Sussex Industrial Archaeology Society Newsletter

Number 203 **July 2024**



Bishopstone Roof uncovered
Seen during the SIAS May visit, see page 10

Newsletter 203

Contents **July 2024**

Editorial 2
SIAS Events 3
Events from other Societies 4
AIA 2024 Conference 8
Proposed Increase in Subscriptions 9
A Timely Return to Bishopstone and Newhaven 10
Brighton Walk 13
A history of the Southern Region Diesel-Electric Multiple Units 16
Mystery Building 20

Editorial

Welcome to *Newsletter 203.*

SERIAC 2024

Saturday 12th October 2024
at Chichester College

REMINDER TO BOOK
Closing date for booking 27th September 2024
Full details of programme at
www.sussexias.co.uk

Forthcoming SIAS Events

Wednesday 21st August, 2 00pm. Behind the Scenes Tour of The Keep, Brighton

A behind the scenes tour, following which there will be selected items on display which will be of interest to us including a collection of photographs by a founder member of SIAS dating from 1968-70. The Keep houses the collection of archives from the former East Sussex Record Office, the Brighton Royal Pavilion & Museums Local History Collection, the University Of Sussex Special Collections of rare books and the East Sussex and Brighton Historic Environment record.

The visit is restricted to 15 members, on a first come first served basis and will cost £7.50 per person, card payment only.

Please register with John Blackwell, johnblackwell@ntlworld.com or 01273 557674 if you intend to come.

Saturday September 7th Brede Pumping Station, Waterworks Lane, Brede TH31 6HJ. Meet at the Pumping Station (TQ 814 178) at 10 30 am for a guided tour hosted by the Brede Steam Engine Society. Built in 1903 to supply the town of Hastings with water from a new well. Originally it housed two Tangye triple expansion pumping engines one of which survives in restored condition. In 1939 a second pump house was built for a Worthington Simpson engine installed in 1941. In 1964 the boilers were removed and the engines mothballed. However in 1987 restoration began and both remaining engines are now capable of being demonstrated by compressed air as we shall see. The one time boiler space now houses a fine collection of water heritage pumping machinery many in working order. *However, the Brede website warns that 'Building work will start on 28th May 2024 to complete the new Power House. It will not be possible to run all of the engines at the same time until all the work is complete. We plan to run one of the large engines in the morning and change over at lunchtime to run the other large engine. However, visitors on site at the time will be able to watch as this change over happens. We will keep as many of the smaller engines running as possible with our limited power'.*

There is a tea bar serving light refreshments on site.

In the afternoon we will assemble for a visit to Hastings Fisherman's Museum, by the old net huts in Rock-a-Nore Road Hastings TN34 3DW. This is a small fascinating museum illustrating the Hastings fishing history

Please register with Richard Vernon, richard@rvalimited.com, mobile 07771 901830 if you intend to come.

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*

Sunday 28th July. ***Toy and Collectors Fair***. Horsted Keynes Station, Bluebell Railway. www.bluebell-railway.co.uk

Sunday 28th July. ***Worthing seafront bus rally***. www.worthingbusrally.co.uk

Saturday 3rd August, 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

Weekend 3rd – 4th August. ***Retro Wheels*.** Vintage bicycles of all shapes and sizes. Amberley Museum. 01798 831370. www.ambereleymuseum.co.uk

Weekend 3rd – 4th August. ***Tinkers Park Model Railways.*** Model Railway Show and Southdown Bus Event on the 4th at Hadlow Down. Model Railway layouts, Trains running both days, refreshments, real ale tent, traction engines, road making demonstrations, up to 50 visiting buses on the Sunday, connecting bus to Uckfield and Heathfield www.tinkerspark.com

Sunday August 4th. ***Geoffrey Mead's "Ambles not Rambles".*** Henfield: evening in lanes and meadows. Meet Henfield Museum car park 6pm..

Saturday 10th August' 12noon to 4pm and Sunday 11th August 10am to 4pm. ***Cuckfield Royal Observer Corps Nuclear Bunker open for visits.*** Newbury Lane, Cuckfield. www.facebook.com/Cuckfieldnuclearbunker

Sunday 11th August. ***Open Afternoon at Chichester Model Engineers***. Trains running during afternoon. Blackberry Lane, Chichester. www.cdsme.co.uk

Sunday 11th August. ***Bus Rally at Tenterden Station.*** Services running all day to local destinations and railway stations. kesr.org.uk/bus-rally/

Monday 12th August 7.30 pm. ***A photographic ramble around the UK and Europe.*** Southern Electric Group presentation by Simon Jeff. £3 non-members. Deall Room, Southwick Community Centre, Southwick. www.southernelectric.org.uk

Saturday 17th August, 12 noon to 4pm. ***Open Day at Crawley Signal Box***. Brighton Road, Crawley.www.facebook.com/CrawleySign

Sunday 18th August. ***Commercial and Communication Day*.** Displays and demonstrations. of communication related activities. Also Steam Train rides operating. Booking required.01798 831370. www.ambereleymuseum.co.uk

Wednesday 21st August, 7.45pm. ***Chat N Snap members presentations.*** Sussex Transport Interest Group talk by Tony Sullivan. Visitors £2,50. Brighton Model Railway Clubrooms, London Road Station, Brighton. 07769 294408.

