



NORTHAMPTONSHIRE'S  
INDUSTRIAL HERITAGE

## NEWSLETTER



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Northamptonshire Industrial Archaeology Group

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Photograph front cover: The weathervane on top of the gazebo protecting the haystack boiler at Swannington  
© Jane Waterfield 2015

## From the Editor

Thank you to those of you who have commented on the new look newsletter. Terry did the leg work for finding the printer and then it was up to me to redesign the front cover and this theme will continue for the year, the colour band changing in 2017. So I am delighted that the change has been well received. Please keep sending in snippets and articles for inclusion in forthcoming editions, they are always gratefully received.

The Winter session of talks have been excellent and most enjoyable and once again the January Members night proved to have a diverse range of topics. How about having a go at giving a short presentation to members next year as we do need 'fresh blood' at the sharp end. Reports for the 2015 talks can be found from page 6, 2016s will follow next time.

With the terrible weather that the country endured over the Christmas and New Year period and with all the hype surrounding global warming or not, I came across an article on '*Wild Weather*' and decided to include it in this issue on pages 14 and 16. This begs the question as to whether we really are experiencing the results of global warming or whether we are now so much more aware of what is going on around the country and world with the fast flow of information pouring into our homes one way and another be it from the news on TV, via the web or in good old fashioned newspapers.

Controversy dogs a new application for yet another warehouse development, this time between Milton Malsor and Blisworth; the article can be found on page 18 and a further piece about the Secretary of State for Transport rubbishing the plans submitted can be found on page 22.

The summer walks will commence on the 6th of May with a visit to a Shoe factory and the forthcoming programme looks like being another good one – this is enclosed with this mailshot.

*Ed*



## SUMMER VISITS OF 2015 - CONTINUE

### EMIAC at Swannington - 10th October

The day, although starting out with mists, proved to be a lovely warm Autumn day. LIHS were to host their second day at Swannington with a view to updating delegates on progress at the Califat Colliery complex. We were not to be disappointed. Eight members from NIAG made the journey up the motorway and met up at the venue with coffee cups in hand. The report of this day follows:

### Recent developments at Califat Colliery excavation – Denis Baker

The *Gorse Fields*, part of the ancient village common, displays evidence of

coal mining activities over several centuries; first by quarrying where the seam outcropped at the surface, subsequently by adit mining and then by bell pitting into the coal seams. This was purchased for conservation by Swannington Heritage Trust in 1986.



The Califat Colliery was part of that former common. Discovery of a haystack boiler in 1967 indicated that a Newcomen pumping engine had once been installed here. Acquired in 1993 the Trust, with a small team of LIHS members, has been excavating and interpreting two engine houses. All that remains of the pumping engine house are the large blocks that once supported an inverted beam engine.

Excavation and interpretation of a second engine house and boiler house is work-in-progress, which started in 2006 when a programme of tree planting had exposed an underground tunnel. Excavation of the boiler house revealed two cradles into which the boilers sat, one of which was larger than the other.

In the adjacent engine house a massive brick plinth running the length of the building was found. This had four pairs of holding-down bolt holes along its length, each descending to crow holes near its base to firmly hold an engine, of which no remains have been found.

Once the structures had been recorded and assessed, they were stabilised by the addition of sacrificial layers of brickwork and voids back-filled with gravel. Currently [2015] work continues to excavate an adjoining brick structure and interpreting the function of the original tunnel and of a second found.

### **Latest additions to Hough Mill – Roger Bisgrove**

Thringstone Smock Mill was built in the early 19th century on a finger of land between Swannington and Coleorton; in 1936 the land transferred to Swannington. The Mill was built and operated by John Griffin (1758-1833) and his son John (1792-1874). When Susannah Griffin died in 1877, the mill and house were sold to John Hough, land steward to the Coleorton Hall estate. The last commercial use of the mill was for production of animal feed during the World War 1, after which it was left to deteriorate.

North West Leicester District Council compulsory purchased the mill from the Hough Trust in 1989 with the condition it was renamed as Hough Smock Mill. Swannington Heritage Trust purchased the mill in 1994 and started its restoration with the help of Lottery funding. A new cap was installed in 1999 and a new fantail in 2009.

A new brake wheel, 10 feet in diameter, was constructed by the Trust from four-year-old seasoned oak; the three layers comprising the wheel being held together by about 100 three-quarter inch bolts. New cast iron teeth were made in a number of sections for ease of assembly.

On completion the new brake wheel weighing some 1¾ tons was dismantled in 2012 for transfer to the mill. Each of the 32 items was winched up into the cap and the wheel reassembled on the windshaft.

Work on a new wallower\* started the following year, again using seasoned oak. Construction of the main structure of the wheel was similar to that of the brake wheel but with the addition of a metal band on each side of the wheel for strength. Individual gear teeth cut from hornbeam were fitted into slots around the rim of the wallower. As before the completed wheel was dismantled and taken to the mill to be reassembled around the upright drive shaft. To allow the windshaft to be regularly turned by hand to prevent it bowing under the weight of the brake wheel, the wallower has been left in a lowered position out-of-mesh with the brake wheel.

### **The Coleorton Railway – Fred Hartley**

The Coleorton Railway (CR) is an enigma line extending a couple of miles northwards from the Swannington incline. When the Leicester and Swannington Railway (L&SR) was planned it did not extend to the mines on Sir George Beaumont's Coleorton estates.

Construction was completed in 1835 with tunnels at Peggs Green and Newbold having portals similar to those at Glenfield and an office and weighbridge. However it failed to reach the newly developed Smoile Colliery - its *raison d'être*. Instead it ended a quarter of a mile away on the south side of the Cloud Hill Plateway belonging to the Ashby Canal Company. Coal was in fact carried from the mine on the plateway before being transferred to CR wagons.

With the opening of the L&SR, the canal companies started a price-cutting war that had the effect of reducing the price of coal in Leicester by half. Consequently Smoile coal couldn't be sold at a profit which limited further developments.

By the end of the 1830s coal prices had recovered and Smoile coal was shipped over the rails to Leicester in modest tonnages. Also the L&SR helped by lending money to the CR and Ashby Canal companies to lay a combination track on the Cloud Hill branch from Newbold to Cloud Hill Quarry to allow both standard gauge wagons and plateway wagons to run through to the quarry. This was in use by 1840-41.

Account books indicate that slack coal was regularly delivered to Cloud Hill with lime carried on the return journey. There were coal shipments from Smoile, Peggs Green and, from 1851, California collieries. By 1875 however traffic had dwindled to less than the pre-1840 level.

