Institution of Civil Engineers

Panel for Historical Engineering Works

Newsletter

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Professor R B (Reg) Schofield

Obituary: Professor R B (Reg) Schofield

by Mike Chrimes

Readers will be sorry to learn of the death of Professor R B (Reg) Schofield. He was Emeritus Professor of Civil Engineering at the University of Ulster. He graduated in Mechanical Sciences from Corpus Christi College in the University of Cambridge, and after several years as a Chartered Civil Engineer in professional practice, joined the staff of the University of Salford.

He left for Northern Ireland in 1975 and retired as Professor of Civil Engineering and Head of Department in 1989. Much of his research has been in the field of fluid mechanics and open channel hydraulics, particularly in physical modelling. He had a long term interest in the history of engineering and made a significant contribution to its understanding.

His biography of Benjamin Outram entitled *Benjamin Outram, 1764-1805: An Engineering Biography* was published in 2000 and the last of his papers for the Newcomen society on experimental work of John Scott Russell was published in 2004.

He used his specialist knowledge in contributing to the *Biographical Dictionary of Civil Engineers*, writing the articles on Outram and Scott Russell, but most importantly on William Jessop, Sir Alec Skempton being too poorly to undertake it at that time.

Brunel and Stephenson Plaques in Wales

by Keith Thomas

Autumn 2009 saw the last of three plaque presentations in Wales to commemorate the anniversaries of the deaths of two of the most famous Victorian engineers. I K Brunel and Robert Stephenson both died in the autumn of 1859, 150 years ago. Brunel died on 15 September and within a month Stephenson had passed away on 12 October. The Stephenson anniversary was being marked throughout Britain and we in Wales decided to take part. Stephenson's major work in Wales was the Chester and Holyhead Railway with the innovative and world beating tubular bridges at Conwy and Menai Straits. The construction of the whole route however posed many other challenges over its length.

Keith Thomas, Panel Member for Wales of PHEW presenting plaque to Richard Burnell, Vice-Chairman of Holyhead Maritime Museum

I am indebted to Huw Thomas of easyJet and Jackie Bunyan of London Luton Airports for arranging the visit on 5th September 2007.

References:

Cantilever hangar for Luton, Construction Steelwork, Sept., 1970

Flugzeughalle des Flughafens Luton (Hangar at Luton airport); Architects: Yorke, Rosenberg & Mardall, Deutsche Bauzeitschrift,1971, no.12, p.2491-2492

Luton Airport Hangar; Architects: Yorke, Rosenberg, Mardall, Building With Steel, 1972 Feb., pp.30-32

Correspondence

Dear Editor

Kylerhea Ferry – Glenelg Slipway Postscript

I refer to my article in the last *Newsletter No.124* and initiative by the owner of the ferry and PHEW Scotland to have the facility upgraded from C(S) on account of its outstanding historical engineering merit.

Historic Scotland has now reviewed its earlier decision and on 19 January reached 'the conclusion that Category B would be more appropriate' which is great news!

Hopefully this will help ensure that the historic Telford / Mitchell / Davidson slipway, which is in need of some repair, will be appropriately maintained.

Roland Paxton

Dear Editor

I see that David Greenfield has mentioned the recent erection of a plaque to Joseph Locke in the *Newsletter.*

The Chairman and driving force of the team of the Retired Chartered Engineers' Club in Exeter that has promoted the plaques that David mentioned is A G Banks FICE (Geoff) and I enclose a full list of the plaques that have been erected, because if it can be reprinted in the Panel Newsletter I think it will be an encouragement to others who have not participated so far.

James Green (1781-1849) First County Surveyor of Devon. The plaque is fixed on the right of the entrance to the Imperial Hotel, St David's Hill, Exeter. Unveiled on Monday 3 December 2001. OS ref: SX912933.

Sir Frank Whittle OM FRS (1907-1996) Inventor of the jet engine. The plaque is fixed to the north wall of the house known as Walland Hill, near Chagford where Sir Frank lived for fourteen years. Unveiled on Wednesday 3 July 2002. OS ref: SX693882.

George Parker Bidder (1806-1878) President of the Institution of Civil Engineers (1806-1861). The plaque is located on the building facing The Square in the centre of Moretonhampstead. Unveiled on Thursday 29 May 2003. OS ref: SX753861.

James Meadows Rendel FRS (1789-1856) President of the Institution of Civil Engineers (1852-1853). The plaque is fixed on the right of the front elevation of The Post Inn, Whiddon Down. Unveiled on Thursday 9 June 2005. OS ref: SX692926.

Percy Carlyle Gilchrist FRS (1851-1935) Co-inventor of the modern process of steel manufacture. The plaque is fixed on the retaining wall at the east end of Marine Parade, Lyme Regis. Unveiled on Thursday 30 March 2006. OS ref: SY342921.

Joseph Locke FRS (1805-1860) President of the Institution of Civil Engineers (1858-1859). Member of Parliament and Lord of the Manor of Honiton. The plaque is fixed to the east wall of the old Angel Inn, High Street, Honiton. Unveiled on Wednesday 11 March 2009. OS ref: ST163008.

Brian George

Dear Editor

I am moved to offer what is intended to be a light-hearted response to the final item in the latest *Newsletter* (always welcome and read by me with interest, I must say). This refers to masonry culverts under the Grand Western Canal that I guess date from the early nineteenth century. I read that nine are "mostly 900 mm diameter, with one 1,200mm diameter".

I venture to doubt whether any are really of 900 or 1,200mm diameter, and would be surprised indeed if any were of 90cm or 120cm diameter either. 0.9m and 1.2m I could believe, however. The point is of course that they were built to Imperial dimensions! And I suggest that it's important to engineers to be aware that anything earlier than c.1973 was built to feet and inches, not to metres and millimetres. So the culverts were probably specified to be built to be 3 and 4 feet in diameter – 914 and 1,219mm nominally, but allowing for building tolerances I feel that 0.9m and 1.2m is about as precisely as one can reasonably quote them in SI units.

I often come across old construction that has been measured by someone who is unaware that it was built to dimensions that are rational when expressed in Imperial units, but appear 'odd' in metric/SI. Thus a cast iron beam flange measured at 38mm thick might be reported as 40mm, in the belief that this was the intended value, whereas in reality it was made 11/2 inches thick. Some 1850s stone