

North East Derbyshire
Industrial Archaeology Society
NEDIAS Newsletter No. 31 – August 2008

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Chairman's Comments:

The summer of 2008 will go down in the annals of NEDIAS as the time the Ashover and Shardlow walks were successfully accomplished without too much interference from the weather. Add to that the success just announced of our application to Awards for All which now enables us to enter the digital age for our talks, to enhance our displays at exhibitions and to print the 2008 Journal this autumn, and we can be excused a brief smile without feeling too smug.

Obtaining the funding at our first attempt is down to the hard work put in to the application by Cliff, Derek and other members, as well as advice from Brian Morris of Links in Chesterfield. Particular thanks are due to Cliff for his dogged determination in drawing the details together in what was clearly just the right format. Well done, to one and all!

David Wilmot

NEXT NEDIAS MEETING:

Monday 8 September
David Howes: "Chesterfield shops: 1850-1950"

WHAT'S ON?

NEDIAS Lecture Programme, 2008

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

Where: **Friends' Meeting House, Ashgate Road, Chesterfield**

8 September 2008	David Howes: <i>"Chesterfield shops – 1850 to 1950"</i>
13 October 2008	Peter Kennett: <i>"The Vulcan Bomber Project"</i>
10 November 2008	Mike Hayden: <i>"The Regeneration of Chesterfield's Industrial Areas"</i>
8 December 2008	Christmas Meeting: <i>A seasonal mix of short talks by members on their own projects</i>

Philip Cousins has kindly offered to present two items for the Christmas Meeting on 8 December:

- a) **The Cromford Canal** - In 1965 amateur film cameraman, the late J Newton, made a narrated colour film, lasting just over 13 minutes, of a journey along the Cromford Canal from Cromford to Ambergate. With the co-operation of his relatives we are able to view this all too brief glimpse of the canal.
- b) **Duckmanton Tunnel** - During the early 1970s the former Lancashire, Derbyshire and East Coast Railway's Duckmanton Tunnel was filled in using spoil from the nearby Arkwright Colliery. The story of how this was done will be told using contemporary photographs. *(Coincidentally, information has recently come to light on the fate of the LD&ECR's Bolsover Tunnel, which ran in a straight line for 2650 yards between stations at Carr Vale and Scarcliffe. Some years after decommissioning in 1958 it was decided that it should be infilled. How the NCB's Civil Engineering Department met the challenge of moving 150,000 cu yards of dirt from Bolsover Colliery over a two year period will be addressed by Derek Grindell in an article in the next edition of the NEDIAS Journal, to be published later in the year).*

Other Diary Dates

23-25 August 2008	Midland Railway, Butterley Works, open days. Talks and presentations on all days
Sundays, 14 September and 5 October 2008. All at 3.00pm	Lumsdale Mills and Valley Tours. Booking essential via Arkwright Society on 01629 823256 . Charge £2.50; meet Highfield School, Lumsdale, Matlock.
Friday, 19 September 2008	Cliff Lea: "The Story of Derbyshire Oil" . Holymoorside & District History Soc., 7.30, Holymoorside Village Hall
Saturday, 4 October 2008	AIA Annual Conference. Coventry Transport Museum. Information via John Atkinson or Terry Keegan, 01299 832358. terry-keegan@supanet.com

Tuesday, 18 November 2008	Brian Key: “Railways and Canals around the Erewash Valley”. 7.15 pm, Ilkeston Library. Ilkeston Local History Society, phone 0115 930 2530 for more details.
3 - 7 June 2009	Coalbrookdale 300 – Footprints of Industry. At Ironbridge, a celebration of 300 years industrial history, and 50 years since the restoration of the old furnace. Check Ironbridge Gorge Trust web site for details. http://www.ironbridge.org.uk/

The Walking Festival – Ashover’s Industrial Past

Pat Pick

After last year’s heavy rain this year’s walk festival was greeted with fine weather.

Seventeen of us, including four people from Leeds, gathered at Ashover for a walk to look at the village’s industrial past.



