

North East Derbyshire Industrial Archaeology Society



NEDIAS Newsletter No. 65 – February 2017

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Reflections of a Radical

from Michael Parkin

At the NEDIAS meeting in November last, Michael Parkin gave us a detailed account of the Pentrich Rising of June 1817, and particularly placed the unrest at Pentrich in context with other events happening around the country. Our speaker read out an account written retrospectively by one of the participants Thomas Bacon, a man who was tried and sentenced to Transportation for his part in the "Rising". Michael has sent me a copy of that account:

G-day, as I sit in the scorching sun in this strange alien land I find me mind returning to what could have been, what should have been and what I have achieved, or more truthfully, failed to achieve. I have been quite ill of late, too poorly to work and, incidentally, I'm, the oldest convict in the region by some few years. I know my end is nigh. But it amazes me how I ever reached this age, particularly as no higher personage than the gracious Lord Sidmouth was after my head twenty or more years ago.

I'm in Port Macquarie, New South Wales, it's truly a million miles from Pentrich. It's a different world, a collection of shacks where old convicts, those who haven't been hanged, beaten to death, succumbed to strange diseases or even freed; come to die; that fate surely awaits me and soon.

Looking back to the trials I suppose I was lucky to endure transportation as Jeremiah Brandreth, Will Turner and Isaac Ludlam were hanged – unfairly in my view. They were convicted by a jury of property owners and farmers; how could they understand how we felt, how many of the jurors had faced starvation? How many would have recognised a frame if they had fallen over it?

I' still confused by George Weightman's reprieve. He's somewhere in this God forsaken land but I've not spoken to him in all these years. I always believed him to be a good man, as indeed was Isaac Ludlam. Although I'd heard his reputation, I knew little of Brandreth before the dreadful events of that night.

The first thing I want to say is that I've always believed in reform. My declared intention was to work with the small number of middle and upper class men, men of quality, who were supposed to share our views, people like Major Cartwright, Sir Francis Burdett and writers like Thomas Paine, William Cobbett and others. However, it came to be that many of these well-heeled reformers were playing a game, a deadly game, but a game nevertheless. They were never going to raise a finger to take a risk, let alone take a life. We were never short of talkers, even of writers, but we had a great lack of leaders. Henry Hunt talked in flowery language but they were only yellow daffodils

There were some good men in the midlands and the north; you maybe know them as well as me. I never trusted the Londoners, too sharp, too posh with too much to lose!



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

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I never wanted the Pentrich Rising to be our epitaph but that is what it turned out to be. It was never going to succeed, we lacked support from influential people and, more to the point, we were duped by the government spy William Oliver; I hope he rots in hell!

Could I have stopped him, could I have warned the others, maybe? It was only towards the end that I realised Oliver was probably a spy. People were getting arrested, Oliver were even arrested and let go. I started putting two and two together when he pressed us to change the date – I smelt a rat but I had no proof and many of the men were set on riot. It were always difficult to get round to tell people.

Although I'd heard of Brandreth as an active radical, as I said I'd never knowingly met him until a couple adays before the Rising; there was nothing going to stop him, I could see that in his eyes straight away. Delegates had promised men in great numbers but they began to drop out – Manchester lost interest, even Nottingham radicals were all talk! The brave men of Huddersfield got no further than we did. Many of them that were keen had been locked up after Habeas Corpus had been suspended.

How can a man stop a bull charging, even if it were that same man who provoked the bull in t'first place? I could see no other option but to disappear so disappear I did. I tried to warn them in a roundabout way but they were all set to go.

So I hid in James Booth's hovel for a few days and then, John, me brother, and me set off. It wasn't to last we were sold in, I'm sure about that.

Some have asked me why I hid away, it sempt the right thing to do at the time, I were an old man, I couldn't walk to Nottingham, I'd have been a burden. I weren't a coward I've never bin a coward and I was never a turncoat. I didn't always tell the truth but I would not let colleagues down. Some did; Cope and Booth for two!

The trial were a farce, they wanted to put on a show and I was top of the list, the first name. I had to take care of myself and, not having been on the march, I managed to get a deal by pleading guilty and keeping my head. I had to keep my counsel on Oliver but what could I have done? To be honest, I'd intended to bring Oliver into the reckoning but, was it worth me neck? I did think it might be worth taking the terrible drop. I knew they wanted me dead, what would you do? Nobody told me I might a got away free.

