



# NORTHAMPTONSHIRE'S INDUSTRIAL HERITAGE

## NEWSLETTER



BALH Newsletter of the Year Award 2017

### ISSUE 147 - SUMMER 2018

Northamptonshire Industrial Archaeology Group

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Photograph front cover: An American Indian Ladies Top one of the many items in the Leather Collection in Northampton  
© Jane Waterfield 2018

## From the Editor

We start on a sad note when I have to tell you that Susan Ranson passed away quite quietly on the 22nd April after a short illness. Many NIAG members attended the celebration of her life on a glorious warm Friday morning. Her obituary is to be found on page 21.

The summer programme got off to a very good start with the visit to the National Leather Collection which is housed in the Grosvenor Centre, Northampton. Thankfully we were indoors on a very wet morning and fingers are crossed that rain will keep away for the majority of our summer programme. As this edition is 'put to bed' so far so good.

I came across an interesting piece in the BALH publication *Local History News* in which the author, Alan Crosby talks about the demise of Local History Groups due to lack of 'new blood' coming along, in particular onto Committees. I have précised this later on in this issue and it makes interesting reading even though the message is clear in that societies/groups need new blood on committees in order to survive.

There is an interesting little piece about hot water lamps on page 19 and if anyone can throw any light on this (pun not intended) please send me any information about them for later issues.

As always the months whizz by and it is that time of the year when subscriptions become due. Please note that there is a small increase this year the first for a number of years. Also there is an important notice regarding the new data laws. This can be found on page 22.

As I put the final touches to this edition 'to bed' further sad news comes our way when I have to tell you that Ron Greenall, he who taught many of us local history and was a stalwart of the Northamptonshire Record Society, passed away after a second heart attack a few weeks ago.

There is an important message regarding our last visit this year. Please see Dates for the Diary on page 23.

Finally we hope you have a good summer and look forward to seeing you sometime.

*JW - Editor.*

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## Errata

In the report of the talk on Edward Harrison Barwell at EMIAC93 (Newsletter 146 page 7 and 8), the following corrections should be noted:

The bridge at Luton Hoo built by Barwell in 1830 had a 45 foot span, at that time double that of any iron bridge in Bedfordshire.

Barwell's partner in 1826 was Thomas Hagger (not Haggar).

## WINTER TALKS OF 2017/18

### Northampton's Boot & Shoe Factory Heritage - 1st December

*Due to illness, this talk by Peter Perkins replaced the one originally scheduled for December on Toys which it is hoped will take place at a later date.*

Northampton is known internationally for its boot and shoe heritage. Although today much of the boot and shoe industry has disappeared, in many parts of Northampton (as well as in other towns in the county) we still retain the Victorian street scene of former shoe factory buildings interspersed amongst terraced housing. This talk concentrated on the buildings associated with the boot and shoe industry in Northampton.

There was a thriving boot and shoe industry in the county in medieval times and we know that by the time of the English Civil War in the 1640s, there was large-scale production of boots and shoes. At that time and through into the 18th century, shoes were produced by hand in small workshops and houses by individuals or small groups of shoemakers. However, by the start of the 19th century, we started to see entrepreneurs setting up 'manufactories' in the larger towns of Northamptonshire. These were not factories in the current sense, where shoes would be produced from start to finish but, in effect, warehouses where leather was received and leather pieces cut out by hand using a knife running around the edge of a brass-bound pattern. These cut components were then sent out for workers to produce shoes by hand in their own homes and workshops (this was termed *outworking*) before the complete shoes were returned to the manufactory to be inspected prior to distribution, often for sale in London.

The most well-known early manufactory in Northampton was built in 1857 in the Italianate style by Moses Manfield on Campbell Square in 1857. (*photo below*) Adjacent was Turner Bros, Hyde and Co's manufactory, built around the same time, and we know from contemporary newspaper reports that over 2000 men worked for this company but most of them worked in their own homes, only



© Richard O'Rourke collection

a dozen or so actually in the manufactory! Both these buildings were demolished in 1982 during the town centre redevelopment.

The late 1850s saw the introduction of a stitching machine suitable for sewing together leather components. It was

operated by hand so did not need power and could thus be used in homes and workshops as before. However in the 1860s and 1870s, other machines were introduced which required the use of power supplied by a steam engine, in particular the reciprocating press for cutting out thick leather soles and the Blake stitching machine for sewing on shoe soles. This marked the start of the shoe factory as we know it, using machinery driven by lineshafts, pulleys and belts linked to a steam engine. Gradually over the next 30 years, more and more mechanisation of shoe manufacture took place and so more and more operations were carried out in the factory rather than in homes or workshops. By the late 1880s, most of the shoemaking operations could be mechanised and required power for them to operate, by means of a steam engine or later by an oil or gas engine. Stubbs and Grimsdell, were shoe manufacturers who moved to Northampton from London in 1889, building a factory in Talbot Road just off the Kettering Road and this is claimed to be the first factory in Northampton where all shoemaking operations were carried out on the premises, no work being sent to outworkers.

So we get the ubiquitous three-storey boot and shoe factory built in-amongst the terraced housing, often on street corners, creating what became the familiar Victorian streetscape in Northampton. Externally many of the factories were relatively plain. Most had had largish metal-framed windows with curved brick window heads, but with wooden-framed sash windows where the offices were located. There were usually loading doors on one or more of the upper floors, with a wall-mounted crane for taking in leather and other components from the street and loading completed footwear onto wagons. Some factories used what was called a pier and panel construction, with the windows set in panels between the brick piers. Brickwork was sometime polychromatic – different colour bricks – with decorative corncicing. The degree of decoration would be dependent on who



3-storey boot factory, Colwyn Road

© Peter Perkins

was paying for the factory building. Speculative building was more likely to be plain. A shoe manufacturer who had started to be successful and was expanding

his business would be likely to want something a little more decorative as a statement of his importance!

Shoe factory buildings came in all sizes, from the very small two-storey factory at 15 Ecton Street, off the Wellingborough Road, up to what was the very large factory on Kingsthorpe Road built for Barratts in 1913, the decorative office block of which still remains. Inside a typical three-storey boot and shoe factory, there wasn't a rigid system for where the various operations were done. Generally the operations requiring heavy machines were done on the ground floor or in the basement and the operations requiring good light for matching leather on shoe uppers or for cutting and closing were done on the upper floors, especially if there were roof lights.

