



NORTHAMPTONSHIRE
INDUSTRIAL, ARCHAEOLOGY
GROUP

NEWSLETTER



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From the Editor

With the layout of the meeting room changed (backs to the door) and causing initial confusion, the Autumn session got off to a cracking start with the history of GEC at Rugby. Due to work commitments our speakers for the AGM meeting were unable to attend and we were well satisfied with member Matthew Naylor's talk about 'his' mill at Wolverton. December's evening had a bit of a Christmassy feeling and we heard about 'Appreciating Street Furniture'. The talk about 'energy from rubbish' will now take place in February. Thanks to those members who have pitched in with the coffee making and unenviable task of washing up.

I note from the papers that many road signs have been removed from across the county which is an altogether good thing. They need to do more and remove what can only be described as 'the obvious'. After all how long after a new road junction is designed does a sign bearing the words 'new road layout' need to remain? Plans are now being aired for the new retail site on the Towcester Road, Northampton after the removal of the gas towers and work is progressing very nicely on the 'new' railway station with its main structure appearing on the skyline in December. In fact the gas holder on the St Peter's Way roundabout has now gone and no doubt before you get this newsletter the second one in Towcester Road will have been demolished. A case of watch this space. Abington Street in Northampton will soon become open to traffic again. Obviously the pedestrianisation of this street has not been a success, according to the Council, since on any given day one can almost get knocked down by vans, lorries or cyclists! And to add to the chaos that is now Northampton, the news is that work could start earlier than anticipated on the rehashing of the Sixfields area. Milton Keynes looms.....!

NIAG had a very good write up in the Autumn issue of IA News with regards to the two small publications recently produced, so thanks to this little bit of publicity members of AIA from across the country are purchasing them as well as having enquiries from other members of the public.

12 members attended the Lincoln EMIAC day at Welbourne, Newark which gave us an insight to all the oil wells which were once dotted around that area (and beyond). As always this was an excellent day and in spite of the original estimation of a low turn-out, more than 70 delegates assembled to hear the speakers and enjoy the day. A report for this will come in a later issue, if it's anything like last year's EMIAC reports it might be quite late!

Steve Miles lets us know that the Mounts Baths in Northampton was finally listed earlier this year (2013). It only took about 6/7 years to get this listing!!

It is to be hoped that the next few months will be kind to one and all – I for one am not a winter person and do not wish to endure the cold any longer than we need. May I wish you all a very happy 2014 and with it good health and happiness.

JW

SUMMER WALKS AND VISITS - CONTINUE

Cranford West Ironstone – 17th May 2013

A group of 17 people met in the village of Cranford St John for a visit to some of the remains of the ironstone quarries in the area. Before setting off on the walk we took time to look at a road-side map of the area in the village centre, here we were able to see the location of the Cranford west quarries and the track bed of the main line railway. The history of quarrying in the area is quite complicated but by looking at the map it became clearer which quarries were Cranford 'east' and which were Cranford 'west'. Cranford is actually two villages, Cranford St John (which was on the main road before the building of the A14 and also had a railway station on the Kettering to Thrapston line) and Cranford St Andrew to the north of it. The extraction of ironstone took place all around the outside of the villages, all of the workings with the exception of the very earliest connected with the main line railway either to the east or to the west of Cranford St John.

As we walked across the fields towards Cranford St Andrew we were able to see Cranford Hall in the distance, this was the home of the Robinson family the local landowners. Sir John Robinson opened the earliest quarries in the area to the east of the hall in the early 1870s but these were short lived, the ore probably being taken to a tipping dock at Cranford Station by horse and cart. Afterwards the family leased their lands to a number of different companies who then carried out the ironstone extraction.

The first company that the family leased land to was the Cranford Ironstone Company. This company was formed by the Staveley Coal & Iron Co. Ltd, James Oakes Ltd of Alfreton and the Tredegar Iron Co. Ltd. The Tredegar Iron Co. soon withdrew from the partnership owing to the cost of transporting the ironstone to South Wales, their shares being acquired by the Staveley Co., who then became the managing partner. At Cranford St Andrew we saw the area leased by the Cranford Ironstone Co. from Sir Frederick Robinson in 1878 and quarried during the period 1880-1886. The extent of the quarried land was easily visible as the ironstone removal has left it lower than the surrounding area.

Walking back along the road towards Cranford St John we crossed the Alledge Brook and then followed a public footpath across a field that had been quarried by the Cranford Ironstone Co. between 1890 and 1893. This field is considerably lower than the adjacent road and we were able to find the remains of a bridge by which the narrow gauge tramway had passed under the road on its way to a tipping dock by the main line railway. A photograph of the two narrow gauge locomotives that worked in



Bridge brickwork remains

the quarry was passed around the group and by using this bridge as an anchor point it was possible to work out the approximate position of the photo and the loco shed. From here we climbed up to the road to view the area that had been quarried on the other side of the road between the road and the main line railway.

The leases for the quarries in this area (west of the village) expired in 1895 but operations continued until 1897 to remove unworked ironstone. When the quarries closed the equipment and locomotives were moved to new quarries on the east side of the village where the Cranford Ironstone Co. resumed operations, again on land leased from the Robinson family. Later an area of 496 acres to the west of the village was leased to the Clay Cross Company. This company extracted the ironstone to the north and south of the main line railway by underground mining rather than quarrying due to the depth of the overburden and the quarrying machinery available at the time. The mines to the north of the railway were operational from about 1913 until 1926 and were situated to the north west of Cranford St Andrews. Access to them was via adits in the final working face of the Cranford Ironstone Co. quarry which we had looked at first, however nothing remains of the adits today.

From this point we walked along the road to join a public footpath to take us under the A14 to see the impressive remains of the last working face of the final quarry of the Cranford east quarries. This quarry closed in July 1969 and by the time of closure had swung around to the south of Cranford St John and was working to the south west of the village. Had quarrying continued the workings would have broken into the mines that the Clay Cross Company had operated to the south of the railway before they ceased operations in that area in 1913.

A short part of our route to this quarry took us along the track bed of the former Kettering, Thrapston and Huntingdon Railway which opened to goods traffic on 21st February 1866 and to passenger traffic on 1st March of the same year. This line was operated by the Midland Railway and it was the opening of it which prompted the extraction of ironstone on a large scale between Kettering and Thrapston and the erection of blast furnaces at Islip. The line closed to passengers from 15th June 1959 (the last train ran on 13th June) but closure to goods traffic was piecemeal, the last train running from Twywell to Kettering on 20th January 1978 with official closure coming on 20th March of the same year.

Source: Original research, The Ironstone Quarries of the Midlands, Part V, Eric Tonks, Runpast Publishing 1991, The Midland Railway – A Chronology, John Gough, RCHS 1989.

