North East Derbyshire Industrial Archaeology Society

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Dene Quarry

Mike Banks

The quarrying and mining industries in the Wirksworth/Middleton/Cromford area have been in operation for many centuries and it now looks as though it will all come to an end within the next few years.

The geology found in the Wirksworth/Middleton/Cromford area goes back 330 million years to the carboniferous limestone era when this area lay south of the equator in a warm sea where much of marine life comprised animals with shells. When they died, their shells accumulated to a great depth and over the coming millennia were compressed to form limestone. A second geological phase occurred when giant rivers spread mud and coarse sand over the limestone layer and volcanic activity plus the passage of time resulted in the mudstones and millstone grit we see today. Volcanic activity also caused the deposition of lead compounds, barytes, calamine and fluorspar in fissures in the limestone.

These natural resources have all been exploited by mining, quarrying of the millstone grit for building material and, of course, limestone used for agriculture, lime mortar for building work and decorative marble block stone for building work. Production was greatly enhanced by the construction of the Cromford and High Peak railway in 1832 which gave access to a much wider market and quarries near Wirksworth such as Middle Peak, Middleton, Coal Hills, West Quarry, Southeast Quarry, Northeast Quarry, Reef and Steeplehouse Quarry thrived. However all of these quarries have since ceased production.

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The first written evidence of quarrying in what is now called Dene Quarry refers to "Deanwood Dale" in 1811 and then in 1829 where decorative marble blocks were being produced. There is then little or no reference until 1940 when the Ministry of Supply requested a search for high purity limestone for sugar refiners, glass makers and as steel flux to meet wartime demand. Apparently in response, Herbert Hardy bought up land on Cromford Hill and set in motion plans to open up Dene Quarry. Considerable local opposition was over-ruled by the Ministry of Supply and the quarry started production in 1942 with operations concentrating on the north side of Dean/Dene Hollow. High purity agricultural limestone dust and decorative stone were the first products. The limestone dust was supplied to sugar refineries in Liverpool and Lincoln and to the iron and steel industries in Corby and Northampton. Production rose quickly and by 1944 the old railway sidings at Black Rock were re-opened to cope with the high transport demand.

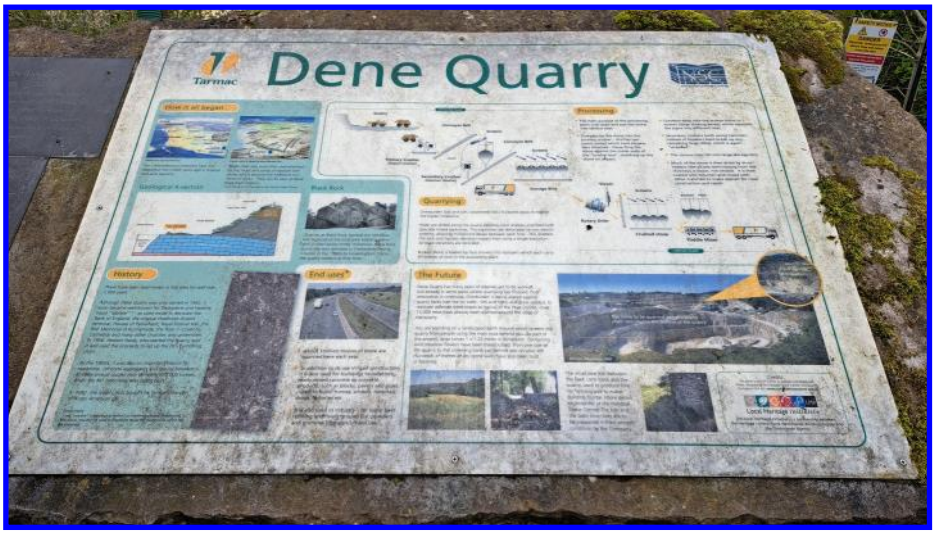
When the war finished in 1945, national rebuilding schemes proliferated and the company found a ready market for large blocks of fine building stone found in the lower beds of the site. They marketed two types of stone, Derbyshire Fossil "Derbydene" and "Hadene Stone". The first was a brownish grey limestone packed with fossil crinoid fragments and the second was a finer grained creamy limestone with similarities to Hopton Wood Stone, both of which could take a high polish. This stone can now be found in the House of Commons, Buckingham Palace, Heathrow Airport, various embassies, the Air Forces Memorial at Runnymede, the Royal Festival Hall, Westminster and Coventry Cathedrals and the Bank of England.

In 1946 a competing quarry was set up called Slinter Quarry situated just to the north of Dene Quarry producing limestone aggregates, fluorspar and barytes. Limestone quarried there also feeds the owner's concrete business.

