



NORTHAMPTONSHIRE
INDUSTRIAL ARCHAEOLOGY
GROUP

NEWSLETTER



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Photograph front cover: Decoration on the inside of the lid of a Polygon musical box.

From the Editor

Terry & I recently spent a few days in Oxford on a weekend course at Rewley House titled 'Maps for local Historians'. An intensive few days with a trip to the Bodleian Library to look at a few of the thousands of maps which they hold and which one is able to go and look at and explore our history in map form. It's years since I've been to Oxford and it was alive and well and bustling. Unlike Northampton with it's one bookshop (I don't exactly class Smith's as being much of the bookshop), there were many and one we found still open at gone 8.00 pm which was awash with books. Needless to add we came out having purchased a marvellous little book all about what the Germans would have done if they came to England during the war years. Never have been able to come out of a bookshop without something! Oxford is, needless to say, extremely expensive for parking and it cost us over £50 to park for Saturday and Sunday in one of their car-parks near the centre of Oxford. I did notice, in the Bus Station however, that OAP's could travel to London return for £6.00 odd!

The big wheeze of 2008 has to be the story in the Chronicle and Echo about the demolishing of the 'Lighthouse'. The story ran on April 1st and it would seem that everyone was taken in by the very sensible reporting on Northampton's iconic building to recent industry. Speaking to the young lady at their shop/office in the Market Square revealed that the paper had been inundated with phone calls and e-mails. On the serious side this could have been the truth since there is the ever increasing desire to demolish good buildings and the destroying of our industrial heritage.

We look forward to seeing you during the summer at what looks like being an interesting and different summer programme.

Jane Waterfield



WINTER PROGRAMME 2007

History of Ironstone Mining at Irthlingborough - 12th October

For the first meeting of NIAG's 2007-8 Winter Session, Alan Pack (who gave his last talk to NIAG some 18 years ago) delighted the audience of over 40 members and friends with a sparkling digital presentation on this relatively little known aspect of Northamptonshire's industrial history. Alan had been the estate surveyor with Richard Thomas & Baldwins Ltd, the company which worked the mines until they closed. This first-hand experience of his subject gave us a far better understanding of the operations than an outside observer ever could have done.

The late 1950s importance of home iron ore was emphasised with an image of the front cover of a 1958 issue of "Picture Post" which was concerned with the iron ore mines at Irthlingborough. The ore was of Northampton Sand Ironstone and

came out of the mine as a blue-grey colour, as compared with the brown stone used in building, as in Irthlingborough church. By the time of WWI the outcrop iron ore in the area was being worked on a fairly minor scale. Dr. Henry Louis, minerals advisor, ascertained there was considerable ore at a depth beyond the capabilities of opencast working at that time, and recommended mining the ore. After considering various possibilities for getting the ore to the main-line railway for onward transmission to the blast furnaces it was decided to make a rail-link to the Northampton - Peterborough line, and this was shown by a splendid aerial photograph.



The Ebbw Vale Steel, Iron & Coal Co. Ltd. commenced operations at Irthlingborough in January 1916 by driving a tunnel in a nearly north-westerly direction in the hillside south-east of the town. The main tunnel was 14ft wide and 10ft. high, with double track 3 ft. gauge railway. Electric locomotives

were used underground - small battery locos. from the working area to the main tunnel, on which over-head wire electric locos were used to bring the small tubs out of the mine. The ore was worked between 70 and 80 feet below ground level, although in one place it was only 40 feet below. This would normally have been worked open-cast but here it was easier to have a continuation of the mine.

Calcine kilns (to get rid of volatile impurities so reducing the cost of transporting the ore to the furnaces) were erected further down the slope of the hill, and alongside the link to the main-line railway. The kilns, associated buildings and viaducts, were constructed of reinforced concrete, and looked spectacularly modern. (A well-illustrated and detailed account of these appeared in the *Indented Bar Bulletin No.51*, April 1919, and NIAG presented a very grateful Alan Pack with an original copy of this obscure publication! Guess who had it?). With the completion of the plant, production of ore began and we were shown a photograph of the official opening in August 1920, with dignitaries riding in the mine tubs, after travelling in a special train from Euston.

In 1936 Richard Thomas & Co. Ltd. took over and reorganised the plant, including dispensing with calcining, and sintering the ore instead. It was proposed to have an output of 10,000 tons per week but Alan Pack considered that 7,000 tons in a week was the most ever got out, even during WWII when the mines were worked

to the utmost. Five hundred men were employed at this time but the number dropped at the end of the war, as people left. This led to increasing mechanisation.

From 1918 until 1938, ratchet drills were used for making the holes into which the explosive charges were inserted for blasting out the ore. Men worked in teams of two - a miner, and a helper. Illumination was from carbide lamps. We were shown pictures taken under ground and it looked quite dangerous but it was generally regarded that it was safer down the mine than working open-case with plank and barrow. Twelve men lost their lives at the Irthlingborough mines but they were not all working underground. In 1938 electric drills were provided (For everything else needed, the men had to provide their own) and the output went up to 10 tons per man per shift. More explosives were used per shift but management was not worried because the men paid for their own explosives!

Of the 300 or so employed after WWII, only about a hundred were actually at the working face. Even with the reduced numbers it was not possible to get them from the indigenous population because of the availability of easier jobs elsewhere. Recourse was made to recruiting from Europe, initially from Poland for whom a building in Irthlingborough was adapted as a hostel, and then from Italy which meant refurbishing the accommodation to a better standard!