The boot and shoe industry in Northamptonshire reached its peak just before WWI and then began a long decline until today we have just a handful of shoe manufacturers in operation, some still using the premises they did in the early part of the 20th century such as Crockett & Jones, Trickers and Church's Shoes. In 1999, English Heritage carried out a survey and identified over 400 buildings still remaining in the county which had been used by the boot and shoe, leather and other supply trades, most of which are now in other uses. These exclude all the garden workshops built behind terraced houses that may have been used by outworkers, of which there are still several hundreds, particularly in towns like Kettering and Rothwell.

In Northampton, something like 200 factory buildings still remain that have some link with the footwear or leather industries. Very few exist in the town centre, having been swept away with the redevelopment of the centre in the 1970s. There are some in St James, a few in the Regents Square area and others off the Kingsthorpe Road. But the majority are in the area to the north and east of the town centre which in 2011 was created a conservation area known as the Boot and Shoe Quarter. It contains about 100 buildings that had strong links with the boot and shoe trade. Some are in other industrial use and a few remain unchanged externally with their original windows but many have been converted into apartments.

The second part of the talk explored the history and architecture of some of the factory buildings in the Boot & Shoe Quarter. This is fully covered in my book published by NIAG in 2015 entitled *The Industrial Heritage of Northampton's Boot & Shoe Quarter*, copies of which are still available from Jane Waterfield, price £7.50 to NIAG Members.

*Peter Perkins*

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## **Members' Night - 12th January**

On a chilly night members gathered for the annual members evening for which



there were three main presentations and one 'shorty'.

Geoff West started the evening with a trip down memory lane at one of the **Longtown** weekends that members went to back in the '70s/80s. He says:



At Easter in 1988 members headed to South Wales for the annual weekend at the Longtown outdoor activity centre near Abergavenny. The subject for study being the history and the route of the Hay and Kington railways. On Saturday we followed the Hay railway from Brecon to Hay-on-Wye, walking across sections of the track bed and stopping to visit

sites such as the Tal-y-llyn tunnel. (*photo above*). The next day we continued from Hay to Eardsley via Whitley-on-Wye, and then along the route of the Kington railway to finish at the Britannia bridge on the outskirts of Kington where the railway crossed the River Arrow. It was a good weekend with much to see and talk about.



L to R: John Van Laun, Malcolm Hill, Ray Tims, Richard O'Rourke, Geoffrey Starmer, Judith Hodgkinson, Lizzie Hill, Barbara Hill, Cecil Swann, Robert West, Tessa & Jan Fajkus, Colin Billows, Chris?, Oliver Ranson, Cecil Swann's son and Richard Hodgkinson  
© Geoff West

There was an enjoyable six minutes by Tony Waller who mentioned that whilst browsing on the computer he came across mention, with pictures, of another NIAG in the world. This took the shape of trains (*photo right*) and buses in Germany.



Jane then took members on the annual trip of pictures from our last years' summer programme and Peter closed the evening with a wonderful talk about the **Scottish Diaspora Tapestry** showing pictures of a range of industrial topics depicted in the Scottish Diaspora Tapestry panels on display in London's Westminster Hall in April 2017. He had accompanied Sandra to the exhibition at the invitation of Gill Lindsay, one of the embroiderers who was for many years a NIAG member.

Back in 2012, people associated with the Prestonpans Art Festival started an embroidery project which would commemorate in stitch the skills and achievements of Scottish pioneers who had emigrated all over the world. Based on cartoon designs created by Scottish artist Andrew Crummy, 305 panels, each half a metre square, had been embroidered by stitchers in 34 different countries over a 2-3 year period, each showing an image relating to a local Scottish pioneer. Called the Scottish Diaspora\* Tapestry\*\*, the panels went on tour round the world in 2015/16, returning to the UK in 2017.

There were four panels which featured Corby steelworks and its links with Scotland, celebrating the formation of Stewarts & Lloyds (*photo left*), the recruitment of Scottish labourers to work in the Corby steelworks in the



1930s, the expansion of Corby as a new town and the role of the steelworks in the [PLUTO] pipeline which supplied fuel to D-day troops in France. Other panels stitched in England featured famous Scotsmen Thomas Telford, Sir Nigel Gresley (*photo right*) and John Laird (of Cammell-Laird fame at Birkenhead).

Northern Ireland celebrated John Barbour from Paisley who started the Barbour Linen Thread Company at Lisburn (the company had a warehouse in Overstone Road, Northampton in the 20th century – now flats called the Linen Thread Building).

Other panels included Scotsmen such as George Sandeman who went to





Portugal and introduced us to after-dinner port, William Chalmers who moved to Sweden and founded an industrial school now called Chalmers University of Technology and three World War One Scots airmen who moved to Australia and founded the Queensland and Northern Territories Aerial Services in 1920, now called Quantas.

\* Diaspora meaning the spread of people from their original homeland.

\*\* Although Tapestry in name, as with the Bayeux Tapestry, the panels are actually embroidered.

Photos of the Tapestry courtesy of Peter Perkins

*Members*

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### **The History and operations of steam trams 1880-1926 - 9th February**

Member Tony Taylor started his presentation by showing us a slide of what is the last steam tram in regular use in the world in Berne, Switzerland. He explained that he had become interested in 'quirky' railways after finding out about the Wollaton railway near Nottingham.

As towns and cities expanded and the population grew in the nineteenth century the horse drawn carrier's carts that were being used for the carriage of goods and passengers were no longer adequate. A solution to the problem came in the form of horse drawn trams running on rails laid along the streets, this meant that the horse could pull about twice the load and ensured a smoother ride for passengers. The first tramway system was the Oystermouth Railway in South Wales which commenced goods services in 1806 and passenger services in 1807 and ran until closure in 1960.

The requirement to move ever more people resulted in horses being replaced by steam engines which could pull more and larger carriages. One horse-worked tramway survives in the British Isles however running along the seafront at Douglas in the Isle of Man. The engines were of a special design for running along the streets in towns and cities and the heyday of the steam operated tramway in Britain was between 1880 and 1902. Most of the tram engines ran on four wheels so that they could negotiate the sharp curves found in the streets of towns and cities. The first tramway carriages also ran on four wheels but as they became larger a pair of bogies was used enabling them to go around curves more easily as well as giving a smoother ride. Earlier carriages had open upper decks but from the 1880s these started to be covered in to give the passengers protection from the weather as well as the exhaust from the engine, however the stairs to gain access to the upper deck remained outside!

