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If there are workers pursuing industrial archaeological studies in any of the five counties who are not yet in touch with that County's representative, it is hoped that contact will be established as soon as possible so that each representative will have a complete record of the industrial archaeology being undertaken in his County. This will help co-ordination of the work so that:-

- (a) Anyone will be able to see if a particular topic is being studied and if so, by whom.
- (b) Anyone coming across information or material remains which are relevant to another worker's studies will know to whom to pass the information.

THE WILTS & BERKS CANAL - Part 1

by D.L. Banfield.

This interim report describes an enterprise which was partly within and partly outside the area of CBA Group 9. About two-thirds of the route has been examined in detail during the last two years and some two hundred photographs and slides have been obtained of features observed along the route. The first part of the report covers the location of the canal, a brief history and some topographical notes. The second part, to be published in Bulletin No.9, will give an account of the more important physical remains.

Geography

The mainline route commences at its junction with the Kennet and Avon Canal at Semington, two miles south of Melksham. It runs north to Swindon via Melksham, Lacock, Stanley, Dauntsey, Wootton-Bassett and Wroughton, with branches to Calne and Chippenham. From Swindon the main line traverses the Vale of the White Horse via Shrivenham, Longcot (branch), Uffington, Challow, Wantage (branch), Grove, Steventon and Drayton to the River Thames at Abingdon.

In the centre of Swindon, the North Wilts. branch ran through the G.W.R. works and power station at Noredon, via Grosslanes, Hayes Knoll, Chelworth (for Cricklade) to Latton Basin at its junction with the Thames and Severn Canal, north of Cricklade.

The 1876 version of the twenty-five inch Ordnance Survey map shows each feature of the route clearly, and the route can easily be followed on the current two-and-a-half inch Ordnance Survey maps. On the one inch Ordnance Survey map, sheets 167, 157 and 158 cover the entire canal.

Brief History

The main line of the Wilts and Berks. canal was conceived as a compromise route, following the abandonment of the 1789 and 1790 surveys for the Western Canal from Newbury to Bath via Hungerford, Marlborough, Calne, Chippenham, Melksham and Bradford on Avon. The Western Canal was eventually constructed as the Kennet and Avon on the route surveyed by Rennie in 1793.

The enabling Act for constructing the Wilts. and Berks. main line was passed in 1795, on the line surveyed by Robert and William Whitworth. Robert (father of William) was already familiar with the Southern part of the intended route, which was close to that proposed in the part of the 1789 survey for the Western Canal, on which he had adjudicated. William Whitworth finally engineered the canal, and few of its features bear the hallmark of his more illustrious father, who built the Thames and Severn Canal. Construction commenced in 1795 and the route was opened to Wootton-Bassett in 1801, including the branches to Chippenham and Calne. Swindon was reached in 1804 and Longcot in 1805. However, five years elapsed before the completion of the final eighteen miles to Abingdon. This delay was caused by the extreme pressures of the Napoleonic War on both labour and capital. To construct the main line had cost the shareholders some £255,000 by the time of its opening to Abingdon on September 22nd, 1810.

In 1813, agreement was reached with the Thames and Severn Canal to construct a link to bypass the upper Thames to Abingdon by means of a branch from Swindon on the main line to Latton on the Thames and Severn. Such a scheme had been suggested in 1794, at the outset, and again in 1810, on account of the appalling state of the upper Thames navigation above Oxford, which detracted from the viability of the Thames and Severn Canal. However, this was blocked by the Kennet and Avon proprietors who feared loss of trade. Eventually they changed their minds, and the enabling Act for the North Wilts. Canal was passed in 1813, permitting a capital of £35,000 to be raised. This comprised a contribution of £15,000 from the Wilts and Berks. (putting them further into debt), £5,000 from the Thames and Severn and £15,000 from the Exchequer Loan Bill Commissioners. The latter sum was made available under the 1817 Poor Employment Act which sought to employ, on public works, the great section of the population thrown on the labour market following the end of the war in 1815. The construction was completed in 1819, and on April 2nd, the North Wilts. Canal was opened through to Latton, and in 1821 the two canals were incorporated into one company.

The Wilts. and Berks Canal was one of many constructed as a result of the mania for promoting such ventures in the 1790's following the success of the Duke of Bridgewater's Canal from Worsley to Manchester. It suffered the fate of many of its contemporaries, in that, in its early years, it was undercapitalised and was built in a time of sharply rising prices. After only thirty years it was overtaken by the G.W.R. whose Bristol main line followed most of its route to the east of Swindon. Later the Cheltenham and Great Western Union Railway, completed in 1845, took further trade from the North Wilts. Branch from Swindon to the Thames and Severn Canal.

Such factors all resulted in the canal being a poor investment for the shareholders who in general received low dividends.

Despite the financial liability to the shareholders over its entire life, the canal undoubtedly made a profound impact on the development and wealth of the communities along its route. It was primarily intended to import coal from the Somerset Coal Canal, to the communities along the Avon valley to Wootton-Bassett, and through Swindon, then a mere village, to the Vale of the White Horse. Additionally, the markets to London and Bristol were to be opened to the agricultural products of Wiltshire and West Berkshire. In these aims it was successful. As a through route from London to Bristol it was less successful. Being a narrow canal, the cost of operating freight per ton mile higher than on the more direct wide canal, the Kennet and Avon.

Following the opening in 1810, it was found that water supplies were inadequate. An unsuccessful attempt was made to feed the canal from an artesian well sunk to the North of Swindon. A beam engine failed to make the well any

more productive, and it was finally agreed to dam the north end of the Coate valley to form the Coate reservoir. This was completed in 1822 and thereafter this reservoir supplied the summit level, and the entire length of the North Wilts. branch, as the latter was forbidden to extract water from the surrounding country or the Thames and Severn Canal.

By 1839 the proprietors had finally paid off their debt to the Exchequer Loan Bill Commissioners, but the railway was then under construction and rapidly it usurped the canal trade after briefly using the canal to carry railway construction materials. The result was a dwindling return on tolls during the following forty years, and in 1888 the last dividend was paid to shareholders.

By 1876, the writing was on the wall, and the proprietors had to sell out to the Wilts. and Berks. Canal Lessees. A new company was incorporated by Act of Parliament, called the Wilts. and Berks. Canal Navigation Company. After five years and some £20,000 of capital, this company too was in trouble, and they in turn leased the canal to a group of Bristol Merchants for twenty-one years in 1882. They too failed to make it pay and surrendered their lease, some £16,000 the poorer, in 1888. The Lessees held on until 1891 when the United Commercial Syndicate, backed principally by Lord Wantage, was formed to run the canal. Despite earlier example, they invested more capital in boats and improvements, but by 1897 were seeking to abandon the entire canal, which was rapidly becoming derelict.

