



# Repton Village History Group Newsletter

## Summer 2019 (21<sup>st</sup> June 2019)



### The ongoing programme:

Our next meeting will be on July 16<sup>th</sup> in the United Reformed Church Schoolroom and will include a talk on Rev William Bagshaw Stevens the Headmaster of Repton School from 1779 - 1800. We will bring another box from the archive and can also look forward to feedback on the Foremark Monuments and Inscriptions work, the St Wystans churchyard trail, geophysics on the lower paddock and hopefully on the Warehouse Field and the Tanner's Lane field, and the planned graffiti survey. If folk have not been able to follow Cat Jarman's Vicarage Garden dig on Twitter, we can address that too.

We are in the process of planning a church crawl on the north side of the river Trent - Swarkestone, Barrow, Twyford and Willington. The date and arrangements will be announced in due course.

The metal detectorist who featured in the Channel 4 programme on Cat's work at Foremark has offered to come and talk to us at some point, as has Adam with his finds.

Unfortunately, Dr Cat Jarman will not be giving us a talk this year on last autumn's work at Foremark and this spring's archaeological digs. However, if you can make a 2.00pm talk on Friday 25<sup>th</sup> October she is giving a talk at Repton Literary Festival but we don't know quite what she will cover.

She has outlined the findings of the dig on Twitter but, sadly, the days have passed when, each season, Martin Biddle would stand on the Slype at Repton School and explain and interpret what had been found to a large chunk of the local population. Then the assembled throng was split into groups to visit each trench for a talk by those supervising them. Twitter is not quite the same.

Remaining dates for your diary this year are:

Sept 17<sup>th</sup>

Nov 19<sup>th</sup>

December 17<sup>th</sup> (?) Christmas Buffet?

All these meetings will be in the United Reformed Church Schoolroom in Pinfold Lane. Some on-street parking is there and you can park on the drive of 43 Main St or indeed on Main Street itself.

### Helping with enquiries:

We had a couple of requests for help recently. One from a mother seeking information for her son on the giant's skull reputedly found in the Viking mound in the vicarage garden. We were able to provide quite a lot of information, but it led onto interesting questions as to whom it had been given. A Dr Simon Degge recorded its finding in 1727 - 40 years after the event - and reported that it had been given to Mr Bowes, Master of Repton School. At that time (c1687) the "Master" was Head Master of the school and all the other teachers were Assistant Masters. However, the head at that time was John Doughty and there has never been anyone named Bowes. William Bower was the Second Usher from 1687 and was succeeded by his son, John in 1705. So these may have been the people in question.

A request for assistance in locating the graves of members of the Ward family was passed to us by the church warden and resulted in us doing some research and hunting in the churchyard. We found indications that a key member on their family tree had an earlier marriage and a son, who died aged 17, by his first wife. His first wife Salley died and he remarried and had more children which the family had located from the censuses. We found another unknown child Harriot who died in her first year and so would not have appeared on any census. We had a pleasant hour or so with them in the churchyard locating the graves. The Ward family is large with many branches over the years in Repton and Milton and so it is good to have been given a bit of the family tree for the archive.

We were approached by John Wallace who, in sorting out his mother's affairs had come across a copy of MacDonald's History of Repton which he kindly passed onto us. His grandfather was Harry Eastwood who until 1941, ran the Repton School Bookshop at the Cross and initially lived over the shop. He also ran the Grubber. He was treasurer of the PCC and, described as a stocky figure and, with abundant energy, he had a nickname in the school of "The Mighty Atom". They had a house built on Burton Road named Ashlea - next door to Bunty Marshall. John sent his recollections of Repton and a copy of a page from the Repton School magazine recording Harry's retirement, a brief history of the family for us and a list of Repton names that he could remember. Through the Friday Luncheon Club, Gordon Johnson has added more details.