After crossing the River Amber via a lovely old Clapper Bridge we followed the track bed of the disused Ashover Light Railway to Fallgate Mill, the best preserved of Ashover’s four mills. A treat awaited us as we had a guided tour of its interior and the adjacent quarry. The mill was built in 1731 and operated until 1961. Originally the mill had 2 water wheels each 12 ft diameter, 4 ft wide positioned at either side of the mill. The mill began its life grinding wheat and oats from local farmers. In 1925 the mill began grinding fluorspar for the Clay Cross Co. Because the fluorspar was so hard French millstones, two of which are outside the mill, replaced the traditional gritstone millstones. Operations were dictated by the water supply from the River Amber. When the mill closed in 1961 the mill pond was filled in. We then continued our walk to

Milltown Quarry and up the hillside over various lead veins to the area where the mineral was processed We were greeted by a wonderful display of orchids. Time was spent looking for minerals amongst the rocks before continuing to Gregory Mine and Chimney. A brief history of the mine was given before lunch and a chance for more mineral hunting.

The afternoon started along the Coffin Road, named as a route for coffins to be carried from Lea and Dethick (as they did not have their own burial ground) to Ashover Church., to Overton Hall to hear about one of its distinguished owners, Joseph Banks, who sailed round the world with Captain Cook. The only visible signs of a lead mine could be seen nearby at Overton Hall. Then to Goss Hall to hear about another famous past resident Anthony Babbington, famous for the Babbington plot the free Mary Queen of Scots from prison. For his trouble he was hung and disembowelled whilst still alive.

Butts Quarry awaited us and its motor bikes. Butts quarry was the end of the Ashover Light Railway where limestone was quarried and carried on the railway to the Clay Cross Co. works at Clay Cross. The Ashover Light Railway had a short life of only 25 years closing in 1950

Finally we had a look at the remains of Lexley Mill an old water mill which possessed two water wheels mounted side by side, and was last operational ca. 1905

We finished by walking along the line of the disused track bed, then up the Coffin Road into Ashover.

