



SUSSEX INDUSTRIAL ARCHAEOLOGY SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER 126

April 2005

ISSN 0263 516X

Registered charity no 267159



The SIAS President and Michael Palmer enjoy a chat at Coultershaw Pump Working Day, Sunday 13th March.

Officers

President

Air Marshal Sir Frederick Sowrey,
Home Farm,
Heron's Ghyll,
Uckfield

Chairman

J. S. F. Blackwell,
21 Hythe Road,
Brighton,
BN1 6JR 01273 557674

Vice-Chairman

Brig. A. E. Baxter,
9 Madeira Avenue,
Worthing,
BN11 2AT 01903 201002

General Secretary

R. G. Martin,
42 Falmer Avenue,
Saltdean, Brighton,
BN2 8FG 01273 271330

Treasurer & Membership Secretary

P.J. Holtham,
12 St Helens Crescent,
Hove, BN3 8EP
01273 413790

Chief Editor

B. Austen,
1 Mercedes Cottages,
St. Johns Road,
Haywards Heath
RH16 4EH 01444 413845

Newsletter Editor

R. E. Allen,
7 Heathfield Road,
Seaford, BN25 1TH

Programme Coordinator

Pat Bracher,
2 Hayes Close,
Ringmer, Lewes,
BN8 5HN 01273 813902

BN25 1TH 01323 896724

Archivist

P. J. Holtham

Area Secretaries

Eastern Area R. F. Jones, 3 Nutley Mill Road, Stone Cross, Pevensey, BN24 5PD
01323 760595

Western Area Brig. A. E. Baxter, 9 Madeira Avenue., Worthing, BN11 2AT 01903 201002

Central Area J. S. F. Blackwell, 21 Hythe Road, Brighton, BN1 6JR 01273 557674

Northern Area E. W. Henbery, 10 Mole Close, Langley Green, Crawley, RH11 7PN
01293 406132

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

C. Bryan, M.H.Dawes, Diana Durden, C.C. Hawkins, P.J. Hill, Claire Seymour,
R.L. Wilson.

Visit our web site : www.sussexias.co.uk

Copy for the July Newsletter should be sent by June 14th to :
R. Allen, 7 Heathfield Road, Seaford, E./Sussex, BN25 1TH
E-mail footprints@tesco.net

CONTENTS OF NEWSLETTER 126

Officers & Committee	2
Programme May to July	4
From other organisations	5
Book review <i>The History of Chichester's Canal</i>	7
Merston Bridge	8
Pictures of the past in West Sussex	9
Firle Place Riding School roof construction	10
Sussex Main Lines - Uckfield to Ashurst	11
Presentation at Coultershaw Pump	14
Bentley Motor Museum	15



Not the SIAS but a good reminder that a team of volunteers is renovating the brick display and the brick drying shed at Amberley Working Museum each Monday. If you can spare a couple of hours call Bob Allen on 01323 896724.

SIAS PROGRAMME TO 30th July Pat Bracher

Saturday 28th May 10.30 am. A walk around New Town Chichester with Alan Green. Meet at St. John's Chapel, St. John's Street, off East Street.

2.30pm. A guided tour of West Sussex Record Office. A behind-the-scene tour with a display of IA documents. Numbers limited to 15.

Contact Pat Bracher 01273 813902, as soon as possible please, the Record Office need to know.

Saturday 11th June 7.00 pm. Positively the last walk around Lewes with Graham Mayhew. Meet at the East Sussex County Council car park behind St. Anne's church, Western Road, Lewes. TQ409099. Contact Pat Bracher 01273 813902.

Wednesday 13th July 6.00 pm. open evening at Coultershaw Beam Pump. Party for SIAS members, with a glass of wine. Contact Robin Wilson 01798 865569.

Saturday 30th July 10.30 am. Meet at Paradise Park, Newhaven Museum, Avis Road, B2109, TQ452022 to see the new Newhaven Railway Model. Then to the B & Q car park on The Drove Industrial Estate for a walk down the east side of the River Ouse looking at the railways with John Blackwell.

2.15pm Piddinghoe Kiln, TQ432033. Use the car park by the church in Piddinghoe village, space is limited by the kiln. For kiln information see SIH No.12 1982. There will then be an opportunity to visit Newhaven Fort. Adults £5.20, Concessions (over 60s) £4.55.

Contact Pat Bracher 01273 813902.

