

# BULLETIN OF INDUSTRIAL ARCHAEOLOGY IN CBA GROUP 9

Number 3

October 1967

Editor: Geoffrey H. Starmer, 17 Mayfield Road, Northampton

## COUNTY INDUSTRIAL ARCHAEOLOGY REPRESENTATIVES

Bedfordshire: Mr. Geoffrey Sands, Bedfordshire County Council,  
3 High Street, Bedford.

Berkshire: Mr. J. Kenneth Major, 2 Eldon Road, Reading.

Buckinghamshire: Dr. P.N. Jarvis, 1 Wordsworth Drive, Bletchley.

Oxfordshire: Mr. J.F. Carter, Tarvers, Adderbury East, Banbury.

Northamptonshire: Mr. Geoffrey H. Starmer, 17 Mayfield Road, Northampton

If there are workers pursuing industrial archaeological studies in any of the five counties who are not yet in touch with that County's representative, it is hoped that contact will be established as soon as possible so that each representative will have a complete record of the industrial archaeology being undertaken in his County. This will help co-ordination of the work so that:-

- (a) Anyone will be able to see if a particular topic is being studied and if so, by whom.
- (b) Anyone coming across information or material remains which are relevant to another worker's studies will know to whom to pass the information.

## INTER-COUNTY CO-OPERATION

One of the aims of the industrial archaeology sub-panel of C.B.A. Group 9 is to further co-operation between industrial archaeology activities in the five counties. This Bulletin contains a reference to co-operation between workers in Northamptonshire and Oxfordshire with regard to the Oxfordshire Ironstone Company.

A rather different example of the involvement of several Counties is that of an Honours Degree student, G.P. Hawksford at the Rugby College of Engineering Technology who is undertaking a project in industrial archaeology as part of the final year of his course. The student's home is near Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire. He is sponsored by the firm of W.H. Allens Ltd. of Bedford who consider that his final year project will provide him with a valuable background to his work as a sales engineer. The title of the project is "Changes in the form of stationary prime movers used within 10 miles of Rugby" and besides an investigation of technical, economic and social aspects, it includes a survey of what remains of part forms of prime movers in the 10 miles radius. This covers parts of Warwickshire, Leicester and Northamptonshire. The supervisor for the project is Mr. G.H. Starmer, the Industrial Archaeology representative for Northamptonshire.

## REPORTS OF INDUSTRIAL ARCHAEOLOGY IN THE INDIVIDUAL COUNTIES

### BEDFORDSHIRE

#### 1. Studies

Tramway near Linslade. Dr. M.J.T. Lewis writes of a tramway which appears on the Dunstable and London and Birmingham Railway plans of 1844. The tramway is shown as running from "Clay Cross Coal Depot" just south of Linslade to the Grand Junction Canal, apparently not joining the London and Birmingham Railway and crossing the Dunstable Line at an acute angle. The depot, which once had a limekiln was at about 913243. Dr. Lewis's informant was Geoffrey Webb of Bedford who has found no surviving traces of the line.

## BERKSHIRE

### 1. Studies

(a) Rope Walk, Wantage. Dr. E.L. Jones has found and recorded the remains of a rope walk in Little Lane. This lane runs between two 18th century brick walls and was in fact the rope walk. On the eastern wall the bricks have been engraved with numerals in arabic script to mark the two yard intervals.

(b) Buscot Park. John Gray, of Abingdon, has continued his work on this estate which became industrialised in the late 1860's. More and more documentation is coming to light about the scale of operation. The railway is now mapped and the sugar beet factory is becoming a very real enterprise even though it ceased to exist some 80 years ago.

(c) Colliers Brickworks, Reading. Mr. McCombe and Mr. Kenneth Major have been recording this brickworks.

This recording is of an emergency character as the brickyard ceased to make bricks in April and is now about to be demolished so that houses may be built over the site. Colliers was one of the great brickyards of Berkshire and its hand-made bricks were sought after in many parts of the country. Sir Edwin Lutyens used bricks from this yard in his work at Hampstead Garden Suburb, Folly Farm, Sulhamstead as well as other of his brick houses. Many original drawings were rescued and have been placed in the Royal Institute of British Architects Library. Lots of site plans of this brickyard and of other brickyards have been saved enabling a pattern to be built up for this yard as much of it had already been demolished. 150 photographs have been taken of the kilns, of the machines and of the tiles in the stock rooms. The stock rooms have not been entered for some 40 years and the tiles date from the existing catalogues of 1899. These are highly decorative roof tiles, finials, hips, verges, ridges, door numbers etc.

