

Kings Clipstone

The royal heart of ancient Sherwood Forest



1. King John's Palace and Dog & Duck meadow
2. Cavendish Lodge
3. Straight mile
4. Maun Valley & lakes
5. Spa Ponds and Pele
6. Flood dykes
7. Old Churn Oak
8. Parliament Oak
9. Deer Leap
10. Warsop boundary bank
11. Open Field remains (strip and furrow)
12. St Edwin's Chapel
13. Clipstone Old Quarter
14. Archway House
15. Forge Bridge
16. River Maun
17. Green Ride & Centre Tree
18. Thynghowe
19. Sherwood Forest Country Park (ancient Birklands)
20. Major Oak
21. Edwinstowe Parish Church
22. Sherwood Heath
23. Rufford Abbey Park Park



- Key**
- Residential
 - Forest and park (check access)
 - 2.5 miles from the Dog & Duck, Kings Clipstone
 - Roads
 - Rights of way & permissive paths

30 interesting places at the heart of Sherwood

2.5 mile circle centred on the Dog & Duck, Kings Clipstone

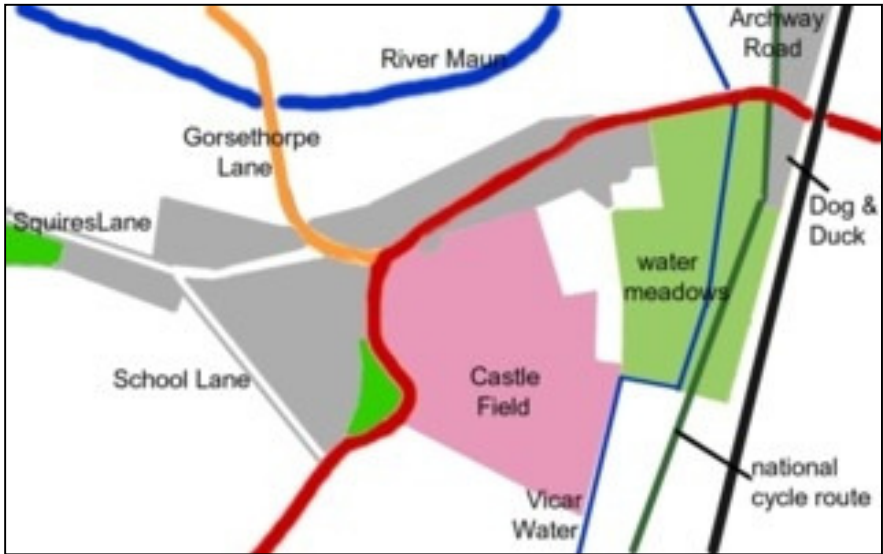
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| 24. Sherwood Pines Forest Park | 28. Robin Hood's Whetstone (parish meer-stone) |
| 25. Parish meer stone | 29. Clipstone Army Camp(1915-1920) rifle ranges and training trenches |
| 26. Pittance Dale | 30. Vicar Water Country Park |
| 27. Old Coach Road to Great North Road | |

The guide to the royal heart of ancient Sherwood

£2.00

www.HeartOfAncientSherwood.co.uk

The Village



The village layout in 2005.

The layout of Kings Clipstone has probably altered little in 1000 years. The 1630 map of the village shows it to be remarkably similar to the present day village with the houses strung out along the road between the Castle Field and the Great Pond with most of the dwellings to the north of the road with plots down to the river.

It would never have been easy to make a living from the poor sandy soil. The villagers of 1630 would have had important rights to use the forest but the middle years of the 17th century saw most of the forest around the village destroyed to produce charcoal for the iron forges. The second half of the 18th century saw the enclosure of 2000 acres of open land. The 1832 directory described the village as being in a sad state, one of the worst in Bassetlaw.

As part of his irrigation scheme, the Duke of Portland demolished most of the houses on the side of the village nearest the Maun and replaced them with a model village. The semi-detached houses had a large paddock each, so that the residents, who worked on the estate, could be more self-sufficient. By 1842 the description of the village had changed to 'being in danger of becoming one of the neatest'.



The 1630 & 1754 maps transposed onto a modern map.

Main Road

For much of the 19th century until 1889 Maun Cottage was the Fox and Hounds Inn, later it became a shop. The picture shows the building about 1915. At the rear of Maun cottage and Brammer Farm House is a very thick stone wall that is thought to have been part of the great gate to the palace.

