Sussex Industrial Archaeology Society Newsletter

Number 200 **October 2023**



Members on the Brighton Walk lead by Geoffrey Mead - August 2023

Newsletter 200

Contents **October 2023**

Editorial 2
SIAS Events 3
Events from other Societies 4
Spared! – Worthing's West Seafront Shelter 7
SIAS Brighton Walk 8
Aspects of Brighton & Hove's gas history 11
Feedback - Chichester Station Roof 14
The Fall and Rise of St Pancras Clock 15
Request for Information 18
Bishopstone Station - An update from Alan Green 20

Editorial

Welcome to *Newsletter 200.*

Please note the enclosed notification for the AGM on Saturday 19th November. Details of the talk that follows are on page 3.

Please help make the job of our new treasurer easier by check that you have paid your subscription that was due on 1st April.

Brian Austen

Sadly the death of Brian has been announced.
He was a founder member of SIAS in 1967 and served as a committee member from then until last year. He was editor of SIH for many years and will be remembered for his definitive series on Sussex Turnpikes.
A full appreciation will appear in the January newsletter

Visit our website - www.sussexias.co.uk

Forthcoming SIAS Events

All the autumn and winter SIAS meetings are held
at West Blatchington Mill Barn, Holmes Avenue, Hove, BN3 7LF

Saturday 14th October. 2.00pm. Palmer and Green's Regent Foundry. Brighton
David Green, a descendent of one of the original partners has researched and written a book about the history of the foundry and the fascinating life stories of the many company partners. The foundry in North Road was the towns' largest manufactory and biggest employer during most of the nineteenth century. It produced much of the domestic and construction iron goods and fittings for the rapidly expanding town and also some major items that graced the townscape. They also had an extensive ironmongery shop in North Street. The business was later sold but continued under new owners until the early years of the twentieth century.

Saturday 19th November. 2.00pm. AGM

The AGM will be followed by a talk by Geoffrey Mead about The Chalkpit Furlong an historic part of Brighton's West Laine. The area has a long IA history from the initial chalk extraction, through metal and wood working and brewing, to a later period running up into the 21st century of large retail units. This talk looks at the evolution of the area from field strips and a chalk pit, to the 19th century landscape of urban twittens and 'mean dwellings' and the 20th century near obliteration of the area's core.

Saturday 13th January. 2.00pm. Newhavens' industrial past and its influence on its present

For many places the arrival of the railway led to major economic, social, and spatial changes. In Newhaven, the effective ownership of the port by the railway company and the establishment of regular cross channel boat services had significant impacts in all these areas.

Will Pilfold will explore the port's rich industrial history, drawing heavily on the valuable collection of photographs held by the Newhaven Historical Society in their museum. Sadly, the constant process of renewal and alteration in the face of technological change and economic pressures means that relatively little industrial archaeology survives in the port area. However, the legacy of its industrial past is witnessed by the present structure of both the port and the town, and the issues they face.

Dates for your diary

Saturday 17th February. 2pm
Jim Gibbons will be telling us about The Hastings DEMU group

Saturday 16th March. 2pm
Martin Snow and his famous Film Nite (matinee)

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 e-mail to *malcolm.dawes@btinternet.com*

Monday 9th October. 7.30 pm. Brian Jackson takes us through a further selection of his father's photos. Southern Electric Group event. £3 non-members. Deall Room, Southwick Community Centre, Southwick. www.southernelectric.org.uk

Wednesday 11th October. 7.30pm. ***Walter Hussey and Chichester***
Chichester Local Historical Society talk by Dr Peter Webster, author and art historian. Visitors £5. New Park Centre, New Park Road, Chichester. 01243 784915

Weekend 13th- 15th October. ***Giants of Steam Autumn Gala***
Visiting locomotives, Bulleid West Country Class No. 21C127 'Taw Valley' (from Severn Valley Railway) and Bullied Battle of Britain Class No.34070 'Manston' (from Swanage Railway). Bluebell Railway. 01825 720800. www.bluebell-railway.co.uk

Sunday 15th 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.

