Focus on Industrial World Heritage Sites
Part One
From the Chairman

Reading the heritage press at the moment, one might be forgiven for thinking that the future for museums is bleak. There is little doubt that for those museums sustained by public funding in particular, the prospect of cuts and closures is a reality for many as the impact of austerity continues to play out.

Industrial, science, transport and engineering collections continue to face considerable difficulties, and there have already been some high profile closures in the sector, with the demise of Snibston in July 2015 being a particularly sad loss. As our editor Graham Binns notes in this issue of the newsletter, the axe still remains poised over two important industrial heritage sites in Lancashire.

Industrial heritage collections are not the only ones to be under threat of course, but it maybe that they are less appreciated by funders and stakeholders. This issue of the newsletter tackles this more general problem in the context of Britain’s industrial World Heritage sites, which have had mixed fortunes in recent years themselves. The next issue will continue this theme by focussing on the efforts individual sites are making to address this imbalance.

ABTEM suffered its own significant loss in 2015 with the passing of its President Lord Montagu of Beaulieu. The obituary printed in this journal outlines what a huge contribution he made to transport heritage, historic houses and the development of the tourism industry in Britain. The association is proud to acknowledge the important role Lord Montagu played in the establishment of ABTEM – he was present at the first meeting held in 1963, and continued his support over the years, making a welcome appearance at our 50th anniversary seminar held fittingly at Beaulieu in 2013. In January of this year, a number of committee members and several hundred other friends and colleagues attended a service of thanksgiving at St Margaret’s Church beside Westminster Abbey to commemorate his life and work.

Tim Bryan
ABTEM chairman
April 2016
ABTEM News

**Updating the Standards in the Care of Larger & Working Objects**

*Progress Update*

We reported in the last edition of this newsletter that ABTEM had commissioned museum consultant Rob Shorland-Ball to carry out a scoping study on the feasibility of developing and updating the 1994 MGC Standard 4: Standards in the Museum Care of Larger & Working Objects. Working with a small steering group drawn from across the industrial & transport heritage sector, Rob carried out the study during the latter part of 2015, collecting feedback through two open meetings held at the Museum of Liverpool and the London Museum of Water & Steam in May in addition to gathering further information via individual meetings as well as telephone and e-mail contact.

The overwhelming support for the proposal to revise and republish the standards led to an application being submitted to Arts Council England for SSN funding via the Resilience Fund. This application received a first round pass in March 2016, and a full application is currently being prepared. If this is successful, it is hoped that work on the new guidelines can begin in the autumn. Watch this space for more news!

**Seminar Round-up**

Learning & Participation, June 2015

Three seminars have been held since the publication of the last newsletter; coincidentally, two were held in the City of Liverpool, a location not visited by the association for some considerable time. The first, titled Learning & Participation in Industrial and Transport Museums was hosted by the Museum of Liverpool on 26th June 2015 and had two contrasting sessions. The morning session was presented by Dr Jo Reilly, Head of Learning & Participation at the Heritage Lottery Fund. The HLF’s current strategy is titled ‘Making a Difference for Heritage and People’ and in larger Heritage Grants projects, applicants need to demonstrate how they intend to make a difference for people through the delivery of an Activity Plan, often the key document in a second round application to HLF. Jo talked through the HLF
guidance, shared good practice from other projects and got us all working well in groups, making it a really interactive session!

The Transport Gallery, Museum of Liverpool

In the afternoon, we enjoyed two contrasting but inspiring presentations. Claire Weston Outreach and Access Project Officer from the National Motor Museum Trust talked about Caravans and Charabancs – Leisure Motoring after the First World War, a commemorative project supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund. This two-year project investigates how the social and technological developments in the war led to a revolution in leisure motoring in the decades that followed. Claire explained how she engaged a variety of community partners and worked with them to devise outreach activities around the project theme.

The second presentation had a distinct Liverpool focus with Sharon Brown, the curator of Land Transport & Industry for the Museum of Liverpool, outlining the work the museum has done with two partner groups: the first was a restoration group, the Merseyside Tramway Preservation Society, which has worked with the museum’s Liverpool Tramcar 245; the second was a support group, The Retired Carters Association, with whom the museum has developed exhibition content, research, collection knowledge and talks. This interesting presentation brought to a close an excellent and informative day.
Reconnections, October 2015

In lieu of our normal autumn seminar, ABTEM agreed to be a co-sponsor of the second day of a new conference initiative that will encompass three events held in the maritime cities of Liverpool, Belfast and Cardiff. Supported by the city councils of the three cities and the Maritime Heritage Trust, Reconnections was a two-day event, the first concentrating on regeneration and planning issues whilst the second concentrated on heritage itself. Speakers from most of the supporting organisations, the MHT, Heritage Railways Association, Transport Trust and ABTEM took part in a day which began with keynote addresses from Sir Neil Cossons, Sara Croft from HLF and Paul Lewin, General Manager of the Ffestiniog Railway. More practical sessions followed: Martyn Heighton, Director of National Historic Ships, outlined some of the particular issues surrounding the preservation of maritime heritage and then Tim Bryan, ABTEM chairman, gave a presentation titled ‘What will be Left to Save: Guidelines for Operating and Conserving Industrial and Transport Heritage’ – this outlined some of the familiar issues around conservation and operation of historic collections faced by those in the transport heritage sector and more detail about the ongoing work to revise the old MGC standards for Larger & Working Objects.

