



# NORTHAMPTONSHIRE INDUSTRIAL ARCHAEOLOGY GROUP

## NEWSLETTER ISSUE 97 – ‘WINTER’ 2006

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First a very happy New Year to you all. Christmas, for another year, has been and gone and with it the mad scrum of the Boxing Day Sales. Perhaps you all remember the halcyon days of the magic of Christmas, followed by a lull and then the excitement of popping down to the sales to see what bargains could be had. For me, it was the fun of that pre-sale invitation from stores such as Marshall & Snellgrove, Debenhams and Harrods as my late Mother had accounts at all three. I am afraid that this year there was no dashing about picking up that bargain which would get eventually consigned to the back of the wardrobe - rather it was a cup of tea and Agatha Christie and Miss Marple. Always a good couple of hours even if one had seen them before. However onwards.....

The winter programme had a good start when we heard all about the new Wellingborough Museum. As I write only two talks are left for this year's session and we will be looking forward to another exciting programme of summer walks which are currently being worked on by members of the Committee.

We wind up the summer visits of 2005 and look to the reports of the winter talks amongst other things. Thank you to those you keep sending interesting articles, they are most welcome and I am always on the look out for more - in particular little ‘shorties’ which can be used to fill in gaps. Get hunting and I look forward to getting all sorts in the coming months.

*Jane W*



### LAST REPORTS OF SUMMER VISITS

#### **Brigstock ‘Mills’ - Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> July**

It was a pleasant evening when we met at Brigstock. About 15 of us joined Beryl Simon, Chairman of the Brigstock History Society, her husband Bill, and Peter Hill a local historian, at the former Wallis clothing factory. We were lucky to have Pat Wallis, a direct descendent, who was able to tell us some of the family history behind the company. This was considered to be a ‘bonus’. Beryl and indeed Pat gave us a short talk and presentation on the factory before we explored the building, at least the parts that were ‘open’.

In 1856 Frederic Wallis purchased a small factory in School Lane, Kettering. One cutter, three tackers, three machinists, three button holers, two pressers and three chain stitch sewing machinists were the total number of staff. In 1857 he went into partnership with a John Linnell. Unfortunately in 1864 the factory was gutted by fire and the contents destroyed. A blessing in disguise as a new building was constructed and by 1868 garments were being exported to France. Catherine Reynolds one of the employees was asked by Mr Wallis to go to Brigstock to teach some girls to make garments provided that both girls and premises could be found. A cottage was discovered and machines installed and training began. The site at the junction of Old Dry Lane and Back Lane was purchased in 1872 and building begun, opening in 1873 at a cost of £1,333-2s-7d. The factory has many windows so that each machinist could get the maximum amount of daylight.

From here factories were opened in Cottingham, Woodford and Gretton. 1906 saw fifty years of achievement. There were factories at Northampton and St. Neots as business continued to grow. The



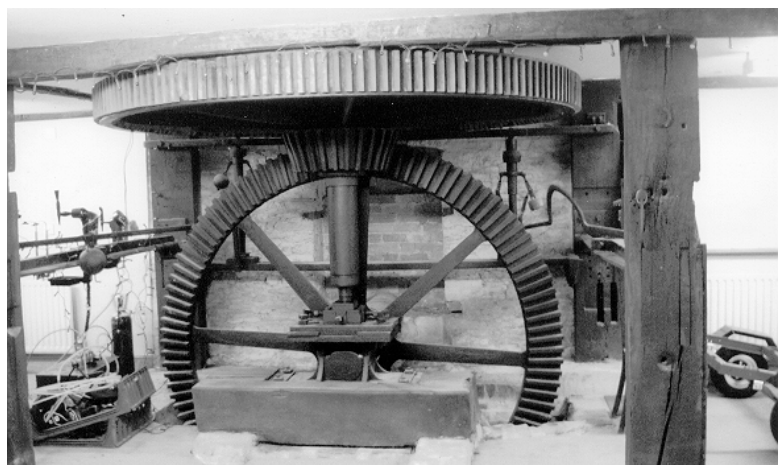
Decorating the walls of the offices.