Weekend 24th- 26h August. ***Hellingly Festival of Transport***. www.ehvc.biz

Monday 26th August, 10am to 4 pm. ***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 1st September. ***Geoffrey Mead's "Ambles not Rambles".*** Sweet Hill, Patcham: Brighton's lost suburb. Meet Waterhall Sports Ground car park 6pm.

Weekend 6th – 8th September ***Diesel Gala Weekend.*** Visiting and Bluebell diesels on display. Full timetable of diesel hauled trains. Bluebell Railway. 01825 720800. www.bluebell-railway.co.uk

Weekend 7th- 8th September. ***Vintage Tractor Weekend.*** Visiting exhibitors with their stunning vintage tractors. Steam engines running on railway around the museum. Amberley Museum. 01798 831370. www.amberleymuseum.co.uk.

Weekend 7th- 8th September. ***Laughton Autumn Show.*** Laughton, East Sussex. www.heritagefield.co.uk

Saturday 7th September, 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 8th September. ***Steam Excursion to Chichester and Goodwood.*** Photographic opportunities in Sussex.www.steamdreams.co.uk.

Sunday 8th September. ***Steam Excursion from Chichester to Littlehampton and Brighton to Chichester.*** Photographic opportunities in Sussex. www.steamdreams.co.uk

Sunday 8th September. ***Open Afternoon at Chichester Model Engineers***. Trains running during afternoon. Blackberry Lane, Chichester. www.cdsme.co.uk

Sunday 8th September. ***Steam Excursion to Chichester and Goodwood.*** Photographic opportunities in Sussex.www.steamdreams.co.uk.

Sunday 8th September. ***Steam Excursion along the Sussex Coast between Chichester and Brighton.*** Photographic opportunities in Sussex.www.steamdreams.co.uk.

Wednesday 11th September 7.30pm. ***Forty Years as a City Councillor.*** Chichester Local Historical Society talk by Anne Scicluna, past Mayor of Chichester. Visitors £5. New Park Centre, New Park Road, Chichester. 01243 784915

Thursday 12th and Friday 13th September. ***Waverley Paddle Steamer's visits to Shoreham and Eastbourne.*** Possible day trip to the Isle of Wight. Booking at waverleyexcursions.co.uk

Weekend 14th- 15th September. ***Miniature Steam Engine Weekend.*** Visiting exhibitors with their working miniature steam engines. Steam engines running on railway around the museum. Amberley Museum. 01798 831370. www.amberleymuseum.co.uk

Weekend 14th – 15th September. ***Fernhurst Open Weekend***.
Activities at the site of the Fernhurst Furnace. Details at a later date.
www.fernhurstfurnace.co.uk

Saturday 21st September, 12 noon to 4pm. ***Open Day at Crawley Signal Box***. Brighton Road, Crawley.www.facebook.com/CrawleySignalBox.

Sunday 22nd September. ***Autumn Bus Show*** Visiting and Museums buses on display with bus rides all day. Steam engines running on railway around the museum. Amberley Museum. 01798 831370. www.amberleymuseum.co.uk

Weekend 20th - 22th September. Bluebell Railway Beer Festival. Wide variety of beers with food, music and steam. Regular bus service between Haywards Heath and Sheffield Park Station. Bluebell Railway. 01825 720800. www.bluebell-railway.co.uk

Weekend 21st – 22nd September. ***Model Railway weekend at Spa Valley Railway.*** Extensive displays at three stations with trade stands. Trains running all day. www.spavalleyrailway.co.uk

Tuesday 24th September, 7.30pm. ***The Shetland Bus.*** Bravery of fishermen fighting the weather between Shetland and Norway during WWII**.** Danehill Parish Historical Society talk by Gilly Halcrow. Danehill Memorial Hall. Visitors £4.

www danehilhistory.org/programme

Weekend 28th-29th September. ***Threshing Weekend***.
Demonstration of the process of threshing oats using steam powered threshing machines. Transportation of the straw and grain for storage by the Museums horses and carts. www.wealddown.co.uk/events

