



NORTHAMPTONSHIRE
INDUSTRIAL, ARCHAEOLOGY
GROUP

NEWSLETTER



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Photograph front cover: Finial on top of Ernest Chambers factory, now Westcom Engineering, Raunds © Jane Waterfield 2013

From the Editor

At the Joe Brown concert, back in March, we were unhappy when the bass player collapsed on stage. He had recently been ill, but had been determined to 'do the show'. The curtain came down for about 15 mins and the show then continued with a lad stepping in from behind the scenes. It turned out that the bass player was OK and did not have to go to hospital. This scenario brought to mind of an event when I was about 10 or 11. A school friend's birthday party saw a group of us going to Covent Garden, the ballet was *'The Prince of the Pagodas'*. Well into the second Act there was the usual mirror dancing, once on the left side, then on the right side – to our horror the male dancer on the right side took a flying entrechat, landed and went smack onto the stage. On came the staff of the Opera House and carried him off – the music did not pause – we sat horror struck and a bit giggly (as you do at that age). The left ballet dancer carried on with his moves and the right side – nothing. The ballet continued to its conclusion and we left still talking about the 'mishap' and the ballet in general. Needless to say this ballet was withdrawn for the season. Whether it has been danced since I don't know. Memories.....

Our local farmer finished fencing round the fields in May and it is most enjoyable watching the cattle now gracing the field immediately behind the house. Working in the garden now brings an added pleasure - the chomping of a cow eating the grass whilst looking over the fence to see what we are doing! A couple of issues ago I mentioned my wonderful prize of a Helicopter Ride, I do realise that this is not necessarily a NIAG thing, but it could be argued that if one looked closely enough there was a lot of Industry below. My adventure can be found on page 8.

We are now nearly at the end of the summer programme for 2013. The turn-out for these has been excellent typically between 10 and 20 attendees. The weather, as usual, has played its part and in one instance the few members who turned out were dressed more for the winter than summer! The Model Engineering Trains at Delapre was a most enjoyable afternoon and hot. If you have young grandchildren this is the ideal venue for an afternoon outing.

There is an urgent notice about our proposed visit to Timsons on page 20. Please also note that there is no increase in subs this year. Renewal notices are enclosed.

I see from the local paper that yet another family run business will be putting up its shutters in the near future. White & Bishop, a shop that once sold to the farming industry and moved into the world of walking and mountaineering will be closing after 83 years in Northampton. See page 18. This now means that two very old establishments will have closed shop in the past year – Church's China and now White & Bishop. Certainly a sad state of affairs.

The winter programme begins in October and once again the committee have pulled out the stops for interesting topics. The programme is enclosed giving all the relevant information. Hope to see you there.

Jane W

WINTER TALKS OF 2012/13

The last reports

Fencing makes a Park – 8th February

The story behind our penultimate presentation of the session could have been set anywhere in country - and probably did: that of urban expansion. In recounting events of more than 100 years ago, David Shrewsbury included many references to local IA activities.

Today we think of Abington Street as being little more than a shopping area that eventually becomes the Wellingborough Road. In the mid-nineteenth century, Abington was just a farm estate 'out in the sticks' to which the aforementioned street led. During the latter part of the century the town of Northampton expanded rapidly in a north-easterly direction. Manfield built a factory for making shoes first in the Mounts and then in Monks Park. By 1893 trams were travelling along the Wellingborough Road and in 1898 Matthew Holding was the architect for the Abington Park Hotel. The parish of Christchurch was formed by amalgamating the parishes of Abington, St Edmunds and St Michael. However, further expansion was required to accommodate 1,000 homes.

The area targeted for this development was the Abington Estate. As part of agreement Lord Wantage gave the Council 20 acres of land for use as a public amenity on condition that they made the area secure. In 1896 the Council erected a fence on top of the low wall surrounding the area; comprising closely spaced vertical bars the fence was unclimbable. Gates built by Hill & Smith of Brierley Hill, Birmingham were hung from pillars of stone brought from Darley Dale in Derbyshire. When it was opened in the summer of 1897, the gates were locked at 6.00 pm by the keepers. The other condition of this gift was that a new road was required; what we now know as Park Avenue South was built in 1899 at a cost of £315-18s-0d.

We, of course, know it as Abington Park, though initially it only comprised the area to east of Park Avenue South. Local firms were involved in providing the fencing: Mobbs & Co of the Lion Foundry; A Bells & Co erected a two-rail fence around one of the lakes to keep out the animals; Rice & Co of the Eagle Foundry, also put up some lakeside fencing; Northampton Foundry Co erected fencing around what is now the boating lake. David showed pictures of the different styles of fencing with their unique embellishments.

As we know there is now a third lake in the park; the area around the south-east corner of the park was originally rather marshy and water-logged from the stream flowing out of the lower lake. When the Crescent was constructed material was taken from the park land to form what is now the third lake.

