
INDUSTRIAL HERITAGE ASSOCIATION OF IRELAND *NEWSLETTER*

www.steam-museum.ie/ihai
www.steam-museum.com/ihai

No 23
February 2005



Welcome to the winter edition of the IHAI Newsletter. My apologies for not getting an issue out last Autumn, as intended, but I have been extremely busy workwise and not had an opportunity until now to sit down and put one together. This issue is therefore very much a recap of events during the latter part of 2004, notably the Public Utilities Conference in Belfast last October, and the Special General Meeting in Dublin in November.

The next Newsletter will give details of our 2005 programme. Details of any events of an industrial heritage nature will be gratefully received for inclusion.

SERVING THE PEOPLE: THE HERITAGE OF PUBLIC UTILITIES

A very successful IHAI conference took place on 9-10 October last in Belfast on the theme of public utilities. The venue was the restored St Patrick's School in Donegall St.

On Saturday talks ranged from the supply and disposal of water (Tony Canavan on Newry's water supply, Ronnie McGrane on Kells Waterworks, and Mary McMahon on mains drainage in Dublin), to electricity and gas supplies (Des Doherty on the electrification of Inishowen, and Fred Hamond on Northern Ireland's gas industry), and then on to air conditioning (Nigel Keery on the Royal Victoria Hospital). Details of these papers will be given in a special publication which it is hoped to bring out later this year.

Sunday was given over to field visits, and our first port of call was Belfast's Duncrue Street wastewater treatment works. Here, David McCullough gave us a guided tour of the 1880s pumping station, complete with restored steam-powered pumping engine.

Next stop was Carrickfergus Gasworks, 10 miles north of Belfast. Recently restored and opened to the public as Flame - the Gasworks Museum of Ireland, this is the only complete Victorian gasworks left in Ireland and one of only three in the UK. Here we were shown around by its former manager, Sam Gault, and other members of the Carrickfergus Gasworks Preservation Society.

After an enjoyable lunch at the gasworks, it was on to the Royal Victoria Hospital where Nigel Keery gave us a guided tour of the world's first air conditioning system, opened in 1903. It also boasted operational steam engines which once powered the huge fans which blew warm air into the wards. Thanks to the endeavours of Nigel and his colleagues, one of these was under steam during our visit.

All in all, a most enjoyable and informative weekend. A big big thanks to the speakers, those who allowed us to visit their sites, and to Ian McQuiston for organising the weekend.



Participants in the Utilities Conference outside the Duncrue Street pumping station.



Carrickfergus Gasworks as seen from the gasholder. The buildings at top left house 36 horizontal retorts in which the gas was made.



Ian McQuiston poses beside his no.1 fan at the Royal.



IHAI SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING

A Special General Meeting of the IHAI took place on 20 Nov 2004 in the Reading Room of the National Archive, Bishop St, Dublin (formerly W & R Jacob's biscuit factory). This was to ratify your Committee's recommendation to reconstitute our Association as a limited liability company (as notified in previous newsletters). The motion was proposed by Norman Campion and passed unanimously.

Our host for this occasion was Mr Brian Donnelly, Archivist and Surveyor of Business Records at the National Archive. Brian showed us a variety of documents of industrial heritage interest and outlined the scope of the archive's collection. This included records of government departments and agencies, local authorities and business records. The latter encompass flour milling, distilling and brewing, meat processing, utilities and transport. Often one company held records for others which it had acquired, e.g. Barrett & Co's records for lighthouse equipment have a wealth of detail on items manufactured by Edmundson & Co. Although it is a joy to stumble across such unexpected gems, it also makes it extremely difficult for the researcher to track them down! Fortunately, most of the archive has been catalogued and is searchable by name and subject on a computer housed in the reading room. The database can also be accessed on line at www.nationalarchives.ie/databases.htm.

After soup and sandwiches at Jury's Hotel, we visited the College of Art & Design in nearby Thomas Street. This was formerly Power's Distillery and still retains many original buildings. William Dick, who formerly worked here as a chemist, outlined the process of whisky-making. Mike Hargreaves of Straffan Steam Museum then took us on a conducted tour of the two steam-powered beam engines which survive in situ. Both are by Turnbull, Grant and Jack of Glasgow.

No.1 engine dates from 1878 and drove the malt mills. It is one of only two surviving 'house' engines in Ireland, i.e. the framework on which the beam is mounted is built into the walls of the building (the other is at Caledon, Co Tyrone).