Brigstock factory specialised in 'better quality trousers'. During the 1939/45 World War, the company supplied uniforms for the women of the services. It is interesting to note that the 'patterns' used were photographed and sent to other manufacturers to ensure '*strict adherence to the designs accepted*'. In all 100,000 garments were made for the WAAF and WRNS personnel. It is also very commendable to note that '*Not 1% was rejected by the government's inspection*'. In 1945 Wallis and Linnell changed direction again and made masses of suits, sports jackets and flannel trousers which came to be known as the 'de-mob suit'.

1956 and centenary year. A special year and special celebrations. During 1970 the company took over a shirt factory in Blaeneau Ffestiniog (Wales). By the mid-seventies competition from abroad took hold and led to a gradual decline in orders. Sadly in 1979 things grew worse and the receivers were brought in. The Brigstock factory workforce was reduced to 20 who struggled on. It became too much and the Bank fore-closed as the debts were too great. The factory closed in November 1979. Thankfully the building stands and is still used as offices.

The views from the top over Brigstock were clear and distant. Out of the 'factory' we walked through to the village itself and looked at the Mill stream - now dry and part of a garden. We viewed the pig pens in the garden of another house. Then it was on to the Mill itself, with a short walk around the grounds of a private house before looking at the Mill Wheel and the ground floor of the wheel housing.

The Mill is in private ownership and the next bonus of this evening being when the owner took us up into the Mill to show us what he was achieving with his conversion. You will be delighted to know that the Wheel, not in the best state of repair, is not to be removed. We will keep you informed at the Mill's progress and who knows in a couple of years time we might be able to return to see what has happened. Over a convivial half after the



Inside the wheel housing room.

walk we were able to catch up with news and other happenings. Our thanks to Beryl, Bill, Peter and Miss Wallis for such an interesting evening.

*Jane & Terry Waterfield*

*Information about the factory has been taken from 'The Factory' written by the late Irene Tooley*

**Cromford Canal and George Stephenson’s Tramway - Saturday, 30<sup>th</sup> July**

Weather and illness combined to reduce our number to five people who met at the famous triangular station at Ambergate under uncertain skies. The station is much reduced in recent years and the sight of just a single line where once Jubilee Class locos hauled the Manchester express was sad to see. However the rails are still bright and the local service still thrives. The longer-term view of some to reopen the Midland line all the way to Manchester remains very much a pipe dream.

The Cromford Canal through Ambergate has been destroyed by industrial development and we joined the towpath off Poyser’s Bridge No.16 where the canal is in water and has had some restoration in the interests of nature.

A pleasant walk along the towpath towards Whatstandwell gave fine views of the Derwent valley with road, river, rail and canal all taking the easy route through the rural scene.

Arriving at Whatstandwell Station we left the towpath by Crich Council Footbridge No13a and climbed steeply through the village of Crich Carr. A well-made footpath eventually climbed to the top of the hill to bring into view the top of the church tower. This route was a reminder of the days when everyone walked to work (or play for that matter).

The open fields at the top of the hill gave an overview of the Derwent Valley and beyond and also brought into view our lunch venue The Cliff Inn close by the Tramway Museum and the Cliff Quarry which supplied George Stephenson’s lime kilns at Ambergate and his ironworks at Clay Cross.

After lunch we were able to follow much of the tramway route from Cliff Quarry as substantial cuttings, embankment and bridges as well as the tunnel near Crich Market Place still exist. From this point we followed a high level path over The Tors and were able to define the route of the tramway towards Chadwick Nick where the position of the level crossing was clear.

The route from this point was not easily traced and we followed a field path to find our way back to Ambergate. We did not find the tow path diverted around Transco’s works but did find the clear line of the rop-hauled incline which served the lime kilns. This was a reward late in the afternoon after a bit of a scramble just as the light rain started to fall exactly as forecast.

I am grateful to Ron Whittaker for his assistance in guiding us through Crich to find the features of the Tramway and also to Kathleen for afternoon tea at a welcome moment.....See what you missed!

*Malcolm Hill*



**Cliffe Hill Quarry – Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> August**

13 of us assembled at the Midland Quarry Products - Cliffe Hill Quarry, Ellistown in Leicestershire. It was a dark miserable morning and not that warm either - there was a strong possibility of rain and it was hoped that this would hold off until after the visit. After a coffee, comfort stop and a very very short talk about the quarry we went off for a tour round site. Since my visit with Atkins the previous year, I found this ‘introduction’ to be extremely disappointing, but then you can’t have everything.

