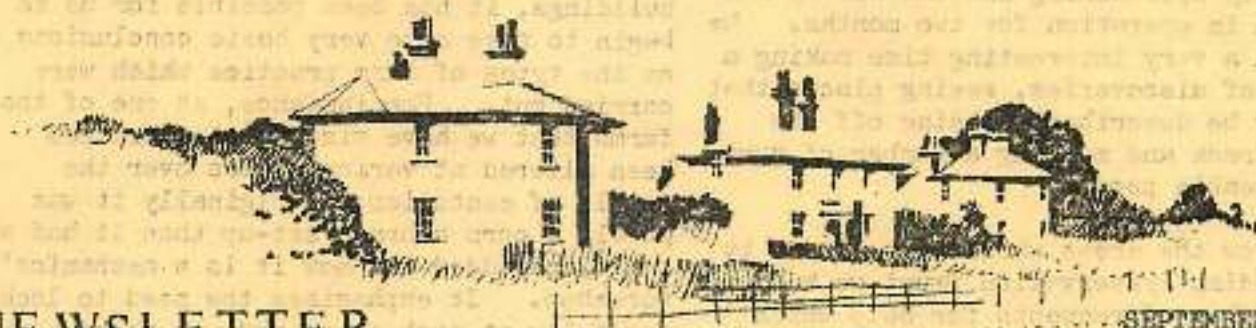


Nottinghamshire Building Preservation Trust



NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 1979.

SUSPENSION OF GRANT-AID

The front page of our newsletter has often reported modest or major successes of the Trust which have given us pleasure; at times it has reported, with regret, the loss of one of the county's buildings. Sadly, we have to advise you on this occasion of not the loss of some important building, but a major blow to the work of the Trust, although one which we hope will be temporary.

As a small registered charity the Trust is largely dependent for its income on grants from the local authorities and it is fair to say that in the past we have been generously supported. Unfortunately, it appears that the present restrictions on local authorities' spending may drastically curtail the amount of grant-aid which the Trust receives from the County Council and, perhaps, other local authorities. The exact amount of assistance which we are likely to receive is yet to be determined, but until such time as this is known, the Council of Management have decided to withdraw the grant-aid which the Trust has, in the past, offered. Although this is very much regretted, obviously the Trust cannot offer grant-aid in excess of the income which it receives.

Where grants have been previously offered, and accepted, then of course these commitments will be honoured.

It appears, therefore, that at least for the time being a questionmark hangs over the whole future of the Trust's grant-aid. For better or worse it is likely that the situation will have been clarified by the time the next newsletter is published and we shall of course keep our members fully informed of all developments.

It is worth remembering, however, that first-class technical advice - free of charge - is still available as a service from the Trust and, also, that other major aspects of the Trust's work, which often go unseen, such as the monitoring of planning applications which affect buildings in Conservation Areas, goes on as usual.

Bob Middleton, Secretary.

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FARM BUILDINGS SURVEY

: + : + Phil Tbbotsen + : + :

The season of mists and mellow fruitfulness is rapidly approaching and the Survey has now been in operation for two months. We have had a very interesting time making a variety of discoveries, seeing places that can only be described as being off the beaten track and meeting a number of very knowledgeable people.

Apart from the areas which were chosen by the Building Preservation Trust we have had a number of requests for help which has meant that the survey work has broadened somewhat to that originally intended. It has become more and more evident that this work is something that has roused a great deal of interest from both private individuals and official bodies, and there has been a large amount of support for the undertaking. Particularly, we are very pleased that the Nottinghamshire Branch of the National Farmers' Union have given us their blessing; for this we are most grateful.

Work has been done at Elkesley and Collingham in the North of the County and we have also been at work at Langer, Edwalton and Bulwell. Records have been made of a rather dilapidated Dovecote, a very fine range of early Eighteenth Century farm buildings and the interesting set of farm buildings which form part of one of the old coaching inns in the south of the County. As well as these we have material on a rather unique butcher's shop dating from the Sixteenth Century, a barn which was converted to corn milling and powered by an engine, and an Eighteenth Century model farm which has a dovecote chamber built as an integral part.

