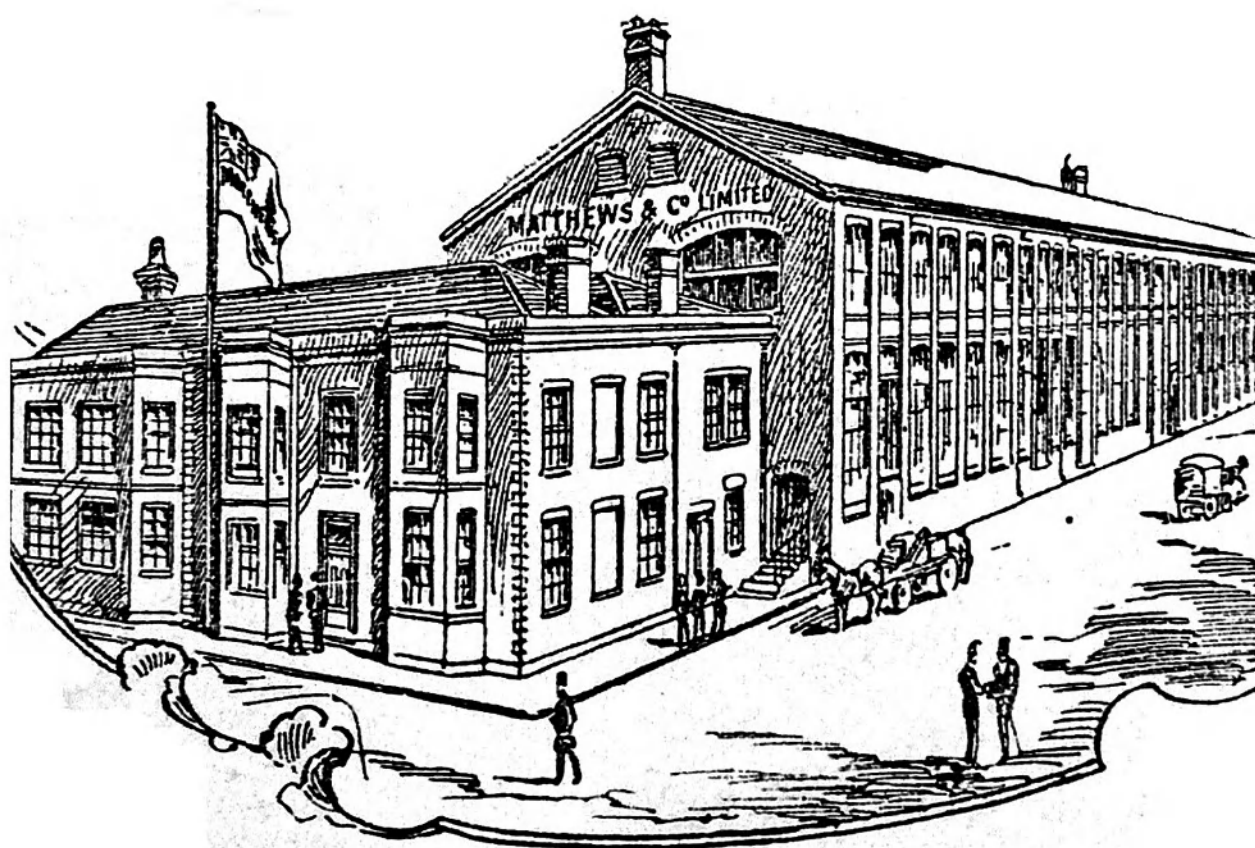


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GLOUCESTERSHIRE SOCIETY FOR INDUSTRIAL ARCHAEOLOGY

Gloucestershire Society for Industrial Archaeology

Journal for 2009

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Cover Illustration Mathew’s furniture factory as depicted in Industrial
Gloucestershire 1904 (see page 9) .

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Editorial

A lot has happened in the twelve months since the last editorial was written in June 2009. In particular, in March 2010, a pair of replica tramroad wagons were installed in Gloucester Docks on the historic alignment of the horse operated tramroad than ran from the Docks to Cheltenham between 1811 and 1861. The Society has been the prime mover of the project since 2004 but the idea of a replica tram at this location was first put forward by our former Chairman, the late David Bick as long ago as 1991. The Society hosted the 41st South Wales and West of England IA Conference in Cheltenham on Saturday 17 April 2010. Pate's Grammar School turned out to be an excellent venue for a very well attended event. However, on a less happy note, a planning application was lodged for major developments at Kings Stanley Mill in May 2010. It is proposed that the Grade I listed brick built mill and other listed buildings will be converted into about 70 residential apartments with a similar number of new build units on the site. GSIA is just one of a number of organizations (including several national bodies) who are opposing the application because of the effect of the development would have on the character of the listed buildings.

