



NORTHAMPTONSHIRE  
INDUSTRIAL, ARCHAEOLOGY  
GROUP

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NEWSLETTER



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Photograph front cover: The wall painting on the former Drage shoe factory, Bozeat.

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## From the Editor

As I put this edition to bed, autumn is now well and truly with us with glorious sunshine and extremely warm days. This season also heralds the cropping of cob nuts from the tree at the bottom of the garden and it is now a race against the lone squirrel to ensure that he doesn't get them all! Having said that, it is a joy to watch the industry of these quite clever little animals as they race up and down the tree, manage to get an enormous 'bunch' of nuts off the end of a thin branch and down again to enjoy the fruits of their labour. Wonderful.

The last of the summer's walks and visits were completed in extremely warm and humid weather which made a great change from getting cold and wet as happened during the 2013 season. When it mattered we were able to sit and relax with a coffee, tea, lunch whatever and enjoy a good exchange of thoughts. It is to be hoped that all those who were not able to be with us enjoyed their respective summers and got out and about without becoming worn out with the heat.

With this edition will be the AGM papers, yes it's that time again and seems to come round quicker than ever. Also there is a reminder to those of you who have not yet submitted your subscriptions for the next year. Don't forget that should you still wish to receive the newsletter and enjoy the summer walks and the winter talks you have until the 31st December to renew.

There is a note about the cancellation of the EMIAC conference, due to be held on the 18th October and hosted by ourselves, on page 21. The Committee are not happy that we have had to do this, but at the end of the day it was too late to reschedule and organise everything that goes with such an event. On a personal note, I am somewhat annoyed that all the work put in by the committee, and Terry in particular, has been swept aside by the sheer arrogance of people who can't do anything without thinking about '*what's in it for me*'.

There is a message from the Committee regarding membership – Peter writes about this in our '*And Finally*' section which is found at the end of the newsletter.

Thank you to all those who enjoyed a coffee/tea at the end of each talk, this 'service' will be provided again this coming year and it is hoped that the take up will be as good as the 2013/14 season. If not, the committee will be, as the song goes, '*reviewing the situation*'. Use it or lose it!!

It remains for me to wish you all a happy end of the year season and into 2015. Good health and happiness always.

Nearly forgot: We took the stand to the September Heritage Fair and it was a very successful day. As a first Peter took members of the public on two tours around a very small part of our Northampton Boot & Shoe walk of 2011 in the immediate area. It has to be said that these were hailed as a great success. So hat's off to Peter.

*Jane W*

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## **EMIAC at Chesterfield - 10th May**

14 members attended the EMIAC conference at Chesterfield on a mixed day of weather. As usual our hosts – this time NEDIAS – welcomed delegates with coffee. After a short introduction we were off into the world of Chesterfield before rail, fireproofing in early industrial buildings and to learn about a family, The Smiths of Chesterfield. We were then given a short presentation from a member of the Chesterfield Borough Council regarding the future development of the Walton Works site which we would later view during our afternoon's walk.

### ***Chesterfield before Rail – Philip Riden***

Whilst Chesterfield has been described as the Centre of Industrial England, it only acquired this reputation after the railway had arrived. Until then it was a market town and trading centre. It had two market places: when the old market outgrew its site north of the church, a new larger market was created, still claimed to be the largest in the North of England. During the 17th century there was a decrease in the leather trade, which had been prominent in Chesterfield since the Middle Ages; it was being replaced by the trade in lead – red, white and pig lead. Chesterfield's problem was that all goods had to travel by road. A scheme to open the River Rother to navigation failed to materialise.

It had to wait until 1777 for the Chesterfield Canal to be completed; but then only as far as Tupton Lock. Whilst this was a vast improvement that led to a growing manufacturing industry, it too had its drawbacks: It was a 'narrow' canal that linked into a network of 'broad' canals; it was heavily locked with a long summit tunnel; it was never connected to any other canals at its western end and therefore never enjoyed any 'passing trade'.

During its first 50 years, the total annual tonnage carried by the canal increased from c.36,000 tons to 100,000 tons. Lead exports rose from 2,500 tons in 1777 to 3,000 tons in 1787 but then declined to 1,000 tons over the next 15 years as seams were worked out and cheap imports became available. By 1790 coal exports had reached 50,000 tons from an initial value of 10,000 tons and thereafter fluctuated about a value of 40,000 tons until 1822. It was argued that the Rother valley iron works would have died out during this period if it were not for the canal being used for transport.

In contrast the canal brought in such items as groceries; wines, spirits and porter; hemp and flax; cotton, wool and yarn; and other small packages. Corn was another important commodity transported on the canal increasing from 2,000 tons in 1777 to 18,000 tons in 1825. Much of this was malted barley for the brewing trade. With the coming of North Midland Railway in 1840, the canal went in to terminal decline.

### ***Fireproofing in early industrial buildings - Pat Strange***

The Griffin Foundry (see below) supplied cast iron pillars and beams to "fireproof" Strutt's West Mill, Belper. In this construction the floor was supported on cast iron

beams resting on cast iron pillars. The space between the beams was filled with a brick and plaster barrel roofing; a wedge-shaped timber located within the beam's web provided a support for the first row of bricks in the arch. This timber was then protected by a covering of sheet metal. A wrought iron tie-bar passed through each of the beams to prevent them from 'spreading'. Building 10 of the Bump Mill uses the same fireproofing structure. An article in the [American] Mechanics Magazine of 1825 provided an alternative method of fireproofing, which was widely adopted. In place of the cast iron beams, large cross-section timbers supported by cast iron pillars were used; the flooring comprised thick (3" to 4") boards. This approach resulted in a 'slow burning' structure giving its inhabitants time to escape the fire.

### ***The Smiths of Chesterfield 1775-1833 – Peter Hawkins***

Although entitled the Smiths of Chesterfield, Peter Hawkin's presentation covered the history of the Griffin Foundry from 1775 to 1833.