Although the IA aspects were slow to appear, they might not have been there had Lord Wantage not had the foresight to make the arrangements he did and we wouldn't

be able to enjoy the park. There are still remains of the original fencing if you know where to look! A very enjoyable presentation.

Terry Waterfield



Development of the Boot & Shoe Industry in Leicestershire and Northamptonshire – 8th March

The final talk of the winter season saw David Holmes, Chairman of the Leicestershire Industrial History Society, comparing the development of the boot & shoe industries in Leicestershire and Northamptonshire during the 19th century. David spent all his working life in the boot & shoe industry, mostly working for the British United Shoe Machinery Company in Leicester, but also in Northamptonshire shoe factories.

Northampton's tradition of shoemaking goes back at least to the Civil War and by 1830 there were some 30 firms in operation, quite apart from individual shoemakers. Leicester, on the other hand had no tradition in the industry and there were no firms engaged in shoemaking in 1830. The first mention of footwear in Leicester comes from hosiery firms diversifying into knitted infants shoes.

Over the next 20 years the boot & shoe industry increased in Northampton, whilst in the Northamptonshire villages, shoemakers decided they could be their own masters and set up their own factories there. By 1854 there were 73 firms in Northampton and 53 in the rest of the county. In Leicester more hosiery companies started to produce footwear (mainly children's) during the 1830s and 1840s but then shoemakers started to take over production. However, by 1854 there were still only 8 firms in Leicester and none elsewhere in the county.

The next key stage was the introduction of machinery. Although Marc Brunel had introduced shoe machinery into a factory in London in 1810, it was not until the 1850s that machines started to be more widely used and firms in Leicester adopted them early on. Thomas Crick, described as the 'Father of the Leicester industry' was key in this respect. He developed a range of machines and patented a process for the riveted sole construction which he introduced into his factory. This meant that shoes could be produced quicker than traditional hand-sewn shoes, at a lower price and with reasonable quality. Other companies in Leicester followed Crick's lead and this led to a rapid expansion of the industry there. Crick himself owned the first firm in Leicester to employ more than 1,000 persons, producing some 5,500 pairs of shoes per week.

Northampton was slower in adopting machinery for shoe production, with workers refusing to accept the sewing machine when it was introduced. The strike of 1857 led to machines being removed from factories and it wasn't until Isaac Campbell took the initiative with offers of inducements and improved conditions of employment in his new factory if machines were accepted, that eventually the strike collapsed.

Over the next 30 years, disputes in the industry over not just machines but also wages, in-factory working and general working conditions saw the rise of both manufacturers' associations (1871 in Leicester, 1878 in Northampton) and trade unions. In 1874 the National Union of Boot & Shoe Rivetters and Finishers was formed to overcome problems associated with the role of the outdated cordwainers' union and by 1890 it had become the National Union of Boot & Shoe Operatives and one of the largest unions in the country. Trade disputes affected both the Leicester and Northampton industries, but it seems that Northampton was more disadvantaged due to the reluctance of the traditional shoemakers to adopt new technology and working practices!

During the latter part of the 19th century, mechanisation proceeded apace, with an ever wider range of machines becoming available to replicate the hand shoemaking operations. American firms were at the forefront of such developments, with the Howe sewing machine, the Blake sewer, the Goodyear welter and the lasting machine being the key machines introduced.

During the 1880s and 1890s the Leicester industry continued to grow faster than that in Northamptonshire. Leicester firms decided to move the cheaper part of the boot & shoe business out to the villages in Leicestershire and concentrate in-town on middle grade footwear. The multiple retail industry also flourished in Leicester much more than Northampton with many of the brands familiar on the high street in recent years (e.g. Freeman Hardy & Willis, Stead & Simpson and Lennards) appearing by the end of the 19th century, with over 1000 branches between them. Northampton, on the other hand, only had Manfield with its 86 branches (True-Form did not appear until the early 1900s).

By 1900 Leicester was the largest shoe centre in Europe. It had the largest shoe production; it was the main machinery centre and the main shoe materials production centre. It was the headquarters of the shoe manufacturers association and of the union and had most of the large multiple retailers. However, as the 20th century progressed, the industries in both Northampton & Leicester began their slow decline. Today, virtually all traces of the boot & shoe industry in Leicester and Leicestershire have completely disappeared. Northamptonshire's boot & shoe industry, on the other hand, which began long before Leicester, still continues today, albeit in a much reduced state. David felt that the longevity of Northamptonshire industry could be attributed to its adoption of the Goodyear welted process at the end of the 19th century.

Peter Perkins



SUMMER WALKS AND VISITS

Northampton Society of Model Engineers – 6th May

What a glorious day. A group of about a dozen were present. I had my LMS drivers cap on so no-one initially recognised me. Please let me apologise to the group as I waffled on when we should have had a ride before the queues built up.