The bricks were made in a 4-storey building, taken through tunnel dryers and then fired in the Hoffman Kiln. The tiles and pottery were made in other sections of the yard and there were 16 downdraught kilns for the firing of these.

(d) Emergency recording. The need for more keen workers in Industrial Archaeology in Berkshire is underlined by the Emergency Recording of Colliers Brickyard. Similar work should be undertaken at Tilehurst Potteries which is also about to be demolished. This cannot easily be done with the present small numbers and people are urgently required both for field work at the end of this season and for library researches.

## BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

### 1. Studies

(a) A mediaeval pottery at Olney, Bucks. This is being excavated by the Bucks. County Museum with the aid of a grant from the Ministry of Works. The Director of Excavation is Mr. Philip May, and the site supervisor Mr. Dennis Mynard of the Wolverton Archaeological Society. This site revealed several clamps, and one kiln has been excavated this year. The kiln was about 8 ft in diameter and had a central baffle. It was wood-fired. The contents of the last firing of the kiln were abandoned in the floor of the kiln when it collapsed, and a most interesting collection of crockery has been removed from it. Once the necessary jig-saw puzzle has been completed, there should be a fine set of pots to study. The pottery seems to have been in use from about 1150 to 1350- it is almost certain that it was abandoned before 1373. This is the first pottery of this type to be found in North Bucks. Excavations will be continued next year.

(b) Cast Iron Bridge at Newport Pagnell (See Bulletin No. 2 page 3). This is a cast iron arch of 62 ft span crossing the Great Ouse and dating from 1810. It was built by the Messrs. Walkers of Rotherham who also cast the celebrated bridge designed by Tom Paine which was eventually erected at Sunderland in 1786. The Newport Pagnell bridge has the same attractive design as the Paine bridge, having diminishing rings in the spandrels. The first stone was laid by Mr. Provis of Paddington.

On Wednesday, July 19th, 1967, a public meeting was held at Newport Pagnell to discuss the future of this bridge. At the conclusion of the meeting there was an overwhelming vote in favour of retaining the bridge.

The bridge has now been scheduled by the Ministry of Public Buildings and Works.

2. Lectures, Courses

Dr. Michael Lewis is to talk to the Bletchley Society on "Railways before George Stephenson" on October 12th; this lecture covers the subject from Mediterranean rutways of the year dot until the opening of the Stockton & Darlington in 1825, and is profusely illustrated.

OXFORDSHIRE

1. Studies

(a) Oxfordshire Ironstone Company. Production of iron ore from pits near Wroxton began in 1919. The quarrying activities developed considerably over the years resulting in an extensive standard gauge railway system to carry ore from the quarries to the crushing plant at Wroxton and to carry the crushed ore about 5 miles to the Great Western Railway, one-and-a-quarter miles north of Banbury station. At one time there were 22 steam locomotives and up to 30,000 tons of ore per week were moved to Banbury sidings. The steam locomotives were replaced by a fleet of 13 diesels, in 1964/5

In the "Banbury Guardian" of 20th July, 1967, there was an announcement that the Oxfordshire Ironstone Co. was to cease production at the end of September. Mr. John Carter and a group of workers decided to record this quarrying system and a pilot survey of the line was made by Mr. Geoffrey H. Starmer of Northampton to determine the items worthy of recording.

A small group of workers have made a colour film of the last workings at the two faces providing ore at the time of closure, namely Hornton Grounds and Alkeston No. 1. The quarry manager, Mr. Young, has been most co-operative and helpful in producing this film. He has also offered his scrap book of relevant photographs for copying to put with the film

As a result of an appeal in the "Banbury Guardian", John Carter has been offered a short cine film and a number of photographs.

Mr. R.G. O'Rourke of the Northamptonshire Industrial Archaeology Group, has spent some time at the system and has compiled a detailed map of all the remaining features.