The Smiths can be traced back to the late sixteenth century to a certain William Smith (-1627) living at Grenoside near Sheffield. Alongside his farming activities he also had a cutlery business. His son Henry (-1646) took a greater interest in the cutlery business, becoming a member of Cutlers' Company in 1629. Henry's grandson John (I) (1684-1753) was the real founder of the family's fortunes: Apprenticed to Master Cutler John Winter he had the fortune to not only marry his master's daughter but, by virtue of the marriage, also obtained a share of Winter's fortune – an established business, which he continued to run. His eldest son John (II) (1728-84) continued the family cutlery business and the iron works on The Moor, Sheffield.

In 1775 John (II), with others from Sheffield, acquired two works in Brampton, just outside Chesterfield's borough boundary: A boring mill and forge were leased from Samuel Johnson, Edward Wright and William Robinson, grandfather of John Bradbury Robinson, the founder of Robinson & Sons Ltd, whose works now cover much of the area under discussion. These premises were later known as Thompson's Forge.

A furnace and foundry, the Old Griffin Foundry, were leased from James Shemwell, who operated near-by Nether Walton corn mill. This was probably the first blast furnace to be built in Derbyshire. To manage the foundry, John Bale became a partner in 1776 and in 1777 John (II) moved to Brampton. After his death in 1784, John (II)'s sons John (III) (1752-1814) and Ebenezer (1756-1827) ran the Griffin Foundry. During the period 1788 to 1791 two new furnaces were built adjacent to the cornmill, now part of the lease, together with a new casting house, now known as Cannon Mill. Its main output was armaments and munitions, though following the Napoleonic Wars their demand decreased. During a similar period there was a strong demand for Newcomen engines, which were also cast at the foundry. Cannons and steam engines were produced until 1833. The foundry also supplied cast iron pillars and beams for fireproofing buildings including the Walton Bump Mill in 1800.

With local supplies of ironstone running out, the foundry went into decline and it

was too far from the Chesterfield Canal with its cheap transport costs. By now both of Ebenezer's sons, William Cater (1784-1866) and Ebenezer (II) (1785-1852), were running the foundry; it is conjectured they were less able businessmen than their forebears. The Griffin Foundry closed in 1833 and the corn mill sold back to James Shemwell, whose grandfather had leased it to John (II) in 1775. The site was bought by Robinson & Sons Ltd in 1886 for £1,020.

***The future of the Walton Works site – Chesterfield BC***

As Conservation Officer for Chesterfield Borough Council, Jacob Amuli outlined progress to date on securing the development of the Walton Works site, which was occupied by Robinsons until 2003. The Walton Bump Mill, listed as Grade II\* in 2004, is significant because of its fireproofing construction. Building No 7 utilises the same fire-resistant structure as Strutts warehouse of 1792/3. Building No 10 includes a slow-burning construction; only two other surviving mills have the same



type of structure. The mill has been on the Heritage at Risk Register since 2008. The Walton Works is part of the Chatsworth Road Conservation Area, which was formally adopted on 6th May 2014.

Various plans for housing developments have been proposed and rejected. The latest application, lodged in May 2012 by Robinson's preferred developer, included refurbishing the works, possibly for use as workshops, mixed retail units and private housing. To date this application has not yet been determined by the planning authority.



After a buffet lunch we donned raincoats and set off in a light shower to look at the various mills, including the Walton Works and the Cannon Mill before returning for a very welcome cup of tea and the journey home.

*Terry Waterfield*

Cannon Mill, Chesterfield

## SUMMER WALKS AND VISITS 2014

### Welford Canal – 23rd May

Eight members stepped out to challenge the threatened showers, our limited numbers a contrast to the large numbers of boats moored along the canal and in the marina – restoring the Welford Arm to use in 1969 looks to have been a popular move. Welford does not merit a mention in the NIAG Gazetteer – the county boundary runs along the infant River Avon placing Welford Wharf just into Leicestershire whilst Welford Reservoir is in Northamptonshire but in the parish of Sulby. By my reckoning (therefore large ‘health warning’ attached) Welford must be the largest settlement in Northants not to be accorded the NIAG accolade.

The canal had a complex gestation – the Leicester and Northants Union Canal getting its Act in 1793 and opening as far south as Gumley Debdale in 1797 before getting rather hung-up on the not inconsequential questions of where to go from there and by which route. Market Harborough? Stamford? Northampton? The Oxford at Hillmorton or Braunston? The GJC at Braunston, Norton or Long Buckby?

James Barnes (of GJC fame) advised in 1802 on a route to Norton, requiring 16 locks and two tunnels, via Welford, Crick and Watford, plus a branch to Market Harborough and this was pretty much what got built once it had seen off the alternative proposal by Telford of a longer route/fewer locks alternative Eastern line from Gumley to Norton.

A meeting in June 1808 set the capital-raising in motion, and in May 1809 the Barnes line was selected and construction started at Foxton locks. The engineer was Benjamin Bevan, whom we last ‘met’ at Cosgrove Aqueduct and would ‘meet’ again later in the summer at Jordan’s Mill (where in 1807 he surveyed the line for the River Ivel Navigation extension from Biggleswade to Shefford). His canal constructions appear disappointingly unexciting for a man who sounds to have been something of a Polymath – publishing articles about cast iron, wood, bone, ice, glue, the weather, the measurement of heights and the development of a new rain gauge. Another, more dangerous, interest was astronomy and Bevan died from a heart attack on 2nd July 1833 whilst watching an eclipse of the moon. Be warned.

The 23.25 mile canal had its official opening on 9th August 1814 with the 1.6 mile Welford branch opened three months later. It is the high point of the Grand Union Canal system – the Old Grand Union wends its way at 413.5 feet above sea level whilst the single lock on the Welford arm adds 3’ 6”. Hence the industrial archaeology isn’t just about the buildings around Welford Wharf initiated by William Dobson to service his coal, brick and lime trade, but is about water supply – doubly important with the canal emptying at Norton into the Braunston summit level of the GJC.