FROM OTHER ORGANISATIONS Malcolm Dawes

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 6EE or e-mail to malcolm.dawes@btinternet.com

Monday 9th May 7.30 pm *Thirty years of railway photographs.*

A Southern Electric Group talk by Les Nixon. Deall Room, Southwick Community Centre, Southwick.

Friday 13th May 8.00 pm *Hurstpierpoint.* A Burgess Hill Local History Society talk by Ian Nelson. Cyprus Hall, Cyprus Rd, Burgess Hill. £2 visitors.

Saturday/Sunday 14/15th May *Southern at war.* Weekend of events, Bluebell Railway. 01825 720825.

Saturday 14th May 11am *Chichester: World War II* A Chichester Museum walk with Chris Butler. Meet at the Museum, 29 Little London, . Tickets £2.50. 01243 784683.

Sunday 15th May All day *Hastings trolley bus rally.* The Oval, Hastings. www.1066.net/trolley.

Wednesday 18th May 8.00 pm, *Southern Railway sepia photographer - O.J.Morris.* A Sussex Transport Interest Group talk by Laurie Marshall. Brighton Model Railway Clubrooms, London Road Station, Brighton. Visitors £1.

Saturday/Sunday/Monday 28th-30th May 50TH *Anniversary of closure.* Events marking the anniversary of BR closure of the Lewes to East Grinstead Line. Bluebell Railway. 01825 720825.

Monday 11th June 7.30 pm . *Transport films* Southern Electric Group. Films presented by Keith Carter. Deall Room, Southwick Community Centre, Southwick.

Friday 17th June 7.00 pm. *World war II in Hastings.* A Polegate and Willingdon Local History Society talk by Victoria Seymour. St.Johns Church Hall, High St, Polegate.

Saturday 18th June at 11.00 am. *Georgian Chichester*. A Chichester Museum walk with Alan Green. Meet at Edes House, West Street
Tickets £2.50. 01243 784683.

Sunday 3rd July at 2.00 pm. *Chichester ship canal*. A Chichester Ship Canal Trust walk from the Marina to the Canal Basin. Meet at Salterns Lock. Chichester Festival event. Tickets £3.50 in advance from Festival Office. 01243 780192.

Sunday 3rd July *Sussex bus rally*. Sheffield Park Station, Bluebell Railway. 01825 720825.

Wednesday 6th July at 7pm. *Chichester at work*. A Chichester Festival walk with SIAS member Chris Bryan. Tickets £3 in advance from the museum. 01243 784683.

Thursday 7th July at 7.30 pm. *History of Chichester ship canal*. A Chichester Ship Canal Trust talk by Rick Travis. Assembly Rooms, North Street, Chichester. Chichester Festival event. Tickets from the Festival Office. 01243 780192.

Sunday 10th July at 10.00 am. *Portsmouth canal*. A Chichester Ship Canal Trust/SIAS guided walk. Meet at Barnham, signposted from the church. 01243 576701.

Friday 15th July at 7.00 pm. *Working in Georgian Britain*. A Chichester Festival talk by Alan Green. Tickets £3 in advance from the museum. 01243 784683.

Saturday 16th July at 7.30 pm *Edinburgh & Glasgow waterways* . Mikron Theatre Performance tracing the building of the waterways, culminating in the building of the Falkirk Wheel. Geoffrey Osborne Training Centre, Stockbridge Rd, Chichester. Tickets £6.50 from Chichester Festival Office. 01243 780192.

16-17th July *Rail collectors fair*.
Horsted Keynes Station, Bluebell Railway. 01825 720825

Sunday 31st July *Worthing bus rally*. Marine Parade all day.
01903 520286



BOOK REVIEW

Brian Austen

Alan H.J. Green, *The History of Chichester's Canal* (Sussex Industrial Archaeological Society 2005) paperback pp 90 illus 14 ISBN 0-9512036-1-4 £6.50 (Available from the Society at 42 Falmer Avenue, Saltdean, Brighton BN2 8FG at £7:50 inclusive of post & packing).

Until the growth of coastal towns like Worthing, Littlehampton and Bognor from the first half of the nineteenth century, Chichester was without rival as the major town of the Western half of the County. It acted as a centre for administration, both civil and ecclesiastical, for justice and above all for trade. It was tantalizingly close to the sea with access at Dell Quay about two miles away. No wonder that schemes to connect the city to the sea by water are to be found as early as 1585, though it was not until 1823 that the dream was finally realised.