The Abandonment Act of 1893 was defeated on a technicality, and it was finally in 1914 that the Swindon Corporation (Wilts. and Berks. Canal Abandonment) Act passed on to the statute book. As a result of this Swindon Corporation took over the Coate reservoir and all canal land within the Borough boundary. Other land was to be sold back to the original estates, who had to maintain water rights, while bridges were taken over by the Highway Authorities.

So died, after a hundred and twenty difficult years, an integral part of the canal system in Southern England.

Topography

The main line route is 52.125 miles from Semington Junction and Lock to the Abingdon Lock and Thames Junction. Four branches from the main line were constructed as follows:-

Calne Branch :	3.125 miles long rising 21ft. in 3 locks and passing under the Bath Road in a tunnel about 75 yds. long.
Chippenham Branch:	2 miles long and level, passing into the canal basin through a 75 yd. tunnel.
Longcot Branch:	0.5 miles long and level, running from Longcot Old Wharf to the New Wharf to serve Shrivenham.
Wantage Branch :	0.75 miles long and level to Wantage basin in Mill Street.

The North Wilts. Branch ran as follows:-

9 miles from Swindon Junction to Latton Basin at the Thames and Severn Canal Junction 1 mile north-west of Cricklade. The branch falls from Swindon by 59 ft. in 12 locks, comprising a flight of 5 close to the G.W.R. Gas Works (now being demolished) and another flight of 3 at Noredon. A tunnel of some 100 yds. carried the canal under the Gloucester and Great Western Union Railway. On the branch are a number of classical Brindley style aqueducts over the Rivers Ray, Churn and Thames.

The main line rises from the Kennet and Avon Canal at Semington by 201 ft. through 24 locks. The summit level then runs for 9 miles from the Summit Lock (5 miles south-west of Swindon) to Marston Top Lock (4 miles north-east of Swindon). To the Thames at Abingdon there is a fall of 168 ft. through 18 locks.

The line generally was surveyed to give a level close to the water table, save in the region between Wootton-Bassett and Dauntsey, where the major "civil engineering" works were required, including the Dauntsey flight of 7 locks. Water was supplied to this length by the 17 acre Tockenham reservoir, while the 67 acre Coate reservoir fed the summit level and the North Wilts. branch via the River Cole, and the West Leaze Brook at Rushey Platt.

The Wilts. and Berks. was a conventional narrow canal with most locks 78 ft. long by 8 ft. wide and nominally 2 ft. 6 ins. deep. Ground paddles were constructed round top gates, with gate paddles on the larger bottom gates. Locks comprised double bottom gates with single top gates. Lock chambers were invariably of brick with quoins of Swindon stone. Most bricks were burned on the spot or in the numerous brick works of the Kimmeridge Clay belt which predominates along the line. The bridges and locks of the North Wilts. and the main line to the north of Swindon, were also of local brick while around Swindon, local stone was generally used. Invariably, bridge arches are of semi-circular form on the main line where stone is used, making them quite distinctive. Some brick arches are flattened, or elliptical.

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WHERE ARE THE CLAY TOBACCO PIPES?

by H. Oak-Rhind.

With growing interest in Industrial Archaeology a good deal has now been written on the subject of clay tobacco pipes, but it is well to remember the basic purpose of their study: to help provide a dateable collection of pipe fragments which can be referred to as an aid to dating early modern archaeological sites by a study of the developing form of tobacco pipe, and the makers' marks on them, from around the year 1600 to the present day. The biggest problem for one wishing to start on this relatively new branch of Industrial Archaeology is where to begin looking.

Interpretation of makers' marks and dating them has not yet been fully covered in one publication: the most authoritative list known to the writer is that compiled and published by Adrian Oswald, M.A., F.S.A., in 1960 (1) and recently re-published with supplementary bibliography (2). A considerable amount of information has been collected since Oswald's list was compiled, and very little has been published (3).

Remembering that the first English record of tobacco pipes dates only from around 1590, and that Oswald's list covers more than 1,400 makers, the available debris should be fairly extensive. The average length of clay pipe stem to be found in any one area today is about one inch. The length of tobacco pipes over nearly 400 years averaged about six inches. Even allowing for the difference in population and the fact that smoking was mostly confined to men, it is tempting to consider these fragments as comparable with cigarette ends of today were they as indestructable as fired clay. It has been suggested that this must be a gross exaggeration, but from the writer's experience he is not convinced that this is so.

The search then, should not be too difficult. Probably the first and most obvious sites for investigation are known dumping areas for rubbish of the 17th and 18th centuries.

The next best guide is perhaps to consider where men are likely to have gathered together either in relatively small numbers over an extended period, or in large numbers over a comparatively short period. The first of these is generally covered by inns and their grounds. If there are known coaching inns in the area the search is likely to be still more productive. Consideration should also be given to inns which have lost their licence and been converted to dwelling houses or other uses.

Allotments are almost always a fruitful source of pipes of the 19th C., whether they are extensive town allotments, or merely village allotments serving a population of two or three hundred.

Eighteenth century canal navvies' camp sites should provide search areas likely to produce finds which could at least be put into a useful date bracket, besides assisting to pinpoint such sites, the location of which seems generally to have been forgotten. A good deal of common sense plus a study of the topography should help reduce the area for a preliminary search. Particular events in connection with the use of canals might also help, as, for example, the likely site of a navvies' camp in connection with the building of the first wooden aqueduct to carry the Grand Junction Canal over the river Ouse near Wolverton, and its subsequent collapse and replacement by the present "Iron Trunk" in 1811. A chance turn-up by a plough of 18th C. pipe bowls in a field near the "Iron Trunk" provoked further search which produced a scatter of some 30-40 18th. C. bowls along one edge of the field, and a find of about the same number of early 19th C. bowls along another side: unfortunately none bore any maker's marks. Nevertheless the two groups almost certainly reflected a navvies' camp site when the aqueduct was first built in 1801 and its present successor in 1811.

Investigation of earth brought to fill a dip in a site destined for building may not only produce pipes, but lead the inquiring searcher to the source of the rubble. This method was successfully followed when large quantities of rubble were brought from demolished streets of houses near Wolverton station, for filling in an awkward dip near the canal close by. The finds were identifiable as early 19th C., as the streets in question were built by the railway company about 1845, the dating could be given at least a useful terminus a quo.

