

SOUTH WEST WALES INDUSTRIAL ARCHAEOLOGY SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

CYLCHLYTHYR

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Newsletter 25, August 1980

Editorial Committee: F.G. Cowley, P.R.Reynolds, W.I.Roberts

Price to non-members: 15p

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Weekend Exhibition at AFAN ARGOED COUNTRY PARK

SEPTEMBER
13 - 14

The Society has been invited to mount an exhibition at the Afan Argoed Country Park. It will take the form of a display of finds and photographs from Scott's Pit, basically the exhibition that was prepared for the opening ceremony. It should be a useful opportunity for publicising the Society and the work done at Scott's Pit, and may, we hope, lead to a few new members being recruited.

SEPTEMBER
20

Coach tour of sites relating to the geology of the coal field in the Swansea area.

Leader: Professor T.R.Owen

Departure: By coach from the Guildhall at 2.00 p.m.

Please book your seats on the enclosed booking form.

The winter programme of lectures will start on THURSDAY 18th SEPTEMBER. The full programme has been arranged in advance and, for the first time, a card has been printed. A copy is enclosed with this Newsletter. As usual, meetings will be held in the Royal Institution (Swansea Museum). We have booked the room for the third Thursday in every month which should make it easier to remember.

CLYNE VALLEY TRAIL

We are pleased to be able to send out a copy of the latest leaflet to be produced by the SWWIAS and Swansea City Council. The text is by John Hayman, the map by Hayden Holloway and the drawings by Robin Campbell and Annette Philipps. We are sure that members will find it interesting, and its eye-catching appearance should help to ensure widespread distribution. Further copies are available from Swansea City Council Planning Department at the Guildhall, or from Paul Reynolds in return for a suitable sized s.a.e.

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS

This is the final warning to those whose 1980 subscriptions are still outstanding. Please remit to the Hon. Treasurer as soon as possible. The opening ceremonies at Scott's Pit have been quite a drain on our funds and we cannot continue to send information to members who are not paid up. A red cross in the margin beside this paragraph is a reminder that according to our records your subscription has still not been paid. Unless we hear from you soon, we shall regretfully have to assume that you have resigned your membership. The rate for 1980 is still £1-50 (adults) or 75p (full-time students and OAPs).

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

At the AGM held last March the question of subscription levels for 1981 was considered. The financial statement for 1979 showed a small deficit with the prospect of a larger one in 1980 because of heavy spending at Scott's Pit and the increase in postage of nearly 50%. In view of this the meeting agreed to an increase in subscription levels to take effect from 1 January 1981. It was also decided to introduce a third category of membership, Family Membership, in addition to the two existing categories. For £3 p.a. all the members of a family living at the same address can become members of the Society, so long as they are satisfied to share one copy of all newsletters and circulars. Thus, under the new arrangements a husband and wife will pay no more than they are at present.

The new rates for 1981 are as follows:

Full rate £2-00 p.a.

Reduced rate £1-00 p.a. (full-time students, OAPs)

Family rate £3-00 p.a.

This is the first increase since 1977 which means that rates have been pegged for four years.

If you pay by Banker's Order, please alter the instructions to your bank to take account of these new rates. "SO" in the margin here is a reminder that you are one of the members who has chosen to pay in this way.

RECENT NEWS

Congratulations to Miss Betty Nelmes, Administrator of the Royal Institution since 1968, who was awarded an MBE in the Birthday Honours in June. Everybody who has ever had occasion to use the Royal Institution will join in offering her their warmest congratulations on this happy occasion.

IA at the OU. A short course in industrial archaeology, lasting eight to ten weeks, has been organised by the Open University. Details from Kevin Moloney, Press Office, Open University, Milton Keynes MK7 6AA.

