



NORTHAMPTONSHIRE  
INDUSTRIAL, ARCHAEOLOGY  
GROUP

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## NEWSLETTER



ISSUE 121 - WINTER 2012

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Photograph front cover: G T Hawkins corner stone  
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## From the Editor

As we pass from 2011 to 2012 it is time to reflect on what an excellent year NIAG has had with talks, walks and conferences. The work that goes behind the scenes by those who organise these 'events' is to be congratulated and once again thanks to the committee who do so much to bring this about.

We had our usual trip to Germany just before Christmas – for once the trip to Trier was in glorious sunshine, so much so that it became difficult to read some of the motorway overhead signage because the sun was 'in the way'! The markets were very busy and 'heaving' on the Saturday and we had an enjoyable time wandering round, sampling food and having the inevitable mug of gluhwein. Another excellent drive back to Ypres with a slight detour to look at remnants of the West Wall just off the E42 motorway at junction 3 (almost at the German/Belgium border). The concrete triangles of the 'Wall' looking very mystical in the morning mist. Ypres was very busy with its own Christmas market, and as is our usual custom we went to the Menin Gate ceremony which never fails to make one wonder what on earth was it all for and to reflect on the terrible waste of life during the early 20th century. The last couple of days were spent exploring other 'remnants' of both World Wars. First La Coupole which is now a monument to the lives of those who built it and subsequently died doing so. The site of a proposed V2 rocket launch site, it was never completed as it was found by RAF spotters and subsequently bombed. What remains is a huge concrete structure with walls some 5 metres thick. The museum contained inside the huge dome tells the story of its making and the story of Rockets which led to the eventual exploration of space in the 1960s. Secondly on an extremely windy day we made our way to Cap Griz Nez to look at what remains of the Atlantic Wall. Lots of structures dotted along the coast and well marked paths to follow on a more spring like day rather than in wind which took the breath away. A lot to explore and another part of France which we will return to to explore the remains of WWII.

In this issue we catch up with the remaining summer reports and if space permits reports from the some of the winter talks. For the summer it has been suggested that we might return to a couple of the walks which were almost rained off last time – remembering our attempts to do the summer walk round Northampton and its eventual success on a lovely summer's evening – I personally think this is a good idea. Suggestions for walks/visits are always welcome. Watch this space, as they say.

I would like, at this point in time, to thank two Groups who send us their Newsletters and from which I occasionally take information. Thank you, therefore, to TfL Industrial & Social History Group and to Hampshire IAG. All good wishes to both these Groups for 2012 and also good wishes to all our members.

*Jane Waterfield*

## SUMMER WALKS and VISITS of 2011

### The last reports

#### Kelmarsh Railway Tunnel – Friday 20th June

A party of members gathered in the car park at the site of the former Kelmarsh Station on a very wet Friday evening, but at least it would be dry in the tunnel! From the car park we followed the course of the former London and North Western Railway line from Northampton to Market Harborough. Royal Assent for the construction of the line was granted on 4th August, 1853 and construction was to be completed within 5 years. The company were anxious to build the line as cheaply as possible and in July 1856 it was decided to build it as a single line but with the six over bridges built wide enough to take double tracks. At the same time it was decided to reduce the width of the two tunnels from double to single track. At this point the line was looked upon as branch and little through traffic was envisaged even though the line would join two other LNWR lines together, that from Blisworth to Peterborough to that from Rugby to Stamford.

Work on the construction of the line started about September 1856, by January 1858 work was behind on the construction of Kelmarsh Tunnel a situation made worse by a serious landslip at the north end of the tunnel in March of that year. The line, still not complete, was inspected by the Board of Trade on 3rd August, 1858 so as to comply with five year construction period as specified by the Act of Parliament, it eventually opened to passengers on 16th February 1859. A new station was built at Northampton (Castle Station) to serve the line as a reversal was required to gain access to Bridge Street Station; this was not considered a safe procedure by the Board of Trade.

It was decided to double the line from Northampton to Lamport on 13th April 1860 and this was opened in two sections, the second being passed for traffic on 16th April 1862. A joint London and North Western Railway and Great Northern Railway line from Welham, on the LNWR line from Rugby to Stamford, to the GNR at Tilton was authorised in 1874. This gave the LNWR access to Nottingham and it was thought that the single track section of the Northampton to Market Harborough railway would become a bottleneck, so in August 1874 plans were drawn up to double the remainder of the line. Work began on the second Kelmarsh Tunnel at the north heading on 22nd May 1876 and was completed on 16th February 1878. The widening was all carried out on the up side of the line except at Kelmarsh Station where it was on the down side. The widened line opened for traffic on 4th August 1879; the LNWR and GNR joint line opening to freight traffic on 1st November 1879 and to passengers on 15th December 1879. The cost of widening the line was justified by the amount of extra freight traffic carried but passenger traffic never amounted to very much.

A line from Kelmarsh across to Ringstead on the LNWR Blisworth to Peterborough line was considered in the 1880s to tap the ironstone traffic but nothing became of it. Passenger services over the line ceased on 4th January 1960 but later in the 1960s the line was considered as the route for passenger trains to Leicester and the north, with these starting at Euston instead of St Pancras. Nothing came of this proposal but the midland line sleeper services from London to Scotland were diverted to run over the line starting from Euston instead of St Pancras in January 1969. This situation continued until 1973 when the services were withdrawn. Freight traffic over the line was gradually run down and complete closure came on 15th August 1981.

