



NORTHAMPTONSHIRE
INDUSTRIAL, ARCHAEOLOGY
GROUP

NEWSLETTER



ISSUE 123 - SUMMER 2012

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Photograph front cover: Scotts of Thrapston - Logo
© Jane Waterfield 2012

From the Editor

With the excitement of the Diamond Jubilee weekend now gone, there is still the Olympic circus to get through. Let's hope that those of us who are not overly sports mad can manage to survive the hours of television viewing which will 'hit' us at the end of July; in this household it will be catch up time on many DVDs that we have, or programmes that we have recorded and not quite kept on top of. The cost of staging this event far outweighing the simplistic games that were first competed in centuries ago.

The summer walks and visits have been, so far, excellent – the weather being the inevitable mix of rain and sun and either freezing cold or baking hot. But we have got used to this and can only hope that the remaining few are neither cold, wet or unpleasantly hot.

The annual rail tour on the 20th June was another excellent day, grateful thanks to Barry for organising this treat and we were so lucky with the weather. The sun shone and the wind kept off.

The 2012/13 winter programme is enclosed with this mailshot, another excellent and diverse range of topics which it is hoped will appeal to many of you. An extra talk has been arranged in partnership with The Historical Association – Northampton branch for September. Please note the date.

Once again I have been scanning magazines and newspapers for items of interest. I must apologise for the emphasis on the Northampton area, you will appreciate that I am unable to get the local papers for the other side of the county but would ask you all that should you see anything of interest to point me in the right direction to obtain the story.

NIAG will be taking the stand and displays to four events in the Autumn. Heritage Weekend in Northampton, Archaeology Day at Wellingborough, EMIAC at Retford and the NALH History Day at Sulgrave. Hope to see some of you on these days. This is chance to showcase our Group and to bring awareness of our fast declining industrial heritage to the notice of the public. Details in 'Dates for the Diary' section. Incidentally we have gained a few new members from attending such events. So it's onwards and upwards.

Also enclosed is the annual membership form and the next EMIAC flyer. In order to continue receiving the newsletter please ensure that you renew before the year is out. It looks like October is going to be rather busy. The AGM will take place in November and all the relevant papers will be sent out with the October Newsletter. The October lecture sees the story about the new build A1 Locomotive – Tornado. I believe that John Rawlinson, the speaker from the Trust, will be bringing some items to sell. Just in time for the odd Christmas present for the grandchildren – or perhaps for yourself!

Do enjoy the rest of summer and I look forward to seeing you in the near future.

Jane W

Correction:

In the last issue (122) on page 17. Rushton station should have read Rushden.

**Additional NIAG talk on 7th September****Understanding the Workplace: Archaeology and Industrialisation**

by Professor Marilyn Palmer

Following a suggestion from our newest Committee Member David Waller, NIAG is to hold an additional lecture in association with the Northampton Branch of the Historical Association on Friday 7th September at 7.30pm in our normal meeting place - the Garden Room of St Matthews Church Hall.

The talk will cover the impact of industrialisation on both people and their workplaces and will explain the importance of IA in today's environment. It should be of interest to both those who know little about IA as well as those familiar with the subject.

Professor Palmer is President of the Association of Industrial Archaeology as well as Emeritus Professor of Industrial Archaeology at Leicester University and has written several books on IA, so it should prove to be an interesting evening.

Free to NIAG and HA members, it will give an opportunity of sharing a common interest with the Historical Association. It will also provide NIAG members with an additional activity in the gap between the end of the Summer programme and the start of the Winter programme in October.



WINTER TALKS 2011/12

Final report

Allchin Steam Roller 1131 – 9th March

For the last presentation of the winter programme members were treated to a very local story, which began in 1899 when Allchin Road Roller No 1131 was built and registered by the County Borough of Northampton as their No 1 roller in 1900. It cost £400.

William Loader Allchin and his son William were involved in making steam powered tools in the late nineteenth century at The Globe Works in Northampton, though their offices were in Augustin Street. Their names appeared in the London Gazette of 21st January 1862 regarding their invention for “improvements in apparatus applicable to the superheating of steam”. The Works closed in 1931.



The roller, based at the Westbridge Depot, was used by the Highways Department for carrying out repairs to, and making new, roads until it was taken out of service during the 1960s. It was fitted with a scarifier at the rear on the right hand side to break-up the road surface prior to it being repaired. Although the Council bought a second roller (No 2), it never performed as well as No 1 and was eventually disposed of.

After retiring from active service, No 1 roller was fully restored by the council workers and then made regular appearances in the Northampton Carnival Parades during the 1960s and 70s before eventually falling into disrepair again. Although the Borough Council made a number of attempts to rehome it, all came to nought. It had been broken down into many parts and left to languish in the council’s yard. When the Skinners rescued it, it was buried beneath a mass of vegetation.

Sharon Skinner’s early attempts to gain legal possession were frustrated by changes in the Council’s offices and all paperwork being lost. Undeterred she restarted the whole process again and eventually took possession and moved the ‘kit of parts’ to the Northampton and Lamport Railway site at Chapel Brampton in 2009. Through fund-raising activities and a £50,000 lottery grant Allchin No 1 had been fully restored to working order by the end of 2011.

