



# Repton Village History Group Newsletter

## Spring 2019 (31<sup>st</sup> March 2019)



### The ongoing programme:

Having decided to move to monthly meetings we found the preparation took more time than expected and we need progress to have occurred on projects between meetings. So it's nominally a meeting every other month now – the next one being on 21<sup>st</sup> May with additional ones if something crops up. However the visit to Knowle Hill is on 11<sup>th</sup> April at 2.30pm

- April 11<sup>th</sup> – Visit to Knowle Hill (Landmark Trust)
- May 21<sup>st</sup> – AGM, talk, project feedback, planning
- July 16<sup>th</sup> - visit (ideas needed)
- Sept 17<sup>th</sup>
- Nov 19<sup>th</sup>
- December 17<sup>th</sup> (?) Christmas Buffet?

Unless we get a better offer, the talk at the AGM will be on William Bagshaw Stevens – the headmaster of Repton School who allowed it to fall to just one pupil.

As long as we can, we will meet in the Red Lion but due to space constraints, these meetings are limited to members

### Helping with enquiries:

Bamford: In the last newsletter, we related some research we had helped with for descendants of the Bamford family. We were able to work out what happened to Alice (born 1875) but lost track of her older sister Harriett. She had a child but on the following census was not in the family home (Dale Cottages) although her little girl Sarah was. Now the family have identified Harriett as being in London as a general domestic servant with another Bamford family. This family originated in Kent so it's difficult to see the connection, but the surname coincidence is considerable. She went on to marry William Arthur Spanswick in 1897 in Brentford, but came back to Repton where their new daughter Dorothy Hetty Spanswick was baptised. They were living at 2 Woodbine Villas at the time - if these were in Repton, where are they?

Sept. 4. 1898	1848	Dorothy	William				
	Sept. 25. 1898	Hetty	Arthur	Spanswick	2 Woodbine Villas.	Carpenter	J. G. Phillips
	1804		Harriet				
	No. 1704						

By 1901 however, they were back south living in Ham in Surrey. Did little Sarah know that Harriett was her mother or did she grow up believing Alice was? Did William Spanswick know there was a previous child? We met some of the family and helped them locate some of the graves in the churchyard.

Phillips: We were approached by a couple researching the Phillips family and they had traced them to Repton and to the Burton area. Her great great grandfather was George Phillips born in Repton in May 1832. He lived near the Cross and from our WW1 research we identified that Private Samuel Joseph Phillips was nephew to Mark Phillips (Burton Rd near the butchers) who was a son of George and Ann, her GG grandparents. We have not worked out the exact relationship but she is some sort of distant cousin to the Phillips family still in Repton through Samuel Joseph. Again we met them and hunted graves in the churchyard.

Faddy: We had an enquiry about Charles Samuel Faddy (born 1848) asking for information about the school on Long Street where he was on the 1861 census. It turns out he was in Mr Latham's Boarding house (now St Wystan's School). Mr Gould was assistant housemaster and eventually took over the house when Latham House on Tanner's lane was built. Charles was born in the East Indies and his father was a captain in the army in Bengal. He had presumably been sent home for schooling but was only at Repton School from January 1860 to March 1861 (aged 12). We were able to send extracts from the 1881 map and the School Register and some general photos of the school.

### Foremark churchyard

Derbyshire Family History Society have kindly photocopied for us their research room copy of the Foremark Monuments and Inscriptions book produced in 1989. The plan is to bring it up to date. In return we gave them CDs of the update to the Repton book and the Monsom Lane cemetery.

### **Repton Churchyard trail**

Four of us met on a blustery March afternoon and wandered purposefully around the church and churchyard seeking items to include. Jane had brought examples of other trails – ranging from one with just 8 items to one with 28 pages of them. Chris photographed things as we went. We came up with a good 20 or more items and subsequently have identified more. These include famous people like C B Fry and Winford Dewhurst (impressionist painter), interesting people like Rev Stevens (Repton School Head master in the late 1700s,) and Samuel Marshall (murder victim), interesting graves (like stone mason's errors) and the WWII War Graves Commission area. Since then other ideas have arisen such as the lych gate (lych=corpse), old steps by the vicarage garden wall, the steeple and so on.

Jane offered to try design ideas – initially working on two sides of an A3 sheet. At the moment we are digging out information from the archive or researching new material.

### **Crowland visit**

A small group of the guides from Crowland Abbey (once Croyland) came to visit Repton as they used to some years ago. The Abbey was built on the site of St Guthlac's oratory by Mercian King Æthelbald - who was buried in the Benedictine Monastery in Repton in 757 AD. Guthlac came from the monastery at Repton.