After closure the track was lifted and the line became the Brampton Valley Way, a cycle track and footpath from Market Harborough to Boughton Crossing. We followed this footpath from the car park to Kelmarsh Tunnel, here we entered the up tunnel (the second one built), the down tunnel (the original one) now being inaccessible. The whole length of the tunnel is lined in blue brick and is still unlit, the refuges in the walls have been bricked up otherwise it is in much the same condition it would have been in before the track was removed. The tunnel which is 531 yards long has one ventilation shaft and as we neared this we heard the sound of a whistle; thankfully not a train but one which someone had brought with them! We exited the tunnel at the Northampton end and shortly afterwards reached the summit of the line, the heavy freight trains being banked from Market Harborough to Kelmarsh when the line was at work. We carried on a little further to the point where the A14 road crosses the track bed, here the footpath has been diverted slightly from the alignment of the railway but soon regains the original formation. From here it was possible to see the cutting of the former down line leading to the original Kelmarsh Tunnel.

At this point we turned round and retraced our steps, still in the pouring rain, back to the cars.

*Mick Dix*

*Source: original research and The Northampton & Harborough Line, John Gough, RCHS, 1984*



Exiting the tunnel

©Terry Waterfield 2011

## Olney, Buckinghamshire – Friday 22nd July

To lessen the risk of NIAG members feeling homesick on this expedition to foreign parts, it was felt sensible to focus on Olney's boot and shoe trade. Our expert guide for the evening was Oliver Ratcliff, a printer and stationer in the town a century ago, and publisher of a couple of Olney 'Almanacks' (sic), the latter one of 1907 having recently been re-printed. The desire to return 'our' copy to the local library in a recognisable state, rather than as a slab of papier-mache, limited his appearances on this damp evening.

In his introduction to Olney, Ollie wrote of "an industrious community principally employed in the shoe trade ... the manufacturers are Messrs Hinde & Mann, Messrs S Cowley & Co, Messrs J Kitchener & Son and Mr T Johnson ..." In addition, Gordon Osborn in his book 'Cowper Country' wrote of the shoe industry becoming Olney's main trade from the 1850s with the pioneers being Stephen Owen and George Drage (who had moved to the town from Bozeat). So it was in search of these various premises that we embarked.

First up, Thomas Johnson, where a detour into West Street was required to see the factory situated to the rear of his home at 21 High Street. Kelly's Directories list him as a manufacturer (rather than a mere 'maker') here from the 1887 edition to the 1915, his private residence continuing at 21 High Street (but now with no trade listed) through to 1939. Perhaps due to Johnson's failure to place an ad in Ollie's rag we were spared any fawning sycophancy from the 'Almanack' so could return to the High Street, simply noting the factory to be a converted barn, raised to three stories.



©Terry Waterfield 2011

Numerous High Street addresses can claim shoe connections, so here we will just mention No.94 as the home of Stephen Owen and where he is said to have made Olney's first riveted shoes, and Joseph Mann's Orchard House at No.67, designed by Northampton architect Alexander Ellis Anderson.

At the top of the High Street we reached the boundary of the pre-railway town, marked by the presence of farms either side of the street, with a barn on the west side yet to succumb to property developers' attention. Beyond, a steady stream of back-alley workshops unfolded before us: we were in boot and shoe territory.

Along the Yardley Road, on the gate piers

to a late c19th house, now the 'Broomfield' nursing home, can be seen the name 'Springfield'. Ollie tells us that this was once the home of George Drage but by 'Almanack' time is Samuel Cowley's, the transition having occurred sometime between 1895 and 1900. The accompanying factory was in Clicker's Yard, just at the end of Springfield's garden, and was turning out 2000 pairs of boots per week in Ollie's day.

*"His business is a manufacturing wholesale house trade business, and it is safe to say that in all the departments and branches of the trade there is not a single detail that can escape his eye. He supervises every part of the business, and is ever on the move looking after the progress of the work, and attending to the wants of his numerous clients. He himself, being a thoroughly practical man, is able to cut his own patterns, and can make, if necessary, all classes of boots by hand or machine. He started in a small way in the face of strong opposition, and against the advice proffered by some of the knowing ones, and his indomitable courage has carried him through to the position he now holds in the shoe trade."*

As for the factory, one summer's day in 1928 Mr Cowley's gardener decided to have a bonfire. This was not a wise career move. Need I say more?

A few backyard workshops later, we were outside 28 Dartmouth Road, the 1907 home of John Thomas Kitchener. The Kelly's directories place him here for 1899-1907, previously having been at 122 High Street in 1895 and at No.108 in 1891.

*"Mr J T Kitchener, the head of the present firm, commenced as a manufacturer's agent in 1880, and for a period of 19 years represented a number of the leading manufacturers of the country amongst the number being Fussell & Drowery, Birmingham; R E Randall, Northampton; A Stanton, Northampton; and Rabbitt & Sons, London; and during that period distributing tens of thousands of pounds in wages. At the closing down of Messrs Rabbitt, in the year 1898, the present firm launched out into the wholesale trade both for home and export. In the year 1900 they added to their growing business a retail branch at Wolverton, where their noted brands of 'Kitchener's Reliable' are absolutely in front of all others in the district."*



Between seeing Kitchener's home and the factory at the end of his garden (hence fronting onto East Street), we passed the Hinde & Mann factory, built in various

phases and at dates that no two sources appear to agree on. Started in 1891, an opening ceremony was held at this site in 1894 (presumably after an extension phase) and the finished form can be seen in the background of a photo in Ollie's 'Almanack' of 1907. Judith Hodgkinson commented on its prominent oriel window as looking to be the work of Anderson, linking to his later design of Orchard House.

