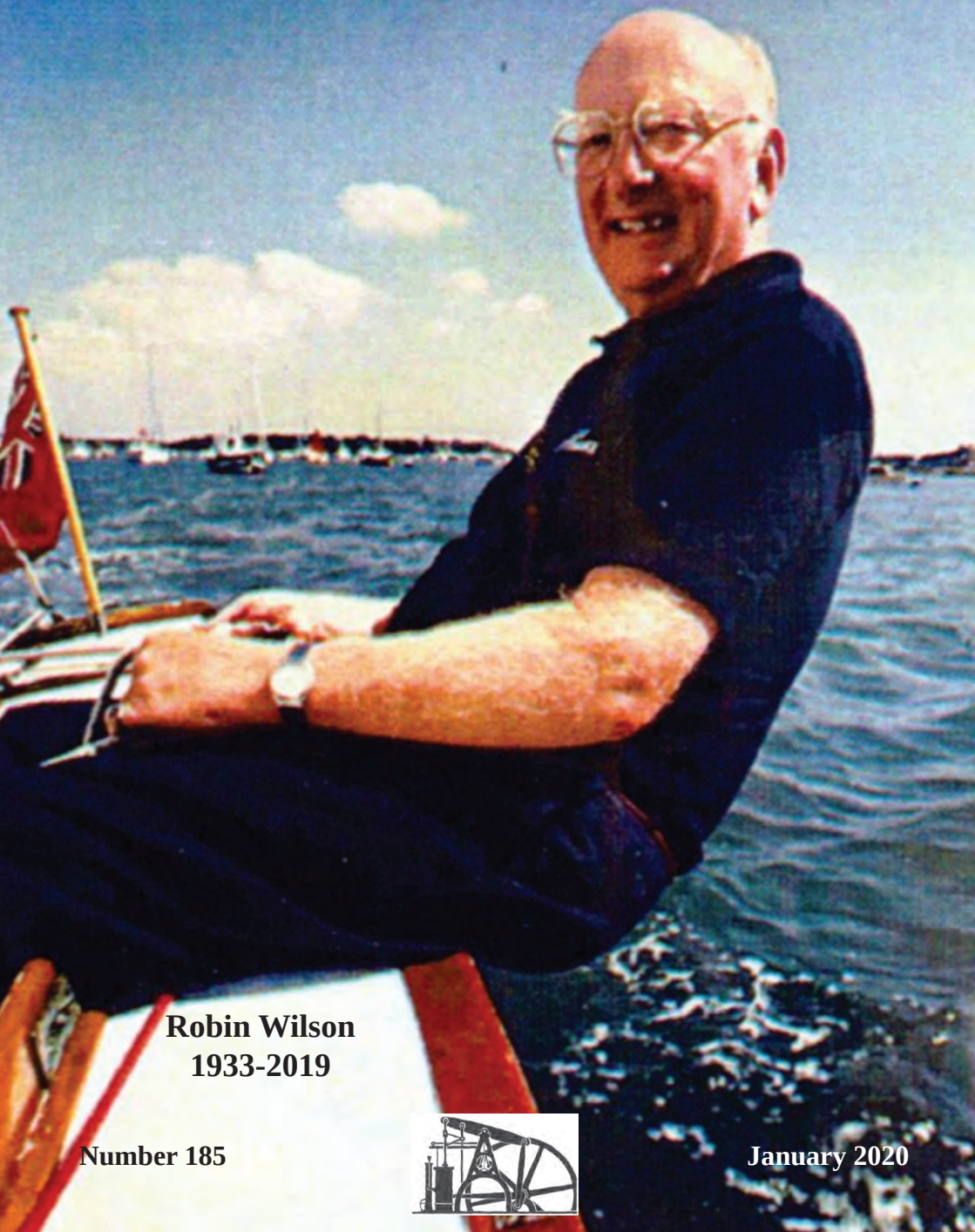


Sussex Industrial Archaeology Society Newsletter



Robin Wilson
1933-2019

Number 185



January 2020

Newsletter 185

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Editorial

Welcome to *Newsletter 185*.

The Society has lost two of its most influential members within a few months, our President Sir Frederick Sowrey and Robin Wilson until recently Chairman of the Coultershaw Trust. SIAS Chairman John Blackwell writes:-

Robin will be remembered for his leadership at Coultershaw Heritage Site for nearly 20 years. In 1782 a beam pump was installed to supply water to Petworth House and town. This was restored between 1976 and 1980 by SIAS members and operated by them until 2003. A trust was then formed and registered as a separate charity in order to attract outside funding, this made the trust independent of SIAS although our working members continued their association. Robin was chairman and the driving force behind the trust. In 2012 he was instrumental with financial support from the Leconfield Estates, for installing an Archimedes Screw in the old wheel pit to generate electricity for sale to the National Grid. Also in 2012 a grant of £244k was obtained from the Heritage Lottery Fund for restoration of the canal warehouse, refurbishment of the pump house, restoration of the engine house, including the return of the original 1937 engine, and improvements to the interpretation and visitor access to the site. Although Robin would always say these major projects could not have been completed without a team of professionals and volunteers, every project must have a leader and Robin was that person. He was an inspirational member and every year gave a detailed report to our AGM thus maintaining the link between the Trust and SIAS.

