



NORTHAMPTONSHIRE
INDUSTRIAL ARCHAEOLOGY
GROUP

NEWSLETTER



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From the Editor

Sitting down after Christmas to write this introduction it is time to reflect on the past year. NIAG has undoubtedly had a good year in that the walks were well attended and the winter talks at both ends of the year excellent. The recent AGM saw 40 or so members attend and the lecture following by Steve Miles was both fascinating and informative, a report of this will be included in a later issue. For those not at the AGM there is an important report for members from our Treasurer on the financial state of the Group. The committee as always is working hard on your behalf to ensure that all aspects of our membership remain – outside forces in many guises throw up many spanners, and not least of which are costs. The aim is to carry on whatever these outside forces throw at us.

Please note that there is an important announcement about our web-site on page 22 with a name change being made at the end of December.

We had an excellent round of walks and visits this summer and the last of these reports are in this newsletter. Thank you again for all your input and keep sending in articles which helps to keep the newsletter interesting and fills in gaps when needed. It should be said that they do not have to be Northamptonshire – it's always interesting to learn about other areas with an industrial content.

With all the 'wonderful' news reports at the moment I have now resorted to thinking temperatures in the good old fashioned Fahrenheit – looks and sounds so much better than Celsius. It never fails to amaze me how the intense cold manages to 'catch' the authorities on the hop!. Having been to Trier in Germany in the last couple of weeks, before this last spate of snow, we were told by the hotel owner that they had had eight inches of snow a couple of days before we arrived. Looking around the hotel car park and then the town there was no evidence whatsoever that any snow had fallen – it was not until we went out for a meal at a winery, a fifteen minute bus ride away, that we saw any evidence of snow and this only on the sides of both paths and roads. Our journey across, France, Belgium and Germany was good, OK the roads were dirty – spray etc. but the snow had been swept off all the main roads, which included all the 'pull off' areas. Only the tracks and narrow lanes leading to farms, etc. were still covered. On the way home we had an extra day at Calais and spent a few hours having a very bracing walk along the sands of Dunkirk and looking at some of the gun emplacements which litter this part of the coast. The sun was out, it was cold, but enjoyable, the sea was a cold blue with a really wintery sky. The light for taking photos was fantastic and half way through taking some shots the battery in my camera failed! Got to go back – and this time in the summer/autumn and ensure that the batteries are charged!!

A slightly warmer morning for feeding the birds on the Christmas Bank Holiday so with the winter solstice now passed, we can look forward to better weather, but I suspect there will be a lot more snow before we are finally done with Winter.

Take care, keep warm and a very happy New Year to you all.

Jane Waterfield

2010 SUMMER WALKS AND VISITS

continued

Brackley Town – Friday 2nd July

It has been many years since I've been into Brackley town - used the bypass many times but never into the town itself - so it was with great surprise to see the buildings of the large timber yard/saw mill standing in ruins. The soap manufacturer Bronnley is still there - did you know their first factory in Brackley was in a former brewery, moving there when a fire destroyed their Acton factory. The buildings of the former Great Central Railway are still in use; we were to learn later that the entrance to the goods yard has a series of metal strips set in the concrete to protect the road surface when tanks were being delivered from the station to Silverstone during the war.

We met our guide Max Garratt, a member of Brackley History Society, outside the town hall, where coincidentally the council was holding a meeting to discuss the proposed route of HS2 in the vicinity of Brackley. In Saxon times the town was centred on the church close to the site of the mill; the current road layout dating from the building of the turnpikes. Two major families had a hand in the modern development of the town: the Ellesmere family and the Bridgewater family. The present Town Hall, originally called the Market House, was built in 1707 and sold to the Town for a shilling by the Duke of Bridgewater.



Stable Yard entrance © Terry Waterfield 2010

One of Ellesmere's influence can be seen in the black and white half-timbered buildings that are to be found in Brackley; one such example is the building which stands on the corner of the old Banbury turnpike; this was built in 1895. From the southern end of the Market Place the locations of the LNWR station, the corn mill and the gas works were pointed out - the latter now the site of a supermarket. The house where Flora Thompson, of *Lark Rise to Candleford* fame, grew up and lived for many years, was also pointed out to us.

Old Brewery Walk leads into a modern small housing estate; the archway and the adjoining building on the street front are the only Brewery remains of Hopcraft and

Norris.

Where the old meets the new we found a pair of wooden gate posts on which were hanging two iron gates; from the end of the Walk we could look down the line of the 'Barrel Run' between the back of the brewery and the old LNWR station from where the beer was shipped to all stations.

Beside the Town Hall stands the property once owned by George Augustus Campbell; a grand house at the front stretching back to a range of domestic rooms and ultimately a stable yard. Although the stables have been renovated and converted into small business units, their origins are still quite clear with much of the original brickwork.

Walking up the Market Place we observed the detail on the premises - the old brick work, wooden lintels; a restaurant had recently removed the rendering to reveal carved stone work. A modern square has been created where once stood Burgess, Agricultural Machinery and repair workshop - the showroom (now Costa Coffee) was built as a school in 1840 by the Countess of Ellesmere, then became the Town Reading Room and finally part of the ironmongers and agricultural machinery shop eventually taken over by Burgess. A stone pillar adjoins the Plough pub, all that remains of an archway removed when the Buckingham Road was widened.

The Fire Station built in 1887 now stands empty, the Fire Service having moved to a new location on the old railway station site. The building that once housed the appliance(s) had doors at each end, as in a modern building, to allow the appliance to enter from the rear and be driven out through the front door on its way to a fire. But interestingly, there did not appear to be a road way or other access to the rear door.

Across the park lies the heart of the Saxon town. At the northern end of the park stands the cottage hospital; when built only doctors practising within the town could send their patients to the hospital. A certain Dr Rickards had his surgery out of town and wanted to refer his patients to the hospital but was refused. After much to-ing and fro-ing he eventually moved his practice into the town so that he could use the services of the hospital. The story goes that most of the medical staff then left the hospital and set up another facility on the high street facing the park.