Midland Road heads down beside Hinde & Mann's to the Railway Station site. The railway came in 1872, local brewers Hipwells having anticipated it by building The Queen Hotel at the Dartmouth Road/Midland Road junction in 1871. These stood as frontier outposts until Hinde & Mann pay packets fuelled the development of the area in the early 1890s. Some time was spent looking at the maps of this area from 1881 and 1899, and noting that no back street workshops appear to have been built after the 1899 map. Indeed, with many of the short terraces having date stones, further refinement could be attempted for dating Olney's transition to factory production. A return down East Street enabled us to see the workshop at the rear of 98 High Street, Edward Hinde's original factory and where Joseph Mann had come to work and been taken into partnership in 1890.

*Matthew Naylor*



### **Northampton's Boot & Shoe Quarter – Friday 29th July**

Earlier this year Northampton Borough Council designated a large area to the north and east of the town centre as a Conservation Area, calling it Northampton's Boot & Shoe Quarter. It thus seemed an opportune time to revisit the area and see what remains of the shoe and leather factories that sprang up from the 1870s in amongst the terraces of Victorian housing.



Detail of Trickers frontage.

© Jane Waterfield 2011

Our walk began outside the Chronicle & Echo on The Mounts, close to the site of the Mounts Shoe Factory started by John Cove in 1854, which used to stand on the corner of Overstone Road. Unfortunately the factory was demolished in 1970 to make way for road widening. Walking along Overstone Road to the corner of Dunster Street, we viewed the



former leather factory of W Collier with its wooden window frames in the top storey which would have contained louvres to facilitate drying of leather finishes. We then moved on to look at the derelict factory on the St Michaels Road/Overstone Road corner, formerly occupied by GT Hawkins, manufacturers of walking boots until about 2000. At this point, a man emerged from the building carrying an old display board showing the construction of a GT Hawkins boot, very similar to that used on Dr Martens boots. He told us that the developer Colin Clayson, who has converted several old shoe factory buildings in the town, was hoping to redevelop the Hawkins site and convert it to apartments but that its recent listed building status was causing great difficulty in coming to an agreement with the planners.

Walking down St Michaels Road, we noted several former shoe and leather factories as well as the three storey premises with glazed brick frontage of Trickers who still produce shoes on the site. The factory was used in the making of the 2005 feature film *Kinky Boots*, which told the story of Steve Pateman's efforts to keep his Earls Barton shoe factory going in the 1990s.

On Kettering Road we stopped to view member Brian Dickens' leather factory with its three-storey gateway. We then walked up Grove Road, past the converted cinema – built on the site of a shoe factory – to the Grove Works, the former premises of GM Tebbutt, on the corner with Clare St. Both of these buildings have been converted to apartments by the aforementioned developer Colin Clayson.

Further up Clare Street is a rather utilitarian factory rebuilt after WWII for Leicester-based Brevitt Shoes. More recently part of it was used by Haynes & Cann, manufacturers of military footwear for aircrew. The original factory on the site was for many years Joseph Dawson's shoe factory.

Passing the 1888 shoe factory of Allinson on the corner of Clare Street and Earl Street we made our way down Duke Street to the impressive 6-storey factory built for Church's Shoes in 1893 and used by them, along with several adjacent factory buildings, until they moved to their present site in St James in 1957.

On Bailiff Street, we looked along Lorne Road towards the building dating from the 1870s which was more recently Arnolds cardboard box factory and then proceeded to Robert Street, the site of several early shoe and leather factories, including the building formerly used by TWH Hegg, leather curriers. The 1899 Goad Plan shows this as a four-storey factory, although the 1956 update suggests that it had only three storeys. This can perhaps be explained by the fact that a 1999 photograph shows very tall windows in the third storey whereas, following Colin Clayson's subsequent conversion of the building to apartments (that man again!), there are once again four storeys of windows.

Connaught Street contains the remains of two former shoe and leather factories, one of which on the 1899 Goad Plan is noted as 'F Cook South Place Shoe Factory'. This is curious as F Cook built a factory in Long Buckby in 1902 known as the

‘South Place Shoe Factory’. There is no obvious reason why this location in Northampton would have been called ‘South Place’. How come then that the factory in Northampton was known under that name three years before the Long Buckby factory was constructed? Any suggestions welcome.

Returning to Earl Street and our starting point we stopped outside the Charles Bradlaugh, talking about its earlier use as a repair factory for the Leicester-based British United Shoe Machinery Co. I was just pointing out that it was thought the windows had been reduced in size when Church’s Shoes used the building briefly in the 1970s. Suddenly a man, presumably the owner, emerged from the building and informed us that he reduced the size of the windows when converting it to a bar-restaurant – another useful intervention from a local!

This walk only covered a part of Northampton’s Boot & Shoe Quarter and it is hoped that we can visit other parts of it in future Summer Programmes.

Anyone who would like a copy of the map and notes that accompanied the walk can obtain one by email from [secretary@northants-iag.org.uk](mailto:secretary@northants-iag.org.uk)

*Peter Perkins*



## **Industrial Heritage Day – EMIAC 82**

### **“Stoned in Northamptonshire – The County’s Quarrying and Mining Industries”**

The latest EMIAC Industrial Heritage day organised by NIAG was held on the 15th October 2011 under the title: *“Stoned in Northamptonshire – the County’s Quarrying and Mining Industries”* and was attended by some 60 delegates.