## **Leicester and Swannington Railway [L&SR]- Bill Pemberton**

Opened in 1832 to transport coal from the pits in the Swannington area to Leicester, the route of the L&SR can be traced on maps and satellite images for most of its length. Construction of the line faced three obstacles: the rising incline away from the pits, the falling incline at Bagworth and the high ground between Glenfield and Leicester. When the Midland Railway acquired the track as part of the Leicester-Coalville line in 1848 they built the Thornton Deviation line to by-pass the Bagworth incline.

Although coal mining ceased at the end of the 19th century, the Swannington incline remained in operation until 1948 to keep the steam-powered Calcutta pumping station supplied with coal to ensure neighbouring mines didn't flood. About half of the original line is still an operational railway used by freight traffic serving Bardon Quarry. Of the remainder about half is public footpaths; the mile-long Glenfield tunnel is closed to the public and the rest is in private ownership.

The foundations of the winding house at the top of the 1 in 17 Swannington incline have been stabilised and interpreted and a short section of track was installed. This and most of the incline is open to the public.

It is possible to walk the complete length of the Bagworth incline. Near the top of it are the remains of the incline operator's house; this last remaining building of the LS&R was given Grade II listed status but sadly has been allowed to fall into disrepair and is now a pile of bricks.

The former Stag and Castle pub, now a private residence, was one of the original stops on the line. Nearby on the footpath can be seen a set of stone steps almost certainly the original stone sleepers used to support the LS&R rails. An industrial unit now stands on the site of Ratby station but the former 'booking office', the Railway Inn, still exists. Nearby can be seen a length of the original fish-belly rail.

Leicestershire County Council now owns the Glenfield Tunnel, the third major civil engineering works on the L&SR; both entrances have been bricked-up. LIHS are allowed to open it a few days a year for visitors; currently access is only to the first air shaft. All of the 13 air shafts used in construction and to ventilate the tunnel still survive; some are in private gardens but others can be seen from the road side.

A public park now occupies the site of the West Bridge station. A branch line from the station crossed the River Soar and the canal to access the canal wharf. The pillars that carried the line across the river still exist and remains of the track can be seen near the road bridge over the canal. The railway was carried over the canal by a lifting bridge to allow canal traffic to pass beneath. This has been preserved and is currently [2015] outside the former Snibston Discovery Park Museum in Coalville but its future is in doubt due to the impending closure of

Snibston by the Council.

Lunch was a bit of a scramble as there was a fairly tight schedule for the afternoon walks. Thankfully the weather was kind and having packed up the NIAG stand Terry and I set out for Hough Mill and the walk to look at the Callifat Colliery site and the newly erected boiler. Others walked up from the village hall to the mill, others went to the incline. LIHS have worked extremely hard in the excavation



and interpretation of the footings found beneath the surface of this large site, some of which were clearly visible from the road leading into the Mill complex. When finished, if ever, this will be a very good legacy for generations to come.

The haystack boiler was curiously encased in a wooden structure – more like a gazebo

than an enhancement of this historical artefact. Bearing in mind that this boiler has stood outside in the elements for years, more could have been done to ensure that the whole thing could be seen to its full height. The roof was sited low over the top of the boiler and somewhat spoil the whole effect. However, at least the site has something worthy to offset the good work being undertaken by LIHS in their attempts to excavate and show the visitor what once stood on the site.

It must also be said that the colours of the trees with their autumn hues were magnificent and if you looked closely at the ground excellent specimens of fungi could be seen.

Although the day was drawing in, Glenfield Tunnel was also visited and we understand that this, too, was well worth the drive to look at it, as we decided not to do the 20 minute drive but came home instead.

On reflection this was a worthy second visit to this area for the EMIAC conference hosted by LIHS.

*Jane & Terry Waterfield*

The following websites provide additional background to the papers presented:

Swannington Heritage Trust - [www.swannington-heritage.co.uk](http://www.swannington-heritage.co.uk)

Coleorton Railway [newbold.g-forbes.co.uk/page19.html](http://newbold.g-forbes.co.uk/page19.html)

\**Wallower* - a horizontal gear driven off the brake wheel

Photograph above shows the Califat Colliery site, work still in progress.



## WINTER TALKS 2015/16

### Spitfires over Castle Bromwich - 9th October

*Regrettably the speaker, Mike Gibson, failed to turn up to give his talk; the notes below were taken from a presentation he made to another organisation.*

In 1938 work commenced on the construction of a new factory dedicated to the production of aircraft, initially the Spitfire Mk II fighter aircraft. At that time the site was 132 acres in size with an adjacent airfield (circa 1909) to dispatch the aircraft to their various squadrons. After 18 months of activity and £4.574m spent, the plant was completed and ready for initial production of the Spitfire MK II in 1940.

The factory was in the hands of Lord Nuffield but, with production very sporadic over a critical time, the Government persuaded Nuffield to hand over control to Lord Beaverbrook. Chief test pilot was Alex Henshaw, who started at Weybridge and moved to Castle Bromwich in 1940. He is the only pilot known to have performed a 360 degree barrel roll in a Lancaster bomber, a feat that was considered by some to be reckless or impossible due to the aircraft's size and relatively modest performance.

Faced with an ill-disciplined workforce – poor timekeeping, high absentee rate, and low production – Beaverbrook decided to bring in new management from other aircraft factories.

By the end of the war 12,000 Spitfires and 300 Lancaster bombers had been manufactured at the site despite being hit during a bombing raid in 1940 when six people were killed.

Following cessation of hostilities Fisher & Ludlow were offered the Castle Bromwich site by the Government in 1946 to house their 14 factories which were spread all over Birmingham at the time.

The site is now home to Jaguar Land Rover.

*Terry Waterfield*

Line up: Lancasters and Spitfires



---oooOooo---

## Restoration of Wooden Canal Boats - 13th November

Peter Boyce has a boat building yard in Braunston and since retiring has been restoring three wooden canal boats.

A wooden canal boat is 7ft wide and 70ft long. It has elm bottom boards 2-3" thick, oak side frames and 3" thick side planking, an ash cabin frame and a pitch pine keelson (2 x 40ft planks joined with one scarf joint). Originally this was all held together with iron nails. Over time acid rain mixing with this combination of oak and iron allowed the side planking to rot away. There were examples of rotted planks showing how 3" oak can be hollow on the inside but look perfectly good from the outside. There was also a selection of tools on show that had been (and some still are) used in the yard, including caulking hammers, an adze, and hand boring tools.

The three restored boats are:-

The "*James Reader*" was built in 1948 and worked through until 1960 carrying coal to power stations around Birmingham. Jerry boats (tugs) would tow up to 10 of these boats. Finally the hard winters of the early 1960s froze the canals when the coal was most needed. The business was turned over to road transport and it never returned.

