

North East Derbyshire Industrial Archaeology Society



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Some Early Motoring in Derbyshire

John Hodson

This article considers motoring, mainly, but not exclusively, in North Derbyshire, from about 1900 to 1930. It is no surprise that a search of the words “motor cycle” and “motor car” in the 1899 *Kelly’s Directory for Derbyshire*¹ did not yield any instances of the words being used. However, by 1912 the same directory² has three instances of motor cycles and twenty two instances of motor cars. Over the thirteen years between 1899 and 1912 a range of new trades had sprung up in Derbyshire and these included motor engineering, motor garages, motor car dealers, motor vehicle manufacturers and agents, motor car accessory suppliers and motor omnibus proprietors.

In 1912/1913 motoring in Derbyshire was flourishing. For example, according to *The Motor Cycle* magazine of October 1913³, the number of motor cycles registered in Derbyshire increased from 1,413 in 1912 to 1,800 in 1913 an increase of 387. In the British Isles as a whole, motor car registrations increased from 32,953 in 1912 to 42,288 in 1913 an increase of 9,335 and motor cycle registrations increased from 34,878 in 1912 to 40,867 in 1913 an increase of 5,993. The increasing use of motor vehicles in Derbyshire included for trade purposes and commuting to work, it also resulted in the creation of motor cycle and car clubs, social events including trials and racing.

With the notable exception of Rolls-Royce, there was little car or motor cycle production in Derbyshire in the early days⁴ and early car production was concentrated in the south of the county. The Simplex Perfecta has been credited with being the first car produced in Derbyshire. It was made at the Randolph Works, Normanton, in 1900⁵. A four seater voiturette, the 4hp Simplex Perfecta cost £100. A complication when attempting to purchase the Perfecta was the necessity to deposit £100 in the company’s bank before production started. It is thought that the company only lasted one year and it is not known how many Perfectas were made.

In 1904 the Repton Engineering works produced the Repton three wheeled, single seater car, it was unusual in having front wheel brakes. Situated at Askew Hill, Repton the works was opened in 1886 and established by W J Stephenson-Peach. In 1914 the works was advertising that their specialities included motor lawn mowers, light four wheel runabouts, motor bicycles, gas, steam and oil engines and the manufacture and repair of bicycles⁶. Nearby Repton School was a pioneer in that it made use of contacts with the Repton Engineering works to teach engineering to public school boys. Later on boys from other schools in the UK attended the engineering classes at Repton Engineering and these included Eton and Malvern public schools^{5,6}.



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<https://www.facebook.com/nediaschesterfield/?fref=ts>

A Hatton-McEvoy car was made at the Leaper Street Works, Derby in 1930⁵.

In 1903 a 9hp Chatsworth car competed in the Derby and District Auto Club Hill climb. The car has been attributed to Joseph Briddon of Bakewell maker of the Chatsworth bicycle. Thomas Briddon appears in the 1899 Bakewell *Kelly's Directory* as a whitesmith, cycle agent and repairer, of Bath Street. However, there is no evidence that the Briddons made this car, it is more likely to have been made by George Payne of 118, Chatsworth Road, Clapton, London (1903-1908)⁷.

Rolls-Royce produced cars at Nightingale Road, Derby from 1908 to 1939. As their history is comprehensively covered elsewhere⁸, no more will be said about them here. With the exception of Rolls-Royce, significant car manufacture did not take place in Derbyshire until comparatively recently.

In many ways it was easier for the small business proprietor to produce motor cycles rather than cars. Often the parts for a complete motor cycle were purchased in kit form from suppliers or as individual components from a variety of suppliers. In either case it was simply a matter of assembling the parts to form the complete motor cycle.

In about 1870 Richard Marshall senior settled in Clay Cross from Heage. Not only did Richard change where he lived but he also changed occupation from coal miner to watch maker. Richard obtained a velocipede or bone-shaker; he passed this interest in early bicycles on to his son, also called Richard, who went into business as a bicycle maker/repairer in Clay Cross whilst his father and brothers were in the watch making business. However, Richard senior maintained and developed his interest in bicycles and motor cycles. At some time before 1912 Richard Marshall senior turned his hand to producing a motor cycle. In 1912 Miss Emma Marshall of Clay Cross, a member of the North Derbyshire Motor Cycle Club, rode a motor cycle fitted with a 2½hp Minerva engine. The bike was built by her father, who at the time was over seventy years of age and “has never had an hour’s tuition in motor mechanics”⁹. Not much is known about the motor cycles they made in terms of numbers produced or their specifications. The only Marshall-Lily (as they were called) known to survive is a 1913 3½hp model powered by a TD Cross engine. The tank bears the name H Marshall and Sons, High Street, Clay Cross, Derbyshire. Humphrey Marshall is Richard senior’s father. This bike is now based in The Netherlands but is ridden in events in this country¹⁰.