Alan's presentation should have involved some film clips but these were uncooperative during his presentation. However, after his sterling work on the computer whilst we were enjoying coffee, Alan was able to show the clips - and how wonderful they were. They included miners going to work (with appropriate musical sound track!), the visit of the Italian ambassador to the hostel for his countrymen, and a wonderful sequence underground where a man was operating points, in the very short intervals between speeding locomotives and their trains of tubs, with his foot and sometimes his hands - no point lever, or Health & Safety Rules! A splendid conclusion for a wonderful evening.

Geoffrey Starmer

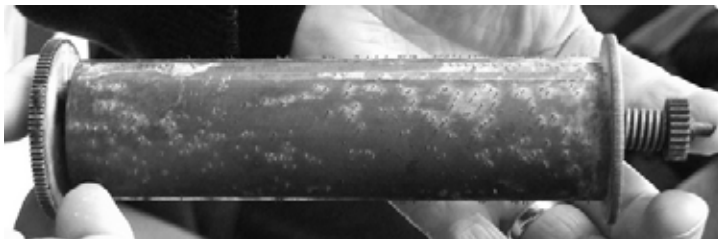


Mechanical Musical Instruments - 14th December

The speaker at our pre-Christmas meeting was Kevin McElhone, a collector of mechanical music devices, and author of the excellent Shire book "Mechanical Music", who brought along some of his collection.

We were told that the first musical movement was in a small fob watch. Our speaker used an example of this type of movement to show how the volume of sound altered from when the movement was held in his hand to the louder sound when it was on a wooden box, hence the "musical box". One of the first musical watches appeared in France in 1772. In 1794 in Switzerland, Antorne Favre patented a musical watch that played tuned steel rods and from this developed the musical box: A key was used to wind a clockwork spring which through gearing

and a speed governor caused a pinned cylinder to rotate so that the pins plucked the teeth (of different length to produce the different notes) of a steel “comb”. An example of a pinned cylinder was passed round (*see photo*) so that we could see in close-up the arrangement of pins, in this case 8 sets to produce 8 different tunes. We then heard one of Kevin’s music boxes play one of the 8 tunes.



© Jane Waterfield 2008

The early music boxes were made by watchmakers and had a key to wind the mechanism. By about 1815 it was realised more music boxes could be sold if the purchaser did not have to buy a clock as well, and the key (which could get lost) was replaced by a lever on the side of the box. Later drums, blocks, bells and in a few cases reed-organs were included in the box, all operated by the pinned cylinder. Some boxes had three separate combs, each producing the same tune but the sound was soft, normal or loud. It was pointed out that you were stuck with only the tunes which came with the box! The manufacture of music boxes became a huge industry, with women pinning the cylinders at home during the winter months.

In order to have more tunes, some music boxes were made so that the pinned cylinders could be changed and so extend the selection of tunes. These were very expensive and in 1886 the first commercially successful disc-playing music box was produced in Germany and marketed as the Symphonium. Kevin demonstrated an example of such a “floppy-disc” (His term!) player. The round, thin, flat disc was of steel, which had projections punched into it. The projections nearest the centre provided the base notes whilst those near the perimeter gave the highest notes. These projections plucked a ‘star wheel’ which in turn plucked the tuned teeth in the musical comb. The projections on the discs were made by women on piece-work but now in a factory.

In the 1890s musical boxes were available from about 90 makers but discs from different manufacturers would not play on the same machine. Although of the same thickness of metal, the discs varied from 4½ in. to 3¾ in. diameter. The firm of Polyphon was not the first manufacturer of disc players but it was the largest and so its name became the generic term to cover all other makes (in the same way that “Hoover” is used for all vacuum cleaners). Besides the domestic disc players there were also coin-in-the-slot machines in commercial premises. It

was emphasised that juke boxes originated in 1895 from Polyphon - NOT from gramophone records!

Our speaker demonstrated a barrel organ of 1785 - dated from the newspaper found inside it when the bellows were replaced. This was the second smallest type of barrel organ with dummy pipes on the front. When this was removed we were able to see the mechanism. It was observed that after considerable use, the wooden barrel went banana shape. There were also barrel-pianos. These were put on carts for street music in this country, whereas in the rest of Europe street organs were used.

Another method of producing the music was by using paper, with an arrangement of holes to produce the different notes in the required sequence. These were used on player pianos and also pipe organs - Kevin referred to the roll-playing pipe organ donated by Barratts to St. Mary's church in Northampton. Fairground and dance organs also produced music from an arrangement of holes, but in this case in cards connected together so that after passing through the machine each card fell on top of the preceding one to form a neat pile. This method was also found in some small hand-worked organs used by itinerant entertainers. For our last meeting before Christmas it was appropriate that Kevin ended this very entertaining and instructive evening by using his final machine to play "We wish you a happy Christmas".

Geoffrey Starmer



Members Night - 11th January 2008

About 20 or so members turned out on a extremely wet evening to attend the annual 'Members Night' - the showcase of things which members have either done during the year, visits they have made or projects they are working on.

This year was a varied programme with contributions from Judith Hodgkinson, Jane & Terry Waterfield, Geoffrey Starmer, Peter Perkins and Steve Miles. Judith started the ball rolling to speak about her trip to Turkey to look at Silks, Jane & Terry took members through some of the summer trips in a short slide presentation, Geoffrey spoke about Thomas Telford and his connections in Scotland, Peter about assistance with looking for Planning Applications (last issue - page 10) and Steve took us on a trip round Preston and Liverpool when he visited the Preston AIA conference during the autumn.