### **Foremark churchyard**

Helena arranged for the Derbyshire Family History Society to provide us with a photocopy of the reference copy of this 40 year old booklet and we scanned and OCRd it to make it into an editable document on the computer. Several nights were spent correcting scanning errors and then 5 of us spent a morning looking at all the graves and noting any errors and some omissions (even of very old graves). We corrected the errors, added the new grave stones, new inscriptions on existing stones and the cremation memorials and brought the book up to date. As we checked things, we found more concerns, including the omission of Samuel Forman from the war memorial listing in the original booklet. So we had a number of re-issues and added the issue date to the cover so we could keep track. The latest version is dated 6<sup>th</sup> May 2019. The name, place name and mason indexes were brought up to date and we added trees to the graveyard map to help with locations and removed the now vanished style and added locations of the new memorials. We did not check the memorials in the church as we knew none had been added since the original booklet was published. However, these memorials might be worth checking one day for errors. Martin F gave us access to his information on the graveyard which includes Church Warden Ann Redfern's map of burials in the newer section. With her help, we hope to be able to publish this too so people can visit graves even if there is no memorial. Needless to say, it is now in the digital archive and a copy has gone back to the DFHS and some paper copies have been printed for Foremark folk and St Saviours.

One unexpected find was shoe outlines scratched into the slate top of a raised grave – much like those in Repton. They are not so easy to see, and further work is needed to photograph them.

### **Repton Churchyard trail**

Jane came up with an innovative layout design for this and we carefully worked out how much we could squeeze onto it. In the end we decided not to include any items from within the church but to make reference to them if appropriate when writing about items in the churchyard. We chose about 20 items - some features such as the lychgate and the steps by the Vicarage, but mostly graves with an interesting story. Chris C photographed everything and Andy and Margaret researched them and wrote text for each. Jane is acting as editor and squeezer in. We have still to put locations on the map, but we are making good progress.

### **Sutton Bonnington visit**

We hosted a visit during half term for 19 members of the Sutton Bonnington Local History Society but, due to mobility constraints and rain, we limited the walking to the far side of the churchyard to see how high we are above the Old Trent and then talked through Repton's History in the church with a few slides followed by a trip to the crypt and around the Medieval Priory site. Time was limited and so the shorter talk was used, but giving it so infrequently, it was difficult to maintain a fluent presentation. A slide led talk is probably needed rather than a talk with just a few slides.

### **Repton School Archive:**

We started this project with an introductory visit in order to decide what could be achieved and to try to work out the process to be used and how to store and share the information. The earliest documents date from the 1200s and there are some bits and pieces that may be earlier. They run right through to the 1900s. Many of the documents are in a legible hand and are straightforward to transcribe. Others are in a much earlier hand and there we need the expertise of Barbara Foster and Charles to help us. Some documents are in legal Latin and full of abbreviations. Barbara may be able to deal with them, but some may need professional help. The plan is to list everything that is there and to photograph it as we go so that there is a copy that can be made available to people and perhaps lodged in the Record Office at Matlock. Transcriptions will be made using the photographs but

will take several lifetimes - we have to regard this as a very long term part of the project. We are currently considering how to record everything so that images of each part of a document are kept together, easy to find and the transcriptions can be searched and so that we can easily keep track of where things are stored.



A corner of the archive room.

### Village Party:

We managed to patch up the event shelter for this year's event and invited folk to try to help us by naming people on some of our photographs. We also had a slide show running plus our bookstall and people could come and make badges with their names spelt out in Viking runes. Russell had an excellent display about the mysterious heads from Knowle Hill that were once at Ridgeway farm but have now disappeared.

But the star activity was Aimee's archaeological test pit built by John K and full of sand with buried (plastic) gold coins and jewels. It was well attended by children (and parents) from age 2 to 10 all afternoon.



The lost heads of Knowle Hill.



Test Pit

### Filming:

The HelloHalo series "River Hunters" went out on the History Channel in March and April and included the Viking episode containing filming of the team in the Old Trent by the school. It had a lot of noise and references to the viciousness of the Vikings and flashes of still images depicting their attacks but was also disappointing and a bit misleading. The site of the Vicarage mound was intercut with photographs of the skeleton in grave 511- which was actually on the other side of the church. At one point a hand emerged from the water clutching a torque, but it turned out that this was intercut from a later part of the film at Tamworth (it was also a modern tourist souvenir!). No Viking items were found at Repton. As Martin B suggested – entertainment rather than education.

