

FRIENDS OF BRANDY BOTTOM COLLIERY, PUCKLECHURCH

Newsletter N° 16, August 2017

(Photos 1-39 will be found on page 5 onwards)



There have been 16 work parties since the last newsletter, bringing the total for the year to date to 42. Information has been found about possible changes to winding operations in the New Pit, a stone floor was uncovered in the Old Boiler House, and a new structure found outside the south-west wall of the Cornish Engine House. There has been no progress on the ground of the rebuilding of the New Pit structures, as the exact scope, and hence the cost, of the contract is still under discussion. It is hoped that work will start next month.

A paper on the conservation of Brandy Bottom was presented to the 2017 conference of the National Association of Mining History Organisations. The AIBT had a stand at the 2017 South Gloucestershire show (photo right © M Fletcher). It was located alongside that of the SGMRG, and showcased the work being done at Brandy Bottom. As well as the AIBT banner seen in the photo on the right, a second banner inside the tent carried the logos of



Historic England, Ibstock, and the Ibstock Cory Environmental Trust as acknowledgment of their financial and/or material assistance to the project. This banner can be seen on the left of photo 36.

There was a visit on a rainy evening in July by the Friends of Yate Heritage Centre, another in August by members of the Bristol Industrial Archaeological Society, and Brandy Bottom will be open over the 'Doors Open Day' weekend in September. Further details can be found on page 4. Many passers-by have been given tours during recent work parties.

Progress: May – August 2017

A correction has to be made to a date in the previous newsletter (N° 15). In the first paragraph on page 4, the date the pumping shaft is thought to have been capped should be 1923 and not 1932.

The winding ramp of the New Pit has been cleared of spoil (photo 1), and the asymmetric layout of the walls can be seen in the photo on the right. The left hand (north-west) wall lines up with the edge of the arch in the brickwork of the Horizontal Engine House, while the right hand wall lines up with the centre. This suggests that at some time



winding was changed from a two cage to a single cage operation. The side walls of the ramp have subsided over time, leading to cracks appearing (photo 2), and this was probably caused by the poor quality of their foundations.

Work parties during the period turned up a collection of glass bottles bearing company names. Some were found in the Pond area, and the rest in the Old Boiler House. The area around the latter appears to have been used as a bottle dump after closure, as a number of bottles and other household objects were found when the path was originally driven round that part of the site in late 2013/early 2014. A selection of these recent finds is shown in the photos on this page and in photos 3-11. (The following information on the individual bottles has not been rigorously researched, so may be subsequently altered.) The distinctively shaped Southwell's bottle in photo 3, with a close-up of the logo in photo 4, probably held a fruit squash produced by Chas Southwell & Co, of London. The British Library has a record, dated 7 Jan 1885, in which the three partners announced that their partnership arrangements had been finalised. They had signed it not with their signatures, but by writing the company name in their different

handwritings. The document also shows three different ways of writing the ampersand. The 7" high, 8 fl oz capacity Lamb & Watt bottle in photo 5 probably held a cordial from the Liverpool manufacturer. It carries a faint impression of the company logo on the side facing the camera. The 8" high 9 fl oz capacity bottle on the right (10 cm x 10 cm scale) would have held mineral water from the G C King's works in St Paul's, Bristol. The



company was started in 1888, and was probably closed by 1956. The bottle bears their trade mark of Mr Pickwick standing on a leaf and holding bottle. He wears a pair of glasses with small round lenses (photo 6). This bottle does not have a stopper in its neck, but instead has an internal screw thread. The bottle in photo 7 has 'Scotts Emulsion' in raised lettering on one side and still contains a small amount of a whitish emulsion. Scott's Emulsion was a proprietary mixture of cod liver oil with glycerine added as a sweetener, however one internet post disputed the use of the term 'sweetener'. Another bottle came from the 'California Fig Syrup Co'.