The quarry is used by Midland Quarry Products and is actually in two parts, separated by a large hill through which a tunnel was constructed in 2003 and was used by the BBC when filming the series ‘Seven Wonders of the Industrial World’. It was filmed as representing the tunnels which were used to divert the water of the Colorado during the dams construction.



Inside the Crusher.

Work commenced at the Quarry in 1868, by 1894 granite was being quarried. In 1965 this became the quarry for tarmac and since then has produced aggregates and material for our roads.

On our tour by a 15 seater mini bus we were taken to the old quarry to view the site from one of the many strategic viewing areas and then down into the quarry itself amongst the giant trucks with equally huge wheels, to the giant crusher. In the lull between lorries with the loads, we quickly walked across the floor from the safety of our vehicle to the recently

completed new Crusher. Up iron steps covered in red dust, don't touch the rails, and into the relative calm of the 'office' high above the action of the crusher. The huge central core, rotating eccentrically in the crushing bowl, literally 'crushes' the massive rocks which are tipped into its maw. From there it is conveyed elsewhere around the site to be made into its different products before ending up under our feet or motor vehicles. Back down the stairs and a short stop when the doors of the side of this building, for want of a better word, were opened for us to view the dust, crushed rock and to look at the actual core of the crusher close to. Oh and the noise - horrendous when working.

Again back into the bus and on we went through the tunnel, alongside the large conveyer belt taking the output from this crusher to the main processing area, and back into the 'new' quarry. The old now being called the old new quarry and visa versa for the new old quarry.....confusion reigns!

Again we were driven to a vantage point and were able to spend a good 20 mins or so watching the action as the trucks looking like a load of 'busy ants' danced and twirled about the slopes, back and forth carrying their large consignments of stone. The 'new quarry' is nearing the end of its productive life and is being back filled.

All too soon our visit was at an end and seven of us repaired to a local pub for a hot lunch, the others making their way back home. And the rain.....yes it did as we left the quarry and how!!

*Terry and Jane Waterfield*



Looking at the different levels of working. To the right in the hollow is the 'floor' and this is the depth that quarrying has reached and will go no further.



### **EMIAC 70 - "Towcester at the Crossroads" - Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> October**

This day was hosted by NIAG and about 50 plus members, from across the six organisations which make up EMIAC, met to enjoy an excellent morning of three quite different talks.

Brian Giggins was unable to do the advertised talk and his place was admirably taken by Richard Moss who gave an excellent presentation about Towcester and its surrounding areas. Geoffrey took us on a trip along the Holyhead Road, beginning at Braunston and giving us a taste of one or two little gems along the route, mentioning milestone posts, public houses, toll houses etc. before ending at Towcester.

Terry Waterfield then changed the theme completely by telling the audience all about how Plessey came to Caswell, a small hamlet next to Greens Norton. We looked at the Underground factories at Ilford, East London, or Essex as it was then, the rather grand farmhouse at Caswell, one of the Duke of Grafton's model farms with its attendant barns and outbuildings. This, in a sense was unfamiliar territory for NIAG, but it must be remembered that the work carried out at Caswell was, and still is, of



an 'industrial' nature. From components for fighter planes to the optic fibres which make up so much of our daily life.

An excellent lunch, enjoyed by one and all, plenty of time to chat and circulate, before the 'business' part of the day. Those not interested in this, which is devoted in the main to reports from other Groups, disappeared and returned in time for the walks in the company of members of the Towcester and District Local History Society.

We understand the walks were extremely enjoyable - we did not go on them and members returned for a quick cup of tea and nibbles before wending their way home.

It must also be reported that the Committee worked extremely hard all day and thanks must be given to them and to others who ably assisted. Thanks should also be extended to members of the Towcester History Society who took members on the guided walks in the afternoon.

*Jane Waterfield*

*We are hoping to repeat the walk sometime in the summer so look out for it with the Summer Programme next issue.*

## WINTER PROGRAMME

### **The New Wellingborough Museum - Friday 14<sup>th</sup> October**

Robert Wharton was our guest speaker to kick start the Winter programme. Robert gave us a potted history of the building which began life as a swimming pool - Dulley's Baths, after which it became a shoe factory.