The Channel 4 programme documenting Dr Cat Jarman's digs last year was much better though the scene with the Viking ship on the Trent was very obviously not near Repton and the first section included some of the same noise and flashed up stills that River Hunters had used. They had filmed for the whole 3 weeks in the Vicarage garden but, to the chagrin of us budding film stars, there was only the briefest shot of the skeleton in Martin F's grave (needs rephrasing!). However there were nuggets of solid gold in the programme such as the revelation that the occupants of the prominent graves 511 and 295 found by Martin B and his wife, were father and son - with a possible identification as Olaf and his son Eysteinn. Another was the tantalising evidence that our locally and long held suspicion of Foremark being part of the winter camp in 873 looks correct, plus the exciting discovery there of an Anglo-Saxon plough share abandoned in a burnt out building – not something an Anglo-Saxon would have willingly abandoned.

### The WWI poppy book – "We Will Remember Them"

This book sought to remember the lives of those from local villages who are on our war memorials. In the process we found a few more who are not recorded locally. Subsequently, during the research for the 2018 display on those who participated and survived the war, we found another 6 with local connections who had died.

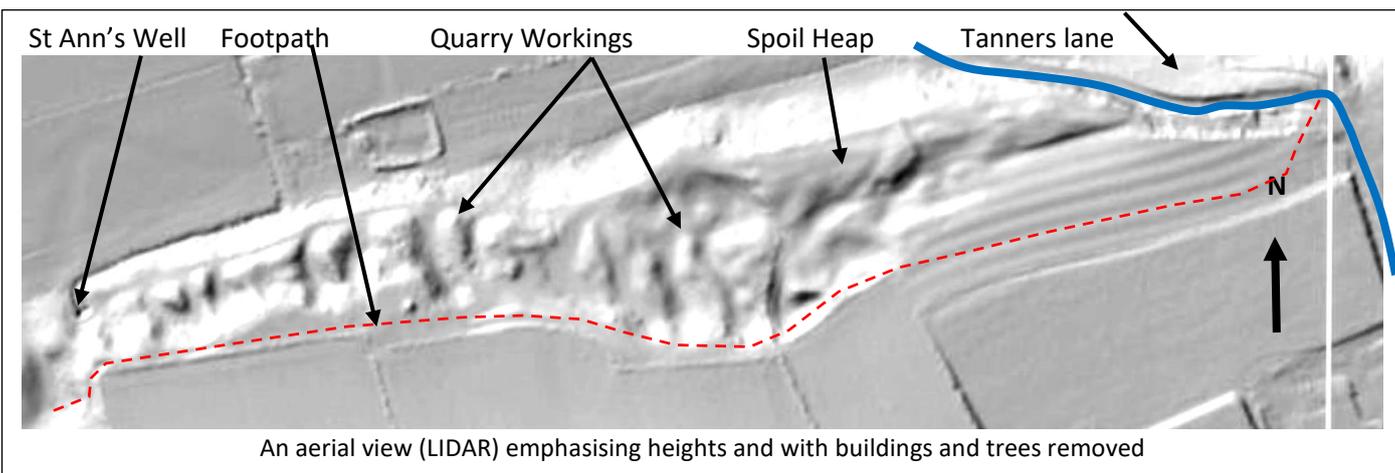
They are: George Edward Pegg Dennis, Edward Wilfrid Estridge, John Jackson, Arthur Nettle, William Nettle and Frederick (Frank) Waldron.

So a third edition has been produced. However we probably need only a handful of copies and they will cost £4.10 each to print. So we are considering putting it on our website for anyone to look at. We can print them locally one at a time if needed.

