

North East Derbyshire Industrial History & Archaeology Group.

Newsletter No. 3 - August 2001

Editorial

All being well, this will be the last Newsletter of the above Group. Following a lot of hard work by the Steering Group formed in May this year, a constitution has been drawn up for the emergence of a succeeding body to be known as the **North East Derbyshire Industrial Archaeology Society** or **NEDIAS** in short. As described below, an Inaugural General Meeting of the Society is to be held on 10th September when, hopefully, all our friends who have previously enjoyed the earlier meetings will attend to endorse the proposals for the new body. Newsletter No. 4 in November should be under the banner of NEDIAS, unless your editor is prematurely auditing the spheroidal output of his domestic fowls!

Particular thanks are due to the Steering Group, the members of which have given up many a warm summer evening in the garden to develop the essential framework for the Society and to organise the programme of talks to be held during the coming winter months. Needless to say, there is still plenty of work to be done and volunteers to stand for the essential committee roles will be very welcome - previous experience not essential, just enthusiasm.

At the same time, why not treat readers to Newsletter articles from some fresh sources? The monotony of Wilmot's witterings is gratefully broken in this issue by Cliff Lea's article on the latest thing to sprout from Brussels. More please!

NORTH EAST DERBYSHIRE INDUSTRIAL ARCHAEOLOGY SOCIETY

Notice of Inaugural General Meeting, to be held at 7.30 pm on Monday 10th September 2001, at the Friends' Meeting House (Social Room, Ground Floor), 27 Ashgate Road, Chesterfield.

The purpose of the meeting is to formalise the Group which has been meeting during 2001 by the creation of a properly constituted Society. The meeting is open to all who are interested in the industrial archaeology of the north east corner of Derbyshire, an area broadly corresponding to the local authority districts of Chesterfield, Bolsover and North East Derbyshire.

Agenda

- Opening of Meeting
- Report of Steering Group
- Adoption of Constitution
- Election of Officers
- Adoption of Subscription
- Any Other Business
- Close of formal meeting.

Copies of the proposed constitution will be available prior to the start of the meeting.

It would also be helpful if all nominations to serve on the committee could be handed in by that time. The roles are;

Chairperson - (Acting Chairman - David Wilmot) Secretary - vacant
Treasurer - (Pam Alton)
Committee of 6 members, covering
Membership Secretary/Assistant Treasurer - vacant Publicity Officer - (Cliff Lea)
Funding Officer - vacant
Meetings & Visits Organiser - vacant Archivist/Librarian - vacant
Newsletter editor- (David Wilmot)

Names shown in brackets are those who have been nominated or volunteered to date, having carried out the particular roles during the period of the Steering Group, and now standing for election at the IGM.

Pending adoption of an annual subscription, and income being derived from it, the usual request will be made for a contribution of £1 for each adult attending the meeting.

After the close of the formal meeting there will be a short break, following which David Wilmot will give a talk on the history of railway development in the Chesterfield area.

Autumn Programme

The meetings between now and December have been arranged and will be held in the Social Room of the Friends Meeting House, Ashgate Road, Chesterfield, at 7.30pm (1930 hours) on each of the dates shown. Please note that, to avoid traffic and parking problems on the Tuesdays when Chesterfield FC have an evening match, **all meetings will now be held on the second Monday of each month.**

10th September - Inaugural General Meeting, followed by David Wilmot's talk on *the Development of Chesterfield's Railways; From Butler to Bainbridge.*

8th October - John Robinson, *A History of Coal Mining in the Chesterfield Area and its personalities.*

12th November - Robert Metcalfe, *Pleasley Pit, its History and its Restoration.*

10th December - Howard Smith (to be confirmed), *Recent Research into the Development of the Sheffield, Chesterfield & Derby Turnpike.*

The programme for January to April 2002 is still being finalised and details will be published in Newsletter No. 4 during November. In the meantime, readers might like to make a note of the dates concerned - Mondays, 7th January, 11th February, 11th March and 8th April.

Amateur Archaeology to be Banned - by Cliff Lea

What? **Who said that Amateur Archaeology was being banned?** Surely not - just as the brightest spot in Industrial Archaeology was in its embryonic stages in north east Derbyshire. Are we amateur archaeologists doomed almost before the Society gets going?

So what's it all about?

The July copy of Current Archaeology (CA, Issue 74, p241) contains a warning that a recent **European Convention** is set to be implemented, and that this will prevent any archaeological research involving excavation, unless the work is carried out by qualified, specially authorised persons.