WALKS IN NOTTS. -

Colston Bassett - Collingham - Sneinton

The above walks were much enjoyed by those taking part and in addition to their interest proved most enlightening. We are greatly indebted to Carol Bennett, David Ablitt, Graham Beaumont, Bob Harrison and John Severn for all their

Quite apart from the interest of the buildings, it has been possible for us to begin to make some very basic conclusions on the types of farm practice which were carried out. For instance, at one of the farms that we have visited the barn had been altered at various times over the couple of centuries. Originally it was purely a corn storage set-up then it had a hop floor added and now it is a mechanics' workshop. It emphasises the need to look carefully at each place and not to be satisfied with outside appearances.

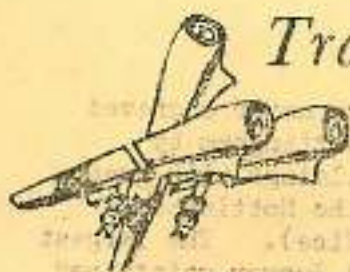
One of the activities which we have become involved in is the exhibition of material which we are in the process of collecting. In July we were asked by the Nottinghamshire Local History Council if we would put on a display at Edwinstowe. At the moment we have been given the use of the Collingham village Museum for a display. The Gedling House Resource Centre have very kindly loaned us a collection of models to illustrate the types of structures that we are interested in and we have been able to make a small collection of historical documents and plans which are also on show.

One of the most important parts of the undertaking which is helping to enlarge our knowledge of buildings is, as I have already mentioned, the opportunity that we have to be able to talk to the farming people and the owners of the various properties. This is probably as important as the actual surveying of the homesteads. We have been able to learn a great deal from these conversations.

effort and hard work in planning the itineraries and making the arrangements. However, the very poor attendances on two occasions were most disappointing and we would hope for better support if future activities of this nature are to be planned.

COACH TOUR : IRONBRIDGE - SATURDAY, 15th SEPTEMBER

There are still places available on this tour and we should be pleased to accept late bookings. Please telephone Nottingham 53681/2 for details.



Tracing the History of Your House

The third contribution to a regular series of short articles by Adrian Henstock, the County Archivist, describing basic documentary sources for tracing the history of smaller houses in Nottinghamshire built before c.1900.

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B. Maps and Plans, 16th-20th Centuries (continued)

6. Borough and District Council Building Plans, c.1870-date

In the last half of the 19th century it became necessary for plans of all new buildings and building works to be submitted for approval to the local council in order to comply with public health regulations. Such plans are thus invaluable for providing measured plans and elevations of new properties erected during or since the Victorian period together with precise dates and the names of the owners and the builders or architects. They can also help in dating modern additions and alterations to an old property and can, for example, provide a plan of an 18th century cottage at the time of the addition of a new bathroom in c.1930. An extensive series exists in the Nottinghamshire Record Office for Nottingham Borough (later City) from 1871 to 1948, comprising many thousands of plans and including many fine examples of Victorian and Edwardian architecture such as Waring and Gillow's building in King Street. There are chronological registers to accompany the plans, but these are not properly indexed and a long search may therefore be involved if the date of construction is not precisely known. Also in the Record Office are other series of plans for the former Urban District Councils of Arnold, Carlton, Kirkby, Skegby and Sutton and the Rural District Councils of Basford (part) and Bingham, although coverage is patchy, and most do not commence until c.1920. Other series, if they have not been destroyed, will usually be in the custody of the Chief Planning or Technical Officer of the relevant successor District Council.

7. Insurance Plans, 19th-20th Centuries

Large-scale plans of city centres were compiled by the firm of C.E. Goad as an aid to insurers and valuers, marking buildings with notes as to their function and building materials. The Nottinghamshire Record Office has sheets for the centre of Nottingham for c.1890, 1922, 1934 and 1962.

C. Topographical Views, 17th-20th Centuries

These are all visual sources recording the appearance of buildings in the past, in the form of prints, drawings, paintings and photographs, etc.

1. Prints and Drawings, 17th-19th Centuries

Many local topographical views have been printed as engravings in antiquarian and topographical books published since the 17th century, either in local works such as those of Thoroton (1677), Throsby (1797) or Deering (1751) or in national publications. Some were also sold separately as souvenirs or for framing. Whilst they mostly comprise views of country houses, churches, or townscapes, other buildings were

sometimes illustrated. Some drawings and sketches were never engraved or reproduced, such as an excellent South Prospect of Nottingham by Thomas Sandby of 1742 which depicts many individual buildings with great accuracy and which only exists as a pencil drawing in the Nottingham Castle Museum (photograph in Nottinghamshire Record Office). The largest collection of local views is contained in the Pictorial Survey maintained by the Local Studies Library at Nottingham but there are also collections at the Castle Museum, the Record Office, and other local libraries and museums. Others may be found in the Print Room of the British Library in London or in other repositories. A useful guide to possible locations outside the county is Professor M.W. Barley's Guide to British Topographical Collections (C.B.A., 1974).

