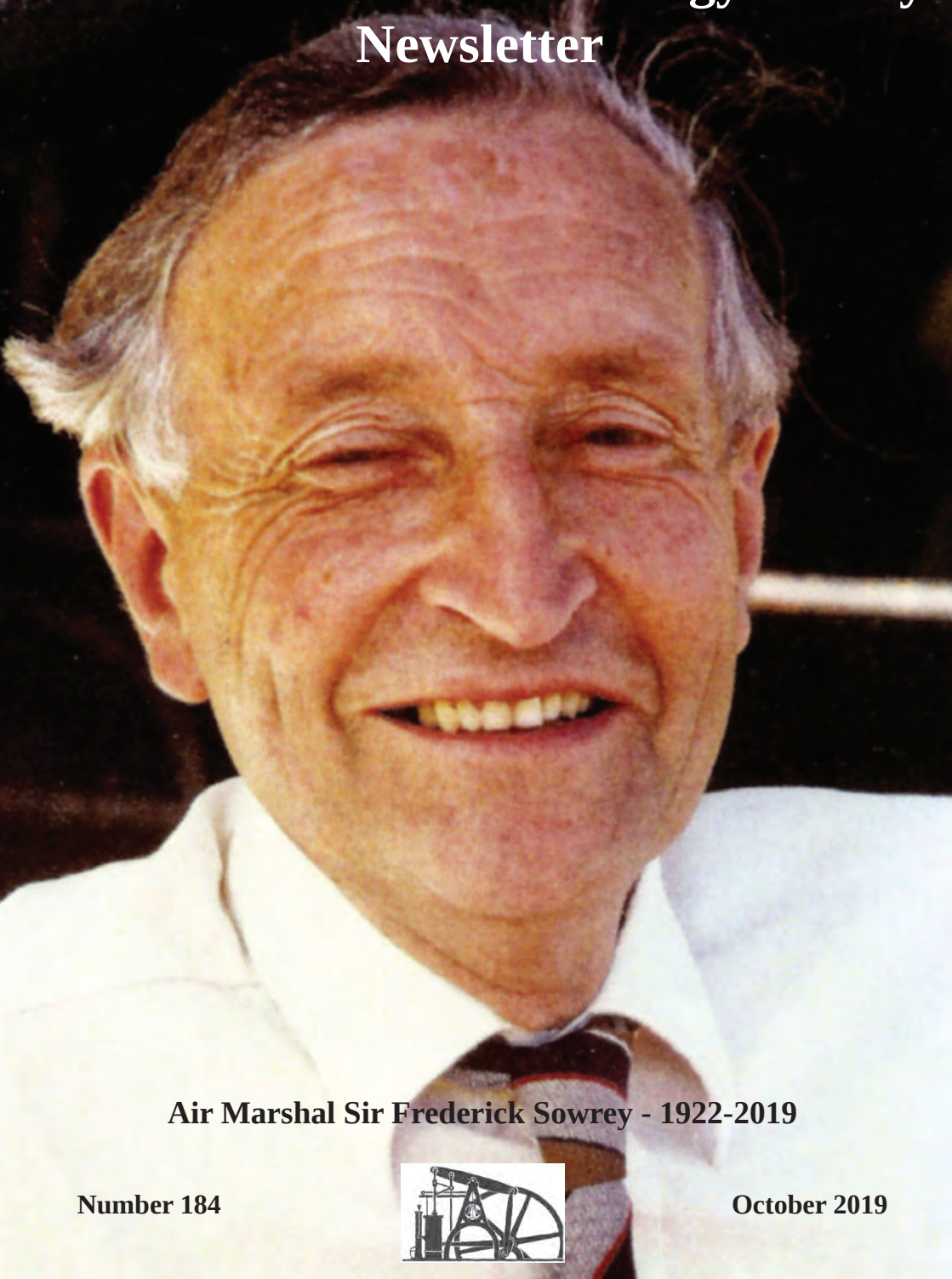


Sussex Industrial Archaeology Society Newsletter



Air Marshal Sir Frederick Sowrey - 1922-2019

Number 184



October 2019

Newsletter 184

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Editorial

Welcome to *Newsletter 184*. Opposite is the sad news of our Presidents death.