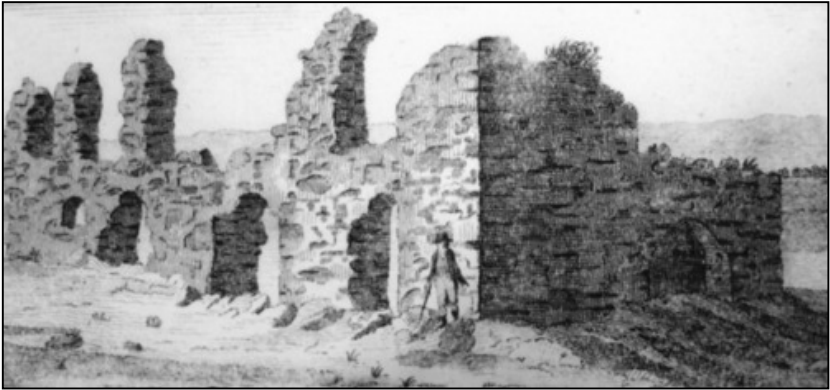
Maun cottage is one of the contenders for the oldest cottage in the village, the other being Rauceby across the road. Rauceby may be a cottage shown on William Senior's map of 1630 or have been built on the same foundations.



Main Road with Maun Cottage on the right

Manor Garth or Castle Field

How many places in the East Midlands still have remains, not just of a castle, but of a royal palace!

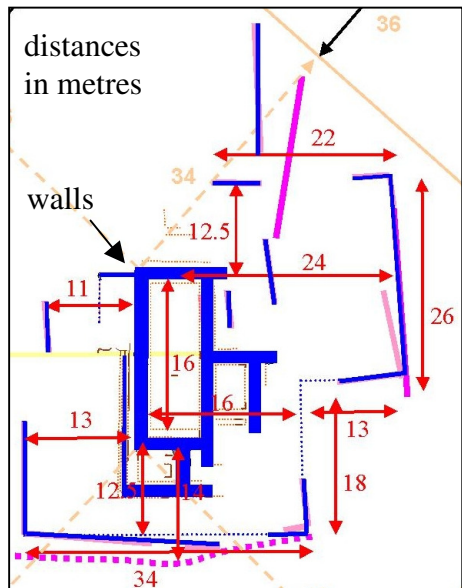


The ruins circa 1795

The recent geophysical survey of the site has revealed that the remains below ground-level cover an extensive area and stretch far out into the field where there is evidence of a defensive ditch. The excavation in the 1950's and field walking have also revealed numerous small Roman remains.

It seems the site was probably first occupied by the Romans, later becoming first a saxon, then a royal manor. The Plantagenet Kings transformed the building into a royal palace. Records from 1164 – 65, during the reign of Henry II, first mention the Kings's House at Clipstone, when £20 was spent on the property.

This plan shows actual walls and probable wall positions based on archaeological surveys.



For over 200 years the palace was the main royal residence in the area and Henry II, Richard I, John, Henry III, Edward I, Edward II, Edward III, and Richard II all stayed for weeks or even months at a time. Ideally situated at the heart of ancient Sherwood, and only a day's ride from Nottingham, they could enjoy the pleasures of the beautiful countryside and rich hunting away from the main palaces.

Situated on the high ground above the River Maun with the Great Pond of Clipstone to the east, the site would have been fairly secure and very pleasant. The palace must have been an impressive building by April 1194, when Richard I (the Lionheart) selected it as the place to welcome William the Lion, King of Scotland, for his state visit.

The palace, built of stone was gradually extended by successive generations. Some of these additions were large and expensive. In 1279 Edward I added two chambers with chapels costing £435 12s 6d, a huge amount. Two years later he built stables for 200 horses at a cost of £104 8s 5d. In 1348/49 money was spent on the rebuilding of the knights' chamber and the repair of the great hall, the Queen's hall, the King's kitchen, the Queen's kitchen, great chamber, Rosamund's chamber, Robert de Mauley's chamber, the treasurer's chamber, the chamber of Lionel, the King's son, the great chapel, the chapel next to the King's chamber, the King's long stable, and the great gateway.

The 'King's Houses' was very much a Plantagenet palace. When the first Lancastrian king, Henry IV, deposed Richard II in 1399, he sowed the seeds of the unrest that plagued England for the next 86 years as Yorkist and Lancastrians battled for supremacy. Henry IV, Henry V & Henry VI continued to maintain the building and made some additions. The palace, never a castle but a fortified house, would have been secure enough in times of relative peace but the turbulence of the 15th century would have made it a very insecure. It was not until the accession of Henry VII, after the battle of Bosworth in 1485, that peace returned. No monarch is ever again recorded as using it so it is not surprising that it fell into a state of disrepair.

A survey of 1525 recorded 'great decay & ruyne'. New work like building chimneys had been started but not finished and much of the building had no roof. By 1568 the palace is being described as 'site of the late castle

The Great Pond – Dog and Duck meadow

The Great Pond and its mill were very ancient, the earliest reference to them being in 1220. Stretching back as far as Waterfield Farm, the pond was over half a mile long and was an important source of fish for the royal table. During one royal visit in December 1315, 100 pike and 1600 roach were taken from the pond. The mill was situated at the bottom of the hill on the banks of the Maun. An embankment for the Edwinstowe and Ollerton roads was built across the top of the Great Pond shortly after the Napoleonic Wars, but the pond was still shown on maps as late as 1830. The Dog and Duck Inn was built at some stage between 1785 and 1819, probably about the same time as the embankment was constructed.

