



NORTHAMPTONSHIRE INDUSTRIAL ARCHAEOLOGY GROUP

NEWSLETTER ISSUE 98 - 'SPRING' 2006

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It was excellent to note that whilst I was finishing off the last issue, the bulbs were beginning to shoot, a sign of warmer clims I thought, but no the frosts kept coming and the cold just seemed to go right through me. Still at least the days are now getting longer and with it the bi-annual messing about with all the clocks.

'Waterways', as always, has proved to be an excellent series and makes one think of summer days. I sometimes wonder at those who give up everything to live on a canal boat - I only hope that the couples don't get on each other's nerves not being able to 'shut a door' for a bit of peace. But thankfully we are not all the same. We have now come to the end of our Winter Programme and look forward eagerly to the Friday evening walks beginning with Cyril's annual Church walk on the 5th May. As always the committee have put together an excellent programme and they hope to see many of you on these evenings.

I really must apologise for the less than perfect copy of the last issue - I think the day I went to Staples gremlins were well and truly in the system. After problems with the first copy, I got them to do it again and it came out only marginally better than the first time. The cash tills played up and all in all everyone round the photocopy shop, including the staff, got well and truly 'cheesed off'. I understand that they are in the process of getting new machines so watch this space.

Do hope you have a happy Easter and look forward to seeing you during the summer months.

Jane Waterfield

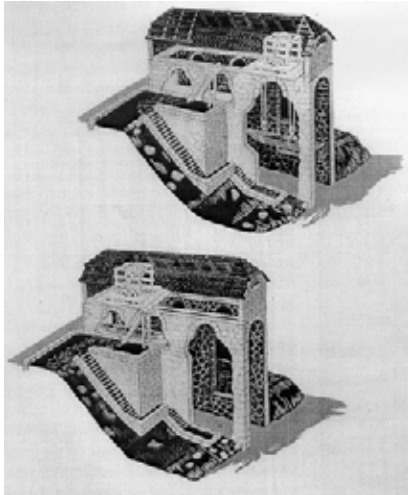
WINTER PROGRAMME 2005/6

Two hundred years of Boat Lifts in Europe - 9th December 2005

Our member Mike Constable, who with his wife Sue regularly travel waterways in Europe, gave us a comprehensive and well-illustrated review of inland waterways' boat lifts in Europe. At the beginning, he explained that he was dealing with vertical lifts, not inclined planes such as at Foxton with which most NIAG members are familiar, or rotary lifts which include the Falkirk wheel in Scotland. Most of us are used to the idea of locks for changing level along a waterway, and Mike referred to the Romans having a view about them. He also pointed out they could be very wasteful of

water: deep locks sometimes involved the use of steam pumps, whilst having a number of shallower locks resulted in the slower passage of boats.

The world's first vertical boat lift seems to have been in Germany - the Churprinz Canal, which was a small industrial canal connecting the Churprinz silver mine in the Freiburg mining district, with the smelting works further up the River Mulde and to Europe's then largest mercury works at Halsbrücke. The canal, to avoid obstacles to boats on the river, was opened in 1788. The lift consisted of a stone structure with a hoist travelling on horizontal rails. This lifted the boat out of the water and traversed to the other level of water into which the boat was then lowered. The lift closed c1868 but there are substantial stone remains of it, as Mike showed from his visit there.



The Halsbrücke boat lift. From a model in the Mining Museum in Freiberg.

After referring to Edwin Clark's patent for a hydraulic lift, used in the Anderton lift of 1875, Mike turned to the Canal du Centre in Belgium, which links the Canal de Charleroi à Bruxelles with the French industrial region. This had four hydraulic lifts between Thieu and Houdeng-Goegnies (see report of AIA visit in NIAG Newsletter No. 95) but these are no longer in operation due to No. 1 lift being severely damaged in January 2002 after a problem with the hydraulic system. We were shown some interesting views of the damage - very sad, but Mike made up for this with a magnificent view of Lift No. 3 and the associated hydraulic power house, which uses two Pelton wheels to supply high pressure water to this lift and Lift No. 2.