It is pleasing to report that the topics in this issue of the Journal geographically span the County from the Forest of Dean in the west to Lechlade in the east and the subjects covered are also suitably diverse.

The restoration of the Cotswold canals is at last gaining momentum with the start in July 2010 of the construction of the A46 road bridge over the Thames & Severn Canal at Wallbridge, Stroud. Theo Stening brings us up to date with progress along the full length of the two canals with the next of his annual reports on the project. One of the most interesting buildings associated with the canal is the lengthsman's cottage, the Round House, at the eastern end of the Thames & Severn Canal at Inglesham, Lechlade. The building has been recently investigated and surveyed by John Copping and he has kindly made his report available to GSIA so that Alan Strickland could produce an abridged version for the Journal.

Ian Standing gives us an insight into how Thomas Sopwith carried out his very important mineral survey in the Forest of Dean in the 1830s. Also in Dean, Pat Morris has more to tell us about Upper Redbrook Iron Works, 1798-9 and David Tanner's bankruptcy. Steve Mills has written about a site at Leonard Stanley where cricket bat willow trees were grown commercially in the 1920s and 1930s. Hugh Conway-Jones relates the history of Matthews & Company, Gloucester's most important furniture manufacturers. Their former premises immediately to the north of the Gloucester Quays Designer Outlet shopping centre has just been refurbished as the new home of the Antiques Centre. Amber Patrick continues her reports on malhouses in the County with one at Frampton on Severn now converted into holiday accommodation.

There was a very good programme of Summer Visits and this year's issue concludes with the reports on these events, followed by a selection of book reviews. As ever, we must thank all of the contributors for the very interesting articles they have provided. Hugh Conway-Jones must also be thanked for his usual invaluable help with the production of the Journal.

Ray Wilson August 2010

GSIA VISIT REPORTS FOR 2009

Once again the Society's thanks are due to Frank Colls who organised a programme of local visits and walks. Although a Spring coach trip had been arranged, there was insufficient support to enable it to go ahead and an Autumn trip was not pursued. The following reports have been compiled by Frank Colls, with a contribution from Ray Wilson.

Sunday 26 April 2009

Afternoon walk at Parkend

It was a fine afternoon as 23 of us assembled near the Fountain Inn to meet walk leader Frank Colls. We first heard about the 1811 main line tramroad from Lydbrook to Lydney and the building of several branch tramroads out from Parkend to bring stone, iron ore and coal down to the main line. These developments began a long period of industrial activity for the area. We saw some old stone tramroad blocks at Marsh Sidings which had become an interchange point between the tramroad and the later railway from around 1870. The 1878 OS map was available, showing the complexity of the tramroad and rail lines including links to the iron works (from around 1820), the site of which we saw later.

We followed the line of the Milkwall and Oakwood tramroads and went close to the site of an 1859 sawmill hearing how this developed with water power and then steam power. Changes of ownership, mixed fortunes, a big fire in 1928, and eventual decline led to closure in the 1970s. New owners took on a nearby site to start a modern timber treatment plant, which we saw from the path, and this is now run by International Timber (using imported wood). We turned on to the route of the 1875 Coleford Branch of the railway which had skirted the village to the west, and saw the site of the 17th century King's Ironworks and the terraced houses of Stampers Row. During the first half of the 19th century, water power was used to stamp slags and cinders from the earlier ironworks into a powder used in glass making. Going north towards Coleford Junction where the single track branch had left the main line we saw the base of the old signal box. Turning south along the main line (through a lorry park) we passed a site (now a caravan company) which had been a stoneworks from about 1850 up to the 1930s.

We left the rail route and followed the road towards the cricket field and the 1903 New Road to see the sites of the Tinplate Works and the area used for housing many of its workers, The Square. Further on we came to the former iron works engine house and heard about the development of this major contributor to Parkend's industrial prominence. Begun in 1799 and with a chequered history of technical problems and a fluctuating market over about 80 years, the site was home to three blast furnaces over this period. The air blast was powered by a beam engine and a second engine was installed in a new engine house in 1828. A 51' water wheel (fed from a new pond at Cannop) had been installed in 1827 but water supply was inconsistent and a third engine was erected in 1841. We heard about a bridge structure built over the adjacent tram and rail lines to carry trucks of iron ore, coke and limestone to the tops of the furnaces. Some of the site could be seen from the current railway level crossing but all that remains is the engine house. After many years as a Forester Training School, this is now a Field Study Centre.