Guthlac was born about 673 to well-to-do noble parents, but was a bit of a lad. It seems, he fell in with two others and they wreaked havoc locally and built up quite a war band. He served in Æthelred's army – perhaps as leader of a band of mercenaries. Eventually repenting, he entered the monastery at Repton and was tonsured there by the Bishop (probably Headda) and Abbess (probably Aelfritha) in about 697. He was an earnest priest, anxious for the solitude of a hermit, and in 699 set off by boat down the Trent (now the Old Trent) to wherever his boat should take him. He was supported by Tatwine (a guide/oarsman), and a servant and ended up on an island in the fens where there were the remnants of a robbed out burial mound. Here he made his hermitage. It may have been some comfort that in 714, when dying, he was sent a shroud and lead for his coffin by Edburga then the Abbess in the Repton monastery where he had started out. Æthelbald was exiled from Mercia as a young man but was sheltered by Guthlac who prophesied that he would become king and without bloodshed. This did indeed come to pass and Aethalbold built the Abbey over Guthlac's relics.

Paul Stevens gave them a comprehensive tour of the medieval priory remains and the old school building and then after they had lunched in the Red Lion, we dealt with the Anglo-Saxon and Viking period. We took them to the Vicarage garden and churchyard – the site of the monastery where Guthlac was tonsured and then into the church and crypt. It is unlikely that Guthlac saw any of the buildings so far identified with the monastery, but since the monastery was probably founded about 660, the crypt could have started life as a baptistery shortly after and Guthlac might have seen it – and even been baptised in it.



Crowland Abbey

<http://www.wikigallery.org>

### **Repton Cross**

There has been concern for some time that the Cross is suffering, possibly from the heavy traffic, and there are some cracks near the top of the column. Another theory is that the iron rod which runs through the ball has rusted and swelled thus cracking the stone and the repair was likely to be very expensive. Now however, a specialist firm has had a look and the good news is that they feel that remedial work is straightforward and not nearly as expensive as expected.

We do not know the age of Repton Cross, but we suspect it was a market cross and although there would have been earlier markets, in 1330 the right to a market was claimed "by prescription" and was held on Wednesdays with a hiring fair annually on the 1<sup>st</sup> July. So we assume that the Cross was built around then. However there is an argument that the cross is on the site of an even earlier one, of Saxon origin, and at the junction of roads and a river crossing and gave its name to the Walecros Wappentake. Bigsby noted that the original square section shaft was replaced (for no good reason) in 1806 with the present plain circular one.



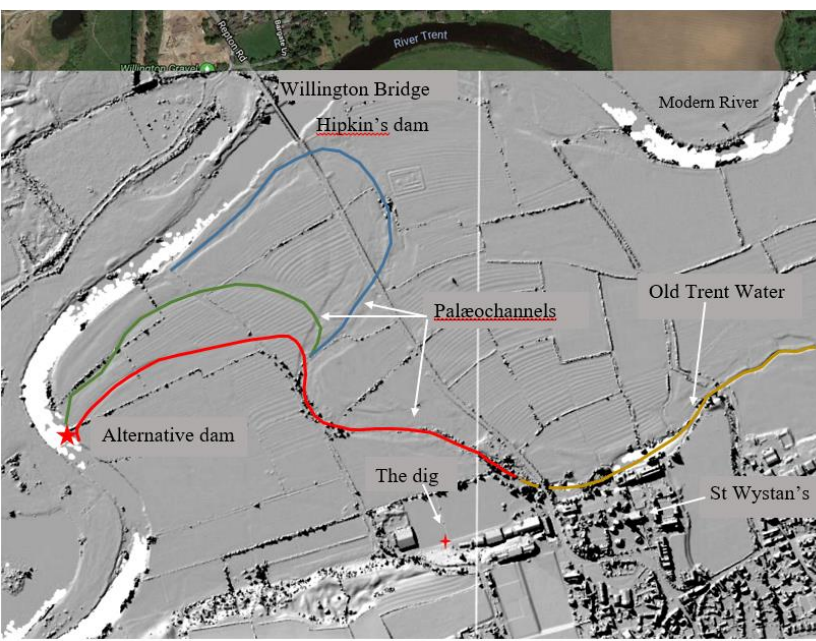
From Bigsby's book

### **Repton School Archive:**

Paul Stevens is the school librarian and archivist but has limited resources to work with. So we have offered to list the contents and, with the expertise of Barbara Foster and Charles Proud, to start to transcribe the ancient papers. Hopefully this will reveal more about the village and its occupants as well as the school. Work should start in May.

## Dam

In the last issue we mentioned that there might be a better site for the dam that blocked off the main channel through Repton, diverting the flow closer to Willington. This was the result of an Act of Parliament in 1699 and took place about



From lidarfinder.com

1705. Rev Hipkins has the dam just downstream of the bridge, but he was writing nearly 200 years after the event. There is another location which is possible further upstream – the map below shows where. It coincides with the start of two palaeochannels apparent in the LIDAR.

At that point, Martin Flowerdew spotted stones which appeared to have been carefully laid, but not as a wall which is how many wing walls and revetments appear. He has reported this to the County Archaeologist who is going to try to get some experienced archaeologists to take a look. There is also a line of stones nearby leading out into the river which needs an explanation. This might be our first water-borne archaeology!



