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Northamptonshire Industrial Archaeology Group

CONTENTS

Photograph front cover: Catesby Viaduct built to carry the Great Central Railway over the River Leam.

From the Editor

Even before the last issue (156) of the Newsletter had been sent to the printers, Jane was already working on this issue. She had been scheduled to have major surgery at the end of September and thought that the two- or three-weeks post-surgery would be spent recuperating rather than sitting at the PC. Sadly, that was not to be for on 24th September she unexpectedly passed away (not Covid-19 related); fortunately, I was able to spend the last few hours with her.

Since she had most of the material available for this issue, and indeed had assembled much it in draft form, I expressed a wish to complete it on her behalf for distribution in January 2021. So, with about a month to go to the usual printer's deadline, I find myself going through the files to pick-up where Jane had left off. To misquote a well-known comedian of yesteryear: "*It's all there – but not necessarily in the right order!*"

As the year draws to a close, the prospects of being able to resurrect any of the Winter Programme are rapidly diminishing due to increasing numbers affected by the Covid-19 virus. Much of the worsening situation must surely be aimed at those who continually flout the regulations as evidenced by the images appearing in the national press and on television and those who, by 'burying their heads in the sand', are ignorant of the seriousness of the pandemic. However, on a brighter note Ron Hanson is hoping to start the summer programme with some local walks.

You will have seen the Update Note from Peter Perkins seeking a new editor for the Newsletter. As has been said many times, none of us can go on for ever; so, if you value this publication and feel you can contribute to NIAG's future then please contact Peter. Without an editor there will not be a Newsletter.

Finally, Terry apologises for the lateness of this issue. Trying to sort out Jane's affairs has taken much much longer than anticipated – nobody is replying to letters, but of course they all require 'original documents' as proof. When trying to enquire progress by phoning, the usual response is "*We haven't received your letter and there's at least eight weeks delay in handling mail*". It's like trying to wade through treacle!

Jane with a little help from Terry

Obituaries

Jane Waterfield 1946-2020

Jane grew up in the Hampstead suburbs of London and was educated at Francis Holland School, Clarence Gate. After successfully attending secretarial college, she entered the world of commerce as a secretary working for stockbrokers in the Stock Exchange before moving to Woolworth's London headquarters in Marylebone Road as secretary/PA in the Buyers department. She embraced

life to the full becoming a member of the English Folk Dance and Song Society and as a volunteer driving a Red Cross Ambulance. Her next post was in the Job Evaluation Unit of Barclays Bank. Initially based at Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, the unit later relocated to Coventry Business Park. Jane then took redundancy when it subsequently moved yet again to Leeds. Not letting the grass grow under her feet Jane then spent three years in the catering department at Warwick Castle where she gained the Certificate of Food Hygiene. Whilst working as the Clerk to Norton Parish Council, she successfully completed the Certificate of Local Council Administration in 2007.

It was through their joint love of English Folk Dancing that Terry and Jane met and later married. Their joy of folk dancing continued through membership of London Folk, which performed regularly in London's Albert Hall and at festivals at home and abroad, and Oaken Leaves which performed regularly at the Broadstair's Folk Festival Week as well as by invitation to other events. Jane also fully embraced Terry's love of the mountains and joined him on his many visits and walks. Both enjoyed photography and their skills were enhanced on a photo holiday in the Swiss Alps.

Jane had always had an interest in history and undertook a two year course through the University of Leicester gaining the Certificate in Local History in 1997. She encouraged Terry to become interested in local history and both became active members of NIAG.

Terry Waterfield

Jane had been a member of NIAG for more than 20 years. In 2003, she took on the role of Newsletter Editor, producing a total of consecutive 69 issues of the NIAG Newsletter. Each issue has appeared on schedule and has been full of information about NIAG activities and industrial archaeology in general, along with the occasional acerbic editorial comment when Jane felt it appropriate. In 2017 Jane was rewarded for her efforts by the British Association for Local History when the NIAG Newsletter was awarded 'Newsletter of the Year'.

Ever present at NIAG meetings welcoming everyone, it was always Jane who made sure the coffee and tea were available, and she could be found on most NIAG summer walks and visits, occasionally cursing the walk leader (usually me) for walking too quickly or too far. She also developed the NIAG display boards which she and Terry took to EMIAC conferences around the East Midlands and to Heritage Days in Northampton each year. Jane had the uncanny skill of not only selling NIAG publications but raising additional funds from the sales of all sorts of secondhand leaflets and books, most of which had very little to do with

industrial history. Jane will be sorely missed by NIAG and its members.

Peter Perkins

Peter Acres

One of NIAG's longer serving members, Pete Acres, died on 27 September 2020 after a short illness. Pete and his wife Rita have been regular attendees at winter talks and summer visits for many years. In fact they met through attending NIAG's Newspaper Study Group in the late 1970s. Their son Richard accompanied his parents on NIAG walks when he was younger.

Pete on a NIAG visit to Avoncroft Museum in 1990.

Pete was interested in many aspects of transport including road and rail vehicles and spent his working life in the motor trade. In the 1980s he was involved in the restoration of buses and coaches, including a Bedford OB type coach and became a part owner of one of Northampton Corporation's former buses, a Daimler CVG6 double decker. He wrote a couple of reports in NIAG's Newsletters about the trials and tribulations of their restoration.

Another interest was photography and in recent years Pete recorded aspects of industrial archaeology on video, including many of NIAG's summer visits and walks. He showed some of the results at NIAG's winter meetings, most recently in 2016 when we were regaled with memories of visits to Corby tubeworks and to Oliver and Susan Ransome's farm at Ashton near Roade where Oliver demonstrated his reaper binder in action. Pete's interest in railways, particularly diesels, resulted in frequent filming trips on railtours which he enjoyed with Rita.

Pete was a good supporter of NIAG and always interesting to talk to. We shall miss him. Our condolences to Rita and family.

Peter Perkins

ARTICLES

We continue the fascinating insight of newspaper reporting centred around the construction of Kilsby Tunnel. Ed.

The construction of Kilsby Tunnel from contemporary newspaper cuttings: Part 2

Northampton Mercury, Saturday, 6 May 1837

Kilsby Tunnel – taken from Captain Alderson's report on the comparative merits, in an Engineering point of view, of the Cheshire Junction, mid South Union Railways

Interior of Kilsby Tunnel, 1837.

Having heard of the difficulties that had arisen at the Kilsby Tunnel, on the London & Birmingham line, by coming into a vein of quick sand with water, and as this might guide my judgement with respect to those likely to occur in the above undertaking (the projected cutting through Dean's moss), I went to inspect it. On going down one of the working shafts, where they had met with the running sand, I found this vein giving out the water very freely, which they were collecting and pumping up with the steam engine; at the same time they were working 40 feet below, in the blue shale, perfectly dry. It appears to me, therefore, if this had been an open cutting, or if time could have been allowed to work this tunnel from the ends only, that, had they come upon the stratum of sand, it might have drained off at a comparatively small inconvenience or expense; but it is necessary in a tunnel of this length to commence at several places at once, in order that one part may not delay the opening of the line; and the shafts, required afterwards, for the ventilation of the, tunnel, but sunk now for the above purpose, became so many wells, causing the difficulties encountered in the tunnel alluded to. The masterly and scientific manner in which they have been completely overcome, reflects great credit on the engineer employed.

Leicester Mercury, Saturday, 4 November 1837

Foot-race at Kilsby – On Monday last at the popular village of Kilsby, a match of 200 yds., for £5 a-side, came off between Jack Payne, better known as the Running Miner, and Jem Nixon, a youth from Rugby. A vast number of persons assembled, and it being pay week, the railroad men sported lots of money on their man (Payne), whom they backed to win at 2 to 1. Young Nixon is a fine youth, seventeen years of age, standing five feet seven, and weighing about 10 stone; but as this was his first public attempt, and being matched against a noted runner, the odds went begging. In going away Payne got the start by two yards, but when they had gone over half the ground, young Nixon gallantly shot by his man, and ultimately won the race by at least seven yards. This is the first match Payne ever lost, although he has run three-and-twenty times. Payne acknowledged the superiority of his opponent, and declared that he would himself back him against any man in the neighbourhood of Kilsby for £5.

