

# SOCIETY FOR INDUSTRIAL ARCHEOLOGY

## NEWSLETTER

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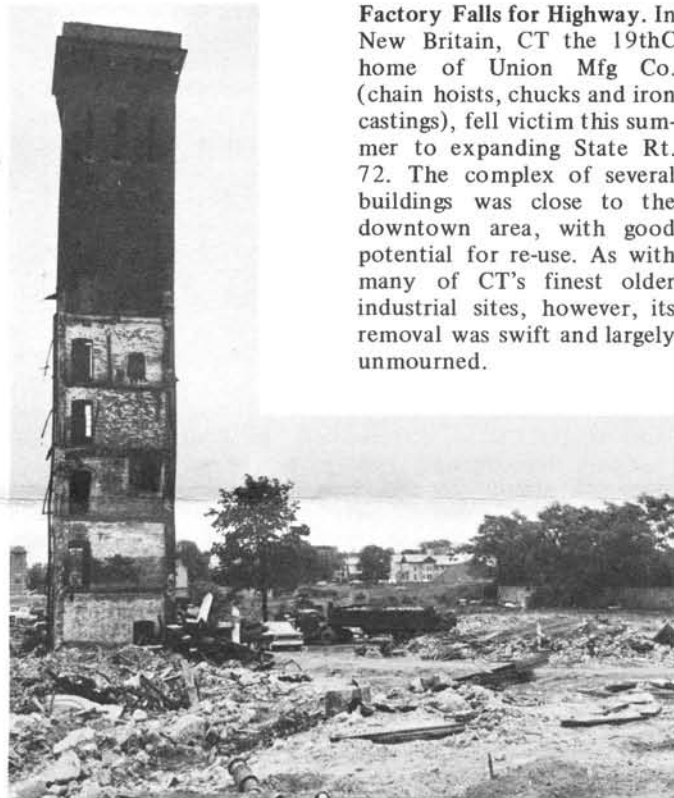
### L. T. C. ROLT

With the newly formed Assn for Industrial Archaeology barely underway, it is the sadder to have to report the death last May of Tom Rolt, its first president, at age 64. Rolt was perhaps the most prolific writer over the past 35 years in the history of technology and IA, his immensely readable and scholarly works on machine tools, railways, canals, industrial firms et al, and his lucid biographies of many of the giants of the industrial revolution achieving a well deserved fame world wide.

He has been aptly described by Angus Buchanan in a touching memorial in the 2nd AIA *Bulletin* as one of the outstanding Founding Fathers of IA, who will be remembered far beyond Britain for his success in the preservation—among other things—of much of that nation's canal network and several of Wales' narrow-gauge rlys, when both systems were on the brink of dissolution. There was no English board, commission, council, conference or other body or event of consequence dealing with IA with which he was not involved, both actively and creatively. His passing is a major loss to IA and the history of technology.

### HARD TIMES

*Despite the good works noted on these pages, any celebration of a new golden day for industrial preservation would be premature. The wrecker's ball swings apace.*



**Factory Falls for Highway.** In New Britain, CT the 19thC home of Union Mfg Co. (chain hoists, chucks and iron castings), fell victim this summer to expanding State Rt. 72. The complex of several buildings was close to the downtown area, with good potential for re-use. As with many of CT's finest older industrial sites, however, its removal was swift and largely un mourned.

*S J Raiche photo.*

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**Edison's Factory Demolished.** In W Orange, NJ, 72 year old Theodore Edison sadly watched a series of blasts level the onetime home of his father's phonograph and record factory. The four-story structure was built in 1906 of reinforced concrete on a system developed by Edison, and its demolition was not easy. The factory was one of a handful of structures at the sprawling Edison laboratory campus to be spared by a 1914 fire. It had been in use up to two years ago for manufacturing by McGraw-Electronics. Said Edison, "To think that we are wasting so much good material that could be rehabilitated."

**Boston Buildings Blasted Despite "Historic" Label.** Twelve historic warehouse structures on the Boston waterfront were demolished by the Boston Redevel Auth in apparent defiance of the Natl Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, which had not yet completed its statutory review of the HUD-financed project. Located in the Commercial, Lewis, and Fulton Sts blocks, the buildings had been put on the Natl Register only last year, thus supposedly protected from such Fedl projects under the Hist Pres Act which provides for specific review by the Council before any demolition. Water-front residents also had sought injunctions to prevent demolition of the buildings before the review process was completed.

**Blast Furnace Destroyed Before Halt is Ordered.** Blame it on