2. Paintings, 17th-20th Centuries

These are less likely to depict smaller houses, usually being views of country houses, distant townscapes or rural scenes such as rustic cottages at Clifton or Wilford. The Nottingham Castle Museum holds a number of examples, including a recently acquired east view of Nottingham of c.1700, as do other museums around the county and also local stately-homes. Others may well be in private hands.

3. Photographs from c.1860

Photographic views exist in comparatively large quantities from the late Victorian period onwards and are invaluable for recording the appearance of buildings before later alterations. They are thus especially useful as a guide to restoration. They can also record the existence of buildings now demolished, e.g. a photograph of 1890 might depict a building of 1590 which has since disappeared. The largest collection for Nottingham and the county is again in the Pictorial Survey at the Local Studies Library at Nottingham, although for the city the Nottingham Historical Film Unit (96 Hucknall Road, Nottingham) has a vast collection, many of them now published in Victorian Nottingham and its companion series. There are smaller collections at the Record Office and at district libraries, for example West Bridgford Library has a collection covering the Rushcliffe area. Others may be in private hands locally. Many major buildings, including ones now demolished, are recorded on photographs at the National Monuments Record in London.

D. Property Rating and Taxation Records, 17th-20th Centuries

Property ownership has in the past, as today, formed the basis for the levying of many national and local rates and taxes. The records are especially valuable if they survive a period of years.

1. Parish, District and Borough Rate Books and Valuations, 18th-20th Centuries

Before the advent of County and District Councils at the end of the 19th Century, local rates were levied by parishes (or boroughs). They were not general rates such as are familiar today but a series of separate rates raised for different purposes, e.g. poor rates, highway rates, constables' rates, as well as occasional special rates such as church rates, drainage rates and enclosure rates, etc. Rates were usually based on the estimated annual rental of a property, and the amounts paid thus provide a rough indication of the 'quality' of a property.

Valuations are usually the most informative records, providing a brief description of the property, its area and the names of the owner and occupier, but they were only usually compiled at long intervals. The assessments, on the other hand, are less detailed, but often survive in

a long run, enabling the history of a building to be traced over a period of time. After 1894 most local rates were levied by borough or district councils in similar fashion to those today.

Unfortunately the survival of rate books before the late 19th century is very haphazard and even after that date is not complete. Earlier ones occur, usually in parish church records, now mostly deposited in the Nottinghamshire Record Office, but some are found amongst the financial records of borough or district councils together with later council rate books. These again are either deposited in the Record Office or else, where they have not been destroyed, in the hands of the Treasurers of modern successor Borough or District Councils. Many 20th century rate books are extremely bulky, and are consequently often destroyed. Even in the Record Office it is only usually possible to keep a sample, e.g. one in five years.

2. Land Tax Assessments, 18th-19th Centuries

The Land Tax was a property tax levied in the 18th and 19th Centuries, but the assessments usually only survive for the period from 1780 to 1832 because they were then used for electoral purposes. In Nottinghamshire the assessments are more-or-less complete for every parish (except Nottingham) for each year within this 52-year period, and some exist for the Newark area after 1832. Their value thus lies in their continuity, but against this they rarely record any description of the property or give any indication of where it is, usually simply listing owners and occupiers and the tax payable (the exceptions are Mansfield and Southwell where descriptions are given). In most cases the lists are arranged in alphabetical order of owners' names, but in some cases they may be in topographical order by street (although this may not be stated). It is possible by dint of painstaking work to reconstruct the ownership and occupancy pattern of every house in a town or village over the 52-year period by comparing one return with the next, especially with the aid of a parish rating survey or tithe apportionment of similar date to which the information can be linked. In some cases it might only be possible to identify a specific property by process of elimination after carrying out such an exercise covering the whole community. In a few parishes which were wholly or largely owned by one great landowner, especially in the Dukeries area, the assessments may be virtually useless as they will only record the name of the owner and 'various tenants' unspecified.