The first steam tram in Britain commenced work in Leicester in 1876 but lasted only a few months; the first large systems to use them in Glasgow and Govan starting in 1877. The exhaust from the steam engines was a nuisance

and experiments were carried out using compressed air instead of steam as a means of propulsion as well as experimenting with caustic soda as a fuel but developments in Britain often lagged behind other countries particularly France. In 1879 The Board of Trade introduced regulations governing the operation of steam tramways the five key regulations were:-

1. Speed not to exceed 12mph
2. No smoke to be emitted from the engine
3. Operation to be free from noise
4. Machinery to be concealed from view above 4 inches from rail level
5. Visible emission of steam to be prevented.

As most steam trams were fired on coke the smoke nuisance was not too much of a problem but the amount of fuel it was possible to carry on the engines was quite small so arrangements had to be made to top up supplies on longer routes. The problem of emitting steam was overcome by fitting the engines with condensers and shrouding was fitted over the wheels so as not to frighten horses.

Steam-operated tramways were most prevalent in northern Britain the most extensive systems being in Manchester and Birmingham. However not all systems were urban some such as the Wantage Tramway, which connected the village to the railway station, ran alongside the road and the Wisbech and Upwell Tramway ran through the open countryside and unusually used some six wheeled tram engines. There were eight different gauges used in Britain ranging from 2ft 6ins to 5ft 3ins. The latter being the standard gauge for railways in Ireland. Probably the oddest gauge was 4ft 7¾ins as used in Huddersfield and Govan.

The steam tramway most local to Northampton was the Wolverton and Stony Stratford Tramway built to a gauge of 3ft 6ins and opened in 1886 to convey workmen from Stony Stratford to the London and North Western Railway carriage works at Wolverton. An extension to Deanshanger was opened in 1889 with the hope of attracting goods traffic from the engineering works there to the main line railway. These hopes proved fruitless as the freight traffic continued

to use the canal and the extension closed after only two years. The peak of the tramway operation was in 1892 when there were fifteen trams each way per day. Some of the carriages were very large and seated one hundred people with longitudinal seating along the outside downstairs and in the centre upstairs. The tramway, which had become the



property of the London Midland and Scottish Railway Company, closed during the General Strike in 1926 and never reopened. One of the carriages still exists in the museum at Milton Keynes.

It was the introduction of the electric tram which was cleaner and more efficient that hastened the demise of the steam tram and by 1910 only seven or eight systems were still operating in Britain and this was reduced to two or three systems by the end of World War One. The last steam tramway was the Wisbech and Upwell which closed to passenger traffic in 1927 but remained steam operated for the mainly agricultural freight traffic until it was dieselised by British Railways in the early 1950s not finally closing until 1966. Today there are just a small number of tram engines left in the British Isles, all in museums and none in working order at the moment.

*Mick Dix*

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## ARTICLES

### **Wish you were here? J Salmon postcards - a potted history**

*Following on from the news in Issue 146 about the demise of J Salmon I thought members would be interested in the following article from The Guardian newspaper in 2006. Ed*

J Salmon Ltd is Britain's oldest surviving postcard firm. It's been turning out views of our villages, towns and ancient landmarks for more than 100 years - and many are now highly collectable.

*Patrick Barkham - The Guardian - 17 August 2006*

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The Lake District lies at the top end of the warehouse and Land's End at the bottom. In between are neat piles of more than 5,000 postcards that light up every corner of England and Wales in high-gloss colour. There are the pretty thatched cottages of Godshell, the Isle of Wight, the floodlit and moated castles of north Wales, the daffodils and snow-covered valleys of the Yorkshire Dales, tin mines and Truro cathedral on Cornish Landmarks, the ponies of Dartmoor, and views of everything from the honeyed streets of Chipping Campden to the curve of the London Eye.

This modest factory in Sevenoaks, Kent, belongs to J Salmon Ltd, the country's oldest surviving postcard seller. Doomsayers may claim that email, camera phones and so on inevitably sound the death knell for the snailmail postcard, but the Salmon family - still at the helm - beg to differ. This year, they will sell 20m postcards, which will be picked up by tourists, pensioners and even teenagers across England and Wales, for anything from 8p to 80p (which buys an upmarket, white-bordered panorama card depicting *A peaceful day at Mevagissey, Cornwall* or *Golden light at Lizard Point*). And the Salmons do not envisage the death of the postcard any time soon. "*Physically writing something on a piece of*

*card showing where you've been is still part and parcel of being away on holiday,"* says Charles Salmon, joint-managing director with his brother, Harry. *"You're getting away from home and doing something different."*

Charles and Harry's great-great-grandfather, Joseph, a bookseller from London, founded the stationary and printing business in Sevenoaks in 1880. Pictorial cards began to be posted in earnest in the late Victorian era and Joseph's son, also Joseph, started out by printing reproductions of watercolour paintings of Sevenoaks by local artists. Then, in the summer of 1911, he was strolling down Oxford Street when several watercolours of bucolic rural scenes caught his eye in the window of an art gallery. The signature read AR Quinton. Joseph tracked down the 57-year-old artist and obtained his permission to print a 1912 calendar of his work entitled *Picturesque Villages of England*. The calendar sold well, so he tentatively asked again: would the painter consider touring the seaside resorts of England and Wales to produce a series of postcards?

A legendary postcard series was born. Occasionally stopped from sketching in coastal towns during the first world war (it was considered a security risk), AR Quinton went on to paint 2,300 views for J Salmon postcards (being paid £4 and then five guineas for each work), right up to his death, aged almost 80, in 1934.

With the dawn of mass tourism bringing a golden era for postcards, J Salmon's colour postcards were hugely popular in the 1920s and 30s. In 1928, the most expensive watercolours retailed at 1½d. Their ranges of black-and-white and sepia photograph cards also flourished, particularly as the Royal Mail offered a cheaper postal rate for postcards.

J Salmon's postcards remain collectable today and there is even a dedicated band of fans who have formed the Salmon Study Group (membership: 55), which publishes a newsletter about the company's different postcards and meets to discuss rarities. If a member is ever ill, the group all sign and send them a postcard.