In the Netherlands the canals are mainly below sea-level and separated from it by high dykes. Double inclined planes, known as *Overtooms* were developed to get boats from the inland waterways over the dyke to the variable height of the sea and natural waterways. We were shown a reconstructed version of an

overtoom at Venhuizen, near Enkhuisen: two horizontal wooden capstans, the inclines and a small boat between them. In 1923 to cope with heavier traffic and larger boats, an overtoom at Brockerhaven was replaced by a "dry" lift where boats were floated over a steel cradle which was raised by steel cables connected to an overhead travelling crane, taken over the dam and then lowered into the water the other side of the dam. It worked until 1981. Later it was designated a national technical monument and at the time of Mike's visit seemed to have been operated by the local fire service.

After a brief reference to the late 18th century "diving lock" as at Combe Hay on the Somersetshire Coal Canal, our attention was drawn to the flotation lift at Rothensee, linking the Mittelland Canal with the River Elbe. It came into operation in 1938 and could accommodate 1000 ton vessels. In a flotation lift, the weight of caisson and boat is supported hydraulically but the actual lifting is by threaded spindles, each 27.3 metres long with an outside diameter of 420mm. Mike was understandably very impressed by this magnificent piece of engineering. This lift is still working despite a later shaft, or deep, lock having been built alongside to take the modern 1350 ton standard vessel.

The final example was the Strépy-Thieu counter-balanced lift, again to 1350 ton standard, to replace the four hydraulic lifts on the original route of the Canal du Centre. We were given our first view of this from between the old lifts Nos. 3 and 4, taken in 1991. Although started in 1982, the lift was still under construction at this time and Mike had some very interesting views inside the structure taken from places no longer accessible to the public. This 73.15 metre double lift opened in 2001 to replace the 4 old lifts and 2 locks on the original route, and takes vessels only 14 minutes to go through. Its construction has changed the whole landscape at great cost.

In conclusion, Mike asked 'Will this be a white elephant or not?' He said that Belgium is going through a lean patch with industry. Using 1350 ton boats instead of the former 400 ton



Strépy-Thieu Boat Lift. View from SW.

vessels means less commercial traffic will be using it. On the other hand, compared with road transport, the goods carried on a 1350 ton boat is equivalent to two miles of lorries nose to tail! There were plenty of questions at the end of the talk, and the discussions carried on whilst we had our coffee or tea - and small Christmas cakes. If you had one, were you aware they were made by 3 year old Oliver, Alice and Frank's son?

Geoffrey Starmer

Members evening - 8th January 2006

33 members turned out for the annual members sessions which is now very much a feature of our programme. We were as always taken along a trail of differing routes by our speakers, Terry Waterfield, Geoffrey Starmer, Barry Taylor and Steve Miles. The beauty of this evening is that members are not aware of any subjects, until they are mentioned at the beginning of the meeting by our Chairman, Peter Perkins. Tonight we were to travel from the Isle of Man, across the Channel to Belgium and not much further than a mile or two from where we were sitting. As before each speaker has contributed a short report and we will begin with Terry and the Isle of Man.

'Lady Isabella'

Terry Waterfield presented a few slides from a trip to the Isle of Man when he and Jane had made a day of visiting the most famous 'wheel' in the Country. Lady Isabella is perhaps the most iconic structure on the island. Otherwise known as the Great Laxey Wheel, its construction started in early 1850. Designed by Robert Casement to raise water in the Great Laxey mine from a depth of 1200 feet at the rate of 250 gallons per minute, the wheel is 72½ feet in diameter with a width of 6 feet. Each of the 168 pitch-backshot buckets holds 24 gallons. The 5' crank drives a horizontal connecting rod, some 210 yards in length, running on 16 pairs of rollers on a rod duct comprising of a series of 34 arches. At the northern end, a T-rocker translates the horizontal movement to a vertical movement to operate the seven pumps connected in series to raise the water. The connecting rod extended in the other direction to an L-shaped rocker supporting a counterweight. Water for operating the wheel was, and still is, piped from higher up the valley and then taken up inside a tower, adjacent to the wheel, to a trough reaching out over the wheel. A circular staircase of 95 steps on the outside of the tower leads to the viewing platform which covers the water trough. When Mrs Dumbell opened the great wheel in 1854, she named it Isabella in honour of the Governor's lady.



