

Repton Village History Group Newsletter

Spring 2016



Panic! - the equinox has passed – was it the Easter Bunny or the White Rabbit who said “Oh dear! Oh dear! I shall be too late”?

The programme

There has been further shuffling I'm afraid. We had so many members volunteering to do a short talk that we arranged a second members evening in November. However, a holiday booking meant that Alan Hiley couldn't make his September date and so we re-booked him for November and put the members evening in September. This is not ideal as the chairman who would normally drive the projector and was down to do a talk himself, is already committed to doing a talk to Hilton and Burnaston History Group that night so we will need a volunteer projectionist please.

There is one other change in that Catrine Jarman has kindly agreed to come and talk to us about the isotope research work she has been doing on the teeth from the vicarage garden charnel house. Hopefully she will also be able to give a progress report on the archaeological work in that area. This will be instead of our archive evening in June.

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| April 19 th | Keith Blood - St Oswald's, Ashbourne. Oswald was killed in battle with our King Penda. Oswald's brother, King Oswy, got his own back 10 years later. |
| May 17 th | Arnold Burston 'One leg Paget'. A hero of Waterloo, and once charged with “criminal conversation with a lady”, this covers Paget generations much earlier than the talk by Richard Stone a while ago. The talk will be followed by our AGM. |
| June 21 st | Catrine Jarman – origins of the skeletons in the vicarage mound and current archaeological developments. |
| July/August | The results of the vote for visits were 1 st Catton hall, 2 nd tie, Papplewick Pumping Station and Sinai Park House. Given that Papplewick will only be in steam on one very very busy weekend in each of July and August, it makes more sense to go to Sinai House. |
| September 20 th | Members evening – Chris Pegg – “Wooden box part II “and Paul Heapy – “Two Fields”. |
| October 18 th | Richard Stone - “The River Trent a water transport route.” |
| November 15 th | Alan Hiley – “History of the Trent Motor Traction company”. |
| December 20 th | Social with speaker. |

Meetings take place in the Village Hall (DE65 6GR) at 7.30pm.
All are welcome. Members £2.00, Visitors £3.00. Tea, coffee and biscuits included.

Personal: Very sadly, Alan Kimber, a past chairman, died in January. He was the driving force behind the group for many years and even with failing health, maintained an active role on the committee where his support and advice has been much appreciated. He is greatly missed.

Walks n Talks:

We have provided the Repton WI with notes and a hands-on run through of a walk through Repton from the Main St mill to the Parish Church. We will add further information to enhance the notes in due course. The History Group does not have the capacity to do these walks as well as meeting the requests for talks on the older history of the core village. So this helps us and provides a fund raising avenue for them. They also offer a very good tea at the end!

Family History Enquiries: We have still to complete our work on the Poxon, Clamp and Smedley families, but have been able to provide quite a bit of help to Christine Frantzen in New Zealand. She has been researching a number of family names in Repton. In particular the Turner family who were tailors and seamstresses for several generations. For many years the family lived in Jessamine, a thatched cottage in High Street. It was where the town houses are now and opposite the School Sanatorium. We were able to put them in touch with the Fishers who were there later and still live in the village. They have given us a mine of information about the Turners and some lovely photographs.

We have also been working with John Payne who is researching his grandfather who was in service at one time to Henry Kidd who bought the Repton Steam Laundry from Dr Meyer. We have many of the deeds relating to the business and, with other research on the Meyers, an interesting story begins to emerge.

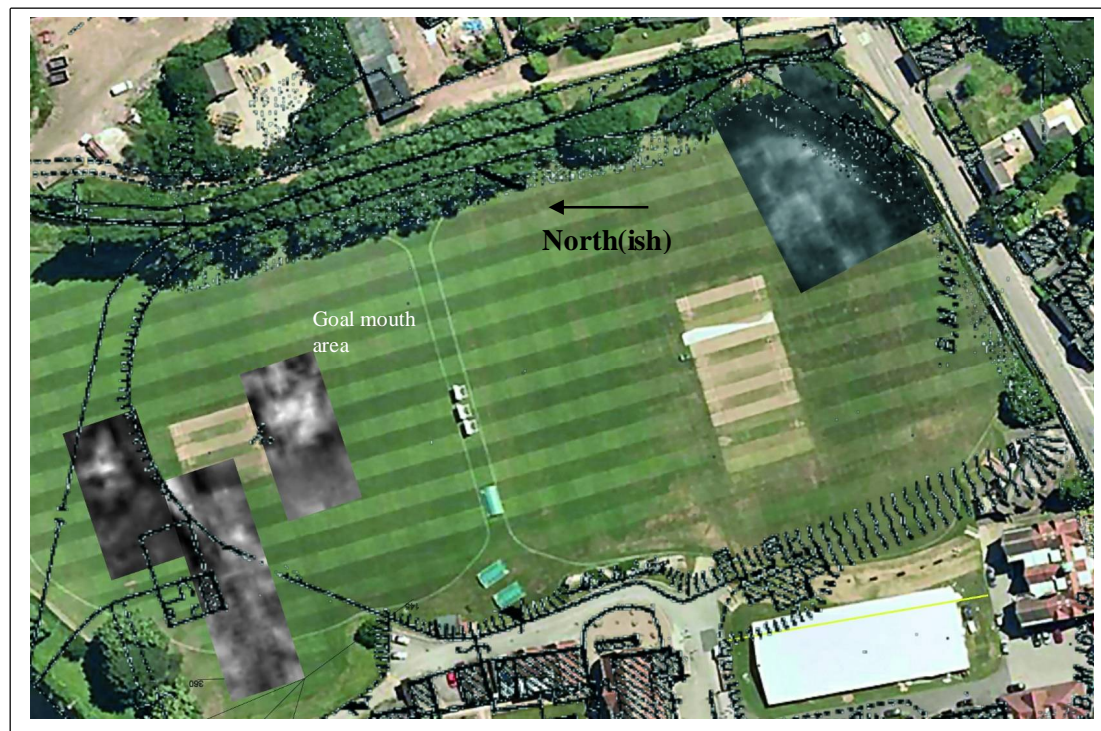
Archiving: We are now listing all Alan Kimber's material for the archive, but still have to finish David Guest's archive and also have material from Ivor Sandars, Pat Smythe and Sue Ellis to deal with. We are very grateful for all this material – and if anyone fancies helping with the listings, please let us know.

