



November 2024

Chairman's Update

We started the new season very well, with a Zoom talk on 'Bradshaw's and an Early Railway Tour' by Robert Mee, which attracted 49 people. It was certainly popular; 95% of the audience rated it 'excellent' or 'very good'

We then had our first live talk since Covid, and very good it was too. 20 people heard Richard Marks' talk 'So You Think We Do Not Make Anything Anymore? British Manufacturing in the 21st Century', and we all learned a lot. And then Bill McNaught gave us a Zoom on 'Brunel: Father, Son & Grandson', which attracted an audience of 64 and was equally well received.

We finish this calendar year with two live talks at Leatherhead Oddfellows. We have 'Mayors, Thieves & Bargemistresses: People of the Early Wey Navigation' by Dr Sue Jones on 21st Nov, then on the 5th December we have 'Musings of a Miner: A Glimpse of Life in County Durham a Century ago' by Michelle Howes. Please come along!

We have a great programme of talks coming up from January to April, and at least one half-day out shortly afterwards (see the article on page 2). We've also gained quite a few new members since we re-started talks, and committee members and SYAS staff have been working at updating our website and membership records.

This will be the last newsletter of 2024. The next one will be in Q1 2025, and we also plan to produce a journal of longer articles, akin to the newsletters SIHG produced pre-Covid. Watch this space.

Garry Brooks, SIHG Chairman

AGM Report

We had a very useful Zoom AGM, attended by over 30 members. The main news from this event was:

- Membership will be free until April 2026.
- New committee members – Simon Ritchie, Richard Shenton & Stuart Denison. Pam Taylor, Gerry Moss and John Bourn have stepped down.
- A budget of £1800 for talks, hall hire, Zoom fees and promotion was approved.
- The committee will meet soon re:
 - Whether to re-start SIHG.
 - conservation awards / plaques
 - Our reserving policy.
 - Our policy for giving.
 - Grants / awards to external bodies
- The committee will report its recommendations back to the membership, hopefully before Xmas.

January to April Programme

9th Jan: 'Concorde: Icon of the Skies' (Zoom)

23rd Jan: 'London Underground's Origins' (LH)

6th Feb: 'A History of Wandle Breweries' (Zoom)

20th Feb: 'Victorian Dynamo: the Life and Work of Sir Henry Cole' (Zoom)

3rd March: 'The Stations of the London Brighton & South Coast Railway' (Zoom)

20th March: 'The Panama Canal' (Leatherhead)

3rd April: 'Ashted Pottery: Post-War Rehab through an Alliance of Art and Industry' (LH)

10th April: "It's All a Bit Heath Robinson: Re-inventing the First World War" (Zoom) by Luci Gosling

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. The address is:

Oddfellows Hall
45-51 Bridge Street
Leatherhead, KT22 8BN

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

Introducing: Guy Bartlett



Guy, our Zoom speaker in January, is an aviation historian with significant experience of public speaking. As a former teacher, he is confident in delivering material in an interesting manner, using archive film footage, technology, music, humour and genuine enthusiasm for aviation history to provide a fascinating insight into many topics.

His forename is a dedication to Wing Commander Guy Gibson, the leader of the Dambusters. Guy's love of aviation came from his father, who was in the RAF, and had a passion for air displays. He would take Guy to airshows as a child, and it wasn't long before he too was hooked. Guy's all-time favourite aircraft are the Avro Vulcan, which he helped to restore to flight, and Concorde, with which he has a number of links. He is a committee member of Chatham Naval Officers Association. He has taken part in aerobatic manoeuvres and yes, he did feel very sick afterwards!

In 2024 Guy was honoured to be asked to present his Dambusters talk to senior RAF Officers at RAF Brize Norton, as part of their commemoration of the 81st anniversary of Operation Chastise, the Dambusters raid.

His talks began almost a decade ago, at a dinner party, where the guests were asked to tell the group something about themselves that others wouldn't know. He described his flight on Concorde. After, he was asked if he gave presentations as he was so entertaining. He said he didn't. But, a month later, he was invited to a local active retirement association, at short notice, to talk about the Vulcan and the rest, as they say, is history.

