

North East Derbyshire Industrial Archaeology Society

NEDIAS Newsletter No. 34 – February 2009

Price: £1.00 (Free to Members)



Contents:

Comment	1
Meetings Diary and Summer Visits	2
Survey of Industrial Sites around Chesterfield	3
The Last Canal Port: <i>the making of Goole and its Waterways</i>	4
The Butterley Company: <i>a brief history</i>	6
A Window on the Workhouse: <i>from 1760 to 1843</i>	7
IA News and Notes	11
..... And Finally	12

Comment:

Since the last Newsletter, we have had a number of exceptional speakers. For the researcher, Ruth Gordon from the County HQ Local Studies Library gave a valuable account and history of the local news media and records available. And at our first David Wilmot Memorial Lecture, a packed house were treated to an excellent presentation with slides and video on the work of the Pacific AI Loco Society's groundbreaking work in the building and introduction onto the rail network of the Tornado, the first steam engine specially built to run on the UK mainline for 50 years. This was very timely since the Tornado had just two days before hauled the Pullman from Kings Cross to York – David would have appreciated both events very much.

However many of you will recall the presentation in February from Brian Key, on the subject of the history of one of Derbyshire's world renowned engineering organisations, the Butterley Company, and the fruits of Outram's, the Jessops', and the Wrights' work. It was just 3 weeks after Brian's talk to us, that it was announced (on 3 March), that the Butterley Company was to be placed into administration. The Administrator blandly stated that "... this is a highly specialist business that has proved vulnerable to the economic downturn..."

"Specialist" it may have appeared in the 21st century, but Brian's talk showed a company and successful enterprise that over 220 years had been responsible for populating a wide area of over 30,000 acres, attracting a vast army of people to work, housing and schooling their families, developing the land and farms to feed them, exploiting the mineral wealth of the area, and leaving a tremendous global legacy from their works and manufactories. Some of the Butterley Company's work can be seen on this front cover, and a short article by Brian Key (written for us before the announcement of Administration) can be seen on page 6.



St. Pancras End Screen, April 2003
(Photo: David Wilmot)



St. Pancras Train Shed, April 2003, April 2003
(Photo: David Wilmot)

Cliff Lea

WHAT'S ON?

NEDIAS Lecture Programme, 2009

Venue: Friends' Meeting House, Ashgate Road, Chesterfield @ 7:30pm

11 May 2009	Mary Wilde: <i>"Linacre Over Lead Smelt Mill"</i>
4 July 2009	Summer Visit to Goole Waterways Museum – see <i>"Summer Visits"</i> below
14 September 2009	Joan Unwin: <i>"History of the Company of Cutlers in Hallamshire"</i>
12 October 2009	Wendy Freer: <i>"Framework Knitting in the East Midlands"</i>
9 November 2009	Peter Greaves: <i>"Why the Lead Miners looked towards Chesterfield"</i>

Other Diary Dates

Saturday, 16 May 2009	EMIAC 77: High Peak Industrial Heritage, Glossop. "The Longdendale water supply" . Booking form via Derbyshire Archaeology Society; www.derbyshireas.org.uk
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.
13—14 June 2009	Wingfield Railway Group's "Peak Model railway Exhibition" . 10:00am-5:00pm, Bakewell, Agricultural Centre/ Showground
22 June 2009	Brampton Living History Group. Peter Wilde: "The Chesterfield Canal" . 7:30pm, St Thomas's Church Meeting Room, Chatsworth Rd,
15 September 2009	Chesterfield & District Local History Society. Reg Hobson: "The Sheffield Flood" . 7:30pm, Rose Hill United Reformed Church,

NEDIAS Summer Visits for 2009

We have already had our first visit of the summer, under the guidance of David Palmer to see the restored hydraulic ram pump at Daniel Hayes farm. Our next visits will be:

Saturday 4 July, Goole Waterways Museum.

A full day trip organised by Derek Grindell, leaving by coach from Chesterfield. The transport/ coach cost is sponsored by NEDIAS, booking is essential – there is a limit on places

NEDIAS have arranged for a guided tour and a boat trip is also available.

COST: £5 deposit, to cover entry/ guided tour. Coach transport cost is courtesy NEDIAS.

Saturday 24 September, Clay Mills Pumping Station, Burton-on-Trent

This is an outstanding Victorian industrial monument. There are four beam engines by Gimson of Leicester 1885, five Lancashire Boilers 1936-1937, an early 20th Century generator house, Victorian workshop & blacksmith's forge, and numerous other small engines & artefacts. Times and further detail to be advised. Booking essential.

More information and booking for both trips: Brian Dick ☎ 01246 205720.

Survey of Industrial Sites in and around Chesterfield – An Update

Les Mather

Regular readers of the NEDIAS newsletter will know that we are undertaking a project to document significant industrial archaeological sites in and around Chesterfield. This brief article is to update you on progress so far and to let you know what you can expect to see over the next few months.