At the time of her presentation, the roller was still in need of its boiler test before

it could be driven in public again but it was hoped that could be completed before the summer season. Sharon showed a number of images of the roller at work in and around the town; some of the audience knew, or had connections with, the workers shown. Some of the roads are no longer! Finally, one of our members had donated a set of Allchin rollers having seen news of the restoration in the local press and in recent newsletters.



This was a fitting end to the Winter programme.

Terry Waterfield

Photographs courtesy of Sharon Skinner

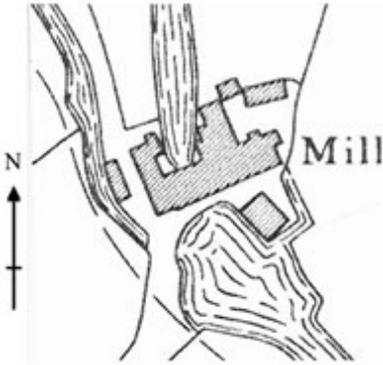


SUMMER PROGRAMME WALKS AND VISITS

Isham Walk – 4th May

In stark contrast to 2011, when the first NIAG Summer visit took place on a balmy summer evening, the 2012 equivalent took place in wintry conditions – 6 degrees, dull, windy, drizzly and thoroughly unpleasant. Despite this some 12 intrepid members turned up. It had been intended to walk along the Ise valley at Isham but the flooding which occurred a few days earlier made this impractical and so a walk around Isham village ensued.

First stop was at the remains of Isham watermill adjacent to the footpath to Burton Latimer. A water mill is recorded at Isham in 1546 but as NIAG’s latest Gazetteer* tells us, the mill had a life of varied uses: *“By the 16th century a fulling mill had been added to the original corn mill. In the early 18th century it was entirely used for fulling but from c1750 until c1820, paper was made in the mill. For a short time it operated as a silk mill but in 1834 when in use as a carpet mill it was destroyed by fire. After rebuilding, the water-wheel was augmented by a steam engine for worsted*



Outline plan of Isham Mill (taken from RCHM: *Archaeological Sites in Central Northamptonshire*, 1979, fig 95.

spinning. From about 1855 until shortly after 1930 the mill was used for flour milling and then for gristing”.

The present remains appear to date from the rebuilding in the middle of the 19th century.

The main external walls are of stone with some brick and are extant up to a height of several feet. As the outline plan of the mill shows, the mill leat passed through the centre of the building from north to south, meaning the mill wheel was inside the building. On the ground, the depression forming the now-dry mill leat could just about be made out amongst the rubble. The tops of the arches could be seen where the water entered and exited the building and the location of the wheel pit was also identified. It was not clear if the stream running to the west of the mill site was anything to do with the mill although ground conditions made it difficult to explore the area in detail. Although there is still evidence of various other structures in different parts of the site, it was not possible to ascertain their purpose or indeed identify where the steam engine was located. Remains of two millstones were seen, dressed (according to our resident mill expert!) in an anticlockwise direction. On the opposite side of the footpath were the remains of a brick-built warehouse associated with the mill, now deteriorating rapidly.

The Midland main line runs adjacent to the mill and a footbridge takes the footpath to Burton Latimer over the railway. Locally called the “hurdy-gurdy” bridge, for reasons which are not immediately apparent, it is a riveted latticework beam supported on abutments constructed using both red and blue bricks and these incorporate the steps. Unusually the steps rise from the south on the west side but from the north on the east side. Although the railway opened in 1857 on the Midland Railway’s Leicester to Hitchin extension, the bridge must have been rebuilt in the late 1870s when the lines were quadrupled. In the 1980s the two slow lines were removed between Kettering and Wellingborough during track rationalisation, but in the last few years one of these lines has been reinstated, thus allowing the government to claim that a new railway line has been built!!

Returning to the village a circuit in the increasing gloom revealed amongst the mixture of stone cottages, some with thatched roofs, an attractive thatched stable, a manor house, possibly of medieval origin, with a central semi-circular carriage arch now blocked in, and two dovecotes, both rectangular, one of which is thought to date

from the 16th century. The village still boasts two pubs: what used to be called the The Red Lion on the main road but has for some reason been renamed the ‘Monk & Minstrel’ and the ‘Lilacs’ in the bottom part of the village away from the main road. After an hour’s walk in the gloom and cold, we were glad to call it a day. Our walk along the valley of the River Ise will have to wait for another year!

**A Guide to the Industrial Heritage of Northamptonshire 2nd Edition, published by NIAG in 2011 - copies are still available from Jane, priced £7.95 (£6.00 for members).*

Peter Perkins



Scotts of Thrapston – 11th May 2012

During NIAG’s visit to Thrapston in 2011, the group spent some time outside the Scotts factory site in Bridge Street near the Nine Arches Bridge, trying to determine the exact location of Bridge Street station (on the former Northampton to Peterborough line).

This year NIAG had the opportunity to visit the Scotts of Thrapston factory and 16 members were warmly welcomed by current Chairman, David Scott. Scotts are still a family business and have been trading for over 90 years. They manufacture high quality specialist timber products such as National Trust summerhouses, pavilions, equestrian buildings and specialist roof structures. The family purchased the current six acre site from British Rail in the mid-1960s and have developed a purpose-built factory. However, due to expansion of the business, the company are planning to move to an out-of-town site near the A14 in the near future. It is expected that the current site will house a new supermarket in Thrapston, although there is a rival scheme to build a new Sainsbury’s on the current cattle market site!

