Sussex Industrial Archaeology Society Newsletter

Number 201 **January 2024**



Brian Austin 1932 - 2023

Newsletter 201

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Editorial

Welcome to *Newsletter 201*.

Please read the tribute to Brian Austin a founding member who made many contributions to IA in Sussex and the Society over the years. It is only when these people are gone that one realises just what they were quietly involved in.

As has been pointed out at the AGM before by John Blackwell (Our Chairman) none of us on the committee are getting any younger and our annual 'MOT' with the doctor reminds us of increasing ailments.

Fortunately members have recently stepped up to fill the recent vacancies, but ideally if some younger members became involved in the societies management this would ease things for the future.

Many hands make light work! Speak to any committee member to find out more

This Newsletter has a report for the meeting in January 2023 that had been held over for lack of space.

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 17th February, 2pm

Martin Snow and his famous Film Nite (matinee)

Back by popular demand. Martin Snow will be showing an informative and entertaining series of film clips from many obscure sources. All material not shown to us before on too many subjects to mention here.

Saturday 16th March, 2pm

A history of the Southern Region Diesel-Electric Multiple Units - their introduction, use in service and preservation.

Presentation by Jim Gibbons a member of the voluntary group who are renovating the units.

The line between Tunbridge Wells and St. Leonards was constructed during one of the 'Railway Manias' in the mid-19th Century. The newly constructed tunnels were in danger of collapsing due to insufficient courses of lining brickwork. The issue was resolved by providing the additional required brick courses inside the existing structures resulting in a reduced clearance and trains having to be of lesser width than the rest of the then system.

The 1955 'Modernisation Plan' sought to eliminate steam traction from the UK's railway system by electrification, and where not justified, by dieselisation. The then Southern Region opted for a Diesel-Electric multiple unit option for the route and introduced them in 1957. The trains soldiered on until the line was electrified and resignalled in 1987 when the lines through the restricted tunnels were singled permitting standard width vehicles to be used.

The Hastings Diesels Group was formed in 1986 aimed at preserving one or more of the unique vehicles. It is now Hastings Diesels Ltd. and owns 16 vehicles including 5 motor coaches of which 9 are currently operational.

Jim Gibbons was for 32 years in British Railways operations management ultimately becoming Network South East's Professional Head of Operations.

He is currently an independent consultant working across the railway industry and is the voluntary operations consultant for Hastings Diesels.

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*

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.*

Saturday 27th January, 2.00pm. ***The changing colours of Brighton Buses*** Southdown Enthusiasts Club talk following AGM. The Shoreham Centre, 2 Pond Road, Shoreham-by-Sea. Admission £3

Tuesday 30th January, 7.00pm. ***Ford Madox Ford I West Sussex: Finding a 'rhomboid of green'.*** West Sussex Record Office talk by Prof Alexandra Harris. West Sussex Record Office, Orchard Street, Chichester. Phone WSRO 01243 753602 for in person tickets

Saturday 3rd 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 6th February, 7.30pm. ***The coast at work***
Newhaven Historical Society & Museum talk by Dr Geoffrey Mead at the Hillcrest Centre, Bay Vue Road, Newhaven. Free parking next to the Hillcrest Centre. Non members £5 www.newhavenhistoricalsociety.org.uk

Thursday 8th February, 2.00pm. ***108 years of Southern electric***
RCTS Chichester Branch Meeting. Bassil Shippam Centre, Tozer Way, St Pancras, Chichester. https://rcts.org.uk/branches/branch-chr-chichester

Friday 9th February, 8.00pm. ***The history of Chailey Heritage***
Burgess Hill Heritage & History Association talk by Ian Kirby.
Cyprus Hall, Cyprus Road, Burgess Hill. Visitors £4. 07774 819587

Wednesday 14th February 7.30pm. ***Memories of a small-town greengrocer***
Chichester Local History Society talk byJim Weston former Chichester greengrocer. Non-Members £5. New Park Centre, New Park Road, Chichester. 01243 784915