Mike giving us the history of the Society.

Very briefly the history of the Northampton Society of Model Engineers Ltd started eighty years ago with the formation of the Northampton College Society of Experimental and Model Engineers. In 1945 it became the Northampton Society of Engineers and in 1976 NSME. We have around 150 members.

March 2014 will be the 80th anniversary of an inaugural lecture meeting given by Wenman Joseph Bassett-Lowke.

The raised track is 1800ft long, with a short tunnel, in the form of an elongated closed loop of 3½" and 5" gauges. A traverser is used to get the locos from the steaming bay. The 5" and 7¼" ground track is 3000ft long with a terminus, turn table and sidings.

Members own their engines which are mainly coal fired steam locos. There are a few electric and hybrid petrol hydraulic/electric although these tend to be a bit more experimental. Most locos are scratch built or assembled from kits. Prices start from a few thousand pounds.



One of the many hand built locos to be seen on the tracks at the Park

The site is a wooded area at the bottom end of Delapre Park. We have some old truck bodies for storage, a clubhouse, workshop, station and ticket office. A signal box is on the wish list.

A recent addition is the garden railway consisting of 32 and 45mm tracks. This gives a vast range of model scales including 16mm narrow gauge O and gauge 1 so there

could be a main line express running alongside a narrow gauge slate train.

Our working day is Tuesday when we fiddle and put the world to rights. In December 2012 after five hours of filming we featured on 'Escape to the Country' for three minutes.

There is a very good web site with lots of information and photos. I think everyone enjoyed the visit and would just mention that if you should visit in the future with the grand-children and have any questions I will endeavour to answer them.

Mike Ringwood.



Raunds Town Walk – 24th May

On an evening more akin to December than May, eight intrepid members gathered in The Square at Raunds, wearing woolly hats, scarves and gloves to brave the wintry conditions. In common with many of the county's small towns, Raunds developed from a village in the 19th century due to the rise of the boot & shoe industry and at its peak there were more than a dozen firms operating here. It was unusual, however, in that almost all the factories here manufactured army boots and relied on government contracts. When the Boer War ended at the turn of the 20th century, the reduced need for army boots resulted in manufacturers undercutting each other to get contracts and this led to the famous Raunds March to London in 1905 in protest against the consequent reduction in wages. Most of the boot factories were demolished in the latter part of the 20th century but there were still a few remnants to see on our tour, along with other facets of the town's industrial past.

Facing onto The Square is the former Carlton Cinema which seated 504 people. It opened on 18th November 1937 with the first film shown being 'Ramona' starring Don Ameche & Loretta Young. It closed in 1977 and is now a snooker hall and restaurant. Just north of The Square, on High St, is a modern Spar supermarket, almost certainly on the site referred to in the Evening Telegraph for December 1900, asking for tenders to build a boot factory for Walter Lawrence, with shops on the ground floor and factory above. A picture exists which shows the 3-storey building, with shop fronts on the ground floor and an oriel window on the first floor. During WWII it was being used by Rushden-based shoe company Bignells.

During the early 1880s, Raunds briefly had its own ironstone quarry and, according to the 1883 OS map, quarrying took place in the Ponds Close area south of Manor Street, with a tramway running east from this area, then north alongside the Raunds to Bythorn road to a railhead at Raunds station, some two miles away. Although there is a quarry face on the east side of High Street to the north of Manor Street, there appear to be no records linking this with the Ponds Close quarry. However some 10 years ago, former NIAG member Paul Roberts contacted me about excavations for the installation of drainage in the pavement of Manor Street at the entrance to what

is now St Peter's Court. These revealed the remains of a brick arch below ground level, consistent with a tramway tunnel beneath Manor Street, suggesting that the quarry face in High Street was worked for ironstone and that the tunnel connected the face with the rest of the tramway system.

Walking up Manor Street, we came to Park Road. Here were two heel factories, both apparently run independently by members of the Chambers family. The one opposite

the junction with Manor Street, is still extant; this was Ernest Chambers factory, now Wescom Engineering. Grade II listed, it features spiked ball finials at each end of the roof parapet. It also used to have a stone wellington boot mounted on the central roof pediment, a fact confirmed during a recent talk to Raunds History Society when a lady in the audience said she had been offered the boot when workmen were removing it during work on the building a number of years ago! It is now in the safe custody of the Raunds History Society. Of the heel factory used by James Chambers further down Park Road on the opposite side, little remains except possibly a single-storey building with a north lit roof.



Loading door on the Ernest Chambers factory

Due to the weather we did not visit the site of Raunds Manor brickworks behind Manor School on this occasion. However, it can be reported that

the conical Grade II listed experimental limekiln on the site (*see NIAG Gazetteer -2nd edition - site No 330*) has now completely collapsed.