A 1913 Marshall Lily with 3½hp TD Cross Engine after the 2016 Sunbeam Motor Cycle Club Pioneer® Run.

Between 1903 and 1907, S B Haskard of Curzon Street, Derby manufactured motor cycles and tri-cars on a small scale¹¹. An advanced 3½hp motor cycle was built and designed by Edgar Russell of Derby. It had a single speed belt drive and was used by the owner with some success in local events but did not go into production¹¹.

The 1912 *Kelly's Directory for Derbyshire*² includes many organisations describing themselves as motor engineers, motor garages or motor car manufacturer’s agents. Many of them would only have had the most basic skills in motor engineering and many would not have remained in business for very long. There is only space for consideration of a few of them here. The Ford Motor Company in Chesterfield has already been covered by Darrell Clark¹². Kennings, Derbyshire’s largest motoring organisation has also been covered, this time by David Bevis¹³.

Morris and Orme Ltd of Packers Row, Chesterfield is an example of a small motor engineering business. On the other hand, The Holywell Motor Co (Chesterfield) Ltd of Holywell Street and Spa Lane was a bigger concern with service depots for Calcott, De Dion and Humber cars together with motor cycles and Albion commercial vehicles. The company was in business from 1919 to about 1931, in 1919 they bought a “spacious piece of land” formerly known as Clayton’s Old Tan Yard situated at the bottom of Spa Lane¹⁴. The Holywell Motor Company



started out as Boulton Bros Ltd but the name was changed in 1920, shortly before opening “a Commodious and Up-to-date Workshop fitted with the Latest Machinery and Garage Appliances to cope with Heavy Vehicle and Pleasure Car Repairs”, on Spa Lane¹⁵, “acknowledged to be the finest and best equipped Motor Repair Shop in the Chesterfield District”¹⁴. Equipment included a 200 ton solid tyre press and a kerbside petrol pump they also had a very large stock of tyres. The motor cycle business was carried out at the Holywell Street depot. They made the point that “First-class Mechanics only employed for each department”.

Many organisations will have combined the roles of motor engineering, garaging and agents. Cavendish Motors, of Cavendish Street, Chesterfield were in business from at least 1912.

As shown in this 1912 advertisement, they were agents for a range of makes of cars and motor cycles as well as providing accessories and repair services.

CHESTERFIELD	
LARGEST MOTOR GARAGE IN THE MIDLANDS	
WOLSELEY SERVICE DEPÔT	
CAVENDISH	Acetylene Welding, Lubricants, Petrol, Vulcanizing, Agents for Dis- solved Acetylene. Solid Tyre Press. 'Exide' Battery Service.
MOTORS, Ltd.	
AUTOMOBILE :: :: ENGINEERS	
Sole District agents for Wolseley, Citroën, Armstrong Siddeley, Standard, Rover Cars, Triumph, B.S.A. Motor Cycles, and any make of Car or Motor Cycle supplied to order.	
Dunlop, Michelin, Palmer and all noted makes of Tyres Stocked.	
Garage and Works: Holywell Street, Chesterfield.	
Motor Cycle Depôt: STEPHENSON PLACE.	
Telegrams: "Cavendish Motors, Chesterfield." Official Repairers to the R.A.C. and Automobile Association.	



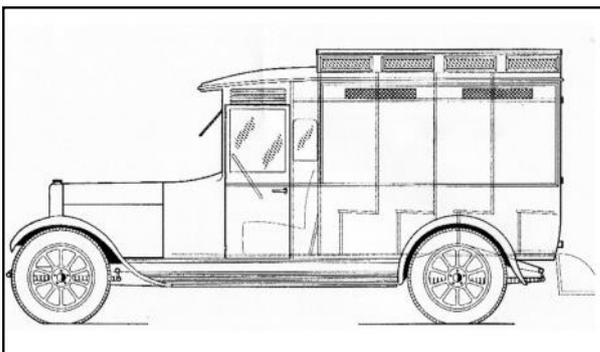
Lauri Smith's Motors (LEFT) was situated on Chatsworth Road, Chesterfield and is typical of the petrol station/service stations of the 1930s.

The Heanor Motor Garage of J T Boam and Sons gives a good example of how a part time business grew into a fully operating motor business. John Thomas Boam was a head mechanic in the hosiery industry at Heanor. In his spare time he bought and assembled bicycle components from such suppliers as BSA, Chater Lea and Brampton. Frames were braised together and

stove enamelled. He sold them as the Ray bicycle after the Ray family of Heanor and the Ray estate where he lived. In 1900, after securing permission and gaining the funds required, a new shop and workshop were built. Although Mr Boam still continued to make and repair bicycles and to sell a wide range of items, his main interest was in mechanical engineering. This interest led him to concentrate on motor cars and motor bicycles and his work was such that in 1904 he received a very positive testimonial from a local GP regarding the quality of his workmanship. The Heanor Motor Garage was set up as a result of his efforts¹⁶.