This edition features a fair bit of railway connected coverage, so be sure to look at the mystery photo and put your thinking hats on. The image in the last issue was from one of the societies collections, donated by member Joe Whicher, a comprehensive record of the Brighton by-pass construction from the days before digital photography. Well done Joe! I plan to feature more of them in the future, we take for granted the ability to speed around Brighton, it is so good to be reminded just what engineering was needed to make life easier for us today.

A weekend to celebrate Amberley Museum's 40th birthday

'Chalk, Talk and Walk'

16th to 17th November 2019

Background

The Museum is celebrating its fortieth birthday with a weekend exploring its chalk and lime heritage. Up until the late 1960s, the Museum site was a working chalk pits where chalk was quarried and burnt in kilns to produce lime. Many of the original quarry buildings and lime kilns remain, forming the backdrop for the museum's collections.

All activities are included in the price of Museum entry.

Opening times: 10 to 4pm Saturday 16th and Sunday 17th

Details: www.amberleymuseum.co.uk

Visit our website - www.sussexias.co.uk

Air Marshal Sir Frederick Sowrey - 1922-2019

John Blackwell

Members will no doubt have heard of the death of our President at the age of 96. Freddie, as he was always known, joined SIAS in 1976 and following retirement from the Royal Air Force was Chairman for ten years from 1983 to 1993, following which he accepted the role of President

Many will recall the AGM when Freddie enthralled his audience with memories of his adventurous life with the RAF where he had flown over 50 different types of aircraft. I remember two events among the many he recalled; one at the height of the 'cold war' when during the bitter winter of 1962/3 the runway at the station he was commanding was unusable, due to frozen snow ice, so he mounted two redundant jet engines on the front of a heavy lorry and blasted the snow and ice away. He commented that he was not going to be caught napping by the Russians! The other was a proud moment when he led a formation of 90 jet fighters on all seven days of the 1959 Farnborough Air Show.

He was an outstanding Chairman of SIAS and was responsible for sourcing and obtaining funding for a full time recorder, Don Cox, to produce a comprehensive set of record sheets covering the rural parishes of Sussex. Member's evenings held at Home Farm were always a pleasure inspecting Freddie's cars, including a 1901 Darracq which he restored and regularly took part in the Veteran Car Run from London to Brighton, as well as his fine collection of old road signs and his motoring related enamelled iron advertising signs.

As President he continued to support the Society's activities including the 'Spring Clean' at Coultershaw beam pump where he could be found enthusiastically lighting and feeding the bonfire.

When the Society was hosting the South East Regional Industrial Archaeology Conferences (SERIAC) Freddie usually gave the welcome address which was always pertinent, well researched, humorously delivered and importantly, never too long. Always fascinated by cars, in 1956 he had established a world record in his Cooper 1100cc racing car for a standing start over a mile course (an RAF runway) when he achieved a 93.88mph average and was clocked at almost 200mph as he crossed the finish line.

I recall his pleasure on the visit to Goodwood motor racing track, during the 2015 AIA Conference, when he learnt that I had arranged a surprise trip for him around the circuit in the latest Rolls Royce.

I shall fondly remember Freddy as a friend and mentor. He had this wonderful ability to encourage one to do something and never ever forgot to thank you.

The Society has lost an inspirational and influential President and supporter.

Forthcoming SIAS Events

Malcolm Dawes

SIAS evening meetings are held at

West Blatchington Mill Barn, Holmes Avenue, Hove, BN3 7LF

Saturday 19th October 7.30pm. The Brighton Belle

David Jones will trace the history of the 'Brighton Belle' from its early days as the steam hauled 'Southern Belle' through to the electrification of the Brighton Line and the naming of the new Belle in 1934. Following the end of services in 1972 the dispersal of the 15 electric Cars is covered together with the formation of the 5BEL Trust in 2009 whose aim is to bring back the 'Brighton Belle'. David will then cover the subsequent extensive refurbishment programme of the first four vehicles ready to take to the main line as the new luxury 'Brighton Belle' dining train quite soon.

Saturday 16th November 2.00pm. AGM followed by Vic Mitchell talking about his railway past- Part 2

Vic is the founder and author of Middleton Press, famous for producing the extensive range of books on railways routes across the UK. This is a follow up to his entertaining talk at last year's AGM where he told us about the early years of Middleton Press

Saturday 18th January 7.30pm. The microcar and its manufacture in Brighton and Hove. Presentation by Duncan Cameron

After 1945 a surprising number of enterprises in Britain and elsewhere in Europe decided to get into motor car production, despite having little or no previous experience in the sector! Many of these entrepreneurial start-ups produced cars that were very small, mechanically simple, and cheap. They went under a number of names – bubble cars, three wheelers, baby cars. Virtually none of these ventures survived in the long-term, and by 1960 the microcar boom was running its course. In this talk Duncan will start by describing the emergence and development of these types of car. He will look at the extraordinarily wide range of eccentric and unusual designs that appeared in the marketplace in those years. He then will show how Brighton and Hove became a motor manufacturing town, producing just one model of car - the Isetta.