In 1956 Herbert Hardy sold Dene Quarry to a national masonry concern and set up the famous DFS furniture store. However the ongoing demand for blockstone did not last forever and by 1959/60 was overtaken by increasing demand for crushed stone. Hoveringham Stone bought the quarry and production of crushed stone in the early 1960s reached about 250,000 t.p.a. when roughly two thirds was used for cement and concrete aggregates. However this rose significantly in 1966 due to high demand from construction of the M1 motorway.

In 1981 the quarry was purchased by Tarmac. Dene's output then rose significantly in 1992 with the closure of the Middle Peak Quarry at Wirksworth. In order to meet lost capacity, Dene's output rose from 800,000 to 1,500,000 t.p.a. Also, by the mid 1990s there were three asphalt plants operating and these were upgraded in 1998. The mid 90s also brought consideration of the quarry environment once it eventually closed and experiments began on schemes to break down the regular benching around the periphery to create a more natural "daleside" profile (see photo on page #1). At about this time, Dene Quarry was also used by Lubrizol to test emulsion explosives which were more stable and predictable than previous products and gave off a less obtrusive noise threshold for local residents.

Up until 2013, the processing plant had been a fixed structure set along what was once the floor of Deanwood Dale. It now found itself on a ridge with land either side deepened by quarrying. By demolishing and removing the old machinery, it was able to re-open in 2016 using mobile plant and loaders (see photo on page #1). The ridge has now been quarried away. In 2005 the most recent planning permission attached to the site was granted by the county council and allowed the firm to quarry northern and southern extensions. All mineral operations were to cease by 2026 at which point the site must be vacated, but this is once more under review! This will still leave Slinter Quarry in operation which has a planning request to extend quarrying until 2033 with landscaping completed by 2037. Once operations cease here that will spell the end of Wirksworth, Middleton and Cromford's centuries old association with the mining and quarrying industries!



Much of the information given in this article has been derived from the excellent book "Delving along the Derwent" available from the National Stone Centre for £25.

Dates for your diary

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 11 September 2023	**"The historic CEGB coal fired power stations on the River Trent" by Ian Mitchell**
Monday 9 October 2023	**"Riddings oil refinery, Derbyshire, 1848. 175 years ago this year - Britain's and the world's first" by Cliff Lea**
Monday 13 November 2023	**"The Iron Industry in the Rother Valley in the Canal Age, 1780-1840" by Philip Riden**
Monday 11 December 2023	**CHRISTMAS Meeting**

