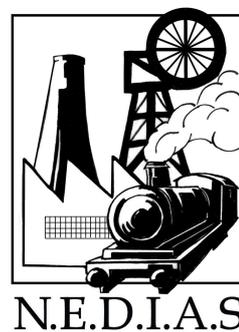


North East Derbyshire Industrial Archaeology Society

Newsletter No. 10 – May 2003
Price: 50p (Free to Members)



Editorial

In writing this Newsletter we try to inform our members of our various activities, including our lecture meetings and visits, as well to keep in touch with those who cannot attend. We therefore like to include as many items of industrial history and archaeological interest as our contributors can provide and our printing budget can accommodate. Hopefully that is a successful formula and, from our growing membership numbers, that does seem to be the case.

In this issue you will find information on the summer visits programme and a summary of our 2003/2004 winter lecture programme. Perhaps we should not mention winter while we are still anticipating summer, but your committee has been busy contacting speakers and we feel the need to share the fruits of their success with you right now so proper priorities can be established in your diaries.

Since the Issue No. 9 in February we have had our AGM and two very successful lecture evenings, with Roger Shelley talking to us about the Lombe Silk Mill at Derby and its current role as the Derby Industrial Museum. Our 2002/2003 season closed with Barry Knight from Clayton's Tannery describing the history of England's tanning industry in general and Clayton's in particular. As only one of three tanneries left in England, we have not only a thriving business here in Chesterfield but as anyone who has visited the works will appreciate, an important piece of industrial heritage. Thanks to Cliff Lea, we made our first venture in to the realm of PowerPoint, computer laptop driven presentations at this meeting in place of the traditional slides, merging tools of both 19th and 21st centuries.

Our AGM saw the addition of a new face to our committee and we welcome David Rance to our ranks. The full committee is listed in this issue but this is not exhaustive - we still have room for willing souls to assist and the term of office runs only for a year at a time!

Perhaps the biggest change is that of editorship of this Newsletter. Our Publicity Officer, Cliff Lea has very kindly agreed to become our Editor with effect from Issue No. 11. We feel the time has come to enhance the appeal of the Newsletter and Cliff, being well versed in computing matters will, I am sure, build on its style and presentation for the betterment of the Society. From small beginnings, I have enjoyed seeing the Newsletter grow and handing over the chair (or should it be "keyboard"?) is not done without a touch of sadness. However, I hope you will all support Cliff in his endeavours, not the least by keeping him well stocked with interesting articles for publication.

David Wilmot.

Summer Visits Programme, 2003

Saturday 28 June - Chesterfield Canal walk, with Christine Richardson - A walk of 3 miles (about 2 hours) to view the newly restored 23 locks, 1 aqueduct, the hamlet of Turnerwood and the bridges of the summit level. Meet 09.45 at Kiveton Park station (map ref. 508825) for the 10.06 train to Shireoaks, then a walk back along the canal. On return to Kiveton Park the pub should be open for food, drinks and toilet facilities. From Chesterfield by train, catch the Central Trains 09.19 to Sheffield (arrives 09.39) for the Arriva Trains Northern 09.46 service, which is the train calling at Kiveton Park at 10.06. No cost except rail fare. Advance booking not required but if wishing to attend please contact David Wilmot (01246 854180).

Saturday 5 July - Strutt's Belper, with Mary Smedley - a morning tour of North Mill, followed by an afternoon walk around the Strutt industrial housing. Meet at North Mill at 10.30am. Bring sandwiches for lunch (or use pubs/cafes nearby). Cost - £3 per person. Advance booking not required but if wishing to attend please contact David Wilmot (01246 854180).

Saturday 9 August - Scunthorpe Steel Works Rail Tour - A 15 mile, steam hauled, rail tour of part of the rail system of Scunthorpe Works, courtesy of the Appleby Frodingham Railway Preservation Society. The tour, which starts promptly at 1.30pm, takes about two and a half hours, with a short break at the locomotive shed. Car parking is available on site. Cost - Donations collected on the train. **Seats are limited, so Advance Booking is Essential** - Contact David Wilmot (01246 854180). There is also a brake van tour of different parts of the works during the evening and this may be booked separately.