3. Hearth Tax Assessments, 1664, 1674

This tax was levied on the number of hearths in each house. The assessments are arranged by parish and list the names of householders and the number of hearths only; some poorer persons with one hearth were exempt. The records provide some indication of the size of a house and an indication of the addition of chimneys, etc., but there is of course the possibility of evasion and undertaxation to be considered. The original records are at the Public Record Office in London but there is a microfilm at the Nottinghamshire Record Office. The returns for Nottingham only for 1674 are printed in J.P. Briscoe's Chapters of Nottinghamshire History (1908) but no-one has yet been able to work out the topographical order (if any) in which the names are arranged.

4. Window Tax Assessments, 1696-1851

This tax was levied on the number of windows in a property but, apart from a few stray documents, none of the original assessments apparently survive for Nottinghamshire.

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In the next issue : Probate, Manorial and Estate records, etc.

HOLME PIERREPONT HALL

by Professor M.W. Barley,
Chairman of the Trust

The Hall at Holme Pierrepont has gone through several vicissitudes, but remains one of the most important historic houses in the country. Now that it is being thoroughly examined for the first time, its history can be summarised as follows:

It was built at the beginning of the Tudor Period, and the surviving portion shows that it was one of the grandest houses in the county at the time. It was built round a courtyard, with a great hall on the north side and private rooms such as a great chamber on the east side. The south side, in the middle of which is the arched entrance, has four rooms on each of the two floors; they were intended as private bed sitting rooms for members of the Pierrepont household and staff. Such lodgings can be seen in great houses elsewhere such as Dartington Hall (Devon) and Berkeley Castle (Gloucs.), but no other examples survive in this county.

The house was built of brick, as can be seen now that the front has been stripped of its stucco, and it is the oldest surviving brick building in the county. Internal walls in the south range were timber framed, as can still be seen, and the superb roof is intact and exposed upstairs at the east end. The church was only a short distance away, and the group of church and house represents very clearly the style of country life in Tudor and Stuart England.

Nothing is known of the great hall or dining room, because it was demolished in the 18th Century and along with it the old kitchen. A new kitchen was then made in the ground floor of the east wing. Later the rest of the house was covered with stucco and some windows altered, to give it the style fashionable in the time of George III.

The east range has seen many changes which are now difficult to disentangle, even though the interior has been stripped in the process of restoration. The most impressive feature of it is the grand staircase inserted in the reign of Charles II. Such staircases were the height of fashion at the time, constructed on a generous scale, with elaborate foliage carving instead of balusters. There is a similar staircase in Thrumpton Hall, and these two are among perhaps a dozen of the Restoration style and period in England. On the first floor there are two stone fireplaces, probably inserted in the time of Charles I (c.1620) and a doorway recently uncovered halfway up the grand staircase must be of the same date.

The county is very fortunate that the house has not changed hands and that the determination of the present owners, Mr. and Mrs. Robin Brackenbury, to restore it has never flagged. The project has been aided by the Historic Buildings Council, and by the County and the Bingham and Rushcliffe District Councils. At present a team of young workers is busy there under a Manpower Services Commission scheme; the amount of work they have accomplished and its quality are most impressive. One must hope that this assistance can be maintained in spite of the proposed reduction in the scope of MSC programmes. The Trust has been able to help only in a modest way, but it has recently played a part in procuring a grant from a private charitable trust.

Anyone who knows the Cuckney area will know the 'Green Dale Oak' Inn. This local lies just off the main road from Mansfield to Worksop and its name commemorates the famous oak tree to be found in Welbeck Park between the Abbey and Norton village. As a result of an after-dinner bet the Earl of Oxford cut a coach road through the oak in the early Eighteenth Century.

Through at least two hundred and fifty years this Inn rose from being a superior beerhouse to the status of a coaching establishment with a good reputation. Until 1810 it was not on a main road and during the age of the stage coach the main road from Mansfield to Worksop Manor Park side by-passed Cuckney village to go through the smaller village of Norton. Due to this fact it was necessary to reach the 'Green Dale Oak' by leaving the main road just south of Cuckney and rejoining it by going past the Church and Vicarage to where the main road passed Mr. Toplis' Lower Mill almost in the village of Norton. Competition from other local inns was considerable. In Norton there were four serving the coaches and carriers who used the road. After 1810, on the newly made Sheffield road to the west, the 'Blue Bell' at Woodend attempted to rival the 'Green Dale Oak' but without much success.

