

The
Butterley
Gangroad
Project

NEWSLETTER

No.3. July 2014

Welcome to our project newsletter. Its been a long time since we issued the last one (August last year) but we have achieved a lot in that time, thanks to you. We are near to the end of the project and have either finished or started all the activities associated with it. We discovered much more about this simple one mile railway than we ever imagined might be possible. We are publishing the detailed findings and this includes a very big article, with many maps and illustrations, for the Derbyshire Archaeological Journal this year. This together with the research information and masses of photographs will be added to our web page later. We have involved children, led guided walks and given talks. We are preparing a walk leaflet and information boards so that anyone will be easily able to trace the railway. Its now time to celebrate and we are holding a big event in Fritchley on Sunday 14th September, so please come along and visit us then!

We still need help with building a wagon display, helping at the event, assisting with research and web page work, as explained below. Its not too late if you have memories or photographs of the railway, Amber Wharf or the Hilt's and Warner quarries for us to include them. We also have talks taking place to give updates as explained here.

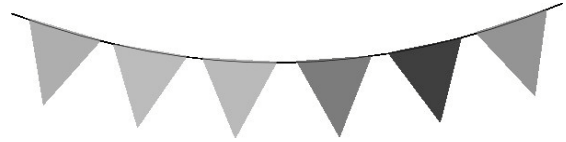
Thank you for your help and interest to date!



LOTTERY FUNDED

BUTTERLEY GANGROAD CELEBRATION EVENT

FRITCHLEY
14th September 2014



Join us for an afternoon of celebration in the heart of Fritchley Village on and around the village green. Activities booked so far include a miniature steam train ride along the historic Gangroad embankment, horses and carts, Napoleonic troops, a brass band, working model engines and an indoor local history fair. The history fair will include our own exhibition material such as maps, relics, models and photos of the line. Children will be able to have another go at sending trucks along the working incline model. Refreshments of various kinds should also be available. The whole event is free apart from the refreshments and possibly rides. So you and your family have no excuse not to be there if you are around, please mark it in your diary now! It's the best way to find out all about this project and chat to and meet all the people involved.

It's all about getting you and other local people to discover and enjoy their local history!

Starts around noon and finishes around 4pm

Important discoveries.

The last newsletter revealed what we had learnt about the Fritchley tunnel from archaeology and research. The rest of the railway has now been studied through fieldwork and further research with many volunteers taking part. We have examined virtually every record that might be relevant at the Derbyshire Record Office and photographed those that are for later study. We are especially grateful to Dave Bunting for carrying out the lion's share of this work to keep himself busy while his wife did family history research!



Very few new photos have come to light but when they do they can reveal a lot. This one was thought to show a train in one of the quarries but it is actually on the tip north of Dimple Lane by the Hat Factory, the triangle of track in the foreground was just north of the Warner Quarry branch. This shows that the later locomotives were capable of running up the steep gradients on the tip sidings and that side tip wagons were in use for this purpose. (Photo copyright Alan C.Baker)

Dave recorded late eighteenth and early nineteenth century Butterley Company accounts and documents that have only been there since 2003. These threw new light on the early history of the railway.

Combining these results with other information we have developed a history that is much more detailed than we ever thought possible, covering not only the railway but also the people behind it. Important discoveries include:

1. Evidence that the railway was open in 1793.
2. Sleepers may have originally been wood, stone blocks replacing them early on.
3. The initial gauge was 3ft 6in between the backs of the upright flanges and the later gauge probably was 3ft 10½in.
4. The early line had a gradient of 1 in 30 (30%) down from the quarry. The Hilt's incline had a gradient of 1 in 15 (6%) that extended beyond the double track section. There is no evidence for an incline on the approach to Amber Wharf. The gradient here is a relatively gentle 1 in 40 (2.5%) as a result of the bridge over Drover's Lane having been raised by about 15 feet c.1900. The double track here was to separate incoming from outgoing wagons.
5. That remains exist of the mine that became a tunnel at the entrance to Warner Quarry (1802 not 1808 as previously thought). The top was removed c.1900 but part of the sidewalls remain.
6. The land for the railway was leased originally and was eventually purchased except for one short stretch at Bowmer lane that remained leased until the end.
7. Dimple Lane was diverted when the Hilt's Quarry branch was opened. The lane used to run south of both of the Hat Factory buildings and there is evidence suggesting that the old line passed under Dimple Lane originally by a bridge as well.
8. Confirmation that the route did change and made use of the alignment of the Midland Railway's proposed

Crich branch of 1844. We now know when and how this happened.