This project aims simply to catalogue the surviving physical remains of the industrial past in this area. There are no strict rules governing the types of sites to be included, as we want to cover anything that might prove to be of historical interest. So, if in doubt, we err on the side of inclusion. Sites can be of any age and of any size – the smallest so far comprises half a gatepost! However, as a guideline, we will wish to include a site if:-

- It is within the Chesterfield Borough Council or North East Derbyshire District Council area.
- There is physical evidence present when the site is first included in the survey.
- It is of historical industrial interest in the broadest sense. This includes industrial buildings, evidence of mining and quarrying, transport infrastructure, housing built for industrial employees, and commercial premises with an industrial link such as brewery owned pubs.

The biggest problem with any published survey of industrial sites is that it starts to go out of date as soon as it is printed. Therefore this survey will not be issued as a conventional monograph but as a computer based inventory, which will be continually updated as changes occur. We can then issue the latest version on demand, either as a CD-ROM for use with a personal computer or in printed form.

So what have we produced so far and what can you expect to see over the next few months? At the AGM in March we demonstrated a CD-ROM containing details of 75 sites around Chesterfield, Staveley and Brimington. Details for each site include its location and condition, a description and photograph, and where possible brief historical notes. The CD also includes area maps, a list of street names with an industrial link, and a full index. All of this information is held as PDF files, which can be read by most personal computers using freely available software.

Over the summer we will be expanding and updating the information on the CD, and copies will be made available at the autumn NEDIAS meetings. We will then be asking for your help, to tell us what we have missed, what we have got wrong, and what you would like to see in the next update. Then over next winter we will add in all of the new information, and also expand the survey to include sites in the wider area outside of Chesterfield Borough.

We hope that this survey will be of interest to NEDIAS members, and will also prove to be a useful tool for anyone wanting to know more about the industrial past of Chesterfield and its surrounding area.

