



Repton Village History Group Newsletter

Spring 2022



www.reptonvillage.org.uk

Membership matters:

Forgive us please, for reminding you that annual subs are due in January and the constitution only gives you till March to pay up! Thank you to all who have already done so. The amount is £8 (please) to John (Membership Sec) or Andy (Chairman) by cash or cheque or by BACS. See end of Newsletter for details.

We are planning a face to face meeting on 24th May for our AGM and have booked Robert Mee for his talk on lock-ups. This fits well since Charles has just found evidence of the location of ours - see below.

Not musket ball craters this time:

A few years ago, on a Village History Group visit to St Mary's in Newton Solney, small craters in the church wall were pointed out. These were musket ball impacts caused during the civil war by Parliamentary Forces having forded the Trent there en route to attack Bretby Castle.

While recently researching the position of Repton's ancient lockup, we noticed some similar indentations in the brick wall behind the Post Office just up the hill from The Boot Inn. Clearly not caused by musket balls, it turns out that there used to be a phone box nearby and folk waiting to use it would lean against the wall and twist their coins against the soft brick – resulting in the indentations.

The larger ones were probably old pennies. The smaller ones might be shillings or new-pence. They are at a range of heights as well. Does this reflect the ages of the people waiting there?

The range of brick sizes is interesting too. Thinner bricks are usually older – but their minimum size was eventually regulated to avoid sharp practice by some brick works. Big bricks were introduced to reduce the cost of the brick tax but were difficult to handle. The modern brick is a compromise evolved in Victorian times.



Samuel Hanson:

We researched Samuel back in 2016 and he appeared again in the 2017 winter and 2018 spring newsletters when we got the Freemasons to repair his grave stone. Born in 1784, he was their Tyler for 49 years and our Parish Clerk for over 60. He lived in the thatched cottages and was a weaver making braid at one of the Winshill watermills.

We recently found this about him: (Thomas – *Repton 1557 -1957*)

“Inside the church there were high box pews, a choir gallery at the west end, two side galleries and the three decker pulpit standing at the east end of the nave. The lower deck was for Sam Hanson the Parish Clerk, a gigantic figure who boasted that he was the only man in the village who was big enough to wear Macauleys cast-off clothes. By now he was very deaf and started the alternate verses of the Psalms in a manner peculiar to himself; married twice, he lived to be over 80 and was famous for bell ringing and beer drinking; while ringing for Queen Victoria's coronation he was said to have drunk 7 gallons of beer. There would have been a lot of ringing, but perhaps 7 quarts was more likely.

There is a parallel mention in Macdonalds' *A short history of Repton*, writing about headmaster Macaulay:

“... some six feet in height and some twenty stone in weight ...” and it goes on *“... the parish clerk nearly matched him in size and used to say that it was a godsend to him that no one else could wear the Headmasters cast-off clothes.”*

Helping with enquiries

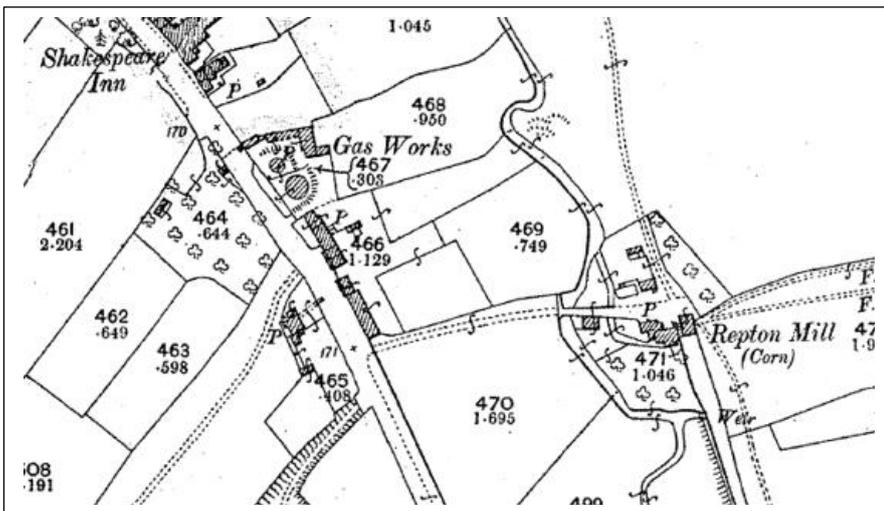
1) We had an enquiry from Malcolm Bennett in Australia. He says that according to his birth certificate, he was born in Repton in 1946 on Mill Street and according to a cousin this was at the Mill next to Brown's farm on Main Street. They moved to Wellington when he was four but worked in the area as a teenager so knew it quite well.

His grandparents lived at the Toll House on Willington Bridge prior to it being demolished. His mother's maiden name was Sharratt and he had an Uncle Jack who lived near the Mount Pleasant Pub. His dad was Len Bennett who was bell ringer and verger at Willington for some 40 years - however his "local" remained the Mount Pleasant until they moved to Western Australia in 1981.



