sand and gravel is still quarried in the Kingsbury area.

There is a considerable amount of knowledge amongst members about many of these industries, and the surviving locations, but very little of it is officially recorded. The only IRIS form completed is on the Fenny Compton brick kiln. We need to take each of these extractive industries and produce a record of the sites, both of major and minor importance. The coal industry is probably the most difficult to survey, but the brick, cement, and ironstone industries present a more acceptable challenge. All we need now is volunteers

Could it ever return?

This is a copy of the accession record of the Warwick Fire Engine to the Henry Ford Museum. Is it destined to stay in the United States of America for ever?

THE HENRY FORD MUSEUM AND GREENFIELD VILLAGE

Date: January 1930 **Object:** Fire Engine **Date:** c.1890
Purchased from: City of Warwick, England
Through: H. Morton, Ford Motor Co. Ltd,
Maker: Shand, Mason and Company Manchester, England.

Dimensions:
L. 127 ins W 61.5 ins H 100.5 ins Wheelbase: 67 ins
Dia. front wheels: 34 ins Dia. rear wheels: 47.5 ins

Description: Horse drawn steam fire engine. Brass vertical boiler in rear with combustion chamber below, plate on left: SHAND, MASON & CO / ENGINEERS / LONDON. Machinery in rear has plate each side: PATENT/VARIABLE-EXPANSION / ENGINE / SHAND, MASON & CO. / LONDON. 2 copper cylinders with brass bands in rear, double education outlets below, left one marked: JOHN MORRIS & SONS / FIRE ENGINEERS / MANCHESTER. Brass hold rail and metal platform with metal boxes each side in rear. Triple coupling on stand left rear. Cog wheel and chain to cog top of boiler right rear works bellows. 2 lanterns right side and rear. Front consists of high wood tool box red with gold trim marked: WARWICK each side with brass rail center of top with two leather straps. At foot of tool box each side is folding platform with rubber mat. Driver's seat raised at front of box wood with brass arm and back rest, 2 braided rope pulls each side. Lantern each side and lever to work wheel brakes, also two copper nozzles. Foot board on metal rods projects out front, above is gong, below plate with maker's name. Below is additional tool box with brass handle. Behind seat is brass wheel to ring gong. Metal fuel box on front axle. Semi-elliptical springs. Rubber suction pipe with wire bands hooked to left rear. Red wheels, front 6 felloes, 12 spokes, 7 rear felloes, 14 spokes. Shovel, metal stokers.

Remarks: Condition good. The variable-expansion engine was installed at a later date. Used in Warwick, England until 1930.

The Gas Industry

Toby Cave contributes two items on the gas industry of the area. Many country houses had their own small gasworks, and Berkswell Hall was one such example. The second item looks at a very interesting development in researching the history of gas production in Birmingham.

Warwickshire Gas Works

Berkswell Hall Gas Works

Berkswell, Warwickshire
O.S. Map c 1886

An earlier house on the site was rebuilt in the early 19th. century after a fire in 1812. At that time the property was owned by the Eardley Wilmot family who came into possession of the manor a few years before the fire. In 1860, the estate of 1, 285 acres was purchased by Thomas Walker, an ironfounder of Wednesbury in the Black Country. The estate then produced an annual income of £2, 349, but Mr. Walker added to the estate by purchasing surrounding farms and by 1888 it had been increased to 2, 308 acres with an annual income of £4, 841.

Thomas Walker improved the house and in 1866 erected new stables and coach houses to accommodate eighteen horse and fifteen carriages. He also dammed up the stream passing the house to create the lake. The gas works was possibly built at this time.

After Thomas Walker's death in 1888 the estate was found to be heavily mortgaged and was sold by his son, Thomas Eades Walker, to help pay the debts, but Eades Walker was himself declared bankrupt in 1893. Thomas Eades Walker was M.P. for East Worcestershire from 1874 to 1880. The sale particulars, dated 3rd. August 1888 did not mention the gas works, although these were obviously in place at that date.

The property was purchased by Joshua Hirst Wheatley, a woollen manufacturer from Yorkshire. His family held the property until the death of the last direct descendant in 1987. The estate was then sold and the house converted into flats.

There appear to be no traces of the gas works surviving on the site.

