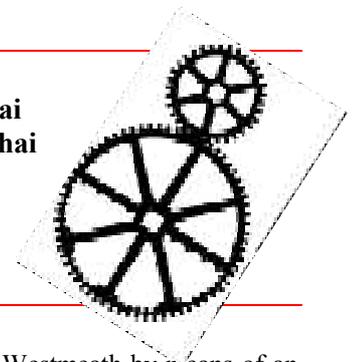

INDUSTRIAL HERITAGE ASSOCIATION OF IRELAND *NEWSLETTER*

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

No 21
February 2004



DIARY DATES

22 March	Demesne Bridges in Ireland. Talk by Ron Cox. 8pm IEI, 22 Clyde Rd, Dublin 4. All welcome.
27 March	IHAI AGM, Shannonbridge
3-4 April	AIA Ironbridge Weekend : Inland Waterways
10-18 April	Titanic Celebration, Belfast
16-18 April	ESB Conference on Ardnacrusha
13-19 Aug	AIA Annual Conference: Hertfordshire and Lea Valley.
9-10 Oct	Public Utilities Conference, Belfast

Events in bold are organised by IHAI

Greetings for 2004 (Easter that is!) and welcome to this edition of the IHAI Newsletter. Our first event is the AGM at Shannonbridge in March. This promises to match, if not surpass, last year's at Anna Liffey Mill (minus the minus temperature). At the time of writing, only one other IHAI event is confirmed – the Autumn Conference. If you know of anything of IA interest happening in your area, please let the editor know for the next newsletter. This edition also contains a round-up of 2003 events, articles on topics of industrial interest and reviews of recent books.

Finally, a reminder to anyone who hasn't yet paid their 2003 subscription to send a €20 (STG£15) cheque to Dermot McNamara, 95 Bulfin Rd, Dublin 8. Subs for 2004 should also be sent now or brought to the AGM in Shannonbridge.

IHAI AGM

This year's AGM will take place in Shannonbridge, Co Offaly on Saturday 27 March. Our venue is the Fort, just across the bridge on the west side of the river. Coffee will be served from 10.30am, and formal business commences at 11am; the agenda is attached to this newsletter. Please note the proposal for the IHAI to reconstitute itself as a limited liability company.

Lunch will be served around noon. Afterwards, there will be a conducted tour of the village, taking in the Napoleonic fortifications, mid 18th century bridge, Shannon Navigation works. We then visit the nearby ESB power station and Bord na Mona's Blackwater Works (also home of the Clonmacnoise & West Offaly Railway).

The ESB opened its first peat-fired electricity power station at Shannonbridge in 1965. This 80MW unit was augmented by a second one in 1976. When a 40MW unit was commissioned in 1982, the first unit was closed. The utility is supplied with milled peat from the Blackwater group of bogs in counties

Offaly, Roscommon, Galway and Westmeath by means of an extensive narrow gauge railway network. A new station (known as 'West Offaly') is currently under construction and will supersede the existing two units, both of which will close at the end of the year. The new station has a life expectancy of 15 years.

The peat-fired stations at Portarlinton (Co Kildare) and Ferbane (Co Offaly) have already been demolished, and Rhode's disappearance is imminent. Now's your chance to see what survives in close-up!

The cost of the event will be €10 including lunch. If you require a lift from the Dublin direction, please contact Ron Cox on 01-2824235.



The new power station under construction beside the existing one at Shannonbridge.

SERVING THE PUBLIC: THE HERITAGE OF PUBLIC UTILITIES

This is a call for papers to be presented at the next IHAI conference, to be held on 9-10 October 2004 in Belfast on the theme of 'Public Utilities.' Papers dealing with the heritage of water supplies, sewage disposal, electricity, gas production/distribution, and public health infrastructure are invited for presentation on Sat 9.

If you wish to deliver a paper on any of these topics, or can nominate someone who would, please contact Ian McQuiston, 5 Knockmore Pk, Bangor BT20 3SL (tel 048 9146 2880; email ianmcquiston@aol.com). It would be helpful to receive responses by Good Friday, 9 April.

TITANIC: MADE IN BELFAST

Organised by Belfast City Council, this nine-day event celebrates the legacy of the *Titanic*, built in Belfast by Harland & Wolff. As most people will know, the ship was sunk by an iceberg on its inaugural crossing of the Atlantic in April 1912. This extravaganza includes exhibitions, boat, bus

and walking tours of Queen's Island and launch slipway), and illustrated talks. For further details contact the Belfast Welcome Centre (tel 028 9024 6609) or log on to the event website www.titanicmadeinbelfast.com.

ESB CONFERENCE

To mark the 75th anniversary of the opening of the hydro-electric power station at Ardnacrush on the River Shannon, the ESB is organising a conference in Limerick on 16-18 April. This will focus on many different aspects of this ground-breaking scheme.