Saturday 28th September. ***Tinkers Park Open Day at Hadlow Down.***
Traction engines, train rides,Rreal Ale Tent, working exhibits, veteran and vintage cars, working exhibits, refreshments.. Connecting bus service to Uckfield. www.tinkerspark.com

Sunday 29th September. ***Land Rover Day.*** Celebrate the classic Land Rover. Amberley Museum. 01798 831370. www.amberleymuseum.co.uk

Tuesday 1st October, 7.30pm. ***Lewes from a Newhaven Perspective***. A reflection on the relationship between the two towns by Bob Cairns using his huge collection of photographs. Newhaven Historical Society and Museum talk. Hillcrest Centre, Bay Vue Road, Newhaven. Free parking next to the Hillcrest Centre. Non-members £5. www.newhavenhistoricalsociety.org.uk

Saturday 5th October, 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 6th October. ***Autumn Historic Transport Gathering.*** End of season gathering of vintage cars, motorcycles, commercial vehicles, steam engines, diesel and steam locomotives. Amberley Museum. 01798 831370. www.amberleymuseum.co.uk

Sunday 6th October. 10.00am ***Geoffrey Mead's "Ambles not Rambles"*** Binsted: ancient woodland and wide open fields. Meet Binsted church (nr Arundel) parking in lane.

Weekend 11th- 13th October. ***Giants of Steam Autumn Gala.*** Visiting locomotives – further information later in year. Bluebell Railway. 01825 720800. www.bluebell-railway.co.uk

Sunday 13th October. ***Open Afternoon at Chichester Model Engineers***. Trains running during afternoon. Blackberry Lane, Chichester. www.cdsme.co.uk

Sunday 3rd November. ***London to Brighton veteran car run***.

Pallant House Gallery, Chichester. The Shape of Things – Still Life in Modern British Art. Until 20th October 2024

Heritage Open Days in September

Many buildings are opened to the public during September as part of the Heritage Open Days event. Many of these buildings have an industrial archaeology interest. Events outside of London run from 6th to 15th September.
Details from www.heritageopendays.org.uk

Events in London will take place from 14th – 22nd September. Details from https://open-city.org.uk/open-house-festival-2024

The Association for Industrial Archaeology Conference. The one day conference and two half day visits are taking place in Cardiff from 4th to 6th October. See page 8

Do please check details with societies web sites 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.

Look out for our new website - www.sussexias.co.uk
This is now live

Association for Industrial Archaeology (AIA) - Annual Conference in Cardiff 4th-6th October 2024

The AIA's Annual Conference will be held in Cardiff this year, based at the Radisson Blu Hotel in the city centre. It starts on Friday 4th October and these are the main events:

- Friday 4th: Coaches leave the hotel at 13:45

for either **The National Waterfront Museum, Swansea** or an **Industrial tour of the Lower Swansea Valley.**

- Saturday 5th: four talks, the AGM and then presentations by this year's award winners.

In the evening our Annual Dinner will be followed by award giving.

- Sunday 6th: coaches leave at 09:30

for either **Big Pit, the National Coal Museum of Wales** (including underground tour) or **Blaenavon Ironworks.**

The coach will return to the hotel at about 14:30 and drop off at the station a few minutes later.

As usual, you can book for the Saturday conference alone or include one or both of the half day tours. The timing of the events means that you should be able to travel to Cardiff on the Friday morning and return home on Sunday afternoon. The conference fee does not include accommodation, but the AIA has negotiated a discounted rate at the Radisson Blu. There are, of course, less costly hotels in the vicinity. You are also reminded that SIAS is an Affiliated Society of the AIA, so you are intitled to a discount on any fees. Full details of the conference and a booking form can be found on the AIA's website: https://industrial-archaeology.org/ under the 'Events' tab.

Finally, it should be mentioned that AIA has recently introduced an online-only membership category: for just £22 per year you get all the membership benefits, except that **Industrial Archaeology Review** and **Industrial Archaeology News** are sent to you by email as PDF files, rather than on paper. Since members receive a 10% discount on the conference fee, you could save more than £22 straight away!

Proposed Increase in Subscriptions from April 1 2025

Your Committee is proposing to increase the annual subscriptions rates to £25 for an individual member, plus an additional £5 for a family member at the same address and £375 for life membership.

The last increase was 10 years ago in 2014 and costs have much increased since then for printing both newsletters and SIH with associated dramatic rises in the cost of postage. We now also produce the newsletters and SIH in full colour.

These increases have been absorbed by funds in hand but this is not sustainable. It should be noted that although we have received a substantial legacy this was donated to benefit IA projects in Sussex and not for the day to day running of SIAS.

Producing and distributing our publications electronically has been investigated but at the last AGM the overwhelming majority of the members present, would prefer to continue to receive these as printed copies.