Thomas Walker was the owner of the Patent Shaft and Axletree Company which he purchased in 1854 on the death of the founder. Walker was then aged 37 and in 1864 the company became a public company with a share capital of £300,000, much of which was owned by Walker. He remained Chairman until his death in 1887. Financial problems developed from 1879 when one of the most trusted people in the company, William Coath, the chief cashier, defrauded the company by stealing a large sum of money.

References:

Berkswell Miscellany. Volume 3. Berkswell Local History Research Group.

The origins of the gas industry in the Midlands

We are justifiably proud of the 1822 Warwick gasworks that acts as the motif of the Warwickshire Industrial Archaeology Society. Recent research in the Gas Street area of Birmingham has also revealed an important feature of the early gas industry of the city. When examining an application to redevelop a site in Berkeley Street it was discovered that one of the buildings was a gas retort house, which pre-dates the one in Warwick. The building itself has a very interesting cast and wrought iron roof.

Gas Street itself was laid out on part of a filled-in branch of the Worcester and Birmingham Canal. The corner of Gas Street and Broad Street also has a building with some fine terracotta decoration, which may also be due for re-development.

The future of the gas retort house has become a matter of considerable political controversy. We hope to keep you informed of any developments.

Warwickshire Industrial Archaeology Society

Programme 1995/6

The Society's summer walks this year are:

22nd June 1994

Peter Chater continues his series of walks with a visit to the Oxford Canal. Please meet at 7.00 p.m. for a 7.15 p.m. start on the A423 Southam to Banbury road, near the old Fenny Compton Tunnel. There is parking space by the side of the road for a number of cars.

13th July 1995

'Shop front geology' A guided tour of Leamington Spa by Mr. John Crossling. Please meet at the top of the western (Tesco) end of the Parade, Leamington Spa at 7.15 p.m. This is strongly recommended.

August 1995

John Haslam has led us into 'unknown' territory in Coventry before and he continues this with a walk around Earlsdon. Please meet at 7.00 p.m. for a 7.15 p.m. start outside Earlsdon Library.

10th Sept 1995 Sunday visit to Rugby Cement Open Day at Southam Works. Tickets available from the Chairman in due course

Indoor meetings 1995/6

These meetings are held on the second Thursday of the month in the Sixth Form Centre at Warwick School, starting at 7.30 p.m.

In a new initiative, during the last half-hour of each of the indoor meetings from September, members will give a talk on a particular theme of Warwickshire's Industrial Archaeology. This should not only be a major contribution to our knowledge of the County, but also provide a boost to our surveying of sites and subsequent contributions to IRIS.

Any member who would like to take a theme should contact Toby Cave or Martin Green.

14th Sept 1995 Dr. Nigel Crowe, Heritage Officer, British Waterways
'The British Waterways Architectural Heritage Survey'

12th Oct 1995 Dr. Shirley Rodden. 'The Telford Memorial Library'
followed by IA of Warwickshire: Bridges by Roger Cragg

9th Nov 1995 Roger Waring 'The Stonebridge Railway'
followed by IA of Warwickshire: Railway Stations by Peter Chater

14th Dec 1995 Rita McLean on the Soho House Project, Birmingham.

11th Jan 1996 Members Evening and IRIS Report
followed by IA of Warwickshire: Gasworks by Toby Cave

8th Feb 1996 Gillian Bardsley 'The History of the Lucas Company of Birmingham'
followed by IA of Warwickshire: Ironstone Quarries by Mark Abbott

14th March 1996 Keith Croucher on 'Lead Mining in the Peak District'

11th April 1996 Trevor Lord of the Gaydon Motor Museum on the 'History of Petrol Filling Stations in Great Britain during the 1920s and 1930s

9th May 1996 AGM followed by 'Railway Adventures around Nuneaton' by Peter Lee.

13th June 1996 Members Evening and IRIS Report

Toby Cave is always willing to hear of any ideas for talks, visits or walks. Do not hesitate to get in touch if you feel you can help in any way at all.

Occasional additional events will also take place during the year, and members will be duly notified of these.

The Machine Tool Industry

A postscript

As a postscript to his talk to WIAS in March on the machine tool industry in Coventry, Arthur Astrop offers the following item which vividly describes, at first hand, the experience of a 14 year-old Coventry lad applying for an apprenticeship at Alfred Herbert Ltd, Coventry in 1937. It is extracted from the first few pages of an unpublished manuscript in Arthur's possession which is the autobiography of a man who made his career in machine tools, and who for many years represented Alfred Herbert overseas.