An exhibition of Frank Keating's paintings of the construction work in progress will run in parallel in the Hunt Museum from 6 to 23 April.

Full details may be obtained by sending an s.a.e to Brendan Delaney, Archive and Heritage Manager, ESB, 27 Lower Fitzwilliam St, Dublin 2 (tel 01-7026496).

AIA EVENTS

The Association for Industrial Archaeology is organising a conference on Inland Waterways at Colebrookdale (near Ironbridge) on 3-4 April. For details, contact Ray Riley, 8 Queen's Keep, Clence Parade, Southsea, Hants PO5 3NX.

This year's AIA conference, on 13-19 Aug, will focus on Herts and the Lea Valley. Based at the De Havilland campus of the University of Hertfordshire, an extensive range of talks and tours will be on offer (including Bletchley Park and Waltham Abbey Gunpowder Mills). For details, contact Tony Oarkes, 60 School Lane, Hill Ridware, Rugeley WS15 3QN.

Details of these and other events can also be obtained from the AIA website www.industrial-archaeology.org.uk.

CHANNEL 4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AWARDS

Entries are now being sought for the Channel 4 Awards, part of the British Archaeological Awards, which are presented for various achievements in the field of archaeology. There are three award categories: broadcast programmes, non-broadcast films or videos, and ICT projects (interactive CD-ROMs, websites or integrated multimedia packages).

Entries may deal with any aspect of archaeology, including industrial archaeology, and may have been made for broadcast, educational, promotional or site-specific purposes. To be eligible they must be British-produced and have been made or broadcast between 1 July 2002 and 31 May 2004. Winners in each of the three categories will be awarded a cash prize of £750 and a BAA certificate. Entries should be submitted by 31 May 2004. The winners will be announced at a presentation ceremony in Belfast in October 2004.

Further information and entry forms may be downloaded by following the links at <http://www.bufvc.ac.uk/c4awards/> or by contacting Cathy Grant, CBA/BUFVC Committee for Audio-Visual Education, c/o British Universities Film & Video Council, 77 Wells St, London W1T 3QJ. Tel 020 7393 1507, fax 020 73931555, email cathy@bufvc.ac.uk

BARNI

The Buildings at Risk Northern Ireland on-line database was officially launched on 18 Feb by the Ulster Architectural Heritage Society and Environment & Heritage Service. This database contains a selection of listed and interesting non-listed buildings through NI which are currently at risk from lack of use and which require a sustainable future. The database is accessible on the internet via the UAHS website www.uahs.co.uk, and is searchable by location (but not, unfortunately, by building type) and contains descriptions, potted histories and photographs. If you've a healthy bank balance and are seeking a challenging 'dream' home, look no further than BARNI to find it!

NATIONAL HERITAGE WEEK 2003

National Heritage Week took place during the second week of September last. It formed part of the European Heritage Days initiative held throughout Europe and in which 48 countries participated. Ireland has been involved since 1991.

The increased participation by voluntary groups is notable and the work of the Heritage Officers has been crucial. Upwards of 150,000 people attended last year's event.

The IHAI organised two events in Dublin, the first being a guided walking tour of the Liffey Bridges between the Custom House and Heuston Station. Twenty-three hardy souls rose early on the Sunday morning and braved the threat of rain to accompany Dr Ron Cox of the Centre for Civil Engineering Heritage at Trinity College Dublin on the bridge tour. On the following Sunday, Mary McMahon led a party around the Dublin docklands during which a number of sites of industrial heritage were described. In Northern Ireland, Flame – the Gasworks Museum of Ireland was also open.



Contrasting technologies on the Liffey: O'Donovan Rossa Bridge, 1816 (top), and James Joyce Bridge, 2003 (bottom).

Ron Cox

IHAI AUTUMN TOUR OF CO KILDARE

Last autumn’s tour was based in Monasterevin, Co Kildare over the weekend of 4-5 October. Our first stop was Odlum’s Mill, Sallins, one of only three oatmeal-producing mills still at work in Ireland (the others are in counties Waterford and Down). Established on the Grand Canal in 1912 as a flaked maize mill, the present mill dates from 1960 and was re-equipped in 1984. We were privileged to be shown around by Tim Odlum and followed the path of the oats from the massive bulk intake silos, through the screening, drying, dehulling, milling, flaking and packing departments. Flaked and pinhead meal are both produced and the latter is exported to America.



The usual suspects at Odlum’s Mill. Tim Odlum is at right (and his apprentice at left).

Our next stop was Victoria Bridge Mill, a c.1800 four-storey brick flour mill on the Liffey. It has been converted into a house, restaurant and music venue, but still retains its paddle wheel, gearing, four sets of millstones and flour processing equipment. This was also our lunch stop.