Mr Boam was not the only person to graduate from bicycles to working on motor vehicles. The Glossop Cycle and Motor Co and Leonard Lord (not the Leonard Lord associated with Morris Motors) of Parwich, Ashbourne, to name just two, did the same thing.

Thomas Metcalf was in business in Saltergate, Chesterfield from about 1890. They started as coach and carriage builders and progressed to motor car and coach builders and general motor repairers from about 1912¹⁷. They worked on Chesterfield's first motor bus fleet and attended to the Duke of Devonshire's coach for King George VI's coronation. They were in business at the same place until February 1974¹⁸.



A 1928 Reeve and Kenning Van
Mounted on an Austin 20hp Chassis

In 1888 Harry Reeve founded a wheelwright and blacksmith business in Bridge Street, Pilsley¹⁹. Reeves were to become a significant producer of commercial vehicles. The company progressed from building horse-drawn vehicles to a wide range of motorised vehicles including brewery trucks, ambulances, buses, coaches and vans. Their vehicles were built on bought in chassis; they were able to produce complete vehicles through all stages including initial design, timber work, metalwork, building the vehicle and painting.

In 1925 the company went into partnership with Kennings of Clay Cross to form Reeve and Kenning Limited and in 1958

the company became Reeve (Coachbuilders) Limited after the Kenning interest was bought out. The company was sold to T H Holdings in 1974 and was closed in 1991²⁰.

In the 1911 census Wilfred Kantlehner is recorded as an apprentice engineering tool maker living in Sheffield. By the 1920s he is working with his father, Fred Kantlehner, at their garage at Sheffield Road, Old Whittington. Advertisements in the Derbyshire Times over the years show them trading in new and used vehicles and carrying out repair work. Concentrating first on motor cycles, progressing to cars and then providing engineering work such as reboring and resleeving of engines, including work for the motor trade. Over the years they were agents for Excelsior, Montgomery and Norton motor cycles. A Kantlehner Trophy was awarded by the North Derbyshire Motor Club for success in their events. Eventually the garage was taken over by C E Taylor and E Bradbury.

In 1912 there were at least three motor omnibus proprietors² in Derbyshire. These included: Clay Cross Motor 'Bus Co. Limited, High Street, Clay Cross, Commercial Car Hirers Limited, Hall Street, Alfreton and F H Doughty, Church Street, Brimington.

Motor omnibus outings had become popular as shown by the photograph left, taken in the early 1920s, of staff from John Turners Ltd., Drapers, of Packers Row, Chesterfield. On one occasion they travelled to the Bulls Head, Youlgrave for lunch before returning to Chesterfield.



An Early Event of Chesterfield and District Motor Cycle Club

forming a motor cycle club would have put Lauri in contact with motor cycle owners, a good business move on his part!

In 1911 the following notice appeared in *The MotorCycle*²¹: “Many local suggestions have been made for the formation of a motor cycle club in Chesterfield and district, and any who may be interested are invited to attend a provisional meeting to be held at the Hotel Portland, Chesterfield, at 7:30pm on Wednesday March 15th. Those wishing to attend are asked to send their names to Lawrence Smith, Rosemount, 23, Clarence Road, Chesterfield.” As a result of this notice The Chesterfield and District Motor Cycle Club was formed. According to the 1911 census for Chesterfield, Lawrence was a chauffeur, motor cycle and car mechanic and a dealer. For chauffeuring and taxi work Lauri, as he was known, used a 1912 six cylinder American Studebaker car.

RIGHT: Chesterfield and District Motor Cycle Club hill climb at Amber Hill, Kelstedge, 1912. Lauri Smith is standing directly behind the right hand motor cyclist. His sister Florrie, also a keen motor cyclist, is the only female present and standing next but one on his right. As well as Kelstedge, events were also held at Hardwick Park, Stanage Hill and Chatsworth Park.





Three regular competitors in events were the brothers Brian, Frank and Joseph Kelly, sons of Peter Kelly, Pawnbroker of Whittington Moor. They often used Bradbury motor cycles, an Oldham firm more famous for the manufacture of sewing machines. In 1912 Brian Kelly's marriage to Alice Steels was featured, complete with a picture of their motor cycle combination, in the *Derbyshire Times*²² under the heading a Motor Cycle Wedding. Sadly Brian was not to return from the First World War.