In 1937, when I applied for a job at Alfred Herbert Ltd., I was 14 years old, had had a good education (or so I thought), was reasonably bright, but was naive. I was certainly ripe for a rude awakening. Coming from a large family, I was in turn a paper boy, butcher's boy, bookseller, and caddie. By the age of nine my childhood was effectively over. Times were hard.

I applied for a job at Herberts on the insistence of my mother, and she was going on A casual word from my father to the effect that 'if he could get an apprenticeship with Herberts, he'd have a job for life'. In 1937, kids didn't question grown-ups, so off I went, with my mother, to Herbert's Labour Office in Canal Road, Coventry. This small and spartan office had no furniture in it, after about five minutes a girl appeared and asked our business. The Labour manager (Mr. Lynex), she told us, was 'in the shop', but would be back soon. So we waited.

'Back soon' turned out to mean about an hour, but Mr. Lynex at last appeared. An imposing figure, and completely bald, he had a large cup-shaped hole in his forehead where the skin had grown over a wound suffered in the 1914-1918 War. We had come at a bad time, he told us sternly, because the apprentices had only just returned from a 2-week strike, and the management was not pleased with them. Nevertheless he took us into his office and asked to see my School reports. After reading them he said "His reports are good, he has been first in his class, and top of the School in his last two terms. BUT I notice his teacher describes him as 'talkative'. Now WE DO NOT WANT TALKATIVE BOYS at Alfred Herbert Ltd. It was talkative boys who started the strike."

My mother hastened to defend me (which was difficult because I was talkative!), and at last Mr. Lynex decided that maybe I wasn't the potential trouble-maker he feared I might be. Perhaps my height was in my favour. I was only 4 ft. 11 ins., and maybe he thought that a kid so small couldn't do that much harm! Mr. Lynex said he would go into the works to see if he could find something for me, and mother and I stood in the waiting room for yet another hour. On his return, Mr. Lynex said he had fixed me up as an office boy in the toolroom. "Be in this office at 7.30 am sharp next Monday morning, and we will set you on", he said. "If after six months or so you have proved suitable as an office boy, then we will consider you for an apprenticeship". Thus began my life-long career in machine tools.

It wasn't until nineteen years later that I discovered that my real talent lay in demonstrating and selling Herbert machine tools. Considering I was only 33 years old, my appointment was something of a record, because in 1956 the rigid rule had been that no-one under 40 years of age could possibly be mature enough to work as a salesman for Alfred Herbert Ltd!

• Seen and Heard

• The railway books keep on coming ...

'The Birmingham to Leicester Line' by Chris Banks.

Published by Oxford Publishing Company.

A quality hardback, liberally illustrated with photographs and maps.

Some interesting material as it passes across the northern corner of Warwickshire. Hope you have got £24.99 to spare.

• New canal.

The first canal to be built in Britain for almost a century was opened at the beginning of April. It is the re-routed section of the Aire and Calder Navigation south of Leeds. It cost £20million and will carry approximately 2.5million tonnes of coal, oil, sand and gravel between Leeds and the Humber.

• Eyesore to icon?

English Heritage has presented 40 buildings of the Fifties and Sixties as candidates for listing. The midlands does not feature very strongly, but the following buildings are included.

Commercial Buildings:

Carr and Company, Shirley, Birmingham (1955)

Railway buildings:

Coventry Station (1962)

Rugby Signal Box (1964)

Birmingham New Street Signal box (1964)

A few slides at the end of a meeting, perhaps?

• Keith Ingham

On a similar, though sadder theme, the death of architect Keith Ingham was announced recently. He was responsible for the design of Preston bus station. This was built in 1969, and was at the time the largest of its kind in the world. It brought to surface technology the design standards applied more normally to airports, with a complete system of graphics and a prototype moulded plastic kiosk, versions of which can now be seen all over Britain. The concrete decks of the multi-storey car park were elegantly swept up with curved ends. It remains largely unaltered to this day. Should you happen to be in Teheran rather than Preston, you will still have a chance to see this type of building, for a virtual copy of the Preston bus station was built in Teheran.

I wonder if the new Pool Meadow bus station in Coventry will be similarly remembered?

