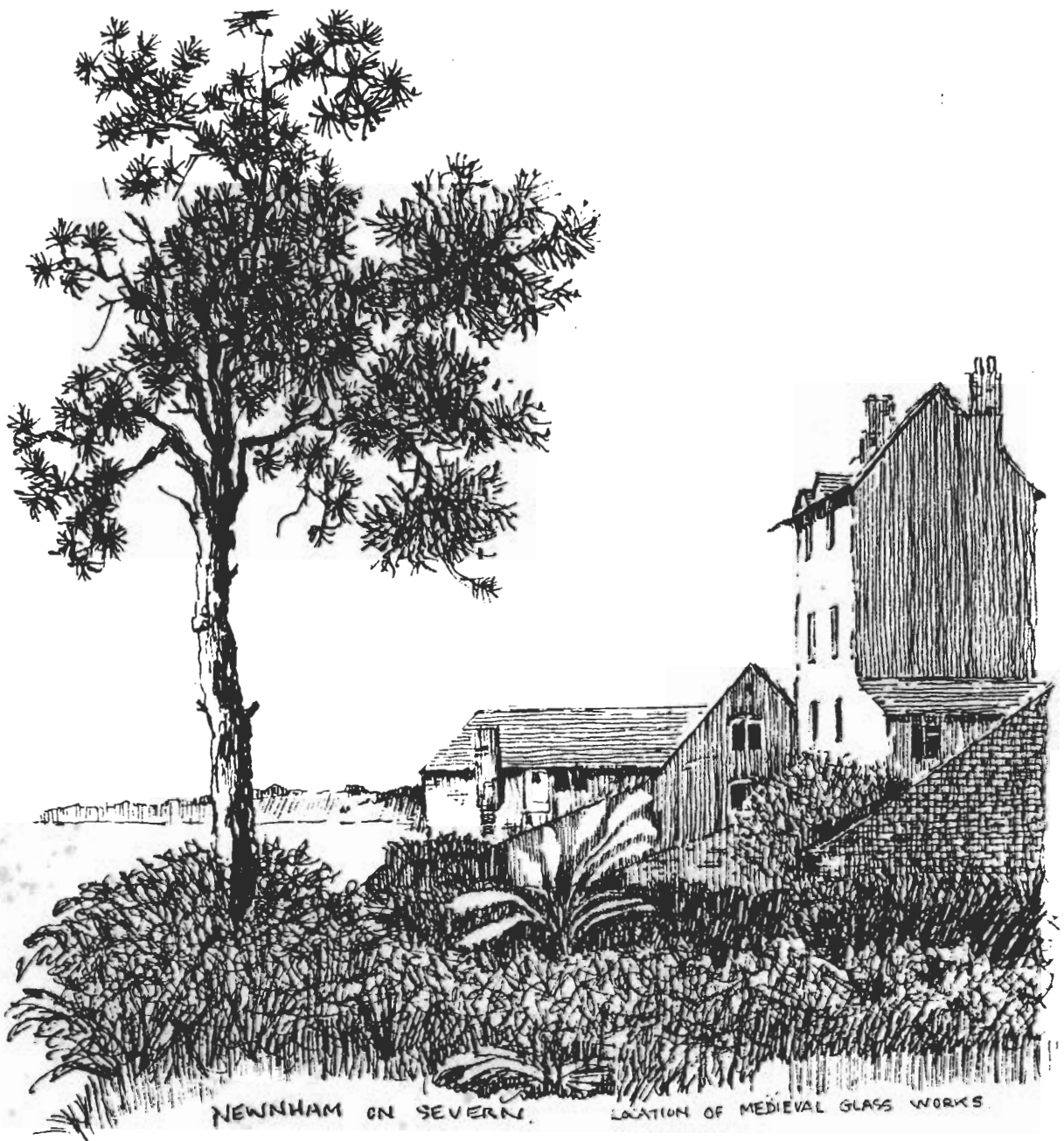


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EDITORIAL

In this issue Ian Standing resumes his continuing story of the Whitecliff Furnace, with a promise of more to come! and David Bick also contributes a short article on David Mushet. So the industry of the Forest of Dean is once more well represented in the Journal.