Visit our website - www.sussexias.co.uk

Robin Wilson CBE BSc(Eng) FREng FICE 1933-2019

An Engineer of Distinction

Alan Green

On the afternoon of Tuesday 26 November 2019 Fittleworth Parish Church was filled to capacity for the service of thanksgiving for Robin Wilson whose funeral had taken place at Findon Crematorium that morning. The size of the congregation reflected Robin's wide circle of friends, the number of organisations with which he was associated and the high regard in which he was held. His distinguished career had been in civil engineering in which he received the highest possible accolade – election as President of the Institution of Civil Engineers.

Robin was well known within SIAS both as a long-serving committee member and as founder and chairman of the Coultershaw Trust. Eleven Society members attended the service.

The eulogy was presented jointly by Robin's son James and daughter Jaqueline, and it was a *tour de force*, encompassing the many aspects of a long and eventful life. Robin was a great achiever.

Born in Croydon in 1933, Robin suffered the loss of his mother when he was only three, and as his father was running a tin mine in Northern Nigeria he was brought up by his grandparents. He was sent off to boarding school aged seven, and at 13 on to Glenalmond School in Scotland where he was very happy despite being so far from home. For his 15th birthday he was presented by his father with his first boat, a dinghy, which he learned to sail. He started a sailing club at the school, partly to nurture his interest and partly to avoid having to play cricket which he loathed! Sailing was to become a passion which he pursued almost to the end of his life, and the service contained appropriate references to the sea, including the singing of William Whiting's sailors' hymn *Eternal Father strong to save, whose arm doth bind the restless waves* sung to J B Dykes' stirring tune *Melita*.

After school he read civil engineering at the University of Glasgow, and on completion of his degree he enrolled with William Halcrow, the civil engineering consultancy. He quickly transferred to R Travers Morgan & Partners with whom one of his first jobs was as a young site engineer on the construction of Chichester bus garage in 1956. Its roof structure was an early example of thin-shelled, pre-stressed concrete design by Travers Morgan's celebrated Alfred Goldstein. Robin told me that they had stressed the tendons with the adjacent railway still operating, and that if one of the tendons had snapped the jack would probably have ended up in the sea! Most of his work though was in highways and soil mechanics on which he spent much time in Nigeria. Closer to home he worked on the widening of the A55 along the North Wales coast, a road originally constructed in the early 19th century by



The SIAS visit to Chichester Bus garage on 24 September 2016.

Robin Wilson, standing on the extreme right, is returning to the site where he had worked sixty years previously. During the visit he had explained the complexities of the design and construction of this important building. (Martin Snow)

the great Thomas Telford as part of his Chester to Holyhead Road. Robin's work there included the 1991 tunnel under the estuary of the River Conwy, a pioneering use of the immersed tube technique. Geoff Mead is a regular user of the A55 to get to his cottage in Wales and always refers to it as 'Robin's Road'. Within Travers Morgan he became a senior partner in 1985 and later served as chairman of the Travers Morgan Consulting Group.

Robin was a Fellow of the Institution of Civil Engineers (ICE) and had served on its Council through the 1980s. He was elected Vice President in 1988 and in 1991 become President - the highest peak a civil engineer can scale anywhere in the world. Presidency of the ICE is the engineer's equivalent of the apostolic succession - succession in this case to the said Thomas Telford who was made the first President in 1820! Presidency lasts only for a year, but it was a hectic year involving travelling all over the world promoting the Institution.

At the end of his presidency in 1992 he was elected a Fellow of the Royal Academy of Engineering, one of only 800 such in the world. More honour was to come that year when he was appointed a Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE) in the Queen's Birthday honours list. He then became President of the Smeatonian Society, the oldest engineering society, which takes its name from the revered John Smeaton, regarded as the father of civil engineering and whose Eddystone

lighthouse features on the ICE crest. As if all that were not enough to complement his day job with Travers Morgan, he served as chairman of the Construction Industry Council from 1994 to 1996, and in 1998 chaired the Engineering Council's Board for Engineers' Regulation. In 2003 he became Master of the Worshipful Company of Pavours where he achieved the livery company's long term desire to receive chartered status. Needless to say the order of service also contained apposite references to engineering, including the reading of Robert Louis Stevenson's praise of the Civil Engineer taken from his *Records of a Family of Engineers*.