### Quarries.

Along the lower (northern) part of the field that starts at Tanners Lane and contains the footpath to Newton Solney, there are unusual mounds of soil that can only be spoil from some ground work. We have wondered in the past if it came from the hollows in the escarpment farther along that we thought might have been a source of clay for the Newton Brickworks. However another visit with Keith Foster revealed that the footpath skirts a sizeable stone quarry cut into the edge of the escarpment and it is likely that the spoil came from there. Some work with maps is required to try to date it, but Adam points out that the Earls of Chester (who built the Motte and Bailey

Castle about 1100) gave the Canons at Calke a quarry close to the River Trent. So this may be it. Gill Stroud in her Extensive Urban Survey of 1999, speculates that the workings may have obliterated earlier Anglo-Saxon buildings along the edge. More to think about. We do plan to do resistivity surveying in parts of the field this year and something may turn up.



### Milton Saw Mill

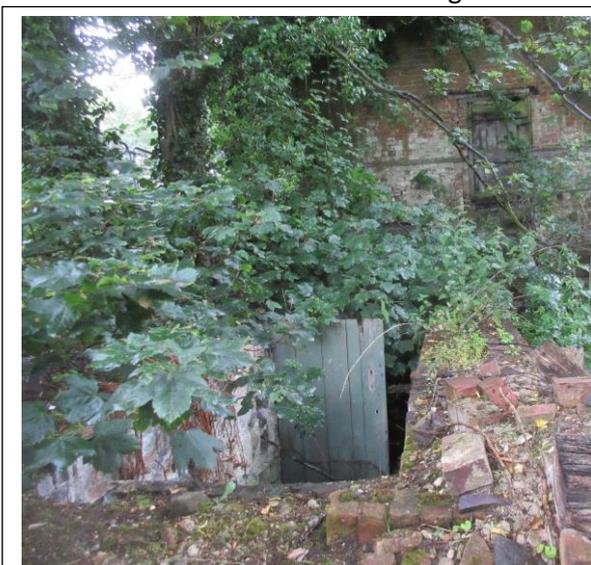
A planning application was made by the Church Commissioners to demolish the Sawmill at Milton and put 3 large houses with space for 4 cars each on the site. We went and peeped at the site. As a youngster, Russell used to take his car(s) up there when working on them. So we were able to glean a lot of information. Research through old maps revealed that it was just woodland in 1829 and still not present on a Harpur estate map from before George H-C died in 1844. Gravel extraction took place nearby, but not here. However, the area has been levelled and the surrounding woodland is on banks some 4 feet above the working surface. These banks contain no gravels in their stratigraphy. By the 1899 map the brick building that is there now was present with the office, store and what is thought to have been a carpenters shop and an outside saw-pit. The saw-pit (once roofed) is a rare survivor and would have used two sawyers - one above and one below - to saw trees into planks with a double handed saw. This building looks to be complete and sound and is a rare survivor of industrial archaeology in Milton and of the working parts of the Foremark estate. The corrugated iron roof was probably originally tiled, shingled or thatched. There is another ramshackled building in the NW corner which is present on the 1901 map and thought to



1901 map.



1924 map



The saw-pit

have been a smithy - horse shoes and slings and chains would have been much used here. By the 1924 map the long sawn timber seasoning sheds in the NE corner were present as was the saw-mill by the gate containing the steam powered circular saw. In this building there was also a system of drive pulleys connected to a large timber lathe. This had 4 speeds using pulley wheels with 4 diameters of pulley on them. The drive belt from the steam engine ran on a loose pulley at the lathe and the moving belt could simply be slipped over onto the adjacent drive pulley for the lathe when necessary. There were rails in the floor for a saw bed which fed the timber

into the saw wheel and other rails were used to move timber in and out of the shed. These two tin-roofed buildings are classic timber agricultural buildings from the early 1900s and, not surprisingly, in poor condition. The steam engine was replaced by an electric motor and the saw-mill was operational until 2018. The exhaust steam pipe and the brick plinth for the water tank are still present. In later years there were other buildings – now gone.

The history group has sent in a request to the planners that the brick building, as a scarce example of industrial activity in Milton and the Foremark estate, be retained and re-used. There are other non-historical causes for concern over this application and personal objections have gone in from a number of people.

