

North East Derbyshire Industrial Archaeology Society

NEDIAS Newsletter No. 40 – November 2010

Price: £1.00 (Free to Members)



Farewell Sheepbridge and Brimington Station

Philip Cousins

It was perhaps slightly ironic that Tom Ingall's May 2010 David Wilmot Memorial Lecture, looking at the Great Central Railway (NEDIAS newsletter number 39), should have been delivered a matter of days after the disappearance of yet another landmark of that concern in the Chesterfield area. For during the night of Thursday 8th April 2010, the remaining wooden station buildings at Sheepbridge and Brimington Station, situated at Wheeldon Mill, burnt down. So ended the story of these buildings, opened in June 1892. Now only the former station master's house remains at Wheeldon Mill.



Station site and goods shed, May 1988. The site of the gents is marked by the roof louvres on the station's remaining up platform building. *P. Cousins*

In 1889 the Manchester, Sheffield and Lincolnshire Railway (MSLR—renamed Great Central in 1897) obtained an Act of Parliament authorising construction of a line from Beighton, through Staveley, for access to the Great Northern Railway in the Leen Valley. A line from Staveley to Chesterfield was also sanctioned. This branch opened for passenger traffic on the 4 June 1892, together with Sheepbridge and Brimington station. In 1890 Parliament had authorised a second line from Chesterfield to rejoin the Leen Valley route at Heath. This section opened on the 3rd July 1893. These railways

were known as the 'Derbyshire Lines' of the MSLR. The whole line later became known as the Great Central Railway (GCR) Chesterfield Loop.

The GCR was a constituent of the London and North Eastern Railway at the grouping of railways in 1923. The railways were, of course, nationalised in 1948.

A number of the Derbyshire Lines stations, were built of wood, using standard components, including those at Brimington. Gordon Biddle in his *Victorian Stations* (David and Charles, 1973) said that these buildings represented '...some of the best wooden stations in England...'

Sheepbridge and Brimington station (it was renamed Brimington from 1951) closed 'on and from' the 2nd January 1956. In railway terms this meant that the last day's services would have been the day before. As this was a Sunday, with no services calling at the station on that day, the last services to call at Sheepbridge and Brimington would have been on the 31 December 1955.

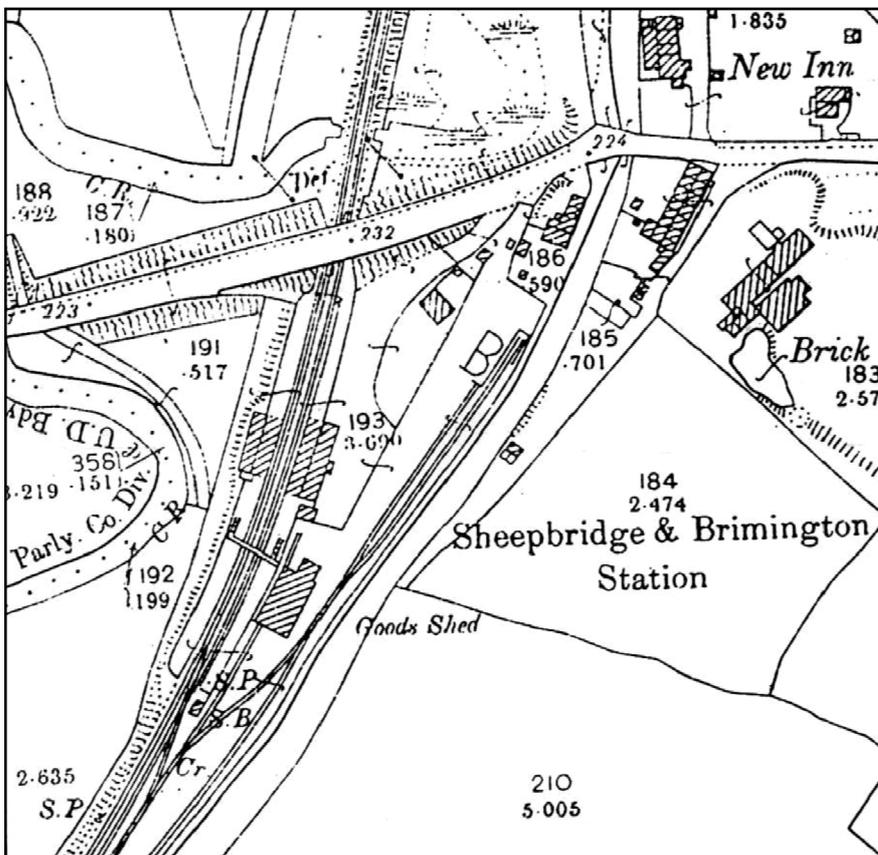
Contents: Farewell Sheepbridge and Brimington Station ■ Wingerworth Saw Mills ■ Use of Countermarked Dollars by Early Industries ■ Chairman's Chat ■ What's On? ■ NEDIAS Archives ■ IA News & Notes ■ An interesting Grandfather and an early auto pioneer ■ And Finally Some unusual recycling in the far north!

