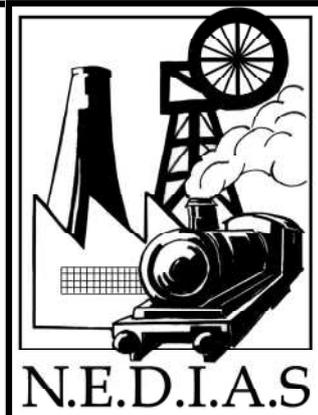


North East Derbyshire Industrial Archaeology Society

NEDIAS Newsletter No. 26 – May 2007

Price: £1.00 (Free to Members)



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Chairman's Comments:

A brief version, as space is at a premium in this issue. Firstly, thanks to Malcolm Calow for the chance to reflect on previous NEDIAS activities with his video projection after the March AGM. Thanks also to Jacqui Currell as well as the contributors of material, for the fine display in the foyer of Chesterfield Library during April. I have had more than a few favourable comments on the display from interested people and without doubt it will have increased awareness of NEDIAS amongst the local community, perhaps even adding to our membership.

On membership, and particularly attendances at talks as mentioned at the recent AGM, our numbers are interesting. For the twelve meetings From January 2004 to March 2005, the average attendance was 44.6. The thirteen meetings between September 2005 and December 2006 at Rowland Hill House produced an average of 39.6; while for the first three meetings of 2007 (including 35 for the March AGM) we achieved an average of 46 members and guests.

The peak attendance of 68 reached in February 2004 for David Hey's talk, followed by the meetings in January 2005 and November 2006 when 55 people were present. Close contenders for the lowest numbers are the May and March meetings, the latter being our AGM with an average of 33 (35 in 2007). If nothing else, there is an overall consistency between attendances from 2004 to the present day and it behoves your Committee to ensure we continue to provide an interesting and stimulating programme, which reminds me; we still have vacancies on the Committee for anyone willing to help us develop our aims and objectives! For details, talk to any of the committee or contact us through the channels shown on the last page of this Newsletter.

David Wilmot

WHAT'S ON?

NEDIAS Lecture Programme, 2007

When: Meetings are usually held the second Monday of each month, starting at 7:30pm
Where: Friends' Meeting House, Ashgate Road, Chesterfield

10 September 2007	Mike Taylor – <i>“Some Links between School Chemistry and Industry in North East Derbyshire”</i> – otherwise described in the NEDIAS programme as <i>“Aspects of the Chemical and Coking Industries in Derbyshire”</i> .
15 October 2007	David Jessop – <i>“The work of the archaeological rescue group ARCUS.”</i>
12 November 2007	Brian Naylor – <i>“The History and restoration of Heage Windmill”</i>
10 December 2007	Christmas Meeting: David Wilmot – <i>“From Ankerbold to Antonito – a miscellany of canal, road and rail.”</i>

Other diary dates

Sat 28 July 2007	Visit to Goole and the preserved boat “Sobriety” – further details from Graham Hague, SYIHS, 0114 268 6729 (starts 09:41 train from Sheffield)
Sat 8 September 2007	Wortley Top Forge, Heritage Open Day (11:00am-4:00pm) Free admission.
Sat/Sun 22-23 Sep 07	Steam Days at Wortley Top Forge

NEDIAS Spring and Summer Visits

Monday 25 June 2007: The Shardlow Mid-Summer Saunter & Supper

Something of a tradition has developed within NEDIAS for a summer evening visit by members and friends to a place of interest for a guided tour followed by some supper. There is to be slight change this year as we are forsaking the world of steel rails for a canal experience. On the evening of **Monday 25 June, 2007**; there will be a guided walk with a member of the Shardlow Heritage Trust to look at the canal-based township created by the late-18thC arrival of the Trent & Mersey Canal. This will be followed by a buffet supper in the Clock Warehouse, a former canal building which straddles an arm of the canal and has in more recent times served as a public house.

The cost, including the guided tour and buffet supper, will be £12.50 per head. **Numbers are limited and advance booking is essential.** For further details, contact Brian Dick, 01246 205720

The History and Future of Walton Bump Mill

Richard Robinson

As the Industrial Revolution began to get under way one of the keys to it was improvement to the road system. Thus the road going west through Brampton to Old Brampton was taken over by a Turnpike Trust in 1759, and this was an essential precursor to the development of the local manufacturing and mining industries.

The origin of the name Bump in Bump Mill is not known but it was commonly used to describe Mills which used to produce candlewicks. It also has flavour of low quality and may have used shorter cotton fibres - these were often described by Lancashire Cotton Merchants as “‘avin’ two ends and no middle!”

The earliest written information about the Bump Mill on the Walton site is that in a Trade Directory in the Local Studies Library, which states that Hewitt & Co started producing candlewicks here in 1791. The founder was Mark Hewitt (1760-1820) from Beighton who set up in Chesterfield as a Mercer and Draper.⁽¹⁾ Later in 1811 he describes himself as a linen and woollen draper. He was also the Mayor, aged 29, at the time he built the Mill and had 13 children, so could be said to be pretty active! He had three adult sons; the eldest William ran the Drapery business, whilst the second son George (b1800) ran the Cotton Mill. George's son, John Mark (1824-1877) was later a JP and also classified as a candlewick manufacturer. The third son, Charles, who died at the age of 25, ran the candle making business in Beetwell St.