The afternoon session included presentations from Bob Gwynne of the National Railway Museum on good project communication and a joint session on Europe-wide industrial heritage initiatives. The final keynote speaker was Bob Pointing, the chair of the NW
Partnership of the Canals & Rivers Trust, and the day concluded with a plenary session. The event was held in the unique surroundings of the Titanic Hotel, a new venue which includes hotel accommodation and a conference centre housed in a Victorian dock warehouse. More information about the event and future conferences, including speaker presentations, can be found at: http://www.maritimeheritage.org.uk/conference2015

2016 Spring Seminar

The most recent ABTEM event was held in a contrasting and no less historic venue than the previous one. The venue for ‘Managing Archive Collections in Industrial & Transport Museums: What do you Need to Know and What do you Need to Do?’ was at the RAC Club in Pall Mall, London. Around 30 delegates gathered on the 18th March to hear presentations aimed at helping people working with industrial and transport heritage who did not have access to professional archivists, but had material in their collections that could be classed as archives.

We were very fortunate to begin with a welcome from Tom Purves, the Chairman of the Royal Automobile Club, who outlined the interesting history behind the club and its pivotal role in the development of the car in Great Britain. The seminar then began with a presentation from Emma Chaplin, who gave us a great introduction to the management of archives in

The Titanic Hotel & Conference Centre, Liverpool
museums based on work she had done in producing an AIM Success Guide titled ‘Successfully Managing Archives in Museums’. (This can be downloaded at: http://www.aim-museums.co.uk/downloads/9bf30cc0-6cd8-11e5-a9ea-901b0e0dc93a.pdf)

The grand surroundings of the RAC Club

Emma’s presentation was followed by a very interesting and thought-provoking session from Naomi Korn. A consultant with a museum background, Naomi now runs a company specialising in copyright issues and gave us much to think about, highlighting that for all museums, copyright was very much an issue of risk management as well as rights management. She noted that we should not be fearful about copyright, but should however ensure that it is a key part of our risk management policies. She concluded it was about more than just legal issues though, reminding us that it was an ethical issue dealing with people – the users and customers, rights holders, donors and museum and archive staff. On a practical note, she reminded us to ensure that when we accept an item into the collection, we also ensure that the donor signs over any copyright to the museum – this will save problems of copyright clearance in the future!

After lunch, two contrasting case studies followed: Jane Holmes, Heritage Manager for the RAC Club outlined the history of the collection held by the club, and the particular challenges of balancing public access and the needs of the club members themselves. The final presentation was a two-hander, with John Benson and Margaret Harrison, archivist and curator of the Canal & River Trust respectively, talking about the differing needs and challenges of their collections and how they worked together.
Delegates were given the opportunity to have a tour of the club following the seminar, and ABTEM would like to thank Jane Holmes and her colleagues at the RAC club for their assistance and hospitality. We hope to return again soon!

**Autumn Seminar**

ABTEM have a number of exciting new initiatives planned and will announce these at our next seminar, which is planned for the autumn of 2016. In the meantime, don’t forget to keep up to date with developments on our blog at [www.abtemssn.wordpress.com](http://www.abtemssn.wordpress.com)

**Closure of Mills Delayed to End of September**

The nationally significant Helmshore Textile Mill and Queen Street Mill museums, which were due to be closed by Lancashire County Council at the end of March when funding was to be withdrawn, have been given a reprieve by the council until the end of September. A body has been in discussion with the council with a view to running the museums, but further information about these arrangements is not being released at present.

*Left: The only two remaining original Arkwright water frames at Helmshore Mill Textile Museum*

*Right: Dobby and Jacquard looms in the former packing area of Queen Street Mill*

In a bid to raise awareness of the plight of these exceptionally well-preserved historic sites, Neil Cossons (ABTEM Vice-President) gave the following address to a recent meeting of the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Industrial History.
**When Britain’s Bread Hung on Lancashire’s Thread**

For over two hundred years, Lancashire was the world’s leading centre for the spinning and weaving of cotton. Its role was pivotal in the emergence of Britain as the first industrial nation.

In 1860 there were 2,650 cotton mills in the county, employing 440,000 people, sustaining the livelihoods of as many again, and producing more than half the world’s cotton goods. By 1900 Lancashire cotton mills produced 8 billion yards of cotton cloth a year and exported throughout the world. The spinning and weaving of cotton formed the mainstay of the county’s economy, and it was by cotton that Lancashire was world famous, a byword for technical innovation and quality manufacturing.

Such was the importance of cotton to Lancashire’s economy that the county also became the leading manufacturer of spinning and weaving machinery and of the steam engines that powered them. Accordingly, it is a Lancashire mill engine, from Burnley, that holds the central place in the main hall of the Science Museum in London.

Today that astonishing achievement is largely history, reflected in important archive holdings, in the memories of the last generations of those who worked in the mills, and in the remains of the mills themselves, many adapted for entirely new uses, others awaiting a new future, but most now gone.

**In only two places is the material evidence and essence of Lancashire’s great textile heritage preserved and presented to the public:**

At Helmshore, near Haslingden in Rossendale, where in two adjacent mills, Higher Mill and Whitaker’s Mill, raw wool and cotton were transformed into yarn ready for weaving into cloth. Higher Mill was built in 1796 for William Turner and Whitaker’s Mill in 1820 for the Turner family. Here are fulling stocks, powered by the water of the River Ogden, and all the machinery, largely still working, essential to the preparation of cotton for weaving. Since 1976 both mills have been in the care of Lancashire County Council, forming part of the county museum service. Both are Listed Grade II and Higher Mill is a Scheduled Ancient Monument.

At Harle Syke, Burnley where Queen Street Mill, with its 308 Lancashire looms powered by a Lancashire steam mill engine, is the world’s only surviving steam-powered weaving shed. Built in 1894, the mill closed in 1982 and since the 1990s has also formed part of Lancashire’s county museums service. The mill, its engine and looms, are Listed Grade I.
Working spinning mules still in-situ inside Helmshore Mill

The weaving shed of Queen Street Mill with its 308 looms
In 1999, when the United Kingdom Government was reviewing its Tentative List of sites with potential for World Heritage inscription, Queen Street Mill was on the shortlist for inclusion, only narrowly missing a place. It would, I believe, undoubtedly meet UNESCO’s criteria for ‘Outstanding Universal Value’, and should be considered for inclusion on a future List.