Not surprisingly, he was keen for copies of maps and photographs of the mill and Jim Brown's Farm. We were able to send photos of the Gas Works which includes some of the Brown's farm buildings and several of the mill together with maps showing the mill layout in some detail. Sadly we don't seem to have any more pictures of the farm buildings.

Sharratt and Bennett are both good Repton names. Malcolm remembered 8 Sharratt aunts and uncles: Nancy Phillips (née Sharratt) near to the Shakespeare, Kath Sharratt at 27 Pinfold Lane (now replaced by a modern house), Jack Sharratt who lived well down Main Street, Bill and Fred Sharratt in Willington, Phylis Anscombe (née Sharratt) in Findern and his mother Susan Bennett (née Sharratt) in Repton then Willington. We included photos of the Shakespeare Pub and the forge and he remembered a cobblers somewhere. In fact the forge had a small office at the end nearest the village which was a cobblers.



1901 map.



The gasworks (looking towards the village). The thatched buildings were on Brown's farm.. Later there was a chip shop here.

2) We also had an enquiry about "The Brook Stile". Chris Vipond has been researching his family and found that his 3x great grandfather William Thomas died aged 64 in Repton. He was born in Repton in 1833 and was found dead in 1897 by the "Brook Stile". Chris found a newspaper report of the inquest into William's death held at the New Inn and was hoping we could pinpoint the stile.

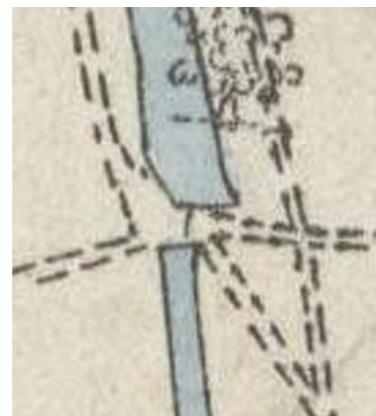
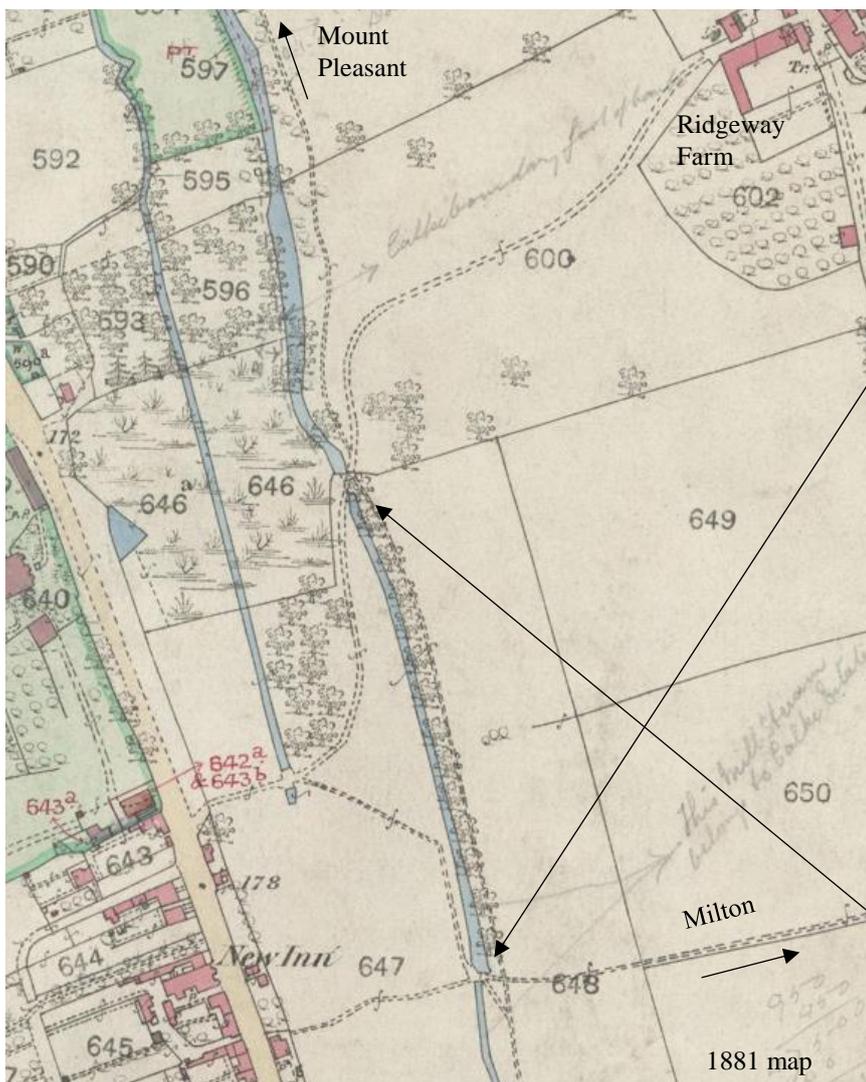
REPTON.