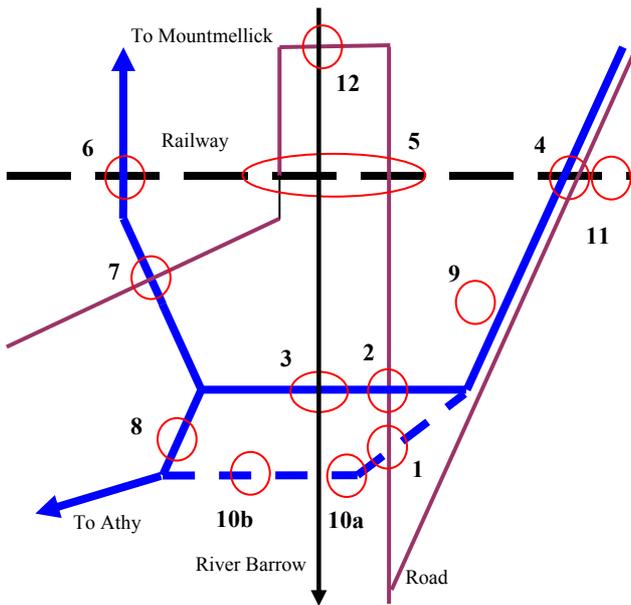
The afternoon featured sites along the Grand Canal - Blackwood Feeder, Bonyng Bridge (1782), Robertstown (with its restored Grand Canal and 1784 bridge), Digby Bridge (1794), and Leinster Aqueduct over the Liffey (1784).

Sunday was devoted to exploring Monasterevin, sometimes called the ‘Little Venice’ of Ireland. Some idea of the concentration of industrial sites is evident from the map.

increasingly rare example of a lifting drawbridge which takes the road over the canal. The cantilevered counterweight across the top of the lift has been removed on safety grounds and the bridge mechanism has been electrified. Just upstream, a multi-span steel girder bridge carries the main Dublin-Cork railway over the river, road and river. Nearby is Monasterevin station, designed by Sancton Wood for Great Southern & Western Railway Co. and opened in 1847. On the west side of the Barrow is the 25th lock on the canal, with hump-backed bridge at its south end.

After lunch, we took to our cars and traced the line of the Mountmellick Branch of the Grand Canal. This runs from Monasterevin to Mountmellick and was opened in 1831. Although long disused and partly infilled, many of its locks and bridges survive. At Portarlinton, Canal Road follows its line, but the canal store and lock house remain.

Special thanks are due to Ewan Duffy for organising the tour, and also to Ron, Norman, Dermot, Robert and Fred. Thanks also go to Tim Odlum and the the owners of Victoria Bridge Mill for what has been a memorable trip.



- 1- Old canal bridge (road/canal);
- 2- Lifting bridge (road/ canal);
- 3- Barrow aqueduct (canal/river);
- 4- Railway bridge (over canal);
- 5- Railway viaduct (over river/roads);
- 6- Railway bridge (over canal);
- 7- Canal bridge (road/canal);
- 8- 25th lock and bridge;
- 9- Canal house and site of stores;
- 10a, 10b - Site of locks;
- 11- Railway station;
- 12- Pass bridge (road/river).

FULSOME PRAISE

The Federation of Ulster Local Studies (FULS) hosted ‘A Day at the Mill’ in Strabane Library, Co Tyrone, on Saturday 31 Jan 2004. It focused on the industrial heritage of the North-West and attracted upwards of 80 participants.

There were presentations on the development of transport (Michael Pollard), watermills on the Glenmorran Burn and Burdennett Rivers (John Dooher and William Roulston), and on the development of the mill village of Sion Mills (Michael Kennedy). The final formal presentation was on taped recollections of shirt factory workers (Roy Hamilton).

During the afternoon there was an excursion to Herdman’s Mill (Sion Mills), courtesy of Celia Ferguson and the Sion Mills Buildings Preservation Trust. The Trust is currently preparing a multi-million funding application to the Heritage Lottery Fund to restore the complex for community and commercial use.

FULS are to be congratulated on their initiative. The high turnout reflects the considerable interest in this facet of our cultural heritage and may encourage other local history societies to organise similarly themed events.

The Barrow line of the Grand Canal arrived in Monasterevin in 1785. Prior to the opening of Barrow Aqueduct, barges negotiated a lock on the east bank down to Barrow, where they crossed to opposite bank and were then locked up to continuation of canal. This section was abandoned when the aqueduct opened in 1831. Designed by Hamilton Killaly, three ornate shallow segmental masonry spans carry the canal and towpaths over river. This must surely be one of the finest surviving aqueducts in the Republic. Beside it is an



Bob Patton (centre) led a tour of Herdman's Mill, closely shadowed by IHAI member Billy Dunlop (centre right).