We walked past the sites of several boot factories in the vicinity of Hill Street, all demolished and replaced with housing, including those of Neal & Gates, Adams Bros and the St Crispin Productive Society. In Hollington Road we came upon a three-storey building adjacent to the Methodist church graveyard, marked as a shoe factory on the 1971 map. This could have been the premises of HW Chapman, cardboard box manufacturers, who were recorded as being in Hollington Road in 1914. Further along this road is a single-storey building/workshop adjacent to No.4, with an unusually decorative plasterwork frieze along the roof parapet and also a decorative plaster door pediment. Does anyone know what this building was used for?

On Coleman Street, there is little sign today that the three identical pairs of semi-detached houses (albeit with different dates and initials on the datestones!) near to the bottom of the street were once the offices of boot manufacturer Tebbutt & Coleman, whose factory buildings were in the gardens of these houses. Only a small 2-storey factory building behind the end house of the six remains now converted to

apartments, betrays the history of the site. The name ‘TEBBUTT’ can just be made out on the wall.



Looking at former site of Tebbutt & Coleman. The house on left being the former offices of the company.

In Brook Street, what is now the Co-op Funeral Care building clearly had industrial origins and through the arch a loading hoist can still be seen at 1st floor level. Records suggest that this was JH Clark’s boot factory, constructed in 1887. Further on, adjacent to the Millennium Gates is a plaque commemorating the centenary of the 1905 Raunds March and close-

by at 1 Grove Street is the 3-storey factory, now converted to flats, which was the premises of Owen Smith, boot manufacturer, in 1914.

Our final stop on the walk round Raunds was opposite the site of the gasworks on Wellington Rd. Here stands an arch between two houses with a stone wellington boot on top and the name ‘Wellington Works’ carved in stone on it. This was the entrance to the boot factory built by JK Smith in 1881, which later became a tannery, being operated by OB Strong from 1932 and amalgamated with Rushden-based Strong & Fisher in 1947, only closing in 1992. Subsequently, the factory site was cleared for housing, leaving only the entrance arch. The Northampton Mercury contains an account of the opening of the factory in 1881 and tells how Mr JK Smith ascended the building and guided the stone boot into place as it was being lowered into position by his daughter ‘by means of apparatus from below’. The boot was then ‘christened’ by pouring sparkling water onto it!

Hurrying back to our starting point, we dreamt of warm soup and a blazing fire – well that’s a British summer for you!

Peter Perkins



The Bargain Helicopter Ride of a Lifetime To the Olympics and back

In January 2012 we attended a dinner with Terry’s colleagues from the IET. Envelopes were on the table for donations to the Charity of the evening – The Heart Foundation. I duly put my money in and sealed the envelope – little dreaming that I would get the prize of a lifetime. My name, the first to be called out, meant that

I had won the first prize of a helicopter flight over the London Olympic site. This was to be taken within the year. What with one thing and another I did not make any contact with the company until the middle of September. My flight would be on the 29th September from North Weald Airfield, just north of Epping, at 10.45 am. Praying for a good and sunny day we awaited the day.

Saturday dawned and we set off from home just after 7.30 am. It was a beautiful bright and extremely sunny morning. It promised to be warm as we sped off down the M1, a quick stop at South Mimms service station on the M25 and along to the M11 exit. Travelling north we took the first exit and found our way into the airfield. A huge market was in full swing and we circumnavigated the airfield to 'The Squadron' building where we parked up with many others all taking flights of one sort or another. After a coffee and quick comfort stop we waited our turn before being checked in. Terry upgraded me to a front seat of the helicopter, but declined to take up an offer of a back seat. He felt that I had the best seat and would be able to take many photos as I went into London, in any case he was able to take a few photos of me settling into the helicopter, which would have been impossible if he had been on board!

There was quite a delay before the eventual take off as the flights before the VIPs were five minute affairs – hardly worth the bother really – get on board, take off, whizz round a smallish circle and back again. Well, we finally got our call – standing in a small group near the helicopter landing area – and set off across the grass to the 'copter. I had my own personal attendant who settled me on board next to the pilot. The views were going to be good.

It was an extremely gentle lift off, in fact I was hardly aware we had taken off, as we took to the sky, dipping and turning and in the direction of Harlow, over the M11 before a gentle turn to the left and across fields along the M25 and the sight of the



The Reservoirs of the Lea Valley.

massive Jewish cemetery at junction 26. I've passed this cemetery many, many times when I have gone back to Chadwell Heath to see friends. From the air it all looked so different.

