



NORTHAMPTONSHIRE
INDUSTRIAL, ARCHAEOLOGY
GROUP

NEWSLETTER



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Photograph front cover: To be seen on the bank of the River Idle at West Stockwith
© Jane Waterfield 2012

If anyone could tell me what this was possibly used for I would be grateful Ed.

NB: Unless otherwise stated all photographs © Jane & Terry Waterfield 2012

From the Editor

As you know we have been reporting on the demise of the gasholders in Northampton. The news is that the small street of houses which runs behind one of these holders will be knocked down in the next few months as part of the regeneration of the Station area. More offices are to be built! Another landmark gone! I am sure that with a bit of imagination one at least could be saved just like those in London (one still near Kings Cross). The fishmarket (Northampton) has gone – just a building site now and soon a new Railway Station will replace the awful looking structure which replaced, what I understand to be, a very nice Victorian building with plenty of character.

It is amazing how gremlins get in the works and no matter how much you check things a mistake is made, not noticed, and smacks you in the face when the final has been printed. It is of course gratifying that even the ‘big’ boys manage to make typo errors or give out the wrong information. In our case it was a question of three reports not making the newsletters. These have now been rectified and apologies all round to those affected.

Murphy’s Law struck again when shortly after the distribution of the last issue, one or two programmes came onto the television which might have proved to be interesting to members. If there are repeats, and I am sure there will be, not to be missed are: Michael Portillo on another of his wonderful trips round the railways of Britain, Dan Snow on the History of the Railways, Time Team and four half hour programmes on the new Welsh Highland Railway from Caernarvon to Porthmadoc and the Llangollen railway.

Once again our winter programme proved popular and all who came to the Members evening were no doubt happy that it did not fall on the following week when the snow was dumped on the county. It’s incredible to believe we are now into Spring and the arctic conditions continue. The garden project has been abandoned again until better (and warmer) weather comes.

The next EMIAC will be at Leicester University. This is a free event and we must apologise to members for the lack of leaflets which have been provided. If you are unable to access the web-site, for whatever reason, I do have a few paper copies of the leaflet, so let me know and I will get one to you as soon as possible. Incidentally work has now begun on our next EMIAC in October 2014, can’t believe that it will be three years since our last one at Cogenhoe and Irchester Country Park. Tempus fugit and all that.

Our annual walks and visits beckon; this year’s programme is once again a good mix. All we now need is some good weather to enjoy the events. We look forward to seeing you.



**The ones that almost, but not quite, got away.
The last Summer Reports of 2012**

Wakerley Ironstone Walk – 8th June

On one of the coldest and windiest nights of the summer a group of six people gathered to look at the remains of the ironstone quarrying activities at Wakerley in the north of the county. The weather had been wet for most of the day and it was not surprising that the turnout for the visit was small.

The extraction of iron ore at Wakerley took place over a period of about eight years, but during this period three different companies were involved and the history of the site is quite complicated. Had the steelworks at Corby continued in operation there is little doubt that the remaining iron ore in the area would have been quarried as the Wakerley group of quarries at Shotley were working towards the village of Wakerley.

The first development of quarrying in the area was considered in 1907 by the Marquess of Exeter, the landowner. Discussions with Messrs Bell Bros Ltd of Port Clarence started in October 1907, but it was to be November 1911 before they decided to go ahead. Operations started in 1913 (probably January) but they did not last long and closed down in February 1914, the lease being surrendered on 20th November of that year. The quarry ran parallel with the River Welland but was some distance away, working the ore where it out-cropped along the 200ft contour close to the Harringworth to Wakerley road. We were able to see the extent of the quarry at this point as the fields are noticeably lower than the road. A horse-worked tramway of probably 2ft gauge was laid from the quarry to a tipping dock on the LNWR line about half a mile west of Wakerley & Barrowden station. It is probable that the loaded wagons were gravity-worked down the hill to the tipping dock. Bell Bros were one of the pioneers of the Cleveland iron industry and this was their first venture into the Midlands ironstone field. Little remains today of this first attempt at quarrying, the tipping dock was demolished to make way for later operations but the remains of the approach embankment are still in situ.

The quarries were taken over by the Wakerley Ironstone Co Ltd, probably in 1915. This company had a possible connection with George Keeble who was involved with ironstone extraction at Finedon Park, and brick making at Peterborough. Production began in 1916 using prisoners of war, the company had advertised for a 2ft 6in gauge locomotive in December 1915. This was another short-lived operation as the Partington Steel & Iron Co Ltd took over the operations in 1918, they advertised for a further locomotive in February 1919.

Under the new proprietors the expansion of the activities was begun and four calcine kilns were to be erected adjacent to the LNWR line on the site of the Bell Bros tipping dock. Two were completed, the other two had only the bases built; these impressive kilns still remain and we were able to see them from the public footpath,

it is likely that they were never used. At this point we were also able to see the embankment leading to the re-sited tipping dock; however no sign of any remains of the locomotive shed were visible. The tramway was extended to go under the Harringworth to Wakerley road in 1918 and a steam dragline and transporter were purchased but were not successful as the ore at this point faulted making it unsuitable for extraction by mechanical means. The bridge parapets were inspected but nothing could be seen of the quarry as this area has been levelled and planted with trees. On the other side of the road the cutting has been filled in but the level of the field is considerably lower than the road, a good indication that quarrying has taken place. Again the quarrying activity was short lived with closure taking place about 1921. This time there was to be no resumption of work and the railway was lifted and all machinery removed.

Mick Dix

Source; original research and The Ironstone Quarries of the Midlands, Part VI, Eric Tonks, Rumpast Publishing, 1992.



EMIAAC 83 Trent Station and EMIAAC 84 Trent Transport & Trade

The two EMIAACs in 2012 concentrated on the Trent Valley and the industries that were associated with the area around Trent Locks and Retford.

1. EMIAAC 83 – Trent Station 1862-1968

Members were treated to a comprehensive potted history of the Trent area by three good speakers. The valleys of the rivers Trent, Derwent, Soar and Erewash have provided corridors for transport of many forms. In 1839 the railway came to the area with the opening of the Midlands Counties railway between Nottingham and Derby. The rail network expanded rapidly in 1840 with the opening of the line to Leicester and Rugby, and again in 1847 with the opening of the Erewash Valley Line. A further complex of lines was opened in 1862 by the Midland Railway with an interchange station known simply as Trent. The rail network continued to expand with the opening of a line to Stenson Junction in 1869 and the High Level lines through to Toton in 1900. Many changes to the layout of the junction took place over the years with Trent Station itself closing in 1968. However most of the railways in the area remain in use.