This syrup was marketed as a mild laxative, however that may be due to the presence of a sizeable (25%) proportion of Senna rather than any intrinsic properties of the figs. Its popularity could also have been enhanced by the 6% alcohol content. Photo 8 shows the logo on a 1 pint milk bottle belonging to Chard's Dairy in Fishponds. So far no information on the company has been discovered. Another milk bottle bears the legend 'Safety First Milk Association'. This was a brand of the 'Home Counties Dairies', which was in turn owned by 'Cow and Gate'. This bottle has a 35 mm diameter neck, which marks it as being used in the Bristol area. An 'R' marked on the base signifies that the maker was Rockware Glass. The bottle seen in the photo on the right (cm scale) is 8½" high. It is marked 'T Brooke' and has their logo or trade mark of an anchor entwined



with a 'B' (see close-up in photo 9). T Brooke was a Bristol mineral water manufacturer between 1861 and 1889, with a factory first in Merchant Street, and then from 1870 in Old Market. This bottle must date from before 1889, when T Brooke amalgamated with Batten and Prudencio to form Brooke and Prudencio, with new premises in Newfoundland Road, St Pauls, and a new logo. The stopper in the neck is not a marble, but is shaped like the float in an industrial flowmeter. An 11" high clear glass bottle carries the mark of 'Radiant Table Waters Ltd, Kingsdown'. This company was founded in 1931 and amalgamated in 1936 with the Bristol-based Pickup & Co, F Pickup (a Leeds company that may have been founded by the same person as the Bristol one), and Tizer Co Ltd to form Tizer Ltd. Tizer Ltd had factories around the country, including Bristol. The latest bottle to be found is a milk bottle marked with 'Longs for the best, Downend' (photo 10) and a 'LD' logo (photo 11). An initial internet search on 'Longs/dairy/Downend' did not turn up any useful information, so it will be a case of returning to the old, paper-based, ways of research.

As well as the bottles, spoil removal in the Old Boiler House has uncovered a stone floor (right). This is reminiscent of a stable floor, and suggests that the use of the building altered over the life of the pit. It is not the sort of floor that is associated with a boiler house, however neither would a stable be connected to the chimney by a sizeable flue ... as always, Brandy Bottom poses more questions than it gives answers. A coil of wire rope, two 3 $\frac{3}{8}$ " high salt glazed pots (one of which can be seen in photo 16), a bolt with a strangely shaped nut, what



appears to be the base of a carbide lamp (photo 17), and two military-style brass buttons have been found in the spoil. The wire rope (seen in close-up in photo 14) is $\frac{7}{8}$ " diameter and has a metal core, making it suitable for use as a winding rope. It is the same diameter as the New Pit's hoisting rope in the 1900 sale catalogue. The 10 $\frac{1}{2}$ " long bolt has a 1" square head, and the nut (seen in close-up, with dimensions, in photo 18) would appear to have been custom made to fit a particular location, judging by the irregular shape. That shape must have made it difficult to tighten, and damage to some of the edges suggests it may have been flogged with a hammer. The 1" diameter brass button (photo right, cm scale) has a lion on the left and a unicorn on the right of the central shield, with a lion above a crown at the top. The shield itself has a dent in it, and as a result the detail has been lost. The layout of the design is similar to an image of a General Service Corps button on the Imperial War Museum website. Neither the War Museum nor the Army websites give any information on the history of the Corps. The name of the maker, Smith & Wright Ltd, Birmingham, is engraved on the back. A second, similar, button was found on top of the spoil heap during the BIAS visit. It was made by Wooley & Co (Birmingham).



The clean-up outside the south-west wall of the Cornish Engine House continued. Examination of the top of the platform showed that it had once been paved with stones (photo right) and that only part of one remains in-situ (photo 19). Judging by the position of the drill hole (photo 20), it has been re-used from elsewhere. As the spoil ramp has been removed, the remains of the steps are now the only means of reaching the inside of the engine house without the use of a ladder. These steps will have to be rebuilt for their protection, as they currently have uneven surfaces and some awkward step heights.



Removal of spoil along the face of the platform wall continued to the south-east of the steps, uncovering an alcove under the platform (photo 21). As is so often the case at Brandy Bottom, its function is not clear. The alcove is a dead end, apart from a small hole in the roof, and the brickwork does not appear to have been subjected to heat despite being adjacent to the firebox of the egg-ended boiler. There is a low, angled brick platform in the back left-hand corner (seen in photo 22), there is a drain outside the entrance to the alcove, and the spoil inside contained ashes. The bowl of the clay pipe seen in photo 24 was found in this area. This is the first pipe bowl to be found on site.

