Sussex Industrial Archaeology Society Newsletter

Number 210 **April 2026**



Eastbourne Blacksmith and Steel Fabricator Alan Godwin at work at his forge. (Adrian Backshall)

See: 'The Last Edwardian Forge in Eastbourne' page 18

Newsletter 210

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Editorial

Welcome to *Newsletter 210.*

Please Note the centre pages, where you will find the SERIAC 2026 flyer.

There is time to book your tickets and meal.

Reminder

Annual Subscriptions were due on April 1st

£20 Full Membership,
£30 with family member at same address

Thank you if you pay by bank transfer; these save us bank charges and administrative time

Our bank details are: Sort Code 40-47-25 Account 61345680

If you choose to pay by cheque, please send it to Ron Gordon at 52 Barons Down Road, Lewes, BN7 1ET
Cheques can be made payable to SIAS

If I have your email address you will receive a confirmation of receipt

Many thanks

Membership Secretary

Forthcoming SIAS Events

Saturday 25th April. South East Regional Industrial Archaeology Conference at South Norwood, London

Details of this conference were provided in the January newsletter. Organised by Greater London Industrial Archaeology Society. Closing date for bookings 17th April. Bookings can be made at https://tinyurl.com/SERIAC-2026

Thursday 11th June. 10.45am. Visit to Ewhurst Brickworks near Horsham

Ewhurst brickworks are part of the Wienerberger Company who manufacture a wide variety of bricks and tiles. Of particular interest to Sussex Industrial Archaeology Society is that Keymer handmade bricks are now manufactured at Ewhurst.

The Keymer brick company had a long history in Sussex and could be traced back to 1588. It finally closed in 2014 and the manufacture of handmade Keymer bricks and tiles was transferred to the Ewhurst Brickworks.

Our day visit consists of a tour of the factory covering the full manufacturing process for bricks including the Keymer handmade brick. There will be an opportunity of making your own hand made brick. The day also includes a lunch. The visit is scheduled to run from 10.45 to 13.45.

The number of brickworks in Sussex has diminished in recent years and tours have also diminished because of safety problems. So the visit to Ewhurst to view the manufacturing process and is an opportunity not to be missed.

The company requires information on the group size so it would be of assistance if you would let us know whether you would be interested in going on the visit. Please send an email to Malcolm Dawes at malcolm.dawes@btinternet.com.

Details of the location of the works and visitor car parking will be sent to those members registered for the visit. The final date for registration is 25th May.

Sunday 16thAugust. Visit to Fawley Hill Railway and Museum near Henley-on-Thames

Details of this trip were provided in the October and January Newsletters when we asked members to provide their details if they would be interested in going on the visit.

Fawley Museum have offered to let a group from SIAS visit the museum on the 16th August. The Museum has suggested that all visitors pay a donation of £15 for the visit. We asked members who contacted us to confirm their interest in the visit.

There are a few additional places available for the visit. So if anyone else is interested please contact malcolm.dawes@btinternet.com.

Full details for the day including location, facilities and car parking will be sent out nearer the date of the visit.

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 19th April. ***Spring Industrial trains***.
Steam, diesel, petrol and electric locomotives operating all day. Opportunity to ride on industrial passenger trains. Demonstration of contractor's monorail system. Amberley Museum. 01798 831370. www.amberleymuseum.co.uk

Weekend 25th– 26th April. ***The Toll House Reimagined***
A living history event in the Weald and Downland Museum's Toll House from Beeding. The building is undergoing restoration and the historic garden is undergoing reinterpretation. Guides will be explain the role of the Toll House and describing the lives of the people who lived there. www.wealddown.co.uk

Sunday 26th April. ***East Grinstead Country Bus Running day***
Free rides on vintage buses running from the High Street. www.visiteastgrinstead.com

Sunday 26th April. ***Spring Bus and Coach Show***
View and ride on a variety of historic buses. Steam Train rides also operating. Booking required. Amberley Museum. 01798 831370.
www.amberleymuseum.co.uk

Monday 27th April 3.00pm. ***Transforming the Wealden garden – the development of 'plantsmen gardens' by incoming country house families c1840-1920s***
West Sussex Record Office talk by Dr Sue Berry. West Sussex Record Office, Orchard Street, Chichester. Phone WSRO 01243 753602 for in person tickets. Also book via the WSRO website.

Saturday 2nd May. ***Toy and Collectors Fair***
A must visit for collectors and enthusiasts of all ages. Horsted Keynes Station, Bluebell Railway. www.bluebell-railway.com

Saturday 2nd 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 2nd– 3rd May. ***Magnificent Motors Rally***
The largest free motoring event on the South Coast. Over 600 Classic cars, motorbikes, buses, commercial vehicles and traction engines. Seafront, Eastbourne. www.magnificentmotors.co.uk

Sunday 3rd May, 10.00am. ***Geoffrey Mead's "Ambles not Rambles", Brighton Old Town: twittens and lanes***
Meet at Brighton Museum entrance in Pavilion Gardens. g.mead@sussex.ac.uk

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

Monday 4th May. ***Classic Motorcycle Show*** Vintage motorcycles being ridden around the museum and on display throughout the day. Booking required. Amberley Museum. 01798 831370. www.amberleymuseum.co.uk

Monday 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.

Friday 8th May, 8.00pm. ***The contribution of Indian Soldiers in WWI***
Davinder Dhillon OBE will tell us about the contribution of soldiers from undivided India on the Western Front in WWI, and their convalescence in Brighton. Burgess Hill Heritage and History Society event. Cyprus Hall, Cyprus Road, Burgess Hill. Small entrance fee. www.burgesshillheritagehistory.org.uk

Saturday 9th May, 10am to 4.30pm. ***Sussex Vintage Model Railway Club Show***
Working displays and rare Model railway layouts. Plumpton Village Hall, 1 West Gate, Plumpton Green.