Other Diary Dates

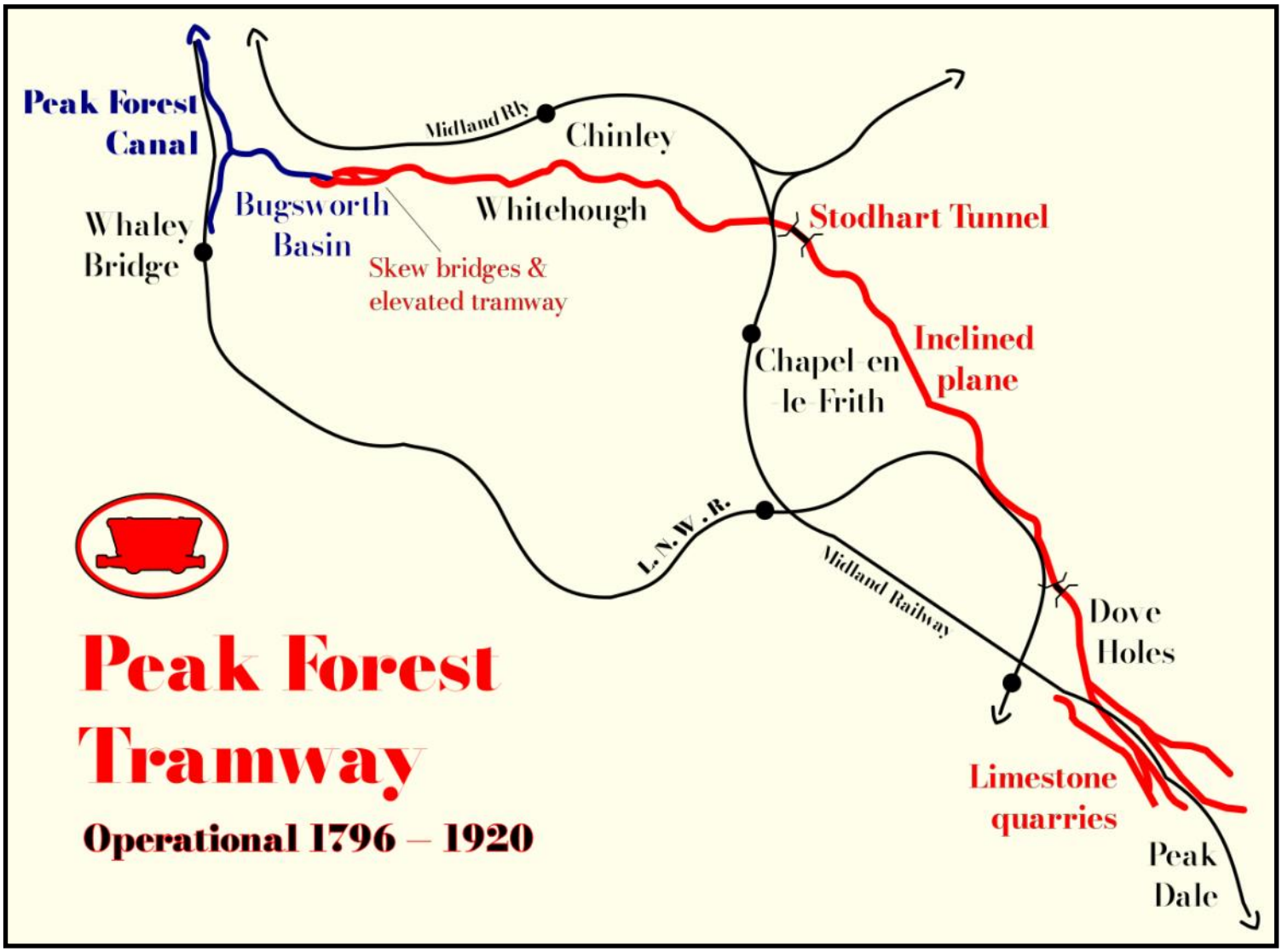
8-17 September 2023	**Heritage Open Days** – we're now racing towards another fun-filled Heritage Open Days (HODs) festival. From family friendly activities to exclusive evening experiences, this year's festival will have something for everyone - and the best part is... it'll all be FREE! There's now over 3000 events to choose from on our online event directory (https://www.heritageopendays.org.uk/visiting), with more to come over the next few weeks.
Saturday 16 September 2023	10:00am: **DAS organised tour with the Peak District Mining Museum, Matlock Bath.** This 3-hour visit will be a chance to see the museum as it is today. hear a talk about the plans for the future to move the museum to the National Stone Centre at Wirksworth, as well as to take a tour into Temple Mine. More info and tickets: https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/632011893587
Wednesday 20 September 2023	Morning: **Join NEDIAS group on a short walking tour around Belper** during the morning. It was here that Jedediah Strutt and his sons began their cotton mill business in 1776; see the workers' housing including Long Row, chapel, Nailers' house, North Mill etc. E-mail Cliff if you're interested. (cliff.lea@btinternet.com)
Saturday 20 January 2024	**Derbyshire Archaeology Day** from 9.45am to 4.15pm at the Winding Wheel Theatre. The line-up of speakers includes Tristan Cousins from York Archaeology, Alison James and Michael Lobb from MSDS Marine and Thomas Booth from The Crick Institute with many more to be announced. Subjects range from 'Holbrook's Hidden Heritage' to 'The Medieval Origins of Shirebrook' with other talks also focusing on the study of Ancient DNA and results of recent excavations. More information on the speakers and topics will be released here: www.chesterfieldtheatres.co.uk/archaeology. Derbyshire Archaeology Day tickets are on sale NOW. Book online using the link above or contact Chesterfield Visitor Information Centre Tel: 01246 345777 or Email: tourism@chesterfield.gov.uk

The Peak Forest Canal and Tramroad

Martin Allen

The earliest rail haulage methods were those used in the tunnels of underground mineral workings. In particular, the mines in Germany from the early 16th century, were found to be very efficient in operation. However, manpower alone was the only option to drag the wagons in the tightly confined tunnel conditions. The later establishment of more efficient surface operations using larger wagons that could be horse drawn in multiple was the next obvious development. In the UK, the contender for the earliest recorded surface tramroad (or gangway) is the Prescot Hall coalmine near Liverpool. Among the earliest records are of a local magistrate's court proceedings dated 1594. These make reference to a fine of three shillings and four pence being imposed for the illegal felling of trees and cutting them into sawn timber, said to be "For the making of rails for a wagon-way".

The discoveries of numerous mineral deposits around the UK, such as coal, limestone, lead, copper and iron ore which all became prominent in the era of the "Industrial Revolution" from about 1750. However, the large-scale transportation logistics for these various materials were not yet proven and any inefficiencies in operation would make the tasks uneconomic. What was needed would be a modular method for delivering the by-products to the mills, factories and other enterprises, then returning the empty wagons back to the mines and quarries for replenishment. The concept of navigable inland waterways in the form of canals intended specifically for operating by flat-bottomed barges evolved from circa.1757. The first of these canals ran from St. Helens in Merseyside and was known as the Sankey Canal. The principal traffic was coal from Haydock Colliery to the River Mersey at Widnes. This started a revolution in transportation which was without equal, until tramroads (sometimes referred to as gangroads or tramways) and ultimately standard gauge railways, were developed.