Alan Green in his book traces not only the many abortive schemes and trials and tribulations before the Chichester Canal was built but also traces the history of the Portsmouth and Arun Canal from its start at Ford to the point when it joined the route to Chichester. The author has accessed a wide range of primary source material not only within the county but at national record offices and has produced a book that is not only scholarly but also entertainingly written. The story of both canals is one of problems in construction and finance, ambitious expectations not realised and, particularly after the railway arrived, of decline and threatened extinction. For the Chichester Canal however there remained a glimmer of hope because of the determination of a few with vision. In the end this enabled the canal not only to survive but also to be renovated as an amenity for the public at large. The book is well illustrated and many of the pictures will be entirely new to readers.

A work of this nature will have an immediate appeal to those interested in the history of canals in Sussex and to residents of Chichester and its surrounding districts but deserves, and undoubtedly will attract a wider readership. The price is modest, the quality of production of a high order and the text well researched and perceptive.

MERSTON BRIDGE

Chris Bryan

The latest project on the Portsmouth and Arundel Navigation is to conserve a brick arch bridge which is on private land and not accessible from a public right of way. Adge Roberts has been interested in the bridge for some time as it was completely overgrown and investigative archaeology may reveal some details that could not be observed at the other two remaining brick arches at Yapton. The other 15 brick arch bridges between Ford and Hunston have been demolished. It was fortunate that SIAS member Gerry Nutbeem knew the land owner and a verbal agreement was given to clear the bridge of trees and undergrowth provided that a report was provided on the bridge.

Since the middle of January, Adge and his team have been busy clearing the bridge and Alan Green has kindly produced a report to a very high standard covering every aspect of the bridge.

The bridge stands in isolation, the canal bed having been filled in on both sides, with no evidence of a road or track leading to it. The first edition Ordnance Survey of 1875 shows no path to the south but an 1843 tithe map has a track leading to St Giles' Church which is just to the north of the bridge.

To gain access to the bridge requires the permission of the general manager of Humber VHB who has kindly allowed us to drive around two sides of the largest glasshouse in Europe. The tools then have to be carried the last 100 metres in wheelbarrows.

Having removed all the invasive ivy from the bridge and as much of the trees as possible that were damaging the fabric and structure, Adge and the team are digging out the top which has revealed some brickwork laid as paving, along with the fragile remains of numerous rectangular tin cans. The bridge may well have served a purpose during WWII but how, has not yet been worked out. The brickwork on the south-east corner has some tow rope score marks; evidence that the short-lived canal did carry some traffic.

A dig for evidence of the tow-path underneath is still to be carried out.

PICTURES OF THE PAST IN WEST SUSSEX

John Blackwell

For our March Winter Lecture we welcomed Martin Hayes of the West Sussex Library Service who introduced and presented images he and his team have put on to a new web site www.westsussexpast.org.uk. This is the start of digitising images from various repositories within West Sussex. The initial contributors were Amberley Working Museum, Arundel, Crawley, East Grinstead, Littlehampton, Marlipins (Shoreham), Steyning and Weald and Downland Museums in collaboration with the West Sussex Library Service. Assisted by Heritage Lottery funding some 8,000 images and comprehensive descriptions have been inputted to a powerful database.

Martin then showed a small selection of industrial images, many of which were unknown to the audience, particularly interesting were a pre-war view of Beeding cement works, a toll cottage at Dial Post and, from a painting, the Swallow Brewery at Arundel. However the image that provoked most discussion was, allegedly, of the LB&SCR Carriage and Wagon works at Lancing; which it was not; but its actual location could not be ascertained although the general consensus that it was a brickworks.

Much additional information was provided from the floor which illustrates the importance of captioning one's photographs before depositing them with a museum etc. Martin was aware the information is only as good as the source and the volunteers who compile the same. He requested if any SIAS members spot any inaccuracies they E-mail him via the web site. More images will be added in due course (let's hope this includes Frank Gregory's collection!!) and the good news for East Sussex is that Martin is acting as consultant to look at a similar project for that area. Thank you Martin for an informative and educational evening.

FIRLE PLACE RIDING SCHOOL – ROOF CONSTRUCTION

Ron Martin

The Riding School at Firle Place is one of only five extant listed examples still being used for their original purpose. This one was built in the early 19th century and is a typical example of the genre with one large open space with a clear span of about 18.3 m (60 ft.)