Forthcoming FULS events include 'Studying your street or townland' (28 Feb), 'Using school records' (24 April), and AGM (19 June). For further details contact Roddy Hegarty (email fulsltd@aol.com)

NEW CHAIRMAN FOR HBC

Ian McQuiston has been appointed Chairman of the Historic Buildings Council, a statutory advisory body to the Built Heritage division of the Environment & Heritage Service. He takes over from Dr Philip Mowat, Director of the Ulster American Folk Park, and he starts his three-year stint on 1 March 2004. Amongst his many responsibilities, Ian also finds time to sit on the IHAI Committee and is the main organiser for this year's IHAI conference on Public Utilities.

INLAND WATERWAYS UPDATE

The Winter 2003 edition of *Inland Waterways News* (edited by Brian Coggin) reports that the Inland Waterways Association of Ireland has applied for EU Interreg funding to make a start on the reinstatement of the Ulster Canal between loughs Erne and Neagh. The aim is to make part of the Finn River (at the Co Fermanagh end) navigable and also rewater part of the canal west of Clones, Co Monaghan. IWAI should know by April whether its application is successful. The Association's objective is to bring what was Ireland's narrowest canal up to the standard as the Erne-Shannon Waterway. This will inevitably have an impact on the existing built heritage and will doubtless generate much heated debate!

The IWAI's Heritage & Conservation Sub-Committee have embarked on a major survey of all canal-related features throughout Ireland. A database has been set up and funding secured from the Heritage Council. This initiative was recognised with the presentation of a Heritage Council plaque in July 2003.

Ian Bath was awarded the IWAI's Endeavour Cup in recognition of his inspirational role in the restoration of Ireland's Waterways. Ian was also responsible for carrying out photographic surveys of the Royal and Grand Canals, the results of which can be consulted in the Heritage Council's headquarters at Rothe House, Kilkenny.

Inland Waterways News also carries an article by Ruth Heard on the trials and tribulations encountered by William Jessopp

during the construction of the Grand Canal across the Bog of Allen in the 1790s. Nick Spalding writes about the Mountmellick Branch of the Grand Canal, constructed between 1826 and 1836. There is also a reprint from the *Illustrated London News* of 1850 on the production of charcoal from peat at Derrymullen, Co Kildare.

Last year the Heritage Council commissioned two waterway corridor studies – one from Lanesborough to Shannonbridge (including the Suck and Ballinasloe Canal), and the other from Lanesborough to Rooskey and the western end of the Royal Canal. These projects are nearing completion and a report will follow in the next IHAI newsletter.

To subscribe to *Inland Waterways News*, contact its editor Brian Goggin at Stradbally North, Castleconnell, Co Limerick (tel 061-377057; email big@iwai.ie).

CAHIR VIADUCT: A BRIDGE TOO FAR – AGAIN !

At 3.50am on Tuesday 7 October 2003, a train of two locomotives and 22 wagons carrying bulk cement derailed as it crossed the viaduct over the River Suir at Cahir, Co Tipperary. The locomotives and one wagon remained on the track. Of the remainder, 12 crashed through the bottom of the railway viaduct into the river and onto the bank. Nobody was injured, but the event created quite a stir. It was a lead item on television and radio news that evening and was covered in all the national papers in the Republic.



In the following days it was clear that the accident would result in the closure of the line for months and have a heavy financial cost. There was concern expressed that the accident might be used by the government to close down the Waterford - Limerick line, which has been underused and under-funded for a long time. This aspect of the event was discussed in the Dáil the following day. The Minister for Transport, Séamus Brennan, replied that it would "be silly for a country like this to go around closing railway lines" (*Irish Times* 8/10/2003).

The accident was also covered in an Irish Times editorial on the future and management of the railway network. Some of the coverage was not helpful, referring to the bridge 'collapsing'. In fact the viaduct held up extremely well. The damage was to the tracks and the bed of the bridge; the abutments, piers and main girders stayed intact.

A very similar, but more serious, accident happened at the viaduct on 23 December 1955. A train carrying sugar beet

from Wellington Bridge, Co Wexford to Thurles, Co Tipperary overran Cahir Station and derailed. The engine and 22 of the 32 wagons crashed through the bottom of the bridge and into the river. The driver and the fireman were both killed and the memory is still strong in the locality.

The viaduct stands about 200m west of the station, itself an intact complex of cut and carved limestone railway structures, with a fine station building, cast-iron footbridge, etc. It is a very fine and distinctive structure, constructed in 1849 by William Dargan in consultation with the Earl of Glengall, who controlled the Cahir Estate. It opened on 1 May 1852.

It is c.110m long and consists of two heavy iron girders resting on massive abutments of cut limestone with stringcourses and coped parapets. The abutment piers are surmounted by castellated turrets and the ends of the parapets by equally decorative finials. There are also two pairs of piers in the river itself with shared V-shaped cutwaters.

During the Civil War the viaduct was wired for destruction by the anti-government forces, but was not blown up.