Expanding further, Keith Reedman, our first speaker, told us that the Trent valley between Long Eaton and Shardlow has long been, and still is, a source of gravel. With the aid of a geological map of the area as a background, Keith described the development of the transport links in the area; each phase being shown in a different colour. Recent excavations have revealed remains indicating the Trent was used as an ancient trade route. The early turnpike roads that have morphed into the modern

road network. Then came the canals: the Trent-Mersey, Erewash and Derby. And finally the railways: the Midland Counties Railway opened the Derby-London line via Leicester and Northampton, followed by the Derby-Nottingham line. Coal from the Erewash Valley coalfield was transferred from canal to railway at what was to become the Sheet Stores site. To accommodate increasing rail traffic a complex of new lines was opened with an interchange station known simply as Trent. New stations were built and others closed. This was followed by a talk by Rodger Smith who told us that ‘Trent’, the station to Nowhere, opened in 1862 and closed in 1968, changing little during its lifetime. Surrounded by a complex track layout, it was built solely to provide interchange facilities between the Derby-Nottingham, Derby-London and Nottingham-London lines. It was not designed to serve any local community - hence being named after a river. Even before the station was built, trains would be split and combined at this junction to everywhere. In 1961 up to 100 passenger trains a day would use the station - but only to allow passengers to change trains.



The Sheet Dressing shop built in 1899.

The afternoon walk took members to the Sheet Store basin where once the Midland Railway transferred goods, mainly coal, from the Erewash Canal to their railway wagons. The Midland Counties Railway bought coke to fuel its locomotives from the Erewash Valley

coalfield. The canal basin had been built to enable the coke to be transferred from boats to railway wagons. As the rail network extended into the coalfield the coke store was no longer needed. In 1854 the site became home to the Midland Counties Railway Sheet Stores. We were able to look at the buildings dating from the mid-nineteenth century that once housed the workshops for the manufacture, repair and storage of tarpaulin sheets. This was the time when goods were carried in open-topped wagons and the tarpaulins were used to keep them dry. Our third speaker, Ian Marshall, had already told us that sheets, or tarpaulins, had been required to protect the freight from the elements. The standard wagon sheet was 21 feet long by 14 feet 4 inches wide, made by sewing together five breadths of canvas. Boiled linseed oil mixed with red, green or black colouring was used to waterproof the sheets; the mixture being applied in the dressing shop, which could accommodate up to 2,500 sheets at a time. Each sheet was identified by a unique number and the month and year of manufacture. The walk continued to Trent Junction and then on to Cranfleet Cut to view the site of the Trent Station, railway bridges and the flood lock for the

Cut.

Finally a few of us entered the small cafe besides the canal lock for a cup of tea in bone china cups and delicious cakes. A really good ending to a very interesting day.

2. EMIAC 84 – Trent Transport & Trade

Until the coming of the railways in the mid-nineteenth century the River Trent and, towards the start of the period, canals connected with it, carried a huge volume of traffic both up and down stream. The river trade was in turn closely linked with the coaching trade through Hull and Gainsborough as well as with road transport in the region. The morning sessions looked at both the organisation of the trade by sea, river and canal and at the goods carried. Ongoing research will consider how improvements during the canal age facilitated the first phase of the Industrial revolution in the East Midlands.

Two speakers guided us through the complexities of these subjects. First Malcolm Dolby told us that the mediaeval new town of East Retford was founded during the reign of Henry I in 1105. It received a number of charters, the first when Henry III granted the right to hold a fair. Although some believe this charter was granted in 1246, Malcolm firmly believes the correct date to be 1259. The town was Incorporated during the reign of James I in 1607. A certain Major Cartwright set up a worsted mill in 1788 known as the Revolution Mill. It employed some 600 workers. The railways came in 1849 providing links to Manchester, Sheffield and Lincoln.

Secondly Philip Riden presented his as yet unpublished research into the trade from, and into, the Trent Valley. In the first lecture entitled *Stage Waggon, Barges & Narrow Boats in the East Midlands*, Philip considered the transport modes: clearly in the early days the only available modes were road or river. As today, there was a clear distinction between the local carriers and the long distance carriers, the latter operating services to the North-east, East Anglia, London and occasionally to the North-west. Whilst the canals offered an alternative transport mode, their limited routes and the lack of interconnections between them limited their appeal. In his second presentation Philip gave his results on the goods being traded through the principal port of Gainsborough. He considered not only the type and quantities but also the variation during the latter half of the nineteenth century. From the extensive data presented in tabular and graphical form, the lasting memory is that, perhaps surprisingly, the most important export during the period was cheese.

In the afternoon delegates boarded two coaches for a tour of the area. We visited the market town of Bawtry to see some of the remains of the old town. Looking northwards from Gringley Beacon three of Yorkshire's major power stations could be seen: Drax, Eggborough, and Ferrybridge. Nearer to home the chimney of the old brickworks was clearly visible. The journey continued to West Stockwith where the River Idle and Chesterfield Canal join the Trent. Returning through



On Gringley Beacon - map discussions.

before packing up and travelling home. Another good day and very complimentary to the day earlier in the year at Trent.

Jane & Terry Waterfield

PS: We visited Trent again in July shortly after all the heavy rain of June. The river was high, almost to the top of the canal lock gates, extremely fast flowing and we watched in horror as a small water bird was swept down the river struggling to swim, only to see it thankfully land up near our feet. We left it and can only hope it still lives.



WINTER TALK REPORTS - 2012/2013

From Dream to Steam - The Tornado Story: October 2012

Just as we finished last year's programme, so we started this year's programme with a steam topic – the construction of the first main-line steam locomotive in the 21st century.

The Peppercorn A1 Pacifics were an 8P Class of powerful locomotives built just after the Second World War for heavy express passenger workings between London, Yorkshire, the North East, and Scotland. The design was undertaken by the London & North Eastern Railway; however, all 49 engines were built by the newly nationalised British Railways Board in 1948/9 and became their most reliable locomotive in that category. They were cheap to build, run, and maintain; important considerations for a bruised and battered railway so soon after the war when steel and labour were in short supply, and coal was often then of a very poor quality.