Mr. A. Grimwood Taylor (deputy coroner) held an inquest at the New Inn, Repton, on Saturday, touching the death of William Thomas.—Bertha Beard, wife of Samuel Beard, stated that the deceased was her father. He was 65 years of age, and lived at Wood's End, Repton. Witness last saw him alive on Thursday, when he appeared in his usual health.—A dressmaker named Grace Sagonid she knew the deceased well, and saw him about 6 o'clock on Friday evening. He then seemed in good health, but about 7 o'clock the same evening she heard he was dead.—John Hawksworth, a labourer, said that about twenty minutes to seven on the night in question he was coming home from work, and found the deceased lying on the ground near to Brook-stile. He did not answer witness when he spoke to him, and witness believed he was dead. The gate was locked, so that the deceased would have to get over. Witness believed that while he was getting over he fell. He had a wound on the forehead, and no doubt that was caused by the fall.—Dr. Cronk saw the deceased, and he told witness that death was due to natural causes.—The jury returned a verdict to that effect.

We checked with Marjory Boddice who was brought up at Wood End in the 1930s, but neither she nor her childhood friend from Milton recognised "Brook Stile".

William's father (also William) had moved to Repton from near Atherstone having married Mary Orchard in 1819 and, according to the 1830 land register, was living in a cottage at plot 744 at Wood End - shown on the 1829 map. The family stayed on in Wood End and for a while William was a sawyer. Apart from the reference on the sketch map of Repton School in 1666, the only sawmill we know of locally is the Milton one. Part of the Foremark Estate, it had one or possibly two saw pits which are still there although in really poor condition.

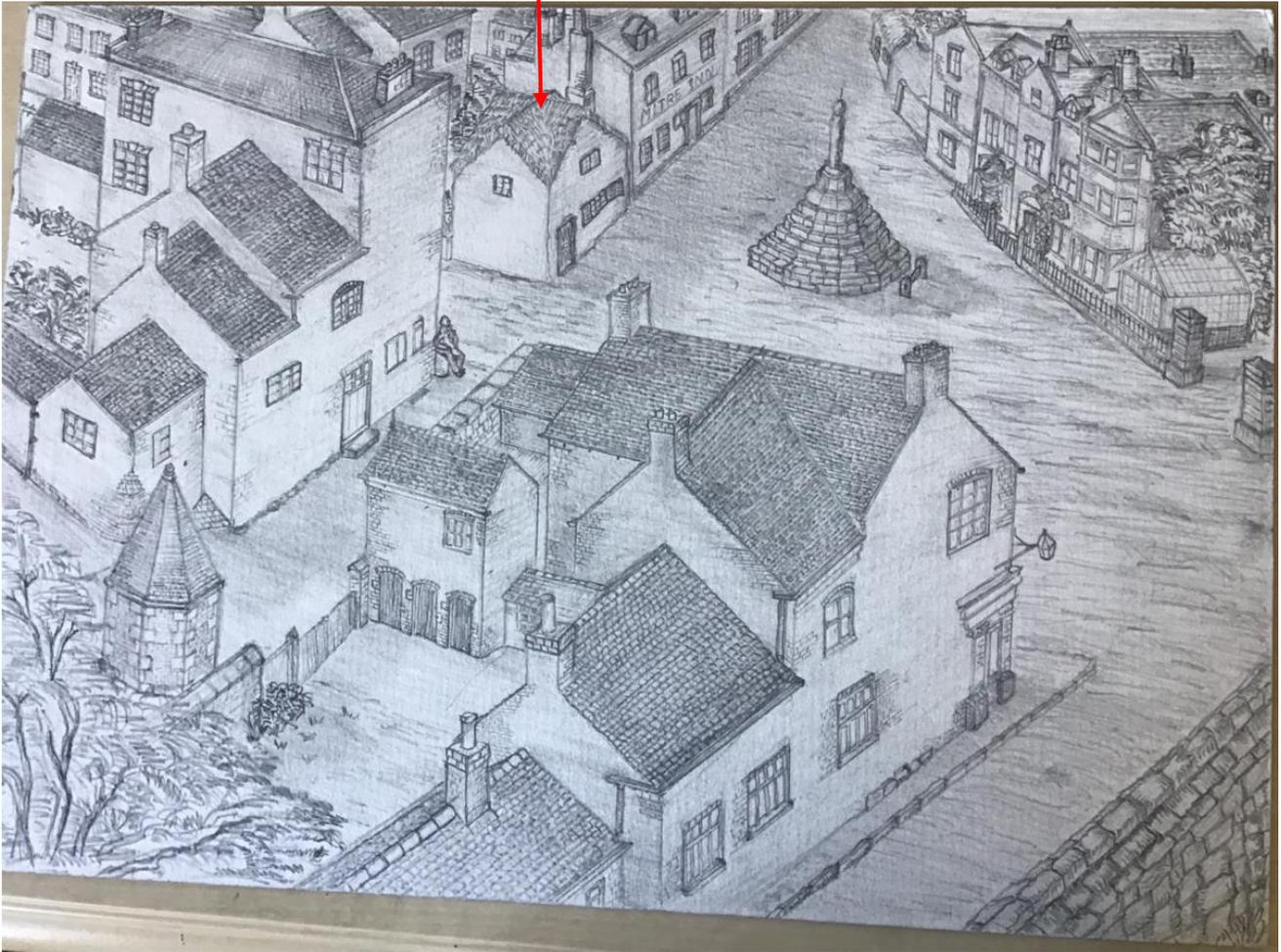
The most likely route to work would be a straight route down the footpath opposite the New Inn, across the field (Marble Close) to the brook, over the White Bridge, up the hill, across the Ridgeway path, down into Milton and up the hill to the sawmill. There would be a stile at the field boundary as you climb the hill from the brook but it's not close to the brook. Perhaps the locked gate referred to in the press cutting was on the White Bridge