Robert began by telling us that the museum is a Heritage Centre which is open 5 days a week, with 25 volunteers who work in three shifts. The building, owned by the Council, is leased to the Winifred Wharton Trust which was signed in August 1998. Robert talked about his vision and the possible uses of the building, which apart from housing the Museum, is hoped that other groups will come to use it.

In 2003 a Lottery bid from the Trust to refurbish the building known as Dulley's Baths, also known as Castle Works, received a stage one pass and £28,400 was obtained from this bid to commence work.

The Museum itself will cover some 10,000 sq feet, containing artefacts relating to the borough of Wellingborough. It is estimated that some 8,000 visitors could pass through its doors per year. There is currently one paid member of staff who is responsible for the cataloguing and general care of all the acquisitions. The Museum is registered to look after items and there is a limit to what can be taken in!

The current Museum is housed in three rooms in a council building with static showcases, and there came the time when a new building had to be found, one being located near to the Castle Theatre. This was formerly Dulley's Baths and after WWI a shoe factory. Attached to the building, a small extension made do as an air-raid shelter.



© Wellingborough Museum.

Cox's Factory, but the old name still stuck. Further extensions were made during the following years until such time that no more could be made. Cox's relocated to Westfield Road where it continues to trade.

David Dulley of Dulley's Brewhouse had Dulley's Bath's built in 1892, as an indoor swimming pool for his employees and the people of the town. Hot water was a by-product of the cooling plant in the brewery [the brewery no longer there, the site now a car park]. Lighting came from skylights which are still the originals. The building was used as a Muster Station during WW1 for troops billeted in the town or camping in Castle Fields. Difficulties after the war meant that the Baths were purchased by George Cox, who had been a master brewer for Dulleys and who had since set up a shoe factory in Finedon. The baths were filled in, the building extended and a first floor inserted, which included the gallery from the old swimming pool. The building now became known as Castle Works or

We were shown slides of the Baths, gas mantles, the slipper baths and maps and diagrams showing the layout of the buildings. In between were the photos of the bathers, shoe workers and the top floor which still has the original skylights from the Baths area. During excavations it was found that the baths are still intact and Robert told us that it is hoped to make them a feature as a café area



© Wellingborough Museum

*Jane Waterfield*

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**Mystery Site in Co. Durham - Issue 92**

At last a solution to the mystery site in Co. Dublin featured in issue 92. This comprised a c7.5 diameter circular ditch, around the inner side of which were 19 regularly spaced small pits. According to the latest issue of the magazine *Archaeology Ireland*, after much scratching heads, it is now established that this is an 18<sup>th</sup> century military field kitchen located within a military camp. Each pit was the location for a small fire-place above which cooking was undertaken. The open ditch provided a ventilation flue for the fires. It is suggested that the size and number of fire-pits present in such kitchens would vary according to the number of soldiers for which they catered, one fireplace being provided for the men of on tent or mess.

I am uncertain whether any such kitchens have been recorded in England though it is evident that some form of field kitchen must have been used by the temporary military camps, known from metal detecting, that were established in the area around Weedon Depot in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

*Graham Cadman*

Further details of examples in Ireland please see McQuade M. & Chancy P. 'Langhanstown's army kitchen'. *Archaeology Ireland* Vol.19 No3. Autumn 2005 p8.

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**Restoration of the Ashby Canal**

The 30 mile Ashby-de-la-Zouch canal was opened in 1804 from Marston Junction on the Coventry Canal to Ashby Woulds near Moira. Various tramways led off the canal to Ticknall, Cloud Hill and other places. The development of the North West Leicestershire coalfield provided financial stability for the canal for many years but after being sold out to the Midland Railway in 1846, the northern stretches were gradually closed down partly due to mining subsidence. The 2½ mile section above Donisthorpe through to Moira was abandoned and dewatered in 1944. The section through South Measham was abandoned in 1957 and the infamous current terminus of the Canal in the middle of a field near Snareston was sealed off in 1966.