A viewing platform is being built across the engine bay and flywheel slots of the Vertical Engine House to allow visitors to look into the winding drum pit without having to scramble around the north-west wall of the building. The photo on the right shows the completed base of the platform. The sump in the engine bay has been covered with a grating for safety.



Historic England gave us a grant for some metal signs to identify the buildings, and these have been erected. Examples of the signs can be seen in photos 28 and 29. Several of the signs have been placed so that they can be seen by passers-by when we are not around.

There are copies of all previous FoBB newsletters on the 'Archive' page of our website (www.aibt.org), and there are over 300 photographs of the buildings, work in progress, and artefacts found, on the Brandy Bottom project pages.

Doors Open Day 2017

Brandy Bottom will be open during the 2017 Doors Open Days weekend: on Friday 08, Saturday 09, and Sunday 10 September between 10 am and 4 pm. This is the first time the site has been open under the scheme. For some reason it has been omitted from the local listings, but does appear on the Heritage Open Days nation website.



Many of the paths around the site have been tidied up in preparation for the Doors Open Day weekend, and an extension has been built to make for easier access to the bottom of the New Pit heapstead ramp (photo 31). A fragment of a tile with the maker's name (photo 32) was found near the Fan Ducts during one of the tidy-up sessions. The only other example of a named tile was uncovered in the winding drum pit of the Vertical Engine House in February 2015. Five pieces of brown glazed stoneware were uncovered outside the north-west wall of the Horizontal Engine House, one of which can be seen in photo 33. These may be parts of a sink, as they have the same coloured glaze as two pieces that were found when this area was first worked in February 2012. One of the latter pieces, seen in photo 34, looks like the corner of a sink.

Future Work Parties

At present access to the site is limited to days when there is a work party in progress. The date for work parties for the rest of 2017 are: Sat 02, Doors Open Day weekend (Fri 08, Sat 09 and Sun 10), Wed 13, Sat 23 September; Sat 07, Wed 11, Sat 21, Sat 28 September; Sat 04, Wed 08, Sat 18 November; Sat 02, Wed 13 December. Please note that work parties may be altered at short notice, so newcomers are advised to first make contact via the AIBT's email address of info@aibt.org.

There is a location map on a dedicated page of the website, together with directions to the site.

Photographs



Photo 1 – View of the south-east wall of the New Pit winding ramp after the spoil had been removed from the area.



Photo 2 – Crack in the north-west wall of the New Pit winding ramp.



Photo 3 – This distinctively shaped bottle, marked with the Southwell's logo seen in photo 4, probably held a squash produced by the London manufacturer. (30 cm scale)



Photo 4 – Close-up of the logo on the bottle seen at the bottom of the bottle in in photo 3.



Photo 5 – 7" high, 8 fl oz capacity Lamb and Watt bottle found in the pond area. (10 cm x 10 cm scale)



Photo 6 – Close-up of the Mr Pickwick trade mark on the G C King bottle.



Photo 7 – Scotts Emulsion bottle. This still contains a small amount of a white emulsion. (10 cm x 10 cm scale)



Photo 8 – One pint milk bottle with the logo of Chard's Dairy in Fishponds.



Photo 9 – Close-up of the logo or trade mark on the T Brooke bottle seen at the bottom of page 2. (The brown object near the bottom is the internal stopper.)



Photo 10 – Logo on one side of the Longs milk bottle ...



Photo 11 – ... and on the other side. (cm scale behind both photos)



Photo 12 – View of the stone floor in the south-eastern end of the Old Boiler House.



Photo 13 – Excavating spoil from around the coil of wire rope in the Old Boiler House.



Photo 14 – Close-up of the coil of wire rope as the surrounding spoil was being cleared...



Photo 15 – ... but its weight required some specialist lifting gear when it was moved out of the way.