Lecture Programme, 2003/2004

Meetings are usually held the second Monday of each month. The venue for each meeting is the **Friends Meeting House, Ashgate Road**, Chesterfield (junction of Brockwell Lane). The meetings are held in the Social Room on the lower floor, reached from the Ashgate Road entrance, **starting at 7.30pm**. The talks are free to NEDIAS members but **visitors are asked for a donation of £2 for each meeting**. Due to space constraints in this issue, only subject titles are given. Further information on the subjects covered can be found in the NEDIAS Lecture Programme leaflet.

2003

8th September - Philip Riden; *Company housing in the Derbyshire Coalfields*

13th October - Hugh Potter; *Cromford Canal*

10th November - Darrell Clark; *Arkwright's Mills at Cromford*

8th December - Peter Machen; *The Development of Sheffield Trades*

2004

12th January - Ann Hodson; *Memories of Barker Pottery*

9th February - Peter Hawkins; *Markham's 1889-2000*

8th March - AGM & Members' Evening

19th April - Andrew Firth; *Hulley's Buses*

10th May - Ken Horan; *Railway Steam to Diesel - A Regional Perspective*

Other Items of IA Interest

We have received details from the **South Yorkshire Industrial History Society** of their summer programme, including: -

Issue No. 10 – May 2003

Saturday 21st June - A walk in the Moss Valley; Birley Hay to Seldom Seen. Meet at the car park at Ford, 1.30pm. Contact Graham Hague 0114 268 6729 or Chris Ball 0114 236 1471.

Sunday 7th September - Model Engineers' open day at Wortley Top Forge

An exhibition, "LMS 80", is currently being held at **Derby Industrial Museum** until 13th July, to celebrate the 80th anniversary of the formation of the London, Midland & Scottish Railway.

Damstead Works, Dronfield

Led by Paul Smith, our Damsteadeers continue to survey the site, currently concentrating on the area around the chimney base and its flues. Derbyshire County Council has awarded a contract for conservation of the site and work is due to start in mid-May. They have taken up our suggestion that the floor features of grinding wheels and hearths should be retained and we will be working with the County Archaeologist to look at the best way to conserve the walls and remaining chimney structure. DCC also hopes to make use of any dressed stone recovered from the river Drone to make a feature for the site once occupied by the gasholder.

HOMES FIT FOR WORKERS (or, as yet, an unsolved mystery), by Darrell Clark

On July 5th 1918 in an address to the Robinson Company's Holme Brook Works' Council on Housing and Town Planning and chaired by Mr. P. M. Robinson, Alderman Rhodes explained the serious shortage of houses within the Borough of Chesterfield. He claimed the housing famine was fast becoming a menace to the health of the people of the borough. Giving proof of his statement, he showed that from 1911 up to 1917 only 608 houses were built in Chesterfield which, against the number actually required, left a shortfall of 800 houses.

Alderman Rhodes averred that the Government recognized the seriousness of the situation on a national scale, and as a means of providing work for our men returning from the war, it proposed to promote and finance a massive house-building programme. A worthy example of the fruits of Alderman Rhodes' address, and worth examining in some detail, is the formation of the Wheatbridge Housing Association by Robinson and Sons Ltd.

Early in 1919 a committee of management had been formed from four members of the various works councils, with Mr. W. A. Pursglove as secretary, with representation of the Directors of Robinson's, in the shape of Major W.B. Robinson, Mr. C. W. Robinson, and Mr. P. M. Robinson. By September that year the Association had been formally registered and negotiations had begun with the Duke of Devonshire for the purchase of 14 acres of land on Ashgate Road, opposite the recently remade entrance to Chester Street.

Quoting from the Robinson in-house magazine, *The Link*, "This land is considered by many to be the finest building site in Chesterfield, and it should soon be possible to make an extremely pleasant garden suburb there". By the December issue of *The Link* it can be seen that Mr. Bailey Deeping of Chesterfield had been appointed as Architect and was engaged on the layout of the land, envisaged to contain 112 houses.