Responsibility for the success of this Inn lay with James Pearse who took over the establishment from Robert Thompson early in 1794. On April 19th of that year the Nottingham Journal carried the following advertisement:

'James Pearse having lately taken the Green Dale Oak Inn begs leave to assure the Public that no pains will be spared to render the accommodations perfectly agreeable to those who may favour him with their company.'

Lord Bathurst owned the property - the Inn and a farm - and the rent in 1790 was £21 per year; thirty years later it had risen to £63. It must have been a sizeable building as there were 15 windows on which tax was paid. Pearse had a riding horse and two working horses though no mention is made of any servants in 1802.

By 1823 the Inn had become a very well established hostelry. In June of this year the officials of the Whitwell Enclosure Committee held their meeting

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L O C A L I N N

by Phil Ibbotson

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here; it lasted 6 days and John Fairbank, the surveyor and map-maker from Sheffield, stayed for that period. From the bills and accounts we're able to find out what facilities there were and the cost of various items.

The total cost for the stay and for entertaining came to £8.19s.0d. - the charge for breakfast was 1/6d; for dinner between 2/- and 3/-, but no mention is made of lunch. A pot of tea cost 1/6d, a glass of brandy 8d, ale 3d per glass and a bottle of wine 6/-. On June 19th six people were charged 18/- for dinner and drank 5 bottles of wine; with a 6/- tip paid to the servants the bill came to £2.17s.4d. On leaving tips were paid to the chamber maid, the waiter, the hostler and the boots, which came to 7/6d and the charges for stabling one horse were 13/8d.

The fact that the Committee was prepared to use this Inn for its meetings rather than one of those in Worksop, which were probably nearer, shows how much of a standing this hostelry had in the district. As a rather astute move Pearse also had the Malt Office in Cuckney and was responsible for assessing and collecting the duty on malt. This enabled him to keep an eye on the amount of trade done by the other innkeepers in the area. It was the practise at this time for innkeepers to do their own brewing; they bought in gin, rum and brandy at 11/-, 18/- and 26/- per gallon respectively. Malt for brewing cost 8/- per bushel.

Coaches travelling between Mansfield and Worksop used the Inn as a stopping place according to the early trade directories. It was also the receiving and despatching point for letters: as late as 1862 the Post Office was still to be found at the 'Green Dale Oak'. The carriers' carts also called as well as the market carts to Worksop and Mansfield.

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By the 1840's there were a dozen inns and beerhouses in Cuckney Parish. Now there are just two and the 'Green Dale Oak' is still going strong.

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HISTORIC BUILDINGS COUNCIL

GRANT-AID TO HISTORIC CHURCHES

The extension of grant-aid to historic churches (other than Cathedrals) in use was initiated only just in time to save churches particularly under threat, say the Historic Buildings Council in their recently published Annual Report. In the first eight months of operation, 450 applications were received and 65 offers of grant made, taking up the first year's allocation of £350,000. The number of applications received was evidence of the threat to many important churches faced with escalating costs of repair work and shrinking congregations, says the Report.

According to the Report, by the end of 1977/78 there were 254,000 buildings in England statutorily listed as being of special architectural or historic interest. Just under 8,000, including four Grade I, were added to the list during the year under review. The Council again draws attention to the slow progress being made in the updating of the lists. The Council considers that a new approach is needed to the listing of Grade II buildings; and recommends that this should be handed over to those local authorities who are qualified and willing to undertake the task. The Department would continue to be responsible for the listing of Grade I and some Grade II buildings and of churches - and sufficient staff should be recruited to complete the resurvey within five years, says the Council. The present procedure for controlling demolition should also be continued.

THE CHANCE OF A LIFETIME

One of the categories to be announced for which Churchill Travelling Fellowships will be offered in 1980, and which will be of special interest to members is: MASON AND STONEMASON RESTORERS - Everyone involved in the construction or restoration of historic buildings and environmental works of art in stone or masonry. For further information send P.C. with name and address to Winston Churchill Memorial Trust, 15 Queen's Gate, London, SW7 5PR.

