



To mark the end of our open period we are celebrating in our customary style of holding a bonfire night on Sunday 1st November at 6.30 p.m. The Amberley Chalk Pits Museum Association (ACPM) has devised a different formula this year. Tickets are available from the Museum (telephone Bury 370) at £2 adults or £1 for children which will include hot food (probably hot soup, and hot dogs and/or burgers) and a display of fireworks bought direct from the manufacturer, a licensed bar (cash) provided by our friends at the Black Horse, Amberley, plus of course the bonfire built by volunteers. What better way to spend £2? No need to bother about the weather, as the show goes on whatever happens to fall or blow on us.

The Bonfire Celebration will, it is hoped, add to the funds of ACPMA who have already passed over about £200 to the museum to be devoted to the Country Garage on which work has already started.

Please note, if you receive this Newsletter in sufficient time, that the museum will feature on the TVS "Country Ways" programme at 6.30 p.m. on Friday, 9th October.

GORDON THOMERSON per pro IAN DEAN - DIRECTOR

MEMBERSHIP CHANGES

New Members

R. Hibbitt 72 Park Crescent Road, Brighton BN2 3HS. Brighton 682066
R. O'Shea 6 Sealcliffe, South Coast Road, Telscombe Cliffs, Newhaven BN9 7AE
Peacehaven 6236
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C.R. Cowlin 19 Denehurst Gardens, Hastings TN35 4PB. Hastings 751859
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Central Area J.S.F. Blackwell, 21 Hythe Road, Brighton BN1 6JR (0273) 557674
Northern Area E.W. Henbery, 10 Mole Close, Langley Green, Crawley (0293) 23481

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

B. Austen, Brig. A.E. Baxter, D.H. Cox, I. Dean, F.W. Gregory, E.W. Henbery,
P.J. Holtham, G.E.F. Mead, R.M. Palmer, G.G. Thomerson, M.F. Tighe.

Copy for the Newsletter should be sent to:

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PLEASE NOTE Latest acceptance date for copy for the January Newsletter
is 10th December 1987

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OCTOBER 1987

CHIEF CONTENTS

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Some Brighton Glasshouses
Destruction of a Windmill

DIARY DATES

- 10th Oct. Saturday. Autumn Conference of Federation of Sussex Local History Societies, at the Victory Hall, Balcombe. The theme will be "Aspects of interior and exterior decoration". One of the speakers will be Dr Brian Austen (our editor) who will talk on "The history of furniture and furnishings 1500-1650".
11th Oct. Sunday. "Open Day" at Chalk Pits Museum. Vintage cars, buses, fire engines, traction engines, motor cycles, stationary engines etc. Further information, phone Bury 370.
25th Oct. Sunday. Timber yard in operation at Chalk Pits Museum. Steam and hand cranes in use, rack saws in operation under steam power. Further information, phone Bury 370.
30th Oct. Friday. Lecture, "The start of a new venture" (8 years of Amberley Chalk Pits Museum) by Mrs Judith Warren, Church Hall, Cuckfield, 8 p.m.
14th Nov. Saturday. Our own AGM. See enclosed notice.
The AGM will be followed by an illustrated (slides) talk by Frank Gregory on "The Water Mills of Sussex".
24th Nov. Tuesday. Lecture, "Hogges ironworks" by Mrs Dot Meades, Danehill Memorial Hall, 8 p.m.
26th Nov. Thursday. Illustrated Lecture, "Wealden iron" by Mr J. Hodgkinson (WIRG), Church Hall, Forest Row, 8 p.m.

MEMBERS' EVENING, Saturday 27th June

Home Farm at Herons Ghyll, near Uckfield, our Chairman's house, provided the venue for this year's members' evening. After examining his collection of veteran motor cycles and motor tricycles and other most interesting automobilia, we were treated to a superb spread of refreshments by Sir Frederick and Lady Anne.

Dot Meades of the Wealden Iron Research Group then presented her video of the activities of the Rye foundry which members had visited last April (see Newsletter No 55) and showed the preparations for, and casting of various artefacts such as street bollards and firebacks. All present were most impressed with the near professional standard of the video.

Tony Yoward then showed his video of a special once only brew at Southwick Brewery near Portsmouth. The brewery ceased brewing in 1976. In 1982 Southampton University I.A. group started 2½ years work renovating the equipment culminating in a once only brewing in 1985. The day started at 5 a.m. firing up the steam boiler. The brew was completed that day and sat for a week before being casked. The first pint was drunk a week later. The brewery is now a dry museum.

The barn at Home Farm provided an ideal setting to view the videos and our thanks must be extended to our Chairman and his wife for their hospitality.