Turkey : trade, transport and textiles, a visit with the Costume Society of Great Britain to Istanbul and Bursa in April 2007 - Judith Hodgkinson reflects.

The city of Istanbul spreads along the shores of the Bosphorus, and its off-shoot, the Golden Horn. Shipping is ever-present, and ferries are still the most convenient way to cross the Bosphorus or travel to and from the Black Sea. At rush-hour ferries disgorge thousands onto streets without pedestrian crossings,

while elsewhere a brand new tram system squeals incongruously round the tight corners of the old city. Though challenging, the best way to get around is, of course, on foot, and amongst the most exciting places is the Grand Bazaar with its 66 streets and more than 4000 shops, each one hoping to entice you in and discuss business terms over a cup of tea. At the Turkish and Islamic Art Museum just off the Hippodrome we saw displays on weaving, dyeing and making felted yurts, and, in contrast, we visited the workshops of two of Turkey's finest contemporary fashion designers.



The Bakery at Cumalikizk Village, Turkey
© Judith Hodgkinson

Before the Turks conquered Istanbul, the Sultans were based in Bursa, to which we transferred for three days. There we visited the Silk Market, built in 1491 and still flourishing. Although the customers are mainly local, many of its products are now imported - from China, where the silk trade began. We also visited a private museum displaying dozens of variations of Turkish regional dress, many in use until the mid 20th century. Turkey's Asian and Islamic roots make it endlessly and effortlessly fascinating, and the most lasting impressions of the visit relate to absolutely delicious food washed down with *ayran* (a yogurt drink), and colour and pattern of Qu'ranic inscriptions in marble, tile and paint in the mosques and mausoleums.

The summer programme: Jane & Terry showed a quick resume of some of the walks which they had attended last summer. The presentation showed members, who had been unable to go on the walks, a variety of topics ranging from Boots - more slides for the benefit of those who had been unable to get to Nottingham for that trip, Flore, Dovecote Farm, Sywell, Timsons, etc ending with their own very industrious visitor - Nutkin the squirrel.

Telford in Scotland: Geoffrey's talk took us on a tour of Scotland featuring Thomas Telford.

Thomas Telford was born on 9 August 1757 so 2007 was the 250th anniversary of his birth. Apprenticed to a stone mason, within two decades he had become an eminent architect and engineer. During his lifetime his work included the Holyhead Road, with the Conwy and Menai suspension bridges; St. Katherine's Docks in London; improvements of the Birmingham Canal; bridges over the River Severn but in England and Wales his anniversary seems to have passed un-noticed. However, for his considerable work in Scotland Telford's 250th anniversary was commemorated in several ways including a four-day tour of some of his works, organised by the Institution of Civil Engineers and the American Society of Civil Engineers who put commemorative plaques on several of the structures, and Newcomen Society members were invited to attend. That's how Judith and I came to be there.

Thomas Telford was born at Glendinning about 2½ miles NW of Langholm. An example of his very early work can be seen in a doorway at Langholm, Eskdale, built by Telford during his apprenticeship to a local stone mason. To give an idea of the extent of Thomas Telford's work still to be seen in Scotland, the following examples, are grouped into the different aspects of engineering he undertook there: Sea defence & harbour work are illustrated by Fortrose Harbour, on the north side of Moray Firth, and NE of Inverness. It was built in 1817 and is only 120 ft x 150 ft. Although repaired in 1881 it is still largely in its original state and is an excellent example of its genre. Another example of work with tidal waters is the Fleet Mound (In English, an embankment) constructed in 1813-16 as part of the improvement of the great road from Edinburgh to Thurso. There had to be passage for the waters of the River Fleet to escape into the sea, but salt water had to be prevented from going into the area of reclaimed land. Telford achieved this by having several of arches across the river, each with a flap door that opened for river water going out and closed when the tide came in. The resulting series of pulleys and chains had a Heath Robinson appearance but continued to work until 2004 when the system was modernised.

The stone bridge over River Oich showed the "dam" effect of multi-arch masonry bridges when a river runs high. Telford's single span bridges of iron eliminated this hazard. Craigellachie Bridge (built 1812-14) is an example. It spans the River Spey with a single arch of 150 ft. and a rise of 20ft. The design uses a prefabricated lozenge-lattice spandrel of cast iron - and designed by a man who was initially a stone mason! The ironwork was cast at Hazeldine's foundry at Ruabon, transported by sea to Speymouth and then by horse-drawn wagon to Craigellachie where it was erected on pre-erected centring. This was one of the sites where the AMSCE presented a plaque, the civic dignitaries of Moray Council were there and of course there had to be music - hence the picture of the piper in full regalia!

The Caledonian Canal was planned as a seagoing canal to provide a quicker and safer alternative to the hazardous route round the northern extremities of Scotland, it ran south-west from Beaully Firth on the East of Scotland to Fort William where it connected with Loch Linnhe leading to the Irish Sea. Surveyed by Telford in 1801, work began in 1804 with Jessop as consulting engineer. Although the distance between the two ends of the canal is 60 miles, 38 miles were through four Lochs, including Loch Ness, so that only 22 miles had to be constructed. The estimated cost was £474,000 but the final expenditure was £1.2 million.