Remnants of a possible dam.

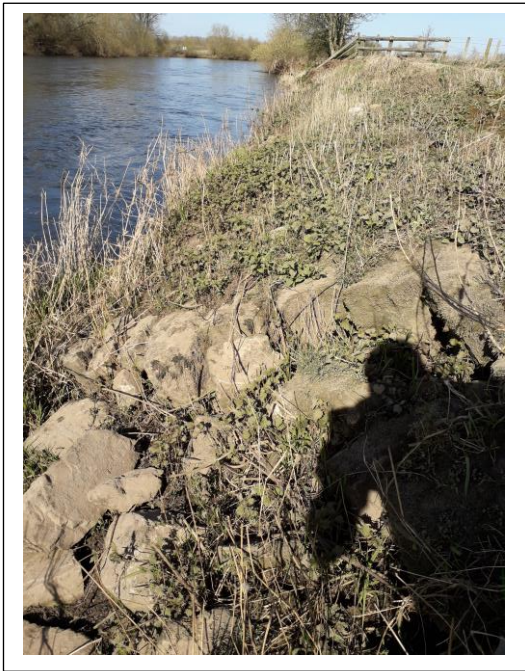


The feature running out into the river

Photos: Rev Martin Flowerdew

Stone walls have been spotted in the river bank in several spots downstream of Willington Bridge and Shelagh and Richard Wain concluded that they were wing-walls designed to prevent erosion of the banks. It is possible that the “Dam” is the same, but looking at the river channel, the erosion problem at that specific point is not obvious. More

stonework has been spotted by Martin just downstream of Newton Solney pipe-bridge but again this is probably erosion protection which has successfully limited the movement of a meander and thus saved land from being lost south of the river.



Near newton Solney

**New Book**

A couple of years ago, the Post office reported that they were often asked for a map of the village, leaflets of walks and a history booklet. We provided Ken Ash’s historical map (brought up to date), free copies of leaflets of walks that we had helped put together and of which there was still stock, but not the history booklet. This we are in the process of remedying and a first draft of ‘A Simple History of Repton’ has been prepared. There will be several rewrites and versions before we have something ready for print, but hopefully it will satisfy a need later this year.

**Archaeological artefacts**

More of the artefacts found during Professor Martin Biddle and Birthe Kjølbye-Biddle’s digs in the 70s and 80s.



Part of padlock



Spearhead



Arrowhead



Key



Draw-knife blade



knife, sheath and buckle

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

We no longer offer a programme of monthly talks, so here are the published programmes for some other Local History Groups:

**Willington History Group** (7.30pm, The Old School Willington)  
Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> April A Victorian Governess` Life – Liz Keeley  
Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> May Guided walk around Ashby - £2 per head, provided through auspices of Ashby Museum.

**Ticknall Preservation and Historical Society** (7.30pm, Ticknall Village Hall, 01530 810266/01283 762064/  
01332 862116)  
Friday 26<sup>th</sup> April The History of Palitoy with Bob Brechin. Bob, an ex-design engineer, at Palitoy talks about the company history and the 60 years of Action Man.  
Friday 31<sup>st</sup> May The Ecclesbourne Railway with Eric Boulby. Eric will be giving a talk on the history and restoration of the Ecclesbourne Railway.  
Friday 28<sup>th</sup> June Outside visit - Come ride on the restored Ecclesbourne line from Duffield to Wirksworth.

**Melbourne Civic Society** (7.30pm, Assembly Rooms High St Melbourne, 01332 865760, Guests welcome.  
Members £1, non-members £2. pamadams56@yahoo.co.uk)  
New programme about to be released.

**Etwall and Burnaston History Group** (7.30pm, Chapel School Room, 01283 730287)  
Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> April Derbyshire Adventurers and Explorers (Part 2) - Shirley Horton  
Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> May AGM followed by 'History of Slavery' - John Cumpstone

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

**Hilton and Marston History Group** ([hiltonhistory@gmail.com](mailto:hiltonhistory@gmail.com), Methodist chapel, Main St. Hilton DE65 5FF  
7.30pm £3.00)  
Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> April Mary Queen of Scots. The captive Queen in England 1568-84, David Templeman  
Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> May Life and times of the Bladon family in 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> c Uttoxeter - Dave Marriott  
Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> September Life in an Institution – Domestic service at Sudbury hall – John Redfern

**Aston on Trent Local History Group** ([astonontrenthistory@gmail.com](mailto:astonontrenthistory@gmail.com) £2 over 18s. Children free)  
April 23rd Bert Willow: Interesting Stories about Wine  
May 28th Steven Flinders : Stanton Ironworks: Gone but not forgotten  
June 25th Peter Liddle: Abbeys and Priors  
July 23rd John Whitfield: Remembering the 1950s  
August: NO MEETING  
September 24th Tony Luke: Church & State from the Black Death to the Reformation  
October 22nd The History Group: Finding Photographs  
November 26th Peter Castle: Derbyshire Songs and Stories  
December: NO MEETING