Mick Dix



Cosgrove Aqueduct – 31st May

Still in the Wolverton Mill car park, and already lots of history. The wide grass verge beside the road a reminder of the Wolverton to Stony Stratford Tram; the chestnut trees planted in 1907 to shield Wolverton House from the dust of the former Oxford to Cambridge turnpike of 1814; and the land we were standing on once part of the Radcliffe estate.

After the Norman Conquest the 2,500 acres bounded by the River Ouse, the Bradwell brook and Watling Street had been granted to the de Wolverton family and then passed through the female line in the late C14th into the hands of the Longuevilles. It was bought in 1713 by the eminent Oxford-educated doctor John Radcliffe who died a year later, bequeathing it to the Radcliffe Trust – hence the Radcliffe Infirmary, the Radcliffe Library, and the Radcliffe Observatory. Chunks got sold off during the nineteenth century for the construction of Wolverton – the oldest railway town in the world, established in 1838 – but there was still about 1500 acres left to be acquired in 1970 toward the development of Milton Keynes.

First stop, Wolverton House, built (or, rather, re-built) 1782-1786 by Thomas Harrison, agent to the Radcliffe estate. And a man with fingers in many pies. Land agent for Earl Spencer, and for the Earl of Uxbridge (so intimately involved with the Parys Mountain copper mine on Anglesey – the presumption being that it was profits made there which paid for Wolverton House); a founder of the Horseley Ironworks; also of the Wolverton Valley company which built the first (brick) aqueduct in 1805. That collapsed in 1808 with its Iron Trunk replacement opened in 1812. It's story was told to us by James Clifton, the Canal and River Trust's 'Enterprise Manager' in his NIAG talk the previous December. [*Report issue 128*]

Beside the river we stopped to note that it was straight. In these parts, that means someone straightened it. Step forward distinguished engineer Bryan Donkin (1768-1855), better known for his work on paper machinery with the Fourdriniers at Frogmore, the Babbage calculating machine or even tinned food. Successive floods had convinced the Radcliffe trustees that the canal embankment was interfering with the flow of the river, and Donkin had 'form' in the Apsley water disputes between the Fourdriniers and the Grand Junction Canal Company. In 1832 he was hired to make recommendations, resulting in the river being straightened, gravel removed and the mill race altered. He was hired again in 1834 when the railway sought to cross the valley, with the positioning of Stephenson's 1838 viaduct and its length owing much to his interventions.

I was asked whether this was the same Bryan Donkin who gave his name to an engineering works in Chesterfield, but did not know the answer. Now I can confirm that it is – Donkin's works in Bermondsey continued in the family line (via a Bryan Donkin II and a Bryan Donkin III) and merged with Clench & Co of Chesterfield in 1900. With the Bermondsey site constrained, a new site was secured in Chesterfield and the company amalgamated operations there in 1902.

Across the field we could see Wolverton Park, home to John Edward McConnell (1815-1883) from 1858 to 1880, Locomotive Superintendent at Wolverton from 1847 to 1862. Also the Church of All Saints, re-built by Henry Hakewell in 1809-



On the Aqueduct footpath

1814 as an early example of Romanesque Revival Style (isn't Wikipedia wonderful?) complete with cast iron window frames from Harrison's Horseley works. The building cost £7,792 18s 7½d as against an estimate of £3,742 17s. Some things don't change, do they?

And so to the aqueduct, with the river low enough for the brick piers of the Harrison failure also available for viewing. Whilst the history books tell us that Benjamin Bevan travelled to Pontcysyllte for inspiration, surely he also stopped off at Brunel's iron bridge at Buildwas? That was the first 'through the arch' bridge, using 173 tons of iron to span 130 feet as against 378 tons to span 100 feet at Ironbridge. It was replaced in 1905 after earth movements had squeezed its abutments together. Does that leave the

Iron Trunk as the oldest standing 'through the arch' design – a genre which includes such iconic bridges as Sydney Harbour and the Tyne Bridge at Newcastle?

The return trip involved, for most in the party, a slight diversion to Wolverton House in order that advantage might be taken of its current status as the holder of a full on-licence.

Matthew Nayler



Royal Gunpowder Mills – Saturday 15th June

The site has been involved with the manufacture and development of explosives for over 300 years and after World War II became a research establishment for non-nuclear explosives and propellants. The site contains buildings and structures that were used in all of these processes. The ERDE (Explosives Research & Development Establishment) site was formally closed by the MOD in 1991. Since then a charitable trust has been set up to safeguard the site in perpetuity; the first phase is to restore some of the buildings and waterways.

A number of cars were queuing at the locked entrance gates waiting for 'opening time' (10:00 am) after making good time – despite road works on the M25, and soon there were 12 members sorting themselves out in the car park. As soon as the admin details had been dealt with, there was time for a coffee or a preliminary visit to the well laid-out exhibition hall whilst waiting for our first tour. For 'operational

reasons', as they say, we were to have the guided walk in the morning.

Our guide for the tour was [industrial] historian and author Richard Thomas who has been, and still is, working through the site's archives. After a brief introduction to the extensive canal network amounting to some 10 miles, four locks and three cast iron aqueducts, we headed for the first steam-powered mill, or more correctly the site of as it suffered an explosion in 1861. Steam power was first introduced to the site in 1857 with the construction of the Group A incorporating mills: six pairs of edge runners on a single shaft were driven by a beam engine of the James Watt design. After the explosion, which occurred whilst men were clearing the mills and caused serious damage, the mills were demolished. All that remains today is the concrete base, a white-washed end wall of the engine house and the machine shop which houses examples of modern rocket motors developed on the site. The boiler house is now home to the café.

Before going any further two technical terms that we were to hear regularly throughout the day should be explained: *Incorporating mill* is where the process of mixing the three ingredients of gunpowder – saltpetre, sulphur and charcoal – into a fine powder takes place. Each mill comprises a pair of *edge runners*: two large heavy steel wheels mounted on a common horizontal axle inside a large 'mixing bowl'. As the axle is rotated about a vertical axis through its centre point, the wheels run over the mixture crushing it to a fine powder.

Looking northwards from the above-mentioned concrete pad there is a large expanse of grass, known as Queen Meads, that extends to the woodland beyond. This was the area of expansion started after the Crimean War. Along the right-hand (eastern) side were built four sets of mills – Group C (1861), Group D (1868), Group F (1878) and Group G (1889); Group E mill, built in 1878, stands to the east of the others beyond the canal. Each comprises three sets of edge runners either side of the centrally located boiler and engine house in a 'T' shape. The beam engine drove a shaft having two flywheels, one each side of the connecting rod; on the outside of each flywheel is a dog-clutch driving the shaft to the three sets of edge runners. Group C mill is open to the public and is well documented.