From an early age, maybe as young as fifteen, I realised that my family were at the bottom of the tree. We lived from day to day. Our comfort and the food on our table was at the whim of the weather, the demand for whatever we had to sell (including our labour) and the landlord; in our case the Duke of Devonshire. No-one spoke for us, least of all the vicar; I decided I had to do something.

I took to reading easy; I read all I could get hold of – newspapers, pamphlets and the like. I used to pick them up in the bar of the Devonshire Inn, t'Anchor or t'Peacock. I even heard some men talking about the situation, the government, the mad King and what ought to be done.

I got invited to meetings, reform groups and the like. I began to travel to towns and cities most in Pentrich

had never heard of. After a year or so I found the knowledge and confidence to speak myself. I found people listened and, often as not, agreed! That was how it all began and it were exciting, I'll not deny that.

As I read these scribbled notes I am forced to think whether I could I have done more, not more for myself – I did that – more for some of them Pentrich and South Wingfield men. Most of them were simple, uneducated and easily led particularly by elder relatives and hot-heads. For some, it were the best excitement they'd ever had. A few had been soldiers but most had spent their entire lives within ten miles of where they were born.



Revolutionaries outside Butterley Ironworks 1817 confront the Works Manager

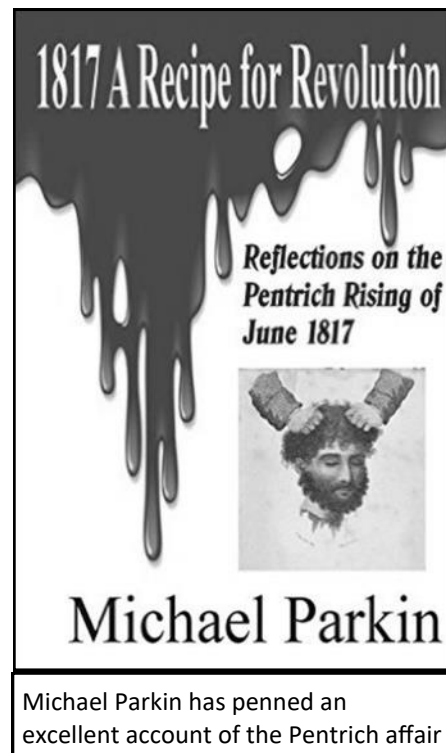
I was involved in frame-breaking to protect the livelihoods of weavers in Pentrich, Swanwick and South Wingfield. I admit I even organised some of the raids but we never committed murder – I know as some did! After they made it a hanging job we gave up.

People began talking about doing something bigger to change t'government. Petitions were not working! I'd already been impressed by news of the French successes, reading Thomas Paine's papers and listening to Cobbett and others.

Why did I plead 'guilty'? I often wonder. Cope, Martin and Booth had told lies trying to save their necks. There was a lot of bad practice, but what could I expect. I had put myself in the line and I don't regret it. Many of the men were my friends, good friends and a good few were relatives. I feel bad about that, very bad.

So, that's it. I was never as bad as some said and, probably, never as good as I thought myself.

Signed: Thomas Bacon



WHAT'S ON?

NEDIAS Lecture Programme

Meetings are held at: St Thomas' Centre, Chatsworth Road, Brampton (opposite Vauxhall/Bristol St Motors) S40 3AW. There's plenty of parking in their own car park, including disabled spaces, as well as on-road parking in front of the Church. All meetings commence at 7:30pm.

Monday, 13 th March 2017	AGM followed by talk from Les Mather on aspects of the Wingerworth Stone Saw Mill .
Monday, 10 th April 2107	David Hulse: "Francis Thompson"
Monday, 8 th May 2017	DAVID WILMOT MEMORIAL LECTURE Les Nixon: "West Yorkshire through to South Yorkshire"

Other Diary Dates

Thursday, 16 th February 2017	"The Jubilees of Millhouses Shed: in the shed and out on the line" – Talk and slides from Ted Hancock. 7:30pm; Barrow Hill social evening at Hollingwood Hub (meeting at the Hub whist the Roundhouse has building work in progress).
Monday, 20 th February 2017	"The Cutlers Company and the Assay Office" – Talk by Christopher Jewitt. SYIHS, Kelham Island Museum, 7:30pm. Info: Derek Bayliss 0114 210 7693.
Tuesday, 21 st February 2017	"The Brunels' Thames Tunnel – a great legacy to modern tunnelling" by Prof. Lord (Robert) Mair. Newcomen Society, SYIHS and SMEA meeting. 5:30pm for 6:00pm at the Holiday Inn Royal Victoria Hotel, Sheffield. Info and booking: Ken Ridal (0114 230 5650 or kenridal@stonedelf.fsnet.co.uk).