The contents of all three mills, together with the textile industry archives held by Lancashire County Archives, are Designated as Collections of National Importance. Both sites are open to the public and both enjoy the benefit of significant volunteer support for their operation. But, they need to be in the hands of a competent authority which will afford them the care they deserve and ensure they remain open to the public.

Demonstrations of carding at Helmshore Mill (left) and weaving at Queen Street Mill (right) (latter photograph courtesy of Neil Cossons)

A creel, used to wind strong warp threads from many bobbins onto one wide reel, which was then fitted onto a loom.
Edward John Barrington Douglas-Scott-Montagu
3rd Baron Montagu of Beaulieu
20 October 1926 – 31 August 2015

Edward Montagu was a champion of the historic vehicle movement and founder of the National Motor Museum. He played a major role in the preservation of England’s historic houses and the development of the UK tourism industry.

Edward inherited the Beaulieu Estate on the death of his father, a motoring pioneer, when he was just two years old. He was thus already a peer of the realm, and gradually came to realise he was also heir to the Beaulieu estate, although it was managed by his mother and trustees until he became 25. In 1937, at the age of ten, he attended the coronation of King George VI. The youngest peer in attendance, he wore a special costume for minor peers and carried a black velvet bag containing sandwiches to sustain him through the day.

In 1936 he went to St Peter’s Court boarding school. War intervened just as he was about to go on to Eton, and he and two of his sisters were evacuated to Canada, where they would spend the next two and a half years. He returned to England when he was nearly sixteen and belatedly took up his place at Eton. In 1945, having completed his schooling, he joined the Grenadier Guards and was posted to Palestine as part of a peacekeeping force. When he left the army at the age of 21, he went to New College Oxford where he read modern history. During this time, he also took his seat in the House of Lords, where his maiden speech was about his experience in Palestine.

A keen party-goer, Montagu enjoyed mixing with the artistic and bohemian set as well as being part of conventional society. “I suppose I should have realised that sooner or later... I would end up in trouble” he would later write. In his second year at university an altercation between the Bullingdon Club and the Oxford University Dramatic Society led to his room being wrecked, and he felt obliged to leave.

Edward Montagu was now determined to carve out a career for himself. “Some eldest sons were sufficiently affluent to retreat to the family estates and lead a life entirely devoted to their management and enjoyment”, he said. “This was not an option for me, nor did I want it.” Instead, he secured a position with the advertising and public relations agency Voice and Vision, where his first job was to launch the now classic comic *Eagle*. He publicised the first
issue by hiring a fleet of Daimlers mounted with huge model eagles to tour the country distributing vouchers for the first issue. Over a million were printed and all were sold.

When Edward Montagu took over the running of the Beaulieu Estate on his 25th birthday in 1951, he found that he could expect only £1,500 a year from his inheritance, a figure that would barely cover running costs. “In 1951, to any sensible, rational being, the house was a white elephant”, he would later say. “The wise solution was to get rid of it. For me, however – neither entirely sensible nor rational – that was unthinkable.” Various solutions were considered, but eventually he decided to open the house to the paying public (the abbey ruins and grounds had already been open for many years). In his own words, his early attempts to attract visitors to the house were “charmingly amateurish”.

Palace House, as it was called, was not as grand as other stately homes such as Longleat, which had opened its doors a couple of years earlier. What was needed, therefore, was an extra ingredient. Montagu later recounted: “What catapulted me permanently into the major league for the future was the idea of commemorating my father’s life... by exhibiting veteran cars. Without it, my life would have been very different and I doubt whether I would have been able to remain as owner and occupier of my ancestral home.”

Lord Montagu outside Palace house
In 1952, there were no other motor museums in the country but a major drawback to this plan was that Montagu only had one veteran car, a 1903 6hp De Dion Bouton that had previously been used by the estate electrician. A call-out to the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders produced the additional exhibits he needed to start a small motor museum in the front hall of Palace House. On opening day, he told his private house guests that if they received more than a hundred visitors by 6pm they would have champagne with dinner. The doors opened at 11am and by 12.30pm the hundredth visitor passed through; they had champagne with lunch.

By 1956 the vehicle collection, which now included several motorcycles, had outgrown the house and Montagu established a separate home for them in some large sheds in the grounds. The Montagu Motor Museum was born. In the same year, he also launched Veteran and Vintage magazine, which he published until its sale to IPC in 1979 (it later became Collectors’ Cars and eventually Classic Cars). Over the years he also became a successful author, The Gilt and the Gingerbread, The Motoring Montagus and Jaguar: A Biography being the best known of the 21 books he wrote on motoring and heritage topics.

By 1959 the vehicle collection had grown even further, and so a new building was constructed. Satellite motor museums were established at Measham and Brighton but were short-lived. Another of Montagu’s passions at this time was jazz, and in 1956 he held the first of six Beaulieu Jazz Festivals on the lawns of Palace House. These were later recognised as pioneering events in the burgeoning music festival movement that followed and top performers drew large audiences. However, after what became known as the 'Battle of Beaulieu' at the 1960 festival, involving rival gangs of modern and traditional jazz fans, followed by further trouble in 1961 when 20,000 visitors crowded in for the weekend, Lord Montagu reluctantly called a halt to the events as they were having a detrimental effect on the village and the patience of its residents.