JOHN BLACKWELL

VISIT TO RUDGWICK BRICKWORKS

On the morning of Saturday, 25 July, about 15 members visited the works of Rudgwick Brick Co. Ltd., at Lynwick Street west of Horsham. Our guide was Mr Watkinson, the quality control manager, who began by giving us a brief history of the brickyard. It was established around the turn of the century. All bricks were made by hand until 1949, when a Berry machine was installed. This was replaced by the present Aberson machine in 1961. In 1972, gas-burning of the clamp was introduced and, at the present time, a new drying shed is under construction. This is situated between the two clamps and will utilise some of the heat given off during firing. Our guide took us on a tour of the works, starting with the extensive clay pit, which contains enough material for another 20 years' working, and then through the main shed, where mixing and moulding takes place, on to the drier and finally to the clamp.

For details of this operation, please refer to my note in the January 1987 Newsletter (No 53). I should, however, like to correct two points made in that article: (1) The base of the clamp is not completely flat. A ridge of sand at the outer edges results in the base being slightly 'dished' and the sides of the clamp taper gradually to give stability when the bricks contract during the firing process. (2) The wastage of bricks on firing can be as little as 1% or 2% but in fact averages about 6%. However, such is the demand for bricks at the present time, that even some of the rejects are saleable!

The tour ended with a short 'questions' session in the company board-room. Around the walls of this room are photographs of some impressive buildings which have been built with Rudgwick bricks and the walls themselves consist of panels of brickwork illustrating the different products of the company. Our thanks are due to Mr Watkinson and the Rudgwick Brick Co. for a very interesting visit and to Don Cox for making all the arrangements.

In the afternoon the party split up into smaller groups to record sites of I.A. interest within the parish of Rudgwick. One group toured the outlying sites by car whilst the others enjoyed one of the few sunny days this summer sauntering up and down the long village street, observing buildings and speculating about their earlier uses. The work of filling up the record cards was left in the capable hands of Ron Martin.

M. BESWICK

VISIT TO EMSWORTH - 22nd August

About 25 members enjoyed a perambulation round Emsworth on Saturday 22nd August led by Tony Yoward with Mary Yoward in the rear shepherding the stragglers.

There are not many visible remains of I.A. in Emsworth now, but it has a lot of interest in the past. It became important as a port in the eighteenth century and by the mid nineteenth century coal was imported to support local industry such as brick making and the brewing of beer. Other industries were the manufacture of sailcloth, sacking, rope, twine, fishing nets, and ship building.

Emsworth boasted two water mills, three tide mills, a steam mill and a wind mill, from which flour was exported at the town quays. Timber was also exported.

A significant oyster industry is evident from the remains of oyster beds seen at low tide. In the mid nineteenth century the beds were laid partly with native oysters and partly with those caught on the French coast brought over in barrel hold vessels. The oysters were sent mainly to London by rail. In 1902 an outbreak of cholera caused by pollution from untreated sewage (as forecast in 1895 by an inspector whose advice was not heeded!) resulted in the closure of this industry. However, with sewage now disposed of at Thorney Island the oyster industry is now back in business.

This visit was enhanced by Tony's skill as a raconteur ably assisted by Mary, and by their invitation back to tea and biscuits in their home at Slipper Mill. Thank you both very much Tony and Mary for a very pleasant afternoon.

Subsequently some members visited Poyntz Bridge at Chichester on the way home.

AIA CONFERENCE -BATH, September 1987

Several of our members spent an interesting and enjoyable few days at Bath this year. We were particularly pleased to have our President John Haselfoot with us.

GORDON THOMERSON

AREA SECRETARIES' REPORTS

WESTERN AREA

Coultershaw Pump

Open Days continue to attract a worthwhile number of visitors and "gate-money" is making a significant contribution to maintenance costs.

The electric motor driving the Duke & Ockenden borehole pump has been completely overhauled, including impregnating the windings and fitting new bearings, by three local firms at no charge; we are very grateful to them. The pump is now operating again as a working demonstration.

There is minor woodworm attack in the roof trusses and some of the floorboards of the building. Estimates are being obtained for treating this.

The replacement of the two outstanding main sluice-gates is being planned for the autumn, as a joint operation between Petworth Estate staff and SIAS members. This is becoming urgent as the old gates are unlikely to survive another season. We have had the new gates to hand for 18 months.

Poyntz Bridge

The bridge is now being decked with timber and the handrails are being fitted.

MICHAEL PALMER

NORTHERN AREA

Ifield Mill

The open days have proved very popular with a steady stream of visitors with which we have managed to cope. Ideally we would like to have someone in attendance on each of the three floors plus one other to look after the running of the waterwheel. Prior to opening next year we shall canvas support for manning on open days and hope that some of our members can fill the gaps.

The installation of the stair lift now seems certain and it is planned to complete this during October, and next year's access should be considerably easier for the elderly and disabled.

Some deterioration of the elm sides of the launder has become apparent and our main task before the weather gets too cold is to replace them with oak planks which we now have to hand.

Lowfield Heath Windmill

The dismantling by our contractors commenced on 7th July with the removal of the roof in one piece, after considerable preparation work to ensure a safe lift. The brest was removed on 14th July and by 31st July the entire structure, including cross trees and post had been successfully taken down and transported to the storage site.

Meanwhile Peter James and his team had taken down, brick by brick, the roundhouse walls and all that now remains is to complete the site clearance in the next few weeks.