Thursday, 23rd February 2017	“The Derwent Dams” – Illustrated talk by Keith Blood. With the help of Archive photographs this talk tells the story of the building of the Howden and Derwent Dams in the wilds of moorland Derbyshire. It covers the materials and methods used and especially the people who worked on it and their way of life. Brimington & Tapton Local History Group; 7:30pm Brimington Community Centre, High Street, Brimington (next door to the Co-op Store).
Friday, 24th February 2017	“The Ordnance Survey in Derby, or when Mat and Mel came to town” Talk by Rod Pearson. DAS Industrial Archaeology Section, St Mary’s Church Hall, Derby, 7.30
Wednesday, 8th March 2017	Talk: Building History. From maps and plans to census records, and tithes to old photos and artwork. A review of local sources of information about local heritage and old buildings. Derbyshire Record Office, Matlock. More information 01629 538347 and www.derbyshire.gov.uk/recordoffice . 10:00am—12:00 noon.
Monday, 13th March 2017	“Henry Ford’s Holiday – collecting British steam engines in 1928” – Talk by Prof. David Perrett. Newcomen Society meeting, 6.30 at Kelham Island Museum. Info from John Suter: meetings.syorks@newcomen.com
Thursday, 16th March 2017	PSOV - Main Line 2016 – Karl Jauncey and Dave Richards are no strangers to Barrow Hill and return to present their annual DVD show with a look at steam on the main line the length and breadth of the country during 2016. 7:30pm; Barrow Hill social evening at Hollingwood Hub (meeting at the Hub whilst the Roundhouse has building work in progress).
Friday, 7th April 2017	“Japanese and Far Eastern Industrial Archaeology” – Talk by Ian Mitchell and AGM of DAS Industrial Archaeology Section, St Mary’s Church Hall, Derby, 7:30pm
Monday, 10th April 2017	“From Coal to Canvas” – Talk by Imogen Homes of NCCM. SYIHS, Kelham Island Museum, 7:30pm. Info: Derek Bayliss 0114 210 7693.
Thursday, 20th April 2017	“Ten Years Plus on Platform 5, Part 2” – Robert Pritchard Robert enters the digital era as he continues his tour around the UK and Europe showing images taken between 2007 and 2013. 7:30pm; Barrow Hill social evening at Hollingwood Hub (meeting at the Hub whilst the Roundhouse has building work in progress).
Thursday, 27th April 2017	“Railways in a Cornish Landscape” – Illustrated talk by Stephen Gay. This slide show presentation will concentrate on a railway journey of today from Truro to Penzance, including the branch lines to Falmouth and St Ives. Brimington & Tapton Local History Group; 7:30pm Brimington Community Centre, High Street, Brimington (next door to the Co-op Store).
Saturday, 6th May 2017	“Cromford Threads” – EMIAC Industrial Heritage Day at Cromford Mill organised by NEDIAS. More details later, put this date in your diary now.
Monday, 15th May 2017	“Dead Dogs and Foul Odours – the cleansing of the River Porter in 1880s” – Talk by Derek Bayliss. SYIHS, Kelham Island Museum, 7:30pm. Info: Derek Bayliss 0114 210 7693

I'm sure I wasn't the only one whose ears pricked up recently (October 22) on hearing about the lady who dreamt up the idea of disposable nappies. Wonder if there's a Robinson's connection, thought I.

Valerie Hunter Gordon died at the grand old age of 94. She was born on the Baslow Hall Estate and as a young mother in the 40s found the job of washing nappies by hand an unappealing chore, so in 1947 she tried out a few ideas, using bits of old parachute obtained by her soldier husband, this packed out with some cellulose wadding (manufactured by Robinson's from 1935) and a layer of cotton wool (manufactured by Robinson's as early as 1856) – both biodegradable.