David gave an amusing introduction to the history of the company, including telling us that he got engaged five times but has only been married once! The business was started by his Grandfather, James, in 1920 who, after failing to make his fortune in the Canadian Gold Rush, commenced production of wheelbarrows and ladders in premises only 200 yards from the current site.



Inside the factory

© Ron Whittaker 2012

The timber buildings business started in the later 1930s at the beginning of the Second World War and it was around this time that the company started designing timber summerhouses for the British aristocracy. In fact, some of these early Scotts garden buildings are still standing in the gardens of Brigstock's largest houses.

James's son, Douglas, joined the business in the late 1930s. Douglas was considered more ambitious than his father and he was determined to make a name for Scotts within the poultry industry. The company began making a variety of new poultry products and also diversified into other areas, such as dog kennels, Wendy houses, trailers, bus shelters and kiosks.

The third generation of the Scotts family, David, the current Chairman, joined a year before the death of James in 1962 and developed a marketing and expansion programme. The joinery division was added into the company in 1972 and a roof trusses division in 1976, the year Douglas retired. New products were launched in the equestrian market.

David's son James (the fourth generation) joined the company in 2000 and has developed the timber stables business. The company is a regular exhibitor at the

RHS Flower Shows and the Burghley Horse Trials.

After the introduction, David and James showed the NIAG group around the site which combined old wood processing equipment with the latest CNC machinery. They pointed out where the rail track went but unfortunately nothing remains of the station



The old railway bridge

© Terry Waterfield 2012

site. At the back of the premises the old Northampton – Peterborough rail bridge could be seen in position over the small waterway which links the Nene with the old Thrapston Wharf near to the Midland Road roundabout.

The morning was finished off with a delightful sandwich lunch, hosted by the Directors. In these difficult economic times, it was great to see an old-established Northamptonshire business with over 100 employees flourishing so well with ambitious plans for the future.

All the members found it an enjoyable NIAG visit.

Ron Whittaker

NEWS ITEMS AND UPDATES:

Billing Road Conservation Area

Northampton Borough Council resolved to designate Billing Road Conservation Area on the 7th March 2012. This includes the North side of Billing Road from Alexander Road to the Billing Road Cemetery. St. Andrews Hospital is not included, nor is Northampton General, however the houses in Cliftonville are. For more information please look at www.northampton.gov.uk. You will need to look at Consultations.

Fishmarket, Northampton

The plans to build a new bus station over the Fishmarket have been criticised by officials from within the council behind the scheme. The NCC revealed plans to build the replacement for the Greyfriars building back in April. In early June they were criticised by English Heritage because of the ‘significant harm’ which would be caused by the Fishmarket’s demolition. Now the county council’s own archaeological department has also expressed concerns. In a letter discussing the plans, county archaeological adviser, Lesley-Ann Mather, said it would be sad to see the Fishmarket go. *“It’s disappointing that the proposals involve the demolition of a building of regional and local interest.”* The decision on whether the development should go ahead is due in the coming months.



and a ‘dilemma’ to the council over Fishmarket plans!

The leader of the opposition at NCC has claimed the authority faces a ‘real dilemma’ over the future of the Fishmarket. Experts from both English Heritage and the county council’s archaeological unit have expressed concerns about the possible demolition. Cllr Brendan Clynane said: *“There are not many buildings left in the UK like the Fishmarket, so I think they’ve got a real dilemma. We certainly need a new bus station, but I think you could argue the Fishmarket site is not the right place.”* He also raised concerns about the archaeological finds which could be under the site.

Northampton Chronicle & Echo – 7th June 2012

All this building needs is a clean up and making dry and warm. I understand that there is only a small problem in one corner where the walls are damp, other than that the building is reasonably sound. As always the council owns these properties

– Greyfriars bus station and Grosvenor Car Park spring to mind – but they are too tight fisted to maintain them. They would rather spend rate-payers money on grandiose schemes which don't last! Ed

Photograph - Fishmarket entrance © Jane Waterfield 2012



MISCELLANY ITEMS OF INTEREST

Station site of ‘global worth’?

An archaeological discovery ‘of international importance’ could be unearthed when work begins on Northampton’s new bus station. It is planned to build the town’s new bus station on the site of the former Fishmarket in Sheep Street, close to Northampton’s Market Square. The site has long been believed to have been at the heart of the town’s Jewish community during medieval times. Archaeologists who have looked at the site before any construction work is carried out, have suggested there could be the remains of both a medieval pub, called The Red Lyon, and a Jewish synagogue buried under the site.

Historian Marcus Roberts has carried out above-ground investigations of the site before. He said: *“I think there ought to be a full archaeological dig of the site because it’s got so much significance in terms of the medieval town. And if there are the remains of the medieval synagogue there, finding them would be incredibly important, not just nationally, but internationally. There are only a few medieval synagogues in Europe. The only remaining one in this country is in Guildford, underneath a branch of Waterstones.”*

When synagogues were built in medieval times, their structures were sunk deep underground, meaning remains of the Northampton building could still exist deep under the current street level.