Saturday 21st October. 2.30pm. ***Brighton's Hidden Parks and Gardens***
Brighton and Hove Archaeology Society, Local History Forum talk by Sarah Tobias. £4 non-members. The Fellowship Room, Central United Reformed Church, 102 Blatchington Road, Hove. www.brightonarch.org.uk

Monday 23rd October. 7.30pm. ***Video and slide presentation***
The Locomotive Club of Great Britain, Brighton Branch presentation by Richard Hingley. £4.00 donation. Brighton Model Railway Clubrooms, London Road Station, Shaftesbury Place, Brighton. www.lcgb.org.uk/branches/brighton/

Tuesday 31st October. 7.00pm. ***The Women's Land Army – a Sussex Connection***
West Sussex Record Office talk by Ian Everest. West Sussex Record Office, Orchard Street, Chichester. Phone WSRO 01243 753602 for in person tickets.

Saturday 4th November. 10am to 4pm. ***Open day at the Brede Steam Engines***
Steam and working industrial engines. Situated 6 miles from Hastings on A28 to Ashford. https://bredesteamgiants.co.uk

Sunday 5th November. ***London to Brighton veteran car run***

Tuesday 7th November. 7.00pm. ***Eastbourne Post-War Recovery and Modernisation***
Eastbourne Local History talk by Alan Wenham. Visitors £2. St Andrews Parish Hall, 425 Seaside, Eastbourne. www.eastbournehistory.org.uk

Wednesday 8th November. 7.30pm. ***The power brokers of West St and Westgate*** 100 years of the Freeland, Raper and Tyacke families**.** Chichester Local Historical Society talk by Richard Childs. Visitors £5. New Park Centre, New Park Road, Chichester. 01243 784915

Monday 13th November. 7.30 pm. ***Railways of the 1980s, 1987-1989*** Southern Electric Group presentation by Andrew Marshall. £3 non-members. Deall Room, Southwick Community Centre, Southwick. www.southernelectric.org.uk

Wednesday 15th November. 7.45pm. ***Brian Jackson makes a welcome return showing images from his collection*** Sussex Transport Interest Group, London Road Station, Brighton. 07769 294408.

17th November to 30th December. ***Steam Lights at the Bluebell Railway*** Entire trains bedecked with lights. Lineside Festive Scenes with Sheffield Park and Horsted Keynes Stations adorned with lights and decorations. Timetable and booking procedure on the web site. www.bluebell-railway.com

Weekend 18th - 19th November. ***Brighton Model Railway Exhibition*** Patcham Community Centre, Ladies Mile Road, Brighton. 10.00am to 5.00pm Saturday. 10.00am to 4.00pm Sunday. https://brightonmrc.wordpress.com/exhibition

25th November to 24th December. ***Santa Specials at the Bluebell Railway*** Timetable and booking procedure on the web site. www.bluebell-railway.com

Tuesday 28th November. 7.00pm. ***Chichester in colour*** Archive film West Sussex Record Office talk by Alan Green. West Sussex Record Office, Orchard Street, Chichester. Phone WSRO 01243 753602 for in person tickets.

Saturday 2nd December. ***Steam train excursion from Three Bridges to Bristol*** Steam hauled on outward journey south along the Brighton line, stopping at Haywards Heath, Preston Park, Hove and Worthing. Return journey steam hauled, stopping at the same stations. Photographic opportunities in Sussex. www.railwaytouring.co.uk.

Saturday 2nd 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. https://bredesteamgiants.co.uk

Tuesday 5th December. 7.30pm. ***Denton and Mount Pleasant – Past Life and Times*** Newhaven Historical Society and Museum talk by Ian Everest. Hillcrest Centre, Bay Vue Road, Newhaven. Free parking next to the Hillcrest Centre. Non-members £5. www.newhavenhistoricalsociety.org.uk

Wednesday 6th December. Steam Excursion from London Victoria to Eastbourne Steam hauled down the Brighton Line passing through Haywards Heath and Lewes. Steam hauled return from Hastings passing through Crowhurst, Battle, Robertsbridge and Tunbridge Wells. Photographic opportunities in Sussex.

www.railwaytouring.co.uk

Friday 8th December. 7.00pm. ***A History of the Adur Valley***

Brighton and Hove Archaeology Society talk by Dr Janet Pennington. £4 non-members. Unitarian Church, New Road, Brighton. Note; The talk will start at 7.30pm following the AGM at 7.00pm. www.brightonarch.org.uk