Yet local societies, volunteers and an army of amateur enthusiasts are the backbone of groundbreaking research in the UK. In fact, without the enthusiastic amateur, we would be blissfully ignorant of many of the most scintillating findings in recent years. **Think particularly of the richness of our heritage in Derbyshire, and then think again of our sparse knowledge if the volunteer element were to be excluded: how many qualified archaeologists are actually employed in the County, the sparsity of those in the academic establishments and shameful number employed by the County Council.**

The European Convention on the protection of Archaeological Heritage has been around for some years. But the UK government has declined to ratify it until March this year, and English Heritage says it will now take the lead in implementing it here. If implemented, the UK could become like Italy, with a host of crumbling and deteriorating heritage, which can only be worked on by qualified archaeologists who have State approval.

Well, we're all amateurs* in the NEDIAS, and we may wish to adopt projects in conjunction with others and, under guidance, investigate record, make secure and reveal to our community the fabric and construction of early industrial activities. **Without our enthusiasm, we know that the evidence and memories will surely be lost.**

Are we to be stopped in our tracks?

Do you feel as strongly about this as I do? Then write to the **Council for Independent Archaeology**, who have launched a campaign to modify or stop one of the articles in this convention. Your name can be added to an open letter which they're sending to the UK Government. The address to write to is:

Kevan Fadden, Council for Independent Archaeology, 7 Lea Road, Ampthill, Bedfordshire MK45 2PR.

And, since English Heritage seem to be taking a leading position, please write also to them, particularly if you are a member. **Let's make our voices heard!**

[*Ed. - Needless to say, the views expressed above are those of the author, not necessarily those of the Society. However, we do have at least one MA qualified archaeologist amongst our number, but probably not "doing paid work in the field", which begs the question as to the extent of the qualifications required. Also, my garden has revealed a number of pottery shards so am I to stop digging out the pond? Can I have an archaeologist (free of charge) please, to continue its landscaping? Sites would presumably be designated but that usually follows a find, often quite by accident, by a non-professional- very confusing - please keep us posted, Cliff.]

Hollingwood to Staveley Canal Tunnel - David Wilmot

While looking up the background to Cannon Mill, I came across a reference to an underground canal close to some ironstone workings near Duckmanton Furnaces. Philip Robinson described an interview made in 1957 with Mr. E Allen during which the latter gave his father's description of a "well-known tunnel which was erected by the Staveley people for the purpose of bringing coal, and apparently ironstone as well, down to Staveley Works." (1) According to Mr. Allen, the underground canal "went southwards from Hollingwood for 1.75 miles, and at the far end it was 80 yards from the surface, it was 6ft. high, 5ft. 9ins. wide, and there was 2ft. of water in the bottom which was sufficient to float barges 21ft. long, each holding 7 tons."

Philip Robinson doubted the tunnel's existence during the Smith period at Adelphi Works but his inclusion of its description and reference to as "well known" suggests he gave credence to its existence. The depth of the description belies the initial reaction that this could be added to the many apocryphal tales of underground passages between ancient public houses and church residences, monasteries or castles. Can someone please tell us more about this canal?

Tramroads of Derbyshire - Unstone & Chesterfield- David Wilmot

In Newsletter No. 2, Joseph Butler's Ankerbold & Lings tramroad was examined. A proposal for a further tramroad has recently emerged, although it is even more anomalous and seems unlikely ever to have been built. This is "The Unstone & Chesterfield Railway" (2). It is not the lack of construction which creates the apparent anomaly as Philip Riden's essay on Derbyshire tramroads included another moribund scheme, the Ashover & Chesterfield. It is that the entity proposing to build the tramroad was the Sheffield & Chesterfield Turnpike Trust.

The scheme was for a tramroad from Unstone, north of Chesterfield, to carry coal and other items to the Chesterfield Canal. Most of the tramroads in Derbyshire were mooted as adjuncts to canals such as the Chesterfield or Cromford companies. In at least one instance the canal company itself provided the tramroad whereas in most other cases it was the colliery company which took the initiative. The involvement of a third party, such as a turnpike trust, seems to have been an exception.

In February 1816, there was an agreement between certain subscribers to pay Wotton Byrchinshaw Thomas, of Chesterfield, as Treasurer to the Trustees of the Chesterfield to Sheffield Turnpike Road to make "a Rail Road from the Dree field in Unston Township, the property of George Mower Esq., to the Chesterfield Canal at the New Wharf near Wheldon's Mill in Brimington Township" (3)

A total of £1,800 was to be subscribed by seven local worthies, including the Lord of the Manor of Un stone, the said George Mower, at £100 and Joseph Haslehurst, a cornmill owner and coal lessee, at £400.