Sulby reservoir was completed in 1814 and Naseby in 1821 (its head raised by two feet in 1834), with ‘New Sulby’ (ie Welford Reservoir) completed in 1837. Time was taken to examine the numbers set out in an Appendix to the 1982 publication by

Leicestershire County Council 'Foxton: locks and barge lift' where, taken from the 1906 Royal Commission on Canals, are set out the sources of water for the summit level and the likely usage. The basic message being the water lost to leakage of lock gates and sluices together with percolation through the banks will dominate, at between 0.8 to 2.0 inches per day (multiplied by the surface area of the canal) whereas evaporation will be only 0.05 inches per day. Per year, the leakage works out to be 192 million cu.ft. whereas the 36,000 tons of traffic carried in 1906 required under 15 million cu.ft. of lockage water.

Numbers are also set out for the reservoir capacities and for the water brought in from feeders, also for the 'compensation water' which the legislation required the feeders to leave in the watercourses that were tapped. Good examples of the complications this gave rise to were examined where the minor road to Naseby crosses the River Avon and the canal feeder coming down from Naseby Reservoir. The feeder is purely for Reservoir water, with the river water kept separate and draining the farmland to either side of the feeder. Hence the south side of the bridge shows three streams, the north side only two – the canal feeder has dived off towards the canal, the separate streams 'belonging' to the River Avon are permitted to re-emerge on the north side of the bridge to unite and continue in that guise. Again, to the north side of Welford Reservoir the track alongside the reservoir is following the line of a cutting which previously kept separate the water from a stream the canal was not permitted to tap. A reminder of the value of water.

*Matthew Nayler*

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**Delapre Park – 1st June**

A very select group gathered at the Model club on a glorious sunny afternoon. The club is celebrating its 80th year; it had begun at the Technical College, originally having a very strong boating element. We began the afternoon by taking rides on the raised track and then the ground track.



We got on the first train, gingerly, and settled down for our ride of 533 metres. Just as we were leaving the station Peter arrived and managed to get a photo of us, seen here in the photo with Mike Ringwood. With smoke, wind and the seeds of the trees in our hair we were off..... Whoosh! 'What fun' as Joe Gargery would say to Pip. And fun it was. For such small engines the speed was incredible as the train fairly rattled along the track. A small problem with the brakes was soon sorted – not BR here – and we sped on through the tunnel and back to the station.

We then got our second tickets and went to queue for the second ride – this time on



the ground track of some 853 metres long on the larger of the two gauges of 5 and 7.25 inches. Seated this time immediately behind the driver, we got the full blast of smoke, water – yes, too much I was told – and off we rattled once more to ride the track. This ride was more to our liking as we were ‘on the ground’ not raised and the whole ride seemed much more smooth.

On both rides we were able to admire the woods from a different angle, wave like mad at everybody who was doing the same thing to us, ooh and ahh at some of the toy animals etc. which were dotted about the landscape and generally have a good time.

A couple of facts about the raised track, already mentioned is the length, but the gauges are 3.5 and 6 inches. The members have laid all the tracks and three of the members manufactured all of the ground track points. It has to be said here that the members are all qualified engineers of one kind or another. For interest Eastleigh near Southampton airport is 10.25 and the Romney Hythe and Dimchurch is 15 inches and 13.5 miles long.

The locos are either coal fired or battery powered and a few have lawn mower engines in them. Apparently in the US and Canada they tend to use oil (domestic central heating type), this has less emission from the exhaust. The locos are all hand built and members have spent hours on these marvellous little engines to ensure that both the big and little children all enjoy a jolly good afternoon ‘riding the trains’.



All the gauges in fine detail.

For those who do not wish to venture on the trains there is a small garden railway with gauges of 32 and 45 mm. The locos can be meths, gas or coal fired – so you can keep your dignity and enjoy watching the trains doing a short circuit. There are also benches and tables at various points for the public to sit and if so inclined have a picnic whilst enjoying the trains steaming past – squeals notwithstanding from the little ones.

Having taken the trains, we took a stroll along the well maintained paths and enjoyed the spectacle of watching others riding the tracks. It is hard to believe that this little gem is just a short distance from the town centre as it is somewhat hidden away from the main thoroughfares.

We had a cuppa and chat before making our respective ways home. I am told that Tuesday is the club’s working day so if you happen to be passing, Mike says to drop in for a cuppa and chat. Trains are not always out, but there is usually something going on. So thank you to our host and our member Mike Ringwood for letting us in on your world of steam engines albeit the small kind.

*Jane Waterfield with technical information supplied by Mike Ringwood*

## Stockton Canal Walk – 20th June

Our walk, just over the county border in Warwickshire, was a repeat of the one organised by Ray Tims on 21st June 1991, exactly 23 years ago. This report draws heavily on the one relating to the earlier walk which appeared in NIAG's Newsletter No.43.

The Warwick & Napton Canal opened in 1800, connecting the Oxford Canal at Napton with the Warwick & Birmingham Canal at Saltisford Basin, Warwick. The section included a series of ten locks – the Stockton flight – just north of the village of Stockton. In the vicinity of Stockton, the presence of both limestone and blue lias clay led to the development of a lime and cement industry from the late 18th century that went on until the end of the 20th century. There were at least four sites where processing took place along the canal in this vicinity. However, today most of the remains of these have disappeared, apart from what is left of Southam (formerly Kaye's) cement works.

The visit started from the car park at Stockton canal balancing reservoir, located behind the popular Blue Lias pub which stands alongside the canal. Just south of this is the trackbed of the former London and North Western Railway line between Daventry and Marton Junction (on the Rugby - Leamington line of the LNWR). The line opened on 1st August 1895; passenger traffic ceased on 15th September 1958 and through freight services ended in November 1962. The part of the line from Southam cement works to Marton Junction remained open until 1985, bringing chalk from Dunstable (until that was pumped as a slurry through an underground pipeline) and coal for firing the rotary kilns.



Surprisingly, it was still possible to use the course of the railway as a footpath, although trees and undergrowth now restrict the 'loading gauge' somewhat! We walked westwards along it and reached the dilapidated iron girder bridge for the railway over the arm of the canal which was built to serve Kaye's cement works and called Kaye's Arm. This private cut had been agreed by the canal company in 1819 and traffic on the

arm continued until after World War Two but today the arm is only now used for permanent moorings. From the bridge we were able to view the remains of the Southam cement works.