He will present some interesting original material in relation to the Brighton manufacturing operation. Although the size of Brighton's car industry was almost microscopic by international motor manufacturing standards, the venture was eccentric in some ways unique, and well worth recording. Duncan will finish by looking at what if any traces remain today of this episode in Brighton's history.

Saturday 15th February. Film Nite

Details to follow.

Events from Other Societies

Malcolm Dawes

Detailed below are events organised by other societies, which may be of interest to our members. If you have details for future events please send these to:

Malcolm Dawes, 52 Rugby Road, Brighton, BN1 6EB

or email to malcolm.dawes@btinternet.com

Wednesday 16th October 7.45pm. London's Country Buses

Sussex Transport Interest Group talk by Paul Snelling

Visitors £2.50. London Road Station, Brighton. www.sussex-transport.co.uk/stig

Thursday 17th October 8.00pm. Mass Observation Project

Mass Observation Projects Officer, Kirsty Patrick, will provide an insight into the work of the Mass Observation during World War II. Wivelsfield Historical Society event. Visitors £2.50. Wivelsfield Church Hall. Note change of venue. www.wivelsfield-historical-society.co.uk

Sunday 20th October. Autumn Industrial Trains

Narrow gauge trains in action, plus demonstration runs with the road machines and contractor's monorail. Resident steam trains running around site.

Amberley Museum. 01798 831370. www.amberleymuseum.co.uk

Wednesday 23rd October 7.30pm. Classic Southern Electric in Colour

RCTS Chichester Branch talk by David Brown. Council Meeting Room 2, County Hall, West Street, Chichester. www.rcts.org.uk/branches/chichester/events.

Saturday 2nd November, 10am to 4pm. Opening day at the Brede Steam Engines

Steam and working industrial engines. Situated 6 miles from Hastings on A28 to Ashford. 01323 897310

Sunday 3rd November. London to Brighton veteran car run

Monday 11th November 7.30pm. Riding the Rocky Road in Southern Comfort

Southern Electric Group, Sussex Branch talk by Andrew Marshall. £3 visitors. Deall Room, Southwick Community Centre, Southwick. www.southernelectric.org.uk

Wednesday 13th November 7.30pm. The Millers' Tale – Five generations of a Chichester family

Chichester Local History Society presentation by Terry Carlisle. Non Members £3. New Park Centre, New Park Road, Chichester. 01243 784915

Wednesday 20th November 7.45pm. Gone but not forgotten. The days of cross-country services from Brighton since 1970

Sussex Transport Interest Group talk by Andy Gibbs. £2.50. London Road Station, Brighton. 01273 512839.

Saturday 23rd November 2.30pm. Flea-pits and Picture Palaces

Brighton and Hove Archaeology Society, Local History Forum talk by Sarah Tobias. £4 non-members. Ventnor Hall, Central United Reformed Church, 102 Blatchington Road, Hove. www.brightonarch.org.uk

Tuesday 26th November. Steam train excursion from London Victoria to Eastbourne

Steam hauled return journey from Hastings through Battle to London. Photographic opportunities in Sussex. www.railwaytouring.co.uk

Wednesday 27th November 7.30pm. Women on the railway

RCTS Chichester Branch talk by Dr Becky Peacock. Council Meeting Room 2, County Hall, West Street, Chichester. www.rcts.org.uk/branches/chichester/events

Wednesday 27th November. Brighton Lost

Chris Horlock delves into his extensive collection of photos to illustrate the many buildings and meeting places in Brighton that have disappeared. Volks Electric Railway Association event. Visitors £2.00. West Blatchington Windmill Barn, Holmes Avenue, Hove. www.volkselectricrailway

Saturday 7th December, 10am to 4pm. Open Day at the Brede Steam Engines

Steam and working industrial engines. Situated 6 miles from Hastings on A28 to Ashford. 01323 897310