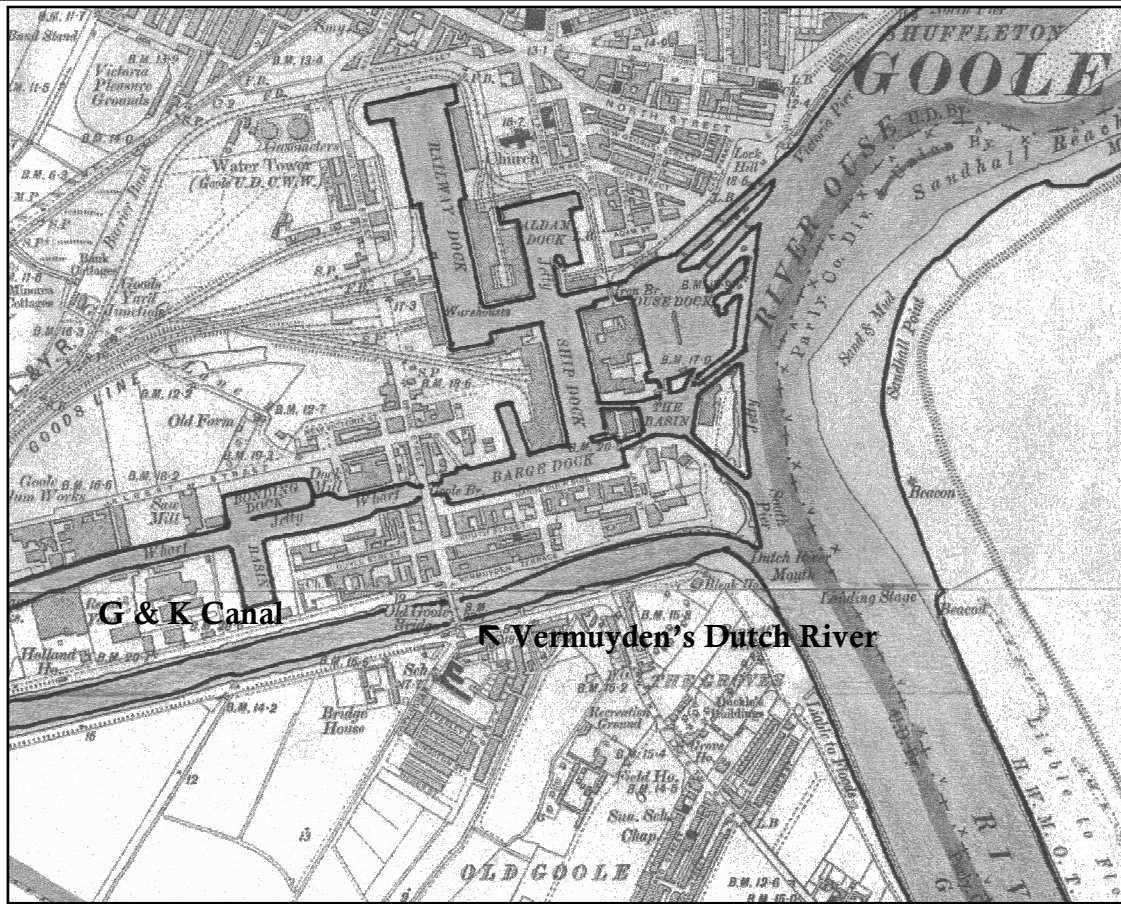


Right: Canon Mill

Photo: Cliff Lea

The Last Canal Port: The Making of Goole and its Waterways

Derek Grindell



Even those of us fortunate to have been taught geography in the days when it was adjudged an essential part of the school curriculum might struggle to specify the area covered by the Humberhead Levels. Strangely, the name was only created in 1998 by the Countryside Commission in *Countryside Character Vol. 3: Yorkshire & The Humber* to refer to the lozenge-shaped area, extending over 880 sq. miles (2275 sq. km.), which includes the low ground between the Vale of York beyond the Ouse to the north, to the Vale of Belvoir and the Trent Valley in the south. The western boundary is the southern Magnesian limestone ridge, and the eastern, the first slopes of the Yorkshire Wolds to the north and the Lincolnshire Edge to the south. As a landscape of extreme flatness, interspersed by rivers and dykes, it is reminiscent of the Low Countries and it was perhaps inevitable that, in 1626, Dutch expertise was retained by Charles I to drain Hatfield Chase at the centre of the Levels. Five years previously their most famous representative, Cornelius Vermuyden, a surveyor and embankment engineer, had been summoned to England by the ailing James I, to resolve the problem of flooding at Dagenham.

Hatfield Chase had been reserved for use by the nobility since 1460 and was the largest unenclosed royal hunting deer park in England, extending to 180,000 acres (72,850ha.). It was 'disparked' in 1626 and remains the largest area of lowland raised bog in England and a wildlife site of international importance. Vermuyden, having settled in England and married, was knighted for his service to the crown but his design for the Chase proved to be flawed; good quality dry land within the small townships of Snaith, Fishlake and Sykehouse was inundated by the Don. At harvest time in 1630 the poor had to witness their crops ruined and they were forced to wade away from their homes, carrying their children and belongings on their backs. Thomas Wentworth, as President of the Council of the North, was effectively the King's representative and, when alerted to the injustice, he responded by ordering not only that the petitioners be afforded relief by a cut, which would direct the Don into the Ouse, but also that the newly drained acreage should be redistributed with a larger proportion being allocated to the fenmen at the expense of Vermuyden and his shareholders. Aware that his profit margins were under threat, the Dutchman played for time but he was eventually obliged to comply although it was three years before the cut, which became known as the Dutch River, was completed with an outfall at Goole. By that time he had become involved in the more successful and

extensive drainage of the Bedford Level in East Anglia. Supported by a powerful group of shareholders he found the opposition of the local fenmen less intimidating despite their interests being under the watchful eye of a local squirearchy, which included Oliver Cromwell. Not so well known is the fact that Vermuyden acquired an interest in the Dovegang Mine at Wirksworth.

Until well into the 19th century Goole was a small settlement in the aptly named district of Marshland, a location where the tidal rivers Ouse, Wharfe, Derwent, Aire, Don and Trent met and flowed into the Humber Estuary. In 1821 it had a population of only 450 and was overshadowed by neighbouring towns such as Selby, Howden and Thorne with populations of 4097, 2080, and 2713 respectively. The Aire & Calder Navigation Co. had originally relied upon the River Aire as its main trade route but in 1788 the Selby Canal was built to cater for a growth in traffic. By the early 19th century the canal could not cope and the engineer John Rennie was consulted. Finding both the Ouse below Selby and the lower Aire to be equally inadequate he proposed a new canal, which would link the Aire at Knottingley with the Ouse at Goole.

On the 30th June 1820 an Act of Parliament was granted to allow the A&CN Co. to proceed with the project. George Leather had earlier surveyed a route for the canal, but the A&CN Co. entrusted the making of detailed plans to John Rennie, the greatest Civil Engineer in the country, next to Telford. Following the death of Rennie the designs and modifications were left in Leather's hands. The contract for cutting the docks was signed at the Ferryhouse at Boothferry during the Whit week of 1822, with the contract being awarded to the firm of Jolliffe and Banks of London. Four years later, on Thursday 20th July 1826, at about 11 a.m. in the morning, a procession of vessels consisting of four flyboats fitted out to carry passengers, and dressed overall in flags and bunting of all nations, together with upwards of fifty vessels in sail loaded with merchandise, left Ferrybridge for Goole, arriving about 4 p.m. in the afternoon. Thousands of spectators had gathered to watch this unique event and, in addition to the locals and people from surrounding villages, many came in coaches from as far away as Leeds, Wakefield and York. On entering Barge Dock the procession received a Royal salute of guns, fired from 12 pounders stationed on the pier for the occasion, thus the Port of Goole was formally opened.