Frilly, or deckle-edged cards and other innovations continued until the company, which had passed from Joseph's sons Eric and Norman to Norman's son, Derek, adopted the *continental* postcard size (an innovation from Europe) in the late 1960s – the continental size is 4.125 in by 5.875 in.

While this classic format is still the most popular, postcards have filled out rather since the 1980s. J Salmon has followed the trend, producing its white-bordered *superview* card and several variants of the posh panorama card, all white borders and dramatic filters on the photographer's lens. The company also makes calendars, illustrated cards, cards of *driftwood art* (brightly hued reproductions of slightly childlike paintings of sailing boats and seagulls and VW Kombis on old driftwood) and comic postcards. Its 'Funny Side of Life' range includes animal antics and domestic life. *"Now what's wrong?!"* shouts a cartoon wife at her glum husband, not realising she has reversed their little red car into a yellow garage

door.

But its core business remains the *local view* cards. Its range has contracted since the golden age, but every tourist destination and major town, even places such as Northampton or Peterborough are still covered. With its thriving tourist industry, the West Country is a postcard stronghold. J Salmon's bestseller is probably the Cornwall card, although simple Union Jack and flag of St George cards also sell well across the country.

The fun part of Charles Salmon's job is choosing the new postcards. The company employs 70 people, including 12 travelling reps who visit every little independent shop they can. When Wells-next-the-Sea refurbishes its old lifeboat house on the quay, for example, the reps get to hear about it, and tell the Salmons that they should perhaps freshen up their postcard of Wells quay.

Charles Salmon draws up a wish-list and regular freelance photographers are dispatched each year with a new mission – to capture a sunset on Ullswater, perhaps, or the river Dart in springtime. The Salmons are also inundated with unsolicited photographs both professional and amateur, a small fraction of which are bought (for a one-off fee) and become postcards.

When he takes a holiday, Charles's family keeps him firmly away from the postcard racks. But he hopes that his business will continue for a few generations yet. The succession, at least, looks secure: he and his brother Harry have five sons between them.

*Sadly this was not to be. J Salmon ceased printing production at the end of 2017 and withdrew from publishing in early 2018. It is now concentrating on licensing imagery from its archive. Ed.*

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## Essential lynchpins

Alan Crosby, a stalwart of the British Association for Local History, writes in the *Spring issue no.127 of the Local History News*, of his concern on learning of a couple of long-standing local history societies in Lancashire being forced to disband. One case because of the lack of numbers attending meetings and the other because the work involved in organising events depended on ever fewer people. He also cites the 'getting older membership' of groups which were set up many years ago with young vibrant members all eager to preserve local history, whether it be buildings or people.

I quote here the opening text of the Blackburn Society mentioned and which was taken off their website: "*After more than 28 years of promoting Local History in Blackburn and the wider Lancashire area, the committee decided to close in December 2017. Unfortunately, because of ill health, family commitments and the difficulties of advancing age (we) felt we could no longer administer the running of the society to the standard it deserves*".



Whilst the Blackburn History Society closes down there is good news in that the society in Preston, founded in 1948 and twenty years ago was moribund, now regularly attracts an attendance of over 150 people and as a consequence had to move its venue to the parish church in order to accommodate the crowds. Alan is sure that this is due to a small number of people who gave the society a hefty kick up the rear and propelled it from the 19th century into the 21st.

There is a message here that needs serious thought. No society can afford these days to be complacent and ideas and actions need to be forever updated. Within our own Industrial Conference both Nottingham and now NEDIAS have folded, due in the main to the lack of members willing to take on tasks. Whilst committee work can be quite boring it can at the same time be extremely rewarding. For all societies founded back in the 1970s/80s membership sadly grows older and it is tantamount to the excellent stewardship by their committee members that so many have gone on from strength to strength. However even the most successful committees need new blood to inject new ideas to promote and to continue its activities. NIAG is no exception and with the AGM fast approaching in November there will be the by now annual request for some new blood to join the happy band to take the group further into the 21st century.

Alan's article certainly opened my eyes and is a timely reminder that faces all of us at some time during our tenure in keeping a Group alive. So my plea is that if you think you have what it takes then please join the committee at the November AGM, I have said before duties are not onerous, current committee members are a friendly bunch and would be happy to welcome 'new blood'. So give it a whirl....

*Jane Waterfield, Editor*

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## UPDATES

### **Wolverton Works demolition project faces judicial review**

Plans by property developer St Modwen to demolish the historic remains of Wolverton Works could be the subject of a judicial inquiry. The developers want to build up to 375 houses in a conservation area along with units for industrial use, and despite vehement objections, Milton Keynes Borough Council has approved the plans. Part of the site has been demolished for a new budget supermarket. (*seen it and it's definitely 'out of the way' to get to. Ed*).

A campaign to throw out the plan has been waged, following the discovery of irregularities by the council uncovered in a Freedom of Information request. There has also been intervention from Historic England (HE). A spokesman from HE said: "*Wolverton is a really important heritage place. It is probably the first railway town in the world and the works is an absolutely fundamental part of Wolverton as a town. Without the works, it would be like Cambridge without the colleges.*" HE

plans to notify the council and developers of its intentions, and if planning consent is not withdrawn, then an application will be made to the High Court. The works, built by the London & Birmingham Railway and first opened in 1838, led to the creation of a railway town as houses were built in the surrounding area for staff and workers. It was the first railway works to use electricity for lighting and powering machinery, building ambulance trains during the First World War, and in the BR era many Mk1 carriages and DMUs for Northern Ireland. It is also the base for the Royal Train. After being sold by BR, the works was operated by Railcare, which was bought in 2013 by Knorr-Bremse, the current occupier of the site.

*The Railway Magazine – February 2018*

### **The new freight terminal for Northampton?**

Property developer Roxhill has submitted a proposal for a rail-served freight interchange to be built near Northampton. The Northampton Gateway Strategic Rail Freight interchange would be close to both the West Coast Main Line and the loop line serving the town. It will cover 116 acres close to Junction 15 of the M1 motorway, and could generate up to 7,500 jobs. Plans show rail sidings to each of the planned warehouses, but no specific rail traffic has been identified. The scheme has been examined by South Northants Council and a final decision is expected in the new year. Roxhill is currently constructing the 700-acre East Midlands Gateway freight interchange near Castle Donnington, which will be capable of handling up to 16 77m-long freight trains each day.