At Parkend Station a train was arriving as part of the Sunday operation of the Dean Forest Railway. This was a chance to hear about the DFR and this year's notable anniversary of the passing of the Lydney and Lidbrook Railway Act in June 1809, so beginning the tramroad era for Parkend and the surrounding area. The present day operation of the line is a result of the preservation efforts in the 1970s and the continuing enthusiasm and hard work of the hundreds

of volunteers involved. We crossed the railway footbridge and made our way across the slope to join the Yorkley road and go into the area known as Mount Pleasant. Here we heard about some of the collieries which were worked in this area and the period when coke was made for the ironworks. We continued across a grassy area to find a prominent earthwork channel which had been the line of the leat which had brought water from Cannop Pond to drive the iron works waterwheel. To the north was a broad track which had been the line of a tramroad used for bringing coke to the furnaces and later for bringing coal from Parkend Royal colliery, up till 1928. We returned to the main road and went back to the level crossing by Parkend Station where Frank was thanked for giving us a most interesting and varied look around a fascinating area.



GSIA Visit to Parkend. Sunday 26 April 2009. Pannier tank engine 9681 approaching Parkend with a train from Lydney

Sunday 31 May 2009

Afternoon walk, Latton and the Wilts and Berks Canal

It was a fine afternoon as 10 of us met up with Will Harris, our leader for the trip, on the old road west of Cricklade. This was on the line of the Thames and Severn Canal and we were shown a distinctive building which had been a canal agent's house with warehouse wings. The adjacent canal basin and the canal itself had been filled in but we were able to follow a path by the recently upgraded A419 road to see the concrete conduit under the new road by which the route of the T & S canal has been preserved. It was then a short drive to the site at Latton which had been an important junction on the T & S canal, connecting with the North Wilts Canal (opened 1819) and thence with the Wilts and Berks Canal at Swindon, some 9 miles to the south. From the footpath, we could see the clear line of the T & S canal and, branching off, the North Wilts canal with a short aqueduct over a former mill leat from the River Churn. Then came a large rectangular basin, the recently dug out Latton basin, and beyond this by a private

house were the lock gates of a stop lock. Also seen was a bridge structure, in the midst of renovation work, with several bricks marked T & S C.

We then drove to a site in Swindon for a short walk alongside a stretch of the Wilts and Berks Canal actually in water. This is now a pleasant linear park with many water birds and plenty of greenery. We heard about the canal and its route from Trowbridge on the Kennet and Avon Canal to Abingdon on the Thames. It had opened in 1810 and was closed in 1901 after the collapse of an aqueduct near Chippenham. We walked along to a fine brick bridge over the canal which had carried the Midland and South Western Junction Railway (now a cycle and foot path). From this bridge we could see an area designated for some new housing developments and we heard about the plans to take the canal under the M4 motorway just visible to the south.

Returning to the cars, we had a final drive to a spot south east of Wootton Bassett where a bridge crosses the line of the canal. A towpath walk took us past a new spill weir which the Wilts and Berks Canal Trust has recently constructed. Further west was a remarkable site on this virtually dry stretch of canal – a new lock structure, very neatly built in red brick. While without gates and sluices, Chaddington Lock presented a fine sight and clearly demonstrated the intentions of the Canal Trust to restore the canal and open the navigation as soon as they can. On our return to the cars we thanked Will for a most interesting afternoon and hoped that a visit to other sections of the canal could be arranged at a future date.

Sunday 28 June 2009

Afternoon Visit to Frocester Hill and Halmore Mill

A group of 27 met at the Coaley Peak car park on a fine afternoon and, before assembling for the walk, we were able to admire the distant views from the topograph. Ray Wilson was our guide for the walk along a stretch of an old road up Frocester Hill which was to form the first third of an enjoyable afternoon. He outlined the brief history of road developments in the area and the difficulties posed by Frocester Hill for 18th century travellers between Gloucester and Bath. We first walked along by the Nympsfield long barrow to a building thought to have been a toll house for that first road, although there is little evidence from the present structure. We then started a descent along a rough track which took a zig-zag course down the hill. At a couple of places there were some distinct grooves in the stone base of the track which were possibly signs of wear from cart and carriage wheels. We passed a 19th century quarry which had somewhat interfered with the line of the old road and continued down to some former farm buildings, now in residential use. At this point the track joined the modern road coming up from Frocester and it was the higher stretch of this modern road, built in 1784, which had enabled the abandonment of the older steeper section we had followed. We retraced our steps up the hill and were able to appreciate the difficulties of both ascent and descent, and the sharp turns, which had led to the improved line being built.