Moy double turn bridge

© Geoffrey Starmer

A picture of the motor vessel “Jacobite Queen”, at Muirtown, on outskirts of Inverness, gave an idea of the size of vessel for which the canal was intended. The canal was built 110 ft wide at the top; 50 ft. wide at bottom, and 20 ft. in depth. A view of Dochgarroch Lock, one of 29 on the canal. 170 ft. long, 40 ft. wide, was another indication of the size of vessel which could use the canal. A Fort Augustus is a staircase of five locks giving a total lift of 40 ft. Also at Fort Augustus was a swing bridge, a 1930s replacement of the original one, carrying the road across the canal. There are no over-bridges on this canal so that sea-going sailing vessels were not impeded. In contrast to the large swing bridge, at Moy a track crosses the canal by a double turn-bridge, each section having to be turned separately by hand-winding. The mechanism here is still the Telford original. The final illustrations were of Neptune’s staircase, at Banavie, built 1808-11. This has 8 locks, giving a 64 ft. change in level. By the side of these locks is a very fine lock-keeper’s house. Designed by Telford - so from the extensive masonry of the locks to the gentler masonry of a domestic dwelling we have come back to where I started with Telford’s early work as a mason in Langholm.

AIA Conference for 2007: This was based in Preston, but took in the wider county of Lancashire. Steve told us that this is a classic area for industrial archaeology.

Lancashire has some very interesting transport archaeology. Road transport in particular features strongly in the visits, with Talbot Road Multi-Storey Car Park

in Blackpool (of 1939, said to be the first in the country), Preston Bus Station (of 1969), and the Leyland Commercial Vehicle Museum, being visited. Preston was where the UK's first stretch of motorway was built - the Preston by-pass - later part of the M6.

Water transport was represented by various visits to parts of the Leeds & Liverpool Canal, the Lancaster Canal, and the Sankey Navigation. John Rennie's 1797 Lune Aqueduct is particularly impressive, although it almost crippled the canal company at the time of its construction. This led to the stretch of the then proposed canal through Preston becoming a tramway, linking the northern and southern sections of the canal. Preston Docks and Glasson Docks also featured, although only Glasson is used commercially now.

Air transport is of great importance to the North West. A visit was made to the former Squires Gate Shadow Factory in Blackpool, where over 3000 Wellington Bombers were made, and also to BAE Systems at Salmesbury which still makes military aircraft parts. There was even a trip to the former Stanley Park Airport, now Blackpool Zoo, delegates attention being perhaps taken a little too much by the exotic birds and animals rather than by the remaining hangars!

Railways were not missed out. The Ribble Steam Railway is located on the old Preston Docks branch, and was formed after the closure of Steamport, Southport. The East Lancashire Railway, which celebrated its 20th anniversary in 2007, also got a look in.

However the largest emphasis was on the manufacturing industries of Lancashire, particularly textiles. Many textile sites were visited including the spectacular Queen Street Mill in Burnley. This is a must, if only to experience the sound of a weaving shed full of operating looms! A walk along the Leeds and Liverpool Canal in Burnley passed through the 'Weavers Triangle', an area still thick with mill buildings despite much disappearing due to demolition. At Grane Mill in Rossendale, the steam engine there has been lovingly restored by one man over the past 10 years. Other industries were represented, including restored Sedgwick gunpowder mill, and the 'World of Glass' museum, illustrating the history of glass manufacturing at St Helens.

However the visit to Blackpool will stay in the mind the most. Some went up the tower, others went on a guided walk around the town, mixing with Saturday afternoon holiday makers and various stag/hen parties!

Overall it was a good introduction to Lancashire industry. Despite initial concerns about the potential emphasis on the textile industry, the conference did try to show there is more to Lancashire than just cotton.



Railways Around Northamptonshire - 8th February 2008

Barry Taylor and Graham Onley presented a programme of slides on the railways of Northamptonshire, mostly taken during the 1960's when steam power was still evident. The railway system of the county, at its height, consisted of a network of north to south main lines, linked by a further selection of cross country routes, serving over 90 stations. Today of course the scene is completely different, with only five stations still open (six if Peterborough is included) and just the north-south lines still on the railway map, minus of course the closed Great central main line.

The evening began with a light hearted look at slides of two (almost anonymous!) railway enthusiasts of the 1960's, with not an anorak in sight!

Graham then took us on a tour of the lines around Northampton, starting from the long forgotten location of Rothersthorpe Crossing on the branch to Blisworth. The town was then approached via Duston West (where the Blisworth line was crossed by the later direct route from Roade), into the locomotive depot at Far Cotton, and around past the Gasworks and Carriage shed to Northampton Castle station, opened in its enlarged form in 1881 with the Roade line. After a brief look at the station itself, we moved on north under Spencer Bridge, past numerous signal boxes controlling the many junctions and sidings, and eventually to Kingsthorpe where the Rugby line parted company with the earlier route to Market Harborough.

Part two of the evening was presented by Barry, and consisted of a series of tours along forgotten branch line routes throughout the county. The original route from Blisworth was rejoined at Bridge Street, Northampton's first station opened in 1845, with a look also at the notorious level crossing which had delayed (and sometimes trapped unwary) road users for over 100 years until passenger services were withdrawn in 1964. The tour continued to Hardingstone Junction on the eastern outskirts of the town, where the 1872 Midland Railway branch to Bedford joined the original 1845 Blisworth - Northampton - Wellingborough - Peterborough line. A diversion was then made to view the Midland's station at St Johns Street, closed in 1939, and in the throes of demolition when the photographer arrived in 1960. After retracing our steps to Hardingstone Junction, the Bedford line was followed out of the town past the Houghtons, and through Piddington station, which is still extant and was the subject of a NIAG summer walk a few years ago. Also shown (and also visited by NIAG on the same walk) was Ravenstone Wood Junction where the remote SMJR line to Towcester left the Bedford branch.