Amazingly, amongst all this intense activity he found time to marry and raise a family (he met his wife-to-be, Gillian, at the Boat Show!) and to sail his beloved boat which was moored at Itchenor. He moved to Sussex in 1960, not to Chichester as might have been expected, but well away from the sea at Pulborough. They moved in 1971 to Grove House, out in the wilds at Little Bognor near Fittleworth, where he loved to entertain friends and family.

Naturally retirement did not lead to Robin hanging up his hard hat and relaxing – far from it. As well as being active in Itchenor Sailing Club, where he had become the youngest-ever commodore, he founded the Coultershaw Trust to restore the 18th century beam pump that once supplied Petworth with water. His many achievements at Coultershaw are given in the following tribute by Tony Sneller.

A story not included in the eulogy was one that Robin often told against himself with great glee regarding his presidential portrait. It has been the tradition at the ICE for a portrait to be painted of each past president for display in the Institution building. This began with Thomas Telford who – naturally - hangs at the top of the stairs, but by 1992 wall space was becoming something of a premium and the Institution had recently changed their artist whose work, to put it mildly, was deemed not quite as worthy of that of Samuel Lane who had painted Mr T's magnificent portrait 172 years earlier. As a result Robin found himself consigned to the basement where he hangs next to the lavatories!

Robin's manifold achievements were not only on account of his brilliant mind, insatiable appetite for hard work and a desire to serve others, but also his character. He was a gentleman in every sense of the word and loved by all whom he encountered; when he asked his staff or fellow board members to do something it was willingly done – and it was the same in his life outside work.

I end with one more Telford reference. Robert Southey, the Poet Laureate, was an intimate of Telford and wrote of his friend "a man more heartily to be liked and more worthy to be esteemed and admired I have never fallen in with" He could easily have been writing about Robin Wilson 200 years on.

Robin Lee Wilson, 4 March 1933 – 11 November 2019

Forthcoming SIAS Events

Malcolm Dawes

SIAS evening meetings are held at

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

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

Returning to a screen near you by popular demand, this informative and entertaining evening of film clips from many sources. All new (to us) material on too many subjects to mention here. Do not miss it, put the date in your diary now.

Saturday 14th March 7.30pm. The Selsey Tramway

Illustrated presentation by Joe Whicher covering the history and eventual demise of the Tramway.

Selsey at the southern tip of the Manhood peninsula has only ever had one rather difficult road to gain access to and from Chichester. In the late 1800s the idea of a rail link was considered, and a young engineer H F Stevens was appointed. He was noted for being thrifty and designated the line as Tramway with operating costs kept to a minimum. It was called "The Hundred of Manhood and Selsey Tramway" and in many respects the line resembled a railway. The first train of locomotive and three bogie coaches left Chichester in 1897.

For the next 38 years it suffered several setbacks but played an important part in the development of Selsey and became a much appreciated institution, although its many idiosyncrasies resulted in it being the butt of much humour. Eventually the motor bus gave a cheaper and more reliable service resulting in the Tramway's closure in 1935.

Very little is left to be seen today. It closed before the advent of colour photography, so the limited surviving pictures are black and white but fortunately much has been written to record the lines quaint history.



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

Thursday 16th January, 8.00pm. *A turbulent history of Pub Life in Lewes*
Wivelsfield Historical Society talk by Mat Hornewood. Visitors £2.50.
Wivelsfield Village Hall. www.wivelsfield-historical-society.co.uk

Saturday 18th January, 2.30pm. *The History of Brighton Fishing*
Brighton and Hove Archaeology Society, Local History Forum talk by ex-fisherman Alan Hayes. £4 non-members.
The Fellowship Room, Central United Reformed Church, 102 Blatchington Road, Hove. www.brightonarch.org.uk

Wednesday 29th January, 7.30pm. *Irish trams and trolleybuses including the Giant's Causeway*
Volk's Electric Railway Association talk by Peter Williams. West Blatchington Windmill Barn, Holmes Avenue, Hove. www.volkselectricrailway.co.uk

Saturday 1st February, 10am to 4pm. *Open day at the Brede Steam Engines*
Steam and working industrial engines. Situated 6 miles from Hastings on A28 to Ashford. For any enquiries email bsesgiantsofbrede@btinternet.com or phone 01323 8976310

Tuesday 11th February, 6.30pm. *Pioneers of Armour Plate*
Newcomen Society lecture by David Bournnell. Hood Room, The Royal Maritime Club, 78-80 Queen Street, Portsmouth. Information from newcomen.com

Saturday 15th February, 2.30pm. *Brighton before the Pavilion: a different aspect of the city history* Brighton and Hove Archaeology Society, Local History Forum talk by Geoffrey Mead. £4 non-members. The Fellowship Room, Central United Reformed Church, 102 Blatchington Road, Hove. www.brightonarch.org.uk

Wednesday 26th February, 7.30pm. *Island Treasures – The Railways of the Isle of Wight* RCTS Chichester Branch talk by Colin Brading. Council Meeting Room 2, County Hall, West Street, Chichester. www.rcts.org.uk/branches/chichester/events