Wednesday 13th December. 7. 15pm. ***Railways of Col. Holman Stephens***

RCTS Chichester Branch Meeting. Bassil Shippam Centre, Tozer Way, St Pancras, Chichester. https://rcts.org.uk/branches/branch-chr-chichester

Saturday 16th December. 12 noon to 4pm. ***Open Day at Crawley Signal Box***

Brighton Road, Crawley.www.facebook.com/CrawleySignalBox

Saturday 6th January. 10am to 4pm. ***Open day at the Brede Steam Engines***

Steam and working industrial engines. Situated 6 miles from Hastings on A28 to Ashford. https://bredesteamgiants.co.uk

Wednesday 10th January. 7.30pm. ***Freelands' Fair Ground***

The curious history of Oaklands Park**.** Chichester Local History Society talk by local historian Alan Green. Non-members £5. New Park Centre, New Park Road, Chichester. 01243 784915.

Local Exhibitions of interest

Brighton Museum. World above the waves

Drawings and paintings of the Chain Pier depicting entertainers, the landing stage for cargo and passengers, fashionable society, holidaymakers and shop keepers. Closes on the 14th January 2024.

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 Worthing West Shelter in happier times

Spared! – Worthing's West Seafront Shelter

Alan H J Green

At the Adur & Worthing Council's planning committee meeting on 20 September a planning application to demolish the east public shelter on Worthing Promenade and redevelop the site to provide restaurants set over two floors, was roundly refused. Not only would the scheme have eliminated an historic feature of Worthing's sea front the bulky new development would have completely blocked the view of the sea from West Buildings, and thus be harmful to the character of the Conservation Area.

The Worthing Society ran a vigorous campaign to save the shelter and sought support from SIAS so, on behalf of the Society, I lodged an objection to the demolition of this historic structure. I am pleased to report that campaign has paid off.

The shelter was built, along with its counterpart to the east of the pier, in 1925, by W J Ceams of London. The Borough Surveyor had previously visited Margate to inspect their shelters and based his design upon them. The glazed screens (recently boarded over) afforded views of the sea for those sheltering on the leeward side, and also allowed those approaching the seafront from the north down West Buildings to glimpse the sea beyond. Its design is simple but distinctive, having a decorative cast iron valance above cast iron columns that also act as rainwater pipes to drain the roof. The hardwood glazing bars to the screens are slender adding to the building's lightness and transparency.

Although not listed the shelter was put on the Local List in 2003 and it gets a favourable mention in new Sussex (West) *Pevsner* of 2019. The main thrust of our objection was that the two shelters are the oldest structures on the seafront hence this one should be retained and refurbished as an important part of the town's architectural heritage, and an asset to the Marine Parade and Hinterland Conservation Area.

The developer may go to appeal of course, but if not, or if the appeal is overturned, it is greatly to be hoped that the Council will now heed public opinion and restore this useful shelter to its former glory.



The shelter in 2011 (Martin Snow)

SIAS Brighton Walk

Geoffrey Mead

On August 20th SIAS members, 15 in all met at Brighton Station in that traditional meeting place, 'under the clock'; but not just any clock, as this is the 1882 LBSCR clock…and it was on the correct time! The arrival of the railway into Brighton was outlined, the contended routes and engineering problems and the rationale for the station being where it is located, and the reason for the first steam railway in Sussex being from Shoreham into Brighton, 16 months before the arrival of the London train. The magnificent 1882 station roof was noted, as was the Mocatta 1840s entrance building, then out along the old platform 8/9 to the gorgeous August sunshine. The platform is lined with period images of the station and rail system on the west side and modern images of the city on the east, several of these were of IA interest with for example Volks Railway, Birdcage bandstand and West Pier, in glorious large scale colour images. The history of the station site is well documented in *SIH* 28 by Ron Martin and a colleague. Outside the station we gathered at the information board for the Greenway; this is the cycle track/nature reserve/community garden that lies along the route of the Lower Goods line. Period maps and illustrations showed the extent of the LBSCR workshops, over 9 acres, employing over 2,600 workers by 1891. The rundown of the Works started early, as by 1901 the Marine Workshops had been moved to Newhaven and in 1912 the Carriage Works went west to Lancing. By 1922 the last loco 'Remembrance' was built, but wartime losses saw the assembly of locos recommence until full closure in 1958, with periodic demolition of the buildings through the 1960s. The Greenway is lined with huge brick columns that carried the workshops over the Lower Goods line and a 1912 photo of the area clearly shows these. At the end of the Greenway the 1852 bridge that carries the line over New England Rd was made in Brighton at the Regent Foundry; this bridge is part of an older IA site as this large hollow was a former chalk pit. The stairway down to the road brings us out near the 1839 Wick Road viaduct also known as the Montpelier Bridge, which was started in May 1839 "with full Masonic honours". A tiny brick building amongst the shrubbery across the road is the one remaining part of the huge engineering complex to the south; this was the clocking-in office for the workforce, one of three that would have served the works. Down to Preston Circus and a view of the 1846 Preston Rd viaduct, 27 arches and 400 yards long. At the Circus there are two imposing buildings on the east side, one the Duke of York's cinema, and the oldest in the UK. As the Malthouse building was not demolished but transformed into a cinema it took only from May to September 1910 for it to open. This was originally the Malthouse for the Amber Brewery across the road. *SIH* 28 & 49 by Peter Holtham has details of brewing and malting at this site. Next to that is the 1938 Fire Station

