

RIPLEY & DISTRICT
HERITAGE TRUST
DERBYSHIRE

Newsletter



Number **Six**

September 2016

www.rdht.org.uk

Welcome to our sixth newsletter. We distribute it, mainly by e-mail, three or four times a year. Remember : the more items members submit, the more we can include in the newsletter. Any member can e-mail items to the editor on pcs1003@btinternet.com.

Members' Evening

Our first Members' Evening will take place at Marehay Cricket Club on Friday 7th October at 7pm. All members are invited, and may bring a guest. In addition, some non-members who have been helpful in our recent projects will be invited. There will be a free buffet, and we will be showing the first part of the History of the Butterley Company DVD, as well as updating members on our other projects. Do come along : we hope it will be a pleasant evening for everyone.

Our Next Talk

David Amos will give two talks on Ripley's mining heritage on Wednesday 19th October at 7.30pm at Marehay Welfare. Admission is free but there will be the opportunity to make a donation on the door, and there will be the usual raffle.



*Western
Pit 1969*

From the experience of our previous talks, it pays to arrive early, for what is sure to be a popular event.

Heritage Lottery Fund Progress

We are coming to the end of our period of lottery funding, and, as well as using the money to buy equipment like scanners, a projector and screen and display boards, we have funded talks, and the production of several DVDs, including :

The History of the Butterley Company DVD

Mike Frost has spent hundreds of hours working on this project, Tim and the two Johns providing advice and text and collating pictures. The result is that the History is mainly complete up to 1910 and we hope that it will shown at the Members' Evening. It is a really professional piece of work, and, with luck, the HLF funds will stretch to completing it and producing copies for sale next year.

Other DVDs

Mike and colleagues from the Camcorder Club have also been busy recording the memories of older members of the community who have connections with Butterley. A group of ex-Butterley workers were filmed reminiscing, and John Wright, former manager and a member of the family who owned Butterley was filmed in discussion with Tim about the last days of the Company. Both films will be kept as a record, but also edited to form part of the second half of the History of Butterley DVD.

In addition, we have also filmed Valerie Marshall, granddaughter of John Marshall, and an entrepreneur in her own right, talking about her family history, and about life in Ripley in the past. Again, this material will form part of a future DVD.

We'd like to thank Valerie, John and all the others who took part in the filming for their help.

Butterley Walk

This walk, part of the Autumn Footprints Festival, will take place on Saturday 24th September, starting at 1pm from the Midland railway car park. This is the third year we have run this walk.

Website News

Again thanks to HLF funding, our website has been revamped : see it on www.rdht.org.uk. It is very much a starting point, and a lot of work needs to be done on it, but it certainly looks a lot better than the old site, and gives us the space to add huge amounts of information about the Trust, its activities and the history of the local area.

Co-op Calendars

We have received a donation of a number of Ripley Co-op Calendars from about a hundred years ago. These large colourful items are quite rare, and, once copied, it is likely that they will be donated to Derbyshire Record Office.

War Memorial Book Funding

At a recent meeting, we agreed to part fund the production of a book on the men named on the Ripley War memorial. The book is being produced by Ripley U3A's Genealogy group, a number of members of which are also members of RDHT, and is being jointly funded by Ripley U3A. It will be sold at cost and proceeds returned to the two organisations.

Meanwhile, anyone who has any information about ancestors who appear on the memorial, or especially photographs, is urged to get in touch with me, Peter Smith, on pcs1003@btinternet.com.

Articles in Local Publications

Articles from RDHT members have appeared (or will appear) in recent editions of All Things Local (Chapman's chain engine, and Dr Fletcher) and Country Images (The Butterley DVD). It all helps to spread the word about RDHT !

John Knowles

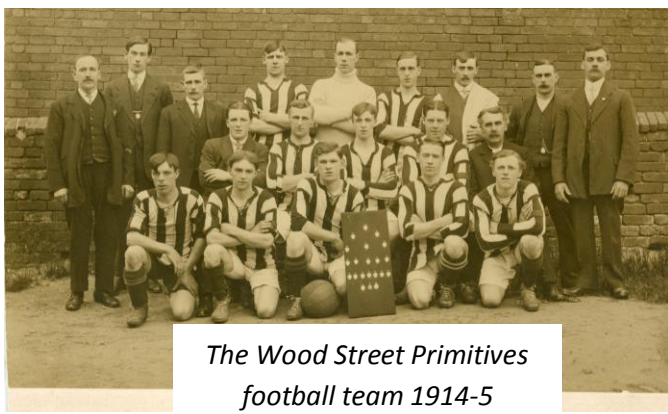
Thanks to Maurice Wright, of Heage Road, we have recently been able to get access to fascinating information and pictures about John Knowles, the first man from Ripley to die in the First World War.

Knowles was born in 1882 in a cottage at the corner of Riley Lane in Pentrich. He appears to have first joined the army in 1902, enlisting in the Dragoon Guards in Leicester.

He became a lay preacher and wrote notes for sermons, becoming very involved with Wood Street Methodist Church. In 1909 he started a football team called

the Wood Street Primitives. He was by then a fettler, that is someone who was responsible for trimming off waste on mouldings

He was mobilised



*The Wood Street Primitives
football team 1914-5*

on the outbreak of war and was a Lance Corporal in the Coldstream Guards when he died, the first man from Ripley to do so, in September 1914, only 41 days after war was declared.