9. There are definite "kinks" in the stone walls where the old alignment and new alignments met at two locations. At one the levels were also altered.
10. There is no evidence for any locomotive, other than Brunton's "Horse", before 1869. We think we have identified the builder of the first locomotive as Chaplins of Glasgow. This also dates the engine shed.
11. The incline to Hilt's Quarry was singled and converted to locomotive operation in 1894 when "Fitz" arrived. The branch had originally had stone sleeper blocks and light rails. These were replaced by timber sleepers and heavier rails. The rest of the line was relaid with this heavier rail by 1903.
12. The stone sleeper blocks used to construct a flight of steps at Amber Wharf c.1900 are completely different to others found along the route. They may have come from another railway since they show evidence of having been used as walling stone at some time.
13. There was an extra siding, not shown on any map, on top of the old tip near to incline cottage.
14. We found a list of drawings for various alterations made in the period 1894-1921, but sadly not the actual drawings!
15. Disposing of waste became a major problem. The "island" of land in the middle of Hilt's Quarry is actually waste dumped there when that area was worked out.

Memories

Freda Raphael collected a mass of memories for the project that have proved invaluable. Even though the railway closed over 80 years ago some of the information given by Stan Byard provided significant insights into how it was being operated at that time.

He could remember John Hamilton who was manager from 1893 and who modernised the limeworks and railway and reopened Warner Quarry. Mr.Hamilton was known as "Snush" by his employees and lived at the house now known as Lime Grange until 1945. He also remembered that the circular stone summerhouse in the garden was not a gunpowder store as recently believed but was actually the workmen's toilet!

Tony Elliot also provided details of the derelict site at Amber Wharf in the early 1950s. Sadly Tony, who was a much-loved Bullbridge resident, died earlier this year.

World's oldest -its official!

Early this year we were approached by the Guinness World Book of Records. They wanted to know more about the tunnel at Fritchley. We submitted the evidence that we had discovered during the project and as a result they have now recognised

it as the world's oldest railway tunnel. We have the certificate to prove it and will display it during the event on September 14th.



English Heritage have also visited and collected evidence with a view to either listing or scheduling the tunnel in order to protect it.

Derbyshire Archaeology Day



The big local event in Derbyshire Archaeology and local history is held in Chesterfield every January. This year we gave a talk about the project to a massive audience of 450 people in the Pomegranate Theatre. The project also featured as the lead article in the magazine "Archaeology and Conservation in Derbyshire" handed out to all participants. If you would like a free copy of this magazine, popularly known as "ACID" (!) we will have them available at the September event.

Telling the story

Amber Valley Borough Council have approved our planning applications for two interpretation boards. One is intended for the bus shelter on Crich Market Place, the other is going near the visible kilns at Bullbridge. They are being designed and will be manufactured and erected later this year.

We are also applying to place a further board and a display on the Drying Ground in Fritchley. The display will have examples of both types of track used on the railway and demonstrate how wagons were able to run on both track gauges during the transition period.

We have been donated all the "difficult" track features need for the display, i.e. replica plate rails, stone sleeper blocks and original bull head rails from the railway. The sleeper blocks came from a garden and originate from the Little Eaton Gangway, we have not disturbed any from the Butterley Gangroad itself.



We have purchased wheelsets and materials to make a mock up wagon for the display. The Golden Valley Railway, a narrow gauge railway at the Midland Railway Centre near Ripley is kindly providing workshop facilities. A small team of volunteers has come together to work on re-gauging the wheels and building the wagon. They could however do with more help, both to do this and to erect the display on site. Do please contact us if you have a few hours to spare to help with this. If you do work at the Golden Valley Railway workshop then you will need to be a member of that group for insurance reasons. HOWEVER we will pay your first annual subscription, so if you find it interesting then you might get involved in other activities there. For example at the moment they are rebuilding a carriage from the old Ashover Light Railway.