From here we again turned slightly towards the King George's, William Girling, Banbury and Lockwood Reservoirs in the Lea Valley. I had not known that there were so many of these massive reservoirs so it was a bit of a surprise and a definite 'wow' factor. The sun was glinting on the water and London loomed in the distance, with some landmarks beginning to show through the distant haze of the morning. I was eventually able to make out the Shard, the City of London skyscrapers and Canary Wharf. It was later on studying the maps that I was able to note that on the way down we passed on our left Epping Forest, Chingford, Highams Park, Edmonton, the north circular, before getting to Stratford and the Olympic village and stadium.

If I am honest, I was more interested in the lay of London rather than the Olympic Village itself as we were passing over an area which I had travelled through whilst living in Essex and London itself. Did I recognise any of it – no, not really, because I had not been prepared for the route we were to take – had I known then yes I would have looked for special landmarks. I had a rough idea but after the Jewish Cemetery lost track. It was the massive house developments and 'estates' which threw me completely. This area had grown, or had it always been like this? However, with luck the photos would enable me to pinpoint things when I got back.

In the distance, as we flew down the Lea Valley, Stratford loomed with the Millennium Dome standing out on its site on the south side of the Thames. It certainly stands out. Up high one was able to see how the river bends and how very wide it is at the Greenwich point.

The helicopter gently turned to show up the Olympic village. I was able to locate Stratford station – now Stratford International, but it was nothing like I remembered as all the marshalling yards had disappeared; the station itself was massive and it didn't help not having any trains, tube or mainline, on the tracks. We came into the site from the north and slowly swung round to look at it in more detail. There was the stadium, then the track and that awful red thing of steel, which actually looked better from overhead than from the television pictures of it from the ground. Passing over the five defunct gasholders at Bromley Bow we turned slightly to look once more over the site spotting the Olympic village flats before noting that we were on our way back. I have failed to mention the River Lea and corresponding canal which had been a feature of our journey. From the ground one is just totally unaware of the water which is a big feature of the Lea Valley and it's only when you are able to view it from 'upstairs' that you realise there is so much of it.

Other landmarks that I managed to spot were the Millennium Wheel and the Wembley Arch. It really does stand out. Hampstead Heath must have been somewhere in between Wembley and our 'copter, but it was difficult to work out where.



We steadily flew back up the Lea Valley, people playing football on a field below, a train on its way north, another cemetery, houses in 'regimented' patterns, the main arterial roads of this part of London before the massive sight of Epping Forest once more. We swung over the M25 near the huge Sainsbury's warehouse between junctions 25 and 26, spotted the tunnel entrance which goes under the A10 at junction 25 and made our way back to the airfield. I also spotted Bell Common tunnel (M25) which was quite distinctive as we flew towards the M11. Patterns in the fields were also noted – a rather interesting 'pattern' of circles and trees near, I think, Copped Hall, a burnt out country mansion visible on the right from the M25 as you drive west from junction 27.

For the final run, I spotted a yellow single engine aircraft ahead and we followed this back to the runways, in fact flying, what seemed, quite a short distance back from it. The pilot drew my attention to the plane and I nodded to say I had spotted it. Thinking back I think he wanted me to get more photos which was good of him, since I had done nothing but take photos all the time we were in the air! The plane banked and landed and we gently swung round to pass round the back of it as it taxied along the runway to its stopping place. We carried on a short distance as we turned into our allotted place alongside another helicopter in front of Terry and the waiting stewards.

It was over – I was helped out of the seatbelts – shocked the pilot when I thanked him and shook his hand, as I am sure no-one else had done that simple act that morning, if ever. After all without him we wouldn't have enjoyed our trip. Got out of the helicopter and went to meet Terry.

What a ride. Much better than an aeroplane as it was such a gentle take off and set down. Helicopters seem to 'dance'. No stomach lurching as the plane takes off or indeed excessive bumping on landing. Wonderful. Sickness – no way - too exciting for that.

After this, we made our way to the Gunpowder Mills at Waltham Abbey* and spent a happy afternoon wandering round this enormous site.

Jane Waterfield

** We visited this site on June 15th. Report in a later issue.*



NEWS ITEMS AND UPDATES:

Castle stones to go on show in new station

Pieces of Northampton's medieval castle will be put on display in the town's new railway station. Over the past few weeks, archaeologists have unearthed the remains of a 12th century section of the former castle under the current station's car park. It is hoped that finds from the latest dig will be put on display in the £20m new station building, along with intricate carved stones from the castle's former royal apartments, which have been in storage at Northampton's museum for decades. A representative from the Borough Council says the plan was to create a display inside the new station which would reveal the history of the castle. It is understood that they are looking at how they can bring the castle back to life and really show-case it. They definitely want to put as much of the castle's heritage back on site as is possible.

The castle was once used as a seat of Parliament. It was partially demolished in 1662 under the orders of King Charles II because of the town's support for Parliament during the Civil War. The remnants of the buildings were taken by the Victorians for building work and the site was cleared in 1859 to make way for the railway station. The remains found in the past few weeks, are from a building which would have stood in the outer bailey.