Undaunted, Montagu put his energy into other ventures. Ever the entrepreneur, and having noticed that the owners of old cars were having difficulty obtaining authentic tyres, he co-founded Vintage Tyre Supplies in 1962; this company remains the world's largest supplier of original equipment tyres for veteran, vintage and classic cars. The following year, he created a Maritime Museum at Buckler’s Hard, establishing the village as the second visitor attraction on his estate; the museum tells the story of 18th century shipbuilding on the Beaulieu River. In 1967, the now world-famous Beaulieu Autojumble was held for the first time. The inspiration came from the automobile swap meets Montagu saw in the United States and he was proud that the name he devised, Autojumble, was later given a place in the Oxford English Dictionary.

By the mid-1960s, Beaulieu was attracting over half a million visitors a year. Edward Montagu realised that a long-term plan was needed to fully harness the potential of its leisure and
tourism business in a way that didn’t diminish the scenic and conservation value of the estate. He commissioned a leading planner of the day, Elizabeth Chesterton, to draw up a strategy for the redevelopment of the visitor site, a by-pass to divert traffic away from the village, the construction of a marina at Buckler’s Hard and a limited number of residential developments elsewhere on the estate. The overall plan was seen as far-sighted and was the first such large-scale private plan to be accepted as the basis for county planning policy.

The plans for the new Motor Museum and its visitor buildings were then drawn up, encompassing a new 40,000 square-foot hall with space for at least 200 vehicles. To achieve this, Montagu founded the Beaulieu Museum Trust. As chairman of the charity, his enthusiasm and drive won the support of the motor industry and other sponsors, and within a couple of years the necessary funds to start construction work had been raised. This ambitious project, which Montagu’s advisors had warned against, came to fruition on 4th July 1972 when The Duke of Kent opened what was to become Britain’s National Motor Museum. The buildings, which included a purpose-built admissions centre, cafeteria, motoring research library and offices, won several awards, the most prestigious being the National Heritage Museum of the Year, which was awarded in 1974. In the same year, a monorail was installed, passing through the museum at high level. It didn’t stop there. In 1989, the National Motor Museum Collections Centre opened to provide an administrative centre for the Trust and to house the ever-expanding motoring libraries and archives. The reference library is one of the

Outside Westminster with a 1899 Daimler

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largest of its kind and together with the photograph and film libraries is used by commercial and private researchers from all over the world.

While he was most closely associated with the motor museum, Lord Montagu’s underlying focus remained the management and improvement of the Beaulieu Estate. In 1978 he worked with the Nature Conservancy Council to establish a nature reserve on the southern part of the estate adjoining the Solent foreshore. He also founded a charity called the Countryside Education Trust. This now operates two centres on the estate, including a residential centre on a small farm, and welcomes over 5,000 children and adults each year.

From the time he first opened Beaulieu to the public, Montagu worked to establish an association for the owners of stately homes. Some of the old guard opposed this, especially when a membership fee was suggested, but in 1973 the Historic Houses Association was finally formed with Lord Montagu as its President. He was also closely involved in establishing the Association of Independent Museums, of which he was Patron.

In 1983, in recognition of his innovative approach and commercial success, the government invited him to chair its new Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission, which he soon renamed English Heritage. Those who feared the insensitive commercialisation of ancient sites were proved wrong, although Montagu did make them more visitor-friendly, with improved interpretation and facilities. When the government decided to abolish the GLC, the then Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher was said to have endorsed the transfer of its historic buildings to English Heritage because “Edward Montagu will know what to do with them.” He attended the House of Lords regularly and when the 1999 reforms were implemented, he was one of the Conservative hereditary peers elected to remain. Over the course of six decades, he spoke on motoring, tourism, museums, historic buildings, conservation and the New Forest.

Lord Montagu was an active in many clubs, associations and organisations and held the Presidencies of the Tourism Society (1991-2000), the Southern Tourist Board (1977-2004), the Museums Association (1982-1984) and the Institute of Journalists (2000). He was Chancellor of the Wine Guild of the UK from 1983 and President of the UK Vineyards Association from 1996. He was also instrumental in setting up an advisory group that became the Federation of British Historic Vehicle Clubs, of which he was President. In 2012 Lord Montagu received the accolade of a lifetime achievement award for his dedication to preserving automotive history over many decades.

Lord Montagu played as hard as he worked. He was a keen shot, loved foreign travel, went wind-surfing off his own foreshore and regularly competed in historic motorsport events. He also had a passion for the theatre, opera, gourmet restaurants and parties, for which he never lost enthusiasm despite mobility difficulties in later life.
Are our Industrial World Heritage Sites Appreciated and Valued to the Extent they Deserve?

A Reflection by the Editor, Graham Binns

Over the last few years, I have visited several industrial World Heritage Sites and I’ve thoroughly enjoyed each of them, although it became strikingly apparent that many haven’t received the resources needed to do them justice: they often fail to convey explicitly that they are places of global significance. Consequently, they don’t enjoy the high profile that their status should command, and the general public seem largely unaware that we are custodians of so many sites of such importance. Whereas millions of people flock to look at those big stones in Wiltshire (as they’re featured in every UK guidebook), our industrial World Heritage Sites are relatively forgotten about and uncelebrated.

This issue was raised by Geraldine Kendall in her article *Industrial Strength* (Museums Journal, May 2015). She points out that maximising our heritage potential “could make a huge impact in the UK’s often-deprived former industrial towns and cities” yet, as Neil Cossons (former director of the Science Museum) is quoted as asserting, “industrial history is more valued and recognised abroad than in Britain”. This situation is surprisingly incongruous given the many relics and sites that remain testament to the fact that Britain instigated and led the world through the industrial revolution. No doubt one reason why World Heritage Sites are not appreciated fully is, as always, because of a lack of funding for world-class displays and promotion. However, perhaps another reason, cited by Cossons as being an endemic problem in industrial museums generally, is due to “a failure among museums to place their material in historical context – to make it a part of our wider social and economic history”. This too is somewhat surprising, since (British) technology impacted on social and economic conditions across the world so fundamentally, it transformed the lives of all who lived during its invention, and in one form or another, it continues to influence our daily lives today.

