EDITORIAL

The first instalment of *Industrial Archaeology Review* for 2020 was one of the largest issues ever produced, and yet the present issue is by no means a 'poor relation' for the 42nd volume, but rather reflects the journal's increasing international appeal and reputation. This is again evident in the five articles that feature in this issue, which are drawn from research undertaken across the globe.

This issue opens with a welcome contribution from China that provides a fascinating account of the alum industry in the Far East. The manufacture of alum can legitimately claim to be the world's first chemical industry, and the importance of the English alum industry is reflected in the smattering of articles that have been published in *Industrial Archaeology Review* since 1995, but there has hitherto been no accounts of the industry in other parts of the world. This imbalance is addressed by Shujing Feng *et al*, who provide a fascinating account of the quarrying, processing and refining of alum in the Zhejiang Province of China, which operated from the middle of the 14th century to 2017. As such, this important centre of the Chinese alum industry bears witness to 600 years of alum mining and refining technology, which is examined through a review of the documentary evidence coupled with an archaeological survey of the mining and refining sites owned by the Wenzhou Alum Mine Company.

This is followed by the second contribution to *Industrial Archaeology Review* from Romania, which presents a survey of a 93km-long narrow-gauge railway that traverses the Apuseni Mountains in Transylvania to connect the towns of Turda and Abrud. Opening in 1912, the railway acted as a catalyst for the area's industrial development, and its historic importance and value as a heritage asset was recognised by local authorities and volunteer groups shortly after its closure in 1990. The survey was carried out in response to an increasing interest in the abandoned railway, and aimed to create a record of the infrastructure that could to be used for prioritising the preservation of key historic features and thereby inform an ultimate goal of securing its restoration as a tourist attraction.

The third article derives from the southern hemisphere, and is drawn from a detailed study of timber-getting at a former convict station in Tasmania. This is the first article in *Industrial Archaeology Review* to feature a site in Tasmania, and the first to consider the archaeology of the convict system. The British colonisation of Australia was made possible by its co-option of unfree labour, and a key feature of this process was the clearance and targeted harvesting of the rich resource of timber. Richard Tuffin *et al* have combined thorough documentary research with evidence gathered from archaeological survey to provide a fascinating account of the timber-getting process using convict labour on this island state of Australia.

The final two contributions are from England, and include an article by Nigel Linge, one of the leading authorities on telecommunications heritage and no stranger to *Industrial Archaeology Review*. In collaboration with Andy Sutton, Andrew Hurley and Neil Johannessen, Nigel provides a valuable insight into the development of the K8 telephone kiosk, the last red cast-iron phonebox to be introduced to Britain, outlining the circumstances that led to its inception in 1968 as a replacement for the 'classic' designs of Giles Gilbert Scott. In doing so, not only is the importance of telecommunications highlighted, but also the historic value of 20th-century street furniture; despite over 11,000 K8 phoneboxes being manufactured, less than one percent survive, providing a poignant reminder of how vulnerable more recent heritage assets are to eradication from the landscape. In the final article, Ronan

O’Donnell and Kayt Armstrong examine four factories that were built on a trading estate in the North East in the late 1930s, and take an archaeological approach to understanding the efficiency of their layout for movement and process both in the offices and the factory floor, together with the division of labour between workers of different status and gender.

The value of researching 20th-century buildings in Britain is similarly highlighted in two articles that are likely to appear in the next issue of *Industrial Archaeology Review*, which examine the technology employed in the construction of houses built for munitions workers in the First World War, and a survey of an Edwardian motor-car factory near Southport. It is envisaged that these will appear together with a selection of articles drawn from different parts of the world, including an account of the public tram system in one of the first socialist cities in the USSR, the production of olive oil soap in the Holy Land, and the development of Lowell as an industrial enclave in Massachusetts.

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