Weekend 9th- 10th May. ***National Mills weekend***
See Mills newsletter for further details

Sunday 10th May. ***Open Afternoon at Chichester Model Engineers***
Trains running during afternoon. Blackberry Lane, Chichester. www.cdsme.co.uk

Wednesday 13th May, 7.30pm. ***Ventnor to Waterloo***
A trip from the Isle of Wight to South London. Southern Electric Group presentation by Peter Jones. Visitors £3. Deall Room, Southwick Community Centre, Southwick Street, Southwick. Email sussexbranch@southerelectric.org.uk

Wednesday 13th May, 7.30pm. ***Fishbourne Roman Palace and the Romans in Chichester***
Chichester Local Historical Society talk by Alan Collins of Fishbourne Roman Palace. Visitors £5. New Park Centre, New Park Road, Chichester. 01243 784915. www.chichesterlocalhistory.org.uk

Weekend 16th–17th May. ***Home Front Weekend*** Exhibition of military vehicles with re-enactments, dioramas, and period trains. Also stream train rides operating. Amberley Museum. 01798 831370. www.amberleymuseum.co.uk

Weekend 16th- 17th May. ***Road meets Rail*** Horsted Keynes Station transformed into a bustling Edwardian Scene with the sights, sounds and smells of steam power at work. Traction engines, road rollers, showman's engines, crane

engines on display and working. Demonstration of road building, wood sawing, timber haulage and heavy lifting. Traditional steam fair featuring working traction engines displays, miniature engines, goods trains and a steam driven fairground rides. Bluebell Railway. www.bluebell-railway.co.uk

Weekend 16th – 17th May. ***1940s Weekend***
Event at Kent and East Sussex Railway. Re-enactments, music, displays at Tenterden and Bodiam**.** www.kesr.org.uk

Wednesday 20th May, 7.45pm ***Courage At Sea Part 1 – presentation by David Start***
Sussex Transport Interest Group event. London Road Station. Non-members £2.50.

Weekend 23rd to 25th May. ***Laughton Spring Fair***
Held on the Heritage Field. Many Steam engines on display. Many exhibitors and traders. www.laughtonshowground.co.uk

Sunday 24th May. ***James Bond at Amberley***
The story of how James Bond Film was made at Amberely Museum in 1984. Guided tours, displays, the Zoro train used in the film and Aston Martin cars on display. Amberley Museum. 01798 831370. www.amberleymuseum.co.uk

Monday 25th 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.

Tuesday 26th May, 7.30pm. ***World War Two at Sheffield Park*** Memories of the role played by Sheffield Park during the war. Presented by Alan Bradford who spent his entire life at Sheffield Park. Danehill Parish Historical Society event. Danehill Memorial Hall. Visitors £4 with tea/coffee and biscuit. www.danehillhistory.org

Wednesday 27th May, 7. 15pm. ***Signalling Topics***
RCTS Chichester Branch Meeting. Bassil Shippam Centre, Tozer Way, St Pancras, Chichester. https://rcts.org.uk/branches/branch-chr-chichester

Weekend 30th – 31st May. ***Tinkers Park Steam Rally at Hadlow Down***
Variety of vintage vehicles, narrow gauge railway and collection of organs. www.tinkerspark.com

Tuesday 2nd June, 7.30pm.. ***Cakes and Ale: a "full English" in your 17th Century local?*** Changes in food and drink provided by your local pub over the last 300 years. Newhaven Historical Society talk by Dr Janet Pennington. The Hillcrest Centre, Bay Vue Road, Newhaven. Free parking next to the Hillcrest Centre. Non-members £5. www.newhavenhistoricalsociety.org.uk

Saturday 6th June, 2pm. ***Visit with talk by Alan Green to St. Johns Chapel***
5 St Johns Street, Chichester. A West Sussex Archives Society event.
Non-members welcome. Booking required. www.wsas.co.uk

Saturday 6th June, 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 7th June, 6pm. ***Geoffrey Mead's "Ambles not Rambles"***
Firle Park & Charleston:gentry in a landscape. Meet Firle village carpark (not a pub carpark). g.mead@sussex.ac.uk

Wednesday 10th June, 7.30pm. ***Trams, Tramways & Trolleybuses on film***
Tramway and Light Railway Society presentation by Keith Carter. Visitors £3. Deall Room, Southwick Community Centre, Southwick Street, Southwick.
Email sussexbranch@southerelectric.org.uk

Wednesday 10th June, 7.30pm. ***The Unlikely Theatre – the story of Chichester Festival Theatre***
Chichester Local Historical Society talk by John Coldstream author Restored, Refreshed, Renewed – the 2012 renovation, Local Historian. £5. New Park Centre, New Park Road, Chichester. 01243 784915. www.chichesterlocalhistory.org.uk

Friday 12th June, 8.00pm. ***The way we were – a film of Old Sussex***
Paul Green will show a film of Old Sussex from the birth of the Royal Pavilion, through both World wars & up to 1950s. There is some excellent footage – a session not to be missed! Burgess Hill Heritage and History Society event.
Cyprus Hall, Cyprus Road, Burgess Hill. Small entrance fee.
www.burgesshillheritagehistory.org.uk

Weekend 13th–14thJune. ***Emergency Services***
A wide collection of emergency vehicles , both vintage and modern, on display. Demonstrations by Fire Brigade. Also stream train rides operating.
Amberley Museum. 01798 831370. www.amberleymuseum.co.uk

Weekend 13th – 14th June. 10am to 5 pm. ***High Weald Steam Working weekend***
Freshfield Mill farm, Sloop Lane, Scaynes Hill. www.highwealdsteam.co.uk

Wednesday 17th June, 7.45pm ***Anglesey to Welshpool*** Presented by Peter Jones
Sussex Transport Interest Group event. London Road Station. Non-members £2.50.