The first annual dinner and presentation of prizes of the Chesterfield and District Motor Cycle Club was held at the Hotel Portland on the 14th February 1912. It is not known how long the club lasted; it may well not have survived much later than the First World War.



The North Derbyshire Motor Cycle Club was also founded in 1912 and continues to this day²³ but is now known as the North Derbyshire Motor Club. The club organised events for both motor cycles and motor cars. In 1913 this club held a motor cycle gymkhana at Chesterfield. The American 7hp Indian motor cycle outfit pictured left won first prize and is parked on Low Pavement, Chesterfield²⁴. Florrie Smith is seated in the sidecar and Lauri Smith is to the



immediate right of the sidecar. The same faces appear in photographs of events organised by both motor clubs indicating that, at least initially, there was sufficient interest for both clubs to exist side by side and thrive.

Not only did the early motorist have to contend with poor roads and unreliable vehicles, they could attract the attention of an overzealous police force. There are a number of newspaper reports of "reckless" motoring in Derbyshire in the early 1900's. In January 1902 a member of the Derby Automobile Club wrote to *The MotorCycle* that the Clay Cross police have been found measuring a stretch of road near Clay Cross. Apparently this was in order to catch speeding motorists with a view to prosecution. The stretch of road in question was situated between Stretton and Tupton on the Derby to Chesterfield Road. In Belper a court defendant was accused of furiously riding a motor bicycle. His speed was reported at 19 miles an hour in one place and 26 miles an hour, or 800 yards per minute in another locality. The police had "regulated their time-pieces and calculated on measured distances how fast the ground was covered". For this "reckless riding" the motor bicyclist was fined £2 with 16s costs²⁵.

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WHAT'S ON?

NEDIAS Lecture Programme

Your Committee deeply regret that we have taken the difficult decision to cancel all remaining meetings for the remainder of the 2020 season. This is - as you will understand - because of the ongoing COVID-19 situation and how this affects our need to observe strict requirements for social distancing etc.

With coronavirus laws currently prohibiting public gatherings and no certainty about what the future holds with the potential for further lockdown measures to be reinstated this autumn and winter, the Committee has reluctantly come to this decision.

All 10 surviving LB&SCR A1 class 'Terriers' could be re-united under Barrow Hill proposal.

The London, Brighton and South Coast Railway (LB&SCR) A1 Class is an English class of 0-6-0T steam locomotive. Designed by William Stroudley, 50 members of the class were built in 1872 and between 1874 and 1880, all at Brighton Works. The class has received several nicknames, initially being known as "Rooters" by their south London crews. However, the engines were more famously known as "Terriers" on account of the distinctive 'bark' of the exhaust beat. Later in their careers, some engines were known as "Hayling Billy" on account of their work on the Hayling Island branch line. A pub of this name on the island was briefly home to the engine which is now No.W8 *Freshwater*.

The possibility of bringing together all ten surviving locomotives for a special 150th anniversary gathering in 2022 is being given serious consideration by Barrow Hill Roundhouse.

The idea would be to unite as many of the remaining examples of the once 50-strong class as possible for a celebratory event at the Roundhouse, marking 150 years since the type's introduction.

This could potentially include the temporary repatriation of No 54 *Waddon* from the Exporail museum in Montreal, Canada, for the first time since it left the UK in 1963, and the release of No 82 *Boxhill* from the National Railway Museum in York.

Haulier Andrew Goodman – who was behind the repatriation of A4 Dominion of Canada from Exporail in 2012 – has pledged his support to any bid to bring *Waddon* back to Britain.

The remaining A1/A1Xs are: No 55 *Stepney* and 72 *Fenchurch* from the Bluebell Railway; Nos 70 *Poplar (Bodiam)* and 2678 (*Knowle*) from the Terrier Trust/East Sussex Railway. Nos W8 *Freshwater* and W11 *Newport* from the Isle of Wight Steam Railway; No B662 *Martello* from Bressingham; and No 50 *Sutton* from the Spa Valley Railway.

Waddon, *Boxhill* and *Stepney* are on static display whilst B662 and W11 are operational with the rest under overhaul.

The aim is to have them back in steam in time for the wider 'Terrier 150' celebration in 2022.

No.55 Stepney carrying the early LB&SCR 'Improved Engine Green' livery

By Ben Brooksbank, CC BY-SA 2.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=17354713>



NOTTINGHAM'S HIGHWAY TO THE SEA – PART 2

*Drawing on the account of the early work of the Trent
Navigation Committee by W. A. Appleton*

by Derek Grindell

The Committee revealed its appreciation of trading prospects when it declared “that the prosperity of the town might be greatly increased by an efficient system of navigation for the river.” This report stated that the necessities of trade require that the river should be straightened and deepened so as to make it available for vessels of considerable tonnage. It declared also that such a scheme had already engaged the Committee’s attention and that it was prepared, if such a course was necessary for giving effect to the scheme, to purchase the undertaking of the old Company.