Returning to our starting point at Hardingstone again, the Peterborough route was then followed, illustrated by Wellingborough's first station on London Road at Little Irchester, the small station at Ditchford, and more substantial locations of Irthlingborough and Thrapston, which even had a second station on the cross country route from Kettering to Huntingdon.

The SMJR route was then followed on its remote way from Ravenstone Wood, through Quinton and Stoke Bruerne to its crossroads at Towcester station, now the site of a Tesco store, and onwards through Blakesley and Woodford West Junction (where it connected to the Great Central) to Byfield.

With some earlier late running to recover, flying visits were made to Charwelton (again the subject of a recent NIAG summer walk) , Cransley and Loddington, Wellingborough Midland, Pitsford, Spratton, and Draughton, Roade and Blisworth, before finishing (more or less !) on time at Peterborough .

Barry Taylor



EAST ANGLIAN RAILTOUR 2008

WEDNESDAY JULY 16th

Members may recall that we attempted to organise this day out in 2007 but were frustrated by the derailment of a freight train near Ely which caused long term bridge damage and closure of the line. Apparently things are now back to normal, and it has been decided to try again this year on Wednesday 16th July.

The itinerary should be broadly the same as that planned for last year, but I will confirm this later once I have seen the summer timetables.

Essentially the day should start from Stamford station (free parking!) on the 08.57 through train to Ely via Peterborough and March. At Ely we will continue to Ipswich, passing through Bury St Edmunds and Stowmarket, and then on to Lowestoft by the East Suffolk line through Woodbridge, Saxmundham and Beccles. From Lowestoft we travel across the Broadland through Oulton Broad, Somerleyton, and Reedham to Norwich, where we then return to Ely via the Thetford line, thence back to Stamford as per our outbound journey arriving hopefully some time after 18.00hrs.

If the timetables do not permit the above, it may be possible to travel instead from Ipswich to Norwich directly along the main line, and then fit in a trip to Cromer / Sheringham and back instead of Lowestoft.

We will not be pausing anywhere for too long, although a lunch break should be possible somewhere (probably Ipswich or Norwich depending which itinerary) - so the day is mainly an opportunity to see the East Anglian countryside from the train.

Overall cost should be a maximum of about £25 - but this becomes £15 if you have a senior railcard - for a total of about 270 miles travel.

Members who are interested should please contact me preferably by email at barryr.taylor@btinternet.com, or by phone on 01536 713518 (or of course at any of the early NIAG summer events). I will then firm up on details and confirm the itinerary back to interested parties about two weeks before the trip.

Barry Taylor

Other Ironstone Mines in Northamptonshire.

During the discussion at the end of Alan Pack's presentation on the Irthlingborough Ironstone Mines, he was asked if there were other ironstone mines in Northamptonshire. He replied that there were seven but there was no time for him to elaborate so the following notes might be of interest:

Cogenhoe Mines were SSW of the village, south of the Cogenhoe-Grendon road. The railway connecting the mine and quarries with the Northampton - Peterborough railway, came down a steep incline to cross the Cogenhoe - Grendon road about ¼ mile east of Mill Lane in Cogenhoe. Apart from a reference in 1859 to mines here, information about iron ore working here is only about opencast working.

Cranford Mines were west of Cranford St. John and comprised a mine about ¾ mile north of the old Kettering - Thrapston road, and one about ¼ mile south of that road. They were served by metre gauge railways, both tipping at separate tipping docks on the south side of a siding south of the Kettering - Huntingdon railway line. The remains of the latter have been obliterated by the construction of the A14 road.

The **Islip Iron Co.** had a number of separate Mines, each with their own entrances and ventilation systems.

Unlike the Irthlingborough system, and presumably the other Northamptonshire iron ore mines, which were laid out with roads and headings on a rectangular pattern, the Islip underground workings were on a lozenge-shaped pattern, probably due to the Company hiring a German mine engineer who adopted the same layout as used in the mines in the Lorraine. The railways underground were of 2ft 6in gauge and at tipping docks outside the entrance to each mine, the mine wagons tipped into wagons on the 3 ft gauge lines for transport to the blast furnaces on the south side of the Kettering to Thrapston road, adjacent to the Kettering-Huntingdon railway line. The mines were:-

Church Mine South lay to the west of the bridle way which heads north from the road to Slipton, soon after the latter leaves the old Kettering -Thrapston road. The mine extended northwards as far as the right angle bend in the bridle way. The entrance to the mine was from an earlier open-cast quarry in the angle between the Slipton road and the bridleway. In the 1960s NIAG considered exploring this mine but the quarry had been used for dumping all kinds of rubbish and was also flooded so we considered it too unsavoury to attempt to get inside. Very good plans of the underground workings exist at the Northamptonshire Record Office.

Church Mine North was on the east side of the bridle way and extended from Islip Lodge northwards just a short distance before being level with Drayton House. The entrance was at the north east end of the mine and was served by the Islip Co.'s line to its Lowick quarries. The ventilation shaft in NIAG's 2001 Guide to the County's Industrial Heritage served this mine.