Northampton Mercury, Saturday, 18 November 1837

Railway Accidents

- An inquest was held before G. Abbey, Esq. Coroner, on the 2nd instant, at Barby, on view of the body of Timothy Butler, aged 28 years, who, as he was oiling an engine at Kilsby tunnel, fell with his back upon an iron bar, and so seriously injured his kidneys, that he died in less than

two days. Verdict, Accidental Death.

- Another inquest was held by the same coroner, on the 3rd instant, at Kilsby, on Thomas West, aged 17 years, who was killed at the bottom of a shaft, of the depth of 80 feet, by some hard clay falling out of a skip upon his head. Verdict, Accident.
- And on the 11th, at the same place, on Charles Peck, aged 30 years, who, being at work at the bottom of a shaft, of the depth of about 24 feet, a heavy stone fell upon his head, from the wall at the top or heading of the tunnel, in consequence of which his skull was fractured, and died at the infirmary at Kilsby, about two days afterwards. Verdict, accordingly.

Northampton Mercury, Saturday, 10 March 1838

We regret to learn that about 70 yards of the railway tunnel, at Kilsby, fell in on Monday last. Fortunately, the labourers were absent at the time, and no accidents occurred.

Birmingham Gazette, Monday, 19 March 1838

The following is extracted from the Railway Times of this day:

> Reports having reached us of some serious accidents having occurred to the Kilsby and Brickwood tunnels, on the London & Birmingham Railway, we are glad to find upon enquiry that they are wholly unfounded. The worst effect of the late trying weather has been to damage a few bricks in the Brickwood tunnel, and a small portion of the brickwork in Kilsby, where it was in an incomplete state; neither of which circumstances will have the slightest effect on the opening of the line, but of course will tend to add considerably to the confidence of all parties interested in the success of this great work. That a work with so much water about it as Kilsby tunnel should have received no damage, except in a part which was unfinished, during a frost of so long continuance, when the thermometer was in some places at 12 degrees below zero, must afford a sufficient guarantee that, notwithstanding the difficulties of the undertaking, they have been met with a corresponding degree of science and skill and have been fully surmounted; the trials it has been put to lately are of a much more severe nature than may ordinarily be expected in this climate. The line from Birmingham to Rugby may be considered finished, although a few trifling things yet remain to be done; but in order to proceed with due regard to the safety of the public, it is not intended, we understand, to open it till the 9th of April, at which time that point between Tring and Denbigh Hall will also be ready.

Northampton Mercury, Saturday, 24 March 1838

London & Birmingham Railway report. London, February 15, 1838

Kilsby Tunnel – This work is at present in a very satisfactory state, and the monthly regular progress can be expected considering the nature of the operations. No new difficulty has recently occurred, except the capricious appearance and disappearance of water in some of the shafts both in and beyond

the quicksand. Between these shafts the junction of the respective portions of the tunnel has consequently become rather uncertain, the actual rate of progress tunnelling through the intermediate space falling short of what was estimated. To remove this contingency as much as practicable it has been found necessary to sink additional shafts for the purpose of dividing those unfinished portions which would require the longest time to execute, or which our average rate of progress was most likely to be interrupted by water or a change in the nature of the strata. On the 20th January last, a careful measurement was made to determine accurately the distance unfinished between each pair of shafts, and the time of completion of each calculated upon an average which there are no reasonable grounds for doubting. The results are stated in the following table:

	Quantity remaining between shafts yards	**Progress per month** yards	**Time of completion** months
Between 1a & 1b	33	6	5½ say end of June
1b & 1c	30	6	5 say middle of June

The averages of progress adopted in the table appear to be scarcely borne out by reference to the reports of progress in some particular shafts; but such instances are accounted for, either by the occurrence of fallen length (which was the case in one of the quicksand shafts), or by the proximity of the face of the tunnel to the shaft which lessens the room for working, and invariably reduces the rate of progress below that which ought to be taken as a guide. The circumstances requiring the adoption of expedients explained above (in order to avoid disappointment by the further protraction of the time fixed for final completion), have necessarily caused the expense of prosecuting this work to be materially augmented beyond what was estimated last year; and in addition to this, it has been found absolutely indispensable to increase the prices of mining, timbering, and brick-work formerly paid to the Sub-contractors, and which expense was proved to be altogether inadequate. In the quicksand especially, although effectually drained, the utmost caution in mining has been required, and expenditure of timber unavoidably incurred, which would appear excessive and lavish to anyone whose experience has been confined to ordinary tunnelling. The present plans of proceeding are being arrived at by close observation and mature reflection, and cannot with safety or propriety be altered for the purpose of economising. Several circumstances have occurred demonstrating that none of our precautions or expenses have exceeded what the magnitude of the difficulties attending this work imperatively demanded.

Reading Mercury, Saturday, 19 May 1838

The works on the line of the London & Birmingham Railway, although rapidly

proceeding, will not be completed before the month of October next: the great difficulty at Kilsby, occasioned by a quicksand beneath the rock through which the embankment is cut, is now overcome, but there remains much to be done at Blisworth, in Northamptonshire, where the rock is blasted, which process consumes weekly, no less than 1½ ton of gunpowder.

Northampton Mercury, Saturday, 16 June 1838

The tunnel at Kilsby is, in all essential particulars, completed and a dinner for the workmen, and procession through the tunnel, on Thursday next, in celebration of the event, is talked of.

Leicester Chronicle, Saturday 30 June 1838

Completion of Kilsby Tunnel – Thursday last being the day fixed to celebrate the completion of the tunnel at Kilsby, an immense concourse of people assembled to witness the ceremony of inserting the last brick in this stupendous work, which from the extraordinary engineering difficulties to be encountered, has, by many, been deemed impracticable. On account of the great length of the high ground through which the railway passes, the tunnel extends to nearly a mile and a half. Two enormous shafts have been constructed, in diameter about three times the width of the tunnel, which is itself both broad and lofty. The depth of these shafts is nearly 140 feet. About one o'clock Mr Lean, the superintending engineer, having entered the southern end of the tunnel preceded by a band of music, and followed by many hundred spectators, by the light of lamps, candles and flambeaux, advanced to the southern shaft, a few yards beyond which was a platform. Mr. Lean was here joined by Messrs. Stephenson and other engineers, who ascended the platform, after a few minutes preparation, the last brick was inserted, cemented with a silver trowel, and presented to Mr. Lean from the workers. This having been proclaimed to the surrounding multitude, wine was presented to those on the platform, Stephenson, who, with a few more, ascended, when a salute of guns was fired. The remainder of the procession advanced to the northern extremity of the tunnel, from which they could only be restored to the light of day by climbing ladders, the soil not being yet removed. To complete the whole, a sumptuous entertainment consisting of every delicacy of the season, was provided by the workmen for Mr. Lean and his friends, and also a repast for the workmen themselves, both of which, no doubt, ample justice was done.

Staffordshire Advertiser, Saturday, 25 August 1838

London & Birmingham Railway – On Monday last, a large party of directors and proprietors breakfasted at the Birmingham station, and at half-past six they left, with one of Mr. Bury's engines, to make the first excursion along the entire line to London, where they arrived at Euston station at one o'clock, without any kind of accident or circumstance to interfere with the pleasure of the journey.

The time occupied in travelling was exactly five hours, the other hour and a half being devoted to the examination of the stupendous and interesting works on the new part of the line, much of which is yet incomplete.

The Kilsby Tunnel has been constructed in defiance of immense physical difficulties, and is a work which has excited the greatest interest and admiration. When the party arrived at the central shaft, which has a diameter of sixty feet, they were saluted with hearty cheers from a number of workmen who had stationed themselves at its summit far above the subterranean travellers, who responded to the welcome.

Ron Hanson

Image: John Cooke Bourne / Wikimedia Commons / Public Domain. Ed.

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History of Roundhouses

Following the update on Wellingborough Roundhouse in Issue 156, members may be interested in the following taken from the English Heritage Advice Report of March 2011.