Ian Mackintosh continues his account of the development of the town of Stroud, which by the eighteenth century was becoming the urban centre of the local textile trade. In addition, Mrs Haine adds a grace-note to her series on the cloth mills of the Painswick valley with an account of the one mill in that parish which was not in the textile trade. Another mill, of a rather different sort, is the subject of a "Note" by Dr. J V Garrett, our guest contributor of this issue. This was at Elkstone, on the Cotswold plateau, and not in the valleys.

A ray of hope for the future of the redundant mill buildings in the Stroudwater area is revealed in Neville Crawford's 'Planning' notes. Readers might also wish to take cognisance of the Textile Group of the Stroud Museum Association, which has taken on the task of transferring redundant textile machinery from the Lerry Mills at Aberyswith to Stroud, including at least one item manufactured at the Ferrabee's Phoenix Iron Works. (Incidentally, the late Rex Wailes, who did so much to inaugurate the recording of industrial monuments, was a member of that family.)

Finally, but by no means least, our grateful thanks to Member Pat Lane T.D., for another attractive cover drawing!

With best wishes,

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VISITS



VISIT TO STANLEY MILL. Thursday 17 April 1986.

The first visit of the season was a return to Stanley Mill after an interval of several years. This is of course one of the finest mills in the county, and notable as being one of the earliest fireproof mills. The present main building dates from 1812/13, and has cast-iron double-columns and arches down the centre of each floor. Previous visits had taken place on Saturday mornings when there was normally little activity at the mill. However, the new management at Marling & Evans could only permit a mid-week visit, and for those able to attend this had the advantage that we could see all the manufacturing processes. Our guides had to deal with a host of questions as they showed us willeying, carding, spinning, doubling, warping, and finally, weaving.

Very noticeable was the recently installed machinery. The latest ring frames for spinning could be seen working on the same floor as the spinning mules. The modern highspeed looms were particularly impressive.

Some members concluded their tour with a very profitable visit to the factory shop. This is open at certain times during the week, and details can be obtained by telephoning Stonehouse 2391.

RW

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JUNE COACH TRIP TO SOMERSET, AVON & WILTSHIRE.

Thirty-six took part in our coach trip on 7 June. Our first visit was to Eastwood Manor Farm at East Harptree, where Mr Gay showed us his remarkable 100 year-old Model Farm. The principal building is reputed to cover more than one acre; it is iron framed with stone walls, and with a series of barrel-shaped corrugated iron roofs, which have only recently needed their first repair. There is a series of large cattle halls on the ground floor, each surrounded by stalls and each provided with a central drinking fountain and a special floor-washing system draining to a common slurry tank. The upper floor serves for storage and the preparation of feed stuffs. The central power house is no longer used but still has relics of the earlier steam- and oil-engines. The water supply comes from a string of small reservoirs in a stream running down from Mendip to the Chew Valley, which are now used as a trout farm. There are interesting old workshops and some old farming equipment, including a stack elevator which is said to have been operated by five generations of the Gay family.

After lunch we went to the Camden Works Museum at Bath, a former "real tennis" court which now houses the collection taken from the former Camden Works of J B Bowler, general engineer and mineral water manufacturer. The firm is said never to have thrown anything away in over ninety years; there are - a gas-lit front shop, belt-drive machine tools, a pattern shop and small brass foundry, a brass finishing shop and a gas fitting shop etc., and in addition a complete factory for making and bottling mineral waters. This has a wooden barrel for making

CO₂, the syrup mixer with all the assorted essences and flavours, bottle cleaning, pressurised filling and labelling machines, and crate-making equipment, all still capable of operation. The original office is also preserved. Also in the museum is a new section dealing with the mining, transport, working and use of Bath Stone. This was a useful introduction to our next visit.