The construction of the new Knottingley & Goole Canal had entailed the demolition of a part of Old Goole on the north side of the Dutch River. The new town of Goole was built in its place with bricks manufactured from the spoil excavated from the new dock basins. By the 1840s the new settlement had 250 houses and the port complex comprised both ship and barge docks connected by inner locks via an intermediate basin to separate river locks. The water level in the docks was maintained by canal water and the whole system could be used as a vast lock. The new waterway accounted for 40% of the A&CN Co.'s income in 1851, mainly through the import of grain and wool and the export of textiles and coal. A local railway, the Wakefield, Pontefract & Goole, acquired a tidewater outlet in 1848, followed by the NER in 1869. The Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway later absorbed the WP&G and developed Goole as its major east coast outlet, mainly for coal. The Goole Steam Shipping Co., founded in 1864, was backed by the A&CN Co. and the L&YR but it was the invention of the compartment boat train system in the 1860s by W.H. Bartholomew, Manager of the A&CN Co., which enabled it to maintain its competitive edge as a coal carrier against fierce competition from other railways until WWI.

The 'Tom Puddings', as they were called, involved the arrangement of up to nineteen rectangular steel barges into an amphibious goods train. Originally the barges were pushed-towed in steerable trains of up to twelve units but from the early 1900s they were pull-towed. Each 20ft. x 15ft. iron barge or 'pan' had a depth of 9ft. and could hold up to 40 tons. Loaded at West Riding collieries they were hauled in train by steam tugs to Goole where they were tipped in turn by one of several hydraulically powered hoists into sea-going vessels for delivery to European or English ports. One drawback of the system, especially after WWI, was the difficulty experienced in finding return cargoes but, over an operational lifetime of more than 125 years, the puddings carried 55 million tons, usually in nineteen-pan trains. The last full year of peace, 1913, proved to be exceptional with 18 steam tugs and 1,010 pans hauling 1,560,000 tons of coal to Goole; each day saw an average of 7 trains tipped.

Goole prospered as a port in the late 19th century and its dock space was doubled over a thirty year period, starting with the Aldam Dock in 1881 and the Lower Ouse Improvement Scheme of 1884 gave access to vessels of 2000 tons for the first time. In the period 1865-1904 the number of foreign vessels entering the port rose from 400 (total 70,000 tons) to 1360 (total 555,000 tons). Canal boat registrations rose from 400 in 1878 to 814 in 1899. The population of Goole, a mere 4618 in 1851 reached 20,916 in 1911. The outbreak of WWI provided a boost to its shipbuilders but overall it lost its foreign trading partners through enemy occupation

and many vessels were requisitioned by the government. The import trade never recovered between the wars despite coal exports remaining buoyant and the opening of Ocean Lock in 1938 failed to stimulate a recovery not least because the outbreak of WW2 saw plans to improve the Ouse navigation shelved. The prohibitive cost of improving the Humber at its confluence with the Ouse has been a further deterrent to aiding Goole's development and its dock layout of 1913, comprising 39 acres of water in eight commercial docks remains essentially unchanged. Despite an expansion of the town in the post-war years its population in 1990 remained virtually unchanged from its level in 1911.

The Butterley Company: a brief history

Brian Key

The Butterley Company of Ripley, Derbyshire, was founded in the year 1790 as a coal and iron company to work the rich mineral seams in the area. The original partners were Benjamin Outram of Alfreton and Francis Beresford of Ashbourne, but they were joined two years later by William Jessop and John Wright. Jessop was the engineer for the Cromford Canal with Outram as his assistant. Beresford was a solicitor and Wright a banker, both the latter having interests in the canal, so all were well acquainted. Originally known as Benjamin Outram and Co., the name was to change to the more familiar Butterley Company in 1807, following the death of Outram in 1805, at the early age of 41.

The partners soon began to work extracting the minerals on the Butterley estate, particularly the coal. Once the Cromford Canal was fully open in 1794 it gave access via the Erewash Canal to the River Trent and other parts of the national canal network. The ironworks had been deliberately sited over the Butterley Tunnel on the Cromford Canal so that direct access could be gained to the canal by means of shafts from the work's yard. These allowed goods and raw materials to be easily transported to and from the works. Neighbouring estates of land were purchased so that the mineral wealth below ground could be exploited. Following the acquisition of the Codnor Castle estate the decision was taken to build a second ironworks at Codnor Park, alongside the canal, which had the advantage of being below many of the locks and also making it easier to transport larger castings than could be lowered down the shafts.

Some of the earliest iron constructions were bridges, some of which were sold overseas, but the company also had a good reputation for its steam engines, used in mines and also drainage work in areas like the Fens. With the coming of the railway age from the 1840s onwards Butterley was involved in constructing many of the bridges needed, but the contribution it was most closely associated with was supplying the iron frames for the Midland railway Company's new London terminus at St. Pancras in 1868. This station has recently been much altered as it has become the London terminus for Eurostar trains to the continents. Other important railway contracts were for the supply of railway wagons, made at Codnor Park works. The railway connection has followed through to modern times, with Butterley being involved with new bridges for the upgrading of the West Coast main line. However, its most recent prestigious contract was in supplying much of the steelwork for the Falkirk Wheel in Scotland, a 21st century answer to the problem of two canals set at different levels.

Until the nationalisation of the coal mines in 1947 the company owned many mines in the Erewash Valley area, in the 1880s they were producing nearly one million tons of coal annually. As the local seams became exhausted they followed the concealed coalfield eastwards into Nottinghamshire, firstly in the Sutton/Kirkby area and then in 1921 opening a colliery at Ollerton. On nationalisation Butterley passed over into public ownership seven large working collieries, over 1,000 railway wagons and around 1,850 houses.