#### **The Vicarage Garden Dig – season 4:**

Members of the history group have supported these digs by cleaning the finds and collecting, metal detecting and (sometimes) sieving the spoil. This year we had Ailsa and Sheila cleaning items and Margaret, Russell, Adam and Andy dealing with the spoil. The first two modern digs in the Vicarage garden revealed an artificially weatherproofed surface of gravel with post holes probably supporting shelters. A tantalising theory that it was a ship burial came to naught. Artefacts suggest Viking industry - fiddle-key horseshoe nails, wood working tools, an arrow head, roved ship's nails, a broken axe head and scraps of metal including lead flashing from moulds and some gaming pieces typical of Viking armies. Also found were small pieces of Roman glass, cement and pottery. Broken Anglo-Saxon quern stones and part of a broken Anglo-Saxon cross emerged quite early - including one fragment that could just be part of a mill stone. Season 3 in a new location was disappointing. The radar survey had offered tantalising potential and our resistivity survey had identified fairly deep pits that we anticipated would be middens associated with the previous site, or possibly graves. A broad shingled strip had been interpreted as a path leading to the Viking Burial Mound and a range of stones across the site again tempted the image of a ship burial. One of the middens was dug and turned out to lead to a grave of a man (probably) but the condition of the bones was so poor as to prevent Carbon 14 dating. A coin found in a higher level (a Sceatt) is from before 740 and so the grave was likely to be Anglo-Saxon and from the monastery. More Roman fragments were also found. 4 trenches dug in the area covered by the range of stones revealed little.

This season (4) was shorter, but a lot more exciting. A few more coins and some lovely brooches and pendants strongly implied that the gravel path was Saxon not Viking. Also it does look as though there are several graves running parallel to the one found in season 3 – possibly 9 within the bounds of the trench. These will have to wait till next season for exploration. The area under the range of stones has been very carefully examined and although there is still the possibility of a burial there, only a few metal artefacts and animal bones have so far been found. More Roman material was found including two pieces of hypocaust tile and a large piece of Roman brick with a cat's paw imprinted in it. Another shadow in the soil was imagined to be a ship burial, but it disappeared as the level descended. However a slot put in at right angles to the north edge of the trench suggested there may be a row of post holes and it also contained Roman Samian Ware. The slot came down onto red clay which Martin F also found in the bottom one of the 4 central trenches with gravel below. There was speculation that this might be the floor of a Roman building. Since the Anglo Saxon finds were in the same context as the gravel path, it was concluded that it was of Saxon origin rather than Viking and led to the site of the two roomed chapel or mausoleum built in the days of the Anglo Saxon monastery but which had later been used as a charnel house and mounded over by the Vikings. Since it runs over the anticipated graves, they must have been forgotten by the time it was laid and so the graves might even be Roman (or Romano- British).

Of particular interest was an early spoon drill bit (auger - you can still buy them) - evidence of woodworking on the site - and some lead from glazed windows. The latter (called lead *came*) was made from a strip of lead folded down its length into a U section into which the edge of the glass would have been slipped and then a cement pushed in to hold it. The same technique is used today although the came is mostly of H section. The cement was still there but the glass had gone. Small fragments of Anglo-Saxon glass were also found.

So Season 5 looks potentially exciting.



Skeleton found at the end of the 2018 dig



Roman brick



Anglo Saxon or possibly Roman Graves?



The slot at right angles to the northern edge of the trench with post hole and red clay base.



Before cleaning



And after cleaning



As found. The clean breaks had us vainly hunting in the spoil heap to see if we could find any more bits.



After cleaning



A tiny Anglo-Saxon sceat from before 740AD



Constantine the Great- died 322 AD



Blotting out the sunshine to help with photography.



Unearthing yet another padlock – or a part of.

**Knowle Hill visit:**

On April 11<sup>th</sup>, 15 members of the group visited Knowle Hill and were taken round the site by Kasia Howard who is the Engagement Manager for the Landmark Trust who own and manage the site.

