

## Unscheduled monument report – Ticknall Lime yards, Ticknall, Derbyshire.

### 1.0 = Introduction

#### 1.1 = History

The Ticknall lime yards were first documented on the 14<sup>th</sup> of October 1462 (Usher, 2000), it is believed that the site though has been quarrying lime since 1411. The site developed through leasing of parcels of land but reached its first important stage in the seventeenth century when Sir John Coke purchased the land known as “old town yard” for the building of his new house ‘Melbourne Hall’. In 1690 extensive lands were purchased by Sir John Harpur (owner of Calke abbey), and later during the 1760’s his family played a major role in the yards expansion (Marshall, 1992). It is during this expansion that the limekilns were built for the processing of the lime, and despite the high value they were still only operated part time (during summer)(Usher, 2000). Transport of the materials now became a problem and when the option of building a canal was rejected due to the cost a horse drawn tramway was installed. This opened in 1802 (Holt, 2002) and connected with other local tramways and eventually onto the



Ashby Canal, now little can be seen on the site except for the tunnel and small bridge (fig 1,2). Because of the better transport, new markets were available outside of the local area allowing an increase in the production of lime. The only limitation was the extent to which the area had already been quarried and in many of the ‘pockets’ of lands resources were becoming short. By 1857 most of the yards were owned by the Harpur-Crewe (Calke abbey) family and leased to the Ticknall Lime company, but by 1913 the tramway and most of the lime workings were removed, only ‘estate’ working still remained but the last of this took place in 1940 (Usher, 2000).



#### 1.2 = Location



The lime yards are located around the village of Ticknall (originally Tichenhalle), South Derbyshire.

Grid ref = SK352238

Many changes have occurred since the sites creation but a map of the workings in 1882 can be seen in Fig 3. The village as it stands today clearly has developed around the quarrying and has been designed to meet the

needs of the work force. Today the site is unrecognizable from the air due to the growth of trees (fig 4) but on the ground the original layout can still be found.

Fig 5 shows the location of the site in regards to local centers of population and the other limestone outliers that were in the area. As can be seen this was one of few in south Derbyshire and was located quite a distance from local towns, but near to other limestone quarries. It is this locality to other quarries that made the site so successful and become one of the last in this area to finish working (Holt, 2002).

### 1.3 = Present State

The lime yards are presently protected as an SSSI (special site of scientific interest) and managed by the National Trust whom own the adjacent Calke Abbey estate, now a NNR (National Nature reserve). The SSSI status has been given for the sites variety of lime loving plants including Dogs mercury, Ransomes and wild clematis. Although the land is protected, no actual protection or conservation plans are given to the kilns and remaining workings. Extensive tree growth, vandalism and general degradation are damaging the remaining kilns (fig 6) and some form of official conservation plans are needed before they reach an irreparable state.



### 2.0 = What should be scheduled?

My proposal is for the surviving kilns in the area known as “Sir Henry Harpur’s Yard” (Usher, 2000) at the centre of the remaining site to be given scheduled monument status to ensure the long term future of this important site. Although much more of the site could be scheduled the state of the kilns and workings is very poor and little could be done, in Sir Henry’s yard though they appear to be structurally sound and conservable. This said, with the site already protected and no problems from development etc: it may be possible to have the whole site scheduled. If this was possible it would certainly help in the protection of this important monument to industrial life.

### 3.0 = Why should it be scheduled? (According to secretary of states criteria)

#### 3.1 = Period

The kilns and surrounding site having been around from 1462 have progressed through many changes and have developed greatly. It is this slow development over the centuries that makes this site so interesting. The kilns seen in Henry’s yard are largely eighteenth and nineteenth century (Marshall, 1992) when this part of the site had its greatest importance. This period stretches from the start to the finish of the period known as the industrial revolution, and the progression of the kilns can be seen. The original ‘hole in the ground’ style kilns were being removed and more efficient ‘continuous’ kilns which did not need cooling installed (Marshall, 1992).

### 3.2 = Rarity

Kilns of this age and potential for restoration are rare wherever you look, in this area of south Derbyshire they are even rarer. In places the occasional one or two kilns can be seen, often in a poor state. But to find the number and condition as seen at Ticknall is unheard of.

The greatest value of this site is in its whole landscape, nowhere in this country is it possible to see the evolution of the limekiln throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth century. The evolution of the type of kiln, relationship with the limestone and methods of transportation make this site one of national importance (Marshall, 2002).

### 3.3 = Documentation

Due to the local importance of the site and its relationship with Calke Abbey, extensive documentation from the earliest to the latest uses of the site can be

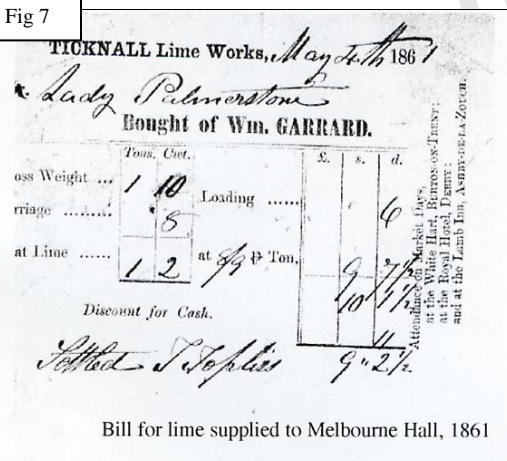
found (fig 7). Archaeological excavations on the site have also been reviewed in the included “industrial archeological review” (Marshall, 1992)

Records on the site can be found in many of the local archives due to its connections with not only other houses E.g. Melbourne hall

But also with scheduled monuments E.g. Swarkestone bridge

As well as canals, roadways, bridges, and farming.