In pursuance of the powers conferred upon it by the Town Council the Committee proceeded to oppose the Trent Navigation Bill of the Company. In its efforts to oppose the Company’s Bill the Council was supported by the Borough Members, Mr. Arnold Morley undertaking to move an amendment on the second reading to the effect that the Parliamentary Committee on the Bill should be instructed to consider what steps should be taken with a view to mitigating evil arising from floods on the Trent, and that it should also take into consideration the petition of the Corporation of Nottingham against the Bill.

This opposition failed to achieve all that was intended, but it resulted in an exchange of ideas between the Bills promoters and the Corporation, and a tentative agreement which Mr. Froggatt, the Committee Chairman, recommended The Town Council to accept. A scheme indicating the policy recommended was presented to the Town Council on the 2nd February, 1885. It dealt with finance, flood prevention and the future maintenance of the river. It contained also a report by Mr. W. H. Bartholomew, the Engineer of the Aire and Calder Navigation. He said “The Trent is the great outlet of the Midland inland water systems to the East Coast, and I see no reason why Nottingham, with the Trent improved, should not become the distributing centre to the surrounding and Midland districts.”

There is also a report indicative of technical and literary ability by the then Borough Engineer. Mr. M. O. Tarbotton, who calls attention to the injury to life and property which so continuously resulted from the floods in the Trent Valley. Attention was called by Mr. Tarbotton to his evidence before the Duke of Richmond and Gordon’s Committee in 1877, to his studies of the problems of the Seine, and to particular measures at Colwick and Beeston weirs, and in respect of dredging if floods were to be avoided. He also adds: “There is at all times, an abundance of water for lockage, and with such a splendid waterway, the navigation ought to be the finest in England.” These reports show how carefully and extensively the problems of the Trent were studied by officials, by Committees, and by the Town Council.

Despite positive reports, the Trent Navigation and Protection Committee appears to have received more adverse criticism than anticipated, for on the 10th February, 1885, they resigned and the matter appears to have been left to fester until the Christmas Eve of 1886 when the Town Clerk begged to report to the Council that a new Bill was being promoted, which recited the powers of the Trent Navigation Company for the purposes desired and claims also that the existing Company should be dissolved and replaced by a new one incorporated with powers to raise new capital, to borrow money on mortgages, and fund such improvements as deepening, altering and widening locks.

On March 4th, 1887, The Trent Navigation Committee of the Town Council, seemingly reconstituted under the Chairmanship of John Barber, stated that after protracted negotiations with the promoters of the Bill it had been able to obtain such concessions and admissions of liability from the new Company as warrants the Corporation in withdrawing opposition. The determination of the Corporation to maintain its rights in the river continued, and is indicated in reports presented in February, 1892. Here, however, Parliamentary opposition was deemed to be unnecessary.

In March 1894, the townspeople were directly consulted, and a public meeting was called to discuss the

propriety of rendering the Trent available for navigation by vessels of larger tonnage than were then used. A number of resolutions were passed amongst them the following:-

“That, in the opinion of this Meeting, a good navigation between the ports of Hull, Grimsby and Goole and the town of Nottingham, and other towns in the Midland districts, is of the highest importance, not only as providing a cheap method of transit for the use and development of inland trade and agriculture but also as a means of keeping the railway rates between the localities named reasonable; and that if such waterway could be made so as to admit a regular service of boats of from 100 to 200 tons burden, great pecuniary gains would accrue to manufacturers, colliery proprietors and consumers.”

It was further resolved that the Corporation be requested to take up an enquiry and to issue a report for publication and also to invite the co-operation of all Councils and Authorities interested in the navigation of the Trent. Some of the Authorities to whom communications were addressed took but limited views of the proposals, but others were full of encouragement. Amongst these latter were the County council of Lindsay, Lincolnshire; the Kesteven County Council; the Derby Chamber of Commerce; the Merchants Traders Association and some private subscribers. The Town Clerk Sir Samuel George Johnson, after studying all the replies was of the definite opinion that unless the Nottingham Corporation was prepared to undertake the responsibility and the cost of enquiry, it would be vain to proceed.

The project was not allowed to lapse, for on the 8th June, 1914, the City Council adopted a fateful resolution. This declared: “That the time has arrived when, in the best interests of the City, careful consideration should be given to the question of the improvement of the Trent Navigation to enable merchandise to be delivered between Nottingham and the seaboard by water carriage without trans-shipment, and in particular, to the desirability of the City Council providing on suitable security, and at a satisfactory rate of interest, such sums of money as may be necessary for this purpose.”