A suggestion that pipes should be found around Wolverton Mill failed to bear fruit, but fortunately led the frustrated searchers to examine a neighbouring field which has subsequently produced, and continues to produce very many pipes which can be dated with certainty to around 1860-70. In 1867 the branch railway line from Wolverton to Newport Pagnell was opened, and these finds almost certainly pinpoint a railway navvies' camp of the date.

Within the requirement "where men are likely to have gathered" the searcher should include markets. It has been found that where a market adjoined a churchyard, pipe fragments can often be found just inside the churchyard wall where they were certainly thrown as rubbish.

The normal disposal of rubbish by dumping, and sometimes burning at the end of a cottage garden can often lead to interesting finds even if the cottage concerned has long vanished. Part of the writer's garden is known to have been within the grounds of a cottage demolished before 1914. Little is remembered of the cottage, but finds of early 18th C. bowls (as well as 19th C. pieces), and a relatively few 17th C bowls suggest probably continuous occupation of the site for around 250 years.

The known site of a pipemaker's kiln would almost certainly throw up identifiable and dateable fragments of wasters. The problem is to locate such a site, even when the locality is known to have supported a working pipemaker. Stony Stratford provides an example of just such a case, but all attempts to locate the particular pipemaker's site have failed to date. A lead of this kind which might be followed in Northamptonshire is provided by the Stony Stratford record of the indenture of Thomas OWEN of Stony Stratford to be apprenticed to William DAVISSE of Towcester, in the trade of pipe-maker, 14th August 1740.

It should be remarked here that excavation seems to the writer to be a waste of time in a search primarily directed to finding clay tobacco pipes, unless perhaps the site of a kiln can be located. Against all probability fragments of pipe seem not to work far down into the soil. Most can be found on the surface or a few inches below, when digging a garden or ploughing a field.

This article is not concerned with the marking of pipes, but it should be remembered by the initiate in this field that every fragment must be washed and examined for marks, even though five years' collecting produces a useless hoard of 15,000 unmarked pieces of stem as has happened in the writer's personal experience.

Although a good deal is known about tobacco pipe makers of Northampton town, it would be helpful to know more about James MORGAN who advertised in the "Mercury" on 3rd May 1722 for his runaway apprentice William BETT. The latter may be identical with William BETTS, pipemaker of Woolmonger Street, who appears in the Northampton Polls in 1768, but is he?

James VEERS and George HENSHAW who also appear in the Polls for 1768, living in Kingswell Lane, are both still no more than names to the writer.

The Northamptonshire County Record Office has index cards for the under-mentioned pipemakers, but there has been no opportunity to follow up these clues:-

Thomas HARRIS of Bugbrook	Ref: C(H) 126
Samuel SAUNDERS of Stamford Barron	Ref: EH 508 (1709)
Joseph KINGSTON of Towcester	Ref: YZ 7781 (1675)
** John DAVIS of Brackley	Ref: Ag. 38-40 (1724-29)

** Might well be related to William DAVISSE of Towcester, 1740.

There must have been other pipemakers in the County, for it was a very localised industry, and it is hoped that this brief review may inspire further research, and give some idea of where field work might be begun.

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STARTING FROM SCRATCH

by Mrs. W. Mahon.

Billing Mill (SP 813611) on the River Nene, a few miles east of Northampton, is now a Museum of Milling and is open 3 - 8.00p.m. from 1st June until 30th September. Mrs. Mahon, who was responsible for organising this museum tells how she went about this unusual task.

In the summer of 1965 I was asked by Mr. John Mackaness who owns the Billing Aquadrome near Northampton if I would organise a corn-milling museum in a dis-used watermill on the River Nene in the aquadrome. As I am a housewife with no idea of

mechanics or engineering and had done nothing like this before except help with a village exhibition, I had to think about the suggestion carefully. In the end I agreed to do it, though I must say I underestimated the amount of time I should have to spend on it. The museum was to open in the spring of 1967 which seemed plenty of time away.

The buildings on the site were the mill, the mill house joining the mill on one side and a barn the other, with its roof extending over the mill stream to the other side of the mill. When I first saw it from the outside everything looked in very good condition as the roof was replaced and walls repaired a few years previously when the buildings got so derelict that they were dangerous. The interior however was in a very different state, the house was derelict inside and had to be entirely rebuilt within the outside walls. The barn had been cow sheds and hay store and was flooded every winter and the mill itself had all the floor beams of the upper storeys sawn out when the building had been re-roofed so that all that was left was the machinery and a few rotten floor boards on the hursts and round the stones which were rather precariously in place.

All the machinery was there though needing attention. There was a bolter but its casing was so riddled with woodworm that it fell to pieces when it had to be removed for the floor to be replaced and we have been unable to obtain one to take its place. (Any offers? - Editor). There were three pairs of stones, one pair of which we had to remove to make room for a gallery put in to join the two buildings over the mill stream. The mill wheel itself needed all the scoops replacing as they looked like lace with rust holes. As the firm who made the wheel originally still exists they took off the old scoops and made new ones. They also put the rest of the machinery into working order.

But, before all this happened, I had to get some knowledge which meant reading and visiting. I went to both the town and county libraries, told them what I was doing and asked for their help. They supplied many books and when from them I found other titles they obtained from all over the country anything they hadn't themselves. One of the libraries told me about Mr. Geoffrey H. Starmer who was doing a photographic survey of watermills on the River Nene at this time and from him of course I have had a great deal of help including copies of many of his photographs which are on display. At the same time I was visiting mill sites found on Ordnance maps. Many of these are no longer there, many others are not much more than a heap of rubble but quite a number of buildings exist, some of which have nothing inside but some have quite a lot. Nearly all the owners were very interested to hear what I was doing and I obtained a fair number of exhibits this way. Once my friends knew what I was doing I was inundated with cuttings from local and other newspapers about watermills and any which appeared at all hopeful from my point of view I either wrote or phoned to. I got a terrific amount of interesting miscellaneous information all of which helped with background knowledge.

An illustrated article appeared in a magazine about the Reading University Museum of Rural Life so I visited the Keeper who was helpful about their methods of keeping records. Mr. Iaw from the Science Museum was also very helpful and showed me a series of drawings of a mill which would have made an interesting exhibit and suggested some of the kind of things that would be interesting. One of the three Norwich Museums has a very fine working model of a windmill. author of a book on windmills, let me have negatives of photographs illustrating his book for display.

In the autumn of 1966 it was decided the buildings would not be ready for opening in 1967 so the opening was postponed until spring 1968.