What a cracker! IHAI members and friends pictured at the SGM.



Event organiser Norman Campion (left), Brian Donnelly and IHAI Chairman Ron Cox (right) peruse one of the documents on display.

The adjoining no.2 engine of 1886 drove mash tuns and is of the more conventional type in which iron columns support the beam frame. An application has been made to the Heritage Council for funding to restore this engine.

Our thanks are due to everyone who made possible this most interesting and varied day.

INSTITUTION OF ENGINEERS OF IRELAND

The IEI Heritage Society programme of lectures for the 2004-05 season is as follows:

- 21 February : *Nikola Tesla 1856-1943*, by Jock McEvoy.
- 21 March: *John Killaly, Canal Engineer* by Ron Cox.

All lectures will take place in Room M4 of the Museum Building, Trinity College Dublin, starting at 8pm. Everyone is welcome to attend.

Ron Cox

MILLS AND MILLERS OF IRELAND

The next Mills and Millers of Ireland (MMOI) event will take place on 5th March in the granary at Croom, Co Limerick, starting at 10.30am.

The two speakers are Dr Valerie Hall (Queen's University, Belfast) who will talk about grains and their cultivation in historic Ireland, and Norman Campion who will focus on flour production.

Everyone is invited to attend. For further details of this event, contact Simon Lancaster, tel 01 8414900. Those with web access can also find further information of MMOI activities on www.millsofireland.org.

NIAH UPDATE

Those who read Ed Galvin's review of the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage's survey of Co Kerry in the last Newsletter may be interested to know that the Tralee database, absent from the Kerry publication, is on a CD ROM, copies of which are freely available from the NIAH.

The NIAH have also launched a website www.buildingsofireland.ie on which all future inventories will be presented. At the time of writing, the following county inventories have been posted: Carlow, Kildare, Leitrim, Meath, Roscommon, South Dublin, Waterford and Wicklow. Entries can be accessed by date, type, name, town and townland. Keep an eye out for the results of last year's fieldwork.

BENBURB VALLEY HERITAGE CENTRE – TRUSTEES WANTED

This heritage centre is based at Orr's Mill, between the River Blackwater and the 8th lock on the Ulster Canal near Benburb, Co Tyrone. The mill was set up for grinding corn by John Stevenson in 1729. In the 1800s, it was converted to a linen factory which ran until closure in the 1960s. In 1990, a charitable trust was set up to preserve the mill. With funding from the European Regional Development Fund and Ulster Garden Villages, it opened to the public as a visitor attraction in 1993.

This extensive complex of buildings contains a major collection of Irish linen machinery including 22 beetling engines, 60 power looms and a complete engineers' workshop. The earliest surviving piece of equipment dates from 1846 and is a hydraulic press made in the Lagan Foundry, Belfast. The most magnificent item in the entire collection is the Victor Coates horizontal stationary steam engine of 1898.



Orr's Mill, Benburb

New trustees are now being sought to assist the existing committee in overseeing the museum's future development. Immediate plans include installing a flax breaker and scutching equipment donated by Lord O'Neill. Funds have already been raised to match applications which are due to be made to major funders.

Budding trustees would be expected to attend three or four meetings a year and are guaranteed to find it a most rewarding experience. If you are interested, or would like further information, please contact Erskine Holmes at 88 Clifton St, Belfast BT12 1AB (tel 028 9031 1156; email erskine@friendsprovident.fsnet.co.uk).

RECORDING IRELAND'S CANAL HERITAGE

The Winter 2004 issue of *Inland Waterways News*, published by the Inland Waterways Association of Ireland, features the work of its Heritage Committee in recording the upstanding remains of Ireland's canals. Over the past couple of years, volunteers have been busy recording the various physical features of the canal infrastructure - locks, bridges, quays, stores etc. Their findings are presented as a web-based database on www.irishwaterwaysheritage.com. If you're interested in becoming involved in this very worthwhile field survey, for which full training will be given, contact Niall Galway on 087 4105439.

FRIENDS OF THE ULSTER CANAL

For a number of years, the Inland Waterways Association of Ireland has been campaigning for the reopening of the Ulster Canal, between Lough Neagh and Lough Erne. Despite recent setbacks in securing EU funding, a charitable trust known as the Ulster Canal Trust has recently been formed to progress the objective of repairing and rewatering the entire canal. If you'd like to give a donation in support of this aim or become involved, contact Colin Becker at 2 Kylemore Pk, Taylors Hill, Galway.