Saturday 27th June. ***Open Afternoon at Chichester Model Engineers***
Trains running during afternoon. Blackberry Lane, Chichester. www.cdsme.co.uk

Weekend 27th - 28th June. ***Model Railway Weekend***
Variety of layouts across the railway stations. Many exhibitors and Traders
Bluebell Railway. www.bluebell-railway.co.uk

Sunday 28th June. ***Sadcase Car Show*** Storrington and District Classic and Sportscar Enthusiasts is a nationally known award winning club with over 1650 members. They will be displaying sports and classic cars around the site. Amberley Museum. 01798 831370. www.amberleymuseum.co.uk

Saturday 4th July, 6pm. ***Geoffrey Mead's "Ambles not Rambles"***
Warminghurst; USA and Sussex. Meet at Warminghurst church.
g.mead@sussex.ac.uk

Saturday 4th July, 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 4th- 5th July. Midsummer ***Steam Show***
Large scale and full-size working steam engines on display around the Museum. Also Steam train rides operating. Booking required.
Amberley Museum. 01798 831370. www.amberleymuseum.co.uk

Sunday 5th July. ***Eastbourne Bus Rally***
Services running from Eastbourne Railway station during the day.
www.eastbourne-classicbus.co.uk

Wednesday 8th July, 7.30pm. ***The Train Ferries of World Wars I & II***
Tramway and Light Railway Society presentation by Gordon Adams. Visitors £3. Deall Room, Southwick Community Centre, Southwick Street, Southwick.
Email sussexbranch@southerelectric.org.uk

Friday 10th July, 8.00pm. ***Life at Danehill Stores & Post Office in the 1970s***
Goo Coomber will talk about growing up in Danehill, watching & listening whilst her parents ran the village shop, the environmentally friendly hub of the village. Burgess Hill Heritage and History Society event. Cyprus Hall, Cyprus Road, Burgess Hill. Small entrance fee. www.burgesshillheritagehistory.org.uk

Sunday 12th July. ***Open Afternoon at Chichester Model Engineers***
Trains running during afternoon. Blackberry Lane, Chichester. www.cdsme.co.uk

Sunday 12th July. ***Classic Car Show***
Classic motor vehicles and accessories from the 50s, 60s, 70s and 80s.Also Amberley Museum. 01798 831370. www.amberleymuseum.co.uk

Saturday 18th Jul, 2pm. ***Visit to Ardingly College consisting of a tour, visit to archive, farm buildings*** Light refreshments are included. Booking required. A West Sussex Archives Society event. Non-members welcome. www.wsas.co.uk.

Weekend 18th – 19th July. ***Southern at War at the Bluebell Railway***
Bringing the sights, sounds and spirit of wartime Britain vividly to life. Re-enactors, classic military vehicles, display stands. A spitfire on display and aerobatic Spitfire flying displays on both days (weather permitting). Booking recommended. Bluebell Railway. www.bluebell-railway.co.uk

Weekend of 18th – 19th July. ***Rail Gala Weekend***
Steam, diesel, petrol and electric locomotives on display with rides on the trains all weekend. Amberley Museum. 01798 831370. www.amberleymuseum.co.uk

Saturday 25th July. ***Toy and Collectors Fair***
A must visit for collectors and enthusiasts of all ages. Horsted Keynes Station, Bluebell Railway. www.bluebell-railway.com

Saturday 1st 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 8th - 9th August. ***Tinkers Park Railway Gala***
Model Railway Show, classic cars bus rides and traction engine trailer rides. Hadlow Down. www.tinkerspark.com

Sunday 9th August. ***Bus Rally at Tenterden Station*** Services running all day to local destinations and railway stations. kesr.org.uk/bus-rally-2023

Novium Museum, Tower Street, Chichester
Small exhibition on the Selsey Tramway including some items loaned by Alan Green.

Pallant House Gallery, North Pallant
Exhibition: ***William Nicholson***. First major exhibition of his work in over 20 years. Includes pictures of his time ussex. Ends 10 May.

Exhibition: ***British Landscapes - A Sense of Place*** From 30 May

Oxmarket Gallery
Tuesday 26th May 4.30pm. ***Chichester City of Art – 900 years of Art and Artists***
Presentation by Alan Green. Details and tickets via Oxmarket Contemporary website. https://www.oxmarket.org/

Date for Diary
Association of Industrial Archaeology Society Conference to be held at Norwich, 4th– 9th September.

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 Art of the Georgian Engineers
January's Meeting
Report by John Blackwell

It was a warm welcome to SIAS Committee member Alan Green, for the first of a regular 'zooming' of our meetings.

As a prequel, Alan explained the work of Sir Christopher Wren (1632-1723) on the design of St. Paul's Cathedral's innovative three layer dome. This is made up of the inner dome, visible from inside the cathedral, above which rises a brick cone, which supports the lantern and the rafters and frame work of the wood and lead covered outer dome. James Elmes was also mentioned who in 1813–4 restored the top part of the spire of Chichester Cathedral. He reconstructed the pendulum device, incorporated into it by Sir Christopher Wren, to counteract the effects of strong winds.