The Tithe Barn: This project is as complete as we can make it unless further opportunities for archaeological activity arise. We did confirm the existence of the barn and its location – the story is now on the History Group website. Planning permission has recently been sought for replacement of the house with a slightly wider footprint and we have made representations regarding an archaeological watch

Priory Mill: Work to try to find the Priory Mill has continued. We now have a considerable amount of early documentary evidence plus the thoughts of later authors such as Bigsby, Hipkin and Messiter (sometimes conflicting) to guide us. It is now known that the Priory Mill was one of the two mentioned in Domesday, though we don't know where the other one was – possibly in Milton. The Priory Mill almost certainly supported the Norman Motte and Bailey Castle which the Earl of Chester had built around 1100, roughly where Repton Hall is now. The mill was given by the Earl to the canons at Calke about 1135. It could just possibly have been in existence even earlier supporting the Repton Royal Palace and Anglo Saxon Monastery, but it would be surprising if the Vikings had left it standing in 874.

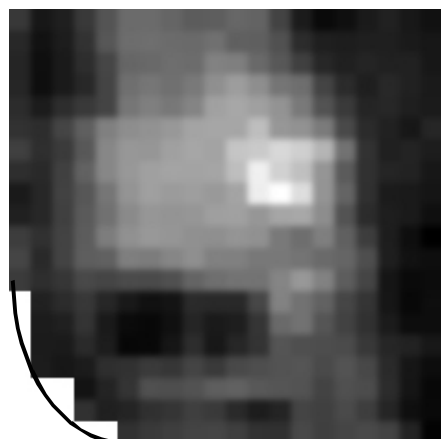
We have managed to construct a timeline for the Mill, the brook and the school paddock from about 1100 right through to 1905 and formulated some theories about the mill's location. Much terracing and levelling from 1866 onwards may have buried some of the archaeology beyond reach of resistivity surveys but we are very grateful to Repton School for allowing us to spend a few days over a cold half term doing seven grid surveys. Led by Keith and Barbara Foster (who are very generous with their time) these did not reveal anything startling on the lower paddock but we hope to do another seven grids and some pseudosections once the cricket season is over. We did re-discover the location of the medieval tile kiln originally found when the upper paddock was being levelled. Our resistivity survey found anomalous high and low resistance areas which corresponded with a very small, but anonymous, rectangular outline on the very large scale 1881 map. This also corresponded with a comment in our archive notes that the kiln was 100 yards south of Pears School, though the source of this information is unknown. We have been given permission to do further work there at Easter and we hope that pseudosections will tell us more. From the contemporary descriptions of the find, we rather fear that the scholars may have unwittingly dug away the kiln itself before reaching what was either the hearths underneath it or drying tunnels for tiles prior to firing.

Below is a view of the lower paddock which shows the 1901 map superimposed on Google Earth plus the resistivity results. The map pre-dates the moving of the wall (top right corner) southwards to its present position in 1905 and does show a building in the lower left corner which is where we always felt the mill might be.



In the south east (top right) by Brook End, we had hoped to find traces of the earlier wall line and possibly traces of the brook's original channel and the dwellings built onto the outside of the wall. We did find a curved area of lower resistance (darker shades) that might indicate topsoil filling of the original wall's foundation ditch, but may also be earth disturbed when shrubbery was removed. We would like to do another six 20 x 20 grids to the north and west of the ones we completed in this corner to see if the high

resistance patch (lighter grey) is the norm or an interesting island. The high resistance area in the goal mouth was where the grounds staff remember light ploughing turning up stone work and Peter Ratcliffe found a piece of medieval tile.



These are the resistivity results on the upper paddock – most probably the medieval tile kiln. Light is high resistance, but note also the darker, low resistance areas just to the south



Alan Gifford's photograph of Peter Ratcliffe's fragment of tile.

To make comments or for more information, please contact Andy Austen on 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.