The first nineteenth-century engine maintenance sheds, known as roundhouses, were built in two forms: square or rectangular, with parallel lines of tracks (*surely only sheds with radial tracks were called roundhouses, Ed*); or circular in appearance, although built as sixteen-sided polygons, with a central turntable serving radiating tracks, or roads, onto which individual locomotives were rolled for maintenance. Circular ones fell out of favour in the 1870s because they were very difficult to extend to cope with the increasing size of locomotives and their coal tenders. The turntable in the Wellingborough roundhouse, also known as No. 2 locomotive shed, was seventeen metres in diameter serving twenty-four roads, each road with one, or often two, funnel-shaped chimney flues discharging through the roof above. Several roads also had continuous inspection pits for maintenance of the engines. The Ordnance Survey Maps of 1888 and 1925 indicate that locomotives entered the shed through the archway in the centre of the north elevation, and that there were workshops attached to the extreme ends of the façade. There are identical examples at Wigston (1873), Carnforth (1874), Staveley Barrow Hill (1870) and Derby.

The Midland, North Eastern, and Great Western Railway Companies, all favoured square locomotive sheds from the 1860s and the Midland Railway Company built them at nineteen sites between 1867 and 1900, often with more than one at each location. There were originally two at Wellingborough, Wellingborough No. 1 built in 1868 to the north was demolished in 1964. There were two at Burton of exactly the same design and date. Before the 1890s locomotive sheds were quite elaborately detailed, with decorative brickwork, corbelling and diamond-pattern glazing bars in the windows, and this was the case at Wellingborough, designed by John Holloway Saunders of the Midland Railway Architects Department in 1871, under Chief Engineer, John Crossley,

and built in 1872-73. The surviving roundhouse went out of use in 1966, following which it was used as a distribution warehouse by the flour millers Whitworth & Co. During this period, full length clerestories were added to the roof to provide ventilation.

The Roundhouse is a large building, sixty metres square, constructed of red brick in English bond with dressings of blue engineering brick, covered by three parallel gabled roofs running northsouth. These are clad with corrugated iron as are the clerestories. Each gable end has triple round-headed stepped lights above three round-arched windows linked by stringcourses at the base of the arches. All the windows are blocked with brick. The north and south central gables have wide segmental arches for the entrance of locomotives in place of the central window, and to the east and west elevations are eleven blocked round-headed windows. Above them is a corbelled eaves cornice.

The development of the railway network was one of the greatest achievements of the Victorians and marked the nineteenth-century culmination of the transport revolution which had begun in the middle of the seventeenth century with improved roads and in the following century with turnpikes and canals. The railways had major consequences for the economic, social and cultural development of the country and fall into four phases. The early pioneering phase beginning with the Stockton to Darlington Railway in 1825 to the completion of the Great Western Railway from 1841, gave way to the heroic age of railway building between 1841 and 1850, often called the period of railway mania. This period established the principal routes which make up today's rail network and evolved into the third phase of railway development, consolidation of the network, and the opening of the Settle to Carlisle line which carried the Midland Railway into Scotland. The fourth phase up to 1914 saw the completion of the network.

The Transport Buildings Selection Guide (English Heritage, March 2007) indicates that normal considerations apply when assessing buildings that are of outstanding architectural or technological importance, or exceptionally early in the history of the railways. Pre-1840 buildings will be of international significance as being among the earliest railway structures in the world, and even partial survivals need to be assessed carefully. The 1840s saw a massive expansion in the network and while the Italianate style was favoured, many designs were eclectic. Great care should be taken in seeking out work of this date because, although much survives, it is often hidden by later alterations and extensions. Rigorous selection is required for buildings after *c.*1860: this reflects both the quantity of what remains and the standardisation of design.

Roundhouses were for the maintenance of railway locomotives, the most celebrated of which are the early examples at Camden (1846–47) by Robert Dockray, at Leeds (1847) by Thomas Grainger and John Bourne and Derby

(*c.*1830) by Francis Thompson, all listed at Grade II*. The most complete Midland Railway square roundhouse is at Staveley Barrow Hill (1870), listed at Grade II. There are a number of surviving roundhouses built by the North-Eastern Railway, including the National Railway Museum in York (1876–77). Approximately forty-two of the surviving examples and most of the listed roundhouses either retain their turntables or have evidence for them.

The Roundhouse at Mill Road does not retain the twenty-four roads, the internal smoke ducts above each one, the inspection pits, and its ancillary workshops such as the blacksmith, coppersmith, and machine shops or the boiler houses, although one remained until fairly recently.

The roof was replaced in the 1960s when the chimney flues were removed, but the iron glazing bars of the windows, for which Midland locomotive sheds of this period were noted, survive internally, although the openings are bricked up. Unfortunately, the survival of the windows is incidental and does not compensate for other losses. Rigorous selection is required for railway buildings after *c.*1860, reflecting both the quality of what remains and the standardisation of design.

A number of factors should be taken into account when assessing buildings of the latter half of the nineteenth century, including approaches to construction, distinctiveness of house style, and rarity of survival, group value is also significant. The Roundhouse off Mill Road, Wellingborough was one of a pair, the other having been demolished. Although the building has some fine brickwork, it has lost its turntable and associated mechanism, as well as the key functional buildings once attached to it. In recent years it has also undergone significant internal alteration and conversion to light industrial

use.

Taken from: *English Heritage Listing Advice Report*, 1 March 2011.

Jane Waterfield

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Steam Mill at Old

As part of the process of producing the 3rd edition of NIAG's Gazetteer of former industrial sites in the county, I was planning to visit the village of Old to check on and photograph the site of the former Tomblin's Brewery at the north-east end of the village. I looked to see what Mike Brown's book *Brewed in Northants* (2nd Edition, Brewery History Society, 2010) said about the brewery when I noticed that he states: '*Contrary to some descriptions, the buildings at the rear of the White Horse are the remains of the steam driven flour mill, which the pub originally was, not the* [Tomblin's] *brewery*.' I had driven past the White Horse on High Street in Old a number of times over the years but did not remember seeing anything resembling a steam mill. However, on passing through, I was surprised

to see a chimney rising up behind the pub next to a range of buildings. I took some photos and returned home to do some desk research.

View of chimney and mill building behind the *White Horse.*

The earliest date recorded for a steam mill at Old appears in Trevor Stainwright's book *Windmills of Northamptonshire* (WD Wharton, 1991) in a section about Old post mill which stood half a mile north of the village and is shown on Eyre & Jeffery's map of 1779. He states that '*during the 1870s the post mill was run by William Bushby* (sic) *who was recorded in 1885 as working with steam power.'* Kelly's Northamptonshire Directory for 1890 and 1898, denotes William Busby as a '*baker & miller (steam)*' at Old. This would appear to be the same person mentioned in Stainwright's book.

William Busby was born in Broughton in 1822, but by 1851 had moved to Old (or 'Wolds' as it was then called) as a *baker*. In fact the 1851 census denotes his residence in the village as *Bakehouse*. The 1861 to 1891 censuses do not give a precise location in Old for William Busby and although in 1861 and 1871 he is still referred to as a *baker*, in 1881 he is described as a *miller, baker and farmer* and in 1891 as a *miller and baker*. William Busby died in 1899, quite well off; probate quotes his estate as worth £1,333. The *Northampton Mercury* for 31 March 1899 carries a notice of a sale by auction:

> by the orders of Mr William Busby, deceased, of a freehold indoor beerhouse known by the sign of the Old White Horse situated in the High Street of Old …. in the occupation of H Barrett, together with the mill house, engine house etc adjoining (at present in hand), including a 12 hp horizontal steam engine and Cornish boiler, gristing mill with three pairs of stones and appurtenances thereto.

In the 1901 census, Henry Barritt (sic) is listed at the White Horse as *miller and publican* and in the 1911 census he is just *publican*, with his 23-year-old son being *miller*. Newspaper reports indicate that the Barretts are still at the White Horse in 1924 and, judging from a brief reference at the end of a Chronicle & Echo report on the licence for the Price of Wales at Old, one of them is still a *miller*. Thus, it appears that the steam mill was probably built around 1880 and was in use until at least 1924.

About a month after my visit, out of the blue I received an email from a resident of Old asking if NIAG knew anything about a steam mill at Old and were we aware that there is still a set of millstones in the building! Following an exchange of emails, I went to view the millstones and we pieced together a bit more of the history of the mill.