Work on the new railway station is due to be completed next summer [2014].

Notes:

- It is not yet known what the building which was found on the castle site in the past few weeks was used for in medieval times, but it was located away from the main royal apartments.
- A spokesman from the Northamptonshire Archaeology unit said '*We certainly weren't expecting to find a stone building this well preserved and this close to the surface*'. Finds made this month have included hundreds of small pieces of pottery and many animal bones.
- Remnants of the old Victorian station have also been found.

Northampton Chronicle & Echo – 11th April 2013

Artefacts have been found dating back to the 10th century. Latest finds include a medieval silver penny and two Saxon oil lamps. The remains of a building have also been identified as a 12th century workshop, which stood in the grounds of Northampton Castle. Work will now start on the foundations of the £20 million new station, due for completion by autumn 2014.

Northampton Chronicle & Echo – 13th June 2013

Gasworks site to be cleared as part of redevelopment and Tanner Street, Northampton to be demolished.

All the houses in Tanner Street near the town centre will be demolished by the end of the year. Plans were unveiled back in 2008. Initially the residents expressed fears about what would happen to their homes. WNDC, over the past couple of years has brought up the houses and expects to send in the demolition crews later this year. Documents published by the organisation said *“We’re progressing with our plans to demolish the residential and commercial properties in readiness for the future development of the land. The properties in Tanner Street were all vacant by May 24th. The commercial units will not become vacant until the end of September. Providing there are no issues with nesting birds or bats, both demolition phases are expected to take up to four weeks to complete. The site should be cleared by the end of 2013.”*

The houses in Tanner Street are all that remain of a number of houses which used to be in the area. Some people who had lived the properties had been there for more than 60 years. The scheme in hand is to build a high-class office development next to the river. The plan could also see the town’s landmark gas towers go.

Meanwhile.....

Part of the former gas works of Northampton could soon be demolished. National Grid has applied for planning permission to knock down part of the now empty building in Towcester Road. The firm said *“The buildings at the site are unused and present an ongoing target for vandalism. Demolition will eradicate the vandalism problem and eliminate potential safety hazards to anyone attempting to gain unauthorised access to the site.”* The demolition would not include the front of the building which is listed. This work is expected to take place between June and August this year.

Northampton Chron & Echo – 30th May 2013.

So that’s that – goodbye to another couple of landmarks in this town. Meanwhile in other cities and towns listed buildings and former gas holders are being preserved. In their recent newsletter our friends at the TFLISHG report that the Kings Cross Gasholder 8 is being restored. It was taken apart, sent to Shepley Engineering in Yorkshire for cleaning and repair. Re-assembly commenced in early June and it will be re-sited on the north side of the Regent’s Canal, to be joined by three other preserved and refurbished gasholders which will form the centrepiece of a new public park. So it can be done. Ed.



MISCELLANY ITEMS OF INTEREST

NR supports a Scrap metal bill

Network Rail is backing the aims of a Private Member's Bill (introduced in the Commons on June 20th) to re-regulate the scrap metal industry. With the direct cost of metal theft to the rail industry running at £19million a year, NR said: "*Reform that effectively takes away the illegal market in scrap metal, and which includes an effective licensing regime and adequate power to police and magistrates, is sorely needed.*"

£2.5 million update for town's sewers

Northampton's sewage system is set to get a £2.5 million upgrade this year although the work is likely to lead to dozens of road closure in the town. Anglian Water is planning to re-line 90 different sections of sewer including 5½ kilometres of pipes in the town centre. The aim of the work is to protect the ageing brickwork and reduce the potential for the sewers to be blocked. It is said that this work will give the town sewers fit for the 21st century.

The Hind Hotel – Wellingborough

The owners of one of Wellingborough's most important historical buildings are in dispute with the council, after being told to carry urgent repairs to stop its deterioration. Wellingborough council says the 17th century Hind Hotel, on the town's Sheep Street, has been visibly deteriorating over the past 10 years – and it wants the owners to apply for heritage lottery funding to help them stop the rot. The hotel is Grade II* listing, which English Heritage categorises as being a '*particularly important building of more than special interest*'. The council says a number of urgent repairs are necessary – wooden rafters, beams and windows have rotted, stone and brick work is eroded, rainwater pipes are broken and leaking, a number of walls are covered in vegetation and some have structural cracks in them.

The owner's son says that the building has been undergoing repair works for some time, and is saddened that the council has made the issue public.

Council's spokesman said: "*The Hind Hotel is a rare, high-grade listed building and of great importance to the town. It was a resting point for Oliver Cromwell's army before the Battle of Naseby in 1645 and it's alleged that Cromwell himself stayed at the hotel. We have a duty to protect historic buildings like this and we have to act quickly to stop the hotel deteriorating any further.*"

It would appear that the owners are still to put in a bid for lottery funding, who argue they have recently spoken to council offers and that they only received the 18-page heritage lottery application on January 2nd. They have identified areas within it which they wish to clarify and are seeking legal and contractual advice.

