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Institution of Civil Engineers

**Panel for Historical
Engineering Works**

Newsletter

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CONTENTS

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News from Scotland

Wigan Pier

Alexander Mitchell, the famous blind engineer of Belfast

Book Review

Information Wanted

B7 Update

HEWs in the News

NEWS FROM SCOTLAND ... Roland Paxton and Alastair Turner

The Scottish Group of the Panel celebrated its tenth birthday at its Annual Business Meeting in the Royal Society of Edinburgh rooms on 1 December with a best ever attendance of twenty. Both Local Associations were well represented and Bryan O'Loughlin's attendance was particularly welcome.

Since its inception (when there was only one Panel Member for Scotland!), the Group's numerous activities have included producing some 180 B7 records, organising and taking part in about 40 visits and lectures and producing booklets and hand-outs. A start is now being made on the book for Scotland. Visits planned this year include the West Highland Railway on 23 May in a train hauled by "Concrete Bob" McAlpine (the recently named locomotive, of course), and the Tay Bridge, which attains its centenary for passenger traffic on 20 June. ScotRail is planning a special celebration to coincide with the third joint ASCE/ICE plaque-laying event at the Tay Bridge on 12 September. There are some grounds for optimism that the Forth Bridge's Visitor Centre first nurtured in the Group will blossom forth this year near the Hawes Pier from June to September, but finance is very tight and the project is in the balance. (There are still some numbered presentation paper-weight rivets available at £19.50 for any reader who would like to help the venture!)

After the meeting the party adjourned to the wood-panelled regimental surroundings of the Royal Scots Club where a culinary speciality awaited them - a Bell Rock supper based on a menu for artificers on the "Pharos" in 1807: 1 ½ lb beef, 1 lb ship biscuit, 8 oz oatmeal, 2 oz barley, 3 quarts beer, 2 oz butter which, with vegetables and salt, Robert Stevenson said "got them into excellent spirits when free of sea-sickness". The menu was modified just a little to suit the occasion and the addition of coffee and a good port smoothed the passage through, first, a colour slide foray on to the rock (the account in the last Newsletter refers) and, secondly, Dr Peter Russell's unforgettably realistic rendition of Southey's ballad of "Ralph the Rover" who went to the rock and cut the float from the Abbot of Aberbrothok's bell which sank with a gurgling sound. Some months later on returning from a piratical exploit, Ralph suffered a fitting retribution for his evil act some 12 miles off Arbroath in a thick haze!

In conclusion the Group would like to take this opportunity of thanking both Scottish Local Associations for their lively and generous support which is very much appreciated.

Kenneth McCrea won the prize of a mention here for noticing in the last Newsletter that the longitude given for the Bell Rock lighthouse should have read 2 23.1'W and not N.

FOOTNOTE FROM BRYAN O'LOUGHLIN

Sorry about the last item, Roland; and thank you very much for the kind words in your first paragraph. I enjoyed myself immensely, and it was a particular pleasure to meet for the first time several people who up to now have been just names at the foot of B7's. They have all done sterling work for the Panel in this way.

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