Association for the Promotion of an Institute of Field Archaeologists. This body was formed in 1979 to promote an Institute of Field Archaeologists, the objects of which are to include the maintenance of adequate standards of training, education and conduct in the practice of archaeology and conservation of the archaeological heritage. Membership of the Institute will be by election only, but membership of the Association is open to all interested parties for a subscription of £3. The Secretary of the Association is B.K. Davison, 71 Basinghall Street, London EC2P 2EJ, but information is available locally from the Glamorgan/Gwent Archaeological Trust, 6 Prospect Place Swansea SA1 1QP.

Genwen Colliery Engine House. The engine house of Genwen Colliery (M.R. 545 995) at Bynea, near Llanelli, is perhaps to be preserved by Llanelli Borough Council. The building is at present covered with ivy and rather delapidated, but it is the second oldest industrial monument surviving in the town. It could be made into an interesting, even an attractive, feature in the area once the general improvement scheme is completed. Co-operation is being sought from the Welsh Office. Genwen Pit was sunk by Chauncey Townsend, the English capitalist who was also active in Llansamlet, in 1766. The existing engine house, however, is the work of Colonel George Warde who replaced Townsend's work with the present building in 1806. The pit was worked with intermissions until 1908, but an adjacent slant survived to 1928. It is possible that later owners have made various modifications to Warde's engine house.

GOOD TOOLS GOING CHEAP

The completion of the MSC scheme at Scott's Pit means that the Society is now in possession of an assortment of tools which were bought with MSC money. As one of the conditions of receiving the money in the first place, we are required to try to sell these tools so as to make some sort of repayment to the MSC. If anyone is interested, please contact Cliff Alden (14 Heol Dulais, Birchgrove, Swansea) who will make arrangements for you to see the tools. It is probably true to say that no sensible offer - or even any offer - will be refused. Most of the tools are still in pretty good shape.

CEFN COED COAL AND STEAM CENTRE, CRYNANT

Earlier this summer the Cefn Coed Coal & Steam Centre, which is based on the winding engines of the old Cefn Coed colliery, opened to the public under the auspices of West Glamorgan County Council. There are a number of features well worth seeing, including

- the boiler house, compression machinery and steam engine, and shafts
- operations in the nearby Blaenant Colliery
- a permanent exhibition including audio-visuals on Cefn Coed and life in the Dulais Valley
- changing exhibitions in the compressor room
- outdoor machinery exhibits

The center is one mile south of Crynant on the A4109 road from Aberdulais to Seven Sisters. It is open daily (except Tuesdays and Wednesdays) from 1030 to 1830 (April to October) or 1100 to 1600 (November to March). Admission is 50p each, or 30p for children, OAPs and the disabled. Facilities include a car park, toilets and a shop.

Cefn Coed Colliery was sunk in 1926 after earlier failures by the Amalgamated Anthracite Co. It was then the deepest anthracite mine in the world being almost $\frac{1}{2}$ mile deep. Working at such a depth meant structural and ventilation problems and production did not start until the 1930s. Steam was used to power the massive engine which wound the cages up and down the shaft. The colliery was taken over by the NCB in 1947 and mechanised mining techniques were introduced. By 1968 it had become uneconomic to mine the high quality anthracite and Cefn Coed closed. Men were redeployed at the adjoining Blaenant Colliery where a new drift was opened in 1975. The coal produced at Blaenant today is of a lower quality and is used solely at power stations. Most of it is sent to Aberthaw by merry-go-round train.

(Information from West Glamorgan County Planning Department.)

OBITUARY

As reported briefly in our last issue, the death occurred in November 1979 of Mr Elis Jenkins, the well-known historian and antiquary of Neath. A former pupil of Swansea Grammar School, he was among the first graduates of the University College of Swansea where he was awarded the degree of B.A. in 1925. In 1928 he was appointed head of the English department at Neath Grammar School, a post he held until his retirement in 1967. He was President of the Neath Antiquarian Society three times and President of the Royal Institution of South Wales in 1966/67. He was well known as a lecturer, his chosen subjects being local porcelain and pottery and topographical prints of the Neath area. His largest audience is said to have been 1000 at Port Talbot in 1944. Several historical writings from his pen have been published, including Dillwyn's Etruscan Ware (1971), Swansea Porcelain (1970) and others. Perhaps his two most noteworthy books are Welsh Porcelain (1970) which was published in a limited edition of 650 and sold out within a few weeks, and Neath and District: a Symposium (1974), a collection of essays of which he was the editor. Again, the first impression of this handsome volume was soon exhausted and a second printing called for within a few months. Mr Jenkins was awarded the honorary degree of M.A. by the University of Wales in 1975 and became a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries in 1977. These distinctions represent the public acknowledgment of the mark which he has unquestionably made on the study of the history of Neath.