“If the initial tests are correct, there should be massive walls under there. We’re talking about 10ft to 14ft walls that could be uncovered. But the critical thing is it is properly excavated and the remains are preserved if they’re substantial so the public can access them and they become a treasured part of Northampton’s heritage”.

The archaeologists who have looked at the site for the NCC suggested a series of trial pits should be dug across the site before any development work was carried out, to see exactly what was under the ground.

Mr Roberts hopes that if the synagogue was unearthed, it would be preserved and may be covered with a glass screen, so people could see it as they waited for their buses. He hopes that it should be possible both to have the new bus station and something that will be of architectural importance to Northampton. The Borough

Council's planning committee will decide in the coming months if the development should go ahead.

Northampton Chronicle & Echo – April 24th 2012.

Major expansion planned for DIRFT

Plans for a major expansion of DIRFT have been unveiled meaning the facility will remain as the UK's largest rail-served logistics terminal. With the second phase of DIRFT opening in June 2011, this third phase is the biggest yet and the proposal is that DIRFT III will utilise land that is home to the redundant BT Rugby radio station C. This site will be bounded by the M1 motorway and the A5 road with the facility being built in a wedge that borders DIRFT 1 and Junction 18 of the M1.

Since 2003 there has been a developing partnership between Prologis – which builds and manages DIRFT – and the Rugby Radio Station Limited Partnership [RRSLP] which includes BT and Aviva.

Rugby Borough Council is working with RRSLP on a sustainable housing project plan, for land previously used by the radio station west of the A5 and up to the Northampton branch of the West Coast Main Line. A pre-planning application consultation is to take place and because the proposals are of national significance they will also be considered by the Infrastructure Planning Commission.

Sitting in the axis of the M1, M6, A5 and A14 – with direct links by rail to the Channel Tunnel – DIRFT has proved to be an ideally-placed distribution hub. Under the new plans there would be a new rail link from the terminal, new storage sheds and 714,000 sq.ft. of rail-served storage and distribution, as well as office and control buildings. Because the retail and supply industry works on the 'just in time' basis, facilities such as DIRFT are an essential part of the logistics chain.

To cater for the expansion at DIRFT III, the intermodal area within DIRFT 1 would close, although the sidings remain in situ as contingency. All trains would use DIRFT II and III. At the north end of the new site, Lilbourne Meadows would be created – a 70 hectare landscaped site that would provide a buffer to Lilbourne village.

With an average of 20 trains per day using DIRFT, indications are that, if, and when, DIRFT III comes on stream, there will be capacity for 36 trains in a 24 hour period.

The Railway Magazine – June 2012

Brunel train shed to be restored for GW electrification

Brunel's original Bristol Temple Meads train shed is to be restored to its former glory as the terminus for trains to London, coinciding with Great Western Main Line electrification to Bristol by 2016. It was last used by passenger trains in 1965.

The building has been brought for £3.8 million by the Homes and Communities Association [HCA], a Government agency that also owns three other pieces of land around the station. The HCA, which has been working with the council and the Local Enterprise Partnership on the project, is also spending £1.2 million on a pest

control depot next to Temple Meads. This deal will see the building eventually owned by Bristol City Council, helping to create a public transport hub that will also serve a network of 'bendy bus' routes.

Network Rail Western Route Managing Director, Patrick Hallgate said the move demonstrated a *“clear support for the rail industry’s ambition to revamp the railway in Bristol. Rail demand in Bristol is growing rapidly, with a forecast growth of 44% by the end of the decade. We need to grow the railway to cater for this boom, and there is potential to do so by redeveloping the land, buildings and railway in the Bristol area.”*

David Warburton, head of the HCA in Bristol, said *“It’s vital that Brunel’s old station is used to its full potential, whether that is to support Network Rail Western’s plans for improved transport links, or provide improved workspace and facilities for companies who want to be based here. Working with the city council to acquire the building will allow us to do that.”* He also added that there was a great deal of work ahead to make the project a success.

Built in 1939-41, the Grade 1 listed terminal building was the world’s first example of a rail terminus with an integrated locomotive shed, passenger and office facilities. It was originally designed to take Brunel’s 7ft-wide broad gauge line, and preceded the larger, adjacent train shed that was completed in 1878. Its mock Tudor hammer beam roof has the largest span of its kind in the country. Most recently, it was owned by the British Empire and Commonwealth Museum, and is currently used as a car park and exhibition hall.

Once the Didcot signal centre becomes operational, the Bristol Panel signal box, at the open end of the terminus, will be removed and rails re-laid for electric trains.

Rail Magazine – April 18/May 1 2012

Advert ban for the former Maltings

One of Britain’s biggest advertising firms has been told it cannot put billboards along a Northampton town centre street, because they would harm the look of the area. London-based advertising firm Clear Channel, had applied for permission to put up three large billboards in St Peter’s Way, in front of the former Maltings building. Officials from NBC turned down the plans in October last year and the company appealed against the decision.