The roof, which is built entirely of softwood, is hipped and M-shaped with a central valley at a higher level than the eaves. The roof is supported on trusses which are effectively double king post trusses with an additional post under the central valley beam. The trusses bear on continuous wall plates and carry two intermediate canted purlins in each outer slope with an upright purlin at the eaves carrying the secondary rafters. Dragon ties with a dragon beam are used at the external angles. The eaves are projecting and the soffit is slatted for ventilation.

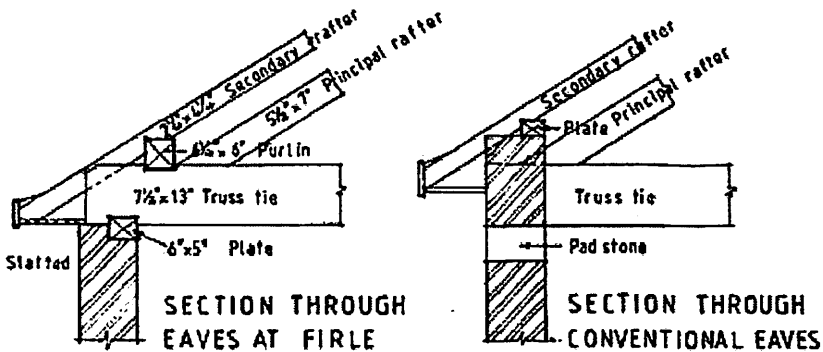
The interesting feature about this roof is that the normal method of construction would be for the feet of the secondary rafters to be carried on the wall plate, with the trusses supported on individual pad stones. The explanation about the arrangement at Firle might be that the space above the top of the wall plate was arranged to be left open to get good ventilation. (See the sketch on the opposite page.)

The roof is covered with duchess-sized Welsh slates on battens and is currently being replaced.

Another unexplained feature is that under each of the tie beams there are five equally spaced pulley wheels, each about 100 mm diameter, arranged so that the rope would run in the direction of the beam. If anyone has any explanation for the use of these pulleys, please let me know.

A photograph of the interior of the roof appears on the back cover of this Newsletter.

I am hoping to organise a visit to the outbuildings at Firle Place which will include the riding school and the ice house at some time during the summer.



SUSSEX MAIN LINES – A YEAR 2004 SURVEY

John Blackwell

11 UCKFIELD TO ASHURST

The final article in this series looks at the sad remains of a once thriving network of secondary lines that served rural communities. A line from Lewes to Uckfield opened in October 1858 and was extended in 1868 to Groombridge on the East Grinstead to Tunbridge Wells (West) line, which had opened in October 1866. The line was doubled from Uckfield in 1894. The link between Uckfield and Lewes closed on 23rd February 1969 but that between Groombridge and Tunbridge Wells survived until the 6th July 1985 when the Eridge –Tonbridge shuttle was withdrawn. Part of this route has now re-opened as the preserved Spa Valley Railway.

We start our journey at Uckfield Station, which bears more resemblance to a container than a passenger booking facility, with one bleak platform serving a line that has reverted to the original single track. The 1858 station was sited on the opposite side of the main road, and when the line was extended in 1868 this wooden building was turned through ninety degrees and served the town for over 30 years. In 1901 a fine new station in the Wealden style with two gables and a lengthy canopy on the up platform was built. This became the terminus station when the link to Lewes ceased. Operation of the level crossing, when services arrived and departed, caused the station to be re-sited in the early 1890s. The 1901 station

lingered on in the hope of the line to Lewes being reinstated, but was destroyed by fire in 2000. The crossing signal box survives. It is of a once common Saxby & Farmer design, with a pyramid roof, overhanging eaves and sliding four light windows. Usually the base was of brick but this example is of all wooden construction and is appropriately being used by an engineering company. To the east of the station is Uckfield Watermill now converted to flats. The dates conveniently show the date of construction of the three buildings that make up the complex. The oldest and furthest from the railway line was erected in 1792 and is five storeys high and slate hung. A breast shot wheel drove five pairs of stones. In 1894, the building nearest to the railway, was constructed as a roller mill which was powered by a water turbine. The final building, dated 1922, bridged the older pair and housed cleaning and dressing machines. Oats imported from Canada were delivered by rail direct to the mill which ceased operation in 1950; its main customers were the chicken fattening plants in the area.