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

The Autumn/Winter 2004 catalogue of Colourpoint Books contains many publications of interest to anyone engaged in industrial heritage. Two books which caught your editor's eye are highlighted below. They can be purchased directly from Colourpoint House, Jubilee Business Park, 21 Jubilee

Road, Newtownards, Co Down BT23 4YH (tel 028 9182 0505; email sales@colourpoint.co.uk). It's also worth checking out their website www.colourpoint.co.uk for details of the entire range of publications. Norman Johnston, managing director, is himself a transport enthusiast so the standard of his books is top notch. He also has a Colourpoint cat - "owns" would be too strong a word!

OUR DAILY BREAD: A LOOK AT ULSTER BAKERIES. James Davidson. £9.99. ISBN 1-1904242-14-6. Newtownards: Colourpoint Books, 2004.

This is a lavishly illustrated review of Northern Ireland's bread industry. Well known household names such as Brewsters, Hughes, Irwins, Inglis and Ormeau feature in the 93 pictures with extended captions. The book is laid out in themes such as working conditions, machinery, advertising and delivery and has pictures from bakeries all over Northern Ireland. Particularly fascinating are the pictures of 19th century bread carts and early 20th century bread vans.



THE STEAM AGE IN IRELAND IDEA: A COLLECTION OF RAILWAY ART. The Lord O'Neill £30.00. ISBN 1-904242-3-59. Newtownards: Colourpoint Books, 2004.

Few things are more evocative of a bygone era than a well-executed painting. The *Steam Age in Ireland* contains 88 of them! It depicts the golden age of railway travel, bringing to life a period when most photographers used black and white film and when colour pictures were rare. Using art as a medium of communication allows us to play out our fantasies, creating scenes as we imagine them to have been. Between the covers of this book, you will see many different styles and interpretations. Most of the artists are contemporary; most of the paintings are commissions - some for book covers, some for posters but the majority for private individuals who, for their own enjoyment, want a particular scene to be immortalised in a painting.

The range of subjects is wide, as are the locations. Many feature iconic engines like *Maeve*, the largest steam engine to run in Ireland, an NCC Mogul or a GNR Compound. Others are more prosaic, like the cover painting, depicting a rural

location. The famed Irish narrow gauge features strongly, as do some Victorian scenes such as a double-framed engine at Woodenbridge. There is even the odd diesel railcar, but in the 1930s these were very much part of the 'steam age'.

ROSS ISLAND: MINING, METAL AND SOCIETY IN EARLY IRELAND. William O'Brien, €80.00 ISBN 0-9535620-3-X. Dept. Archaeology, Galway University, 2004.

This 800-page book describes the results of Dr Billy O'Brien's 10-year programme of archaeological research and excavations at Ross Island copper mine near Killarney, Co Kerry. Mining began here around 2400 BC and continued sporadically right up to the 19th century. This interdisciplinary study also includes an analysis of the mine's geology and natural environment, as well as the social context of its miners. Copies can be obtained by post at the above address (please add € for p&p).

MILLING ON THE CRANNAGH CROSS RIVER. Edward Egan. €15 Published by the author, 2004.

This book focuses on eight water-powered corn mills along a 16-mile stretch of the Crannagh Cross River in south Co Roscommon. The mills are described in detail and genealogical details given of the people associated with them. This book is also an invaluable record of many local stories and traditions handed down through the generations. The author, a well-known local historian, is well qualified to write this book, being a member of one of this region's milling families and also, for a time in his youth, a former miller.

E-MAIL CONTACT

Events of industrial heritage interest to IHAI members are sometimes advertised at short notice and do not get included in the Newsletter. Anyone who would like to be kept up to date about forthcoming events is invited to send their e-mail address to the editor at frederick-hamond@utvinternet.com. Please mark the subject line 'IHAI contact' to avoid it being deleted as potential spam! Be assured that your address will not be passed on to any third party.

NEWSLETTER NUMBERING

In case you're wondering why issue 20 of the IHAI Newsletter is missing, I made a mistake in the numbering sequence! July 2003 was no.19 and Feb 2004 was mistakenly numbered 21 - it should have been 20! My apologies for any confusion caused.

My thanks to James Davidson, Erskine Holmes and Simon Lancaster for their contributions to this newsletter. The next issue is due out in March and any contributions on the topic of industrial heritage will be greatly welcomed by the editor Fred Hamond at 75 Locksley Park, Belfast BT10 0AS.