The British Transport Commission had estimated that closure of the station would save £2950 a year, after allowing for losses in receipts. In 1954 only about 434 tons of freight were being consigned from the goods yard, with about 1317 tons received—chiefly coal and old sleepers. Passenger traffic recorded during a census taken in September of that year reveals that, on average, only 38 fare paying passengers had joined trains each day, with 26 alighting (less on Saturday). A further 15 railway employees had joined and 14 alighted.

Perhaps, not surprisingly, there was little adverse reaction to the proposed closure. Brimington Parish Council wanted assurance that the platforms would be retained. This was part of the closure plans in any case, as it was planned to retain facilities for dealing with guaranteed excursions until expensive repairs became necessary.

The station sidings and the signal box (from at least 1947 this had only been opened on an 'as required' basis) were abolished in March 1956, with the platform awnings and the down side buildings removed sometime before July 1959 (it is not known when the lattice iron platform footbridge succumbed). In September 1957 planning permission was granted for land-use change from abandoned railway station to timber yard and saw mill. The up-side buildings, the goods shed and yard were then used for a variety of industrial purposes. The goods shed succumbed to an accidental fire in November 2001. The former up-platform buildings had been largely internally gutted for a number of years before they too recently burnt down.

The loop was closed to all passenger services on the 4th March 1963. Goods services at the Chesterfield Central Station on Infirmaroy Road were finally withdrawn on the 11th September 1967.



Extract from the 1898 (second edition) 25" Ordnance Survey map of Brimington showing Sheepbridge and Brimington station. The 'New Inn' is now known as 'The Mill' public house, Station Road runs right to left to the top of the extract. The up platform buildings, which survived until April 2010, are to the right of the station group. The smaller detached building is thought originally to have been the coal and lamp room. Note the footbridge, signal box ('S.B.') and goods shed. The sidings led to a cattle dock. (Derbyshire Sheet XVII.13)

Until it burnt down, Sheepbridge and Brimington Station was the only remaining 'Derbyshire Lines' station still in situ. The only other recent survivor—that at Killamarsh—has been dismantled for possible re-erection elsewhere. Fortunately the surviving buildings there were the subject of a detailed written and photographic survey, together with measured drawings, to English Heritage standards. For photographs of the station at Brimington (and others on the northern section of the Derbyshire Lines) readers are referred to Ken Grainger's excellent Sheffield Victoria to Chesterfield Central: the 'Derbyshire Lines' of the Manchester, Sheffield & Lincolnshire Railway, Part 1 (Foxline, 2006). In addition further information can be found on the 'Disused Stations' section of Subterranea Britannica website (www.disused-stations.org.uk), to which the author has contributed information. There is also a link on this website to a series of unfinished articles about the station at Brimington, along with the line's building and closure. Philip Riden, with the author, is working on a brief article about the wooden station buildings of the 'Derbyshire Lines', although this is primarily aimed at modellers.

Finally, after its railway use had finished, the goods shed appears to have been used as a depot during the early years of the British Road Services. The author would be particularly interested in information on this or on the station in general, which he has been researching for some time. He can be contacted by email: philip-cousins@sky.com or telephone 01246 209528.



The goods shed, May 1988. Originally equipped with two 30 cwt cranes, the goods shed burnt down in November 2001. *P. Cousins*



Detail of decorative terracotta finial to the station roof, 2006. A common design element on the wooden built stations. *P. Cousins*



Inside the station buildings, 2006. Looking from the site of the booking office towards the ladies waiting room. The platform would have been to the left of this photograph. The interior partitions had been removed by this date. *P. Cousins*



Detail of window treatment.
P. Cousins



The former entrance to the booking hall was situated behind the brown car (2006). The doorway arrangement had been altered for some years. *P. Cousins*

To look now at the site where stone had been cut and shaped at the old Wingerworth Saw Mills, one can see a corner of a small wood with a curved section of a dry-stone wall leading into it. Delve a little further and blocks of squared stone can be located in the undergrowth. This, originally, was a thriving industry where stone was sawn to requirements. The stone was not found on the site but brought from the nearby Bole Hill quarry.



From an early photograph the picture can be brought into better focus by doing a bit of archaeological research.

Some of the blocks on the low side of the quarry road did not just occur but were put there and then filled over. It created a more level route than using the lane, which is the present road to the quarry.