• Courtaulds Mill, Marlborough Road, Nuneaton

The battle to save the derelict Courtaulds Mill in the centre of Nuneaton has been lost. In a letter to the Society, the Planning and Development Officer for Nuneaton and Bedworth, Mr. Stuart Hall, writes:

"... the Secretary of State concluded that the building was of insufficient historic or architectural interest to qualify for listing."

Members will recall visiting the outside of this mill during Peter Lee's tour of Nuneaton last year. The Marlborough Road mill has been the target of vandals and trespassers in recent months, and Beazer Homes plan to demolish the mill and provide 60 homes in its place. The turret clock which was such a feature of the building is to be moved to the British Horological Museum in Southwell, Nottingham, when the mill is demolished.

See Toby Cave's article on 'Looking for Harry!'

• British Brick Society

Following several requests, I enclose details of this Society.

The British Brick Society was founded in 1972 to promote the study and recording of all aspects of the archaeology and history of bricks, brickmaking and brickwork. Its members are drawn from many backgrounds - geologists, archaeologists, school teachers, artists, historians, brickmakers, bricklayers, architects, engineers, etc., etc.. Some have a professional interest in a particular aspect of the subject area while for others membership is the extension of a general hobby or interest. The common factor is that they are all fascinated by the history and development of bricks, brickmaking and brick buildings.

The Society's newsletter, "INFORMATION", mailed to members three times a year, is typically a 20-page, A4 size publication featuring articles and reports on work of interest to members together with news items and accounts of Society visits. These visits are organised from time-to-time to buildings or towns of particular interest, to archaeological sites, and to brickworks.

The annual membership is £7 per annum due on 1st January. Applications should be sent to

Mr. Michael Hammett, Honorary Secretary, British Brick Society, 9 Bailey Close, High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire. HP13 6QA

- **BS 4800 10.C.31 and BS4800 08.C.39**

Residents of, and visitors to, Leamington Spa will have been delighted to see the freshly-painted GWR bridge in High Street/Clemens Street. Members will also be pleased to know that our Chairman, Toby Cave, was on the panel of experts called in to help advise on the project. Much debate ensued on the choice of colours to be used, but GWR 'chocolate' and 'cream' won the day. Unfortunately, the Severn Valley Railway and Railtrack/BR disagree on the precise shades of chocolate and cream that accurately represent the GWR colours. An added - and continuing - problem is the size of the pigeon population in the area, and the painting will not be finished until this has been solved.

Despite these problems, the painting of the bridge has gone ahead and the result has both significantly enhanced the area, and drawn people's attention to this fine bridge. All involved are to be congratulated.

- **Coventry Museum's Marshbrook Close store.**

Many members will recall our visit to this store, and Mrs. Rylatt has written to suggest that we might like to assist in trying to identify some of the many items that rest in the store. Any members interested in such a project, should get in touch with Toby Cave. Mrs. Margaret Rylatt would be grateful for any assistance in this process.

A further possibility is that for those who would like to contribute in a practical way, the restoration of the cast iron water fountain which once stood on Hearsal Common represents a real challenge. Martin Green knows a painter who would be willing to carry out the painting of the intricate detail on the fountain, but much preliminary work needs to be done before that stage is reached. Please contact Martin Green if you are interested.

- **Stratford and Moreton Tramway.**

A railway relic lovingly restored by a retired Warwickshire farmer has now gone on display at the National Railway Museum in York. Seventy-three year-old George Terry inherited one of the horse-drawn wagons of the Stratford and Moreton-in-Marsh tramway when he bought land at Ilmington, near Stratford. It had been used as a tool shed and a children's play den until he decided to restore it. Once restoration began, Mr. Terry discovered the name of Thomas James Shipston (a coal merchant) on the side of the wagon. Yet another excuse for a visit to the York Railway Museum!

- **Train-free parks.**

Some familiar sites in two of Leamington's parks have now disappeared. Two years ago, a diesel shunting locomotive and a steam roller were removed from Victoria Park in Leamington for safety reasons. The loco is now undergoing restoration at the Gloucestershire and Warwickshire Railway's base at Toddington.

Now the same fate is to befall the Austerity Class 0-6-0 saddle tank engine on Newbold Comyn. It may become a (fenced-off) exhibition item, or returned to owners, the Welsh Industrial and Maritime Museum.