The "*Lucy*", built in 1952 at Braunston, was a sunken hulk when Peter bought her for £1. Before she could be moved, she was wrapped from the underside in plastic sheets to prevent water ingress whilst pumping out the hull. A steel frame was built to hold the structure together before she floated and she was then recovered back to the boatyard.

The "*Clent*", built in 1949 for Fellows Morton & Clayton, was originally fitted with an 8hp single cylinder Bollinger engine.

Peter described some of the techniques that both he and the original boat builder had used to replace and rebuild, for example:-

Flat bottom boards, which were subject to wear due to grounding on the canal bottom and therefore often replaced, are fitted with a taper on the width so that they can be replaced individually without disturbing their neighbour.

Side planks. Before any are removed a gauge is made to record the angle it makes with the bottom. This record is taken at set points up the length of the plank or the length of the boat. A former is also made showing the shape of the side frames. A template is then made of the actual plank. Timber is then cut as per template and chamfered as per gauge and former. Then the plank is steamed for 5 hours (2 hours per inch plus 1 hour), after which it becomes pliable (for about 15 minutes) and can be manoeuvred into position and clamped - taking up the shape of the boat. These days stainless steel bolts and coach screws are used to secure, as opposed to the traditional iron nails.

Knees. The brackets that connect the side frames to the bottom boards were

originally made from the part of the tree that grew in that shape, thus providing maximum strength. These were replaced in “*Clent*” by FM&C with wrought iron, so during restoration a membrane was inserted between the oak and the iron to prevent the old problems reoccurring.

Sealer. Pitch has been replaced by silicone based sealants, however oakum (old rope) caulking is still used.

There were also many photos showing the process of preparing and fitting the stem (the “*pointy*” front bit) and the stern post, both substantial pieces of oak.

Altogether it was a most enlightening talk, after which Peter invited us to visit his yard next summer, which we will no doubt take him up on.\*

*Ron Hanson*

*\*And yes we are visiting this boatyard in May (18th) Ed*

---oooOooo---

### **Mind the Gap – 5th December**

Jason Cross described himself as a railway enthusiast with a particular interest in the London Underground system and explained that he usually did the show for like minded enthusiasts. He started by showing us a selection of slides of passenger and engineering trains that he had taken from station platforms and then showed us a map of the underground railway network as it really is. This he compared to the more familiar map pioneered by Harry Beck in the 1930s. On this style of map, which is still in use today, all the railways are shown as straight lines; horizontal, vertical, or angled at 45 degrees and the stations are spaced at regular intervals. When comparing the maps all present could then appreciate how confusing a map of the system would be if it was based on the actual layout of the railway network.



Jason explained that there are two sizes of trains on the underground, known as surface and tube stock. The surface trains are built to a similar sized loading gauge to that used on the main lines of Network Rail and work on the Metropolitan, District, Circle and Hammersmith and City lines. These early lines are either on the surface or just below it and most of the tunnel sections were constructed by the cut and cover method. This method of construction which requires a large trench to be excavated and then roofed over caused a lot of disruption with roads having to be closed and even buildings demolished when these lines were built. All the other lines are built to a much smaller loading gauge and these

are the tube lines. The underground sections of these were built by tunnelling and are generally much deeper than those built by the cut and cover method although the tube lines also run on the surface at some points. Mile End station is the only place where a cross platform interchange between surface and tube stock is possible.

The first line to open was in 1863 and ran from Paddington to Farringdon; this is now part of the Metropolitan Line. This line which was the world's first underground railway was built by the cut and cover method and operated by trains hauled by steam locomotives. It was not until 1890 that the first tube line was opened and operated with electric locomotives hauling the trains. Expansion of the system continued until World War 2 when work on new or extended lines ceased, some of the tunnels on the Central Line extension which was under construction at the time were used as factories for producing aircraft components. The Central Line extension eventually opened in 1949 but it was not until the opening of the Victoria Line in 1971 that any more new lines were built. This line links many of the other lines and apart from the train maintenance depot is entirely underground. This was followed by the Jubilee Line in 1979 and the Jubilee Line extension in 2000. Over the years some small sections of the network have closed as have some stations, however there have been no major line closures. In the last few years the East London line between Shoreditch and New Cross has been transferred to London Overground and now much extended forms part of that system.

Today the system is electrified at 630 volts DC and comprises of eleven different lines, all coloured differently on the underground map, 270 stations, and 249 route miles 20 miles of which are in sub surface tunnels and 93 of which are in tube tunnels. Only 45% of the system is actually underground. The lines cross the River Thames 11 times but only two of these crossings are above it. Morden depot is the most southerly point on the system and the Central Line on its way to Epping is the only line to go outside of the M25. At the present time the system carries on average 4 million passengers a day, compared to an average of 2.75 million passengers carried per day on the national rail system.

The rolling stock on the sub-surface lines is being replaced by new stock which is being assembled by Bombardier at Derby and is known as S stock. Once fully assembled the new trains are taken to the test track at Old Dalby near Melton Mowbray where they are tested and provide the unusual spectacle of underground stock running beneath overhead electrification wires. Once testing is complete they are then towed to Ruislip depot for commissioning before entering service. The Metropolitan Line trains are formed of eight coaches whilst those on the Circle and Hammersmith and City lines are formed of seven coaches. The District Line is at present worked by D stock built by Metro-Cammell of Birmingham in 1980; this is due to be replaced shortly by seven-coach trains of S stock.

The tube lines are operated by rolling stock of differing ages and designs, the oldest stock in use anywhere on the underground system is known as Mk 2 stock and dates from 1972; this is used on the Bakerloo Line. The newest is known as 2009 stock and is used on the Victoria Line and is a tube version of the S stock. The trains on the Waterloo and City Line are 1992 stock and are similar to the rolling stock used on the Central Line. They were actually built for British Rail who used to operate the W&C line until its transfer to the underground.

Out of peak hours during the daytime about 20% of the trains return to the various depots for cleaning and maintenance. The trains are stabled at night during the four or five hours that there are no trains running and further work can be carried out on them during the period. Track maintenance also takes place at night after the last service trains have run. The maintenance trains are hauled by electric locomotives until they reach the section of track where the maintenance is taking place. Here where the electricity supply is isolated the locomotives switch over to run on battery power.

Jason pointed out that there is much for the industrial archaeologist to look out for on the underground system as a lot of the modernisation has been carried out in a sympathetic way. Some stations still retain their tiled exteriors and he showed a photograph of Kilburn Park station as an example. Many stations on the Piccadilly Line retain their original tiles and features at platform level. Sudbury Town station was designed by Charles Holden, as were a number of stations on the Piccadilly Line, and still retains many original features at street level. Some of the surface stations on the Central Line were built by the Great Eastern Railway Company and still have canopy ironwork bearing that company's initials, also some of the surface stations on the Northern Line still show evidence of their former owner the Great Northern Railway. A few stations that have been re-named retain tiles at platform level showing the original name but at Hampstead the tiles show the name Heath Street a name that it was never known by.

