

MANCHESTER REGION INDUSTRIAL ARCHAEOLOGY ARCHIVE

David George

The Manchester Region Industrial Archaeology Society was founded in 1964 at the instigation of staff in the Extra-Mural Department of Manchester University and in the Department of the History of Science at UMIST to record and preserve the region's industrial heritage.¹ One of the aims of the society was to be 'the preservation of industrial archives and to provide a central deposit of records of field work'. Field work in an organised form involving teams of members was undertaken in two major surveys. The first, in which the society was assisted by the Manchester Amateur Photographic Society and by students of the John Dalton College of Technology (later part of Manchester Polytechnic) took place in the late 1960s and early 1970s and was devoted to recording the major industrial sites in Manchester and parts of Bolton, Stockport and Trafford with the information recorded on the CBA cards then in use. Local groups in Stockport, Rochdale and elsewhere supplemented this survey by sending in cards and photos to the field secretary for transmission to the NRIM. Members' related research was also published in the form of occasional papers issued with the Society's Newsletter about three times a year.

In the 1980s the then Secretary Steve Little initiated a more comprehensive photo survey conducted by members who were each allocated a district of the city such as Ancoats, Chorlton-on-Medlock and Castlefield: to record all those features of interest in the streets associated with the industrial age. The results were made up into albums of end prints with captions.

Since strong links had been established with the original Museum of Science and Industry, founded in a building in Grosvenor Street in the late 1960s, which also became the meeting place for the Society's monthly meetings, these records, together with newsletters and publications were housed with the museum's collection of archives in the basement for the first few years, but were not generally accessible. When however, an Urban Studies Centre was opened by Manchester Education Committee in Castlefield,



Brick pit shafts and engine bed, Tunsgill Colliery, Milnrow.



Ticket for opening of No.9 Dock, 1905.

the Director invited MRIAS to transfer its collection there, with the intention that it could be consulted and worked on by members and students. By this time in the 1980s, the society's own minute books, accounts, correspondence files, also a growing collection of monographs and offprints donated by speakers and members was too large to be contained in the secretary's filing cabinet, so these too were incorporated in the records. Sadly the Urban Studies Centre closed in the late 1980s, the victim of education cuts. More fortunately, the Museum of Science and Industry had by then transferred to its new home at Liverpool Road Station and the Archivist, Ann Jones, was approached with a view to the Society's archive acquiring a permanent base by means of an agreement in which *all* MRIAS material – including bequests, donations and items on loan from members could be placed on deposit on extended loan and insured for the museum as part of the Government Indemnity Scheme.²

The next step in 1990 was to form a group of members who would undertake to catalogue the contents of some 40 boxes after systematically sorting papers, photos, cards,

MUSEUM OF SCIENCE AND INDUSTRY IN MANCHESTER MANCHESTER REGION INDUSTRIAL ARCHAEOLOGY SOCIETY ARCHIVE PHOTOGRAPH RECORDING SHEET			
PIECE NO/ REF	3/1117	RECORDED BY DATE	P.M.S. 21.3.95
COLLECTION/SERIES A.D. + A.M. George, personal scrapbook / album			
SHORT TITLE "Margyport harbour Elizabeth dock"			
DESCRIPTION OF IMAGE/LOCATION Aerial view of Elizabeth Dock, showing typical working installation, with dock gates, harbour approach, warehouses etc. Cranes and cargo handling equipment, dockside rail systems are seen. Town area shown in midground with open country beyond. Inset view shows harbour with barge in full sail.			
AUTHORITY/EVIDENCE FOR IDENTIFICATION From label			
DATE OF IMAGE EXACT		EARLIEST	1930s LATEST
AUTHORITY/EVIDENCE FOR DATE From label			
PHOTOGRAPHER	AUTHORITY/EVIDENCE		
?			
COPYRIGHT HOLDER	CONDITIONS OF PUBLICATION		
?			
PROCESS			
TRANSPARENCY	PRINT <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	OTHER	B/W COLOUR ORIGINAL COPY
FURTHER INFO <i>Sevia</i>			
SIZE OF PRINT (MM)	H 135	W 158	LANDSCAPE/PORTRAIT MOUNT <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
CONDITION	VERY GOOD	GOOD	FAIR POOR COMPLETE
PIECE MISSING	TORN	FADED	DISCOLOURED OTHER
DOES A NEGATIVE EXIST?	YES/NO	REFERENCE	
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION Descriptive press clipping adjacent from "Lakeside" October 1973			
OBA RECORD CARD REFERENCE			

Photographic record sheet relating to Elizabeth Dock, Margyport.

correspondence, conference newsletters, reports and publications into a logical sequence. In particular, it was agreed that each photograph would be recorded separately on the computer-generated forms which the museum had developed for its own extensive collections – a task which is only now nearing completion.