The morning lecture session was held at Cogenhoe Village Hall and a brief introduction highlighted the importance of the different extractive industries to the county in the past. Although the ironstone industry was somewhat dominant in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, building stone extraction had been of key national importance since the Middle Ages. For example, the quarries at Weldon supplied the stone for the fan-vaulted ceiling at King’s College Chapel in Cambridge. On the other hand, stone and clay extraction for lime, cement and brick production activities were only of local significance. In more recent times gravel extraction has changed the face of much of the Nene Valley.

The first talk was on the evolution of the Northamptonshire ironstone industry by NIAG Members Peter Perkins and Mick Dix. This told of the early medieval ironstone smelting industry for which considerable archaeological evidence has recently emerged, of its disappearance in the 15th century and the ‘rediscovery’ of ironstone in the 1850s. Detailed maps showed how the early ironstone quarries were

developed close to the blossoming rail network, beginning with the Northampton to Peterborough line, to facilitate transport to furnaces outside the county. In the early days all ironstone extraction was manual with the so-called ‘plank & barrow’ method of working. In the 20th century, mechanisation enabled more deeply buried ironstone beds to be worked and larger quantities of ore to be extracted. At Corby, vast reserves of ironstone were identified at the beginning of the 20th century and this led to the development of Stewarts & Lloyd’s integrated iron and steelworks, employing some 12,000 people at its peak. In the latter half of the 20th century the competition from cheaper ore elsewhere led to the decline of the county’s industry and both extraction and processing in the county had ceased by 1980, leaving only the tubeworks at Corby in operation. The talk was illustrated with photos supplied from several sources, together with a variety of maps and charts of production data. It is hoped to publish the information given in this talk separately.

In the second talk, David Ellis spoke on ‘Winning Collyweston Slate’, the local stone roofing material which features on many buildings in the far north-east of the county and further afield. Having been involved with the extraction and use of Collyweston stone slates for almost 50 years, David spoke from the heart about his experiences both in the underground workings around Collyweston where the ‘slate logs’ were extracted and in the use of the finished slates. He showed how the ‘logs’ were left out to be exposed to the frost in order to cleave them into stone slates and talked about some of the buildings with which he has been involved in roofing projects. Although no new slate has been quarried for some time, David has recently identified a fresh source of slate logs in a quarry close to the A47 in the north-east of the county which he hopes will keep the industry going a little longer.

In the final talk, Alan Pack described the history of the Irthlingborough Ironstone Mines which operated from 1920 and continued to produce ore until 1965. Alan was the surveyor for Richard Thomas and Baldwins, owners of the mine from the 1930s. Ore was taken from a vast area beneath the ground to the north of Irthlingborough and around Finedon. Alan described the changes in the methods of working underground as well as how the ore was dealt with on emerging from the mine. The mine was the



© Jane Waterfield 2011

subject of a talk to NIAG by Alan Pack a couple of years ago, a report of which was contained in NIAG newsletter No.106. Alan has also put a comprehensive history of the mine on his website: [www.apack1.co.uk](http://www.apack1.co.uk).

Amongst the exhibits shown in the hall were examples of iron ore from Alan Pack. Bob Payne and Greg Evans also provided a display of photographs and maps from Pitsford ironstone quarry that featured in their talk to NIAG in October 2010 (*see NIAG Newsletter No. 118.*)

Following a buffet lunch, delegates made their way to Irchester Country Park where they were able to visit Irchester Narrow Gauge Railway Museum. Unfortunately no locos were in steam – funds are still needed to renovate the boiler of one of the three metre-gauge Peckett steam locos rescued from the Wellingborough ironstone quarries in the 1960s. Nevertheless there was still plenty to see in the museum. Walks were also provided for delegates to see the remains of the unrestored Wembley Pit with its deep quarry face as well as the conifer-covered hill and dale left behind by quarrying. They were also able to see the route of the tramway from the quarries down to the former Northampton to Peterborough railway line and the remains of calcine clamps. A gloriously warm, sunny, autumn Saturday afternoon was the ‘icing on the cake’ for a memorable day – the cake being supplied with tea at the café in the park in the sunshine!

Thanks to those NIAG members who assisted on the day and to Jane and Terry Waterfield in particular, for making the day run without a hitch.

*Peter Perkins*



## **2011/2012 WINTER PROGRAMME**

### **Reports**

#### **Victorian Northamptonshire – Inventions and Inventors**

Member Jon-Paul Carr's day job is Northamptonshire Studies Manager for Northamptonshire Libraries and Information Service and is based at Northampton's Central Library. His role brings him into contact with the library's archives of photographs, books, maps and historic county newspapers. In looking at Victorian Northamptonshire, he has amassed a range of information about some of the county's entrepreneurs big and small and his talk covered a range of examples.

With its importance to the county, the boot and shoe industry featured strongly in the inventor stakes. The first mentioned was Owen Robinson, born in Desborough in 1838, who first worked in the worsted industry in Kettering where he was unsuccessful in inventing new looms. He transferred to the boot and shoe industry

where he developed the Champion lockstitch sewing machine, patented in 1862, a version of the sewing machine invented by Elias Howe in 1846. He built this at his Champion Works in Victoria Street Kettering, where he also invented paring and breasting machines for the boot and shoe industry.

Also in Kettering, Charles East (father of the artist, Sir Alfred East), who built a large boot and shoe factory in Northall Street, was the first manufacturer in the town to use a sewing machine – which he took home with him at night, and put underneath his bed, due to the discontent among workers about the introduction of mechanisation. In 1862 he introduced the riveted process for attaching soles and was the first in the town to use a steam engine to power the boot and shoe machinery.