Working tirelessly at her sewing machine on the kitchen table she made 600 of them, which she sold to friends for 5/- (25p) each. The obvious popularity of the idea led to her decision to seek a patent, which she obtained, before writing to various nappy manufacturers, most of whom weren't impressed by a mere woman (this was the 40s). As luck would have it her father – Sir Vincent de Ferranti (son of the founder of the Ferranti electrical engineering and manufacturing business) and a survivor from Dunkirk in 1940 – happened to be talking to Chairman Sir Robert Robinson one day at a dinner and the rest, as the saying goes, is history.

She sold the patent to Robinson's who began marketing Paddi Pads in 1949 – the first and biggest selling disposable nappy made in the UK. She was also involved in the design of Robinson's Nikini Sanitary Brief in 1957 and the Cosifit Paddi in 1979.

Production was carried out at the Walton Works before a new factory, Boythorpe Works, was erected (in Goyt Side Road opposite to the end of Factory Street) to cater for this growing business – producing Paddis at the rate of one mile a minute, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Eventually the big American manufacturers got in on the act and the arrival of Pampers in the UK started the decline of Paddies.



To School by Train

Lawson Little

In 1945 I "passed the scholarship" and rather than being directed to the nearby grammar schools at Mansfield I was allocated to Chesterfield, some ten miles from my home at Langwith Junction on the county boundary. (I was a member of Heathcote House and at the school between 1945-1951).

To get to school I was issued with a Pass by the then London & North Eastern Railway, entitling me to free travel on the 8:27am from "The Junction" and return on the 4:00pm from what was then Chesterfield's third station, located on West Bars but more grandly described in the timetable as "Market Place". The morning train arrived in town at 8:56am which meant a quick scamper through the Market Place, up Soresby Street, through the alley by the wood yard, across the churchyard and down to Sheffield Road, in time for lessons but not for Morning Assembly!

The reverse journey in the afternoon was equally hurried, as missing the 4:00pm departure meant a two-hour wait for the next train, and a cold dinner! There were 30-40 of us on the train, and because we were deemed unsuitable to mix with the (occasional) paying passengers, we were shepherded daily into a couple of special carriages at the front of the train. These were





Arkwright Cutting with the portal of Bolsover Tunnel in the distance

cutting near Arkwright Town where there had been some ground-slippage, and a mechanical digger was working to clear up the soil. As the train passed, the vibration must have caused the digger to slip, and the unfortunate driver was thrown out of his cab, striking his head on the side of the locomotive. The train did an emergency stop, and the casualty was lifted into the guards van before we made a spirited run to Market Place, where an ambulance awaited us. Sadly the man died later in hospital.

Another, potentially much more serious accident occurred later. The special saloons mentioned above were parked in Platform One at Market Place throughout the day waiting for their next journey in the afternoon. There was a diverging set of points under the front carriage, and somehow these had been moved across at some stage; when the train started the leading end of the carriage moved forward and the rear end went sideways.

At this date I had been elevated to the dizzy heights of House Prefect (I still have my badge somewhere) and one of my duties was to sit in the forward-facing seat at the end of the stricken saloon, to keep an eye on my slightly younger companions. I can still clearly remember that when we inevitably came off the rails, the carriage bumped heavily over the sleepers, causing puffs of dust to rise from the floor each time.

My first instinct was to look at the very large plate-glass windows, thinking that had we turned over they would have smashed to pieces with unthinkable results to all of us. Fortunately, we had a stroke of luck – the other heavy saloon behind us had safely negotiated the points and was now running on the track alongside, still coupled and holding us upright.

The platforms at Market Place curved sharply to the left, and I could see the locomotive barking away at the unusual drag through the left-hand windows, its crew, who should have been watching the platform as standard procedure, clearly oblivious to our plight. Then the second stroke of luck occurred. The outer ends of the platforms were edged with wooden beams rather than the standard paving stones, and when we reached that section, the buffers on our coach, which had been sliding ineffectually along the stone, now dug into the wood and forced the straining engine to a halt. Dusty and dishevelled, we climbed out of the wrecked coach, and for probably the only time in six years, were allowed

most unusual, being open saloons, with large plate-glass windows and long bench seats facing inwards; very rare in 1945 and extinct today, one had a long table down the centre which we utilised for playing half-penny football!

Over the next six years I learned every yard of the ten-mile journey, all the signals, sidings, stations etc., and in the process developed a love for railways which still continues seventy years later. The daily trips were not without incident – one fateful morning the train was running through a



Chesterfield Market Place Station

into the 'ordinary' coaches for the trip home.