It is situated on a precipitous promontory where two valleys meet just behind Seven Spouts Farm between Ingleby and Ticknall. Back in 1686 Walter Burdett from the Foremark family rented land at Knowle and built a rather splendid but unusual house surrounded by an Italianate garden incorporating buildings and terracing that dropped down the steep hillside. He worked in London but retired to the country after his father’s death in 1696. Walter was a son of Sir Francis Burdett the 2<sup>nd</sup> Baronet and brother of Robert the 3<sup>rd</sup> Baronet. In fact Robert died and Walter claimed the title but only for a matter of weeks because Robert’s wife was pregnant and her son (also Robert) became the 4<sup>th</sup> Baronet instead.

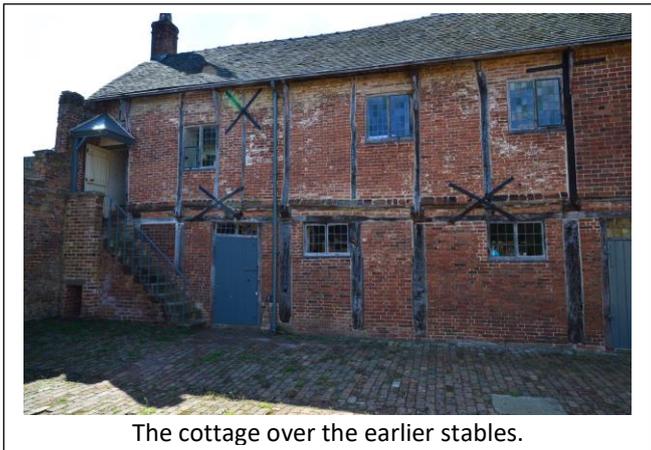
Walter’s hillside structures incorporated man-made cave-like passages and rooms with domed ceilings and alcoves. He had a reputation for socialising and was acquainted with Sir Francis Dashwood who started the Hellfire Club and one wonders exactly what went on there.

Walter died in 1732 and left the place to his niece who sold it to a local man Nicholas Hardinge. Walter’s nephew Sir Robert Burdett (4<sup>th</sup> Baronet) rented and then bought Knowle Hill and the family lived there while the Jacobean House at Foremark was demolished and Foremark Hall was being built. After moving to the new place at Foremark in 1762, he demolished the main house at Knowle, but used the gardens and hillside structures for entertainment. They were allowed to decline as mysterious and attractive features. He built a custodian’s cottage above stables at the top of the hill and a turreted Gothic tower and building as a summerhouse – all of which are still there, restored and available as a holiday let through the Landmark Trust.

There was considerable speculation as to the location of the main part of Walter’s house and research by Russell has found a picture that suggests that it was adjacent to the later cottage. So we are now laying plans for a geophysics survey to see if the foundations can be traced.



The entrance to the mysterious underground rooms



The cottage over the earlier stables.