Arthur H Peppercorn was the last Chief Mechanical Engineer (CME) of the LNER, and the first, and only, CME of British Railways, Eastern Region. His career closely followed that of Sir Nigel Gresley, who designed and built the famous streamlined

A4 Class. One of which, Mallard, attained the unbroken World steam speed record of 126mph in 1938.

All of the Peppercorn Class A1 locomotives were scrapped under the British Railways Modernisation Plan after fairly short working lives. There was an attempt to save one, Saint Mungo, in 1966, but in the end none were to see preservation.

The A1 Steam Locomotive Trust (a registered Charity) has now filled that missing link and has created the fiftieth member of the Class. At a cost of over £3million pounds, and taking almost 20 years to build she was completed in 2008; some 60 years after the very first original Peppercorn A1s ran on the East Coast Mainline! Given the next BR sequential running number of 60163 she made her first public mainline run to Newcastle in January 2009, and was then officially named Tornado in February 2009 at York Station by Their Royal Highnesses The Prince of Wales and The Duchess of Cornwall, thereafter hauling the Royal Train to Leeds.

John Rawlinson, ably assisted by John Harratt, described in some detail the Tornado's epic journey from initial concept discussed over a pint of beer through its design, construction and commissioning trials to mainline running. It was emphasised that the Tornado is a re-creation and not a restoration.

Although the Trust had access to the original drawings, many of the specification documents had been lost. Thus, converting the original drawings with their lack of tolerances and fits to a modern standard was no simple task. In addition, account had to be taken of the small differences between modern-day stock sizes and their old imperial equivalents. It had also been agreed at an early stage that the new locomotive would be designed for mainline running, which would require the fitting of various items of safety/train protection and radio equipment required by modern legislation. During the short working life of the Peppercorn A1s, a number of 'design modifications' had been considered, but never implemented. These and other improvements, taking into account modern materials and practices, were also incorporated into the design.

Construction of the Tornado was never going to be straightforward for a number of reasons: First and foremost was raising the necessary funds; this build was going to be a one-off; with most of the old engineering facilities lost, many specialist manufacturers would be required placing an extra burden on getting the drawings 'right first time'; all of the cast components would require new patterns to be made; and finally, but by no means least, the assembly and testing of the locomotive.

Tornado, the first mainline steam locomotive to be built in the UK since the Evening Star was completed at Swindon in 1960, has appeared in three liveries: The plain grey used during its commissioning trials was replaced by Apple Green, the livery carried by the original A1s. It then appeared in Brunswick Green with, at different times, both the BR lion-over-the-wheel emblem and the lion holding a wheel over the crown crest on its tender. For the 2013 and 2014 seasons it will carry the BR express passenger blue before reverting to its 'core' livery of apple green.

By the end of 2012 Tornado will have achieved over 60,000 miles of mainline running and is now well established as a reliable powerful locomotive for the nation-wide rail tour charter market.

Terry Waterfield



Maps of Cogenhoe & Whiston - November 2012.

Ted Barnes of the Cogenhoe & Whiston Historical Society gave a talk on the interesting technique the members of the Society are using to research the history of the villages. The results of this research will be the subject of a book to be published by the end of next year. The principle they applied was that by looking at a map a snapshot of the village is given for that moment in time. By taking many maps over a period, an overview emerges of how the village has changed or developed over that time. 54 maps were researched, some created by the society. To illustrate his main point of development and change, Ted showed that:-

- * The original village before Domesday was in two parts.
- * In Norman times the centre of the main village moved slightly North-eastwards.
- * The Jacobean period showed expansion southwards along Main Street and that construction was of stone/thatch.
- * By the 19/20th centuries it had developed along an East-West axis along the Northampton Road.

These snapshots also showed up interesting detail, for example:

- * How closely the modern routes followed the line of the old.

- * Two drove roads passed the village (not through the village because of the filth that it would leave). Also an enclosed drove pasture.
- * There were no woods within the village boundaries (a valuable resource for the locals).
- * The ridge and furrow alignments followed the contours of the land to drain into the natural water courses.
- * The physical barrier of the river to the North (possibly the border with the Dane law in the 10th century) only had a ford until 1790 when the packhorse bridge was built.
- * The 1829 enclosure map showed the denuclearisation of the village by moving the enclosed farms and their dwellings outside of the village.
- * In 1754 the straightening and canalisation of the Nene.
- * Sixty years on from the enclosure map, the Sale of Cogenhoe Estate Map of 1891 indicates the growth of industry in the form of the railway, iron ore extraction and brick making. The shoe industry is represented with T. C. Manns factory shown on the Whiston Road where 50 people were employed in the factory and up to 150 outworkers around the village. (This factory burnt down in 1909 but the business moved to Short Lane, continuing business until 1947).
- * There is also a Deposit Plan dated 1852, proposing a Peterborough to Northampton railway that didn't materialize.
- * A comparison of a 19th century map and a census return of only 3 years later showed a total of 47 buildings in the village, including: The Church, Rectory, Manor House, 33 households with 198 persons and the Bottom Farm area, still separated from the main village as originally shown in Domesday.
- * Apart from the physical evidence that the maps revealed, one particular map was to conjure up a rather colourful character from the past. A precivil war map of 1630, the Cheyne map, was the product of P Richard Norward and commissioned by Francis Cheyne. Apart from the fine and accurate draughtsmanship (distances were measured by stick and wheel at that time and triangulation by compass) P Richard Norward had had an interesting life. Born the son of a gentleman, the family fell upon hard times, so he was apprenticed to a fishmonger. From there he went to sea, and is accredited with the first use of a diving bell to retrieve objects from the seabed. He was a navigator and surveyor, and is known to have also made maps of Bermuda and Warrington.

Ted had explained at the start of his talk, that it was not going to be a chronological history of the two villages, but rather a meander through their history via the use of maps. This he achieved and proved his main point of not looking at just one map/

snapshot but by the comparison of multiple maps to produce a joined up string of snapshots of people and places.

