

IRONSTONE

Issue 4

“The Home of East Midlands Ironstone Quarry Heritage”



The Magazine of Rocks by Rail £2
The Living Ironstone Museum

Editorial

Welcome to Issue 4 of Ironstone and let me apologise for it being late. Unfortunately I've been very busy at work, so this and other things have had to take a back seat for a while. This is always a big problem for all volunteer organisations, trying to balance the volunteer work with everything, else, family life, job etc. Of course, the more volunteers you can call on, the less the impact there is someone can't make it. So if you can volunteer, even just once a month please let us know, the more the merrier.

Regards

Alistair Grieve

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Opening Times

General opening hours:

Tue/Thur: 10am-5pm (last admission 4pm)

Sun: 10am-5pm (last admission 4pm)

Operating Days:

First and third Sunday in every month Train driving sessions: Monthly, Year round - by ticketed pre-arrangement

Workshop tours: Everyday

Café: From 11am when Museum open

Admission Charges:

Operating Days:

Adults £6, Children 3, Under 5's Free

Group Visits - by arrangement

Dogs welcome if responsibly managed

Rocks by Rail (Rutland railway Museum)

Cottesmore

Rutland

LE15 7BX

Contact Details

General queries - secretary@rocksbyrail.org

For membership—membership@rocksbyrail.org

Questions or information relating to the ironstone quarry heritage, the exhibits or local quarrying history, please contact curator@rocksbyrail.org

www.rocks-by-rail.org 07873 721941

Front Cover—A Welcome Return—Former Rutland Railway Museum Resident, and an ironstone railway classic Salmon, back at Cottesmore for an all too brief visit.

Rear Cover— STR and Salmon making a noise as they enter the yard at Cottesmore

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Events For Early 2015

First Sunday of Each Month is Driver for a Fiver.

July 19th - Barrington Bash. Barrington Locos and Stock. Passenger services TBC—check website

August 16th - Quarry demonstration trains and passenger services

September 20th - Diggers, Diesels, & Dumpers, a celebration of all things diesel

October 18th - Quarry demonstration trains and passenger services

November 15th - Autumn Steam Gala

Note: Operations on Bank holidays are subject to review and will be confirmed in due course – check website for details.

<http://www.rocks-by-rail.org/>

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Salmon



The big news in this issue has been the (albeit brief) return of Salmon to Rocks by Rail, an iconic Ironstone locomotive. Salmon was built in Kilmarnock by Andrew Barclay and Sons in 1942, works number 2139 for the Stanton Ironworks Company, going to work at their Harlaxton Quarries in Lincolnshire. In 1948 Salmon was moved to the Stanton Ironworks nearby Woolsthorpe system in Leicestershire and in 1950 she became the property of Stewarts and Lloyds (Minerals) Ltd when they took over the quarry operations. Salmon left industry in 1969, initially entering preservation at the North Yorkshire Moors Railway before moving onto the Rutland Railway Museum and then the Swindon and Cricklade in 2000 where it was returned to an operational condition. The locomotive has now moved back to Scotland, and can be found at the most northerly standard gauge preserved line in the country, the Royal Deeside Railway near Aberdeen.

The return of Salmon has been a great coup for the railway. It not only reunites Salmon with Cottesmore (it still carries a Rutland railway Museum stock marker), but also the locomotive shed it was based in at Woolsthorpe (now our workshop) and a fellow Woolsthorpe resident Belvoir.

SALMON was named in memory of HMS Salmon, an S - Class Submarine, that was lost with all hands in July 1940.

Development News



Work continued over the winter on the Ironstone Exhibition Centre and we were helped out in no small way by the donation of a significant quantity of cement and mortar by Hansons at Ketton. This very kind gesture is a big boost to the project and has enabled us to make huge progress towards its completion.

This was complemented by a generous donation of 40 tonnes of granite chippings by Lafarge/Tarmac from their Mountsorrel Quarry. It will enable the base of the rail tracks to be laid out following compaction of a layer of limestone fill

sourced from both Ketton and the Mick George quarry at Thornhaugh. Once the fill and granite ballast has been laid part of a quantity of rail donated earlier by building materials company Cemex UK, being surplus from their rebuilding of the Barrington Light Railway, will form the new display track within the building



Work progresses inside the shed, using the donated materials to make the walkways that will enable the visitors to move between the rows of exhibits. What a difference this will make to the railway and the whole Rocks by Rail experience!