During the evening we were treated to a really good selection of slides and movie footage both on the surface and underground taken in the daytime and at night. Jason explained how he finds out about engineering trains at night and how he manages to photograph them, as well as showing us how he takes photographs over fences and walls by setting his camera up on a long pole and using a tablet to see what he is photographing. This was a thoroughly interesting



evening that made those present realise how the underground system has grown in the last 150 years and how important as a means of transport in the capital it is today. When visiting London in future I, for one, will take more interest in the train I am travelling on and try to stop and look for some of the features described and shown to us.

*Mick Dix*

*Full of information a small book 'London Underground Guide 2016' by Jason is an excellent guide to the Underground. Published by Train Crazy Publishing at a cost of £9.95. This gives a history of each line and a route guide history to the stations. Ed*

*Photographs for this article (c) Jason Cross. His descriptions for the two photographs are:-*

*Page 8: A train of Northern Line 1995 Stock calls at East Finchley with a High Barnet to Morden (via Bank) service on 16th May 2015. Originally opened by the Great Northern Railway in August 1867, East Finchley became part of the Underground from 3rd July 1939. The station was rebuilt in the late 1930s to a design by Charles Holden which includes the kneeling archer by Eric Aumonier seen in the picture.*

*Page 10: Battery loco L25 passing through Notting Hill Gate (District and Circle lines) with a Ruislip Depot to Earl's Court engineer's train at 01.28 on 11th February 2015. The station here dates back to 1868 when the Metropolitan Railway opened its line from Praed Street Junction to South Kensington.*



## UPDATES

### **Wicksteed Park (1)**

The Wicksteed Trust is planning to fund a reproduction of the first slide in the park; a structure that was to change the history of children's play forever. The park was founded in 1921 and it is 100 years since the trust formed to carry on the work of its founder Charles Wicksteed. The Chairman, Oliver Wicksteed, the great-grandson of Charles said: *'The trust has endured for 100 years and kept alive Charles Wicksteed's dream to provide healthy play for children and families, despite facing many challenges, and with no regular external funding'* (incredibly the park is free to enter). The trust aims to maintain free access, despite having no regular external funding, and is determined to ensure the park has a sustainable future. They also want to reinstate the feel of the original park and continue to encourage natural play, where children enjoy free play simply through using their imagination.

*Northants Telegraph – 14th January 2016*

### **Wicksteed Park (2)**

The Park has revealed a £4.5m plan to bring the history and heritage of *'the home of children's play'* alive to all visitors and would have been unveiled on the 29th January. The new restoration and rejuvenation project involves a bid to the

Heritage Lottery Fund for £2.5m alongside £2m from the Wicksteed Charitable Trust. Key parts of the plan include the restoration and landscaping of the playground, re-introducing heritage play equipment including a replica of the first slide in the park and provided a context for the history of the park.

Included also is the restoration of important historical buildings and aspects of the park which have been lost over the past decades, restoring aspects of the original rose garden, the fountain lawn and landscaping around the pavilion and transforming the Captain's Lounge at the top of the pavilion building into a learning centre and conference space with an outdoor-walk-around viewing platform so everyone can enjoy spectacular views across the park. The park's main thoroughfare is to be rejuvenated, with street furniture and restoration work in keeping with its historic heritage. There will also be the creation of a Wicksteed ice cream parlour serving traditional Wicksteed ice cream together with heritage buildings for displays and information, all within an area that has not been accessible to the public for generations.

The Trust Chairman says: *'This project is part of a master plan for the future of the whole park, retaining its historical significance and highlighting its importance from a heritage perspective.'* The Trust wants visitors to understand they are in a place where key elements of children's play developed.

*Northants Telegraph – 21st January 2016*

### **Old Midland Railway shed:**

HLF awarded £26,400 of development costs on the 15th September 2015 towards working up the detail of a £1.345m project to develop the old railway shed (296 in the *Gazetteer*) into Student Union facilities for the waterside campus of Northampton University. [Issue 129 - winter also refers]

*Information from member Matthew Naylor*

### **New use for Midland Railway engine shed at Northampton**

For many years now, the former Midland Railway engine shed has been derelict, surrounded by steel fencing in the wasteland behind the Avon Cosmetics premises at Nunn Mills on the Bedford Road. This Grade II listed building was constructed in 1873 when the Northampton (St Johns) to Bedford line was



(c) Peter Perkins

opened and was later used by British Rail as a welding school. Some 15 years ago a fire destroyed part of the roof and it has not been used since.

The University of Northampton is building their new Waterside campus in this vicinity and the engine shed is to be refurbished to

provide offices and other facilities for the Students Union. Funding has been approved to restore the shed to its original state, including replacing the wooden roof structure and reinstalling the clerestory roof that disappeared a long time ago. As part of the funding agreement the Students Union will be opening up the premises for local groups to use and will be undertaking a programme of activities to explain the building's history. It is expected that NIAG will be able to visit the facility once restoration is complete in a couple of years' time.

*Peter Perkins*

### **Wolverton Works – a rethink on the plans to demolish the works**

A decision on the future of the LNWR's Wolverton Works has been deferred until early February. Site owner and property development company St Modwen plans to bulldoze many of the original buildings on the 37-acre site to make way for a £100m regeneration project, including 300 new houses and a budget supermarket. However, government advisory body Historic England has now intervened, severely criticising the loss of so much heritage.

What is the world's oldest continuously open railway works opened in September 1838. It entered administration on July 29th 2013, when Railcare, which operates the works, ran out of cash. After four weeks in administration, Germany Company Knorr-Bremse purchased the business on August 27th that year, by which time 50% of the works' staff had been made redundant and train companies had removed their trains from the massive sheds.

St Modwen has suggested that all of the buildings will be demolished and that half of the site will be taken out of railway use. The only buildings that St Modwen plans to conserve are the Grade 2-listed Royal Train Shed, Reading Room and New Works. The works is currently used to house the Royal Train.

In a new report, Historic England stated: "*The extent of the demolition proposed is such that the site would lose virtually all of its architectural and historical special interest,*" and this would cause "*substantial harm*" to the conservation area, the report adds. It reveals that the structures that St Modwen said it would preserve would become "*isolated fragments*" of history if the remainder were bulldozed. Historic England has also questioned the claim that there is a need for more housing, stating it would be of "*limited benefit*" because the site is not allocated for housing in the local plan. It also challenged St Modwen's claim that converting and reusing the existing buildings would not be possible or viable. The report concluded "*the works is a very complex and difficult site where there is a clear need for regeneration. In our view this should be heritage-led and focus on the retention and reuse of the historic buildings on the site.*"

Local residents spoke out against the plans at a public meeting in Wolverton in November. A spokesman for Future Wolverton said: "*People are certainly in favour of the economic boost the development would bring to the town, but they don't want to lose the heritage.*"

Milton Keynes Council was to rule on the planning application in December but

a revised application from St Modwen means that the decision has been deferred to February.

