



NORTHAMPTONSHIRE INDUSTRIAL ARCHAEOLOGY GROUP

NEWSLETTER



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From the Editor

Just after putting the last issue 'to bed' came another article in the Chron & Echo regarding the fate of the two gasholders in Northampton. It would appear that when the holders are dismantled some of the bosses and other features will be retained and donated to the museums! Personally I can't see the point of that, as it will be a case of out of sight, out of mind. Far better to leave the shell and make use of it. More in the update section on page 15.

On a brighter note Phipps Brewery is on its way back into Northampton. A recent report in the Chron & Echo tells us that this will be based in an empty brewery building in Kingswell Street. The building is to be restored and work should commence in September and all being well be completed by Christmas. So it's not all doom and gloom.

Now the residents in the St. James area of Northampton are attempting to save the bus depot in St. James as there are fears that once the bus company vacates the site, the quite serviceable buildings will be flattened to make way for anything but for what it was built. However Church's have stepped in with a view to purchasing the site to expand their business (*see page 17*)

The AGM is fast approaching and with this edition the AGM papers are enclosed. Please ensure that if you still wish to receive the newsletter and be informed about what is happening on the industrial heritage front, you renew your subscriptions. A reminder for those who have yet to 'pay up' is also enclosed.

For those of us who have used the Northampton Railway Station, either for work or on our Rail Tours, the old footbridge has now been demolished. According to a spokesman it was "*out of date and at capacity during peak times of travel.*" Certainly an understatement!

An excellent day was had at the recent Heritage Fair held at St. Seps. It was good to see many members visit the Fair and to look at our stand – some purchases being made! These events are a good way of advertising NIAG 'to the world' especially when some visitors said that they did not know that such a society existed! We can but hope we get an influx of members.

The last couple of reports from the 2012/13 winter programme can be found following this introduction. Whilst all attempts are made to ensure that reports are in order, work commitments of our contributors more often than not get in the way. So thank you to everyone who has written reports this year.

I hope it is not too soon to wish you all a happy ending to 2013 and a good start to 2014 without, hopefully, the frightful bitterly cold weather we experienced at the beginning of this year.

Jane W

WINTER TALKS OF 2012/13

The last two reports

‘Understanding the Workplace: Archaeology and Industrialisation’ – 7th September 2012

The Winter programme for 2012-13 began in the unusually early month of September with a joint meeting with the Northampton Branch of The Historical Association. This presented an excellent opportunity to promote awareness of the study of industrial archaeology to members of another society, the majority of whom are primary and secondary school history teachers. Given the joint nature of the meeting it seemed only appropriate to have as our speaker the doyenne of the academic study of IA, Emeritus Professor Marilyn Palmer of the University of Leicester. As many will know, Prof. Palmer is a past President of the Association for Industrial Archaeology and was appointed Britain’s first Professor of the subject in 2000; she also happens to be a leading member of the Historical Association as well as an advisor to English Heritage and The National Trust.

Her aim in her well-illustrated talk was to explain the evolution of the study of IA since its origins in the 1950s. This date may seem surprisingly late, but one of her principal themes was the threat posed to Britain’s industrial heritage by the relative neglect of its material remains prior to the mid-20th century. Industrial processes had been relatively well studied throughout their evolution by historians, economists, geographers, sociologists and even anthropologists and cultural theorists, but the idea that such contemporary activities also left a physical legacy which deserved systematic evaluation just like any other archaeological remains was quite modern. The very term ‘industrial archaeology’ was unknown before 1955, when Michael Rix of Birmingham University published an article in *The Amateur Historian* calling for a proper historical understanding of the remnants of the Industrial Revolution. Rix was also the author of a Historical Association pamphlet *Industrial Archaeology* (General Series no. 65) published in 1967 - one of the first attempts to explain the industrial landscape in archaeological terms to a wider audience and to correct any misconception that it was a largely a type of local history or even antiquarianism.

The postwar growth of interest in Britain’s industrial heritage encouraged the Council for British Archaeology to establish a research committee on the subject in 1959, which in turn proposed a national survey of sites in order to identify those worthy of protection and preservation. This was largely carried out by amateur enthusiasts who recorded their observations on record cards to ensure a standardised set of data; and several members of the audience were able to recall their own experiences in doing this. The resulting National Record of Industrial Monuments provided a basis, from 1965 onwards, for recommendations to the statutory authorities regarding preservation orders. It is sobering to reflect upon just how recently buildings of an industrial or commercial purpose have been thought worthy of preservation; many histories of IA argue that the public controversy over the British Railways Board’s

decision to demolish the Doric portico at Euston Station in London in 1962 gave a major boost to the industrial conservation movement and ensured that IA would not be exclusively an academic preserve.

Having been based in the East Midlands for much of the past half-century Marilyn was able to use many local examples to illustrate her analysis, including framework



knitters' houses in Nottinghamshire and shoe workers' domestic workshops in Raunds and Earls Barton. One of her arguments was that the sheer diversity and ubiquity of industrial premises have often served to obscure their importance in the eyes of subsequent generations: precisely because such activities were everywhere, they are (relatively) easy to overlook. Related to this, we must not ignore context - both physical and social - when

interpreting industrial activity; without it, the economic, cultural, and even political significance of the processes in question is lost, and we are left with what are indeed merely relics in the landscape.

Marilyn's lecture was no 'Cook's tour' of IA or one that offered a pretty picture of a subject lacking intellectual rigour or anything more than sentimental interest. Instead, with the authority and experience of half a century of investigation, she convincingly demonstrated how the methods of scientific archaeology can be applied to the recording of the industrial



economy and landscape, just as much as to the artefacts of the distant past. Her account also made clear the near-unique extent to which IA involves the active participation of amateur enthusiasts in advancing our knowledge; to a much greater extent than other forms of historical investigation it allows for, indeed depends upon, the amalgamation of national perspectives with local expertise.