Map of the Peak Forest Tramway and other railways – By Rcsprinter123 - Own work, CC BY 3.0, https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=89723967

The Peak Forest Tramroad was founded on 28th March 1794 and was opened for traffic on 31st August 1796. The purpose was to serve as a feeder for the Peak Forest Canal, mainly for the transportation of limestone, as a vital ingredient in iron production. It was proposed as a single line from Bugsworth canal basin to the numerous limestone quarries around the district of Dove Holes and to supply the two lime kilns located at Marple and Disley. The route of the tramroad rose from Bugsworth up to 129 feet as far as Whitehough, then to Chapel Milton on the level. Here, it next climbed another 57 feet to the bottom of the incline, taking the line up another 192 feet over a distance of 1,536 feet.

Benjamin Outram (1st April 1764 – 22nd May 1805) was responsible for the design and construction of the tramroad. Famous in his day, both as an advisor for tramroad legislation and as a contractor. He was also one of the founders of the Butterley Company, who were the first to manufacture cast iron edge-rails and construct wagons for tramroads. His guidance on constructing tramroads offered recommendations such as:

> *"If such trade be both ways in nearly equal quantities a line as nearly horizontal (level) as possible should be chosen. If the trade is all in one direction -as generally the case between mines (or quarries) and navigations what is required is one with a gentle descent such as shall not make it greater labour for the horses to haul the loaded waggons down than the empty ones back"*

The tramroad was originally planned to operate from Chapel Milton to the numerous limestone quarries at Dove Holes, but instead it was decided to terminate near the village of Bugsworth. This was as far forward as the Peak Forest Canal could be cut, without the need for the construction of a second flight of locks and establishing an additional water supply at this location. Authorisation for this change in design was given on the 8th July 1795 and the tramroad from Bugsworth canal basin to the Dove Holes quarries was six and a half miles long. Around the Dove Holes area, there were originally five separate limestone quarries together with lime-burning kilns operating at various times. Little evidence of these individual workings survive today, because as the excavations expanded, the adjacent quarries eventually merged with each other into one large site.

The original edge rail plates were made of cast iron in a "L" cross-section measuring 4 by 4 inches and each weighing 56 pounds. The plates were 3 feet long and fastened directly onto stone sleeper blocks, which had a fixing hole bored in the centre, for inserting an oak plug. The ends of each rail had a slot at each end, through which an iron spike would be driven into the plug, thus securing the rails to the blocks. Later improvements included fitting saddles (or baseplates as we call them today) under the joints between each rail, to reduce the risk of breakages. After 1865, most of the cast iron rails were replaced by L-section rolled steel rails, pre-cut into lengths of 9 feet and 12 feet. These were manufactured in Manchester at the Gorton Works of the Manchester, Sheffield and Lincolnshire Railway Company, who had gained ownership of the Peak Forest Canal and the tramroad since 1863. The stone blocks were laid in pairs, but there was no method of securing the lateral gauge alignment of the rails. This was because of the risk to horses tripping over any sleepers or cross ties and thus causing accidents. Cobblestones were also laid between the rails to provide assistance for the horses. The track gauge was set at 4 feet 2½ inches, which suited the average girth of the horses and the width of the harnesses attached to the wagons. A team of four horses could pull up to twenty loaded wagons coupled together and each weighing nearly 3 tons, on the level sections. These wagons were made of riveted iron and were used to transport limestone to the canal. They were horse drawn into gangs and braking was achieved using 'sprags', being either a stout iron bar or an iron chain put through the spokes of the wheels, so that they jammed. The average running speed allowed when fully loaded was 3 mph. The design of the wagons themselves were identical to those previously supplied by the Butterley Company for use on the Little Eaton Tramroad.

The tramroad was for the most part operated by gravity. Wagons travelled downwards under the action of gravity and controlled by a brakesman, who travelled atop the leading wagon, with the assistance of horses to haul the empty wagons back uphill to the quarries. At Chapel-en-le-Frith, the tramroad had to negotiate a steep hillside and a self-acting double track inclined plane was built there, with a steam operated winding house at the top of the incline. To reverse the winding action, there were two ten foot diameter grooved wheels placed between the two tracks at each end of the incline. This concept can be still seen today, on the Cromford and High Peak Railway at the Middleton incline. The descending loaded wagons could be assisting the ascending empty wagons on the inclined double track sections adjacent track by attaching them to a pulley system using an endless hemp rope. The ropes were often overloaded and became broken, so they were changed for an iron chain in 1809 and later from 1886 by a woven wire rope. There was a short inclined plane of 33 yards in length at its original terminus at Load's Knowl at the top of Barmoor Clough. This was

the original terminus of the tramroad to access an adjoining quarry and it was operated by a horse gin rotary winch system. This location ultimately fell into disuse, when the line was extended into Dove Holes Dale and consequently this quarry and the adjacent inclined plane was permanently abandoned when the source of the limestone was exhausted.