Another Special Committee was appointed of which Mr. A. R. Atkey, J.P, and Sir John Turney became respectively Chairman and Vice-Chairman, a happy linking of enterprise, sagacity and experience. This Committee presented to the Council, on the 26th October, 1914, a report which dealt exhaustively with the history, the then condition of the river and the works proposed, and methods by which money could be raised to enable these works to be proceeded with. It was also concerned to secure any funds to be raised on the income and assets of the Trent Navigation Company, the latter having intimated its willingness to grant the Corporation a first charge thereon.

At this moment the provisions of the Development Act of 1909 were brought to the notice of the Chairman, Mr. A. R. Atkey. Included in the objects of the Act were the following :- Reclamation and drainage of land; the general improvement of rural transport; the construction and improvement of harbours; the construction and improvement of INLAND NAVIGATIONS. Provision was made for loans, and Commissioners were appointed to consider applications.

The Development Bill was one of the attempts to ameliorate the consequences of a grave period of unemployment, and when in 1914, the world was involved in war, the Government, fearing that another cycle of industrial depression would materialise, set aside large sums for development, in order to minimise the trouble and the waste of unemployment.

Mr. Atkey ascertained that the Development Commissioners were authorised to advance the sum of £1 million sterling for the purpose of assisting works of public utility, including works for the improvement of Inland Waterways, and at his instigation The Town Clerk, Mr. W. J. Board, approached the Development Commissioners, informing them that his Committee was unanimously of the opinion that it was of the greatest importance that the work should proceed and that the natural advantages which the river afforded should be utilised to the fullest extent. The Town Clerk pointed out that the provision of the sum of £150,000 which was then estimated to be necessary to complete the work presented difficulties, and after urging that the request was in the public interest, and that the work contemplated was suitable for large numbers of men who might be unemployed as a consequence of the war, pleaded that the Commissioners should provide such money as might be necessary.

The matter received the prompt attention of the Commissioners, who asked that a deputation should wait upon them and accordingly, on the 21st August, Mr. Atkey, the Chairman, Sir John Turney, the Vice-Chairman, Mr. Councillor Huntsman, and the Town Clerk, representing the Corporation, with Sir (then Mr.) Ernest Jardine and Mr Frank Rayner representing the Trent Navigation Company, met the representatives of the Development Commissioners.

The Commissioners gave favourable consideration to the projects submitted, but stated that they could only provide monies in connection with undertakings owned by the public. It was ascertained, however, that if the powers, rights and liabilities of the Company in that part of the Trent between Nottingham and Newark were transferred to the Corporation, the Commissioners could make a grant. Sir Ernest Jardine, speaking for his fellow directors, thereupon intimated that the Trent Navigation Company would be prepared to adopt such a proposal, and on the 25th August, the Commissioners wrote offering an advance of £50,000.

In the Commissioners' reply two points are emphasised. They say: "It is understood that the consideration for the transfer by the Company to the Corporation will be merely nominal," and that "The work shall be carried out to the satisfaction of the Board of Trade and under such supervision as the Board may think desirable." These conditions indicate that the Commissioners deprecated profits to promoters and was determined that there should be no scamped work.

The Commissioners were offering £50,000; the works were estimated to cost £160,000. The Corporation had no statutory powers to borrow this money. At this time, however, it was held that the various Acts authorising its gas, water, and tramway undertakings enabled it to expend any balance of profits after meeting specified charges and providing a reserve fund, "in such manner as they think best for the improvement of the City and the public benefit of the inhabitants." The Corporation was prepared, if this procedure was legally permissible, to utilise the profits on its old undertakings for the purpose of financing its new one.

The Special Committee realising that the City Council, before altogether committing itself, would require the fullest technical information, sought actuarial advice from Mr. Charles J. Pain, and called for engineering reports from Mr. Frank Rayner and Mr. Arthur Brown, the engineers respectively of the Navigation Company and the Corporation. These reports strengthened the conclusions of the Committee which thereupon, on the 19th October, 1914, made the following specific recommendations:-

1. That the offer of the Development Commissioners be accepted.
2. That the sum of £100,000 be provided by the Corporation out of the accumulated profits of the trading undertakings, or in such other manner as the Finance Committee may determine.
3. That an Agreement be entered into with the Trent Navigation Company for the transfer to the Corporation of the rights, powers and liabilities of the Company in the River Trent from Averham Weir to Trent Bridge, Nottingham.
4. That application be made to Parliament for confirmation of the Agreement; and
5. That the several works of construction be proceeded with as soon as the Agreement with the company is completed, and that they be carried out under the direction of Mr. Frank Rayner, the Engineer of the Company, in consultation with the City Engineer."

