



January 2025

Chairman's Update

We finished 2024 very well with two well-attended talks at Leatherhead Oddfellows, i.e. 'Mayors, Thieves & Bargemistresses: People of the Early Wey Navigation' by Dr Sue Jones and 'Musings of a Miner: A Glimpse of Life in County Durham a Century ago' by Michelle Howes.

Our new year's programme starts on January 9th, but please note a couple of changes: Chris Green's London Underground talk has been put back to 1st May, with his January slot being taken by a Zoom talk "Robert Hooke & Thomas Tompion - Father of Clock-making"; and we've added an extra Zoom talk on 10th April, with a bit of "light relief", i.e. a talk looking at some of Heath Robinson's World War One "inventions". The programme is on p3 of this newsletter.

In the next few months, we'll be booking speakers for Sep-Dec 2025. We plan to include a "members' session" (Thursday 9th October 2PM at Leatherhead), in which 3 to 4 SIHG members will do short presentations on a subject of their choice. One member has already offered a talk on Victorian pumping stations. Anyone fancy offering a talk? If so, please email chairman@sihg.org.uk.

Garry Brooks, SIHG Chairman

Annual Journal: Articles sought

The group is reintroducing a "journal" (like the newsletters we produced until 2022) but on an annual basis. Articles are therefore sought on any Industrial History topic particularly (but not exclusively) anything that has a Surrey connection, the historic county boundary in this context. For example, it could be about mills, manufacturing, transport, extractive industries,

waterways, notable engineers or something about economic or social history arising from industry in Surrey. We intend to issue it Summer/Autumn 2025; all that is required at this stage is to simply email a one paragraph outline of what you propose and whether you have any suitable illustrations (helpful but not essential) no later than 31st January. Just email Stuart on publications@sihg.org.uk

Days and Half Days Out

On Sunday, April 27th at 14:30, we have booked 'Brunel, Engineers & Railways: a Tour of Kensal Green Cemetery'. Kensal Green Cemetery is the final resting place of several Brunels, McAdam, John Rennie the younger, Carl Wilhelm Siemens and many other great engineers, scientists and more. Tour is £12 pp, £10 for over-65s/students. If you'd like to come along with us, please email meetings@sihg.org.uk. These tours have a four and a half star rating on TripAdvisor, so expect an entertaining afternoon.

We are also looking at 2-3 other days out in 2025; possibilities include a visit to the Rural Life Museum, a visit to Chilworth Gunpowder Mills, a trip on the Basingstoke canal, a visit to Chatman dockyards and a visit to Cobham Mill. If you'd like to help organise these, please email chairman@sihg.org.uk
More news on these soon.

A Topical Talk!

As a history group, we're all interested in times past and don't usually attempt to do talks on topical subjects. But we've scheduled one talk which, quite accidentally, has become topical, i.e. our 20th March talk on the Panama Canal.

The Panama Canal has been in the news lately, due to Donald Trump's social media postings on "Truth", in which he's threatened to invade Panama and "take the canal back".

Some commentators have had the temerity to question the President-elect's knowledge of the history of the Panama Canal, so maybe we should send an invitation to "The Donald" to come along to John's talk and educate himself? Even if he can't make it, why not come along yourself, and you'll probably know more than Mr. President himself by the end of the talk!

Industrialisation and Architecture

SIHG have rarely had talks focusing on architecture, but when you think about it, architecture was a big part of the industrial revolution – think factories, cities – and railway stations.

So on 6th March, please join us for a talk on the architectural legacy of some British railway stations. Discover the collaboration between talented architects and railway companies, from Brunel and Wyatt's work at Paddington Station to Charles Henry Driver's unique "house style" for the London Brighton & South Coast Railway (LB&SCR). This talk stems from a ten-year project to restore Peckham Rye Station, designed by Charles Henry Driver for the LB&SCR. Benedict O'Looney, the lead architect involved in the restoration, will share the story of Driver's architectural style and the restoration project, placing it within the context of other Victorian railway architects. As a respected architectural professional and preservation advocate, Benny's insights will enrich our understanding of Victorian railway architecture and its restoration.

Introducing: Anne Anderson



Anne's not someone who usually lectures to industrial history groups, she's usually to be found talking on fine arts and architecture, organizing cultural exhibitions or leading arts & architecture tours around Europe. However, she's offered us a talk on "Ashted Pottery", an inter-war enterprise set up to give work to disabled war veterans, and to "assist in the reconstruction of rural life", which is a very unusual slice of our local industrial history with a strong emphasis on the importance of design (very modern!). It only lasted 12 years but produced some very individualistic Art Deco pottery, which is now quite valuable.

Anne did a degree in Archaeology, but soon became "smitten with Art History" and went on to do a PhD. She has worked in academia,

including working in a Fine Arts Valuation team, has held several prestigious fellowships and written several books, including one on Art Nouveau Architecture. In recent years, Anne has reached wider audiences through Zoom but says that the downside of zoom is "I miss real people!". So, real people, come along and meet Anne on April 3rd at Leatherhead!

Anne's website is at anne-anderson.com

Who Was Sir Henry Cole?

The Victorian era produced some prominent figures who seemed to fit so much into their lives that you might wonder how they had time to sleep. Isambard Kingdom Brunel, William Morris and William Ewart Gladstone spring to mind, but another example, rather less well known, is Sir Henry Cole.

You may not have heard of him, but you've certainly heard of the Penny Black, the Great Exhibition of 1851, Christmas cards and the Victoria and Albert Museum – and Sir Henry played a key role in the development of all of these. Come and hear more about him from one of SIHG's favourite speakers, Nick Pollard, by Zoom on 20th Feb,

Membership

Membership of SIHG will be *free* until April 2026. All members will enjoy free entrance to our talks, both Zoom and live at Leatherhead, and will receive newsletters and emails on SIHG news and events.

If you are not already a member, please email membership@sihg.org.uk and we will email you a (very short) membership form.

Oddfellow or SYAS Member?

If you are, you can enjoy *free* entry to our Zoom / Leatherhead Oddfellows Hall talks. Please come along and give us a try!

Lastly...

We hope you like this newsletter. If you have any comments on it, please email chairman@sihg.org.uk
Next newsletter will be published in March or early April

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SIHG



Surrey Industrial History Group



2025 Events January–March



9th January 7.15pm

"Concorde: Icon of the Skies"

by Guy Bartlett (Zoom)



23rd January 7.15pm

"Robert Hooke & Thomas Tompion - Father of Clock-making"

by Martin Grossel (Zoom)



6th February 7.15pm

"Brewing in the Wandle Valley"

by Alison Cousins (Zoom)



20th February 7.15pm

"Victorian Dynamo: The Life and Work of Sir Henry Cole"

by Nick Pollard (Zoom)

6th March 7.15pm

"The Stations of the London, Brighton and South Coast Railway"

by Benny O'Looney (Zoom)



20th March 2pm

"The Panama Canal"

by John How (Leatherhead)



£3 Entrance Fee for Non-members at Leatherhead talks. Zoom talks are free.

Contact meetings@sihg.org.uk for more details

Graphic by Liam Ruz, who can be contacted on liamruz@hotmail.co.uk

Leatherhead talks start at 2.00 p.m. with doors open at 1.30. Talks will last about 90 minutes with a tea break in the middle. No need to book.

Address: Oddfellows Hall
45-51 Bridge Street, KT22 8BN

Zoom talks start at 7.30 p.m., "doors" 7.15, talks usually last an hour or so. You need to register for Zoom talks.