GREEN CWM LIME KILN, PARKMILL

Since 1973 the Gower Crusaders have been working on the restoration of the lime kiln in Green Cwm. On 10 May the project was declared open in a simple ceremony at which the SWVIAS was represented by John Hayman and Paul Reynolds. A brochure was issued which contains background information on the project, a number of photographs and a useful essay, 'Lime kilns in Gower' by Martin Brocklehurst which forms a useful introduction to a subject which has not generated a great deal of literature. It is available from Mr Tony Edwards, 39 Pennard Road, Kittle, Swansea at 50p. The lime kiln itself is now looking very good, and is well worth paying a visit to: the walk up from Shepherd's store is short and easy and you can see the Giant's Grave at the same time.

SCOTT'S PIT OPENING CEREMONY

At last, after 3½ years' work by a small number of Society volunteers, and about a year of the Job Creation Project, the Scott's Pit restoration scheme was formally declared open by the then Mayor of Swansea, Cllr Gwilym Webber, on 25 April. Cllr Webber is a former miner and a Llansamlet ward councillor so it was very suitable that the ceremony should be timed to fall within his term of office.

Work on site

Work started in September 1976 at the instigation and under the direction of Barry Fagg. For the first two years it was on a purely voluntary basis, but in the autumn of 1978 an MSC grant was obtained and this, in addition to the continuing volunteer work, enabled far better progress to be made. The MSC scheme lasted for nearly a year. In 1979 Swansea City Council purchased the site from its previous owner and early in 1980 let a contract, the funds for which were provided by the Welsh Development Agency, for the repair and stabilisation of the gable-ends of the engine house and the top of the chimney stack. Meanwhile, Barry had moved away and Cliff Alden had taken over as project supervisor.

Opening

During March and April a small group of volunteers put in a great deal of time and effort to clean up the site for the opening ceremony. The contract for stabilising the engine house gables and chimney stack was still running and it was a matter of touch-and-go whether the scaffolding would be down and off the site before the ceremony. As it turned out, it was - but with only about an hour to spare. Fortunately the weather on 25 April was almost ideal and all the arrangements were able to go ahead as planned. The final preparations were made in the morning and at about 2 o'clock the first guests started to arrive. On the arrival of the Mayor at 2.30 all those present assembled on the platform near the shaft. The President of the Society, Professor F. Llewellyn-Jones, made an introductory speech outlining the history of the site and the project. Mr D.S. Aitken, on behalf of the British Steel Corporation then handed over a superb engraved plaque which explained the layout of the site. This plaque was accepted on behalf of the Society by the President and then unveiled by the Mayor. Finally, a presentation was made to the Mayor and Mayoress, to the Mayor a piece of tramplate found on site, polished, mounted and with a suitable inscription, and to the Mayoress a bouquet of flowers.

After this brief ceremony the visitors inspected the site and showed a gratifying degree of interest and appreciation. A display of finds was on show, and a photographic exhibition had been mounted by Hayden Holloway. This was on the outside of a caravan loaned to us for the day by the Glamorgan/Gwent Archaeological Trust, while from the inside tea and biscuits were dispensed by Margaret Alden and Pauline James. It was good that so many people were able to stay and that the weather encouraged them to linger.

Coverage in the local media was quite good. BBC and HTV both included short sequences of film in their local news bulletins that evening, and Cliff Alden and Paul Reynolds were interviewed on Swansea Sound the day before. The South Wales Evening Post featured the event prominently on the Saturday - providentially about the last issue before they were strike-bound for a fortnight or more.