By 1803, due to an increase in trade, the track of the tramroad was mostly converted from single to double-track operation. However, Stodhart tunnel was never widened and it remained in single-track operation throughout it's working life. Another short section of single track was necessitated at Buxton, where the original road bridges occurred. The reasons being was that demolishing and rebuilding these two sections would have an adverse effect on traffic operations and the cost would be prohibitive. Stodhart Tunnel is situated between the stately home of Stodhart Lodge and Stodhart Farm at Chapel Milton, Chapel-en-le-Frith. This tunnel, which opened in 1796, is based on similar designs previously used on canal tunnels of the era with elliptical side walls, constructed of dressed gritstone. The portals at each end were built slightly later than the interior of the tunnel, a situation brought about by objections from the owners of Stodhart Lodge who wanted the tunnel to be made longer, to improve their privacy from the tramroad. However, in 1949, the northern portal was blocked and permanently infilled, due to the widening of the adjacent A624 Hayfield Road. This tunnel is considered to be the second oldest surviving rail-related tunnel in Britain and because of its importance, it was "Listed" by Historic England as a Grade II* structure on the 3rd September 1985. The Stodhart Tunnel Preservation Trust was incorporated on the 21st March 2005 and now takes care of the upkeep. As built, the tunnel was originally about 94 yards long. Measurements recently taken have established that its internal height is 7 feet 6 inches. Its width at track level is 9 feet and at the spring of the arch it is 10 feet wide. This narrow width meant that it could only ever accommodate a single track. The oldest surviving rail-related tunnel in Britain (and possibly in the world) is at Fritchley, also in Derbyshire. This is situated on the former alignment of the Butterley Tramroad near Crich, which opened in 1793 and remained operational until 1935.

The tramroad was officially closed by affirmation of a Parliamentary "Act of Abandonment" in 1925. After an active existence of nearly 130 years, the tramroad then passed into the history books. From April 1927 to February 1931, the scrap metal recovered from the tramroads demolition was acuminated at Bugsworth Basin by Thomas Ward Limited of Sheffield. Subsequently, the scrap was loaded onto barges and then sent to Guide Bridge, via. the Ashton Canal at Prince's Dock. Here, the various components were sent onwards by rail to the premises of Edgar Allen Limited at Sheffield, for sorting and melting down. The total quantity of recovered scrap was nearly 524 tons altogether. Along the alignment, the stone blocks and the cobblestones were then mostly taken up and sold locally to be used as building materials, but some short sections of the line still have the stone blocks insitu today. Most of the route can still be easily studied by walking or cycling, but some sections of land are now private property and prior permission for access from the landowners would be required.

Today, the National Railway Museum at York has a restored Peak Forest Tramroad wagon on display in the main hall, mounted on a section of cast iron plateway. This example is said to be the oldest railway wagon in existence and the wagon displays its identifying number, 174. A replica wagon based on the same design is also on public display at the Bugsworth canal basin.

An Idyllic vista of the canal basin at Bugsworth, with the alignment of the tramroad still clearly visible. This was the terminal of the tramroad which handled the traffic from the lime quarries at Dove Holes. The original track alignment is on the left side, with the later unloading siding at the water's edge. Here, barges for the onward journey would be loaded from the wagons by means of a rotary tipper. In its heyday during the 1880's, approximately 600 tons of limestone would be dispatched every day, requiring a fleet of at least 24 barges. Nearby, there are also the remains of the limestone crushing shed and two bridge structures which have now been rebuilt. The canal itself has been restored by the Inland Waterways Protection Society and today it is fully navigable once again.

Photograph by permission of Paul Steane.

Sudbury Gasworks

Cliff Lea

The first time I went to Sudbury Gasworks must have been 40 years ago, when as the family we had been round Sudbury Hall. I distinctly remember this sad partially ruined red bricked but very decorative- think Arts and Crafts - red-bricked ruin of a building almost totally obliterated, over-run and hidden by nettles, brambles, trees and ivy.

It had been an early and small gas works constructed to generate and supply gas to the hall and village. It was built in 1874 and designed by George Devey, a noted architect of the time who had worked on the Hall itself. Gas was produced from coal and piped to Sudbury Hall as well as many houses in the village. The gasholder was dismantled in the 1930s.

