

WALK ROUND DUCKMANTON WORKS with Ron & Gladys Turner (nee Allen), 9 September 1992. Transcribed from a tape recording made by G. Downs-Rose at the time.

The closure of Arkwright colliery early in 1988, the stopping of the mine pumps and blocking of the surface drifts, made the underground water rise and this forced methane gas to the surface, threatening the lives of the people who lived in old Arkwright Town.

Eventually, British Coal Opencast put forward a scheme to move the people to a new village across the A632 from the old village. It was a condition of the scheme that permission would be granted to opencast some 1,000 hectares of land, worth £150 million pounds, around the old village to pay for the cost. In consequence, all the remains of the Adelphi Ironworks and the sites of iron-workers cottages would be destroyed.

Planning consent was given, with the proviso that Works Farmhouse- the original iron works offices- and a nearby cottage- the 'High House'- would be protected, and reinhabited after opencasting ended. The purpose of the walk was to take a last look at the remains of Duckmanton Works before opencasting work began in July 1993.

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The walk began at the site of Works Row in the Ox Pastures, where the Smiths of Chesterfield (ironfounders) built eight cottages for employees when the Adelphi Ironworks were built in the 1790's to make cannon balls during the Napoleonic Wars with France. Later, two cottages at the eastern end were made into one, to house the works' joiner. The Row stood west of the ironworks (See Map) and faced open fields and woodland to the north while, immediately south, towering above the Row, was the embankment of the loop line built in the early 1900's to link the Great Central Railway with the Chesterfield to Lincoln Railway.

Mrs. Allen was born in a cottage nearer to the Ironworks offices. She described Works Row where her parents, Grandma and Grandpa Allen moved to when she was a child. Her father's job as a miner had taken her parents away from Duckmanton Works for a time. When they returned, it was to live in Works Row. When No.1 (western end) in the Row became empty, she and her parents moved into it. It consisted of 2 bedrooms, a living room and a kitchen.

Mrs. Allen, in her excellent booklet, *My Childhood Days at Duckmanton Works*, describes No.1, Works Row and gives a very full account of its rooms, furnishings and the way of life of the people there.

A track to the ironworks passed in front of the Row and, on the other side of it was a field divided into seven allotments for the cottagers, and a well from which domestic water had to be drawn and carried in buckets.

Our walk took us under a bridge carrying the loop line to join its northern junction with the Great Central line, and on towards the ironworks site. On the left, just past the bridge, stands a large cottage, the only one to have survived the demolition of the other 15 cottages when they were condemned after the 1939-45 War.

Probably one of the first to be built for the Works, to house a member of the management, it stands in a large garden, back from the trackway, and was one of three which once stood on the site. It was known as 'High House' and in 1919, at the time of sale of the Sutton Estate, it was let to Mr. F. Allen (Mrs. Allen's grandfather), and had 3 bed-rooms, a parlour, a kitchen, scullery and pantry with an earth closet and coal store outside.

To the north of 'High House' stood 'Long House' let, at the time of the \*sale, to Mrs. Allen's maternal grandmother, Mrs. Willis. It contained two bedrooms, a scullery, a dairy and living room. It shared a stand pipe with the tenant of the third cottage. The 'Long House' was so-called because it was long and narrow.

Information has come to light recently about the possible original purpose of this cottage. In the Census of 1841 the tenant was Mr. Thomas Bennett, aged 27, a grocer. He was the great, great grandfather of Mr. R.W. Smith of Dorset, and was married with 3 sons. He also employed a grocer's apprentice and a female servant. One ex-local, Mrs. Peters, reported that the cottage had a bakehouse attached. All the structure of the cottage has been demolished since it was last vacated, except part of a brick wall which runs west to east on the south side of the building's position. This wall's surface has evidence of having been exposed, at some time, to a very hot fire.

Nearby, to the east of the 'High' and 'Long' cottages stood a small, third cottage, 'The Slipper'. In 1919 it was let to Miss Goucher and contained two rooms and a lean-to wash house. No inhabitants were recorded there in 1841, and it did not appear on the 1837 Tithe Map of the parish. So its age is not

known. However, it was here that Mrs. Gladys Turner was born at the time when her maternal and paternal grandparents lived in the 'Long House' and 'High House' respectively, and from the 'Slipper' she moved with her parents into No.1 Works Row.

From Works Row, our walk took us to the remains of Works Farm. The surviving buildings there consist of what were originally the ironworks offices and pattern shop. When the Smiths of Chesterfield were made bankrupt in the 1840's the Arkwrights of Sutton Hall, owners of the estate, began to convert the use of the land back to farming. In 1853, Arkwright employed Daniel Gladwin there. In the 1861 Census, Gladwin is recorded as clerk in the old Works office and as a farmer with 60 acres of land. Redundant ironworks buildings- the weigh office, pattern shop and stores- were converted to accommodate Gladwin's family and equipped for use as a saw mill and joinery shop.

Luckily, Daniel Gladwin kept a work diary which survives. A small team of joiners, wheelwrights and a blacksmith were manufacturing carts for the use of tenant farmers and brick and woodwork for their farm buildings. One legacy was the orchard of thirty trees which Gladwin planted between the farm and where the loop line for the railway was later built. Each tree was taken from a cutting begged by Gladwin from his friends, and during our walk we took a last look at the orchard before it was erased when the farm buildings were taken over as office and plant store by the opencasters.

Another survival we saw was the brick-lined reservoir which stood across the track from the Saw Mill cottages. It had served to provide water to supply a steam engine which powered the saws, lathes and other powered tools for Arkwright's joiners. The water for the reservoir was brought by pipe line from an old mine shaft on higher ground in the Ox Pastures to the west of Works Row.