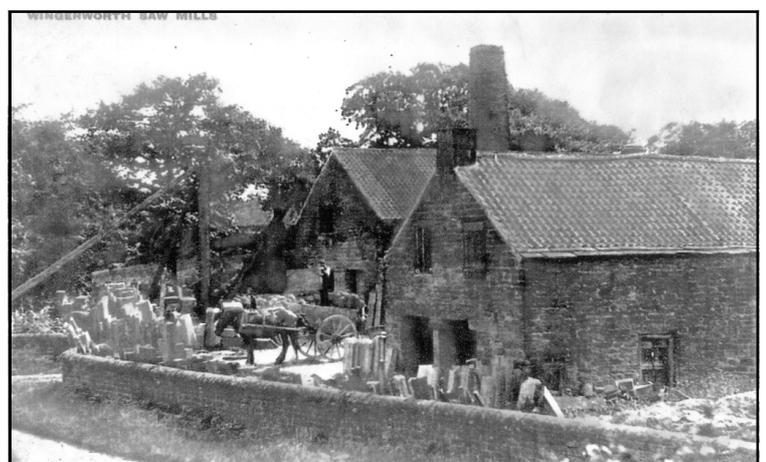
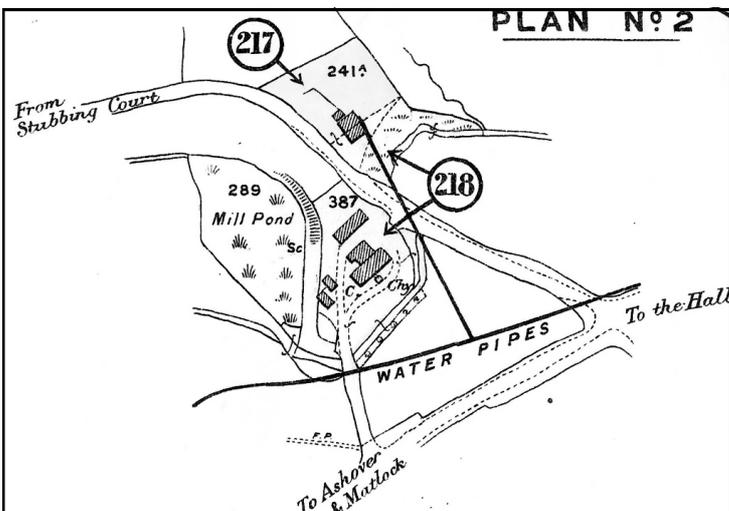
Once inside the quarry grounds, using this lower entrance, there stood a derelict building which locals referred to as the cracker/ crusher. I guess that this crushed stone would be needed for road building & mending, and would utilize those pieces not suitable for sawing down at the mills.

We can also detect from the sale catalogue that a recognised right of way existed from the quarry to the road now known as Bole Hill Lane, for the purpose of extracting both stone and timber. This is confirmed from the statement "Over Lot 97 along the track Ord. No. 522 to the Public Road". Lot 97 in the sale catalogue was Bole Hill Farm, and the field from the quarry to Bole Hill Lane is part of their property.

A lower entrance into Bole Hill quarry is a more obvious route, for we are not transporting stone by lorry, but by horse and cart. This is substantiated from the photograph, which includes a horse hitched to a tip-cart.

But lurking at the rear of the cart is a second horse. This would be harnessed in sling gears so that on heavy work there would be a pair of horses working together in tandem. Stone is a very heavy material. Therefore the more level the track over which the blocks of stone would be moved from the quarry to the saw mills, the easier for the horses.

Looking at the track from Bole Hill Lane to the quarry it is fairly obvious from the contours of the field that this track-way has been superimposed across the field. Outcrops of stone the size of



Having established the route so far, the logical way, and one with lesser gradient, would be through the stackyard and onto the crossroads where Birkin Lane meets Bole Hill Lane. From this point we progress to another catalogue – the Residual Portion of the Wingerworth Estate. Two cottages on Pearce Lane, just along from the Sheepwash, now known as Oak Bank and Sycamore Cottage, are listed in this as Lots 217 &

LOT 218 (Coloured Pink on Plan No. 2).

The Adjoining Cottage of Similar Construction

together with

The Old Saw Mill

now disused, but with water power available comprising an important brick and stone built Mill, a Range of useful Store Sheds and the Mill Pond, in all about

2a. Or. 10p.

Being Ord. Nos. Pt. 241A, 239 and 387 in Wingerworth Parish.

218. The latter was included with the Old Saw Mill. We now know from the detail that the mill was disused, but the sale included it as "important brick and stone built mill, a range of useful store sheds and the mill pond".

At this time the properties were let to Charles Norman and Samuel Norman at £7.8 per annum each.

When sold Oak Bank realised £500 and the other, with the saw mill, fetched £550.

Although the saw mill was disused, it was sold as if the buyer might start up the business again, for the sale included the right to take water from Stubbing Great Pond through a sluice pipe, but limited the extraction to the extent that the level of water in the pond was not reduced more than 3ft. below a line which was to be described on the front of the boat house.