Your Committee propose the increases to continue the high standard of what we do.

- Publish quarterly newsletters for both SIAS and our associated Sussex Mills Group.
- Publish an annual journal *Sussex Industrial History* containing articles reflecting research into Sussex's industrial past.
- Hold Winter lectures at West Blatchington Mill Barn.
- Arrange summer visits to places of interest across the county.
- Campaign to save historic buildings and structures of IA interest, from demolition or unsuitable conversion.

In accordance with our Constitution a proposal to approve these new rates will need to be ratified at the AGM in November.

John Blackwell
Chairman

A Timely Return to Bishopstone and Newhaven

Julie O'Hara

It is very unlikely, when the date of 8th June was decided upon for the SIAS visit to Bishopstone station and Newhaven Tide Mills, that the full significance of the date registered with anyone.

However, on that Saturday, two days after the 80th Anniversary of D Day, we found ourselves admiring a railway station with two pill boxes on the roof, walking a tank road and looking out to France from a shoreline that had been a major point of departure for troops, ammunitions and supplies. SIAS last visited Bishopstone railway station in 2017 when the Grade II listed building was in a very sorry state. The transformation that has occurred since speaks volumes for the determination of the Friends of Bishopstone Station and the local community to save this very special structure.

Following The Grouping in 1923, James Robb- Scott (1882-1965) became Chief Architect to the Southern Railway Company and a detailed account of his work can be found in *SIH* 50.

Here, however, at Bishopstone, he was working to a brief set by the Guildhall Development Company who had grand plans for new housing estates in the area. A railway station already existed at nearby Tide Mills on the Newhaven – Seaford line (opened 1st June 1864), Newhaven being the principal LBSC port. With the line being electrified in 1935, Guildhall had every hope of a profitable housing development and paid the Southern Railway to develop the new, Bishopstone, station in the very latest sleek Art Deco/Style Modern fashion, using the very best materials. Given that he was using Guildhall money, Robb- Scott was given free rein to produce something very special. Tide Mills, the original Bishopstone station, was closed in 1938 when the new station opened. But then came the Second World War and the proposed new development was doomed, never to be revived.

Robb - Scott's original drawings for the project can be viewed in the lofty, top lit, octagonal booking hall and they are notably similar to Charles Holden's work for the Piccadilly Line East Extension

We were shown around the Parcel Room, now a versatile community hub, and other structures (including, of course, the lavatories) by Jim Stanford, Chair of the Friends of Bishopstone Station. Apart from their success in generally making the building attractive and useful, the Friends have gone on to achieve recent successful funding bids that have enabled Robb-Scott's original signage to be installed on the octagon's turret, between the two brick pill boxes - which were built in 1940 to defend Newhaven port. They have also secured funding for the replacement of the canted Crittall windows with the curved ones indicated on Rob Scott's original drawings.

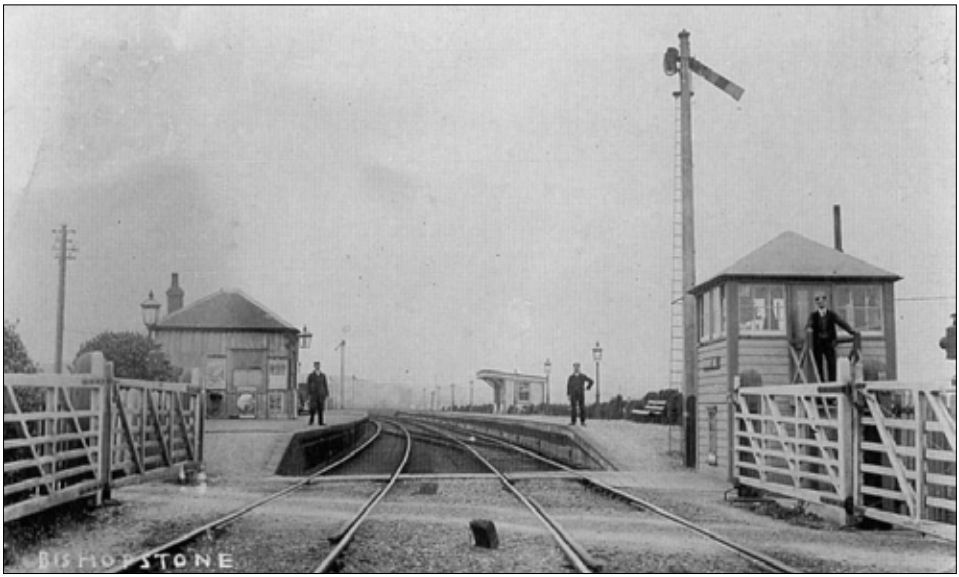


SIAS group members admiring the station features

The station is built in a cutting and platform access is via an interesting footbridge (this is a station that is a no-go facility for wheelchair users) which, being a superior footbridge, was originally glazed with Crittall windows and its steps, deck and roof were cast in situ reinforced Concrete. The footbridge and the platforms are areas in which the Friends hope to carry out further restoration work. The station has been unstaffed snice 1988 and the line was singled in 1975; all trains now use the up platform, providing a regular service between Newhaven and Seaford as well as a daily train to Victoria.