It is planned to commence, in the near future, the preparation of the foundations of the roundhouse on its new site, at the Aviaries & Zoo at Charlwood. By the middle of 1988 it is anticipated that the roundhouse will have been completed and the initial stages of re-erection of the mill will be in hand.

Once again may we appeal for any offers of help to be made known to P. James, 15 Sandringham Road, Broadfield, Crawley, Sussex RH11 9NF. Tel. Crawley 540705.

TED HENBERY

SOME BRIGHTON GLASSHOUSES - or - I.A. in the warm

One of the joys of the S.I.A.S. is that its members' interests cover a wide field of study, as the Newsletters and Journals bear witness. With this in mind, I found I was agreeably surprised on browsing through Ron Martin's file of industrial buildings, to find amongst the Victorian warehouses and Art Deco cinemas - a commercial grower's glasshouse in Balcombe! As luck would have it I was in the process of researching market gardening and had recently found reference to some extensive glasshouses in nineteenth

century Brighton. Now, while I love to push back the boundary of S.I.A.S. research, even I could not convince sceptics that the cultivation of geraniums and sprouts, came within S.I.A.S. remit! But the heating mechanisms for a hot house grape crop most certainly could. (Ron Martin informs me that at a SERIAC conference within the recent past glasshouses were featured along with Thomas Paxton of Crystal Palace and Chatsworth fame.)

Loudon's Magazine of Gardening seems an unlikely source of I.A. material, yet in a copy of 1842 under "Gardens at Brighton and in its neighbourhood" is the following description:-

"Rose Hill Nursery, Messrs J. & G. Evans ... we must not forget to record the dimensions and crop of one vinery. Length 45 ft; breadth 10 ft; height at back, 10 ft; at front, 3 ft. Heated by one fire, over which there is a boiler, the water from which circulates in pipes at the back of the house, while the smoke passes along a flue in front ... the weight of grapes cut annually from this house is from 3 cwt. to 3½ cwt!"(1)

Evans' business covered, by 1873, the whole area east of Rose Hill between Park Crescent and Upper Lewes Road and consisted at that date of 34 glasshouses set on a well drained south facing slope well sheltered from the north and east winds, but above the frost and fog hollow of Brighton's Level.(2)

The magazine next mentioned:- "Normans Market-Garden at the eastern extremity of Brighton, in Park St., is remarkable for its vineries which form a range 400 ft. long, 15 wide, and 12 ft. high at back. There is no front glass, but a parapet of 2 ft. with openings with wooden shutters for admitting air, and there are corresponding openings and shutters at the top of the back wall. Both are opened by jointed wooden levers in a very simple manner. These houses were put up about twenty years ago; and they are heated by flues which Mr Norman after nineteen years' experience considers cheaper than the hot-water system ... the abundance of light ... the dryness of the fire heat, and also the dryness of the soil and subsoil, Mr Norman attributes (to this) the high flavour of the grapes which, he says, are the highest in flavour which are brought to Covent Garden Market."(3)

Normans was in a similar situation to Evans, 28 separate glasshouses south facing, at the base of a hill on a chalk subsoil and Coombe Deposit cover well protected by hill and sea from wind and frost.(4) By the mid 19th century both nurseries were near upper class residential markets - Evans' near the London and Lewes Roads with the fashionable terraces offering a wealthy clientele; and Normans' adjacent to Queens Park and Kemp Town. Their success in the following years was secured with the opening of railway stations within a few hundred yards of the glasshouses allowing easy access to the Metropolitan market. Both lasted, in a reduced form until the 1930s when the Brighton housing boom made their worth as nurseries insignificant compared to their property value.(5)

References:-

- (1) Loudon's Magazine of Gardening (June?) 1842 p.350. Brighton Reference Library photocopy.
- (2) O.S. map 10.56 ft.-1 inch sheet LXVI(10.1) 1873.
- (3) Loudon op. cit.
- (4) O.S. sheet LXVI(10.22) 1873.
- (5) personal communication, Mr R. Carden who remembers both nurseries.

GEOFFREY MEAD

FATAL ACCIDENT - DESTRUCTION OF A WINDMILL

From The Brighton Gazette March 27th 1862.

"The accident which happened on Monday morning (March 25th) was occasioned by the fall of a windmill at the top of Sussex Street (Brighton) near the wall of the Queen's Park. The mill was about to be removed, when owing, apparently, to the great age and rottenness of the timbers of the mill, it fell down and crushed a labouring man who was assisting in the work, and a little boy who was looking on."

It was quite common in the nineteenth century for mills to be moved particularly in growing towns such as Brighton where windmills previously erected on the open downs

were enveloped by a sea of encroaching housing, necessitating their removal to a more open position or demolition. There is a well known print, a copy of which is in Brighton Pavilion, showing a post mill being moved, affixed to a sled which is being drawn by oxen.

The mill at the top of Sussex Street which was owned by Francis Taylor and was stated at the resultant inquest to be some 70 or 80 years old, was being moved from its position near the present Windmill Inn to a site near the Industrial Schools (the present day Fitzhurst School in Woodingdean) some two miles to the north-west.