Our route followed the track around Queen Meads between the mills and the canal to a tented area adjacent to Group D mill; here restoration of one of the barges is being undertaken. Much discussion ensued over the design and construction, using copper nails, of these boats and how they were used to transport materials and end products around the site. Three such boats lie at the bottom the canal alongside the track. From here the tour continued along the track to the edge of the woodland with Richard pointing out the salient features of the other mill buildings.

Immediately in front of us was the three-storey observation tower, converted from the hydraulic accumulator house, which once provided hydraulic power to various buildings. Across the canal stood a number of storage units, the 'magazine land', some had leather-covered loading bays abutting the canal. Across the canal was a

semicircular footbridge bridge, one of several around the site, allowing the barges to pass beneath unhindered. Although comprising a steel framework, the steps and walkway were entirely of wood; Richard explained that no-one was allowed

on a footbridge when a barge was passing beneath it.



Here we left the path and walked between the tower and canal to view the 1878-9 lock chamber, now in a state of disrepair; this connected the main, now dry, upper canal on our left with the middle canal system that ran alongside Queen Meads. Since the lock chamber was empty it was possible to observe the various

culverts noting some unusual design features; these and other features of the lock provoked much discussion. Although the lock protrudes above the surrounding landscape, it must be remembered that decontamination of the site removed about two feet of topsoil.

Further along the canal, on the same side as the lock, stands the Blank Cutting House, rebuilt after an explosion in 1902; on its left a massive concrete traverse to prevent the spread of explosions and on its right a magazine built c.1862. An interesting feature is the large sluice gate in the canal bank leading into the building. Continuing along the canal-side path the next place of interest was a magazine built between 1908 and 1914 as a cordite store. The front of the store overlooks the canal; around it is a short length of narrow gauge track. A short distance further on was store set in inside a circular traverse.

A massive E-shaped concrete traverse is all that remains of two moulding houses, one in each bay. The left-hand bay was built in 1882 with the right-hand bay added two years later. It stands adjacent to a 'dry' canal that leads to a canal 'cross-roads': Ahead lies the Burning Ground that dates from 1963 where discarded materials were burned. To the left are two more magazines overlooking the canal and separated by a large concrete traverse. A walk-way has been constructed over the now-dry canal that passes under a bridge built in 1878 to carry a footpath when the high-level canal system was extended. The walk-way ends at one of the three cast iron aqueducts on site; this was built in 1878-9 to carry the canal over the Old River Lea.

We returned to the moulding house and continued along the track through the alder plantation that brought us to the western-side of Queen Meads. Alder makes the best charcoal and was the most common source of charcoal for military powder. Partially hidden are the remains of the Climatic Test Cubicles, built in 1951. A small building across the road was a manager's office by 1912 but after World War 1 it had become

a Heat Test Room. It adjoins a blue timber-framed building built in 1897 as a factory laboratory and extended in 1902. Here they tested every batch of cordite.

When production switched from gunpowder to cordite at the end of the 19th century, the mills around Queen Mead were converted to make cordite. With the outbreak of World War 1, new cordite facilities were developed on the far side of the Middle Stream. However gunpowder production was not phased out altogether: Along the Millhead Stream was the last group of water-powered gunpowder mills, which were built in c.1850 and produced gunpowder until the end of the World War 1. They were damaged beyond repair by a German parachute mine in 1941 and finally demolished in 1958. All that remains are the sluice machinery, wheel bay, concrete traverses reduced to half-height and, amongst the undergrowth out of site, various machine bases.

After lunch we boarded the land train for an excursion into the northern part of estate not open to foot traffic as it is a designated nature reserve and SSSI. Although sharing the ride with other 'punters' we all felt that we were treated to a 'special' commentary by our guide Harvey as there were many references to the morning's walk. Also we arrived back somewhat later than scheduled!

Nitroglycerine was produced by mixing concentrated sulphuric and nitric acids with glycerine, a process that had to be carried out slowly and with precision as it produced a lot of heat. The nitrating house was built on the top of a c.30ft mound so that the mixture could be rapidly dumped into a pond below in an emergency. Underwater explosives were tested the 40ft deep Newtons Pool.

At the end of a dry water course stand the remains of a Victorian press house; the pump house separated from the press house by a large masonry traverse. The remains of the press stand in isolation; it would have been once housed in a wooden building. Corrugated iron clad the semi-circular roof of the hydraulic pump house; the pump being driven by a cast iron water wheel. The roof cladding has been removed from the building and carefully stacked to one side; the irony is that since the building is listed the Trust is only allowed to 'conserve' the building, not 'preserve' it. However they hope that they can get the water wheel and pump turning again, albeit with electrical power.

There was much more to see during this tour than memory and space allow to be described. In addition there are other areas that are the subject of another tour. Clearly another visit must be made.

Terry Waterfield



The 3rd Northampton Boot & Shoe Quarter walk – 5th July 2013

In 2011 Northampton Borough Council designated a large area to the north and east of the town centre as a Conservation Area, calling it Northampton's Boot &

Shoe Quarter. This followed the English Heritage Survey of the county's boot and shoe factories in 1999-2000 which identified over 80 factories and workshops still remaining in this particular area which had at one time or other been used by the boot, shoe and leather industries. In 2011 and 2012 NIAG looked at the remains of the boot and shoe factories in the areas between Barrack Road, Kettering Road and Wellingborough Road. This year, we covered the area bounded by Wellingborough Road, York Road, Billing Road, Alfred Street and St. Edmunds Street, an area which was developed in the 1870s. Although it was a smaller area than those covered in either of our previous two walks, nevertheless it contained just as many architecturally and historically interesting factories.

Beginning in St. Edmunds Road we noted that, prior to 1880, the road had been known as 'Bird's Piece' a name that still exists on the wall of a house on the corner of Denmark Road. On the north side of St. Edmunds Road most of the houses which used to be there have been demolished and many of the plots have been incorporated into those of the shops and other businesses facing onto Wellingborough Road. On the south side of St. Edmunds Road, there used to be several large boot and shoe factories which had been built during the 1870s but most have been demolished within the past 20 years to be replaced by modern housing. They include the boot factories occupied by Henry Wooding, Peach & Kightley, Joseph Gibbs and Laycock & Sons. Laycock's factory was later used by W Pearce & Co, leather merchants, before they built their tannery at Billing in the 1930s.

Between St. Edmunds Road and Billing Road we can still see the characteristic Victorian streetscape of 2- or 3-storey boot and shoe factories, often at street corners, set in amongst terraced houses. However, unlike the terraced housing of the later Victorian period, here different groups of houses have much more varied and interesting architectural features. Some of the boot and shoe factories that remain in the area are still in commercial (non-footwear) use while others have been converted to apartments, often preserving the original detail. Unfortunately however, in some cases the brickwork has been rendered, thus hiding the original architectural features and in others the original metal window frames have been replaced with ugly white plastic ones.