*Heritage Railway – December/January 2015/16*

### **Hopes fading for the former St Edmunds Hospital, Northampton**

Hope for the above building being turned into a retirement village is fast disappearing. The site has been falling into disrepair for the past 18 years since it closed. A year ago there looked to be hope as the Cypriot-based owners lodged plans to create a retirement village of 130 care apartments and a 62-bed specialist care home on the site. In June 2015 they were approved – providing the developers submitted a document justifying its plans to demolish the Grade II listed former school house and nurses' home. Despite this being a mere formality, the document has never surfaced.

It is believed that the borough council needs to use its powers to buy the site off the developers and develop the site themselves. It is thought that the company is not serious and have no intention of developing the land and that it is time to 'call it a day' on the prevaricating.

However.....the developers, who brought the site from Rochmills in 2012, claim that the plans were not submitted because it was '*frustrated by constant delays from the authorities*'!

*Northampton Chronicle & Echo – 18th February 2016*



## **MISCELLANY ITEMS OF INTEREST**

### **Wild Weather**

In 2003 two of the greatest natural catastrophes occurred, there were the East Coast floods when the North Sea surge inundated great areas of eastern England resulting in the loss of 307 lives and the evacuation of 30,000 people from their homes on the 15th August 1953 and then the Great Storm of November 1703 when 8,000 people died, this event making the gales of October 1978 and January 1990 look almost tame by comparison.

Under various headings here are some more '*wild weather*' happenings – some of which no doubt members will/ may remember.

Flood: Lynmouth : 34 lives were lost and 98 buildings destroyed in the flood of 15th August 1952.

Severn marshes in 1606: A memorial plate in the church of St Mary Magdalene, Goldcliffe sums up what it meant for a parish on the Monmouthshire moors:

“1606: ON THE XX DAY OF JANVARY AS IT CAME TO PAS IT PLEASD GOD THE FLVD DID FLOW TO THE EDUGE OF THIS SAME BRAS AND IN THIS PARISH THEARE WAS LOST 5000 AND OD POVND S BESIDES XXII PEOPLE WAS IN THIS PARISH DROWN”

Low lying areas around both sides of the Bristol Channel were affected; many

accounts describe the height of the waves – ‘*huge and mighty hills of water*’ according to one writer – and the speed at which the drowning of the land took place. Lives were lost in both South Wales and the West Country, the loss of livestock did not help matters. The floods were probably the result of an exceptional high tide coinciding with the storm surge driven in by a roaring south-westerly gale.

Hail: On the 5th September 1958 a storm at Horsham in Sussex produced hailstones the size of small tennis balls, one of which weighed 141g. On 19th May 1760 there was a tremendous storm of hail at Littleport on the Isle of Ely which entirely destroyed a field of hemp, stripped the fruit trees bare and reported three days later as being as large as 2½ inches.

Storm: The storm which battered the southern half of England on the night of 26/27th November 1703 was an event of quite devastating ferocity. Church steeples crashed to the ground, while the lead was ripped from their roofs and stained glass windows shattered. Windmills were flattened, thatch ripped from cottages and barns and hundreds of thousands of trees uprooted. Many people died as toppled chimneys broke down the roofs of houses. At sea, ships seeking shelter were torn from their anchors, some being driven and de-masted across the North Sea; others being blown ashore and dashed to pieces by enormous waves. On the Goodwin Sands alone, five men-of-war were lost and with them some 1,600 men. The first Eddystone lighthouse, 14 miles off the south Devon coast was completely destroyed and with it its creator, Henry Winstanley. Northern France, the Netherlands and north Germany also suffered.

Snow: Many of us may recall the blizzards which were such a feature of the winters of 1947 and 1963. In both winters, south-west England endured the worst storms. In 1963 there were drifts 25 feet deep at Princetown on Dartmoor. Some people being trapped for eight weeks.

One of the worst Scottish blizzards occurred on the evening of 24th January 1794 in the Southern Uplands.

Cold: The period from 1550-1850 is often referred to by climatic historians as the ‘*Little Ice Age*’. The winters of the late 17th century were particularly cold and, possibly following southerly-extending tongues of Arctic ice, Eskimos in their kayaks occasionally appeared around the coasts of Scotland. Sir John Reresby described the Great Frost of 1683/84 “*At this time there was soe great a frost that Thamse was frozen over belowe the Beridge. Ther was bull-baitings and hors-races upon the Thamse; the sault water was frozen upon all the coasts above a league into the sea, soe that we had no comerce from any part of the world, noe shippes or boats being able to goe out or come in.*”

The Thames remained frozen for ten weeks.

Fog: For centuries, Britain has been known as a land of mists and fogs and its cities in particular have suffered from fogs thick with pollution, known as smogs. London’s ‘pea-soupers’ reached a peak in 1952 when smoke-laden fog shrouded

the capital from Friday 5th December to Tuesday 9th December. Traffic was brought to a standstill, with people generally suffering from respiratory problems. Outside of the capital, the most notable fog was probably that of the summer of 1793. On the 8th June, a massive volcanic eruption began in Iceland – 11km<sup>3</sup> of ash and lava pouring from the ground. After a short time-lag observers in Britain began to record the effects of massive atmospheric pollution.

*Living History magazine – December 2003*

*I don't remember the smog of 1952 even though I was only six, but I do remember many many others when we would crawl along the road using the centre markings as a guide as you didn't dare go into the curb for fear of running into a parked car. Another memory is of the time when there was a terrible fire up our Lane, we heard the wailing sirens but couldn't make out where the fire was as you couldn't see out of the windows the fog being so dense. The fogs were quite dreadful and I do remember that if you had the misfortune to be out in them, on occasions it was hard to see your hand in front of your face – I kid you not. Oh and by the way, we did not leave school early because of this! Ed*

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### **Cool View of global warming**

Consider the following extract from a report which appeared in the national press recently:

*“The Arctic Ocean is warming up, icebergs are growing scarcer and in some places the seals are finding the water too hot, according to a report to the Commerce Department from the Consulate at Bergen, Norway.*

*Reports from fishermen, seal-hunters and explorers all point to a radical change in climate conditions and hitherto unheard-of-temperatures in the Arctic zone. Exploration expeditions report that scarcely any ice has been met as far north as 81 degrees, 29 minutes. Sounding to a depth of 3.100m showed the Gulf Stream still very warm. Great masses of ice have been replaced by moraines of earth and stones, while many longstanding glaciers have entirely disappeared.*

*Few seals and no white fish are found in the eastern Arctic, while vast shoals of herring and smelts, which have never before ventured so far north, are seen in the old seal fishing grounds.*

*Within a few years it is predicted that due to the ice melting, the sea will rise and make most coastal cities uninhabitable.”*

It all sound fairly familiar, doesn't it? Apparently this report was dated 2nd November 1922 – more than 93 years ago. The reporter adds: “Presumably all this must have been caused by the Model T Ford's exhaust emissions!”

