



# SOCIETY FOR INDUSTRIAL ARCHEOLOGY

## NEWSLETTER

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# PRESERVING THE PRESIDENT PUMP ENGINE HOUSE

In 1872 one of the world's largest stationary engines was put into operation just south of Bethlehem, Pa. at the zinc mines in the village of Friedensville. The President pumping engine cleared the high groundwater from the mine pit and shafts, allowing zinc ore extraction. What remains today is a massive stone Cornish engine house. The adjacent Ueberroth quarry is full of aquamarine water in a bucolic setting that has the potential to be an attractive park with historical and archeological significance. The engine house is on private property owned by Lehigh University and site conditions are such that it is not currently open to the public.

Mark Connor, a local resident with a background in business and historical research, has studied the President Pump's history and is working with the township and the property owner to consider the development of a historical

park built around the engine house ruins. Connor is seeking to garner a broad coalition of parties interested in making this preservation project a reality. As a member of the SIA's Oliver Evans Chapter, he made a presentation to that group in Oct. 2017 at the Fairmont Water Works. This was a fitting setting given the innovative water pumping systems used at Fairmont and the fact that the President Pump was largely made in Philadelphia, then hailed as the "workshop of the world."

Connor's familiarity with the engine house goes back to his childhood. Of his impressions of the structure, he wrote: "I thought it looked like a castle from the classic illustrated comic books I loved to read. Stories like *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* were a particular favorite. Much to my surprise, my research into the engine house in Upper Saucon Township led directly back to Cornwall, England,

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Lehigh University

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- Slate of Candidates for 2018 SIA Election
- Update: 2018 SIA Annual Conference, Richmond, Va.
- Student Scholarships
- New SIA Tours and Events Coordinator
- Fall Tour Preview: Dayton, Ohio
- Roebling Chapter tour report: A Tale of Two Bridges

*President engine house in 2017 following clearance of tree and vegetation growth from around building.*

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## CALENDAR

### 2018

**Apr. 13–14:** TICCIH Thematic Conference. The International Heritage of the Water Industry: Historic Values of Supply and Treatment Networks, Barcelona, Spain. See note in this issue. Info: [waterheritage.museuagbar.com](http://waterheritage.museuagbar.com).

**May 17–19:** 2018 History of Oil Symposium, Petroleum History Institute. Salt Lake City, Utah. Paper sessions and field trips. Info: [petroleumhistory.org](http://petroleumhistory.org).

**May 24–26:** Construction History Society of America Biennial Meeting on Construction History, College Park, Md. Info: [www.constructionhistorysociety.org](http://www.constructionhistorysociety.org).

**May 23–26:** Early American Industries Assn. Annual Meeting, Bethlehem, Pa. Info: [www.eaiainfo.org](http://www.eaiainfo.org).

**May 31–June 3:** SIA 47th ANNUAL CONFERENCE, RICHMOND, VA. Info: [www.sia-web.org](http://www.sia-web.org).

**June 6–10:** Mining History Assn. Annual Conference, Deadwood, S.D. Info: [www.mininghistoryassociation.org](http://www.mininghistoryassociation.org).

**June 22–28:** Assn. for Industrial Archaeology, Annual Conference, Caithness, Scotland, U.K. Tours of sites related to the herring fisheries, flagstone industry, civil works, and an excursion to Orkney for sites related to WWII naval fortifications and scuttling of the German fleet. Info: [www.industrial-archaeology.org](http://www.industrial-archaeology.org).

**July 9–13:** 6th International Congress on Construction History, Brussels, Belgium. Info: <http://6icch.org>.

**Sept. 13–15:** XVII TICCIH Congress, Santiago, Chile. TICCIH's first in Latin America. Info: [www.ticcih.org](http://www.ticcih.org).

**Sept 20–23:** Preserving the Historic Road 20th Anniversary Conference, Fort Collins, Colo. Info: [www.historicroads.org](http://www.historicroads.org).

**Sept. 27–30:** SIA FALL TOUR, DAYTON, OHIO. See article in this issue. Info: [www.sia-web.org](http://www.sia-web.org). ■