Saturday 17th February 2.30pm. ***Daniel Defoe's tour of South East England***
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 21st February, 7.45pm ***AGM followed by Isle of Man Railways, 30 years in 2023***

Sussex Transport Interest Group talk by Keith Carter. London Road Station. Non-members £2.50

Saturday 2nd 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

Monday 11th March, 7.30 pm. ***Sussex's wonderful narrow gauge railways***

Southern Electric Group presentation by Peter Williams. £3 non-members. Deall Room, Southwick Community Centre, Southwick. www.southernelectric.org.uk

Wednesday 13th March 7.30pm. ***Fishbourne Palace and the Romans in Chichester***

Chichester Local Historical Society talk by Alan Collins, Fishbourne Roman Palace.. Visitors £5. New Park Centre, New Park Road, Chichester. 01243 784915

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

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

Wednesday 20th March, 7.45pm ***World Steam on sound cine films taken and presented by Ian Wright***

Sussex Transport Interest Group event. London Road Station. Non-members £2.50

Saturday 23rd March, 2.00pm. ***Stagecoach South***

Southdown Enthusiasts Club talk by Marc Reddy, Managing Director of Stagecoach South. The Shoreham Centre, 2 Pond Road, Shoreham-by-Sea. Admission £3

Tuesday 26th March, 7.00pm. ***The material culture of life in Elizabethan Chichester***

West Sussex Record Office talk by Dr Caroline Adams. West Sussex Record Office, Orchard Street, Chichester. Phone WSRO 01243 753602 for in person tickets

Wednesday 27th March 7. 15pm. ***History of Eastleigh and its railways***

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

Monday 1st 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

Tuesday 2nd April, 7.00pm. ***Department Stores of Eastbourne***

Eastbourne Local History Society talk by Paul Jordan. St. Andrews Parish Hall, 425 Seaside, Eastbourne. Visitors £2. www.eastbournehistory.org.uk

Tuesday 2nd April, 7.30pm. ***Newhaven Museum Showcase***

Dr Jenny Flood will look at some of the interesting and curious artifacts

in the Newhaven Museum collection. This is a follow up to last year's talk when Jenny looked at old photos. The talk will follow the AGM. Newhaven Historical Society & Museum evening event at the Hillcrest Centre, Bay Vue Road, Newhaven. Free parking next to the Hillcrest Centre. Non-members £5. www.newhavenhistoricalsociety.org.uk

Saturday 6th 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

Friday 12th April, 8.00pm. ***Sussex murders and misdemeanours***
Burgess Hill Heritage & History Association talk by Paul Green. Cyprus Hall, Cyprus Road, Burgess Hill. Visitors £4. 07774 819587

Wednesday 17th April, 7.45pm ***The railways of modern Paris***
Sussex Transport Interest Group talk by Tony Gwyther. London Road Station. Non-members £2.50

Tuesday 30th April, 7.00pm. ***What did the Victorians do for Chichester***
West Sussex Record Office talk by Alan Green. West Sussex Record Office, Orchard Street, Chichester. Phone WSRO 01243 753602 for in person tickets

Saturday 4th May, 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

Weekend 11th- 12th May, *National Mills weekend*

See Mills Newsletter for further details

Sunday 12th May, ***Historic Commercial Vehicles Run, between London and Brighton*** www.hcvs.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.

Dr Brian Austen 1932-2023
Connoisseur and Antiquarian

John Blackwell

Born near Haywards Heath in 1932 Brian lived in a modest Victorian cottage and on passing the eleven plus examination he attended Lewes County Grammar School for boys (now Priory School). National Service followed schooling, which included an army posting to Egypt as a pay clerk in 1952. Teacher training at King Alfred College in Winchester gained a Certificate of Education with Distinctions in History and Horticulture leading to a teaching post at a school in Tonbridge. Education was to be his career during which he attained an impressive number of degrees including a first degree in Economics in 1965, an MA in Economic and Social History in 1971, a Doctorate from the London School of Economics in 1979 an MPhil in Visual Arts from the University of Lancashire in 1982. He never went to any of the graduation ceremonies, preferring to receive his certificate by post.