Brick making was also an important part of Butterley's activities. Company built many houses for its employees, plus other buildings, it generated a demand for its own products but eventually it was able to expand its sales and built large brickworks at Waingrove nr Ripley in 1914 and at Kirton, Ollerton, in 1956. Limestone was also quarried near Crich and kilns supplied burnt lime over a wide area.

Butterley was one of the largest landowners in Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire, holding at one time over 30,000 acres on lease or freehold. Some of this they farmed themselves in the area closest to the works, having a number of specialist farms for the production of milk, beef, cereals, etc. When the company was founded the area around was totally undeveloped, as it grew and built housing for its workforce so the local settlements expanded, perhaps the town of Ripley is the best example of this, where the town badge includes the head of the unicorn, part of the crest of the Wright family, who had the longest association with

Butterley. They also contributed to the cost of churches and schools in the area, and were benefactors in many other ways.

In the 1960s Butterley went through a difficult phase, the engineering and brick making activities became two separate items, the Codnor Park site was closed and the farms and housing stock were sold off. In the 21st century the company had been forced to sell some of its Butterley site for housing but a much reduced workforce carries on its Butterley tradition, maintaining nearly 220 years of work on the original site.

A Window on the Workhouse: From 1760 to 1843

Richard Robinson

Why another article on the Chesterfield Workhouses?

Graham Ullathorne, the tutor to the WEA Local History and Landscapes course at Hurst* House, recently arranged a visit round the St Helens ward, including Christ Church and the site of the Chesterfield Union Workhouse. During our visit, John Holmes, the churchwarden of Christ Church, informed us that over one thousand former occupants of the Workhouse were buried in the Christ Church Graveyard with no memorial at present. Subsequently, I thought it possible that one of my forebears could have been one of the 40 members of the Board of Guardians.

On looking at the Minute Book in the Chesterfield Local Studies Library for 1839 to 1840, I found that my great grandfather's grandfather, William Robinson, was indeed a Guardian from the first Board meeting on 20th October 1837. He continued as a member until February 1843 when, aged 71, he stood down from the election in March 1843 for the following financial year. On reading the thesis by A F Watson of the Bakewell Historical Society dated 1981 (*Note 1*) it became apparent that during the years William Robinson had been a Guardian he had had stood up for several "underdogs" on a number of different occasions. Some of these were amusing and others were more serious but I felt his role and that of Guardians in general deserved a wider audience –hence this article!

** Francis Hurst was the owner of Hurst House on Abercrombie St and he was also Chairman of the Board of Guardians in 1837. Mr Hurst was a draper on High St., while William Robinson had his draper's shop on Low Pavement and therefore both of them were in competition! Was William more "upmarket" since he was also described as a Mercer i.e. he sold high quality fabrics like silk?*

Who were the Guardians?

The larger parishes such as Chesterfield, Ashover, Eckington and Dronfield each elected two members annually from the votes of ratepayers having property valued at over £25. Ratepayers with property valued at £200-£400 had two votes and those with large businesses had three votes!

The Chesterfield area was still largely rural and so 50% of the Guardians were farmers and the average attendance of members was 57%, though attendance improved at the quarterly accounts meetings! Some like the JP Mr George Sitwell of Renishaw never attended but some including Samuel Johnson, Mr Wilcockson and William Robinson were regular attenders. The Clerk to the Board was a Chesterfield solicitor Mr J Marsh, of whom more later!

A pen portrait of William Robinson junior, born 1772, died 1845



William was also known as Gentleman Robinson and in addition to being a Draper and Mercer, also owned the clay pipe factory set up by his father, (William Snr.) The latter had had to leave Bolsover because his neighbours had objected to the smoke and fumes from his pottery kilns due to the salt glazing!! Subsequently he set up another pottery in Brampton on the site where Wickes is now. He later leased this out to Mr Wright but kept the initially more profitable clay pipe factory!

William Jnr. was apprenticed to a draper in Nottingham before setting up shop in the retail drapery trade on Low Pavement on the bottom side of the Market Place. In 1796, aged 24, he married Ann Bradbury of Rye Flatt Nr Coombes /Whaley Bridge with whom he had ten children. His third son John also followed his Father's footsteps in his marriage to a Bradbury when, a generation later, he married his cousin

Martha in 1825, also from the village of Rye Flatt.

It was John, a dispensing chemist on Low Pavement, who founded the Robinson Pill Box Business with substantial loans from his father both in 1839 and in later years to keep the business afloat.

In 1816 William was made a Trustee of the Local Savings Bank.

William's letters show him to have been a hard working and successful man of business and reveal a devoted husband and a man of deep religious feeling and strong convictions! He was a stout member of the Independent Chapel (Old Blue Meeting House) and was a Trustee of this Chapel in 1817. He was involved with the Building Committee for the new Chapel on Soresby Street which is now the United Reformed Church.