The Port of Shardlow

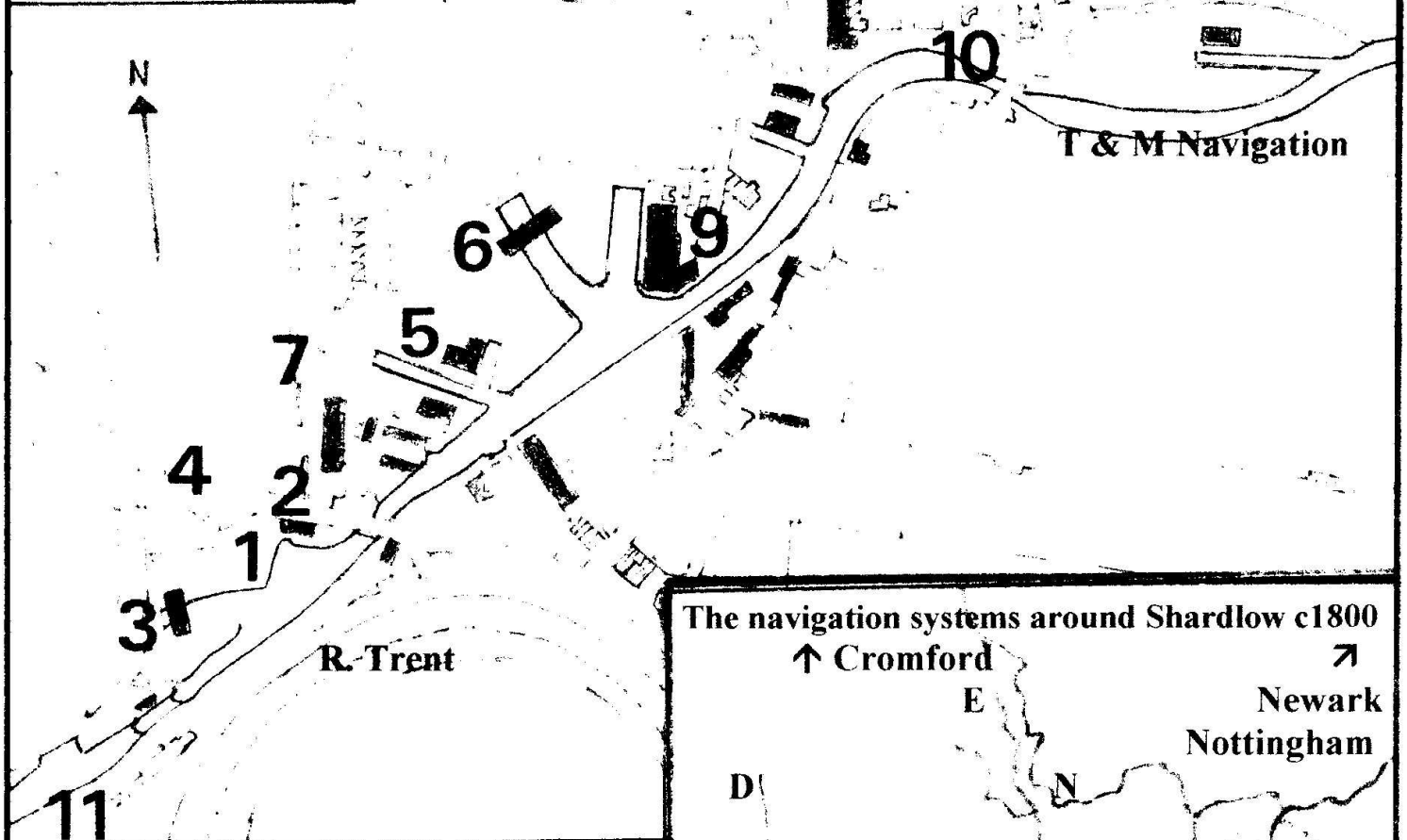
Derek Grindell

Members will recall that the NEDIAS visit to Shardlow, originally scheduled for June 2007, was a victim of the prolonged abnormal rainfall over North Derbyshire and South Yorkshire, which by the late afternoon had rendered many main roads impassable and imposed a gridlock on local traffic. In stark contrast, the dozen or so NEDIAS members, who assembled at Shardlow's Heritage Centre on Monday 16th June 2008, enjoyed the rearranged guided tour on a glorious evening, which may well prove to have been one of the finest of the year.



**Shardlow
Lock and
Lock
House**

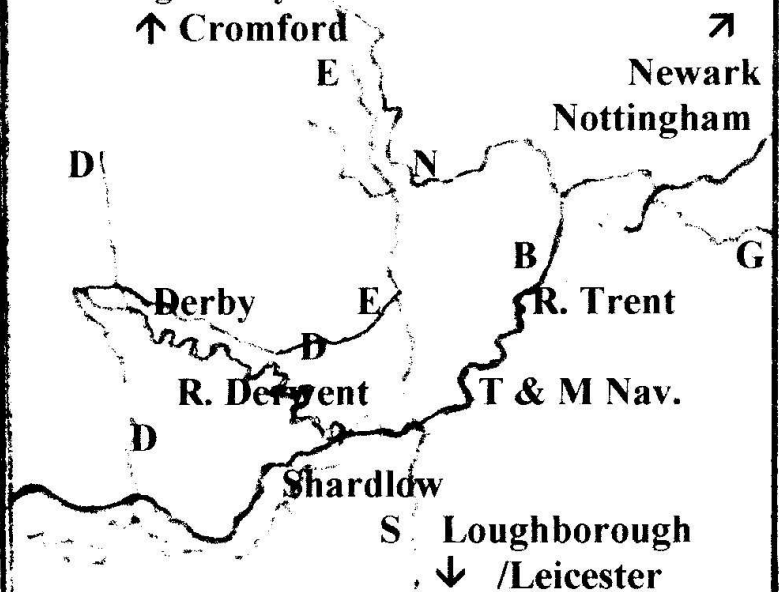
The Port of Shardlow c 1850



KEY

- B - Beeston Canal**
- D - Derby Canal**
- G - Grantham**
- N - Nottingham Canal**
- S - River Soar Navigation**
- E - Erewash Canal**

The navigation systems around Shardlow c1800



Together with Stourport, Shardlow shares the distinction of being one of the country's only surviving inland canal ports. The illustration below shows the extent to which Shardlow, no more than a rural hamlet in the mid 18thC, had been transformed into a busy centre of commerce a century later. The inset illustration shows Shardlow in the early days of the 19thC, already the hub of a fast developing navigation system.

Readers of Jenny Uglow's *The Lunar Men, The Friends who made the Future* (pub. 2002 by Faber & Faber Ltd.) will be aware of the potter Josiah Wedgwood's role in promoting the Trent and Mersey Canal Act, which received the Royal Assent in 1766. Excavation at the mouth of the Derwent started in the same year and is thought to have reached Shardlow by 1768 and Stafford by 1770. Shardlow Lock and Lock House were soon completed and followed, immediately to the south, by the Canal Tavern (No. 11), which responded positively to the invasion of the navvies and passing traffic by housing a brewery, a butcher's and a bakery. London Wharf (No. 1) was the first basin and wharf facility built by the Company in the 1770s and the Salt Warehouse (No. 2), now home to the Shardlow Heritage Centre, was the first port building. The 'Clock Warehouse' (No. 3), erected in 1780 to accommodate 'wide' keels, has happily survived and is now owned by Marston's Brewery. A contemporary building, 'The Limes' (No. 4) was built for use as the company

office and was said to have retained its original features until demolition in the 1980s at a time when the Clock Warehouse was being restored.