He was, for 13 years, Senior Lecturer in History at Shoreditch College a college strongly involved with training teachers in Design Craft Technology. Following the merger in 1980, he subsequently, taught within the Department of Craft Technology at Brunel University. Latterly he was involved with the teaching programmes of various universities within the American University system, and with extra-mural programmes of London and Surrey Universities lecturing until well into his eighties. In 2018 he was awarded an Honorary Degree by his alma mater, by now The University of Winchester, in recognition of his contribution to the field of education.

From an early age, Brian collected stamps and was one of the founding members of the Haywards Heath Philatelic Society when it formed in 1952 later merging with the Burgess Hill Society and becoming Mid Sussex Philatelic Society. He was a frequent speaker at their meetings with his last attendance at a meeting in Lindfield in 2022. His talks were well attended and he travelled to many clubs throughout Sussex to give talks. His collection was one of the largest in the U.K. specialising in the countries of the Empire from Victorian times to the present day and extended to at least to 100 albums. The London auctioneer handling the sale remarked that his collection "was really beautiful and so well-presented."

Philately spurred his collecting enthusiasm, antique furniture, clocks and prints were his early interest. In December 1971 he purchased his first piece of Tunbridge Ware (see SIH 27) which he noted as a 'Box c.1850 in rosewood with Tunbridge Ware picture of Queen Victoria (purchased in) Brighton (cost) £4'. From then on the collection grew and grew and grew to over 1,200 pieces. He became pre-eminent in the field and in 1995 he authored *Tunbridge Ware and Related European*



A glimpse of Brian's Tunbridge Ware collection

Decorative Woodwares now in its third updated (Kindle) edition. It has become the bible for collectors. This was not his only published book, previously he had written *Handbook of Styles in English Antique Furniture* (1974) *and English Provincial Posts 1630-1840* (1978) and later edited *Irish Furniture* (2000) for the Furniture History Society of which he was a council member for over 30 years.

Antiquarian books, maps and guides were another collecting obsession. These included all the standard topography's of Sussex and a collection of Georgian resort guides (pre 1840), of which those relating to Brighton make interesting reading. His sister in law, Hazel, fondly recalls a book sale at Alexandra Palace where Brian had purchased four folio size volumes and when she asked "how do we get these home?" (on the bus and train) Brian replied "well you can carry two and I will carry the other two!" Fortunately the seller offered to have them delivered. Following his death some 100 crates were sent to auction.

Brian was a founder member of SIAS in 1967 taking on the role as coordinator for tollhouses and milestones, recording the then surviving structures and artefacts. This led to his Doctorate thesis *British Mail Coach Services 1784-1840*. He remained a committee member until 2022. Having co-edited *The Industrial Archaeology of Sussex - A Field Guide*, published in 1985 he became editor of SIH from 1985 to 2018, during which period our publication won the AIA award for best journal, twice.