The works of Thomas Telford (1757-1834), the son of a shepherd, and a hero of Alan's were next illustrated. His big break came in 1784 when working as a stonemason he was plucked from obscurity by architect Thomas Wyatt to be clerk of the works for buildings to be erected at Portsmouth Dockyard including the surviving Commissioners House. His most well known major project was the ground breaking Pontcysyllte Aqueduct (1795-1805) crossing the deep valley through which the River Dee flowed. Normally such canal crossings were achieved by flights of locks up and down and a small masonry aqueduct across the river. Telford's design was to be high rise, 18 stone piers, the tallest being 38m above the river, with cast iron arches surmounted by a cast iron trough 300m long and 3.6m wide. Within the trough was the towpath with a protective iron railing. In 1824 Telford commenced work on a new Harecastle Tunnel on the Trent and Mersey Canal in Staffordshire. This was to replace James Brindley's original tunnel which had taken 11 years to build and was then the longest



Harecastle Tunnels - Telford's on left
(Photographer Akke Monasso CC BY-SA 2.5)

tunnel on Britain's canal network at 2,630m. By the 1820s trade had increased and the slow process of legging through created a bottleneck. Telford's tunnel ran parallel to the original but had a larger bore and towpath. Due to advances in civil engineering (the tunnelling shield) this larger tunnel was completed in two years. Between 1819 and 1826 Telford constructed the Menai Bridge spanning the Menai Straits between the island of Anglesey and mainland Wales. The suspension bridge, which had to be high enough to allow shipping to pass under, had a tower



Menai Bridge showing original chain cables with wrought iron links. (Authors collection)

on either bank with the 579m of roadway suspended from 16 chain cables with wrought iron links. It was the biggest suspension bridge in the world at the time.

John Rennie (1761-1821) a multi talented engineer involved with many projects of which Alan highlighted Waterloo Bridge, opened in 1817. Built with masonry piers on timber piles and featuring nine low elliptical arches each of 30m span. The Bridge was demolished in the 1930s. Between 1793 and 1810 he was Engineer to the Kennet and Avon Canal, the canal is 57 miles in length, joining the River Avon at Bath, to the River Kennet at Newbury. His designs included the Caen Hill flight of 29 locks over two miles at Devizes and the elegant bath stone Dundas Aqueduct over the River Avon at Lympney Stoke. In Sussex Rennie was Engineer for the Ford to Chichester Harbour (Birdham) canal of the Portsmouth and Arundel Navigation.[1]

James Watt (1736-1819) a skilled scientific instrument maker was asked to repair a model of Newcomen's atmospheric steam engine and noted how inefficient it was. His first and goundbreaking improvement was a separate condenser, which stopped the alternate heating and cooling of the power cylinder, this he patented in 1769. Difficulties in finding suitable large accurately machined pistons and cylinders coupled with funding difficulties led to a partnership with Matthew Boulton, businessman and inventor, in 1775 and production of his engines began, producing a 75% saving in coal over Newcomen's engines. A further patent in 1781 was obtained for the sun and planet gear used to convert reciprocal motion to rotary, leading to replacement in the use of water to power factories. Between 1775 and 1810 some 500 engines were installed including one at Ford for the Portsmouth and Arundel Navigation.[2]

Plateways, flanged cast iron rails fixed to log sleepers or stone blocks, had been used since the 1780s to convey wagons drawn by horse from mines and quarries to rivers, canals or ports for transhipment. It was the Surrey Iron railway, opened 1803, from Wandsworth to Croydon a distance of eight and a quarter miles that opened the door to the railway age. It was a public railway (plateway) for goods hauliers to use their own horses and wagons (these had to be a certain size), on payment of a toll. It demonstrated advantages over road and canal transport. It was said horses could pull five times more weight on rails than on roads and railways were not affected so much by winter conditions as canals (icing up). No mention was made at the time of using anything other than horse power.

George Stephenson (1781-1848) a civil and mechanical engineer had built locomotives from 1814 for several Durham collieries and persuaded the promoters of the Stockton and Darlington to use locomotives for as much of the route as practical. It was the world's first public railway to use steam locomotives and opened on 7th September 1825 with a huge train of 32 open wagons, some loaded with coal and others empty but with 'seating' for over 300 passengers (600 were said to be clinging on when the train arrived at Stockton) plus one carriage for directors and drawn by Stephenson's designed and built Locomotion No1. Stephenson was also Engineer to the Liverpool and Manchester Railway, this involved tunnels (to the docks (2,030m) and the first terminus at Crown Street (265m), both cable hauled). Also deep cuttings at Edge Hill, the Sankey Viaduct and the crossing of the peat bog at Chat Moss were notable features. Opening on the 15th September 1830 it was the first 'Inter City' railway, designed to transport both passengers and goods. Raw cotton needed to be delivered to Manchester's mills from the port of Liverpool and the finished goods returned there for export. The superiority of steam traction over horse power and cable traction was once and for all demonstrated by the winner of the 1829 Rainhill Trials, 'Rocket'. Designed



Edge Hill Station 1830. The centre tunnel was to the docks and the right hand tunnel served the terminus at Crown Street. Both tunnels were cable operated.
The left hand tunnel was a store, provided for symmetry.
(Entrance of the Railway at Edge Hill (1831) by Thomas Talbot Bury
CC0 1.0 Universal Public Domain Dedication)

by Stephenson's very talented son Robert it featured a multi tube boiler, separate fire box, blast pipe exhaust, and angled cylinders with direct drive to the wheels.

To conclude Alan mentioned the Institution of Civil Engineers, formed as a professional body in 1817 with Thomas Telford as the first president in 1820. Images of past presidents line the walls including fondly remembered SIAS member Robin Wilson president in 1991-2 whose portrait is outside the cloakroom!

It is always a pleasure to listen to Alan's presentations, so well researched and illustrated, and this was no exception. One could appreciate these engineer's achievements and the high esteem Alan holds for these early members of his profession.

1 The History of Chichester's Canal, Alan Green, available from https://www.sussexias.co.uk/publications/books/

2 See Sussex Industrial History No 41 2011online at our website.

SERIAC 2026

SOUTH EAST REGIONAL INDUSTRIAL ARCHAEOLOGY CONFERENCE

SATURDAY 25 APRIL 2026
1030-1645

STANLEY ARTS, SOUTH NORWOOD, SE25 6AB



Hosted by the Greater London Industrial Archaeology Society (GLIAS)

BOOKING FORM

To Book by Post, please complete the form below

Name:

Address:

Email (if applicable) or telephone

Please book me ..... places for SERIAC 2026 at £25 each

..... packed lunches at £6.50 each
(vegetarian required Y/N)

Car Parking required (Free) Y/N

Display Space required (Free) Y/N

I enclose a cheque for £

made payable to GLIAS

Please include an SAE for acknowledgement and further details

Bookings close 17th April, no refunds after this date

Please return the form with a cheque to:

SERIAC 2026

2, Tetherdown,
Prestwood,
Great Missenden,
BUCKS.

