

# North East Derbyshire Industrial History & Archaeology Group.

## Newsletter No. 2 - May 2001

### Editorial

The first newsletter, issued in January 2001, thanked those people who had given their support to the idea of the new group. It has been very pleasing to see that the initial enthusiasm was justifiable, with a good attendance at the first three meetings. We have twice seen at least twenty people present and, for one meeting forty-three signed in. Having overcome the initial teething problems, the meetings have been well received. The talk on the Ashover Light Railway was deservedly popular and, not surprisingly, drew the largest audience. Thanks are due to Dudley Fowkes, Malcolm Bond and Derek Bayliss for the time they gave and the trouble they took to give their individual talks.

We now have a few clear weeks to consider where we go from here and, hopefully, to arrange a series of equally captivating talks for the autumn and winter sessions. So far, three speakers have offered their services but we shall need a few more if we are to maintain the existing momentum.

Up to now, we have only hinted at the need for assistance with the touchy subject of administration. There has been no discussion on the likely need for any formal structure or constitution. Perhaps the next step should be the formation of a steering group, made up of a band of volunteers? Hopefully this can be discussed at the 22nd May meeting.

### Spring 2001's final Meeting

**22nd May - Open for anyone to give a short talk, to show slides, photographs or display any other material, whether on local industrial archaeological topics or from a wider sphere.** A projector and screen will be available, so if three or four people could each make 10 to 20 minute contributions (one at a time please!). We should also have time for discussion on the Steering Group but fear not there will be no coercion to get involved!

### Time & Place

The **Friends Meeting House, Chesterfield**, in the Social Room on the ground floor at **7.30pm (1930 hours)**. The meeting house can be found on the corner of Ashgate Road and Brockwell Lane. The entrance with the least steps/stairs is from Ashgate Road. The usual request will be made for a contribution of £ 1 for each adult attending.

### Future Issues

It is hoped to produce at least one further issue of this Newsletter in 2001, in early autumn. Much depends upon the availability of your written contributions for publication! Thanks to those who responded to the request in Newsletter No. 1 by sending 4 x 2nd Class stamps to the editor for subsequent copies and other mailings. We have a mailing list but it would be helpful if those receiving this Newsletter could send some postage stamps to the editor at the address below if they have not already done so.

## **Finances**

Thanks to the extent of support at meetings, and the generosity of speakers on the matter of expenses, the contribution originally suggested for each meeting has been reduced from £1.50 to just £ 1. A copy of the accounts for the first four months is enclosed with this newsletter.

## **Local Heritage Initiative**

On 17th March last, Angela Essom, Local Heritage initiative adviser, The Countryside Agency, East Midlands region, gave a talk to groups and societies at the Derbyshire Record Office, Matlock. The Local Heritage Initiative (LHI) is a means by which groups of individuals can obtain funding for local projects. It currently has an annual budget of £375,000 for the East Midlands region, was launched in February 2000 and has already funded several pilot projects. For LHI project approval purposes, "Heritage" is deemed to be something in existence at least 30 years earlier.

The grants can provide 60% cover for projects between £3,000 and £25,000, although the usual maximum is £15,000. There are a number of other criteria to be met for groups to be eligible, such as having a constitution, an element of funding from sources other than Lottery funds and, particularly important, an element of local community participation. LHI covers the cost of the project, except for the acquisition of assets. The project must be sustainable and provide the community with some on-going activity. Publication of a book after local research is not eligible for funding, but the actual research would be if local people gained skills or useful knowledge in the creation of the book's contents. There are obviously more points to be considered and further details can be obtained from the editor if anyone so wishes.

All this might seem somewhat obtuse for this group as it currently stands, but with industries disappearing all too rapidly from our landscape, it is not beyond the bounds of probability that we, or other interested parties, might find a project calling for restoration for which LHI funding would be a godsend. Those present at Derek Bayliss' talk on Sheffield's Industrial Heritage could not fail to have noticed the extent to which the South Yorkshire Industrial History Society has become involved with local site preservation projects over the years. LHI funding might be the means by which the East Midlands could enhance its industrial heritage and it is to be hoped that this corner of Derbyshire will see a share of the money now available.

## **Site Recording**

Paul Smith of this group has drawn attention to a dormant industrial site in the Whittington area which, according to signboards visible from the Sheffield railway line, is currently up for sale for redevelopment.

This is the former works of Wagon Repairs Limited, with an interesting array of open sheds and other buildings.

If the owner's permission could be obtained, assuming no other industrial archaeological body has already done so, it would be an interesting exercise to review the workings of the site before the evidence is removed to make way for its regeneration.

A further site, or sites, suggested by Paul can be found in the area south of Walton where there is evidence on the ground of earlier iron-ore workings. Also, in Brampton, the fate of a decaying waterwheel is a cause for concern. Hopefully, Paul will expound on these at our 22nd May meeting.

### **Ankerbold & Lings Tramroad - by David Wilmot**

The principal work on the tramroads of this area has to be Philip Riden's essay *Tramroads in North East Derbyshire* published in *Industrial Archaeology* in 1970. Even so, it was described by the author as an interim report, largely due to the relative absence of primary documentary evidence and traces on the ground of many of the tramroads identified up to that time. Much of the evidence used for earlier writings had been based on John Farey's 1817 publication *A General View of the Agriculture and Minerals of Derbyshire* but the route of the line from Lings Colliery, north of North Wingfield to Ankerbold in the valley of the Rother near Tupton, had not been determined by 1970 and still appears to be a mystery today. The probable routes of all the tramroads described by Philip Riden were shown in diagrams at the end of the paper, except for the Ankerbold & Lings. Its end locations were shown, but no attempt was made to suggest the likely route of the line.