which curves around the street junction. The fire station had been, until 1921, at Brighton Town Hall as it was part of the borough police service, but was moved to this spot in 1912 as Brighton had grown so far north. This building replaced a rundown 1926 structure. The Hare & Hounds pub opposite has a 1905 date on the frontage as the early 19th century building was demolished to allow an easier route for the early 20th century tram lines. South along London Rd and noting the range of interwar department stores that had developed along here in response to the suburban expansion along the London Rd valley to the north.



The grandest of these was the 1931 Brighton Co-op; thankfully the magnificent curved frontage was saved from demolition and now fronts a large student housing complex. Smaller stores were built in 1926 for the County Furniture store, now a pub, and for former Jollyboys department store now Superdrug but in 1932 Marks & Spencer. The large 1936 Poundland was originally Roslings store, latterly Woolworth's. One group member had family connections to the area and very helpfully brought along images from the *JS Gray collection* to show the development of stages of the store. Even non-architectural historians can see that this is a classic interwar store frontage. Sadly 2023 saw the demolition of the 1935 Marks & Spencer store further south. At 36a London Rd was the short lived 'Gem Electric Theatre' a cinema that only opened from 1910 -15, losing out to the competition of the Duke Of Yorks. On the east side of the road is Brighton Open Market in Marshall's Row which until the 1960s held the last urban farrier as this was Dawkins Forge; as a child I can recall Mr Dawkins as a short but immensely strong man. Until development of the site about 20 years ago the iron rings that held the horses were still in the flint wall at the rear. The former HSBC south of here has 1904 high on the gable, another tram line rebuild. At the corner of Cheapside we glanced into the foyer of the Hobgoblin pub; this has a monogram NH in Edwardian mosaic tiles indicating it was the 1905 Northern Hotel. This, like the Hare & Hounds was a rebuild, as the 19th century building was demolished to accommodate the 1904 tram lines. Up Cheapside and in front a real IA building, as it is named 'The Ironworks'; this is the former home of HA Waller's metalworking

workshops, but now a gallery and meeting place, thankfully now named from its IA usage. See SIH 33 for a detailed account. Snaking around some modern New England developments we found a quiet backwater below the soaring station buildings where the LBSCR stables and offices and storage was located and still survive as a variety of small enterprises, cycle repairs, a bar, and as this is Brighton …a Lebanese restaurant. This area was the Lower Goods terminus and had some large warehouses until development as Trafalgar Gate in the 1990s; the buff bricks and blue metalwork of this large office complex are a nod to the similar colour scheme of the Station opposite. We climbed the last steep stretch of Trafalgar St under the station approach bridge and past the cab road doors, to finish up under the 1882 Porte Cochere that obscures much of the 1840s entrance; thankfully we had a 1840s illustration to show the magnificent structure. Lovely summer weather and a wealth of IA material made this a satisfying urban visit.



The Works from Preston Circus looking west.

Brighton
Railway Works
c.1912
from Preston Circus



Brighton
Goods Yard
c.1921

"The main pipes through which the gas is propelled are of a nine-inch bore."