Our first stop was 68 Denmark Road where stands a 3-bay, 3-storey boot and shoe factory built by 1871 and the premises of William & Eli Evans who lived in adjacent houses just round the corner in Billing Road. In 1889 the factory was taken over by William's son, Thomas Brown Evans who was still there in 1919. In Thenford Street, Nos. 24 and 26 are two new terraced houses built recently to complement the other houses in the street. They replace single and 2-storey factory buildings which, together with the still existing three-storey block at the back of the plot, was the premises of (among others) Thomas Richardson, boot and shoe manufacturer, before he moved to a factory in Victoria Road sometime prior to 1912.

Pythchley Street still has two former 3-storey factories, both dating from the early



1870s and both now converted to apartments. *Norpak House* at the corner of Harold Street has been rendered, thus hiding the original architectural detail. JR Marks was a boot and shoe manufacturer here from c1891-1898 and WT Garratt & Sons moved here from Victoria Rd in the mid-1930s. In the 1960s it was used by leather importers, Norpak Leather Co. The factory at the corner of Ecton Street has fared slightly better, although rendering of the piers

and the white plastic replacement window frames detract from its appearance. Used by a number of firms over the years, the fragility of boot manufacturing businesses during the late 19th century is demonstrated by the succession of partnerships which went bankrupt or broke up here, according to the *Northampton Mercury*.

At 15 Ecton Street is a small 2-storey workshop, seemingly unused but, according to members who peered through the broken window, still filled with shoe boxes. This was the premises of John Jackman, boot manufacturer around the turn of the 20th century, and used by James Palmer, leather merchant from the 1920s to the 1950s.

Victoria Road still has a number of shoe factory buildings, particularly in its northern half. Unfortunately for us, most are located around the last remaining pub in the area and this being a warm Friday evening..... let's just say we did not loiter for too long! They include:

- the remains of James Walding's 1870s 3-storey boot factory abutting his house on the corner of Wellingborough Road;
- 10-12 Victoria Rd, which has attractive iron-framed windows reminiscent of reticulated Gothic tracery, now apartments;
- 32-34 Victoria Rd, a small 2-storey factory used by WT Garratt & Sons, boot and shoe manufacturer before moving to Harold Street. From the 1930s until c1960 it was the premises of G Dunkley, leathersgoods manufacturer.
- Victoria House with a datestone for 1873, 3-storeys+basement, 7 bays long with a 5-bay rear extension. By 1912 Thomas Richardson had moved here from 24 Thenford Street becoming T Richardson (Kingswell) Ltd by 1925. In 1938, company was renamed Kingswell Shoe Co. and was here until the late 1960s. The factory is still partly in commercial use.
- In the yard of No. 46 was Robert Goldie's '*Goldie-Izeing & Goldie-Proofing Works*', manufacturing waterproof soles between c1894 and c1940. This has now disappeared.

On the corner of Victoria Road and Harold Street is a series of 2-storey buildings now the premises of Abbott Signs. Although rendered with pebbledash, a 1916 picture enabled us to see where windows and doors had been adjusted over the years in what had been three separate premises in the 19th century. During the period 1900 to c1960 it was used by Frecknall & Timms, later called GH Frecknall, who were long-lived boot and shoe factors (material and component suppliers), also having branches in Wellingborough and Rushden.

The area around Ethel Street south of its junction with Woodford Street was the site of a number of factories and workshops, most being used by the shoe and leather industries at one time. Today many of these have gone, leaving just two former 2-storey workshops, now converted to dwellings, facing what is now a playground in Ethel Street. At the bottom of Ethel Street there appears to be a factory converted into apartments, called the *Gaiter & Spat* building. This is an almost complete rebuild, although the original factory on the site was used by the Northampton Legging Gaiter & Spat Company in the 1960s. Dominating the Woodford Street/Ethel Street junction is *The Works*, a 3-storey factory built in 1875 and occupied by renowned boot manufacturer John Marlow & Son until the company moved to the Phoenix Works on St. Georges Street in 1893, where they stayed until the 1970s. The Woodford Street factory was later used by a variety of other shoe manufacturers including Haynes & Cann, then after WW2 as a furniture repository, and is now converted to apartments.

On the corner of Palmerston Road and Stockley Street is *Hamilton House*, a 3-storey factory, although the more decorative building on the corner post-dates the original plain 7-bay range facing onto Stockley Street. First used by J&J Brown between 1885 and 1902, it became the premise of A Jones & Sons (Bootmakers) Ltd who were taken over by Church & Co in the 1950s. Church's used the factory until the 1960s, after which it was briefly used by a cardboard box manufacturer.

Further along Stockley Street, at its junction with Alfred Street, is a white-painted building now used by Co-op Funeral Care. This was originally two factories and each part still retains a loading door and wall-mounted crane at first floor level. The full history of the building is not clear from the directories but we know that Benjamin Charles Smith was a shoemaker in part of the premises by 1921 and that the business was taken over by his son Noel Montague Smith who was there until the 1960s. In recent years the building was the premises of footwear retailer Jeffery West.

The attractive 3-storey factory in the Venetian Gothic style at 9-12 Palmerston Road, now converted to apartments and called *Palmerston House*, has Jewish connections. In the 1880s it was the factory of A&W Flatau, Jewish boot and shoe manufacturer from London, and during WW2 it was a kosher canteen supplying some 80 meals a day to Jewish servicemen. It started life c1876 as a branch of E Blakey & Sons, the Leeds-based manufacturer of heel tips (Blakey's segs) and between the wars it was

the premises of GH Nelson, a polish manufacturer.

Our final site was the one factory building that still remains on the south side of St. Edmunds Road, at its junction with Ethel Street. This was originally a 3-storey house facing onto Ethel Street with a 3-storey factory behind along St. Edmunds Road, although rendering of the walls and conversion of the ground floor to shop fronts hides much of the original detail. Built in the 1870s, it was first used as a shoe factory by Elijah Irons, then by Alfred Vernon, followed by Lewis J Shaman. Since 1900 it has been used by a range of other industries.

It is hoped that NIAG will be able to publish a guide to the all the boot & shoe factory buildings remaining in Northampton's Boot & Shoe Quarter, based on the information gathered for this series of walks. In the meantime, any member who would like a copy of the map and notes that accompanied this year's walk can obtain one by email from secretary@northants-iag.org.uk

Peter Perkins



Oxford Canal, Aynho – 19th July

In twenty-eight degree heat, nine of us beat the bounds between Nell Bridge and Aynho Wharf. Inevitably, where to start the canal's story is itself murky. Perhaps with Andrew Yarranton who proposed, in his 1677 book "England's Improvement by Land and Sea" suggested making the Cherwell navigable from Oxford to Banbury. Or perhaps with the Oxford Canal Act of 1769, except that the funding thereby generated ran out when the canal reached Banbury. Another Act of 1786 topped up the coffers and enabled James Barnes as Resident Engineer (perhaps better known to us for his work on the Grand Junction) to complete the job by 1790.