But, back to the original Mill itself, the Derby Mercury of 31 July 1800 tells us that the whole building and its contents was burned to the ground with the exception of the steam engine and chimney (next to the tower on the photo). It is likely that the engine itself had probably only been installed a few years earlier. It is suggested that a lighted candle set "hurds" alight so that the fire spread with "rapidity and violence". "Hurds" are described as the coarser parts of flax used to make coarser cloth and candlewicks, so clearly flax was also used in the Mill. Sadly a 15 year old girl died in the fire⁽²⁾

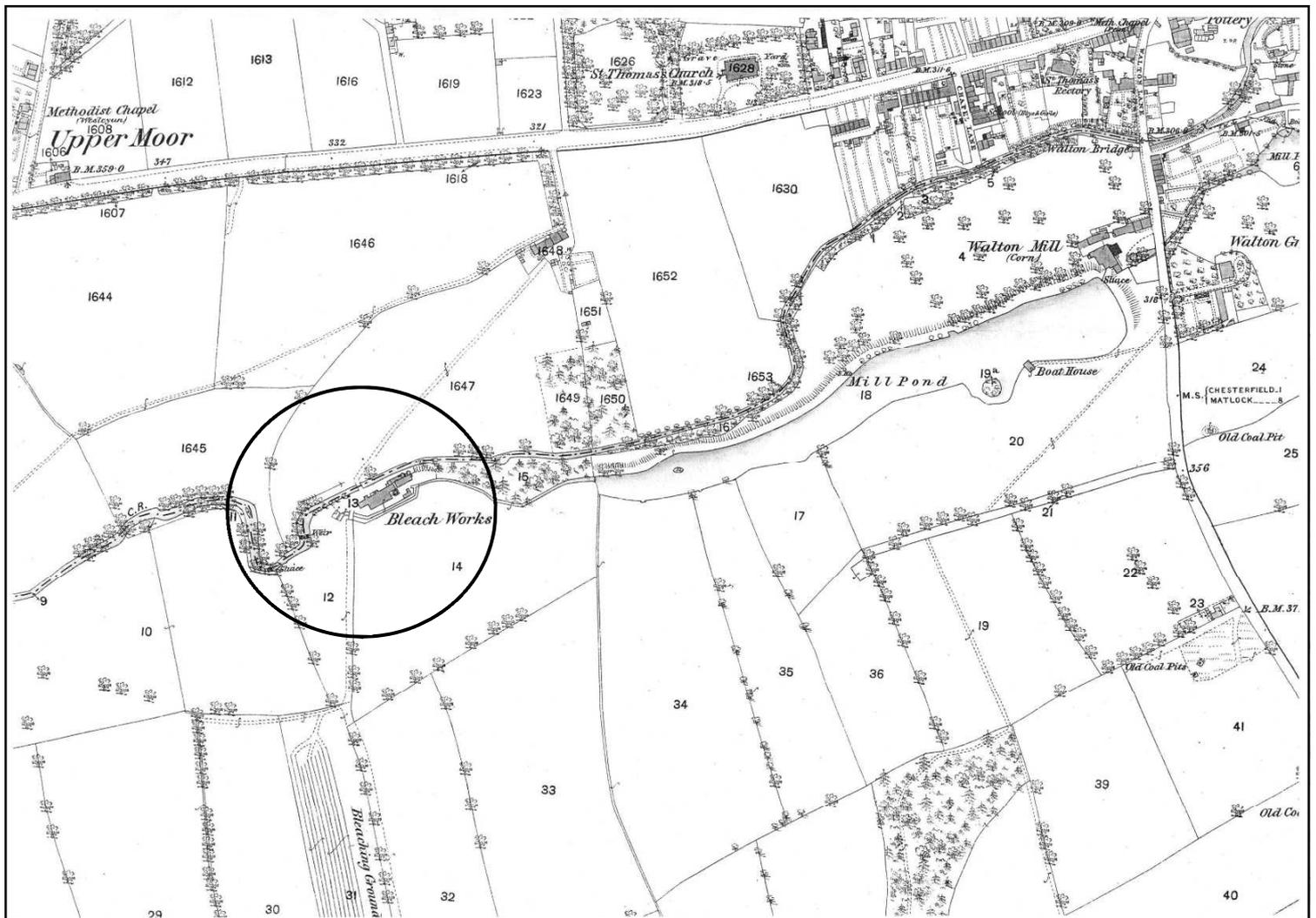


It can be seen from the photograph that the lower walls of the building on the left side are of stone whilst the upper walls are of brick. This suggests that the original Mill was built in stone and that, after the fire, the original lower wall was in a good enough condition to take the weight of the three storeys of the rebuilt brick mill above it. It also suggests that the original mill was either insured or that it had been very profitable! This is the first of a number of questions that would repay further research.

It is known that the original Mill was water powered and the water wheel was in what is now room eight behind the left hand door above. The water wheel was fed from Walton Dam via a dam on the site of what is now Bobbin Mill Lane (at the junction of the road leading to Morrison's car park). Earlier, in 1745 the water driven mill on this site had been a Red Lead / Smelting Mill, leased in 1781 by the Wilkinson family until about 1811. It may then have been owned or leased by the Hewitts. In the 1850s Charles Taylor was a wood turner who bought what became the Bobbin Mill to make bobbins for Manlove's Mill in Holymoorside and probably also for Robinsons at Wheatbridge

The oldest building in the Bump Mill is Room 7 between the two doors above. This has a "fireproof" structure dating to 1800/1801, which consisted of cast iron pillars with cast iron beams on top, which then support brick arches built between the two adjacent columns of arches. These pillars were cast at the Cannon Mill which was the "new casting house" of the Fairbanks's survey of Smith's Griffin Foundry of 1788-1791. The Griffin Foundry also supplied the cast iron pillars for Strutt's rebuilt North Mill in 1804 which had burned down in 1803, only a few years after the Bump Mill. William Strutt in Belper is normally credited with the development of fireproof mills in cooperation with Charles Bage based in Shrewsbury. Bage also had connection with Darley Abbey to whom Smith's also supplied cast iron pillars in 1793.