Aspects of Brighton & Hove's gas history

Geoffrey Mead

Over the past few years there has been much debate in Brighton on the fate of the Black Rock gas works, and the proposals by a major developer, St. William, to build huge housing blocks at the site. The AGM of the Brighton Society in 2023 noted *"…the Coalition of 16 amenity and community groups over the past two years (to) express their fear anger and dismay about the proposals is overwhelming."* This needs to be put in its historical and industrial history context, which by good fortune I was able to do, as a chance find has recently revealed something of the site's early days.

I have been a tour guide and sometime room-steward at Firle Place for the past 15 years. The house is quite literally a treasure house, with paintings by Van Dyke and Rubens, Joshua Reynolds and Thomas Gainsborough; furniture by Chippendale and cabinets of incredibly expensive Sevres porcelain. It also has books aplenty, both in Viscount Gage's private library, but also an eclectic and large collection in the guides' room, largely an overspill from the main Gage collection, but with much of it original early editions. Between tours I have been browsing the collection and as might be expected with a family that has occupied this property for over 500 years there is a great deal of Sussex material. Much is well known and some is even to be found is in the less-distinguished library of Dr. GEF Mead, but some volumes are rare and absolute treasures in themselves. One such published in 1825 is *'Topographical sketches of Brighthelmston'* (sic), 1825 by EW Brayley FSA. Gently leafing through the thick paper pages I came across *'Section II. Sketches of Brighton'…-"in which all the principal Buildings etc. are delineated in succession, as beheld from a Vessel coasting to the Westward".*

Rather appositely the first building is a pub (it is Brighton after all…). "*The first building that meets the eye at the eastern extremity of Brighton is a small public-house, called the Abergavenny Arms: which stands in an elevated situation, at about the distance of one hundred yards from the verge of the cliffs."* The pub was named from a principal local landowner the Marquis of Abergavenny who at that time held a swathe of land bordering the resort on the north and east



Black Rock c.1920s Abergavenny Arms

sides. The Abergavenny survived into the early 20th century and was by that time, indeed on the cliff edge. The next paragraph outlines the Gas Works *"These works have been recently constructed, to supply gas for the use of the Town under the direction of a Company of shareholders incorporated by an Act of Parliament (58th George III) which received the Royal assent in June 1818 and has since been explained and amended by another act passed in the 4th year of his present Majesty. The principal shareholders reside in London but the immediate concerns of the Company are conducted by a Committee at Brighton. The works consist of several buildings slated, and include two gasometers and a steam engine; the whole being inclosed by a quadrangular wall of flints, strengthened by lateral bands of and buttresses of brick. The pipes are laid under a very considerable part of the Town, and are carried westward as far as Bedford Square, where some gas-lights have been recently displayed. From these works his Majesty's Pavilion has been supplied for some time, as well as a few shops; but with the exception of the Steyne, the streets etc. are not yet lit up; the Steyne was first illuminated with gas on the 1st of May 1824. The main pipes through which the gas is propelled are of a nine-inch bore. When the whole of the Town is illuminated by the brilliant light the effect from the sea will be peculiarly striking."*



Black Rock gasworks 2021

The gasometers at Black Rock came about due to taxation and also social pressure; inhabitants were none too keen to have a gas works near their housing (an early example of Not In My Back Yard…) thus the Brighton Gaslight & Coke Co. works were established at Black Rock in 1818, a considerable distance from any housing and just outside the town boundary in Rottingdean parish, to allay residents fears, but also in order to avoid tax dues. All coal brought into the town attracted a levy of the 6d a ton; the coal shipped from coalfields in the North East and was beached at Black Rock where in 1824 a tunnel was dug from the beach to carry the coal by wagon directly up to the gas works. West of Brighton there was a similar group of gas holders and production facilities established just west of St. Andrews church, Hove; this was a separate concern, the Brighton & Hove General Gas Co founded in 1825 and just as at Black Rock in Rottingdean parish so the General Gas Co was located in duty-free Hove parish, where with no cliffline the coal imports were even easier to deal with, and as at Black Rock housing was some

distance away. Gas was pumped into Brighton from east and west thus avoiding the swingeing coal tax in Brighton. In 1882 The Brighton & Hove General Gas Co absorbed its older rival; by 1930 the Worthing Gas Co had also been subsumed by its larger rival. The demand for gas and the consequent huge increase in coal usage saw both Black Rock and Hove's gas production eventually moved to the Canal