He took with him to war a supply of postcards, and wrote regularly to his wife from the first day of the war, August 5th, to his death.

One read :

Dear Wife,

We are now in France at Le Havre the place you see on card its very hot here but am first class only sea voyage upset me

From loving husband John.

John, Mary and Nellie



Butterley Site Update



The Butterley Trust is now holding regular monthly meetings in the Town Council's office. It comprises of RDHT, Ripley Town Council (RTC), Amber Valley Borough Council (AVBC), Derbyshire County Council (DCC), Friends of Cromford Canal (FCC), Midland Railway Trust (MRT),

Pentrich & South Wingfield Revolution Group (PSWRG) and Israel Newton & Co Cromford (INC).

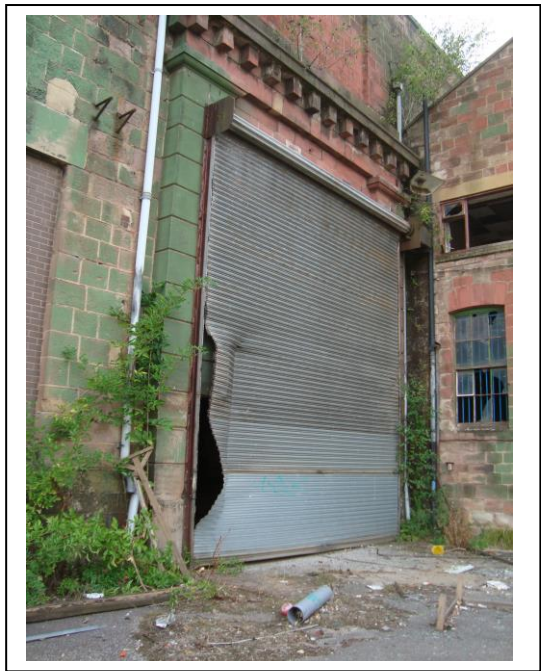
Each group has nominated an individual to be their representative on the Trust. RDHT's is Robert Grasar. A draft constitution has been drawn up and is now being fine-tuned by RTC and DCC legal departments.

Each group has put forward ideas regarding the future use of the site, soon to be combined as a single document (masterplan) entitled 'Tunnel Vision'. This is to be presented to the owners, Aquarius Estates (AE) sometime in the near future when they also will put forward their masterplan for the site.

The Trust's masterplan covers the development of the northern portion of the site (the Works Yard) which is encircled by the 1838 Pattern Shop, the Octagonal Gatehouse, listed offices, the former Stores with the Canteen above, Machine shops and the Blast Furnace Wall with its Cast-house arch. The objective is to develop complimentary commercial and public amenities on the site based upon its archaeological and industrial heritage.

The envisaged centre piece of the development (and probably the main revenue generator) would be to provide visitor access to the section of the canal tunnel

and Wide Hole beneath the Works Yard. The Wide Hole is a section of the tunnel which was dug double width to enable a boat to moor alongside a wharf formed at the base of two vertical shafts up which raw materials could be craned to the raised ground above and behind the Wall. Site meetings have recently taken place with tunnel consultants (services free of charge) to assess the engineering feasibility of the idea.



The Pattern Shop is a fine two storey stone building built in 1838. It lies on the perimeter of the main site and has its own external car park, making it an excellent choice for a multi-organisation heritage centre.

The Octagonal Gatehouse is central to Butterley's famous history as it is believed to pre-date the 1817 Pentrich Rising. It stands directly at the Works entrance, opposite another similarly old stone building, formerly a house incorporating the old post office in its basement. Both buildings could be restored to their former glory to become the main entrance for visitors and a security facility for commercial businesses on the site.

The Machine Shop could become an excellent revenue generating venue as a Heritage Engineering facility. One company (Israel Newton & Co) and MRT have already shown interest and INC has put forward a theoretical business plan. It could also be developed as a further source of revenue by installing internal visitor viewing platforms on the central mezzanine floor to overlook the ongoing engineering operations.

RDHT now has unsupervised access to the site via the small gate between the Gatehouse buildings and the Pattern Shop. We have particular interest in the

Company documents which remain on the site, including in the Machine Shop office where a considerable quantity of documents are piled inside, the stores, already heavily vandalised but documents of interest were retrieved last Autumn and taken to Matlock and some interesting items still remain.

The foundry offices are difficult to access but a very large quantity of documents are stored in boxes and files on heavy duty racking. The canteen is also difficult to get to, but documents were piled up within this area, lying up to 4ft deep and stretching the full width of the building. The majority of the documents seen had little or no 'heritage' value.

Vandalism continues in spite of extra security put in place by VPS. The entrances to the ground floor stores have again recently been forced open and further trashing of documents has taken place. The Machine Shop's main shuttered door has also been forced open.



One final concern is the condition of the wall's stonework. In recent years a substantial trees have grown in and on top of the wall, the roots of which are creating large cracks in it, whilst also forcing the individual stones to bulge outwards. It will only be a matter of time before the structure begins to collapse. The Trust organised a visit by DCC and Historic England's (formerly English Heritage) ancient building inspector who agreed to contact the owner.

Contact RDHT

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