*The Railway Magazine – January 2018*

### **Daventry Canal Arm ‘sunk’ by threat of unitary**

It comes as no surprise when information that the Canal Arm will not now be dug was headline news in the local newspaper. The news is that with the impending changes which are likely to be made regarding the councils in the County due to the recent debacle at Northampton County Council, the scheme no-one wanted has been put on a ‘back-burner’ for the time being, until the political future of the county becomes clearer. Not exactly ‘sunk’ more a case of ‘put to one side’.

*Info from the Daventry Express – 10th May 2018*

### **‘Olivers’ bakery**

One of the last remaining shops from the former Oliver Adams bakeries chain in Northampton town centre has shut its doors. The shelves of the store in Mercers Row were empty last week as customers arrived in the morning to find the bakery closed and the ovens cold. It was one of six Oliver Adams bought out in April last year by a group called Bakery Organic after the Northampton-base firm abruptly went bust and made 150 employees redundant. It comes after a plan was approved by the borough council to demolish the Oliver Adams factory in Gladstone Road and turn the site into industrial units. The company had a

history stretching back to 1858. The bought-out shops reopened as ‘Olivers’ just days after the company went bust.

*Northampton Chronicle & Echo – 10th May 2018*

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## MISCELLANY OF ITEMS OF INTEREST

### **The UK’s tunnel record-breakers**

What is a tunnel? It may seem to be an obvious question, but how is it actually defined? By length? By depth? By material? Some argue that a tunnel must be at least twice as long as it is wide, or that it has to be at least 176 yards long (tenth of a mile).

Network Rail classifies tunnels by method of construction. A tunnel has to be bored or dug, whereas a bridge is a structure that has to be built. There are 1,195 tunnels on the national network, not including High Speed 1. This does not include ‘covered ways’ (such as the 15-chain covered way at Gerrards Cross) or ‘cut and cover’ (as is used on the Circle Line), because both those methods are built rather than bored. With so many tunnels on the network, the maintenance challenge for Network Rail is a serious one. And it’s a challenge made more complex by the many variations – no one tunnel is the same as the next...

Stephanie Browne, of the Rail magazine, explores the varied tunnels on the network, and what makes some of them so significant.

#### Longest tunnel:

On the main network, the Severn Tunnel in Gloucestershire, which dates back to 1886, is the longest at 4 miles 628 yards (7.01km). It is beaten only by London Tunnel 2 on HS1, which is 6 miles 544 yards (10.15km). The latter has twin single bores, so has two identical bores of that length. There are 17 tunnels in total on HS1, four of which have twin bores. The shortest is only 92 yards (85m) long.

#### Shortest tunnel:

Hoppity Tunnel on the Tattenham Corner branch is the shortest tunnel on the core network, at only 37 yards (33m) in length. While parts of this line were opened in 1897, the section on which Hoppity Tunnel lies was not opened until 1901.

#### Highest tunnel:

Shotlock Hill Tunnel is 1,145ft (349m) above sea level. It is on the Settle-Carlisle Line, located on the Settle side of Ais Gill summit, which is the highest point that main line trains reach in England. The tunnel is 106 yards long (97m) and was built in the 1870s.

#### Oldest tunnel:

Strood Tunnel was opened in 1825 as a canal. In 1845 a single line was built on

the towpath, and subsequently the canal was filled in and converted into a double-track railway. The oldest bored tunnels specifically for railway use are those dug for the opening of the London & Birmingham Railway in 1837. However, in 2013 archaeologists discovered what they believe to be the world's oldest railway tunnel, hidden away in Derbyshire. It's on the route of the Butterley Gangroad, which was a horse-operated railway built in 1793. The line closed in 1933, and the tunnel was sealed up in the 1980s.

#### Newest tunnel:

Not including those built for HS1, the newest tunnel on the network is Harecastle Tunnel near Kidsgrove. It opened in 1965, and is 243 yards (200m) in length. Of course, this doesn't take into account the tunnels being bored for Crossrail, which are now nearing completion. (*Crossrail tunnelling is now complete.*)

#### Most expensive to maintain:

The Severn Tunnel requires continuous pumping, to prevent it flooding. About 50 million litres of water per day are pumped from the tunnel into the River Severn. Its length (at more than 4 miles) also contributes to the expense of maintaining it. More maintenance time is required for an older, longer tunnel than for a short one, even if the actual work being done is the same. The longer the tunnel, the more problematic it is to get possessions on the line, which increases the cost. The Severn has about 200 trains per day passing through it, so to guarantee safety of working in the tunnel any significant maintenance must be carried out during temporary line closure.

#### The most distinctive?

Twerton Tunnel near Bath on the Great Western Main Line. Built by Isambard Kingdom Brunel between 1836 and 1840, the tunnel portals at either end are in an unusual Tudor Gothic style and are both listed structures.

#### Busiest tunnel:

Considering only a single tunnel bore, the busiest is Birmingham New Street south tunnel, which has about 20 trains per hour passing through it. The busiest combination of tunnel bores would be Bishopsgate Tunnels at Liverpool Street, or Primrose Hill Tunnel (London's oldest railway tunnel). Including trams, the Hockley tunnels in Birmingham have 12 trains and 20 trams per hour passing through.

*Rail magazine – 10th/23rd December 2014*

### **Crossrail's tunnels below London**

At last, all 42 km of Crossrail's tunnels have been dug and its eight huge tunnel-boring machines are taking a rest. It will take another three years (*article written in 2015*) before passengers travel on the line, but it is already a massive feat of engineering.

Crossrail is Europe's largest civil engineering project. Now that the last bit of tunnel has been drilled through to Farringdon station in central London, the UK

capital is getting really close to having its much-needed new railway line, which will run from Berkshire to Essex and carry an estimated 200 million passengers a year, starting in 2018. Construction of Crossrail began in 2009 at Canary Wharf. The giant drills started cutting their way through London's clay from May 2012, digging out earth while at the same time lining the tunnels with concrete segments. But the excavated material isn't going to waste – millions of tonnes of it have been shipped to Wallasea Island in Essex to create a wetland nature reserve for birds.