David Waller

Photographs: Top: Earls Barton Boot & Shoe workshops.

Bottom: Framework Knitter's house, Calverton, Notts. -

Industrial Landscapes of the East Midlands - Marilyn Palmer & Pater Neaverson.



Restoration of the Iron Trunk Aqueduct at Cosgrove – 7th December 2012

To celebrate its 200th birthday, the Cosgrove Aqueduct was given a lick of paint last year – hopefully in the same colour scheme as had been originally used - and James Clifton, ‘Enterprise Manager’ at the Canal and River Trust who oversaw the project, came to tell us of the refurbishment. The aqueduct is 101ft long, 15ft wide (the oldest broad canal iron trough aqueduct) and 6ft 6ins from top edge to inner floor, and part of the talk covered how the giving of a lick of paint to such a structure costs the thick end of £300k, and part covered that, given it did, how does an organisation like the Canal and River Trust build the coalition of interested parties necessary to secure funding and keep everyone on board, from the involvement of local school children to the designing of a logo – an aspect of preserving our Industrial Archaeology that is perhaps foreign terrain to most of us. To the £122k contributed by (the then) British Waterways Board was added £79k from National Grid (for the removal of a disused gas pipeline that ran just to the east of the aqueduct), £10k from the local councils, and £41k of WREN money – together with a £60k contribution secured by the 4,923 votes the project received in the People’s Millions bunfight.

The story of getting the Grand Junction Canal across the Ouse valley started with flights of four locks either side of the river, just to the west of the current set up (the question of ‘and how did the horses get across’ remains open for debate). On the north bank a fifth lock remains as the current one where the old Buckingham branch departs the main line at Cosgrove – its alignment pointing towards the previous lock flight rather than to the current aqueduct. These got the canal open in the Autumn of 1800 but by 1799 had already been dropped to ‘temporary’ status with Jessop’s realisation that the Ouse was prone to flooding and that he couldn’t always be confident of an adequate supply of water to operate the locks. So an embankment of 2.2 million barrow loads of compacted soil and stone was called for to carry the canal 11 metres above the valley floor, with a three-arch aqueduct to be built on dry land just south of the river’s line, the river to then be diverted through the aqueduct on completion.

Step forward Thomas Harrison - local land agent to the Radcliffe estate; partner in the Horseley ironworks; some-time agent to Earl Spencer; also to the Earl of Uxbridge and hence closely involved in the Parys copper mine in Anglesey - as the head of the Wolverton Valley Company to take on the contract in late 1802, with construction starting early in 1803. The finished aqueduct was open to traffic by August 1805, and it quickly became apparent that all was not well: the aqueduct leaked and the embankment was prone to slippage where it crossed the line of the old river course. Disputes began over whose responsibility it was to effect repairs, a problem solved, or at least replaced by a rather greater problem, with the aqueduct’s collapse in February 1808. Deciding who should foot the bill for the re-build required legal action to be taken against Harrison, with the court settling on his workmen having been at fault and awarding damages of £9,262.

Time for a hero to emerge. Step forward Benjamin Bevan (or, as the Canal and River Trust are apt to call him, “Beavan”). He was one of the three engineers (John Woodhouse and Henry Provis being the others) to have been appointed to replace James Barnes on his retirement upon completion of the canal in 1805. Thirty-one years old at that point, Bevan first comes to our attention with the design for a bridge in Leighton Buzzard in 1802, so whilst he would later go on to build the Grand Junction’s branches to Northampton and Newport Pagnell, also the Grand Union line from Norton to Foxton, the Iron Trunk looks to have been his step-up into the higher echelons of canal engineers. Its use of voussoir-shaped cast iron plates pays homage to the Telford/Jessop masterpiece at Pontcysyllte, or some would say puts it at the tail-end of copying Telford’s failure to escape from his training as a master mason, but it adds a towpath cantilevered onto the outside of the trough perhaps encouraged by its broad-canal width creating less of a bow-wave resistance than at the narrower Pontcysyllte. The transverse ribs below the trough are deeper toward the centre, suggesting an understanding by Bevan of cast iron’s relative weakness in tension more than two decades before Eaton Hodgkinson formalised the science. The castings were made at the Ketley ironworks where, when still run by its founder William Reynolds before his untimely death in 1803, Telford’s Longdon-on-Tern aqueduct had been cast heralding the start of the iron aqueduct genre in 1796.

It has stood the test of time well, only being drained in 1921 and 1982 with the latter occasion notable for the discovery that one of the five 4” square elm drain plugs was leaking, requiring the sacrifice of workman Terry Levitt’s Wellington boot to effect a repair (which is still holding, although the brand of boot performing this task appears to have gone un-recorded).

Matthew Naylor



SUMMER WALKS AND VISITS - CONTINUE

Siemens Locomotive Depot, Northampton – 7th June

Travelling northwards from Northampton railway station most passengers are probably totally unaware of the Siemens depot on the west side of track just past Spencer Bridge. 22 members were welcomed by Service Director Steve Wright, who also gave us an introduction to Siemens and its railway activities. Although founded in Germany in 1847, Siemens had a presence in London in 1850. The company achieved many notable ‘firsts’ in this country such as such as a water-powered alternator to power street lighting in Goldaming in 1881. A major player in the field of electrical and electronic engineering, its equipment can be found across a broad spectrum such as: building automation and operations equipment and systems; motors and drive components for conveyor belts, pumps, compressors, etc as well as heavy duty drives for steel mills and compressors for the oil and

gas industries; energy generation including gas and steam turbines and generators and wind turbines; lighting products; medical components and equipment such as imaging equipment and the magnets for MRI scanners, and rail transport such as trainsets (multiple units), locomotives and a host of infrastructure equipment.