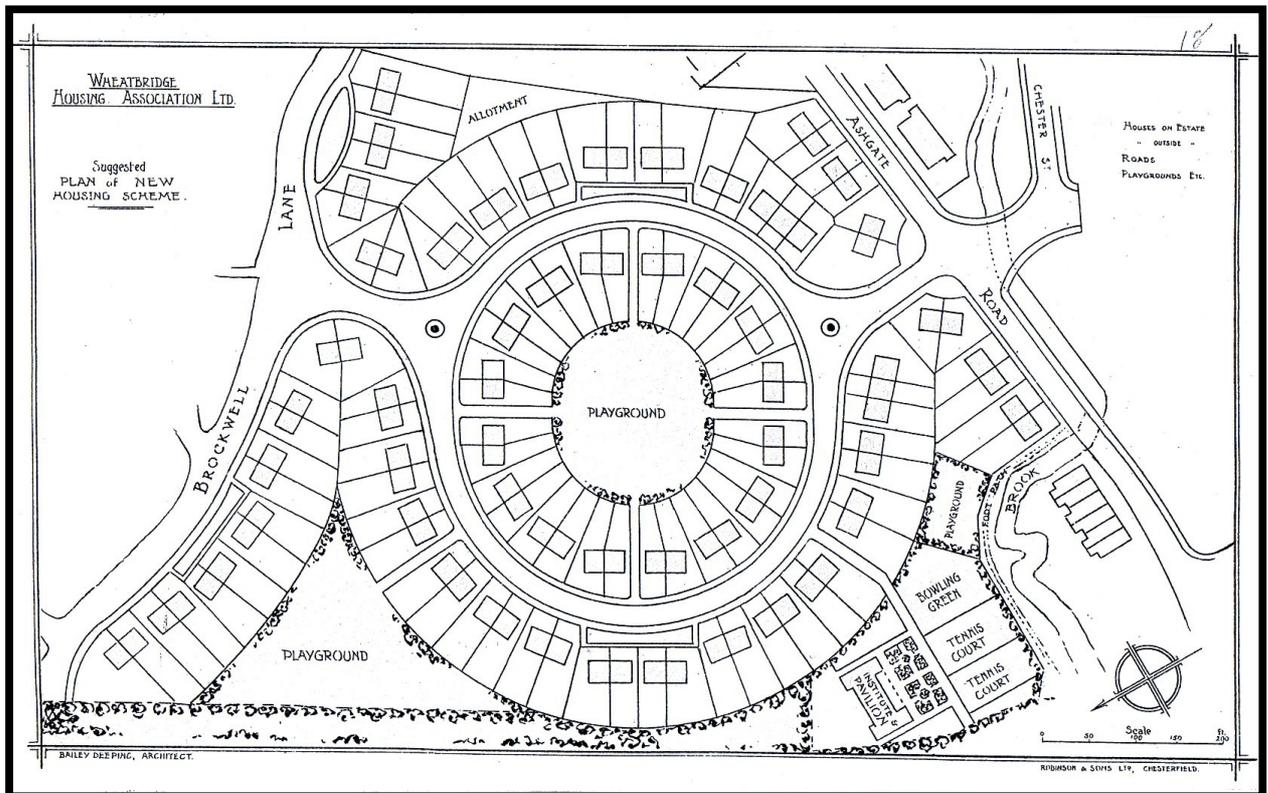


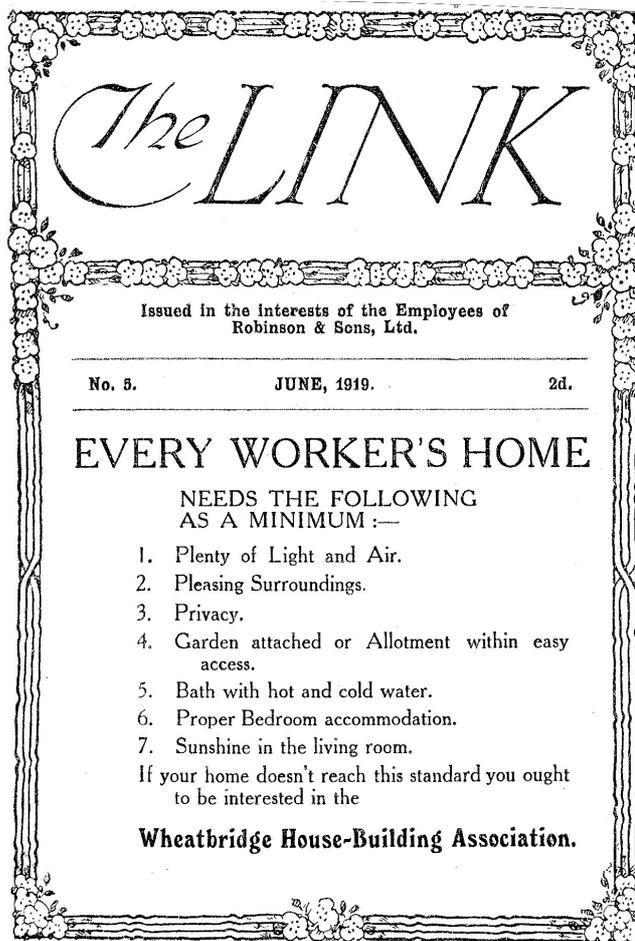
Fig 1: Original suggested plan of the housing scheme proposed by “Wheatbridge House-Building Association”.