Photographs © T J Waterfield : Two views of Lady Isabella.

The Manx Electric Railway has operated continuously since it first started in the mid-1890s. Here we are interested in the section which ascends Snaefell, construction of which started in 1894 and was completed in seven months opening on 21st August 1895. Initially it was planned to use the Fell Inclined Railway system to aid traction up the 1 in 12 gradient. This system was dispensed with when it was proved elsewhere that normal wheel adhesion alone was adequate. The centre rail was retained for braking purposes. However the physical state of this rail, with the centre section heavily corroded, does give some cause for concern! Except for the stock lost in a depot fire in 1930, the original rolling stock is still in daily use. Some of the motors have been rewound, and the controllers upgraded.

Mills of Belgium

The second contribution was from Geoffrey Starmer on a Tour of Mills in Belgium, made last September with the Mills Section of the SPAB (Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings). The mills were mainly in the area north and west of Antwerp, where there are about 130 windmills and 200 watermills. Most of these have been restored in the last 20 years. In Belgium the owner of a mill receives 80% subsidy from the authorities when he has repaired or restored it. By accepting the subsidy, the owner has the obligation to open his mill to the public at least 50 days a year, and is encouraged to operate it as often as possible. In three Provinces the miller is given a bonus per revolution of the principal drive shaft, although the maximum bonus in a year is restricted to 1250 euros.

During the long week-end (Thursday to Sunday) 25 mills were visited: 14 windmills, 7 watermills, 1 tide mill, 2 horse mills and 1 dog wheel. Thankfully, not all of these were shown during Members' Evening: only a few examples chosen to illustrate characteristics different to those of mills in the UK. The post-mill at Dienst Schaffen showed the extent of decoration on the porch at the top of the steps into the buck of the mill; the post-mill at Lindenmolen was perched on top of the remains of the town's medieval defences, as shown in many pictures of towns and cities made in the past. Whilst most of the tower mills were of brick, the one in the very good and extensive open air museum at Bokrijk was a smock mill with a wooden frame - and rather brightly coloured wooden gearing inside. The windmill Arbeid Adelt at Weelde was a grain mill but also had machinery for producing oil from oil-seeds, such as rape.



De Heerser 1794. In 1934 moved to Retie.

Several of the watermills were oil mills. The process of crushing the seed under vertical stones rolling around a vertical axis, then being heated and put in a cloth bag between wedges driven in by drop stamps to produce the oil was illustrated by work-in-progress at several of the mills visited, including one near Hoogstraten which was a complete rebuild of the building and the wooden machinery, all looking very new.

A number of the mills, wind and water, were still operating commercially. The last visit on the first day was made to the tide mill at Rupelmonde, on the River Schelde upriver of Antwerp. We arrived at about 10.30 p.m. after having had our first Belgian (i.e. plenty of alcohol) evening meal. Why visit so late? We had to be there after the tide had turned so that there was a good head between the mill pond and the dropping level of the river, to turn the waterwheel and

milling could start. The final visit on Sunday was to Bakkersmolen at Esen-Wildert. This was built in 1981 (Yes, nineteen 81!). A very fine tower mill with modern self-regulating mechanism on the leading edge of the sails, it is in use every week-end to produce flour for the bakery close-by, which made bread and cakes for general sale and for the very large adjacent restaurant. This is all part of a complex, set up by a wealthy Belgian collector of historic technological artefacts ranging from very small items to working steam engines, a steam driven carousel and a narrow gauge steam railway running round the site. There is no entrance fee to the site but you need one euro for a ride on the carousel or the railway. This was a wonderful place at which to finish our tour.

Duston West Railway

Barry Taylor and Graham Onley presented a brief history of the railway development of an area of Northampton known as Duston West, using initially slides of old maps and prints, and then followed by colour slides of the immediate area from the 1960's and present day.

The vantage point for most of these was the elevated area to the south of the town known as Hunsbury Hill, and this produced a recurring backdrop to most of the slides, which showed both constant landmarks of the town, such as the many churches and the early industrial areas, and also later developments on the landscape.