On September 10th 1833. William became one of the first Directors of the Chesterfield and North Derbyshire Bank. He was first elected to the Chesterfield Town Council in 1835, aged 63 and again in 1837 for the third time. In the same year he was also elected as a Guardian of the Union Workhouse for the first time. The Board of Guardians met most Saturdays including Christmas Eve and New Years Day when they fell on a Saturday! From the minutes it is clear William was present at most meetings until the very end of his period of Office in February 1843. William was taken ill on October 1845 at his son Josiah's shop in New Square and died from a stroke at his home, aged 73.



The Old 1760s Workhouse
(Picture the Past DCC000419)

Towns and villages, prior to the 1834 Poor Law Amendment Act, were responsible for providing for the poor either via the local Relieving Officer in their own homes or in smaller local Workhouses. The Chesterfield Workhouse built in 1760's had a capacity for 28 people but was rarely full. In a survey of 1797 there were 12 children, 8 men and 8 women. In 1832 there were 30 in the Workhouse with 149 "out-poor" i.e. on relief in their homes. The Workhouse was behind the old bowling green on South Place. The photo opposite, taken in the 1950's, shows the Poor House where the Master lived, with the Workhouse out of sight behind it.

In 1832 the cost per inmate was 3s/5d per wk (£12.50 in 2007. *see note 2*)

It is very significant according to John Bestall (*History of Chesterfield Vol 3 Ch 7 p59*) that there were ten Friendly Societies in Chesterfield in 1797 that provided benefits against illness and death. That at the Nags Head had a monthly subscription of 1/- (5p) plus 2d for expenses i.e. total of 7p per month. After two years they qualified for a payment of 8/- (40p) per wk for one year's illness and 25p thereafter. This was very comparable to a

common labourers wage at the time of 9/- (45p) per week. (NB 9/- equated to a weekly wage of £32.80 in 2007, according to the RPI index website *see Note 2*). Thus insurance was fairly effective but, then as now, the poor could not afford the subscriptions!

However, it was not until 1911 that the Liberal Party reforms under Lloyd George brought in a National Insurance scheme that provided a "safety net" to help those who could not help themselves.

The Founding of the Chesterfield Union Workhouse in 1837

The object of the **1834 Poor Law Amendment Act** was to save money in the relief of the poor by combining parishes together in "Unions" and by providing purpose built premises which would be cheaper to run. The Chesterfield Union was to cover the 34 parishes on the western side of the Scarsdale Hundred with an 1831 population of 34,246. They also hoped to reduce the number of poor obtaining relief who could work but chose not to. In retrospect it is obvious the organisers of the Workhouse system got the balance wrong and many were penalised for being poor through no fault of their own. However "Benefit Scroungers" existed then as they do now and the Victorians did not know how to deal with them humanely.

At the first meeting of the Guardians on 12 October 1837 Robert Arkwright, grandson of Sir Richard, was elected chairman. Local JPs were ex officio members and William Robinson was also present. John Marsh, a Chesterfield Solicitor, was appointed as clerk to the Board at a salary of £90 pa. Thomas Gratton, formerly Assistant Master at the old workhouse was appointed to the New Union as Master at £110 pa and Mrs Bacon as Matron at £30 pa. As a stop gap measure the Old Workhouse was rented temporarily with the accommodation expanded somehow by 300%!

The Guardians spent the early meetings in planning a new Workhouse and bought a plot of land off Newbold Rd in November 1837 from Joseph Gratton for £700 (Was he a relation of Thomas Gratton, I wonder?!) The new building also involved the demolition of the Toll House on Newbold Road. Though the Poor Law Commissioners had authorised an expenditure of £6,945 and a contract with Wilson and Knight was signed for £6,245 (probably £608,000 at current values *see Note 2*), the cost of the building and furnishings was £10,000 bankrupting the contractors in the process! This sum can be compared with the cost of building Holy Trinity Church opposite, which was built at the same time for £3,300.



The Union Workhouse in 1909 DCC000327

The first Residents moved into the Workhouse before Christmas 1839. The ratepayers did indeed benefit from lower costs for the new Union which at yr end March 1838 fell to £6,338 from a previous 3 yr average of £8,874 i.e. a reduction of 30%. However, the costs rose in subsequent years owing to harsh economic conditions. A severe winter in Feb. 1839 had a major impact on the poor when the bread required for both the Workhouse and for “out relief” increased from 200 loaves per week to 1500! All was not doom and gloom, however, because a cricket match took place on the ice at Walton Dam for the Workhouse occupants!

Problems in staffing the Workhouse

One of the perennial problems in running the Workhouse was in recruiting and keeping staff with adequate experience. The wages paid to teachers and other staffs were not good and so turnover was also high.

In modern parlance “If you pay peanuts, you get monkeys!” Thus the Matron, Mrs Bacon, was found to be taking provisions out of the Workhouse for herself! She was taken to court and fined and replaced by Mrs Gratton at a lower salary of £25 pa.!

