

SHERBORNE STEAM AND WATERWHEEL CENTRE



Open days 2025

Sunday March 16

Sunday April 27

Sunday May 11

Sunday June 8

Sunday July 20

Sat & Sunday August 9 & 10

Sat & Sunday September 6 & 7

Sunday September 14

Non steaming

Sunday October 19

Trustees

Paul Belliss (Chairman)

Nigel Bartram (Vice Chairman)

John Thompson (Treasurer)

David Wilkins (Secretary)

Geoff Ward

Craig Henderson

We have had a good start to the season with a good attendance at the open days so far. Interestingly many of the visitors for the May open day were from Sherborne who were walking past and saw that we were open. "Always meant to come and enjoyed it. I will tell my neighbours" was a typical comment.

Work continues on the waterwheel pumphouse. We are seeking a plasterer who can replaster the wall. Plasterers seem to be in short supply and are all very busy. The plan (subject to funding) is also to repair and restore the floor and renovate the exterior pointing. We are busy seeking funds for all of this. Once complete the plan is to complete the signage for the site with new signs for the pumphouse and tidy up the items on display.

Further work has been carried out by Chris Turner and Mike Briggs in the kitchen and café so that both are very much improved. New volunteer Ruth Smith has enthusiastically led the catering on this year's open days.

The 10th August will be a gala day with special attractions that we hope will follow on from the successful special day in June last year – please note this date in your diaries and spread the word, more details to follow.

SSWC has also made an application to 'Dorset Council to get the whole site listed on the Dorset Heritage list. This is not the same as national listing but is important as it is a recognition of the local importance of a site. Dorset Council says the standard for inclusion in the lists is very high and the application is exhaustive. The local list creates a record of the heritage assets. It highlights assets that need consideration, celebration and protection within the planning system and hopefully will also be an asset when applying for funding.

Find us on our website or on Facebook

<https://www.sswc.co.uk>



Charity No 1099153

South Wales and West of England Region Industrial Archaeology Conference

A one day conference SWWERIAC 2025 of the Association for Industrial Archaeology (AIA) was very well organised and run by Somerset Industrial Archaeology Society (SIAS) near Street in April 2025. Interesting papers were presented on the industrial archaeology of the Porlock area, the history of Coker Canvas, the Kilve Oil Shale Scandal, Great Bow Wharf at Langport, Buildings of Street, and Fox's Works at Tone Dale.

Many regional IA and related societies were represented as was the AIA itself. Members of SSWC also attended and displayed for sale our publications and other information about SSWC with the objective of enhancing awareness of SSWC and the work being done. Useful contacts with the AIA were made in respect to potential funding for restoration works.

From SSWC archives

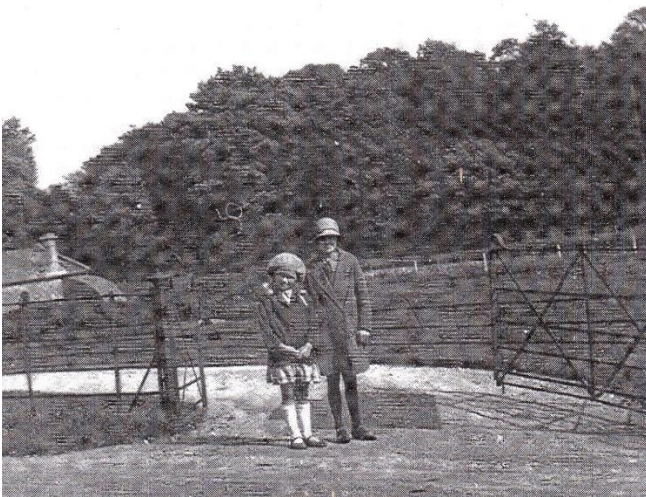


Photo at the entrance to the site from the Osborne Road 100 years ago

The photo shows wrought iron railings and gates at the Osborne Road that enabled access to the site to be closed, as farm animals were then frequently driven along the road into Sherborne. The gates were taken down in 1956 and are now located on the

south side of the waterwheel pump house providing protection at the lower leat.



Photo The gates in their new position protecting the leat

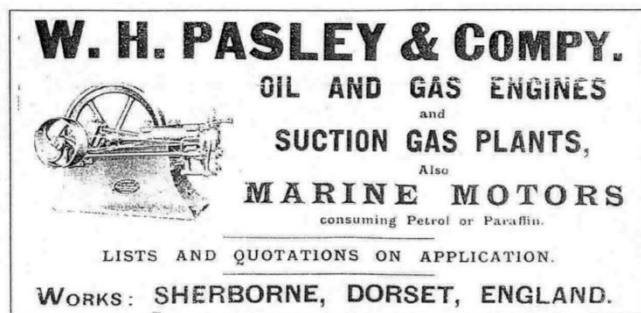
Pasley in Sherborne

William Henry Pasley was born in Ireland in the late 1850s. By 1871 he was an apprentice ironmonger. Clearly he learnt his trade well as, by 1881, he was an ironmonger employing five people in Wimbledon High Street. Pasley appears in Sherborne in 1885 when he took over the premises at 85, Cheap Street, which were previously occupied by Thomas Penny, ironmonger. Pasley was an innovator and in 1890 registered a patent for "improvements in oil stoves". The business appeared in *Kelly's Directory* and the *Western Gazette* carried reports of Pasley's local involvement. For example, in 1890 he supplied ironwork and a screen during the refurbishment of Stowell Church and cast-iron windows for the extension to the Castleton Waterworks pumphouse were supplied in 1898.