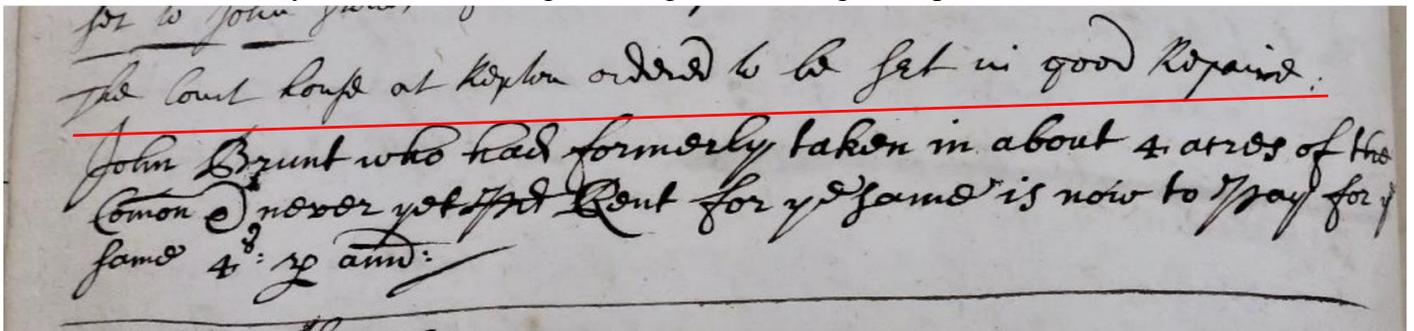
Another possibility is that he was on his way to or from Ridgeway Farm or Mill Hill and the Mount Pleasant beer house. In that case he might have crossed the brook nearer the village (bridge now gone). There is still a gate and stile there on the eastern side of the brook.

The Lock-up and the Law in Repton

For some time Russell has been interested in the village lock-up and produced this excellent sketch of how things might have looked. It shows the Court Leet beside the Mitre Inn, stocks by the Cross and the lock-up in Boot Hill.



We have pictures of the Court Leet which was demolished about 1884 by which time the local pubs were being used for the petty sessions (magistrates courts). Not always satisfactory when antagonistic protagonists were in a location serving alcohol. Eventually, the Court House adjacent to the Boot Inn was built by Bertie Warner's father. The courts leet were originally manorial courts but eventually became magistrate's courts. Although residential, we presume that the building was originally used as the court, and Charles has found references to it in early records - including it having to be set in good repair in 1688:



The court house at Repton to be set in good repaire.

Charles notes that by 1794 it appears in the Harpur estate rentals, presumably, at least in part, as a dwelling and occupied by Catherine Sarson who was paying 1/- per year. It is shown as plot 572 on the 1829 map and in the 1842 land register survey when it was owned by Sir George Crewe and let to John Parker. It can't have amounted to much because he paid just 2/- per year in 1835. The Parker's remained there till at least 1853 when Hannah Parker had it (still paying 2/- per year).

As we shall see, 1794 could be a good date for the building of our lock-up.

Tenants Names &c.	The half year ending at Michas 1794			The half year ending at Lady day 1795		
	Rents	Arrears		Rents	Arrears	
<i>Repton continued</i>						
<i>Tenants at Will continued</i>						
<i>Brought forw^{ds}</i>	£ 435	s 9	..	£ 435	s 9	..
<i>Webster Joseph's Widow</i>	5	10	..	5	10	..
<i>Wrayte John</i>	39	..	..	39	..	..
<i>Mawell John</i>	..	10	6	..	10	6
<i>Hone Luke late Joseph</i>	..	1	3	..	1	3
<i>Wrayte Widow</i>	..	1	3	..	1	3
<i>Edon Treas^r for a House and Garden from Waste</i>	..	..	6	..	..	6
<i>Sarson Cath for the Court House</i>	..	..	6	..	..	6
<i>Robert P... ..</i>	..	..	..	..	..	..