In 2003 I suggested to Brain that we undertake a survey of Sussex turnpike trusts. This became an annual pilgrimage over several summer seasons, for Brian, Peter Holtham and myself. Each spring we would meet at Brian's home, an event in itself, one had to negotiate the passage along which were stored boxes of stamps and ephemera bought at auctions. Into the main living room where a square piano was stacked most precariously with hundreds of Tunbridge Ware items. The walls were lined with cabinets and shelves of antiquarian books and maps. An ancient gas fire was the only source of heating in the house and to get to the telephone one had to circumnavigate a large table, overflowing with the latest purchases and a typewriter (later a laptop), a fireside chair and yet more boxes further impeded the route. Brian had divided the county into sections to be covered each year and provided a set of notes and references (always precise and informative) which were to form our working guide. The next few Monday's were spent in the appropriate record office examining the Tithe Maps and consulting the catalogues, thus accumulating the historical information and locations (hopefully) of the tollhouses. We then set off by car to travel, where still possible, the routes of the turnpikes locating any remaining milestones, tollhouses or their sites and visiting the local libraries in search of further information. A pub lunch was an important part of the day. Brian, being somewhat parsimonious, invariably opted to find an establishment offering a pensioner's lunch or buy one meal get one free. Peter and I always relished a pint of bitter with our meal whilst Brian invariably went for a pot of tea. Before entering the premises Brian insisted that the large brief case be always carried was deposited in the car's boot. It was always heavy and contained numerous forthcoming auction catalogues and reference books. At the end of the day's exploration we would often drop Brian at a bus stop which appeared to be in the middle of nowhere. Brian was a non driver but had an encyclopaedic knowledge of the County's bus timetables and as far as I recall they never let him down. The results of our endeavours were written up by Brian in true academic style, lots of references to sources, and these appeared in SIH between 2005 and 2020 thus forming the definitive history of the Sussex turnpike roads.

During these years I got to know Brian well and gained an insight into all the many interests that occupied his time - and gave him pleasure. He was an academic, modest in his lifestyle and about his collections and other interests of which he was always happy to explain and share. I shall miss enjoying the company of this unassuming and knowledgeable gentleman.

I am indebted to Mrs Hazel Austen, John Burgess, President of the Mid Sussex Philatelic Society and Robert Bleasdale, Auctioneer of Tunbridge Ware in compiling the above appreciation.

January Talk 2023
Sussex and its Wonderful Narrow Gauge
Report by John Blackwell

Our member Peter Williams took an attentive audience on a detailed journey from Chichester to Rye chronicling the many narrow gauge railways on route. Many of the smaller sites had less than 100 yards of track and were principally concerned with brick and tile production and the extraction of sand, gravel and beach. There follows brief descriptions of a few of the larger sites from Peter's presentation.

Midhurst. Lord Cowdray the local landowner planned to build a tunnel from Portsmouth to the Isle of Wight. To line the tunnel engineering bricks made of lime and sand were to be used – Midhurst Whites. Lime was brought in by road from Cocking and vast quantities of sand were excavated at the Midhurst site which opened in 1913. A 2ft 6ins gauge line was laid to service the site. The tunnel was never built but the bricks found other uses, many being sent from the adjacent Midhurst LSWR goods yard until closure in 1955. Production ceased in 1969.

Devil's Dyke Steep Grade Railway. A 3ft gauge cable hauled railway was opened in 1897, on the northern scarp of the South Downs to the village of Poynings, by the owner of the visitor attractions at the Dyke. The Winding House, the base of which can still be seen at the top of the incline, contained an oil engine used to wind a continuous steel cable which drew one car up and let the other down. The cars were designed with a 30 degree inclination, and seated 12 passengers and descended the steep 840 ft length of the slope cut into the chalk, at a stately 3mph. A wooden platform was constructed at the top but the lower station was never built. It closed in 1908.



Devils Dyke Steep Grade Railway

Eastbourne. Claude Lane's Modern Electric Tramway. This 2ft gauge tramway opened in stages between 1954 and 1958 from the junction of Channel View Road and Royal Parade and ran through Princes Park and on to Crumbles at the eastern end of the seafront a total distance of one mile. The miniature tramcars proved popular with visitors. Sadly a dispute arose with Eastbourne Corporation and the tramway closed in 1969. The cars were regauged to 2ft 9ins and moved to Seaton in Devon where they successfully operate to this day. What a loss to Eastbourne!