It is interesting to speculate from the inquest evidence reported in The Brighton Gazette how the mill was to be moved. Evidence is given of the side pieces of a "carriage being made in 12" x 6" deal and the tie timbers were double tenanted four inches into it". A workman also admitted to being "under the carriage measuring the gauge of the rails", so presumably, the carriage was moved by animal power on a track. Did the carriage have wheels or rollers?

It was also reported that the "mill rested on blocking during the whole of Sunday. Yesterday morning (the day of the accident) we commenced blocking it and the cross bracing to make it standing secure" by lifting one corner at a time with screw jacks and putting the packing in. How was the carriage positioned under the mill and the mill secured to it for transportation?

The remainder of the evidence concentrated on whether the carriage broke or the cross piece of the mill (crosstree? from which the body of a post mill is hung). The jury decided it was the cross piece and hence a verdict of accidental death was recorded.

JOHN BLACKWELL

JOHN STENNING & SON LTD., 1792-1987

The sale, closure and clearance of the timber yard of John Stenning & Sons at Robertsbridge in the early part of 1987 marks the end of a story which began in 1792 when John Stenning, a 17 year old who had not completed his apprenticeship as a joiner, arrived in East Grinstead in search of work. The timber merchant's business which he established there soon prospered, taking over the Robertsbridge yard in the 1890s. In 1964 the East Grinstead yard was closed, having become difficult to operate in its town centre location, the site was redeveloped with office blocks, and the whole business was concentrated on Robertsbridge.

This note is merely for the sake of record. It is good to know that the current head of the family, also named John Stenning, is compiling its history and that the firm's records, which date back to the early 19th century, have been offered to the East Sussex County Record Office.

The East Grinstead Town Museum has for sale a limited number of photographs of work on one of the firm's former sidelines, making tennis rackets and hockey sticks, and a postcard of the topping out of the chimney at the East Grinstead yard in 1913. The two may be obtained from me for £1.25, post free.

M.J. LEPPARD, Honorary Curator, East Grinstead Town Museum, East Court, East Grinstead, Sussex, RH19 3LT.

VOLKS ELECTRIC RAILWAYS BRIGHTON

TQ 315035 to TQ 333033

The use of electric traction started early in the South. In 1883 Magnus Volk constructed a narrow gauge electric railway along the foreshore at Brighton, starting near Palace Pier and extended eastwards in three stages until it reached Black Rock, a distance of 1900 yards. The first public electric railway in the U.K. it predated the electric railway at Portrush, Northern Ireland, by a few weeks, and the tramway on Ryde Pier by 3 years. The first electric street tramway was at Blackpool, opened in 1885 and still in use.

Originally both rails were used as conductors and the gauge was 2 ft. The third rail system (at 160 volts) was introduced in 1894 and the gauge was widened to 2 ft. 8½ inches.

This railway still operates.

A bolder venture was Volk's Brighton to Rottingdean foreshore railway to give passengers a view of the chalk cliffs. It was laid on the chalk wave cut platform between

tides, with two 2 ft. 8½ inch gauge parallel tracks 18 ft. across the outer rails, on concrete blocks at 6 ft. centres, total length 2½ miles. The civil engineering design was by R. St. George Moore who had designed and was involved in the wartime defence scheme that led to the Nab Tower towed out and sunk in position in 1920.

The passenger car looked like a section of pier on four cast iron columns with a bogie at the bottom of each. Current at 500 volts was taken from two overhead electric wires as in tramway practice. The motor was at deck level, two bogies being driven by vertical shafting at the legs.

Running started in 1896 but had to be abandoned in 1901 when Brighton Corporation carried out extensions of the groyne system between Black Rock and Rottingdean.

ALAN ALLNUTT

BOOK REVIEWS

Vic Mitchell & Keith Smith, Hastings to Ashford (Midhurst 1987) The Middleton Press, ISBN 0 906530 37 1 pp96 £6.95