John Cave's shoe factory in High Street Rushden was unique during the 19th century in having shops on the ground floor of its factory when it was built in the 1860s. Unfortunately the factory burnt down in 1877. However one of John Cave's sons, Amos Cave, invented a new sole press in 1888 which worked faster than previous presses, enabling the company to increase production.

Mobbs and Lewis who had their last making plant in Carrington Street Kettering, invented an easy-exit last (the former on which the shoe is made) and changed over from metal lasts to wooden ones using timber imported from Canadian forests.

Engineering inventions also featured strongly. For example, the Dorman Engineering Company of Northampton invented a device to fix a motor into a bicycle in the early 1900s.

Charles Wicksteed (1847-1931) the founder of Wicksteed Park in Kettering was a prolific inventor. As well as building ploughing engines and inventing children's playground equipment, he patented the idea for a stand for a penny farthing bicycle, developed an automatic gearbox, seating to suit the human form, developed prefabricated buildings and invented a bread slicing and buttering machine.

Joseph Grose (1861-1939) was the founder of Grose's Garage in Northampton, the first person to own a motor car in the town in 1896 and also raced penny farthings. He developed a cycle called the Kangaroo, as well as Grose's patent detachable gear case for bicycles. Other inventions included clips to attach a pump to a bicycle and a baby carrier.

There were far too many inventions and inventors mentioned to cover them all in detail but here is a brief flavour of some of the rest:

- William Butlin smelted iron ore for the first time (since medieval times) at his engineering works in Northampton in 1852.
- In 1898 Wenman Bassett-Lowke, who became the 20th century Northampton model maker, photographed the Wellingborough train crash when a trolley ran from the platform onto the rails in front of an express.

As a result, platforms now slope upwards towards the edge and platform trolleys cannot move unless they are pushed.

- Allchins of Northampton produced stationary steam and traction engines from 1847-1930.
- Robert Hickman of Northampton developed a gas jet heater for greenhouses.
- George Radford Mather, who had a foundry behind the Dog and Duck at Wellingborough, invented a machine to test for earthquakes.
- William Elliot patented the manufacture of bricks from 'plastic'.
- John Bosworth of Kettering is claimed to have invented the pneumatic tyre. Perhaps they should have been called 'Bosworth Tyres' rather than Dunlop.
- Mr Spring of Northampton Water Company developed a silent flushing toilet in 1892.
- Percy Pilcher died flying a glider in 1899 at Stanford Hall but in 1897 he patented a powered flying machine which he never built.

Finally, the most improbable 'inventor' mentioned was Joe Ingram who was nicknamed 'Parachute Joe', born in Finedon in 1850 and described as an 'aero-hydro-scientist'. He was forbidden from jumping off Cave's shoe factory in Rushden using wings made of straw! Nevertheless, he predicted that airships would carry hundreds of people and that aircraft would one day be used for bombing. Sadly he died in the workhouse in 1921.

This was a very enjoyable presentation that covered both the well-known and the less well-known inventors of Northamptonshire.

*Peter Perkins*



## Miscellany of Items of Interest

### **Paint a tram shelter**

Residents are to renovate one of two preserved tram shelters in Northampton. Members of the Queen's Park Residents' Association and borough councillor Sally Beardsworth will repaint the shelter in Harborough Road, opposite The Cock Hotel. Owen Jones, Association chairman, said: "I think it would be nice because the road's are going to look quite smart".

The shelter served a horse-drawn tramway until its closure in 1934.

The cost will be split equally between the county and borough councils and the contractors carrying out the Kingsthorpe corridor roadworks.

*Northampton Chronicle & Echo – 11th November 2011*

### **The Allchin Steam Roller**

Less than three years after being rescued from a council depot where it had been left to rust for decades, the Northampton-built steam roller has been returned to its former glory.

The Allchin steam roller, which was built at the Globe Works, near Southbridge, in 1899, was rescued in bits from Northampton Borough Council's depot in July 2009. The rusting remains of the machine had been left buried in bushes at the council depot for more than a decade before a team of steam enthusiasts recovered them. After securing a £50,000 lottery grant to fund its restoration, the team behind the project unveiled the new look roller to the public on New Year's Eve.

Kingsthorpe resident Julian Skinner, who has led the restoration project with his wife, Sharon, said: *"It feels great to see it like this and we know there are a lot of people who have been looking forward to seeing it at its best again."*

The 113 year old roller was used to build roads around Northampton from 1900 until it was retired and replaced by a diesel roller in 1954. After it finished working on the town's roads, the vehicle was fully restored by council workers and regularly starred at the front of the town's annual carnival during the 1960s and 1970s, before it eventually fell into disrepair again. Now it has been restored once more, it is hoped the roller will feature at the front of the town's 2012 carnival.

During its restoration, the roller was known by its official name, Allchin Roller 1131. But it has now been renamed "Northampton". Mrs Skinner said: *"It's part of Northampton's heritage, so we didn't want to name it after a person. We thought naming it after the town was much more fitting."*

From another report on the 22nd December 2011, Monica Walker, who helps organise the carnival, is now talking to the restoration group about returning the roller to its starring role. She says *"The carnival would be a great place for them to show off the work they've done and we're planning to celebrate the history of Northampton in next year's carnival, so we're happy to talk to them about bringing the roller back."*

### **Fact file:**

When it was built, the Allchin steam roller cost Northampton council £400 – the equivalent of £22,000 today.

The steam roller is now the only one of its kind left in the world.