Future plans

There is still some more work for the Society to do at Scott's Pit, especially in connection with the haystack boiler and the winding and ventilation arrangements. A permanent masonry plinth also has to be erected so that the plaque can be placed on site permanently. When the work on site is finally completed, then there remains the task of preparing a formal report.

Historical note

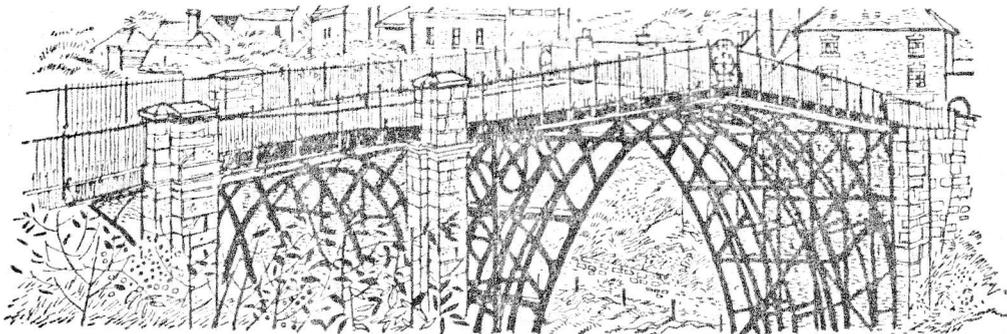
Scott's Pit is named after John Scott, a London attorney, who acquired a lease of the minerals in this area in 1816. The construction of the pit seems to date from 1817-1819. The workmanship is of a high standard which reflects the ambitious expectations that Scott appears to have had of his new pit. There is evidence that a steam locomotive was in use for haulage on the tramroad from Scott's Pit down to Foxhole for a short time in 1819-1820, possibly the work of George Stephenson. Scott's Pit failed to repay the heavy investment and after a succession of financial embarrassments Scott pulled out in 1828 and the pit passed to a local coalowner, Charles Henry Smith of Gwernllwynchwith, who kept it open until about 1840. It then stood derelict until it was reopened solely as a pumping shaft in perhaps about 1900. It then fell into disuse once again, during which period it was used as a rubbish tip and farm buildings were constructed on the site. In 1972 its importance as the last surviving Cornish engine house in this district was recognised when the Ancient Monuments Board for Wales recommended that it should be scheduled.

When the SWWIAS started work all that could be seen on site was the engine house covered by a dense growth of ivy. The ivy has now been completely removed and excavation around the engine house has revealed an interesting complex of buildings. The engine house contained a Cornish pumping engine, probably with a vertical 40 in. cylinder and a 33 ft. beam. The base of the condenser has been revealed on the engine house floor. The shaft, now capped, was stone-lined and divided by a central brattice into upcast and downcast sections. It is said to be about 500 ft. deep. A platform to the northeast of the engine house probably represents the base of the winding engine. It was connected to the shaft by a narrow tunnel. Also entering the shaft, from the north, is another tunnel, probably connected with ventilation. The foundations of two boilers have been found: to the south-west is the base of a haystack boiler about 13 ft. in diameter which was probably the original source of energy. On the opposite side of the engine house are the foundations of a waggon boiler which may have been put in when the pit was re-opened in about 1900: it is shown in situ on a picture postcard postmarked 1907. Although a number of tramplates have been found on site, both whole and fragmentary, there is still no firm evidence as to the course of the tramroad in the immediate vicinity of the pithead, although earthworks may be seen south of the pit near the M4 and Swansea District railway line.

INDUSTRIAL ARCHAEOLOGY AND STAMP BOOKS

Do you buy books of postage stamps? If not, then you will probably have missed the drawings of IA subjects that are currently appearing on the covers of books of 1st class stamps. Illustrated is a view of Ironbridge from the days when first class postage cost 10p. The current £1-20 book has a picture of a mill in Northern Ireland and further designs are said to be on the way.