Ron Hanson



Members Night : January 2013

This was another extremely good night when the topics presented by members were of a varied nature. Little Trains of Wales, Annual Slide show of the 2012 walks, Underground Tunnels at Vimy Ridge, a Balloon Ride and finally a trip to Belfast.

Geoffrey Starmer started the evening looking at little trains in Wales, in particular those at Porth Madog. Jane then took the members on a trip to the places we had visited during the summer of 2012, including her inevitable quirky photographs of things perhaps not noticed by others on the walks. Terry told the evening about his findings, with connections to IA, of the history surrounding the underground tunnels at Vimy Ridge in France. Peter Acres showed a short movie of his time above the ground in a balloon over Sywell and Bozeat; this was interesting in that it showed the many lakes which have been formed from all the quarrying in the area. Finally, Ron Whittaker took us on a short trip to Belfast to look at where the Titanic was built, the museum and other places associated with that ill fated ship. More detailed reports follow:

Vimy Ridge and below – Terry Waterfield

By way of introduction we are all aware that, historically, besieged castles were always vulnerable to entry from beneath the walls – i.e. tunnelling. With the introduction of artillery interest in this mode of entry disappeared until the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-5 when it was considered again. The military top brass quickly reviewed their manuals; but since it was the generally accepted view, that with the advent of large calibre artillery, there would be no need for tunnelling in the future.



Glass insulators on the tunnel wall.

Contrary to the recognised military view at the time, the Great War very quickly degenerated into a fixed-trench battlefield extending from the North Sea to the Swiss border. Both sides began to ‘play’ with mining (as it was known) but it was the Germans who scored first.

Enter one Sir John Norton-Griffith, a major in the 2nd King Edward’s Horse, a regiment he had raised at his own expense. Closely associated with Kitchener during the Boer War, he was head of a company of international engineering and mining contractors. At the outbreak of war one of his companies was involved in digging tunnels

for sewers under Manchester using a specialised technique known as ‘clay kicking’. Militarily this was very important as it was a near-silent operation in clay.

After an interview with Kitchener and a quick survey, in February 1915 he was ordered to raise clay kickers and miners for service. Within 3 weeks the first

Continued on page 14



You thought it was where?

I'm sure there are occasions when many of my friends think I'm a bit of a luddite since I eschew many of today's 'must have' gizmos. But there are advantages as was demonstrated whilst working on a mini-project recently: To go through all of the [recent] back issues of the newsletter checking the validity of the URLs provided by authors and to see if any were suitable for inclusion on our website. Quite a few had changed. One had disappeared, though it was temporarily up to allow owners to retrieve their photos!

fotopic.net provided a repository for [registered] users to store their digital images. In 2011 the company running fotopic.net went into liquidation. The assets of the company – and images belonging to its users – were bought by a private buyer with the intention of resurrecting fotopic.net and incorporating it into their own photo portal. Subsequently it was found to be too costly an operation to set up and run; the original plans have now been abandoned even though, for many of the users, the site held the only copy of their images. In November 2012 the site owners were providing access on a rolling basis for owners to retrieve their images

I've been carrying out some on-line research on a topic: when I started there was an overwhelming abundance of sites providing the information, yet 12-18 months on very little can be found. Where has it all gone to? Now I've got into the habit of printing out at least one page from the site of interest so that I can easily find it again. A number of common problems can lead to the dreaded Page 404 Page not found error:

- a) The URL refers to a document which has either been removed, moved or renamed.
- b) The web site has been redesigned/re-organised/restructured, etc.
- c) The website has been removed from the hosting server.
- d) The original owner of the URL has allowed the registration of the name to lapse and the name has been reused by a third party for a different subject.

Returning to the matter in hand, websites referenced in Newsletter articles are shown overleaf with an indication of their validity:

Terry Waterfield

| Issue | Subject | URL as given |
|--------------|--|--|
| 101 | Great Central Railway, Charwelton | www.disusedrailtunnels@fotopic.net |
| 105 | Corrugated Iron Club | www.corrugated-iron-club.info/index.html |
| | Directory of companies able to convert old recordings into modern format | www.radiocraft.co.uk/directory/formats |
| | Historic recordings | www.bl.uk/collections/soundarchive/nasacollections |
| 108 | WW2 airfields | www.wartimememories.co.uk/airfields |
| 109 | Aerial imaging and surveys | www.pixaerial.com |
| 111/ 113 | AIA | www.industrial-archaeology.co.uk |
| 116 | Blisworth ironstone | www.blisworth.org.uk/images/Mining/Blisworth_mining |
| | Penrhyn quarry railway | www.penrhynrailway.co.uk |
| 118 | English Heritage consultation documents | www.english-heritage.org.uk/publications/heritage-assets-draft |
| | Real-time tube train locations | trainintimes.org.uk/map/tube |
| | | data.london.gov.uk/blog/guess-what's-back-trackernet-returns |
| 120 | Northamptonshire heritage trails | www.northamptonshireletyourselfgrow.com/museumsandhistorichouses |

NB: As of now (April) 100,000 images have been irretrievably lost and the site is closed.

Lesson: keep your photographs on hard discs and CDs – do not give them to some clever clog

| Comment | Current URL |
|---|--|
| See above | |
| Now in Japanese and no longer relates to original subject. | |
| OK if omit the /formats. | www.radiocraft.co.uk/directory |
| The site has been totally redesigned. From the home page follow the links to <i>Catalogues (full list)</i> , then <i>Major catalogues</i> for the sound archives. | www.bl.uk |
| The site is currently undergoing a redesign but the home page has all the necessary links. The URL shown will automatically redirect to the new page. Probably best to start from the home page, which covers various aspects of WW1 and WW2. | www.wartimememories.co.uk |
| OK. Auto redirects to pixaerial.co.uk | www.pixaerial.co.uk |
| Error | www.industrial-archaeology.org |
| Error | www.blisworth.org.uk/images/pictures |
| The site has had a makeover. | www.amutek.co.uk/penryhn/railway.htm |
| Page not available – clearly a draft document. Should use /publications | www.english-heritage.org.uk/publications |
| Error | www.traintimes.org.uk/map/tube |
| Error | data.london.gov.uk/blog/guess-whats-back-trackernet-returns |
| Site OK but slow to load because of too many images on the home page. | |

... to store them for you!! Ed.