Harpur Estate rentals from 1794/5 renting the Court House to Catherine Sarson for 1/- per year (2 x 6d)

In 1865 the Mitre next door was rebuilt as a school boarding house but the Court Leet was still there.



After the cross was changed in 1806



After rebuilding of the Mitre.

Russell points out that in the manuscript notes for his book "Repton and its Neighbourhood", Hipkins mentions it being used for Parish Meetings and records the stocks being by the Cross and possibly removed in 1806 when the ornate square shaft was replaced by the present cylindrical one. In the preface to his book he notes "during the last fifteen years the old house which stood on the corner ... in which the "Court Leet" was held, and the "round house" at the back of the Post Office, with its octagonal shaped walls and roof, and oak door, studded with iron nails, have been destroyed". Hipkins published his book in 1899, so the demolition must have been about 1884.

Lock-ups were traditionally called round houses even though they were usually not round. They were mostly built following an edict from the Magistrate's General Quarter Sessions of 1790 requiring all parishes in the county to "provide a place of temporary confinement for the reception of vagrants, paupers, felons and the like". They tended to fall out of use when the County Police Act of 1839 allowed JPs to set up local police forces and required Police stations/houses to have a secure cell.

The location of our lock-up is recorded by some antiquarians as being on Boot Hill behind the Post Office. Russell has drawn ours as octagonal which is the same as for Ticknall, Smisby and Packington. The only local round lock-up is Breedon.

Charles has transcribed the Constables Accounts from 1763 to 1833 and he has found a few references in it. Before 1825, the references are to the Lock-up or Lock-up house. After that they only refer to the Round House.

In 1824 a notorious poacher (Joseph Starkey) escaped by breaking through a wall. He'd been arrested on

Sunday 21st Nov, taken to court (probably in the Court Leet in Repton), sentenced to 3 months in jail in Derby but held in the village lock-up overnight.

He escaped by breaking through a wall and was on the run.

There is an entry in the accounts for a payment of 5s 6d for Joseph Parker to spend 2 days in Burton and one in Derby looking for an escapee. This may be for Starkey's escape, but the date in the accounts is for 6th October 1824. So perhaps there was more than one escape:

Derby Mercury Nov 24th 1824

On Sunday night John Fisher, gamekeeper to Sir Francis Burdett, Bart. suspecting there were poachers on the manor of Foremark, proceeded to Twysford ferry, where he fell in with three men at the water side who were about crossing the ferry, and entered the boat with them. Two of the men before they had gone far jumped into the water and escaped, but Fisher seized the third man, upon whom he found two hares.—The following day he was taken before Sir Oswald Mosley, Bart. and A. N. Mosley, Esq. who in default of payment of the penalty, ordered him to be committed to the house of correction at Derby for three months. He was lodged for the night in the lock-up house at Repton when the Constable on going to remove him in the morning discovered that he had made an aperture in the wall, through which he had made his escape and has not since been heard of. He proves to be a person of the name of Starkey, a notorious poacher.

Constables' Accounts Oct 6th 1824

Paid Joseph Parker going two days to Burton & 1 day to Derby after the man who broke out of the Lock-up House.

Joshua Starkey, who was apprehended some time ago for poaching at Foremark and escaped from the Round House at Repton, was retaken this morning in Derby, and committed to the County House of Correction for three months. Committed to the county goal. George Cook, charged

Derby Mercury 01 December 1824

He was recaptured on about the Wednesday 1st December 1824.