In the autumn of 1966 Industrial Archaeology classes were started in Northampton by the University of Leicester and as the first two lectures were about mills I thought I would join for those two and would leave the rest. I am now in the middle of the third winter course as apart from the general enjoyment of such an interesting subject I have received a great deal of help from members of the class, in addition to that from Mr. Starmer, the course tutor. Mr. A. Stedman has made a beautiful scale model of Baxterley windmill (now demolished) from drawings done by Mr. D. Ogden of Warwickshire who is now a full-time millwright: photographs have come from a number of members and

Mr. J.F. Carter who was a member for the first year and now organises similar classes in North Oxfordshire, told me of a number of mills to visit in other counties which I have done with profit. There are quite a number of small societies who are working on the restoration of their local mill though there appear to be more windmills being restored at the moment than watermills.

Transport of items for the museum was fairly easy to arrange but not the most appropriate as it was either a pick-up or large lorry with fairly high platform and no sides or a tractor pulling a low trailer-loader. Millstones were our greatest trouble. One day driving through Wellingborough I saw a pair of new ones standing in a seed merchant's yard in the middle of the town. He was quite prepared to let me have them as long as we collected, so one sunny Saturday morning six men, myself and a lorry went along to collect. As they were new they weighed three-quarters of a ton each and it was found impossible to manhandle them onto the lorry. Luckily, just down the road there was a stonemasons yard with a crane, so to the amazement of passers-by the millstones were rolled on their edges along the street one at a time to the crane. As the stones are convex on one side it was very difficult to keep them on a straight track but it was managed without any accident. Another Saturday we collected the main shaft from the mill at Cransley near Kettering. This again is a very large and heavy item which was manhandled on to the lorry.

The smaller items I mostly collected in my car including one occasion when the back was quite filled with two fairly large heavy wooden hoppers for feeding the corn to the stones, these were an exchange with another restoration group in Buckinghamshire for a stone cover. The trickiest job of collecting I did was collecting a quarter size model of a windmill sail made by Derek Ogden; this is about 8 to 10 ft. long and I could not get it in my car so I borrowed a pick-up which when I collected it turned out to be a diesel. Of course I had never driven one before, but it started easily and though noisy, smelly and slow I got used to it driving through town in the dinner-time traffic. I was going to Great Alne which is a village near Alcester in Warwickshire and got lost in some of the lanes I was directed to take. This wouldn't have mattered except that I had to reverse and nothing I did to get into reverse succeeded and I had to go on until I found somewhere wide enough to turn completely. When I arrived I needed to rest while recovering from the noise and discomfort but turning the ignition key off had no effect on the engine, it just went on and on, after about quarter of an hour I ran the truck gently into a pile of sand and that did it. Mrs. Ogden and I then turned the truck by hand, put the sail in, I started again with no trouble and had another noisy, smelly and slow journey back to the mill. I found out there is a pushbutton at the front of the seat underneath the drivers legs which turns the engine off, but I never managed to find the reverse but as I never intend to drive a truck like that again it doesn't really matter.

A great deal of patience is needed in following up clues. An article on windmills in a volume of Newcomen Society's transactions was illustrated by a small reproduction of an advertisement of a firm of millwrights. It needed a magnifying glass to read the name of the firm and a modern directory of Ipswich to find that they were still at the same place. They told me that they had modernised a few years ago no longer kept anything to do with wind or watermills and had thrown all their old catalogues away. I then asked them if they knew any firm who might be able to help and they did tell me of a firm in Whitechapel. This firm was started in 1784 and their foundry is still in the same place, but for how much longer I don't know. In answer to my first letter they sent me an illustrated list of some of their obsolete mill furnishing and asked me what I was particularly interested in. As I did not know they suggested I visited them and one of their directors would take me round. This was a most interesting outing as we went over the stores, some of which looked as if they had been there since the founding of the firm. The result was we collected a lorry load of exhibits a few weeks later.

In the preparation of the museum I visited 26 mills some of them more than once, read about 50 books and publications of various sorts and travelled over 4700 miles besides meeting very many interested people.

GAS MAKING AT BANBURY

By G.C.J. Hartland.

The Banbury Gas Light and Coke Company was formed in 1833 although there had been proposals, as early as 1825, to introduce gas to Banbury. The Company's official supply commenced in March 1834 and the first public lamp was lit in August of that year. In the early years most of the gas produced was for lighting but it is recorded that on August 24th, 1847, Gypson applied to the Company for 20,000 cubic feet of gas to fill his balloon.

The Original Company's Works

The site of the original gas works was on the side of the Oxford Canal at the rear of the premises previously occupied by the Station Garage and now by the Banbury Borough Council's workshops, etc. in Bridge Street. In those days, coal was delivered by canal boat and carbonised in iron retorts. In 1850 the Company installed a gas holder in a brick tank of 12,000 cubic feet capacity. The retort house and gas holder were enlarged about 1852, when new purifiers were erected on the site of the offices.

The New Works at Grimsbury

By 1854 it was found that a larger site for the manufacture of gas was necessary to efficiently supply the rapidly expanding town. A committee was appointed to select a site for a new works and one and half acres of land was purchased between the two railways at Grimsbury. Later in 1854 tenders were considered for the erection of the new works on the site. There is no record of any plant being removed from the works in Bridge Street to the new works in Grimsbury but it is recorded that the old works were sold for £800 to Mr. J.H. Jones.

The original works erected on this site in 1854 consisted of a retort house containing thirty clay retorts, 14 in. x 8 ft. 6 in., with a coal store running parallel with the retort beds. Other plant consisted of a condenser, a scrubber, three large dry-line purifiers, two gas-holders, a station meter and a station governor.

Developments at Grimsbury

During the following years steady progress was made, making it necessary for the plant to be modernised and further added to. In 1892 a new 100,000 cubic feet gas-holder was erected at the bottom end of the works. In 1901 the Company embarked upon a scheme of free installation of cookers and other apparatus. This was to the Company's advantage as gas consumption steadily increased, and in 1902 the first incandescent burner was introduced into the public lamps, and in 1908 the whole of the lamps were lighted and extinguished by clock controllers.

The year 1909 was a time of anxiety for the management for the whole of the year was given to major extensions and repairs. Four new purifiers were installed with the necessary connecting mains, four new beds of eight retorts were erected, also a sulphate of ammonia plant and extensive alterations were made to the towns mains.