This week however, national planning inspector, Tim Belcher, said the development should not be allowed to go ahead. In an official report on the plans, he said *“I consider that poster panels along this part of St Peter’s Way would not be sensitively located. The posters would harm the appearance of the street scene by introducing unacceptable commercial clutter which would dominate the street scene and unacceptably harm its current attractive appearance. I am aware of the advantages that the advertising industry generally brings to the economy of the country but in this case those advantages are outweighed by the harm which these poster panels*

would cause. I agree that it would be preferable if this land was managed in an appropriate fashion whilst awaiting redevelopment, but I do not consider that this is a good reason to allow advertisements which would cause harm.”

The former Maltings building and St. Mark’s Church which stood on the site in St Peter’s Way were controversially demolished in 2007. Since then the site has remained empty. In February the WDC revealed plans to compulsorily purchase the site so it could be completely redeveloped.

Northampton Chronicle & Echo – April 26th 2012

Extension to Wellingborough Station

The Midland Railway station building could be extended and provided with a large new car park. Extra capacity will be needed when a new £200m, 3,200-home and retail development at Stanton Cross is completed nearby.

Rail magazine – May 30/June 12 2012

Finedon’s Local History Society ‘home’.

This society was founded in 2000 from a small group of enthusiasts and is now well established with a membership of approximately 130.

Through the generosity of local businessman Jim Gibbard, Chairman of Tingdene Holdings Ltd, the society has the use of a building that was originally the Quaker Meeting House as its headquarters. Quakerism was very strong in Finedon in the 17th and 18th centuries and immediately after the introduction of the Act of Toleration in 1689 the Quakers built their Meeting House in 1690. It is now the oldest surviving building built for non-conformist worship in Northamptonshire and is the third oldest building in Finedon. With the exception of the thatched roof being replaced with slates and the addition of an entrance porch the building is largely unchanged. Many of the original features have been retained and the building and burial ground are still enclosed within the high wall built to give protection from stone throwing locals. The first burial at the meeting House was in 1704 and the last in 1946. Many of the simple head stones typically used by the Quakers are now positioned alongside the boundary wall. On a small outbuilding there is a date stone inscribed “16 JW 99” which was possibly the gravestone of John Whitlark one of the original trustees and a member of an important Finedon Quaker family. The society is justly proud to have such a building, which provides great interest to visitors, as its headquarters.

Source of this is unknown

‘Spaghetti Junction’ on the M6, Junction 6, is 40 years old!

On the 24th May Spaghetti junction reached the grand old age of 40. The junction officially named as ‘Graveley Hill Interchange’ was constantly referred to as ‘Spaghetti Junction’ in the 1970s by a journalist from the Birmingham Evening Mail. The name stuck and became synonymous with many a snarl up on the M6.

The junction is the centre piece of the Midland Links project, which was designed to join up the M1, M5 and M6 motorways, as well as the A38(M) Aston Expressway to bring traffic into the heart of Birmingham.

The designers had to build a six-lane carriageway and link roads through several built-up areas, and with the minimum demolition and disruption. In order to achieve this, the M6 and Spaghetti junction follow the line of the canal and river network on elevated sections. In meeting the old and new methods of transport, the pillars carrying the junction over the canal network had to be carefully placed to allow a horse-drawn narrow boat to pass underneath without fouling its towrope.

Construction of the junction commenced in 1968 and took four years to complete. It has 559 concrete columns, some of which reach to 80 feet high.

The junction cost £10 million at the time of its construction; it involved 13,000 tonnes of steel reinforcement and 175,000 cubic yards of concrete. It covers 30 acres and serves 18 routes, including 2.5 miles of slip roads, but only 0.62 miles of the M6 itself. It is split across 5 different levels and is designed to last for 120 years.

Routine repairs to the reinforced concrete structures have been ongoing since the late 1980s. Maintenance on a regular basis include replacement of expansive joints, painting of steelwork, the clearing of draining channels, gutters and clearance of vegetation and removal of graffiti. Concrete repairs are carried out in small sections, so the overall strength of the supporting beams is never compromised. Interestingly during these repairs, small sections of old concrete are cut out using water. Specially trained operatives use a lance to carefully guide a jet of water, pressurized at 16,000 psi, which cuts through concrete with surgical ease. Using water rather than physical tools removes the risk of damage to other sections of viaduct through vibration. As you drive over this section of the M6 you would not be aware that men are working beneath the carriageway on these upgrades. Approximately £7 million a year is spent by the Highways Agency to maintain the Junction in a safe and serviceable condition.

The Junction appears in the Guinness Book of World Records, as “*the most complex interchange on the British road system*”. Not surprisingly the Junction is one of the biggest motorway interchanges in Europe and one of the most recognizable. It even has its own weather station to monitor conditions.

Construction of the Junction meant having to divert the River Tame and the reduction in size of a lake nearby. As the lake is registered as a reservoir under the Reservoirs Act, the construction of the bund between the river channel and the lake had to be supervised by an engineer on the register of Dam Engineers.

Not that you would wish to, but if you did, to drive along every road at the Junction itself, adhering to the Highway Code, you would have to travel approximately 73 miles!

During the first year of opening, the average flow of vehicles was 40,000 per day. Today, the average daily flow is over 210,000 vehicles and incredibly it has, over its

40 years history, carried nearly 2 billion vehicles.

The Junction currently has 46 signals, 3 electronic message signs and 25 emergency roadside telephones, and now the Highways Agency is preparing for the installation of a system known as ‘Managed Motorways’ through Spaghetti Junction, which will allow hard shoulder running and variable speed limits to keep traffic flowing.