The following numbers are those at the time of the article written in 2015:

- 10,000 people currently working on Crossrail.
- £7.5 billion total expenditure.
- 42km – the total distance of tunnels bored.
- 8 tunnelling machines.
- 2 mix slurry machines for tunnelling through the west chalk and flint beneath the River Thames in southeast London (Mary and Sophia).
- 6 earth pressure balance tunnelling machines for digging through London clay, sand and gravel.
- 10 new Crossrail stations being built.
- £14.8 bn – the agreed funding envelope since 2010.
- 110m – the length of each slurry machine.
- 148m – the length of each of the six earth pressure balance tunnelling machines.
- 1,000 tonnes – the weight of each tunnelling machine.
- 6.2 metres – the diameter of the tunnels (compared with 3.6m for the oldest Tube tunnels).
- 42 metres – the deepest point in Crossrail tunnels at Finsbury Circus.
- 72m – the length bored on the fastest day of tunnelling by a single machine – done by Ellie, on 16th April 2014 between Pudding Mill Lane and Stepney Green.
- 75 million working hours that have been completed on Crossrail at the time of the article.
- 5 tunnel portals built (Royal Oak, Pudding Mill Lane, North Woolwich, Victoria Dock and Plumstead).
- 38m – collective average daily Crossrail tunnelling progress.
- 98% the percentage of the excavated material intended to be re-used.
- 3Mt – weight of excavated material that is being used to create a wetland nature reserve twice the size of the City of London at Wallasea Island in Essex.
- 5 ships used to transport the excavated material to Wallasea Island.
- 1528 shipments that delivered the excavated earth.



The names of the boring machines are:

Phyllis – Phyllis Pearsall created the London A-Z guide

Ada – Ada Lovelace was the world's first computer programmer.

Victoria – named after Queen Victoria

Elizabeth – named after HM Queen Elizabeth II

Mary – Mary Brunel was the wife of the famous railway engineer Isambard Kingdom Brunel

Sophia – Sophia Brunel was the wife of Marc Isambard Brunel, who built the first tunnel under the Thames.

Jessica – Jessica Ennis-Hill won the heptathlon gold medal at the London 2012 Olympics

Ellie – Paralympics champion swimmer Ellie Simmonds.

*Engineering & Technology – August / September 2015*

### **Railway Heritage Awards**

The winning entry for the supporters award category went to the reinstatement of the original windows into the twin East and West Lodges at Euston. These had survived the destruction of the original Euston station in 1961, but had their windows blocked up. They are now licensed premises specialising in craft beers. Euston Tap Ltd collected this award for its work in restoring the lodges' original outward appearance, using old photographs for guidance.

*Rail – 20th Dec 2017 to 2nd Jan 2018*

### **Just a minute: time to correct error on historic clock**

While most timepieces were adjusted by one hour, officials in Dorset are finally correcting a public clock's extra minute. The dial of a 200-year-old clock in Dorchester town centre was found to show 61 minutes, with an extra digit between the seven and the eight. The town clerk says: "*it's incredible to think that no one has ever noticed this before. Thousands of people walk past the clock every day, yet I have never heard anyone mention it, nor do we know how it came about.*" The clock is believed to date from the early 19th century. Its dial, which is 3ft 6in across, has been removed and repainted and is awaiting reinstallation.

*The Times – 26th March 2018*

### **Phrase explained: Nineteen to the dozen**

Meaning doing something at breakneck speed; derives from the 1770s when steam-driven pumps were installed to clear the water at Cornish tin and copper mines; at their optimum, the pumps could clear 19,000 gallons of water for every 12 bushels of coal used.

*Daily Mail – 26th March 2018*

### **New lease and Euro cash for extension plan at Leighton Buzzard**

The Leighton Buzzard Railway (LBR) can progress its extension project following two pieces of positive news. Agreement has been reached for a new 250-year lease on the whole LBR line, including an extension towards Double

Arches, with Arnold White Estates (AWE), and confirmation has been received for LEADER funding. AWE is the owner of the nearby sand quarries and much of the land on which the railway operates. Securing the new long-term



lease unlocks a £47,000 LEADER (an EU funding programme) grant. The grant includes £34,000 to help extend towards the historic starting point of the 'main line', a new coach, and improvements to facilities at Stonehenge Works.

LBR's £150,000 extension appeal launches in the summer of 2017 has already raised £57,000, easily exceeding the LEADER bid's £24,000 of matched funding requirement. The total includes a significant donation from a benefactor which enabled track for the extension to be secured. With the LEADER

funding and donations in hand LBR has raised £91,000 towards the £150,000 target and is renewing efforts to raise the balance needed to build the extension. Mundays Hill, the immediate extension target from the present terminus at Stonehenge Works is 140 metres from Eastern Way. With sand extraction activities continuing on the other side of this road the potential for a further extension will be negotiated with LBR's landlords Arnold White Estates in future years.

Donations can be made on-line at [www.buzzrail.co.uk](http://www.buzzrail.co.uk) or cheques payable to Leighton Buzzard Narrow Guard Railway Society can be sent to Pages Park Station, Binnington Road, Leighton Buzzard, LU7 4TG.

*The Railway Magazine – February 2018*

*NIAG visited in 2016 : report can be found in issue 142. Ed.*

## **50 Years Ago – February 1968**

**Oxford-Bletchley and Bedford-Cambridge lines.** Last trains ran on the above lines on December 30th. The last train from Bedford St Johns to Cambridge was two-car DMU set Nos. E5654 and ES1296; its departure from Bedford St Johns was filmed by ITV cameras. In anticipation of trouble, the last train from Oxford (22.50) to Bletchley carried two policemen in the brake van. The train was not full, and their services were not required. Local press saw off the train from Winslow, where a few detonators were exploded.

**St Pancras Station** has been scheduled by the Ministry of Housing & Local Government as a building of special architectural or historic interest. This means it cannot be demolished, extended or altered until six months notification has been given to the local planning authority. Among suggestions for the future of the station is one that it should be converted into a sports arena; another by Lord Montagu of Beaulieu is that the train shed would make an excellent

transport museum; and a third, by The Victorian Society, that the former hotel should be re-opened with twentieth century comforts. *(thank goodness sense prevailed and we still have a thriving railway station Ed)*

*The Railway Magazine – February 2018*

### Hot Water Street Lamps



An article in the April edition of the GLIAS newsletter from Bob Rust mentions these lamps. Here is his story.