It turns out that the steam mill consisted of a two-storey-plus-attic mill building and an engine house with an adjacent 10-metre-high square cross-section

chimney. It was probably constructed in about 1880 next to the White Horse because baker William Busby also owned the beerhouse and he may have used existing buildings which were adapted to suit. However, the mill seems to have been operated separately from the beerhouse. It has been suggested that the steam engine was replaced by an oil engine from *c.*1903 but it is not clear what happened to the mill after 1924.

In the 1950s, the engine house was demolished, leaving the chimney isolated a few metres from the remaining buildings which were subsequently incorporated into the public house. Today, the chimney is a garden feature for the pub. A single set of millstones remains in the corner of the mill building, probably in its original position, with a beveled gear wheel on the vertical shaft which turned the top millstone from beneath. Under the bearing for the millstone shaft are the remains of a horizontal driveshaft which lines up with a brick-filled hole in the remains of the stone-built wall of the former engine house. The horizontal shaft would have connected to the beveled gear wheel on the millstone shaft and to the auxiliary equipment via the belt drive.

A number of watermills and windmills in the county were adapted for use with steam power during their working days but a purpose-built steam mill was unusual. There were of course the larger steam mills at Little Irchester (Whitworth Bros) and at Blisworth (Joseph Westley) built for flour milling using roller mills. There was also a small steam mill at Yelvertoft which was demolished in the twentieth century, but as far as we know the steam mill at Old is the only one that still has some of its equipment remaining in situ. Needless to say, the steam mill will feature in the new edition of the Gazetteer.

Peter Perkins

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Northampton Castle Station Model

The original Castle station was built in 1859 with the opening of the Northampton to Market Harborough line, itself a branch line off the Blisworth to Peterborough line that brought Northampton its first rail link, via Bridge Street station, in 1845. As many of you will know, the opening of the Roade to Rugby loop line in 1881 brought with it a significant rebuild of Castle station by the London & North Western Railway and which served the town until the mid-1960s when West Coast electrification and the quest for modernization heralded its demolition.

When choosing a station to model for my 1960s-era railway layout, I toyed with modelling Bridge Street before plumping for Castle station. As with all my

models of Northampton, the basis is styrene plastic with some commercially available brass fret and white metal components to model the more intricate structures. The building itself took about six months to complete, back in 2001, and the interior is fully lit. It was not until 2009 that I completed the rest of the station – platforms, West Bridge, etc.

I consider I've modelled a station and its environs 'in the spirit and with the flavour' of the old LNWR without replicating everything to scale, so a rationalized track-plan and selective compression (as with my model of Derngate Bus station) have been used within the space available. This is why I've named it 'Northampton Town' not 'Castle' station, although the station building itself is as near a scale replica as I could achieve. The windows are archetypically LNWR and, with no commercial frets for this style available, I designed my own and had them etched by a reputable components supplier.

Modeller's Licence (where we modellers can make a few changes to reality for our own ends) has enabled me to dispense with the full-width sloping awning of its later years and instead model the earlier porte cochère struck, as I was, with its delightful and quite intricate iron and glass canopy.

I do sometimes wonder whether, in 100 years or so, anyone will be inspired to make a model of either of the further two station buildings that followed this one. There may be no accounting for taste!!

Clive Hardwick

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Travel on the Railway 1961–72

During my time in the Royal Navy, I must have travelled several hundred miles on the railway. The first occasion was from Liverpool Street Station to Ipswich to join the Navy at HMS Ganges. Annual leave was organized in groups; we were bussed to Ipswich in a convoy of Corporation buses with each group being allocated to a particular train. My train to Liverpool Street arrived during the early morning rush hour presenting commuters with the sight of young sailors running down the platform. Then it was the Underground to Waterloo and a train to Surbiton. A journey repeated three times during my year at HMS Ganges.

My first posting (or drafting in naval terms) was HMS Pembroke which entailed a journey between Chatham and Surbiton. I discovered I could travel from HMS Pembroke to home on a Saturday or Sunday leaving Chatham about midday and returning before leave expired at 2300.

My next draft was to HMS Excellent on Whale Island near Portsmouth which was someway from the town station. So it was a 'fast black' (taxi) to catch the next train to London. I took the fast train but had to change at Guildford or Woking as the fast did not stop at Surbiton. Returning, on arrival at Portsmouth it was a scramble for a taxi. The quest, if possible, was to share a cab to the same destination thus saving on the fare.

My next ship was HMS Tenby, a frigate based in Plymouth. Leaving from home meant travelling up to Waterloo and across to Paddington Station. Going on leave the Navy issued a railway warrant routed on the Southern Region. The Western Region line was quicker but if I was unlucky enough to be asked for my ticket, I would have to pay the difference.

Serving on HMS Tiger also required travelling between Plymouth and London. Several of us had discovered that a train left Waterloo on a Sunday at about 0100 carrying papers but with several carriages attached. It arrived at a station near the dockyard at about 0700 leaving plenty of time to be back on board for 0800. It was important to watch which carriage one entered as they were marked with various destinations along the way where they were dropped off. A couple of lads not being observant woke up to find they were in the sidings at Exeter. Needless to say, being late back on board they faced disciplinary hearing. Another time HMS Tiger called in at Rosyth when I was due to go on a fortnight's leave. That meant a train to Edinburgh and then from Waverley Station to Kings Cross. This train was so crowded I did not get a seat until we reached Berwick. By the time leave was over, the Tiger had sailed round to Plymouth so it was back to Paddington for the journey to Devonport.

On one occasion going between postings, I had some leave. Armed with kitbag, suitcase and grip I negotiated the Underground to Waterloo and caught my train. The wrong one as I discovered as it sailed through Surbiton and its first stop was Weybridge. Here, over the bridge to catch a train back to Surbiton.

When the frigate HMS Yarmouth sailed for the Far East, it called in at Simonstown naval base in South Africa for two weeks self-maintenance. The base was a twenty minutes bus journey to the local railway station from where the line ran along the coast to Cape Town. At the station there were two separate entrances, one for Europeans and the other for non-whites; signed in both English and Afrikaans – the platform was similarly divided. When the electric train pulled in, it also was divided up into separate carriages. We missed the last train back to Simonstown and the railway police wouldn't allow us to

Continued on page 19

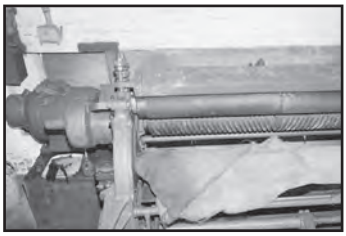
Image Gallery

Images taken during a visit to William Cowley Ltd

See page 23 for a report on the visit.

The boiler provides all the hot water required for the various cleaning processes. Notice how clean the area is.

Paddling machine for removing any chemicals left from the tanning process.



Frizing machine for removing flesh from the skin.

Pegging the skin to a frame for removing final traces of flesh by hand, grease by whiting and then drying.

Having attached the skin to the frame, it is tensioned using this tool to turn the pegs.

Finally the skins are placed in the drying room to dry naturally.

All images courtesy of Roy Sheffield.

Images from walks 2008–11

Normally these pages would comprise images from NIAG's summer walks and visits, all of which have had to be cancelled because of the Covid-19 pandemic. So, in their absence a selection has been chosen from the editor's archive of images.

Former WW2 airfield at Harrington was visited in 2008. The structures that remain date back to 1959–63 when it was a cold-war missile site. In addition to the standing structures, there are numerous sets of bolts on mounting plates located in the surrounding concrete slabs.

NIAG were able to visit Titchmarsh Mill in 2009. Then belonging to a private club, what remained of the mill machinery was in a very poor state.

The site of Turnell's Mill, Wellingborough was visited in May 2010. Originally worked by Thomas Turnell in 1848, a working mill existed on this site until 1966. The new mill built in 1874 was demolished in 1973. In addition to remains of the waterwheel, some of the leets could be seen.

Has anybody seen a quarry? Members looking for one of the Storefield quarries in 2010.

The Orton Trust's stonemasonry centre, founded in 1968, is situated in the deconsecrated church of All Saints. Students at work: some were beginners learning the basic skills whilst others were tackling more advanced carving and shaping of the stone.

An evening walk along the river bank in Northampton revealed the remains of a former timber warehouse near South Bridge. Behind the fence in the foreground is a short arm from the canal.

