

Alike Harry Paar, in IL.72 pp92-94, this line has excited my curiosity, initially through having doubts as to the substance of the entry in the Industrial Railway Society *East Anglia Handbook* attributing a 'Standard gauge contractor's loco 7x22" as advertised by Swift & Co, Engineers, of Melbourn, in October 1876, as being used on the construction of this line. Something wrong with the dimensions too!

It appears that the Meldreth Company was originated by H.O.S. Ellis, a local barrister, but no details are known. Apparently the works closed in 1908, re-opening a few years later under the Standard Cement Co Ltd.

I do wonder if the Meldreth Portland Cement & Brick Co Ltd was the successor to a seemingly low-key operation which did not get off the ground, viz Meldreth Cement & Coprolite Syndicate Ltd, as recorded by Dissolved Company File BT31 4530/29636 held at the Public Record Office, Kew. Incorporated 4 September 1889 with a nominal capital of £500 divided into 50 shares of £10 each to (inter alia) carry on the business of manufacturers or dealers in cement, coprolites, stone, clay, bricks, tiles and terra cotta, the Company was wound up by Order of the County Court of Cambridgeshire, on petition, 22 July 1891. Among the shareholders were Thomas Westrope Bowman, Meldreth, farmer and John Bowman, Liddington, farmer; the Memorandum of Association providing for the Company to acquire, by purchase or lease, certain lands, the property of the former, situate at Meldreth.

Thanks to the good offices of Frank Wade, Property Database Manager for Blue Circle Properties Ltd, and his Manager, Planning & Resources, Peter Sumpton, I have been able to peruse various Minute Books and Reports to Board of The British Portland Cement Manufacturers Ltd. Under the heading of The Standard Cement Co Ltd, Meldreth Works, I noted on 6th May 1913 approval being given for the purchase of this undertaking from Mr F.W.Davis and his friends jointly by the Associated and British Companies. On 16 September 1913 it was reported that in the course of removing coal and coke from the Works, a boy riding on one of the wagons fell off and was killed. Hopefully, Harry may now be able to return to the local newspaper to search around this date to come up with more detail. It was agreed on 20 April 1915 to dismantle the plant and machinery, and on 8 June 1915 it was minuted by the Works Committee "Messrs Boyd & Sons [Who were they? - WJF] having offered the sum of £1000 for loose and fixed plant at these Works, it was decided that it is advisable to pull up the rails, and that an offer be obtained for the loose plant alone". On 21 September 1915 Messrs Boyd are reported as having increased their offer to £600 for the fixed and loose plant, exclusive of siding and buildings, and this was accepted. The property was eventually conveyed and assigned by the Liquidator of the Standard Cement Co Ltd to The BPCM Ltd on 18 July 1922; his statement in file BT34 3826/124732 [PRO] informs "All shares in the Company were held by The BPCM Limited, or by Trustees for them. No manufacture or trading has been carried on by the Company for some years".

Should the local newspaper prove unproductive regarding the fatality in 1913, it may just be worth having a look at the 'Coroners' Daily Record: register of inquests, held at the County Record Office at Cambridge, to see if a locomotive is mentioned as being involved. Apparently, the actual Inquisitions are not extant.

Unfortunately, I was unable to find the BT31 number at PRO for the Meldreth Portland Cement & Brick Co Ltd (Company No.55045). Other files, not consulted, are: BT31 20969/124732 re Standard Cement Co Ltd (Incorporated 1912); BT34 633/29636 re Meldreth Cement & Coprolite Syndicate Ltd (Liquidator's accounts); and BT31 17206/80448 re Atlas Stone Co Ltd (Incorporated 1904).

PETERSFIELD

JOHN FLETCHER

THE MELDRETH TRAMWAY

Further to my letter in IL.73 p134, wherein at paragraph two I queried a location for a possible works at Chiswick End. Having re-visited the site, I now suggest the location of such a works to be where the siding is shown before the tramway crossed the road into Meldreth station yard. There is at present a firm called Chiswick Supplies here, operating from a row of nissen huts, so perhaps a military camp was established here on the site of the old works, during WW2. Remarkably, a length of the tramway has survived where the line crossed the road at Chiswick End, although with houses springing up around it, it may not remain much longer. The route north of this crossing can still be traced in part, and the Atlas Stone Co's works is still making cement sheeting under the title Eternit Building Products Ltd.

NORWICH

CHRIS FISHER

THE MELDRETH TRAMWAY

In his article IL.72 p92 Harry Paar refers to an un-identified 'locomotive engine' for sale here in June 1911. Hunslet received an order 29/7/1909 (HE.o.31949) from Meldreth Cement Co, 9 St.Andrews Street, Cambridge, for 50 boilertubes 8'10" long by 2" diameter. These could well have been for this locomotive, but there is nothing in surviving records to confirm this. And if for a locomotive, the fact that Hunslet got the order does not *prove* it was a Hunslet locomotive. No other references to any "Meldreth" company have been found in Hunslet records spanning 7/1897 to 4/1920.

LLANFAIRPWLL

V. J. BRADLEY

LOCOMOTIVES OF THE BROAD OAKS WORKS

Further to this topic, last raised in IL.73 p126, back in the 1930s two drivers at Swansea and Didcot both said that Powlesland & Mason's No.2, at Swansea Harbour, was a six-coupled tank loco with 12" cylinders and a very long stovepipe chimney which led the men to nickname it "STRETCHER". Acquired in 1902 and disposed of by 1913 for scrap, it was said to have been built at Chesterfield.

Derek Stoyel told me that all locomotives built by Markham of Chesterfield were otherwise accounted for, while George Alliez muddled the waters by suggesting it was either by Manning Wardle or Avonside, had come to Swansea secondhand, and had inside cylinders.

I still wonder if Chesterfield has any significance and would welcome readers' views on this.

NEATH

KEN DAVIES

ESNA BARRAGE, EGYPT

Re letters IL.73 p123, knowing of my interest in railways in Egypt Mr R.J.Ireson, who was there during and after WW2, recently loaned me his notes of observations he made during this time. One of his visits was to Esna Barrage on 18th March 1946, when he recorded the following eight standard gauge 0-6-0 tank locos:

SLP 51 - HC 1679/37 not named; SLP 52 - HC 1680/37 MONTGOMERY; SLP 53 - HC 1681/37 not named; SLP 55 - HC 1683/37 MONTEVIDEO; SLP 56 - HC