HP16 0RY

For email contact:- treasurer@glias.org.uk

Or Book Your Tickets: https://tinyurl.com/SERIAC-2026

WWW.GLIAS.ORG.UK



SERIAC 2026

SOUTH EAST REGIONAL INDUSTRIAL ARCHAEOLOGY CONFERENCE

SATURDAY 25 APRIL 2026
1030-1645

STANLEY ARTS, 12 SOUTH NORWOOD HILL, LONDON, E25 6AB

Just a short walk from Norwood Junction Station (TfL Windrush Line and National Rail from London Bridge,Victoria and East Croydon)

FREE parking for 50

A snack lunch can be ordered if required

Hosted by the Greater London Industrial Archaeology Society (GLIAS)

SERIAC is a long-running gathering of Industrial Archaeology and related societies across South-East England.

For 2026, GLIAS welcomes you to Stanley Arts, the remarkable 1901 complex created by engineer, inventor and philanthropist William F. R. Stanley.

PROGRAMME

More than Biscuits, Beer and Bulbs – Reading's Other Industries
Speaker: Jo Jones (BIAS)

Brunel's Timber Viaducts: Masterpieces or Aberrations?
Speaker: Roger Davies (Hants IA)

The Working Coast
Speaker: Geoff Mead (SIAS)

West Ham Sewage Pumping Station Project
Speaker: David Perrett (GLIAS & HELT)

Stanley Arts – How Did We Get Here?
Speaker: Andrew Millar (Stanley Arts)

Our Industrial Heritage – Fieldwork in Cyberspace
Speaker: Robert Mason (GLIAS)

Book Your Tickets: https://tinyurl.com/SERIAC-2026
or use the attached booking form

WWW.GLIAS.ORG.UK

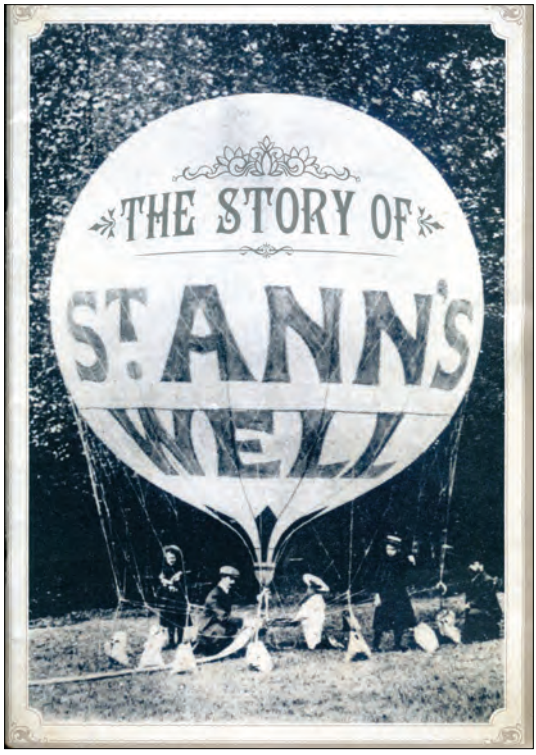
St. Ann's Well balloons

Geoffrey Mead

Back in the summer of 2025 on August 9th SIAS was part of the celebrations around the erection of a new Brighton & Hove Council Blue Plaque in St. Anns Well Gardens Hove, to one the pioneers of UK flying, the Short Brothers, whose balloon flights from the gardens 1901-1903 were the start of their aviation history. Sadly, the local press ignored the leading role of SIAS in the whole project! See SIAS Newsletter 208, October 2025 for more details.

Recently while browsing my favourite bookshop [Oxfam Books, Hove] I came across a 2008 publication 'The Story of St. Ann's Well' published by their 'Friends' group. I was intrigued by the cover of the publication [an A4 soft cover publication] as it had the title superimposed on a large balloon. Page 11, titled *'The Balloon'* explained that this was a captive balloon and '*an object of curiosity'*. Even in the 21st century the article went on to say-*'...visitors can struggle to find the park on their first visit, and at the turn of the last century, day trippers were simply encouraged to look up in the sky and locate the balloon which was tethered at the base in the park. This was a novel form of advertising and on more than one occasion the balloon escaped.'*

Accompanying the editorial text was a copy of a local press cutting, sadly however with no referenced date or publication, but is post-1904 as the Mr Tee referred to in the text took over as park lessee and manager after that date-



"The missing balloon from St. Ann's Well.

Recovered in Essex.

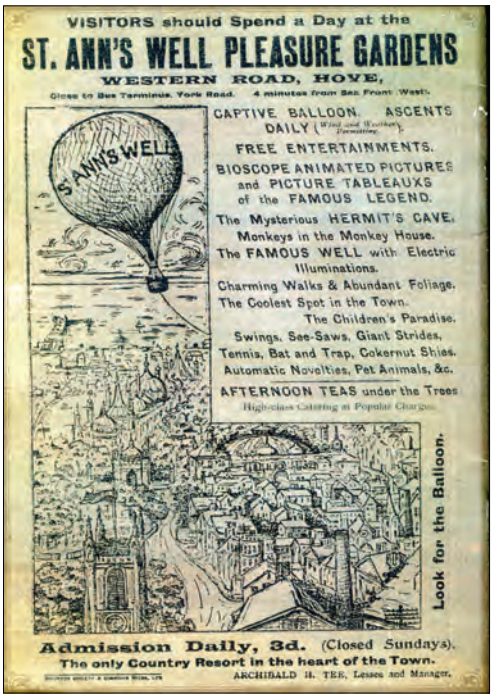
Tidings have this week been obtained of the balloon which broke from captivity at St. Ann's Well pleasure gardens in Furze Hill, Hove on June 5th and sailed away as free as the air. It seems the balloon, after travelling an estimated distance of from two to three hundred miles landed on the same day , at midnight, at Broadysh Farm, Redwenter, Saffron Walden, Essex.