Nurses in the Infirmary in pre Florence Nightingale days could also be a liability - though making a supply of porter (weak beer) part of their wage was asking for trouble! One nurse was seen more than once late at night with some of the inmates in the Workhouse and was given notice when she was subsequently found to be pregnant!

A Bust up in the Boardroom

By 1840 George Arkwright had taken over the chairmanship from his father Robert. An important bit of background is that George Arkwright stood for MP for the area in 1837 though he was not elected. His Election Agent was the same Mr J Marsh who was the Clerk to the Guardians, who turned out to be a man of dubious character!

Interestingly, at this time Mr Wilcockson and William Robinson were described as being “vocal during the year”. This suggests that George Arkwright’s chairmanship was more autocratic and is confirmed by subsequent events! The “Bust up” started over an order for suet, part of the staple diet of inmates. (Suet is the hard fat from sheep and oxen usually eaten as suet pudding. The ration for men was 20oz and women 16oz per week.) George Arkwright reproved the Master, Thomas Gratton, for not accepting a delivery of suet. It was probably unfit and likely to have been badly “off” for him to make such a decision! This was the start of petty warfare that continued through November and December 1840. There was then an argument over who should have the key to the Boardroom, Thomas Gratton or the Clerk, Mr J Marsh! It was decided in favour of J Marsh and that a record should be kept of those coming and going into the Guardians Office! NB The original Guardian’s Office fronted on to Newbold Road in the 1909 picture above.

The later Office, still existing but nearer Sheffield Rd., was built in 1895 and was criticised by the Rector of Killamarsh as “a scandalous waste of money”. It was a high status building then and still is today in its current use by the NHS! Some years ago it was also used as the Registry Office for the Registration of Births and Deaths.

The next episode in the saga was that Thomas Gratton was criticised by George Arkwright for temporarily employing his daughter in the Workhouse. This brought things to a head and at the meeting on 16th January 1841 George Arkwright asked for the resignation of Thomas Gratton. William Robinson defended him but was not supported by the other Guardians. However, William was able to see that Thomas got a good reference and he subsequently obtained the post of Master at the newer Bakewell Workhouse. Other information that throws light on the “dust up” was that the Derby and Chesterfield Reporter publicly accused George Arkwright of “corruption and intimidation” In addition Mr Marsh was less than honest and was summoned to appear before the Derby Quarter Sessions accused of what would now be called “Election Rigging”. It is also hard to believe that George Arkwright did not know what Mr Marsh was up to! Mr Marsh was subsequently dismissed as Clerk to the Guardians.

In a separate incident William took up the case of a pauper, Mr Marshall, who wanted to see the Master but was kept waiting for hours and denied his meeting with the Master.

Much more could be said about the Workhouse e.g. that 51% of the occupants were under the age of 16. in 1840, rising to 56% in 1844. Also, 50% of the deaths there were due to TB of between 21 and 35 deaths pa from 1840 to 1842. In addition, 30% of the deaths were of babies and toddlers under the age of 1 year old. It is also clear that many families whose daughters were having illegitimate babies were expelled to the Workhouse to have them! There was an average of 16 illegitimate births pa from 1840-43 with some of their babies dying within a matter of weeks.

Though there is an overall air of sadness in connection with the Chesterfield Workhouse it was better run than many of the others at the time and there are occasional glimpses of consideration by those outside the Workhouse. On one occasion a benefactor supplied all the inmates with plum pudding one November! However, for some of our parent’s generation, there was still a real fear of the Workhouse even when it became the Scarsdale Maternity Hospital!

However, I think we could do something to see that the inmates of the Workhouse have some memory of them preserved - especially for their descendants. This could be by entering their details onto two websites. There are 4-5 pages of admissions and deaths recorded on microfiche for 1867- 1888 Vol 3 in the Local Studies Library. There are also 80 deaths recorded for 1840-42 in the Register of Deaths for 1834 -1904 in the County Records Office in Matlock (Transcribing this information in the latter can now be done directly into a laptop at the reading tables). The information needs to be entered on an Excel Spreadsheet to enable alphabetical sorting to be done. This data can then be sent to a website on either or both the Chesterfield Workhouse or Genuki (Family History) Websites. For the former, Peter Higginbotham, is willing to upload the information. So, if a few people volunteered this would not be an individually arduous task. **If you willing to help in this way please contact me on richarddb@tiscali.co.uk**

Notes:

1. A F Watson, Bakewell Historical Society 1981 No VIII, Ref L362.5V. Local Studies Library (LSL)
2. The inflation factor from 1839 to 2007 was £93.7 per £ for buildings. see <http://eh.net/hmit>

Bibliography and References:

Google: Chesterfield Workhouse: Peter Higginbotham’s website is very comprehensive

J M Bestall, History of Chesterfield Vol III Chapter 7: The 20 pages of this book are the most detailed on the subject

Picture the Past website; picturethepast.co.uk: Ann Krawszik, formerly of LSL, advised on the use of these photos

Elaine West’s Thesis 1907- 1927 (LSL): The effect of Lloyd George’s National Insurance Act etc.

I. A. News and Notes

NEDIAS Journal No. 2

Have you collected your copy of NEDIAS Journal? Whilst its list price is £7.50 for non-members, the special members' price (one copy only) is £2 (or £3 by post).