The most recent volume in the series "South Coast Railways" fills the last gap in the Sussex railway scene with the exception of Tonbridge to Hastings which will no doubt follow from the Middleton Press in due course. The Hastings to Ashford line, although opened throughout as early as February 1851 never became more than a secondary route. It was seen by the military, obsessed with the threat from France, to have a strategic value but commercially it was never important. The new harbour at the mouth of the River Rother at Rye failed to develop to any extent despite its rail connection. Of the towns along the route Rye was the largest but with little industry, it retained the character of a sleepy country agricultural town, well illustrated by its market adjacent to the station and the illustration (42) of the loaded hay waggons in the goods yard. The book also covers the New Romney branch with its military traffic at Lydd. Although the Rye and Camber Tramway and the Romney, Hythe & Dymchurch Railways are mentioned in the text briefly, neither line is illustrated, the authors no doubt feeling that to do them justice required more space than could be permitted in this volume. As with other railway books from the Middleton Press the eyes of the industrial archaeologist will light upon the illustrations which show station buildings, goods sheds and like structures, and there are plenty of these. The reproductions of large scale ordnance maps for the various stations along the line are also most helpful. It is possible to be critical of detail. The plan of Winchelsea town following plate 37 seems to serve little purpose and information about the rebuilding of the town after the storm of 1827 included in the captions to both plates 32 and 37 would appear to have little relevance to the theme of the book. The reproduction of advertisements where there is a clear railway connection, for instance those between plates 40 and 41 is perfectly valid, but those of the Rye Coffee Tavern (in the Appledore section of the book) and Reeve & Finn, Estate Agents of Rye & Lydd (under Brookland) seem less justified. The proof reader has also failed to note the incorrect date for the Battle of Trafalgar in the introductory section. Despite these minor blemishes, the book follows the Middleton Press philosophy of giving an attractive book at a reasonable cost. It provides a valuable record of the line, its buildings, its traffic, its passenger stock and locomotives from the second half of the nineteenth century to the present time.

BRIAN AUSTEN

Vic Mitchell & Keith Smith, Tonbridge to Hastings, Middleton Press 1987 pp 96 £6.95

Another volume in the "Southern Main Line" series from the usual team and the same publisher. It also follows the same format and arrangement, introductory text, copious illustrations (120 of them) with detailed captions explaining the important features and large scale O.S. map extracts of station areas. There is no need for change. This formula has proved itself successful to both the railway enthusiasts, who are the main market, and also the industrial archaeologist and local historian. Once more station views and railway buildings feature large. A wayside station like Stonegate has six photographs that illustrate its buildings and record developments over a span of time from early this century until the present time. Other stations are equally well illustrated. The Mountfield gypsum mines and their associated railway and ropeway are comprehensively covered with four pages devoted to them. Apart from the main line, the Bexhill West branch is fully covered and some reference made to the Kent and East Sussex Railway,

though this has been fully covered in an earlier Middleton Press title.

As with most books there are small points which offend this particular reviewer. The pages are unnumbered and it is thus difficult to refer readers to particular pages. I agree that the photographs are numbered in sequence but this does not help if it is a page of text or a map to which reference needs to be made. As usual in this series tickets are illustrated. These provide useful information on travel costs, routeings, conditions of travel and incentives offered to the public. The same however cannot be said about platform tickets, and luggage labels are even less instructive, yet these appear in places. It would help if the tickets could be included in the section to which they refer. This sometimes happens but is far from universal. The map included after the section on Sidley station merely duplicates the information included in the introductory map and does not even include the Bexhill West branch. These are however but minor points of detail. In general terms the book fully lives up to the Middleton standard of providing an attractive, well illustrated book full of interest at a reasonable price. There are yet other lines to cover, though little of Sussex interest left, and enthusiasts of many kinds will look forward eagerly to the arrival of the next volume.

BRIAN AUSTEN

Alec Clifton-Taylor, Buildings of Delight, (ed Denis Moriarty), Victor Gollanz 1986 pp 257

The death in 1985 of Alec Clifton-Taylor, the distinguished architectural historian was an especially sad note for Sussex; for of his two highly rated BBC-TV Series "Six English Towns", one programme was on Lewes and one other on Chichester. His enthusiasm and love of buildings of all scales and usage, where those buildings were soundly and imaginatively constructed, ensured a healthy balance in his programmes of the sumptuous and the workmanlike.

This, his last book, published posthumously, contains a wealth of material to delight and inform, for with Niklaus Pevsner and W.G. Hoskins he had the talent to bring architecture and history together, combining sheer enthusiasm for his subject with a detailed knowledge both of technique and materials.

This volume traverses England to list 96 entries, many of unheralded architectural interest, thus we have the stables at Chatsworth - but not the house; the forerunner of Brighton's Pavilion, Sezincote in Gloucs., but not its gaudy seaside offspring. Members of this society will be pleased to see Sussex represented twice with Sackville College, East Grinstead and the Balcombe Viaduct. Further afield is the Dundas Aqueduct, Wilts., Stowmarket Station, Suffolk and Pitstone Green windmill, Bucks., to name but a few; the whole book is a delight in its attention to essential detail - a house is rarely mentioned without the source quarry of its material - and in its excellent quality of presentation, printing and photographs. For researchers there is that too rare aid - a comprehensive, accurate and easily read index.

Members with only a smattering of architectural interest will find this a revealing and enchanting collection of studies, and those with a more professional background will recognize an acknowledged master.

GEOFFREY MEAD

Recently 3 booklets have been published on the Brighton area which all touch on aspects of I.A. For the princely sum of 10p Brighton and the horse can be purchased from the Lewis Cohen Urban Studies Centre, Grand Parade, Brighton. Compiled by R. Gregory and E. Oldfield, this is a folded A4 pamphlet stuffed with facts, quotes and illustrations, showing the influence of horse transport within the town from pub mews to The Dome, road surfaces to housing development. One of a series costing in all - 90p!