Duston West is located in the Far Cotton area of the town, and was a point where several of the routes serving the town converged or crossed, making an excellent vantage point for the local 'trainspotters' of the 1950's and 1960's.

The first 'railway' in the area was actually a horse drawn tramway connecting the Grand Junction canal at Blisworth to Northampton, which opened in 1805 but closed 10 years later when a canal arm was constructed from Gayton. This itself was superseded in 1845 with the arrival of the first 'real' railway in Northampton, a branch of the LNWR from Blisworth to Peterborough, with a station and other facilities at Bridge Street. In the 1850's a further branch was constructed from this line to Market Harborough, thus creating another small station close to the town's Castle. In the early 1880's as part of their general upgrading of the line from London to Rugby, the LNWR then constructed a new loop line from Roade to Rugby, which tunnelled under Hunsbury Hill and crossed the Nene Valley and the original line from Blisworth at Duston West. This also involved the enlargement of the 'Castle' station, and the building of a new locomotive depot in Far Cotton, all of which replaced the original smaller facilities at Bridge Street. The building of the locomotive depot also involved the diversion of the canal towards the north, and this was illustrated on both the maps and later slides.

Today most of the previous infrastructure has disappeared and the only line now serving the town is the Roade to Rugby loop, together with the remains of the Bridge Street line as far as Far Cotton track materials depot which has recently closed to regular traffic, and is now being encroached upon by the inevitable housing and industrial development.

Finally Steve Miles took us on a photographic tour of his visit to Belgium with the AIA. Geoffrey's write up in issue 95 gives the tour, but Steve had some fascinating photographs to show the group.

Thanks must be given to Barry Taylor, Terry Waterfield, Geoffrey Starmer and Steve Miles for their contributions to an excellent evening



Railways and the Post - Friday 10th February

Derek Smeathers gave us a fascinating survey of the influence of the coming of the railways on the development of the national postal system, with particular examples from Northamptonshire.

The Post Office had already been in existence for 200 years when the first railways appeared. At this point in time, the Post Office only carried letters, and was still to introduce their later facilities for parcels, telegraphs, insurance or registration. Mail was carried by horse drawn carriages, which connected the post offices located in major towns, and secondary distribution to the addressee was then carried out by local horse and rider. This system did however have drawbacks both in terms of speed - the average speed of the horse drawn coach being 10 mph – and of capacity, as the space available for mail on the coaches was very limited.

Railways immediately offered an improvement in both areas, with greatly increased capacity, and a doubling of the average speed to 20 mph. The carriage of mail by train began in 1838, when the London and Birmingham route was opened, and this immediately brought benefits for Northamptonshire, with trains calling at Roade, Blisworth and Weedon to handle mail as well as passengers. Specially built flat carriages were attached to passenger trains, and the Post Office exercised strict control over the timetables, speed, security and offloading of the trains. Initially the L & B line was split into two sections, awaiting the completion of Kilsby tunnel, and during this period, mail and passengers were still conveyed by road coach between Denbigh Hall and Rugby, where the train was rejoined.

Further north on the Grand Junction railway, automated lineside collection and delivery apparatus had been introduced, and this also came into use on the L & B line, avoiding the time consuming loading and unloading of mail at each station stop. By 1890 the L & B had become part of the London and North Western Railway, and special mail carrying and sorting coaches were provided for the long distance postal trains, with mail bags being automatically collected and dropped using the trackside apparatus, and sorting of mail being carried out during the journey. However, even with this automated system, by 1895 Blisworth was still a major calling point for mail trains, due to its importance as a junction station serving several routes.

The railways soon introduced their own special services for mail, with a facility to deliver "express letters" at an extra payment, and these were notified ahead to the receiving station using the railway's own telegraph system, which had originally been introduced for train operating purposes. As an

example of this, Derek mentioned a letter in 1911, which was carried from London to Towcester, via Blisworth, for a fee of 6d; this left Euston at 10.10am and arrived in Towcester at 1.30pm.