There is no designated parking for Bishopstone station but if you are passing on the Newhaven Seaford road, it is well worth a detour to visit this Grade II listed working station. Your other option is to remain in your armchair and to tune in to Tim Dunn's enjoyable The Architecture the Railways Built where, unlike us, you will be able to see inside the pill boxes on this remarkable station.

The redundant Tide Mills/ Bishopstone Beach Halt is a short distance away towards Newhaven and on our visit to the Tide Mills site with guide, Will Penfold, we were able to view the down platform and running in board and, possibly more excitingly, have trains pass us on the foot crossing point (now gated, but until recently the site of many incidents), one train on our walk to the mill site as well as one on our return.



Bishopstone Tide Mills Station

The history of Bishopstone Tide Mills is extensively covered in *SIH* 51 (which also covers Newhaven cement works). There was some speculation on whether Tide Mill was the more appropriate nomenclature since there was only one mill, albeit a mill with several stones that ground on both the ebb and flow tides. The site is managed by the South Downs National Park Authority and each structural remnant has a useful information board, although, at the time of our visit, only the largest remnants were visible due to the extensive rewilding of the site. Arriving at the shore where the tanks would have been parked up prior to embarkation, the remains of the racehorse convalescent stables and the Chailey Heritage holiday chalet (daily sea dips, lots of fresh air and heating only in the nurse's quarters) remain visible.

We did not venture on to the site of the seaplane base but retired to Newhaven Museum where we enjoyed the much visited gilded statue of Ho Chi Mihn (he worked as a steward on the Newhaven Dieppe crossing) the Parker pen display (noting the holy water sprinkler disguised as a fountain pen line – who knew?)) and the D Day exhibits which included a sample of the lavatory paper that was issued to each soldier (ever a scatological reference with SIAS trips).

All in all a good, thought provoking day out courtesy of our very own railway man, Alan Green and guides Jim Stanford and Will Penfold. – and it didn't rain, not even a little drizzle, once.

(Mr. Green would like it pointed out that his 31 minutes late arrival to lead this visit was caused by gross ineptitude on behalf of the Highways Authority who successfully impeded his journey by car from Chichester to Bishopstone by their mismanagement of the A27 – his apologies were accepted by the group as it was his first known lapse in timekeeping.)

SIAS Brighton Walk

Geoffrey Mead

A small but select band of SIAS members [including 3 committee members] met on Sunday 26th May for a walk in Brighton's Old Town or Lanes area leading onto the fringe of North Laine. The walk started at Brighton Museum and after a short stroll through the Royal Pavilion Gardens our first point to note was a pair of 1930s buildings opposite each other in the short cul de sac of Princes Place. The larger of the two is Princes House, the 1935 office block originally the Brighton & Sussex Building Society; this is an acknowledged Thirties building by the renowned architect Goodhart -Rendal who at the time lived in Brighton. It was the organisation that eventually became Alliance Building Society founded by Lewis Cohen, later Lord Cohen of Brighton. Its patterned brick and angular window frames give it a distinctive appearance and its construction in the 1930s was one aspect of Brighton's financial sector. Opposite is a more modest building, of the same age and with similar distinctive brickwork, Regent House, an office building that was home to a number of publishers, but was built on the site of the Brighton & Hove Herald offices, there until the early Thirties. The glass panels on and above the door show images engraved on them of Mercury, messenger of the gods and appropriate for a newspaper and publishing office. On through the Gardens to Pavilion Buildings to see the fine 1935 offices that housed the B&H Herald when it vacated the old flint cobble