We then travelled by car to Halmore Mill, north of Cam, making use of the road down Frocester Hill we had seen on our earlier walk. Ray's navigational notes also pointed out some features along the route, including an old milestone, a turnpike house and the Frocester Court Tithe Barn. At Halmore Mill we met Geoff Vatcher for a close look at his water wheel project which had been the subject of an evening GSIA talk in March 2009. The former cloth mill had been destroyed by fire in 1939 but the water course and wheel pit were still substantially intact, although severely clogged with mud, debris and vegetation. From 1984 Geoff had been working on a project to clear the site and install a new water wheel aiming to generate electricity for his house adjacent to the mill site. There is still much to do but we saw the partially

completed wheel (14' diameter and 8½' wide) in action as Geoff let some water through the sluice. We saw the tailrace in a culvert under the road and heard about the many weeks of manual labour involved in clearing it out. Moving to a point above the wheel, we saw the new sluice gate Geoff had designed and built to bypass the wheel. He led us through some fields upstream to see the line of the River Cam and we heard more about the current stage of the project which is tackling the issue of regulatory permission to extract water from the river and the possible environmental impact.

It was then a short drive to Ray's house at Hamshill to enjoy part 3 of the afternoon - tea and cakes in the garden, very kindly added to the programme by Moira and Ray. Some light rain forced us inside for a spell but Moira's refreshments and hospitality more than made up for this small setback. Geoff Vatcher had joined us for the tea so it gave us the chance to thank him properly for his contribution. We had all been highly impressed with Geoff's efforts and his engineering skills in taking forward such an ambitious scheme, and we thanked him for letting us see it all. We also thanked Ray for his interesting walk and for organising the travel and parking arrangements (not an easy task!) and Moira for her excellent teas and cakes which had rounded off a very pleasant afternoon.

Thursday 16 July 2009

Evening walk, Cirencester

It was a wet evening as 20 of us met up for a look around Cirencester with David Viner. He outlined the main theme of the walk as a review of how the town had changed over the years from its period as a typical market town. This itself had grown out of its historical legacy and layout from Roman and medieval times and, importantly, the town was still undergoing adaptation and development to suit modern economic and social influences. To appreciate some of these changes we would be looking at various buildings and industrial and transport sites. We passed The Bear, a good example of a timber framed inn with a jettied structure from the 16th century but later extended as the town grew. The Bingham Library was seen, this built in 1904 by Daniel Bingham who used his wealth to endow the town with a cultural and learning centre, now restored as the Bingham Gallery and offices and still owned by trustees. Benefactors such as Bingham and the Cripps and Bathurst families were crucial to the town's development and its crop of high status buildings.

The Corn Hall buildings of 1862, with an imposing frontage, were erected on the site of a medieval butter market and became a cultural centre after their initial use in the corn trade. We saw the results of very recent developments whereby the building is now home to up-market shops and restaurants, and further building work is in hand. Outside the Corn Hall we appreciated the Market Place, now a wide open area but formerly occupied by some permanent buildings and a "shambles", all cleared away between 1825 and 1830. Another influence on the town's appearance was the arrival of outside enterprises with their own building style, an example being the former Midland Bank. Over the road had stood The Bell public house and we saw the fine stone carving of a bell built into the corner. We moved on past a building which had been used by a sheet metal company during the second world war, before coming to the site of the Cirencester Brewing Company, run by the Cripps family. It was noted that part of the old office building facing Cricklade Street had been very appropriately used as an off-licence, but this had recently closed. Also on the site, a former barrel store was now very much in business as part of the Brewery Arts Centre and we admired *A Celebration of Hands*, a recently installed sculpture by Rory Young, high up on one of walls.