Wellingborough Extra – 6th February 2013

It is to be hoped that everyone gets together to sort this out and is able to preserve this historic building without resorting to fisticuffs. Otherwise I foresee the demise of yet another important building. Ed

Brewery up for sale

The owners of an award winning Northamptonshire brewery are offering people the chance 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.

Northampton Chronicle & Echo – 14th February 2013

Further news: New owners have now taken over this brewery and will stick with tradition.

Northampton Chronicle & Echo – 23rd May 2013

Heritage Lottery Funding

Delapre Abbey was awarded a grant of £47,400 (90%) for their project to promote heritage participation at the Grade II* Abbey ahead of the main restoration project, to capture oral histories and build the capacity of the Friends.

The Earls Barton War Memorial Project however had their grant to research the names of those recorded on the village war memorial and discover their stories and produce a book and website rejected.

The Northampton Underground Society also had their application rejected. This was for a one year project to investigate, document and publicise the past of Northampton by looking at tunnels, cellars and other underground places.

Unfortunately the 1101 Kettering Air Cadets also had their application rejected for their project '1101 Kettering Squadron Centre of Air Cadet History' This was to create the first RAF Cadets Museum in the country. They had hoped the application would enable them to house in a portacabin documents and materials dating back to the Squadron's formation in 1940. They would have worked with the Harrington Museum Society on the project.

Information from the HLF website – East Midland Committee Minutes.

Today, 9th May, the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) has announced initial support worth £68m for six major projects in England, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

The sites are:

- Silverstone, home of British motor racing in Northamptonshire
- HMS Caroline, the last surviving warship of the First World War fleet, in Belfast's Titanic Quarter

- Redruth's old brewery transformed to celebrate Cornish heritage
- London's Alexandra Palace – 'The People's Palace' – with over 140 years worth of history
- 12th-century Auckland Castle in Durham, home to a spectacular collection of Zurbaran paintings
- Aberdeen Art Gallery and Cowdray Hall, the city's public gallery with an impressive collection of early and contemporary works

Silverstone Heritage Live – initial support for a £9.1m HLF bid, including £446,000 development funding

The British Racing Drivers Club (BRDC) has put together exciting plans to showcase the world's only race circuit that is owned by a not-for-profit organisation. Silverstone held its first race meeting in 1948 and has hosted the British Grand Prix 47 times, helping nurture excellence in British motor sport and engineering. Proposals include: housing the BRDC's extensive and unique archive collection; recording oral histories from former competitors such as Sir Jackie Stewart, Sir Stirling Moss and Lady Christabel Watson; and redeveloping the site's visitor entrance as a heritage 'hub'.

Sir Jackie Stewart OBE said: *"I am very pleased to hear that such an important initiative is underway. Silverstone holds a unique place in the history of motorsport; having hosted the first ever World Championship Grand Prix in 1950. Silverstone holds special memories for me as I am proud to have won the British Grand Prix in 1969 and 1971. This grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund is hugely important as a first step in helping the British Racing Drivers' Club and Silverstone to ensure that the heritage of the site and that of British motor sport can reach a far wider audience than before and cements its importance for future generations."*

Taken from the HLF website 9.5.13

100 years ago

Quite a national fuss was made over the display of the model warships on the River Nene at Northampton. An army of pressmen, photographers and cinematograph operators came down from London to boom the little fleet.

They were in charge of the managing-director of the firm which made the models (Mr J Bassett-Lowke), who enable them to turn out some picturesque copy, and incidentally give the firm an advertisement of a kind which no amount of money could have bought.

The wonders of this miniature battlefield were told in graphic detail. Some of the writers were transported beyond plain prose and burst into poetry, combined with such a wealth of vivid imagination.

Northampton Chron & Echo – 23rd May 2013

White and Bishop to close after 83 years in Northampton

White & Bishop, a name synonymous with shopping in Northampton, is to close its Bridge Street store after 83 years in the town. The outdoor goods retailer has taken the decision to concentrate on its growing on-line business, and will close its doors for the final time on Saturday, July 27th.

The store was first opened by Walter White in 1930, supplying country and work wear to the farmers of the county. It later became known for sheepskin coats, and camping equipment, and in the late 1970s the outdoor centre was added. Managing director, Steve Moseley said it had been a 'hard decision' to leave Northampton, but it was important the business moved with the times. He also said the current restrictions in Bridge Street had influenced the decision but this was secondary to the need to concentrate on the on-line business. He also said that the reason for being there for 83 years was because they had embraced change, and evolved from a farmer's outfitter, to a sheepskin and country store to an outdoor centre. The restriction of traffic flow was partly a problem for the last 18 months and had had an effect on the footfall. There is another store in Rugby which is doing well.