Willow Close Mine extended almost $\frac{3}{4}$ mile west from the Slipton - Sudborough road, and northwards from about $\frac{1}{4}$ mile north of Slipton village. The entrance and tipping dock were on the east side of the road. In 1981, a few NIAG members combined with members of the Wellingborough Caving Club, this time equipped with hard hats and cavers' lighting equipment, were able to explore the southern part of the underground workings. Access was through a small, almost vertical, hole opened up by erosion after a period of very wet weather, but once in the workings proper we were surprised at their height and width.

The northern edge of the Willow Close workings were contiguous with **Crops Acre Mine** which extended northwards to be level with Slipton Lodge, and had its own entrance on the west side of the Slipton - Sudborough road, just over $\frac{1}{4}$ mile north of the Willow Close entrance.

Woodfield Mine entrance was about $\frac{1}{4}$ mile east of the Slipton and Sudborough road. Its south-east corner was just north of Home farm on the Drayton estate and its east boundary was only about $\frac{1}{2}$ mile from Drayton House itself.

Wellingborough Iron Co. Ltd. Mines were east of the Wellingborough - Finedon Road. **Glebe Mines** and **Thingdon Mines** together extended to less than $\frac{1}{4}$ mile short of Nevilles Lodge; the southern edge was about $\frac{3}{4}$ mile north of the kink in Sidegate Lane and reached northwards to the SW side of the A6 south-east of Finedon. The northern part (an extension of an earlier and unsatisfactory mine worked by Walter Neilson from 1908 to 1910) was known as Thingdon Mines, the larger southern part was known as Glebe Mines. In about 1975 a group from NIAG on a Saturday afternoon informal walk came across the adits to Thingdon Mines and without proper lights, headgear and footwear decided to explore - but not for long, and sadly not having photo flash equipment on an afternoon walk, no photos were taken. Some weeks later two children entered one of the adits and got lost. After spending the night in the mine they were found the next day. The adits were immediately securely blocked! Although the two mines seem to have been contiguous, each had its own set of entrance adits with 2ft 4in. gauge mine wagons discharging into metre gauge wagons for taking the ore to the blast furnaces at Wellingborough Iron Works. A third, and much smaller mine was **Carrol Spring** (taking its name from the nearby Carrol Spring farm) on the north side of Sidegate Lane.

Woodford Mines had entrance adits immediately north of the old Kettering - Thrapston road, about mid-way between its junction with the A510 (Finedon - A14 road) and the turn to Raunds. The narrow gauge railway tubs from the mine tipped into standard gauge wagons on the Woodford Iron Ore Co.'s railway to Twywell station on the Kettering - Huntingdon line.

Geoffrey Starmer



Book Review

A History of the County of Northampton - Volume VI Modern Industry Published December 2007

This latest VCH volume initially seems to be an improvement on its five predecessors. Weighing just under 1 kg, with the previous volumes at over 2 kg each, it is going to be easy and convenient to handle. The absence of an erratum slip should be noted. The area covered follows the original VCH remit of Northamptonshire and Soke of Peterborough. Without an introductory explanation the reason for this may not be apparent to 21st century readers. The local government changes of 1965-1975 are ancient history now. The main text seems well up to VCH standard, but there are glitches. You have been warned. Take the Introductory Chapter: Barnack is not southwest of Stamford, and VCH Vol. III dates from 1930 not 1903.

The period covered, 1800 to 2005 could have usefully started in 1750. The almost continuous late 18th century warfare and its effects on the population as well as its stimulus to embryo industries could have been noted. This would have been a useful comparison to the high-tech industrial developments of the 1940-1955 period which some of us have witnessed in person.

The departure of Charles Insley to Kent in 2004 seems to have added to the problems of the VCH Trust in Northamptonshire. Three names appear on the title page, but Dr. Insley is not named. His contribution is however credited in the Chairman's Foreword. He is also credited at the top of sections which include his work. The Editorial Note names so many people who contributed to assembling each others work that this reviewer suspects a lack of firm editorial guidance. Consider just three of the introductory sections.

- a. The Chairman's Foreword gives a list of financial backers without separating individuals from trusts bearing personal names. Evidence for lack of vetting is that the Francis Coales Trust appears simply as Francis Coales.
- b. Maps do not have their own map numbers. Although listed separately, Maps and Illustrations use one set of Fig. numbers running Fig. 1 to Fig 74. Queries can be raised for at least six of the eight maps. Why do Norton Junction and Gayton Junction appear on Fig. 14 called Railways in 1930? In Fig. 39 Quarries, only sites in central Northants appear, there is no mention of Easton on the Hill or Hellidon/Charwelton.
- c. The Illustrations List shows both poor vetting and lack of textual co-ordination at its worst. This is without considering picture content. Fig. 10 is incorrectly titled Harrington Viaduct although its source at NRO P3253 is indexed at Harringworth. Fig.25 is labelled on Wellington Road but the relevant text description is Wellingborough Rd. And the listing

for Figs. 44 and 48 quotes the source as Greenhall! The picture caption prize must go to Fig.40 Ironstone Quarry. This must be building stone because of the stone blocks and lifting gear visible. Tracking its source to a John Steane article in NPP the location is out of County in Rutland.

The main text gives a fair account of industry in the County. Dedicated Industrial Archaeologists, and others, might prefer to see more detail relating to their own special interests. Do remember that Volume VI is intended to be a definitive overview of 200 years of industrial change. The closing sections of the book, Bibliography, and Index are the best of the whole compilation.