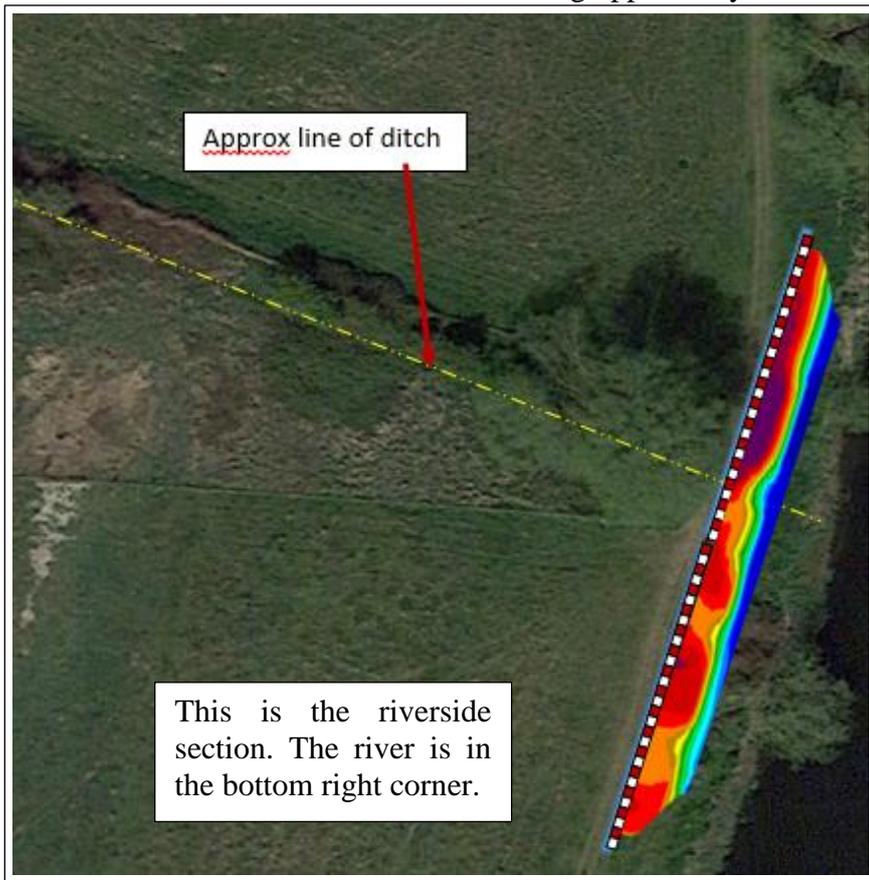
In 1825 there were substantial bills for repairs/rebuilding and many later references to housing of vagrants, but all later references are to the Round House. So it is possible that the original lock-up was octagonal and the replacement, round. That fits with the 1830 plan for the 3 cottages and the later Constable's Account entries but not with Hipkins' notes - and since he arrived in 1872, he would have seen the Lock-up before it was demolished so we have to accept his description.

Paid John stone mason for cutting stones for Round House 4/-. Paid for last load of lime from ???? 10s 6d

Paid Mr Goodale for thatch to Round House. 5/- (not very secure!)

Via Devana

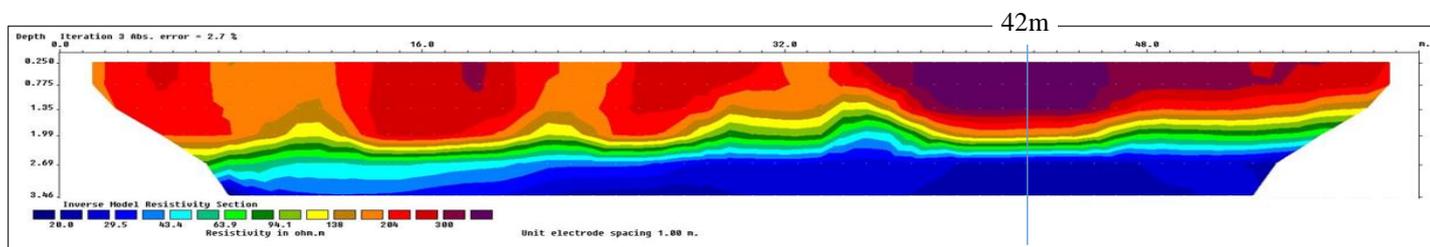
In the last issue, we mentioned an opportunity for geophysics between Barton and Branston to try to confirm the route of the Via Devana Roman road. In the event, it took place at short notice and Staffordshire Wildlife Trust decided to use it as a training opportunity for some of their people. So apologies to those who had offered to help - there may yet be another opportunity.



We carried out two long (60m and 70m) pseudo-sections parallel to the river. One right by the riverbank and the other some 500m away. Other sections of the road have been long confirmed and by line of sight on a map, there is a corresponding hedge and ditch at this point. Roman roads had a ditch either side and a metalled section between them, and one or both ditches often remain to this day. A drone was used to provide photographic evidence of location and this worked well by the river. A lack of recognisable features in the aerial photograph of the other one made it less useful. Fortunately someone had taken a photograph of the work going on and the camera was able to give positional references using GPS.

The brightly coloured image is the pseudo-section. The light blue line is where the traverse was made and the red and white item is a scale in 1m units.

Imagine the section hanging vertically into the page with the blue stuff about 3 m down.



The blue colours indicate low resistance – usually from moisture and humus rich soils. The reds and purples indicate high resistance and usually harder impervious materials. So here we have a harder, dryer surface about 2m deep, below which are the yellow and green layers of lower resistance soils and then the blue at about 3m probably represents the water table.

Certainly, although some probes could be pushed in, we had to knock most of them in with a mallet and some with a hammer. A quick dig with a shovel revealed the reason for this - a gravel rich surface.

Interestingly, the highest resistance area, centred on 42 m, is just where we might expect to find the agger - the cambered metalled road - relative to one of the ditches. It is 1.5m deep and 8m wide which, if slightly wide, is acceptable for a Roman road.

Shockingly, although over the years, several county archaeologists had made clear the historical potential of the area, plus the find (following a landslip) of a Bronze Age spearhead with the wood of the shaft still in the socket, no archaeological requirements were attached to the planning approval for developing the site. Re-profiling the river bank will obliterate the possible Via Devana site and adjacent palaeochannels. There is not even a requirement for a watching brief during the re-profiling.