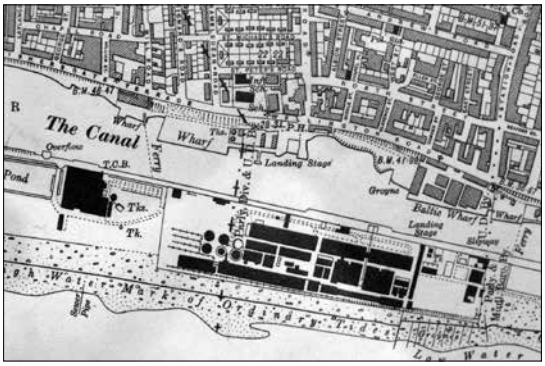


1930 St Aubyns. Hove Gas works to north


Church Rd old gasworks wall 2017

side site at Portslade to works founded by the General Company in 1870 on a 7 acre site between the canal and the sea. One hundred years later after the introduction of North Sea natural gas, the Portslade Works on the south harbour side now occupying 40 acres was closed and demolished soon after. The impact on coal imports after closure needs to be seen against the import figures of coal for the Portslade works being 160,000 tons in 1930.The Hove site ceased gas production in 1885and in 1989 the site was cleared almost entirely and a large Tesco store built on the site; only the boundary east wall, high and mainly flint, has survived on the site periphery. During WWI the nearby home of Mrs Vallance (now Hove Museum) was appropriated by the government for use as a German officers POW camp, the prisoners marched daily to work at the gas works; this caused anguish amongst Hove residents (and letters to the papers) but they were assured the men were employed in moving coal at a coking plant and were nowhere near any retorts!

The three holders at Black Rock were often targets for the Luftwaffe during World War Two who scored a direct hit during the conflict resulting in a flare some 300 ft. high! A near miss in 1944 resulted in Marine Gate flats beyond getting hit instead; indeed Marine Gate has the dubious distinction of being the most bombed building in the city during WWII. The gas holders were improved and replaced a number of times, the two gasometers that remain there today were constructed in 1935 and 1946; however they are no longer in use. It is this site that has caused much concern over its future usage for the intended high rise housing development.



Portslade gas works and canal 1929

References

Topographical sketches of Brighthelmston. 1825 EW Brayley FSA.

Kemp Town History. (on line)

Encyclopaedia of Brighton. Tim Carder 1990

The lights of Brighton & Hove. Judy Middleton 1982

Portslade. Judy Middleton.1997

Feedback - July Newsletter No 199, page 12

Chichester Station Roof - John Minnis

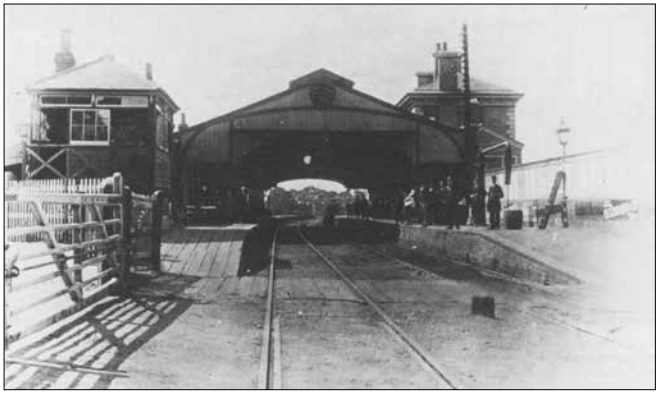
At the Board Meeting of 26 August 1846, Robert Jacomb-Hood (Resident Engineer, later Chief Engineer of the London Brighton & South Coast Railway) was asked to prepare plans of the station. A tender for the buildings from Robert Bushby (a Littlehampton builder) for £1,982 was approved on 9 October 1846, together with a tender for an iron roof from Palmer, Green & Co of the Regent Foundry, Brighton in the sum of £812.

I didn't find any reference to the roof being replaced in the 1860s, only that the enclosure of the platform shed ends for c.£60 was authorised at the Board Meeting of 29 October 1860.

The demise of the overall roof was covered in the Minutes of the Engineering Committee of the Board. At its meeting on 23 January 1894, a letter from the Town Clerk of Chichester, expressing dissatisfaction with the station, was read out and, at the next meeting on 20 February 1894, new roofs over the platforms 'in place of the span roof' were authorised, which with the lengthening of the down platform was estimated at £2,400.