In this review only some of the obvious errors have been listed. There are others in the various sections discussed. No doubt vigilant scrutiny will find errors that this reviewer has missed. A decent proof reader with knowledge of Northamptonshire would have made this book better value. Perhaps VCH should enlist a bright sixth former as soon as possible. My conclusion is that lack of a single co-ordinating editor and minimal proof reading detract from the value of this reference book. It is definitely a curates egg. Caveat emptor. At full retail price it is expensive. The good news is that Amazon offer a better price than the printers discounted price to societies. The VCH must get a grip on its editors and ensure that the next volume, Corby, is better value than Vol VI.

Sceptical Chymist

I have to say that on a quick 'flick' through this tome I did wonder at some of the figures and couldn't work out what Gayton and Norton junctions had to do with the railways! Sounds to me, and I am no academic, that this volume contains loads of mistakes and not much about the 'modern industry'. Was anything mentioned about the Plessey company?. Ed.

Another view

Peter Mounfield writes that a couple of chapters and sections have been written by him (footwear and leather). It may be useful for members to know that at the mounfieldpublications.com website members can find similar material plus listings (as comprehensive as he has been able to make them) of footwear manufacturing concerns in the county in 1911 and 1923. He is putting these lists in the public domain in the hope that they will be useful of other researchers and to members looking at particular localities. Feedback would be welcome, especially additional detail. Peter can be contacted by email at pandp@mounfield.wanadoo.co.uk.

There is a related matter. There are a couple of references in sections of Volume VI written by Charles Insley, to "The Beaver Collection". This is material of the late Professor Stanley Beaver gifted to Peter by the S.H. Beaver Trust. He has tried to get this into the NRO, but without success, and it now sits in the VCH archives. It includes items such as copies of Beaver's M.A. dissertation on the iron industry. Members wishing to access this may get a helpful response by contacting

Kerry.Whitston@sas.ac.uk (Tel 020 7862 8779). She is the VCH Production Manager.

I wonder why the Record Office don't want this information since it would appear to relate to Northamptonshire. Perhaps a question should be raised? Ed.



Miscellany of items of interest

What the Papers say - and get it wrong!

The Evening Telegraph for 3 November 2007 had a two page feature headed "Remember When" which gave reasonable coverage of the efforts of Trevor Stainwright, of Wilby, to restore the waterwheel of Turnell's mill at Wellingborough. However, across the top of the two pages was "*There used to be 141 watermills in Northamptonshire. Now this is the only county in the East Midlands and East Anglia where there is no preserved watermill whatsoever*".

In 1970 investigation by NIAG found information on 166 watermills in the County. Since that time, further research has resulted in substantial information on over 260 sites where there has been a watermill and we are aware that there are still more to be discovered, particularly those likely to be located by the County's Archaeological Services. From where comes the ET's number of 141 watermills? It is the number of sites selected for a survey made in 2001 for the County Council where there could be planning implications.

The statement "*there is no preserved watermill whatsoever in the county*" is not true. Assuming that "*preserved*" means that the machinery is still intact, there are at least three in the county that come into that category although in two cases, their water courses have been altered by public authorities. In addition, King's Cliffe Mill has had its waterwheel reinstated and although there is no milling machinery, it will be used for electricity generation. It is a pity that the ET is so disparaging about the mill at Billing. There is hardly another mill in the whole of the Country where one can call in at virtually any reasonable time and have the waterwheel put in motion and see the primary drive gearing working. This is appreciated by many mill enthusiasts from outside Northamptonshire, and if the brewery company owning Billing Mill pub sees that their efforts in keeping the mill machinery intact are not appreciated, they may throw it out.

It is also worrying Trevor Stainwright's "*Northamptonshire Windmills*" book, excellent in its way, is described as the **definitive book** on the County's mills. It covers only 78 of the 287 wind mills known in the county, on 119 of which considerable information has been found. Further research will probably increase the latter number.

Geoffrey Starmer



Of This and That

Dates for the Diary:

- 2nd May Commencement of Summer Programme - Please see enclosed listing.
- 10th May Saturday Heritage Day at Sneinton. In association with EMIAC.
- 7/8th June weekend event Annual Friends Weekend. The Friends of the National Waterways Museum, Stoke Bruerne hold this event. The 1940's will this year be the theme, in preparation of a village event later in October. Visiting Commercial Narrow Boats are expected, en route to the Braunston gathering which takes place a fortnight later. All are welcome to visit and it is hoped to see the recently cleaned up Museum.
- 12th to 20th July 9 days National Archaeology Week - excavations open days, tours, workshops.
Contact: Sophie Cringle, Marketing & Events Officer, CBA, St. Mary's House, 66 Bootham, York, YO30 7BZ.
Tel: 01904 671417. e-mail: naw@britarch.ac.uk
- 18th October Saturday Heritage Day (EMIAC) - Wellingborough. A joint venture between NIAG and NALH with the Wellingborough Archaeological & Historical Society doing the hosting.

TV Programme:

- Channel 5 Monday's at 7.30 pm - 'How do they do it?' - Robert Llewellyn (*he of Scrapheap Challenge fame*) hosts a variety of everyday tasks. 10 programmes and you may just catch the last three or four.
- Channel 5 Wednesday's at 8.00 pm - 'Megastructures' - Repeat series.