A short walk brought us to the former Cottage Hospital (still in use by the town's registrar) and alongside it the rather incongruous grass covered air raid shelter (also still in use by a voluntary body for seasonal exhibitions). Nearby was an imposing stone building, a former Congregational Chapel of 1833, with a frontage which had been elegantly modified to form a distinctive war memorial, and this building is still used for modern healthcare purposes. These examples of adaptation and different uses had to be contrasted with other older buildings still in need of such treatment such as the former railway station building, dating from 1841, which we then visited. It is currently a council store but really needs ideas, money and new uses to ensure its longer term future. We went on to see the location of the terminal basin of the Cirencester Arm of the Thames and Severn Canal and heard about this important transport link, although modern housing developments have overtaken the site. It was then along Querns Lane past a former warehouse, currently in commercial use, to view a fine building previously the Cirencester Urban District Council Water Works. This had been neatly converted for residential use, as had another fine building, the Cirencester Brewery Maltings, which we passed later. A short walk brought us back to our starting point where we thanked David for a most interesting tour with lots to think about. Some of us felt in need of refreshment which we found at the Wheatsheaf, thus rounding off a very enjoyable evening despite the weather.

Sunday 16 August 2009

Afternoon walk Mills of the Uley Valley, part 2

It was a fine afternoon as 26 of us met at Uley. We set off across a field path towards Owlpen and paused at a point where Ray Wilson, our leader for the walk, pointed out some buildings a little distance away. These were three of the remaining structures of Sheppard's Mill which we were to see more closely later on. We continued up to a lane from which we could enter the secluded settlement of Owlpen, first looking at the small church with its finely decorated interior from the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Nearby was the Court House, formerly used for local manorial jurisdiction, and a Grist Mill (rebuilt in 1726 and with an extant water wheel), both properties now used as holiday accommodation. We left the Owlpen estate and started our gradual descent of the valley of the Ewelme Brook, passing a sizeable pond which had been part of the water source for Sheppard's Mill. A simple stone footbridge across the brook was seen, and it was interesting to note the "footprints" worn into the top surface. We heard about the hundreds of mill workers who had been employed by Sheppard when cloth production was at its height. Most would have walked to the mill and these marks in the stone were a good reminder of the hard life of that period. Further down the brook we came to the surviving buildings of the mill site which were marked on a useful plan which Ray had provided. Of the 30 buildings, noted as covering a wide range of cloth making processes, engine houses and workshops, only 3 remain, all now in residential use. We saw a Press House, the "Great Mill" and the Clerks dwelling house, and heard about the production of Uley Blue cloth. When Sheppard went bankrupt in 1837 around 1000 people (mill workers and ancillary trades) lost their livelihoods.

Continuing into Uley village we saw a Bethesda chapel from 1821 now in use as the Prema Arts Centre. Nearby was an attractive building which was on the exact site of Dauncey's Factory, a premises for making garments rather than for milling cloth. Interestingly, it had the look of an old mill or warehouse but was in fact a modern structure for residential purposes. We walked along a path to enter Uley's Millennium Green, a large field intended to provide a "natural" open space for vegetation and wildlife for people to enjoy. This was thought to have been a Rack Field in the cloth-making period. We made our way to Dauncey's Mill, now in use as a private house, where Ray had arranged for us to see inside and to look around the grounds. Begun in 1689 and with various changes of ownership and use over the centuries, mainly for

fulling with cloth production ceasing in the 1840s, and later having a period as a saw mill. In the entrance hall we saw the water wheel, no longer functioning but nicely restored (in 1994), and heard about the top quality cloth which had been made there. Outside we saw the mill pond and a ruinous round building, of rough stone, which had been a wool drying stove. The final mill on our tour was Marsh Mill, though only the roof could be seen, and again this had been a cloth mill, later a saw mill and is now a private house. Returning to the main road, we turned off for a brief look at Uley Brewery (still producing good local beers), and could see the boldly inscribed name in the stonework, 1833 Prices Brewers. Ray was thanked for giving us an interesting and informative walk before we climbed up the hill to our cars near The Old Crown. A few of us thought it proper to sample the Uley beer (and very good it was!).

Tuesday 8 September 2009

Visit to Huntsmans Quarry, near Naunton

It was a fine morning as 16 members gathered at the quarry offices to meet David Glenn, Managing Director of Huntsmans Quarries Ltd, for a tour of the site. He introduced the visit by outlining a brief history of the company and giving us a short talk on the various products which they extracted and processed at the quarry. The area was first worked as a family business from the 19th century when the Jurassic limestone was found to be a good source of building material, especially roofing tiles, and in the 1920s the stone was in demand as a high quality aggregate. In these early years hand working and transport by horse and cart prevailed but in the 1920s and 30s engine driven crushing equipment and mechanised handling and transport started to be used. In 1936 it became a limited company although there is still a family connection with the business. Products include natural stone blocks and roofing tiles (known as slates though they're not slate!) as well as building items made from reconstituted material. There is also ready mixed concrete, different sized aggregates, and agricultural lime. An interesting product line is the "Lego", a large cast concrete block (about 1.5m x 0.5m x 0.5m) which has a number of uses in agriculture, waste management and building material storage, used to make temporary compounds which can be easily modified to suit changing requirements.