It is thought that lime had been produced on the east side of Kaye's Arm of the canal from the early 19th century and in about 1875 Kaye's began producing Portland

cement here. Sometime after 1900 Kaye's built a new cement works to the west of Kaye's arm, on the site of Cuttle Farm. Taken over by the Rugby Portland Cement co in 1934, the site was renamed Southam cement works and was in continuous use until 1999. The site is now owned by CEMEX who are still extracting limestone and clay in the vicinity but the cement works is disused.

Walking further west on the railway trackbed, we spied some relatively rare common-spotted orchids, maintaining the botanical theme which began two weeks earlier when eagle-eyed members spotted some bee orchids on the roadside at Cransley on Mick Dix's walk! We left the route of the railway to get onto the A423 Coventry to Banbury road and in a spinney adjacent to the railway cutting found the remains of a bridge with stone abutments and a brick arch which had once carried the track to Cuttle Farm over a tramway and which was in use before the LNWR line was built, i.e. pre-1895. The tramway took limestone from quarries in the vicinity of the present cement works, down to limekilns and a wharf on the mainline of the Warwick and Napton canal.

On the A423 we headed northwards until we reached the canal and followed the towpath eastwards. At Itchington bottom lock (lock 13) we had our first sight of the arrangement of the locks on this stretch of the canal. The original narrow lock remained in situ but was blocked off to traffic. Alongside was the wide lock built between 1932 and 1934 as part of the improvements made by the newly created Grand Union Canal Company to compete more effectively against the railways and the growth of road transport. We noted that the lock-keeper's cottage here was brick-built with bricks on their edge, similar to one on the Grand Junction Canal at Braunston. Further on, past lock 12, is the entrance to Kaye's Arm, the furthest end of which we had seen at the Southam cement works site. On the north side of the canal there is now no sign where the junction with Sitwell's arm was located until the 1930s. This arm had necessitated an embankment and a bridge over the Stockton to Long Itchington Rd (demolished in the 1930s). Yet, on the earliest OS maps this arm seems

to finish in the middle of nowhere and there is no evidence of what purpose it served!

We continued along the towpath past the road bridge adjacent to the Blue Lias pub, up to the next lock (No.11), from where we could view the next three locks in the flight. All had the wide locks on the north side – the opposite to the arrangement at Itchington



At lock 12 just before the entrance to Kaye's Arm.

bottom lock (No.13). From here we could see the site of Greave, Bull & Lakin's Blue Lias Lime & Cement Works on the south side of the canal, in operation from the 1820s and now a modern engineering works. It is thought that perhaps only one of the original buildings still exists on the site.

Returning to the car park, some members availed themselves of the facilities offered by the Blue Lias pub on this warm summer evening.

*Peter Perkins*

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## **Bozeat walk – 11th July**

Bozeat is a typical Northamptonshire village which changed from a rural economy to an industrial one and now has become very much a dormitory village with relatively little in the way of industry. Weaving was important in the village in the Middle Ages and lacemaking in the 18th and 19th centuries. However, the boot and shoe industry became dominant towards the end of the 19th century.

Census data for Bozeat (supplied by Roy Sheffield for his 1994 walk around the village!) shows that in 1851 only 13 males were shoemakers out of a male working population of 167, whereas 121 were farmers or agricultural workers. By 1891 the male working population had increased to 462 and whilst agricultural workers had only declined slightly to 109, there were now 286 working in the boot and shoe industry. A similar situation occurred in the female working population, with 63 of the 67 females reported as lacemakers in 1851 but only 10 out of 150 females in 1891, 96 being in the shoe trade.

Bozeat's boot and shoe trade was dominated by two families – the Drages and the Botterills, the latter responsible for developing the Gola brand in the 1930s which became famous in the 1960s for football boots. Gola was apparently chosen because it was an anagram of 'goal' and the slogan was 'Gola means goals'. By the end of WWII, Bozeat had three significant shoe factory buildings, the factories occupied by Drage (Hope Street), Botterill (London Road) and the Bozeat Boot Co (Easton

Lane). Today only the Hope Street building remains (now converted to apartments) but around the village there are still several former shoemakers' workshops identified as such by English Heritage in their Northamptonshire boot and shoe building survey of 1999/2000.

Our tour round the village started in Mile St where a two-storey workshop stood with its



The former village school which became a shoe factory.

back to the road, behind 51 London Road. Although built of brick it had a rear wall of limestone to first floor height, probably retained from an earlier building on the site. Next door, the building on the corner with London Road was the village school until 1870, when John Drage – see Arch Villa below – bought it to use as a shoe factory.

No 87 London Road is a bungalow built in 1910 according to the datestone in its gable. In the garden behind the bungalow was Thomas Corby's Perfecta Heel Works built in 1909 but burnt down in the 1930s. According to a 1916 advert, the single-storey factory was fitted with a petrol air gas plant for lighting purposes which was 'a great improvement on the paraffin oil lamps'!

On High Street, the property called Arch Villa (in recent years this was the 'Paper Shop') was built by John Drage in about 1870. He established the boot and shoe manufacturing company of John Drage & Son in 1861 and later his company occupied the factory that still stands in Hope Street. Adjoining the house are a series of two-storey workshop ranges, one with iron framed windows, where apparently John Drage encouraged the men of Bozeat to learn the shoe trade. The workshops were used by the Drage shoe company for many years and after WWII it is reported that they still had a clicking room here.

In 1999, English Heritage recorded details of a row of outworkers' workshops serving a terrace of houses at 47-51 High Street. They commented that the large workshop windows were made ineffective by their proximity to the wall of one of the houses. These workshops have been completely rebuilt in new brick recently, it would seem exactly as they were originally, minus the chimney flues – perhaps something to do with the housing development next door.

Walking further along High Street, we noted the closed pub, formerly the Lord Nelson, and one of five in the village in 1911; also Wheelwrights Yard, where there was still a lace school in the 1930s. There were other workshops in and off Church Lane. Stopping briefly at the church, we were reminded that on our 1994 visit, the banns for the forthcoming marriage of members Joy and Chris Farey-Wood were posted

at the gate. We are pleased to record they are celebrating their 20th wedding anniversary in a few weeks' time!