Eastbourne Tramway

Rye and Camber Tramway. This was the first line engineered and managed by the redoubtable Holman Fred Stephens, opening in 1895. The 3ft gauge line was built primarily to transport golfers to the nearby course with a terminus aptly named Golf Links. This was a typical Stephen's building constructed using corrugated iron on a wooden framework and survives as store for the golf club largely unaltered. The line attracted visitors and was extended for them to Camber Sands in 1908. With the advent of motoring for the golfers and buses for the tourist, revenue decreased until closure on the first day of WWII, September 3 1939. For the opening two Bagnall steam locos were purchased, with a Simplex type petrol engine loco arriving in 1924 to save operating costs. The line did not reopen after the war, what an attraction that would be today.

Some of the locos and wagons used at locations shown in the talk are preserved at Amberley Museum and can be seen in operation at the annual Rail Gala Weekend which will be held on the 22-23 of July this year.

This was an excellent presentation expertly researched and profusely illustrated with maps and images of which many were new to your reviewer.



Rye: Camber Sands Golf Links station

Old Steine Buses 1950s

Geoffrey Mead

During a visit to Oxfam books in Hove recently, I purchased a landscape format volume of old Brighton Argus B&W images of the area. Very little script with the images and all grouped under decade titles from the 1920s to the 1960s. One in particular is pleasing to IA enthusiasts, which shows a 'bus jam' at the Old Steine terminus. One SIAS committee member on seeing this noted over 20 buses and made the old joke about London buses coming in twos… but Brighton, Hove & District coming in twenty-twos! The fine assemblage of a Southdown single decker, Brighton Hove & District and Southdown double deckers, along with Brighton Corporation trolleybuses makes for compelling scrutiny. The single decker No.12 'Relief' ran from Valley Drive Tongdean, Brighton to Pevensey Road, Eastbourne; in this image it is trying to battle its way through the throng, attempting to access Pool Valley before its onward journey; a one hour 44 minutes route. Cutting in front of No.12 'Relief' is the No.122 which had the longest route, running from Brighton's Pool Valley via Lewes, Uckfield, Crowborough and Tunbridge Wells to Gravesend Maidstone & District office, a journey time of four hours and 13 minutes; a service jointly operated with Southdown and Maidstone & District. Close behind No.12 is no.13 running from Pool Valley to Lewes County Hall, a 33 minute journey. Variants of the No.13 route were the No.13a running to the north-east Brighton suburb of 'Coldean Estate' which until 1952 was outside the Borough boundary, 18 minutes journey. No.13b terminated at North Moulscoomb at the base of Coldean Lane. In the corner of the image is a Southdown No.16 which ran to Lewes County Hall, then on to more rural spots of Ringmer, at that date still a small village, before the rating of it as an ESCC 'Key Settlement' and its subsequent expansion in the early 1960s. After passing the Roebuck Inn at Laughton it terminated at the Golden Cross Inn, an hour and 8 minute journey. This seems a curious destination as Golden Cross is on the edge of the Dicker Common and even in the 21st century the population hardly rates a bus route. A two minute changeover would enable passengers to catch the No. 92 for Eastbourne Pevensey Road via the scenic Wealden route of East Hoathly and Hailsham, taking another 48 minutes. In my Southdown timetable for 1948 which provided these route details all Lewes routes stop at County Hall; at that date the present (closed) Lewes Bus Station had not been built. More locally to Brighton the No. 26 & No. 46 trolleybuses are heading out to the far Brighton suburb of Hollingbury (present Mead homeland) much of which was then barely 10 years old. The No. 48 was only going to the Lewes Road Brighton Corporation depot, prior to 1939, the Brighton Tramways Depot. Glimpsed in the background on the left of the image is the roof of the former tram shelter; a comprehensive