Books:

English Heritage have brought out three books on Liverpool - priced at £7.99 and in paperback

1. Building a Better Society - Liverpool's Historic Institutional Buildings by Colum Giles
2. Built on Commerce - Liverpool's Central Business District by Joseph Sharples and John Stonard

3. Religion and Place: Liverpool's Historic Places of Worship by Sarah Brown and Peter de Figueredo.

Two further publications are due out in July and September respectively:

1. Places of Health and Amusement: Liverpool's Historic Parks and Gardens by Katy Layton-Jones and Robert Lee
2. Ordinary Landscapes: Special Places: Anfield, Breckfield and the growth of Liverpool's suburbs by Adam Menuge.

Did you know?

3281 is the number of reels of microfilm the National Archives of Ireland will digitise and transcribe as part of the 1911 census of Ireland project.

There were 35 million people in the 1911 census for England and Wales

In the summer of 1898 the Great Eastern Railways carried 60,000 bicycles into and out of Liverpool Street Station.

1861 Postal Statistics show that between 1854 and 1864 there was a 53% increase in postal traffic. 1854: 443,000 / 1864: 679,085 letters were posted.

3,386,167 women were registered as domestic servants in the 1891 census for England and Wales.

750,000 is the number of copies of legal and historical documents made annually by the National Archives of Scotland.

The number of recruits who belonged to the WRAF and its fellow female service organisations in mid 1918 was 25,000

Taken from the Who Do You Think You Are magazines Feb to April 08.

The first census was taken in England & Wales, and a separate one in Scotland, on 10th March 1801. The reason was to discover the extent of the population, which it was feared was outstripping the country's ability to support it. Names were not recorded and few copies have survived.

Taken from the Your Family Tree magazine March 08.

Seen recently:

In the current issue of Current Archaeology (No.216) I happened to notice in one of the columns an interesting little tit-bit which it could be arguably discussed "*are politicians the right people to look after our heritage?*" or "*Do politicians have a clue about our heritage?*" The short article was about 'Vernacular salvage - the latest architectural style' and the author discussed the near removal of grading to a building which had in fact been built during 1924 from genuinely ancient materials. The author carries on and I quote:

"2007 was also the year that almost saw the listing of a non-existent building. When Tessa Jowell, then Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, refused

to list Undershaw, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's house near Hindhead, in Surrey, she wrote to the Guardian newspaper to justify her position, saying that '*The building most closely associated with Sherlock Holmes is 221b Baker Street. I would be only too pleased to consider that building Grade 1 should such a request come forward*'. Nobody is quite sure whether the same politician, who one confused Isambard Kingdom Brunel with the Islamic Kingdom of Brunei, realised that the Baker Street address is fictional" !!

Also in the same magazine is an excellent article about Neil Cossings who has just completed a seven year stint as Chairman of English Heritage and who has been a driving force throughout his life behind some of the great industrial schemes in this country. St Pancras, Ironbridge, Chatham dockyard to name just a few. He is also a founder member of the AIA and TICCIH.

Noted in the English Heritage Conservation magazine was a short note about the recent flooding at Ironbridge. Apparently the watercourses in Coalbrookdale flooded three times, on the 19th June, 25th June and again on the 20th July in 2007. Up to 60 properties including listed and parts of the museum complex were flooded, resulting in massive clean-up costs to remove silt and contamination. The initial costs to the Museums are in the order of £66,000 with an estimated £100,000 for the next stage costs. An emergency plan for the museum worked well. A particular problem would appear to be that silt deposition in the watercourse since 1995 has raised the level of the water above that of the surrounding cottages. It is understood that the local authority are meeting with the Environment Agency to assess the amount of this silt and debris along the length of the watercourse and how it can be best removed to prevent further flooding in the future.

Ed.



From past Newsletters

Watermills

Alan Teulon reports that in the first week of December the Turnell's Mill waterwheel (which had stood isolated in its wheelrace for many years after the rest of the mill had been demolish) was in two sections standing by the fence at the roundabout giving access to the new A45 road south of the A509 Wellingborough to Newport Pagnell road.

Issue 7 - December 1981

According to issue 9 - June 1982, the waterwheel was still standing and was still in its original wheel pit on the old mill site. The wheel is at reference SP 898663 and could be seen to advantage from the new A45 when travelling west.

Is it still there? Please let me know with photographs if possible. Ed.

PLEASE NOTE

WALES TRIP - JUNE 2008



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We are sorry to announce that the proposed trip to Wales is cancelled due to very few members wishing to come along.

We will, however, earmark this trip for June 2009 and to that end will be putting together this year a programme for members to enjoy. If you are interested in coming to look at what Wales has to offer in the way of industrial heritage, then keep the beginning of June fairly free.

The photograph above shows Glan Dena, the cottage belonging to Midland Association of Mountaineers, where we are members and it would be here that we would make our base.

Jane & Terry Waterfield



And Finally:

**So Geographers in Afric-Maps
With Savage Pictures fill their gaps
And o'er uninhabitable Downs
Place Elephants for want of Towns**

Jonathan Swift (1667-1745): On poetry: A Rhapsody.

NIAG Committee

President: Geoffrey Starmer, 34 The Crescent, Northampton,
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Chairman & Secretary Peter Perkins, Eastfields Farmhouse, Manor Road, Rushton,
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Members: Steve Miles, Barry Taylor and Terry Waterfield

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Newsletter:

Next Issue: **July 2008**

Deadline for all articles and information **20th June 2008**. 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 and 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 and don't forget to put a caption with them.