Starting at Nell Bridge and, instant delight, a skew arch bridge buried beneath the modern road bridge. But only a slight skew, and constructed before it had been figured out how to do 'proper' skew arches. With the imposing 198 foot spire of King's Sutton church behind us, we headed south. This was canal building on the cheap: making use of the river; a trench dug through level ground with the earth used to create side banks, a real contrast to the Grand Junction. One feature of the Oxford Canal are the iron 'DIS' ('distance') markers placed about 200 years from locks to indicate priority in their use.

Where the river crosses the canal's path is the unusual diamond shaped lock with a fall of only one foot. The conventional explanation – that it lets more water through than would a standard narrow lock, to compensate for the next lock having a fall of twelve feet – looks rather inadequate, for it is still only going to pass one quarter, at most, of the water required to maintain balance. This stretch of the Oxford was built without any additional reservoir capacity being added – are the diamond-shaped locks both here and at Shipton Weir just the best that the canal company could



Nell Bridge - the skew arch bridge.



Warehouse by the side of the canal.



Brunel's station of 1850.



The last working face of the final quarry at Cranstone east - this can also be seen from the A14.



One of the two styles we came across on the walk at Cranford.

At the Gunpowder Mills:
 Right: One of the many loading bays along the canal with an iron bridge shaped so that barges could pass underneath.
 Below: a gunpowder barge being restored.



A derelict loco to be seen on the land train trail.



The site's canal crossroads and thought to be the only crossroads on any canal network.

On the land train.



The Victorian press and pump house.

On many of the buildings inscriptions are to be seen. RGPF [Royal Gunpowder Factory] with the date and VR in the middle..



10/11 Victoria Road with detail of window.



70 Wellingborough Rd/
2 Victoria Rd corner
detail of bricked up
loading bay door.



On the corner of St.Edmunds Rd.

15 Ecton Street.

Timsons blast furnaces and main office building.



The Iron Truck Aqueduct.

2013 Rail Tour: Liverpool, Lime Street Station and signage on the houses at Shotton.



Taken the evening we went on the Castle walk, the Gasometers have now been demolished and so have the houses.

manage to extract water from the river without opposition from the millers?

Time was taken also to admire the bridge across the canal, and that taking the towpath over the river. The main bridge contractor on this stretch of the Oxford was James Hollinsworth, his first known works. After these, we next find him building Halfpenny Bridge at Lechlade, and then he follows James Barnes to work on the Grand Junction where he carries the can for the kink in Braunston Tunnel. Perhaps deciding that he had dashed his chances of joining the Jessop entourage we next find him doing bridge work on the Kennet and Avon, and successfully becomes a part of the Rennie clan. From 1811-1817 he is Resident Engineer on Strand Bridge in London ('Waterloo Bridge' from 1816) and, from 1824 until his death in 1828



RE for London Bridge (the one now in Arizona) and one of the leading bridge builders of his time. But here's where it all started!

A regular accompaniment of trains on the adjacent line confirms the Cherwell Valley as the 'other Watford Gap' in getting from London to the Midlands, with the Warren Girder bridge, which carries the 'down' line of the Ashendon-Aynho Great Central 'link' over the Great Western's Oxford to Banbury extension, admired from a distance. At Aynho, most managed to continue to see the pretty Brunel station of 1850, now a house, and the sadly dilapidated Great Central's Aynho Park 'station-ette'. Whilst the snappers got excited as a train load of Transit vans passed beneath them, one of us preferred to admire the fine brick skew arch carrying the Ashendon-Aynho over the B4031. And others satisfied themselves with the simpler pleasures of the Great Western Arms.

Matthew Naylor



Castle Heritage Project Trail – 26th July

We met on the pavement outside St. Peter's Church in Marefare and once we had gained entrance into the church we had an opportunity to examine the excellent stonework. Attention was drawn to the varying sizes of the column capitals – the present theory being that some had come from the earlier Saxon stone church. There have been three churches on this site; the first one was a wooden one, superseded by a stone one, both Saxon. After 1066 the Normans built a larger church, essentially the one we have now. It is thought that they may have decided to reuse the capitals and had a few extra made for their new, larger, church.

We looked at the enigmatic stone set up in the south aisle said to be the reliquary slab

of St. Ragener. Outside we saw the badly rebuilt processional arch set in the east wall indicating the churches use for Royal services in the past as well as the grave of Dr. William Smith, "*The Father of English Geology*" who died in the nearby Hazelrigg House, the home of his friends, the Bakers.

After a brief look at the (outside only!) of the Old Black Lion, probably the oldest surviving pub in the Town, we walked along Chalk Lane that follows the edge of the outer bailey of the castle. The car park to the west of Chalk Lane is where two simple, early Saxon houses were found during the 1970s excavations and is probably where Northampton (Hamtune) started, in the 4th century CE. It was here that we appreciated the view to the west and the Lift Test Tower (only two in Europe, the other is in France and only half the height).

It was from here and the viewing mound possible to appreciate (if that is the right word!) the enormous amount of soil, and stone removed by the London and North-Western Railway Co. to make space for the new station in 1897. Not only did they demolish the larger part of the castle, they also carved away the whole of the hillside creating a terrace that became St. Andrew's Road and a lower level for the station, sidings and engine shed, they also shifted and canalised the river, this can be seen by standing on West Bridge and looking north.

The view from the mound gave a better idea of just how far one could have seen bearing in mind that the ramparts would have been 30-40 feet higher. We looked at the area of the remaining Castle site now beneath the grass. Although there is no sign above ground we were able to stand where the Great Hall would have been; where Archbishop Thomas Becket was tried, the king's and the queen's chambers nearby and the location of the main Garderobe (Medieval toilet). To the north of the area was where the kitchens were, away from the Great Hall, although this meant food was often cold because it had to be carried over to the Great Hall. It did mean that if there was a fire in the kitchens it didn't spread to the great hall and king and queen's chambers!

It was pointed out that it is intended in the future to outline the various halls etc. with engraved stones set level with the grass. We left the inner bailey northwards walking down the earthworks that once protected the main, great (north) gate of the Castle.

A brief look at where the Scarletwell once stood and no doubt is still beneath the tarmac; this was famous in the past for the quality of the water for dyeing cloth. I have, to date been unable to find any information as to whether this water has ever been analysed. Perhaps this could be a future project for the Friends of Northampton Castle (FoNC)?

This was followed by a trek to Grafton Square and the site of the gate of St. Andrew's Priory. Our final destination was Holy Sepulchre Church (locally called St Sep's) where we arrived later than we had intended. Here we were met by John Kightley who kindly gave us an interesting tour of the oldest Church in the Town (the original Saxon St. Peter's was much older, but this is the oldest surviving).