An EMIAC conference was organised by DAS and held in the spring at the recently rescued and restored Sudbury Gasworks. DAS members, AS volunteers and a few NEDIAS members were amongst the 50 or so who enjoyed the day, and we heard of the work of the buildings architect, George Devey, of the history of the site and of the work of the Derbyshire Historic Buildings Trust assisting the Sudbury Gasworks Trust in their restoration of the site over the last 10 years or so.

The site has now been gloriously rescued and most importantly an after-use has been identified, the only way to encourage funders. It is now a great community space for the villagers of Sudbury who had never had the benefit of a church hall for meetings, functions, events etc. Our conference was held inside the reconstructed gasholder, just the right size for our conference of 50. And when I went into the "retort house"– a great space for small exhibitions – and looked up at the iron rafters and tie bars, I was immediately reminded of looking up inside Chesterfield's Cannon Mill, a listed building here with its roof-tiles now falling in, but where there is currently another glimmer of hope for a future.

I would strongly recommend a visit to Sudbury Gasworks. Look at their list of events at https://sudburygasworks.com/events. I particularly like the sound of their history talks on first Fridays at 11am. Some interesting subjects.

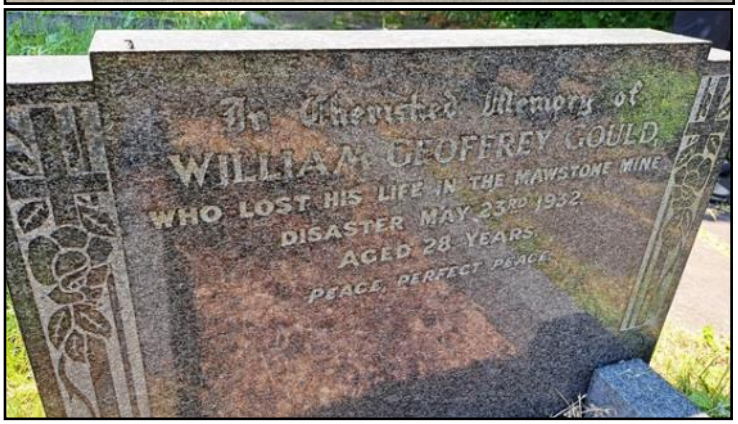
Youlgreave and Alport

Jamie Mather

Our walk on Saturday 10 June 2023 took us around Youlgreave and Alport, where the remains of the once extensive lead mining industry are hiding in plain sight. Our guide, Tony Wood, really brought the mining history to life and it was ironic that, in hot sunshine and with little rain for weeks, much of the story was about the struggle to remove water from the workings.

We finished our walk in Youlgreave churchyard, and memorials to some of

the eight men who died in a gas explosion at Mawstone Mine in 1932 – five in the actual explosion, and three more, including the mine manager, in the rescue attempt. A reminder that mining, in all its forms, has always carried a human cost.



A surprising link between Snibston Colliery site and Keswick in the Lakes

Cliff Lea

Snibston Colliery was the last coal mine to be closed down in Leicestershire. Coal working there had been started by George and Robert Stephenson in 1831. The Stephensons were then building the Leicester & Swannington Railway and were living at Alton Grange on the Long Lane (what is now Coalville) to Ashby de la Zouch road.

Sinking Snibston No 1 pit proved to be difficult due to vast volumes and pressures of water. At the top of the shafts 50 yards of solid rock had to be cut through and to cope with the difficult conditions the Stephensons brought in experienced sinkers from County Durham. The Main Seam was intersected at 220 yards and the shaft was continued to reach the "Roaster Seam" at 284yds.

Snibston No. 2 was started in 1832. Two shafts were sunk, 9 yards apart. The downcast shaft was 8 feet diameter and the upcast 10 feet diameter. At the top of the shafts 52 yards of Triassic rock was passed through to reach the seam immediately beneath and the total depth was 309 yards. Snibston No.3 pit was sunk half a mile north of No. 2 pit close to the top of the Swannington Incline to which a siding connection was made in about 1850. Two shafts were sunk, 8 yards apart, the downcast shaft being 8 feet diameter and the upcast, 7 feet diameter. Total depth sunk was 263 yards. By the mid-1880's the Main Coal and Roaster seams had become exhausted and No. 3 colliery was closed and the shafts were filled in.

The majority of the town of Snibston is now a district of Coalville, and the buildings and headstocks you can and at Snibston Country Park the headstocks and some buildings of Snibston No. 2 survive (*See photo right, courtesy of Dave Hart*). Snibston Colliery No. 2 produced coal continuously from 1833 to 1983.