Wednesday 11th December, 7.40pm. Trams and Trolleybuses on the screen

Keith Carter presenting a selection from his collection of films. Tramway and Light Railway Society event. Visitors £1.50. Deall Room, Southwick Community Centre, Southwick Street, Southwick

Wednesday 11th December, 7.30pm. Amberley Industrial Museum Railway

RCTS Chichester Branch talk by Geoff Boote. Council Meeting Room 2, County Hall, West Street, Chichester. www.rcts.org.uk/branches/chichester/events

Saturday 4th January, 10am to 4pm. Opening day at the Brede Steam Engines

Steam and working industrial engines. Situated 6 miles from Hastings on A28 to Ashford. 01323 897310

Wednesday 8th January 7.30pm. Pevsner, Nairn and Chichester

Chichester Local History Society presentation by Dr Tim Hudson. Non Members £3. New Park Centre, New Park Road, Chichester. 01243 784915

Do please check details of events before travelling

The details of these meetings and events organised by other groups are only included as a guide and as a service to members: inclusion here is not intended to be seen as an endorsement.

Please see the Mills Newsletter for details of Mills Group activities

Visit to Spa Valley Railway and the Pantiles at Tunbridge Wells

Description of visit supplied by Alan Green and Brian Austin who led the trip during the day – with a small amount of editing by Malcolm Dawes

The visit was made up of a trip on the Spa Valley Railway (SVR) from Eridge to Tunbridge Wells West, diesel hauled. At Tunbridge Wells West (TWW) the group had a look around the goods shed which is now their workshop and had lunch in the buffet car. The afternoon was set aside for a walk to Tunbridge Wells West to see what remained of the original imposing station and track beds, followed by a guided walk through the Pantiles. Our return train to Eridge was steam hauled with a driver who had worked on the footplate for 60 years and decided to celebrate his retirement by taking us through the countryside at maximum speed.

Tunbridge Wells was the centre of numerous lines radiating in all directions and controlled by rival railway companies. Alan has provided a history of this complex railway centre with some comments on what remains of the railway and buildings.

In the beginning

The railway first arrived at Tunbridge Wells in 1845 in the form of the South Eastern Railway's branch from Tonbridge. The following year the station was moved to its current site and the line later extended to Hastings. The SER's 20-year monopoly in



The view of Tunbridge Wells West from Montacute Road bridge in June 1985 just weeks before closure. By this time the island platform buildings and canopies had already been demolished and the canopy on the main station building shortened. The sidings are being used for berthing several 3H and 3D DEMUs. From this viewpoint today only the top of the clock tower is visible above the redevelopment that has taken place on this vast site. (Alan Green)

the town was broken when the London Brighton and South Coast Railway (LBSCR) extended their Three Bridges to East Grinstead line eastwards through Groombridge to a new station not far from the historic Pantiles. This opened in 1866 and the LBSCR upstaged its rival by building a really grand station with buildings designed by Charles Driver in a quasi-Italianate style. These were exuberantly decorated with bands of polychromatic brickwork and incised stonework and surmounted by an impressive clock tower. At that time Tunbridge Wells was partly in Sussex and appropriately the Brighton Company's station was on its side of the border! Both companies called their station *Tunbridge Wells*, seemingly pretending not to acknowledge the existence of the other!

West is Best!

Over the next 22 years the LBSCR developed a network of lines between its Brighton main line and the SER's Hastings line which converged upon Groombridge, whence traffic was funnelled to Tunbridge Wells. These lines came in from Uckfield (1868) Hailsham (1880), Oxted via East Grinstead High Level (1884) and Oxted via Ashurst (1888). I shall refer to these lines collectively as the "Tunbridge Wells group". To accommodate all this traffic the LBSCR increased the number of platforms from one to five, controlled by two signal boxes, and provided a new four-road engine shed. In 1871 a single-track connection, partly in tunnel, was opened through to the SER line, joining it at Grove Junction. It was mainly used by goods traffic at first, but later the SER did send a few trains round to terminate on enemy territory using a bay at the country end of the station. That single line was really to come into its own in the 1950s.