Thus it would seem the Smith's were advising mill owners on how to incorporate "fireproofing" measures ahead of the Strutts. Therefore, these new developments in "fireproofing" mills were incorporated *three years earlier* than into the Strutt's North Mill, into a mill in a relative backwater in Walton! Were the Smiths encouraged to spread these improved fireproofing techniques to any clients they could find? Perhaps, since both firms had Christian owners –the Smiths were Dissenters and the Strutts were Unitarian, their faith was the linking factor that led them to cooperate? Is there any way of clarifying the Smith's role in spreading the use of "fireproof" mill constructions?



In 1806 the firm was called Bunting, Creswick, Longson and Claughton⁽³⁾, though nothing is known of the last three partners. In 1811 it was called Hewitt and Longson specialising in wick spinning and bleaching. By 1813 it had become Hewitt, Bunting, Longson & Claughton (with Christian names Mark, John, Robert and Josiah respectively) but we do not know anything about the other partners other than Hewitt & Bunting. Is anyone willing to do some research on them? From 1857, the firm became Hewitt and Bunting until 1895. The business is referred to as a "Linen and Cotton Wick Manufacturer" and as "Cotton Spinners and Turkey Spun Cotton Dealers and Bleachers". The Hewitt at this stage would have been Mark's son George. In the 1839 Tithe Survey a William Broadhurst is also mentioned.

The bleaching treatment referred to above almost certainly consisted of treatment with lime slaked with water to break down the fats and waxes on the surface of the cotton fibres, followed by exposure to sunlight on a paved bleaching area. A contemporary bleach works at Kelstedge of the time used "oxymuriated lime and oxymuriatic acid" whatever they were! (*Editor – these are archaic names for hypochlorite chemicals, even now still used for bleaching*). The Bleach Works or "Wash House" as it was described locally, is shown clearly on the OS map of Walton Dam dated 1876 along with its paved bleaching field. Thus the building must have been there for at least 60 years. The Bleach Works had disappeared from the 1896-1900 2nd edition OS map.

Orchard Cottage, where I live now, is on the site of the two former cottages lived in by two of the bleachers at the works. Hence the lane's name - Wash House Lane, which still lives on.

By 1882 William Robinson the son of the founder of Robinsons had been carrying out experiments into the bleaching of lint and cotton wool with more modern chemicals, so this information would have been common knowledge by 1898 and explains why the bleach works had disappeared by that time. However, the wash ponds continued to hold water because Robert Hubbuck, who was a keen fisherman, used them to raise trout in the late 1950s. He was the manager of Walton Works at the time and got the younger apprentices to dig out worms from the river bed and its banks on a Saturday morning! Clearly this was accepted as a perk of the job, though a somewhat unusual one!

The nearby stone built dam, with its resulting waterfall, was used to divert water along the leat into Walton

Dam. This dam, or something like it, must have been in position since 1351, during the reign of Edward III. The deeds of Robert Bretton state there were two corn mills in Walton owned by him, one at the east end of Walton Dam. The other was Walton Nether Mill, which was probably the one adjacent to the Cannon Mill, which was in use until 1886.

The Burdett map of 1777 shows a smaller Walton Dam than at present, whereas the Walton Tithe award of 1849 shows it at its current size. Since the Hunloke deeds of 1804 refer to improvements carried out at that time, these probably involved digging out the Dam to its present.

Returning to the Bump Mill it is thought that the bay at right angles to the earlier building was probably built after 1831. This was probably because the site was constricted by the river to the north of the buildings where the steam engine and boiler were. It was also constricted at the south end by the Goytside road, which was built in 1831. The “fireproofing” in this building with its three floors was American in style i.e. using similar cast iron pillars but with 3 to 4 inch thick wooden floors.

In 1841 Hewitt and Longson had 80 or more winders with nine boys between the ages of 10 and 15. By 1851 a directory states that the mill employed 260 hands, so obviously business was booming, no doubt due to the expansion of the population in both Chesterfield and Brampton! In 1781 the population of Brampton was 1500, at the first census in 1801 this had risen to 2000, and by 1831 to 3594 and by 1851 to 4,409.

From 1857-1895 the company was described as Hewitt and Bunting, run by Mark’s son, George, who now lived at Walton Hall. Later he also owned Walton Hall Colliery. Bunting was a tallow chandler in Beetwell Street, presumably close to the candle factory. The best tallow for candles was apparently a mixture of beef and mutton fat held in a melting tank into which a dipping frame with candlewicks on was repeatedly dipped. No doubt the proximity to the cattle market and the Shambles where they were slaughtered was an advantage!