At the north end of the village we came to the three-storey former Drage shoe factory at the junction of London



Road and Hope Street, with its large wall painting on the south gable originally done in about 1932 by Jack Walker, a local painter and decorator. Built about 1890 this was first the shoe factory of F Goodman & Sons who were bankrupt by 1892, after which William Drage, son of John, took over the factory, extending it in 1914. By 1929 the firm had been taken over by Allen & Caswell of Kettering and ultimately the factory production was moved to Kettering in 1972. Today the factory building is used as apartments. The wall-mounted crane still stands half way along the Hope Street frontage.

Some of the historical information came from *'Bozeat 2000: The Story of a Northamptonshire Village by Philip Bligh (WD Wharton 2004)'*. Thanks also to Joy and Chris Farey-Wood for contributing their first-hand knowledge.

*Peter Perkins*



## UPDATES

### **Northampton name change causes a fuss!**

A proposal to change Northampton Station back to its original name of Northampton Castle could cost £200,000, local Labour councillors are claiming. They also point out that there is no need for the change, as the town has no other station with which it could be confused. But supporters of the plan say that new signs would be needed in any event as the station is the subject of a major new reconstruction.

Jim Hawker, leader of NCC said: *"This is part of a much wider regeneration project in Northampton, centred around its heritage gateway, which is absolutely essential if we are to compete to attract investment into the town and the county. The people of Northampton have always known their station as Northampton Castle and continue to do so."*

*The Railway Magazine – May 2014*

### **Justification for the name change to Northampton station:**

The county council says the £200,000 to be spent on renaming the station Northampton Castle is justified because it will recognise the site's historical significance. The change is expected to take place early next year.

*Rail magazine – 23rd July 2014*

*Having moved here some 29 years ago I didn't know the station was called 'Castle station' until I did the History course with Ron Greenall and then joined NIAG and got interested in the history and industry of the town that this kind of information came to my attention. However..... Ed.*

## **Wicksteed Park**

A set of clocks at Wicksteed Park in Kettering are to begin telling the time again after being painstakingly restored. The four clocks which sit at the top of the park's pavilion have not worked properly for 30 years because of the detailed and delicate work required to repair them. But the Wicksteed Park Charitable Trust, which owns and operates the park, has paid for them to be restored to mark the completion of the £2million lake restoration.

The timepieces adorn the clock tower, which was donated to the park's founder Charles Wicksteed by the Clubmen of Kettering in 1921. That gift was believed to have taken the form of a financial donation, because the construction of the pavilion did not start until 1922. It was completed in 1923. Work to repair the cast iron clocks, made by the world-famous Gents' of Leicester, has been carried out by Andy Adamson of Clockwise in Kettering, who has donated his time for free.

The four visible clocks are connected to a fifth, which sits above the stage inside the Edwardian Pavilion. Another clock in a nearby corridor acts as a master timepiece, allowing the hands on all six to be set to exactly the same time. It is also believed that the clocks were originally linked to a seventh at the lakeside boathouse thanks to wires running beneath the lawns.

Alasdair McNee, the park's managing director, said: "*The Wicksteed Park clocks are an iconic part of the park's history and we are delighted to have them repaired and up and running again. They have a unique history and we are keen to hear from anyone who knows about them. The clocks have been re-wired and re-connected, retaining the original features and mechanisms and we are very grateful to Andy Adamson for his time and painstaking work to restore them and preserve them for future generations to enjoy.*"

*Northants Telegraph – 15th May 2014*



## **MISCELLANY ITEMS OF INTEREST**

### **Re-use of a Nene valley quarry structure**

NIAG members may be interested in the recent re-use of an example of industrial archaeology connected with the 20th century sand and gravel industry in the Nene Valley.

A former sand and gravel quarry conveyor loading ramp or dock is located (NGR:SP88678 64065) in Wollaston parish. It sits by a footpath which runs along the northern perimeter of Summer Leys Local Nature Reserve. The path utilises the now disused quarry haul-road which has served aggregate quarries in this part of the Nene Valley until relatively recently. This haul-road in turn re-used the former

track-bed of the Blisworth (Northampton) to Peterborough, London and North Western Railway.

*Description:*

The structure comprises a concrete walled platform or dock with an associated vehicle ramp to the east and a concrete screen wall extending to the west. Together, these exceed 40 metres in length. This was the terminus for a conveyor belt which ran to the quarry company processing site located off Station Road (at SP8609 6193), Earls Barton, approximately 3.2 kilometres distant.

Vehicles shipped in the aggregates quarried from nearby sites, using the former railway as a haul-road and then tipped sand/gravel via the ramp and dock on to the continuous conveyor for onward transport to the quarry processing works. The ramp is believed to have built in the late 1970s or early 1980s and ceased operation in 1997 (pers. comm. P Watson). An example of such a conveyor can still be seen to the west of Hardwater Crossing.

*Re-use for wildlife:*

This redundant quarry structure was given a new lease of life in March 2014, when, with the addition of 50 newly drilled holes along its southern face, it is planned that it will provide homes for sand martins, a few pairs of which have nested in the structure's pre-existing weep holes in recent years. The majority of the new holes are 64mm in diameter (77mm cores lined with 64mm internal diameter pvc pipe), however the central 11 holes on the top row are 62mm in diameter and are unlined. The c800mm long cores extend through the concrete walls into the packed gravel beyond. The voids in the gravel core and a short section of the core through the wall have been packed with clean sand. In order to minimise the disturbance to the nesting birds, gates and fencing will be used to guide passers-by around the northern side of the ramp during the breeding season.

This re-use has been undertaken by Steve Brayshaw (RS Brayshaw Ecological Consultancy) for Summer Leys Local Nature Reserve and the local Wildlife Trust with support from Hanson UK and the Friends of Summer Leys. I am grateful to the former for information and photos about the project.

*Significance:*

Though of recent origin, this former sand and gravel quarry structure is of industrial archaeological interest. It is one of the few surviving upstanding structural remains of an industry which has had an extensive impact on the landscape and character of large swathes of the Nene Valley. Its simple, functional nature and recent origin both contribute to its local industrial archaeological and historic landscape significance. The retention and innovative, yet sympathetic re-use of the structure for wildlife benefit, is to be greatly welcomed.