The Harpur-Crewe family records cover nearly five hundred years of lime



burning history with surveys, accounts, correspondence and even tramway proposals (Marshall, 1992). Many of these records can be viewed at the Derby country records office and the Melbourne hall Muniment room.

### 3.4 = Group Value

As stated in the previous section the kilns and site have strong connections with major local houses and families as well as other important locations. The greatest connection though has to be with the horse drawn tramway built to serve the lime yards at a time 25 years before George Stephenson's Stockton and Darlington railway (Holt, 2002). The tramway was almost totally removed when the yards closed but the tunnel under the Calke Abbey Driveway still exists and is now a designated scheduled monument. The addition of the kilns to this scheduling would complete an isolated story and object which has little overall context. The adjacent Calke Abbey estate and house has largely been made due to the income and materials generated by the lime yards, in fact the house, estate, gardens and quarry have all developed together. This lime yards, tramway, and Calke estate make up a full and interesting story that have high conservation as well as income generation potential E.g. guided walks.

### 3.5 = Survival / Condition

The survival of the kilns is relatively good but presently only a few have been excavated in detail. Some are in a dire state and need immediate conservation and restoration to stop any more degradation, but most (especially in Henry's yard) are still whole and in structural dormancy coated by a layer of soil, grass and vegetation (fig 8/9). The lining of many of the kiln 'pots' (area which lime is burnt in) is largely disappeared, and what remains is severely vitrified but this is not due to vandalism or degradation (Marshall, 1992). The damage to the inside of the kilns is due to prolonged use over many years and gives us yet more clues to the use of the site and intensity of the workings.



### 3.6 = Fragility / Vulnerability

The site despite its present condition is under enormous stress and pressures, of all these the vegetation encroaching is the most dangerous. In small numbers and as ground cover some plants such as the ivy's in fig 8 can bind the object together and prevent damage from the elements. But as with all good things too much will cause damage, excessive growth will cause plants roots to break apart the brickwork and delicate structure. The dense growth presently in the area will in time cause irreparable damage to the kilns and part of our important industrial heritage could be lost. Pressures from development luckily will be small due to the SSSI and NNR statuses, but erosion and vandalism from not only tourists and walkers but from local landowners and possible mismanagement could occur. Pressures on parts of the site are clearly from water, many ponds exist showing a high water table indicating the possibility of subsidence of the banks supporting the kilns and old tramway, to fully protect the kilns from this pressure, drainage work may be required.

### 3.7 = Diversity

The site has a high diversity of kilns of different styles, shapes and sizes from all stages of the quarry's history (full details see Marshall, 1992). Out of the few that have already been excavated it can be seen that no standard size or shape was used, each land owner has created their own kiln presumably dependant on the wealth and land of the person.

It is this variation in appearance and type of kiln as well as the relationship with the land they are on that makes them interesting. Few sites have enough kilns

surviving to visibly see the standard horseshoe shaped enclosure typical of limekilns at this time (Marshall, 1992).

### 3.8 = Potential

The potential of this site is enormous but would not be without cost, conservation work is greatly needed but this cannot be damaging to the natural environment that has protected this site for so many years and given its SSSI status. Although initial clearance and stabilization of the kilns should be the first priority, the geophysical surveying and excavation of the site can and should be done. Not only could more kilns be found but maybe also remains of the tools, tramway and objects used at the time for the quarrying and lime burning process.

The full restoration of the kilns would be an over ambitious long term aim, due to cost and small potential for raising its own revenue. But the site could be cleared in places and when stabilized as with the adjacent tunnel be left with minimal disturbance for many years until possible grants or money is available. Under the lakes to the side of the site more kilns are predicted, what these would show nobody knows but if protected by silt, water and mud many objects possibly even organics could have survived. With diving equipment an underwater survey at this depth would be an easy and realistic aim.

### 4.0 = Conclusion

As shown in the previous sections this site is vitally important in the south Derbyshire area and also carries national importance due to its long and complex history. A highly diverse environment and set of kilns is visible and awaiting full restoration and excavation, with supporting maps, charts, bills and reports to tell you of the lives and work of the people. Progression, development and a range of wealth's can be seen in the kilns, locations, and tramway through a period of five hundred years ranging from the early 1460's to nearly 1950.

But as with many of these sites when shut decay and neglect have had their way and soon the damage may become irreversible. Many of the problems could be solved with the simple clearance of vegetation but only by giving the kilns official protection and by having their own management plans can the long term future of this important site be secured.

### Acknowledgements

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Mr. Sidney Bricknell of the Ticknall Preservation and Historical Society for all his help and recommended sources.

### Bibliography

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Fig 1 = Author

Fig 2 = Author

Fig 3 = Usher, H. (2000)

Fig 4 = WWW. Multimap.co.uk [accessed 18/11/04]

Fig 5 = WWW. Multimap.co.uk [accessed 15/12/04]

Fig 6 = Author

Fig 7 = Usher, H. (2000)

Fig 8 = Author

Fig 9 = Author