Further geophysics is being discussed to see if we get a similar result a little farther from the river – in which case a trench could be excavated to see if there is indeed evidence of the road.

1910 Valuation Office Survey – a valuable tool for understanding Repton in the early 1900s.

Charles has found and copied this map and register used to establish taxes (c.f. the rates).

Charles writes: The 1910 Valuation Office Survey is one of the most useful sources for Repton house & family history. The first step to finding the details for a particular property is to identify the reference number from the appropriate Survey Map and then to consult the relevant Field Book; there are six for Repton & Milton listing over 500 properties, both dwellings & farmland.



(fig 1)

The Field Book entries vary but will generally give the type of property, the occupier, the owner & its value. For agricultural land, acreages are included as well as Ordnance Survey references. The examples below give an idea of the additional information provided for some properties.

49, High Street - Ref 176 (fig 2):



fig 2

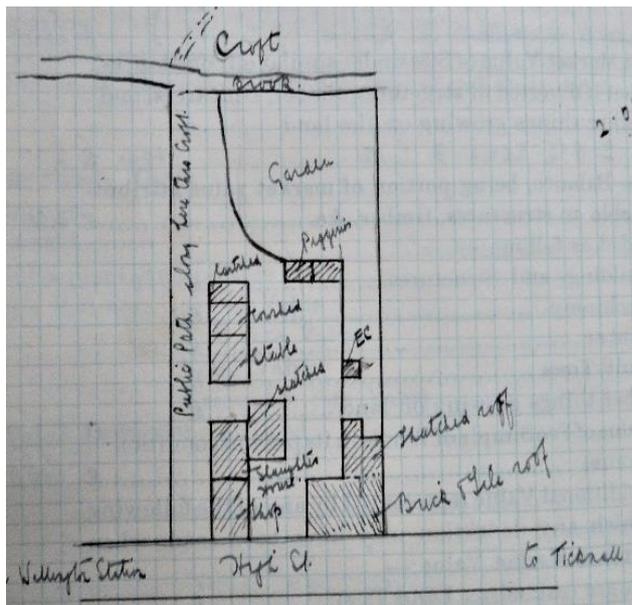
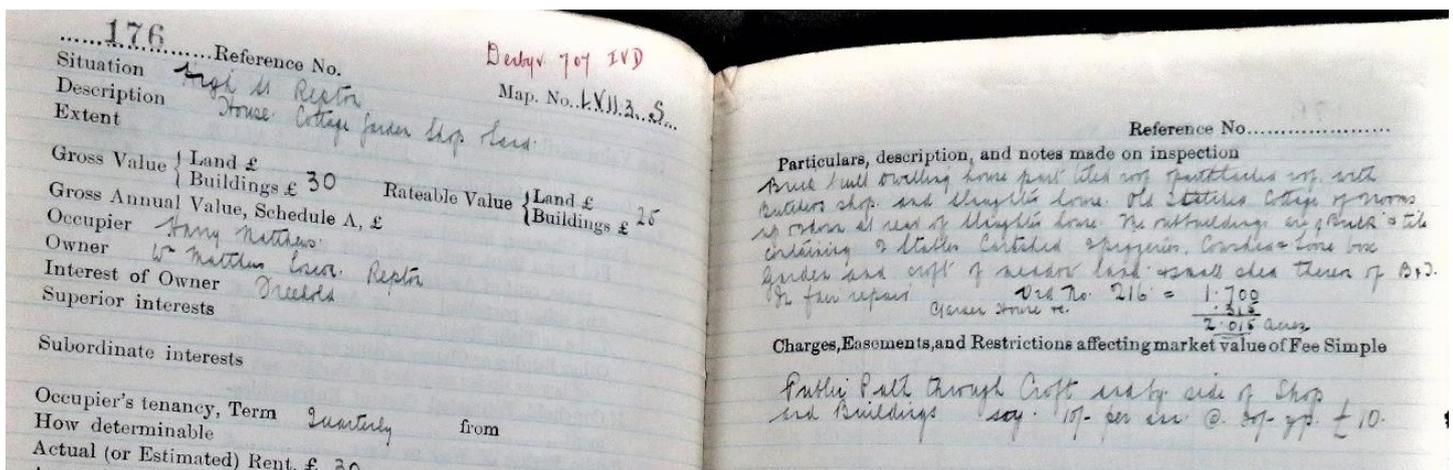


fig 3

This property (Mathews Butchers and jitty - Summer 2020 newsletter) is one of several with an associated plan (fig 3) in addition to the usual entry (fig 4).



(fig 4)

56, 58 & 60, High Street - ref 183-188 (see fig 5):

On the opposite side of the High Street is a more complex property with six dwellings listed separately, all owned by J Wroughton.