Around the Workshop



The two diesel locomotives , Eric Tonks and Ludwig Mond, are almost ready to be put back in traffic. However, before this can be done, the traction motors need to be checked out and cleaned. Which needs access to the inspection pit. Unfortunately this has been impossible due to the stock displaced by the building of the exhibition shed blocking the way. However a major shunt at the end of May released the pit allowing access for Ludwig Mind so work on the traction motors could begin , and complete the final stages of returning it to service.

The Yorkshire Engine Co 0-6-0 diesel 1382, left Rocks in early May, heading to the AFRPS (Appelby Frodingham Railway Society) shed at the Scunthorpe steel works. There the locomotive is to be returned to a fully operational condition complete with a full repaint into Colsterworth Livery. The locomotive will then be available for use back at Rocks as well as at Scunthorpe. 1382 is an appropriate locomotive for both locations, after the Colsterworth system closed it was moved to the Normanby Park system in Scunthorpe for further use.



The AFRPS are based in the old locomotive shed within the Scunthorpe complex and operate a fleet of industrial and ex BR diesels and industrial steam locomotives. Seen here is their YEC 2661 "Arnold Machin" undergoing maintenance in the shed.

Santa Specials

December is a special time of year as everyone gears up for Christmas, and at Rocks by Rail we're no different. Of course we can't be as busy as Santa Clause as prepares himself for Christmas eve and a whirlwind world tour delivering presents to everyone.

Luckily though he and his helpers managed to find time in their busy schedule to visit us at RbR for a couple of days in December. We provided them seats in the Sundew café so our visitors could have a chat with Santa and tell them what they would like for Christmas. Of course it did all depend on how good you'd been in the year.

To make sure Santa didn't forget what he'd been told we provided a letter box so that everyone could write a letter to Santa and get it posted to him. As the reindeer were nosy we had to hide it at the other end of the line to stop them trying to nibble the letters.

To get everyone to and from the letter box Sir Thomas Royden was taking trips up and down the line, decorated with a suitable headboard so everyone knew what it was all about.

Sadly Santa was unable to fulfil my request for some snow to make the pictures really festive, oh well, maybe next year.





January Sunshine

As we progress and develop the railway, we also need to refine our operations to make the best use of what we have. To see what will work and what won't, to train up new volunteers and familiarise everyone with the operation.



In January we had such a day, utilising the second siding in the quarry, to practice shunting and to see how best to make use it during a running day. With both STR and Jean in operation we also made use of the day for some filming, to put together a short video to publicise the railway.

Don't forget we're always on the look out for volunteers, so even if you can only manage the occasional day please come along and make yourself known. There's something for everyone.





DIG IT

The majority of heritage railways offer some form of driver experience package where people can pay for the day to get the full experience of driving (and firing) a steam locomotive. At Rocks we tend to do things a little differently. Rather than just driving a locomotive we offer the whole quarry experience with our DIG IT days—Drive it. Fire it. Shunt it. Dig it.



On these days participants get to drive the locomotives, fire the locomotives (if steam of course), shunt the trains and dig the quarry with the face shovel. A somewhat different experience to usual run of the mill ones on offer.

On the 8th of March we had our first such day, with two participants Laurence Smith and Oliver Jenkins. Normally we would use either 1931 or Sir Thomas Royden, but for this one we had Salmon on site, so it seemed rude not use it. As a bonus they also got to drive MR D as Salmon wasn't quite ready when they started.

Everyone had an enjoyable day, learning new skills and finding out just how difficult things can be, and how easy the volunteers can make it look with years of practice.

Top— Having fun at the controls of the face shovel.

Middle — Getting a helping hand during shunting , putting the brakes on the wagons is not as easy as it looks.

Bottom—Participants and volunteers pose for the camera at the end of an enjoyable day.





Salmon on the DIG IT day, looking right at home in the quarry and on the hoppers.



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Stanton Remembered

Whilst there were a large number of ironstone quarries, there were only a few that were independent. Many were owned and operated by the big ironworks, ensuring they had a secure and stable supply of raw materials to feed their blast furnaces.

One of the key players was Stanton Ironworks who owned and operated a number of quarries to feed their various ironworks, the last of which was the main site, The Stanton Ironworks at Ilkeston, Derbyshire. Opened in 1846 it finally closed down in 2007, although it had stopped making iron onsite in 1974.

