



# Repton Village History Group Newsletter

## Winter 2022/3



[www.reptonvillage.org.uk](http://www.reptonvillage.org.uk)

This is a slimmer newsletter than normal. Apologies for this - just not as much happening and other pressures on time have limited research.

### **Membership matters:**

- **An opportunity** - 52 boxes of documents plus maps and charts arrived in Derby Museum recently. These are the notes from Martin B's digs in Repton in the 1970s and 80s and they have been unpacked and put into shelves in the old Library in Derby. We have been asked if we could help put together a catalogue of their contents and possibly scan some of the material so that it is more readily accessible. The museum are working out what should be recorded and how we should tackle it, but we are suggesting an initial quick run through everything to determine the sort of material in the different folders. Some are notes from Martin's research (a folder on spiral pillars for example) and some are more administrative notes or correspondence. Others are detailed notes, plans and charts from the trenches. If helping to understand this valuable resource appeals to you, please let us know.
- **Our next meeting is on 17<sup>th</sup> January** at 7.00pm in the URC schoolroom and we have Dr Mark Knight coming to talk to us. He is part of Staffordshire Wildlife Trust and the Cultural Heritage Officer for the Transforming the Trent Valley project and very well versed in the history and archaeology of the valley. It is with him that we have been hunting the Via Devana and related potential Roman fort.
- **Our group meeting** on Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> November was quite well attended and we were delighted to be able to offer Lilwen's box of books for people to peruse and take away. Some have been kept for the archive. Russell had brought a box down from the archive to look through and Andy took the opportunity to do dry run of a short talk on hunting the priory mill. This is planned for the Derby Archaeological Society's *At Home* on 7<sup>th</sup> January in their Library in the Strutt Community Rooms in Belper. In fact, two of the 4 talks are on Repton. Richard is giving a talk on the spire and its dating, construction and repairs. The talks are fairly short, the event is free and the talks start at 1.30. All are very welcome.
- **Our extra, seasonal, social meeting** was on 20<sup>th</sup> December and this year we managed not to burn the sausage rolls. Thanks to all who arranged the room, provided the comestibles and helped with serving and washing up. Especial thanks to Chris and Elaine who had created a challenging quiz with questions that could often be worked out even if not known. Congratulations to Shelagh, Margaret, Ron and Andy as winners.
- **Membership renewals** are due now please. Membership is £8 and can be paid by cash or cheque (Repton Village History Group) to any of the committee or by BACS to 60-12-01 A/c 05851238 (Repton Village History Group).

### **Bomber crash**

A query came in via Ewan who looks after the village website. An air enthusiast researching WWII crashes said: "My interest lies in local aviation, particularly World War two. I already have knowledge of the Hurricane crashing behind the bank in Repton but I have recently been told about a bomber crashing near to Meadow's Farm on the outskirts of the village. I wondered if you have any further details of the incident ?

Ivor spoke with Bryan Hollis who is a mine of information and he confirmed it was a forced landing not a crash. He remembered it was a Handley Page Halifax. Sue Goodwin (who farmed at The Meadows Farm) spoke with sister in law Ann who remembered her father mentioned it was a forced landing in a field known as Canons Field behind the Meadows Farm and that the wings were removed to enable it to be retrieved.

## **Wild Camping at Carvers Rocks**

In the last newsletter Russell recalled wild camping at Carver's Rocks – which he remembered as Dawson's Rocks in those days. Ivor also remembered the name:

“With regard to Russell's piece about Carvers Rocks I offer the following bit of information: Carvers Rocks or Dawson's Rocks was a former quarry and according to a memory of my father (Baden), it was from there that the stone was quarried to build Willington Bridge. His grandfather was contracted to cart the stone but as another company involved went bankrupt, he was never paid, and there was no compensation. In the 1960s I took about 20 Junior Club children on a walk to Carvers Rocks where they had a great time. The pump mentioned by Russell was, of course, a ram pump (I think that's right). It pumped water from a low level to a high level without mechanical assistance.”

Richard (Wain) knew the area as Repton Rocks and writes:

“I have always known the area as ‘Repton Rocks’. I believe that both Carver and Dawson were one time owners of the quarry. The presence of the quarry is due to a geological fault line, which follows the ridge along which runs the A511 Burton to Ashby road. To the South, coal and clay are near to the surface, hence the coal mines and clay pits near Swadlincote. To the North limestone is the underlying rock, hence the Ticknall limeyards and the White Peak. However, the limestone is interspersed with outcrops of millstone grit, as found at Repton Rocks.