When the balloon is in a state of collapse, it is almost impossible to read the huge letters 'St. Ann's Well'…the farmer communicated with the maker Spencer, and the balloon turned out to be one of two that had broken loose about this time. The balloon reached St Ann's Well yesterday and weather permitting it will be inflated today (Saturday) or Monday. Its ascent, Mr Tee informs us, will be accompanied by a discharge of signal rockets, which will be heard all round Brighton. When it is once more floating overhead, the balloon will be quite an object of curiosity."

In the same page was another undated press cutting-

"High Wind prevents balloon ascent

A most attractive programme had been announced on Saturday by the management of the St. Ann's Well pleasure grounds, Hove and crowds flocked to this popular place of amusement. In the afternoon a balloon ascent was to have been made, but in consequence of the high wind the attempt had to be abandoned. The balloon was inflated on the dancing lawn and a good many people watched the filling during the morning. When partly filled, however the inflation was stopped owing to the improbability of the wind dropping and during the afternoon the monster balloon which has a gas capacity of 45,000 feet, hovered tantalisingly just above the ground, kept down by innumerable bags of ballast. It was hoped that the wind would go down towards evening, but it was found impossible to attempt the ascent with safety so the balloon had to be emptied-an operation in which a large crowd shewed much interest-and packed up until a more favourable day. It may be explained that the ground is a very difficult one to ascend from owing to the risk of collision with the trees and the glass covered stage on the centre lawn, in the evening an illuminated fete took place and this was well attended…"



The Short Brothers balloon work finished in 1903, but obviously it left a legacy of aerial display. In the Newsletter article John Blackwell notes the gas may have come from a residential gas main in Furze Hill; I am left wondering what the cost was of 45,000 feet of gas? John's article notes 38,000 feet as the Short's capacity [journalistic licence?] and what happened to all that mass of gas on release!

February Talk
The Last Edwardian Forge in Eastbourne
Report by John Blackwell

February welcomed our member Adrian Backshall with his photographs and research on the old forge. Adrian set the scene by explaining he had acquired a decrepit Victorian platelayer's trolley, four flanged wheels under a rotting wooden deck. His idea was to restore it to look like Wickham trolley for which he needed some iron and steel components. This is how he met blacksmith and steel fabricator Alan Godwin who made the iron framework for the body and a curved steel roof. Together they made an authentic looking trolley which now runs on an equally authentic length of permanent way in Adrian's garden.

The workshop in Lower Road in Eastbourne's Old Town was a treasure trove of the blacksmith's art. It was an extension to a Victorian coach house and stables, a most attractive building. Research with the help of local historians found the buildings were originally in the grounds of a Victorian mansion named 'The Gore' which was demolished in the early twentieth century. The date of the forge has not been established.

Being a keen photographer Adrian has images of every nook and cranny and these comprised the central part of his presentation, hundreds of types of horse shoes, wheelwright's equipment and tools, the blacksmith's anvil and forge. The forge, now gas fired with an electric fan replacing the bellows, was mainly used for heating the drill bits of pneumatic hammers before 'sharpening' on the anvil, apparently the only blacksmith's in Eastbourne providing this service. One oddity was a piece of ships timber with the date of 1824 incised, could this be the build date? Sadly Alan has retired and the premises internally are being converted into craft workshops. Lastly examples of Alan's design and metalwork skills were shown including the crown for East Dean's village sign and village's fire beacon.

As an encore Adrian showed his superb images of the cab road beneath Brighton Station. See https://underworld-brighton.com/tag/cab-road

This was a splendid talk on an interior that was a time warp and sadly is now being altered and its unique contents have been removed (we know not where), so Adrian's images now form their own unique record. The presentation was much appreciated by a large audience.

See Front and back covers for illustrations

More on the St. Ann's Well Balloon

Guernsey Evening Press and Star 7th June 1905

STRAY BALLOON. Mr. S, T. Taudevin, Lloyd's Agent for Guernsey, has received the fol|owing letter from the Secretary of Lloyd's, dated 6th June:- I have been asked by Mr. Archibald H. Lee, (sic) Lessee and Manager of the St. Ann''s Well Royal Pleasure Gardens, Furze Hill, Hove, to say that a large balloon was carried away from those grounds yesterday morning, and travelled out to sea. It left Hove at 9.30, and it is thought was making for the Channel Islands. It has the makers' address, viz., Spencer and Sons, Highbury, London, and also the words, "St. Ann's Well," written on each side. Mr. Lee desires it to be known that if returned to him or the maker the finder will be rewarded, and all expenses paid.

Could this be the same balloon if so it landed a long way from Guernsey. Ed

It did. South Wales Weekly Argus and Monmouthshire Advertiser 1st July 1905

After being seen travelling out to sea in the direction of the Channel Islands, the captive balloon that broke away from Brighton has come down near Saffron Walden. Essex.

Digital footprint: managing your online identity after death

I make no apology for this topic, we often just wish such topics away.

I have lifted this with, acknowledgement, from:- www.coop.co.uk/funeralcare/advice/digital-footprint-managing-your-online-identity-after-death

I show here only the start of some valuable advice - visit the website for full details.