Photo 16 – One of two 3 3/4" high salt glaze pots found in the Old Boiler House. (10 cm x 10 cm scale)



Photo 17 – metal object which may have been part of a carbide lamp found in the Old Boiler House. (10 cm x 10 cm scale)

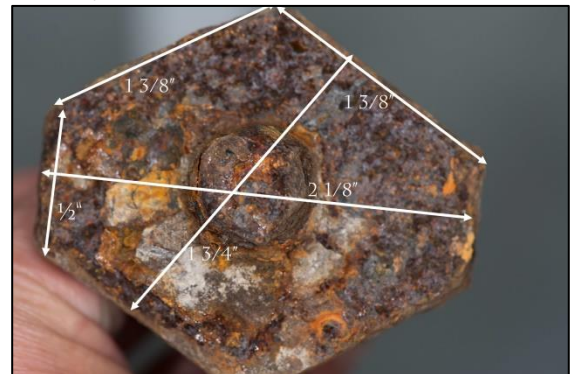


Photo 18 – Dimensions (in inches) of a strange shaped nut found attached to a bolt in the Old Boiler House. (See comments on page 3)



Photo 19 – Platform outside the south-west wall of the Cornish Engine House, seen from the south. The stone with a drill hole, seen in close-up in photo 20, can be seen in the centre of the photo.



Photo 20 – Close-up of the stone on the surface of the platform, showing the drill hole.



Photo 21 – The fully exposed entrance to the alcove. The retaining wall between it and the position of the egg-ended boiler can be seen behind the yellow buckets.



Photo 22 – The inside of the alcove. This has a brick ledge on the left, and is connected to the platform above by a hole on the top right of the arch.



Photo 23 – Removing spoil from inside the alcove at the end of the platform outside the south-west wall of the Cornish Engine House.



Photo 24 – Clay pipe bowl found outside the south-west wall of the Cornish Engine House. (cm scale)



Photo 25 – Spoil removal outside the south-west wall of the Cornish Engine House in the dry...



Photo 26 – ... and in the rain.



Photo 27 – Building the base of the viewing platform in the Vertical Engine House.



Photo 28 – Identification plate above the Pumping Shaft.

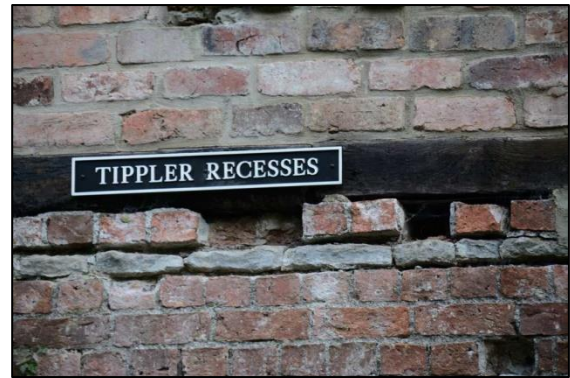


Photo 29 – Identification plate by the tippers.



Photo 30 – The area outside the north-west side of the Horizontal Engine House is given a tidy-up in preparation for Doors Open Days.



Photo 31 – A ramp has been built to make for easier access to the slope up to the top of the New Pit heapstead.



Photo 32 – Fragment of tile with maker's name found by the Fan Ducts.



Photo 33 – Fragment of glazed stoneware found to the north-west of the Horizontal Engine House during the site tidy-up in August 2017.



Photo 34 – Fragment of glazed stoneware, found to the north-west of the Horizontal Engine House in February 2012. (1 ft scale)



Photo 35 – Running repairs are made to the fence around the Old pit.



Photo 36 – Some newly printed banners, one with the AIBT logo and the other with the logos of the

organisations who have given financial or material assistance, are tried out for size before the 2017 South Gloucestershire show. (© K Kemp)



Photo 37 – Wildflower, probably a Scarlet Pimpernel, growing beside the path to the Fan Engine House in June. It had vanished by the time of the next work party. (cm scale)

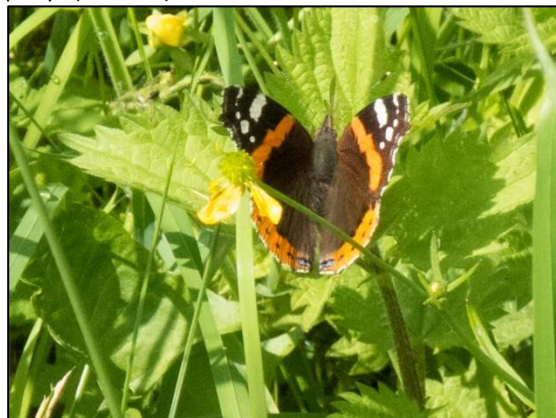


Photo 38 – Red Admiral butterfly resting by the side of the cycle path.



Photo 39 – Toad found hiding under a stone stockpile in the Old Boiler House.

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