We crossed the High Street to return towards town centre. Winchester House School now occupies what was once a manor house built by the Bridgewater; next door stands an imposing estate house, probably occupied by a manager or steward, the cast iron down pipes bearing the initials BT - Bridgewater Trust. The entrance to the school grounds is flanked by two stone pillars, each one showing signs of something being affixed to them in times gone by and a smooth recess at about shoulder height. Closer examination revealed that across the left hand hollow was the word servants and in the other one the word estate could be discerned; were there two bell pulls originally, one for the servants quarters and the other for the family/estate?

The gem of the evening must surely be finding the last remaining town farm; the house fronts on to the high street but by turning into the side road by another half timbered building and redundant church we were able to appreciate the size of this farm by its extensive range of barns and outhouses. Sad to say the 'farm' is up for sale with possible planning permission for quite a number of houses.



The last Town Farm in Brackley

© Jane Waterfield 2010

Our walk finished by looking at the site of Belcoves brewery. This is certainly a pleasant town to walk round as there is so much history in its buildings and behind modern facades.

Terry and Jane Waterfield



Watford Locks – Friday 9th July

On a very warm summer evening, 14 members gathered at the bridge taking the Watford to Kilsby road over the Leicester line of the Grand Union Canal and walked south along the tow-path to Watford locks. Disappointingly, the locks are now closed at 7pm so there was no traffic using them.

The canal was built to link the Grand Junction Canal at Norton Junction with the Soar Navigation at Leicester and opened in 1814. The Watford flight of locks is composed of seven narrow locks (Nos 1 to 7) organised into one central staircase

group of four inter-connected locks (Nos 3 to 6) and three single locks, one above the flight (No 7) and two below (Nos 1 & 2), all of which were linked to large side ponds. The configuration of the staircase lock has the top gate of one lock forming the bottom gate of the next lock. All the waste water passes through a controlling paddle into a series of terraced retaining ponds cut into the hillside next to the locks. North of the top lock, the canal is level for 22 miles until it reaches the top of the Foxton flight in Leicestershire.



Bridge carrying the West Coast mainline over the canal

© Terry Waterfield 2010

Just below lock 2, we noted the milepost at the edge of tow-path carrying the following wording: *GJCCo Leicester 39 miles*. Curiously there was a ¼ mile marker near the top lock – barely 200 yards away! At the bottom lock we also noted the pump house which takes in water and pumps it back into the canal above the top lock to conserve supplies further.

Walking southwards we came to the bridge carrying the B4036 over the canal near Watford Gap Services which has been widened by adding concrete spans each side of the original brick arch. A few hundred yards further on we reached the bridge carrying the West Coast mainline over the canal at an acute angle, thus effectively making the bridge into a canal tunnel some 200 feet long. The central part of the bridge has been rebuilt with modern concrete beams, presumably when the West Coast mainline was electrified. However, each end of the bridge has been rebuilt to accommodate 4 bays of shallow brick barrel-vaulting supported on cast iron beams and what appears to be the original façade of cast iron beams containing classical decoration, supported by stone piers with a cast iron balustrade above, all of which dates from the 1830s when the London & Birmingham Railway was built. Returning to the B4036, we crossed the noisy M1 and took a footpath across the adjacent field towards Watford village. There was what appeared to a slight hollow-way which we thought may have been an earlier route to Watford from Watling Street. However, there was evidence of dumping in this area so it may

have been a red herring! We circumvented the walls and parkland which once formed Watford Court, the house built 1568 for Richard & Anne Burnaby but demolished in 1974. (We were given a tour of this area back in 2001 by Chris Addison – see Newsletter no 83.) Thus we returned on the road to the bridge over the canal from which we started.

Peter Perkins



Northampton Railway Walk – Friday 16th July

A substantial group of NIAG members gathered together on the evening of 16th July for a Northampton railway and canal walk, in memory of the late Jan Fajkus who had twice been thwarted by thunderstorms when trying to complete previous walks in this area. Fortunately on this occasion, the weather was more benign and we were able to enjoy a pleasant ramble, starting with an examination from the roadside of the original London & North Western railway locomotive shed, which is the only remaining building on what was previously the Bridge Street station site. We then followed the towpath of the Northampton arm of the Grand Junction canal westwards, passing the site of the later locomotive depot and the triangle of railway junctions that once surrounded it. The only survivor of these lines is the eastern curve which links Duston North Junction with Bridge Street Junction and station, but this is now disused and disconnected from the main line at Castle station, and truncated at Bridge Street road crossing. The canal was followed further until the Duston West area was reached, where the ‘new’ 1881 railway route into Northampton crosses above, close to a set of canal locks. A little further the canal was crossed on a typical curved GJ style bridge, where several early stone railway sleepers set into the canal bank were examined.



A somewhat damaged container in the yard at Carlsberg brewery.

© Terry Waterfield 2010

Our return route was across fields that were once described as ‘liable to flood’, but now contain a network of footpaths which connect Far Cotton, St. James and Duston. A small section of the St. James retail park was unavoidably a brief part of our route, before passing around

a loop that followed a short part of the Brampton Arm of the River Nene past the back of the old gasworks site and the modern Carlsberg Brewery, which had itself replaced the original Phipps and NBC sites some 40 years before. We emerged by

South Bridge opposite the junction of the Nene and canal, and were able to see across the river the former wharf that once served the small industries and timber yards of Old Towcester Road. We then returned to our starting point past the still operational Matthew's foundry, and the fortunately preserved Midland Railway goods depot buildings.

Barry Taylor



Helmdon Village and Viaduct walk – Friday 23rd July

Another fine evening on July 23rd again saw a large group of NIAG members travel down to the south Northamptonshire village of Helmdon. The village once supported lacemaking and quarrying industries as well as the usual local agricultural activities, but from the mid 1870s had to endure two periods of invasion and upheaval caused by the construction of two railways through the area.