Tuesday 3rd March, 7.00pm. *The Brighton Belle – Its history and Future* Eastbourne History talk by David Jones. Visitors £2. St.Andrews Parish Hall, 425 Seaside, Eastbourne. www.eastbournehistory.org.uk

Saturday 7th March, 10am to 4pm. *Open day at the Brede Steam Engines* Steam and working industrial engines. Situated 6 miles from Hastings on A28 to Ashford. For any enquiries email bsesgiantsofbrede@btinternet.com or phone 01323 8976310

Wednesday 11th March, 7.40pm. *Amsterdam a favourite haunt of tram enthusiasts* Tramway and Light Railway Society – Sussex Area Group presentation by Paul Snelling. Admission £2.00. Deall Room, Southwick Community Centre, Southwick Street, Southwick

Thursday 12th March, 8.10pm. *BR Mark 1 stock particularly on the Southern* Historical Model Railway Society Sussex Area Group presentation by Mike King. London Road Station, Brighton. 01903 814022. email t.cole@steyning.myzen.co.uk

Saturday 14th March, 10am to 4pm. *Crawley Signal Box Preservation Society – Open Day Event* Crawley Signal Box, Brighton Road/Springfield Road, Crawley

Wednesday 18th March, 7.45pm. *Trams, trolleybuses and Trains on postcards* Sussex Transport Interest Group presentation by Mick Funnell. Visitors £2.50. London Road Station, Brighton. 07769 294408. www.sussex-transport.co.uk/stig

Thursday 19th March, 8.00pm. *A passion for Piers* Wivelsfield Historical Society talk by Jackie Marsh-Hobbs. Visitors £2.50. Wivelsfield Village Hall. www.wivelsfield-historical-society.co.uk

Saturday 21st March, 2.30pm. *Eugenius Birch: The King of Piers* Brighton and Hove Archaeology Society, Local History Forum talk by Kathryn Ferry. £4 non-members. The Fellowship Room, Central United Reformed Church, 102 Blatchington Road, Hove. www.brightonarch.org.uk

Sunday 22nd March. *Steam train excursion to Hampshire and the Sussex Coast* Steam hauled return journey running through Hampshire and along Sussex coast to Littlehampton and return. Photographic opportunities in Sussex. www.steamdreams.co.uk

Wednesday 25th March, 7.30pm. 150 years of Brussels Trams

Volk's Electric Railway Association talk by Ian Gledhill who visited the city at the time of the anniversary celebrations. West Blatchington Windmill Barn, Holmes Avenue, Hove. www.volkselectricrailway.co.uk

Weekend 3rd - 5th April. Branch Line Weekend Vintage Branch Line Trains running all weekend. Bluebell Railway www.bluebell-railway.co.uk

Saturday 4th April, 10am to 4pm. Open day at the Brede Steam Engines Steam and working industrial engines. Situated 6 miles from Hastings on A28 to Ashford. For any enquiries email bsesgiantsofbrede@btinternet.com or phone 01323 8976310

Wednesday 8th April, 7.30pm. Tangmere Operations: The Battle of Britain and Beyond Chichester Local Historical Society talk by Julie and Nigel Peachey – World War II historians. Visitors £3. New Park Centre, New Park Road, Chichester. 01243 784915

Tuesday 14th April, 6.30pm. The R101 Disaster

Newcomen Society lecture by Bryan Lawton. Hood Room, The Royal Maritime Club, 78-80 Queen Street, Portsmouth. Information from newcomen.com.

Wednesday 15th April, 7.45pm. Bringing back the Brighton Belle

Sussex Transport Interest Group presentation by David Jones. Visitors £2.50. London Road Station, Brighton. 07769 294408. www.sussex-transport.co.uk/stig

Saturday 2nd May. Toy and Collectors Fair

Horsted Keynes Station, Bluebell Railway www.bluebell-railway.co.uk

Sunday 3rd May. Historic Commercial Vehicles Run, between London and Brighton www.hcvs.co.uk

Saturday 2nd May

The 2020 South East Regional Industrial Archaeology Conference (SERIAC)

To be organised by Greater London Industrial Archaeology Society and held at Goldsmith College, New Cross.

For full details of programme and booking form - *When these are available* please refer to:- www.glias.org.uk or www.sussexias.co.uk

Do please check details 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

The Brighton Belle – with David Jones

October Evening Meeting – Report by John Blackwell

This season's winter lectures commenced with a welcome return of Pullman enthusiast and SIAS member David Jones with his latest presentation on the *Brighton Belle* and the 5Bel Trust, whose aim is to bring back this iconic Pullman train.