Note: on the FoNC website [www.northamptoncastle.com] there is a virtual tour around the castle with a commentary. It should be noted that this is as we *think* it looked; research is always finding new information so modifications take place from time to time. The trial trench dug by Northamptonshire Archaeology in October 2012 in the area of the outer bailey to everyone's surprise uncovered not only a 13th century soil horizon, but a small pit containing a Saxon brooch. Further excavation prior to the work started recently has revealed even more material – the story goes on.

Jon Small



Timsons – 2nd August

Ten of us visited Timsons, Kettering on a fairly warm day. We were met by Troy McCourt (Manufacturing Director) and Martin Hayes (Operations Director) and taken to the Board Room for an introduction and company history. We were also given information packs.

We were taken, first of all, to the Water Street site for the foundry and machine shop. Here, at the foundry, we witnessed the days metal pouring – proving a delight for the photographers. Then onwards to the machine shop where we saw large CNC multi-task machine (Japanese), Hi spec cylindrical grinders (0.000025” accuracy), auto lathes, gear hobbers, Spark Erode profile cutters (any hardness) and 3d inspection machine (work piece mounted on 40 ton granite block).

We moved on to the Bath Road site to stores and fitting shop where we saw a complete digi book press on test but not running. Finally to look at the Timson museum exhibits from 1896 including mangle, cycle, shoe machinery, military shells, gun components, and the Timson ‘Wun Up’ press (1948). This machine, for printing business forms, was the backbone for the company for over 50 years. I was involved in assembly, testing and installation/training across the world (over 25 countries). I started work for the company in September 1963.

I think everyone enjoyed the visit and we all thanked our hosts.

John Andrew

I was only sorry that I missed this visit and glad that John was able to fill my place.
Ed



UPDATES

Wicksteed Play Equipment

Recently doubt was raised as to whether any original Wicksteed equipment was still in use. Member Ron Johnson informs us that in Roade there is still a see-saw and a set of parallel bars which are dated 1959 (the date has now become somewhat faded over the years). Does any member have any idea as to any grants which could be obtained to ensure that this equipment is kept in good condition?

Northampton's Bus Station(s)

The new £7m bus station will be called '*North Gate*' to reflect the medieval history of the town. It is expected to be opened towards the end of March 2014, and will enable the dated Greyfriars building to be demolished. The name of the new building, which reflects the fact the Sheep Street area once formed the North gate into the town, was announced at a topping out ceremony on the 17th September. Greyfriars demolition is expected to commence in July 2014.

Northampton Chronicle & Echo – 19th September 2013

Work to demolish the Greyfriars bus station will commence on 31st March and could take up to 18 months to complete! Decommissioning work started in February (2013) when fixtures and fittings were stripped out of the office complex above the site, and the overgrown roof garden was cut down. The main process will get underway 26 days after the opening of the new North Gate bus station which is on the 5th March. Hoardings will go up and Greyfriars will close completely. Demolition is expected to take 18 months as the building will have to be dismantled brick by brick. The time estimate is from the removal of the first brick, right up to the point where the site is cleared and ready for re-development.

A spokesman for the Council says "*I think it's important that you look at the town centre as a jigsaw and you have to put all the pieces in place. We have always said we are committed to developing the Greyfriars site, but first you have to open the new bus station. Then there is the process of demolishing Greyfriars and to look at what we put on that site.*"

Northampton Chronicle & Echo – 10th October 2013

Turnell's Mill, Wellingborough

A town's last remaining water-mill has become a labour of love for a man who wants to preserve it for years to come. Hidden away just off the A45 on the River Nene in Wellingborough is Turnell's Mill. The watermill, which is almost 1,000 years old, was one of four in the town but is the last one remaining and Trevor Stainwright of Wilby has taken on the project of preservation.

His labour of love started six years ago when he contacted Whitworths, who own the land it is on, and Wellingborough Council, and since then he has been regularly visiting the site, researching its history and working to restore it to its former glory. Although it will never be a working mill again, he hopes it can be preserved as part

of the town's history.

He said: "A good friend of mine was commissioned by the county council to do a survey in 2002 of the remaining watermills in this area. He said there were about 200 of them in the county, and four of them were in Wellingborough. The other three have gone now. This is the last one which is why it is important."

Support has come from his employer who have donated materials for the project. Trevor also said that his strategy is to 'doll it up' as best as he can, get people interested and then go to bigger charities and maybe they can see the potential and make donations. People are now starting to take him seriously and other groups are now interested. He now knows where he is going when he didn't six years ago.

Northants Telegraph – 24th October 2013

NB: NIAG visited this Mill in 2010 - A report is in Issue 115.

The Old Foundry – Deanshanger

We visited this village in 2010 (issue 117) and looked for a time at this building which had been left derelict for a while. News that has come in via Matthew Naylor, who led the walk, is that the site is to be sold for £1,100,000. Planning permission has been granted for 14 dwellings on the 0.75 acre site and includes the conversion of The Old Foundry buildings and erection of new dwellings to make 1 and 2 bedroomed apartments and 2, 3 and 4 bedroom houses.

Obviously it is sad to see the end of a commercial building, but good to see that the original factory will remain as apartments. This is good use of a basic solid building – better this than see it being knocked down for a totally modern building.



MISCELLANY OF ITEMS OF INTEREST

Queen Anne organ to be restored with lottery cash

A total of £43,000 has been provided to restore a 300-year-old organ at the Church of St. Mary the Virgin in Finedon. The historic organ was built in 1705 for the Private Royal Chapel and court of Queen Anne. The organ is very rare as most of it remains unaltered. The HLF are delighted to play their part in ensuring its future for generations to come. Manuscripts of music first written and performed on the organ will be scribed into modern chaps and played at a launch event next year.

Facts:

- The organ in the Church of St. Mary the Virgin is more than 308 years old.
- It still features the original Queen Anne coat of arms on the front pipes.
- Queen Anne was the first sovereign of a united Great Britain.

Northampton Chronicle & Echo – 1st August 2013.

Engine shed could become new gym for University of Northampton

A 19th-century engine shed on the site of the proposed new University of Northampton campus could be converted into a gym. The former railway shed, on the southern edge of the Nunn Mills site, near Bedford Road, is Grade II Listed so it cannot be demolished and English Heritage must be consulted on any redevelopment of the building. The preferred use for the shed is a new gym, which members of the public would be able to use.

Planning documents submitted to Northampton Borough Council stated this would be an “ideal fit” for the building and revealed the development would include a reception, cafe, changing rooms and a fitness centre.

The University of Northampton has submitted an outline planning application for the whole £330m Waterside campus development.