The first, in 1873, was the Northampton & Banbury Junction Railway, later better known as the 'SMJ' which managed to reach neither of those two towns with its own rails. The line started from Blisworth and had reached just beyond Towcester by 1866, when funds ran out and construction stopped. The line was completed as far as Cockley Brake Junction in 1873, where trains were able to use the LNWR route from Bletchley to access Banbury. However, the route was an early casualty, closing to passengers in 1951, and the track being lifted soon after. However, the small station at the north end of the village was soon taken over by Jeff's Coaches, and although the site has been redeveloped over the intervening years, the original goods shed still survives.

After walking through part of the village a footpath took us across fields to the trackbed of the NBJR route at the point where it passed under the later Great Central Railway route, which at that point was carried across the valley on a large blue brick viaduct. Construction of the GC started in the mid 1890s and brought much employment to the surrounding area, and for a time Helmdon was connected directly with London Marylebone station and Rugby, Leicester, Nottingham, Sheffield and Manchester by express trains. However, this was not to last, and by the 1960s the GC was considered a 'duplicate' route, eventually closing in 1966.

Fortunately the viaduct remains, and we were able to ascend the embankment and walk across the massive structure, which is still in remarkably sound condition. The walk continued as planned along the trackbed towards the second of Helmdon's stations at the south end of the village, where the remains of the typical GC line platform layout, and the surviving stationmaster's house and adjacent goods shed could still be seen through much undergrowth. It was then realised that the road bridge above the station could still be reached by clambering up the cutting side, which we did and then continued down through Helmdon village to take a last look at the SMJ station site.

Barry Taylor

Deanshanger – Friday 30th July

A trip around Deanshanger is part the story of a village, a parish, a forest, and of the seemingly ubiquitous Roberts family (whether split between the Smithy Roberts, the Foundry Roberts or the Cycle-works Roberts or, alternatively, the Anglican Roberts, the Baptist Roberts, or the Methodist Roberts). As a village, a map of around 1610 shows a cluster of houses around a village green through which flowed a small stream, together with a nascent development just to the north – nowadays known as ‘Little London’ – and it was around the loop of roads circling the former green that our guide, Jennie Dott, secretary of the Deanshanger Village Heritage Society, led us.

As a parish, Deanshanger is, ecclesiastically, part of the large parish of Passenham (although, administratively, Passenham and Old Stratford were lopped off in 1951).

Passenham was the traditional centre with manor, mill and parish church. A third village in the parish, Puxley, developed to the north-east and was important in the middle-ages as the home of the Royal Forester. Thus in around 1300 there were three centres of perhaps equal size, with Deanshanger occupying in island of sand and gravel left behind by the Anglian glaciation of 470-350 thousand years ago amid a sea of clay soils. The enclosure and de-population of Puxley around 1500 and of Passenham in 1600-1650 served to concentrate population into Deanshanger which, with a friendly geological base, perched beside a forest and two miles from the market of Stony Stratford, gave classic conditions for the development of early industry.

Taking an anti-clockwise circuit of High Street, Church Lane and Village Green we ought to have started with Willow Farm, one of the farms which bordered the central area at the time of enclosure in 1772, but we were sixty years too late to have seen it. However, Gurden’s, Home, Manor Farm and the Manor house remain to remind us of an agrarian past. The line of the Buckingham branch of the Grand Junction canal can also be traced, left as a broad walk-way through the village. The canal came in 1801 but more significant for us was the arrival of Richard Roberts in 1820. The remaining foundry building – the finishing or ‘fettling’ shop of foundry days, the laboratory during the site’s life as the Red Oxide works (1935-1999) - has had an uncertain status of late, Persimmon homes having wanted to demolish and cover the lot with their housing estate. It is now in the hands of a local developer with a track-record of working with, rather than against, older buildings and is expected to be converted to housing. Otherwise, the industrial legacy lingers only in the retained line of the canal and of the choice of street names for the site’s housing development. Various Roberts homes were pointed out as we walked around, several of them distinguished by a curious Roberts predilection for decorative chimney pots. Surely someone out there will one day do a thesis on ‘decorative chimney pots and the decline of British industry’?



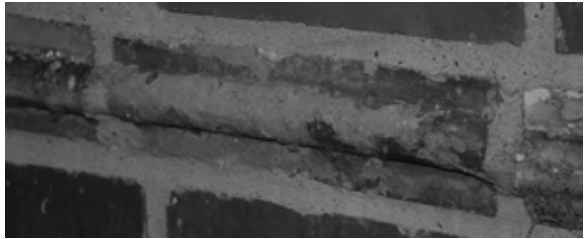
Roberts' chimney pots © Jane Waterfield 2010

Where we swung left from High Street into Church Lane, a view up to Little London shows one of the peculiarities of Deanshanger and surrounding villages – the sharp transition from historic centre to 1960s development. One has the impression that the 1930s never quite happened here. The foundry closed in 1927, and the 1930s saw de-population and demolition of old, thatched, cottages but no replacement with the 1930s semis that line the streets of surrounding towns - including Old Stratford, just a mile away. Council house devel-

opment at Little London came just before the Second World War but the real exception to the 30s slump was the brewers. Charles Wells acquired the Beehive in 1926; Phipps re-built The Woodman in the 1930s and Aylesbury Brewery Co re-built the Rose & Crown in 1939 to serve the expanding Little London.