*A correspondent in the Daily Mail – 14th January 2016.*

Furthermore consider this:

During December 2015 and January 2016, parts of this country experienced some horrific floods – some areas being inundated more than once. All our great leaders could say, aided and abetted by the Met Office, was that such rainfall was

unprecedented. A number of commentators have written essays in the national press pointing out that heavier precipitations were recorded, and reported, in the early 19th and late 18th centuries!

Whilst reading about the Denver Sluice that NIAG visited in 2014, I came across this comment:

*“... that its owners, the government super-power, the Environment Agency, considered it to be of such vital importance that they allowed it to seize up.”*

*Source: <http://www.ousewashes.info/slucies/denver-slucice.htm>*

When the Lakeland village of Glenridding first flooded all the locals were up in arms because their flood defence plans – approved by all the relevant councils – were turned down by, you’ve guessed it, the EA who put ‘beauty’ before practicalities.

In 2014 the Thames flooded and came within inches of my cousin’s house. The cause then was blamed on the EA prohibiting dredging of the river. The Dutch minister who had been brought across made it quite clear that *“we have to manage our waterways properly”!* Enough said.

*Terry Waterfield*

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### **London – Mount Pleasant**

The former Post Office Underground Railway could re-open at the end of 2016, three years earlier than planned, because the vast majority of the required £22.5 million has been raised.

*Rail magazine – 5th-28th August 2015*

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## **NEWS FROM AROUND THE COUNTY**

### **Stoke Bruerne locks**

Over the weekend of the 6th/7th February the locks at Stoke Bruerne were drained for repair. The photos below have been taken by member Ron Whittaker who visited the locks on Tuesday 16th February, a bright and sunny day.



## **Proposed new rail depot**

The next contentious issue which will be discussed at length is news that a new Rail depot is proposed for the area between Milton Malsor and Blisworth.

The Rail Central plan has been put forward by Ashfield Land, which has acquired, or has options on, most of the land between Milton Malsor and Blisworth, stretching from the A43 to the A508. [sic] Similar to DIRFT near Crick, it would see the building of warehouses, new rail sidings, a hotel, a pub and restaurant, a service depot and HGV parking. However at eight million square feet, it would dwarf even DIRFT, which currently covers about 6.2 million square feet.

Understandably residents in Blisworth are extremely concerned. Traffic currently through the village is fairly chaotic, but with 8,000 new jobs there will be a huge number of new commuters, many of whom will want to use the village. There is also concern that this will become a 24-hour operation.

It is understood that HGVs will use the A43 and most new commuters would be likely to use the main road from Milton Malsor to Blisworth. The development would be so big it will effectively join the two villages, which are just over a mile apart.

Ashfield Lane said the Government is very keen to switch long distance freight from roads and motorways to rail as much as possible. The location between Milton Malsor and Blisworth is ideal, because it is both near the M1 and where the Northampton Loop rail line meets the West Coast Main Line, DIRFT, by contrast, is served only by the Northampton Loop.

Rail Central's planning director says: "*Moving goods and products around the country effectively and efficiently is crucial for the economy, for competitiveness, and for the environment – and our national planning policy supports investment into more freight on rail.*" Because of the high priority placed on reducing road freight, the ultimate decision on whether this proceeds will be taken by the Government rather than locally. If the Secretary of State gives the go-ahead, then land not acquired would be compulsorily purchased. A site known to have been bought is Arm Farm. The first stage is scheduled to be up and running by 2021.

Meanwhile the MP for the area is seeking an urgent meeting with a rail minister over the potential impact Rail Central would have on the Northamptonshire's countryside. Interestingly she had no idea about the plans and is urgently seeking clarification from that rail minister.

*Northampton Chronicle & Echo – 7th January 2016*

## **Meanwhile at DIRFT**

The third expansion to the DIRFT site will be commencing sometime during February. DIRFT III is a massive expansion of the rail hub site, and will include around 15 new warehouses and logistic buildings, new roads and roundabouts and an extension of the rail line serving the site. The new site lies to the north of the current warehouses, between the M1 and A5, on part of the old radio mast site. Land off the other side of the A5 is earmarked for thousands of new homes

for Rugby's expansion. It will see 7.86 million sq ft of logistics and warehousing created. The rail arm already built over the A428 to serve the large Sainsbury's unit will be extended over the A5 and into the new site.

DIRFT III will provide 8 million sq ft of rail served distribution space located in the 'Golden Triangle' formed by the M1, M6 and M42 – an area central to the UK with good links to the national motorway and rail networks, and a plentiful supply of workers. The original part of DIRFT opened in 1997, and was designed as a hub on both the road from Felixstowe port and the Channel Tunnel for freight. DIRFT II was granted planning permission in 2005 with an extension to the rail link.

*Daventry Express – 14th January 2016*

### **Nene Past Trust**

The HLF has made a £2.8m grant to the above Trust; The past, present and future importance of the River Nene between Peterborough and Northampton was to be highlighted by an earmarked grant of £2.8m from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) announced last October. The grant is part of the Landscape Partnership (LP) programme. Through a series of projects, Nenescape aims to achieve a well-managed, understood and appreciated landscape that tells tales of times gone by; inspires a sense of adventure; is easy to explore; rich in wildlife, and resilient to the pressures of on-going population growth.

Development funding of £208,300 has also been awarded to help the partnership progress their plans to apply for a full grant at a later date.

This success is the culmination of two years' work by many partner organisations to put together a scheme of projects across the Nene Valley that will build knowledge and understanding of the landscape and its history, improve the visitor experience through improved access and interpretation to heritage sites, and reduce the threats to and negative impacts on heritage. Projects will include interpretation and improved access to historically significant sites, restoration of important wildlife sites, and will create better connections between sites. Over the next few years there will be many opportunities for the local community to be involved in shaping the projects and learning new skills.

Clare Freeman, Head of Landscape said: "*We are delighted that the Heritage Lottery Fund has given us this support. This Nene Valley's heritage is at risk from changing land use and population growth, this support will allow us to work proactively to protect and enhance the natural and cultural heritage in Nene Park as part of the project area. I would particularly like to thank Nene Valley Railway, Nene Valley Archaeological Trust and the Cycle West group who met with HLF officers on their last visit to show the great potential for local projects*".