When someone dies, there are a lot of things that need to be sorted out. Things like checking if someone has a will or a funeral plan, as well as contacting banks, insurance companies and mortgage providers to notify them of the person's death. But what happens to our online identity when we are no longer here?

What happens to your social media after you die?

Social media has become the go-to place to celebrate life's milestones. Announcing everything from pregnancies and engagements to job offers on social media has become the norm. Our social media accounts are filled with precious memories. But what happens to them once we die?

You might assume it will be left to your next kin. But these accounts don't 'belong' to you. The terms and conditions you agreed to when first setting up the account will state this. Once a person has died, there are two options for the account: memorialisation or deletion.

To prevent your account from being deleted, sites like Facebook offer the chance to choose a legacy contact. Your chosen legacy contact will manage the memorialised page, which will allow them to accept friend requests, and change profile and cover photos. To do this you'll need to:

1. click on the Settings & Privacy section in the top right of your screen
2. then click on Access & Control
3. select memorialisation settings
4. select Choose Legacy Contact and follow the on-screen instructions .....

Industrial Heritage and Archaeology Grants

SIAS has, over the last few years, been the grateful recipient of a number of legacies, most recently from the late Brian Austin. Brian was a founder member of SIAS in 1967 and the editor of Sussex Industrial History from 1985 to 2018, during which time our publication won the AIA award twice for best journal. He had a longstanding and deep knowledge of many aspects of Sussex's past history, including industrial archaeology.

The SIAS Committee has ring-fenced a small part of these funds to support and develop the Society and has decided that the remaining money should be made available in the form of grants to support industrial heritage and archaeology projects in, or related to, Sussex. This is in line with one of four key objectives listed in the SIAS Constitution – *'to promote the preservation and restoration of industrial buildings and plant of historical or technical importance'*.

Registered Sussex charitable organisations are therefore invited to apply to SIAS for grants that would support this objective. The high level intention is twofold: firstly that the grant should enable a project to go ahead that might not otherwise do so and secondly that through publicity, it should promote knowledge of and interest in the field of industrial heritage and archaeology in general and SIAS in particular. It is intended that the grant programme will be spread over a few years in order maximise the visibility of our sector and the SIAS role in promoting it.

SIAS has provided a number of grants to projects in recent years. By way of guidance, two are listed below:

- Amberley Museum operates a steam hauled narrow gauge railway which provides its visitors with trips. One carriage was built by Robert Hudson, Leeds in 1940 for the RAF for use at Fauld, Staffordshire and was later owned by ME Engineering Ltd, Cricklewood. It is now used by the Museum to carry disabled passengers, including wheelchairs. After many years of use at Amberley, it needed to be re-wheeled in order to continue safe operation and SIAS paid the cost of this, £8,000.
- SIAS paid some £1,500 to install a Blue Plaque in St Ann's Well Gardens, Hove to recognise the flying of coal gas balloons there between 1901 – 1903 by two of the Short Brothers. These aviation pioneers went on to found the Short Brothers Aircraft Company, which designed and built many pioneering aircraft, including the Sunderland Flying Boat and the four engined Stirling bomber, both of which made significant contributions to the Second World War.

The SIAS website – www.sussexias.co.uk – has full details of the application process and the application form. Applications will be reviewed by a SIAS sub-committee and decisions made by the full SIAS Committee at its quarterly meetings.





Blue Plaque in St. Ann's Well Gardens, Hove



Re-wheeled RAF Fauld coach Bogie at Amberley Museum

The Brighton Central Enigma

Alan H J Green

The LBSCR thoughtfully provided no fewer than six stations within the Borough of Brighton. As well as Mocatta's fine terminus there was Preston Park on the main line, Holland Road Halt on the West Coast, London Road on the East Coast and Lewes Road and Kemp Town on the Kemp Town Branch.

Of these only one, the terminus, contained the word *Brighton* in its name, and although it was situated very much *in media res* and thus deserving of the suffix *Central,* arguably such distinction wasn't needed as none of the others referred to Brighton*. When I started on the railway I encountered some old railwaymen in the early 1970s who referred to Brighton Station as *the Central* which I first took just to be local parlance but later found in fact to have some credence. *Brighton Central* appeared in print on some of the company's publications, even though it doesn't ever seem to have appeared on any signage on or around the station. Trawling through all my books on The Brighton have failed to come up with any photographs of running in boards of any era but in BR days the totems were simply *Brighton* – not a whiff of Central.

So, let's examine this apparent enigma. Firstly the route map which accompanied the 1912 LBSCR public timetable had an inset shewing the lines around Brighton on which the main terminus is clearly labelled *Central,* not only that the summary timetable for the Sunny South Express lists *Brighton Central* as being the sun-drenched destination of this through train from the frozen north.

Even more interesting is the wording of luggage labels. The LBSCR went in for these in a big way and every station had a bespoke stock of labels for issue from itself to every other LBSCR station, as well as many for 'foreign' destinations. Now, whereas in general ones for internal use cite *Brighton*, most of those for foreign destinations use *Brighton Central.* Did someone decide that this would be more definitive for the receiver perhaps?



Fig 1 Extract from the route map to the 1912 Public Timetable



Fig 2 A selection of LBSCR luggage labels to 'foreign' railways displaying Brighton Central plus a less-common internal one with the same feature.

Such usage did not extend to travel tickets however which resolutely shewed *Brighton*, but, inexplicably, the LBSCR's platform tickets were branded *Brighton Central*

So what *was* the official name of the station? From the company's point of view the definitive documents should be the working timetables and the appendices thereto, and these only give Brighton so, one imagines, this was seen as being the official name. I would also imagine the contemporary Railway Clearing House schedules gave the same: that for 1962 certainly does. The only other place I have found the term is in Cuthbert Hamilton Ellis's delightful book *The London Brighton and South Coast Railway*, published in 1960 where, on page 220, he laments Brighton Central Station as having lost the opportunity to have been one of the few stations of Europe.(!)