The mill must have been in severe decline by 1895 and was then owned for a year by Mr Alfred Barnes, who lived at Ashgate House (now the Ashgate Hospice). The family had owned Grassmoor Colliery and some other local collieries but it is difficult to understand the logic of buying into a rapidly declining business. Robinson and Sons Ltd bought the Mill in 1896 to convert it for the manufacture of surgical dressings, cotton wool and Gamgee Dressings. The buildings saw the production of sanitary towels and later maternity towels after a patent taken out in 1885 and the development of disposable nappies in the early 1960s. However, its main purpose over its 106 years use by Robinsons has been for the production of cotton wool until 2002 when the business changed hands and moved to Carlton-in-Lindrick. Gamgee Tissue, consisting of cotton wool sandwiched between two layers of gauze, was also being produced in the Mill,. This dressing which is still in use in hospitals and via the retail chemists after 119 years was invented by Dr Joseph Gamgee in 1883; it is therefore probably one of the longest lived branded products on the market in the UK

The likely developers of the Walton Site, Persimmon Homes are subcontracting the conversion of the listed Bump Mill buildings to PJ Livesey. The latter are interested in portraying the history of the site in the ground floor of Room 7, and it would therefore be useful if a group of people were willing to investigate some the gaps in the history of the site identified above.

If you are interested in helping could you please contact me on 01246 566639 or at richard@robinson2000.fsworld.co.uk.

(1) *Local History in Brampton-(1982) p72*

(2) *Ibid p17*

(3) *Draft copy of Victoria History of Derbyshire, Parish of Walton. Philip Riden*

The Clay Cross Company’s Stonebroom Housing Blocks – an Addendum

Cliff Williams

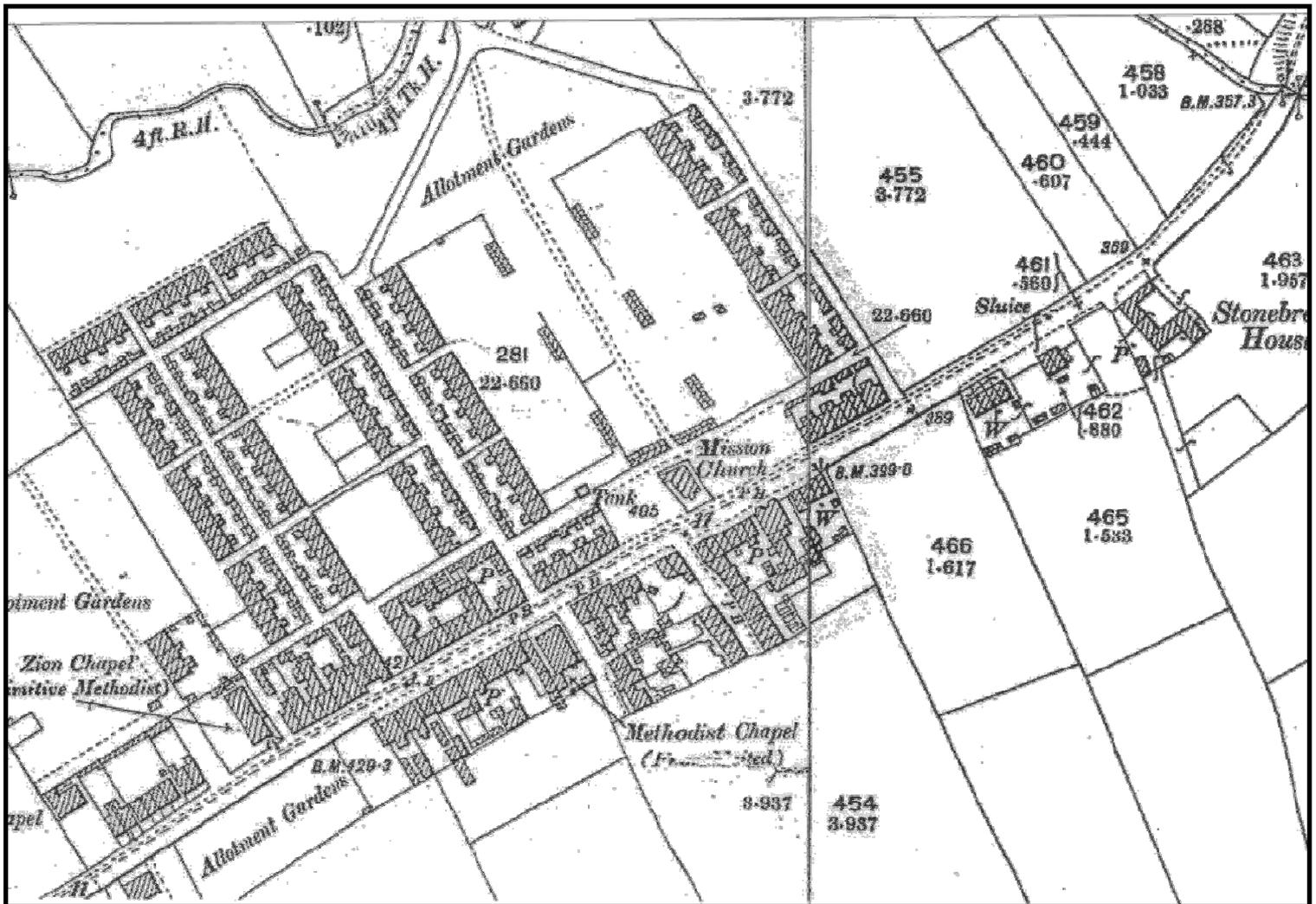
In my article in NEDIAS Journal No. 1, ‘*A Provisional Account of the Clay Cross Company’s Housing*’, I inadvertently gave the wrong date of 1870 for commencement of the Stonebroom Blocks. Subsequent receipt of an advert from Nip Patella showing S Rollinson of Chesterfield as the architect for the blocks prompted some more research. A more detailed picture of the Morton and Stonebroom housing developments has now emerged, plus confirmation of commencement of the Blocks as January 1866 – not 1870!