Stephen Walker's shoe factory in Walgrave, built *c.*1900, produced boots for the army for the Boer War as well as for both world wars. The factory closed in 1980 and from 1982–92 it was used by the Regent Belt Company. Converted into three town houses in 2003.

Nearby could be seen this length of iron kerb edging. Where is Kerttering?

Members walking down the incline to the site of the calcining banks, Finedon. Note the concrete sleepers are still in situ.

In 2011 Peter led a walk to Catesby Viaduct. On a previous visit he was able to photograph the northern portal of Catesby Tunnel (below left).

Since then the fences either side of the footpath had been erected preventing access to the trackbed which is somewhere in the bushes on the right of the image (left).

After discussing the merits, or otherwise, of the construction of a 'skew bridge', the members moved on to examine the former narrowboat weighbridge at Stoke Bruerne. In 2013 the weighbridge was dismantled and taken to the National Waterfront Museum in Swansea where it is being cleaned and restored before being re-assembled.

Members spent a pleasant evening in the workshop of Northampton's pipe organ manufacturer and restorer Kenneth Tickell.

This image (left) shows the voice end of some wooden pipes.
Metal pipes are also made and in the image above can be seen the tuning bench. The wall-mounted thermometer ensures each pipe is tuned to the correct pitch.

This factory building in Lorne Road dates from the 1870s and was used until *c.*1933 by AG Heritage, described as a boot and shoe manufacturer. In 2013 the building was cement-rendered; the taking-in door has gone as has the 'side' window behind the figure and the stone motive and lower window on the corner wall.

sleep on the station. So, we sneaked onto a train unseen, which fortunately was the one back to Simonstown. We arrived back on ship in good time!

My next connection with railways was in Australia. The Yarmouth arrived in Melbourne so we took the train to see where we would end up. Railway travel was free to us in uniform. Our electric train took us from Flinders Street station to Fern Tree Gulley, the end of the line. Returning we hitched a lift with an Australian sailor who deposited us back at our ship. The Yarmouth sailed on to Sydney for a two-week stay. I was lucky enough to spend a week with five others on Cowan Creek sheep station. At the end of our time the manager drove us to Bathurst where we took the train to Sydney. Unfortunately, it was night time so we were unable to appreciate the scenery as we journeyed through the Blue Mountains.

My final use of the railways during my naval service was travelling from Portsmouth to Darlington whilst attending a course at Catterick Camp.

Finally, I should explain that a Railway Warrant was issued to allow one to travel to a new posting or to proceed to and from annual leave. Travelling to go on short or long weekends you presented your pay book when buying your ticket and were issued with a Forces Rate ticket that was cheaper than the normal fare.

Peter Acres

UPDATES

Electrification of the Midland Main Line

The scheme to electrify the MML from Bedford to Corby has been severely delayed due to the corona virus pandemic. It had been planned to start electric services from 13 December but the start date has now been put back to May 2021. Class 360/1 EMUs from Great Anglia will be used on the services.

The Railway Magazine, August 2020.

The first electric train operated under its own power on the MML between Kettering and Bedford on 20 October. A test train was powered by two ex-LNER Class 91s taking power from the 25 kV AC wires. Mechanical testing of the overhead line equipment (OLE) had started earlier in the month.

Dynamic testing employed the 6,300 hp Class 91s to simulate the high power drawn when the Hitachi Class 810 bi-mode trains are introduced on inter-city services in 2022. A class 90 loco will be added in due course to simulate three-pantograph operation in 12-car trains. All three locos have specially-instrumented pantographs similar to those fitted to the Class 810s to test the performance of the OLE.

The Railway Magazine, November 2020.

New stabling sidings for electrical multiple units have been completed alongside

the MML at Kettering. The fours sidings will be used to service East Midlands Railway's Class 360/1 EMUs due to be introduced on the London to Corby route in May 2021. They will allow trains to be cleaned and stabled overnight near the northern end of the route.

The Railway Magazine, December 2020.

Locomotion No 1

The Science Museum Group intends to move this historic locomotive from its current historic home in Darlington's Head of Steam Museum to Shildon. See Issue 155 for details of the proposed move.

In response to a question raised in the House of Lords, Transport Minister Baroness Barran stated that the Government would not intervene in the National Railway Museum's (NRM) decision since the Science Museum Group, of which NRM is a member, operates independently from the Government.

The Railway Magazine, September 2020.

A campaign to keep George Stephenson's original Stockton & Darlington locomotive Locomotion No 1 in Darlington, its home for the past 160 years, has launched an official petition. The move follows plans by NRM to relocate the 1825-built engine from Darlington's Head of Steam Museum to Shildon, where it would form the centre piece of a £4.5m redevelopment of the site, for the bicentenary of the Stockton & Darlington Railway in 2025. However, Darlington Borough Council and Head of Steam wish to see the loco remain in Darlington as part of a £20m rail heritage quarter in Darlington including a redeveloped Head of Steam museum. The 'remain' campaign has the backing of PM Boris Johnston and Sir Keir Starmer.

The Railway Magazine, November 2020.

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE MISCELLANY

Gretton Parchment Works

Ron Whittaker recently spotted a feature about Gretton's former parchment works on *Northants Live's Facebook* page. It described how Will Gamble Architects were tasked with extending a Grade II listed Victorian House into the neighbouring old cattle shed and demolishing a derelict parchment factory beyond that, to create extra space. However, instead of demolishing the crumbling ruin the architect decided to incorporate it into his design, creating a building within the ruins. This reminded Ron of a visit to Gretton with Geoffrey Starmer and Roy Sheffield in the 1980s, at the request of Gretton historian Elisabeth Jordan, to look at a derelict building in a Gretton resident's garden. The visit proved inconclusive although Ron recalls that the potential use for leather or parchment making being mentioned. Some thirty years later, a quick Google search using

the terms *parchment* and *Gretton* and correspondence with the county's Historic Environment Record (HER), showed that knowledge about one of the county's less well-known former industries has advanced.

Today, parchment making in the UK is limited to a handful of craftsmen, one such being William Cowley who has been based in Newport Pagnell, Bucks since 1870. Parchment is made from the skins of sheep or goats, or even calf skin in which case it is called vellum. The process of making parchment is different from that of leather production in that after soaking in lime to remove the hair and flesh, the skin is not tanned but is merely stretched and dried, the collagen in the skin being rearranged rather than being chemically altered as it is when tanning leather.

According to a dissertation published online (Henderson 2018), parchment manufacture was widespread across the Midlands and the South East of England from medieval times. In Northamptonshire, parchment was being produced in Northampton, Wellingborough and Earls Barton from the seventeenth century. In the second half of the nineteenth century there are census records of 43 men working as parchment makers in the county, 12 of whom were in Gretton, eight in Earls Barton, seven in Little Weldon and six each in Northampton and Irthlingborough. This implies that Gretton was an important location for the parchment trade in the county.

The building to which the *Northants Live* article refers, lies behind Stoneleigh, 9 High Street, Gretton. Northamptonshire's Historic Environment Record has a report (Bond and Ellison 2000) of a visit there by conservation officers in 2000. Furthermore, a Historic Building Survey was carried out on the site in 2015 and the report (Allen Archaeology 2015) on this tells us that

Gretton Parchment Works in 2015. ©Allen Archaeology Ltd

> 9 High Street is a Grade II Listed Building, dating to the 18th century, with a main front dating to *c.*1840. To the rear are a series of outbuildings comprising stables and workshops. The outbuildings are believed to have been used as a parchment works, which provided papers for Hansard. It is not known when the trade ceased but in 1935 the works were owned by a Mrs Colvil, who ran them in conjunction with another works at Barrowden. The buildings have also been used for the leather trades, but have been purely domestic since the 1960s.

The HBS report describes the parchment works as

> consisting of a ruinous coursed limestone building, with areas of brick repair, particularly at its south corner where it abuts the adjacent barn. The roof structure is completely absent, but the profile of the remaining walls indicate it was a double pitched, gabled structure of two storeys.

The building is referred to as '*the only surviving upstanding structure associated with*

parchment making in the county, suggesting it is of regional significance'. In addition, the Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) report comments on

> the first floor having five vertical brick piers with remnants of a timber frame infill, and at the north end a small portion of timber slatting survives. This is in the form of louvres to give the free flow of air for drying.