From its eight depots across England and Scotland, Siemens is contracted to have 355 passenger trains available to the Train Operating Companies (TOCs) every day – a mix of diesel and electric multiple units (DMUs and EMUs), the latter comprising both 750VDC and 25kVAC units. 67 Siemens-built Desiro class 350 EMUs are based at the Kings Heath facility, of which 65 must be available every day. Unusually, they agreed to take on seven class 321 EMUs built by BREL and formerly operated by Silverlink and now part of the London Midland fleet.

Steve explained that whilst the TOCs (London Midland for us in Northampton) work on short-term leases as franchisees, the rolling stock suppliers e.g. Siemens, are required/contracted to keep the equipment running for its operational life, which could be in excess of 30 years. In simple terms the trains are procured/owned by one of the Rolling Stock Companies (ROSCOs), who then lease them to the TOCs; in recent years with the Government stepping into the frame, then the financial sector (banks) are the ultimate owners.

When Siemens are awarded a contract to supply a new fleet of trains, they usually design and build a new train-care facility (a depot in old money!) for maintenance and repairs; this enables new and better standards to be achieved than would be realised by using an existing facility. Examples illustrated their ethos based on their working practices within the depot, and train management experiences. Whilst responsible for design and manufacture of trainsets, Siemens, like many other manufacturers, makes use of many third parties for the supply of various sub-systems that make up the finished product. Rather than issue 'diktats' to suppliers about design issues, they regularly bring them on-site to their facilities to show them design flaws, maintenance issues, etc. Once news got out how well this had worked with one supplier, others were eager to be included in the process. All of the EMUs have been fitted with power consumption meters, not only to stave off excessive demands from the energy suppliers, but to ensure they meet their contractual design obligations over the operational life of the trainset. It also means that they are able to monitor driver behaviour and improve operating efficiency.

All of the design work is carried out at their Dusseldorf facility with testing and validation performed on a dedicated 7km test track on the former RAF Wildenrath base. The Siemens-based UK fleet will soon be expanding with new Eurostar trainsets and Thameslink units. They are also bidding for the Cross-Rail rolling stock.

Plans are well advanced for a new training facility at the end of the present car park. Like Rolls Royce, and more recently JCB, Siemens is to have a purpose-built training academy in which to train future apprentices.

Maintenance Manager Gordon Virgo, who was involved with the design and construction of the Kings Heath facility, showed us around the facility after first explaining the modus operandi and the staffing structure. The building is essentially split into two parts – a six-lane unit used for all routine work and a two-lane unit housing the stores and the wheel-turning lathe.

As we entered the first unit lanes 1 to 5 were occupied but there seemed to be a singular lack of personnel – but this was late Friday afternoon! The site employs some 100 people, but excluding the ‘bean counters’ and other back-office workers there are probably 70-80, split over four shifts, on the shop floor. Between each pair of lanes is a gantry at [train] door level and a gantry at roof level; access to the latter is by a series of interlocks as the power to the overhead line is normally kept on, as indicated by the light above the lane. A full-length pit allows access to the underside of the units. Above each lane is a 1-ton capacity hoist used for extracting heavy modules and moving them to the end of the lane. The intensity of the overhead lighting is automatically controlled to ensure a working illumination of 300 lux.



In front of us, as it happened, were examples of all three types of unit based at Kings Heath: ‘Dusty Bin’, named after the show, 321, Mk1 350 and Mk2 350; the main differences between the latter two being the 3+2 seating arrangement of the Mk2s whereas the Mk1s had a 2+2 seating arrangement. Responding to a question as to why the change, Gordon explained it was simply ‘more bums on seats’! Externally, the obvious difference was the colouring of the front interconnecting door being half yellow on the 350/2 compared with all yellow on the 350/1; apparently the designer of the Mk2 wanted to give the impression of a full-width cab window! An orange line encircling each unit just above door height indicates the minimum safe clearance from the 25kV line illustrated by a case that Gordon had witnessed.

Before any work can be carried out, the technician has to print-out the required ‘manual’ from a nearby terminal which details the required tool-set and stores-components that are required for the job in addition to the work-flow and instructions. These print-outs are issued on a ‘use-once-and-destroy’ basis thereby ensuring that only up-to-date information is used; all of the working procedures are stored and updated centrally. Units are moved around the facility by suitably trained technicians, who are not allowed to exceed 5mph. They are not licensed for mainline work! London Midland drivers are responsible for bringing trains into, and taking them out

of, the depot. Warning of any impending movement of a train is indicated by the flashing blue light above each lane. A system of warning lights was adopted instead of audible warnings because of the proximity of residential properties. Since the site operates 24/7 it didn't want to be accused of disturbing the locals!

Lane 1 is configured differently to all the others; each side is a line of jacks capable of lifting a complete four-car trainset. As witnessed on a previous visit by the author, a complete train suspended in mid-air is an impressive sight. It is also fitted with a bogie drop allowing a complete bogie to be removed for examination or repair. By fitting a platform between the rails, the same lift can also be used for removing any of the chassis-mounted units. Once 'dropped' the item can then be moved on an underground track into the adjoining stores/workshop bay for further work.