In 1910 a single lift holder was demolished and replaced by a three lift telescopic holder in the existing brick tank, and two years later a further extension to the retort house was made by the erection of a further three beds of eight retorts each. After prolonged negotiations it was decided to supply gas in bulk to the Adderbury works of the Counties Gas Company and steel mains were laid from the Banbury Company's works to that point and a connecting main taken to King's Sutton. A Waller boosting plant was installed at the works capable of developing a pressure of 160 inches, the necessary reduction being obtained at Adderbury and King's Sutton by Bryan Donkin diaphragm governors.

In 1916 a Shell Filling Factory was erected in the Causeway and demanded an extraordinary supply of gas. The Company's plant was worked to its full capacity, and due to the increasing load it was found necessary to erect a water gas plant, the contract for which was placed with Messrs. Humphreys and Glasgow. The contract for erecting the building to house the plant was obtained by Messrs. J.F. Booth and Son.

In December 1932 the Company was successful in obtaining a contract with the Banbury Corporation for the lighting of the streets with gas for a period of three years. The same year saw the advent of the Northern Aluminium Company as a potential consumer of gas. To relieve the congestion the engine room was enlarged - the positions of the whole plant being re-organised without cessation of supply. The Stoking Machine having been in commission for 23 years the directors decided to replace it by one of a modern type.

The question of gas storage had been a serious problem for some time and in order to maintain an uninterrupted and efficient supply of gas to the town and district a new gas holder became essential. Work was therefore commenced on a new 400,000 cubic feet guide frame holder, and the water gas plant was re-modelled and the enlargement of certain mains in the town was undertaken.

The new gasholder was erected by Messrs. C. & W. Walker Ltd. of Donnington, and was completed in 1933 and was inaugurated on the opening day of the Centenary celebrations. Prior to this the total gas storage capacity was 320,000 cubic feet contained in three holders.

The situation of the works, between the two railways, was ideal in that coal was brought direct by a siding which ran through the works and connected both the G.W.R. and L.M.S.R. Companies. The coal waggons were hauled by a steam-crab and wire rope into the retort house, where the coal was unloaded direct into an underground hopper passing from thence to a coal breaker and then via an elevator to the overhead hopper of the stoking machine.

The coal breaker was later removed when pre-graded coal was introduced, but method of unloading, and supplying the machine was retained right up to the closing down of the works in 1959. The original seven beds of retorts of 1909 and 1912, were still used and no further extensions were made.

General Description of the Works, 1933

The carbonizing plant, as already mentioned, consisted of seven settings of eight D retorts 22" x 16" x 20 ft. long, being operated by a Fiddes-Aldridge multiple stroke stoking machine installed in 1933 to replace the Fiddes Aldridge machine which was installed in 1912. The machine was driven by electricity generated in the works own power house.

The machinery and power house comprised the following plant :-
One 40,000 cubic feet per hour three blade Bryan Donkin exhauster automatically lubricated and driven by a 9" bore by 9" stroke Donkin horizontal steam engine at 70 lb. pressure; one 30,000 cubic feet per hour three blade Bryan Donkin exhauster also driven by a steam engine; one 25,000 cubic feet per hour steam driven compressor for supplying gas to the Northern Aluminium Company's works; one 8,000 cubic feet per hour steam driven compressor for supplying gas to the Adderbury works of the United District Gas Company and King's Sutton; and two Electrical Sets, one gas and one steam driven for generating electricity for the stoking machine.

The washing plant consisted of two Livesey washers, one Holmes rotary brush washer and one tower scrubber and four column set of annular condensers. The purifiers were six in number and were each 20ft. x 15ft. x 5 ft. deep. These were emptied at the bottom and all connections were accessible below the purifiers. There was also a Humphreys and Glasgow carburetted water gas plant complete with oil storage tank, washers and condensers. The capacity of this plant was 4000,000 cubic feet per day.

The steaming plant consisted of two 20ft. x 6ft. Cornish boilers each fitted with Wilton's patent forced draught furnaces, each boiler having a working pressure of 80 lb. per square inch. An additional boiler was later installed having a working pressure of 120 lb. per square inch. The station meter was of the rotary type and was capable of passing 40,000 cubic feet per hour. The station governor was by Braddocks and was of their counter balance type.

There was a good demand for coke, a portion of which was broken and graded to meet the domestic requirements. The tar, except such as was required for local needs was disposed of to the Midland Tar Distillers Works at Banbury under the co-operative system.

The ammoniacal liquor was converted into sulphate of ammonia, but as the value of this product was so low, the plant barely justified its existence.

The Second World War and After

My personal knowledge of the works begins in 1940, when I joined the Company as a Slot Boy. I am sure that most people remember those little two-wheeled wooden trucks used by the Gas Company for conveying the pennies collected from the gas meters, to the works. It was the duty of the Slot Boy to accompany the Collector on his rounds of the Town and District, and when the Collector's bag was full of pennies, which he would put into paper bags holding five shillings worth each, the boy would then fill five pound linen bags with the five shilling bags and deposit them in the truck.

It was also the job of the boy to visit the towns banks about twice a week, to collect a supply of these bags, leaving the truck, locked up of course, in the street being worked, while he was away, (although I doubt if this practice would be safe in this day and age).

The Slot Boy had to push his truck around the town and as far afield as Bodicote, Middleton Cheney, and King's Sutton. His weekly wage was eight shillings and sixpence.

On October 3rd, 1940 a German aircraft dropped bombs on the Company's works. The 400,000 cubic feet gas holder, so proudly inaugurated on Centenary Day, seven years before, was now a smoking mass of twisted steel frame work and buckled plates. The Purifiers had received a direct hit and every window in the manager's house had been blown out. Fortunately the only damage suffered by the three-lift holder had been from flying metal and the holes were soon plugged and most of the gas in the holder saved. The large mains in the roadway had been destroyed by another bomb, but some repairs were immediately carried out and work was resumed in the retort house, which fortunately had escaped damage, enabling a supply of gas to be restored to the town.

In the years that followed many alterations took place, some for the good, some not so good. The Gas Act of 1948 bought the undertaking along with all others in the country under public ownership and control from the 1st May 1949. In 1948 all the old gas lights on the works were done away with when a supply of electricity was laid on. The cables were brought under the railway from a sub-station near the old Switch Gear and Equipment Works (now Kinghams), and into the engine room to be connected to an 11 kv - 415/240v transformer. To enable the stoking machine to be worked off this new supply, a mercury-arc rectifier also had to be installed to convert the a.c. supply to d.c. The two gas and steam generating sets were retained as standby, and the old National Gas Engine underwent a long awaited overhaul.