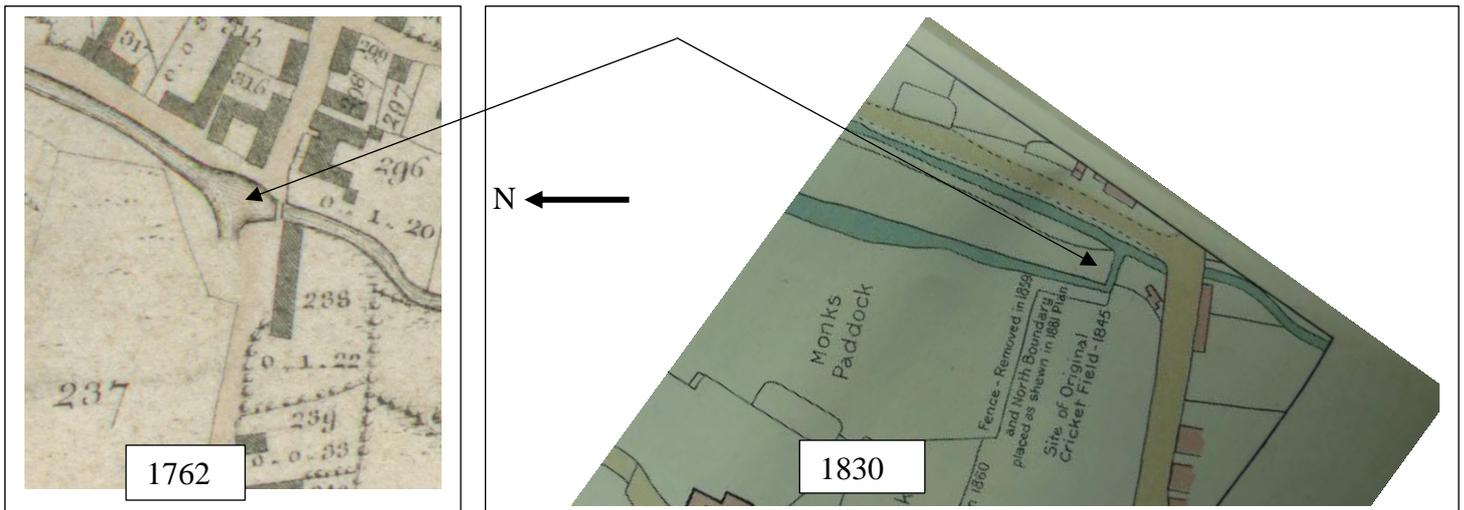
The turreted summerhouse



Inside as a sitting room

### **Geophysics in the lower paddock at Repton School:**

On a surprisingly hot day in April, 5 of us conducted a 40m resistivity pseudosection survey on the lower paddock at Repton School to fill in the information we have about the channels feeding the mill, Priory and the fishponds. We conducted one more section further south (on a cold day) to help identify the edge of the mill pond, and that just about concludes the work we can do without actually digging holes. One more piece of work in the back garden across the road would help us understand the original line of the brook. The bend required to get it from the south side of the bridge at Brook End and through the original arch and into the paddock is so tight as to be improbable. It is likely that, on the 1762 map, the pool by the present Brook End Bridge was a ford with a foot bridge for pedestrians. The channel off it probably flowed through the wall to supply the fishponds as indicated on the 1830 sketch from the Repton School property Register. The ponds are not shown on the earlier map.



Given all we know, the best theory is that the mill was part way down the field and opposite the Priory Garth. Now we are in a position to write and publish a summary of our work and its conclusion.

### **Published programmes for some other Local History Groups:**

We no longer offer a programme of monthly talks

**Willington History Group** (7.30pm, The Old School Willington – second Thursday in the month)

OCT 10<sup>th</sup> – AGM followed by “The Weaker Sex”- six remarkable 19<sup>th</sup> Cent women by John Redfern

NOV 14<sup>th</sup> – “Mystery of Crop Circles, Ley Lines etc” by Paul Newsham

DEC 12<sup>th</sup> – “The Shorthose Pottery of Willington” Jodie Williams` and Alan Gifford’s photographs of Willington

JAN 9<sup>th</sup> – “Pentrich Martyrs” by Richard Stone. The last planned uprising in British history – so far!

FEB 13<sup>th</sup> – “Murder at Staunton Harold” by Gay Evans. Earl Ferrers, the last nobleman to be convicted of murder

MAR 12<sup>th</sup> – “Beside the Seaside” English love of seaside holidays, sticks of rock and saucy postcards! – Bob Massey

APR 9<sup>th</sup> – “Derbyshire in the Jacobite Rebellion” Brian Stone. How Bonnie Prince Charlie’s invasion failed at Swarkestone.

MAY 14<sup>th</sup> – Visit to Rolls-Royce Museum. Please note- this will be an afternoon visit starting at 2.15p.m.

**Ticknall Preservation and Historical Society** (7.30pm, Ticknall Village Hall, 01530 810266/01283 762064)

Friday 28<sup>th</sup> June - Outside visit - Come ride on the restored Ecclesbourne line from Duffield to Wirksworth.