At the 1923 Grouping, the newly-formed Southern Railway differentiated the two stations in the spirit of "one railway, two stations"; the South Eastern one becoming Tunbridge Wells Central and the Brighton Tunbridge Wells West, but the services to both remained largely territorial. The train service on Tunbridge Wells group of lines was at its best between 1955 and 1965 when an ingenious timetable operated giving all lines regular- interval off peak hourly services which interconnected at Oxted, East Grinstead and Groombridge. These services ran to Tunbridge Wells West from Brighton via Uckfield (continuing over the single line to Tonbridge,) Eastbourne via the Cuckoo line, Victoria via Oxted and East Grinstead HL and Oxted via Ashurst all of which terminated. This gave four off-peak trains an hour in each direction between Groombridge and Tunbridge Wells West. With the additional peak trains, Tunbridge Wells West saw 70 arrivals and 66 departures a day so, with servicing of steam locomotives going on day and night, it was a constant hive of activity.

Change and Decay

Then along came Dr Beeching. In his infamous 1963 report, he proposed closure of the entire Tunbridge Wells group of lines save for Oxted to East Grinstead, and



Grove (Frant Road) tunnel viewed from Montacute Road bridge in the early 1980s. The cutting is now heavily forested making this view now impossible. (Alan Green)

this began in 1965 with Cuckoo Line from Hailsham to Eridge, followed in 1967 by Three Bridges to Groombridge. The Uckfield and Ashurst lines were also to have closed in 1967 but the public enquires threw up sufficient obstacles to make the minister refuse closure, apart from Lewes to Uckfield which went in 1969. What then remained was a circuitous 30-mile branch line from South Croydon to Uckfield with a branch from Eridge to Tunbridge Wells West. The trains from Uckfield were diverted to terminate at Oxted and a connecting shuttle service ran from Eridge to Tonbridge via Tunbridge Wells West. With just one train an hour in each direction, and no services to either London or the coast, TWW became a mere shadow of its former self. Indeed it always seemed to be Sunday afternoon when you alighted there; an eerie silence descending when the “thumper” had thumped its way into Grove (Frant Road) tunnel.

When the Beeching closures were finally completed in the early 1970s it seemed as though the remainder of the national network was safe – but this was not to be. In the 1980s the Southern Region was continuing with its electrification programme which included the Oxted line to East Grinstead and Tonbridge to Hastings - but not to Uckfield and Tunbridge Wells West. It was announced that the expense of the retention of Grove Junction under the Hastings electrification could not be justified and so, in 1985, it was proposed to close the Line from Tunbridge Wells Central to Eridge with the loss of Tunbridge Wells West and Groombridge stations, and closure took place on 6 July that year. The line from Oxted (Hurst Green) to

Uckfield was then singled and continues to be served by diesel trains. With its rival slain Tunbridge Wells Central became plain Tunbridge Wells again.

Most of the site of Tunbridge Wells West was sold to Sainsburys who redeveloped it including a supermarket, a Homebase store and car parks. The listed station building was converted into a restaurant, but the two-storey goods shed and both signal boxes were demolished. At Groombridge the station site was sold for housing and the station building, shorn of its canopy, became offices.

Revival

All was not entirely lost however as a preservation group was formed with the intention of reopening the line. Known as the *Tunbridge Wells and Eridge Railway Preservation Society*, with the unfortunate acronym *TWERPS*, they managed to negotiate a safeguarded route for a railway through the development sites at both Tunbridge Wells West and Groombridge. Operating from the engine shed at Tunbridge Wells West they gradually reopened the line, (which had now been singled,) to Groombridge in 1997 and Eridge in 2011. They wisely dropped the *TWERPS* moniker and became the Spa Valley Railway. Sadly they had neither of the original stations at Tunbridge Wells West or Groombridge so had to construct new ones; at Tunbridge Wells West alongside the engine shed and at Groombridge on the other side of the overbridge. At Eridge they sub-lease the former down island platform from Southern Railway.

Tunbridge Wells West today

For those of us who had not been back to Tunbridge Wells West since the 1985 closure a shock was waiting. At the country end of the station, just before Grove (Frant Road) tunnel, is an overbridge carrying Montacute Road that used to provide a grandstand for observing the comings and goings and the operation of 'B' box which controlled the single line. Looking west now, only the top the clock tower of the station building is visible above new buildings and looking the other way it is only just possible to make out the tunnel portal through the dense grove of



Tunbridge Wells West Station today. (Malcolm Dawes)

trees that has sprung up in the intervening 34 years.

Driver's once proud building is now a Smith and Western Restaurant; it has been gutted internally and fitted out in dubious taste for a Wild-West Burger Experience with little sympathy for its history. The full-length canopy on the frontage has been shortened

and on the other side nothing at all remains of the platforms. The SVR use the engine shed (also listed) as their workshop, the inner end having been converted into a visitor centre and shop. Refreshments are served from a former 4BIG buffet car alongside. One of the original BR(S) running in signs has been attached to the outside wall of the shed announcing to the visitor that this is now Tunbridge Wells West. The eastern frontier of the LBSCR lives on in spirit!