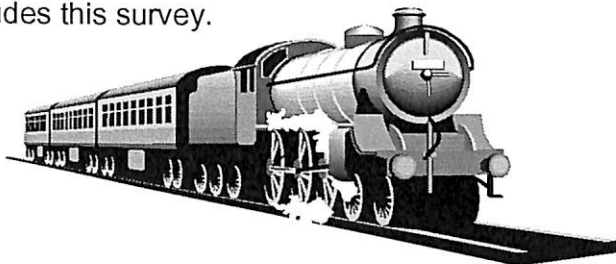
Buxted Station built in the style favoured by the LB&SCR in the cash - strapped 1860s, comprises a single storey brick office and a two storey station house with window and door heads in polychromatic brick. Newly decorated in the green and white colours of New Southern Railway Ltd, it appears very smart. As a commuter, I would be a little concerned regarding train punctuality on seeing a lending library and a partly completed jigsaw puzzle in the waiting room. Vestiges of the up platform remain; but the pair of 1868 staff cottages, off the approach road, are gone. The cast iron footbridge erected in 1893 was transferred to Templecombe on the Western Region main line in 1990. The supporting columns were lengthened, to increase clearance, and the stairway extended by an additional landing – I wonder where that came from?

Rotherfield was the original name of the next station but in 1880 the name was changed to Crowborough, (Rotherfield being used for a station on the newly built 'Cuckoo' line from Hailsham). Jarvis Brook was appended to the name in 1897. In 1905-7 the station was substantially rebuilt in the opulent Edwardian style with wide platforms, extensive glazed canopies, and looping valences similar to Bexhill and Three Bridges. During the last decade or so the canopies have vanished from the down platform (the station is a passing loop) and have been shortened and modernised, to their detriment, on the up side. The lattice footbridge survives but the fine goods shed of 1907 has long gone as has the brickworks that bordered the up side.

Eridge Station was built to serve the Neville family's estate Eridge Castle, as a small structure at track level. With the opening of the 'Cuckoo' line in 1880 the station was rebuilt in its present form of two island platforms and offices on the road overbridge. It was designed by T H Myres and had a half - timbered frontage, similar to the other stations on the line, but was later rebuilt in brick. The superbly decorated cast iron columns, the finest in the county, survive along with the canopy and timber platform buildings. As originally built one island accommodated services from the 'Cuckoo' line and the other those from Lewes via Uckfield. With the doubling of the latter line they became separate up and down platforms. Today only one of the up platform faces is used, the other island remains as a possible terminus for Spa Valley trains. It is well worth a visit. Look out for the disused mailbag chute under the up platform staircase.

Originally services off the aforementioned lines were directed towards Tunbridge Wells (West), and passengers for London had to reverse or change at Groombridge (the station after Eridge). A line from Oxted to Groombridge via Edenbridge (Town) was opened in 1888, and although a connecting spur to this line from Eridge was laid at the time, it was not connected until 1914 when Eridge replaced Groombridge as the interchange station for services from the south. It is this line, formerly known as the Ashurst spur, that is the only remaining operational line in an area that hosted a range of interesting routes to both Tunbridge Wells and London. A viewpoint to imagine bygone days is from the quaintly named "upside down" bridge at the site of Groombridge TQ370532 (a footpath to it is alongside the school). Crossing the county border no buildings remain at Ashurst Station, but do not be discouraged; those at Cowden, Hever, and particularly Edenbridge Town survive; fine examples of late nineteenth century LB&SCR Stations with attractive gable ends and eaves formed of decorative shaped bricks.

So concludes this survey.



PRESENTATION AT COULTERSHAW PUMP

Bob Allen

A sunny but chilly Sunday 13th March saw Robin Wilson and the regular band of volunteers host the annual working day to get this attraction ready for the 2005 season.

About 20 members saw our President, Air Marshal Sir Frederick Sowrey present Michael Palmer, who for many years was the manager of the site, with a pair of framed pictures of the site. One of the pictures was a painting and the other an old photograph. He thanked Michael for the many years hard work in restoring the pump. The strength of the gathering this day was, he said, a tribute to Michael's efforts.

A reminder that as announced in the programme of events on page 3 of this Newsletter there will be a party for SIAS members on Wednesday 13th July from 6.00pm. Please contact Robin Wilson (01798 865569) if you intend to come.



BENTLEY MOTOR MUSEUM

Bob Allen

Last year East Sussex County Council decided to sell the Bentley estate back to its donor. It was then feared that this East Sussex attraction, near Uckfield, would never open again to the public and that its collections would be dispersed. The good news is that two former managers have leased the site and at very short notice have opened it again to the public.