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

1. Studies

(a) Ironstone Quarries. In 1959, Eric Tonks, in his book "The Ironstone Railways and Tramways of the Midlands" listed 17 ironstone quarries at work in Northamptonshire. The number still at work is now only six. Of those that have closed since 1959, eight have been almost completely obliterated, quarries having been filled in and the sites levelled. On the other hand, some quarries which have been closed for over 40 years have remained virtually untouched until the present time when they, too, are being levelled. Investigations have been directed to these two different aspects:-

1. Long closed systems, noting and photographing what still remains. Sites visited are:

Duston Mines (This was greatly helped by Mr. King of the Northamptonshire Record Office, informing the Group as soon as he had acquired a 25" map of 1886 showing these mines)

Hunsbury Hill Mines

Lodge Plantation Quarries (near Stowe Nine Churches)

The old Bennerley Iron Co's pits near Newton, near Geddington.

2. Systems still at work, recording the method of operation as well as the quarries and equipment. Those covered in reasonable detail are:

Richard Thomas and Baldwin Ltd., Blisworth (Closed at end of September 1967)

Staveley Minerals Ltd., Cranford

Naylor Benzon & Co., Nassington

In addition, parts of the very extensive system of Stewarts and Lloyds Minerals Ltd. at Corby have been recorded in association with Eric S. Tonks of Birmingham, the national authority on ironstone railways in the Midlands.

(b) Celluloid Industry. The manufacture of celluloid was established in Northampton before the turn of the century. Some of the early machinery is still in use at Bluemels (previously Dovers Ltd.), St. James Road, Northampton and Mr. W. Huckvale is recording the plant and processes.

(c) Museum of Milling, Billing Mill (SP 814611). Work has continued on the installation of stones and machinery in the mill. One pair of stones is now complete with hopper, horse and shoe together with the entire drive from the waterwheel to the runner stone.

Originally there were three pairs of stones. In addition to the pair which have been fully restored, the bedstone of another pair is in position with the runner stone propped against the adjacent wall so that the dressing of both stones is visible. The third pair has been removed completely together with their stone nut and stone spindle. This provides for easier viewing of the foot bearing to the upright shaft and of the pit wheel and wallower.

The work has taken longer than anticipated and the Museum of Milling will not be opened before Spring 1968. Anyone with items which they think may be suitable for this Museum are asked to contact Mrs. Mahon, Chequer House, Stocks Hill, Moulton.

## 2. Lectures, Courses and Exhibitions

(a) On 6th November, Mr. Eric Instone of the Northamptonshire Industrial Archaeology Group, will be speaking to the Northampton branch of the Railway Correspondence and Travel Society on "Railway Archaeology".

(b) The Northamptonshire Industrial Archaeology Group will have a small display of photographs and "objects" in the exhibition being arranged with the CBA 9 Group Meeting at Northampton College of Technology on Saturday, 11th November.

## 3. Publications

"Desborough 'Co-op' Pits" by Sydney A. Leleux in The Industrial Railway Record, No. 15, September 1967.

Gives some of the history, a good photograph of operations in 1905 and a description of the present railway system. There is no mention of the other existing equipment which includes a medium sized horizontal single cylinder mill engine (disused).

## 4. Preservation/Museums

The Preservation Committee of the Northampton Civic Action Society is of the opinion that an example of a shoe factory should be preserved 'possibly for use as a museum of industrial archeology'. The Preservation Committee feel that it would be unwise for them to recommend any particular building, of the number which are worthy of preservation.

## APPEALS

1. Horsewheels With reference to the horse driven pump at Swallowfield Park (see Page 3 of Bulletin No. 2), Hugo Brunner and Kenneth Major are assembling all the information available on horsewheels, i.e. wheels powered by horses walking in a horizontal plane and Donkeywheels, i.e. wheels powered by donkeys walking in a vertical plane.  
So far at least 50 existing examples have come to light and it would be appreciated if anyone knowing of similar wheels could get in touch with Kenneth Major, 2 Eldon Road, Reading.
2. Buckinghamshire Clockmakers Mr. E. Legg of 17 Napier Street, Fenny Stratford, Bucks, is compiling a list of Buckinghamshire clockmakers and would like to hear from anyone having any examples, or with information on the subject.
3. Metalworking Industry and Mediaeval Monasteries Dr. and Mrs. P. Jarvis are interested in evidence of metalworking industry on or near to the site of mediaeval monasteries and would be grateful to hear from anyone who could help, especially with contemporary records.