A preliminary handlist or catalogue was issued in 1993 and subsequently updated for the benefit of researchers at the museum. Another ongoing task is to list the contents of personal research files which we hold on topics such as water mills and motor works so that individual enclosures can be conveniently located.

Contents of Archive

The first group of boxes (1/1 and 1/2) contain the thirty-year administrative and financial records of MRIAS and contain minute books, secretarial correspondence, balance sheets, membership lists and details of the society's holdings. There are also copies of surveys of monuments by other bodies and archive lists of documentary industrial material held elsewhere in Manchester.

An important box (3/6) comprises two files of letters and enclosures relating to the many conservation issues upon which MRIAS has been consulted or on which the committee has made representations over the years. Topics dealt with have included: Victoria Station, Manchester; the Weavers Triangle, Burnley; Arkwright House, Preston; Salford Docks; Coal industry sites; Havelock Mills, and the Dale Street Rochdale Canal Warehouse and Waterwheel.

Here is a rich source of case study material which could be exploited by those interested in planning issues, the process of public consultation and the role of voluntary bodies. Next is a group of records which reflect the contribution made by MRIAS and other local industrial

archaeology groups in the region to the staging of the (formerly) bi-annual – now annual North West Conferences, first held in 1978 at Bolton following the visit of the AIA to Manchester the previous year. (Box 2/2 contains all the programmes and summary reports of these meetings.) Another box contains the handbooks, field notes and some published papers for the National AIA conferences which over the past twenty years have ranged from Glasgow to Penzance. There is also a nearly complete set of AIA Bulletins and policy statements. In recent years, members have also attended regional conferences on such topics as railway preservation and the regeneration of Pennine textile mills. The archive contains full sets of papers for these meetings which are useful to those undertaking projects in other parts of the country.

Manchester, with its two Universities (now three) has long provided a full programme of classes, courses, field trips, summer and day schools for teachers, sixth formers and adult students in the subjects of industrial archaeology and transport history. The former MEC Museums Education Service was another provider. In addition to many past programmes and syllabuses, there is a collection of study units and study notes issued by tutors which cover textile history, science and technology in Manchester, canals and Castlefield, and aviation history. Academic staff and students in Manchester and further afield have often sought the help of the society in the preparation of projects and

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Example of one of the several hundred monographs in archive.

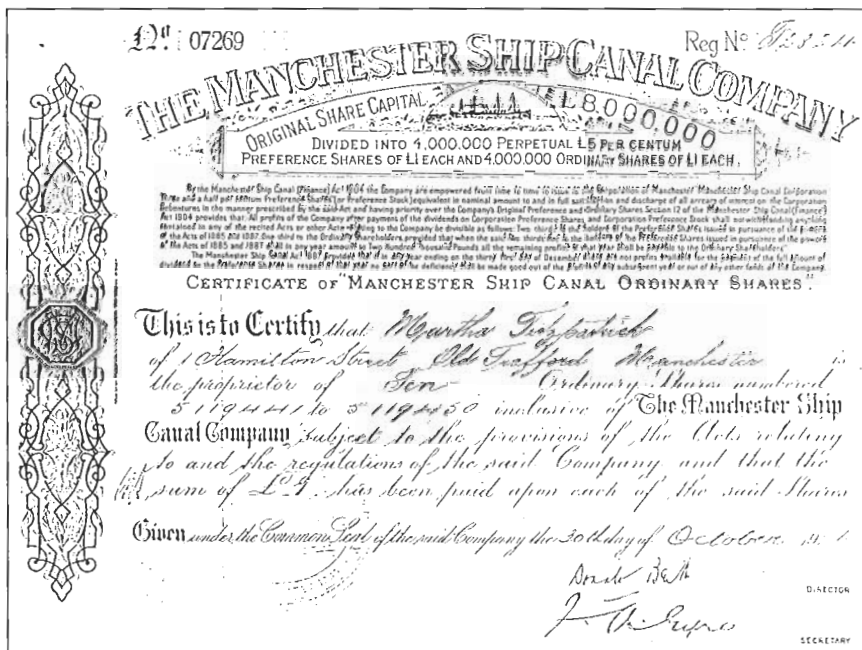
dissertations. Copies of a number of dissertations have been acquired³ whilst amongst the collection of seminar papers, readers will find Divall on engineering, Turner on hatting and Morewood on J. D. Siddeley, amongst others.