It was this cessation of iron making that saw the closure of the final North of Welland Quarries, an occasion we commemorated back in February 2014 with our Sentinel Sunday in 2014. This year we remembered the Stanton Ironworks on our March running . Paying tribute not only to the company, but to the men and women who worked there.

On a personal note, I have a family connection with the Ironworks, as my grandfather (now sadly no longer with us), used to be a crane driver at Stanton prior to his retirement. A change from the mine he worked in beforehand.





Far Left Top - Former Stanton and Staveley owned engine Salmon catches a brief glimpse of sun as it shunts the quarry , reminiscent of its days at the Stanton and Staveley owned Harlaxton quarries.

Far Left Middle—Salmon was also used on the brake van rides and is seen here bring another train back into the yard at Cottesmore.



Far Left Bottom—Sir Thomas Royden was also in use during the day, like Salmon working both the quarry and on passenger duties.

This Page Top— We just had to do this, Salmon poses alongside twin Belvoir, currently out of service. Belvoir joined Salmon at the Woolsthorpe system in 1954, by then owned by Stewarts and Lloyds Minerals LTD, rather than Stanton Ironworks Co.



This Page Middle—the bus that brought some visitors (including former workers) from Stanton and Derby to help remember the Ironworks

This Page Bottom—The crews pose for the camera at the end of a long, but enjoyable, day.



Photo Charter

Normally we host the photo charter in November after our gala to make use of the guest engine. The only problem with that has been the weather. Being winter the chances of good weather are less than ideal, and in practice we've yet to have a good day weather wise. With Salmon on site we hosted an early season photo charter and this time we had good weather, a first for one of our photo charters. Some of the regular charter participants didn't believe the sun ever shone at Rocks by Rail.

Of course the sun didn't shine all day, but that was due to a partial eclipse of the sun, which we made the most of (see page 21). Joining Salmon for the day was Sir Thomas Royden enabling a variety of scenes to be set up, with run pasts, double heading and side by side running, using both hopper and tipplers wagons.

It was an excellent day, which all the photographers thoroughly enjoyed. Many getting their first ever shots at Rocks in sun. Many memorable images were produced and it all went to showcase the best of Rocks by Rail.



Far Left Top—early morning as Salmon brings a rake of empties up the hill from the exchange sidings.

Far Left Middle—Salmon bustles into the quarry with another set of empties for loading.

Far Left Bottom—Salmon trundles over the canal with a short train for Cottesmore yard.



This Page Top—Shunting in the quarry as Salmon waits for Sir Thomas Royden to remove the wagon and place them on the vacant siding.

This Page Middle—The second siding in the quarry enables scenes like this to be captured as Sir Thomas Royden and Salmon stand side by side in the afternoon soon.



This Page Bottom—It's late afternoon and Salmon heads through the yard at Cottesmore with yet another rake of empties for the quarry. As it does so it passes the former Woolsthorpe locomotive shed. This was once a familiar scene as Salmon was based at Woolsthorpe and called this shed home.



Above—something we don't normally do. Sir Thomas Royden leads a rake of empty wagons into the quarry for loading. On operating days we propel the wagons in.
Below—Salmon brings a rake of empty wagons up the mainline whilst Sir Thomas Royden shunts the long siding.





Above—don't worry, it's only a dummy. The Wickham trolley demonstrated for the photographers—see Ironstone 3 for full details of this.
Below—Salmon Crosses the canal



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Above—STR and Salmon put on a show as they climb up the hill into Cottesmore yard.

Below—Salmon poses outside the Woolsthorpe Shed, recreating a scene from their shared past.



Rocking the Eclipse

It's become almost a standing joke at Rocks by Rail, no matter how good the weather is, whatever day Russ Hillier books for a photo charter, it will be bad. The previous 4 photo charters have all suffered from poor weather, so to break the jinx one was booked for March 20, using our visitor Salmon.

For a change we had some brilliant weather, not a cloud in the sky, however we didn't have some sun in the sky at one stage either as it was the same day as the partial eclipse! Of course we had to make the most of it, and we found that the exhaust from the steam locomotives made the perfect filter, enabling us to see and photograph the eclipse without damaging our eyes. Lucky it worked, as it won't be until 2026 when we can try again.