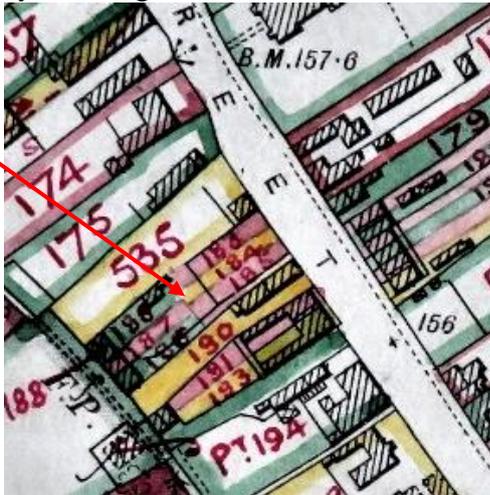


fig 5



fig 6

The 1760 open field map shows buildings at the rear of the property (fig 6) and they (or their replacements?) are still there in 1910. They are described as brick & thatch, 2 rooms up & 2 down valued at just £60 for the three. The three newer houses fronting the road are described as brick & tile, 3 rooms up & 3 down, and are noted to be in good repair. It is often difficult to link families in the 1911 Census to a particular house but the Valuation Office Survey makes this much easier. John Henry Palmer is listed in the Census with no address given but is noted as the occupier of Ref 188 in the Survey so we know exactly where he lived.

Payment of membership fees:

Even in lock-down, we have to pay for insurance and archiving plus some small administrative costs and the membership fee is our main source of income nowadays. Our membership year runs from January. So the fee of £8 is now due please, payable by cheque or cash to Mr J Kidd, 6 Burdett Way, Repton DE65 6GA or by BACS to sort code 60-12-01 A/c 05851238 (Repton Village History Group).

Comments and more information about Repton and its occupants are always welcomed. For more information on the newsletter content or the History Group please contact us on 01283 702448 or rvhg@reptonvillage.org.uk or visit our website.

Programmes of talks: We are considering reverting to a programme of regular talks but in the meantime here are the programmes of historical talks from other local societies that we are aware of:

- Barrow - St Wilfreds.** 7.00, £3.00. Free parking. 07841480691
- 6th April History in Your hands - Archaeologist Stephen Saunders talking about archaeological finds from a lifetime of fieldwork.
- 4th May Walk through the church in the middle ages and what lies beneath the floor - Prof Elizabeth and Dr Martin Tingle
- 8th June Moonings & Mawnings - fascinating stone carvings (not for children!) - Bob Trubshaw
- 6th July The beautiful harp - Dr Terri Eynon
- 3rd August Vikings in the East Midlands - Dr Rebecca Gregory
- 7th September The alabaster men of Burton - Moira Acker
- 5th October Saints and Rogues in Barrow on Trent
- Ticknall Preservation & Hist Soc** - 7.30, £2.00, 01283 762064, Village Hall, parking
- 26th April Far side of the moon - Dr Julian Onions - Village Hall
- 31st May T G Green Pottery - village hall. Ian Hambling - archivist.
- 28th June Visit to Catton Hall 2.00pm
- Melbourne Civic Society** - Wesley Hall/Athenaeum Potter St. Use High St car parks.
- 25th April Derbyshire and the sea - connections - Liz Keeley
- 23rd May Fridtjof Nansen - Scientist, explorer, diplomat, humanitarian, Nobel Peace Prize laureate - Danny Wells.
- Chellaston History Group** - St Peter's Church hall, 7.30pm
- 26th April Objects of curiosity -table top quiz.
- 31st May Dolly Shepherd -Edwardian Ballon Parachutist.
- 28th June Visit to St Wilfred's, Barrow on Trent - Ann Heathcote
- 26th July Visit to Donnington le Heath Manor.
- 30th August Last English Peer to be hanged for Murder (4th Earl Ferrers) - Gay Evans.
- 27th September Medieval Medicine - Gareth Howell.
- 25th October A History of Melbourne - Philip Heath
- 29th November World War One - Ashley Waterhouse.
- Hilton History Group** - Hilton House Hotel 7.30pm £3.00 - hiltonhistory@gmail.com
- 5th May Catherine Crompton's diary - married into a wealth banking family - Stephen Flinders.
- 7th July Visit to Wakelyn Hall
- 1st September Derbyshire holders of the Victoria Cross - Paul Newsham
- 6th October Mary Queen of Scots (final instalment) - David Templeman
- 3rd November Sudbury gasworks
- Aston On Trent History Group** - Memorial Hall 7.30 4th Tuesday.
- 26th April Elvaston Castle update
- 24th May Edward and Mrs Simpson - John Whitfield
- 28th June You're never too old to rock n roll- Vince Eager
- 26th July Local Kinder Transport survivor
- 27th September Derby's other railway -Ken Anderson
- 25th October Regenerating Aston Hall Lake - Steve Deakin
- 22nd November The Mummer's Play -Tony Razzell.