We boarded a small bus for a tour of the site and David gave us a very full commentary on all the excavations, buildings, plant, materials and products we saw. He stressed the strong attention paid to environmental protection in all the activities on the site and pointed out the dust protection equipment used in the concrete plant. Nearby, large moulds were being filled to form the "Lego" blocks and we were to see several such blocks in use around the site to contain huge piles of aggregate. We saw a large area of previously quarried land where the rock strata, including a clay layer, could be appreciated and heard about the programme to restore the area and replace the topsoil. Areas already restored were now used for growing barley. All stone is extracted by hydraulic breakers at the quarry face (no explosives are used) and material is then handled with mechanical shovels and large trucks. Rocks of appropriate size are sorted by hand to pick those suitable for cropping into slates, regular building blocks, or for dry stone walling. Aggregate is processed by crushing and screening to give a variety of sizes. All waste dust and loose material is gathered and fed into the process for producing the mixture for reconstituted stone. This mixture is formed in latex moulds (held in a wooden frame) to form roofing slates which look authentic but are considerably cheaper than those cut from the natural stone. The company also take in certain demolition waste for sorting and processing into usable hard core. Agricultural lime is produced by grinding stone to very fine powder, this being necessary for an effective spreading of the material into the soil, and we saw the bagging plant associated with this. We learnt something of the economics of the business, especially on transport costs where a local market makes a lot of sense. Their average delivery distance for concrete was 7 miles

and for stone 13 miles. It had been a most interesting morning and we had all gained a lot from the visit. We thanked David for all his efforts before heading for home.

Sunday 4 October 2009

Afternoon walk at Nailsworth

Ian Macintosh had kindly agreed to lead a walk for the Society and about 24 members and friends came along for this tour around the mill sites and other features of the town. Ian had requested donations to the Stroudwater Textile Trust and members were very happy to support this organisation.

We gathered at the bus station in Old Market for an introductory talk and from here it was a very short step to Days Mill, a former cloth mill, part of which dates back to about 1800 and situated right in the town centre. The long narrow stone building is now used as a shop selling furniture but some original features such as one of the original staircases and some window seats have survived. Our next destination was part way up Spring Hill to see two fine houses with connections with the Day family and both possibly dating from the early 18th century. On the right hand side ascending the hill is Spring Hill House with its imposing balustraded parapet, shell-hooded doorcase, and some of its original panelling inside. On the opposite side and slightly higher up the hill is the appropriately named The Upper House in the gabled, vernacular style, but unusually with sash windows.

From here we retraced our steps back through Old Market and made our way up Chestnut Hill to see the former wool warehouse used by the well known wool brokers T. M. Newman. The oldest part of the building is in stone with a stone tile roof and has the date 1726 on its north-west front. To the east there is a three storey extension in rubble with slate roof built in the 19th century. About twenty years ago the building was incorporated in a housing development. Just beyond the wool warehouse we saw the very picturesque group of the Friends Meeting House, its courtyard and a mid 17th century house. The meeting house was registered for this purpose in 1689.

From the foot of Chestnut Hill we started along Old Horsley Road and soon descended down through Lock's Mill, a former cloth mill, to the valley bottom. Here adjacent to the mill house we saw some very attractive 19th century cottages, one with unusual ogee-headed windows either side of a circular rusticated window. This mill was known as Johnson's Mill in the 20th century after the small engineering firm who occupied it. A short walk brought us to Ruskin Mill, formerly known as Millbottom Mill, another cloth mill which has seen various other uses in the 20th century. It is currently the home of the Ruskin Mill Educational Trust which caters for young students with special needs.

Our final visit was to Gig Mill where the Stroudwater Textile Trust have amassed a fine collection of machinery used in the woollen cloth industry. Much of the equipment has been restored to working order and trust member Terry Eldridge was on hand to demonstrate examples ranging from a hand loom through to a power loom. He also showed us how the intricate patterns were achieved in cloth with the dobby loom. On returning to the bus station we thanked our guide for a most interesting and informative tour.

RW