What is baffling is the inclusion of an industrial chimney on the saw mill site. This then raises the question as to what purpose the chimney could serve, as the mill was water powered.

From the detail included in Plan No 2, Lot 218 had a single building with a passage between that and another set of buildings. The chimney is shown alongside these, borne out by the photograph. Service roads to the mill appear on Plan No 2 showing access to either set of buildings, exiting on Pearce Lane. Part of the curved entrance to the site is still intact, but the other section no longer exists.

From the picture we can get some idea of the type of blocks sawn at the mill. Could these be of the lintel type for building work or even curb stones?

Perhaps we shall never know, but by reference to old records, we have uncovered a story that is not available to the passer by as he walks along Pearce Lane.

Addendum from Cliff Lea: I met up with Clarence Naylor at his farm some months ago, and we discussed whether NEDIAS might be able to view the site, particularly to spot any signs of the old chimney, and help to answer the question as to its purpose. This would be best done during the winter when foliage has died down, possibly a visit on a bright crisp day in January or February. Please let me know if you are interested; Clarence would be happy to lead us directly along the old trackway and to the site. Phone 01246 234212.



Chairman's Chat

I seem to have spent quite a bit of time away this summer, but NEDIAS was in good hands! Our Vice-Chairman, Derek Grindell, was guest editor for the August Newsletter, which sparkled: **thank you Derek for a fact filled Newsletter.**

We have been discussing the frequency and format of our Newsletter within the Committee – we'd like to know what you feel – is it too long, too short, too frequent, does it keep you in touch, do you have some ideas? Please let us know – either info@nedias.org.uk or to me at 15 Kelburn Avenue. To keep subs down, we'd like to see if we can save on mailing, and as you know we try to have available at meetings. But if you're happy to receive an e-version, can you please let me know.

Whilst I was away, Derek also stood in to welcome our first speaker of autumn. I hear that this first talk by Tony Hallam on the Markham family was extremely well presented, and I was sorry to miss it. A difficult act

to follow you may think, but Cliff Williams followed up in October with a bumper presentation, some intriguing findings from his own research, and covering a wide spectrum of activities. In addition we had a short presentation from Jim Brightman of Archaeological Research Services. We hope very much that with this group, NEDIAS can take part in a joint industrial or transport inspired activity, do you have any thoughts?

We have a tremendously varied programme for 2011, but this is apt:

2011 marks our tenth anniversary

and I'm really pleased to report that Dr Dudley Fowkes, who spoke at our very first inaugural meeting back in 2001 will speak to us again in 2011, ten years on. It should be quite a birthday celebration!

WHAT'S ON?

NEDIAS Lecture Programme

When: Meetings are held on the second Monday of each month, starting at 7:30 pm.

Where: Friends' Meeting House, Ashgate Road (at junction with Brockwell Lane), Chesterfield.

13 December 2010	Christmas Meeting: <i>A seasonal Melange of Members' Proclivities and Mince Pies</i>
10 January 2011	Eric Galvin: <i>The Pentrich Revolution</i>
14 February 2011	Jan Stetka: <i>Sir Richard Arkwright's Bakewell Mill</i>
14 March 2011	Annual General Meeting + talk (to be arranged)
11 April 2011	Ron Presswood: <i>Staveley & Devonshire Works Past and Present</i>
9 May 2011	Richard Booth: <i>The Ashover Light Railway – Origin, History and Future</i>

Other Diary Dates

Thursday, 18th November 2010	Phil Eccleston: <i>The Duchess and The Royal Train</i>. 7:30pm at Barrow Hill Roundhouse
Saturday, 20th November 2010	South Yorkshire Archaeology Day – 10:00am-4:30pm. Details from David Marsh, 0114 273 4223
Sunday, 12th December 2010	Christmas at Wortley Top Forge
Sundays, 12th and 19th December 2010	Barrow Hill Christmas Specials
Saturday, 15th January 2011	Chesterfield Archaeology Day – 9:30am-4:30pm. Bookings through Chesterfield Museum

Monday, 17th January 2011	Joan Jones: The history of Izal. SYIHS, 7:30pm Kelham Island Museum.
Tuesday, 18th January 2011	Peter and Maeve Hawkins: The Interesting story of Lowca works in Whitehaven and How we Discovered its Past. 7:30pm Chesterfield & District Local History Society, Rose Hill United Reform Church, Rose Hill, Chesterfield (Rear Entrance)
Thursday, 27th January 2011	Ken Grainger: Sheffield Victoria to Chesterfield. Brimington & Tapton Local History Group, 7:30pm St Michael's Church Hall, Church Street, Brimington.
Tuesday, 8th February 2011	Clive Hart: The Archaeology of the Peak. 7:30pm Civic Society,

NEDIAS VISITS

Co-ordinator: Brian Dick, 01246 205720

Where would you like to visit with NEDIAS over the coming year? Please let us have your ideas, feedback and suggestions.