Curiously, despite diligent searches I've never been able to trace any record of an official enquiry into this accident – probably it was hushed up by the local stationmaster to save the blushes of the signalman.

In those early post-war years there were frequent problems with reliability, and quite often we would arrive at the station in the early morning to find, not a train, but an East Midland bus waiting for use. The bus company was still modernising its fleet after the war years, and sometimes would only be able to send an old 'crush-loader' single-decker, with seats facing inwards (like our railway saloons), and lots of leather straps for standing passengers. The sight of one of those old AECs struggling along with 40 schoolboys and a number of ordinary passengers can be imagined.

On one occasion we had a Guy double-decker for the afternoon journey. To avoid a low bridge we went all round Hasland, and on an unfamiliar steep hill the driver, attempting a quick gear change with his "crash box", found the gear lever loose in his hand! That was one day we had a cold dinner!

Another double-deck journey, in the opposite direction, saw us cautiously negotiating the low bridge under the LMS main line on the Bolsover Road when there was a loud rumble overhead. The driver leapt out, thinking he had decapitated the bus, but it was only an express passing above.

Yet another incident saw a double-decker trying to park under the overhanging canopy outside the station on West Bars, in the process taking out all the upstairs windows on one side, fortunately without hurting anyone – the upper-deck occupants were already crowding down the stairs ready to dismount.

One of the less pleasant parts of the journey was through the noisome Bolsover Tunnel. This had been a headache for the railways ever since a parsimonious Head Office had refused to pay the Bolsover Colliery Company a fee not to remove the coal seam underlying the tunnel. The resulting subsidence played havoc with the tunnel (and incidentally gave Dad some lucrative overtime on Sundays, shoring up the tunnel sides) and there was supposed to be a strict speed limit through the bore.

One evening I was on the 6 p.m. train after staying at school for some reason, and the train crew must have been in a hurry for their tea – we went through the tunnel at a speed which caused me, sitting in a normal compartment, to move away from the window nearest the tunnel side as I waited for the inevitable accident. On that occasion I was lucky, but a later train DID hit the tunnel wall, after which one track was slewed into the centre and the other track lifted, but eventually even this was insufficient and the line was closed.



ABOVE: Upper: Market Street Station frontage.
Lower: The former AGD Building

So all-in-all I had plenty to look forward to each day for six years. I left school in July 1951, and six months later the line, now British Railways-owned, gave up the unequal struggle with Bolsover Tunnel, and Market Place echoed no more to the sound of grammar-school pupils.

Goods traffic continued for a few years, but eventually even this ceased and the station buildings, after use by a paint company for a while, were finally demolished, and the GPO office building erected in their place. Now even that has gone, and if it were not for the pub which still stands next door, it would be difficult to imagine that a railway once ran here.



Morden Mine

Following the item in the last Newsletter about the relics of Morden Mine on Vancouver Island, the editor has received a mail with the following comments from Eric Ricker of the Friends of Morden Mine.

“Hi Cliff,

“I’m a former co-president of the FOMM board and long-time member. We worked very hard for many years to get the Province of BC and local authorities to fix Morden. It’s been a provincial historic park for well over 40 years, but for reasons too complex (and sad) to go into here, the provincial government treats it like an unwanted orphan child and pretends that it has no responsibility for its fate. Unfortunately, goats and other gimmicks have nothing to do with saving it: what is required is about \$2.8 millions to fix it, as detailed in an engineering study (one of six that have been done over the years) done in 2014.

“When you were on Vancouver Island perhaps you paid a visit to the famous Kinsol Trestle, near Shawnigan Lake. Kinsol, like Morden, is provincially owned but the province had refused to do any maintenance work on it. Eventually the local area government spearheaded a campaign that raised over \$7 million dollars to fix it. It’s now a great tourism success and the province unashamedly boasts about that success!

“Similarly, we tried to get our local area governments to pick up the torch for Morden, but alas, they showed no interest apart from assisting with studies.

“Time has nearly run out for Morden – in fact it could collapse at any time. Of interest to you would be these salient facts: Morden is one of two surviving concrete tipples in North America (the other is at Muddy, Illinois, which you can Google for information) and our European and English research colleagues have informed us that Morden was the third concrete tipple ever built and is the second oldest surviving. The oldest is Camphausen IV in the Saarland, Germany.