Hove's architectural heritage is a booklet reprinting 9 articles from the Evening Argus supplemented with additional data from Hove planners. Well designed and presented, especially the title page which contains acknowledgements, references and contributors - all too often a rare occurrence. There are 9 chapters dealing with Hove's 8 conservation areas, each with excellent photos and some 6" 1875 map sections. Members will find much of interest here especially the chapters on the Engineerium and the industry of Portslade old village. Cost £1.90.

A History of Hollingdean compiled by Ray Carter published by Lewis Cohen Urban

Studies Centre, £2, deals with a previously ignored suburb of the town. In a series of transcribed taped interviews with older residents of the area, the reader becomes aware of the rapid change of use of the district from a 'town edge' site, complete with laundries, slaughter yard, kennels, nurseries, to an interwar residential area and postwar council estate. There are maps and accompanying photos including some of the Corporation refuse disposal yard with its landmark chimney. Reminiscences of the coalyards, laundries and stabling in the area should all interest members.

Three booklets, well written and illustrated for £4 - is this a record!

G.E.F. MEAD

VOLUNTEER REQUIRED

The Federation of Sussex Local History Societies, of which our Society is a member, requires a Conference Organiser. Events up to spring 1989 have already been planned provisionally. Someone to act in a co-ordinating role is required, and there would be advice and assistance from committee members. Names to Mrs J. Wilkins, 20 Fairfield Way, Haywards Heath, West Sussex, RH16 1UT. Telephone Haywards Heath 412817.

BRIGHTON and HOVE HERALD photo archive. Brighton Reference Library

Items of I.A. interest (continued from previous Newsletter)

12. 73	23. 2.46	Warehouses in New England St., Brighton, Elder Fyffes bananas arrived
12. 74	9. 2.46	Hollingbury factory sites
14. 1	1945	Brighton & Hove Herald printing works
16. 24	28.12.46	Dawkins forge, Marshalls Row, Brighton (2)
16. 54		Construction of Astoria Cinema, Gloucs. Place, Brighton
16. 86	25. 1.47	Carden Avenue and Hollingbury factories (2)
18. 60	5. 6.48	Reconstruction of Brighton Station
19. 45)	4. 9.48	Construction of Carden Schools, Hollingbury (4)
19. 46)		
19. 78	9.10.48	Hollingbury industrial estate under construction
19. 79)		
19. 80)	9.10.48	King St., Brighton, shoe factory interiors (7)
19. 81)		
20. 70)	5. 2.49	Hollingbury factory site
20. 83)	19. 2.49	
21. 4	1948	W. Blatchington mill
21. 14	1948	Southwick power station. Brighton 'A'
21. 19	June 1949	Windmill, Patcham
21. 21)	June 1949	Windmill, Rottingdean
21. 22)		
21. 54)	July 1950	W. Blatchington mill
21. 57)		
21. 57	July 1950	Canal, Portslade, south bank
21. 70	1952?	Shoreham, Canal and petrol storage tanks
21. 79	9. 5.53	Shoreham power station, Brighton 'B' with one chimney
21. 80	1952	Windmill, Patcham
21. 81	Sept. 1952	Windmill, Rottingdean
21. 85	Sept. 1952	Windmill, West Blatchington (2)
23. 6	12. 3.49	Brighton Station, engine and lifting gear
23. 76	4. 6.49	Southwick, new power station construction
24. 62	17. 9.49	Dust destructor, Hollingdean, Brighton
24. 77	8.10.49	Kingston Wharf, Shoreham, timber yard
24. 81)	22.10.49	Waterworks tunnels under Downs, Falmer
24. 82)		
25. 84	4. 3.50	Southwick power station
25. 90	March 1950	Holland Road railway halt, Hove
25. 93	11. 3.50	Construction new Cafe, Pavilion Grounds, Brighton
26. 39	23. 9.50	Falmer School construction
28. 7	2. 6.51	Power Station, Southwick