Northampton Chronicle & Echo – 13th June 2013



A photograph showing the original shop front as can be seen on their web-site.



OF THIS AND THAT

Book Review

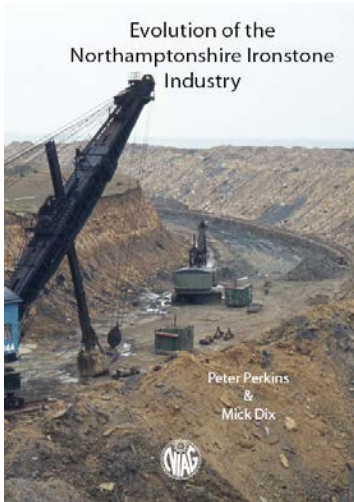
Evolution of the Northamptonshire Ironstone Industry

Peter Perkins and Mick Dix

Retail price £7.50 – Members £5.50

ISBN: 978-0-9576647-1-5

Those of you who attended the last NIAG EMIAC at Cogenhoe will remember Peter's presentation on the Ironstone Industry of the County. Now he and Mick Dix have put together a comprehensive booklet on the subject. It is full of information and well illustrated throughout with both pictures and graphs. I know absolutely nothing about this industry and found that the booklet gave me a better knowledge and understanding of one of the past industries of this county, evidence which still can be found if you know where to look. At the retail cost of £7.50 (Members £5.50) it is a nice reference book to have on the bookshelf and can be obtained either from myself direct or at the Winter meetings.



This is the first of one or two booklets which will be produced and published in order that the history of our Industrial Heritage in

Northamptonshire does not get totally lost in the mists of time.

JW

Obituary

Recently John Rigby a member of some years died after a short stay in hospital. Seven of us from NIAG attended a rather bleak funeral at the Counties Crem. John, it would appear, kept much of his life in separate compartments (not my words) and there was a very short eulogy from his sister which we believe was put together by colleagues from Plessey where John worked for many years as a Chemist.

NIAG Logo on clothing

Some of you may have noticed Jane and Terry sporting embroidered NIAG logos on their polo shirts. Although Terry commissioned the design, it is available for all members to use and the master is held by Tailormade of Daventry under the name NIAG. Their stock room has a wide variety of designs/styles in a range of colours and sizes. If you would like to have a customised garment pop along to their factory

in Lanchester Way, Royal Oak Industrial Estate, Daventry, NN11 8PH and talk to Trisha; or talk to her on 01327-311125. Their prices are very competitive.

The idea for these came from when we take the stand to events such as the Heritage Fair in September. Punters can then see which organisation we come from and do not therefore confuse us with the 'staff' of the venue'!

Winter Programme of Talks - 2013/14

- 11th October: History of the GEC works at Rugby - Alain Foote
8th November: AGM plus Powering the Nation from your Rubbish Bin - Dr. Adam Read and Kathryn Warren.
6th December: Appreciating Street Furniture - Phil Deakin

Dates for the Diary:

- 14th September Heritage Fair at St. Seps. Time 10.30am to 4.00pm
5th October History Day at Wollaston. Organised by NALH and Wollaston History Society.
Information from Terry Waterfield (01327 312850)
11th October Winter Season of Talks begin
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@the britishmuseum.ac.uk.*
26th October EMIAC 86: Oil's Well That Ends Well – Oil Production in the East Midlands. Hosted by Lincolnshire History & Archaeology. At Winthorpe Community Centre, Woodlands, Winthorpe, Newark. See enclosed flyer for full details, book by 30th September.

URGENT:

Visit to Timsons Perfecta Works, Kettering - 2nd August

If you have put your name forward to go on this visit, would you please contact John Andrew urgently to check arrangements. His phone number is 01536 520832.



And Finally

A few to make you smile.

Spotted in the *Chron & Echo*, April 2011

A Supermarket admitted it got a decimal point in the wrong place after queues formed at one of its petrol stations offering unleaded at 12.9p a litre. Dozens of drivers took advantage of the unexpected offer at Asda's store in Rooley Lane, Bradford. The bargain petrol was available for about two hours. *Oops!!*

Meanwhile the *Daily Express of the 18th April 2013* lets us know that on this day:

100 years ago:

A bitter quarrel erupts between MPs and the House of Commons kitchen committee after members are denied haddock in the tea room on account of its smell.

And

50 years ago:

London rush-hour traffic grinds to a halt as three policemen chase a black and white kitten around Piccadilly Circus for 10 minutes. It is taken to the RSPCA. – You couldn't make it up!

Unless stated all photographs are credited to Jane or Terry Waterfield, 2013.

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Newsletter:

Next Issue: **October 2013**

Deadline for all articles and information **20th September 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.