There is a short facebook clip of the new homes in action at: [www.facebook.com/wildlifebcn/posts/626944170710836?stream\\_ref=10](http://www.facebook.com/wildlifebcn/posts/626944170710836?stream_ref=10).





Top L: View to the west and south elevations with the three lines of sand martin holes just evident in the latter.

Above: A conveyor is still present looking west from Hardwater Crossing.

Left: Drilling the new nest holes.

Picture credits: Top and above right: © Graham Gadman, April 2014

Bottom L © S Brayshaw, March 2014.

*With thanks to member Graham Cadman who sent in this fascinating article about the new use of a former industrial structure. Ed.*

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### **Construction of a new facility at Cosworth Engineering begins**

Construction of a new manufacturing facility at a global engineering company has begun in Northampton and is expected to generate 70 jobs and £166 million for the town.

Car engineering and manufacturing group, Cosworth, started work on the £12 million Advanced Manufacturing Centre, supported by NBC, at their site in the Waterside enterprise Zone, off St James Mill Road. The new facility, expected to be fully operational by next year, will create 70 jobs as well as engineering apprenticeships for students and young people in the town. The launch event was attended by Local Government Minister, Kris Hopkins and the chief executive of Cosworth, Hal Reisiger.

Mr Hopkins said: “By choosing Northampton’s Enterprise Zone to develop the next

*generation of high performance engines, Cosworth will keep the UK at the forefront of automotive manufacturing and bring jobs, skills and technology to the area.”* The Borough Council leader said: *“This new development will help to put Northampton on the map. Everything has gone smoothly and the planning application, submitted nine months ago (August 2013), was completed in record time.”*

Hal Reisiger said *“It is invigorating to work alongside a team who share our drive and vision to supply excellent products and services to high performance vehicle makers.”*

The Company also celebrates 50 years in Northampton:

- The plan for the 38,000 sqft extension to the Cosworth factory was announced earlier this year after it received full support from local and national government. It coincides with the 50th anniversary of the existing Cosworth site.
- Cosworth began life in a small workshop in London in 1958. The young company achieved world-wide acclaim in 1960 with Jim Clark’s victory in the Formula Junior category in a Lotus 18 at Goodwood. It moved to Northampton four years later.

*Northampton Chronicle & Echo – 8th May 2014*

### **Marking the 40th Anniversary of Sundew’s epic walk to Corby**

In the summer of 1974, Sundew, the world’s largest walking dragline set off on an epic journey from Exton Park in Rutland to Corby – a 13 mile distance which took nine weeks to complete. It was an astonishing feat of engineering which captured the imagination of people in the area and a feat which has entered into folklore.

To celebrate the 40th anniversary of Sundew’s journey Rock by Rail – The living Ironstone Museum at Cottesmore planned a special event. A photographic timeline and exhibition was planned.

Built by Ransomes & Rapier, the excavator was named after the winning horse in the 1957 Grand National. Weighing 1,675 tons, at the time it was the largest walking dragline in the world with a reach of 86 metres and a bucket capacity of 27 tons. It moved with the use of two large moveable feet which could be used to “walk” the dragline forwards and backwards and its direction was controlled by a large circular turntable under the body of the machine.

Sundew worked at a Rutland iron ore quarry belonging to the United Steel Companies (Ore Mining branch) until operations there finished in 1974. Plans were made to move it to a recently opened British Steel quarry near Corby but dismantling it, moving it and rebuilding it at the new site was not viable. It had taken two years to build and cost £250,000. It was decided that the best option was to walk it to its new location and during the journey Sundew crossed three water mains, ten roads, a railway line, two gas mains and a river before arriving at its new home north of

Corby.

Sundew even enjoyed national fame when it was featured on the children's TV programme Blue Peter, being driven by John Noakes. On the 4th July 1980, Sundew walked to its final resting place and its huge boom was lowered onto a purpose built earth mound, before being scrapped in 1987.

Its cab is now a prize exhibit at the museum in Cottesmore and volunteers are planning to restore it to its former glory as part of the 40th anniversary celebration of its huge walk.

#### *Going back to quarry days*

Visitors to the Living Ironstone Museum at Cottesmore can explore how ore was mined in the area for decades. A section rail line runs into the quarry area and passes the digger playpen when old machines are put through their paces on a regular basis. A viewing area allows visitors to look in to the quarry areas which limestone has been stripped away to reveal the ironstone ore beds. The trail includes Sundew's cab where visitors can climb aboard and enjoy a driver's view of the whole working area.

*Northants Telegraph – 27th March 2014*

### **Local Growth projects: South East Midlands**

A total Local Growth funding allocated to 2020/21 is £79.3m. The rail projects are:

- To re-develop Bletchley Station – see below;
- A railway line in Northampton is to be de-commissioned, to allow an Enterprise Zone project to proceed.

The Government has allocated £1.7million to redevelop Bletchley station. It is part of a Local Growth Deal through the South East Midlands Local Enterprise Partnership (SEMLEP). Both Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Councils have been involved in drawing up plans. The SEMLEP Chairman said: *“We are delighted to have been awarded £1.5m to develop Bletchley Station and create a high-quality station gateway that will connect several recent developments and provide a catalyst for further investment.”* The Milton Keynes Council leader said: *“Bletchley is a key station for East West Rail, but is in need of attention. This funding will ensure we can create a high-quality station gateway.”*

### **Daventry freight terminal expansion authorised...**

DIRFT will be expanded to provide capacity for up to 32 freight trains per day, handling more than 500,000 containers per year. A Development Consent Order for the expansion of DIRFT III was granted by the Secretary of State for Transport in a letter dated July 3rd. Work starts this year. This is the first Strategic Rail Freight Interchange (SRF) project to be authorised under the Planning Act 2008, and the

letter says *“The Secretary of State considers that there is a clear need for DIRFT III which is supported by national policy guidance on SRFs.”*

DIRFT is located on the West Coast Line, is close to the junction of the M1 and M6 and its expansion, built by Prologis, will provide eight million square feet of rail-connected distribution space. Prologis says that work on site will start by the end of this year, that the first DIRFT III buildings will be available at the end of 2016, and that *“9,000 people are expected to be employed in the completed development.”*

*The above two items from The Railway Magazine – 23rd July 2014*

### **York National Railway Museum**

A valuable 20ft x 10ft Terence Cuneo painting of Waterloo station was damaged on June 28th when it was being moved into the Station Hall for display at the Museum. Fortunately the rip in the canvas is repairable.