- **Stratford Canal**

As many members will be aware, the 1819 link between the Warwick and Birmingham and Stratford canals has been re-opened. The link will save millions of gallons of water as boats can avoid the existing locks as they pass between the two canals.

- **End of the road**

Another landmark of Coventry's motor industry has ended its days, with the demolition of the Standard-Triumph works in Tile Hill Lane. The building, which dated from the 1920s, produced thousands of tractor engines and car components. The 110 acre site is being developed as a new Business Park.

- **Coventry Coal available again!**

In April 1994, Coal Investments plc leased Coventry Colliery from British Coal with the (rather daunting) plan to re-open the mine. Coal has in fact been produced since July 1994, and the owners are optimistic about future demand for Coventry coal.

- **Birmingham Compressed Air Company**

The Chairman would be very keen to learn more about the Birmingham Compressed Air Company founded by Act of Parliament in 1884. The objects of the company were "the application of compressed air at Birmingham for distributing motive power from one or more centres to manufactories, furnaces and works and the supply of air for ventilating refrigerating or blowing furnaces, and for various other purposes which would be of local and public advantage". The original Directors were Arthur Joseph Capel, Ernest Ibbetson, David George Sandeman and John Cumming Macdona. It had power to lay pipes in the street for distribution, and was in many ways similar to the Hydraulic Power Company of London, but using air instead of water.

- **Iron room or tin hut**

Recently, the vicar and churchwardens of St. Mary's Church, Leamington Spa, were given planning permission to build an extension to the existing building. This involved the demolition of an existing old corrugated iron chapel erected some years ago. When these plans were submitted to the local Conservation Area Committee, one of the members of the Committee, Mr. Toby Cave, pointed out that this corrugated iron mission chapel was of historical importance as a building type and should be offered to the Avoncroft Museum of Buildings at Bromsgrove, or to another similar Museum. The Coventry Telegraph reported that the Chapel had been used as the church office. It had been known to generations of parishioners as the "iron room" or "tin hut", and they were delighted to know that it was to be preserved.

It will be dismantled and added to the collection of buildings that make up Avoncroft Museum of Buildings.

- **Occasional Papers**

Retort! is intended as fairly gentle, easily accessible, newsletter for members of the Society. Increasingly, it is being demanded in more scholarly circles, and copies are released with some trepidation. At the same time, research by members of the Society is generating material that deserves more than a mention in this newsletter. As a result, the Committee is planning to produce a set of Occasional Papers, possibly one per annum, which would include these more erudite contributions. This would raise the profile of the work done by the Society. Retort! would continue in the usual way. You might have to choose whether you were writing for Retort! or the Occasional Papers

- **Collecting the empties**

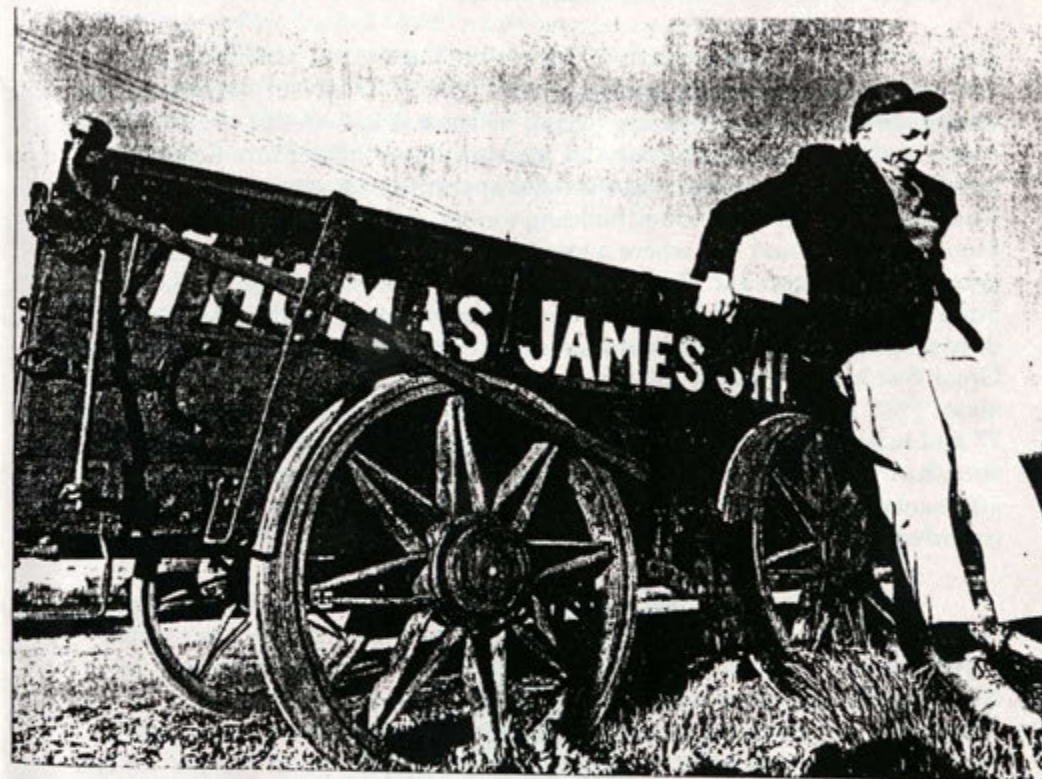
I find that brick-collecting is often ridiculed as a productive leisure activity for a grown man, but I noticed a newspaper article the other day on milk-bottle collecting. It attracted my attention because the example quoted was Clyde Higgs. Strange as it may seem, I did once have a collection of Clyde Higgs bottles, but returned them prior to moving house. To think what might have been.....!