The successful tender for the new platform roofs came from James Longley for £1,679, and was approved on 17 April 1894.

All the evidence points to the iron roof being constructed in 1846-7 and lasting until 1894.



While waiting under the clock at Brighton Station SIAS member and clock enthusiast Jim Hawkins recalled the story of the original clock at St Pancras and sent me a link to a blog authored by Stephen Liddell which relates the fascinating tale, of which I was unaware. The following is based on that blog which I have brought up to date and researched contemporary newspapers for additional information and corrections.

The Fall and Rise of St Pancras Clock

John Blackwell

At the dawn of the railway age there was no such thing as one standard time across the nation. Towns across the country kept their own local time with differences of as much as 20 minutes. For the railways, the need to synchronise time became imperative particularly in respect of timetabling. For example Bristol time was 11 minutes behind that in London and in 1840 The Great Western Railway adopted Greenwich Mean Time (GMT) as standard with other rail companies following. The Midland Railway adopted GMT at all its stations on 1 January 1846, however it was not until the passing of the Statutes (Definition of Time) Act in 1880 that a unified time for the whole of Great Britain was achieved.

When the Midland Railway completed its London Extension in 1868 and constructed the wonderful Barlow train shed followed by the magnificent hotel at St Pancras a grand display of time was made. The clock tower on the Midland Grand Hotel has a clock on each elevation. Inside the station was "an exceptionally fine clock, the dial of which is 16 feet in diameter and designed by the architect Mr G. G. Scott and manufactured by Mr John Walker of Cornhill London"[1]. Contemporary descriptions of the clock as installed are sparse



St Pancras clock 1965

on detail F S Williams in his tome *The Midland Railway: Its Rise and Progress* published in 1876 states 'The platform clock dial is of slate, 18 feet in diameter. The length of the hour hand is 4 feet 5 inches and that of the minute 7 feet 3 inches. It is the largest clock at any railway station in England" (The difference in the quoted diameters could be because the face was surrounded by an ornate raised border.)

The chapter ring appears to be made of segmental 'tiles' affixed to the face with inset slate diamonds holding brass roman numerals showing the hours, with smaller slate rectangles indicating the minutes. Images of the clock prior to the 1960's have not been found but by then the centre of the face had been 'painted' white. (originally slate?) .

This splendid timepiece remained in place 50 feet above the concourse at the south end of the train shed for nearly 100 years until the late 1960s when British Rail considered it needed modernisation, following listing (Grade 1) of both the hotel and station and the removal of the threat of demolition. It was allegedly to be sold to a U.S. collector for a 'enormous sum' (£250,000?). NO documentary evidence of this has been found.

In October 1968 it was reported the clock had been acquired by Roland Hoggard a railway passenger guard with a collection of some 60 railway clocks. "So far I have got the hands and the mechanism and am hoping to get the face but if I don't I will make a replica. I couldn't bear the thought of it being broken up".[2] The cost, apparently some £25.

Things did not go well with the removal of the face, as whilst being lowered it fell smashing into many pieces. This could have meant the end of the clock however Roland was undeterred and over the course of a week he transported the remains in his guard's van and back to his farm at Thurgarton near Newark in Nottinghamshire. By 1978 "a barn wall now sports the huge hands with the mechanism inside now activated by electricity (a car battery) and it will soon be joined by the face made of slate with a metal backing which at the moment lies outside (in broken pieces) in the farmyard.[3] By the mid 1970's British Rail needing a new clock for St Pancras had visited Roland at his farm and taken casts and measurements of the remaining segments and the leaf decoration that had surrounded the clock and recreated a copy of the original dial in GRP (glass reinforced plastic or fibreglass). These casts and measurements also enabled Roland to restore the broken parts of the face using cement moulds, and complete his restoration.



St Pancras clock at Thurgarton



St Pancras clock mechanism at Thurgarton

It was only in the early 2000s when works to transform St Pancras into an international station for Eurostar operations were in progress that the story of Roland Hoggard and the station clock resurfaced and although the fibreglass copy had been refurbished the new owners of St Pancras, Hi Speed 1, found that Roland's restoration of the timepiece could act as the

blueprint for an exact replacement – this time using materials similar to the original – metal face with slate diamond shaped hour markers and roman numerals, cast iron hands and gold leaf ornamentation. Synchronous power and GPS controlled backup, keeps time and automatically corrects at summer/winter changeover. This splendid new clock was made by Dent with Smith of Derby, both companies having long histories of clock making; Dent having made Big Ben and the standard clock at the Royal Observatory Greenwich, whilst Smith of Derby were suppliers of clocks to the Midland Railway Company. Were it not for the skill and stewardship of the owner of the original, such a project would not have been possible.