Louvred openings were common in leather finishing factories but may have been relevant to parchment drying too.

It turns out that much of the evidence for the building having been used for parchment making came from oral evidence of the owner of 9 High Street, a founder member of Gretton History Society, but the documentary sources for this evidence are not known. The HBS report refers to Thomas Myers being a parchment maker at 9 High Street, Gretton in the 1830s and 1840s (presumably based on the oral evidence) and there is further information about the history of the Myers family online (Craxford et al 2015), much of which which I was able to confirm through the Ancestry family history website and the British Newspaper Archive. Thomas Myers was born in Horsforth in Yorkshire in 1797 and moved south by 1820, settling first in Daventry. He then moved to Barrowden in Rutland where he began a business (not defined) and where his first daughter was born. Certainly, parchment making took place in Barrowden from 1841 to the end of the century but it is not clear if Thomas Myers was directly involved in the trade in Barrowden.

By 1827 Thomas Myers had moved to Gretton where, in the censuses and directories, he is variously described as a farmer, fellmonger and parchment maker. He appears in the 1871 census aged 74, described as a parchment maker employing six men and two boys. There was another Myers family involved in parchment making in Gretton at the same time as Thomas. William Myers, described as journeyman parchment maker (in other words he worked for someone else), was also working in Gretton, perhaps for Thomas Myers. His four sons all followed him into parchment making. Perhaps Thomas and William Myers were related but Thomas was born in Yorkshire whilst William was born in Yardley Hastings and a genealogical link has not yet been established.

Thomas Myers must have been successful in his business dealings because he apparently owned up to 200 acres of land in Northants and Rutland by 1873. However, he died in 1880 and his premises and business were advertised for letting, in the Stamford Mercury in September 1880 by his daughter Annie Colwell who in the 1881 census is described as a *parchment yard proprietor*. It is not clear what happened after that as there aren't any parchment makers recorded in the Gretton Census after 1881. However, the HER report says that a Mrs Colvil was still running the parchment works in at 9 High Street, Gretton in 1935, her name being etched into a kitchen window there, along with running similar premises in Barrowden, Rutland. Perhaps she was a descendant of Thomas Myers? Although we may not be able to prove that Thomas Myers'

parchment works was at 9 High Street, Gretton the circumstantial evidence seems compelling.

Gretton Parchment Works incorporated into new extension.
©Will Ganble Architects

According to the House of Commons Library, Acts of Parliament were recorded on parchment until 1849, after which they were recorded on vellum (made from calfskin). Since 2015, they have been printed on archival paper. Whether parchment produced by Gretton's parchment makers was ever used for Hansard or other parliamentary purposes is unclear. Nevertheless, Gretton does seem to have a claim to fame as one of the more important sources of parchment in the nineteenth century. Furthermore, there would appear to be physical remains of that industry in the village today.

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Craxford, A.D., Craxford, J. & Wainwright, A. (2015) *From Gretton to Barrowden 1: The skin trade*. [Online] (Updated 16 October 2015) Available at: https://www.craxford-family.co.uk/themered/featuregretton2.php [accessed 3 July 2020]

Peter Perkins

A visit was made by NIAG to William Cowley's parchment making works at 97 Caldecote Street, Newport Pagnell on Friday, 3 September 1994 and Roy Sheffield has sent me the report from this visit as there would appear to be no record in any newsletter at that time. See the page 15 for his images taken during the visit. Ed.

This, then, is his report.

Parchment is made, generally speaking, from flesh-side splits of highest quality sheepskins. Vellum, these days, has come to signify a higher quality finished product and is made from calfskins or goatskins and, very occasionally, sheep-skins but with the latter, problems arise due to the layer of fat within the skin which is very difficult to extract.

Parchment is used for diplomas, certificates, percussion instruments, the restoration of old documents, for artistic purposes and so forth. Vellum is used in bookbinding, etc.

Skins are purchased from tanneries (in the case of sheepskins, already split) and tanning chemicals are extracted by paddling; much of the flesh is removed by a frizing machine (similar to a tannery fleshing machine but with blades set at a different pitch).

Skins are then tied to frames for final removal of flesh by hand, of grease by whiting and then drying. Some experimentation with mechanising processes is being undertaken in respect of calfskins and goatskins but sheepskins are too delicate for this to be viable.

The factory is laid out for eight to ten production staff with a current production staff of six, each of whom sees their skins right the way through the processes and applies his own mark to each one he has worked.

Roy Sheffield (1994)

Thornton Park, Kingsthorpe

WW2 ARP Lantern, NGR: SP7513 6260

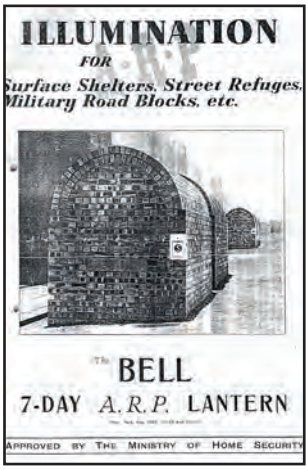
Entrance to Thornton Park, Kingsthorpe. The ARP lantern is recessed into the north side gate pier, see detail below.

Set in to a stone gate pier at the southern entrance to Thornton Park in Kingsthorpe, Northampton is an Air Raid Precautions (ARP) Lantern, a small but unusual and well-preserved piece of military concrete from Northampton's wartime days.

Such lanterns were built of concrete for Civil Defence use during World War Two. This example was called The *Bell*, a seven-day, model 'A' built nearby by Bells and intended for ARP use in surface air raid shelters, blast-proof protection walls and similar structures. Clearly visible, the lantern nowadays sits disused. It was constructed and possibly designed very locally by Bells who during the war manufactured a range of such ARP items for use across the country. Intended to be both wind and weather proof, the concrete lantern held a lamp designed to last for up to seven days before needing refuelling. The rectangular opening was once occupied by a lockable metal door providing access for the lamp with alongside a small circular window occupied by a *bullseye* lens. Smaller holes provided air intakes and outlets for combustion gases. The concrete lantern would have been painted white. It was specially designed for building in to the quoins of walls, as approved by the then Ministry of Home Security.

This Kingsthorpe example is a rare (locally and nationally) surviving *in situ* example of a WW2 Civil Defence lantern. Given the very close proximity of this lantern to its place of manufacture at Bells of Kingsthorpe, it might

be conjectured that its use at the entrance to Kingsthorpe Park represents an early or even experimental use of the type. During the wartime black-out it may have been intended to assist passers-by in seeking out the protection of the stone wall along Kingsthorpe Road in the event of an air raid. Additionally, it may have helped those seeking use of nearby air-raid shelters and/or the gas decontamination centre located in the park (the latter demolished around a decade or so ago). The lantern was presumably abandoned and disused by the later stages of the war and then largely forgotten.



The lantern forms a notable and rare piece of street furniture which serves as both a local landmark and a physical reminder of the Second World War. Its survival is all the more remarkable given its size and potentially vulnerability. Given its rarity and strong local connections it is hoped that it and the wall will be at least Locally Listed by Northampton Borough Council.

Graham Cadman

Kingsthorpe Hall

The Building: Kingsthorpe Hall replaced an earlier building slightly to the north of the present site. The Hall was faced with Kingsthorpe white sandstone; it was of three storeys with a roof of slate. There was a fine stone spiral staircase, with an elegant wrought iron balustrade, a feature of which Johnson (see below) was particularly fond. There was also a separate stable block, recently converted to two storey apartments. The cost of construction was £3,489-11s-0d, around £250,000 in today's money (at time of writing). The builders commission was £174-9s-6d being 5% of the cost. A note by James Fremeaux states '*The cost of my house and outhouses, walls, orchards, planning was £4,500*'.