Millstone grit is good building stone and the Repton Rocks quarry supplied stone for Willington Bridge and Ticknall Church.

I was introduced to the quarry in 1940 when my father, (H.J. Wain) took me there. He used to visit the quarry to make observations for his weekly nature notes for the ‘Burton Observer’. It was a quiet place, a natural nature reserve. To the South, the stream at the bottom of the valley runs through marshy ground. Here I was shown the sundew, a carnivorous plant which feeds on trapped insects. (I have looked for it more recently, but failed to find it.) We travelled by the Trent bus which went to Derby, getting off at the Buildings Farm crossroads. As I grew older we cycled.

In 1944, when I was a nine-year-old at Winhill Junior School, I told some friends about Repton Rocks. It was war-time and no holidays could be taken at the seaside. In the Summer holiday I took a group of nine year olds, boys and girls, on an adventure to the rocks. We travelled by bus and spent the day at the rocks, exploring and playing games. We had sandwiches, though what was in them in wartime I cannot remember.

None of us had watches. However my father had shown me that if you stood on the top of the rocks you could see the bus coming down Coalpit Lane on its way to Hartshorne. The bus ran every hour, so if you saw one go you had adequate time to walk up the valley to ‘The Buildings’ crossroads and catch the next bus to Swadlincote. Here we changed buses and caught the Midland Red bus to Burton, getting off at Bretby Lane. The sun shone all day and we had a grand day out. Hard to imagine parents allowing that today!

One other reason for calling it Repton Rocks is that it lies just outside Repton Parish boundary. If you follow the boardwalk at the South end of the reservoir you will see on the North side a boulder of Millstone grit. This is an old parish boundary marker showing where Repton, Hartshorne and Ticknall parishes meet. The Repton parish boundary follows the stream which is now in the centre of the reservoir.

In 2012 I walked to Repton Rocks from Winhill using field footpaths and tracks. I managed the 11 mile round trip in three hours. Sadly, that was the last time: all subsequent visits have been by car.

The pump Ivor mentions was a Hydraulic Ram. Water flowing through it slammed a valve shut and the resulting pressure wave behind it caused water to spurt up through another valve and into an accumulator. A spring pushed the first valve open again and the cycle repeated. It is likely that it was the water source for Buildings Farm. There was another ram at the weir at Lawn Bridge (Crewe's Pond - Robin's Cross) which probably supplied Repton Park and The Hayes. They emitted a characteristic clicking sound.

## **Photographic Archive:**

Charles has taken a copy of the digital photographic archive off the PC and is considering how to best manage it to provide ready but secure access and how to index it. Although most photographs are numbered and listed, many are still only on CDs and there are multiple numbering systems. So work is required to transfer the CD photos to Charles. There are many duplicates too. There are also slides – most of which we have scanned.

### **A bit of a Change:**

Andy is stepping down as Chairman at the next AGM (in May). He offered to become secretary about a decade ago and gradually picked up more and more of the operational bits and pieces - one of the hazards of an aging demographic. Now the effect of aging is slowing him down too and he feels it is necessary for the work to be better shared. In order for change to occur, he is also stepping back from the committee, but plans to be actively involved in activities and research and will help as requested.

A few years ago he persuaded the group to drop its monthly talks and to concentrate more on research related activities – including archaeology. There are many other groups within very easy reach offering monthly talks. This stood us in good stead during the pandemic but it is clear that many members would like to introduce regular talks again. So this is a good opportunity for the group to establish a new emphasis/direction. To that end a questionnaire was circulated and is now being analysed - thank you to all who contributed.

Whatever the result, some roles will need to be picked up - chairing the group for one. Also, the bits for the Village News (aka Parish Magazine), editing the Newsletter, talks to visiting groups, acting as group contact, organising publication re-prints, listing material entering the archive, finding speakers.....

### **Salt road:**

We were approached by Penny from Newton Solney about a suggestion that the village was once the location of a salt road river crossing but her source had no further information. Tim recognised the comment as coming from one of the judges for the Village in Bloom competition (NS came a very commendable second). She suggested that it should be included in a heritage board that he is developing for the village but Tim wanted to confirm it first.