We paused at the Post Office to note the Deanshanger bricks re-used in its extension, with curious protruding eyelets identified as being meant for threading wire through for the benefit of climbing plants on garden walling. Further down

Chapel Lane, the courses of yellow bricks at Chapel Terrace are further evidence of local brick-making. With the parish 'centred' on Passenham, Deanshanger had to wait until 1853 to get its parish church, with the cost met according to some



Special bricks for climbing plants © Terry Waterfield 2010

sources from a local appeal, whilst others attribute the bulk of the funding to the presence at near-by Wicken Park of Baron Penrhyn, for whom the £2,300 cost would have been about five days' income. The ownership of 5,377 Northamptonshire acres by the Penrhyn's struggles to match the more esoteric local connection of the fifth Baron Penrhyn, winner of the 1908 Grand National on the 66-1 outsider 'Rubio', a nag who'd previously served time between the shafts of the omnibus belonging to a Towcester hotel. Besides the slate connection, Deanshanger can also boast of a coal mining link, in the form of its vicar from 1870 until his death in 1915, George Marie Capell, holder of thirty patents for the

development of ventilation fans. In the 1860s, coal mines moved from the use of furnace ventilation to centrifugal fans, with the Capell fan part of the development of smaller, faster, fans in the 1870-1900 period. A Capell fan remains in-situ at Woodhorn Colliery Museum in Northumberland although the wording on their website is a bit of a downer about our local man's fan: *'it was found to be inadequate in 1916 following the explosion which killed 13 men'*.

Matthew Nayler



Nene Valley Railway, Peterborough – Saturday 7th August

A small party gathered in the car park at Orton Mere near Peterborough for the last of the summer meets programme for 2010. The intention being to walk into Peterborough along the path parallel to the Nene Valley Railway followed by a ride on the railway to Yarwell and back.

The railway once formed part of the London and Birmingham Railway line from Blisworth to Peterborough. The Act for the construction of the Northampton and Peterborough Railway received Royal Assent on 4th July 1843, and was opened to traffic on the 2nd June 1845, being the first railway to reach Peterborough. On 16th July 1846 the line became part of the London and North Western Railway network.

Closure came on 2nd May 1964 except for the Yarwell Junction to Peterborough section which was also part of the Rugby to Peterborough line. After complete closure in 1970 part of the line was taken over by the Nene Valley Railway and the first section from Wansford to Orton Mere reopened as a preserved railway in 1977.

We followed the path which runs alongside the now preserved railway to its terminus at Peterborough NVR station. Shortly after leaving Orton Mere station the path crossed the railway line close to Longville Junction, the point where the single track connection to Fletton Junction on the east coast main line diverges. This line was opened on 2nd July 1883 by the Great Northern Railway and was originally used by their passenger service from Peterborough to Leicester Belgrave Road. This service was withdrawn in 1916 and Longville Junction was closed in December 1929, after which the line was worked as a siding from Fletton Junction. The junction was reinstated in



Signals near Peterborough

© Jane Waterfield 2010

1947 only to be removed again in about 1961 and to be reinstated yet again by the Peterborough Railway Society in 1974.

Continuing along the footpath the party took the opportunity to pick wild plums which grow on the trees alongside; whilst on the path we were passed by a diesel hauled train on its way to Peterborough NVR station. After our leisurely walk we arrived at Peterborough NVR station and Railworld, both of these being located on the site of the former LNWR locomotive shed which was closed in 1932 but not demolished until the 1960s. We continued on past the station and then walked under the former Great Northern Railway east coast main line bridges, the bridge on the eastern side, which is still in use, being the original cast iron structure.

Shortly after passing under the ECML bridges we passed the site of Fair Meadow where the N&PR had intended to build their station. This idea was abandoned when the Eastern Counties Railway (later the Great Eastern Railway agreed to allow the N&PR to use its station on the other side of London Road. This station was latterly known as Peterborough East and was closed to passengers on 6th June 1966 when the remaining services were diverted into Peterborough North station, complete closure coming in June 1970. The party climbed the steps to London Road and viewed the site of the former station from the overbridge, taking time on the way to look at the mural on the wall of the former Mitchell Engineering building.

Following a break for lunch we boarded the train to Yarwell at the NVR station, this was made up of former British Railways Mk 1 coaches hauled by a Class 31 diesel locomotive. The diesel was being used as far as Wansford due to the fire risk involved if a steam engine was used, this was the dry part of August! At Wansford a Hunslet 0-6-0 saddle tank locomotive took over for the short journey through the tunnel to Yarwell where it ran round the train for the return journey to Wansford. This locomotive had recently been restored and was masquerading as a United Steel Companies quarry locomotive, although never owned by the company the livery looked very authentic to the best of my memory.



At Yarwell

© Jane Waterfield 2010

We left the train at Wansford and took time to look round the continental locomotives and coaches on display as well as those undergoing restoration. The present main station building at Wansford is of recent construction, the railway is at present raising funds to buy and restore the original 1845 station building which is situated on platform 3. The wooden building on the island platform was previously located at Barnwell station and was moved to the site shortly after the NVR took over. Also of interest at the site is the signal box at level crossing, this is one of the largest signal boxes on a preserved railway and is grade two listed. It is incredible to think when looking at this level crossing that the road was originally the A1 until the bypass was built.

The next train to Peterborough was caught and again it was diesel hauled, all trains running late due to the time taken for locomotive changes. Back at Orton Mere we walked a few yards to the river and watched as two boats went through the lock. Another extremely heavy shower put paid to us watching any further activities on the river, so we all departed for home!

Mick Dix



Northampton Borough Council's proposed Boot & Shoe Conservation Area

At its Cabinet Meeting on the 24th November, Northampton Borough Council agreed to proceed with consultation on a proposed Boot & Shoe Conservation Area in Northampton. The proposals cover three options for the Conservation Area boundaries to the north and east of the town centre, the area where a large number of shoe factories sprang up in the latter half of the 19th century in amongst the streets of terraced housing. In its largest form it would cover the area north of the Mounts between Kettering Road and Barrack Road, as far west as Louise Road, and up to the edge of the Racecourse. To the east of Kettering Road it would cover Henry Street, Talbot Road and up to Crockett & Jones, while between Wellingborough Road and Billing Road it would include buildings in the vicinity of Victoria Road and Woodford Street.