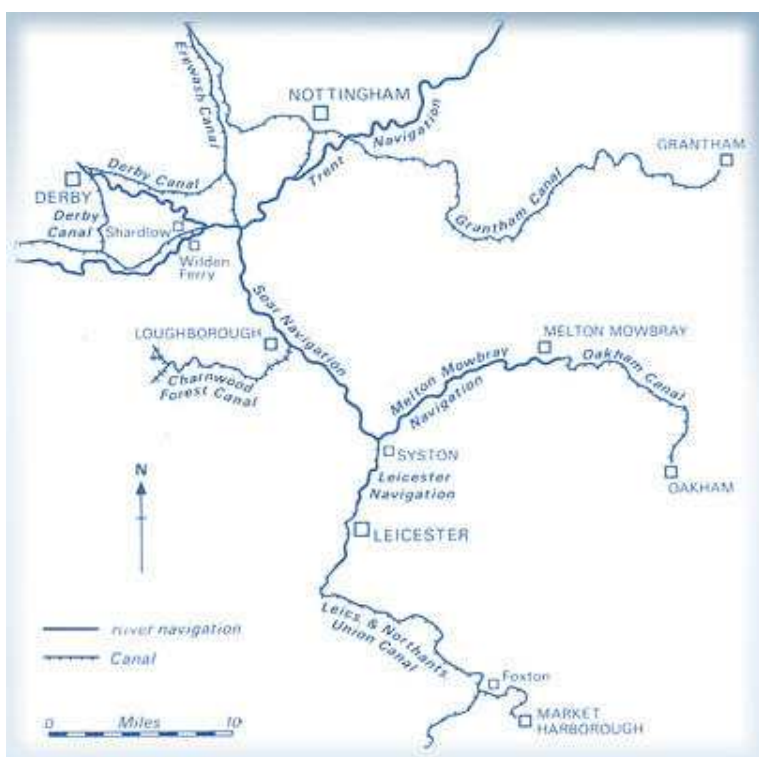
MOWS . Paul Dadford.

Some of our eagle eyed members may have noticed a rather more prominent display than usual by the Melton & Oakham Waterways Society (MOWS) in the Sundew café at our Stanton Ironworks Gala. So who exactly are MOWS and what are they up to?

MOWS

The Melton and Oakham Waterways Society was formed in 1997 to campaign and actively work for the preservation and restoration of the Melton Navigation and the Oakham Canal. The Melton Navigation used the River Wreake for the whole of its course from the junction with the main canal system at Syston. The Oakham canal extended the route into Rutland, another 15½ miles. The waterways meander through beautiful countryside and villages for whom the canal was once the prime mover of coal and other goods.

MOWS supports many interests, including conservation, angling, walking, cycling, boating and local history.



The Melton Navigation and Oakham Canals providing the link to the Midlands and beyond

The Mission of the Society is

“.. the regeneration of leisure opportunities throughout the Eye/Wreake Valley corridor based around a restored Melton Mowbray Navigation and long-term to realise those possibilities for the Oakham Canal.”

History of the Melton & Oakham Waterways

The story started over 200 years ago ...

The 1790s was a period of "canal mania". Towns everywhere saw a new waterway as the key to increased trade and future prosperity, while speculators recognised the dividends to be reaped from prosperous navigation companies. Leicestershire and Rutland were no exception. In 1778 the River Soar Navigation opened from Trent Lock, near Nottingham, to Loughborough. The immediate calls to continue the line to Leicester were followed shortly afterwards by suggestions that Melton Mowbray should also be included in the scheme.



The former canal basin at Melton Mowbray. The entrance to the Oakham Canal can just be seen at the bridge on the right

After various routes had been rejected in favour of a fairly simple canalisation of the River Wreake, the Melton Mowbray Navigation finally received parliamentary approval in 1791. Despite the exorbitant demands of local landowners, necessitating a major refinancing halfway through construction, the navigation was opened all the way to Melton in 1797 at a cost of just over £40,000. The canalised Wreake was never as profitable an undertaking as the nearby Soar Navigation, but Melton's appetite for Derbyshire coal ensured that enough boats would pass down the Melton Mowbray Navigation (paying tolls in the process) to secure its financial viability. Six years later, this traffic would almost double as 15½ more miles of navigable waterway were opened through to Oakham following the construction of the Oakham canal.



A somewhat similar view of Melton today with the Boat Inn clearly visible on the right

Oakham Canal

The Oakham canal was opened in 1802. It was financially successful, especially in its last 10 years, and consistently did more trade than the Melton Navigation. The main cargoes were coal, via the River Soar and Melton Navigation to Oakham, and agricultural products in the reverse direction. In 1846 some 30,000 tons (mainly coal) were transported along the Oakham canal. In the early 1800's plans to extend the Oakham canal to Stamford, thereby opening up access to the rivers Welland and Nene, were discussed. These were put before Parliament in 1811 but the Bill failed to pass and the plans were subsequently abandoned.