The Ironbridge Gorge, with its 10 museums and iconic bridge as its showpiece (pictured), is the most successful industrial World Heritage Site. (It was the first of them to be inscribed though, giving it a head start of 14 years). The Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust’s Director of Collections & Learning, David Eveleigh, says that “World Heritage Site
status is incredibly important to us” and accordingly, the Trust’s strategic plan for 2015-19 states its aim “to be acknowledged nationally and internationally as the world leader in the management, research and development of industrial heritage... and to realise this, we will use our designated collections to tell the holistic story of the Ironbridge Gorge World Heritage Site by linking our museums and historic sites together.”

By contrast, when I visited Pontcysyllte and Chirk aqueducts and walked along the Llangollen canal to the Horseshoe Falls (the weir that feeds the canal), I didn’t even realise that they are all elements of a World Heritage Site. (It does have its own inspiring website though: http://www.pontcysyllte-aqueduct.co.uk/). Similarly, inside Salts Mill (which is part of the Victorian model village of Saltaire), although I did find a room upstairs with lots of big text panels giving me an abundance of factual information about the town’s history, there was little to ignite a spark of enthusiasm for its history and the rest of the extensive building comprised of shops, cafes and a commercial art gallery. In Blaenavon, as well as Big Pit, there is an informative World Heritage Centre that does explain the area’s importance adequately (and from where leaflets can be obtained that detail walks interpreting the local landscape). Yet when I visited the area’s main claim to fame – the world’s best preserved eighteenth-century ironworks – it too wasn’t brought to life, and I suspected that many people would have found it underwhelming; indeed, only a generation ago the area had no security fencing and the furnaces and buildings were left exposed to the elements. Fortunately, the ironworks have recently benefited from new interpretation in the form of ‘audio posts’ and the site gained publicity when the workers’ cottages within it were featured in the Coal House TV series.

Upon visiting the Derwent Valley WHS, which includes the High Peak Junction Railway workshops and Leawood Pumphouse as well as several mills, it was also apparent that more could be done to impress on the passing visitor just how pivotal this area was. At Cromford Mill (the world’s first to spin cotton on an industrial scale, using Arkwright’s pioneering machinery), I was able to join a guided tour of the central courtyard and watch a video in a
modest interpretation room, but at that time those were the only ways to engage with the site. At Arkwright’s showpiece Masson Mill (the best preserved of his mills), a large display of machines, some of which are demonstrated, give a lasting impression of the atmosphere within a working factory. Again, though, most of the building is given over to the transitory pleasure of shopping and eating. In North Mill (notable for its pioneering ‘fire-proof’ construction), I enjoyed a more traditional museum about textile manufacturing and how the mill ‘produced’ the first factory town. However, being run largely by volunteers and with limited opening hours, the museum could never enthuse a large audience about the industry or building, which was actually once part of the world’s largest mill complex.

The world’s best preserved 18th Century ironworks in Blaenavon (©Alan Stanton)

With this viewpoint in mind, for this newsletter I asked several of these sites to contribute to this debate and, perhaps, set the record straight. In addition to hearing their perspective on the notion that World Heritage Sites are under-valued, the intention was to explore how they endeavour to portray their significance through displays and publicity and, moreover, how any projects being undertaken or planned will enhance visitors’ perception and understanding. Sadly, two well-established sites didn’t take up this opportunity, yet this further illustrates my point that not enough is done to raise their profile; surely any World Heritage Site should be so well rehearsed in proclaiming their greatness and importance that they would have some information ready to send to whoever shows interest!

The following two articles give an overview of the situation and the responses received from individual sites will be included in the next edition of this newsletter. To begin with, Ian Bapty (Industrial Heritage Support Officer) describes people’s perceptions of these sites and explains how their management structures will have to adapt for them to realise their full potential. Following this, Mark Suggitt (Director, Derwent Valley Mills WHS) proposes that the lack of coherent advocacy is partly due to the multiplicity of types of site and management structure; he also outlines the over-arching and individual strategies of the principal locations within the Derwent Valley.
Whilst gathering these articles, one other point came to the fore. It is clear that what can make or break a World Heritage Site is the support (or otherwise) of the local council. In 2002, the Maritime Mercantile City of Liverpool WHS was placed on UNESCO’s World Heritage in Danger list because of the city council’s plans to redevelop its northern docklands. Now, the City Council has approved plans to demolish a row of “pleasingly-proportioned, finely detailed historic buildings” that run along the boundary of the World Heritage Site, and this will impact on a ‘defined view’ that should be preserved according to the council’s own Supplementary Planning Document (The Victorian, Magazine of The Victorian Society, No. 50, November 2015). By contrast, according to Sam Rose, who manages the Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site, “The Jurassic Coast has become a new brand in the last 10 years... people recognise it now, they come here, it’s in all the papers, it’s on the telly. And we have taken a lead in quite a lot of areas to do with world heritage in the UK because we’ve had the benefit of the council investing in us.” (Sam Rose, as quoted in Simon Stephens’ article, Coast and Country, Museums Journal, September 2015). For other World Heritage Sites, hopefully the formation of a new body called WHS-UK, which has been set up recently to facilitate the sharing of expertise and resources, will succeed in championing their cause. Then perhaps the general public will come to appreciate and value these exceptional sites – and invest in them and visit them – to the extent that they deserve.