Individual wheel sets can be removed/exchanged in the work area adjacent to the stores or manoeuvred onto the wheel lathe. A number of wheel sets were in the

work area – some had been re-profiled, some waiting for profiling and others waiting to be re-wheeled. The importance of the correct profile was explained. Alongside this work area is a second lane which extends out beyond the end of the building; just inside the entrance from the sidings is the wheel lathe. A battery operated tug is used to manoeuvre the units onto this lane; all of the wheels on an 8-car unit can be profiled in-situ in a single eight-hour shift! The wheel



The Wheel Lathe

lathe comprises two parallel lathes with four tool positions so that all four wheels on a single bogie can machined at once, with each lathe turning the appropriate axle. Neither of the lanes in this unit has an overhead power line.

Outside the sidings were relatively empty. On one side stood the automatic train-wash, every unit is washed on arrival; on the other side are the tank-emptying facilities and hoses for replenishing the water tanks. Although there was no activity whilst we were there, Gordon explained that it could be quite maniac at night as typically 24 trains are moved around the yard and in and out of the building.

Siemens doesn't open its doors to the public very often; the open day in 2012 was the first time the public had been allowed in since the site opened in 2006. If there is another such event, members are strongly urged to make the most of it by applying for tickets as entrance is by ticket only.

Terry Waterfield.

2013 Rail Tour – 19th June

Once again we were favoured with excellent weather as a group of thirteen members congregated at Northampton station for this years railtour. Our outward journey covered familiar territory through Rugby to Birmingham, where we made our first change – fortunately just a short walk along the same platform – into the service to Liverpool Lime Street. Once past Crewe, we were on new tracks for NIAG, and passing through pleasant Cheshire countryside, which we would again see later in the day from a different line. However, industry was never far away, particularly once we had crossed the Manchester Ship Canal and the River Mersey in quick succession on the impressive bridge at Runcorn. We were soon slowing for the approaches to Lime Street, through repeated tunnels and deep cuttings beneath the city streets, and with an on-time arrival there was just time for a short break for refreshments. Normally we would have been able to descend into the Liverpool ‘underground’ system at Lime Street, but rebuilding work necessitated a short walk through the streets to nearby Central station, where the original terminus had long ago been replaced by a modern shopping centre, beneath which lay the Merseyrail system, very reminiscent of the London Underground. Our next train took us beneath the Mersey to Birkenhead, and after emerging into the daylight again, we were soon approaching the wastelands of Bidston. A remote single island platform, complete with original wooden building, served as an apparently isolated junction for the Merseyrail lines to West Kirby and New Brighton, and also for our next train southwards through the centre of the Wirral. This route had once carried lengthy trains of iron ore from the now disused docks at Bidston to the steelworks at Shotton, but was now just a rural branch line extending through to Wrexham. Our party however left the train at Shotton High Level station, just over the border into Wales, and our half hour break proved more than enough to explore the attractions of the adjacent main street! Shotton Low Level station was situated on the North Wales main line, and our next short hop was into Chester, crossing the River Dee and passing the Roodee racecourse on the outskirts of the city. After another short break, our next train took us back across rural Cheshire, through Delamere, Northwich, and Knutsford, to the edge of Manchester at Stockport. Here our homeward journey commenced, but we still had new territory to enjoy, despite a very crowded train, as far as Stoke on Trent. Fortunately we were changing trains at Stafford, from where we travelled south along the Trent Valley to Rugby, and our final leg back to Northampton, where arrival was right on time at 19.45.

Another very good day – plenty of new ground covered – and this year, no delays!

Barry Taylor



Borough Hill, Daventry – 21st June

A fine and dry evening for this walk on top of Borough Hill, Daventry. Our guide for the evening, local historian David Adams, who once worked at the BBC on this site and who has studied the history of the ‘Hill’, took us on a two mile gentle walk around the periphery of the hill. Sprinkled with anecdotes of his time at work on the hill this proved to be a most enjoyable evening.

A Neolithic iron-age fort was once stood on top of the Hill. It is probably the third largest ancient camp and occupies the whole of the summit. The Hill is 660 feet above sea level and in times past one was able to see into three counties. It has not been determined whether there was a Saxon fort built. The Hill is two and a third of a mile round enclosing an area of 150 acres. This enabled flocks of sheep and other animals to graze. Unfortunately a Roman Villa which stood at the North end of the Hill is now buried underneath the local Golf Course. However, antiquarian Beriah Botfield fully excavated and recorded the site in 1852.

During the Civil War, the Royalist army camped on the hill, whilst the King was made welcome at the Wheatsheaf Inn in Daventry. It was from here that he went on to the Battle of Naseby and we all know the outcome of that battle. Interestingly during the 18th century horse racing took place on the hill – Daventry was then the centre of the whip-making industry. Whilst the hill is ‘flat’ it undulates nicely for such a sport to take place.

It was in 1925 when the BBC constructed a transmitting station on the top of the hill. Daventry ‘had arrived’ and became famous for its long wave and short wave broadcasting. Quite a few sites were considered before Borough Hill was deemed the most suitable. 58 acres of land were purchased and the BBC swung into business.



It was an ideal location for such a venture since reception was readily available from and to all directions, in fact transmissions from the short wave station could be received across the world. Building 5XX still stands – 5XX being the call sign for the National Service [*photo shows building*]. Further land was purchased until the 1950s increasing the site to some 220 acres.

Two extremely tall – 520 ft – lattice steel stayed masts were built; over the years, more masts were added to the Hill until there were a great many which could be seen from miles around and which formed a very good landmark especially for the RAF who used Borough Hill as a turning point when out on low flying manoeuvres. In fact, looking from the train as you came into Northampton station, these masts could be seen on a clear day.