The London Brighton & South Coast Railway was an early user of an American Pullman car (not carriage) in 1874. It subsequently ran the first all Pullman train in the UK, (four cars all first class), the first electrically lit (by batteries) train in the world, the first in service to run from Victoria to Brighton in 60 minutes and in 1908 introduced the *Southern Belle* billed as "the most luxurious train in the world". This

was steam hauled until 1st January 1933 when the route was electrified and newly built electric multiple units took over the operation being renamed the *Brighton Belle* on 29th June 1934. The three five car sets of all steel construction, were built by Metro Cammell at Saltley in Birmingham at a cost of £35k for each set. Two sets were used for the



service with the other in reserve (this reserve set was used for a Sunday Pullman service known as the *Eastbourne Pullman* between 1948 and 1957). Each set was formed of a motor brake third (second after 1956), a third class parlour car, two first class kitchen cars and finally a motor brake third capable of carrying 152 third class passengers and 40 first class. Three return journeys were made each day serving breakfasts, luncheons, teas and snacks. Each car had individually designed interiors by top name furnishers including Maples and Waring and Gillow, with marquetry panels and art-deco fabrics covering for the seats. The third's had four facing seats with a tables, each side of a central gangway and seated a total of 48 in the motor brakes and 56 in the parlour. The first's had a four seat coupe, a central saloon with pairs of moveable armchairs each side seating 16 and a pantry and kitchen area. The first's carried names (Hazel, Audrey, Gwen, Doris, Mona, and Vera, popular names of the period). In 1906 the Pullman company had adopted the LB&SCR colour scheme of umber (chocolate) and cream which was retained until 1969 when they were repainted in the British Railways livery of blue and grey. By 1972 the units were old, rode poorly, were expensive to maintain and were sadly withdrawn on 30th April. Many remembered those final days and some, including myself, travelled on the final day; a fondly remembered experience.



Brighton Belle
arriving at
Brighton

On withdrawal the traction motors, air braking and electrical control equipment was removed by BR before being put up for auction. Some were purchased by brewers and pubs but were fairly quickly sold on due to the high cost of maintenance; one however still remains at the Little Mill Inn at Rowarth in Derbyshire for visitor accommodation, similar to those at the old Petworth station. One (Audrey) was purchased privately and housed at the short lived Ashford Steam Centre. I recall a SIAS visit there in the mid 1970s. In 1977 two (cars 292 and 293) were to be found at the Brighton Museum of Transport which was housed in the former Pullman works situated on the Cliftonville curve immediately south of Preston Park station. The Museum failed due to insufficient funds, poor public access and repeated vandalism and both cars were sold to the Venice Simplon Orient Express (VSOE) company in 1992 as were several of the other cars. Most have been refurbished and run now as the Belmond British Pullman.

Preservation of electric traction had received scant attention by preservation societies, as they would have to be hauled by a steam locomotive. However in 2009, the 5Bel Trust was formed whose aim was to return the *Brighton Belle* to mainline service. Of the 15 original cars 14 survived one (car 90) having been destroyed by arson.

David then outlined the history of the surviving cars now owned by the 5Bel Trust. Cars 87, a third saloon, and car 91, a third motor brake, were included in a batch of six purchased by Allied Breweries for £36k in 1972. In 1975 they moved to North Norfolk Railway, subsequently going on long term loan to the Keith and Dufftown railway in Scotland before being gifted to the Trust in 2009. Car 85, a third saloon, also one of the Allied Brewery six was sold on to the Nags Head public house at Mickleover Derbyshire in 1975 and then donated to the Severn Valley Railway

in 1993. In 1998 it was sold to the VSOE from whom it was purchased by the Trust in 2011. Car 88 a third motor brake was bought by the brewers Truman and transferred in 1975 to the Stour Valley railway and subsequently to the Swanage Railway before being bought by VSOE in 1998 who sold it to the Trust in 2009. 'Doris' a first class kitchen car was purchased by CIL Storefitters of Finsbury Park for use as a boardroom and kept at Finsbury Park sidings, which was adjacent to their works. It was sold in 2006 to the Bluebell Railway for intended use on their *Golden Arrow* dining train. In 2011 the Trust arranged an exchange with 'Carina' an ex *Golden Arrow* car giving the Bluebell a loco hauled vehicle rather than having to convert an ex electric car. Finally in 2012 'Hazel' another first kitchen car was purchased from the new owners of the Black Bull Inn at Moulton near Richmond Yorkshire where it had served as a restaurant since 1972. This completed a possible six car train.