These days Snibston Colliery Park makes for a popular family outing. The grounds cover more than 100 acres of mixed habitats. The grounds include the former colliery spoil heap which has been reclaimed to form woodland and an open rough grassland area. At the heart of the park is the Grange Nature Reserve, once the gardens of the Colliery Manager,

Very surprisingly, also on site is a theatre building – the Century Theatre – which links Snibston to Keswick in Cumbia. Way back in 1948, Britain's oldest surviving travelling theatre was built in Hinckley, and It took to the road in 1952. It was a self-contained unit with the cast performing in different locations, but within the same theatre. Based on a mobile auditorium and stage the theatre was composed of four large ex-RAF tractors, each pulling a 30ft trailer with a 10ft trailer hitched on behind. It was a self-contained unit with the cast performing in different locations, but within the same theatre. The rest of the convoy consisted of support services comprising six living quarters trailers, a dining car, kitchen, scenery van, booking office, double decker bus, an office and bathroom and a conventional caravan and jeep.

The Century Theatre toured for 23 years before becoming a permanent fixture at Keswick, where it gained the nickname the 'Blue Box'. It remained in Keswick until 1996. It is this mobile theatre, which was to finally come to rest in Snibston, and it continues to give live performances the year round.

Christine and I spent many short breaks in Keswick, enjoying the Lakes and mountains. I well remember the Blue Box, and when it finally moved on after 23 years back to Leicestershire, we then went to performances at the magnificent new "Theatre-by-the-Lake" whenever we stayed in Keswick.

But perhaps NEDIAS members might be more interested to go to the Snibston Colliery Tours, available most weekends in the summer months. Probably the best time could be on Sunday 10 September, coinciding with "Leicester Mining Heritage Day"

More info on the tours at https://www.facebook.com/SnibstonHeritageTrust/

IA News and Notes

Planners give green light for vital emergency repairs on historic Chesterfield building

Volunteers aiming to save one of Chesterfield's oldest industrial buildings from ruin have won listed building consent from the borough's planning authority. However, permission that will enable emergency repairs on Cannon Mill, a mid to late 18th century brick building with an overshot iron waterwheel. It once formed part of the Griffin Foundry, whose output included cannons, and is one of the oldest surviving industrial structures in Chesterfield, which has suffered a partial roof collapse, comes with strings attached following concerns raised by the town's Civic Society.

Chesterfield Borough Council's planning authority has added the following conditions to its listed building consent: repairs must start within three years, a structural survey is prepared by a suitably qualified person, a schedule of works must be submitted and agreed in writing by the planning authority and evidence of funding streams should be provided where necessary.

The mill on Dock Walk, a short walk from the town centre, carries Grade II listed status due to its importance in the industrial history and legacy of Chesterfield. However, an officer's report to the planning authority said: "The building has not found

a use for many years so has remained empty and it has deteriorated to the point at which urgent repair works are required. Consequently, it is included on Derbyshire Historic Buildings at Risk Register."

But the name Dock Walk intrigues us. The name first appears on maps in the early 20th century, but the nearby stretch of the River Hipper isn't navigable. Does anyone know the origin of the name?

Shirebrook welcomes mining memorial statue to honour area's heritage and history

On Sunday 30th April 2023, on the 30th anniversary of the closure of Shirebrook Colliery, a statue was unveiled in Shirebrook Market Square to commemorate those who worked at the site.

This is how Peter Walker, the sculptor, describes the piece on his website.

"The Shirebrook Colliery memorial is a statue to represent the mining community and heritage of Shirebrook. A group of Shirebrook Colliery ex-miners are planning to erect the Monument in the centre of the Shirebrook Market Place in memory of all the people who have ever worked either underground or on the surface at anytime during the history of the Colliery's Life from 1896 until April 30 1993.

The sculpture depicts a traditional mining family. There is a miner at work at the coal pit face. Above ground, looking out proudly stand the figures of a mother and child. The concept of the piece shows the miner as though he is carving from the rock face, as if sculpting out the future of his family. The mother and child are emerging above the coal face as though the family are at one with the land and the coal. The piece is created to show the miner below ground with the future above ground, as the mother and child look out into the distance beyond."

Sir Richard Arkwright's Masson Mills

Museum now open for tours every week day!

Sir Richard Arkwright's Masson Mills, a cotton spinning mill near Cromford, has been a landmark of the Derwent Valley since 1783. Most recently used as a shopping centre, it has been closed to visitors since 2020.

At Masson Mills you will find:

- Sir Richard Arkwright's showpiece 1783 mill, considered the finest surviving example of an Arkwright cotton mill
- Working textile museum
- Conference and meeting rooms
- Onsite parking

All run on hydroelectric power generated at the Mills.

Masson Mills Museum is open for guided tours including machinery demonstrations at 2:00pm every week day.

Pre-booking is not essential but group sizes are limited. To ensure there is space on your chosen day you can contact them in advance using the details below.