The viaduct is very prominently sited in the town and is a Protected Structure in the Cahir Town Development Plan 1999. The Conservation Officer for the county has visited the site and all involved would appear to be fully aware of the considerable heritage value of the bridge.

Sources: Butler, David J. *Cahir: A Guide to Heritage Town and District* (Cahir, 1999); Johnson, Stephen. *Johnson's Gazetteer of the Railways of Ireland*. (Leicester 1997).

Barry O'Reilly; pictures by Ewan Duffy

KELLS WATERWORKS

Kells waterworks, Co Meath was opened in 1897 to supply the town with water from the River Blackwater via a channel from Lloyd Bridge. The pumps were powered by two water wheels off the same race. Active protection of the waterworks is now urgent as construction projects are underway in the area that could damage this example of our fast-disappearing industrial heritage.

To this end, a restoration action group has recently been set up to restore the waterwheels and pumps to working condition. This initiative is supported by Kells Town Council, Meath County Council, the Kells Heritage Committee and Kells Chamber of Commerce. The group is looking for volunteers with knowledge of water turbines and pumps and persons with experience in restoration projects. Anyone interested should contact Ronnie MacGrane, Cavan Rd, Kells (tel 046 41284; mb 086 2575395; email rfmcgrane@iol.ie).

PEATLAND WORLD SAVED

The Irish Peatland Conservation Council (IPCC) have saved the future of the Peatland World at Lullymore in Co Kildare in a pre-auction purchase. Teagasc the farm advisory board which originally established Peatland World in 1992 were to put the property up for auction as part of a rationalisation plan. More than likely the property would have been sold for re-development. This would have been a great loss for peatland conservation and education in Ireland.

“The chance to secure Peatland World and turn it into a centre of excellence for the teaching, interpretation and public awareness of peatland issues was just too good an opportunity for IPCC to turn down” said Dr Peter Foss, Chief Executive of IPCC. “Once we heard that the centre was about to go up for auction we approached Teagasc with a proposal to save the centre and maintain its strong links with the bogs. We are also keen to create a centre our supporters can be proud of and which the public will find useful. We are delighted that Teagasc accepted our offer and is supportive of our proposal.”

In 2004, IPCC intend to move their headquarters to this property located in the centre of the Bog of Allen and develop its full potential as a cultural interpretive centre for bogs, their past, present and future. In this respect Kildare County Council are sponsoring a trip to the London Wetlands Centre for IPCC staff to see the potential to develop the cultural aspects of peatlands at Peatland World.

IPCC hope to develop new and creative projects involving international peatland groups which will focus on the conservation and sustainable use of bogs. “Once our plans for the centre have been fully developed, IPCC will initiate a programme of investment in the centre which will see us build on the success and reputation of the project to date,” said Dr Ruth McGrath, a director of IPCC.

The Irish Peatland Conservation Council is a national charity and is entirely supported by voluntary contributions. Conservation projects include purchasing bogland nature reserves, providing resources and training for teachers and education groups, repairing damaged bogs, fostering a positive attitude towards bogs, and encouraging lifestyles in harmony with the environment. For further information, visit the IPCC's web site at www.ipcc.ie or write to 119 Capel St, Dublin 1 (tel 01-8722397; e-mail bogs@ipcc.ie).

Ewan Duffy

LARTIGUE RAILWAY MUSEUM

The Lartigue Monorail was a unique railway which operated between Listowel and Ballybunion from Feb 1888 to Oct 1924. Over €1,000,000 has been raised by the Lartigue Restoration Committee to reinstate a 500m long replica reconstruction of the line on the old broad-gauge formation. This opened at Listowel on 17 July 2003 with a press reception held for the Kerry Group, the project's principal sponsor, which has donated €25,000.

The reconstruction includes an Alan Keef built steam outline diesel 0-3-0 which is a full-scale replica of the original engine, and two replica carriages which can carry up to 40 passengers. It offers visitors a 45 minute round trip, which includes time for the locomotive to be turned. The fares are €6 for adults and €3 for children under 15. There are six fully trained FAS sponsored operatives.

The Lartigue Restoration Committee hope to convert the former broad-gauge goods store into a museum and interpretative centre as the next phase of the project and are currently raising funds. To this end, two initiatives have recently been launched: (1) Lartigue Supporters Draw - for a €60 contribution you could win €1000 or one of five prizes;

(2) Sleepers for Sale Club – you can sponsor one of the 600 sleepers which make up the 500m track. The 600 subscribers will be commemorated on site and will also be included in the Lartigue Supporters Draw.

To find out more, or to make a donation, contact Jimmy Deenhian TD, Chairman of the Restoration Committee, on 068-40154 or via email at jdeenihan@eircom.net.