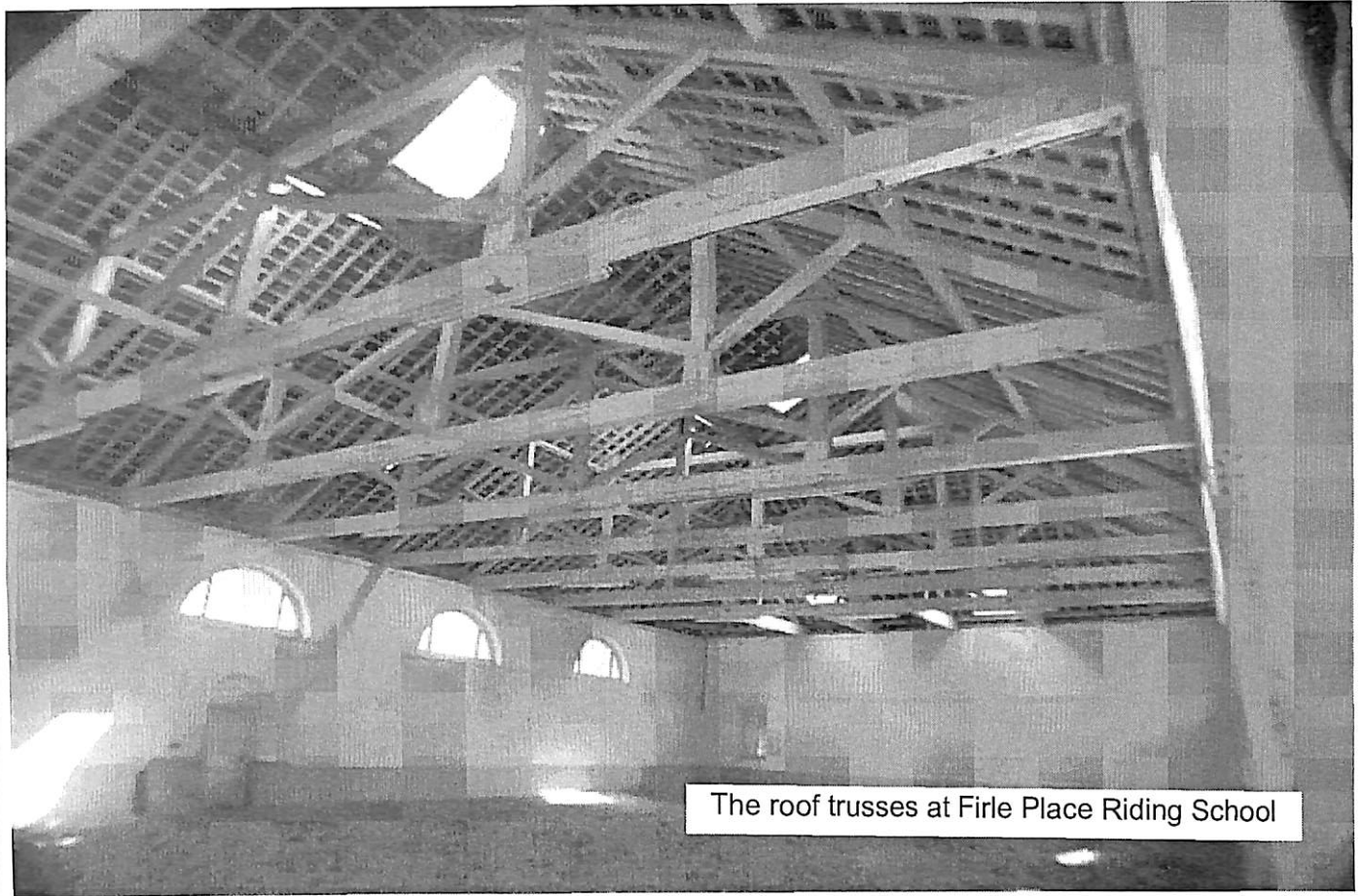
Of particular interest is the superb collection of veteran, Edwardian and vintage cars and motorcycles. All are privately owned and many are used on the road. It is, therefore, constantly changing. The collection includes many rare and unique vehicles in pristine condition.

There is also a 7.25 inch gauge steam railway on the site.

The architecture of the house is of interest. The modest 17th century farmhouse has been converted into a Palladian-style mansion by the famous architect Raymond Erith who restored 10, 11 and 12 Downing Street.

Bentley is open daily from 21st March from 10.30 am to 5.30 pm





The roof trusses at Firle Place Riding School