The Report gives details of applications and grants offered for Secular Buildings, Town Schemes, Conservation Areas. However, so far as conservation in London is concerned, the Council expresses concern as it continues to lag behind the rest of the country in the formulation of long-term programmes and in the provision of funds for conservation. One reason it gives for this is fragmentation among the 32 Boroughs and less - or less articulated - local loyalty in each borough.

The Council also expresses concern about the shortage of staff, which it says not only affects the resurvey of listed buildings but is a more general problem. For example, the number of architects working on secular buildings is only one more than in 1956, in spite of an enormous increase in the number and range of buildings with which they are asked to deal. Most of the work in churches has to be carried out by private architects supervised by a single architect from the Department.

The Council emphasises that its funds remain tiny in relation to the work they have to do and reiterate that changes are needed in the Tax structure, particularly in relation to capital taxation and the incidence of VAT.

NEW USE FOR AN OLD BUILDING

The redundant Baptist Chapel at Hebden Bridge, West Yorkshire, was, at its opening in 1899, the largest and most magnificent in the area. It is now a conference centre for up to 350 people and also houses offices. The conversion of the listed Chapel involved the insertion of a new floor at the level of the galleries and the new upper floor forms the conference hall with the original galleries providing seating on three sides. The ground floor with pews removed provides office space. The Birchcliffe Centre, as it is known, is owned and run by the Joseph Rowntree Social Service Trust of York. Extract from Civic Trust News.

' EYESORES ' OR MONUMENTS ?

by Douglas B. Hague

Founder member of the Association for
Industrial Archaeology

'A prophet is not without honour, save in his own country and in his own house', and it is true that often a countryman who lives and works amongst nature's oft-praised beauties can be oblivious of the delights which surround him. There are of course those who would challenge the value of rustic delights - we all make our own subjective judgements and have a perfect right to do so. But we should not forget that in all subjects and disciplines there are fair-minded, mature and intelligent individuals who because they may have spent many years on the study of a particular subject are likely to give a more balanced and valuable assessment than the spontaneous reaction of a liverish layman. One would not normally seek out the advice of a garage mechanic before buying a racehorse, or the opinion of a greengrocer before investing in antique silver.

The tactful purpose of this article is to suggest that before a local authority decides to sweep away any 'industrial eyesores' it should at least seek the advice of an industrial archaeologist.

It is perfectly natural that in our own insular way we should all regard our own parish church, pack-horse bridge or almshouses as the best in the country. But is the local decayed windmill or vandalised tramway bridge really all that good by national standards? In the more orthodox and well-trodden fields of traditional archaeology, generations of writers and observers have left reliable accounts, either as guidebooks or histories, or more hidden away in the local historical society journals. No new church, chapel or castle, no new dramatically-sited hill fort is likely to emerge; any new discovery will be limited to a modest barrow or a 'crop-mark', unlikely to quicken the pulse of any but the dedicated professional prehistorian.

Industrial archaeology poses certain problems, mainly because it is a new field of study and there is no great corpus of comparative material to assist in setting a standard. The study is in a pioneer

state; we do not even know the nature or extent of our legacy in minor industrial monuments. Clearly there is not the same problem when dealing with either major monuments or the works of the famous great engineers of the last century. We know that no 'new' tubular bridge designed by Robert Stephenson is likely to be hidden in a remote Welsh valley.

Ignorance

Sadly, and I write with considerable experience, there are too many of our elected representatives who have neither knowledge nor interest in such matters, whether they sit in the House of Commons or on the local council. This is the fashion by which we are governed, and there is a lot to be said for it, but there is no virtue in ignorance. Whatever our views and background even the most dedicated and myopic Philistine can recognise a castle and is happy to accept it as an 'ancient monument'.

Industrial archaeology can be associated with a rather sad phenomenon which is encountered in some urban areas; this is a rigid doctrinaire condemnation of any manifestation of the Industrial Revolution as marking only the exploitation of the workers by coal or iron masters. Few would argue that the industrial overlords were philanthropists; wealth and power were their gods; but to be fair some were successful because they had enquiring scientific minds and some did display humanitarian feelings and charity. The tragedy is that the terraced houses, the iron bridges, the great engine houses which are the monuments of the age were all built by the great-grandparents of the very people who now want to level them to the ground. It is very difficult to persuade folk with this outlook that such structures belong to the people and will be every bit as important to visitors a hundred years hence as are the monasteries dissolved in 1536 to the visitor of today.