Finally it has embedded itself so deeply in local culture that even the Birmingham City University Student Union has named their official magazine after it!

Information taken from the ITV Central News website of 24th May 2012

Government confirms funds for Northampton station

Half the cost of building a new £20million railway station in Northampton will be funded by the Government - £5m each will come from the DfT and the Department for Communities and Local Government – with the remaining £10m coming from Network Rail and Northamptonshire County Council. The two storey glass and steel structure will serve the 2.5million passengers who use the station each year.

Construction work is due to begin towards the end of the year with completion taking place in 2014. The station is within an enterprise zone which could mean the creation of up to 13,000 jobs. The project will be overseen by the WNDC.

The Railway Magazine – July 2012

[I was under the impression that the WNDC and all like quangos were being got rid of by the Government – another porky pie methinks! - Ed]

Overstone Hall – At-risk list

A landmark building will feature in the annual catalogue of buildings at risk published Friday June 1st by an influential conservation charity.

Overstone Hall, a majestic Italian-style mansion set within a walled 40-acre park on the outskirts of Northampton, features on SAVE Britain’s Heritage’s list of 100 historic buildings in need of repair throughout England and Wales with the aim of attracting suitable people to take them on and restore them to their former glory.

A spokesman said: *‘Although the costs involved in restoring the Hall would be substantial, it would make a magnificent hotel, offices, or a truly grand country house’.*

Overstone Hall was built in 1866 for the first Lord Overstone, and featured examples of cutting-edge technology including a central heating system, gas lighting and the earliest known cavity wall installation. The house was designed by W M Teulon, younger brother of the renowned Victorian architect S S Teulon. The house has extensive parquet flooring and massive, elaborately carved exposed oak timbers. Built of limestone ashlar with a slate roof, the garden elevation is dominated by an imposing square tower. In 1980, after more than half-a-century as a girls’ school, Overstone Hall was bought at a knock-down price by the New Testament Church of

God which occupied it until 2008. In 2001 the northern half of the main building was badly damaged by fire and has never been restored. In 2010 it was put up for sale for £1 million, with no takers.

The fire which destroyed part of the beautiful Overstone Hall started in one of the upper rooms on the eastern side of the building. Approximately 50% of the building was gutted within 12 hours, destroying all of the best-loved features of the house, including its breathtaking wooden staircase and magnificent library, along with the elegant parquet flooring which graced the public rooms and corridors. It boasted 119 rooms and is surrounded by a 40-acre park and grounds which contain three lakes, the old carriage block, walled garden and farm buildings.

S S Teulon is a distant relative of our member A Teulon who has recently published a book on his ancestor. 'The Life and Work of Samuel Sanders Teulon – Victorian Architect'. [see Issue 113 Winter 2010].

Further memories are that for many post war years, the annual County Show was staged in the Park. Thank you to Terry for that – does anyone else remember this?

Locomotive painted claret for the Jubilee

A locomotive based at Hunsbury Hill Country Park in Northampton has been painted in royal claret to mark the Queen's Diamond Jubilee. A team of four volunteers from the Ironstone Railway Trust spent two weeks repainting the diesel locomotive in time for the Jubilee celebrations, June 3rd to 5th. Kev Smith, operations controller for the Ironstone Railway Trust said: *"We spent a lot of time researching the colour of the royal locomotive. We wanted to get the look of the locomotive just right. It's not often you get an event like this and I can't think of a better commemoration. I'm very proud of the lads and it is testament to the work round the clock they have done over the past two weeks."*

The locomotive also includes the Northampton Borough crest after permission was granted by Cllr. David Mackintosh, leader of the borough council. Simon Tasker, lead engineer from the trust said: *'The residents of Northampton are very proud of our heritage, the crest just finishes off the look and we hope many people from Northampton will come to view the locomotive.'*

Annual Festival of Transport

Around 10,000 people flocked to the annual Festival of Transport, where crowds were wowed by a display of vintage vehicles. The weekend's event, held at Whites Nurseries, off the A45 in Earls Barton, was combined with the Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service show for the first time and is hoped to have raised around £5,000. It featured more than 200 bicycles, cars and buses dating from 1874 to the present day, plus 50 fire engines.

Bringing St. Crispin to life

Work on a £30 million project to restore all the historic buildings on the St Crispin Hospital site on the edge of Northampton has begun.

In 2009, the former owners of the hospital pulled out of the development and it was feared the historic buildings could be left to deteriorate. But later, Irish firm WN Developments, took over the site near Duston and announced major plans to bring it back to life. They have already completed work on a block of new houses on the edge of the site and work has now begun to restore the historic hospital buildings. The owner of WN Developments, Seamus Neville, said: *“It will be dependent on how the housing market performs. We are looking at about 2½ years to get all the historic buildings back into use. Fortunately the structure of the hospital buildings themselves is actually quite sound. And they’re beautiful buildings.”*

The project will include the full restoration of the hospital’s landmark clock tower, which will be illuminated and used as a communal space in the new development.