Vimy Ridge - continued.....

tunnelling company had been formed and was at work in France! Thereafter more tunnelling companies were formed and sent to France and Belgium. Although enlisted men earning more than three times the infantry wage, the men were essentially ‘tunnellers’ and didn’t mix with other units.

Terry presented pictures of some of the tunnels hewn into the limestone of Vimy Ridge in France depicting sleeping areas for messenger boys and the officer. The relatively large upper level had been equipped with communication as evidenced by the glass insulators mounted on the walls. The Grange Tunnel had been first opened to tourists in 1926. But what were these tunnels used for?

On the night of 8 April 1917 648 men were assembled in Grange Tunnel in readiness for an early morning offensive on the German-held ridge. More men had been assembled in other similar tunnels. From Grange Tunnel visitors exit directly to the front line, just as those men did – we had the luxury of permanent steps whereas the men would have had simple ladders or even had to scramble out of the tunnel.

Some of the tunnels were used for defensive mining, as shown in one of the pictures, where mines had been placed deep underground in no-man’s land. The scale of the craters still remaining could be judged from the shadows of people standing on its rim. Other tunnels were used for offensive mining and would penetrate deep beneath enemy lines or even behind them so that they would be destroyed in the explosion. In one section of 1200 metres, some 120,000 lbs (67 tons) of explosive were expended. Tunnels for offensive operations had a long lead time – often planned as much as 12 or even 18 months in advance. When one tunnel had been completed and the mine, containing typically 20,000-50,000 lbs of explosive, constructed, the tunnel was then sealed to await ‘D-day’.

Some mines were not used – either the objective had ‘moved on’, or didn’t fit in with the current plan. Sometimes they were removed but many were left in place. The allied tunnels under Vimy Ridge have been well explored by the Durand Group; in 1998 they found one partly dismantled, one intact but without detonators and one intact, which they neutralised. The explosive used, Ammonal, is very stable so is considered quite safe without its detonators.

There are still unexploded mines! For example, along the ~7 miles of the Messine ridge just over the border in Belgium 25 mines were planned; on 7th June 1917 at 3 am 19 mines containing between 15,000lb and 95,000lb and totalling 1,000,000 lb (447 tons) were detonated within 20 secs. Of the six not used, one (2,000) was detonated in 1955 by lightning. One was ‘lost’ because of German activity but is still buried intact 80ft beneath a farm (50,000lb). So there are still four or five waiting to go up!

Under Vimy Ridge it has been reported that some 22 miles of tunnels were dug on four levels – at 25ft, 75ft, and two deeper levels; on the lowest a narrow gauge railway had been laid for moving munitions to the front. From the initial 12 infantry

tunnels averaging ½ mile, with some more than 1 mile, in length begun in 1916 a very sophisticated network of tunnels was developed to include: assembly chambers, brigade and battalion HQs, dressing station, accommodation for men and materials, bomb stores, signalling offices, etc. Water supplies were laid down together with signal cables, railways, ventilation systems and numerous entrances/exits.

Looking northwards across the Scarpe valley from the Canadian Monument one can see the Lens minefields. On a clear day the Messine ridge can be discerned above the slag heaps. The site is open 24/7, though one has to keep to the designated pathways; the craters and remains of the trench system can still be seen beneath the grass. Grange Tunnel is open to visitors between April and November.

Titanic's Industrial Legacy – Ron Whittaker

The final talk of the evening was given by Ron Whittaker and entitled Titanic's Industrial Legacy. With 2012 being the centenary of the fateful maiden voyage of the Titanic, the subject was very timely. Ron covered the industrial features which remain in Belfast, the port where Titanic was built. He started off by showing a photo of the new £98m Tourist/Exhibition Centre Titanic Belfast which now dominates the entrance to the harbour. He contrasted this with a picture taken near to the same spot 100 years earlier, showing 15,000 men leaving Harland and Wolff's shipyard after a day's work. Three thousand of these men were working on the construction of the Titanic.

Harland & Wolff's old main office still stands and organised parties can tour the building. It is unused and retains all the features from 100 years earlier, the most interesting part being the drawing office where Thomas Andrews and his team designed the ship. Old photos show the room unchanged to the present day.



The drawing office at Harland & Wolff in 1911 where Thomas Andrews and his team designed the Titanic.
© Ron Whittaker 2012.

Probably the most interesting piece of industrial archaeology to remain standing in Belfast harbour is the dry dock and pump house. The Thompson Graving dock was built in 1911 especially for the Titanic and

its sister ship, the Olympic. The dock holds 21 million gallons of water and the sturdy riveted caisson gate is still in position. The splendid Victorian pump house which still stands (apart from its steam engine chimneys) could empty the dock in

100 minutes. The pump house, with its later hydraulic pumps, is open to the public. It was interesting to contrast photos of the Titanic in the dock and see that most of the infrastructure remains today.

In 1912 Titanic was claimed to be the “largest man-made moving object in the world”. It was 882 feet long and 46,000 tons with a top speed of 23 knots. It could carry 3,500 passengers and crew and had 29 boilers fired by 159 coal-burning furnaces. The labour involved in getting the 600 tons of coal into the furnaces each day must have been colossal, as depicted in the TV programmes and films of the fateful voyage. There was no doubt that the Harland & Wolff personnel involved in building the ship were very proud of what had been achieved. Ron quoted the words of Kathleen Whitby about her grandfather who worked in the shipyard. *“That ship, that was their life when they built that. They were so proud of that ship, the people of Belfast and when that ship sank, it was terrible and they wouldn’t talk about it.*



The Thompson Dry Dock and Pump-House at Belfast Shipyard which was built for the Titanic in 1911.

© Ron Whittaker 2012.

That’s why you never heard about it.”

It is pleasing that the company of H&W still trades from Belfast Harbour. They now make specialist engineering products such as the tubular bases for wind turbines.

Ron ended the talk by referring to a local Northamptonshire connection. Bruce Ismay, the Chairman of the White Star Line who owned the Titanic, travelled on the maiden voyage. He helped passengers into one of the first lifeboats which was being launched half-empty. As no other passengers were nearby he jumped into the lifeboat and was safely picked up by the Carpathia, the rescue ship. When Bruce Ismay got back to England, he was greatly vilified by the press and relatives of people who had perished in the tragedy. In the period after April 1912 Bruce Ismay

hid from the public in Haselbech Hall in Northamptonshire which was the Ismay's family home in England. His brother, Bower Ismay and his wife made the Hall their home during the first half of the twentieth century and are reportedly buried in Haselbech churchyard. Descendents of the Ismays continued to live in the Hall until the 1970s.