*Rail magazine – 23rd July 2014*

### **Special collection wows the judges**

Jeyes Heritage and Pharmacy Museum at Earls Barton has been given a special award at an awards ceremony. The museum, in The Square, was given the judges' Unique Heritage Experience Award at the Northamptonshire Museums and Historic Houses Heritage Awards. The museum is open weekdays from 8.30 am to 5.30 pm and Saturday from 8.30 am to 5pm.

### **Jobs at risk at a printing firm**

Timsons, which makes book presses in its Bath Road and Water Street factories in Kettering, says new technology means it has to reduce its workforce in order to maintain its competitiveness. Workers were told on July 21st that a consultation on their future at the business had begun.

More than 95% of books read in the UK – including the *Harry Potter* series and the *50 Shades of Grey* trilogy – are produced using printing presses made at Timsons. The firm, which was founded in 1896, said technology was advancing at incredible rates but added the consultation on staffing levels is *‘deeply regrettable’*.

In a statement the managing director said: *“For the last two years Timsons have been developing the next generation of printing presses using high-speed inkjet technology in collaboration with leading industry names which provides an alternative to the current printing process. On Monday, July 21, Timsons announced to its workforce that it has made the strategic decision to concentrate all of its development activities on this new generation of presses. Timsons have already installed a number of presses using this technology into strategic geographic areas providing a platform for future growth. This change in focus regretfully requires fewer people so there will be restructuring of the business. .... A consultation process has begun. .... These actions, although regrettable, are necessary to ensure that Timsons maintains*

*its market-leading position. The manufacture of books using this new technology is in its infancy at present and the possibilities for future growth are considerable.”*

*Once again advancing technology comes at a price. Ed*

### **Wind Turbine for a quarry site**

A planning application has been submitted for a single wind turbine at a quarry near a village in the north of the county. Bosses at Hempwell Quarry, Harborough Road, Cottingham, have asked Corby Council for permission to put up the 46m turbine at the site.

*The above three items from The Northants Telegraph – 31st July 2014*

### **Firm supplies facilities for war memorial**

Temporary structures specialists, Northampton firm Neptunus, provided facilities for one of the most poignant ceremonies to commemorate the centenary of WWI, which was attended by the The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge and HRH Prince Harry. The ceremony at St Symphorien was one of a number of special tributes staged across the UK and Europe on Monday 4th August.

The structures and facilities used by the dignitaries were put in place by Neptunus, which has its base in Swan Valley. Neptunus was appointed by Windsor-based event management specialists, H Power Group which is renowned for staging high-profile military and ceremonial occasions. A 20-strong technical team from Neptunus took just five days to erect more than 2,500 square metres of structures in fields adjoining the cemetery. It included a VIP refreshments area with linings, carpets, lighting and air conditioning to accommodate 500 guests. A Galeria roof covered an adjacent large grandstand from where the numerous dignitaries and families of those who lost their lives in the conflict viewed the ceremony. Neptunus also provided structures for a media centre, offices, medical room, kitchens and catering areas along with facilities for the BBC TV productions team, who broadcast the event to a worldwide audience.

The assignment was managed by Neptunus UK using technicians from the company’s Belgium office. The Managing Director said: “*We were deeply honoured to have been selected to support such a historically important and immensely moving occasion viewed by millions of people all around the world.*” The evocative ceremony included music performed by the Coldstream Guards band, including the Last Post and Reveille.

*Northampton Chronicle & Echo – 7th August 2014*

*We watched the service on TV and it was a very moving one. Both the Duke and Duchess and HRH Prince Harry were the perfect hosts. The service was conducted in both English and German with readings from both sides of the conflict being read by military personnel from both sides. Ed*

### **Of things to do with Railways:**

A selection of bits and pieces when reading various railway magazines or in the first instance visiting graveyards.

Member Gwyllam Thomas saw this on a gravestone whilst visiting Ely Cathedral last year.

In Memory of  
William Pickering  
who died Dec'r 24. 1843  
Aged 30 years

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Also Richard Edger  
who died Dec'r 24. 1843  
Aged 24 years

### **The Spiritual Railway**

The Line to heaven by Christ was made  
With heavenly truth the Rails are laid  
From Earth to Heaven the Line extends.  
To Life Eternal where it ends.

Repentance is the Station then  
Where Passengers are taken in.  
No Fee for them is there to pay.  
For Jesus is himself the way.

God's Word is the first Engineer.  
It points the way to Heaven so clear.  
Through tunnels dark and dreary here.  
It does the way to Glory steer.

God's Love the Fire, his Truth the Steam.  
Which drives the Engine and the Train.  
All you who would to Glory ride.  
Must come to Christ, in him abide.

In First, and Second, and Third Class.  
Repentance, Faith and Holiness.  
You must the way to Glory gain.  
Or you with Christ will not remain.

Come then poor Sinners, now's the time  
At any Station on the Line.  
If you'll repent and turn from sin  
The Train will stop and take you in.

*So if you happen to be looking at old gravestones have a look at the wording - you might just find another little gem. Ed*

### **King's Cross – Platform 9¾**

This is where fact meets fiction – the mythical platform was a figment of imagination of JK Rowling's imagination, *Harry Potter* books and films, yet later appeared at the station for real, becoming a major tourist attraction, with a platform trolley disappearing into the wall.