The ceremony for the Cutting of the First Sod on Saturday March 6th 1920 attracted many spectators. The task was given to Mrs. Robinson of Field House, who gracefully turned the first chunk of Mother Earth. It is also clear by now that the Housing Association was very well supported, having at this time 40 shareholders holding 2,400 shares of £1, although under the rules no shareholder was allowed more than 200 shares. A Mr. Jos. Henstock had also been appointed Clerk of Works and the brickwork contract for 48 Houses had been let.

At this point we find the first reference to the building of houses by a technique probably unique in Chesterfield, the use of Dorman Long steelwork for the main structure. 18 Houses were to be built to this format, on the Brockwell Lane side of the estate, and it is considered that the idea was suggested by one of the Robinson directors, who had examined the principle of this form of house construction, during a visit to the United States of America.

We now also have a plan of the estate, showing the intention to build two basic types of houses, lucidly described as a parlour house and a non-parlour house. However there was to be a considerable amount of variation in style both externally and internally, but all having bathrooms upstairs as well as entrance halls, while two, three and four bedrooms versions were on offer. Referring to *The Link* magazine of June 1920, there are said to be 10 houses under construction, with photographs of the pairs of semi-detached ones fronting Ashgate Road.

Emerging at this time, is something they appear not to have taken into account, the acute shortage of building materials. "The procuring of building materials is a thought provoking task, and from the first, we have been dogged with many vexatious delays. Bricks and roofing tiles present the greatest difficulty". The Committee, in an attempt to cure the problem of shortage of bricks, purchased the disused chimney of the Brockwell Brick kilns, so yielding a large quantity of serviceable bricks for the inside walls.



It is by now quite clear that the houses when completed will be rented, at a cost relating to the cost of construction, and only by the shareholders. The final reference found so far from the pages of *The Link* is page 7 in volume 17 of June 1922, which states, "The Wheatbridge Housing Association has now erected 32 Houses".

Now to the mystery: what happened next? Why did the Association never complete the intended 112 Houses on the estate? Part two of this mystery in the next issue!

[We are grateful to Robinson & Sons Ltd. for their kind permission to reproduce the cover page of *The Link* for June 1919 along with the map of the estate, as well as the use of material within the pages of its various issues. - *Ed.*]

British Association for Local History

NEDIAS has joined BALH and during 2003 will be receiving the four numbers of Volume 33 of its journal, *The Local Historian*, and its quarterly news magazine, *Local History News*. We will also be able to take part in BALH meetings and events, as well as benefiting from public liability insurance cover for our own activities.

Contributions for the next Newsletter should be sent to Cliff Lea, 15 Kelburn Avenue, Walton, Chesterfield S40 3DG (Tel; 01246 234212, email; c2clea@tiscali.co.uk).

And Finally ...

And if you thought you were ahead of the crowd in forsaking those cycle clips for car keys, read on. From the September 1919 issue of "Link", the house magazine of Robinson & Sons Ltd, under Sale & Exchange:

'Gent's cycle for sale, BSA fittings; Palmer tyres; free wheel. What offers? "Motorist", c/o Editor'.

The Officers of the Society: -

Chairman – David Wilmot; *Secretary* – Patricia Pick; *Treasurer* – Pamela Alton
Membership Secretary/Assistant Treasurer – Jean Heathcote; *Publicity Officer (& Newsletter Editor from June 2003)* – Cliff Lea; *Lecture Meetings Organiser* – Malcolm Fisher; *Newsletter Editor (until May 2003)* – David Wilmot; *Archivist* --Pete Wilson; *Committee members* – David Hart, David Rance, Paul Smith, Jack Smith.

Published by North East Derbyshire Industrial Archaeology Society. Hon. Editor; David Wilmot MA, 2 Bright Street, North Wingfield, Chesterfield S42 5LR (01246 854180 or email davidrhwilmot@talk21.com). The authors retain copyright of the contents.