However the coal mines have now all gone from this part of Leicestershire and like so many other industrial locations, the area is the subject of regeneration. As part of the plans the restoration of the

northern part of the Canal has been agreed and much has progressed in the last few years. The initial phase was to restore the canal around the Moira Furnace which has been made into a tourist attraction. The Canal was then extended northwards into the new 'Conkers' natural history heritage site situated on the site of the former colliery. Up until early 2005 progressive rebuilding produced nearly 2 miles of isolated but navigable canal at the northern end around Moira. In May 2005 I was privileged to attend the opening of a further 1½ mile section of the canal south of Moira to Donisthorpe which included a new lock, roadbridge and swingbridge.

There is now 6 miles between Donisthorpe and Snareston still to connect. It will mean the canal taking a different route to the original around Measham. Interestingly in September 2005 the Government announced support to a £10M restoration programme for the 1½ mile stretch between Snareston and Measham.

Hopefully before the end of the decade we shall see the Canal fully restored between Marston Junction and the Conkers heritage site near Moira. Interestingly at the same time as the development of the Moira furnace site and Conkers, a 30 hectare woodland park is being developed with associated heritage trails on the site of Donisthorpe Colliery which closed in 1990. It is all part of the interesting phenomenon of the last 25 years which has seen the remains of heavy industry being transformed through massive urban and rural regeneration into the 21st century requirement for increased leisure venues and facilities. An important area of study for today's industrial archaeologists!

*Ron Whittaker*



### **AGM 2005**

This was quite well attended and the business section was completed within a relatively short time. We were extremely sorry to say goodbye to Roy Sheffield who 'retired' from his position as Secretary after many years. He will be sorely missed for his hard work and extreme wit at Committee meetings. We were delighted to welcome onto the Committee, Barry Taylor.

Peter Perkins was elected by the committee to continue as Chairman - a job which he does so admirably well. He has also taken on the role of Secretary. Rest assured the smooth running of NIAG will continue through 2006.



### **Of This and That**

**Membership Receipts:** are enclosed with this mailing. Check to see whether your membership needs renewing and if so send it to Jan Fajkus, address on the back page.

### **TV Programmes**

Once again a few programmes which members might be interested in.

BBC2: Every day except Sundays - Flog It : Paul Martin helps to value and sell by auction items which the public wish to sell. Hidden in these programmes are little gems when he goes to find out about the unusual. Times vary but the programme goes out usually around 6.00 pm.

Channel 4: Sundays at 5.55 pm. Time Team. Tony Robinson hosts another series.

BBC2: Wednesdays at 8.00 pm - A Passion for Churches. Individuals who are fighting to save churches or their contents and who are passionate about their particular church. 12 programmes. Commenced 4<sup>th</sup> January.

ITV1: Thursdays at 7.30 pm. 'Water World' with Timothy West - Tales set around the Canals. 12 programmes. Commenced 5<sup>th</sup> January

### **Trains online!**

A recent report in the Daily Mail informed us that evocative images of Britain's railways are about to be made public for the first time. The National Railway Museum at York has 180 tons of such

pictures, documents, memorabilia and other material. Once you had to make an appointment to access the 1.5 million negatives, 9,000 posters, 350,000 tickets, 2,000 oral history recordings and 200 works of art. Thanks in part to a £995,000 lottery grant the museum is about to build a new centre to house them in its Search Engine project. By late 2007 members of the public will be able to go along and access the archive. Eventually this will be available on-line via the museum's website: [www.nrm.org.uk](http://www.nrm.org.uk). This collection is considered to be the finest in the world. Items include a notebook showing the performance of Stephenson's Rocket which won the Rainhill loco trials in 1829.

**Monthly meetings:** are held at *The Garden Room, St Matthews Church Hall, off Kettering Road, Northampton*. Meetings commence at 7.30 pm and are on Fridays. The final two of this year's programme are on 10<sup>th</sup> February and 10<sup>th</sup> March.

### **Dates for the Diary:**

May - Summer walks begin. Programme with the next Newsletter.

20<sup>th</sup> May - EMIAC 71: To be held at Darley Abbey, Derbyshire and hosted by the Derbyshire Archaeological Society. Please see the enclosed leaflet with this mailing.