A note on the coal and iron trade for the north-east of Derbyshire in March 1866, records that 'In the Morton district, on the Erewash Valley, the greatest activity is prevailing and the Clay Cross Company are preparing for the carrying on of a large trade. Building for the residence of the workmen are being erected by the company, and private capitalists are also erecting dwellings in the locality, but not withstanding, it is anticipated that arrangements will have to be made for the daily conveyance of workmen from Clay Cross to and from Morton, after the fashion of the Irish Mail'. *Derbyshire Courier, 31 March 1866, p4*

In December 1865, to accommodate the workers for No.5 Morton Colliery, the Clay Cross Company (CXC) advertised for builders to tender for the erection of eight blocks of eight cottages at Morton. Prospective builders were to inspect plans and specifications, and obtain bills of quantities on the payment of 10s (50p) per copy from Rollinson's office by 20th December 1865. Sealed tenders had to be delivered to Charles Binns at CXC's offices by 28th December. Mr George Heath of Mill Lane, Chesterfield, joiner and builder, won the contract to build all 64 houses. *Derbyshire Times, 3 Dec 1865, and 28 July 1866.*

Also in December 1865, the Brampton Brewery Company in anticipation of this development advertised for contractors to erect a Public House at Morton, with the specification also obtainable from S Rollinson. 30 Dec 1865. Although both advertisements referred to Morton, there is no doubt that the properties were built in Stonebroom in Shirland parish, about 700 yards distant from the colliery. DT. 2 Feb 1867. Mark Morris, a collier at Morton Pit, collapsed and died on his way to his lodgings at the Blocks, the inquest being held at Joseph Allen's house, the Star Inn, in January 1867. This venue was undoubtedly the Brampton Brewery's public house referred to above. *DC. 2 Feb 1867 p3.*

The CXC's Stonebroom Blocks were built in two rows, each of three blocks of eight, later to be known as Edge Row (numbers 401 to 424) and Tank Row (numbers 441 to 464). They had spacious front gardens, all



Stonebroom Blocks c1875 showing the CXC's two High Street blocks of eight houses, either side of the Mission Church, also their three blocks of eight houses in two rows, extending towards the allotment gardens, with six pigsty blocks and a central footpath leading to the colliery. Bircumshaw's 98 cottages lie to the West; nine blocks in three rows, with a further three rows along the bottom.

facing on to a footpath to the colliery. In June 1875, following the creation of the Morton Pig Club in January of that year, CXC spent £92 in building eight blocks of pig sties for the houses of the rows, placed at the head of their gardens and facing their front doors. *CXC Mins 30 June 1875. DT. 23 Jan 1875.*

Two further blocks of eight houses, numbered 425 to 440, were built on the nearby High Street, with a gap later filled by the building of the Mission Church. These blocks brought the total to 64 cottages, all with two bedrooms upstairs, a kitchen, living-room and parlour downstairs, plus shared washhouses, bake-houses and middens outside. The provision of large gardens set them above the private, speculative developments which followed. The opening of Shirland Board Schools prompted the closure in August 1874 of the CXC's 1867-built Stonebroom schoolroom, it being converted to four houses at a cost of £231. *CXC MIN 30 June 1875.* By this means, the CXC's housing stock at Stonebroom increased to 68 properties, a total which remained unchanged until at least May 1894 when the CXC contributed £10 towards the Shirland churchyard 'as our interest is confined to 68 cottages' in the parish. *CXC Min Book.*

September 1866 saw the start of the five-month long anti-trade union or Free Labour dispute, apparently causing a temporary lull in cottage building. It also coincided with a change in CXC's housing policy at Stonebroom, from direct ownership to leaseholding. This was evident in September 1867 when, in support of an application for another beer-house licence in Stonebroom, reference was made to the CXC's recently built 64 houses, adding that about 56 more were then being built. *DT 21 Sept 1867* The additional stock was built by Stephen Bircumshaw, a property speculator from Clay Cross who, by 1871, had erected 98 private houses in the village. With its limited capital required for its modern and expensive colliery developments at Morton and Danesmoor, CXC doubtless found the relief from further investment in housing hugely welcome.

After CXC, Bircumshaw was the largest property owner in Clay Cross and gained some notoriety concerning the neglect of his numerous properties at Clay Cross and Stonebroom, being frequently served with notices to get them cleaned and lime-washed. His Clay Cross residence was at "the Poplars", a substantial stone house, still extant, on the edge of Bestwood Park. Bircumshaw's Stonebroom properties consisted of blocks of six, eight and nine houses, later called Star Row, Bakers Row, Chapel Row and Bottom Row, and all initially leased by the CXC, being numbered from 465 to 562 in their records. The plan below shows the compact site where a total of 162 houses were built, of which the CXC owned just 40% and Bircumshaw 60%.

According to the 1871 Census Returns, 30 of Bircumshaw's houses leased to the CXC were uninhabited and just one CXC house was empty. This scenario might suggest the CXC owned houses were more desirable, probably with lower rents and better maintained, while having the advantages of bigger gardens and piggeries. It is not yet clear whether or not Bircumshaw's properties were held on a repairing lease but the CXC-owned houses did appear to have the edge over their leased property and the company could let them to their most loyal workers at a cheaper rent. Morton No 5 pit produced domestic coal and during the summer many workers would be laid off so it was important to retain a core of loyal workers until the trade picked up, usually in September.