In 1792 the forked basin (No. 6) was commissioned at the northern end of the Great Wharf. The straddle warehouse, comprising two wide arches each capable of accommodating a wide boat, have been converted for residential use. The two large warehouses (No. 5) were a later addition and the structure to the north of the wharf was later extended to house a steam engine, which powered a mill. Derwent House (No. 7), built in 1794, is now a private residence but was once used by the Trent Navigation Co. as offices. The first half of the 'Old Iron Warehouse' (No. 9), adjoining the canal, was erected in 1810 and was let to Daniels & Payne, iron, steel and tin plate merchants of London, Bristol and later Nottingham. The building contains cast iron galleries on either side of a dividing wall. Common cross beams pass through the wall and terminate on slender columns. The Maltings (No. 8) displays a roundel dated 1799 and is characterised by an exaggerated corbelled corner. Nearby is the New Inn (No.10), which has retained its original name from 1777. Located on the canal its customers can watch the passing leisure boats and reflect on Shardlow's more hectic days.



Shardlow's Heritage Centre

Shardlow's population, a mere 200 in 1780 had risen to 580 in 1801 and shortly afterwards a school and workhouse were required. Both were subsequently expanded and forty years later there were 1306 inhabitants. The North Staffordshire Railway bought the Trent & Mersey Canal in 1847 and even invested in the navigation system by allowing the canal trade to continue and building wharves to facilitate the transfer of goods to and from the railway. Over time, however, the NSR let off most of the buildings and Harrison's Derbyshire Directory of 1860 recorded '*...For many years this was an improving place, but since the opening of the Midland and other railways the business of the place has been gradually declining*'. By 1891 the population had fallen to 842.

All-in-all, our visit this year was a resounding success, for which we must thank our guide and the Shardlow Heritage Centre. If you missed this fascinating visit, or indeed if you'd like to go again to have a longer look in the museum of the Shardlow Heritage Centre (or indeed for refreshments at the Clock Warehouse!), the museum is open on Saturdays, Sundays and Bank Holidays until end October, from 10 'til 5. But of course the towpath and environs can be visited at any time.

For more information: <http://homepages.which.net/~shardlow.heritage/>



The Maltings has undergone conversion but has retained much of its character.

Tornado - the new Peppercorn A1 Loco

The first steam engine specially built to run on the UK mainline for 50 years has made its successful debut; it has been funded and assembled at Darlington in a project which has cost £3m, and stretched over almost 20 years. The loco named Tornado is based on the Peppercorn A1 locomotives, which were withdrawn from service by British Railways in the 1960s.

Mark Allatt, chairman of the A1 Steam Locomotive Trust, commented: "When this project was launched in 1990 many people said that it could not be done. The completion of the construction programme proves the doubters wrong.

"Tornado's first public move in steam marks the beginning of the final phase for a project that many said could never be completed. In 1990 a group was formed with a vision and the determination to make it succeed - to build and operate a Peppercorn class A1 Pacific steam locomotive for main line and preserved railway use.



New A1 Pacific 60163 (to be named Tornado) seen outside Darlington Locomotive Works making its first moves under its own power, 29 July 2008 (© Tony Streeter; image from the A1 Steam Locomotive Trust Library)

“Eighteen years later, and thanks to that shared vision and determination, Tornado has turned her wheels in anger for the first time. It is thanks to our more than 2,000 regular monthly and other donors and the hard work of our volunteers and contractors that all that remains now between Tornado and main line operations is the successful completion of her test and trials programme.”

Mark Allatt said it will not run on a specific route but will make occasional trips to towns all over the country. Destinations are expected to include Scarborough, York, Bath, Bristol and Oxford. But maybe the Trust can be persuaded to include Chesterfield

The loco can be seen currently at Darlington Railway Centre and Museum, now renamed as “Head of Steam”, actually located on the 1825 route of the Stockton and Darlington Railway (but do check if you intend to visit – the loco will be doing the rounds). The Centre was refurbished and re-opened again only in April 2008. Visitors can see George Stephenson's Locomotion No 1, built for the opening of the Stockton & Darlington Railway, as well as a variety of exhibits, some on loan from the NRC.

The Head of Steam is open each day bar Monday throughout the year; NEDIAS summer visit for 2009?