The recommendations were adopted and legalised in 1915 by the passing of the Trent Navigation Transfer Act. All seemed set for the work to commence but everyone including the Government had failed to appreciate the implications of WW1. Not only did it differ from previous wars in that the demands for munitions and equipment would be on a scale not previously experienced. A shortage of employment was superseded by a shortage of labour and all work not directly related to the conflict or with conservation of life, had to be left in abeyance.

Following the cessation of hostilities the problem of finding employment for a population no longer needed for feeding the 'war machine' was resolved in part by the Corporation of Nottingham reviving its plans for the improvement of the Trent Navigation and the Government confirming its willingness to renew its financial assistance.

When the war ended, and after the first fevered rushes to manufacture what the world was supposed to want, the problem of finding employment for a population no longer engaged in either producing munitions or in active service unfolded itself in intensified forms. The Corporation of Nottingham thereupon revived its plans for the improvement of the Trent Navigation, and the Government renewed its offers of assistance. WW1 had, however, altered the conditions. The cost of both labour and materials had risen beyond the most pessimistic of pre-war estimates. The £160,000 originally contemplated in 1914 was, in 1920, a hopelessly inadequate sum. Furthermore, the original time limit for construction had expired. If the works were ever to be completed additional money had to be found and the time limits extended, which would require further Parliamentary consent. In the face of these adverse conditions thus arising the Corporation might have been

excused if it had decided to await a more convenient season but, refusing to loosen the century-long grip on the Trent and its potential, the Special Committee, on the 24th October, 1921, recommended the City Council to instruct the Town Clerk, Mr. W. J. Board to obtain the necessary powers in the ensuing session of Parliament.

In the meantime work was actually proceeding at Holme Pierrepont and Stoke Bardolph, and by July, 1922, 550 men, mostly ex-service men, were employed. It was possible to employ this number because the Corporation, endeavouring to meet the needs of the moment, and at once absorb the maximum number of men, and to secure the maximum use of machinery, had instituted a double shift system.

The pertinacity with which the project was pursued, and the big heartedness of the Committee will be best appreciated after comparison of the earlier and later estimates of cost. The plans embraced the construction of a new Cut, lock and weir at Stoke Bardolph; a new Cut, lock and weir at Gunthorpe; a new Cut, lock and weir at Hazleford; a new Cut at Holme Pierrepont and a new Cut at Newark Nether Lock; the latter to be the business of the Trent Navigation Company.

The original estimates for these works were of the order of £160,000 but in 1922 the estimate for the work yet to be completed had risen to £408,032, an increase of £248,032 more for the part than the whole had been estimated to cost.

The Government had helped; successive Ministers of Labour, of Transport, and of Health, had manifested sympathy and given practical assistance; the money had been raised; the work was well on the way to completion. Public opinion, both local and national, had shown support for the City Council as had the great industrial and trading organisations. The Following is a resolution passed by the Directors of the Notts. & Derbyshire Traders' Association at their Monthly Committee Meeting on November 5th, 1878 :-

“That considering the difficulties attending Railway Communication with Hull, the natural port for the Midland District, arising from a circuitous route and two in one case and from New Holland Ferry in the other, and considering how the trade of the district has suffered owing to the want of proper communication by water, and considering that the Trent is the great main artery of water communication from the centre of England to the sea, this Committee expresses its pleasure in the proposal for the formation of a system of a daily service of trains of boats drawn by steam, and it hopes that the Trent Navigation Company may see its way clear to an early application to Parliament to give power to carry the scheme.”

In 1910, the General Federation of Trade Unions advised its members “that a study of the Report of the Royal Commission on Canals and Inland Navigation opened up interesting, profitable and strategic possibilities. That the canal improvements outlined would connect Birmingham, Wolverhampton and Nottingham with the estuaries and promised to give, in addition to interest on capital, cheaper transit and greater choice to the manufacturer struggling to compete, better opportunities for the creation of new industrial centres, and better opportunities for distribution over wider areas of industrial populations.” Accepted authorities like Mr. R. B. Dunwoody of the Association of British Chambers of Commerce, and Sir Norman Hill, have added testimony, and in so doing have given assistance to those who in Nottingham have been struggling to develop “interesting, profitable and strategic possibilities.”

The actual construction of the new works has been accomplished with comparative ease. The scientific knowledge, the experience and pertinacity of the Engineer, has enabled him to overcome any natural difficulties and to keep near to, if not within, his time schedule. He will be the first to admit that the tasks of his directors, past and present, both in the Company and the Corporation have been the greater, for they have had to deal with those sentimental, legal and financial obstacles which for more than a century hindered the realisation of ideals now concretely expressed.