This area was one of the most important in the county in terms of the boot & shoe industry until the middle of the 20th century. However, today, I am only aware of two factories still producing shoes in that area – Trickers in St Michaels Road and Crockett & Jones in Magee Street. Of course there is also our member Brian Dickens' leather finishing factory in Kettering Road (only one of two left in the county). Many of the rest are turned to other industrial uses, empty or converted to apartments, some more sympathetically than others! Their inclusion in a Conservation Area would help to ensure the remaining buildings are better preserved and where alterations are necessary to facilitate reuse, this is undertaken in a sympathetic manner.

NIAG's Committee has agreed that we should support the creation of a Boot & Shoe Conservation Area and assist the Borough Council in any way possible.

Individual members may wish to make their own representation to the Borough Council as the consultation process unfolds.

Further details on the proposed Conservation Area can be found at:

www.northamptonboroughcouncil.com/councillors/ieListDocuments.aspx?CID=528&Mid=6472

Peter Perkins



The NIAG – Longtown link still remembered

In the 1970s and 1980s a key feature in NIAG's programme was the annual IA weekend at Longtown Outdoor Centre in the Brecon Beacons in Wales. Mostly organised by Geoffrey Starmer and John van Laun (the Head of the Centre at that time) the enjoyable weekends provided the opportunity to look at canals, tramways, ironworks, coal and other industries in South Wales and Herefordshire. Ray Grimes spoke at several members' evenings about various visits and published some detailed reports in NIAG Newsletters nos. 13, 19, 23, 27 and 31 for example.

The Group was well looked after by the staff at Longtown, from the dinner on the Friday evening to the final tea and cakes before departure on the Sunday afternoon. It was decided around 1985 that NIAG should recognise this link by awarding John van Laun Honorary membership of NIAG and making a presentation to the Centre of a shield bearing NIAG's new logo at the time, which could be put on display in the Centre's dining room. At one of the weekends, Geoffrey made the presentation to the staff of the Longtown Centre.



Shields on the wall at Longtown

It is pleasing that the Centre, despite being threatened by a number of funding crises over the years, remains open and is still in the ownership of Northamptonshire County Council. It is used for outdoor activity weeks by local schools and is very popular and greatly enjoyed by pupils.

On a recent visit by Brambleside School in Kettering, some photos were taken which I am pleased to report still show the NIAG shield on the wall at the Centre which recognises a link stretching back 35 years.



Longtown party on a coalmine loco in April 1990

Ron Whittaker

If anyone recognises themselves in this photo and remembers being there can they let me know in order that we can put names to the faces. I have often heard about Longtown – any stories/recollections out there that can be put into the Newsletter. If so, then please send them in for future publication.

Ed.



Miscellany of Items of Interest

Half the staff at a doomed Pocklington factory were told that redundancy was just three weeks away. Winding down production at the Sundora dried fruit and nut factory had begun and around 85 members of staff were to leave in mid-September. Once one of Pocklington's biggest employers, the firm was brought out by rivals Whitworth Ltd who planned on moving production to Northamptonshire.

The article went on to quote various representatives from the firm stating in one instance that it was sad for the workforce and Pocklington.

Pocklington Post – August 2005.

Small world – Ed.

Royal Train to leave Wolverton after 142 years.

In a major break with tradition, the right to operate the Royal Train could be put out to tender.

For 142 years, Britain's most prestigious train has been based at Wolverton, and is currently owned by Network Rail. But as NR is not allowed to operate passenger

carrying trains, it has latterly been managed by ESW (now DBS) which inherited it from BR Express Systems at Privatisation.

The operation has never been put out to tender to see if the best price is being achieved, but now the Royal Household, which pays for the operation, is understood to be looking at cost reduction of up to 14%. A senior management member of the West Coast Railway Co (WCRC) has said that '*we would be absolutely thrilled to be offered an opportunity to put a business plan for operating and maintaining the Royal Train*'. Direct Rail Service (DRS) has said that '*As a British owned company, it goes without saying that we'd be honoured to be invited to operate the Royal Train*'.

2012 is the Queen's Diamond Jubilee year and that, combined with the Olympics, is expected to see greatly increased use for the Royal Train.

If an open tendering process does take place and is won by either DRS or WCRC, it is likely that the train would leave Wolverton. The site, north of Milton Keynes, saw one of the Royal coaches recently damaged by stone-throwing yobs. Currently, DBS's Royal-liveried Class 67s move light engine from Crewe to Wolverton every time the train has to move, a cost that could be avoided.

The Railway Magazine – January 2011

Scarborough loses its gantry

One of the best known landmarks on the British main line network is no more. During October, Network Rail engineers carefully dismantled the former North Eastern Railway signal gantry at Falsgrave, Scarborough – subject to countless thousands of railway photographs over the years. The gantry is to be re-erected on the North Yorkshire Moors Railway.

The Railway Magazine – January 2011

Gas Lights still in Central London

There were once over 60,000 gas lamps in London, all lit and extinguished manually. Most have gone, some now only look like gas lights but 'around landmarks' some 1600 real gas lights remain.

Six dedicated British Gas 'attendants' maintain these survivors of another era; the lamps are now operated by time-clocks, pilot lights and light-sensors, converted as late as 1985. Until then, these lamps were operated in the traditional way, somewhat incongruous with the parallel earliest internet and the first cell phones.

Novel approach to the housing shortage

A water tower next to the former offices of the North Thames Gas Works at Ladbroke Grove is being converted into residential accommodation. As the original structure has insufficient volume for dwelling purposes, a further 7 metres of height is being added at the top, with external timber cladding to help it blend into the bucolic environment of inner north-west London.

London Trolleybus news

2011 marks the centenary of trolleybuses in Britain, with a number of events expected to mark this at various locations. Meanwhile May 2012 will see the 50th anniversary of the ending of the London Transport trolleybus service.

A little known ‘blue plaque’

Sir Nigel Gresley, Chief Mechanical Engineer of the London and North Eastern Railway is a more recent railwayman for whom posterity is a little more public but not very publicised. High off the ground, his London memorial may be found outside the main Kings Cross train shed approximately aligned with the north end of platform 8.