There was some surprise that such a crossing should be at Newton because there has never been a bridge and the ford crosses the main channel of the Trent at its confluence with the Dove. People who have crossed there note that it is a wet crossing – Shelagh was aware of someone crossing on a horse in that very dry summer of 1976. Richard (W)'s father's friend crossed but carried his clothes on his head. Chris and Elaine pointed out that there is a Salters Ford Bridge at Eggington and Chris (P) remembered the Salt Warehouse in Shardlow. Given the importance of salt in Roman times, the crossing could date back that far and it will have been carried by packhorse before the canals. It would be on a sensible line from Northwich to the Midlands and beyond, but it seems that salt roads were everywhere.

### **Archaeological proceedings:**

In the last issue we reported that using resistivity, we had managed to find the crop marks in a 1980 aerial photograph close to the Via Devana and as a result could see them in the ground surface of Google Earth.

The double-ditched enclosure does not perfectly align with the anticipated line of the road and, although field walking has produced a few pieces of Greyware and abraded Samian Ware, very little supporting material has been found. So it was decided to put a pseudo-section across the ditches to determine their depth. Two sections were surveyed and neither showed any signs of low resistance areas that could correspond to the ditches. This amazed us and we tried every trick we could to reveal any evidence that was there. Thanks to Dr Mark Knight, the results were passed onto a specialist in geophysics at Keele University who made some suggestions, but so far with no success. Interference from the high voltage pylons may have affected the results or we may have missed the ditches in the ground or perhaps the crop marks and our resistivity results reveal something other than ditches.

### **Formula 1:**

Did you know we have a F1 driver resting in St Wystan's churchyard? An enquiry came in to Tim from someone interested in F1 drivers and their burial places and he had traced David Alan Hampshire to Newton Solney. He and his wife retired there from Monaco. Not a top racer, but he did come 2<sup>nd</sup> in the French Grand Prix in the 1950s.

He is not the only local F1 racer. Reg Parnell from Findern raced in seven F1 GPs and achieved one podium position. His son Tim also raced in F1.



### **Bits n pieces:**

Tim has long been interested in an area on a footpath near Bacon Lodge which turns up interesting items from time to time. Here are 3 more:



This wooden item is a mystery – any suggestions please?



Tim suggests the left hand piece is from Ashby-de-La Zouch. The right hand one is reminiscent of Burrows and Sturgess. Any other suggestions please?

### **Programmes of talks from other organisations.**

We have been including the programme of talks from other local history groups, but it has proved difficult to get hold of them at the moment.

However Derbyshire Archaeological Society have talks most Fridays which are free to attend. They can often be enjoyed by zoom as well as in person. They have 4 sections – Archaeology, Local History, Industrial Archaeology and Architecture: Link: [WINTER PROGRAMME – Derbyshire Archaeological Society \(derbyshireas.org.uk\)](http://www.derbyshireas.org.uk)

- Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> Jan - Strutts Centre Belper 1.230pm – 4 short talks including 2 on Repton
- 13<sup>th</sup> Jan - Industrial Arch section- Ironstone quarries of NE Leicestershire – Bob Trubshaw
- 27<sup>th</sup> Jan - Archaeological section - Transforming the Trent Valley -Mark Knight
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Feb - Architecture section -Transforming St Wilfred's barrow -A Heathcote & Jill Scarfe
- 10<sup>th</sup> Feb - Local Hist section -Rock Cut buildings of Derbyshire and beyond- Ed Simmons
- 3<sup>rd</sup> March - Industrial Arch section -Hope cement works
- 10<sup>th</sup> March - Local History section Aethelflaed: The lady of the Mercians -John Arnold (no zoom)
- 17<sup>th</sup> March - Architecture section - Percy H Currey - local architect -Andrew Polkey
- 24<sup>th</sup> March - Archaeological section - 20 years of Resistivity Surveys -Keith Foster
- 31<sup>st</sup> March - Society Lecture -Archaeological Discoveries at Colchester in last 15 years-Philip Crummy

To attend in person just go to St Mary's Church Hall, Darley Lane, Derby, DE1 3AX for 7.30

To join by zoom then non-members should book via the Eventbrite page Link: [Derbyshire Archaeological Society Events | Eventbrite](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/derbyshire-archaeological-society-events)

Members will receive zoom registration invitations automatically.

Comments and more information about Repton and its occupants are always welcomed.  
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