NOTE: NEDIAS are very pleased to announce that on 13 April 2009, Keith Drury of the A1 Steam Locomotive Trust has kindly agreed to give a talk to NEDIAS specifically describing the Tornado project.

The Cooling Towers at Meadowhall - The Loss of a Landmark or an Eyesore?

Derek Grindell

Following the closure of Blackburn Meadows Power Station some thirty years ago the site was eventually cleared save for the cooling towers. The designers of the M1 route, faced with a bridge crossing of the Don Valley, had found it expedient to fit the eastern carriageway in close proximity to the structures but in so doing left a demolition problem for a future generation of developers.



The last vestiges of the former Blackburn Meadows Power Station

Over the years they have acquired an iconic status to a growing band of motorway travellers. A preservation group was formed, a scheme to embellish them with an art work devised and, latterly, an exhibition held in Sheffield's Millennium Gallery with souvenir mugs on offer. All was in vain, however, since Eon, the German owners, undeterred by claims of insensitivity to Britain's industrial past, cited structural decay and redevelopment as justification for their removal. The towers have now been drilled and prepared for blasting with detonation now scheduled for 24th August but eventually a new more eco friendly station is promised by Eon.

Sheffield's first public supply of electricity was commissioned in 1886 at premises in Sheaf Street. The city's rapid industrial growth in the late 19thC saw a commensurate demand for electricity and a new generating station was built in Sheaf Street in 1894. Sheffield Corporation purchased the privately owned Sheffield Electric Lighting and Power Co. on 1st January 1898 and, when it was realised that the scope for increasing output at Sheaf Street was severely limited, an alternative site was acquired at Neepsend, which had an adequate water supply for cooling and rail access for transporting coal. Between the years 1913 and 1919 the annual output of Sheffield's generation plant increased from 21½ million units to 172½ million units. In 1916 a site owned by Rotherham was chosen for a new power station at Blackburn Meadows. Construction started in 1917 and the entry of America into WW1 allowed scarce generating plant, originally designated for a government factory, to be reallocated to the Corporation. The 28 MW station was opened in 1921 and interconnection established with the Yorkshire Electric Power Co.'s system in 1921 and Rotherham Corporation's in 1928. The area of supply was extended in 1924 to encompass the Parishes of Dore, Norton, Totley, Beauchief, Dronfield Woodhouse and Coal Aston followed, in 1931, by the Urban District of Dronfield and the Parish of Beighton. Thus Blackburn Meadows PS served a significant number of customers in North East Derbyshire well beyond the city boundary.

In 1934 a second Blackburn Meadows PS was built and connected to the British Electrical Authority's National 132kV Grid System. Sheffield Corporation's considerable network investment in the 1930s enabled wartime demand to be met and electricity sales soared from 552 million units in 1939 to 908 million units in 1944. The Electricity Supply Industry was nationalised in 1948 and in 1967 a 275kV ring main around Sheffield was completed. In 1960 a national supergrid operating at 400kV had been initiated and the commissioning of Cottam and West Burton Power Stations in the Trent Valley meant that the days of the

smaller generating stations were numbered. The first 400kV circuit into Sheffield came from Eggborough PS on the River Aire in 1975 and Blackburn Meadows PS closed in 1978. When the new Eon PS reaches the end of its operational life will it merit the formation of a preservation group?

I. A. News and Notes

Derby Roundhouse

Work has commenced on conversion of the Derby Loco Works buildings into extra campus for Derby University, including work on the North Midland railway roundhouse. Watch this space.

Leeds City Museum

After some year's development, the new Leeds City Museum opens on 13 September; if you're visiting, why not also take in Leeds Industrial Museum at Armley Mills. More information on www.leeds.gov.uk/ or 0113 247 8285.

Middleton Bottom Wheel Pit

Next time you're strolling along the High Peak Trail look out for a piece of railway history that has been brought back to life. Middleton Bottom Wheel Pit at Wirksworth has been transformed with a £50,000 grant from English Heritage.

The scheduled ancient monument is one of two surviving structures housing equipment for raising trucks up the Middleton Incline on the former Cromford and High Peak Railway. It operated between the 1820s and 1960s and houses a giant cast iron wheel which used to drive the cables for pulling the trucks up the steep slope.

The monument owned by Derbyshire County Council fell in to disrepair but with money from the Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund work has taken place to repair the structure and clear the overgrown area around it. Two information panels have also been placed at the site to tell visitors about the history of the monument.