Information and ideas please to: Brian Dick, 01246 205720

Use of Countermarked Dollars by Early Industries

Eric Hodge

During the early stages of the industrial revolution, technical and organizational changes in textile production required new forms of wage labour. Accessing cash for wage payments provided a challenge for the early industrialists. The financial strain of foreign wars, especially during the Napoleonic period, resulted in an increase in the price of silver. By an order issued in 1601, the Royal Mint could not purchase silver above 5s 2d an ounce, significantly below the prevailing current market value. Little silver, therefore, was sold to the Mint during the early industrial period. As a result, the Mint restricted production and during the period 1751–1816 very few silver coins were minted.

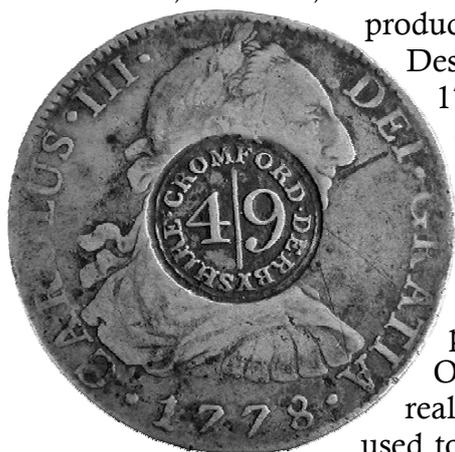
Despite the production of large quantities of copper coins between 1770 and 1775, and the appearance of numerous imitations of official issues and private copper tokens from 1787, the needs of everyday commerce for coins below the value of the gold denominations could not be fully met. It was not that there was a shortage of silver, far from it. There were plenty of Spanish American eight reales, silver dollar-sized coins, available as bullion.

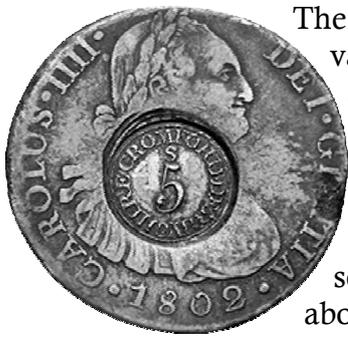
The deficiency of domestic coinage, because of the Royal Mint's inability to purchase silver for recoinage, led industrialists to seek alternative sources.

One of these sources was the countermarking of the Spanish American eight reales (dollars) by merchants, with their name and a value, and used to pay their workers during the period 1780 to 1830.

One of the 70 or so known issuers was the Mill at Cromford.

Three types are known. Two are inscribed within a thin-lined circle CROMFORD DERBYSHIRE around 4/9 (Fig 1) and 5s (Fig 2) being the values at which they were issued. The third type is inscribed A & C° CROMFORD around 5/· There is some disagreement whether this third type is genuine or a concoction. If genuine it could have been issued by the Arkwright & Company Bank as opposed to the first two which are believed to have been issued by the factory. The numbers known are, approximately, 50 for the factory 4/9, 14 for the factory 5s, and 3 for the A & C° mark.





The issue value of these countermarked tokens was slightly greater than the current silver value in the coin, so as to prevent the coin being melted for the silver, but not too high a value to attract counterfeiters. More than half the 4/9 host coins are dated before 1800, and all before 1811, suggesting an issue period from about 1790 to 1810, after which the bullion price of dollars generally remained at or above five shillings until mid 1815. Of the 5/- issues there are at least six where the 5/- punch is believed to be over 4/9 (Fig 3) indicating a sensible re-use of coins and showing that at least some of the 5/-'s came after the 4/9's. It is likely that the 5/- issues were prepared about 1815.

NEDIAS Archives

Please don't forget that we are starting to accumulate quite an archive of books, records, photographs and documents which Pete Wilson holds on behalf of NEDIAS.

Items from this collection are available for all members to loan, and you can obtain a full list of the archives directly from Pete on 01246 235835

I. A. News and Notes

Archaeology at Sheffield University

From 31st January to 2nd February 2011 the Department of Archaeology at the University of Sheffield will be hosting a short course entitled: "Understanding zooarchaeology: a short course for archaeology and heritage professionals, students and enthusiasts". Zooarchaeology is the study of animal remains from archaeological sites. Animal bones and teeth are among the most common remains found on archaeological sites. This material can contribute valuable information to our understanding of how people lived in the past. Among other things animal bones can help to tell us about diet, farming, cooking and eating, trade and industry, social status, ethnicity, beliefs and environment in the past.