Fig 3 An LBSCR single for Ford Junction to Brighton and a BEAM issue platform ticket for Brighton Central.

The most recent official vestige of Brighton Central I found was an SR luggage label - was this a rogue carry over ordered perhaps by an old die-hard?



Fig 4 an SR luggage label to Brighton Central

So what *is* the answer to this enigma? Answers on a post card please…

[All the items depicted are from the author's collection].

*Yes, I know London Road later became London Road Brighton, but that doesn't count for the purposes of this article!

Country Fair magazine 1954

Geoffrey Mead

I am something of a book squirrel [see Mrs Mead for more detail…], and for books also include obscure period magazines. I have amongst the hard volumes in my office some copies of a rather charming period rural publication 'Country Fair' and in the September 1954 edition was this account by CT Palmer of flint working at Brandon, Suffolk. Now, I have not developed dementia or dyslexia, so [as a Geographer…] I know Suffolk is not Sussex! But the flint trades are so linked in origin, character and products that I thought we could stretch a county border…or two.

The image that accompanies this is from a c1850 OS map and shows south east of Brandon the flint pits at Lingheath and northeast of the village the famous Neolithic flint workings of Grimes Graves. From an IA perspective it also shows a lime kiln along the Brandon River to the west adjacent to the railway line of the Norfolk Railway.

"Beside the flint-paved market square at Brandon stands a public house where the last of the town's flint-knappers carries on the trade that has been handed down from the days when prehistoric man roamed the area. Though he turns publican at night and on Sundays, throughout the working week Mr H Edwards of The 'Flint Knappers' wields his mallets that turn the largest blocks of brownish-black stone into gun-flints about the size of a postage stamp, a little over a sixth of an inch thick at the centre, tapering to a razor-like edge all round. Mr Edwards is at any event at Brandon the last of the chain of knappers, and when it is time for him to go the final link will be forged without room for another to be added, for the industry is, like shoeing and hatching and hedging, kept alive as much for the sake of antiquity, almost, as for utility.

Thirty years ago, Brandon could boast not only a dozen knappers but a score of miners, and the mines themselves, but the demand for flint having decreased one by one the men have drifted to other work-even the Brandon mines have been closed now for twelve years; the flint is brought from Wymondham, where there is another little outpost of the craft. Knapping itself consists of three stages, which seem at first glance to be easy, but like all the old rural crafts turns out to demand a considerable amount of skill. The first operation is 'quarting' the breaking of the large boulders into pieces of convenient size to hold. It is these pieces which were used by the builders and roadmakers of the Brandon of the nineteenth century. Next, in flaking, the knapper chooses with an expert eye the correct part of the broken surface to hit. He taps; and the flint is shattered into saucer like discs or oblongs usually from two to three inches long. The actual spot hit doesn't break away but is left standing as a cone and is called a percussion point.

It is the final operation that Mr Edward's skill is put to its real test; the task from which the word 'knapping' is derived. With very gentle taps in the right direction, using his smallest hammer, he breaks away little pieces of stone until the final result is realised in the intricate gun-flint which is then packed for export to Abyssinia and the East. No other flint ware is now made at Brandon, though in the past there were many uses for the mineral, from building materials to tinder-and-steel boxes and, before Julius Caeser, spear heads, knives and chisels. In the present decade being a publican means long hours, and the flint knapper is content to let the industry die fighting to the last flint-gun."



c1850 OS map of Brandon, Suffolk

NOTE

(Ed) 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.

The Coultershaw Heritage Site
March 2026 - SIAS Report

Barry Flannaghan

2025 saw a record number of open-day visitors which was helped by some very well attended event days. As ever this is down to the hard work of our volunteers who organise the events and steward on Sundays between Easter and September.

For the 2026 season, trustees have decided to experiment with free entry. This has come about as some non-event days are poorly attended making it hard to justify volunteers giving up a Sunday. It is hoped that our new 'free entry' road signs will encourage more passers-by to call in. Visitor feedback strongly indicates that those who do stop on the 'off chance' really do enjoy their visit.

Fortunately, Coultershaw has built up healthy reserves and admission charges are a relatively small proportion of total income. We will, of course, welcome donations.

Our 2026 season begins on Easter Sunday with activities for children and a special exhibition on the Gwillim family who once owned Coultershaw Mill as well as other mills on the Rother. We will then be open every Sunday until the Heritage Weekend.

On Sunday 19 April the Coultershaw research team will put on an exhibition of the history of the Rother Navigation.

Work continues on the South Warehouse which will eventually become a flexible exhibition space. As well as housing an exhibition on the history of the Rother valley it will be available for temporary exhibitions from Coultershaw's research team as well as other organisations. The initial Rother valley exhibition will be created by our research team to gauge visitor reaction. We then hope to raise funds for a permanent, professionally-designed exhibition of the quality of the Lottery-funded Pump House displays.

Our Tuesday maintenance team has grown in numbers and skills over the past year and this is already evident in the presentation of the site.

They're not the prettiest bunch but they work hard.

I am pleased to report that work has started on Duncton Mill. An historic buildings surveyor has been engaged to record everything of significance about the mill. He has discovered many clues to its past configuration and history. Meanwhile, Coultershaw volunteers have begun removing the enormous quantity of tufa (a limestone deposit) from the water wheel to enable a full condition survey. It is hoped that it will one day turn again to generate electricity.

https://coultershaw.co.uk/

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Published quarterly in January, April, July and October
Please send contributions for the next *Newsletter* to the Editor by the 7th June 2026

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*

Eastbourne Report - page 18



Coachouse and Stables. Forge roof just visible far left (Adrian Backshall)



Any old iron (Adrian Backshall)

ISSN 0263 516X

Registered Charity No. 267159