Roland was invited to the opening ceremony of the restored station in 2007 and died, age 96, in 2013. He bequeathed the clock to The British Horological Institute who have the hands on display and were in 2018[4] restoring the dial.

References.

1 London City Press 17 December 1870.
2 Nottingham Guardian 31 October 1968.
3 Derby Daily Telegraph 7 December 1978.
4 'The Man Who Saved Time'
BBC Bargain Hunt, 16 March 2018.
A four minute clip worth viewing.



St.Pancras - clock now



Newick Toll house 2023 (Martin Snow)

Request for Information

The following request was received from Alan Cullen,
Chairman of the Sussex and Kent Weald Stationary Engine Group.

The engine was acquired some 18 years ago by a gentleman living in Hereford. He purchased it from Cheshire with many missing parts and has now restored it to working order, running for the first time in July (see photograph). He has some information on its history, namely it is a Hornsby "Stockport " Engine, 3 NHP, serial No. 54209 and left the factory on 23rd April 1928.

It is thought that a Mr Laker was the first owner; he resided at 'Aberdeen House' in or near Three Bridges and that later the engine was installed/used at Three Bridges Railway station but for what purpose is unknown. The engine's owner would appreciate any information as to its history particularly its possible usage at Three Bridges station.

Replies to Mr A C Cullen, 1 Chaucer Ave, East Grinstead, West Sussex RH19 1SF. E-mail Chairman@wealdpower.co.uk or to the Newsletter editor.



NOTE

Please let me have your images and memories for the next* Newsletter *(or two!)
It may be it something you pass every day, but the rest of us may be 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.

Sussex Industrial Archaeology Society

Chairman : John S. F. Blackwell, e-mail johnblackwell@ntlworld.com
21 Hythe Road, Brighton BN1 6JR (01273 557674)

General Secretary and Newsletter Editor : Martin B. Snow,
e-mail martin@snowing.co.uk
32 Orchard Avenue, Worthing BN14 7PY
(01903 208975 & 07836 675472)

Treasurer: Mike Slamo, e-mail m.slamo171@btinternet.com
112 Poplar Avenue, Hove BN3 8 PS (01273 732956)

Membership Secretary: Ron Gordon, e-mail ron.gordon@myphone.coop
52 Barons Down Road, Lewes BN7 1ET (01273 474305)

Chief Editor : Dr. Geoffrey Mead, e-mail g.mead@sussex.ac.uk
47 Hartfield Avenue, Brighton BN1 8AD (01273 501590)

Programme Co-ordinator : M. H. Dawes, e-mail malcolm.dawes@btinternet.com
52 Rugby Road, Brighton BN1 6EB (01273 561867)

Recording Co-ordinator : Vacancy

Committee : A. H. J. Green, P. S. Hicks, Miss. J. O'Hara, Mrs J Morris, T. P. A. Ralph, R. Vernon

Website : www.sussexias.co.uk

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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*

Bishopstone Station - An update from Alan Green

I was invited by Derek Eager to Bishopstone to meet the Friends of Bishopstone Station and view progress on the restoration of this fine station by James Rob Scott (See *SIH* 51) .
The former parcels office and ticket office has been refurbished as a community centre which was very busy that day with locals dropping in for coffee.



A view of the refurbished footbridge. The work was carried out by Network Rail but there are no plans to reinstate the glazing.



The roof glazing to the atrium has been cleaned of its wartime blackout paint so the atrium is top-lit once more, just as James Rob Scott intended, and the walls and ceiling have been redecorated.



Next project - the ladies' lavatories which have been out of use since Bishopstone became an unstaffed halt. A nice detail is this tessellated floor which will be conserved.

A new unisex toilet has been installed in the former lobby to the gents' lavatories, but beyond it the gents; is intact, albeit somewhat unkempt. It will not be restored to use but will be conserved. It too has a tessellated floor and decorative wrought-iron grilles above the doors to the cubicles, just like those still to be seen at Swanage.



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