Irish Railway News 2003 and Ewan Duffy

MULLYCOVET MILL, BELCOO, CO FERMANAGH

If you happen to be venturing through Co Fermanagh this summer, Mullycovet Mill is worth a stop. Signposted off the main Enniskillen-Sligo road north of the Belcoo/Blacklion border crossing, this is the only working single-stone, all timber cog-and-rung watermill in Ireland. For information on opening hours, guided tours and demonstrations, contact Andy Greene at Devenish partnership Forum, 26 Yoan Rd, Enniskillen BT74 6EL (tel 048 6632 7808; email Devenish.partnership@cinni.org).

ST PATRICK'S BRIDGE, CORK

For centuries, Cork was an enclosed town, with the North and South Main Streets the main thoroughfares. By the 1760s, many of the streams flowing between the islands had been infilled and Patrick Street created. The expansion of the town to the north-east necessitated the building of a bridge at the end of the street over the north channel of the River Lee.

Following some concerted opposition from businessmen, who felt that it was illogical to site the bridge downstream of the Custom House (the present Municipal Gallery), an act of parliament was obtained in 1786 for a three-arch masonry toll bridge with a movable portcullis to allow boats upstream. Designed by Michael Shanahan, the foundations of the bridge were laid in 1788, but early the next year, a severe flood swept away the partially completed masonry. Shanahan went into partnership with a Mr Hargrave and together they completed the bridge, which was opened on 29 Sept 1789. The opening ceremony was organised by the Freemasons and named St Patrick's Bridge by the Grand Master.

The tolls were removed in 1812 and the portcullis closed in 1824. In 1818, a new Custom House had been completed downstream, thus removing the need for shipping to proceed upstream of the bridge. As the River Lee had over time been more and more restricted in its course by the development of the city, the next big flood, in November 1853, caused a disaster. The bridge's piers were undermined and the arches collapsed, sweeping 20 people to their death.

The then Cork City Engineer and Architect, John Benson, a native of Sligo, came to the rescue. Within five weeks of the disaster, a temporary timber bridge (Benson's Bridge) was opened to the public and plans drawn up for a permanent replacement. Approval for the project was given as part of the Cork Bridge & Waterworks Act 1856 and the contract placed with Joshua Hargrave, a grandson of the Hargrave who had completed the first bridge some 70 years earlier.

On 10 Nov 1859, the foundation stone of the bridge was laid; during the ceremony, the mayor of Cork, John Arnott, was knighted. Following the protracted difficulties encountered



St Patrick's Bridge in Cork from a 19th century postcard.

when removing the old foundations, the bridge was opened on 12 Dec 1861.

In 1981, the bridge was reconstructed in its 1861 form. It has three arches with elliptical (i.e. three-centred) profiles; the arch rings are chamfered to assist water flow. The centre span is 62ft 4in and the two flanking spans each 56ft 9in, with an arch rise/span ratio of 0.24. The bridge is nearly 60ft wide between the parapets, which consist of pierced balustrades. When originally completed, it was the second widest bridge in Britain and Ireland, only Westminster Bridge, London being wider. The foundations were taken down to 14ft below low water ordinary spring tides and the piers were formed from iron caissons filled with concrete, the interior being reinforced with transverse iron bars.

References: Cox R.C. and Gould M.H. (1998) *Civil Engineering Heritage: Ireland*, p.254 (London: Thomas Telford Publications); O'Callaghan, A. (1989) *St Patrick's Bridge 1 and 2*, p.32 (Cork: Cork Holly Bough).

Ron Cox

WESTPORT RAILWAY MUSEUM

An important chapter in Mayo history has been preserved for posterity by the staff of Iarnród Éireann with the opening of the Westport/Achill Railway Museum at Westport Railway Station. The museum, which is housed in the original Achill line waiting room, was the brainchild of Anne Elliott, Station Manager at Westport Station.

For the past year, Anne and her colleagues have collected a number of railway artefacts, photographs, paintings and newspaper cuttings commemorating the old railway line. Also on display is a working model representation of the Achill line, which opened in 1895 and operated for 42 years until its closure in 1937.

The official opening of the museum was performed by Jonathan Beaumont, author of the definitive book on the line, *Rails to Achill*. Cathaoirleach of Westport Town Council, Cllr Margaret Adams, complimented Anne Elliot and the staff of Iarnród Éireann for their foresight in developing the museum and collecting memorabilia from times past for future generations about the workings of the railway. Cllr. Adams remarked that while Iarnród Éireann have often come in for criticism due to inadequate rail services, she wished to thank them for the improvements to the Westport to Dublin line and the consequent shorter journey time. Cllr Adams also

proposed the creation of a footpath from the viaduct in Westport to the quay in order to commemorate the people who worked on the Achill Railway line and the lives lost in the Clew Bay and Kirkintulloch tragedies.

Cathaoirleach of Mayo County Council, Cllr Frank Chambers, remarked that many a tear was shed on the Achill platform. "It was only yesterday that people in Achill people were talking in Mickey Lavelle's pub about the potato picking in Scotland," he said, pointing to the prosperity and changes that have taken place since.