It was in 1935 that King George V transmitted the first Royal Christmas broadcast

to the British public. Other important messages were also transmitted via the Daventry station. During the Second World War, Daventry provided the only short wave broadcasting link to the world. The hill was used by the RAF and the Telecommunications Research Establishment.

David recounted how the station operated 24/7/365, and likened it to a ‘lighthouse’ - just as the light beam sweeps out in a circle, so the radio signals from Daventry sweep around the world. Between the lattice towers were hung several pairs of aerials and by selecting different pairs of aerials the signal could be sent to any part of the world. Some transmissions only lasted about 20 minutes before being redirected elsewhere. Many a cold winter’s night had been spent in the outfield of the station switching the signal to different aerials.

In 1950 the BBC constructed a 720ft mast at Dodford for the BBC Third Programme, with a 150kW transmitter located in a building near to the short wave transmitter building. The service closed in 1978 and the mast was removed in 1984. We were told that a controlled explosion took place, the top half of the mast falling 30ft into the ground, the rest onto the ground in pieces. The BBC closed the station in 1992, the transmission equipment was moved to other BBC World Service transmitters across the country.

All that is left is a lonely single mast out of the 44 similar structures on the site and which remains for communication purposes. The hill is now owned by Arqiva and Daventry District Council and is designated a country park.

We end with a poem written by Alfred Noyes entitled ‘The Dane Tree’. The concluding lines of which are somewhat fitting to the closure of the BBC Transmitting station.

Daventry calling, memory, love,
The grave beneath and the stars above.
Even in my laughter you shall hear
The power to whom the far is near.
All are in one circle bound,
And all that ever was lost is found.

Daventry calling – Daventry calling
Daventry calling – dark and still
The tree of memory stands like a sentry
Over the grave on the silent hill.

Jane Waterfield



Ref: Daventry Calling the World, Norman Tomalin, 1998.

Ringstead Walk – 28th June

Just nine members braved the damp evening and resisted the alternative TV attraction of Andy Murray at Wimbledon to undertake this longer than normal walk which took in part of the former Northampton to Peterborough railway line, the sites of three deserted medieval villages, Stanwick Lakes Country Park and the former Raunds waterworks, while looking at evidence of ironstone quarrying in the area.

We started at the site of Ringstead & Addington station, some 2 miles from either village and close to the River Nene. Opened on 2nd June 1845 as Ringstead station and renamed Ringstead & Addington on 1st April 1898, it was what the Northampton Mercury called one of the ‘third-class’ stations on the LNWR line from Northampton to Peterborough. The line was single track at the start but doubled by September 1846. The station site and associated level crossing is much changed since George Clark sketched it in 1847 (provisional sketch in Northampton Record Office, completed drawing at Southwick Hall*). I am only aware of two photographs of the station, one in LNWR days shows the station master’s house and booking office adjacent to the crossing on the northern platform, the other taken in 1954 shows only small waiting shelters on the staggered platforms either side of the crossing. Since the station closed in 1964, the surrounding area has changed dramatically, with the extraction of gravel in the vicinity, the vigorous growth of trees and bushes and the introduction of a nearby marina. However, looking at the line of the track-bed and that of the approach lane on the drawings and photos, it is still possible to judge where the crossing and platforms would have been.

In 1871 the station gained a network of sidings on its south side when Butlin Bevan & Co built a narrow gauge tramway heading south-east to ironstone quarries about ½ mile away on the other side of the footpath to Mallows Cotton. The location of these sidings can still be seen within the ‘curtilage’ of the former railway land. The station is adjacent to the site of the deserted village of Mill Cotton, a hamlet which had been clustered around the water-mill on the Nene. The village had almost gone by 1840 when only the mill, a house and a farm remained, the farm appearing in the sketch of 1847.

Walking south-east along the track-bed of the former railway line, at first in a cutting, then slightly above the level of the surrounding flood plain of the Nene, we came to the north end of Stanwick Country Park, now a nature reserve. It was created after the area was excavated for gravel in the 1980s. NIAG visited here twice while gravel was being extracted; the first time, notably, it poured with rain all evening and we only got as far as the site manager’s office! The park is run by Rockingham Forest Trust and has a Heritage Trail created to show the history of the area from Neolithic times, although in practice this consists of a series of stone sculptures depicting some of the finds when excavations took place. It was also the location of our second deserted medieval village of the evening - West Cotton - excavated in the 1980s prior to building the new A45. They found remains here from Saxon, Norman

and Medieval times, including a mill, manor house and later stone houses.

Passing beneath the A45 (there was three inches of water here in March but it was thankfully now dry) we came to the remains of Raunds waterworks, built in 1908 to extract water and pump it to a covered reservoir on the road between Raunds and Hargrave, from whence it ran by gravity into Raunds. Derelict for many years, only the shell of the buildings remain, although someone did start to re-roof one



Discussing the remains

(c) John Peet 2013

of the buildings about 5 years ago, only to stop before it was completed, presumably due to the recession.

Returning beneath the A45 we struck out on the footpath in a northerly direction, crossing the area on higher ground denoted on the OS map as the deserted medieval village of Mallows Cotton. It is

known that the village originated in the 12th century but had disappeared by the time of the enclosure map of 1798. There is an extensive series of ‘humps and bumps’ which indicate house platforms etc. but the long grass had somewhat disguised these. Most notable was the hollow-way running north-south at the eastern edge of the site, which seemed to be heading in the direction of Mill Cotton in the valley below.