Previous 4 items ‘The Bulletin’, [TfIISHG] November and December 2010

QE2’s anchor finds a home

A 13 tonne anchor from the QE2, which was presented by Cunard to Southampton City Council when the liner left two years ago, has finally been found somewhere for display after gathering dust in a dockside warehouse. It will be placed on the pavement outside Holyrood Church in the High Street, which is a designated memorial to the Merchant Navy.

Derby College Roundhouse Campus officially opened:

In early October HRH The Princess Royal officially opened The Roundhouse on Pride Park, part of the Derby College campus which caters for more that 2,500 students. The former 1839 locomotive roundhouse has been restored and converted, with the addition of contemporary buildings, at a cost of £48m and was recently named the 2010 Project of the Year by the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors. The cafe in the Roundhouse itself is open to the public.

Above 2 items – ‘Focus’, Hampshire IAS, December 2010

‘Archaeology in Action’:

To appreciate fully the sheer scale of excavation and discovery that occurs in London, you’d need to make regular visits to building sites, laboratories and Europe’s largest archaeological archive in Hackney. Museum of London Archaeology (MOLA, formerly MoLAS) is the Museum of London’s commercial archaeology service, and like other such consultancies operates across the UK and overseas. But its core work is in and around London, recent projects including the 2012 Olympics site, the Prittlewell Anglo-Saxon grave and a host of major excavations in the city. It seems to be the first archaeological service to mount a substantial exhibition about its work that goes beyond a single site ‘*Archaeology in Action*’ at the Museum of London until Spring 2012.

Five key sites chosen to represent London’s archaeology include the Roman high street unearthed at 1 Poultry and the Saxon town of Lunderwic in Covent Garden.

There are also changing displays that illustrate the daily grind of London archaeologists and new finds, starting with the Shakespearean playhouses the Rose and the Theatre.

British Archaeology – Nov/Dec 2010

Laying the 1858 Transatlantic Cable

One of the largest collections (in format) in the IET Archives is an elephant folder of drawings by the artist EW Cooke detailing the first transatlantic cable expedition across the Atlantic ocean in 1858. This project was both the culmination of years of effort and the first tentative step to a practical, permanent communications link between Britain and the US.

It all started in the 1840s and 50s with the ambitious vision of a few US and British engineers and businessmen, including Samuel Morse and Charles Tilston Bright.

Two ships were chosen to lay the cable; the UK *Agamemnon* and the US *Niagara*. In 1857 the ships left Ireland, laying one ship's cable, splicing, then laying the second ship's load. This failed when the cable snapped and was lost. They tried again the following year, starting from mid-ocean. The cables were spliced and the ships ran towards the coasts of Ireland and Newfoundland respectively. But they were caught in a ferocious storm and the *Agamemnon* was nearly lost. Two more attempts were made, but each time the cable snapped. Finally running out of food and fuel, they were forced to return home.

There was enough cable left for one more attempt. The splice was made and the ships set out for the last time. The *Niagara* veered off course, a whale nearly snapped the cable and the *Agamemnon* just missed a collision with an American schooner en route, but they finally reached Trinity Bay, Newfoundland, and Valentia, Ireland on 4th and 5th August 1858.

The first official message was sent along the cable on 16th August. Sheer determination had got the cable across the ocean, but there had been faults in its manufacture and it had been damaged by the machinery. The final blow came when the engineer Wildman Whitehouse used high voltage instruments which further damaged the cable. It stopped working on 20th October 1858.

Despite this, the Atlantic Telegraph Company did not give up the ambition of uniting the two continents. Lessons had been learned and the cable had worked, despite the massive problems encountered.

The Cooke collection is one in a series of collections in the Archives documenting these pioneering efforts. Many of the protagonists later became members of the Society of Telegraph engineers (now the IET) and donated their personal collections to the Library, starting the IET's internationally significant collections on the history of science and technology.

Engineering and Technology – 25th Oct/7th Nov 2008

Former RAF base bids to become a World Heritage Site

RAF Upper Heyford in Oxfordshire (borders of Northamptonshire) is one of 38 places that are competing to become a World Heritage site. It is up against other famous landmarks such as Brunel's Great Western Railway, the Forth Bridge and the Lake District.

The RAF base, which closed in 1993, is unique in the UK as the only flightline area that required military identification to access. It was made famous in 1982, when used as a USAFE base, set in West Germany, for the James Bond film Octopussy, most memorable for the scene where Roger Moore defused a bomb which had been planted at a circus parade on the orders of Kamal Khan.

Also competing to be nominated by the Government next year (2011) are the Jodrell Bank Observatory in Cheshire, Bronte Landscape and Haworth Village in W. Yorkshire, also The Norfolk and Suffolk Broads.

The list also includes overseas territories and crown dependencies, with applications including the Caribbean Turks and Caicos islands and the island of St Helena in the Atlantic on which Napoleon was exiled after the Battle of Waterloo. The Government plans to submit a tentative list of sites to Unesco next year with a view to making nominations in 2012.

Northampton Chronicle & Echo, July 8th 2010

Historic Buildings at future risk

The 2010 'at risk' listing for Northamptonshire includes:

Scheduled Monuments:

- Univallate hillfort and bowl at Castle Dykes Farm, Fotheringstone, Daventry, at risk of arable ploughing
- Bowl barrows and henge at Mill Hill Farm, Naseby, Daventry
- Site of Bannaventa, Norton, Daventry arable farming
- Ashton settlement site, Ashton
- Multivallate hillfort at Hunsbury Hill
- Roman Villa in Chipping Warden
- Roman Villa near Cosgrove Hall in Cosgrove
- Roman village near Road Hill Farm, Harpole
- Roman Villa near Stokegap Lodge, Stoke Bruerne
- Sulgrave bowl barrow, Sulgrave
- Site near Easton Lodge, Easton Maudit

Buildings:

- A well house at Fawsley Farm Fawsley, Daventry
- Canal enclosure near Weedon Depot, Weedon
- Bastions near Weedon Depot, Weedon
- West Lodge gatehouse, Weedon Depot, Weedon
- Gate arch at Winwick Manor in Winwick
- Delepre Abbey, Northampton

Kingsthorpe Hall, Kingsthorpe, Northampton
Terraced gardens at Castle Ashby in Castle Ashby Park
Wren Wing at Easton Neston Park in Easton Neston
Abbey Lodge East Wing, Farthinghoe
Stable block outbuildings at Wakefield Lodge, Pottersbury
Romano-British settlement near Ecton
North Lodge, Wellingborough
Ashton Mill, Ashton

Conservations areas:

St. Crispin Hospital, Upton
Wellingborough Town Centre, Wellingborough

A report by English Heritage listed 37 historic buildings at risk. This report analysed the condition of the region's most important heritage assets and named 18 historic buildings, 15 scheduled monuments and four conservation areas. This year one building and two monuments were removed from the list, including the Sessions House. This former court house, opposite All Saints Church, was carefully restored and reopened this year as the entrance to the County Council's headquarters in the town centre. However, Ashton Mill, near Roade, was added as the former water powered corn mill is currently empty and in a 'poor condition'.

Northampton Chronicle & Echo – July 8th 2010



Of This and That

Treasurer's Report to the AGM – November 2010

1. Current Position

First the good news: We have been told there will be no increase in room charges during this session. However, it was implied that they will be reviewed again next year.

Based on our current costs my budgetary estimate for the current year is that we shall make a small deficit of approx £30. Included in this figure is a saving of £80 made by changing our insurers. The budget excludes any reference to 'cash sales', i.e. books, etc. Two reasons for this are:

- a) cash sales are unpredictable and in any case should not be relied upon to subsidise the subscriptions, and
- b) any such income should be set aside and used for publicity, publications, etc.

Of course this doesn't take into account the potential increases that we shall experience next year as there is little we can do to mitigate them! The greatest uncertainty is the consequences of the 15% increase in the rate of VAT on 4th January. There appears to be some confusion as to when, and by how much,

suppliers will increase their prices. We have already heard of potential increases in postal rates of about 15% scheduled for April. Printing charges are kept to a minimum by 'bulking-up' material to be copied.

NIAG has not shown a profit on its operating account since 2003/04; consequently since then the level of our reserves has fallen by 40%.

2. Membership Year 2011-12

In the light of potential increases next year – room charges and the 15% increase in the rate of VAT on 4th January, a budget for the 2011/12 year has been prepared in readiness for the AGM. Although postage is not subject to VAT directly, there is bound to be an increase in postal charges – I've made a guess. Some printing is not subject to standard rate VAT but some is – I have made enquiries and nobody has yet made their mind up! So again I've assumed an increase. Also, there is always the risk that the change in VAT rate may be used to implement other 'hidden' price increases.

Clearly there are two options: either increase membership subscriptions or reduce our costs.

2.1 Expenditure

2.1.1 Meetings

With the new charge of 50p per cup for refreshments, this part of our meetings should be self-financing bearing in mind that we have to pay for the use of the kitchen.

Fewer winter meets? I don't think so as that would start destroying part of the 'fabric' of the group. Could we limit the number of speakers who charge a fee? Whilst some speakers do it because they enjoy it, should they subsidise (by not being paid expenses) our meetings? A cheaper venue would be very difficult to find.

Costs associated with the summer programme are primarily that of printing the programme – the equivalent of half a newsletter – as it is posted with the newsletter.

2.1.2 Newsletters

The number of newsletter issues could be reduced from 4 to 3 or even 2, but ideally we would still need 4 mail-shots:

- a) October for AGM material,
- b) January for EMIAC notices,
- c) April for summer programme, and
- d) July for EMIAC notices and winter programme.

A reduction in the number of newsletters cannot be compensated by increasing the size of the issue as we are near the limit for postage at the moment.

The absolute minimum number of mail-shots would be 3:

- a) October for AGM material,

- b) February for EMIAC notices and summer programme, and
- c) June for EMIAC notices and winter programme.

The February slot would place an additional burden on the committee in organising the summer programme.

Regarding postal charges, we just meet the 5mm thickness limit for the 32p rate. Additional sheets may still be below the 100gm weight limit but exceed the 5mm limit thereby putting the postage up to 51p. Once beyond these two criteria, the postage rate is 81p. Thus the postage for 4 'current' newsletters is £1.28 compared with £2.43 for 3 'thicker' newsletters. No contest! Note these are the 2010 prices.

2.2 Income

2.2.1 Guest Fee

I see no point in increasing the guest fee from the current £2 per person as this would have little effect on the overall financial situation.

2.2.2 Attendance Fee

The concept of an 'attendance charge' for the winter meetings to cover speaker costs, etc has been discussed on several occasions. Although some societies adopt this approach, it does rely on a dedicated team of people to implement. This could be difficult to police/manage, particularly in our current venue. We would also be under pressure to bring in speakers that perhaps entertain more than educate.

2.2.3 Membership Fees

Over the last couple of years or so the differential between the Single and Joint subscriptions has been eroded; I believe this should be increased from the current £2 to £4. If two people attend, say, three winter meets as 'joint members' they currently save £6 in guest fees, if they attend more then they would save more.

Based on a differential figure of £4, the subscriptions need to be raised to £12 and £16 respectively giving a budgetary excess income over expenditure of £58. Decreasing the Joint subscription rate to £15 would only give an excess of £23. Neither of these figures is a good working margin.

2.2.4 Membership Numbers

To maintain the current level of membership fees (£10 and £12), the membership would have to be increased by 7%. As of the AGM there are still 9 outstanding renewals.

3. Membership Year 2012-13

Assuming the subscription rates are increased to £12 and £16 respectively, I can't see us not having to have another increase the following year. Assuming a 5% increase in costs, then the subscription rates for 2012/13 will need to be £13 and £17 respectively as a minimum.