Ron Whittaker



NEWS ITEMS AND UPDATES:

Scotts of Thrapston

A timber firm based in Thrapston for more than 90 years is set to leave the area in a move to the West Midlands. Scotts of Thrapston has been based in the town since it was founded in 1920, but last year the firm warned it may be forced to leave the area if it could not get planning permission to build a supermarket on its present site. At the time, the firm said it could only fund a move to new premises in or near Thrapston by earning planning permission at its present home – but in the end planners approved a supermarket site elsewhere in Thrapston. The new company – Scotts Timber Engineering Ltd – has set up design and management offices in Shirley, near Solihull, while its new manufacturing facility is being established. A spokesman for the firm said: *“Once commissioned, the new factory will enjoy the benefits of the latest thinking in machinery and production planning, leading to the creation of around 20 jobs in the early phases.”* The company specialises in timber engineering, taking the benefits of environmentally friendly timber as a construction material and exploiting its strengths.

The new company is being headed up by Richard Evans who has more than 25 years' experience in the industry. Product is initially being manufactured at the parent company's six acre site in Northamptonshire, but shortly all manufacturing for the new company will be at an undisclosed site to the south of Birmingham. The firm's chairman David Scott said the move follows five years of unprecedented growth in Scotts truss and joist business, culminating in the company's best ever year in 2011. He added: *“We feel confident that the house building market will turn a corner in the not too distant future and we wish to be prepared to make the most of that when it happens. Demand for Scotts products has never been stronger and we feel now is the right time to invest and expand.”*

Managing director Richard Evans added: *“It is a very exciting opportunity to start with a blank sheet of paper whilst having the resource of a long established company as support. It is refreshing in the current climate to be involved with a forward thinking team who have confidence in the West Midlands.”*

Northants Telegraph – 10th January 2013

Castle Station, Northampton

1. Archaeological findings

Archaeological findings from the site of the future Northampton Railway Station have been officially recorded and published. This follows an initial trial trench in October 2012 which unearthed a range of remains dating back to the Medieval and Saxon period. They included an ironstone wall, pottery fragments and a brooch. The full report from that process is now available to download on WNDC's website. To build upon the initial findings, there will be an archaeological investigation covering the full footprint of the new station building early this year. The excavation will seek to reveal and record any remains in the area, prior to construction starting this Spring.

In medieval times Northampton Castle was situated on part of the current station site. However, it was largely destroyed and displaced over time as the railway was developed. Located in the Northampton Enterprise Zone, the new station will be twice the size of the existing building. It is a key part of the 'Northampton Alive' regeneration plan, supporting the long term transformation of the town.

The detailed design of the 2,500 sqm station building will be finalised early this year, with construction works due to commence in the Spring and complete in 2014. In the longer term, there are plans for a potential 1270 space multi-storey car park and a 28,000 sqm commercial development on the remainder of the site.

2. New plans

Updated plans for the new and improved Northampton Railway Station have been officially revealed. At twice the size of the present station, the prominent, gateway building will offer more capacity and better facilities. Located in the Northampton Enterprise Zone, the £20m development is set to start in Spring this year and complete in Summer 2014. It is a key part of 'Northampton Alive' – a thriving series of improvements to Northampton town centre. The full plans are featured on a dedicated website that will operate for the duration of the project www.northamptonstation.co.uk.

Above two reports from the WNDC web-site – February 2013

If you wish to view the whole archaeological report made on the finds, log into the WNDC web-site and look for the 'Resources' tag, put cursor on this tag and click 'Publications' tag. This will bring up a few projects in hand and the station report is at the top of the list. Ed.

Chester Farm – more news

Local residents are being asked their opinions about heritage site Chester Farm, in a county council survey. It is part of a project launched by the Northamptonshire [County] Council to open up the Chester Farm site to the public and is supported by Heritage Lottery Funding.

Chester Farm, near Wellingborough, provides evidence of thousands of years of human activity, from at least Mesolithic times to the present day. The site includes traces of Iron Age enclosures and ancient field systems. Below ground there is extensive Roman settlement including a Roman walled town and recent excavation has shown that key elements of the town such as roads, temples and other buildings, have survived. There was also a medieval settlement, including remains of the deserted Chester-by-the-Water village. The site includes a complex of farm buildings, dating from the 17th to the 20th century, together with the remains of formal gardens, orchard and parkland. Extensive ironstone extraction took place in the area during the late 19th and early 20th centuries and there are the remains of an ironstone tramway across the site.

The county council is aiming to develop the site as somewhere people can learn more about Northamptonshire's fascinating heritage, with opportunities to join in activities. The survey will gather feedback about how these plans can best be achieved as well as asking people where they would visit the site, what sorts of activities they might like to see happening and whether they might like to participate in volunteering activities. The results from the survey will form plans for the future of Chester Farm and will be used to help prepare a further bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund.

Wellingborough Extra – 6th February 2013

Wicksteed Park Pavillions

A famous Edwardian pavilion which has hosted dances, parties and shows for generations of Northamptonshire families is to be restored to its former glory in a £200,000 plan to mark its 90th anniversary. The elegant building at the heart of Wicksteed Park, Kettering, was completed by Charles Wicksteed in 1923 as part of his vision to create the first public park and leisure facility in the UK. Within a few years of its opening, demand for the unique venue was so great that it had to be extended and it helped local people party and mark special occasions through the Roaring 20s, the Rocking 50s, the Swinging 60s and beyond. Partying stopped during the Second World War, when the pavilion was used as a base by the UK and American military, although even then some dances were held when accommodation levels permitted.

It is now to undergo a £200,000 restoration and refurbishment in response to a major increase in demand for it to be used as a weddings, conference and events venue. The work, due to be completed by mid-March, will include the sensitive refurbishment of the pavilion's original Edwardian features – including the famous clock tower donated to the park by the clubmen of Kettering in 1921. The exterior will also be repainted and a new entrance foyer is planned for the south pavilion.