HELP STILL WANTED!

The project is managed by a mixed team of Derbyshire Archaeological Society members and other people with an interest in the line.

We still need help with building the wagon and section of track (as mentioned above). We are also looking for people who can help with the closing stages of the project. This involves helping archive the mass of material collected and update our website with attachments so that people can share whatever information is not copyright. This is a very important task for which we can provide expert guidance so if you can help with it then it will make an enormous difference.

If you have received this newsletter by email then you will already have registered your interests with us. However if you now feel you would like to do more, or something different then please let us know. You can reply to the email. There is still scope to take part in fieldwork and research activities and to help at events. Also let us know if you have any memories or know someone who might have who we could contact. If you prefer to write or phone then contact details are given below.

This is your project; we need you to take part!

The Derbyshire Archaeological Society

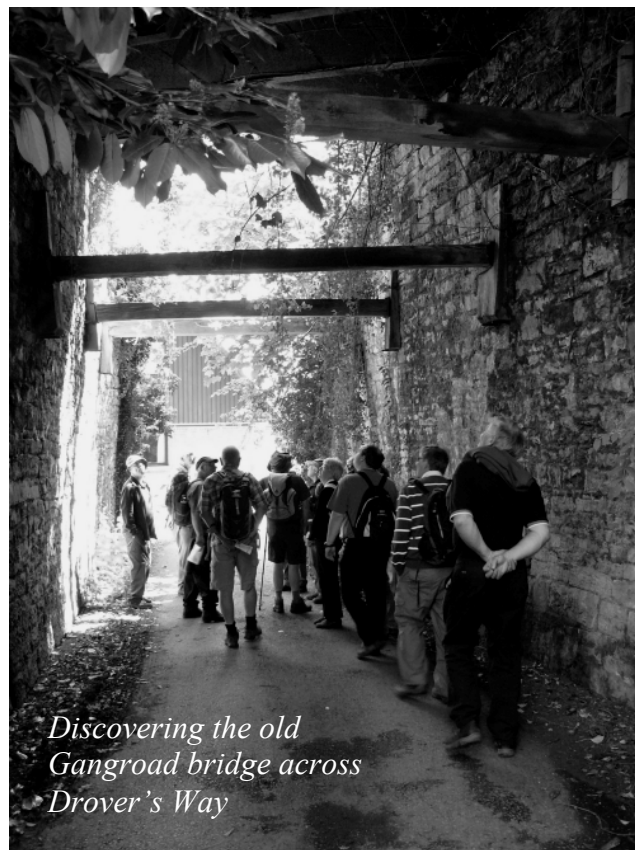
The Society has well over 400 members and is active in carrying out archaeology, conservation, research and publication to a high standard throughout the County. It is responsible for managing some historic sites including the old Morley Park ironworks. It also spreads knowledge through an intensive programme of talks, and visits for its members and the general public. You might like to consider joining to take full advantage of your interest in projects such as the Butterley Gangroad, full details are obtainable from the website: www.derbyshireas.org.uk.

INSURANCE AND SAFETY:

Derbyshire Archaeological Society members have some protection by virtue of the society insurance policy but other than this all activity undertaken on this project must be on an “at your own risk basis”. Having said that all activities, even guided walks, will have a safety risk assessment carried out before they are undertaken. This will enable everyone involved to be advised of any hazards, and be advised if they need protective clothing etc. No activity will be undertaken unless the risks can be mitigated to a generally acceptable level.

PROGRAMME OF EVENTS

- 19th July Talk as part of Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site Discovery Days, giving an update on the project. Strutt Centre, Belper, 7.pm, admission free, pre-booking advisable (01629 536831 office hours only).
- 3rd September Lecture to the Panel for Historical Engineering Works (Institution of Civil Engineers) Derby – Members only!
- 14th September Celebration Event Fritchley (see front page)
- 21st September History Fair at Strutt’s North Mill Belper. We are having a stand with displays and also giving a talk on the project (details available later).
- 13th October Talks “Prehistoric railways” and “Butterley Gangroad”, Matlock Railway Club, Duke of Wellington pub, 7pm for 8pm.



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