Brian also provided some information on the Pantiles and Tunbridge Ware examples which he showed us during our walk.

The Pantiles and Tunbridge Ware

Lord North discovered the Chalybeate spring in 1606 after a visit to Eridge. He realised that the waters were similar in appearance to ones that he was familiar with on the continent. He borrowed a bowl from a cottage nearby and took some of the water back to London. Henrietta Maria, the wife of Charles I visited the site of the well in 1629 camping out on Bishops Down. The Civil War hindered further activity but by the 1670s London money was bringing investors prepared to provide the assembly rooms, gaming rooms and other pleasures. The Upper Walks were laid out, the buildings fronted by a colonnade, where these pleasures could be had, and market traders took advantage. Our walk included the later Regency buildings on the Lower Walks including the theatre, later the Corn Exchange, the Kent and Sussex Hotel, where Princess Victoria and her mother stayed the night en route to St. Leonards, and then Bath Square with the Bath House of 1804. We then viewed the Chapel dedicated to King Charles the Martyr, built from 1676, and noted in the pavement the need for its provision as the nearest churches were at Speldhurst and Tonbridge in Kent and Frant in Sussex, each around five miles distant.

The Tunbridge Ware we were shown were all made in Tunbridge Wells or possibly Tonbridge. The older items were hand painted and decorated with prints on white woods such as sycamore and dated to the period C1800-20. These included a thread barrel box with a view of the Walks, a cribbage board with a view of the Frant Road, a writing container and “a cottage” for needlework materials with provision for a tape measure. The final item was a more complex piece, a tessellated mosaic panel by Henry Hollamby dating to C1870.



A chance to handle some Tunbridge Ware. (Malcolm Dawes)

John Every's Phoenix Ironworks at Lewes Station

The unveiling of a display board at Lewes station by the Mayor took place on September 20th. The foundry cast the decorative iron columns which support the station's canopies. The event was hosted by Catherine Simmonds of the Sussex Community Rail Partnership, whose idea it was, Lewes Town Council and ACoRP who all provided funding. The text and pictures were researched, written and sourced by SIAS member Jennifer Chibnell.

The board is on the wall of the stationmaster's office on platforms 3 and 4.



Photographs above and back cover Malcolm Dawes

Southwick Railway Station

John Blackwell

2020 marks the 180th anniversary of the first locomotive hauled railway in Sussex between Brighton and Shoreham which opened on 11th May 1840. Of the original stations little is known except for Hove. This was to the east of Holland Road on the south (down) side of the line, where Wickes is now situated. Sir Isaac Lyon Goldsmid, an extremely wealthy director of the railway had a clause inserted in the Parliamentary Act that a station be erected on his land. It was designed by David Mocatta, the architect to the London and Brighton Railway, whose father was a bullion dealer in partnership with Goldsmid. Wick House, Goldsmid's residence, now St Anne's Well Gardens, was nearby. The station was identical to that at the then terminus of the branch at Shoreham. This Hove station closed to passengers in 1880. From Hove along the length of the branch there was little housing and that which did exist was to the south of the railway, so passenger numbers using the intermediate stations of Portslade Southwick and Kingston would be small. From Portslade to Kingston the railway was built on an embankment. There is very little information relating to these stations which were not built to Mocatta's design and what follows are the only snippets I have found. The first reference I have to a station at Southwick is on the opening of the main line from London to Brighton on September 21st 1841 when the timetable names stations on the Shoreham branch. A report in the *Sussex Advertiser* for the 18th May 1840, describing the opening of the branch states the train "passed the station house at Copperas Gap" (Portslade) and that "stations are erecting at Hove and Kingston" - no mention of Southwick. It seems that it did not open until sometime later. The original station was erected at the Shoreham end of the present platforms. The 1845 Tithe Map indicates a structure built in or on the embankment near the bridge abutment on the south side possibly some sort of timber structure. A small piece of land fronting the station was also owned by the railway company. Access to the station was by a twitten from Albion Street with a public house The Railway Arms on the corner. The *Brighton Gazette* contains the following paragraph in its edition dated 15th April 1847, "Six cottages to be created on the south side of the station at Southwick for use by the station clerk and those employed at Kingston Wharf. A platform is in course of erection on the north of the station and a more commodious entrance will be opened when the cottages are complete". These cottages survived until the clearances of the 1950s.