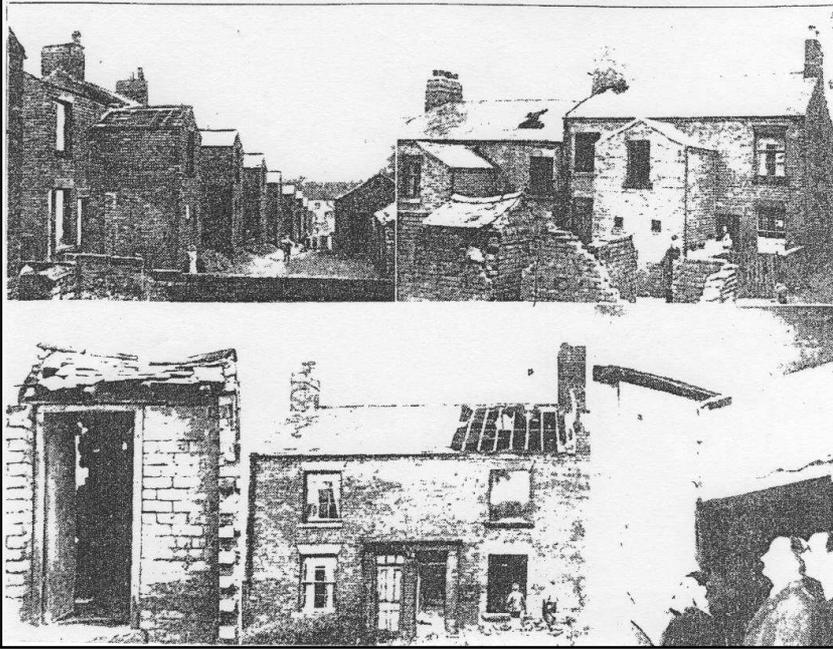
Notwithstanding, a comparison of the heads of households for the CXC's cottages between the 1871 and 1881 census returns using the house numbers, indicates a dramatic turnover of labour, as out of 164 households only 9 heads of families were still occupying the same house. Between 1881 and 1891 for the same households only four were still resident but three of these families had been occupying the same house since at least 1871. This suggests a massive turn over of labour due in part to the Free Labour and other industrial disputes, in addition to the various cyclic depressions. The census returns also suggest that some families returned to the Blocks but to a different cottage when the coal trade became more buoyant.

The reasons for the Company's blocks at Stonebroom commencing with number 401 can be explained by the company's policy of numbering their housing stock, whether owned or leased, for administrative and maintenance purposes, as well as to monitor their tenants. In Clay Cross their houses commencing with the Tunnel Rows were numbered from 1 to 209 and at Danesmoor continued with 210 to 273. The CXC owned and leased housing stock, including those at Ambergate, Crich, Clay Cross, Tupton and Danesmoor, would probably take the numbers up to 400, then recommence with 401 at Stonebroom and Morton.

Despite sinking No.6 Hard Coal pit at Morton in March 1873, very close to their No.5 pit, the CXC did not build any more cottages at Morton or Stonebroom as the existing cottages plus additional private developments, particularly in Morton village, were apparently deemed sufficient. *DC. 29th March 1873.*

Situated just across the Morton Brook in Morton near the Corner Pin Pub and close to No.5 pit yard, the

"THE BLACK HOLE OF DERBYSHIRE" APPALLING HOUSING CONDITIONS AT STONEBROOM



CXC did own a further 18 cottages numbered in sequence from 563 to 580. However, it is quite possible these were the first built when the pit commenced sinking in 1863 but only numbered later. In October 1877, the Chesterfield Rural Sanitary Authority complained to the CXC about these particular cottages having no domestic water supply laid on and that increasingly severe levels of fever prevailed. Seventeen person had recently been 'attacked' with fatal results in two cases and that during the last four years 40 cases of fever had occurred, resulting in 5 deaths. Two years later this situation had not improved and the CRSA were directing the company to connect these properties up to their nearby water main or face the consequences. DC. C.RSA. 20 Oct 1877. DC 6 Dec 1879

The Stonebroom and Morton cottages received minimal maintenance and the

evidence of the appalling conditions is legendary. From the 1920s the properties were frequently threatened with closing orders and in July 1936, Chesterfield Rural District Council (CRDC) issued a clearance order for 64 cottages in Stonebroom but the CXC instructed their solicitor to oppose the order. Incredibly, the clearance order was refused on a technicality but a successful order was made in February 1937 and confirmed by the Medical Officer of Health. Dissatisfied with this decision, the CXC approached the National Association of Property Owners for financial support to oppose it, only to be advised not to pursue the matter any further. However, there was a chronic shortage of houses in which to relocate the displaced tenants and employees, a situation endemic in most of the coal mining communities in the north-east of the county throughout both post war periods; a subject which has yet to be examined in detail.

The images (*above*) of the Stonebroom Blocks appeared in the Derbyshire Times of 14 November, 1947 with a graphic description of the appalling conditions. At this date 145 families were still occupying 128 houses and in an attempt to remedy this situation CRDC commenced building some 272 houses, including 116 of the steel type on the Mickley estate, almost all of these being still with us today.

Letters

Staveley

Dear Cliff

Following our recent discussion on the subject of the area's considerable heritage at Staveley, I'd like to advise members of videos which will shortly become available.

As you are probably aware from 1964 the Staveley site of Stanton & Staveley Ltd. split in two, as was the original 640 acre site.