Oliver Wicksteed, great-grandson of Charles Wicksteed said: *“The pavilion has provided 90 years of wonderful memories for the people of Kettering. As with all buildings which serve a multitude of purposes, some adaptations have been*

made over the years which have meant guests and visitors haven't been able to fully appreciate what a unique, treasured and elegant old building we have here. The 90th anniversary is an ideal opportunity to refurbish and to show off the many unique features which the building has."

The pavilion has been extended many times over the years. In 1927 the 'North Room' was opened and later became the 'Ice Cream Parlour'. Eight years later, the 'South Room' was opened and an extension to the Ice Cream Parlour was created. The pavilion shelter on the north end and the west side extension were added in 1937.

Kettering Extra – 6th February 2013



MISCELLANY OF ITEMS OF INTEREST

Towcester Water Mill

In 1790, the Towcester miller, Thomas Perkins, entered into an agreement with the Earl of Pomfret to rebuild the watermill in Towcester. The work took Perkins four years to complete as can be seen from the datestone on the building. During the 1840s the mill was becoming old fashioned and needed a substantial amount of money to bring up to standard. With only a few years left on the lease, Thomas Perkins' grandson Samuel Perkins negotiated a new lease with the Earl of Pomfret so that he could invest about £500, a very substantial amount at that time, to give the mill a new and improved water wheel. The 1848 lease agreed between the parties has survived amongst the Fermor Hesketh documents at Northamptonshire Record Office (*Fermor Hesketh box N bundle 1a*) and amazingly so has the estimate on a single sheet of paper folded into the lease:-

An Estimate of work to be done for Mr. Perkins at Towcester Mills, Northamptonshire
(Letters in the brackets may not be correct)

For sinking the brook and cutting jet way for an over shot wheel with brick and stone to jet way and sheeting at the bottom, oak cils and blocks, iron shaft for the water wheel with cogs, brasses and [n]aves, the wheel to be 8 feet high and 10 feet wide. Oak arms, elm [r]ings and boards, iron pit wheel and walls. Iron upright shaft with cogs and brasses, elm spur wheel with iron shafts, iron pinions boxes and [r]ising irons. Iron crown wheel and pinions, line shaft, sack tackle, drum wheel, barings, penstock with proper machinery for drawing on the water to the wheel and making floors good and ready for work for the sum of £487 0s 0d

Signed

John Parkinson

Grimscutt

Grimscote is a small hamlet in Cold Higham just a few miles up the A5 from Towcester. John Parkinson is recorded in the *History, gazetteer and directory of*

Northamptonshire by Whellan and Co. dated 1849 as a millwright. “Jetway” is a term that I have not come across before that may be a local term for the mill leat and race going under the mill. As it was an overshot wheel, the water was carried across the top of the wheel in a ‘penstock’ and discharged just beyond the crown of the wheel and it was the weight of the water that turned the wheel. The water wheel and the gearing to drive the four millstones and the sack hoist were all a combination of iron and wood.



Towcester Water Mill.

© Brian Giggins.

Just a few metal parts of this water wheel now survive. The water wheel was located approximately in the centre of the watermill and the archway that fed water to the penstock can be seen just above water level on the right side of the mill when viewed from the bridge crossing the Mill Leat by Bury Mount.

Brian Giggins, January 2013

(For more on Towcester Watermills visit “Towcester History & Photographs” on

Facebook)

Foot-note:

The waterwheel was replaced in 1895 by a British Empire type water turbine made by Armfields, Ringwood, Hampshire, installed at a cost of £85. The late Richard O’Rourke (one of the founders of NIAG) was involved in a survey of the remains of this turbine in 1983. In 1996 Bob Simpson, member of staff of Phoenix VLSI (the then occupiers of the mill) started to restore the turbine and had it working again in the following year when NIAG made a visit to see it.

Thank you to Geoffrey Starmer for this.

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English Heritage’s At Risk Register

Angel Hotel, Bridge Street, Northampton is among the buildings designated as ‘at risk’ in English Heritage’s new list published 11th October. Housing the Balloon Bar and the Fat Cat Cafe Bar, the inside of the Grade II listed building was gutted by a fire that started on January 2nd. Neither bar has reopened yet and EH now deems that the damage could potentially jeopardise the ex-hotel’s future.

Northampton Chronicle & Echo – 18th October

Heritage Lottery Funding for the East Midlands

Lottery Funding has been given to projects across the county.

World War II – The Kettering Legacy: The project aims to research, record and display the social and economic impact of the war on Kettering, in particular highlighting the impact of American servicemen based in the town. The award granted is £13,700.

Thrapston's Virtual Heritage Centre: This is a creation of a Virtual Heritage Centre to showcase the area's history. The award granted is £14,300.

Delapre Abbey: The award was granted to promote heritage participation at the Grade II* listed Abbey ahead of the main restoration project, to capture oral histories and build the capacity of the Friends. The awarded granted is £47,400.

Taken from the Heritage website.

Historic Building to be flats

A historic factory building in Northampton will be converted into 17 flats after proposals to turn it into six new homes fell through. The art-deco Pearce Leatherworks factory complex in Wellingborough Road, Billing closed in 2001. Work is now underway to turn the complex into housing and this week (November 29th) NBC's planning committee gave permission for the factory's old power house to be converted into 17 apartments. Councillors heard the plans were put together after earlier proposals to convert the building into six homes were scrapped because of the downturn in the housing market. Welcoming the development, a Councillor said: *"I would prefer to see its use carry on as a leather factory, but that's not going to happen, so I think we have to support this."*

The leatherworks was built in 1939 and was operational until 2001 when it closed following pressure from foreign imports. At one point, it was suggested part of the former factory complex could have been converted into a leathercraft museum, but that plans never materialised.

Metal detectors plunder site

Two metal-detecting enthusiasts were caught red-handed plundering an ancient Roman and Iron Age archaeological site in Northamptonshire. They were arrested while in the process of stealing ancient artefacts from Chester Farm, near Irchester. Northamptonshire Crown Court heard the site contained the remains of an Iron Age settlement, a walled Roman town, and its suburbs, ancient fields and parkland, a deserted medieval village and areas of more recent ironstone extraction. Prosecuting council said that the extensive site was of special archaeological interest so was listed as a protected scheduled ancient site under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979. He said: *"These two defendants have been entering that site without permission and effectively stealing coins and other items."*

The court heard that on July 26th 2011, they were spotted detecting on the site,

but when approached they walked on to neighbouring farmland where they were tracked by a police dog. They had maps, a compass, four metal detectors, shovels and spades. One had been selling coins on the internet but the prosecution could not say they were from Chester Farm. Adjourning sentence and granting bail, the judge told the pair that they should not be under any illusions. That it was a serious case and the likely outcome would be custody.