Graham Binns
ABTEM Newsletter Editor & Collections Manager
Cotswold Motoring Museum & Toy Collection

Send your news, articles and pictures to Graham Binns (editor) at news.abtem@gmail.com
Realising the Value of Britain’s Industrial World Heritage Sites

A perspective from the Industrial Heritage Support Officer

It is not an exaggeration to state that Britain’s industrial past created the modern world. Everything from the mass produced technology which shapes twenty-first century life to our very view of ourselves began in Britain in the mines, quarries, furnaces, mills, factories and pump houses of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Today, many former industrial sites and buildings are open to the public (there are around 650 publicly accessible industrial heritage sites in England alone), and 9 UK World Heritage Sites are linked to industrial heritage (Ironbridge Gorge, Derwent Valley Mills, Cornwall and West Devon Mining landscape, Liverpool Mercantile City, Saltaire, Pontcysyllte Aqueduct, Blaenavon Industrial Landscape, New Lanark and the Forth Bridge). Other important industrial landscapes – such as the North Wales Slate Industry – are also currently on the UK tentative list for potential future submission for World Heritage Site inscription.

Britain’s industrial World Heritage Sites (together with preserved industrial heritage generally) are a key element of British national identity and heritage, and make a major economic and social contribution to the well-being of modern communities. The Ironbridge Gorge Museums, for example, attract around 500,000 visitors per year along with all the associated economic benefits to the locality. Yet they face many challenges in the public, political and funding environment of the 21st century. Despite generally positive public perceptions of the importance of industrial heritage (as demonstrated by an English Heritage commissioned attitudes survey undertaken in 2011), World Heritage inscription is not a certain route to the economic or regeneration benefits that are sometimes optimistically attached to it. Moreover, perceptions of World Heritage sites by the local communities living in them are not always positive. A core problem even today is that the popular British perception of a ‘historic place’ is firmly anchored around country houses, castles and Roman and prehistoric remains rather than former industrial sites, whether or not with World...
Heritage status. So, for example, a recent 2012 ‘Heritage is Great Britain’ national tourism promotional campaign did not feature a single industrial World Heritage Site (although the Loch Ness Monster did get a mention!).

Some of the issues faced by industrial World Heritage Sites track back to the distinctive way in which industrial heritage has come to be managed in the UK over the last 50 years, with a strong element of enthusiast-led participation in that process via the work of independent charitable organisations (in contrast, for example, to the situation in European countries such as France and Germany, where the recognition and preservation of former industrial sites has essentially been led by top down government intervention). In Britain, the formation of industrial heritage preservation associations gathered pace after the Second World War. Such bodies chimed with post-war ideals of citizenship on the one hand and nostalgia for declining industry on the other. Through the 1960s, 70s and 80s this process for preserving industrial heritage via volunteer-based associations and other independent bodies was in effect further sanctioned via government policy. While many traditional historic sites were preserved by the state (or other nationwide bodies such as the National Trust), the new industrial heritage was typically placed either in the care of small charitable trusts or in public ownership and management via local councils.

The emergence and care of industrial World Heritage Sites (beginning in the UK with the pioneering inscription of the Ironbridge Gorge in 1986) has very much been informed by this tradition, with management processes today typically involving partnerships between local government, communities and independent organisations responsible for the care of publicly accessible elements of sites. (Ironbridge Gorge, Derwent Valley Mills and the Cornwall & West Devon Mining Landscape are all typical examples of that model). The paradox is that while there is a very positive story here of ‘bottom up’ community-based heritage management supporting the preservation and promotion of key components of Britain’s heritage – all the more relevant at a time when austerity agendas are pushing towards ‘people led’ management models – both the independent heritage sector and local government bodies simultaneously face very considerable pressures at the present time. Consequently, the likelihood is that new arrangements will need to emerge in the future to sustain an effective management model. While major museum closures have not yet directly affected assets within any industrial World Heritage Site, current threats to other industrial heritage sites of comparable importance indicate that the possibility is certainly there. For example, Queen Street Mill in Burnley and Helmshore Mill just outside Haslingden, both of national importance, are facing closure by Lancashire County Council.

Against this background, the UK’s industrial World Heritage Sites have the potential not only to exemplify the world-changing significance of the industrial revolution, but also to demonstrate how effective management models for industrial heritage generally can work in the 21st century. Part of the trick here must be to combine conservation outputs and the
running of successful heritage attractions with wider regeneration, public engagement, commercial development and place-making processes. In that sense, industrial World Heritage Sites need to establish their relevance in the context of today’s political and social agendas in ways that go beyond simply the heritage value for which they achieved World Heritage status in the first place.

The Forth Bridge. At nearly 2.5km long, it took eight years to build (1882–1890). UNESCO cited it as an “extraordinary and impressive milestone in bridge design and construction.”

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Creatively developing new partnerships will be a crucial part of this transition. In particular, realising new partnerships with other sectors – such as those connected with social enterprise, the natural environment and health, for example – clearly offers much novel collaborative benefit for industrial heritage sites. Such partnerships may include capitalizing on common interests such as volunteer recruitment and may facilitate innovative shared input into wider environmental conservation and well-being agendas. Moreover, there are obvious wider gains to be had here; these include the capability to draw together innovative cross-sector projects that not only have genuine heritage and community outputs, but which also pragmatically offer a unique fundraising ‘sell’ in a highly competitive environment in that sense.
The future of our industrial World Heritage Sites will perhaps be a core barometer of the health of the wider sector in the next decade. We are at a moment when it is ever more important that the existing resource of preserved and publicly accessible industrial heritage sites is not overlooked, and World Heritage Sites have a key role in this sense. Places such as Ironbridge (to use one example) collectively represent an extraordinary legacy of twentieth century community, volunteer and local government effort, and within that is a powerful basis to build a new contemporary identity for what industrial heritage of all kinds can be for people today.