By 1952 the engine room had been completely re-organised, and two of the old steam driven boosters removed to be replaced by electric turbo-boosters.

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Mr. Day, the Manager and Secretary, left the works house in 1945 to live in Albert Street, Banbury. Most of the ground floor rooms were converted into offices and the remainder of the house was occupied by Mr. S.W. Morse, the Works Superintendent, and his family. Mr. Day retired in 1947 and died in 1951.

In 1952 Banbury was serving Adderbury, Brackley, Woodford with gas, and distribution mains had been laid between Adderbury and Banbury to improve the supply. Work was begun on an integration main between Banbury and Woodford Halse in 1954, and following the completion of the main between Banbury and Brackley, Brackley Gas Works was closed down on September 30th, 1954.

The integration main between Banbury and Woodford was completed in 1956 and the Woodford Works was closed.

The retorts at Banbury Works were re-set and the Carburetted Water Gas Plant repaired. The Southern Gas Consultative Council report referred to representation about the price charged for gas in Banbury. The manufacturing cost was said to be relatively high due mainly to the high cost of transporting coal and the unit of production being small and not of the most modern design. The Council said they were satisfied with the Board's long term plans for the erection of a modern gas works at Oxford with gradual closing down of less efficient works and accepted that until this was accomplished the Board could not be in a position to reduce the price in the Banbury district.

A new tariff came into operation on August 4th, 1956 with an average charge in the area as a whole of 1½d. per therm.

The Kidlington main was completed and an additional main laid from Reading to Oxford. This enabled the closure of the Banbury Gas Works on 1st October 1958. Gas supplies were then to be drawn from Oxford, and the Banbury Works became operational only as a holder station. The stores building at the north end of the works were retained, and are still used as a garage and local service depot.

References

"The Centenary of the Banbury Gas Company 1833-1933" published by the Banbury Guardian Press, 1933.

Banbury Guardian.

Acknowledgments

Mr. H. Burdett and the late Mr. S.H.M. Prestcott, for administrative details.
Mr. W. Hawke, former manager of the Adderbury Works and later Works Superintendent at Banbury.

Banbury Guardian, for access to their files.
The Southern Gas Board, Southampton.

Addendum

Some extra information on Gasmaking at Banbury has been sent by Mr. J.B. Horne of Tilehurst, Reading and this is given on page 18 of this Bulletin.

A P P E A L S

Animal Powered Water Lifting Devices. Kenneth J. Major, of 2 Eldon Road, Reading would welcome information on the location and history of these devices.

Blisworth - Northampton - Peterborough Railway. John Ginns, 25 Broadmead Avenue, Northampton would like to see any pre-First World War illustrations of activities on this line e.g. stations, goods handling etc.

REPORTS OF INDUSTRIAL ARCHAEOLOGY IN THE INDIVIDUAL COUNTIES

BEDFORDSHIRE

Studies

Luton Generating Station.

This station ceased generation in the latter part of March, 1969. A small group of steam enthusiasts, led by Mr. John Page of Luton, have made a brief record of the station.

The red brick offices and main entrance front onto the B653 road, opposite the parish church of St. Mary. The words FIAT LUX appear in moulded brick, one each side of the main entrance. Inside the office block, glazed tiles are prominent including some very decorative blue ones near the foundation stone laid in 1901.

The older part of the engine room is also faced in glazed tiles, brown to about four feet from the floor and above these, white. Over the years considerable changes have been made to the machinery. At the end of 1940, the main generating plant was, in order from the office (or south west) end of the engine room:-

No. 1. set	1000 kW
No. 2. set	1000 kW
No. 3. set	3000 kW
No. 4. set	5000 kW
No. 5. set	7000 kW
No. 6. set	12500 kW

The two Clark Chapman boilers were at that time coal fired. Coal was brought in by rail. In 1930 a 4 wheeled battery electric locomotive was obtained from Greenwood & Batley Ltd. (Loco. No. 1210) to shunt the coal wagons over drops from which an elevator lifted the coal to storage bunkers near the roof of the boiler house. About 1964/5, the boilers were converted to oil firing, with four burners to each boiler. The railway system was abandoned and the electric locomotive transferred to another generating station.

When it stopped generating, the station contained the following:-
No. 4, 5 and 6 sets, all Brush Ljungstrom Turbo- alternators, as above, except No. 4 set carried aboard denoting it was now rated at 6250 kVA. These all ran at 3000 rev/min and were reputed to take steam at 325 lbf/in².

Two 1500 kW rotary convertors and one 1000 kW rotary convertor, all by Mather & Platt Ltd. of Manchester.

There was also the remains of a large D.C. switchboard, in use up to about 1965, but now cannibalized to a large extent.

An old D.C. Generator (by W.H. Allen, Sons & Co. of Bedford, No. 1004) giving 80 A at 200 v when run at 475 rev/min had been kept, although no longer used after the departure of the electric locomotive whose batteries had been charged by it.

There were also two concrete cooling towers on the north west of the generating station.

Report of Lecture.

Last December, the Dunstable Astronomical and Scientific Society heard an extremely interesting lecture on "The Cornish Miner" by E. Walsh, a Cornishman who has great feeling for his subject.

Publications

(a) "Railways of Bedfordshire - Planned but not built 1844-1910" by F.G. Cockman, a retired Bedford business man who has devoted considerable time to investigating the history of railways in Bedfordshire. This 75 page paper examines some 33 proposals but only one is exclusive to Bedfordshire: this is the Leagrave and Luton Light Railway which was briefly mentioned in Bulletin No.6. For each proposal examined Mr. Cockman gives the date of survey, the engineers, the lodgment date and length of the proposed line followed by a discussion of the proposal and reasons for their abandonment when known.

Xerox copies of this excellent paper, including a sketch map, may be obtained from: The County Record Office, Shire Hall, Bedford. Price: 30/- post free.

(b) A brief article on local windmills appears in the current issue of 'The South Beds Spread', the magazine of the Dunstable and District Branch of N.A.L.G.O. It contains no original work and is based on the very comprehensive 'Bedfordshire Windmills', a publication of the Bedfordshire Historical Record Society.

Preservation

An attempt, which appears to have a fair chance of success, is being made to rescue the machinery of the 19th century Horse Mill at Mill Farm, Eversholt (SP 988321). The mill was recorded last Autumn by J. Kenneth Major.

BERKSHIRE

Studies

(a) Brickworks The Maidenhead Archaeological Society members are surveying and photographing the Pinkneys Green Brickworks which closed at Christmas 1968.