4. Comparison with other Societies

A straw poll reveals that our subscriptions are the lowest in the region – even at the proposed new levels!

5. Projects

The Mk2 Gazeteer project will use up almost all of our reserves. I know we will get that money back (plus profit I hope!) but that will be over a period of 2 or 3 years at least. But in the meantime we shall have to start from the bottom again, and without ‘a safety net’, to build up our reserves. I am strongly in favour of this project and would very much like to see more publications produced.

The above was the Treasurer’s report to the AGM attended by 43 members. All but one of those present voted in favour to increase the subscriptions for the year 2011/12 to £12 and £16 for single and joint members respectively.

Before anyone asks, members of the committee do not take any personal expenses. The editor claims only for paper, postage and photocopying.

It must be added that five members had not renewed their subscriptions by the end of December, and therefore are deemed to be no longer members.

TJ Waterfield

Web Site:

‘niag.org.uk’ becomes ‘northants-iag.org.uk’

Our late treasurer Jan was instrumental in providing NIAG with a website. However NIAG does not own the domain name *niag.org.uk*; this is owned by Jan’s son John, indeed he is still paying for the hosting of the website. Fortunately, NIAG has been granted access to the site and I have developed the site; but further development requires NIAG to have control over the physical hosting site.

For the last 15 months Peter and I having been working to have this ownership transferred to NIAG. Whilst John has been quite open about, and prepared to, transfer ownership of the domain name to NIAG, to date he has not taken the trouble to start the ball rolling. We cannot do anything about it, because, as the legal owner, he has to initiate the transfer process. Despite offering him money, he has contacted neither his ISP nor Nominet (the UK’s registration body).

The matter has been discussed by the committee and since the last meeting I have registered a new domain name for NIAG (see above) and a new ISP has been found to host our site. The new site has been populated and is now operational; anyone going to the old URL will be redirected automatically. This new arrangement will enable us to have generic email addresses for the officers and, if so required, for special events, etc. The following email addresses are in place:

secretary@northants-iag.org.uk,

treasurer@northants-iag.org.uk and
newsletter@northants-iag.org.uk.

TW

This is all very disappointing and just goes to show that no matter how good intentions are by third parties on behalf of any organisation, it is always best for the organisation to own, host and control their own website, or indeed anything else if it comes to that.

JW – Editor/Publicity Officer

AGM – November 2010

The suggestion to send the newsletter via electronic mail was made by a member at the recent AGM. This will be given serious consideration by the committee in the coming months. It is understood that not everyone has this facility and it may well be that none of you who do have it will want to receive the newsletter by this method. However, should we go down this route, then everything, including notices, summer and winter programmes would be sent this way. Membership renewal notices would still have to be posted as they are customised to each member and would necessitate a lot of effort to ‘split the file’ for e-mailing.

At the moment we include as many of these notices with a newsletter mailing, and we also hand out as many of the envelopes to members at meetings, January, July and October. The full posting is done in April – newsletter and summer programme. Other notices of conferences can be included in any of these mailshots.

We know that some will be against this suggestion as many of you, like myself, prefer to read any length of text on paper rather than off the screen and indeed keep the newsletters for reference at a later date. The written word, to me, is far better than staring at a screen.

The other downside to this is that, should we proceed down this route, and there is no saying we will, those of you who do not have electronic mail will be the losers since the costs of sending out to a few will far outweigh the current expenditure.

In the interim while the debate carries on, can I ask you to let me know how many of you would be interested in going down this route. We need to know what the membership thinks.

I, for one, will be nailing my flag to the mast and not supporting this idea. I look forward to hearing from you.

Editor

PS: If you have an e-mail facility, please feel free to send a message via this method.

Dates for the Diary:

4th January 2011 **Members Evening** – the usual mix of diverse topics.
The next Newsletter will be available to members.

- 11th February **Railways and Canals in the Market Harborough area:** A talk by Dr. Len Holden.
- 11th March **The Cooper Collection** – A Photographic Archive: A talk by Gary Shaeffer.
- 19th March **NALH AGM and Conference** – Abbey Centre, Overslade Close, West Hunsbury. As members of this Association, NIAG members are able to attend. A hot meal is provided for which a charge is made. If you are interested please contact the Editor. Details available in February.
- 21st May **EMIAC: Heritage Day** at the Peak District Mining Museum – see enclosed leaflet.

TV Programmes:

- BBC2 Great British Railway Journeys – Series 2 – 25 programmes – 6.30pm daily. Commenced 3rd January 2011.
Michael Portillo uses Bradshaw's Railway Guide to travel Britain.

Exhibitions:

- Until March 2011 **London's Water: 400 years of the new river:** The history of this waterway and the role of the New River Company.
Guildhall Art Gallery, off Gresham Street, EC2V 5AE
Included in the admission price to the Gallery.
- Until March 2011 **The Story of Smithfield Market:** the tale of this market's development and the surrounding area.
Venue: as above.
- Until 3rd July **Sport to Street** – A history of the training shoe, from the earliest sports shoes to the iconic brands of today.
Northampton Museum & Art Gallery.

Finally

Pigs on the motorway!

Just before New Year we went across to visit my cousin in Worcester and on joining the M40 at junction 12 (Gaydon) noticed that there seemed to be a ring of stones on the embankment.

With much amusement we noticed that this ring actually comprised of stone pigs in various positions, dancing, sitting, standing, etc.

What a brilliant idea and what a lift to the spirits on what was a very damp, dank and completely miserable day for a drive across country.

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Newsletter:

Next Issue: **April 2011**

Deadline for all articles and information **20th March 2011**. Anything received after this date will be held over to the next issue.

Article guidelines: Should be no more than 1½ pages long, unless article is of a special nature and accompanied by photographs or diagrams. 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 via e-mail, the picture should be no larger than 250,000 pixels in JPEG format and should be sent as separate attachments. Please give information about the photograph. Photographs/slides sent by post (first class) 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.