Restoration work was initially undertaken by Ramparts of Derby who fitted reclaimed bogies from 4Cig sets, a later design than the original bogies, and being equipped with roller bearings gave a smoother ride and a 90mph capability. All electrical gear was stripped out not being compatible with modern safety standards nor having the necessary equipment for main line operation. A decision to replace the 2+2 seating in the third's as 2+1 was taken and provision of a large stainless steel kitchen in car 85 in addition to those in the two first class cars, giving an ability to serve 170 meals to passengers. Slow progress at Ramparts led to W H Davis of Shirebrook taking over the work with the existing marquetry panels being repaired or refurbished, new seating fabric in the original art deco style, new tables crockery and glasses. The interior metal work has been nickel plated bright silver with LED globe bulbs replacing the former lighting. The original free standing table lamps had long disappeared and replicas with authentic but fireproof plastic shades obtained. The cars are also equipped with forced ventilation for today's passenger comfort. It is proposed to initially run a four coach train, one first and three thirds, with a planned introduction is August 2020. The train will be based at Eastleigh and should be travelling once again between Brighton and Victoria and over other southern third rail metals. Each car has cost an average of £1.2m to rebuild so fares will not be cheap but the experience of travelling in the umber and cream cars with their 1930s ambience should not be missed. David gave an excellent, well researched presentation which judging by the memories that were evoked during the tea break was very well received by an appreciative audience. Memories I overheard were of the 'Belle's' overhead signage at the ticket barrier at Victoria's platform 17, estimates of the cost of the Pullman surcharge, passing the line side garden of a member's previous home and Lord Olivier's breakfast kippers saga. Many thanks David for a splendid evening.

Flying at Patcham

Geoffrey Mead

SIAS *Newsletter* 183 had as its cover and as one of its articles, images and a report on the Society visit to Gatwick airport and its distinctive Beehive terminal; it was this set of images that prompted me to search an old box file of Patcham information; one of several I had archived when I was researching Patcham for my PhD. This was a press announcement of early flights from Patcham.

SUSSEX DAILY NEWS

1st AUGUST 1919

‘AVRO joy rides’

“Flying is now taking place on the LADIES MILE BRIGHTON every day from 11 till dusk. Flights from £1.1s. Tickets and full information can be obtained at the Avro office, Aquarium Terrace, adjoining YMCA hut and Hotel Metropole, Eaton Place, Kemp Town and the Flying Ground. Flights can be booked for GOODWOOD RACES from Brighton, £7.7s. return journey. Tilling bus (No 5) ’bus service every few minutes from the Aquarium. Teas provided. Moderate charges.”

Patcham Parish Council were alert to the new transport service now provided in the parish [and its incipient Health & Safety measures] and on 21st August the following is recorded in the PCC minutes, page 146 [ESRO DB/B56/2]-

“A letter was read from the Town Clerk of Brighton with reference to the obstruction caused by the AVRO Company by placing a rope across the right of way on the Ladies Mile and drawn attention to by the Parish meeting. Which informed the Council that the AVRO Company stated that the ropes were placed across the Ladies Mile for the protection of the general public but that all assistance was given to anyone desiring a passage and in some cases flying had been stopped for the time being to enable people to proceed along the Ladies Mile. That they also informed him that the rope had not been left across the Ladies Mile at night and that they would undertake that for the future they would take special care to see that the ropes were moved nightly and to give all assistance possible during the day. That the Company also stated that they had a watchman on duty by the hanger all night.”

Ladies Mile is the long flat east-west ridge to the east of Patcham running up to the Ditchling Road ridge. In the 1920s the surge in suburban housing in Patcham had reached what was known locally as The Drove or Patcham Drove. The notion of cattle and sheep droving did not sit easily with suburban developers and speculators seeking a more genteel appellation for the rapidly expanding ribbon of bungalows and other housing that was climbing the steep downland slopes, and the name Ladies Mile [with a variety of spellings] gradually appeared on architects plans and local council minute books. In some cases the early 1920s plans actually have ‘The

Drove' written on them but with that term crossed out and 'Ladies Mile' written above it. The derivation of the name 'Ladies Mile' has been open to all manner of spurious speculations, but after decades of Patcham research I am at a loss to specify any definite conclusion.

I have found no further information of this particular airfield operation but the idea of an airfield on the site surfaced in the succinctly titled 'Joint Town Planning Advisory Committee Preliminary Report' of 1928 [ESRO C/C1/7]. This report, with its successor in 1932, advocated a sequence of small, peripheral landing grounds around the built up area of the Greater Brighton conurbation. These would function as 'air-taxi' hubs where planes could land and then a new road system would funnel traffic towards the urban centre. *"...the possibilities of the light aeroplane...will considerably influence and increase the popularity of the area for residential purposes."* Airfields were proposed for Saltdean, Patcham and Mile Oak, Portslade. The effects of the great depression and subsequent economic difficulties never saw these grandiose plans come to fruition, although the Inner Ring Road - *"[which] constitutes an inner circular road and is designed to pick up traffic from the several north-south radial roads and distribute it to various parts of the region"*, did resurface in the 1980s as the A27 Brighton bypass...with much the same route as that proposed in 1928! What of the Outer Ring Road? This was planned to run along the line of the downland crest as a South Downs parkway! Thankfully now the route of the South Downs Way.