It has been restored by the Northampton & Lamport Railway Preservation Society.

About 50 steam enthusiasts visited Lamport on New Year's Eve to see the restored roller. Among them was Bill Dickens from the national Road Roller Association.

He said: “It’s a terrific achievement to see it restored to this level in such a short time, it’s astounding and the quality of the work is incredible.”

The roller will be displayed at steam fairs across the region during the summer and it is hoped it will also lead the town’s carnival this year.

*Northampton Chronicle & Echo – 8/22nd December 2011 and 3rd January 2012*

### **Hornsey gas-holder under threat:**

While some of those at the Kings Cross development have some assurance, others are not so fortunate. Hornsey No 1, erected in 1892 beside the East Coast Main Line with a Samuel Cutler Patent Guide Frame (the second of its type, with spiral girders instead of the usual lattice) has proved to be a robust and durable design, repeated at many locations. Haringey Council has de-listed this as it stands in the way of a major development, for which a planning application progresses.

*‘The Bulletin’, [TfLSHG] – September 2011*

### **The abandoned Northern Line ‘loop’ at Embankment**

An interesting web-site to visit is [www.ianvisits.co.uk/blog/2011/10/26/](http://www.ianvisits.co.uk/blog/2011/10/26/) for some history on this curiosity. The early route of what is now the Northern Line only reached Charing Cross from the north, but really needed a link to the District Line at what is now Embankment station.

Parliamentary approval was granted, the original plan being to extend into a ‘dead end’ station with two sidings, landowners objected and a loop was built instead...

The later through-working to Kennington made the loop redundant and most of it was sealed off; one part of the loop was retained as the current platform but the opposite travel direction acquired a new straight station tunnel.

*The Bulletin’, [TfLSHG] – November 2011*

### **M25 (‘Road to Nowhere’ etc) is twenty-five years old...**

this was the illegitimate child of Ringways 3 and 4, the outer vestiges of the abandoned ‘Motorway Box’ scheme of the late 1960s for London passed its 25th birthday on Friday 28th October 2011. Some might argue that’s about the only thing which has passed on the world’s longest linear car park, also known as ‘The Road to H\*\*\*’ ...

London’s remnants of the Motorway Box schemes are the East Cross Route (either side of Blackwall Tunnel), the A40 Westway and the A41 ‘spur’ from White City to Shepherds Bush. On the latter, the incomplete roundabout at the northern end still has ‘on’ and ‘off’-slip road ‘claws’ to link to the road never built. While this urban motorways scheme (which would have killed the North London Line as it would have used the track-bed) never got very far, the M25 was real congestion relief scheme for London, transferring jams, noise and pollution from urban areas to more peripheral places. Planning difficulties meant that Ringway 4 alone could not become the M25 and parts of Ringway 3 were utilised, hence the nearness of the orbital motorway to London varies considerably.

*The Bulletin’, [TfLSHG] – November 2011*



*Having travelled on this road many many times as no doubt a lot of our members have, I would agree that this is a ghastly road as there are always jams of one sort and another at all times of the day. Currently road works to widen the carriageways are going on either side of the M1/M25 junction eastbound towards South Mimms and westbound towards Watford. Travelling south take care as you join from the M1.*

### **Major redevelopment plans for Northampton**

Northampton station is to be redeveloped at a cost of £25 million. Outlines plans are for a new station building that would be a cornerstone for regenerating a number of brownfield sites along the River Nene in the town centre, creating a potential for 70,000 sq/m of commercial development and 4,000 new jobs.

WNDC is working in partnership with Network Rail to deliver the plan. The station's outline design has been completed and 'prior approval' for the scheme has been received. Full planning permission is not required as the site is covered by NR's permitted development rights. Northampton's low-height 'shed-style' station has long been viewed as an example of BR cost-paring policies and its replacement would be more in keeping with a large county town.

With an entrance in Black Lion Hill, it would boast new facilities such as larger booking office, lifts, escalators, a larger coffee shop, multi-storey car-park and increased retail activity. In 2009/2010, the station was used by 2.2 million passengers.

*The Railway Magazine – October 2011*

### **Metal thieves strike again**

The theft of £80,000 worth of equipment by metal thieves has derailed the Northampton & Lamport Railway's extension plans. During October 27-29, hundreds of items including signal pulleys, box levels and point locks were stolen. It was also suspected that thieves had struck again on October 31, ripping copper wire from two coaches. The theft has temporarily scuppered plans to extend the railway southwards towards the Windhover pub. Railway volunteers will have to wait to bid for new equipment when Network Rail next upgrades a section of track.

Lamport Railway Trust believes that the thefts were carried out by experienced metal thieves, who drove their van three quarters of a mile through a field and then climbed an embankment to steal the items. Echoing the sentiments of angry Network Rail officials and British Transport Police, Gordon Titmuss, a director of the Trust, said "*The thieves know it is easy to hand the metal over to a scrap dealer who will give them cash.*" Smart water has now also been sprayed over all the trust's remaining equipment in order to deter any further thefts.

Heritage Railways have been urged to be on their guard for anyone trying to sell them the stolen items.

### **King's Cross footbridge moves to Mid-Hants**

A footbridge at King's Cross station that featured in the Harry Potter films is to be reinstalled on the Mid-Hants railway. The 118 year-old Handyside Bridge will be moved to Ropley in December for re-erection. The bridge, which was built in 1893,

was removed in 2009 as part of the station's £500 million redevelopment.