Northampton Chronicle & Echo – 5th September 2013

Family Restaurant to shut

Dunkley’s in Whiston is closing at the end of the month (September) because its owners, Valerie and John Dunkley, are retiring after 29 years. The pair have been helped in running the restaurant by their son and daughter and four of their six grandchildren. But all have successful careers and are not in a position to take over the business.

John Dunkley said “*Partly it’s the economic climate, which has made things hard in the last few years, but we think now is the right time in our 70th years. I feel very said because the staff have been so loyal and we’ve had some great times. Hopefully people have enjoyed themselves like we have*”.

Their son runs The Rose and Crown in Yardley Hastings, so the tradition of the Dunkley’s feeding Northamptonshire customers will continue, albeit without the family name.

The restaurant building, which is in Grendon Road, is to be sold. The building is being marketed as a residential property and it is possible the landmark train carriages that are used as cocktail and coffee lounges will be towed away. The building is on the site of the former Castle Ashby Railway Station, which was closed in 1964. The sheds were built in 1958 and the carriages which now lie alongside the restaurant were constructed in 1924 and 1926.

Northampton Chronicle & Echo – 19th September 2013

A former railway line in Northampton could become a new walking/cycle path.

The redundant railway line which runs through the heart of Northampton has been bought by the Government backed WNDG (them again!) for £1.5million, which will be reinvested in the British railway network.. The line which runs between Brackmills and Far Cotton, has been disused for years, but was only decommissioned by the Office of Rail Regulation in January 2013. After buying the site, WNDG plans to convert the mile-long section of land where the track stood into a footpath

and wildlife habitat. The site's declassification as a railway line will also open up the former power station site in Nunn Mills Road for re-development as the new home of The University of Northampton and land at Ransome Road for housing development.

The former railway line covers more than 20 acres of land, stretching from the level crossing at London Road, Far Cotton to near Salthouse Road in the Brackmills industrial estate. WNDC is working with the County Council to consider how and when the route could be converted into a walking and cycle path.

NB: The railway line was originally used to deliver coal to Northampton's former power station in Nunn Mills Road.

Northampton Chronicle & Echo – 21st and 24th October 2013

Delapre Abbey gets £3.2m grant

A £3.2 million lottery grant to help restore Delapre Abbey has opened up a 'whole new ball game' of possibility for the historic site, campaigners have said.

The Heritage Lottery cash will pay for the preservation of many of the abbey's main buildings. Volunteers said now the future of the building was secure, they could look at what can be done to improve the parkland surrounding the abbey and also open the site up to wider community use. It could also lead to more events being held on the site, such as re-enactments of the Battle of Northampton.

The chairman of the Friends said *"This is what the Friends was set up for in the beginning. It is the culmination of 11 years' work and it opens up a whole new ball game. The prospects for the place are huge. We have used the building for selective community use, but this opens it up to wider community use and enables us to look at the parkland restoration. We're so lucky to have this place 10 minutes from the town centre."* Meanwhile the chairman of the Preservation Trust added: *"All the South range will be restored, which starts with the roof in November. It gives us the opportunity to do so many thanks internally. It is a hidden gem. So many people in Northamptonshire don't even know it is here. We'll keep on raising funds and keep putting in more money. We have some very generous sponsors and we still need more of them."*

The Grade II listed Delapre Abbey is more than 800 years old, and the borough council has made the restoration one of its key heritage projects. They applied for the grant and have also pledged to invest a further £1.34million in the listed building. The project involves rebuilding the conservatory and opening the south wing for events and public access, restoring the 18th century stable block into a visitor and education centre, shop and exhibition space, and restoring the billiard room and converting it into a restaurant and cafe. It is hoped that restoration work should be completed by January 2016.

Northampton Chronicle & Echo – 10th October 2013

Dr. Martens sold for £300m

Wollaston shoe brand Dr Martens has been sold to a private equity firm for £300m. Permira Funds, owner of Hugo Boss and New Look, has bought R Griggs Group, the parent company and licensee of the Dr. Martens brand. The deal is set to be finalised in January 2014. R Griggs Group chief executive David Sudens said: "Permira was the chosen partner to acquire the Dr. Martens business because they share the current owners' passion for the brand and want to respect and nurture its heritage.

Northants Telegraph – 31st October 2013

Heritage at Risk Register

Ashton Mill, Oundle Road, Ashton – East Northants.

The former water-powered corn mill, adapted circa 1900 to form electricity-generating and water-pumping station for the Ashton Estate has now been placed on the Heritage at Risk register. This is a listed building grade II*, CA and its condition is considered 'poor'. The priority category is now C – slow decay; with no solution agreed.

The Mill once housed the Dragonfly Museum until 2001 and since then has become unoccupied. The roof has been repaired but further works are required. English Heritage has awarded a development grant to carry out surveys and to make the building safe and secure in advance of proposals for conversion to a working museum and cafe. The grant-aided development activities were due to be completed in the summer of 2013.

Taken from the English Heritage web-site - November 2011



OF THIS AND THAT

AGM

There was a good turnout for the 2013 AGM. The existing committee were re-elected, and Geoffrey Starmer accepted the post of being our President for the next three years. Our Secretary, Peter dealt with the AGM with his usual efficiency and we were then able to enjoy Matthew Nayler's talk. Matthew had stepped into the breach to give his talk, originally scheduled for February, as the speaker for the AGM had to be in Dubai for business! Matthew's talk was informative, extremely entertaining and it is to be hoped that all expectations are realised by the Mill enthusiasts in spite of various brick walls being thrown at them from council dictats. Coffee and Teas and good chit chat ended the evening. Thanks from Jane and Ron to Mick for assistance with the washing-up and clearing up.

Once again a request was made for a member to join the Committee and since there were no takers on the night this is a request that should you fancy joining the small dedicated team please contact Peter Perkins – his details can be found at the back of the newsletter.

Treasurer's Report

1. Introduction

With all outstanding monies for the Gazetteer now received, the end-of-year balance sheet doesn't look as healthy as one might have expected. However, a closer examination of the year's trading account, i.e. what we receive against what is spent, demonstrates that a surplus has been realised. During the year the monograph *Evolution of the Northamptonshire Ironstone Industry* has been published in a short run using a local print house. This has been well reviewed in the AIA Journal. A conductor's music stand and light unit were purchased during the year to provide a portable lectern for speakers, etc. This has already proved its worth at our meetings.

2. Current Position

2.1 Membership Year 2012-2013

As for previous years, publication activities have distorted the bottom line of the receipts and payments account for the current year: The loss of £115.52 is attributable to producing the 'Ironstone' booklet. Taking this into account and deducting Miscellaneous income and guest fees, the trading account shows a small surplus of £80.84. This figure is a little optimistic for the following reason: During 2012-13 the Group was using stamps bought the previous year and therefore expenditure on postage was down. The anticipated surplus income for the year was £40.61. The accounts were approved by the AGM.