*“Way back in 1955 when I started lorry driving I went to Northampton. Needing to ask the way I pulled up at the bus station. There was a group of bus men standing on an island round a lamppost, when I went to speak to them I could see a strange gadget on the post. One of the conductors explained that you put your tea can (those were the days, no canteens) on the little platform, put a penny in the slot and got a pint of boiling water to ‘mash’ (his word) your tea. He said the post was a lamppost and a safety vent for the sewer gas. It was used to light the lamp and heat the water. The sewer gas I later learned was methane, also used to power Wandsworth’s dust carts. Talking about this somewhere in a congregation of drivers a Scots chap said he thought there was a similar thing in Glasgow. A couple of years ago I enquired of the Northampton Museum if they had any records as the whole area had been redeveloped but no joy.”*

*GLIAS newsletter No.295 – April 2018*

*Can members throw any light on where the bus station was in the 1950s? Details and pictures would be much appreciated as I think this would be an interesting subject ‘to follow up’. Interestingly a letter in the 2018 Spring Edition of the AIA News also mentions this subject and I note from this letter that it is believed that the first of these lamps was erected in Queen’s Buildings, a block of model dwellings in Southwark, London in April 1898. Ed.*

### Tin miner goes to the well in the City

Twenty years after it shut down for what was thought to be the final time, Britain’s last working tin mine is set to take a big step towards reopening. Strongbow Exploration, the Canadian owner of the South Crofty mine near Cambourne, is to float on London’s Alternative Investment Market in an attempt to raise £25m over the next 18 months. The money will go towards restarting a mine that dates back to 1592 and was shut in 1998.

Demand has been driven by the manufacturing sector, particularly consumer electronics companies that use tin as a solder in electronic devices. Although demand is projected to remain stable for the foreseeable future, tin supply could start to decrease over the next four to five years as production from the leading

producing countries – China, Malaysia, Indonesia and Peru – continues a decline that began in 2015. Strongbow believes that South Crofty is one of the ‘highest-grade undeveloped tin projects globally’ with a proven production capability. The company has secured planning permission to reopen the site and has a mining licence until 2071. It also has permission for a water treatment plant so that it can begin repairing the flooded mine. The plant is expected to be completed in October and Strongbow can then start draining the pit, which is likely to take all of next year. In addition to the £25m a further £120m will be needed to reopen it.

*The Times – 15th May 2018*

### **The 125 Group**

The 125 Group who are preserving the prototype HST power car, has obtained three more Mk 3 coaches. This brings the total to six. Three are in the prototype livery, the other three will need some work before they can be used. Two are ex-Virgin and the other ex-Anglian. The group is based at the Great Central Railway (North) at Ruddington. If and when the two parts of the GCR are reunited it will make a journey of about 18 miles from Ruddington to Leicester North. The bridge over the Midland Main line is in place and the embankments need to be built up. The bridge over the canal also needs to be worked on and parts for this are already obtained.



*Information and picture from member Peter Acres*

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## **NEWS FROM AROUND THE COUNTY**

### **Northampton and Lamport railway**

The N&L railway is trying to raise funds to build a locomotive shed. Windows recovered from Bedford steam shed may be reused in it.

*Rail – 20th Dec 2017 to 2nd Jan 2018*

### **Roman heritage project in Irchester**

Plans by the county council to spend an extra £2.2m on a Roman heritage project in Irchester have been challenged, with politicians saying the funds would be better spent fixing potholes. The council says it has to be spent or more money would have to be paid back to lottery funds.

*Northampton Chronicle & Echo – 10th May 2018*

On the BBC news website I then found a bit more detail about this ‘news’ under the banner ‘Cash-strapped Northamptonshire County Council to fund Roman site’. Ed.

An extra £2.2m has been earmarked by a cash-strapped council for a Roman heritage project! The County Council has decided to put additional funding into the Chester Farm heritage centre. Five years ago the council pledged £4.9m to the project after being awarded just under £4m in Heritage Lottery funding. The 45-acre farm site, in Irchester, was bought by the council in 2004 and the heritage project started in 2013. It was due to open in March. The council had planned to secure the extra £2.2m needed to complete the project from other agencies, but the plans have not been realised. According to the Local Democracy Reporting Service, the 17th Century farmhouse was built on the site of a Roman walled town with human activity dating back 10,000 years. When complete it will include a cafe, community venue, offices and classrooms for school visits. Speaking at the authority's cabinet meeting on Tuesday, Mr Strachan, who represents the Castle ward in Northampton, said: *"Why are we continuing to fund the Chester Farm project when we could use some of that money to repair potholes?"* Mr Morris, Conservative, said the council would lose the lottery funding if it pulled out of the project.

BBC news website – 9th May 2018

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## OF THIS AND THAT

### Obituary : Susan Ranson

Thirteen members attended Susan's memorial service which was held at Hartwell Church on the 11th May. A loyal NIAG member Susan passed away, aged 80, after a short illness at the end of April and will be much missed by all of those who knew her.

Susan was born in April 1933 and was a much travelled young woman and indeed this love of travel continued throughout her life. She attended Bedford College, London (London University) and graduated in 1955. In 1965 she married Oliver and became a farmer's wife. They had two children, Alice and Joseph who both took part in some NIAG events. Susan had a great interest in industrial heritage and was one of the founder members of NIAG, being Treasurer from 1998 until 2004. Many members will remember those wonderful evenings at the farm, where Oliver cut his barley with his old reaper/binder attached to his equally old tractor! There were always regular interruptions due to the string breaking in the machine! However I understand there was much joy, good food, and a great deal of fun (if those films that Pete Acres showed us last year are to go by). She was also a keen church goer and involved herself in the PCC as Treasurer, Churchwarden and as an unofficial historian on the three churches which were near the family farm at Hanslope. Susan trained as an Archivist and in recent years looked after the records at the NT property at Claydon House. A really lovely lady who had a joy of life, was extremely interested in learning things and imparting her vast knowledge to others and as



the vicar told us always seemed to know the right person to contact for doing a job, however big or small. I feel privileged to have known her and appreciated the many kind words she sent me about the newsletter. May she rest in peace.