The O.S. Map for 1863-75 shows what is probably this 'more commodious' structure, immediately to the east of that shown on the Tithe map, with a frontage in line with the foot of the embankment and it is likely that the 1970 photo Fig 1 shows part of that front elevation. The vestiges visible today are much reduced

being at window sill level and below. A small shelter is shown on the north up platform. A letter to the *Brighton Gazette* dated 3 November 1885 complains. "What a miserable place Southwick station is! ... so called platforms are very narrow and low and if the north gate at the top of the steps is locked the only alternative is to go under the bridge and up some unpleasant steps on the other (south) side and then across the railway". A contemporary photograph Fig 2 shows this building on the up platform accessed by two covered flights of stairs and its construction can therefore be dated to between 1875 and 1885. Although it is doubtful if this letter influenced the railway company a note in the *Sussex Express* for 27th July 1889 records "A subway is to be built at Southwick station instead of a footbridge". Recently when the south side embankment was cleared of vegetation etc. the crown of an arch was discovered at the top of the embankment in line with the entrance door opening in Fig 1.

The 1898 O.S. map shows the same building on the south side, a shelter with a canopy on the up platform and the building in the photograph, but unusually for O.S. maps no access steps are shown on either the north or south sides. By 1898 the route to the station had been improved by the laying of what later became Grange Road, as far as the bridge. I have a date for the reconstruction of the station of 1899 with a reference CCE W&M but have been unable to trace this. The O.S. map shows the platforms have been or are being extended eastwards to a point where the present subway is sited so possibly work has already commenced and this could account for the missing steps on the map. The 1911 O.S. map shows the rebuilt station which strangely retained the earlier up side waiting shelter with canopy until at least 1948, Fig 3. Again I could not find any newspaper references regarding the rebuilding; nor any information on the field gun, WWI? which stands on the station forecourt in a well known photograph. The reconstructed station had offices at street level on Station Road, Fig 4, with a covered way leading to a subway with long covered slopes leading to both the north and south platforms. The architecture of the platform canopies, valances and columns, (which were cast at John Every's Lewes ironworks) support a date around the turn of the 19th century. A photograph of the platform waiting room taken in 1970 shows the name SOUTHWICK, in blue coloured glass in the top sash of the windows facing the platform, typical of the period and similar to those surviving on platforms 1 and 2 at Three Bridges station. The canopies covering both platforms were extremely long and almost identical to those being erected on the main line between Balham and East Croydon. Those Stations were anticipating the growth in commuter traffic whereas at Southwick the population was predominantly situated south of the railway and it would be another 30 years before housing to the north developed. There was either unrealised optimism or another reason? The station offices were

demolished in 1971 when the present minimal booking facilities were provided. Two thirds of the down platform waiting room have been demolished and the remainder is now boarded up, both canopies have been shortened at the Shoreham end (the rear wall on the up side denotes the original length) and the roof and side windows have been removed from the access slopes leading from the subway to the platforms.

A final oddity. A hand operated crane at the Shoreham end of the station allegedly hoisted baskets of shellfish from carts to the up platform. The crane does not appear on the O.S. maps and I have found no reference to the dates of operation but it had probably ceased operation by the beginning of WWII.

Further information and comments would be appreciated.



Fig 1 Southwick original station remains

Fig 2 Southwick Station building c1890s



Fig 3 Southwick Station 1948

Fig 4 Southwick Station offices 1970



Photographs from John Hoare collection except Fig 3 britainfromabove.org.uk

Society's visit to Spa Valley Railway and Tunbridge Wells Ron Martin

The Society's last outside visit this year was to the Spa Valley Railway and Tunbridge Wells.

These were two sites which particularly interested me. The first was the Engine Shed at the West Tunbridge Wells Station. This is a large open structure with brick walls and a steel framed asbestos-cement covered roof. It is c.61 m (east to west) x 56 m with re-entrant at the south-west corner c.15 x 32 m. There are no intermediated supports. The pre-war Engine Shed had a slated roof, supported by brick piers and arches. It suffered severe bomb damage during the WWII¹ and the roof was completely demolished and rebuilt. This is roof that we see today. It is presumed that during the war there would have been a shortage of materials particularly steel, but the owner of the site, Southern Railways had access to railway track and this was used for all structural members. The trusses are of the Warren Girder type² which have a continuous horizontal top and bottom member with intermediate members creating isosceles triangles. These are running north to south at c. 7m. centres, the joints between the members being made with steel gusset plates, bolted. The upper horizontal members are mainly external. The roof covering is sheet material supported by two purlins to each bay, also steel rails. The appearance of the whole structure is of it being light and airy but I do wonder whether it would pass current Building Regulation requirement; however it has survived the last 75 years quite happily without showing any signs of distress.