The Ankerbold & Lings had been created by Joseph Butler of Killamarsh at the end of the 18th century. Butler was also the owner of Wingerworth Iron Furnace to which another of Butler's tramroads ran, named by Riden as the Wingerworth & Woodthorpe. Despite the close proximity of the iron works at Wingerworth and the wharf at Ankerbold, there has been no suggestion that the two places were ever connected. Traffic on the Ankerbold line was transferred in boxes from the tramroad wagons to road carts at Ankerbold wharf for the next leg of the journey, either to Wingerworth or to the Chesterfield Canal for Killamarsh.

An earlier work, by S L Garlic, published in *Derbyshire Miscellany* in February 1964 as *The Zig-Zag Railway* was discounted by Riden as confusion between tramroads and early coalpits with later locomotive lines and collieries. Garlic had taken the route of the Ankerbold and Lings as the same as the North Midland Railway Company's line from Hephthorne Lane, up the incline towards Alma Colliery. Apart from a section lost under modern housing on Chesterfield Road, North Wingfield, the latter incline remains prominently visible today and is used as a public footpath.

Garlic refers to the [Ankerbold & Lings] railway having been "taken over and reconstructed by the North Midland Railway in the middle of the 19th century". He also, consistent with Farey, describes the line as having wooden sleepers but goes on to say that stone blocks were found with the imprint of an iron chair and two holes on each, being "clearly shown on the photographs taken by my companion, Mr. Charles Smith". The precise location of the stone blocks was not mentioned in the article, although Garlic did say that they would have been after Joseph Butler's time.

Ergo, they probably came from the North Midland Company's standard gauge line with edge-rail and iron chairs, not the earlier plateway, narrow gauge tramroad. The light use of the line and its short life would hardly justify the expense of replacing wooden sleepers with stone blocks.

In S D Chapman's book on *Stanton & Staveley* [pp35-36] it is said that Butler's Wingerworth forge closed down in the slump immediately after the end of the French Wars and the forge at Killamarsh was up for sale soon afterwards. In that case, it seems probable that the line of the Ankerbold & Lings could have fallen in to disuse some twenty years before the advent of the North Midland and, with its metal rail no doubt being 'recycled', the wooden sleepers would have been left to decay on the ground.

However, there is a possibility that the North Midland did intend to use part of the Ankerbold & Lings route for their incline. Both schemes would have required careful engineering as there is a difference in height of some 200 feet between the river Rother and the plateau on which Lings Colliery was situated, a distance of about one mile. Farey makes no mention of any mechanical means of haulage having been used by the early tramroad, despite giving several other technical details. It has to be assumed therefore that horse power was used, probably to haul up one wagon at a time. A ruling gradient of 1 in 20 could be achieved if certain gullies were used on the hillside, hence the familiar description of the 'zig-zag'. The North Midland's route for its larger, standard gauge wagons, would have to be on a straighter line with no tight curves.

Deposited in the archives at Matlock is a copy of a plan and papers submitted by the North Midland Railway Company to Parliament in July 1837, signed by George Stephenson, showing a route "on lands belonging to Sir Henry John Joseph Hunloke in the parish of North Wingfield". This route was far different from that actually built. It was to start nearer to Ankerbold, not far from the later sidings of Avenue Coke Works, then run Southeast in a straight line across Birkin Lane and up the hillside to cross the North Wingfield-Chesterfield road a few hundred yards north of the eventual route. The first length of the North Midland's incline was drawn for a gradient of 1 in 26, with the upper section at 1 in 10~. For those not familiar with the area, a diagram can be found at the back of this newsletter.

The proponents of a new railway scheme were required to provide Parliament with maps, plans and schedules showing the property crossed and giving names of owners/occupiers. However, none of the papers lodged in 1837 made any mention of a tramroad route. Even so, the topography for the North Midland's initial route does appear to favour a similar line having been used by the Ankerbold & Lings, albeit several years earlier. A further point to consider is that Birkin Lane was at one time a turnpike trust approved by Parliament and, as such, records may well exist of any crossing of its route by the Ankerbold & Lings tramroad. Is there substantive evidence of its route out there yet, either in documents or in remains of its sleepers, metal spikes or angle-plate rails? Enlightenment would be very welcome!



**Information Requested**

A request for information has been received from a Lincolnshire expert on reinforced concrete structures, particularly water towers, built from about 1900 onwards. Apparently there was one such item at Staveley works and the enquirer is interested to know whether it still stands or, if not, when it was demolished. Can anybody identify the water tower from the thin description given and throw further light on the subject please?

**And Finally. on a lighter note**

The Cheshire Lines Committee was what we would now call a joint venture, between several railway companies extant in the area west of Manchester up to 1947. A fellow student at the Institute of Railway Studies, Peter Hanson of Rainhill, found the following entry in the Company's Board Minute Book for 1918 during his researches:

"Knotty Ash, Liverpool, The Military Police made application for latrine accommodation to be provided at Knotty Ash Station, in connection with the movement of American Troops."

Why else?

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