“When it happens, the loss of this rare and great monument to our pioneering coal mine industry will be more than just a shame – it will be crime against history itself.

“Thanks again for taking notice of Morden.”

Eric Ricker, Friends of Morden Mine

So it’s not just in the UK that we have to struggle for funding to preserve our heritage.

Oporto Works Tramcar and Chesterfield Horse Drawn Tram No.8 move home

(Reprinted from Old Glory, November 2016, by kind permission of the editor)

The Crich Tramway Village annual Tram Day in September included the official handover of Oporto works car No.65 from Crich to Beamish Museum. No 65 was built in 1933 at the workshop of CCFP (the Public Transport Company of Porto) and was used to transport coal from a mine at St. Pedro da Cova to a power plant at Massarelos. Following its withdrawal from service it was acquired by Crich in 2005 in generally good condition, but was put into store pending restoration work.

Works cars in preservation are, by their very nature, a rare thing but the Oporto car is unique insofar as it is the only known surviving example of a tram that was used to carry coal for an electricity generating plant. Trams used for carrying goods were used extensively in ex-communist countries but were rare elsewhere. Works cars in general were used in track and overhead line maintenance rather than for general goods-carrying purposes.

Crich is fortunate in having a number of interesting works cars from various fleets but the acquisition of a rail-mounted crane and trailer from Croydon Tramlink in 2010 gave it a modern and versatile vehicle for track and infra-structure maintenance, while Beamish does not have a vehicle for that type of work. Having an open body with drop sides means that operators will have a tram capable of carrying equipment around the extensive Beamish system.

The handover ceremony was conducted by Alan Barber, president of the Tramway Museum Society, who gave a short presentation speech emphasising the cooperation between the two museums before handing over the controller key for No.65 to Laura Waters, Crich curator of archive collections who was standing in for Paul Jarman, assistant director for transport and industry at Beamish, who unfortunately could not be present.

Alan was also able to announce that the National Railway Museum has donated three items from its collection to Crich, two of which had previously been on long term loan – Chesterfield horse tram No.8 and a very early example of a tram power-truck from the South Staffordshire system dating from 1892. The third item was Bournemouth N0.85, which had been on long-term loan to the former Museum of Electricity in Christchurch, but since the closure of the museum the tram had been hidden from public view. This important transfer of resources ensures the long-term future for these items.

The ceremony involved special line-ups of the museum's own works fleet and the ex-Chesterfield and Oporto trams.



LEFT:
Oporto Works Car No.65 to
move to Beamish (Photograph by
David Vaughan, by courtesy *Old
Glory*)

RIGHT:
Chesterfield Horse Tram
No.8 (Transicard
Postcard), has moved
from NRM to Crich



IA News and Notes

Martyn Taylor Cockayne has sent to me the following mail about an exciting find – a map of the intended route of the Nottingham Canal, as presented for the petition to Parliament:

Martyn writes:

A rare map has come into my possession that I thought you and your members would enjoy picking over. It's a map of the proposed Nottingham Canal surveyed in September 1791 by James Green of Wollaton, who worked for Lord Middleton. William Jessop was originally commissioned to carry out the work in 1790, but he was ill with an abscess and chose James Green in his absence.

The canal was given assent in May of 1792, Jessop representing it through Parliament. James Green became resident engineer afterwards and it opened in 1796, were within a year it was carrying 100.000 tons per annum. It was a straight forward canal and Jessop gave it little attention.

There are some interesting features, including at least 5 engine houses and one wind mill shown. Follow the dropbox link below to down load the photographs. Any problems let me know.

https://www.dropbox.com/sh/sl6i73gdp0uhjhk/AACjBgmEmqAqeIII-_UhPVjWa?dl=0

He goes on to mention:

A few years ago I discovered the only known map of the 'intended' Pinxton Canal, a forerunner of the eventual Cromford Canal. The surveyor (if it was surveyed) was unknown, but I deduced that it may have been drawn by Sir Roger Newdigate in 1787. It's only a wild theory of mine and I may never be able to prove it. The evidence is very circumstantial and is based upon the fact he was at Codnor Castle in September 1787 doing water colours. Sir Roger had married the daughter of Miller Munday of Shipley Hall the year before. He (Sir Roger) was a great exponent of the industrial revolution and owned coal mines, steam engines, etc. in his Warwickshire Estates. He was also an early pioneer of railways. I believe he encouraged Miller Munday and others to extend the Erewash Canal, hence the proposed Pinxton Canal.