The archive has also benefitted from a small number of bequests. The late J. H. Norris was chairman of MRIAS in the 1960s and 1970s for a period of ten years. He had a very wide range of interests, lectured for the University Extra Mural Department and published an important study of Cheshire Water Mills⁴ and with M. Craft a pioneering study of museums and historic buildings in Lancashire.⁵ He also conducted a lively correspondence over a period of twenty years with numerous bodies on the subject of mills and water-powered industries. Three boxes contain the letters and enclosures, his manuscript notes, typescripts, mill plans and elevations, some photographs, a collection of post cards and a large number of molinology transactions. There is also a file of notes for field excursions which he made or led.

Turning to the society's photographic collection of large and small black and white prints, the bulk of which resulted from the two surveys described above, but which have been supplemented by selective purchases from newspapers and other archives. These are all arranged according to an industrial classification and comprise sections (boxes 4/2-4/5) on:- Engineering Works, Iron Works, Motor Works, Aircraft Factories, Textile Mills, Watermills, Breweries, Transport, Steam Engines etc. The second central area survey has yet to be analysed but special categories comprise the photographic record of the two excavations carried out by members and students at the Reel Fitz Pit, Bridgefoot (Cumbria) in 1975-6 and at the Fairbottom Bobs Newcomen engine site in 1982.

Some but not all the prints are cross referenced with the CBA record cards, many of which also carry small prints. This material has been used by the Archaeological Unit which carried out the Greater Manchester Textile Mills survey for the Royal Commission on Historical Monument's publication.⁶ Some of the cards and photographs relating to aircraft factories were also loaned to the Royal Commission's Saville Row office to supplement their records. The consultants responsible for the Step reports on the English coal industry have also been able to utilise the record cards for Greater Manchester and Cheshire. Scrapbooks and mementos deposited by members were also featured in the museum's recent exhibition called 'Collectomania'.

The final series of boxes (6/1 - 6/8) contain a growing collection of monographs, off prints, field guides, bro-



Manchester Ship Canal share certificate, 1926.

chures, reports and histories relating to the industrial archaeology of the North West but also to many other regions of the British Isles. Central Manchester, Castlefield, Bolton, Salford and the Ship Canal are represented with the latter folder containing some primary material such as copy share certificates, programmes and tickets. Derbyshire and Cheshire items are particularly numerous as a result of donations from Brian Lamb and Harold Norris.

The museum receives regular postal queries concerning particular buildings, firms or exhibits (for example motor vehicles made in Manchester). So already the MRIAS collection has been earning its keep in providing some of the answers. Museum curatorial staff have also consulted our files in the task of interpreting exhibits on the galleries. A visual records group run by the Friends of the Museum have investigated the holdings in building up a picture of the Liverpool Road Station site and of Castlefield past and present. Copies of photographs have been used for published articles and student projects. (All that is required here is due acknowledgement to the society and re-imburement of the museum at cost.)

The committee of the society is keen to see still more researchers, students and members making use of the archive. Prior booking is preferred and the museum's search room is open on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons and at other times by appointment. The address to contact is: **Senior Archivist, Museum of Science and Industry in Manchester, Liverpool Road, Castlefield, Manchester, M3 4FP (Tel: 0161 832 2244).**

Acknowledgements

Ann Jones for advice on the arrangement of the Archive and Muriel Taylor, Pat Long and Arthur Clarke for their work on the photographic record.

NOTES

- 1 See article by Chris Makepeace in *Manchester Region History Review* Vol.V No.1 (1991) pp.46-48.
- 2 An account of the museum's holdings will be found in *Manchester Region History Review* Vol.IV No.1 (1990).
- 3 These include S. Coltishaw (1986) *The Rise and Fall of the Manchester Car Industry* and *The Merseyside Development Corporation and Albert Dock* (1991).
- 4 *Water Powered Corn Mills of Cheshire* (TLCAS 1969).
- 5 *Museums and Historic Buildings in Lancashire* (1964).
- 6 M. Williams with D. A. Farnie, *Cotton Mills in Greater Manchester* (Preston, 1992).