This edition contains articles on the Sheepbridge Coal and Iron Co., early recollections of Birdholme, Linacre Over smelt mill, Navvies on the Dore & Chinley Railway, and on the Coking industry in Derbyshire.

You can collect your copy at the next meeting, or by contacting Cliff Lea on cliff@nedias.org.uk, or ☎ 01246 234212

Derby Roundhouse

The Derby Roundhouse, dating from 1839, is described by EH as the World's first railway workshop.. It's a 16-sided structure with a 130ft central space for manoeuvres, and with 16 rail spurs, but it fell out of use by 1970.

Although not being brought back into purposeful use like Barrow Hill, it is being preserved, although as a campus site for Derby College of Further Education. The building's large central space is being preserved, with the College's study areas being fitted into it, but retaining the vast open aspect.

For more information, see www.english-heritage.org.uk/constructiveconservation

Festival of British Archaeology

The Festival of British Archaeology (formerly National Archaeology Week) is a unique chance to discover and explore the archaeological heritage of the United Kingdom. During this two-week archaeological extravaganza, which will run from Saturday 18th July to Sunday 2nd August, participants can take part in excavation open days, guided tours, exhibitions, lectures, and more. The aim of the annual event is to encourage everyone to visit sites of archaeological and historical interest or museums, heritage and resource centres, to see archaeology in action and to take part in activities on-site. The Festival is a celebration of both British archaeology and of the presentation of archaeology from around the world in Britain.

Details of all events taking place during the Festival of British Archaeology 2009 will be placed on the official website, www.festivalofbritisharchaeology.org.uk/

Stone for Rebuilding Parliament

Amongst its myriad of uses, and the great variety of cargoes, the Chesterfield Canal was used to transport stone to London from Kiveton for the rebuilding of the Palace of Westminster following the fire in 1834, and for the rebuilding of the 1840s. The stone was quarried at North Anston and was loaded into canal boats at Dog Kennels Bridge, Kiveton Park. From there it was carried to West Stockwith, and transferred to Trent sloops for the rest of the journey to Westminster, via the Humber, North Sea, and Thames.

To mark this major event in the history of the canal, on Saturday 25th April 2009, a new commemorative panel was unveiled at Albert's Dock close to Kiveton Park. This dock had been the location where stone was moved from road transport on to narrowboats at the start of the stone's journey by water to London.

Incidentally, the 2009 Inland Waterways Association National Campaign Rally is to be held at Kiveton Park over the Spring Bank Holiday, 23rd to 25th May. Between 10,000 and 15,000 visitors are expected to enjoy a large range of activities both on the water and along the towpath, and this could be a good time for NEDIAS members to visit Kiveton Park, and to "gongoozle" (to use an old boatmen's phrase) the new commemorative panel.

Last month the Chairman of the Chesterfield Canal Trust, Keith Ayling, retired from the post. Keith had been Chairman for over 18 years, and during his time had seen the restoration of the canal change up a gear. Keith oversaw the transition from Canal Society to Canal Trust Ltd., was involved in the serious discussions on the problem of the tunnel, and was very involved with the many other partners in the serious intent to bring navigation to the full 46 miles: this goal now appears quite certain, yet it was still a twinkle in the eye 20 years ago. During his 18 years at the helm, Keith has been one of CCT's hard working champions.

..... and Finally ...

... An Amazing Discovery in Goole's Lowther Hotel!

Derek Grindell

York-based property developers are currently renovating the historic Lowther Arms in Aire Street, Goole with a view to conversion into a 14-bedroom wedding and conference centre. Originally the Banks Arms, it was opened in 1824 and, in the absence of a Town Hall, it became the focal point for the developing town.

The Aire & Calder Navigation Co. used it for meetings and in 1880 the Riot Act was read there although the reason remains lost in the mists of time. In three first-floor rooms murals were painted on every wall with a total room length of 20 metres.



Over ensuing decades they were lost under numerous layers of Artex, wallpaper and paint but their recent discovery led to the developers commissioning professional conservators to restore the murals. It took eight weeks to fully expose an amazing variety of dockside scenes, and portraits of prominent people, including George IV. A team of 30 people have been working on the hotel since July 2008 and opening is scheduled for this summer - in time we hope for the NEDIAS visit.

Left: Dutch River, Goole.

(Photo: Derek Grindell)

“To think that the new economy is over is like somebody in London in 1830 saying the entire industrial revolution is over because some textile manufacturers in Manchester went broke.”

Alvin Toffler

NEDIAS Committee:

Chairman and publications – Cliff Lea; **Secretary** – Patricia Pick; **Treasurer** – Pamela Alton; **Membership Secretary** – Jean Heathcote; **Lecture Meetings and Visits Co-ordinator** – Brian Dick; **Archivist** – Pete Wilson; **Committee Members** – Diana Wilmot; David Hart, Les Mather, David Palmer.

Published by: North East Derbyshire Industrial Archaeology Society.

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

The authors retain copyright of the contents.