Book Review

Our Rye Harbour: memories and stories of past and present residents of Rye harbour

The Rye Partnership. Rye coastal heritage project 2011 £2.00

Geoffrey Mead

In past SIAS Newsletters Rye Harbour has featured in some of the articles I have submitted; its long association with the 'Blue boulder' trade has been a continuing research interest of mine going back over a couple of decades. As a Trustee of Rye Museum I make several visits a year there and at a talk I was giving in October I noticed some publications that I had not encountered before set out on their new book display shelves. One that caught my eye was this slim A4 account of Rye Harbour, seen through the eyes of its residents. Rye Harbour is a tight knit community, its past economy of fishermen, boat builders, and the aforementioned boulder men gave it a distinct differential to the artistic and literary high-flyers of Rye town a couple of miles further up the Rother channel. This publication outlines the event which

imprinted this tiny community [150 in the 1920s] on the national and international consciousness-the Mary Stanford disaster. This was the Rye Harbour lifeboat that put to sea early in the morning of November 15th 1928 only to be lost with all hands a few hours later in a raging Force Nine gale on a fruitless mission to rescue a ship which had already sailed away. Julie Downey the first contributor was part of the Caister family, her grandfather Spencer Caister was a long-line fisherman working from the beach where he also collected shrimps and cockles. Julie's great uncle was lost on the Mary Stanford and her husband lost his great uncle; like many other Rye Harbour inhabitants she is related through marriage to many other long established families here.

Kathleen Duffy [nee Head] lost her grandfather, Herbert who was the lifeboat coxswain and two uncles; one, John Head, was never recovered. She recalls the time in WWII when she and her sisters collected fallen coke from the train that ran down the mineral line to Rye Harbour. Her other memories were of the shipping using the wharf bringing coal, timber and concrete as well as the local boulder boats. These were the small vessels that operated in Rye Bay collecting the 'blue-stones' which were landed, and by the 1940s, were taken by road to the Potteries for use in flint glaze preparation. She had memories of the local fishing trade and the fish smokeries.

Joyce Tugwell whose grandparents lived at Rye harbour remembered the boulder men and their boats vividly, as her grandfather was a boulder man, and there is a picture of him with his yoke and trugs coming ashore laden with the beach stones. She had vivid memories of the ferry [often overloaded!] that plied across the Rother to the Camber side where she recalled the lighthouse that was located there until the late 1960s. It is this lighthouse that features in a well-known view by the artist Eric Ravilious, an apposite link as Joyce notes that before the war the only visitors to Rye Harbour were artists.

From a SIAS viewpoint by far the most interesting of the accounts is that by Charles Piggott who started work as a boat builder at the Rock Channel shipyard building Motor Fishing Vessels [MFV] for use as minesweepers. Charles gives a detailed blow-by-blow account of the rigours of the job, which did not stop even in an air raid!

This is a modest A4 volume, clearly printed, well-illustrated, but surprisingly with some of the larger images not captioned. A great pity as these are mainly of working men, fisher folk and boulder men. The penultimate image is of the upturned Mary Stanford on the beach, a sturdy hand rowed craft that was so bulky that I know a tank had to be brought from nearby Lydd Barracks manoeuvre it.

Feedback: Southwick Railway Station

John Minnis

I was very interested to read the article on Southwick station. Southwick has always intrigued me, partly because of its early date, but also because of the almost total absence of photographs of the station prior to the 1899 rebuilding - that is until now!

You asked for further information: I hope that the following derived from the LB&SCR board minutes at the National Archives, copied by me onto index cards well over 30 years ago is useful. They confirm much of what has been obtained from the local papers.

Board Minutes

8/3/1847 Six cottages of the 'usual description' authorised

6/4/1847 New station and waiting rooms with platforms on both sides of the line recommended - cost of £350

7/9/1853 Tender from G Terry for booking office £425 approved

4/11/1858 Memorial for shelter on up platform

11/11/1858 Shelter as above c. £56 authorised

3/3/1869 Steps to up platform authorised

Engineering Committee of the Board

14/2/1888 Works including a footbridge authorised

7/5/1889 It was reported that an iron footbridge would be unsafe- the footbridge concerned could be used instead at Plumpton. New waiting room on up side authorised

3/7/1889 Tender for subway from A M Deacon £469 approved

30/6/1891 Tender for erection of waiting shed from R Cook £258 approved

4/10/1892 Frederick Banister instructed to remove disused wooden staircase on up side