Ian Bapty
Industrial Heritage Support Officer

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**World Heritage Status…it’s What You Make It?**

In her article *Industrial Strength* (Museums Journal, May 2015) Geraldine Kendall spoke to Neil Cossons and Oliver Green about the future of industrial sites and museums. Both of them had interesting things to say and offered some challenges to those working in the sector. Neil Cossons felt that the UK underplays the fact that nine of its 29 World Heritage Sites relate to industrial history. “We have absolutely outstanding sites and we’ve diminished them. The bit that’s missing is the wider national and international significance of what you’re looking at: you’re looking at something that was actually part of a changing world.” Oliver Green felt that many industrial museums had failed to develop: “They’ve got all the stuff but they haven’t found a way to make what they do relevant and exciting for people today – they’re dull.”

As someone involved with an industrial world heritage site, those comments got me thinking. I’m assuming that the ‘we’ Neil Cossons refers to includes both the nation and those who run the sites: the owners and the curators. Have we diminished them? In other words, do we actually understand and celebrate the concept that is world heritage? In terms of world heritage status it could be argued that we never built it up enough for any diminution to be noticed! Sad to say, but you can visit many of our world heritage sites and not know you are in one. There are some places, such as the visitor centre at Durham, which clearly explains why world heritage is important and places it in a global context.

You can’t really blame most of them for not proclaiming their world heritage status from the roof-tops. Many, but not all, were all well-established as key destinations before they gained world heritage status. Places like Bath and Stonehenge etc. have long been well-known destinations, and let’s face it, most of us don’t wake up on a weekend and say “lovely day for going to a world heritage site!” We are likely to think of going for a day out to Saltaire or for...
a weekend in Edinburgh though. They have their well established brands, and quite rightly, they market them. You play to your strengths.

The sites are not always natural allies and pre-existing tourism agencies generally have not seen the world heritage brand as a useful marketing tool. That being the case, it is the fault of the sites in not banding together to proclaim their outstanding universal values – or the reasons why they are of importance to the whole world. They have not been helped by the fact that UK governments have never been natural advocates for UNESCO and some see it as another interfering bureaucratic body which is (oh the horror!) based in Europe. Interestingly, European countries like Germany, France, Holland and Spain actively use world heritage status as a marketing tool.

The examples I have just quoted also illustrate the range and diversity of the world heritage sites within the UK. We have houses, landscapes, mills, towns, monuments, castles – all in different types of ownership, with different forms of income and funding and varying types of management and governance. Some sites fit together neatly, with the geography of the site almost matching the ownership and governance. Think Ironbridge (Ironbridge Museums Trust) and the Tower of London (Historic Royal Palaces) or Fountains Abbey (National Trust). Other sites are the opposite, with multiple stakeholders, owners and separate attractions run by a range of organisations. Think Derwent Valley Mills, Cornish Mining and the Jurassic Coast. The Derwent Valley World Heritage Site is a partnership of organisations and does not directly manage any of the industrial attractions within it; rather we manage the relationship between them. Instead of being a single management organisation like New Lanark or Ironbridge, we are a composite of the following attractions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attraction</th>
<th>Type of Organisation</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Masson Mills (Matlock Bath)</td>
<td>Private Museum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cromford Mills</td>
<td>Charitable Trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cromford Canal</td>
<td>Derbyshire County Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Smedley Ltd.</td>
<td>Working factory and shop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Peak Junction Railway Winding Engine</td>
<td>Derbyshire County Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leawood Pumphouse</td>
<td>Derbyshire County Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>River Gardens (Belper)</td>
<td>Amber Valley Borough Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strutt’s North Mill (Belper)</td>
<td>Charitable Trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parks &amp; Gardens at Darley Abbey and adjacent to the Silk Mill</td>
<td>Derby City Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silk Mill (Derby)</td>
<td>Charitable Trust/Local Authority</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All of these organisations have their own aims and agendas. Accordingly, a key role of the partnership team is to weave the concept of world heritage into their activities so that it is
promoted collectively and works to the advantage of all partners. This is not always easy, as world heritage status is not a magic wand that will deliver visitors and income at the stroke of UNESCO inscription. Like the movie Field of Dreams: “inscribe it and they will come”... well they won’t unless you invest in the product and market it!

To use the Derwent Valley as an example: over 10 years of active legwork by the partnership staff have given all the partners an understanding of why this is such an important place. Equally, the attractions within it have all been smart enough to realise that although there is no money that comes directly with world heritage status, the accolade is an important tool in levering in funding from elsewhere. In doing so they have all shown vision, ambition and a determination to do something new around interpreting industrial heritage. The Derwent Valley is therefore a useful case study as a place where the legitimate concerns of Neil Cossons and Oliver Green are trying to be addressed.

The Arkwright Society, which owns and runs Cromford Mills (including the first Arkwright cotton-spinning mill of 1771), has developed an ambitious 10-year master plan for the site. The charity does not possess museum collections but it runs a large events programme and the mills are already a popular destination. The £50 million master plan aims to restore a large portfolio of buildings and give them new and sustainable uses. Sensibly, the plan includes the conversion of some of the spaces into business units, the income from which will deliver regular revenue funding to the Society. It has just completed the first £6.7 million
phase of the plan, which has been largely funded by the HLF and the ERDF; the Society sensibly used the world heritage status of the site in developing their funding bids. A key element of the project is a ‘gateway’ visitor centre, which tells the story of the mills and it being a World Heritage Site. It also gives visitors an indication of what else they can see within the Derwent Valley with the aim of inspiring them to investigate further, and it explains why the area is a world heritage site and why it has an international significance. It also addresses the links the UK cotton industry had with slave-produced cotton in the Americas. International influence is not always benign.

Downstream at Belper, the Belper North Mill Trust is taking advantage of successful bids to the HLF and ACE to fundraise and redesign its governance. It has reinvigorated its displays and also works with artists, who use the highly atmospheric basement area for installations. The World Heritage Team and the museum have also worked with local businesses over the last few years to develop an ambassador scheme for visitors. Local shop staff have been trained and informed about the importance of Belper and the rest of the World Heritage Site. The shops display a sign that informs customers that they can tell them about the area. This scheme played an important part in Belper winning the Great British High Street Award in 2014. The award achieved much publicity and helped local people see both the historic and economic value of the World Heritage brand.