Read more in the next Newsletter when Part 3 will be covering more on the construction

RIGHT:
Trent Navigation Warehouse at Newark-on-Trent By Richard Croft, CC BY-SA 2.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=8764048>



IA News and Notes

Birmingham and the Lunar Society Trail

Have a look at the West Midlands History Society website <https://historywm.com/films/the-lunar-society-trail-following-the-men-who-made-the-modern-world> where you can see a great video on the subject of the Lunar Society. It follows the recently created Lunar Society Trail, covering the background of the main characters, their interplay and exploits as you move across the various sites on the trail starting at Sarehole Mill and onwards to Soho House.

Unstone Mineral Line

Nick Wheat

In 2012 Jane Marson wrote a very well received book on the history of the collieries around the Unstone area north of Chesterfield and the Midland Railway's mineral line that connected them between Unstone and Dronfield - "The Unstone Loop". The 80 page A4 sized book sold out many years ago but due to popular demand a small reprint has been arranged and these are now available online while stocks last. You will recall it contains a wealth of archive maps, photographs and extensive research which I'm sure will be of interest to NEDIAS members who did not obtain their copy before it sold out.

<http://nicwhe8.freehostia.com/pynot/railway/unstone/unstone.html>



Chesterfield Canal Trust

Plans have been pitched to restore another key stretch of the Chesterfield Canal after work on the project was halted by the coronavirus pandemic.

We may have been in Lockdown, but the work has been continuing behind the scenes from home with our Development Manager George. We have submitted our planning application to restore the remaining 2.6 km of the canal within Chesterfield Borough.

Volunteers at the Chesterfield Canal Trust say the completed canal towpath will provide a 'delightful walking and cycling route' which will link up with the Trans-Pennine Trail and other routes.

The bid is part of our ambitious goal to open up the canal from Chesterfield to the River Trent in time for the historic waterway's 250th anniversary in 2027.

It is now on the CBC Planning Portal. <https://publicaccess.chesterfield.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?keyVal=QCIU7FEPJJ00&activeTab=summary>



There are dozens of reports, plans, diagrams etc., but the main document is the Planning Statement (incorporating the Design & Access Statement). <https://www.chesterfield-canal-trust.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Planning-Statement-incorporating-DAS-v1.00.pdf>

And finally

.... talk of the slavery-busting Arkwright

Cliff Lea

There is no doubt that Sir Richard Arkwright's textile business at Cromford would have benefitted at some time from raw cotton grown by slave-labour on Caribbean or American plantations. It's therefore quite unexpected to find that one of Sir Richard's great-grandsons, Augustus Arkwright, born here in Derbyshire at Willersley Castle in 1821 was himself to physically fight AGAINST slavery and AGAINST slave-trading. How come?

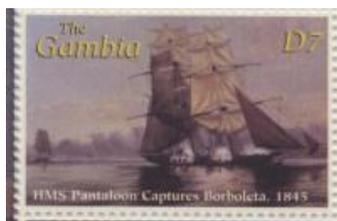
He had wanted to go to sea, and was trained at naval college, being commissioned in the 1840s and he served on a number of vessels. Of course Britain had long before outlawed the trading of slaves (1807) and slave ownership by Britain's was also outlawed under the Act of 1833. However during Augustus' naval service he was to see much of the slave trading that was still going on by other nations and by privateers.

In the 1840s he was serving on *HMS Pantaloon* - a ten-gun wooden sailing brig - off the coast of West Africa; his ship was part of the celebrated Royal Navy's "slavery-busting" fleet on missions designed to disrupt this evil activity. Britain had commissioned this fleet to catch slave-traders off Africa by 1819. In May 1845 *HMS Pantaloon* captured a much larger Spanish-built slave trader, *Barboleta*, after a two-day chase, capturing the slaver off Lagos under heavy fire from the trader's guns. That really must have been a thrilling fight on the high seas.

Finally - It's so good to be able to say that one of the descendants from this most famous cotton family, should physically fight against the slave-trading which was still rife in Africa.



LEFT: HMS Pantaloon (1831) 10-gun brig sloop. Built as the Duke of Portland's private yacht and armed in 1832 with 10 guns (8 x 18prd carronades, 2 x 6pr). <http://www.clydeships.co.uk/>
RIGHT: This hand-coloured lithograph (on zinc) depicts the Pantaloon beating into the wind on a port tack in quite a choppy sea. Day & Haghe Hinton, A. Vernon, H. John © National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London



HMS Pantaloon's victory was commemorated in recent times in a postage stamp issued in Gambia

Contributions, no matter how short (maybe about a visit you have made), and preferably by email to cliff@nedias.co.uk, for inclusion in future editions of this newsletter are most welcome.

COPY DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT EDITION: 5th October 2020

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