Continuing along the footpath, we accessed the modern track to take us back to the site of Ringstead & Addington station. On our way we noted that the Nene valley was unusually narrow at this point thus giving rise to one of the small parts of the valley from which there had been no gravel extraction. Mick Dix also noted that the ground to the west of the track was significantly lower than the track itself, suggesting that ironstone quarrying had taken place here and indicating that quarrying was much more extensive in this area than Tonks shows in his book**. Finally, crossing the course of the aforementioned Butlin, Bevan & Co’s narrow gauge ironstone tramway (of which there is no visible evidence), we returned to our starting point.

Although we did not visit them on this occasion, many members will be aware of the former stone sleeper blocks now used as stepping stones along the footpath from Ringstead & Addington station to the Addingtons, in a low-lying area on the opposite bank of the Nene to the station. I had always understood that these were transported along the Northampton to Peterborough line when the London & Birmingham track was re-laid with wooden sleepers, but interestingly several written sources suggest they came from the Northampton to Peterborough line itself. This would

seem rather late for such stone sleepers to be used but I would welcome any more definitive evidence. I am grateful to John Peet for sending me an article by WH Bernard Saunders from Chambers Journal of 1916, about his visit to Addington via Ringstead & Addington station describing crossing the stepping stones which “... *some great benefactor in the district, on the advent of wooden sleepers, had secured ... and placed them where they now are to provide communication across the valley in times of flood.*”

Peter Perkins

* *Courtesy of David Ball's website: 'Ringstead People' -*
(<http://ringstead.squarespace.com>)

** *The Ironstone Quarries of the East Midlands, Part IV, Eric Tonks, 1990*



Ruddington Framework Knitting Museum and visit to Shardlow– 13th July 2013

Seven NIAG members visited the frame knitting museum at Ruddington, on a beautiful summers day. The museum complex is an original frame knitting yard dating from 1829 and comprises two x 2-storey workshops, a small enclosed garden/courtyard and four back-to-back terraced cottages. The upper floor of the main workshop contains some seventeen frames and our guide described and demonstrated the process of how the yarn (cotton in this case but could be wool or silk) is placed across the needles, pushed down between the needles with thin blades (sinks) to form slack loops and the hook on the needles closed with a drop-down bar to lock in the yarn/stitch. The previous stitch, waiting on the back of the needle is now pushed over the closed hook thus forming the completed row.

When we remember that this process was invented in 1589 by the Rev. William Lee and that the museum exhibits ranged from the mid 19th century, the intricacies of the workings could be considered in the realms of clock making skills of the period. From the frame knitting workshop we moved over to the “Griswold” workshop where bench machines were set up. These machines make knitted tubes ie socks, scarves etc. and are a sophisticated version of the children’s French knitting bobbin. Having finished at the museum we had lunch and drove on to Shardlow.

Shardlow had been an inland port since the Bronze Age, where goods arrived from the North Sea via the Humber estuary and the Trent river. Originally goods were transhipped to road transport, until the building of the Trent and Mersey canal (1755-1777). The Shardlow section was completed in 1770. We walked the village with the aid of an 1852 map, identifying various mills, warehouses and wharfs many of which had been converted into up market domestic dwellings. Of the 35 buildings and wharfs shown on the map only three had been demolished.

Ron Hanson

NEWS ITEMS AND UPDATES:

The Northampton Gasholders

Parts of Northampton's gas towers could be displayed in a museum after the structures have been demolished, National Grid has said. After years of speculation about the future of the two gas towers, National Grid this week (July 18th) submitted official plans to Northampton Borough Council to pull them down. The move has upset some residents, who have campaigned for the towers to be retained. But National Grid has insisted they must go as they are no longer operational and are 'a significant maintenance liability'.

However, the firm has said parts of the towers – such as the distinctive rose bosses on the Towcester Road structure – could be saved and put on display. National Grid said both the gas holders in Towcester Road and St. Peter's Way are non-operational and can serve no other purpose. They have estimated it will take between 12 and 14 weeks to dismantle both the 30ft tower in St. Peter's Way and its 33 ft neighbour in Towcester Road. It is estimated that 90% of the material from the two towers will be recycled, with the structures being dismantled from the inside out.

It is expected they will be dismantled after houses and a number of small businesses close to the base of the tower in St. Peter's Way have been pulled down. Across the country, National Grid has dismantled more than 100 similar towers.

Northampton Chronicle & Echo – 18th July 2013

Raunds Walk report – Issue 127 – page 7

In his write-up for the Raunds evening's walk, Peter requested information as to *what a single-storey building/workshop adjacent to No.4 with an unusually decorative plasterwork frieze along the roof parapet might have been built for?* Member Ron Johnson tells us that as far as his brother-in-law can remember it was always a Labour Exchange and mainly for boot and shoe workers.

Chester Farm - £4m cash win

A historic Northamptonshire site, which was ravaged by fire three years ago, has been given a £4million cash boost to turn it into a 'major education and visitor destination'. The HLF money will be spent at the Grade II-listed Chester Farm, which provides evidence of thousands of years of settlement. The roof and first floor of the farm building, in Irchester, collapsed after a fire in May 2010. The site includes traces of Iron Age enclosures and ancient field systems. The project will include an archaeological resource centre, a classroom facility with space for up to 70 learners and a conference and exhibition space.