The Builder: John Johnson (1732–1814) was born in Southgate Street, Leicester. Nothing is known of his early life or education but he was admitted Freeman of Leicester in 1754. Before 1760 he left for London possessing little more than 'strong abilities'. He began his career as a speculative builder on Berners Estate in St Marylebone, London in 1767 and maintained an office there. From 1769 he built up a country house practice in several counties. His surviving Houses include Terling Place, Bradwell Lodge and Hatfield Place all in Essex; Woolverstone Hall in Suffolk; Sadborrow in Dorset; Holcombe House in Middlesex and Kingsthorpe Hall in Northamptonshire. His houses often had fine staircases, in the design of which he excelled. Johnson was appointed County Surveyor in Essex in 1782 and changed his output to many

bridge and road structures. His major buildings were the Moulsham Bridge in 1787 and the Shire Hall in Chelmsford between 1789 and 1791. He was also responsible for the major reconstruction of Chelmsford Cathedral. In his home town of Leicester, he designed the County Rooms between 1799 and 1800. In Northamptonshire Johnson's work included the following:

- The rebuilding of the Great Hall at Castle Ashby for the 8th Earl of Northampton
- Pitsford Hall (*c.*1775) for Col. James Money, together with later additions and alterations. It is now an independent school.
- Carlton Hall, near Corby, for Sir John Palmer. It is now within East Carlton Country Park.
- Alterations to the mansion of Sir William Dolben in Finedon; it was later altered and demolished.
- East Haddon Hall rebuilt for the Sawbridge family.

Johnson died at his birth place in 1814 and was buried in St Martin's Church, Leicester (now the Cathedral).

The Stone: Kingsthorpe White Sandstone was used for the construction of Kingsthorpe Hall. In the eighteenth century this stone was introduced to local building and remained popular for about one hundred years. It is a white and grey freestone, which can be cut freely in any direction, and of a sandy texture with a fine grit that tends to harden when exposed to the air. This stone related to a period of geological history of Northamptonshire when the Jurassic Sea in the Midlands became a large expanse of marshy terrain occupied by horsetail plants. This stone came from a quarry on the north side of Kingsthorpe and to the east of the Harborough Road, near to the location of Chalcombe Avenue. This may be why the nearby area is known as White Hills. It was used for the first phase of building the Northampton Infirmary (now Northampton General Hospital) in 1793, when Benjamin Drayton gave £1,000 worth of stone for that purpose. In a later phase this stone was covered by Bath Stone. Kingsthorpe Stone was also used on the Cavalry Barracks of 1796 in Barrack Road and on some buildings in Kingsthorpe and Pitsford villages. It was also used on several large country houses and on the church of St Nicholas at Overstone of 1807.

Quarry operators: William Bosworth supplied the stone for the building of Kingsthorpe Hall in 1773. During the period in which John Johnson worked in the County it appears that he may have owned the quarry. An advertisement in the *Northampton Mercury* on 21 April 1783 reads as follows:

> STONE, COALS, LIME, &c: JOHN JOHNSON of Kingsthorpe, near Northampton, begs leave to acquaint the public and his friends in particular, that he sells at the Quarries (lately occupied by Mr Boswell) that durable white Freestone, so justly esteemed for Ashlar, Springers, Watertables, Coping, Cornice and all other ornaments in building. Also, flat Grave-stones, &c, Paving, Hearth, Stock and Sink-

stones; chimney pieces &c finely interspersed with a beautiful variety of shells, being the best of product on commonly called Moulton Park stone.

Kingsthorpe Hall was for the first one hundred years of its life referred to as the White House. Its plain classical style has stood the test of time. Although it is no longer owned by Northampton Borough Council it provides stylish accommodation for today. Its very presence is a reminder of the history of Kingsthorpe Park, now known as Thornton Park, where we can still enjoy the Ornamental Gardens and the wider parkland.

References: Diana Sutherland, *Northamptonshire Stone*, The Dovecote Press; Nancy Briggs, *John Johnson 1783–1814: Georgian Architect and County Surveyor of Essex*, Essex Record Office.

Alan Teulon (from A Short History of Thornton Park)

DIRFT expands

Construction of the third phase of Daventry International Rail Freight Terminal has started on the site of the former Rugby radio station. The 7.5m sqft extension will have a rail connection on an embankment and internal bridge already in situ. Further embankments and a bridge over the A5 will be added before the site opens.

The Railway Magazine, August 2020.

Winvic Construction has secured a £29m contract to construct five 800 m-long sidings and a traverser as part of Prologis' extension to its DIRFT III logistics park. The work includes significant earthworks, 9 km of new track linked to the existing site and the West Coast Main Line and three bridges. The terminal is due for completion in the summer of 2021 and will be capable of handling 24 775 m-long intermodal trains each day.

The Railway Magazine, November 2020.

Nene Valley Railway

Former Nassington Ironstone Quarry Hunslet 0-6-0ST (1953/1939) was out-shopped on 18 July following a full cosmetic overhaul by NVR's Small Loco Group. It is to be a footplate-accessible loco in Platform 1 at Wansford.

The Railway Magazine, September 2020.

Wicksteed Park

The park's Trustees have founded a new company called Wicksteed Trading Ltd to take over running the park and its attractions. The previous company Wicksteed Park Ltd fell into administration whilst the park was closed during Covid-19 lockdown. Around 20 volunteers from Network Rail have helped to carry out essential track repair and maintenance work to prepare the railway for a resumption of service.

The Railway Magazine, September 2020.

Catesby Tunnel

Some NIAG members may recall a walk in 2011 to look at the north portal of Catesby Tunnel and the adjacent Catesby Viaduct, reminders of the now long-gone Great Central Railway. Sadly, barbed wire prevented us from seeing the tunnel portal but we were able access the viaduct, now in splendid isolation. The news release below shows that the tunnel is to have a new lease of life.

Catesby Tunnel transformation project making good progress

A project to turn a disused Victorian-era railway tunnel into a state-of-the-art vehicle testing facility is moving through the gears as the finishing line grows nearer. The £12 million Catesby Aerodynamic Research Facility (CARF) is utilising the disused Catesby Tunnel to create an indoor, fully-controllable vehicle testing centre.

Running from Charwelton to Catesby, the Catesby Tunnel was completed in 1897 and operated until 1966, when the Great Central Main Line was closed and abandoned. Almost 3 km long and perfectly straight, the tunnel provides a stable underground environment in which vehicles can be driven at high speeds to monitor their aerodynamic performance. More accurate and efficient than a wind tunnel, the CARF will be the only testing facility of its kind available for hire and is expected to attract interest from across the world, ranging from cycling and motorsport teams to major vehicle manufacturers. The project to bring it back into use is being developed by Brackley-based firm Aero Research Partners (ARP), with work on the initial design phase starting in 2013.

An initial 400-metre stretch of the tunnel has been made operational so far, allowing some testing to begin. It is hoped the rest of the tunnel, which will include facilities for testing wind and simulated weather impact as well as for aerodynamics and emissions, will be completed by May next year. A new £4 million Research and Innovation Centre is also being built on the site, with the aim of enabling high-performance technology start-ups and early growth businesses to locate next to the testing facility.

The scheme has attracted a £6.2 million investment from the Government's Local Growth Fund, secured through the South East Midlands Local Enterprise Partnership (SEMLEP). Support has also come from Daventry District Council (DDC), which acquired the disused tunnel from the Secretary of State for Transport so it could be leased to ARP. West Midlands construction and civil engineering firm Stepnell began work on site in January

The tunnel's southern portal is obscured by the new building.

2018, building a new access road and two-storey main building at the tunnel's southern entrance. Work to lay a smooth road surface inside the eight-metre-wide tunnel got underway in January this year.

SEMLEP News Release, 1 October 2020 .
Peter Perkins

Catesby Tunnel to open

The CARF is set to open in mid-2021 to create a testing tunnel for high-speed vehicles. Plans are also in hand to open the 3 km tunnel to the public.

Chronicle & Echo, 5 November 2020.

MISCELLANY

Willersley Castle to be sold

Derbyshire is full of industrial archaeology sites and over the years it has been visited many times by NIAG and has hosted many EMIAC conferences. Several of the NIAG Saturday visits in the 1990s and early 2000s were led by Malcolm and Barbara Hill. The area around Matlock Bath and Cromford has been a centre of investigation; mainly because the world's first successful water-powered cotton spinning mill was installed at Cromford by Sir Richard Arkwright in 1771.


Members enjoying afternoon tea at Willersley Castle.

Arkwright successfully developed Cromford around his mills and became quite wealthy. In later years he decided to commission a new home for his family in a prominent hillside position between Matlock Bath and Cromford and named it Willersley Castle. Sadly, Sir Richard died before the castle was completed. However, Sir Richard's son – also called Richard – lived in the mansion and the family occupied it until the First World War when it became an auxiliary hospital. Many original features remain in the castle, including the Robert Adam fireplace and the striking dome-covered *Well Gallery*.