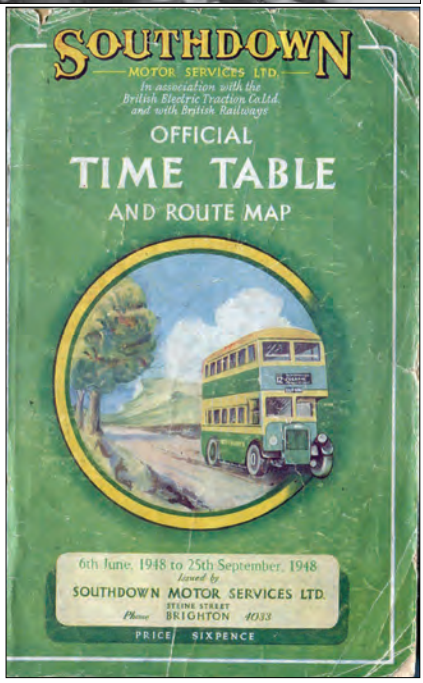


Old Steine buses trolleys 1950s

account of its history is in SIH No. 46 by John Blackwell. SIH No. 47 contains 'Southdown Bus Garages and Bus Stations' by Paul Snelling and SIH No. 53 has the definitive accounts on both the Lewes Bus Stations by Clive Gillam and Alan Green respectively.

As I am not a 'bus person' I would recommend further research into the several volumes available on the Brighton bus networks, 'Trolleybus Memories Brighton' by Glyn Kramer Johnson and John Bishop (2007) and also their 'Streets of Sussex (2005). 'British Bus & Trolleybus Systems No. 4 Brighton, Hove & District' John Roberts (1984) again contains useful facts and interesting images.

"Hold very tight please!".



Southdown Timetable 1948

Association for Industrial Archaeology Conference (AIA)

The AIA's 50th Anniversary Conference and Seminar was held at the University of Bath between 1st to 6th September this year. This was a particularly important event for the AIA as it was the first full conference since 2019 on account of Covid 19 and it also marked the 50th Anniversary of the founding of the Association. As many of you will know, SIAS is an Affiliated Member of the AIA. A total of 114 people, including some SIAS members, registered for the conference, which more than exceeded expectations. For the first time, on-line participation was provided for and a number of delegates participated virtually.

The six days were divided into two halves:

Three days of Seminars, Lectures and presentations

The first day focused on how to attract younger members to the AIA and the work that the Young Members Board has done in the last couple of years. In the evening (retiring) President Professor Marylyn Palmer gave a presentation on the history of IA in general and the AIA in particular.

The second day had talks in the morning from Germany, Belgium, Italy and Poland giving an international perspective on IA. This was followed by a number of presentations from AIA Award winners on a wide range of subjects.

The AGM was held on the third day in the morning followed by a celebration of the work of Angus and Brenda Buchanan, who were so influential on the development of IA after the Second World War. In the afternoon, this was followed by a visit to the Museum of Bath at Work, which was attended by the Mayor of Bath.

Three days of visits to local places of industrial heritage interest. Delegates were divided into two groups and could visit:

Bristol Docks or Brislington
Kennet & Avon Canal and Saltford or Clifton Suspension Bridge
Radstock or Kemble & Swindon

The value of attending conferences like this, comes not only from the knowledge gained from the presentations and visits but also the interaction with other delegates. The opportunity of making new, and catching up with old friends with similar interests is a key attraction of attending events such as this. Not to mention discussing after dinner presentations on a wide range of topics by knowledgeable experts (such as the Bridgemaster of the Clifton Suspension Bridge and the author of the Radstock and Somerset Coalfield books) in the bar late at night.

At the end of the Conference, events were announced for 2024. These include:

CPD online course on conservation of ironwork: 27th January
AIA Spring Tour to Flanders: 13th – 19th May
Three-day study tour in the North East: 5th – 7th July
One day Annual Conference with visits in South Wales: 4th – 6th October

As noted above, SIAS is an Affiliated Member of the AIA and thus anyone from SIAS attending any of these events benefits from the AIA Member discount.