Northampton Chronicle & Echo – 1st August 2013

Finger bone found under site of Castle

A small piece of human skeleton has been found during an archaeological dig on the site of the former Northampton Castle. A team of amateur archaeologists dug up a one metre-square section of land in front of the Doddridge United Reform Church, in

Doddridge Street, Northampton. During the small dig, which only took a couple of hours, the group found pieces of medieval pottery and what is believed to be a finger bone. John Dickie, who helped organise the dig with the Friends of Northampton Castle said *“We dug down less than half a metre, which was really difficult because the ground was very solid. The pottery we found was clearly medieval, but we’re not yet sure about the age of the finger bone. We’ll wash it up so we can have a proper look at it and show it to a professional archaeologist.”* FoNC have held a number of small-scale digs around the site of the former castle over the past few months. In very small areas, they have found a number of pieces of pottery, as well as oyster shells and a sandstone brick, which is believed to have come from the castle. It is hoped even more will be found when a new ‘heritage gateway’ is created in the future to commemorate the castle site.

Northampton Castle was once the seat of Parliament, but was partially demolished in 1662 under the orders of King Charles II.

Northampton Chronicle & Echo – 1st August 2013

On our walk on the Castle Trail in July, member Jon Small told us about the proposed dig, so it’s good to know that something came of it. Ed.

Northampton Railway Station

Work has officially begun on the new £20m railway station which will replace the ‘embarrassment’ the town currently has. A turf cutting ceremony took place this week (*August 19th*) and in the coming days, work on the foundations will begin. The beginning of the work follows extensive archaeological investigations and site preparations.

The leader of Northampton Borough Council said *“The current railway station has been an embarrassment for the town and we want to have a gateway we’re proud of. That’s why we’re investing money in the new railway station and the new bus station to make sure we have these gateways.”* The station will open in the autumn of next year and the existing one will be demolished as soon as London Midland has moved its operations over to the new building. Longer-term phases of the development include a 1,270 space multi-storey car park, as well as a 28,000 sq.m commercial development. Brian Binley (MP) said *“Northampton has had a botched-up station for 100 years and it’s a station which has not served the town well or reflected well on the town. This is vitally important for Northampton.”* Also that *“Northampton is a growing town and it needs a good station and good rail links with London because 15,000 of those new people will be commuters.”*

Northampton Chronicle & Echo – 22nd August 2013.



MISCELLANY ITEMS OF INTEREST

Phipps on its way back to Northampton

Brewery will operate in town again 39 years after closure

A name associated with Northampton for generations is due to return to the town when a new Phipps brewery is opened. The original Phipps brewery closed in 1974 and the firm's famous India Pale Ale (IPA) disappeared from the county's bars. The company was revived in 2008, however, by Northamptonshire-born Alaric Neville, with Phipps beer being made in Rutland. He now plans to restore an empty brewery building once used by Phipps, in Kingswell Street, and bring the company back to the town. He said *"It means a lot to me to bring Phipps back to Northampton. When we come back here, we'll put back what was taken away from the town and a name that reflects part of what it is to be Northampton"*.

The plan will see the empty brewery building in Kingswell Street restored at a cost of more than £1m. When it is re-opened, the brewery will also feature a bar where people will be able to drink the beer they have seen being made.

Mr Neville said: *"The brewing of all Phipps products will be moved here, IPA is the big seller. That's what the company's famous for, but we'll also produce lots of other beers. It will be the second biggest brewery in the county, after Carlsberg. People in the bar will be able to see the pint they are drinking being made."* He also said: *"This is where our beer was once brewed and it will be again now."*

It is hoped that work to re-open the brewery will start in September and it could be completed before Christmas. Jeremy Phipps, a descendant of the Phipps family has said he is delighted the brewery was going to move back to Northampton.

In the basement of the Kingswell Street building where the new brewery will be based is The King's Well and was more than likely used by Kings of England. This was once used to provide water for Northampton Castle but was last used in 1966 to make beer.

Mr Neville said: *"The King's Well was always known as the best well in Northampton. At one time, there were several breweries based around it. We've dug it out recently and had the water sampled and it's still beautifully pure. So we will brew beer from it here."*

The brewery was built in the 1880s. As well as the well, the building's basement also contains a large tunnel which was sealed up until the 1980s. When it was unblocked, the building's owners found up to 10,000 glass lemonade bottles, a collection of Christmas pudding basins and some wooden jam barrels inside. At that time, the tunnel also stretched out to another part of the building, which has since been demolished to make way for the Aspers Casino. It is now planned to blend Northampton whisky in the tunnel, which has a naturally cool atmosphere as it is so deep beneath the ground.

The brewery building was last used as a leather tannery and has also been a sweet factory.

Northampton Chronicle & Echo – 25th July 2013

Please note that this building is referenced in the recently published Gazetteer – Site 247 – other interesting facts are given. Ed.

Bus firm pulls out of town services

It is understood that the bus company – First – is in discussions with the unions and council about cutting services and also withdrawing from the bus depot in St. James, Northampton.

With regard to the bus depot – it lies within the town’s Enterprise Zone and could become a key gateway to the Zone. It is the only Enterprise Zone plot in St. James Road, St. James, and a new development could link this major thoroughfare to parts of the zone behind Franklin’s Gardens. The site itself will no doubt be an attractive proposition to potential buyers.

The site is a sizeable piece of land – 12,700 sq .metres – and very near Northampton’s train station*, making it handy for potential businesses to attract customers.

Northampton Chronicle & Echo - 15th July 2013

** Since when did a ‘railway’ station become a ‘train’ station? Can anyone enlighten me? Ed.*

Bus Station - Church’s to the rescue

Northampton Borough Council has brokered a deal with Church’s which would see the bus depot in St James Road developed, together with land owned by the Homes and Communities Agency, as the site for expansion of the Church’s shoe factory. An agreement over the sale of the depot, which sits on the edge of the Waterside Enterprise Zone would be discussed at the council meeting on the 11th September.