Before it was removed, Network Rail said the only people still using it were Harry Potter fans and station staff. It is now at Eastleigh being shot-blasted and repainted. Paddy Pugh, English Heritage's planning director for London, said "*For over 100 years the Handyside Bridge had been a distinctive and well-known part of King's Cross station, but the transformation of this great Victorian building into a 21st century railway terminus meant that it needed a new home.*" English Heritage is delighted that the bridge has now found that new home on the Watercress Line where it can continue to be part of England's outstanding railway heritage.

*The above two items from Heritage Railway – December 2011*

*I don't know why the bridge could not have been kept as a feature of the Station instead of being removed. Just because Kings Cross was being upgraded doesn't mean to say that any 'heritage' should be 'cut out' and moved just because it does not 'fit the new design'. Let's just hope that nothing happens to it down in Hampshire, after all it was protected from the elements inside the station – it won't be at its new destination! Ed.*

### **1859 King's Cross turntable unearthed**

The remains of the Great Northern Railway's only roundhouse have been unearthed during building work at King's Cross. The 1859 built engine shed was demolished in 1931 and was thought to have completely vanished, but the pits and floor plan of its turntable were discovered in October by builders working on the redevelopment of the land between King's Cross and St Pancras stations.

Although built by GNR, the shed was used initially by Midland Railway locos as that company had running powers over the GN prior to the opening of St Pancras in 1868. After that it was used to stable GN locos – two of which were used to pull it down with hawsers once it had become unfit for purpose.

Also open on the former King's cross railway lands now is the University of the Arts, which has been created inside the restored GNR granary building.

### **Duke of Gloucester meets the Duke of Gloucester at Wansford!**

Having visited the Nene Valley Railway to participate in the line's September Gala, No.71000 *Duke of Gloucester* stayed at Wansford until the middle of October.

On the 28th September the train was in steam for the visit of its namesake, HRH The Duke of Gloucester, who officially opened the Barnwell tea room at Wansford. The extension to the station building expanding the railway's catering facility, became operational in late August.

### **Steam to return to Hunsbury Hill**

Steam will return to the Northamptonshire Ironstone Railway Trust's line at Hunsbury Hill for the first time in more than 12 years this Christmas. Newly overhauled Andrew Barclay & Son 0-4-0ST Sir Thomas Royden (2088/1940) will visit from the Rutland Railway Museum to work Santa Specials. Its appearance is part of an ongoing joint working venture between the two charities, which developed when

a deal to restore Hunslet 0-4-0T Vigilant (HE287/1883) at RRM's Cottesmore site was agreed. Sir Thomas Royden, which operated at Cottesmore, will be returning to operation for the first time in 23 years following overhaul.

### **New footbridge at Wellingborough**

Major improvements to give passengers step-free access at Wellingborough have been completed. The project, funded by Network Rail and the 'Access for All' programme, has been the construction of a new footbridge at the north end of the station. Two new lifts are part of the footbridge, making it easier for passengers to move around the station. The footbridge will also allow the closure of the old barrow crossing as a first step to increasing the line speed through the station.

*The above four articles from The Railway Magazine – December 2011*

### **Canal restoration**

Part of a canal in Northamptonshire is being restored by a group of volunteers. The Buckingham Canal Society is restoring the disused Buckingham Canal that used to run from Cosgrove to Buckingham.

The work is being carried out by volunteers, on alternate Thursdays and on the second Sunday of each month. For more information about how to get involved call 01908 661217 or visit [www.buckinghamcanal.org.uk](http://www.buckinghamcanal.org.uk).

*Northampton Chronicle and Echo – 20th December 2011*



## **Of This and That**

### **AGM - report**

This was quite well attended. We have to report that all the Committee were re-elected with the welcome addition of David Waller who now joins the team. Subscriptions will rise again in 2012 in order to keep pace with the rising costs of postage and other attendant photocopying issues. The Treasurer gives a short report on this subject. Since the AGM, the committee elected Peter Perkins as Chairman of the Committee who will continue to guide the committee expertly through meetings. Peter also remains as NIAG Secretary and he should be thanked for all his hard work during the year. There will be a small change in our auditors for the next year – Gill & David Lindsey, who have done this job for many years, have requested that they now take a back seat and the post of auditing our annual accounts has gone to Jim Goodger, who already audits the accounts of NALH, and is an enthusiastic member of Crick Local History Society.

The talk from Jon-Paul Carr, NIAG member and keen local historian, was light, informative and entertaining. This is the second time I had heard the talk and to someone who does not hail from this part of the world I am still amazed at the number of inventors who came from the County. Peter's report on this talk can be

## **Report from our Treasurer as given to the AGM in November 2011**

### **1. Introduction**

In September 2010 a small deficit on the Group's trading account was forecast. The year has ended better than expected in that a small surplus was been realised. However there is no room for complacency as the Group's finances are still quite fragile and will remain so whilst the current trend of high inflation rates continue. This report is essentially that presented to the AGM and updated as of 1st January 2012.

### **2. Current Position**

#### **2.1 Membership Year 2010-2011**

A cursory glance of the Annual Financial Summary suggests that the Group has made a trading loss of £1,002.03 for the period ending 31st August 2011. However this figure has been distorted by the publication costs associated with the Gazetteer Ed. 2. Excluding these costs, the expenditure for the year is £907.97, some £13 greater than assumed in the budget. This was prepared excluding any income from publication sales and miscellaneous income. Excluding these two line items gives an income of £936.33 resulting in a surplus of £28.36 on the year's trading account. Guest fees account for most of this surplus, which compares favourably with the forecast deficit of £26.