That's my theory anyway and his signature on his Codnor Castle water colours is similar to the hand writing on the proposed Pinxton Canal drawing (but not conclusive). I have attached it for you and your canal members to enjoy. It is in the Notts R.O. among the papers of the Melbourne Estate in his 'Intelligence Papers'. It was completely unrecognised and just lay among many other letters, notes and newspaper clips regarding canals, railways, mines etc. As soon as I saw it I knew what it was and how important and rare it was.

This map doesn't print all that well, but please contact Cliff if you'd like a digital copy.

Newcomen Society – establishment of local branch

The Newcomen Society is the most prestigious and indeed the oldest society for the study of the history of engineering in the world. It's largely London-based, but is trying to make a go of establishing local meetings in our area, at Kelham Island.

Following the inaugural meeting in January, it's to be followed on the 21st February by a joint meeting with the Sheffield Metallurgical and Engineering Association, the Ken Barraclough Lecture when, Professor Lord Mair will speak on:- *Brunels' Thames Tunnel – a Great Legacy to Modern Tunnelling*. Robert Mair is Professor of Civil Engineering at Cambridge and his extremely interesting talk will discuss some of the tunnelling and geotechnical challenges encountered in the driving the Cross Rail Tunnels under central London. (Please note this meeting will be held at the Royal Victoria Hotel.)

On the 13th March David Perrett, one of the leading experts on early steam engineers, will speak on:- *Henry Ford's Holiday - Collecting British steam engines in 1928*, while on the 24th April Professor Barry Chambers will bring us fully up-to-date with modern technology in his talk on:- *Stealth - its history and technology*.

Let's give them as much support as possible.

Industrial Heritage Day EMIAC 92 on Saturday 6th May 2017 – organised by NEDIAS

NEDIAS organised our first “Industrial Heritage Day” three years ago, held it at St Thomas’s Centre, and we had 100 attendees. The theme had been on the local Brampton industrial history, particularly centering on the two listed buildings, Walton Bump Mill and the Cannon Mill. It’s good to see that the Walton Mill has now secured a future, with sensitive redevelopment now approved by local Chesterfield BC Planning Office.

Our next conference will be held on Saturday 6th May 2017, not at St Thomas’s, but at Cromford Mill. It is titled “**Cromford Threads**”, a play on words, and explores some less well known aspects of Cromford.

Whilst the story of the mill itself is well known to industrial historians, this conference will explore some of the lesser known connections to the site. Speakers include Prof. Stanley Chapman, Dr Lynn Willies, Peter South and Darrell Clark and they will tease out some of the interesting connections. Whilst the conference starts by placing Arkwright's Mills in the context of the World Heritage Site's buildings and power units, it moves on to look at early industrial espionage and the building of Germany's first water powered cotton mill – also called Cromford, at Arkwright's water power – a lead mining sough with connections to the great 17th century water engineer Vermuyden, and to the life and times of the later generations of the Arkwright family.

For more information contact Cliff Lea at cliff@nedias.co.uk, or download registration details at http://nedias.co.uk/?page_id=300

Chairman’s Chat

Cliff Lea

Last year there had been a survey of libraries throughout the UK. The survey showed:

- a) Visits to libraries have declined by a quarter in the last 10 years.
- b) Children’s books loans have declined by one fifth in the last five years from 95 million to 79 million.
- c) Adult book loans have declined even more, by one third from 200 million to 127 million.
- d) The number of libraries open for over 10 hours per week (yes, over only 10 hours per week) has declined by 12 percent.
- e) The numbers of volunteers has doubled, with consequent drop of paid and professional librarians
- f) In Sheffield since 2009, the number of child book loans apparently had dropped from nine per year per child, to three per year per borrower.

We can all see the changes in local libraries, and the changes a couple of years ago in Derbyshire’s organisation of local studies sections is particularly puzzling, perplexing, indeed confusing to me, but that’s a minor point.

For local heritage groups such as our own which have great interest in local history, libraries are vital, there’s nothing to beat discovering something by flicking physically through the pages of neglected records. Can I urge us all to make sure we and our families use our libraries, before libraries themselves become history.