Church’s chief executive said: *“At Church’s we are proud to be part of Northampton’s heritage and the town’s bright future. It is an exciting time for us, and with our current site at maximum capacity with no room to develop, we have been exploring a number of different options. The Enterprise Zone gives us the opportunity to secure the long term future of the brand in St James which we consider to be key as we continue to develop and grow. Expanding onto the former First Bus depot would enable us to invest in new operations and facilities, creating around 150 new jobs over five years. The depot has some distinctive elements and every effort will be made to retain these and the general character of the site.”*

The leader of Northampton Borough Council adds: *“The St James depot is a prime site and it is important that it’s part of the exciting growth and development of the area and contributes to the wider regeneration of the town. The building has been part of our town’s landscape for more than a century and the action we are taking will see the site swiftly brought back into use, and another successful project delivered.*

This will not only create jobs, but see investment into a traditional Northampton-based company, which will see more high quality shoes being sold around the world with the 'made in Northampton' mark proudly displayed."

Once the deal has been rubber-stamped, Church's plan to move in on a phased basis. They want to be on site by the middle of next year, and complete development work in two to three years.

Northampton Chronicle & Echo - 3rd September 2013

Test pits draw a blank beneath proposed new hotel.

A number of test pits were dug on the site of a new Premier Inn, at the rear of the Royal & Derngate Theatre this week (w/c 29th July) but experts said nothing remarkable was found.

Northampton Chronicle & Echo – 1st August 2013.

Historic Building is saved

The Government has said Northampton's historic St. Edmund's Hospital should never be knocked down. Earlier this year, an unknown organisation applied to English Heritage to remove the historic building's listed status – leading to fears it could one day be demolished. But now, the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) has said the listed status should be retained, meaning the 176-year old building in Wellingborough Road cannot be bulldozed.

The move is welcomed by officials at EH, who advised the Government that the building should be protected for the future. A spokesman for EH said: "*We're pleased the Government has agreed with our recommendation to keep St. Edmunds on the statutory list. Built in 1836-7, it was one of the first generation of New Poor Law workhouses, designed by the eminent Victorian architect George Gilbert Scott, and it represents a key moment in changing social attitudes towards the provision made for the poor and destitute.*"

The main hospital building on the site has stood derelict since 1999 despite a Tesco and a restaurant being built on neighbouring parts of the former hospital land. The Borough Council will now work with the site's owners to get the full hospital site redeveloped.

St Edmunds was built in 1836 as a workhouse and was converted into a hospital in the 1930s, before closing in 1999. The designer George Gilbert Scott, went on to create both the Albert Memorial in London and the Midland Grand Hotel at St. Pancras Station. It is also thought the building may have inspired Charles Dickens when he was writing '*Oliver Twist*'.

Northampton Chronicle & Echo – 8th August 2013.



OF THIS AND THAT

Obituary

Some of you may remember Terry Green, a former NIAG member who died on 16th July. Terry from Kettering was a stalwart of NIAG's Longtown weekends in the 1980s. A cyclist and radio ham among other things, he will be best remembered as a model engineer, building model locos and boats. In recent years he was closely involved with the Northampton Society of Model Engineers which NIAG visited at Delapre earlier in the summer.

Peter Perkins

Refreshments at the Winter evenings

Teas/Coffees will be provided at meetings for everyone to enjoy whilst chatting after the talks. Many thanks to all those who purchased a coffee or tea during last year's programme as this meant this small service will continue. Jane & Ron will be on hand behind the counter to serve members and it would be much appreciated if a member or two could spare a few moments to assist with either the serving or clearing up! This would mean that Jane & Ron could occasionally mix with members and even talk to the speaker.

Committee Member

Once again the call is out for another member to join the Committee, who would be delighted to welcome new blood. Please contact Peter if you feel you would like to join the team.

Winter Programme of Talks - 2013/14

8th November: AGM plus Powering the Nation from your Rubbish Bin - Dr. Adam Read and Kathryn Warren.

6th December: Appreciating Street Furniture - Phil Deakin

10th January: Members evening

14th February: Where there's a Mill there's a way.

Dates for the Diary:

21st October The Forgotten Past: A Portable Antiquities Scheme conference. See issue 127 for details.

26th October EMIAC 86: Oil's Well That Ends Well – Oil Production in the East Midlands. Lincolnshire History & Archaeology hosts. Booking now closed.

Do you know what happened to: Stewarts & Lloyds of Corby's archive?

Chris Barney, the editor of the AIA Newsletter, once visited this factory in the late 1970s. He says that "*they climbed around the giant dragline and then saw a blast*

furnace tapped – the only time I have actually seen that happen. The strip mill seemed to be busy making scrap which was not impressive and by the heap of reject output it must have spent most of its time doing that. The tube mill had also just had a hiccup and they were busy extracting the part annealed tube for more scrap.” Some 8 years ago Chris went with his son to their archive room as his son was seeking photographs to adorn his office. Not a lot of interesting stuff – but deserving of a root about.

Does any member know what might have become of this archive, apparently the person in charge did not seem to be that interested in what was there, and it would appear that what was, was not well organised. Please let me know and I will pass on the information to Chris. Thanks. Ed



And Finally

In case your dog goes ‘walkabout’.

A recent tale brought a smile to our faces. This was about an owner of a dog who got fed up with the animal disappearing on his daily walk, particularly in the vicinity of a field of rape or corn. He (the owner, not the dog) purchased a dog collar which was fitted with a GPS unit. When the animal disappeared into the field of rape he would text the dog to find it’s whereabouts and meet the animal at the other end of the field when it emerged!

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

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Newsletter:

Next Issue: **January 2014**

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