Mr Neville said it was hoped people would be able to climb up the clock tower once the work was completed. He said: *“There’s actually not a great amount of work to do on the clock tower, because it’s structurally sound. The old clockworks are still in there too, but they’re not in very good condition, so they will probably have to be replaced. But with the plans we’ve got for the clock tower, it should be a real landmark building for Northampton.”*

The first historic building on the site which is being restored is the home of the hospital’s former superintendent. Work began on that building the week of May 28th and it is planned to convert it into four luxury apartments. When the full project is completed, there will be 242 new homes on the site. The first people to live in the new houses on the site will be moving in at the beginning of June.

The hospital complex dates back to 1876 when it opened as the Berrywood Asylum. It was used by the military during World War One but later returned to use as a hospital. The hospital closed down in 1995.

The above 4 articles from Northampton Chronicle and Echo – 31st May 2012

DIRFT: Daventry

A planning application is to be submitted for the third phase of the international freight terminal. Following the application, the Government will compare its merit with the East Midlands Gateway depot (north of the airport), and a third site at Atwell, southwest of Derby.

Rail Magazine – June 13/26th 2012

The British Postal Museum & Archive

This museum has obtained funding towards a major conservation project. Mail Rail is the Post Office underground railway, and BPMA have three train units in store, one each of the types of train built in 1927, the 1930s, and 1980, that need conservation

work to preserve them and tell their story. There was a special Mail Rail open Day in April, and an appeal has been launched to raise the money needed for the full work to be completed. www.postalheritage.org.uk.

Local History News, No. 103 Summer 2012

A new Website to browse

Launched on the 25th June, a new web-site looking at aerial photographs of Britain is another excellent site of old photographs of the country.

www.britainfromtheair.org.com is crammed full of excellent photographs of the country. It is easy to use and to download for your own use. Enjoy.



OF THIS AND THAT

Dates for the Diary:

- 8th September: Northampton Heritage Fair – Church Rooms, Church of the Holy Sepulchre, Sheep Street. 10.00 am to 4.00 pm. This is part of the Heritage Weekend.
- 6th October: Archaeology Day 2012. Wellingborough Musuem, Castle Way, Wellingborough. 10.00 am to 4.30 pm. Refreshments will be available.
- 13th October: EMIAC 84 – Transport & Trade in the Trent Valley – See enclosed flyer for full details.
- 27th October: Day of History. Organised by Northamptonshire Association for Local History in partnership with Sulgrave History Society. Details available from Jane Waterfield, 6 Bakers Lane, Norton, NN11 2EL. 01327 312850.

Winter Programme of Talks

- 7th September: Extra meeting joint with The Historical Association – Dr. Marilyn Palmer to speak on ‘Understanding the Workplace; Archaeology and Industrialisation’.
 - 12th October: ‘From Dream to Steam, The Tornado Story’ – John Rawlinson of the A1 Steam Locomotive Trust is the speaker.
 - 9th November: AGM plus ‘Maps of Cogenhoe’ – Ted Barnes – A look at the history of Cogenhoe in maps.
 - 7th December: ‘Restoration of the Iron Trunk Aqueduct’ - James Clifton
- All talks take place at St Matthews Church Rooms, Abington at 7.30 pm.

Coffee and Teas at the Winter lectures.

The group, as many of you know, usually enjoys a coffee after the main talk when members are able to chat amongst themselves and to the speaker. This is usually an enjoyable half hour before going home. For the last winter programme takings were down on previous years and only just covered costs! Whilst the ‘entrance hall’ is not conducive to standing about drinking and chatting it is nonetheless an integral part of our evenings together. However, the committee are very concerned that if we are not careful a financial loss will soon be evident in our expenditure. They do not want to put the price up again from 50p which is still good value especially as biscuits are also available. However, we will continue this ‘service’ up to the December lecture and will be keeping fingers crossed that the costs of paying for the kitchen and the drinks/biscuits will not lead the Group into debt. Please enjoy a coffee and chat before that trek home. There is a strong danger that this will cease unless more of you support the venture. Thanks should be given to Jane for organising the refreshments and to Ron Hanson and others for assisting.

Terry Waterfield

Number crunching

London’s Northern Line

There are 36 miles of Northern Line.

84 trains are required to operate peak services.

The deepest lift shaft on this line is 181ft at Hampstead.

192ft depth below ground of Hampstead platforms – the Tube’s deepest.

17.25 miles - the distance from tunnel portals at Morden to East Finchley, some of the longest in the world.

960,000 passengers travel on this line during the weekday.

206,734,000 – the annual passengers on this line.

The Queen’s Jubilee Banner

The Banner was used to decorate the Queen’s barge for the trip up the Thames. It measured 10ft by 10ft and depicted a crown flanked by a Lion and Unicorn with the royal motto – “Dieu et mon droit” below. The red velvet used was donated by Colefax and Fowler – a British firm.

5 seamstresses and one designer worked on this banner.

It took 4 months of sewing half a million buttons of gold, gold plate and imitation gold.

There were 250 sticking plasters used for pricked fingers!

250 needles were used by the team.

3,000 cups of tea were drunk by the team as they sewed on the buttons!

31 miles, or 164,050ft, of gold thread was sewn into the banner.

Daily Mail – 17th May 2012

Titanic

£30,000 is the sale price in a Devizes auction of a first-class deck plan of the RMS Titanic. Its original owners were among those to die in the tragedy.