**Melbourne Civic Society** (7.30pm, Assembly Rooms High St Melbourne, 01332 865760, Guests welcome.  
Members £1, non-members £2. [pamadams56@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:pamadams56@yahoo.co.uk))

- Fri June 28<sup>th</sup> - Midsummer Evening at Melbourne Hall
- Sat July 6<sup>th</sup> - A Guided Walk with Nottingham Civic Society round The Park Estate Nottingham
- Sept 14<sup>th</sup>/15<sup>th</sup> - Exhibition at Melbourne Arts Festival in Senior Citizens Centre
- Mon Sept 30<sup>th</sup> - The Arkwrights: Spinners of Fortune by an Arkwright Society Speaker
- Mon Oct 28<sup>th</sup> - Derby and Sandiacre Canal by Chris ReesFitzpatrick
- Mon Nov 25<sup>th</sup> - Bats by Kevin Reynolds followed by the Annual Winter Social
- Mon Jan 27<sup>th</sup> - Robert Bruce Napoleon Walker by Stephen Finders
- Mon Feb 24<sup>th</sup> - The Butterley Company's Greatest 19th century Engineers. Timothy Castledine
- Mon Mar 30<sup>th</sup> - A.G.M. followed by a talk on Derbyshire Castles by Robert Mee

**Etwall and Burnaston History Group** (7.30pm, Chapel School Room, 01283 730287) Unless otherwise stated, meetings are held in the Methodist Chapel Schoolroom, Willington Road, Etwall DE65 6HX and commence at 7.30 pm. Visitors welcome at all meetings (admission £3.00) Further details: [www.etwallhistory.org](http://www.etwallhistory.org) or Pam Kerby (01283 730287) [sandypits.kerby@btinternet.com](mailto:sandypits.kerby@btinternet.com)

- 16<sup>th</sup> July - Conducted walk. 7 pm at Radbourne Church Coffee & cake afterwards at Blenheim House, Etwall.
- 20<sup>th</sup> August - No meeting arranged
- 17<sup>th</sup> Sept - Bradshaw's & an English Railway Tour, by Robert Mee
- 15<sup>th</sup> October - Recent Archaeological finds in Dovedale and at Calke Abbey by Rachael Hall (National Trust)
- 19<sup>th</sup> Nov - History of Cheese Making by Alan Salt
- 17<sup>th</sup> Dec - Social Evening – Burnaston Village Hall – members only
- 21<sup>st</sup> January - History of Melbourne – by Philip Heath
- 18<sup>th</sup> February - Unusual finds at Hanson's Auctioneers, by Jim Spencer
- 17<sup>th</sup> March - Saints in History by Dr Trevor James
- 21<sup>st</sup> April - Ladybird Books by Paul Newsham
- 19<sup>th</sup> May - A.G.M. followed by talk on Markeaton Park by Linda Proud

**Hilton and Marston History Group** ([hiltonhistory@gmail.com](mailto:hiltonhistory@gmail.com), Methodist chapel, Main St. Hilton DE65 5FF  
7.30pm £3.00)

- 4th July Old photos and films of Hilton
- 1st August No meeting
- 5th September Hilton Neighbourhood Plan - Charles Cuddington
- 3rd October The Burton and Ashby Light Railway - Alan Hiley
- 7th November A Christmas Quiz with a difference - Paul Newsham
- 5th December Seasonal Social evening - 10 years since the HMHG was formed

**Aston on Trent Local History Group** ([astonontrenthistory@gmail.com](mailto:astonontrenthistory@gmail.com) £2 over 18s. Children free)

- June 25th Peter Liddle: Abbeys and Priors
- July 23rd John Whitfield: Remembering the 1950s
- August: NO MEETING
- September 24th Tony Luke: Church & State from the Black Death to the Reformation
- October 22nd The History Group: Finding Photographs
- November 26th Peter Castle: Derbyshire Songs and Stories
- December: NO MEETING

To make comments or for more information, please contact Andy Austen on [rvhg@reptonvillage.org.uk](mailto:rvhg@reptonvillage.org.uk) or 01283 702448  
We are always pleased to receive information about the locality and the people that lived and worked near here.