Explaining the importance of HLF's support, Jonathan Platt, Head of HLF East Midlands, said: "*Rich in wildlife and important heritage, the Nene Valley already attracts nearly two million visitors a year. It's also an area that is seeing large-scale changes with new developments and population growth. This National Lottery investment will*

*support a wide range of organisations to work together and help more people explore the fascinating hidden stories and beauty of the Nene Valley.”*

*Taken from the Nenescape website.*

*Thank you to member Matthew Nayler for bringing this to my attention. Ed.*

## **Daventry’s Canal Boatlift**

*Another contentious topic which is angering many residents in Daventry and one which has been rumbling on for ten years or more is the proposal by the Council to build a canal arm into Daventry and with it their idea of a boat lift to get the boats up and into the town.*

Opposition to proposals to spend £100,000 on designs for a boat lift for Daventry’s planned canal arm has been growing. This cost would add to the £1,279 million already spent by DDC on the canal and waterside project over the past 10 years. The proposals were set out in 2005 and include a water front development on the Eastern Way playing field, linked to the Grand Union by a new canal arm. The planning application was lodged in 2012, but has yet to be decided on. It includes a series of canal locks to raise boats out of the town and up to the level of the main canal.\* The Council says that replacing locks with a more impressive boat lift would attract tourists and boaters to the town.

The leader of the council says “*Building the UK’s first canal arm for more than 150 years is a huge development that requires a large amount of highly detailed preparatory work and consultation. The canal arm will be built to the highest standards and we have completed feasibility reports, detailed designs and a large amount of work to shape the planning application such as technical reports, ground investigations and consultations.*” He also says that “*the destination canal arm and boatlift would create a tourist attraction of possible national significance, not only bring great social and economic benefits locally but also helping to drive future investment into our district worth millions of pounds.*”

*Daventry Express – 14th January 2016*

Council papers setting out the case for allocating the funds say the lift would create a tourist attraction of “*regional and possibly national significance in a similar way to the Falkirk Wheel*”, which connects two canals in central Scotland and attracts about 500,000 visitors a year.

*Daventry Express 5th Dec. 2015:*

*[www.daventryexpress.co.uk/news/community-news/daventry-narrow-boat-lift-plan-awarded-110k-by-council-1-7099594](http://www.daventryexpress.co.uk/news/community-news/daventry-narrow-boat-lift-plan-awarded-110k-by-council-1-7099594) [accessed 25 January 2016]*

*\* I understand that the lift would be on the Grand Union and allow vessels to be raised to the level of the canal arm, which would be some 12 metres (39.6 ft) higher. In the 1800s when the Grand Union was built it was proven to be too costly to take it into Daventry so bypassed the town and went via Braunston following the line of the valley. Recently some bright spark has drawn everyone’s attention to the fact that there is already a purpose built visitor attraction in the area in the shape of the former Weedon Barracks which the*

*Council have done nothing to assist in its restoration and upkeep. The canal arm which once ran into the Barracks was filled in and sold off for housing and would have, with a bit of ingenuity, made a wonderful entrance into a ready-made historic site. However Weedon is not Daventry and therefore of no consequence whatsoever to the council! Ed*

### **Northampton was never a serious WCML contender**

In the Rail magazine of 2014 there was a letter written in response to an article written by journalist Barry Doe, concerning the West Coast Main Line and Northampton. The writer of the 'letter' was shocked to see him (BD) repeating the old baloney that Northampton successfully stopped the West Coast Main Line going through the town. This was convincingly disproved by a respected local historian, Joan Wake, some 80 years previously. The unelected Northampton Corporation (on the brink of abolition) declared itself against the railway in the 1830s, as reactionary forces often did. But there is no evidence that George and Robert Stephenson made any attempt to persuade them otherwise. Going through Northampton involved dropping 120 feet in four miles, which at that stage was a major complication, and perhaps an insuperable one. George reputedly said he could get trains into Northampton all right, but not out. He was known to want his railway flat and, like the promoters of HS2, was anxious to get his trains from London to Birmingham as fast as possible, not mess about in between.

*Rail magazine – 22nd January 2014.*

### **Sywell scraps the 2016 airshow**

The organisers of the popular Sywell Airshow have announced it will not take place in 2016. They say the cancellation has been made because of 'various factors including the likelihood of higher Civil Aviation Authority fees'. Instead, the annual show – which often attracts sell-out crowds and raises thousands of pounds for Northants Air Ambulance – will be replaced by a 'smaller, more intimate, event' in August.

*Northants Herald & Post – 11th February 2016*

### **Northampton Arm's Lock Gates repaired**

Three sets of lock gates, which allow boats to navigate the Grand Union Canal's Northampton Arm, have been repaired as part of a £62,000 refurbishment of the waterway. Workmen from the charity the Canal & River Trust have drained a section of the canal and have repaired the lock gates to stop them from leaking. The watertight seals along the edge of the gates have been replaced and some of the gates, weighing several tonnes each, readjusted to create a watertight seal.

The work is expected to save an estimated 650,000 litres of water a day, which is the same as filling up an average-sized bathtub more than 14,000 times.

The Waterway Manager for the Canal & River Trust said: "*The Grand Union Canal is a popular waterway and after many years of service to thousands of boaters,*

*the time has come to repair some of the lock gates. Through daily use the gates can get bashed about a bit, which damages the watertight seal, but once the repairs are completed they should help to conserve water and keep the canal running smoothly so everyone can enjoy it.”*

*Northampton Chronicle & Echo - 11th February 2016*

### **Northampton & Lamport extension move**

Long-held plans by the Northampton & Lamport Railway to extend its running line northwards to Spratton have taken a step closer to becoming reality after Northamptonshire County Council (NCC) approved a public consultation on the proposal.

As part of the programme, NCC would provide the N&LR access to more of the former Northampton to Market Harborough trackbed on a 50-year lease, in addition to the two miles it currently occupies. The route currently forms the popular Brampton Valley Way linear park, part of the Sustrans network, and any extension would need to include this public right of way in its construction. Currently standing in the way of any movement northwards is Bridge 14 over the River Nene, which requires in excess of £50,000 of repairs in order for it to carry trains again. Bridge 13 on the line's southern extension to Bought Crossing was in a similar state of repair, but the N&LR has spent a similar amount in bringing the bridge up to the required standards. It is expected that the railway will seek grant aid to progress the extension, which already has planning permission.

*The Railway Magazine – November 2015*

### **Developers criticised for errors**

Developers trying to build a huge rail depot near Northampton (see main article on page 18) have been criticised by the Transport Secretary for being unable to pinpoint the Grand Union Canal.