Pausing to look at the newly-restored Box Tunnel portal, we went to the Bath Stone Quarry Museum at Corsham. One of our members, David Pollard, is in charge of setting up this new museum, and we were privileged to have a preview before it was opened to the general public. The surface displays of stone working, storage and transport, are in a fairly early stage, but members who braved the 160 steps to the extensive underground workings were given a fascinating insight into the way the old miners sawed (by hand - 4 foot x 4 foot cuts!), or hand-picked and lifted the large blocks of stone.

This is a museum to put on your list for future visits!

JS

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VISIT TO NEWENT. Friday 18 July 1986.

This year for our Social Evening we visited Newent where we were most fortunate to have resident (and Member) David Bick as our guide for a gentle perambulation round this interesting little market town. We were shown how the Georgian facades of many of the buildings in the town centre now disguise features of much older construction.

Moving to the outskirts of town, we passed by Newent Court Lake in its peaceful setting, and viewed the remains of the Hereford & Gloucester Canal nearby. Most apparent since our last visit were several modern housing estates which have been built on the outskirts of the town. This is something which can affect the character of our local small towns: however, the centre remains as interesting as ever, and we are grateful to David for his enjoyable walk.

Finally we retired to the Black Dog for some welcome refreshment, and some lively discussion!

RW

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VISIT TO THE BLACK COUNTRY MUSEUM etc.

On Sunday 12 October we filled a 53-seater coach (and turned people away!) for a visit to the Black Country Museum at Dudley.

Our visit had been chosen to coincide with a 'Steam Rally', and as we looked down from the car park on arrival there were over a score of traction engines, rollers, steam cranes, a steam-powered logging saw bench and a steam roundabout, all firing up. We could see why it was called the Black Country! These visiting machines alone provided a feast of interest.

Most of our party took part in the canal trip into the Dudley tunnel. Restoration of this tunnel is not yet complete, but it is being developed to illustrate, the complex system of old workings under Wren's Nest which could deliver their output direct into the boats on this important transport link. The modern boats are battery-electric, but a couple of volunteers provided propulsion in the old style by legging us for a short distance.

All the usual attractions of the museum were operating: we saw the tramway, the bakery, glass engraving, chain making, nail making, the rebuilt chapel, pub (queues all day!), cottages and shops - manned and womaned by genuine natives. The repartee with local visitors in the general shop was quite memorable, if you could understand it!

Keith Gale gave us a specially conducted tour of the rebuilt rolling mill and later in the day we were able to watch this in operation, re-rolling square billets into flat bar. (This performance was from a safe distance - if the Health & Safety at Work Acts had been in operation in the 18th century, the Industrial Revolution would have been nipped in the bud.)

The canal terminal was quite busy, and the colliery restoration has progressed since our last visit.

The major new attraction is the full-size replica of the Newcomen 'Dudley Castle Engine' of 1712, which was probably originally erected somewhere on the Museum site. The replica engine is apparently still in the running-in stage; it was working spasmodically throughout the day, but the balletic performance which this required from the driver, from ropes on the valve gear to water cocks, and back to the stoke-hole, showed what an enormous achievement the successful operation of the original engine was.

There were a number of fascinating items to be seen all over the site - have you ever seen a steam-powered motor bike? - some of us saw one work for a short distance, a sort of blowlamp on two wheels. Perhaps the most spectacular sight and sound of the day was just as we were leaving: three powerful traction engines coupled in tandem, blasting steam and smoke from their chimneys, hauling a heavily-loaded trailer up a steep hill.

On the way home we were brought down to earth when Mr Foley led a walk along the BCN towpath from Wolverhampton top lock to Oxley viaduct, which brought home to those who knew the area only a few years ago, how rapidly the industrial and transport remains which are not in museums are disappearing.

JRS

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