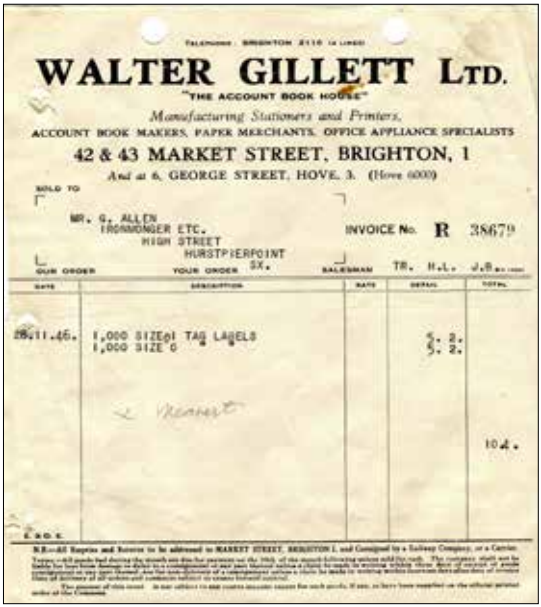


Princes House



Regent House door panels

building then in Princes Place. This is in the style of 'Georgian Civic', brick and Portland Stone, designed by the local architect John Denman. When it was the Herald offices the six large windows on the ground floor showed the week's black & white photos from that edition every weekend. It was later an insurance office and now a bar. This one building shows indications of Brighton's extensive service industries, publishing, finance and leisure, all as important in the 19th century but with a manufacturing layer present that is essentially now absent. Cross the busy thoroughfare of North St and the more historic elements of the area's industrial past came to view. Melville's Brighton Directory 1858 is a rich source of factual information and contains some elaborately printed advertisements on local traders. With its location as the commercial heart of 19th century Brighton, The Lanes housed administrative and financial units that required a great deal of paper based material, ledgers, account books, bills of sale, minute books and all the multitude of commercial paper-based life. In consequence there were a number of publishers, book binders and commercial stationary printers and providers. The walk led through East St past the site of Embling & Beal '*account book manufacturers'* to the southern end where in 1858 was located a chemists, Thomas Brew that supplied '*pure photographic chemicals'* a topic covered in *SIH* 52 & 53 by David Simkin. Opposite '*H.Thunder boot & shoe maker to the Queen'* and MG Greenbury *'Jet ornament manufacturer'*. West of East St lies the diminutive Little East St where we found an old Brighton industry, the building that housed Andrews the rope and fishing net maker, but nearby was until the 1970s,the home of an existing industry Diamond Edge, a provider of specialist cutting equipment, still in the city but now in North Laine. The presence of the Town Hall looming over all was a reminder of how important civil administration is to industrial history, past and present. In 21st century Brighton and Hove it is one of three major employers, the others being the NHS and the two universities. 1858 was no less dominated by the Town Hall needs and the old town centre of Market St, Prince Albert St and Black Lion St had printers, binders and stationary providers in abundance; with Walter Gillette



WALTER GILLETT LTD.

"THE ACCOUNT BOOK HOUSE"

Manufacturing Stationers and Printers,

ACCOUNT BOOK MAKERS, PAPER MERCHANTS, OFFICE APPLIANCE SPECIALISTS

42 & 43 MARKET STREET, BRIGHTON, 1

And at 6, GEORGE STREET, HOVE, 3. (Hove 6000)

SOLD TO

MR. G. ALLEN
IRONMONGER ETC.
HIGH STREET
HURSTPIERPOINT

INVOICE No. R 38679

OUR ORDER YOUR ORDER SX. SALESMAN TR. H.L. J.B.

DATE	DESCRIPTION	RATE	DETAIL	TOTAL
28.11.46.	1,000 SIZE 01 TAG LABELS		£. 2.	
	1,000 SIZE 0		£. 2.	
				10d.

E. & O. E.

N.B.—All Enquiries and Remittances to be addressed to MARKET STREET, BRIGHTON 1, and Consigned to a Railway Company, or a Carrier.



19 Ship Street

and Hadlow's '*heraldic and general engraver*' working on well into the 1970s. Black Lion St is the site of a venerable institution the Black Lion Brewery purportedly established in the 16th century by the Flemish refugee Derryck Carver. The brewery is long gone but a later pub carries the name. Through Meeting House Lane in the heart of The Lanes which earlier in the 20th century housed Gills printers and northwards through the new Lanes addition, Hanningtons Lane; this carries the name of the long established and fondly remembered department store. More book publishers binders and printers in North St then south along one of the ancient streets, Ship St. This had in 1858 along with Mascall's *'Brush makers to the Queen'* and JM Goddard '*Metal & wood block & pump maker'* a steam roller flour mill established in 1745 by Mr Napper, and in 1914 John Napper *'baker*' was living at #43 Ship St. In Middle St to the west lay a couple of mineral waters manufacturers with Schillings at the sea end and the more famous Fry & Co occupying a large site between Middle and West St. Sign writing on adjacent Boyces St shows part of the firms location. At the southern end was JH Lugard '*Cork manufacturer'* and the location until post WWII of several coal importing companies, this location near the beach was noted from early in the 19th century. West St is the limit of this tour westward and the substantial West St Brewery complex at the south west corner. From The Lanes the tour moved across North St where the offices of CG Reed '*Iron & brass founders'* was found at #26; into Bond St, home early in the 20th century to Darby's *'gold wire works'* and further north the warehouse that was successively Pollards Brewery, Crunden's furniture works and later Mead & Co auctioneers sale rooms and removals.