For further information, Department of Archaeology, University of Sheffield, Northgate House, West Street, Sheffield, UK, S1 4ET., email zooarch-shortcourse@sheffield.ac.uk

Call for volunteers at Cromford

Cliff Lea

As many of you know, since retirement I have become a volunteer guide at Cromford Mill, helping to give public tours, on just one day per week. This is an amazing site, we are very privileged to have this important World Heritage Site on our doorsteps - we receive visitors from all over the world. I had a busy learning curve to start off with – helped tremendously by Darrell Clarke and others, but I'm now thoroughly enjoying my contact there - the many and varied questions certainly keep my brain alive!

However, you might be surprised to know that there are only **10 (yes, only TEN)** part time volunteer guides in total, yet our aim is to have a guide on site every day of the year except Christmas Day.

Would you be interested to help? Do you have a day or three per month to spare? Do please give me a call for further information, 01246 234212.

Incidentally, you may have heard of the recent allocation of £2M grant from Heritage Lottery Fund to Cromford Mill. The investment will help pay for a visitor and exhibition centre and other conservation – indeed, this will be the "Gateway" visitor centre for the whole of the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site which will be contained within Arkwright's five-story warehouse which abuts Mill Lane. The interior of this building still bears the scars of its time when a later chemical company used it for processing ores and for

manufacture of toxic lead chromate pigments for paint.

Emma Sayer, head of the Heritage Lottery Fund East Midlands, said: “The Cromford Mills complex was the birthplace of the factory system, and is therefore a vital part of our national heritage. This project will ensure the preservation of this iconic building by creating a centre where visitors will be able to learn about and explore the wider world heritage site.”

This is good news, but the grant is dependant on matching funding from the European Community, which we hope to hear of shortly.

South Yorkshire Transport Museum

This October marked 50 years since Sheffield (other than Blackpool?) became the final city in England to dispense with its old tramway system. To commemorate this, the museum has put on a special Sheffield Tram display – SYTM is open every Saturday, and in addition runs special event days on Sunday 14 November and Sunday 12 December.

Location: South Yorkshire Transport Museum, Unit 9, Waddington Way, Aldwarke, Rotherham S65 3SH.
www.sytm.co.uk

Early Notice: Derbyshire/ Chesterfield Archaeology Day

Whilst registration forms aren't yet available for this great annual event organised by Chesterfield Museum at the Pomegranate Theatre, I hear that the date has been set for Saturday 15 January 2011. I'd recommend that you put the date firmly in your diary! It is always, fact filled and enjoyable, updating with events and findings uncovered during the last year's archaeology in the county. Note also that South Yorkshire Archaeology Day is on 20 November – 0114 273 4223 for more details.

Longstone Local History Group

Congratulations to LLHG and to Archaeological Research Services. Last year's excavation on the hillfort at Fin Cop overlooking Monsal Dale has won the 2010 British Archaeological Award for the “community archaeological project which best advances the knowledge & practice of archaeology in the United Kingdom”. The formal ceremony at the British Museum on the 19 July was apparently quite dramatic as the identity of the overall winner wasn't revealed until a moment before the presentation. Many of us heard the details of the project's findings at January's Chesterfield Archaeology Day, and indeed, at least one of our members was actually involved at Fin Cop. There will be an update of this project at the Archaeology Day.

England's last revolution

What links an enormous volcanic eruption in Indonesia....the writing of Frankenstein (or The Modern Prometheus) by Mary Shelly while holidaying near Geneva.... Damsons....a major change in men's fashions.....enclosure of open fields.....Waterloo....and England's last beheading? No, it's not a fiendishly hard question on Round Britain Quiz.

These and much more will feature in Eric Galvin's talk on the 10th January 2010 about the Pentrich Revolution. Why are the events of a wet night in June 1817 centred on a small village between Alfreton and Ripley with about 180 residents now part of the curriculum for the AS levels?

Eric will set the revolution in its context of a community undergoing the tensions of rapid industrial development at a time of major economic recession. He will look at who was involved, what was happening locally with the development of numerous mines; the success of the Butterley Engineering venture, the Cromford canal and new mill based technologies in the textile trades.

This will be a fascinating evening!

My interest in industrial history has many parts, but this interest is certainly fired by a family activity which started in Victorian times. My Grandfather William Lea was born in Harthill, Cheshire, in 1845.

He moved to the Merseyside area in his twenties, and started his own business in 1870 making harmoniums, and selling musical instruments, particularly pianos and harmoniums – the appetite for these in late Victorian years was prodigious, and his business expanded during the 1870s and 1880s to a number of premises in the North West. In Liverpool itself, he moved his music business right into the centre. This address was a vast and imposing site: it was “The Pantheon”, a large theatre, dating back to the turn of the 19th century, which prior to his occupation was reported to have seating for 1000 people. From 1843 it had been known as “the Liver Theatre”, with a handsome representation of the Liver bird in bold relief on the outside. William Lea made widespread use of the “Liver” within his company name, as you will see later in the article!