### **Bruntingthorpe - Vulcan XH558**

It is understood that the work has begun at the above Airfield on what will be the biggest heritage aircraft restoration project ever. In 2004 HLF had earmarked £2.7m for XH558 if the Trust could raise £600,000 to release the funding. The hanger initially needed to be renovated to meet CAA requirements before work on the aircraft could begin. In October 2005 a team of 7 from Marshall Aerospace was working on the aircraft covering airframe, electrical/avionics and propulsion. A thorough survey was being undertaken and it would appear that the aircraft is in far better condition than was first thought. For the aircraft to have its first test flight in July 2007 more funds need to be raised. There is a shortfall of some £350,000 - sponsorships not materialising. A new Sponsor category has now been set up whereby every donation of £20 or over will receive a blue sponsor's ticket for free admission to a Sponsors Day when the restoration is complete. Every £1 donated releases £3 of the lottery grant. For information about this email [vulcantothesky@aol.com](mailto:vulcantothesky@aol.com) or write to VTS, PO Box 3240, Wimborne, Dorset, BH21 4ZZ (enclosing an sae).

### **Isambard Kingdom Brunel**

2006 is the bicentenary of his birth. Though closely associated with Bristol and the West Country he has nevertheless had an impact on us all. Numerous celebrations are planned during the year. For more information look on [www.brunel200.com](http://www.brunel200.com). Or write to BCDP, Leigh Court, Abbots Leigh, Bristol, BS8 3RA.

*The previous two pieces of information are taken from Focus the Hampshire IAS.*

### **Finally:**

In the news.....again!!

Once more the 'Lighthouse' of Northampton is under threat and consultation has begun again to ascertain if the people of Northampton want it or not. Taylor Woodrow who took over Bryant Homes over have placed plans for demolition with Northampton Borough Council. It is understood that the Tower, nothing remains of its interior, was to be a feature of the site when first designated as a housing estate, hence the estate's name of Tower Estate. The debate on its safety is and has been an ongoing chestnut.

Made famous by Terry Wogan on Radio 2 and it was he who dubbed it 'the lighthouse', this tower has been an outstanding landmark of Northampton for over 30 years. Many of you may have seen the original construction. Some, like us, may have had the experience of going to the top and having fantastic views of the County, the like of which we won't ever experience again.

If you feel strongly, and it is hoped you do, then write to Northampton Borough Council and state your reasons for it to remain.

The Consultation period ends on the 1<sup>st</sup> February.

Remember - another Industrial piece of Heritage may be lost.



Saturday, May 6<sup>th</sup>

**Rugeley Power Station - am**

[1960s coal fired power station of the type that is disappearing]

**Brindley Bank Pumping Station - pm**

[1900s waterworks station, still with its original 1907 Hathorn Davy steam engine, and a small collection of waterworks material, near to Rugeley]

10.30 - 10.45 start time at the Power Station.

**NB: numbers limited at the Power Station to 20 persons**

Please contact Stephen Miles on  
01604 718733 to book your place  
no later than 23<sup>rd</sup> April.

Steve requests you to book your place before the 23<sup>rd</sup> April as names have to be submitted to the Power Station beforehand, and he thinks they won't admit anyone who is not on the list. This I am sure is due to the safety regulations etc.

The Pumping Station has not yet been confirmed as we go to print, but Steve thinks that there is no limit to the numbers here.

Interestingly the power station will not be doing any tours after ours 'until further notice' as they will be installing flue gas desulphurisation equipment during the summer months.

Therefore if you are interested, then please phone Steve right way - 01604 718733 to reserve your place and details will be available in the next Newsletter and no doubt on the Summer Programme.

*Jane Waterfield - Ed.*

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**Newsletter:**

Next Issue: **April 2006**

Deadline for all articles and information: 17<sup>th</sup> March 2006. Anything received after this date will be held over to the next issue.

*Article guidelines: No more than 1½ pages long please. Photographs will be inserted if submitted.*

Please submit by e-mail, fax or mail. Where possible photographs are encouraged to illustrate all articles. When submitting photographs it would be appreciated that they are not sent via e-mail as this can take a very long time to download the quality is not always good. Preferably send photographs/slides by post (first class) and these will be returned to you the same way. Please also include your name and address so that you can be credited with taking those photographs.

Photographs © Terry and Jane Waterfield



To accompany Malcolm Hill's walk on the 30<sup>th</sup> July - See page 3