The Iron utilisation site viz. The Foundries continued as Stanton & Staveley Ltd until eventually it became a wholly owned subsidiary of the French organisation, the Saint-Gobain group. The last iron casting made was made there in October 2006 and subsequent to closure a video was made to record the past history. All the copies of this professional DVD have now gone but a few copies could become available if anyone wanted one.

Following closure of the blast furnaces and coke ovens at the former Iron manufacturing site viz. the Devonshire Works it became Staveley Chemicals Ltd. and continued to manufacture various chemicals. Ultimately, this organisation also became a wholly owned French subsidiary of Rhône-Poulenc. Manufacture ceased there in March 2007 and an amateur DVD is currently being made of what is still left standing prior to the whole site being raised to the ground. This is due to commence in about eight weeks time.

I will undertake to provide copies of both DVDs to any NEDIAS member if they would like one, at a modest cost.

Regards

Ron Presswood

Ronpresswood@aol.com

More on Storforth Lane

Dear Cliff,

Re the item by Darrell Clark in NEDIAS Newsletter No.25, I'd like to refer to Philip Riden's letter about the works, published in the Derbyshire Times on 25 January 2007, which says that a full account has been included in the Hasland section of the Victoria County History, which it is hoped will see the light of day by the end of this year. I have also included a bit about the ironstone mining at Speighthill in the Wingerworth section of the VCH (also not yet published).

I obviously can't pre-empt either of these publications but on the mining, there is an article in the Derbyshire Times of 10 June 1905, with reminiscences of the Speighthill mines, and a map (A 2880) in Chesterfield Local Studies Library which marks the land affected by ironstone mining up to 1859. See also the article by Lynn Willies on Derbyshire ironstone mining in Mining History, vol.13 no.4, 1997, 1-11, and comments thereon by D. Williams in vol.13 no.5, 89-90.

There is a plan of the ironworks in 1903 at Derbyshire Record Office, D2102 add., entitled '*Broad Oaks Furnaces. Staveley Coal & Iron Co. Ltd.*', which I think came from Markham's collection.

I don't have any information about the motive power on the tramroad linking the mines with the works, but I do have a slide which I took in 1983 of the embankment of the line immediately south of Turnoaks Lane, a feature which was levelled out some years afterwards - a lesson, if one were needed, to photograph these features before they disappear!

Kind regards,

David Edwards

Neapen@aol.com

I.A. News and Notes

Ecton – copper bottomed success

Educational groups will soon once again be able to explore the fascinating copper mining remains at Ecton Hill near Hulme End in the Manifold Valley – once the largest and deepest copper mine in the country – thanks to a new charitable trust. The Ecton Mine Educational Trust has been formed to enable educational and local community groups to resume use of the study facilities at the historic mines, which have been closed for the past five years. A special open day was held in early March to allow about 60 representatives of local education authorities and other interested parties to look at the facilities at Ecton.

Dr John Bramley, chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Trust, said: "We were delighted with the response and the expressions of goodwill which were shown at the weekend. We were greatly encouraged by

everyone's enthusiasm. For example, we already have lecturers from Keele University bringing trainee teachers to the mine."

The priority for the Trust now is to continue with the refurbishment of the visitor centre and undertake essential maintenance work to the mine shafts. It is preparing a bid for Heritage Lottery funding to carry out this work, and is eventually aiming to take more than 500 students a year into the mine. Although the mine workings below river level are now flooded, those above are still accessible and contain much of archaeological interest. They rise for some 100m inside the hill. On the hilltop itself there is the engine house which housed one of the first Boulton and Watt steam engines. This and many of the other surface features across the hill have been designated a Scheduled Ancient Monument and the mine workings themselves are also a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

For more information, contact Dr John Bramley of the Ecton Mine Educational Trust on 0114 230 5538.

More about Copper, and a connexion to Jamestown, Virginia?

Cliff Lea

Those of you following the reports of archaeological excavations at Jamestown, marking the 400 year anniversary of this settlement, and the great debate about tobacco seeds found, may have been interested to learn that the early settlers did more than to survive (I believe only 39 came through from that first settlement).

There is evidence from finds, that they had taken over to the New World some English copper to trade, and more importantly it is suggested that they were seeking a source of zinc to manufacture brass. Whilst England was able to produce copper from places such as Ecton, zinc was not available here, and a convenient source was very much being sought. (*New Scientist*, 12 May 2007).

Survey of the Earthwork at Mill Lane – Dronfield?

Colin Briggs

Thanks to Cliff Lea I was able to address NEDIAS members on the evening of 16 April. The main topic was something that has bugged me since summer 2003 when, with my idiot enthusiasm, I barged in upon the NEDIAS' Paul Smith and David Rance as they surveyed the remains of the Damstead Works in Mill Lane, Dronfield. The pair bore my intrusion with fortitude and Paul opened my eyes to an earthwork spanning the lane. In dialogue he mused on the nature of the river Drone's course and wondered whether the earthwork might be the remains of a dam. I hadn't even *noticed* the thing, so I said nothing at the time, but I've thought about his words ever since.

Now I can't possibly summarise the 16 April evening here, but I suspect it was a dam, possibly of, say, Sixteenth Century date or even earlier. It could therefore be an accidentally preserved remnant of Dronfield's early industrial power sources. One thing's for sure, though, it's been long overlooked, because no one seems to know anything about it, which prompts the questions of who raised the feature, when, and why? Since a NEDIAS member set me thinking about the puzzle it seemed fair to employ the 'what goes around comes-around' principle to fire questions back at the NEDIAS.