And finally

.... ‘The Bell Tolls’ – for The Whitechapel Foundry

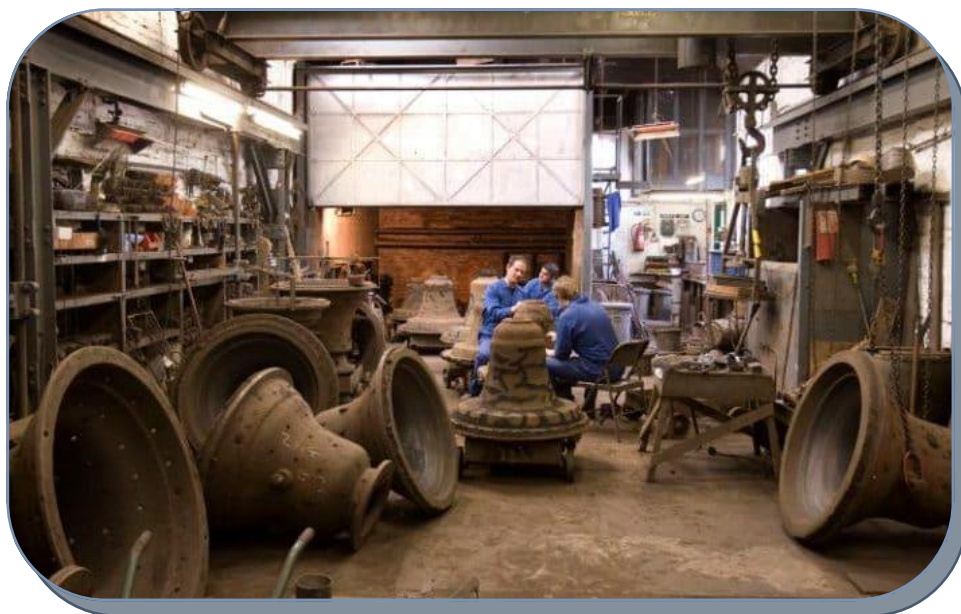
Derek Grindell

The Times of Saturday 3rd December devoted the major portion of p.33 to an Obituary. On this occasion it was not the passing of an individual but an East London factory that has occupied its current premises since 1738. The Whitechapel Bell Foundry claims to be the oldest manufacturing company in business in the country and it can trace its origins back to 1570. The only remaining business of its kind in the UK, after closure in May 2017, will be the Loughborough Foundry of John Taylor & Co.

The first Master Founder, said to have been Robert Mot, cast two bells for Westminster Abbey and one for St. Clement Danes. In 1662 Anthony Bartlet cast five bells for St. Olaves, which survived the Great Fire of London in 1666 and, in 1716, Richard Phelps cast the clock bell for St. Paul's. Twenty two years later Thomas Lester moved the foundry to its present location, which was a former alehouse, called the Artichoke Inn. During WW2 the foundry made aluminium castings for submarine detection equipment.

Two of the bells cast for Westminster Abbey at the Whitechapel Foundry in 1583 are still in daily use as are two bells made for St. Petersburg in 1746. The Liberty Bell, cast in 1752 for State House, Philadelphia cracked on first being struck. It was recast but cracked again in the early 19thC. Other examples of the Foundry's output are the Bow Bells and the equally famous "Oranges & Lemons" Bells of St. Clement Danes on The Strand in London.

The moulds required for large bells continued to be made from sand, clay, goat hair and manure, a mediaeval method which was so effective that it defied change. The goat hair and manure, in the process of burning, creates a network of minute air passages, which facilitate the release of the gases from the hot metal. On an upper floor of the Foundry there is a lathe dating from 1742, which was extremely effective for turning bells but fell victim to the H&S.E., who forced it into retirement claiming that it contravened H&S regulations. It is to be hoped that it is preserved for public display, together with other tools of the founder's craft.



The business has been owned by the Hughes family since the present owner's great-grandfather took it over in 1904. Post WW2 the number of damaged churches created a demand for sets of bells and at its peak it was not unusual for a complete peal to be made each week. In the current year only one has been made.

LEFT: Whitechapel Bell Foundry - the oldest company in Britain



Editor: This has some significance for our area too. Richard Arkwright purchased a bell for use in his bell tower on top of his first mill at Cromford, a bell to call in his workers for the start of their shifts. At the time Arkwright commissioned it, "Pack & Chapman Ltd" were the foundry owners, names proudly marked with the date 1771 on the bell. Members can see this bell on display at Cromford.

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