Now the hub of the city tourist trade and currently over-run with jewellery retailers the area had a wide range of industries that reflected its local needs and services.

March Talk

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

Paul Snelling

March's talk welcomed Jim Gibbons to talk about Southern Region Diesel-Electric Multiple Units, or DEMU's, in railway parlance. Jim is a member of Hastings Diesels Ltd, which is a private company run on a not for profit basis. Their objective is the main line preservation and restoration of ex Southern Region DEMU stock. Their operating base is the former BR St Leonards West Marina sheds at Bulverhythe, closed in 1986, which they share with St Leonards Railway Engineering who provide engineering services to maintain the class 171 units on the Eastbourne to Ashford route and class 66 diesels plus class 73 electro diesels based at Tonbridge for GB Railfreight (GBRF). GBRF supply the drivers for these functions.

Hastings Diesels Ltd have their own shunter, class 07-011, a rare beast.

Jim set the scene by explaining the growth of railways south of the Thames which commenced in 1836 with the London and Greenwich Railway. 1839 saw the introduction of the London and Croydon Railway, with Brighton being reached in 1841.

Expansion to the South East came in 1844 from London Bridge to Dover, via Redhill, with Tonbridge to Tunbridge Wells in 1845, the LBSCR extended from Lewes to St Leonards in 1846, followed by the SER routes St Leonards to Ashford over Romney Marsh in 1851, and then Tunbridge Wells to Bo Peep Junction, east of St Leonards in 1852.

This vast expansion caused a lot of short cuts in construction such that in 1855 Mountfield Tunnel collapsed. Strawberry Hill and Wells Tunnels were in danger and Wadhurst Tunnel collapsed in 1862. The solution was to re-line the tunnels with further courses of brick work. Whist this resolved the construction issue it reduced the available tunnel width to 8 feet rather than 9 feet which is the standard width. This reduction meant that stock had to be narrower and slab sided to meet the restricted width (in railway parlance Restriction 0) which has plagued these tunnels ever since.

Jim went on to explain the introduction of electric power by London United Tramways in South West London in 1894. By 1901 the railways in South London were losing traffic to the trams. To fight back the LBSCR electrified the South London Line at 6.6kv in 1909 and the LSWR electrified at 600v DC third rail by 1917. London to Brighton became electrified in 1933. The introduction of electric stock bought substantial savings in staff costs simply as the fireman was no longer needed although the initial cost were high. In 1937 the planned electrification for Sevenoaks - Tonbridge - Hastings was abandoned due to the aforementioned tunnel constraints.



Hastings DEMU 1018 at Crowhurst 1980. The former through roads have long gone and the bay platforms, that served the Bexhill West branch, are covered with vegetation. The platform buildings and canopies remain but they were all swept away in 1985. Photo J. Atkinson

Post war the British Transport Commission (BTC) in 1948 considered the alternatives to railway steam traction. Importing oil would be costly due to a high foreign exchange rate, loss of income to the NCB resulting in a possible loss of mining jobs, meaning diesel power wasn't significant (until 1950) and railway workshops were tooled up to make steam locomotives. In 1955 the Railway Modernisation plan was hatched amid increasing competition from road and air traffic. £1.2 billion were allocated to replace steam, the failure to address pre-war practices and that BTC didn't have an integrated system. Welcome the Beeching Report! In 1937 the sum total of diesel traction was 3 x 350 hp shunters capable of 25 mph. in 1954 there were five 2,000hp main line diesels capable of 85 mph. In 1955 170 loco's of three types were ordered and in 1957 5,000 DMU vehicles were ordered.

On the DEMU front the Great Western Railway had built 38 railcar vehicles, affectionately known as "Flying Banana's". Diesel mechanical units of class 101 entered service and ran until 24th December 2023! The Blue Pullman consisting of 2 x 6 car units and 3 x 8 car units was in service between 1957 and 1973 but needed 4 maintenance depots and at 90 mph were somewhat rough riders! In 1972 the High Speed Train arrived which was something of a game changer.

Amidst this backdrop in 1957 it was planned to introduce new rolling stock to the services from London Cannon Street to Hastings. By then the benefits of multiple units was well established primarily in reducing station turnaround times by not having to run engines around, the driver and guard simply changing ends with a

typical turnaround time of 7 minutes. Also the introduction of BR Mk 1 coaching stock introduced a generic family and from this it was decided to fit a diesel engine and generator into a Mk 1 bodyshell to create a Diesel Electric Multiple Unit, DEMU. The first tranche were on shorter 57 foot underframes.