2.2 Membership Year 2013-14

2.2.1 Membership

The Treasurer wishes to thank all members for prompt payment of their subs; only a small number of reminders were issued. Eight members have declined to renew their subscriptions for the current year. All members are urged to seek out potential new members.

It is not known as yet whether there will be any increase in room charges for the New Year. Although postage rates have remained unchanged during the last couple of years, further increases cannot be ruled out. However a small increase has been included in the budget.

At the AGM held in November 2012, it was agreed to increase the membership fees for 2013-14 to £15 and £19 for Single and Joint members respectively. It was also agreed that members would only be charged £14 and £18 respectively with the additional £1 coming from the publication reserves. It was agreed at the AGM in November 2013 to make those changes substantive, i.e. the actual cost to members in September 2014 will be as agreed in 2012. This still represents excellent value for money.

2.2.2 Meetings

With the charge of 50p per cup for refreshments introduced in 2010-11, this part of

our meetings should continue to be self-financing. During the 2012-13 session, this facility was well received and will continue so long as it remains viable.

Whilst speakers' fees have been fairly static over recent years, there is the likelihood that more will charge for their services.

Costs associated with the summer programme are primarily that of printing the programme - the equivalent of half a newsletter - as it is posted with the newsletter.

2.2.3 Newsletters

The question of frequency and size of newsletters has been discussed before and the current arrangement of four issues per year fits in well with the Group's activities. Photocopying charges are kept to a minimum by bulking-up print runs. Savings have been made by ensuring print runs meet the break point in printing charges. The Newsletter Editor has been asked to increase the page count for the January edition to minimise photocopying charges.

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

2.2.4 Membership Numbers

To maintain our current level of activities, new members are always required. Although the level of return is difficult to evaluate, the Group endeavours to have a presence at as many public events as can be managed.

3. Projects

The "Ironstone" booklet has been produced as a result of EMIAC 82. It is envisaged that a booklet on the Boot & Shoe Conservation Area could be produced in 2014-15. Since NIAG has now registered as a publisher, notice of our publications should reach a wider audience. The Group is always on the look-out for possible new titles as the lead-time can be two or three years from concept to print.

T J Waterfield - November 2013

Winter Programme of Talks

14th February: Powering the Nation from your rubbish bin. Formerly the November talk.

14th March: The Lloyds of Corby.

Dates for the Diary:

12th April South Wales & West of England IA Conference – Baxter College, Kidderminster. Booking forms available from Christine Sylvester, 12 Upper Park Street, Worcester, WR5 1EX with SAE. Or 01905 354679

- 10th May EMIAC 87: Chesterfield and its industries – hosted by Derbyshire IAS. Leaflet enclosed with this newsletter.
- 19th-22nd June First International Conference on Early Main Line Railways – Caernarfon, North Wales. A conference which will cover the pioneering period of the public main line railway up to the establishment of a regular network of routes. Further information www.earlymainlinerailways.org.uk. Enquiries about the conference contact: early.main.line.railways@gmail.com.
- 18th October? EMIAC 88 – This will be NIAG’s ‘event’. The date at this time is provisional. Full details should be available in May.

Obituary

Jim Irving 1916-2013

Jim Irving died peacefully on 25th November at Peterborough City Hospital, aged 97. The funeral service at Oundle parish church was packed and showed how much Jim had put into a wide variety of community interests, from Gilbert & Sullivan to Snowdonia.

We knew him from his interest in the Oundle brewing industry. He had initially trained as a chemist, but after wartime service, including the D Day landings and the drive for Nijmegen, he joined Benskins as transport manager. In 1950 he moved to Warwicks & Richardsons at Newark, where he was PA to the Managing Director. In 1956 he moved to Oundle to run Smiths, which he did until the closure in 1962. He was offered a directorship at what had become the parent company i.e. John Smiths of Tadcaster. However, he and his family had grown to love the little market town, so he decided to remain in Oundle.

It was through his work documenting the story of Smiths and the other brewers that I got to know him, when I was researching *Brewed in Northants*. Not only had he saved a great deal of documentation from his own firm, he also had a wealth of information on the other concerns and the town’s pubs. He was a driving force in the town’s museum, which has an excellent section on brewing. He also took members of Northants Industrial Archaeology Group on some fascinating town tours, pointing out the remains and locations.

I had some memorable discussions with him, not least when I was convincing him of the Smith family’s involvement elsewhere in the county. Jim was known for his precision and I can assure members that he took some convincing, though he continued to cook some excellent dinners on the occasion of my visits.

Very much a gentleman of the old school and, as was said at the service, a truly remarkable man.

Mike Brown

And Finally:

A bit of fun to keep you amused! These IQ questions were recently seen in the Daily Mail (5th Dec) and below are a very small selection for you to mull over.

1. If you only have one match inside a matchbox and enter a cold, dark room, in which there's an oil heater, an oil lamp and a candle, which do you light first?
2. People climb me, cut me and burn me. My rings aren't made of gold but do tell my age. What am I?
3. If a doctor gives you three pills and tells you to take a pill immediately and another every half an hour, how long is it before all the pills are taken?
4. The letters in the word ABOUT are in alphabetical order. True or False.
5. Although I may have eyes, I cannot see. At one time there was a lack of me in Ireland, and people starved to death. What am I?
6. Some say I'm rock. Some say I'm cheese and I lift and drop the sea. What am I?
7. I am an insect, and the first half of my name is another insect. A famous pop group had a name similar to mine. What am I?
8. A man walked through the woods with his dog and saw three cats, six wolf cubs, seven rabbits and 13 squirrels. How many feet were there in total?
9. A farmer had 17 sheep. All but nine died. How many live sheep does he have left?
10. An electric train is travelling on a 200-mile journey from Swansea. It has 12 cars with a total of 230 passengers. The weather is over-cast and damp, with a warm front approaching from the north. Which direction will the steam blow?
11. How much earth is there in a hole that measures two feet by three feet by four feet?
12. A man sees a snake slithering across the road and swerves to crush it with his tyres. All the street lights were off, as well as the car's headlights. There were no other lights on along the road. How did the man see the snake?

Answers: 1 The match: 2 A Tree: 3 An hour: 4 False: 5 Potato: 6 The moon: 7 A beetle: 8 Take the 's' away!: 9 - Two - the rest have paws: 10 There isn't any steam - it's an electric train: 11 None - it was a hole: 12 It was during the day.

Unless stated all photographs are credited to Jane and Terry Waterfield.

Disclaimer.

The Newsletter Editor and NIAG undertake to reproduce material as supplied. Any factual errors remain the responsibility of the author, who may be faithfully repeating the errors of the original.

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Newsletter:

Next Issue: **April 2014**

Deadline for all articles and information **20th March 2014**. 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.