Ironbridge
Telford, Salop
Part of six
illustrations by
Norman Barterhill
on Industrial
Archaeology
by
Harridge &
Sons Limited



Royal Mail
Stamps
Ten at 10p

RECENT LITERATURE

LLAFUR: Journal of the Society for the Study of Welsh Labour History,
vol. 3, no. 1, Spring 1980 (From Dr H. Francis, SWML, 50 Sketty Road, Swansea)

Llafur has flourished and grown considerably since its beginnings in 1972, both in terms of size and of circulation. The present issue contains over 100 pages compared to about 40 in the first issue, and at £2 represents good value for money. Although the articles it contains are, strictly speaking, only peripheral to IA, no apology need be made for noting it here, since it is studies of the kind that appear in Llafur that help to supply humanity to industrial archaeology and raise it from a sterile antiquarianism. Articles in the present issue include 'The south Wales race riots of 1919', 'Sidelights on religion and politics in the Rhondda valley, 1906-26', 'Crime in Merthyr, 1830-60' and 'The lead miners of Flintshire and Denbighshire'. It is interesting to note in the report on Llafur's main activities in 1979 that an Industrial Archaeology Day School was held at Cardiff to formulate a policy on IA. Richard Keen addressed the meeting and a discussion was held on "Is Wales to become one big playground and museum?" - a pertinent point, since one sometimes has the feeling that the major growth industry in Wales today is the establishment of industrial museums.

GOWER, vol. XXX, 1979

The issue of Gower published last December contains a number of articles on industrial history written by members of this Society. Professor Frank Llewellyn-Jones describes 'The way from Oystermouth village to Swansea town, circa 1800' which considers transport between these two places. Paul Reynolds looks at 'Schemes for a Gower light railway' which came close to fruition several times between 1895 and 1924. Gerald Gabb describes 'A ceremony at Blackpill: 1863' which marked the start of work on the Llanelli Railway's branch from Pontardulais to Swansea Victoria. Also included is G.D. Nuttgens' 'A history of Oxwich village' which contains information on limestone quarrying and trade.

R.O. Roberts, 'Enterprise and capital for nonferrous metal smelting in Glamorgan, 1694-1924', Morgannwg, vol. XXIII, 1979, 48-82

The amount of capital required by the smelting industry was considerable: in the 19th century it appears that an investment of about £500 per employee was required. In view of the small amount of money available in Glamorgan at the beginning of the Industrial Revolution, it was hardly surprising that the capital should have come from outside the county. Mr Roberts identifies the sources of this investment for firms established in three periods, pre-1750, 1750-1860 and post-1860. The largely immigrant entrepreneurs were a highly diverse group, but represented were capitalists in ore-mining and copper and brass manufacture. Mr Roberts also considers briefly their characteristics and achievements as business and community leaders although, as he admits, the evidence for this is too sparse to enable any firm conclusions to be drawn.

P.R. Reynolds, 'Building the Swansea Vale Railway', Newsletter of the Swansea Valley Historical Society, 8, 1980, 1-6 (From SVHS, c/o The Cross, Pontardawe, Swansea. 15p post free.)

An outline of the steps by which Scott's tramroad of 1819 was converted into the SVR and extended up the valley as far as Brynamman, which place it reached in 1864.

AQUEDUCT, no. 5, 1979/80 (From Neath & Tennant Canals Preservation Society, 57 Brithwen Road, Waunarlwydd, Swansea. No price stated.)

The latest issue of the journal of the N & T contains a variety of internal society material and two short articles of historical interest. 'The beginnings of the Tennant Canal' by Gerald Gabb draws largely on The Cambrian in an attempt to avoid duplicating material already published. Ian Milne uses a manuscript volume recording traffic in the 1890s to examine 'Goods carried on the Tennant Canal, 1890-1901'.

Published for the South West Wales Industrial Archaeology Society by P.R. Reynolds, 12 Beaconsfield Way, Sketty, Swansea SA2 9JR.