The planned introduction in June 1957 was delayed as on the first day the signal box at Cannon Street burnt down! Full service didn't commence until June 1958, trains running non-stop to Tunbridge Wells then all stations to Hastings. Jim quoted the fuel consumption as 1.8 miles per gallon on 2 engines. Tunbridge Wells West had 30 DEMU's by 1963, and in 1965 they took over on the Oxted line. Due to reduced weekend requirements they worked Dover to Charing Cross and a Saturday Only Brighton to Exeter service!

Jim went on to recount accidents involving DEMU 's, most notable being that at Hither Green on 5th November 1967 when a train derailed on an up peak hour service due to a broken rail resulting in 49 fatalities and 78 serious injuries. A member of the audience was on that fateful service but miraculously avoided injury.

On 11.01.1979 a unit failed to stop at Charing Cross, went through the buffer stops and demolished a sales kiosk. No-one was hurt in this incident but sales kiosks were swiftly removed from behind buffer stops! Then at Appledore, on 14.03.1980, a unit derailed on facing points sadly killing the driver. By the early 1980's the whole fleet needed replacing, by now their intended 10 year lifespan had reached 25. Replacement came with the so called 1066 Electrics. Eventually the signalling was centred on Tonbridge and Robertsbridge and the four tunnels singled. The total scheme cost £23 million, or less than £1 million per mile.

Hastings Diesels Ltd have 4 certified power cars, 6 open seconds, 3 corridor firsts, inspection car CAROLINE, and 2 non-Hastings cars. Not all stock is in working order. Special trains are operated and Jim showed some examples including working down the Quay at Weymouth, a trip to the Dean Forest Railway, the Bakers Dozen which visited all 13 London Termini starting from Liverpool Street, and the Long Thin Drag over the Settle and Carlisle line which consisted of 14 coaches with two power cars on the front!

Information re Hastings Diesels tours can be found at;
https://www.hastingsdiesels.co.uk/railtours/

Thanks go to Jim for an interesting afternoon's entertainment.

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

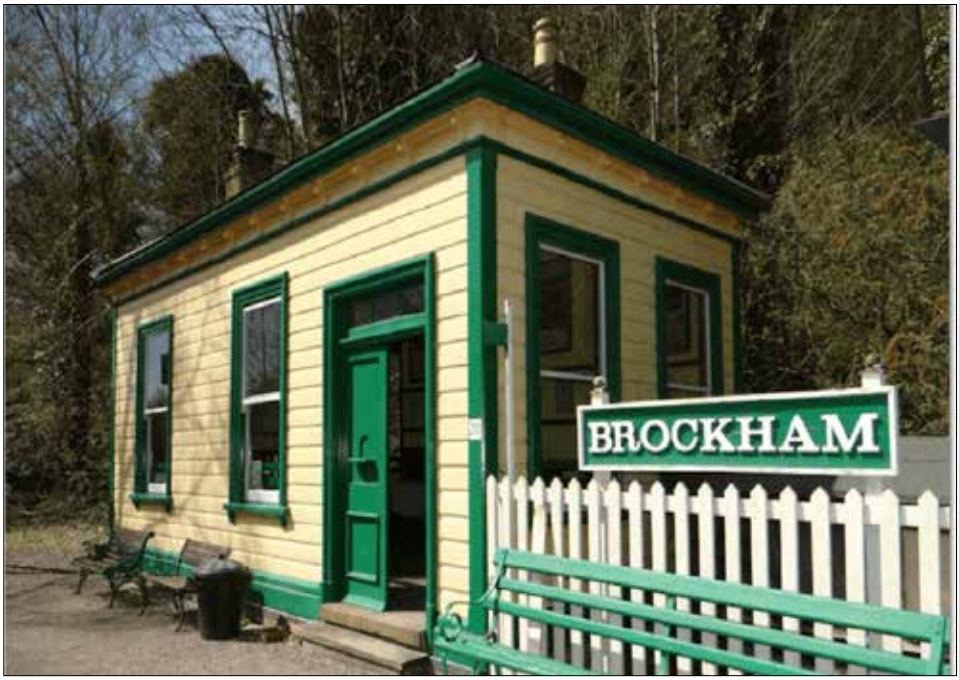
© 2024 Contributors and Sussex Industrial Archaeology Society

Published quarterly in January, April, July and October
Please send contributions for the next *Newsletter* to the Editor by the 1st September 2024

Opinions expressed are those of the respective authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Society unless specifically stated

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*

Mystery Building



I am sure many will have recognised the former northern booking office at Hove Station. Now in use at Amberley Museum as Brockham Station on the narrow gauge railway



A reminder of its former siting and needing some TLC.

ISSN 0263 516X

Registered Charity No. 267159