Leaving the old canal basin by the Boat Inn at Melton Mowbray, and using a series of locks, the canal followed the valley of the River Eye east towards a wharf at Saxby. It then took a more southerly course, with lock 14 situated at the site of the former Whissendine railway station. From here the canal turned east once more towards Edmondthorpe, where the final locks were once situated, and on to a wharf at Market Overton. Turning south once more the canal passed a wharf at Cottesmore, close to the Rocks by Rail entrance on the Ashwell-Cottesmore Road, before reaching the Oakham canal basin.

Unusually the canal was fed only by local streams and smaller rivers and suffered greatly from a lack of water, especially in the summer months. When the canal company proprietors learned of the planned Syston and Peterborough railway they were quick to enter into discussions with the Midland Railway Company to whom the canal was eventually sold in 1847. Land that was not utilised by the railway company was sold or reverted to private ownership.

The wharf at Cottesmore fell into a state of disrepair and now consists only of some overgrown remnants. The site of the former Market Overton wharf, the warehouse (now converted into cottages) and the converted weigh-house, can still be seen from the Market Overton to Teigh Road. The former warehouse at the Oakham basin is now the Queen Elizabeth Theatre. The stonework around its windows, and the interior beams are the original.

Current State of the Oakham Canal

Despite the canal being disused and in the hands of multiple private owners for nearly 170 years, much of it remains visible in the landscape. Notable exceptions are:

- The original canal basin at Melton Mowbray and the original course east as far as Lag Lane - this is mostly under what is now the Mars Pedigree Pet Food factory.
- An area of the original course now under the Syston and Peterborough railway to the south of Brentingby and Wyfordby.
- An area to the south of Saxby where the original course is cut by dismantled railway lines and the Syston and Peterborough railway.
- The former Oakham canal basin and the area to the south of Burley Park Way (A606) which now forms part of Oakham School grounds or has been subject to modern development.
- An area to the north, and at the site of, the former Whissendine railway station where the Syston and Peterborough railway cuts the canal at several points.

Sadly only a small section of canal between Oakham and the former Ashwell prison retains a

public footpath, although the canal can be seen from several roads and other footpaths (including the Rocks by Rail nature trail) which cross it.



MOWS Plans

Restoration of the Oakham canal is a difficult and expensive prospect. Realistically its future lies in the hands of the multiple landowners who own the canal and control access to it. Clearly though restoration would be fruitless without the restoration of the Melton Navigation and it is here where much of the society's activities have been focussed over the past few years. There are many complexities, not only ownership and navigation rights, but also the ongoing discussions in government surrounding the responsibilities for waterways between the Environment Agency and the Canal and River Trust.

Left .The Oakham canal at Rocks by Rail with recent clearance works carried out by the landowner

Below The Oakham canal at Ashwell, maintained by the Oakham Angling Society



MOWS current activities in relation to the "Oakham" are focussed on preservation, accessibility, conservation and awareness.

They are:

Working with Rutland County Council to improve the Springfield section to the south of Burley Park Way

Working with the landowners, initially as far as Rocks by Rail, to try to open up access and conserve/improve what remains of the canal.

Supporting the Oakham Angling Society in their efforts to maintain the canal north of Oakham.

Increasing public awareness of the canal and MOWS. Which, to come full circle, is why

MOWS were at the Stanton Ironworks Gala. They hope to be at more of our major events throughout the year.

MOWS will also be working with us over the coming months to look at how best we can develop the area where the canal crosses our site. With the permission of the local land-owner it is hoped we can do much more here for the benefit of our visitors and to enhance the awareness of the Oakham canal.



Could we make it look as nice as this section near Edmondthorpe I wonder?



The Rocks team are no strangers to canals, some of them are seen here heading along the Birmingham and Fazely canal during a boating holiday in May.

Singapore Remembered



Our February running day was on the 15th which coincided with the 73rd anniversary of the fall of Singapore to the Japanese in 1942. Amongst the captured was our very steam locomotive, Singapore, built by Hawthorn Leslie for the Royal Navy and their Singapore dockyard.

To commemorate the event the locomotive was suitably adorned and a display to remember the event, and the conflict in the east, was put on in the Woolsthorpe shed.

And did you know Singapore is a registered war memorial.