15/3/1899 Tender for new station from R Cook £6,268 approved

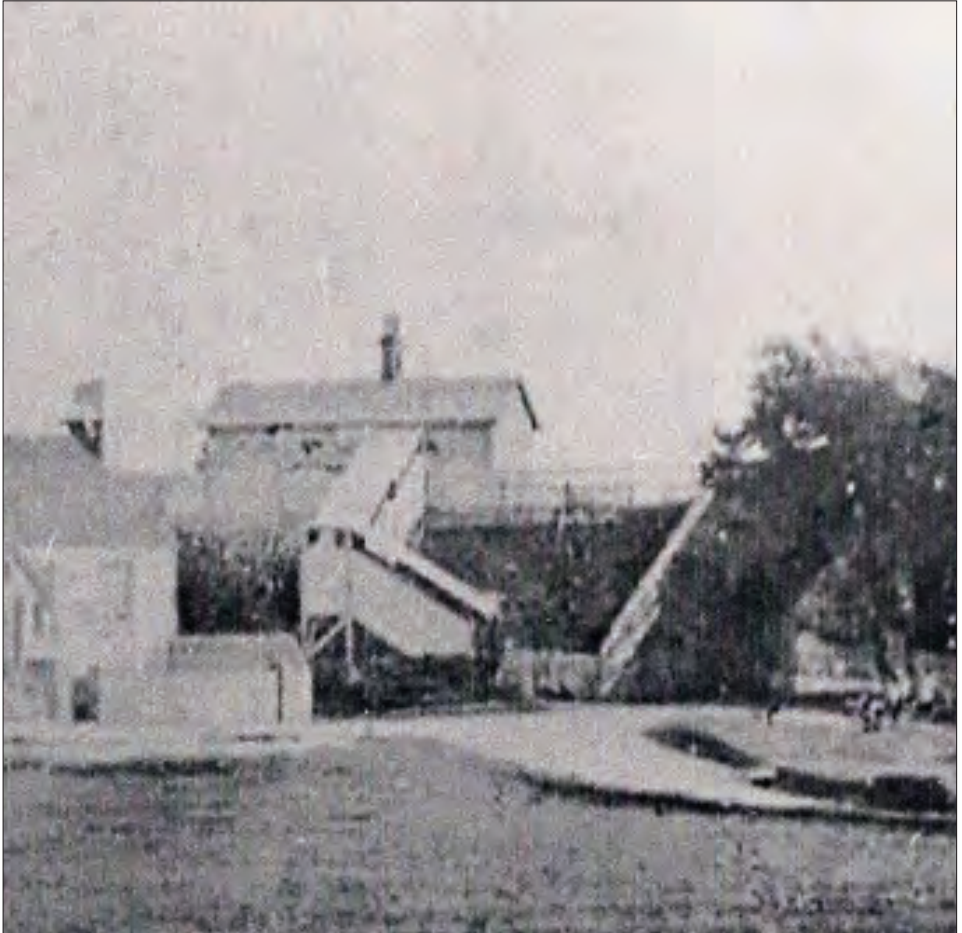
6/1/1901 Account from R Cook settled - final sum £6,004 5s 5d

(The 1853 board minute refers to a booking office, which raises a query as to the interpretation of the c.1890 photograph. The O.S. maps show no such structure on the up platform, the 1891 waiting shed (if present) would be obscured by the school building in the centre of the photograph. I raised this point with John who came up with the following suggestion.) JSFB

I'm not much clearer on when the building in the photograph actually dates from. The trouble is that nothing seems to match the maps! One possibility has occurred

to me. That fence seems to pass across the building and there is not a lot of room on the up platform for a reasonably substantial building of the type seen here. Could we actually be looking here at a building on the down side rather than the up side? In that case the steps would have simply opened on to the platform which was a common enough arrangement. That building could then date from 1853 and be mounted on top of the brick built structure, fragments of which survive. All conjecture, I know, but it could fit. But who knows?

Anyone out there? Ed



Enlarged section of the c. 1890 image, to enable inspection!



Mystery Photo

Do you know your IA?

It appears to be a rail track

But what did it serve?

Where?

What was the purpose?

When was it in IA use?

What happened to have it
appear like this?

Answers in the next
Newsletter - maybe!

(Martin Higham)

~~~~~

The location of the wall featured in *Newsletter* No.184 is Piddinghoe on the west side of the Ouse Valley, north of Newhaven. Peter Hotham reports:-

When I submitted my article for the last “Sussex Industrial History” I thought that I had included all visible remains of East Sussex malthouses. However, I am indebted to Derek Eager to bringing the omission of this one at Piddinghoe to my notice. It would appear that Edward Dean, who from 1789 ran the Tipper Brewery of Newhaven built the malthouse to malt local grown barley for use in his brewery. Dean died in 1829 and the malthouse was bought by William Catt a subsequent co-owner of the brewery. It was offered for sale by auction in 1839 as “A Capital and Substantial Malt House, in full work, containing a cistern to wet about 30 quarters, and dry Store for 1500 quarters: with Cottage, Garden & Premises”.

However, it would appear that no one wanted it as a malthouse and it ended up gutted with one of the walls retained to make an attractive walled garden. I would be interested to learn more about it.

~~~~~

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, to provide inspiration for 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*



Brighton Belle Poster



5Bel seat
(Frank Dumbleton)