28. 73)		Views from roof of new power station including Brighton A, locks, East Arm, Shoreham Beach, oil depot.
28. 74)	22. 9.51	
28. 75)		
29. 26	16. 1.52	Cox's Pill factory, Lewes Road, Brighton
30. 24	12. 7.52	Warren Farm - former Industrial Schools, Woodingdean, Brighton
30. 77	29.11.52	Portslade Butts timber wharf
30. 92	8.10.52	Kemp Town station and train
32. 1	15.11.52	Jack and Jill windmills (3)
32. 49	1954	Patcham windmill - dark paint
32. 83	1956?	Brighton 'B' power station - one chimney
32. 94	13. 4.57	Patcham mill - white paint (see 32. 49)
33. 34		Dyke cable car, 19th century? Clear photo) reproductions
33. 34		Chain pier after storm - shows West and Palace piers)
33. 48	17. 4.54	Gas works from Shoreham harbour (good picture)
33. 70	29. 5.54	Electrical transformer under construction, Brighton (no location)
34. 4	25. 9.54	Shoreham harbour east arm, Brighton 'A' power station
34. 10	9.10.54	Mural at C.V.A. factory, Hollingbury, Brighton
34. 47	19. 2.55	Trolleybus in Stanford Avenue, Brighton (2)
34. 64	23. 4.55	Engine, turntable, and mobile crane, Brighton rail yard
35. 7	3. 9.55	Harbour at night, cranes, Shoreham
35. 45	18. 2.55	New look, construction, Southwick (2)
35. 82	7. 7.56	Shoreham harbour extensions (3)
36. 11	20.10.56	Shoreham, dredger (2)
36. 24	8.12.56	Southwick power station
36. 33	19. 1.57	" " " from the sea
36. 34	19. 1.57	" " " " " "
36. 78	Sept. 57	Shoreham harbour, "S.S. Hayling" and cranes
37. 27	12. 9.59	Newhaven harbour, east bank, 2 ships + 9 cranes
37. 33	1960	" " west arm
37. 42	16. 7.60	Southwick canal, south side
37. 42	30. 7.60	Southwick power station
37. 51	21. 1.61	W. Blatchington mill - silhouette
37. 52	1961	Newhaven, east bank
37. 59	8. 7.61	Rottingdean mill - silhouette
37. 79	18. 8.62	Jill mill
37. 80	8. 9.62	Aldrington basin at dusk - chimneys
37. 85	29.12.62	" " " " " " + cranes, Brighton 'B'
37. 95	27. 7.63	West Blatchington mill
37. 96	3. 8.63	Newhaven harbour and B.R. ferry
37.111	20. 6.64	Southwick power station
37.114	8. 8.64	Moorings at Southwick - south bank sheds
37.116	19. 9.65	Newhaven, Denton Island and boats
37.117	17.10.64	Shoreham Lock
37.117	24.10.64	West Blatchington mill
37.119	7.12.64	Aldrington Basin, power station, Brighton 'B'
37.123	19. 2.65	Rottingdean mill

(to be continued)

ASHBURNHAM FORGE & FURNACE (An I.A. walk in East Sussex)

Subsequent to a memorable visit to Ironbridge and Coalbrookdale in Shropshire I took the following walk in the Ashburnham area as a reminder that Sussex, after all, played a key role in the birth of the iron industry.

One fine blustery Saturday in late July 1986 found me parked at a convenient spot overlooking Darwell Reservoir (O.S. ref. TQ 704212). 18th and early 19th century maps indicated that the way from here to Ashburnham was an old line between Darwell furnace, the site of which is now under water, Ashburnham and Netherfield. I hoped to keep to these, taking paths and the road through to the high ground above the valley containing the Ashburnham workings, some four miles south.

Narrow and damp, the path through woodland dipped steeply towards the source of the reservoir. The way became rather eerie when strange rustlings started on my left. Some

ghostly resident of submerged industrial heritage was abroad perhaps? These persisted for a time then, almost cheekily, a group of young deer broke cover and trotted down the path ahead of me melting away once more. At the bottom, the way turned westward to pass under the aerial ropeway which runs for four miles or so between Brightling and Netherfield. At the time, the hoppers hung silently on their greasy cables, dutifully awaiting the next shift at the gypsum mines.

Regaining the old track through a superb beech stand I came upon a wide fire break, the ground becoming high and dry once more. A mile further on this emerged at Cockle Street next to a row of beautifully kept stone and tilehung cottages, dating perhaps from the time when this had been the way through.

From Cockle Street the road south is still quiet enough to be a pleasure to walk on, crossing the Netherfield road at Darwell Hole and then rising between flowery banks to a high and airy ridge leading towards Penhurst. In several places along this stretch the old way, still sunken, runs next to the road. After glimpsing the sea sparkling seven miles to the south I found myself amongst a herd of cows as the road passed down through the village farm and then a little further on, past the church and manor in stately contrast, surely founded amidst the iron industry hereabouts.

Turning westwards at the junction and walking down the steep hill I was at Ashburnham upper forge. Here the road crosses the bay of an extensive hammer pond. The head water stream cascades over a modern weir some 20 ft. or so in height where it once powered tilt hammers to forge and shape iron from the furnace $\frac{1}{2}$ mile upstream. This forge and furnace were the last in the county to work in the traditional way, relying on water power alone and a lengthy 2 stage reduction process at the furnace using charcoal, limestone and specially prepared local iron ore. The production of the charcoal beforehand was in itself a separate industry of large proportions.

Ernest Straker tells us in Wealden Iron p.364 that this whole complex was established between 1549 and 1563 and conveyed in 1611 to Sir John Ashburnham:-

"To William Relfe of Penhurst gent ... The iron works or forge called upper Forge and the pond adjoining called the upper forge pond and the workmens houses near the same place and all the coleplaces, sinderplaces and wasteground containing $8\frac{1}{2}$ acres in the occupation of george Littleboy gent The iron works or furnace called Dallington Furnace with ponds, water, bais, sinder places and coleplaces in the occupation of the said William Rolfe ... £6,330."