Gerry Glynn, District Manager of Iarnród Éireann said it was a proud day for the station and staff who, only a few short years ago, were facing the stark fact of closure. "With the support of the local councillors and pressure groups including the chamber of commerce, we made the investment power-brokers sit up and take stock", he said. In the last four years the entire line has been completely re-laid with a continuous welded track on concrete sleepers replacing the old jointed track on timber sleepers which was 80-90 years old. The current track will last another 50-60 years. According to Mr. Glynn, improvements are carried out every year and the awards the Westport station has won are justified. "We're not there yet," he said, "but we're getting there."

Anne Elliott, Station Manager, thanked all those involved in getting the museum project off the ground including Noel Enright who designed it, Iarnród Éireann staff from Westport, Ballina and Claremorris who contributed to the project and the Railway Record Society and Railway Preservation Society of Ireland, amongst many others.

Author Jonathon Beaumont said the national railway had a duty not only to modernise the railways but also to protect and conserve the national asset that is our railway heritage. He spoke of the 1894 drowning tragedies in Clew Bay and the fire tragedy in Kirkintulloch in 1937.

The museum will be open to the public each weekday from 1.30pm to 4pm and at other times by appointment.

Mayo News and Ewan Duffy

-- REVIEWS --

AN ECOLOGICAL REPORT ON THE BARNAGH TUNNEL AND ITS ENVIRONS. €5. Great Southern Trail Ltd, Newcastle West, Co Limerick, 2002

This report was prepared for Great Southern Trail Ltd as a Heritage Council requirement for grant aiding the clearance of the approaches to the Barnagh Tunnel, one of the many interesting features along the route of the GST. The report comprises a survey of the plants in the area, a bat survey of the tunnel, and reports on the mammals and birdlife.

These are interesting enough in their own right, showing the diversity of nature that can occur in an abandoned industrial setting. However, the report goes beyond the nature aspects and includes colour photos of the tunnel and Barnagh Station as well as an OS map and line diagram of the Barnagh Tunnel area. Worryingly, the report advocates blocking up the ends of the tunnel with a lockable access door to restrict access to only six months of the year.

Ewan Duffy

THE INLAND WATERWAYS OF IRELAND. Jane Cumberlidge. Stg£30. ISBN 0 085288 424 9. Imray, Laurie, Norie & Wilson Ltd, Wych House, St Ives, Cambridgeshire, PE27 5BT, 2002.

Jane Cumberlidge's book is an extensive (and expensive) piece of work concerning the inland waterways of the island of Ireland. It covers the full gambit of waterway interests, including the voluntary societies that operate in this sphere as well as conservation and development issues. The meat of the book is a description of all of the navigable and formerly navigable waterways on the island.

Primarily aimed at the boater, the book nonetheless contains sufficient industrial heritage interest in the form of maps of each waterway showing the location of locks and key bridges, distance tables, a history of each route covered, and suggestions for things to do and see.

One canal not mentioned (and one for which little information appears to exist) is Lacy's Canal south of Mullingar. Marked on OS Discovery series maps 41 & 48, it runs from the north end of Lough Ennel, ending in the River Brosna just south of Mullingar. Any information on this would be welcomed.

Ewan Duffy

ROSSIN, COUNTY MEATH – AN UNOFFICIAL PLACE. Bryn Coldrick. €9.95 ISBN 1-85182-710-2. Four Courts Press, Fumbally Lane, Dublin 8.

Rossin is a primary example of how places and industries can disappear. Look at a map of Co Meath today and Rossin isn't marked. Located above the Mattock Bridge on the N51 between Slane and Drogheda, the ruins of Rossin Mill remain to this day and Bryn Coldrick's work sets out the development of the area, the development of the flour mill and its subsequent decline in the early 20th century, conversion to a flax mill only deferring its inevitable closure.

Ewan Duffy

RIVER BANN AND LOUGH NEAGH PILOT: A BOATING GUIDE TO THE RIVER BANN, LOUGH NEAGH AND THE RIVER BLACKWATER. Michael B. Savage. STG20. ISBN 0-9517068-6. River Bann and Lough Neagh Branch of IWAI.

This is mainly, as it says, a pilot book, but includes background history to the areas surrounding the waterways, and along the banks. There is a section on legends and also on the environment and nature. It is an interesting and informative publication. I have little knowledge of the Northern waterways, so find it especially interesting, and am anxious to get up there and find out more !

Rosaleen Miller

THE FARRANFORE TO VALENCIA HARBOUR RAILWAY VOL. 1. Patrick O'Sullivan. Stg£10.95. ISBN 0-85361-604-3. Oakwood Press, PO Box 13, Usk, NP15 1YS, 2003.

In the same series as the Oakwood Press' publication on the railway to Achill, the author and Oakwood haven't dropped their standards with this book.