From within Middleton Bottom Wheel Pit

(Photo: Derbyshire County Council)

Where is it? What is it? And why is it there?

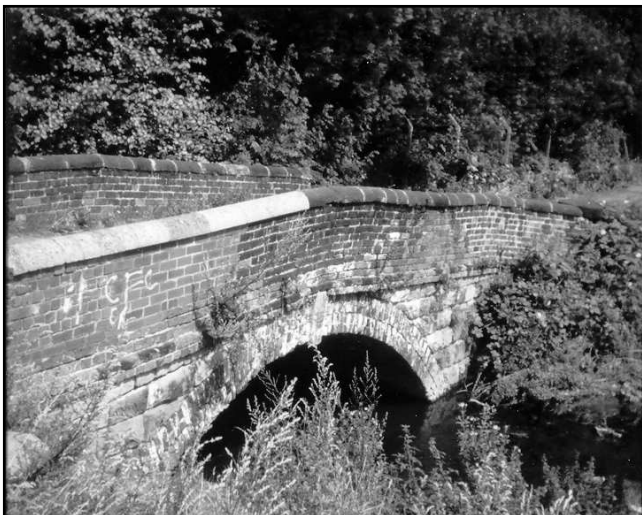
Members will recall the odd structure pictured in the last NEDIAS Newsletter. This post stands on the east side of the Derby Road, a few hundred yards from Horns Bridge Roundabout.

It was correctly identified by Barry Richardson, who commented:

“In the mid 1950s we regarded this stone as ours. A games venue, a meeting point and a place to spend time. It was also a “write of passage” to climb it and sit on top. Its original use would have been one of the gateposts to White Bank Yard: Whitebank Yard contained Whitebank Mill (corn), houses, stables and a blacksmith’s shop; It then led up to Whitebank House with its orchards and live stock. In the 1950s the mill and most of the houses had gone. Whitebank House, the blacksmith’s shop plus housing for two families remained.”

These photos show:

- a. The post just about visible behind the telegraph pole.
- b. The brick and stone bridge, which took the drive to Whitebank Yard, over the River Rother. The new bridge must be at least one bridge width further towards Town.
- c. The second is of the steel and stone bridge, which ran at the side of the brick one some 25 or so feet away, and was a way into the bottom fields of Smarts farm.



Many thanks for the explanation of this strange stump Barry; maybe other members have odd landmarks/ features which they would like to illustrate in a future edition of the Newsletter.

..... and Finally ...

...Oils well that ends well!

Cliff Lea

Knowing my interest in the subject, Doug Spencer has sent to me a cutting from the Daily News of 16 October 1918:

“Striking Oil in Derbyshire – a National Industry Foreshadowed”,

“In a field by the roadside at Hardstoft ... a beginning was made today with a project which, it is hoped, will lead to the establishment in Derbyshire of an important oil—producing industry. When the young Lord Hartington set some machinery in motion this afternoon he started the boring in search of crude oil and thus began the first systematic operation to locate petroleum under the soil of Great Britain. It is thought that oil may be found at a depth of between two and four thousand feet. Lord Hartington hoped that the Derbyshire oilfields would soon be able to supply ... home produced petroleum”

As many of you know, the account and optimism at the time were to prove both prophetic and remarkably accurate, with oil being struck in May 1919 at a depth of 3077 feet, and the gusher actually continued to produce right up to the 1940s. The article goes on to say:

“The landowners (the Duke of Devonshire) had not permanently given up their rights in regard to any oil.”

It was an unusual anomaly that under the Petroleum Production Act of 1934, ownership of all other oil reserves under UK land was vested in the Crown - but the Duke of Devonshire remained the only landowner in the UK under the Act to retain the rights to the oil under his own land.

Interestingly, with the growing global price of oil, it has been reported that once again oil exploration is being carried out on the Chatsworth estates.

NEDIAS Committee:

Chairman – David Wilmot; **Secretary** – Patricia Pick; **Treasurer** – Pamela Alton; **Membership Secretary/Assistant Treasurer** – Jean Heathcote; **Vice-chairman and publications** – Cliff Lea; **Lecture Meetings** – David Rance; **Visits Co-ordinator** – Brian Dick; **Archivist** – Pete Wilson; **Committee Members** – Roger Evans; Derek Grindell; David Hart, Les Mather, David Palmer.

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Editor: Cliff Lea, 15 Kelburn Avenue, Walton, Chesterfield, S40 3DG
☎ 01246 234 212
or e-mail cliff@nedias.org.uk.

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