By 1900 he had started another business - a pioneering business at the very start of the motor car industry, actually manufacturing his own models of the new automobiles which were to change transportation forever.

In December 1900 The Motor Car Journal commented, “Mr Lea produces two types of “Liver” cars. These are fitted with genuine Benz motors, but all other parts are of English make, including the body, frames, chains, etc. The smaller of the two cars, called the Liver Phaeton, is capable of carrying four persons. The engine fitted to the car develops 3 bhp at a speed of 650 rpm”.



William Lea “Liver Phaeton”, 3hp model. (Photo: Liverpool Museums)

The headquarters of his automobile business centred in Birkenhead, opposite the main entrance to Birkenhead Park, and the auto company at this time was called the “Liver Motor Company and School of Automobilmism”. His main depot at Birkenhead Park was clearly very large, and even contained a test track where customers could test drive the vehicles. The track was capable of accommodating up to 50 cars at any one time. The “Autocar” magazine of 1 June 1901 reported “Mr Lea has grasped the vast possibilities of

the autocar industry, with one of the largest, if not the largest, establishments of its kind in Great Britain". Interestingly, his original premises are still visible at Birkenhead Park, now somewhat altered, having been converted first to a cinema, then used as furniture showrooms.

As well as the earlier 3bhp version there was a larger 6bhp model, which was fitted with substantial wooden artillery carriage type wheels. The early 3 bhp model had Benz-like wire spoked wheels, and drive from a rear mounted engine. It had electric ignition, yes electric ignition, not like the crank starts that I remember from the 1950s. The 3 bhp model had side tanks for cooling water, and interestingly were left hand drive. The angle-iron frame resembled other early models of the time; the gear change lever was situated on the outside of the body, and the fuel tank which may also have served as an extra seat was a curved structure at the front. The name 'phaeton' means light, four wheeled carriage and the car body was very reminiscent of a horse drawn carriage. The engine was a Benz horizontal single-cylinder, 1045cc with belt transmission giving two forward speeds plus 'Crypto' extra low gear with final drive by side chains. Steering was by a tiller and the car had solid rubber tyres.

According to the 'Motor Car Journal' in 1900 the car could carry four people at a speed from one to eighteen miles an hour. It was also reputed to be able to carry passengers up a gradient of one-in-four - a proud boast for such an early example of car manufacturing. William Lea was said to have been the first to have ascended Snowdon by car in 1903, and a photo exists showing three generation of the family in the car during the ascent.

Pictorial records in the Autocar Magazine of 9 February 1901 show that the company exhibited their cars inside the St George's Hall in Liverpool (one of the finest neo-classical buildings in the world, built to commemorate the coronation of Victoria) in major early Auto Shows and Trials held in the area. During the summer of 1901, Lea opened up his main depots for garaging for the Automobile Club's national tour and rally, offering free-of-charge storage and assistance to drivers and visitors.

William Lea's auto business declined after 1910; many makers were now starting to appear on the horizon, and rapid technical developments requiring increasing investment which this company would have found difficult to make. So sad to say, the author wasn't descended from a highly successful Henry Ford.

William Lea died in 1923 at the age of 77, but visitors to Merseyside can see one of his Liver Phaeton cars displayed in the Museum of Liverpool Life, possibly the only surviving example.

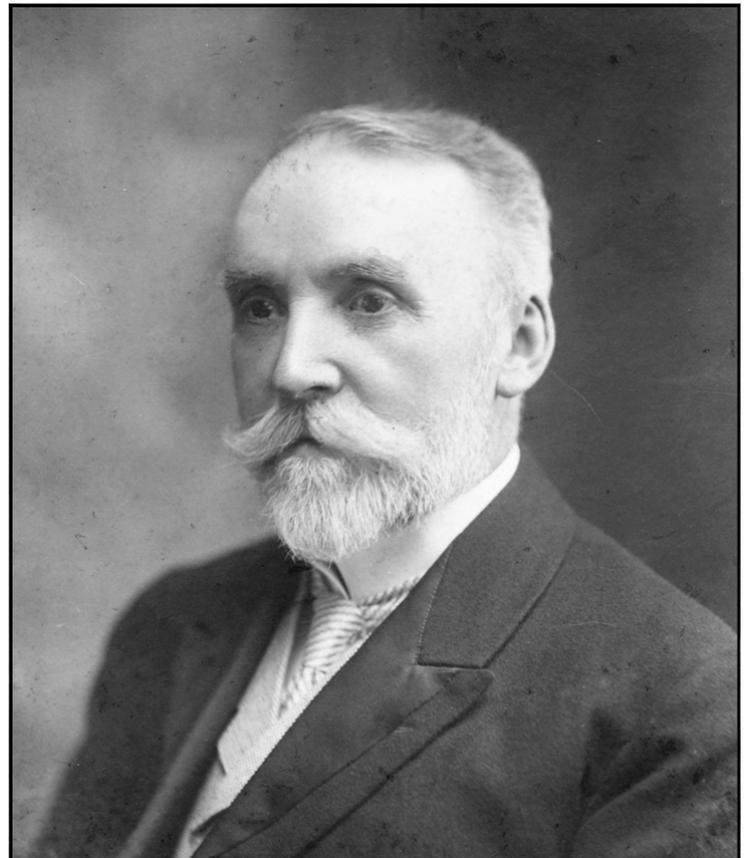
One enduring reminder of William Lea was a prediction, which he made in a letter to the editor of The Motor Car Journal, published in the edition of December 29 1900.