Further, he tells us that cannon and other ordnance were made here and used in the civil war. By 1717 the yield was 350 tons, twice that of any other in Sussex. After 1760 the furnace was only in blast during alternate years and by 1785, in blast for 21 weeks at a time at three year intervals. This was the premier iron works in the weald surviving till 1808 when the furnace was tapped for the last time. The forge continued in a limited way for four or five years longer.

Various buildings associated with the forge remain here, set closely into the bay and on the valley floor to the south. Judging by the size of these and the extent of the site, this was a prosperous settlement in the heyday of Sussex iron, certainly more populated than Penhurst village itself.

North of the bay the pond is completely dry and grassed over, its banks, overshadowed by trees and bushes, extend for one-third mile. Evidence of the work carried out is easily found today. Large quantities of cinders, slag and scrap were tipped into the pond along its edges. The dry bottom is stained still and I was able, without too much difficulty, to turn up pieces of slag, ore and even a sizeable piece of forged iron which must have lain here for at least 170 years.

Ashburnham furnace site is reached by a track north from the forge which is still heavily metallised in places with slag, scrap and cinders from the industry here. This follows the stream and rises up the valley side to meet the old way from Penhurst after passing several small excavations or pits. Thence through woodland to a bridge crossing the stream at the furnace site. At this point the waters fight their way through huge lumps of solidified furnace dross and slag. The stream bottom is a mass of iron red rocks formed by hundreds of years of work here. Again the site is overgrown and extensive, still supporting buildings and a very secluded house. Above this on a level with the bay is an extensive brick and tile ironmaster's house,(1) beyond which a small portion of the pond

is still in water. The power from the fall here was used to operate the bellows which provided the blast for the various charcoal and ore smelting processes. The roar of this and the reverberations from the forge downstream must have echoed for miles along the valley bottom as the furnace glow lit up the night.

I turned eastward here to return to the ridge road along an old iron workers' way out of the valley towards Netherfield. This fords the stream and is heavily laid with slag and cinders for some way but then reduces to a muddy horse path before passing a 15th century cottage. At the time of my visit the owner was busy restoring the structure, a mixture of stone, half timber and brick, only recently provided with a hard access road. The way back continued on up, still to be found skirting a small stone quarry. Then passing through a wood this brought me back to the road at Great Sprays Farm. From here the three mile return journey via pretty Hollingrove along East Sussex lanes gently brought me back to the 20th century.

M. BRUNNARIUS

- (1) Ernest Straker has an illustration showing this and mentions that the men were paid from a small window near the gate and that the last surviving workman lived here until 1883.
- (2) See also S.I.A.S. Newsletter No 28 p.5 for a similar walk through Glaziers Forge in Dallington forest.

PORTLAND STREET, BRIGHTON - REDEVELOPMENT

Yet one more threat to Brighton's industrial heritage was reported in the Brighton Evening Argus property guide, 3rd September 1987: this was the forthcoming sale of a block of $\frac{1}{2}$ acre between Church Street and Portland Street. As the leases on this site expire in April 1989, development can be expected - "the site is ideal for commercial or residential redevelopment" (E. Argus)(1).

Portland Street is remarkable in that being only 300 yards from the prime shopping area of Churchill Square it still retains its 18th century purpose of an industrial and service sector street. During the town's rapid growth at the end of the 18th century industry was forced out of the Old Town on to the surrounding farm lands, principally the crofts and strips of North Laine. By 1799 there was a bakery and a stonemason's yard in Portland Yard and throughout the 19th century it developed an industrial base with Patchings mortar yard open before 1821 - it is still there! - and a cabinet maker listed in 1822. W.H. Webber 'Oven Builder' was advertising in January 1882 and this metal manufacture continues to the present day with Blabers Brass Foundry still casting.(2)

One of Brighton's delights is the juxtaposition of a variety of land uses rather than a strict planners' zoning. Portland Street is minutes walk from the glossy brashness of tourist Brighton, yet on a working day you can watch hot metal being poured!(3)

It is this proximity to the retail 'zone' that spells Portland Street's demise; the relentless loss of manufacturing within the town as it moves more to a service economy based on retailing and financial services, will be accentuated as the small sites near the Central Business District come up for redevelopment.(4)

With its old stabling, cobbled yards, flint buildings and industrial bustle the street is well worth members visiting: in a couple of years it will be 'a tasteful shopping precinct'. You have been warned.

GEOFFREY MEAD

References:-

- (1) Brighton Evening Argus (Property Guide) p.1 3.9.1987.
- (2) Georgian Brighton, S. Farrant. p.40 1980. Cobby Directory p.24 1799. Brighton Gazette, 17.5.1821. Boore's Directory p.17 1822. Sussex Advertiser, 3.1.1987.
- (3) Brighton Evening Argus, 13.1.1987.
- (4) Brighton Borough Plan - Towards 2000, p.9 1986.

AMBERLEY CHALK PITS MUSEUM

We are very happy to report that attendances are 10% up on last year, but this will not be sufficient to achieve our target of 70,000 visitors unless there is a dramatic increase before we close for the winter on 1st November.