In an effort to ease the increasing pressures of handling bulk mail at local post offices, by 1900 a system of "Railway Sub Offices" had been established, whereby railway stations became a type of local sub post office and served to their immediate localities, examples in Northamptonshire being at Rushden, Byfield and Wansford. Letters were therefore often addressed with a suffix of "RSO" to indicate the nearest railway sub-office to their destination.

Parcels were also carried by rail, and such was the importance of rail handling, the Parcels Services Act of 1882 enabled railways to retain 55% of the cost of each parcel. However, certain routes did not include any rail handling and these were included on an "X-list" which enabled the Post Office to identify such mail and retain the full fee for themselves.

The railways were also fundamental in the introduction of a national telegraph service in the 1870's, using their own internal network of telegraph wires, and telegrams could be sent between railway stations for a minimum fee of 6d. Eventually however this service was taken over by the Post Office, and the fee increased to one shilling, due to the need to extend the telegraph wires to local post offices - however this increase was offset by the fact that telegrams were then delivered free within a specified radius to the recipients address by a team of dedicated delivery personnel. Once again Derek was able to give a local example of a telegram to Brockhall which actually cost 1/6d due to the additional mileage from the nearest post office at Weedon.

For many years the national network of individual railway companies had tried various ways of circumventing the Post Office monopoly for carrying letters (there was no monopoly for parcels), and eventually introduced their own competing railway letter service, requiring the use of square labels to replace the official Post Office stamps, but even then the railways were required to charge twice the normal Post Office rates.

Derek also provided an extensive range of postal ephemera and other items to illustrate the various topics, many of which were of local relevance, and these were avidly examined by the large audience following the conclusion of the talk.

Barry Taylor



The Railway into Euston

Unlike the motorway system the first railway into London was built towards London from the north over a period of eight years.

The first mile section, the Warrington and Newton Railway opened on 25th July 1831 from Newton on the Liverpool and Manchester Line. The Grand Junction Railway was authorised in May 1833 to connect Warrington to Birmingham. This line opened on 4th July 1837 between Bank Quay, Warrington and Curzon Street, Birmingham.

The London and Birmingham Railway was also authorised in May 1833. Between 1836 and 1838 there were engineering problems on this line to be overcome. Birmingham, Curzon Street to Rugby was operational (from 9th April 1838, Denbigh Hall on Watling Street (Bletchley) to Euston also began to run in April 1838. It was 17th September 1838 before this London Line was completely open to traffic.

Looking back over 170 years we can perhaps appreciate why the Grand Junction Railway has partly faded into background memory. The engineering problems of the London to Birmingham line have always made a more dramatic story. We can only speculate on the lost opportunity of an opening celebration of the running link between Newton (L&M) and Euston (L&B).

John Rigby



Another Mid-19th Century Tram road in Northamptonshire

In the Northampton Mercury for 19 February 1848, there was a report of a meeting in Wellingborough which started by referring to a meeting the previous September. This came after the proposal for a new site for a station in the town on the Leicester and Hitchin line. At that meeting a Mr. Barwell was requested to promise that "a tram road should be laid along the approaches leading from Sheep-Street to the station, for carrying coals and goods near to the town." When the necessary notice for the

railway had appeared in the Northampton Mercury there was no mention of the tram road hence the present meeting where resolutions were made to be forwarded to Mr. Barwell “with a request that he will be good enough to let them know whether the tram road will be made or not.” The meeting then adjourned until 22nd February.

The following week, the Northampton Mercury for 26 February had a report of the adjourned meeting where the Chairman read out a letter which he had received from Mr. Barwell, dated Derby, Feb 19th :-

“ Dear Sir,

It affords me much pleasure to acquaint you that I have fully explained the subject of the tram road from the proposed station of the South Midland line to a point nearer the centre of Wellingborough, and that Mr. Hudson has authorized me to state that the Midland Company will comply with the request; and I must not omit to say the application was at once conceded, and in the most gratifying manner ”

The Northampton Mercury commented “This was the pith of Mr. Barwell’s note, which gave the utmost satisfaction”

Then what happened? (Wellingborough does not get a single mention in E G Barnes “The Rise of the Midland Railway 1844-1874”, George Allen and Unwin, 1966)

Geoffrey Starmer

How intriguing - especially as we now have another Mr Barwell heading the WNDC who is currently overseeing much of the expansion and development in the west of the County. I wonder whether they are distantly related. History will be the judge as to whether or not the proposed expansions have been a success or not - and we had better not get onto that topic had we?!. Ed



The Trouble with the Internet. . . .