(b) Bell Founding. Mr. Gosling of Wokingham is following up the sites of the various bell founders in Berkshire.

(c) Iron Working. The Headmaster and pupils of Finchampstead C.E. Primary School are working on the remains of smelting in a bloomery they have found near the school.

(d) Turbines and Pumps. Mr. Chase and a group from the W.E.A. class have started work on the pumping installation at Blakes Lock on the Kennet. This pumps the sewerage back across Reading to the Sewerage Farm near the Basingstoke Road. The present installation consists of 4 large electric pumps. The previous arrangement of 3 electric pumps in the steam engine pit and the 3 turbines are still in place.

(e) Roller Milling. The roller plant at Sonning Mill is to cease work and be demolished soon. A photographic record has been made of the plant at work. The building is to be protected but the plant will be stripped out.

Courses. Following the course at Reading University last season a course of 24 lectures will begin in the Autumn. More time will be devoted to the Techniques of Industrial Archaeology and further studies will be made of individual subjects. Further information can be obtained from J. Kenneth Major or from Laurence Cameron, 120 Kingsway, Blackwater, Camberley, Surrey.

Publications "Victorian Wantage" by Kathleen Philip, M.A., 22 Belmont, Wantage, Berkshire - 12/6. plus 1/- p.p. 125 pages.

This is an excellent example of the new trend in Local History publishing. It is easily read and is packed with a great deal of information of help to the Industrial Archaeologist. The short chapter on the Wantage Tramway "From and To" really makes the little line and its personalities live. J.K.M.

Excursions. The Berkshire Industrial Archaeology Society and the W.E.A. course are combining in a series of excursions. Most of these will be made by using members' cars but the longer excursions may be by coach. The programme is as follows:-

April 19th. Visit to watermills and steam pumps in the Basingstoke area.

May 10th. Walk around Newbury, starting from the Museum on the old Canal Wharf at 2.30.p.m.

June 7th. Buscot Park under the leadership of John Gray, to see the Industrial Farm Estate.

July 19th. A full day excursion along the Berks & Wilts Canal, starting from Abingdon.

September 20th. Bath and the Mendips. A full day perhaps by coach from Reading.

Further information may be obtained from J. Kenneth Major or Laurence Cameron.

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

Films.

The Pitstone Local History Society at their Annual General Meeting in March were privileged to view a proof copy of a 16mm sound film on Watermills. The film which runs for ten minutes was made by Paul Graham with a script by John Vince and commentary by Richard Baker. A proportion of the film was shot at the mills of Scotsgrove, near Haddenham (SP 719072) and Ivinghoe (SP 941165)

Copies of the film can be hired from Paul Graham at 15 Combe Rise, High Wycombe, Bucks.

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

Studies.

(a) Victoria Mills, Little Irchester, Wellingborough. (SP 902665) Mr. A. Reynolds is making a study of the history of these mills. The earliest buildings date from the end of the 19th century but there have been many additions on the site - and several losses due to fires. Originally driven by a large steam engine, this was replaced some years ago by large electric motors still driving the machines through the original belts and shafting. This has recently been superseded through the installation of machines with their own separate electric motors.

(b) Thrapston Area. Students taking the Environmental Studies Course at the Corby Annexe of the Leicester College of Education have made a study of the Thrapston Area. This included:-

(i) Rush Collar and Matting Manufacture at Islip. There are two manufacturers: William Knight and R. Loveday. William Knight's business was established in 1868 in Todd's Yard with a straw barn next door. Although the barn has been demolished, the first factory, later used as a cottage, is still standing (SP 985791). About 1900, the business was transferred to a three storey factory (SP 986794). The products were horse-collars, matting, dinner baskets, stool and chair seats. The main buyers were the Railway Companies for their horse-drawn drays. The students comment "A thriving business until the advent of the motor car. World War 1 saw the final collapse". When the owner died, the factory was sold to a brewery and turned into a Working Men's Club.

(ii) Islip blacksmith's shop (SP987788). The shop (with house attached) was built in 1763 and is constructed in limestone with pantile roofing. The glazed window panes are of the overlapping type. The forge and house are part of the Drayton Estate (Lowick) now owned by the Sackville family. One of the family's initials, 'W.B.S.' are inscribed on the face of a set of built-in iron drawers which date back to the original building. The anvil and the forge bellows (both still in use) are known to be at least 100 years old.

The premises are now in a very dilapidated condition. The present blacksmith still does a small trade in shoeing horses. He is now nearing retirement and as he has no apprentice or son to whom to pass the business, there is danger of this business disappearing.

(iii) Smith & Grace Ltd., Thrapston (SP 995785). The business was established in 1857 by Mr. Nathaniel Smith, mainly for the production of agricultural implements. In 1879 it was taken over by his two older sons, George and Edwin. Twelve months later, the manufacture of agricultural implements was discontinued in order to concentrate on the production of cast iron pulleys. The firm continues to produce these, together with plumber blocks, couplings and other equipment for power transmission.

There have been two major alterations to the works. In 1935 the foundry was re-organised and extended to include 17,600 ft² of extra floor space. At the same time an oil-engined power station was installed to provide all the power needed for the works. In 1949 new core and ferrous metals shops were added.

Copies of the report on these studies in the Thrapston area are deposited in the library at the Leicester College of Education's Annexe at Corby.

(c) Industrial Buildings in Northampton. On 15th January the Archaeological section of the Northamptonshire Natural History Society held a meeting to form working parties to survey industrial buildings in the town. This meeting was not successful because after a very useful talk by Mr. John Thornton on the evolution of buildings associated with the shoe industry, the other speaker talked for so long that there was insufficient time to form the working parties! However, it has subsequently been possible to get enough people for one working party and this is holding a meeting to discuss recording procedures on Monday, 14th April, at 7.30.p.m. at 17 Mayfield Road, Northampton.

(d) Towcester Gasworks. Mr. J.B. Horne, of Tilehurst, Reading, makes the following comments on the notes on Towcester Gasworks on page 9 of the article by Richard O'Rourke in Bulletin No.7.

" It would be most unusual for so small a concern to start from new with two holders. On the other hand there would be many more than two retorts, perhaps two benches of retorts would be more like it".

Mr. Horne also sent the following information on these works as at 31st December 1914, taken from "Gas World" Directory and Statistics, 1915-1916.

