



Now here is a riveting story!

An ingenious 100-year-old piece of machinery, specially designed to rivet the high girders of the Forth Railway Bridge, has been found rusting in workshops at Dalmeny.

Cleaned, oiled and mounted on part of an old sleeper, it will now take its place as one of the prize exhibits in the Forth Bridges Visitor Centre at South Queensferry, which will be opened on Saturday.

Structural engineer Mr Douglas McBeth, chairman of the Visitor Centre Trust, said: "The Forth Bridge was the first major structure in the world to be built of steel. Visitors all wanted to know how it was built, but there was no ready information on site. When we opened the centre at Hawes Pier last year, we had 7000 visitors during the short period it was open.

"Our temporary site will be open this year seven days a week from 9am — 7pm until September. We have plans for a permanent centre to be opened in time for the bridge's centenary in 1990."

Another trust member, Mr Roland Paxton, an

engineer with Lothian Highways and chairman of the Institution of Civil Engineers' panel for historical engineering works, said: "William Arrol, the bridge contractor, devised several pieces of plant for the work, including two types of riveting machines, one of which was this portable riveter. It was suspended from derricks at the highest point of the bridge and hydraulically powered to produce pressure of three tons per square inch."

In all, 6,500,000 rivets were driven into the 54,160 tons of steel superstructure.

The Visitor Centre trustees were looking for a piece of Arrol plant when ScotRail bridge examiner Richard Bolt of South Queensferry remembered the old riveter still lying in a corner of the bridge workshops.

Richard told David Grant, the area civil engineer, who arranged for the riveter to be cleaned up and ScotRail then presented it as a museum piece to the centre trustees.

The visitor centre is on the pier at South Queensferry, almost under the bridge. Admission: 60p for adults; 40p for children.

● Picture shows Roland Paxton (left) and Douglas McBeth with the portable riveter.