The old chimney which had served the steam engine had long gone, but remained in our memories. The writer remembers the chimney from a visit as a boy with his father who explained to him that the upper floor above the old pattern shop- then used to store farm equipment- was used by the local bobby, Salt, to encourage younger miners to learn physical exercises in it. The old reservoir, like the orchard, was destroyed by the opencast work.

The Smiths had made bricks, using clay from part of the site which lay immediately north of the Works Farm buildings. Brick-making, for estate purposes, was resumed when the Arkwrights took over, and they built a new brick kiln in March 1854 just across the road from the farm. We remembered it as a grassy mound with steep sides to slide down. The ruins of the collapsed brick kiln disappeared when opencasting began.

The brickyard, which had stood to the north of the kiln, had long disappeared. When it fell into disuse it, and the holes from which the clay had been excavated, the District Council tipped domestic refuse into it. Two cottages built on the northern edge of the brickyard for ironworkers had long gone.

From our vantage point near the farmhouse we stopped to exchange memories and accounts of the farm and the ironworks and its associated features. In the 1919 estate sale, the farm and three cottages had been bought by the Spooners who were followed by the Mosleys, then the Frys. North-east of the farm, beyond the edge of the ironworks site once stood two cottages, in which Mrs. Turner's father had been born.

His father, as a single man, had found employment in the ironworks, and her father became a miner and helped to sink the Do-Well coal mine for Staveley Coal & Iron Co., the firm which went on to sink a complex of coal mines- Ireland, and Markham's 3 collieries in the late 19th century. All these collieries remained open until the late 1980's, early 1990's, and were worked by miners housed in the villages of Arkwright, Duckmanton, Poolsbrook and the cottages at Duckmanton Works.

The track which we had followed from Works Row to the farm, was the main route from the A632, Chesterfield to Bolsover, road and began at Duckmanton Lodge, built for the Smiths family, near the boundary of the Duckmanton and Calow parishes. Known as Works Lane, en route, it passed between two cottages at Ox Pasture Gate, seven at Works Row, the Saw Pits cottages and Works Farm.

Continuing eastwards beyond the farm, it passed through big gates near the site of two mine shafts, sunk to the Waterloo coal seam, which latterly pumped water to the washery plant at Markham collieries. Beyond the gate, and over a stile, a field path took a direct line towards the Cenotaph at Bottom Duckmanton, while the end of the lane- known once as 'Waterloo Lane' after the mine shafts sunk in 1815, and named after that battle- came out nearby on the road to Staveley. But we walked back to the cars, still talking and reminiscing.

On the horizon to our right, looking northwards, stands Bower Wood. Seams of coal and iron once outcropped under all this land. Very shallow ironstone 'bell' pits can be seen amid the trees and scrub of Bower Wood. They were shafts sunk about twenty feet deep into the seams. The seams were dug out for a few yards around the bottom of the shafts, until handling the ore became laborious and surface water a nuisance, then a new shaft would be sunk a few yards away.

This method of iron-working dates the site to before the use of steam engines made pumping and winding easier in the late

eighteenth century. After use, the bell pits were fenced-off to prevent cattle being injured. They gradually became overgrown by scrub and, later, trees and blackberry bushes.

By the time of the 1871 Census the wood from the trees was providing part-time employment for John Bower, an ex-estate carter, and the plantation took his name. Bower lived in the small croft which lay at the junction of the cart track which runs from Bower Wood to the Staveley road, at Inkersall. Bower sold coppiced wood for fencing to local estate farmers.

As we returned to the cars, our discussions continued.

We remembered a Mr. Bagguley who later used to live in the cottage where Mr. Bower had once lived. Mr. Bagguley used to bring the fish round on a Friday, and he used the same lorry to empty the ashpits at Arkwright Town. It was a flat-bottomed lorry, and once it broke down on the main road leaving Arkwright and was stuck there for days. The rotting fish on it stunk like anything. He used to wear those knee-length breeches. Bagguley's daughter married Joe Fotheringham, son of the Mrs. Fotheringham who lived at Saw Pits Cottages.

There was the barm-man who came round with yeast for making bread, and the hardware man and the green grocer. Folk depended a good deal on door-to-door delivery services.

The main source of foodstuffs and other goods was Calow Co-op shop. Jack Penney used to visit each home from the Co-op for weekly orders. On Monday mornings, from the Calow store he would go down Dark Lane, Calow, round Calow Green, Sutton Spring wood, back to top of Bole Hill and then down the lane to the Works, on to Bottom Duckmanton, where he called at houses near the cenotaph: the blacksmith's, Globe's, etc..

Mr. Turner started work at Calow Co-op in 1940, taking Jack Penney's place when he went into the forces, doing the rounds of the surrounding villages. He moved to Calow Co-op from the West Bars' branch. George Wardle from Arkwright was also employed at Calow. When George left for the forces, Mr. Turner became assistant to the Co-op manager, Mr. Herberts. "We used to go by the times of the buses in those days. There was one at ten minutes to six in the evening, and that was the cue for the shop shutters to come down. One day, Mrs. Parker, who lived in Lawn Villas complained to Herberts about it. "Do you know you are closing too early?", she would tell him.

Mr. & Mrs. Turner's stories of their experiences, and of non-Works folk, gave me new glimpses of the wider, inter-locking world that lay around old Arkwright Town, of which I had been only dimly aware in those now distant days.

Relationships between neighbours and trades-people seem far less close and less inter-dependent these days. Its a trend which 'global markets', on-line shopping via the computer and telephone, are not likely to reverse.