

Celebrating Benjamin Baker

In the mid-19th Century the small country town of Frome in Somerset was full of the noise, bustle and fumes of Victorian metal works. Into these surroundings was born the visionary, global engineer Benjamin Baker. He was responsible for some of the most audacious structures of the time. He designed the Forth Rail Bridge (for which he was knighted by Queen Victoria) and the Aswan Dam. He also designed the metal cylinder that brought Cleopatra's Needle back from Alexandria to London and tunneling systems for the London Underground and the Hudson River Tunnel into New York.

From June 13-July 24, Benjamin Baker will be celebrated back in his home town with the first ever exhibition exploring his work, thanks to Heritage Lottery funding, support from Buro Happold and the



Institution of Civil Engineers. There will be images of Baker's most famous achievement, the mile long Forth Rail Bridge under construction. At the time the longest bridge in the world, these little known photographs show an industrial masterpiece – the first ever steel bridge in the making from 1883 to completion in 1890.

They will be shown in the galleries of Frome's wonderful Rook Lane Chapel alongside rarely seen vintage prints, on loan from Getty Images, of two of Baker's other remarkable projects, the transportation of Cleopatra's Needle and the construction of the Aswan Dam'

'The exhibition will show the character and dynamism of Baker's extraordinary life. We are also using this opportunity to show young people in Frome the creative excitement of engineering, past and present, at a time when there is a national shortage of young people choosing engineering as a career option', said Outreach Co-ordinator, Pippa Goldfinger. There will be an expansive education programme for all ages running alongside the exhibition. Graduate engineers from ICE will mentor local college students through the construction and load-testing of cantilevered bridges, whilst more than 1000 First and Middle School children will learn the rudiments of bridge building, with sugar cubes and straws instead of steel.

See website: (www.rooklanearts.org.uk).

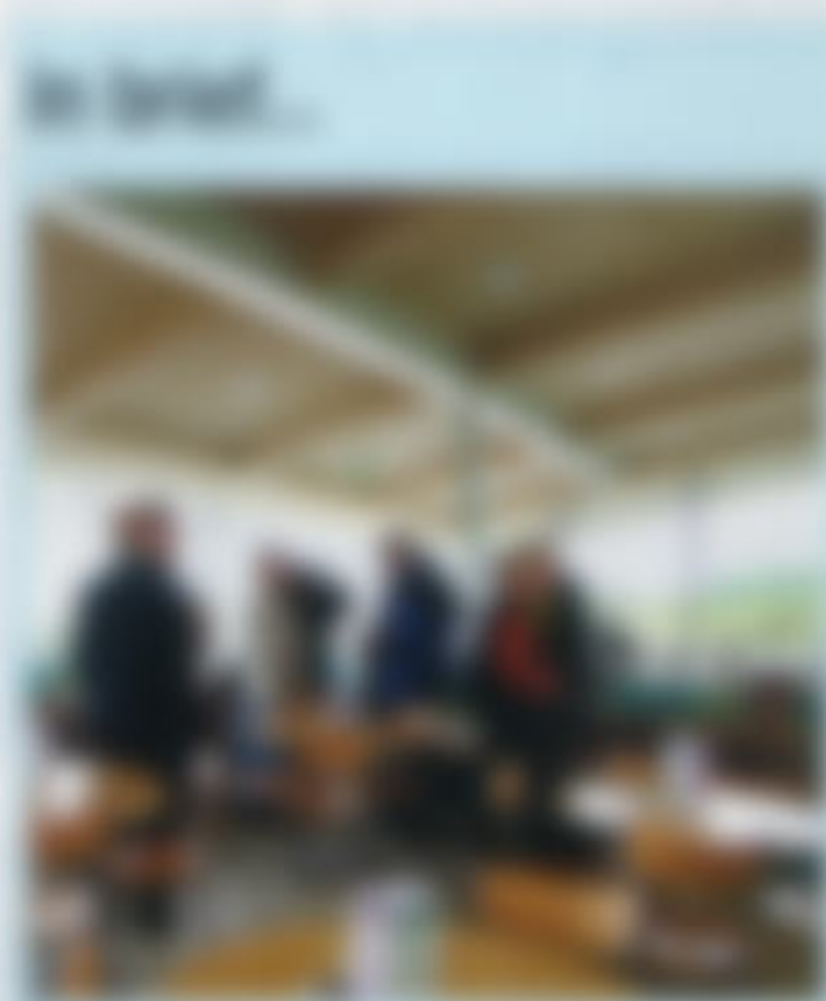
CELEBRATING BENJAMIN BAKER

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ICE WORKS PARTNERSHIP

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