Getting the community involved: visitors on a guided tour of a privately owned Strutt House in Long Row, Belper, during the annual Discovery Days festival.
At the southern end of the Site is the Derby Silk Mill, now managed by Derby Museums Trust. Formerly the Derby Industrial Museum it exemplified the concerns of Cossons and Green. Like many industrial museums established in the 1970s it had become tired and in need of a complete re-think. Derby Museums Trust has developed a vision for the site through the RE:Make the Museum project, which aims to tell the story of Derby’s industries and creativity and link the Silk Mill to the history of making things, which Derby is renowned for through Rolls Royce, Bombardier and Toyota. It will directly address the STEAM agenda of Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Maths.

The project is inspired by the makers of the past and will be made by the makers of today to inspire and empower the makers of tomorrow. Its foundation stones are engagement and accessibility. The museum closed in 2011 and over the past five years the Trust has held makers fairs and a host of pop-up events to shape the new role of the museum. In doing this it has engaged with local people and volunteers, all of whom have an active role in the project. They will also be involved in actually making the museum itself, thereby extending the concept of a museum working with people one step further. In 2015 the museum was awarded a stage one pass from the HLF towards completing the £16 million project. An element of this will be explaining the mill’s place in the World Heritage Site and providing a southern gateway to the Site.

The World Heritage Site Team has also developed projects that interpret the site. Now 10 years old, its Discovery Days festival of walks, talks and events has grown into a week-long event attracting around 15,000 visits. This relies on the efforts of the partnership team, the attractions and many local volunteers and plays an important role in promoting the site to local people and visitors. The team has also developed arts projects that have been inspired by the history of the Site. The Developer was a collaboration with QUAD and the FORMAT photography festival in Derby. FORMAT’s theme for 2013 was ‘factory’ and led to an ACE funded music and film project based at the John Smedley factory. Smedley’s is the last remaining textile manufacturer in the valley, producing stylish, high quality knitwear. The musician John Parish (long-time collaborator with PJ Harvey) led a team of musicians to produce music inspired by the factory. They were based there and composed new music every day, which was placed on the internet every night. In addition, the filmmaker Gavin Bush produced a film about the factory. The final film and music were performed live at the closing party of FORMAT in April 2013 and the project has been archived at www.thedeveloper.cc
The last arts project was Derwent Pulse. The project was conceived by the Derbyshire-based artist Charles Monkhouse. It was a major arts and audience development project which celebrated the River Derwent and the communities along its banks from its source to its confluence with the Trent. Following a successful bid to the Arts Council and support from the Arkwright Society and the Peak District National Park, it involved a light flow of 17 passages along the river, shepherded by local communities. The project included the production of photographs, maps, artwork, education projects, a performance and an exhibition, which is currently touring the county. The intention was to produce a changing artwork in different locations that was both beautiful and thought provoking. Its central element was hundreds of digitally controlled glowing spheres that floated through the selected passages of the river. Working with a team of professional artists and educators Charles actively engaged with local communities and schools, the latter providing electric parades to accompany the light flows. The communities involved were very diverse, ranging from local fishermen, scouts and brownies to the bikers who carried the spheres through Matlock Bath and people with learning disabilities from the Level Centre, whose students produced fabulous artistic responses to the project. Take a look at www.derwentpulse.com

The Derwent Valley is by no means unique in the range of projects that it engages in. As a site that is not under a single management structure, the Team has worked to engage its partners in the concept of what world heritage status can do. It is fortunate to have partners
that understand this and use it to realise their considerable ambitions. They know that industrial heritage can be a difficult concept for visitors who have largely grown up in a post-industrial world and are working hard to make it accessible and relevant.

World Heritage sites in the UK have recently formed World Heritage UK (WHUK - www.worldheritageuk.org). This body has grown out of the Local Authority World Heritage Forum and includes all sites within the UK. Its mission is to raise the profile and secure the future of UK World Heritage Sites by advocating for support and resources, promoting the sites’ values and facilitating networking, training and sharing of good practice. It recognises that the concept of world heritage is not well understood and will be working to overcome this. Overseas visitors often have a greater awareness of the brand and the concept, so perhaps it can be used to attract them to the UK – and tempt them beyond London. This will rely on building partnerships with the tourism agencies and it is no coincidence that WHUK’s first conference in Saltaire focussed on tourism.

It has been said that world heritage status is what you make of it, which, given that the status comes with no funding from the government or UNESCO, is very true. The UK’s world heritage sites are committed to making the most of it, even in what remains a very difficult financial climate. It is also interesting to see that the government’s four main themes for shaping cultural policy centre on creating vibrant places, engaging people with culture and working internationally to support inbound trade and tourism. The fourth one is, of course, “building financial resilience through new (but unspecified) funding models” (my italics). World Heritage Sites do all these things, but like most cultural sites they need investment funding.

The economic impact of culture is a vicarious success. Culture and history bring people to Britain and the secondary spend is proven to be huge; but they are the national loss-leaders, which is why they need public investment, in the same way that government hands out huge subsidies and incentives to private business.

We have seen that the government wants to attract Chinese investment and tourism. Reducing the cost of visas is a step in the right direction, but given that China both understands and respects the concept of world heritage, there is a real case to be made for direct government-funded marketing of world heritage sites in the UK. It’s a known brand outside the UK so let’s work it a bit more. I’m sure both Neil Cossons and Oliver Green would agree that, wonderful as they are, there is more to Britain than London and Bicester shopping village.

Mark Suggitt
Director, Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site
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