The papers included a specification of costs provided by the proposal's engineer, Joseph Renshaw, giving a useful insight to the cost of tramroad construction at that time:

Purchase of Land at £70 per acre	£175. 0.0
Forming 2 ½ miles of road	78.15.0
Three bridges over river Rother [sic]	185. 4.0
Rail 28lbs to the yard and for pass byes, 63 tons at £11 per ton	693. 0.0
Sleepers & Co. for Road, 3390 & nails	123.18.0
Laying sleepers & railway road-stone breaking	105. 0.0
19 gates for Road with posts & setting	31.12.0
Fences required	31.12.0
(unidentified)	311. 9.4
Total Cost	£1,735.10.4

The Sheffield and Chesterfield Turnpike Trust had originally been enacted in 1756 and, in 1797, obtained an Act for a deviation to its route, avoiding two steep hills. This followed a survey of the route by the Sheffield surveyor, Fairbank (4). The 1816 tramroad proposal had been surveyed in 1814 by the same Fairbank and was planned to follow the 1797 route very closely yet the plans lodged for its proposal showed only the original turnpike route, not the deviation.

It seems incredible that the turnpike trust should contemplate submitting plans to Parliament which ignored the existence of its line of road over the same ground. Even more so that the surveyor's later plans would ignore his own, earlier, route. It therefore seems likely that the turnpike company's deviation had not been made at that time and, perhaps, the tramroad proposal was a vehicle for revival of the lapsed scheme which, unlike the tramroad, was ultimately to be constructed.

Another unexplained aspect is that by its nature, and unlike the canal company or colliery business, the turnpike trust was not expected to be a profit-for-dividend driven entity. An entrepreneurial activity such as the promotion of a tramroad by a turnpike trust therefore seems unusual and more information on this aspect of railway/road transport would be appreciated.

The evidence so far seen has to be regarded as inconclusive and surely merits further research unless amongst our readers someone knows otherwise!

¹ Philip Robinson, *The Smiths of Chesterfield, a history of the Griffin Foundry, Brampton, 1775-1833*, Chesterfield, 1957, p100.

² Derbyshire Record Office, Matlock, Q/RP 2/18/2, "Unstone & Chesterfield Railway"

³ Ibid.

⁴ Batty, Kathleen M, *Unstone, the history of a village*, pub. by author, Unstone, 1980.

The Writing is on the Wall - David Wilmot

Derby Industrial Museum has a large display panel full of bricks, each marked with the producing company's name. Yet few of them are familiar names to this area. However, one does not have to look far before seeing local names inscribed in walls, or finding abandoned bricks in the ground, giving an insight to part of our heritage which appears to have been somewhat neglected.

There is a garden wall at the start of Ashgate Road with "Wasp nest" bricks visible. The remains of Arkwright Town yielded "Staveley" bricks by the ton. My garden in North Wingfield provided three different examples of "Clay Cross Co./CXC" bricks, two of "Riddings", as well as "Blackwell", "Hardwick", "Welbeck", "Byron" and "Sherwood Colliery". A less proud, or perhaps complacent, producer must have made the one simply marked "S I C".

Mechanisation of brick manufacture in the mid to late Victorian era gave great scope for embellishment of company names on products, but invariably on the frog where it would usually be covered in mortar and lost to view, much like a Victorian piano leg. In north east Derbyshire, brick manufacture was often an adjunct to an existing colliery. Records of the Bolsover Colliery Company include mention of several kilns on the Bolsover site, subsequently replaced by the pithead bath buildings. Profit from the production of bricks was mentioned in their annual accounts circa 1900. Further records show that a supply of bricks was obtained from Griff Colliery in Warwickshire, it being another of Bainbridge's enterprises.

From the examples of bricks found in north east Derbyshire, this area must have been a major provider of the ubiquitous brick, be it for house, factory or railway viaduct. Yet, it seems, the significance of this product to the economy has escaped general notice because of it being a mere by-product of the all-important coal production process. The colliery companies may have started brick production for their own internal needs but from the evidence around us that was not their only market. The enigma is not helped by the lack of company accounts surviving in public archives and, where they have survived, the sparseness of detail declared by the management of those companies.

So far so good, now, can anyone come up with information on the whereabouts of "Waspnest" brickworks, what the initials "S I C" stood for, and anything else about brick manufacture in this area? Is the site at Barrow Hill the sole remaining example in north east Derbyshire? Answers please by the end of September but sorry, no certificates or prizes available!

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