As stated on previous occasions any Miscellaneous income has been set aside for publicity purposes. Also, monies arising from Publications has been ring-fenced for future occasions.

#### **2.2 Membership Year 2011-12**

The budget prepared for the 2010 AGM forecast an excess of £56 on the trading account for 2011-12. The costs associated with this budget have been reviewed: a small increase in postage rates and an increase in meeting room rates, which was postponed from January 2011 to 2012, have been assumed. Accordingly, the forecast excess for the current year has been reduced to £19. But reducing membership numbers places our finances under greater strain; there are still nine outstanding subscriptions as of 1st January.

### **3. Membership Year 2012-13**

In the light of potential increases next year - room charges, further increases in printing and postal charges (figures of ~20% have been suggested for the latter) and speakers increasing their charges, a budget for the 2012/13 year had been prepared for the AGM hence the need to again review subscriptions.

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

### **3.1 Expenditure**

#### **Meetings**

With the charge of 50p per cup for refreshments introduced in 2010/11, this part of our meetings should continue to be self-financing bearing in mind that we have to pay for the use of the kitchen.

The costs associated with the winter programme are room charges and speakers' costs: The current venue has proved more than adequate for our needs, and unless there is large increase in attendance then there is little to be gained in seeking alternative accommodation. Whilst speakers' fees have been fairly static over recent years, there is the likelihood that more will charge for their services.

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.

#### **Newsletters**

The question of frequency and size of newsletters has been discussed before and the current arrangement of four issues per year fits in well with the Group's activities. Photocopying charges are kept to a minimum by bulking up print runs. Savings have been made by ensuring print runs meet the break point in printing charges. A detailed analysis has shown that savings in printing costs can only be achieved if a large fraction of the membership opted for electronic copies.

Postal charges are kept to a minimum by ensuring all envelopes meet the A5-size, 5mm and 100gm criteria.

### **3.2 Income**

#### **Guest Fee**

There is little to be gained in increasing the guest fee from the current £2 per person as this would have minimal effect on the overall financial situation.

#### **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.

#### **Membership Fees**

For the year 2011-12 the differential between the Single and Joint subscriptions has been returned to its former value of £4. Based on this figure, the subscriptions for Membership year 2012-13 need to be raised to £14 and £18 respectively giving a budgetary excess income over expenditure of £61.

#### **Membership Numbers**

To maintain the current level of membership fees (£12 and £16), the membership would have to be increased by 10%. As of 1st January 2012, there are still 9 outstanding renewals, which, unless monies are received in the immediate future, means NIAG has lost nine members placing yet greater strain on NIAG's finances.

#### **4. Membership Year 2013-14**

It is too early to consider any financial data that far ahead.

#### **5. Comparison with other Societies**

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

#### **6. Projects**

The Mk2 Gazeteer project has used up most of our reserves; a printer's error substantially reduced our final bill. 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 have to start from the bottom again, and without 'a safety net', to build up our reserves. I supported this project and would very much like to see more publications produced. To this end it is recommended that NIAG registers for ISBN numbers, currently priced at £110 for ten numbers. Whilst seemingly expensive it actually gets NIAG's name known in wider circles through various publishers' lists.

*TJ Waterfield - 1st January 2012*

*This should go a long way to explain the accounts sheet which you all will have received with the AGM notice back in October 2011. Ed.*

#### **Winter Programme 2011/2012**

- |               |  |
|---------------|--|
| 13th January  | Members Evening – where members give short presentations       |
| 10th February | Brunel's 'Great Eastern' – Isambard Thomas & Alexandra Warwick |
| 9th March     | The History of Wreford's Transport                             |

#### **Dates for the Diary: 2012**

- |              |   |
|--------------|---|
| 6/10th April | 'Tornado' at the Nene Valley Railway. See this new built steam engine in action and at close hand.  |
| 28th April   | SERIAC 2012 – To be held at St Bartholomew's School, Newbury, hosted by Berkshire Industrial Archaeology Group. Further details on <a href="http://www.biag.org.uk">www.biag.org.uk</a> |
| 19th May     | Industrial Heritage Day (EMIAC 83) - Trent 150: Hosted by the Railway & Canal Historical Society, East Midlands Group. Details in the leaflet enclosed with this newsletter.            |

#### **TV Programmes of interest**

- |      |  |
|------|--|
| BBC2 | Monday to Fridays at 6.30 pm. 25 programmes commenced 2nd January 2012. Michael Portillo's Railway Journeys. Now in its third series Michael takes the viewer on yet more fascinating and informative trips around the country with his Bradshaw's guide firmly in hand. |
|------|--|

**And Finally:**

**Old habits die hard**

“I’m thinking about getting an iPad. But then you can’t put one of those at the bottom of the bird cage, like you can with a newspaper.”!!

*Flemish TV presenter Mark Uytterhoeven on the limits of technology.  
Flanders Today – 7th December 2011*

and I thought this might make you smile.....

**Zimmer frame rescue**

Firefighters were called out after a woman became tangled up in her zimmer frame. A fire crew was called out to Staverton Road in Daventry at 9.40 am on Friday (Dec.30). The pensioner was freed from the walking frame and taken to hospital for a checkup. She did not suffer any serious injuries.

*Daventry Express - 5th January 2012*

*Good grief - how on earth do you get tangled up in what is basically a metal frame which is shaped in a half circle. Certainly raised a huge giggle in this household I can tell you!!.*



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## Newsletter:

Next Issue: **April 2012**

Deadline for all articles and information **10th March 2012**. 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.