Owner: The Towcester Gas and Coke Co., Ltd. Date of formation: 1837.
Share capital paid up: £2,800. Dividend: 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ %
Cost of Coal: 18s. per ton. Coal carbonised: 665 tons.
Annual make of gas: 6,228,000. Annual sale of gas: 5,307,000
Illuminating power prescribed: 18.
No. of stoves: 211: No. of slots: 146: No. of ordinary meters: 188.
Price per 1000 ft³, ordinary and stoves: 5s, with 10% discount if paid within a month; engines: 4s. net; slots 15 ft.³ for 1d.
No. of public lamps: 45 incandescent
Residuals made: 7,194 gallons of tar, 143 tons coke.
Price received for coke: 15s. per ton.
Length of mains: 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ miles.
Chairman: W.H. Percival: Engineer: G.S. Eunson: Secretary: W.E. Whitton.
Office: Town Hall. Towcester.

(e) Commercial traffic on the River Nene. The narrow boats carrying grain from London (Brentford) to Whitworth's Mills at Wellingborough are due to cease operations at the end of March. It is hoped to complete a record of the boats at various places on the Northampton arm of the former Grand Junction Canal from Gayton Junction to Northampton and also the passage of the boats along the River Nene from Northampton to Wellingborough.

Courses.

A Summer Term Course of Industrial Archaeology Fieldwork is being organised by the Leicester University's Centre in Northampton. The first meeting is at 7.30.p.m., Friday, 25th April at the University Centre and during the course it is hoped to record buildings in Northampton for the National Industrial Monuments Survey, to survey parts of the Islip ironstone quarries, to excavate a section of the route

of the Blisworth Mill Tramway and to record a local flour mill and a fellmongers. In addition there will be two full-day visits by coach, one to items in Buckinghamshire and the Reading Museum of English Rural Life and the other to items in Lincolnshire. Further details may be obtained from the Warden. The University Centre, Barrack Road, Northampton or to the Course Tutor, Geoffrey H. Starmer.

Meeting/Exhibition.

The Northamptonshire Federation of Archaeological Societies is holding an open meeting at Kettering Grammar School, Windmill Avenue, Kettering on Saturday, 19th April, at 2.30.p.m. Amongst the talks on recent archaeological work in the County, there will be one on Industrial Archaeology and the subject will also be represented in the exhibition at the meeting.

Publications.

Scopes, Sir Frederick. "The Development of Corby Works". Published: Stewarts and Lloyds Ltd., 1968. Although two blast furnaces were put into production at Corby in 1910, the present industrial complex dates from the decision of Stewarts & Lloyds to base their integrated steel and tube making plant at Corby in 1932. The book covers the background to this decision and the subsequent developments up to the outbreak of war in 1939.

OXFORDSHIRE

Studies.

(a) Hitchman's Brewery, Chipping Norton. A photographic survey, with plans and sections being drawn, was conducted at this old brewery by the Study Group at the Oxford City & County Museum.

(b) Blenheim Estate Mill. The same study group tackled this mill on the River Evenlode at Combe, which contains both water - and steam-powered machinery.

(c) Individual studies being undertaken by members of the Oxford Museum's Study Group include Wheatley Windmill, milestones, school and chapel surveys. All the information collected is put in the Museum reference system where it can be located and studied by any interested member of the public.

Study Group

Although the formal series of ten weekly meetings which was planned to get the study group going has now finished, members intend to continue to meet on the last Wednesday evening of every month at 7.30.p.m. in the Oxford City and County Museum, Woodstock, to discuss projects and receive suggestions for work of which the Museum may have heard. Occasionally the group plans to invite a visiting lecturer to speak and new members who wish to help in work in Oxfordshire are very welcome.

An exhibition of work done by members of the group is being shown in the Museum for three weeks around Easter and a Newsletter will be issued three times a year to keep members in touch. Anyone wishing to receive this newsletter or who has anything to contribute should let the Oxford City and County Museum know.

Through the group the Museum hopes to act as a co-ordinating body and to be able to say what work is being done where and so to guide new workers.

Publications

(a) 'Barrows & Stewart' by Rev. R.C. Stebbing, Road Locomotive Journal, 22 No.1, February, 1969. p.12.

A short article, with 2 illustrations, presenting what is known of the only two traction engines thought to have been built by this Banbury firm, better known for the production of portable engines. Other references to this firm's traction engines are given in:-

Engineering. 32, 1881
and Clark, R.H. "Development of the English Traction Engine"

(b) 'Notes for Use in Detailed Field recording', Field Department, Oxford City and County Museum. This booklet has been produced to help recorders of all types of sites and monuments (including mounds and barrows, mediaeval settlements, etc., as well as industrial remains) in the county. Written primarily to help inexperienced recorders, the notes give comprehensive lists of what to look for on a site and the important features to record.

The notes are available from the Oxford City and County Museum, Fletcher's House, Woodstock, Oxford, price one shilling plus postage.

GAS MAKING AT BANBURY - SOME EXTRA NOTES

By J.B. Horne.

The Gas World Directory gave the following data as at December 31st, 1913 :-

Coal carbonised	:	7964 ton
Annual make of Gas	:	90,716,000 cubic feet
Annual sale of Gas	:	79,796,500 cubic feet
Enricher used	:	Benzol
Number of stoves	:	1732
Number of slots	:	1450
Price per 1000 ft ³	:	ordinary and stoves, 2s.10d; 3s.9d. engines, 2s.5d.
Number of public lamps	:	290, incandescent
Quantity of residuals made	:	Coke, 4778 tons; tar, 506 tons; Sulphate 73 tons.
Coke used on works	:	1023 tons
Length of mains	:	21 miles
Capacity of gasholders	:	350,000 cubic feet

It appears that the company was taken over by a Holding Company founded in 1933 by the Oxford and District Gas Company. This was the "South Midland Gas Corporation Limited" which has Directors etc., in common with the parent Oxford concern. In addition to Banbury South Midland also controlled Eynsham and Witney, later expanding its control to Wantage and possibly elsewhere. Most of these small works were given a bulk supply of gas from Oxford but this was not so in the case of Banbury until rather later.

In 1938 the Banbury company made a total (horizontal and water gas plants) of 264 million cubic feet and sold 223 million. There were 4510 domestic consumers and 14 industrial. 12,686 tons of coal were carbonized and 95,000 gallons of oil also used for gas making. From a total of 8404 tons of coke made, 5412 tons were for sale. The declared calorific value was 450 and gas was sold at 14d. per therm(subject to graded discounts), 16.9d. per therm pre-payment.

The 1947 Directories show a surprising fall in sales at Banbury. The "make" is given as 188 million and sales 69 million cubic feet at 450 calorific value.