Volume 1 deals with the planning, construction and operation of this line. The author sets out the background to Valentia's attempts to be selected as a packet station on the sea route from the United Kingdom to America and the plans and attempts to build a railway to the town.

Ultimately, the line was built in two stages. Stage 1 saw a line from Farranfore on the Killarney–Tralee line to Killorglin, opening in 1885. The extension to Valentia Harbour was built under the Railways (Ireland) Act 1890 and opened in 1893.

This volume deals with the civil engineering aspects of the line as well as signaling and its demise and closure in 1960. Well illustrated with photos and maps, it is good value.

Ewan Duffy

THE HARCOURT STREET LINE. Brian MacAongusa. €19.99. ISBN 1-85607-907-4. Currach Press, 55a Spruce Ave, Stillorgan Industrial Park, Blackrock, Co Dublin, 2003.

With the LUAS line along part of the trackbed of the Harcourt Street Line due to open in 12 month's time, the Currach Press have timed Brian MacAongusa's publication reasonably well.

The book starts with an engineering description of the line, interspersed with aspects of social history, a format that reads well. Chapters follow on services, both regular and specials (the latter always a feature of railway operation), the Drumm battery trains, accidents on the line, a tale of attempted murder, details of the shortsighted closure, a commentary on the economic effects of closure on the Harcourt Street area and details of the LUAS line due to open in 2004. It is well illustrated with photographs and diagrams and is well worth the asking price.

Ewan Duffy

WATER TOWERS OF BRITAIN. Barry Barton. STG £28.50 (+ p&p). Newcomen Society (Book Sales), PO Box 421, Elmswell, Bury St Edmunds, IP30 9XF, 2003.

In towns, municipal water supplies with their water towers began to appear in the early Victorian era, followed by rural water facilities. The latter were often under the patronage of country estates until rural district councils and subsequently water boards assumed responsibility for delivery of piped water throughout the countryside. Provided by such a range of agencies, early water towers were therefore very varied, even though they had the same basic function of storing water at a given height. Strangely, few standard solutions were adopted countrywide so the variations in size, shape and form of surviving towers seem endless.

As modern water supply technology develops, towers are steadily being demolished and few are being built. PHEW therefore decided, in 1994, to form a sub-group to research, locate, visit and photograph water towers of every description throughout Britain and Ireland. The group's eight years of research has produced a definitive record of a subject about which very little has been published in its own right.

The book is 240 pages long with 83 illustrations and 25 maps. There are 11 chapters ranging in content from the functions and origins of the water tower, through Victorian municipal towers, early rural towers, early and modern concrete construction, all-metal structures, towers for other purposes,

problems, re-use and the future. To spare the reader a huge proliferation of references, there is a bibliography relating to each chapter after the main body of the text. Only those publications that the reader has a reasonable chance of tracking down have been listed.

This book is a timely record of an important part of Britain's engineering heritage and will be an important reference work for civil engineers, architects and industrial archaeologists.

Ron Cox

The following books have also appeared recently and will be reviewed in the next IHAI newsletter.

IRISH FLOUR MILLING: A HISTORY 600-2000. Edited by Andy Bielenberg. €20. ISBN 1-84351-019-7. Dublin: Lilliput Press, 2003. Copies may be obtained from Stephanie Bourke, Skerries Mills, Skerries, Co Dublin, price €22.50 (including P&P).

PORTLAW, CO WATERFORD: CONSERVATION PLAN. Garry Miley et al. €15.00 ISBN 1-901137-50-3. Kilkenny: Heritage Council, 2003. This publication is also available free of charge as a printable PDF document on www.heritagecouncil.ie (Adobe's *Acrobat Reader* – a free download – is required to open it).

IRELAND'S BRIDGES. Ron C. Cox and Michael H. Gould. €24.95. ISBN 0-86327-864-7. Dublin: Wolfhound Press, 2003.

STOP PRESS! HERDMAN'S MILL TO CLOSE

On 19 Feb, James Herdman announced that the long established Herdman's spinning mill in Sion Mills, Co Tyrone was to close within a matter of months, with the loss of more than 250 jobs. This is the last operating flax wet-spinning mill in Ireland and its closure will mark the end of a 170-year presence in north-west Ulster. The company opened a plant in South Africa some time ago and it is expected that production will be transferred there. Whether the mill's closure will provide the impetus for the regeneration of the derelict 19th century mill which was vacated when the present factory was built remains to be seen (see 'FULSome Praise' above).



*My thanks to Ron Cox, Ewan Duffy, Barry O'Reilly, Paul McMahon, Ian McQuiston, Rosaleen Miller and Colm Donnelly for their contributions. All items of industrial interest will be gratefully received by the editor, Fred Hamond. The next issue will be in **June 2004**; copy by end of May, if possible, to 75 Locksley Park, Belfast BT10 0AS.*