- **AIA Conference 1995**

The AIA Conference is in Sheffield this year on Friday 8 to Sunday 10 September, with a supporting programme in the subsequent week. The venue will be Ranmoor House, the largest of the University of Sheffield's Halls of

Residence.

John Selby will give you any information about the nature of these Conferences should you wish to attend.



Looking for Harry!

A short article on one of Coventry's most important architects
by
Toby Cave

Harry Quick came from a Devonshire family and arrived in Coventry in the 1880s to be articled to Mr. Donnelly a Coventry architect, and from documents in the Coventry Record Office, it is known that in 1888 Quick restored the chancel of St. Mary's Chapel-of-Ease, Whitefriars Lane which had been a Baptist Church. He was later appointed surveyor to the Coventry Permanent Economic building society and became interested in a Stoney Stanton Road site where a number of local people hoped to establish an industrial school. Mr. Quick was tenant of "The gables", St. Nicholas Street, 1892 - 1897, and although it is not known where he lived at a later date he had an office in Hertford street for many years. Some time after the Great War he moved to 17 Warwick row which he occupied as an office until about 1935. He died at his home 16 Abbey Hill, Kenilworth in July 1935 aged 77 and in his will, dated 23rd January 1924, gave £100 to the vicar and churchwardens of the parish church of Kenilworth to be paid in augmentation of the Assistant Clergy Fund of the parish. It 1951 it was recorded that the annual income was £3. 6s. 4d.

Mr. Quick was in practice as an architect in Coventry for over forty five years during almost the whole period of Coventry's modern industrial expansion. He designed many important buildings for business firms in the city, as well as a large number of houses. The original Coventry Police station was also erected to his design. He was responsible for several large factories, including the first works built by Courtaulds Ltd. in 1904, as well as the works and offices facing onto the Foleshill road, erected in 1923. In addition, he designed a similar block of buildings for Courtaulds in Marlborough road, Nuneaton, although these are now threatened with demolition. Both these sets of buildings are of advanced design for the period.

He was responsible for the Messrs White and Hope factory in Holbrookes Lane erected in 1915-16 which was used for filling shells. This was situated on the Whitmore Industrial estate, and in 1928 the derelict building was leased by William Lyons when he decided to move his business from Blackpool. This was altered by the same architects (with the local

builder J.G.Gray) for use as the first SS Cars factory (later Jaguar cars Ltd) factory in Coventry.

In 1891 Quick designed the original Singer Car Company offices in Canterbury Street, in the Hillfields area of Coventry. Though drastically altered internally, this has survived to be used as accommodation for students of the new Coventry University's 'student village'. During the Great War, he was architect for the Hotchkiss Co., later the Morris Works, in Gosford Street. This had been used for many years as Government Offices, but has recently been converted into teaching accommodation for Coventry University. The major change from Quick's design has been the erection of an additional floor at roof level.

Harry Quick was an architect in Coventry during a very important period in its industrial growth and yet we know very little about his life or the buildings he designed apart from the information given in this short article.

Do you know any more about his life or work? If so, I would be delighted to hear from you.