The tours start from the Visitor Centre (newly opened in July 2023) where souvenirs, snacks and drinks are available.

Tours cost £9 per person, with a reduced rate of £5 for under 16s, and take approximately 90 minutes.

☎ 01629 581001 – Email: info@massonmills.co.uk

Pleasley Pit Secures Biffa Award Grant

Scheduled Ancient Monument Pleasley Pit, managed by green space management charity the Land Trust, has secured a £402,000 grant from Biffa Award; a multi-million pound fund that helps to build communities and transform lives through awarding grants to communities and environmental projects across England and Northern Ireland as part of the Government's Landfill Communities Fund.

The grant awarded through the Partnership Grants Scheme under the Built Environment theme, will allow vital restoration and refurbishment works to be undertaken at the pit including work on the iconic chimney and the South Heapstead building. Along with the structure works, the grant will allow the Trust to digitise and create a range of interpretation to showcase the history of the site through oral history recordings, video tours, historical timelines, and interactive displays.

Managed in partnership with managing partner William Saunders, the Pleasley Pit Trust and the visitor centre manager and staff, this 150 year old colliery in Pleasley on the Nottinghamshire/ Derbyshire border, is an important historic site that has been rebuilt and restored into a popular local mining heritage museum, visitors centre and café.

The heritage museum is run by the dedicated volunteers from the Pleasley Pit Trust and offers an important glimpse into the past of coal mining. The headstocks, engine-houses and steam winders still remain, allowing for visitors to step back in time to explore and engage with artefacts from a bygone era, as well as learn about social history through the Pit Trust volunteer guides. The visitors centre and café are a valuable community hub engaging with local schools and community groups, as well as hosting an array of events, exhibitions, and educational programmes.

The funding will help to preserve irreplaceable parts of the UK's mining history and enable the museum and visitors centre to tell the story of the people who worked there for visitors to learn about and enjoy for many more years to come.

Alan Carter, Chief Executive at the Land Trust said: "We are all so pleased we can now start the important works on the chimney and South Heapstead building. Both parts of the site play an important part in the history and heritage of the colliery and house a popular part of the museum that we don't want to lose."

"The funding from Biffa Award will enable us to preserve the site for future generations, which is fantastic news. With more and more visitors each year, the interpretation works, interactive displays and timeline will be a real asset and help to engage returning visitors and new."

Rachel Maidment, Biffa Award Grants Manager said: "Biffa Award is extremely privileged to be able to support the Land Trust through our Partnership Grants Scheme to restore the chimney and South Heapstead buildings, and to create a range of interactive interpretation. It is hugely important that Biffa Award continues to fund projects that showcase the rich history of our industrial heritage, keeping it alive and providing future generations the opportunity to explore and learn about these vital links to the past. We can't wait to see this exciting project when it is completed in early 2024."

And finally ….

…. Sir Joseph Banks' Overton Hall near Ashover and the Arkwright connection

Cliff Lea

We all know how fabulously rich the Arkwright family became. What is often not appreciated is how many large houses and great estates the later generations were to own all over the country as the family stretched far and wide. One close to us here is Overton Hall near Ashover. How so?

Overton Hall – Ashover

Overton Hall of course is now a HE Grade II* listed building, and as we all know was at one time owned by Sir Joseph Banks (1746-1820) the great botanist who had sailed to the Antipodes with Capt. Cook. Long after Banks had passed away, Francis Arkwright MP (1846-1915) purchased Overton Hall in 1873 and lived there at the time when he was MP for East Derbyshire in 1874-1880 – did you know that 6 of the later Arkwrights became MPs???

Francis Arkwright was one of the many great grandsons of Sir Richard Arkwright – and, by his mother, he was also a great grandson of Sir William Fitzherbert of Tissington.

When Francis lost his parliamentary seat at the election in 1880, he decided he would go and live in New Zealand. He sold up Overton Hall, and moved lock, stop and barrel with his second wife to NZ, purchasing vast tracts of land in North Island just north of Wellington. He then proceeded to build another enormous house there. Probably bad taste but it was to be of Tudor architecture, but sufficiently grand now 150 years on to be a Grade I listed house in New Zealand.

Overton, Marton. Image included in Field Record Form Collection | Julia Gatley | 30/08/1989 | Heritage New Zealand

….. and finally …. it seems incredible, almost unbelievable but Arkwright named his great mansion in New Zealand OVERTON HALL – So we not only have an Overton Hall here in Derbyshire with links to both Banks and Arkwright, **but for good measure there is another OVERTON HALL in New Zealand built by the Arkwrights**.

Oh, and by the way, Francis Arkwright, having had his parliamentary experience in Britain, was elected to the Upper Chamber in NZ.

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

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