Ashfield Land has submitted early plans about the depot, which would be built in a vast area between Milton Malsor and Blisworth, for comment by the Government and other agencies. But in 60 pages of criticism the Secretary of State for Transport points out numerous errors and omissions. He says *‘There are a number of references to the location of the Grand Union Canal that contradict each other, but which all identify it as being outside the application site. However [an attached map] shows the Grand Union Canal crossing the south west of the application site.’*

The Canal and River Trust, another consultee, said the question of whether the canal was in the rail depot area or not was important, particularly because it has been a conservation area since 2014. Other errors in the ‘scoping document’ pointed out by the Government include a passage stating that development in the proposed site is limited to a filling station, when in fact there are several businesses and homes on Northampton Road, which links Milton Malsor to Blisworth. There are also various descriptions of the land in question that range from “flat” to “undulating” to “natural bowl”. And similar to the canal, Ashfield

Land contradicts itself by saying the the A43 does not form part of the site when the map shows that it does.

The Secretary of State concludes: *'The above list is not exhaustive. The applicant should ensure that the description of the site and surroundings is accurate.'*

*Northampton Chronicle & Echo – 18th February 2016*

### **Odds and ends from the railway magazines - Tales of yesteryear:**

#### **Ravenglass & Eskdale Railway**

It is announced that the Ravenglass & Eskdale Railway is to be reopened as a “toy” railway. The line was formerly used largely in the summer time, but was closed some years ago. Now, it is stated, Messrs Bassett-Lowke and Co have obtained a lease of the line, and are about to reconstruct it on a model plan. The old rails are to be taken up, and a new line with a 15 inch gauge laid down. The locomotive will weigh 2 tons. The train is to accommodate some 90 passengers.

*Railway Magazine – September 1915*

#### **Kilsby Tunnel closed for drainage**

Kilsby Tunnel between Welton and Rugby, on the London Midland Region Western Division main line from Euston to the North, was closed to all traffic for five weeks from September 28th to October 31st, while 250 men working in shifts 24 hours a day installed a new drainage scheme to allow unrestricted train speeds in the tunnel. The work involved the total removal of the permanent way, and ballast down to the tunnel invert level, the construction of a new culvert and cross drain system, partial channel drainage along the tunnel walls, the erection of down pipes, the construction of two new reinforced concrete rafts under the main shafts, the formation renewal of the northern approach, and total reballasting, and replacement of permanent way. Dragline excavators, bulldozers, a tracklaying machine, diesel locomotives, and over 2,500 wagons were used to complete the work in the scheduled time. Kilsby Tunnel is 1 mile 666 yd long, and was opened by the London & Birmingham Railway in 1838. Its construction presented many difficulties and Robert Stephenson, who was the engineer of the works, had to design special equipment to deal with the large quantity of water encountered. The tunnel always has given rise to serious drainage problems. While the re-drainage works were in progress, all traffic was routed through Northampton, and certain trains were diverted to St. Pancras.

*The Railway magazine – November 1953*



## OF THIS AND THAT

### **2016 Summer Walks & Visits**

The summer programme is enclosed with this newsletter and we look forward to seeing as many as are able to join us. Another varied programme has been arranged by the members of the Committee, so a thank you in advance for the work they have undertaken to bring the programme to you.

### **Dates for the Diary**

- 6th May                Summer programme begins with a visit to a Shoe factory.  
14th May             EMIAC – Moira, Lincs. Closing date for booking for this event is the 23rd April.

### **AIA diary of events:**

#### **Industrial Explorer Weekends:**

21st April : Looking at the area around Dudley and Smethwick in the Black Country. This will include the iron industry, chain making (including those of the Titanic), glass making, mining, the Dudley Tunnel and more.

22nd September: Oxford and its surrounds. The city is much more than dreaming spires, having been quite an industrial centre including an ironworks in the heart of the town as well as being the home of the Morris Oxford and Minor and a famous marmalade factory. Within reach also is the woollen industry at Witney, the town of Abingdon and the Didcot Railway Centre.

#### **Other AIA Trips:**

16th May: Trip to Romania. Visits to include the world's first oil refinery in Ploesti, a gold mine, a blast furnace site from 1810 and the vast Astra Museum at Sibiu amongst other sites. In Bucharest it is planned to include the Technical Museum and the Palace of the Parliament, the heaviest building in the world.

27th June: Country House Comfort and Convenience: Visiting Bucks, Oxon and Surrey. The Rothschilds were responsible for seven grand houses in the Vale of Aylesbury and we shall be seeing early technologies at three of them. Also included the Tudor home of a great chemicals magnate, the one-time home of Richard Sheridan, the very modest home of a motor magnate and, at the opposite end of the scale, the home of a great military hero and politician.

For more details please look at the AIA website *[www.heritageofindustry.co.uk](http://www.heritageofindustry.co.uk)*

#### **Request for information: Barwell & Haggar**

Martin Green of Warwickshire Industrial Archaeological Society has come across several examples of ironwork in Leamington Spa which carry the name Barwell & Haggar, Northampton. We know that the Barwell & Haggar partnership existed at the Eagle Foundry in Northampton the 1830s. Martin

has found a reference to Barwell & Haggard opening an establishment for sale of ironwork in Leamington in 1833 and assumes that all the ironwork was produced in Northampton. However, he wondered if anyone might be able to throw more light on the Northampton-Leamington connection.

If you have information on this, please let Peter Perkins know (01604 812614 or [secretary@northants-iag.org.uk](mailto:secretary@northants-iag.org.uk)) and he will pass it on.

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### **And Finally:**

*I am sure that the following story would not happen today!*

### **Farm moved by a special train**

An example of the comprehensive service offered by rail transport is provided by a special train run recently by the Western Region. The train, conveying an entire farm including livestock, implements and household furniture, left Witney at 6.15 pm., after the completion of afternoon milking, on a 170-mile journey through the night to Morchard Road Station, Devon. Besides 21 vehicles carrying tractors, road vehicles, 50 head of cattle, 100 head of poultry, four containers of furniture and other farming equipment, a passenger coach was provided for the farmer's family and staff. The schedule allowed cattle to be unloaded at their destination in time for milking the following morning.

*The Railway Magazine – December 1953.*

### **Coming up in the next issue:**

The 2016 Winter talk reports including the members night:

A Bus driver's tale

More news from the papers

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

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## **Newsletter**

Next Issue: **July 2016**

Deadline for all articles and information 1st June 2016. Anything received after this date will be held over to the next edition.

**Article guidelines:** Ideally should be no more than about 1200 words, unless the article is of a special interest and accompanied by photographs or diagrams. Shorter articles are always welcome. Photographs will be inserted if submitted and the Editor is happy to discuss the author's requirements.

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.