Recently I was at a meeting in London when an acquaintance, who was aware of my association with NIAG, came up and said “I thought your Society would know better than put tram plates the wrong way round.” Due to my bewilderment it was explained that he had seen this stated on an Internet site concerned with Blisworth where reference is made to the Blisworth Hill Railway.

The site is www.blisworth.org.uk/images. It is very professional in appearance, easy to navigate, and gives the impression of being authoritative but unfortunately is misleading as far as NIAG’s excavation on the Blisworth Hill

Railway is concerned. The points of concern are:

- The organisation who did the excavation is given as the Northampton Archaeological Society and not the Northamptonshire Industrial Archaeology Group. If the webmaster had gone to the library’s list of societies he would have seen there is no such body as Northampton Archaeology Society.
- The caption to image 35.09 includes the offending comment that the tram plate has been put the wrong way round with the horizontal surface facing inwards. Image 35.03 is an overall view of part of the excavation containing one track where it is clearly visible that the horizontal surfaces of the tram plates face inwards. In any case, from the impressions in the stone blocks, as shown in image 35.07, it would be impossible to put the plates the wrong way round!
- The same caption questions the identity of the fellow taking notes of the excavation. He was Adrian Stedman, a staunch member of NIAG who shortly afterwards was killed in a car accident. The comment “the notes have been lost and were never written up” infers a criticism of NIAG. After Adrian had died we could not go immediately to his wife to ask for the notes. After a reasonable time had elapsed we contacted her, but unfortunately she had disposed of the papers not realising their importance.

Although the Blisworth Images web master can be informed that the information is inaccurate, plenty of people will have seen the incorrect information on the internet and taken it as correct. When can one trust the internet?

Obviously they can't - and it is a worrying fact that organisations putting information on the net do not always check their information. I hope that GS put this chap right about our past member and the case of the 'lost notes', better has this web-site been updated to show that the notes were not written up simply because the author had had the misfortune to be killed in a motor crash. Ed.



Excavation Blisworth Hill Railway - Opposite Buttermilk Farm
L. Richard O'Rourke (white sweater)
Background L (digging) Richard Tomaine
Rear centre with pipe Adrian Stedman:
Rear right (in white) George Freestone

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Battersea Power Station chimneys are to be rebuilt

The four chimneys on the Power Station have been found to be suffering from chloride corrosion of the reinforcement, causing chunks of concrete to fall off. A passing risk to contractors working below. The grade II listed structure is undergoing a £1bn redevelopment to create a leisure and retail complex. Repairs the last couple of years have been unsuccessful, the only option then to demolish and rebuild. Planning application was put into Wandsworth Borough Council last summer and the original plan was to demolish each chimney, starting this Spring and taking 3 to 4 months each - chipping away from the top using hand-held equipment. New chimneys would be rebuilt using traditional shuttering and insitu concrete to look exactly the same as the originals. It is now hoped that the bidders for the demolition job can come up with a solution to take each tower down in one piece and complete the work by the end of 2006.

Guardians to listed buildings, the 20th Century Society and World Monuments Fund are opposed to the demolition and have criticised the inadequacy of the developer's efforts to repair the chimneys. They have now written to the Office of DPM requesting the plans to be called in for a public enquiry. (from *New Civil Engineer*, 28th July and 20th October 2005)

I am sure that the late Fred Dibnah would have come up with a solution. - Ed

Taken from Focus the Hampshire IAS.

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Of This and That

Television:

BBC2: Sundays at 6.00 pm. Coast. 12 programmes commenced 2nd April. Repeat programme of an 11,700 mile trip around the coast of Britain.

BBC2: Every day except Sundays - Flog It : Paul Martin helps to value and sell by auction items which the public wish to sell. Along the way he visits museums, collections etc. Worth watching if only for the ‘insights’. Times can vary but the programme goes out usually around 6.00 pm.