In later years the castle became a hotel and the current owners, Methodist Guild Holidays Limited, have decided to put the building up for sale for £4m.

Ron Whittaker

Bletchley flyover work

In July the news was that three of the UK's largest cranes would be lifting out sections of the Bletchley flyover, as part of the East West Rail project. The

town's main road will be closed from 5 July to 30 August while the sections were removed.

Rail, 15 to 28 July 2020.

Eight sections spanning the West Coast Main Line (WMCL) were removed over three weekends in May with the three spans directly over the WMCL due to be removed over six weekends in July and August.

The Railway Magazine, June 2020.

Conwy Valley Railway Line

Network Rail and Transport for Wales have approved a £2.2m scheme to protect the flood-prone stretch of rail track. Twice during the past three years the line has suffered from two serious washouts and a burst river bank. Repairs to the most recent damage caused by storms in February are still on-going between Tal-y-Cafn and Llanrwst. Network Rail (NR) plans to add about 20,000 tonnes of rock armour along a 1-mile stretch of the track north of Llanrwst.

The Railway Magazine, July 2020.

The line was scheduled to be reopened on 28 September on completion of the £2.2m project to better protect the line from extreme weather and flooding. The line had been closed for five months for repairs after Storm Gareth in 2019 and then in February 2020 after Storm Ciara washed away ballast at several sites. The storm also damaged fencing and level crossings at several locations. NR has installed 16,000 tonnes of rock armour alongside the line between Tal-y-Cafn and Llanrwst. Resilience of the line was tested and found satisfactory after Storm Francis in August.

The Railway Magazine, October 2020.

Having travelled on this line, in places the track is almost level with the water in the adjacent river. Ed.

German industry still using fireless locos

As the name implies, fireless locos do not have any means of heating water to generate steam; compressed steam is injected into the loco's 'boiler'. Historically, this loco type has been used at industrial sites handling explosive or combustible materials where a spark would be potentially disastrous or food and drug factories where contamination of raw materials and finished product would be a health risk. Six fireless locos remain in use in the Felix Schoeller Group factory, Mannheim power station, chemical manufacturer Ineos, the Romonta-operated open-cast lignite mine and bitumen production facility and the Ciech soda factory. A decade ago, there were more than 80 in use.

The Railway Magazine, September 2020.

Nunckley Hill gets a steam loco

Andrew Barclay 0-4-0ST Colin McAndrew (1223/1911) has been bought for Mountsorrel & Rothley Community Heritage Centre and was transferred by road from Chasewater Railway to Nunckley Hill on 27 October. It will be used for live steam shunting demonstrations in the sidings at Nunckley Hill.

The Railway Magazine, November 2020.

See Issue 153 for a report on NIAG's visit to Mountsorrel in July 2019. Ed.

'Ugly Sisters' for sale

Originally built to pull iron ore trains at Corby for Stewarts and Lloyds, 0-6-0ST No 56 found its way to the Ruddington Works of Great Central Railway, Nottingham (GCR(N)) *c.*1994. Despite being an 'industrial' design, it proved more than capable of hauling passenger trains between Ruddington and Loughborough. No 63, also ex-Corby, was acquired from Keighley. Whilst the *Austerity* influence may have influenced their design, the large firebox to enhance steaming gave rise to their nickname.

The class's Achilles heel was the firebox – its industrial design was not built for longevity. Over the years both locos required extensive remedial work that became ever more expensive. By 2018 the loco's owner's health was failing and both locos were gifted to East Midlands Railway Trust in an attempt to secure their future use on the railway. However, with the approval of the Pownall family, both locos have been put-up for sale to help fund a new railway terminus building.

Taken from: Sharpe, P. 2020. Farwell to the 'Ugly Sisters', *Driving Wheels*, Issue 99, Autumn 2020, p.7-9. Nottingham: LNER(GC) Heritage Trust.

UK imports coal

North Yorkshire Moors Railway currently buys its coal from stocks at the recently closed Shotton mine in Northumberland; it will be testing Russian coal transported 6,000 miles from the Kuzbass region. Stocks of British coal will be exhausted within 12 to 18 months. British heritage railways burn 26,000 tons of coal per year and several million tons will still need to be sourced for industries such as steel, concrete and sugar beet. Last year 86 per cent of UK coal was imported with a third coming from Russia followed by the US and Australia.

Daily Express, 3 September 2020.

With plans for the new Highthorn coal mine in Northumberland rejected by the government, the UK will now have to import coal from Russia.

The Times, 10 September 2020.

According to the Heritage Railway Association stocks of English coal will run out in 2021. The only UK mine producing the lump coal used by locomotives is Ffos-Y-Fran in South Wales, which is due to close in 2022. Once stocks run out

the industry will be reliant on foreign imports.

The Times, 7 January 2021.

OF THIS AND THAT

Did you know? Facts about the Navy

- King Alfred was the first English King to command a fleet in 897.
- Naval uniform was introduced for officers in 1748 and for other ranks in 1857.
- Sailors were called *Jack Tar* because they originally wore tarred jackets and hats.
- The issue of rum to sailors became official in 1731. The issue was abolished on 30 July 1970, *Black Tot Day*.
- The last person to be hanged at the yardarm was Private Dallinger RM on 13 July 1860 for attempted murder.
- The White Ensign was adopted as the distinguishing flag for all warships on 5 August 1864.
- 124 Victoria Crosses have been awarded to Royal Naval personnel.
- The oldest ship in commission with the Royal Navy is HMS Victory, launched in 1765. She is preserved in dry dock, alongside the Royal Naval Museum, as flagship of Second Sea Lord and Commander-In-Chief Naval Home Command.
- The Women's Royal Naval Service was officially formed in 1971. Numbers peaked at 74,000 in the 1940s. They were amalgamated with the Navy in 1992.
- The largest and last Battleship to serve in the Royal Navy was HMS Vanguard 1944–60, displacement 42,500 tons.
- WRNS were officially allowed to serve at sea in 1988.

Taken from the flyer for the Royal Naval Museum. Ed.

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Dates for the Diary

January to March talks

Due to the on-going pandemic, the last three meetings of the winter programme have been postponed to 2021/22.

Summer walks

The committee are hoping that we can start to meet outdoors when the weather

improves and the evenings start to get lighter.

Winter programme 2021/22

St Matthews has been booked for the winter season of talks starting on 8 October.

EMIAC

The conference organised by NIAG for 2020 has been rescheduled for 9 October 2021 at Roade.

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And Finally

The following was taken from a reader's letter in response to an article on fare evasion in a previous issue of the magazine and relates to a journey on the Somerset & Dorset Railway in the mid-1950s.

A cunning plan

Snowfalls in winter would sometimes close roads over the Mendip Hills resulting in the alternative trains being heavily oversubscribed. By the time the train in question arrived in Bath around 9a.m., all the compartments, including the First-Class ones, would be bulging. The train pulled into the right-hand side of the platform, whereupon the occupants of the First Class compartments found that the doors on that side had been locked before departure. A ticket inspector was stationed at each door and charged the interlopers the excess fare.

The Railway Magazine, September 2020

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Coming Up

Old Towcester – 43 Romans build Watling Street!!
Was There really a station at Tiffield?
A Record of Detroit Diesel Allison Division of General Motors at London Road, Wellingborough 1964–1982
Union Bridge to be Restored
Working Barge: Braunston Tess Yard to Top Lock at Long Buckby

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

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This edition was prepared by the late Jane Waterfield.
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Newsletter

Next Issue: **April 2021**

Deadline for all articles and information 1st March 2021. 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 are encouraged to illustrate all articles and will be inserted if submitted. The Editor will be happy to discuss the author's requirements.

Please submit by e-mail or mail. Photographs/slides/diagrams sent by first class post will be returned to you the same way. Illustrations submitted via e-mail should be sent as separate attachments to text; they should be in one of the standard formats (JPEG, TIFF, SVG, etc), and images must be at least 2.2 megapixels in dimension. Please give information about the photograph, e.g. a caption and date. Please also include your name so that you can be credited with taking the photographs.

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