Richard Vernon AIA Council Member

Autumn visit to Argos Hill Windmill, a tunnel on the old Cuckoo Railway Line and Tinkers Park at Hadlow Down on 30th September 2023

Malcolm Dawes

Our first port of call was to Argos Hill Windmill situated in a quiet rural area north of Mayfield. It is a post mill built in 1835 for grinding wheat into flour. It was worked by the Weston family up to 1925 after which it ceased to work and its condition slowly declined. In 1955 it was given to the District Council. The following years saw some partial restoration but its condition further declined not helped by a fire in 1963 and extensive damage caused by the 1987 hurricane. In 2002 the mill was placed on the "Buildings at Risk" register and the council decided to remove the sails and to clad the mill in a protective scaffolding.

Local enthusiasts formed The Argos Hill Windmill Trust in 2010 and took over responsibility for restoring the mill. They have successfully fully restored the mill and we were shown around all of the internal areas now in full working condition. Most of the group managed to climb the steep stairs to view the restoration at all the levels from the top bin floor, the stone millstones floor, the spout floor with the receiving bins and at ground floor the supporting roundhouse. Despite the years of neglect many original parts of the mill survived and perhaps most impressive is the main support post made up of four segments of pine.

The supporting roundhouse is also a museum with many artifacts and tools related to milling and some interesting photos of the mill during the 20th century. The photos of the mill in the 19th Century illustrated why a mill was built her, on the top of an isolated hill with only fields and a few scattered buildings nearby.

Today the mill is surrounded by substantial trees in adjacent gardens and a high hedge of Leylandii along one side. The attitude of the neighbours has been a continuing problem with neighbours erecting fencing that prevents the sweeps from turning. Despite these problems the fan tail structure has recently been completed but surrounded by the Leylandii. However the restoration group are optimistic that agreement might be reached with some of the neighbours to enable partial turning of the sweeps.

At the moment the mill can only work when the wind is in the right direction. It has worked successfully on these occasions. The mill is open to visitors on selected days during the summer.

For further details see website www.argoshillwindmill.org.uk

Our thanks to Geoff, Martin and David from the Windmill trust who showed us around.



View down the steep stairs inside Argos Hill Windmill *(MH Dawes)*

The old Cuckoo Railway Line which ran between Polegate and Tunbridge Wells is still visible down a steep road adjacent to the mill. Some adventurous members of the group went for an investigation and a few of them managed to walk through a tunnel that is still accessible.

The final visit was to Tinkers Park near to Hadlow Down. The park is open to visitors on three days per year when the site is full of activity, a narrow gauge railway running around the fields, working traction engines, displays of historic cars and buses, demonstration of working machinery including road making, and the famous Claude Jessett fair organ collection. Other activities include free bus rides around the area including bus connections to Uckfield during the day. So plenty to fit in during our visit. More information on opening days can be found at www.tinkerspark.com

Our thanks to Alan Green for arranging such a successful eclectic day, full of interest that kept us all so busy and engaged throughout the day.



Demonstration of roadmaking with steamroller
(MH Dawes)



Steam engine on the narrow gauge railway
(MH Dawes)



Bristol open decker used for Brighton seafront service
(MH Dawes)

Mystery Item

This image was submitted from Newhaven Museum as a mystery.
Member Michael Brittain has identified it as follows:-



It looks like an old super heated steam temperature probe, the main body is screwed into high pressure steam tank or system, the smaller screw at the top looks like it can be removed and a gauge attached to check the temperature in the system. The springs always keep a constant pressure of the internal probe hard against the gauge removing any chance of the linear expansion pushing too hard on the gauge making it difficult to remove under temperature. As the gauge is delicate and can be in a vulnerable place once checked it can be removed and stored in a safe place. The attached photo is a gauge that is used with similar probes where the gauge can be detached from the probe.

Super heated steam is used on turbines which 100 years ago were used in marine motive power units before large diesels were manufactured. It was also used in power generation turbines for running generators. Super heated steam is drier than steam from boiling water at 100˚c, super heating steam means less corrosion in turbine blades and moisture build up at the end of the turbine cycle.

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

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Argos Hill Windmill
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(MH Dawes)

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