*Jane W - Editor*

### **New data protection**

On the 25th May 2018 the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) came into force replacing the Data Protection Act 1998 (DPA). Whilst the new regulation does not diminish an organisation's responsibility to protect personal data, it extends the definition of 'personal data' that was used in the old DPA and how an organisation may contact an individual.

As a membership organisation, NIAG needs to keep its members informed of its activities and, of course, to provide its Newsletter, which it has done, and will continue to do, through the normal mail service.

Recently email has been used to notify members who have this facility about events that NIAG has received from kindred bodies at short notice and which may be of interest. Also, from time-to-time NIAG receives queries about which members may have specialist knowledge and NIAG wishes to contact such members.

The GDPR places the onus on an organisation to obtain the consent of the individual that the person is willing to receive such communications.

To ensure NIAG is compliant with the GDPR, the enclosed Membership Renewal form includes the question whether you, the member, consent to receiving emails and phone calls from NIAG about its activities. To that end please ensure you return the renewal form duly signed indicating your option(s).

### **Subscriptions:**

With regards to subscriptions please note that there is a £1 increase which is the first for about 5 years. Single is now £16 and family £20. This was agreed at the 2017 AGM and now takes effect from this August (2018).

*Terry Waterfield - Treasurer*

### **Imperial War Museum**

From the 9th April 2018, the Imperial War Museum Research Room in London is moving to an advanced ordering system. All their paper-based collections will be at IWM Duxford in a state-of-the-art store. This means they will no longer be offering an on-the-day service. Researchers will need to book morning and/or afternoon slots for specific dates, at least five working days ahead. The Research Room will be open Monday-Thursday 10am-1pm and 2-5 pm. For further details please see [www.iwm.org.uk/research/research-facilities](http://www.iwm.org.uk/research/research-facilities).

*Local History News – Spring 2018 – No.127*

### **Dates for the Diary**

14th July	NIAG Railtour
21st July	Avro Vulcan XM655, Wellesbourne – Booking now closed.

- 27th July Charlecote Mill, Warwickshire  
 3rd August Archimedes Screw at Hardwater Mill, Great Doddington : this is the final visit of the 2018 season.  
**NB:** Due to a lorry damaging the bridge near this mill and the fact that repairs to the bridge may not be made before the 3rd August please check with Peter (01604 812214) as to whether this visit will take place or not.

Full details of these visits are in your summer programme of events and walks.

#### Other:

- 28/29th July Vintage Fair at Delapre Abbey. Celebrating all things vintage: shopping, cafe, hair salon, talks on the Land Army, ice cream and a vintage car display. Check web-site for timings or the local press. [www.delapreabbey.org](http://www.delapreabbey.org).  
 August Boughton House gardens open daily. Open air screenings of Moulin Rouge on the 10th and Chapterhouse Theatre performing Robin Hood on the lawn on the 14th. Other details are not known so check their web-site.  
 8/9th Sept. Village at War weekend : Stoke Bruerne Canal Museum. Check with website for more details [www.friendsofthecanalmuseum](http://www.friendsofthecanalmuseum).  
 8/9th Sept. Heritage Weekend: Heritage Fair will be held on the Saturday (8th) venue Abington Park. Times as yet not known NIAG hopes to be present. It is suggested that you check our website for details nearer the date as advertising for this weekend could be somewhat lacking from the Council if other years are to go by.  
 14/16th Sept. Brackley Town Hall will be open after its restoration.  
 6th October EMIAC at Market Harborough: booking form enclosed.  
 12th October NIAG's winter programme commences with a talk on the subject *The Bedfordshire Brickworks*. See enclosed Winter Programme for full details.

#### **Exhibitions**

- 8/9th Sept. Roade Cutting exhibition and celebration : Roade Village Hall. Exhibition includes a 14ft model representing the cutting's historical development from 1838 to 2018. More details on [www.roadehistorysociety.org.uk](http://www.roadehistorysociety.org.uk).  
 29th Sept. Exhibition looking at life in Thrapston. Venue The Plaza. More details on [www.thrapstonhistorysoc.co.uk](http://www.thrapstonhistorysoc.co.uk)

## And Finally:

### The shipping forecast

*The date of the following is unknown since the newspaper from which it was taken did not show name of publication, the date or its author. The whole article, this is part, had been neatly cut out and all relevant information cut off. I had to do a bit of digging to find out when Take It From Here was broadcast. Ed.*

In a classic edition of *Take It From Here*, (some time during 1958) Frank Muir and Denis Norden made full use of the names in their operatic version of the shipping forecast. A sample follows and the first verse is to be sung to the *Drinking Song* from *La Traviata*, the second to the *Toreador's Song* from *Carmen* and the third to *La Donna è Mobile* from *Rigoletto*. Happy memories and enjoy.

South Cones have been hoisted in areas Tyne  
Dogger Bank, Hebrides and Thames  
Dover Straits and Portland Bight  
The wind's veering north near the Firth of Forth  
But it's bright nearly every night round the Isle of Wight

Heligoland has got a fall of snow  
Forty below to Scapa Flow  
And – from Iceland there's enough cold air in store  
To freeze the knocker off the door

In Ross and Finisterre  
The outlook is sinisterre  
Rockhall and Lundy  
Will clear up by Monday

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## Coming Up:

Final winter report  
Summer reports begin  
Those Red Phone Boxes

NIAG Members enjoying Oliver's reaper-binder demonstration at Gordon's Lodge Farm in Ashton before being served an excellent farmhouse supper by Susan Ranson. 7th August 1998. Photos courtesy of Ron Whittaker.



Unless stated all photographs are credited to Jane and Terry Waterfield.

Disclaimer.

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## Newsletter

Next Issue: **October 2018**

Deadline for all articles and information 1st September 2018.

Anything received after this date will be held over to the next edition.

**Article guidelines:** Ideally should be no more than about 1200 words, unless the article is of a special interest and accompanied by photographs or diagrams. Shorter articles are always welcome. Photographs will be inserted if submitted and the Editor is happy to discuss the author's requirements.

Please submit by e-mail, fax or mail. Where possible photographs are encouraged to illustrate all articles. When submitting photographs via e-mail, the picture should be no larger than 250,000 pixels in JPEG format and should be sent as separate attachments. Please give information about the photograph. Photographs/slides sent by post (first class) will be returned to you the same way. Please also include your name and address so that you can be credited with taking those photographs and don't forget to put a caption with them.