At some point around 1890 Pasley started a company which manufactured and supplied oil and gas engines.



From a newspaper report it is apparent that Pasley did not assemble his engines in Sherborne but contracted with Carson and Toone of Warminster to do so. The engines were to Pasley's design and specification but went direct from Carson and Toone to Pasley's customers. Carson and Toone were also making their own engines at this time. It is probable, however, that Pasley carried out his development work at Sherborne. The late David Hunt, of the Long Street cycle shop, once said that there was a concrete engine bed at the rear of the premises occupied by Pasley's ironmongery.



In 1894 Pasley registered a patent for the improvement of valve, gear and governing of, internal combustion engines. Pasley's engine was called the "Demon" and was manufactured in different sizes "up to 50 HP" and the horizontal arrangement was maintained throughout the engine's production life. It could be produced as an oil or gas engine.

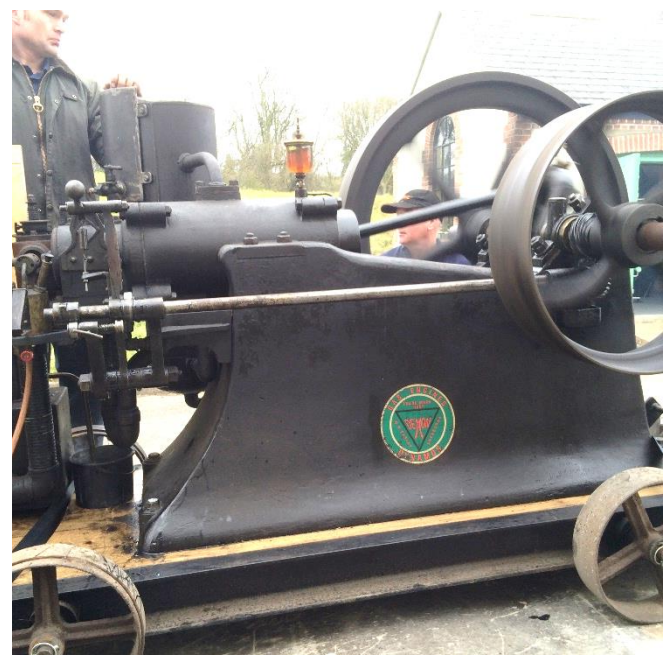
In 1903 Henry Durrant took over the shop where Pasley had his ironmongers and moved his grocery business there. By this time Pasley was living in Castleton and, presumably, from this time onward, concentrated on his manufacturing business. In 1900 he applied for planning permission to erect a workshop at Castleton but the exact location is unclear but a possible position is marked on the map below.



This would suggest that he was assembling his engines in Sherborne from castings made elsewhere and this was reinforced by an advertisement in 1907 for a fitter at Castleton works.

The fitter's job in Sherborne was short-lived as, during 1908, Pasley applied for planning permission to erect a factory in Colchester and, by 1910, was living there. The business continued producing Demons until around 1916/7 when it went bankrupt. The factory was taken over by the Paxman engineering company to increase their capacity. William Pasley, his wife Mary, and son Charles moved to Hampstead where his wife died in 1924 aged 51 and he followed in 1926 aged 68.

The Pasley Engine Company was in existence for around 26 years and in that time must have produced hundreds of engines but surprisingly little is known about it.



The picture above was taken when a Pasley engine was displayed at one of our open days. It seems the majority of production was for export, particularly to Australia and New Zealand. This is backed up by the fact that, of the engines known to survive, four are in Australia, one in New Zealand, one in South Africa and, possibly, two in the UK.



I am indebted to Graham Bendell for his research for this article.

Hereford Waterworks Museum

The museum is celebrating its 50th anniversary. In 1974 a group of enthusiasts founded the museum at the Victorian Pumping station built to supply clean water. The museum now has one of the country's widest collections of pumping engines including early beam and hot-air machines. The collection now also includes water treatment displays. If you are up in that area it is open every Tuesday and has selected steam days on some Sundays. It is best to consult their website for the current dates.

Steam events

Listed are just a selection of steam events running locally. Always best to consult their websites to check on details.

7-8 June	Wiltshire Steam & Vintage Rally	Devizes
14/15 June	Moors Valley Rly Summer Fete	Ashley Heath Ringwood
14/15 June	West Dorset Vintage Rally	Bridport
14/15 June	Wessex Midsummer Vintage Show	Ringwood
15 June	Weston Zoyland Father's Day Steam up	Weston Zoyland
27-29 June	Road & Rail Steam Rally	Swanage
5/6 July	Steam & Vintage Show	Chickerell
11-13 July	Pilford Heath Transport & Heritage Show	Coleshill Wimborne
12-13 July	Sedgemoor Vintage Show	Highbridge
18-20 July	Somerset Steam & County Show	Lowtham Langport

Volunteers

As always if you know of anyone who would enjoy volunteering with us please don't hesitate to encourage them. They don't have to be steam buffs as there are many tasks needed to keep the Centre running and clean shoes people are very welcome.

Our supporters