Rehabilitation

Today when Britain has a weak economy it is important that planners should curb

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grandiose plans and consider that it is better to preserve for use than destroy and rebuild for vanity. Whether we like or dislike Victorian furniture and building none will doubt that in that period the best materials were available for use by craftsmen who were second to none, who took a great pride in their work. One has only to compare the deterioration in post-war council houses with that of houses put up in the twenties and thirties when properly seasoned timber was available; few of our 'dwellings or residential units' of plastic and chipboard will survive to be venerated - to what such ephemeral fabric could one attach a mid-twentieth century post's commemorative plaque?

The problems of rehabilitating industrial housing have been faced successfully by some local authorities and ignored by others. It now seems clear that there is a change in attitude towards old buildings from that held in the era of 'We've never had it so good', which nurtured the extravagant follies of the rapacious developers whose towering prestige office blocks cast perpetual shade over so many of our city centres.

A particularly notable example of the resuscitation of a large group of industrial houses is to be seen at Swindon. Here the houses built by the Great Western Railway Company for the workers in the great railway works were marked for the usual demolition and redevelopment after having been bought by the council, but suddenly there was a change of heart. Instead of demolition all the houses have been beautifully restored and let at viable rents. Now there are many examples of this.

Alas, less happy cases come to mind, one of the worst being the destruction of a group of houses in Merthyr Tydfil known as the Triangle on account of their unusual layout. This was a 'perfect' case of planning blight, lack of imagination, procrastination plus listing and two inquiries, all ending in a pile of rubble. Had the houses been situated in a London borough they would have been bought by private developers, done up and sold at great cost.

A very similar case is developing in

Aberystwyth where a unique group of Barrack buildings, well worthy of listing, was not given that protection, yet with the minimum of repairs they could provide much needed houses.

Industrial housing forms one small part of the vast range of buildings and structures associated with the Industrial Revolution, but in many ways most important as it is easily adaptable for modern needs. Naturally other functional structures are equally important and the most common example is the bridge. Clearly there are times when an old bridge has to be replaced by a bigger and stronger new one which cannot be sited elsewhere, but as most important bridges are protected in one way or another there is full and proper discussion before demolition is allowed. Again Merthyr Tydfil was the scene of a particularly unfortunate case. Their famous cast-iron bridge of ca. 1800 was a scheduled Ancient Monument, but permission was given for them to dismantle it with a view to its re-erection. In fact no attempt was made to do this; it was quite ruthlessly smashed by the contractors, and after being moved twice from one dump to another only a little more than half survives.

In contrast to this Telford's famous Waterloo Bridge at Betws-y-Coed has been most sensitively reinforced with hidden reinforced concrete arches and still carries the A5 traffic over the river Conway. A happier case of the treatment of a redundant cast-iron bridge is to be seen in Coventry, where it was carefully removed and re-sited. There are however many small virtually unknown bridges, possibly old tramway bridges used as footpaths, which should be cherished, and for the evaluation of such things the AIA is well suited.

Another class of structure which can lend itself to re-use is the warehouse. The largest ones are usually immensely strong, often with fire-proof floors; these could with imagination be adapted as multi-storey car parks. Some warehouses especially attractively sited near a water-front have been converted to clubs, or studios, a very good example being the Arnolfini Arts Centre at Bristol. Nearby Bristol has preserved an interesting steam dock crane, and this raises the question of whether or not to preserve a monument in situ.

There is an increasing number of outdoor museums, one of the earliest in Britain being the St. Fagans Folk Museum, Cardiff; this and the Avoncroft Museum specialise in the

removal of buildings. The two best known industrial museums are at Ironbridge, Telford, and Beamish in Northumberland; here again the AIA can advise. Naturally museums have both limited funds and space and have to be selective. There is a government fund which provides financial help for the removal of historic machinery to State or public authority museums. This is administered by the Science Museum in London.

Preservation

Ideally the preservation of building on its original site is best but there are numerous problems. First, is the building of such quality and historical importance to be worth preservation? If so, who will be responsible for its maintenance? Before any such building can be shown to the public it has to be made safe, and any clearance essential before the structure can be interpreted must be done scientifically by an archaeologist. In fact in such circumstances it is necessary to consult fully with the Ancient Monuments Branch of the Department of the Environment, and possibly the local Archaeological Trust.