This letter related an amusing experience when he drove his car past an unattended horse drawn cart owned by a wine merchant, the horse bolted due to the noise of the car, leaving a trail of bottles of wines and spirits in the wake of the cart. William Lea in his letter commented that *"Therein lies the beauty of the motor. You can leave it at the gate ...and there it will remain ...even if an army of steam rollers passes by."* But he went on in this same letter to predict:

"Perhaps some day, when everyone has a motor car instead of a horse, we shall have to keep a private padlock on the wheel when we go visiting or shopping."

An amazing prediction made by my ancestor in 1900 but which later events proved to be highly accurate!

Bibliography: Liverpool History Society Journal, 2005, No. 4. "William Lea: a Victorian Entrepreneur"



..... and Finally ...

... Some unusual recycling in the far north!

Les Mather

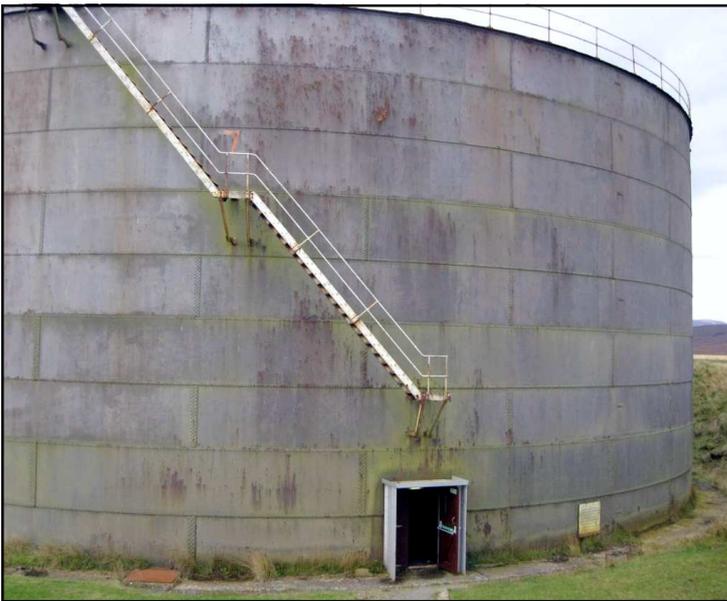
A few weeks ago I visited Orkney, and one day took a ferry across to the village of Lyness on the island of Hoy. On arrival, I noticed a small and slightly crooked direction sign on which were the words "Oil Tank Display". I must confess that, even with my keen interest in industrial history, I was not gripped with immediate excitement. However when I climbed the large grass covered bank nearby I got a surprise....

Said oil tank was large, about the size of a gas holder, and had a doorway cut into its base, suggesting that oil containment was no longer a priority. Instead I found a huge display space, with an audio visual show about Hoy and its naval history, and displays of military vehicles and small boats. Altogether a highly imaginative reuse of an industrial building.

The oil tank now forms part of the Lyness Interpretation Centre, a museum documenting the history of the Royal Naval base at Scapa Flow. It is the last survivor of a series of tanks installed in 1936 to store fuel oil for the ships. The oil was pumped aboard through a Pumping House built in 1937-38 which is also open to the public. This comprises a Boiler Room with three Lancashire boilers by Wilsons of Glasgow alongside a Pump Room containing three non-rotative oil pumps. Displayed amongst this equipment are many photographs and small artefacts detailing the history of the base through the two World Wars. The Pumping House also houses a café which is the best, and as far as I could see the only, place to eat in Lyness.

The site went out of use in 1956 and was derelict until the best surviving buildings were restored in 1990. It is perhaps a little too far for a NEDIAS day trip, but if you are ever in the area I recommend it as an interesting and unusual place to spend an hour or two. The site is open Monday to Friday throughout the year and also at weekends during the summer. Admission is free.

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(From the Editor - Do you have a photo or snippet of information on places of interest you found yourself whilst on holiday or days-away? Please share with us – snippets always welcome.)

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