The other site we visited was *The Pantiles*, a pedestrian precinct with a collonade. Pantiles were introduced into Britain from the Netherlands towards the end of the 17th century and their use quickly spread to the eastern counties of England right up to the Scottish borders. They were virtually unknown in Surrey, Sussex and Kent³, presumably as roofers here had been using plain tiles since the 15th century. *The Pantiles* in Tunbridge Wells was set out in 1638 and was then known as *The Walks* and rebuilt in 1687. It was first paved in 1700 and known as *The Parade*, presumably with flat Dutch floor tiles. It became known as *The Pantiles* in 1887.⁴ This seems quite inexplicable, as the use of the expression "Pantiles" could only have come from the original imported roof tiles and the use of this meaning as a floor tile was an error⁵ and took place 187 years earlier. If anyone has any thoughts about this anomaly please let me know. The only thing you can be sure about is that you will not find any pantiles in the *Pantiles*!!

1. Vic. Mitchell and Keith Smith, *Branch Lines to Tunbridge Wells*, illustration p. 117

2. Internet - "Warren Girders"

3. R.W. Brunskill, *Illustrated Handbook of Vernacular Architecture* (1971) p.88

4. John Newman, *The Buildings of England, West Kent and the Weald* (1969) p. 559 and footnote

5. *Oxford Dictionary of English*. third edition (2010) p. 1484

Engine Shed at
Tunbridge Wells
West Station,
looking west



Did Brighton Corporation Electricity Company hire out saucepans?

Malcolm Dawes

The article on assisted wiring in the July Newsletter mentioned the hire purchase agreements that Electricity Companies set up for boilers and ovens in the 1930s and that they often fixed nameplates on items stating ownership by the company. We have a huge saucepan with a steamer which is engraved with the words “Property of the Brighton Corporation Electricity Company”. This was originally owned by my grandparents in the 1930s and is now brought out once a year for steaming our Christmas Pudding. Were saucepans part of agreements for obtaining electric ovens from the Electricity Companies?

I just hope that we don’t now have a bailiff calling on us for outstanding payments.



Mystery Photo

Do you know your IA?



So, It's a wall!
But what does it (did) it
serve as a wall of?
Where?
What was the purpose of
the building?
When was it in IA use?

Answer in the next
Newsletter

The location of the excavation featured in *Newsletter* No.183 was given away, to the keen eyed, by the Brighton Race Course grandstand and the television transmitter on the far left distance skyline with the Hollingbury Hill Fort to the right.

This one of the terrific series of images of the construction of the Brighton Bypass was taken by Joe Whicher on 12 May 1991. The whole of the foreground has since been excavated to allow the road to pass well below the bridge for Ditchling Road, immediately south of Old Boat Corner. Excavating in this way allowed the chalk to form the support formwork for the bridge, it also meant that Ditchling Road remained open until the new bridge was complete, all stages skillfully recorded by Joe.

Here the bridge has been constructed
and chalk is being removed



*Please keep you eyes open for unusual features on your travels, or it may
be something you pass every day, but the rest of us are unfamiliar with.*

*Social media , Facebook, Youtube, etc are growing with increasingly interesting groups
that I find impossible to keep up with, if you spot one please let me know.*

I am always looking for examples of our IA heritage.

*If possible, let me have an image or link, either for this feature or to provide inspiration
for a future article(s).*

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Subscribing to the Sussex Industrial Archaeology Society gives automatic membership to the Sussex Mills Group

The Sussex Mills Group also produces a *Newsletter* that is sent to members with this *Newsletter*



John Every's Phoenix Ironworks at Lewes station - the unveiling of the display board at Lewes station by the Mayor, see page 12. (Malcolm Dawes)

The view from the bridge during our Spa Valley visit, page 7. The top of the clocktower at Tunbridge Wells West station can just be seen above Sainsburys back wall. (Malcolm Dawes)