Cutlery workers [Sheffield]:

In 1824, there were over 8,000 skilled workers employed in Sheffield's cutlery trade. In the mid-19th century, a dry grinder's life expectancy was just 35 years; a wet grinder's was 45 years.

There were 132 steam-powered wheels in Sheffield in 1865, compared with 32 wheels that were powered by water.

In 1833, the number of Sheffield workers employed specifically in the making of table knives and forks was 3,689.

Skilled cutlery workers were paid relatively high wages, with forgers and grinders earning up to 40 shillings a week.

Bicycle Industry [Coventry]:

The Premier Cycle Works at Coventry covered 3 acres and employed over 500 people in 1891.

The front wheel of an average Penny Farthing measured 48 inches in diameter while the back wheel was only 16 inches.

In 1878 Daniel Rudge took out Patent 526 for ball bearings, enabling him to produce the first fast racing bikes.

By the 1890s Coventry had the largest bicycle industry in the world, employing over 40,000 workers.

Information from Who Do You Think You Are – Christmas 2011 and March 2012

A History of Food in 100 recipes

The earliest record of bread making is depicted on the wall of an Egyptian tomb near Luxor, painted in around 2500BC

A poem by Virgil, written in 30BC, contains the first ever description of roast meat. Romans recipe writer Apicius spent his fortune on food. Then having run out of money, he threw a banquet and poisoned himself during the final course!

The 1908 London Olympics were sponsored by Oxo, who handed out free, piping-hot beef drinks to athletes, despite it being summer.

The modern supermarket was invented by Clarence Saunders, who opened Piggly

Wiggly in Memphis, Tennessee in 1916.

Taken from the book written by William Sitwell - Waitrose magazine May 2012

You can just imagine the scenario: "I'm just dashing up to Piggly Wiggly to get some butter!" To quote The Daily Mail's Richard Littlejohn 'You couldn't make it up'. Ed



Finally, but not quite

Metric or otherwise – that is the question?

Recently a gentleman needed three new slats for his garden bench. He visited a Paignton supplier and asked for three pieces of wood like the one he was holding. Out came the assistant's tape measure, then

'Sorry, I can't do that – it's in feet and inches.'

Somewhat surprised the customer asked for a saw and offered to cut three pieces off a long piece of wood nearby.

'Sorry. Health and safety won't allow you to use our tools'.

'Why can't you just give me three pieces of wood like this?'

'I've told you. We don't deal in feet and inches. It's against the law.'

So there you have it. A daft situation where obviously the shop assistant couldn't be bothered to be helpful. Having said that the customer could have just picked up a long length of wood, taken it home and cut it himself. I leave you to judge the silliness of some of our regulations. Ed.

The story was spotted in the Daily Mail of Thursday 24th May 2012.

and Finally:

'Cunning plan' to amuse passengers

The services of Blackadder actor Tony Robinson and Green Wing writer Richard Preddy have been employed by Chiltern Railways, to liven up announcements on its Mainline service between Birmingham and London.

Robinson, who has been coaching staff, and Preddy, who has written the announcements, spent a month helping workers learn and deliver the lines. *"We have all waited for a train or a bus into work as the rain pours down and hustled our way to a seat, and I think comedy can help to alleviate that stress"* says Preddy.

An example of an announcement passengers will hear may include *"I'd like to welcome passengers boarding the 0733 from Birmingham Moor Street to London Marylebone. If you've just bumped into someone who you barely know, you now have one hour and 30 minutes of awkward small talk. Good Luck."*

Rail Magazine – 13/26th June 2012

Brilliant – hope this takes off in a big way – humour seems to be so lacking these days from a Nation who used to love taking the micky out of anything and which sadly seems to have lost this art. As we all know laughter is the best cure for anxiety and stress.



Late news in

Thrapston mainstays say they will have to leave town if they cannot sell their site.

Directors at a business that has been trading in a county town for close to a century fear they may have to leave town in order to expand. Scotts of Thrapston, which is based in Bridge Street, Thrapston, has been looking for a nearby site to move the business to for a number of years. Bosses at the manufacturing company, which has been based in the town for 92 years, claim that the only way to move to a nearby premises in Thrapston would be to sell their current site in Bridge Street to a developer and use the funds gained from the sale towards relocating. Otherwise a move to a cheaper site outside Thrapston may be necessary.

But the company's planning application for a supermarket on the site looks set to be rejected, with the proposal recommended for refusal by officers at East Northants Council, when they discuss the site's future on July 4th.

David Scott, said: *“To move out of Thrapston is unthinkable but we have to be realistic. We will be celebrating our centenary in eight years time and hope still to be in the Thrapston area when we do. However, we also have to look at the commercial reality of the business. We're in a fortunate position as we had our best trading year in 2011 in my time. We need larger premises to meet the increased demand for our products and, at the same time, will be looking for cost efficiencies through low maintenance and environmentally friendly facilities. It is likely the site will have to be sold to fund a move, but other uses would generate only a fraction of the sale receipts, thus restricting our options.”*

The company employs nearly 100 full-time staff, and the company's directors say the business brings in more than £1m a year to the town's economy.

For full details see the Northampton Chronicle & Echo - June 28th 2012

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Next Issue: **October 2012**

Deadline for all articles and information **20th September 2012.** Anything received after this date will be held over to the next edition.

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.