So, I advocated that the first step to discovering something about the earthwork was to date it using it archaeological methods, because if a suitable date results it would narrow the search field time-wise among documents that might indicate what its *function* was. Since I live in Lincolnshire, visits to the area for research at Matlock or Dronfield must unfortunately be rare.

NEDIAS member Roger Cowen has already kindly offered to join me for to review the feature, and I would welcome involvement however small, from anyone local to Dronfield or the area, who could at least join us for an initial assessment of the possibilities.

Anyone interested can contact me on 01522 730 482, and e mail at colin@briggs5578.fsnet.co.uk

Norwood Tunnel collapse anniversary

The Norwood Tunnel on the Chesterfield Canal had been the longest (2850 yards) canal tunnel constructed in the country at the time it was completed in 1775. Its collapse on 18 October 1907 ended an era and cut Chesterfield off from the rest of the canal system. The 100th anniversary of the collapse and the recent plans for re-opening to navigation, will be marked by festivities at Kiveton Park on 13 October.

The subject for this year's weekend for associated societies was "Roads: Characteristics and Forms of Transport". After an informal gathering in an Ironbridge hostelry on the Friday evening, the weekend started with some forty people attending a morning of talks in the Ironbridge Institute at the Museum of Iron in Coalbrookdale. Speakers covered the history of legislation on roads between the 16th and 18th centuries, the surviving evidence on the ground of roads being abandoned or rerouted, and the turnpike legacy.

One oddity of turnpike route changes was the discrepancy sometimes found in milepost distances and this, in turn, led in to contributions from the Milepost Society on their recording and conservation work. While the extent of their recording work varied from county to county, it was said that their work in Derbyshire had recorded 98% of the 188 mileposts believed to be still in existence in the county. On the Sunday morning, a further Derbyshire component came up from a talk on Manchester University's Mam Tor road project. The University has monitoring equipment at points around the site, measuring the steady downhill slide of the road formation. From their findings, they hope to develop more secure methods of road construction on similar terrain. The question which has yet to be answered is why the turnpike company built their road across such obviously flawed land?

After the morning talks, Saturday afternoon was spent on a guided tour of the bridges of the Severn Gorge, from Buildwas to Coalport, followed in the evening by an informal dinner at The Malthouse in Ironbridge. Sunday morning's talks included a contribution from Derek Brumhead on the variety of bridges around New Mills, bringing Derbyshire to the fore once more.

The Ironbridge Working Weekend has been an annual event almost from the beginning of the museums around what was to become the town of Telford. Intended for members of affiliated societies, its programme has developed from practical workshops to the present format of talks by various member societies on a common theme. Above all, it is a good opportunity to meet industrial archaeologists from a variety of backgrounds and far-flung places. Very good value for money and time well spent!

NEDIAS Exhibition at Chesterfield Library

Throughout April, the activities of NEDIAS have been showcased by an exhibition in the foyer at Chesterfield Library; many members will have seen it, and certainly many have commented on the most professional and striking display very ably mounted by Jacqui Currell. Her work in producing this sort of display material will be of tremendous assistance at future exhibitions.



Chemical and Coking Industry – 10 September

Mike Taylor has sent to me the following tantalising glimpse of his talk to us on 10 September. Ed.

One of the more interesting aspects of school chemistry in the 1950s and 1960s, both for the teachers and the pupils, was the facility for a class to do practical work on a topic, look at the chemistry involved and then see

how it was performed on a larger scale in the outside world. Work with materials such as limestone, wood, coal, metal ores and salt was readily possible. Nowadays, Health and safety considerations, designed for the possibility of an incompetent and ignorant teacher and an uncooperative and irresponsible pupil encountering each other in a school laboratory, have relegated class practical work in the subject to either a teacher demonstration or, worse, a viewing of diagrams in a text book.

My talk to NEDIAS in September will follow the pattern of school practical-chemistry theory-examples of industrial processes. The processes will be selected from the many once operated in North East Derbyshire.

When dealing with an academic subject such as Chemistry in front of lay people, a speaker risks insulting the intelligence of his audience with rudimentary information, on one hand, and losing their attention by assuming too much knowledge, on the other hand. I hope I may manage to strike a balance by restricting myself to what was once classed as pre-sixth form work and, rather than being titled as in the NEDIAS programme, the talk should perhaps more accurately be covered by "Some Links between School Chemistry and Industry in North East Derbyshire."

..... and Finally

The End, ... or a case in support of Health & Safety!

David Wilmot

The Inverness Weekly News of 27 May 1911 carried the tragic story of an accident when, "At Rhymney Amusement Fair David Edwards, aged 18, a well-known Ponslottyn athlete was thrown from one of the swing-boats into a disused colliery shaft adjacent to the shows."

A fairground attendant was lowered down the 39 yard deep shaft only to find the young man was already dead.

NEDIAS Committee:

Chairman – David Wilmot; *Secretary* – Patricia Pick; *Treasurer* – Pamela Alton; *Membership Secretary/Assistant Treasurer* – Jean Heathcote; *Publicity/Publications* – Cliff Lea; *Lecture Meetings* –David Rance; *Visits Co-ordinator* – Brian Dick; *Archivist* – Pete Wilson; *Committee Members* – Roger Evans; Derek Grindell; David Hart.



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Editor: Cliff Lea, 15 Kelburn Avenue, Walton, Chesterfield, S40 3DG

☎ 01246 234 212

or e-mail cliff@nedias.org.uk.

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