BB2: Tuesdays at 8.30 pm. It’s not easy being green. 7 programmes commenced 28th March. Dick Strawbridge (ex army) turns the crumbling family farmhouse into an eco-friendly home with a little bit of help from his family and friends. This has feats of excellent engineering including the building of a water-wheel.

ITV1: Thursdays at 7.30 pm. Sky High. 9 programmes commenced 5th April. Lucy Kite takes to the air to explore the 18 counties which make up the Midlands. History etc. to be found in these programmes.

Just a few programmes which may interest our membership.

Winter Programme 2006/07: will commence in October They will be held at *The Garden Room, St Matthews Church Hall, off Kettering Road, Northampton*. Meetings start at 7.30 pm

Dates for the Diary:

May 5th Summer walks begin. Programme enclosed.

May 6th Rugeley Power Station and Brindley Bank Pumping Station - Have you booked. Get in touch with Steve straight away if you still wish to go.

May 6/7th Stoke Goldington Steam rally and Country Fayre. 45 full-size engines are expected.

May 20th EMIAC 71: To be held at Darley Abbey, Derbyshire and hosted by the Derbyshire Archaeological Society. Last date for booking is 15th April.

Until June 4th Jacob van Ruisdael exhibition at the Royal Academy, London with plenty of paintings and drawings of windmills, watermills (some with two water wheels), bleaching grounds - and a mud mill!

June 24/25th Banbury Steam Society Rally, held at Bloxham. 40 full size engines expected

Aug 26/28th Holcot Steam and Country Fair. 36 full size engines expected and will be involved in threshing, saw bench work, road construction and ploughing. Last year’s event was reported in NIAG Newsletter no.96.

Aug 26/28th Earls Barton Rally and Country Fair. Odd that this is on at the same time as the one at Holcot. If you cannot manage both, Holcot is the better one.

Sept 9/10th Steam Ploughing Great Challenge at Beebys Premises, Rempstone, Notts. The Steam Plough Club is celebrating its 40th anniversary and also 100 years of steam ploughing by Beebys, with eight or ten pairs at work. This should be well worth the journey from Northants.

Sept 15/17th Bedfordshire Steam and Country Fayre, Old Warden Park, nr. Biggleswade, with 130 (!) full-size engines expected.

Oct 7/8th Festival of Showground Organs at Twinwood Airfield, nr. Clapham, Bedford. Could be about 12 large organs, many more smaller organs. The site is a WWII aerodrome with plenty of buildings intact - and associations with Glenn Miller.



Finally:

A query: what is a “clincher”?

The term was used by a member of the Spratton Local History Society after a recent talk on the history of the Northamptonshire shoe industry. She thought it referred to the three-legged lasts used by shoe repairers, as exemplified by the structure/sculpture in Abington Street, near the entrance to the Grosvenor Centre in Northampton. The term is not found in R A Salaman’s *“Dictionary of Leather-working Tools c1700-1950”* (George Allen & Unwin 1986). Surprisingly, this book does not have a picture or any reference to a three-legged last.

Have any NIAG members information on the names given to the three-legged last, or to what tool a “clincher” was?

Please let me know by the usual methods and I will pass this information on.

Geoffrey Starmer

NIAG Committee

President: Geoffrey Starmer, 34 The Crescent, Northampton, NN1 4SB
Chairman: Peter Perkins, Eastfields Farmhouse, Manor Road, Rushton, Kettering, NN14 1RH
Secretary: Peter Perkins, Eastfields Farmhouse, Manor Road, Rushton, Kettering, NN14 1RH
Treasurer: Jan Fajkus, 101 Holly Road, Northampton, NN1 4QN
Web site: Jan Fajkus as above

Newsletter Editor

Mrs Jane S Waterfield, 6 Bakers Lane, Norton Daventry, NN11 2EL
Tel/Fax: 01327 312850 - e-mail: js-sec@tandjassociates.co.uk

Newsletter:

Next Issue: **July 2006**

Deadline for all articles and information 20th June 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.



Snaefell Mountain Railway - One of the ‘cars’.

© Jane Waterfield

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