*It has to be seen to be believed and the queues.....!*



## **OF THIS AND THAT**

### **EMAC 88 – Engineering in Northamptonshire**

It was with much regret that the forthcoming EMAC in October which was to be held at Cosworth Engineering in Northampton, was cancelled at the beginning of August. This was due to the main speaker, a former employee of the company 'bottling out' and letting all the sides down – mainly 'he didn't think there would be anything in it for him' – so enthusiastic at the start of negotiations, left the company at Christmas to form his own company to promote all things to do with Cosworth's heritage and that's that! The other two speakers who were lined up for the day, committed themselves to the day and would have complimented the main presentation. However, without the key speaker and indeed the venue and tour it was decided to 'pull the plug' on the whole Conference as it was far too late to start to reorganise the whole day – venue, speakers and all that it entails to put on such an event. It has to be said that Terry had been 'strung along' for over six months with the promise of the key speaker, but was let down in the end 'big time'.

The next EMAC that NIAG organises should be in three years time – in 2017 – all being well!! If anyone out there has ideas for a theme and speakers, please let the

Committee know pronto so that investigations can begin again in about nine months time.

### **AGM and Committee**

As previously mentioned the AGM papers are enclosed. There is also the usual request for another committee member to make up the number to its required eight. If you, or if you know of someone who would like to join the team, please get in touch with Peter ASAP. Thank you.

**Please note** that our Secretary has recently moved and his new address can be found on the back cover. His new phone number for contacting is: 01604 812614. E-mail address remains the same.

### **Winter Programme 2014/15**

10th October Grimsby Ice Factory - speaker Chris Lester.

14th November AGM and The Northampton to Peterborough Line remembered - speaker Richard Deacon.

5th December The Pearl Button Trade - speaker George Hook. NB: This is the first Friday of the month.

### **Dates for the Diary:**

18th October EMIAC 88 – NIAG’s event - CANCELLED - see note above The next EMIAC will be organised by Derbyshire in May 2015 - details should come with the next Newsletter in January.

### **Exhibitions**

Until 23rd Nov. National Grid – An exhibition about the former Gasworks in Northampton. Northampton Museum and Art Gallery, Guildhall Road, 10am-5pm. Mondays closed.

Until 9th Nov. ‘*A Shoemaker goes to War*’ – an exhibition looking at the stories of some of the shoemakers who fought and how their absence affected those they left behind. Northampton Museum and Art Gallery, Guildhall Road. Times as above.

### **Number crunching**

#### **2014 Tour de France – England stage**

At **Leeds** station – kick start for most spectators – passenger numbers reached 243,000 on the 4th July – an increase of 50% on the previous Saturday. 26,000 passengers are believed to have continued to **Harrogate**.

At **Sheffield** – 8,000 passengers passed through the station ahead of stage 2, while at Meadowhall, **Huddersfield** saw a further 8,500 passengers.

*Rail magazine – 23rd July 2014*



## **10 things you never knew about .....**

### **..... Miles**

The current world record for the mile is held by Hicham El Guerrouj (Morocco) at 3min 43.13sec.

The word mile came from the Latin mille passuum, meaning 1,000 paces.

The Roman army, marching through uncharted territory, used to place a stick in the ground every 1,000 paces (where each pace was two steps).

This led to different mille passuum lengths, according to how tired the soldiers were, but the average is estimated to have been 1,617 yards.

English miles also varied until 1592 when an Act of Parliament laid down that: “a mile shall contain eight furlongs, every furlong 40 poles and every pole shall contain 16 foot and a half”.

That added up to a mile of 1,760 yards.

Under the international yard and pound agreement of 1959, a mile equals 0.9144 metres.

The Scots mile was traditionally longer than the English: Edinburgh’s Royal Mile is 1.12 miles long.

A nautical mile was one minute of arc along a meridian at sea, which is 196ft more than a mile.

The fastest mile run by a woman was Svetlana Masterkova’s 4min 12.56sec in 1996. That time is faster than the men’s world records until 1923.

*Daily Express – 6th May 2014*

### **.....Traffic Lights**

They were installed in Cleveland, Ohio, on the corner of Euclid Avenue and East 105th Street on 5th August, 1914

The first traffic lights of all were a manually operated, gas-lit signal put up in 1868 outside the Houses of Parliament in Westminster

After less than four weeks in use, they exploded, severely injuring the policeman operating them.

The use of red for stop, green for go and amber for caution originated with railway signals.

The European patent office lists more than 5,000 inventions relating to traffic lights.

The first three-colour traffic lights in Britain were installed in London in 1925. They were operated by policemen.

The first automatic traffic lights in Britain were installed in Wolverhampton in 1927.

Monty Python’s Contractual Obligation album released in 1980 includes a song called ‘*I Like Traffic Lights*’.

In 1928, Charles Adler Jr invented traffic lights that were activated by drivers honking...  
...they were quickly abandoned when residents complained about the excessive honking noise.

*Daily Express – 5th August 2014*

### **Information sought**

The Kellys Directories for Northamptonshire 1924 and 1928 lists, under Moulton, John Claret & Co. model steam engine manufacturer. Can anyone assist with information about this manufacturer? If so, a note to me would be appreciated.  
*Thank you.* Ed



### **Finally - a message from the Committee**

#### **NIAG Membership**

At the last NIAG committee meeting, concern was expressed about the recent decline in NIAG membership. Over the past few years, membership has remained at a reasonably constant level, with new members tending to balance out losses. However, the Treasurer has confirmed that no new members have been recruited in the past 12 months and consequently the overall number of members has declined.

This is despite efforts by the committee to promote NIAG in various ways, for example having a NIAG stand at local heritage events, giving talks about NIAG and its activities to local groups and increasing NIAG's presence on-line. The committee has agreed to try and publicise winter meetings on local radio and in the press and is considering other initiatives to encourage the recruitment of new members, including whether we should promote ourselves as an 'industrial heritage' group instead of an 'industrial archaeology' group.

The Committee would welcome any suggestions for attracting and maintaining members to ensure that NIAG has a solid future. We would also encourage members to do all they can to spread the word about NIAG and its activities.

*Peter Perkins*



**Next issue:**

Final reports from the 2014 Summer walks and visits.

More stories from the Railway magazines.

News from Northamptonshire and updates where applicable.



Decorative ironwork seen on our afternoon's walk during the EMIAC conference at Chesterfield.

Unless stated all photographs are credited to Jane and Terry Waterfield

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Newsletter:

Next Issue: **January 2015**

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