Cllr Heather Smith said: *“As a scheduled ancient monument, Chester Farm is of exceptional national importance, so these offences were extremely serious..... We will never know the full extent of the damage caused by these criminals, to a site of such cultural importance, which saddens me immensely.”*

Above two reports - Northamptonshire Chronicle & Echo – 29th November 2012

With regards to Chester Farm and the Cllr’s comments, I wonder if it ever entered her head that her comments would have a hollow hypocritical ring to them, when so much of our heritage is lost through mismanagement, either by the Council or by developers – The Maltings in Northampton spring to mind! Ed

Piece of Chron history for sale

A particularly large, heavy and ornate piece of the Chronicle & Echo’s history is set to go under the hammer later this month [January]. A set of cast iron panels, which formed part of a pair of ornate cast iron gates, once stood at the Newland entrance to the Chron. When the premises were demolished to make way for the Grosvenor Centre, the gates were removed and these panels salvaged and conserved. And those same gates are now set to be auctioned by JP Humberts Auctioneers in Towcester. The centre panels of the gates depicted the four seasons. Autumn and winter had disintegrated beyond repair, the spring and summer were saved. The top section was formed by four sets of cherubs, and the bottom by floral patterned panels. The casting was carried out early in the Victorian period at the Lion Foundry, established in 1830 by John Bretell and situated in Swan Lane, Northampton.

The items will be offered as one lot, expected to fetch between £400 to £600 on January 23/24.

Northampton Chronicle & Echo – 17th January 2013

Royalty visits Crockett & Jones

Expert shoemakers at one of Northampton’s oldest factories are currently making a special pair of shoes for Prince Charles, who recently visited the Crockett and Jones factory in Perry Street. During his visit he picked up two pairs of shoes for Princes William and Harry, which were the same as those worn by Daniel Craig in the James Bond film, Skyfall; also picking out a pair for himself. But because the classic Oxford-style Curzon shoe the Prince selected is no longer produced by the company, a special pair is now being hand made.

Historic royal link:

* The Crockett & Jones factory in Perry Street also had a Royal visit in 1924

when Prince Charles's grandfather, The Duke of York, visited. The Duke of York became King George VI.

- * During his tour of the factory, the Duke saw many shoemaking processes similar to those seen by Prince Charles.
- * Prince Andrew also wears shoes made by Crockett & Jones and it is believed Prince Harry may have bought shoes made by the firm in the past.
- * During his factory tour, Prince Charles saw pictures of his grandfather's visit as well as shoe moulds marked with the words 'HM Queen'.

Northampton Chronicle & Echo: 24th January 2013

Brewery up for sale

The owners of an award winning Northamptonshire brewery are offering people the change to take on their 'dream job' by buying the firm. St. James based Frog Island Brewery is being sold as a going concern by owners, Bruce and Mandy Littler, who are both planning to leave the industry. They have run the brewery in The Maltings, St. James, since 1994, but are looking for a new challenge. The brewery is known for being one of the first in the country to offer a personalised label printing service for its beers.

Northamptonshire Chronicle & Echo – 14th February 2013

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OF THIS AND THAT

New Committee Member required

NIAG's Committee would be happy to extend a warm welcome to anyone who would like to work alongside them as Steve Miles has recently left the committee due to work relocation.

Request for help:

Geoffrey Starmer is currently working on an update of the late Richard O'Rourke's *Northamptonshire Brickworks* and is talking with brick enthusiasts elsewhere in the UK it seems this should include illustrations of the brickworks, brickmaking and the named bricks. We have reasonable pictorial coverage of the brickmaking activity but it would be useful to have more illustrations of each works and of bricks carrying the name of the firm making them.

Can any member please assist with this request for photographs. Geoffrey's contact details are on the back page.

Dates for the Diary:

27th April: EMIAC 85 at Leicester University. *Manufacturing: Past, Present & Future*. Contact David Lyne, LIAS Secretary on lihs99@ntlworld.com. This is a free event.

- 3rd May: Summer walks and visits begin. Programme enclosed.
- 25/26th May: Heritage Event at Delapre Abbey. NIAG's publicity stand will be at this event on the Saturday only. No further timings at present. Contact Jane W if you are interested in attending.
- ? September: Heritage Fair at St. Seps. Details as yet not known
- 21st October: *The Forgotten Past: post medieval small finds and their contribution to our understanding of the past.* A Portable Antiquities Scheme conference at the British Museum. 10am to 5pm. Information from jparol@thebritishmuseum.ac.uk.

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And Finally

Diamonds – 10 things you probably didn't know about them

- * The popularity of diamond wedding rings dates back to 1477 when the Archduke of Austria gave a diamond to Mary of Burgundy
- * The weight of a diamond is measured in carats; a carat is a fifth of a gram.
- * Ian Fleming's James Bond story *Diamonds Are Forever* was serialised as a comic strip in the Daily Express in 1959-60.
- * The line '*A Diamond is Forever*' began as an advertising slogan for De Beers diamonds in 1948.
- * In 20054, astronomers discovered a star about 50 light years from Earth that is a massive diamond of about 10 billion trillion trillion carats.
- * They christened the star '*Lucy*' after the Beatles song *Lucy In the Sky With Diamonds*.
- * A flawless diamond weighing at least 20 carats is called a 'paragon'.
- * Eighty percent of diamonds mined today are used in industry for cutting, polishing or grinding.
- * "*I never worry about diets. The only carrots that interest me are the number you get in diamonds.*" (Mae West)
- * Appropriately enough, the Brussels airport robbery took place at 7.47pm. However, the plane was not a Boeing 747 but a Fokker F100.

Taken from the Daily Express – 21st February 2013

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Newsletter:

Next Issue: **July 2013**

Deadline for all articles and information **20th June 2013**. 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.