Careful thought too is needed in the choice of a monument to be preserved; often there is a choice of two. Is the public interest and purse better served by preserving an engine house at the back of a local council estate where it can be reached with ease; or is it more prudent to take the example situated 1000ft up on the moors at the end of a two-mile long rough track? In no circumstances should buildings of this kind be demolished without proper consultation with an industrial archaeologist.

Several engine houses of many different kinds have been preserved complete with their engines by various societies and trusts; it is doubtful whether any of quality are unknown to experts in the field. But it is sad to relate that some dramatically-sited mine engine houses with their chimney stacks have been demolished quite recently, apparently in a misguided attempt to tidy up the landscape.

Unfortunately there is one class of industrial building which is difficult, if not impossible, to adapt: this is the factory. Purpose-built buildings such as tin-plate works or mills cannot be reconciled with modern conveyor-belt assembly line practices. However there are hundreds of attractive small features such as exotic lamp-posts (sensibly preserved in the centre of Paris), fountains, bollards, nameplates etc. which give distinction to towns which are all too soon becoming uniform and characterless on account of the ubiquitous spread of multiple shops and business premises.

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Should you wish to seek advice from the AIA, please write to Keith Falconer, School of Humanities, University of Bath, Claverton Down, Bath (Tel: 0225 6941).

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This article was first published in the Summer 1979 issue of the Local Council Review, the quarterly journal of the National Association of Local Councils.

TRAIL LAUNCHED

The West Bridgford Local History Society has recently published a trail leaflet. It takes people round the centre of what used to be a tiny village, and reveals some surprisingly interesting buildings. Obtainable from G. Oldfield, 268 Musters Road, West Bridgford (Tel: 232065).

MUSEUM

The Retford and District Archaeological and Local History Society opened a museum in October 1977. It is housed in an old warehouse adjacent to the Chesterfield Canal, on South Leverton Road. It belongs to Bassetlaw District Council who have also donated some showcases. The display shows some of the collection of objects largely donated by local people but not necessarily of only local interest. It is intended to change the exhibits regularly. The museum is open on Saturdays; the Curator is Mr. Robinson, who can be contacted at home - Tel: Worksop 3344.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting will be held, by courtesy of Trent Polytechnic and Mr. W. Middlebrook, the Dean of Education, at

CLIFTON HALL, CLIFTON VILLAGE

on TUESDAY, 23rd OCTOBER, 1979 at 7.30 p.m.

The Hall now houses the Education Department of the Polytechnic and, after the formal business, there will be an opportunity to see the Hall since it was restored.

F I L M * * *

F.E. Cleary has been in the property business all his life. He is a chartered surveyor, Chairman of Haslemere Estates and finds time for public service as an Alderman in the City of London where he is Chairman of the City's Trees, Gardens and Open spaces Committee. If that is not enough he also runs the Metropolitan Public Gardens Association. Now he stars in a film 'Portrait of a Property Developer'. The title conjures up a picture of modern office blocks and shopping centres and the sweeping away of the familiar scene. But Haslemere Estates lay claim to having restored more old houses than anyone else in the history of London.

This is an interesting film for inclusion in a civic society programme. Running for about 20 minutes, the film has a very fresh quality about it as it was filmed without rehearsal and the interview between Robert Key and Fred Cleary was unscripted. 'If you want a better environment you have to care about it' is Fred Cleary's concluding line. Enquiries for borrowing the film should be made to Miss Hilda Lupton, Haslemere Estates Ltd., 4 Carlos Place, London, W1Y 5AE (01-629 1105).

+ TREE CENSUS + +

A Census by the Forestry Commission of all trees and woodlands in Great Britain started this year. The survey - the first national assessment since 1965 - will take until 1982 to complete and will involve the use of aerial photographs and ground measurements to provide the detailed information required. The survey will also cover isolated trees, hedgerows and clumps to give estimates of numbers of trees by species, age, size, life expectancy and timber volume, and for the first time will include a breakdown of these figures into trees in town and trees in the countryside. Apart from providing a clear picture of the distribution of Britain's woodlands and its potential for timber production, it will also provide local authorities with vital information on numbers of trees and their current condition so that replacement plans can be formulated.