Guy's website is www.guyinthesky.co.uk & he can be contacted at mr.guy.bartlett@gmail.com

Introducing: Richard Shenton



Richard is one of the new members on the SIHG Committee. Whilst currently living in West Sussex, Richard was born in Surrey and has lived for very many years at Hindhead, nr Haslemere, so he knows south-west Surrey well. Two interests that Richard has had from an early age are Railways and Canals so it is only natural that the industries that provided them with traffic should naturally follow suit.

Richard is well travelled having enjoyed a full career in the Armed Forces coupled with his love of railways, he has almost been right around the world, and after leaving the armed forces he then went into the travel industry as a coach driver. All the skills accumulated from these career paths have stood him in good stead for his current career as a Blue Badge Tourist Guide for south-east England, where he enjoys showing small groups our military and industrial heritage, along with all that the Southeast has to offer. Richard can be contacted at richardplshenton@gmail.com

Up for a Half Day Out?

On Sunday, April 27th, 2025 at 14:30, we have booked 'Brunel, Engineers & Railways: a Tour of Kensal Green Cemetery'. Kensal Green Cemetery was the first 'garden cemetery' in London and is the final resting place of two Brunels, McAdam, John Rennie the younger, Carl Wilhelm Siemens and many other great engineers, and many artists, writers, royals, politicians, painters and rich drunks & wastrels. Tour is £12 pp, £10 for over-65s/students. If you'd like to come along, please email us at programme@sihg.org.uk stating how many places you would like to reserve. These tours are rated 4.5 stars on TripAdvisor, expect an entertaining afternoon.

The Wandle Industrial Museum

In 1805 the River Wandle, which flows from Carshalton and Croydon to the Thames at Wandsworth, was described as the hardest working for its size in the world. With 13 mills listed in the Domesday Survey of 1086 by the early 1800s 100 mills were said to have been recorded along the banks of the river.

The Wandle Industrial Museum, based in Mitcham, is a small museum run by volunteers who work to keep alive the history and heritage of the industries and people of the Wandle Valley. Founded in 1983, the museum has displays on the industries and people of the Wandle, including a relief map of the Wandle Valley showing the location of the mills along with a model of the works used by William Morris for Morris & Co until 1940. The current exhibition of the leather industries of the Wandle includes a leather skin displayed by J. S. Deeds & Sons at the Great Exhibition of 1851.

The museum offers a wide range of talks with diverse subjects such as sport along the Wandle, art and literature of the Wandle, and the brewing and lavender industries, along with talks on the mills, textile (calico) people and more. It also offers walks along the Wandle taking in the heritage and viewing what remains from a bygone age. A workshop on the textile industry is also available focused on Morris and Liberty. WIM also works with schools and welcomes around 400 children to the museum every year.

The museum is open to the public twice a week: Wednesday 1-4 p.m. and Sunday 2-5 p.m. (not Bank Holiday Sundays). More details are at <https://www.wandle.org/> or our feeds on Flickr, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and Twitter.

Planning for the Future

We already have some talks and events on our radar for next 2025-26 including 'Hooke and Thomas Tompion: a scientist and a clock maker', 'A history of the Wey and Arun Canal', 'The Medieval Wool Trade in Guildford', 'Mill Technology and the Development of the UK Patent System – what makes an invention patentable?' "Caterham Waterworks" and 'Six

famous scientists and how they thought', and a visit to The Rural Life Museum. Any thoughts on these? Anything else you'd like to suggest?

And what about the timings of our talks? For example, should we do some of our live talks Thursday evening instead of afternoon?

Please Email programme@sihg.org.uk and let us know your thoughts.

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.

Website News

We've had a few comments about the website and learned that some of you find it difficult to use and/or have requested changes that the SIHG webmasters (Garry & Simon) can't make. We're going to make a short video on using the website to address the first issue. Maybe it will be with you before you receive this newsletter. Regarding the second issue, the website belongs to SYAS. Garry & Simon don't have the access to change most of it; their access only allows them to add and update events add news articles, amend some SIHG-specific pages and create or delete SIHG-specific folders. SYAS are, however, going to update the website next year, and Garry & Simon will be providing some input for this. We'll keep you updated.

Oddfellow or SYAS Member?

If you are, you will enjoy *free* entry to our talks at Leatherhead Oddfellows Hall, as well as Zooms. Please give us a try!

Lastly...

We hope you like this newsletter. If you have any comments on it, please email news@sihg.org.uk