The Rat-Hole

The series of bends at the western end of the village is called the Rat-Hole. This section of road dates back to before 1630. The name derives from the days before the motorcar when the road was only just wide enough for a single horse and cart. Should two meet, then there would be much arguing and cursing as one was forced to back down the slope.

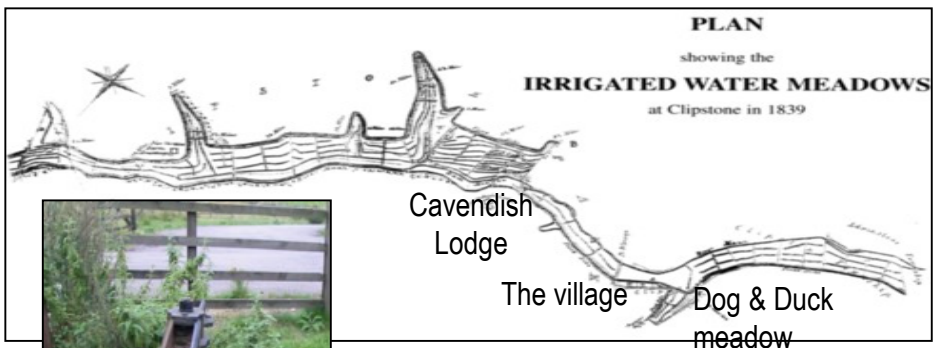
The Iron Chapel

Immediately adjacent to the palace site is the iron chapel, erected by the Duke of Portland in 1903 to provide a venue for Church of England services. Supposed to last 20 to 30 years the chapel is a remarkable survivor. Such tin tabernacles, as they are called, are of increasing importance as more and more of them disappear.



The Water Meadows Irrigation Scheme

The 4th Duke of Portland was a leading farmer, personally supervised a large proportion of his vast estate and is credited with the construction of the first sewage works in England at Clipstone Park Farm. The 1,487-acre farm was only bringing in £346 per year. The Duke wished to increase the number of sheep on the estate but a shortage of winter feed proved a problem. The solution was water meadows. After smaller trials at Clumber, Thoresby and Welbeck, he began the conversion of the wastelands at Clipstone into the famous flood-dyke system. Accounts on the 'water-meadows at Clipstone' are to be found in the first journal of the Royal Agricultural Society.



A surviving sluice in the village

Work was found for hundreds of unemployed soldiers, along with navvies. The irrigated meadows extended from Carr Bank Wood in Mansfield to the boundary between Edwinstowe and Ollerton. The dykes were 7¹/₂ miles long and watered 300 acres. Kings Mill reservoir was constructed to supply water in the summer, and to increase fertility, the Duke arranged for Mansfield's sewage to be discharged in the Flood Dyke. Built between 1819 and 1837 the total cost was just under £40,000. It was estimated that the Duke made £3600 a year from the scheme, close to a 10% return.

During the 1930s mining subsidence altered the levels in the dykes and electric pumps had to be introduced to keep the system functioning. The system finally closed in the 1960s when further subsidence rendered them unusable.

The Parliament Oak

Records suggest that three parliaments were held at Kings Clipstone, The most important was in 1290 when Edward I summoned his lords and nobles. The parliament was a huge undertaking, altogether 251 pleas with petitions were presented to the King.



So many people

attended that the accommodation at the palace was over stretched, clerks and others had to lodge at nearby Warsop. The parliament gathered in November so the legend that says that its meetings were held under the tree seems farfetched. Some historians think that the tree was planted at the time to commemorate the parliament.

It was at this time that Clipstone first obtained the royal part of its name when the Queen's Remembrancer wrote Clipston Regis.

Nearby is the **Churn Oak**, which was used as a meeting place. The name is a distortion of Church Oak.



St Edwin's Chapel & Hermitage

The cross, erected in 1912, marked the site of the chapel and hermitage of St Edwin, the King of Northumbria, who had become the first Christian king in Britain when he married King Ethelbert of Kent's Christian daughter. He was slain at the battle of Hatfield in 633 by the pagan King Penda of Mercia. Legend says that Edwin's body was then carried deep into the forest.

The battle may have been at Hatfield chase near Doncaster but there is strong evidence that it was near Hatfield, a tiny hamlet close to Cuckney, just a few miles north west of the chapel. In 1951 excavations under Cuckney Church found a mass grave containing about 600 bodies, all male.

The hermitage of St Edwin is well documented during the time of the Plantagenets. In 1201, the Sheriff of Nottingham and Derby paid 20s to the chaplain of Clipstone. In 1212 King John started regular payments for 'the ministering for the soul of King Henry', his father. Similar payments by succeeding kings were paid until the time of Henry VIII.

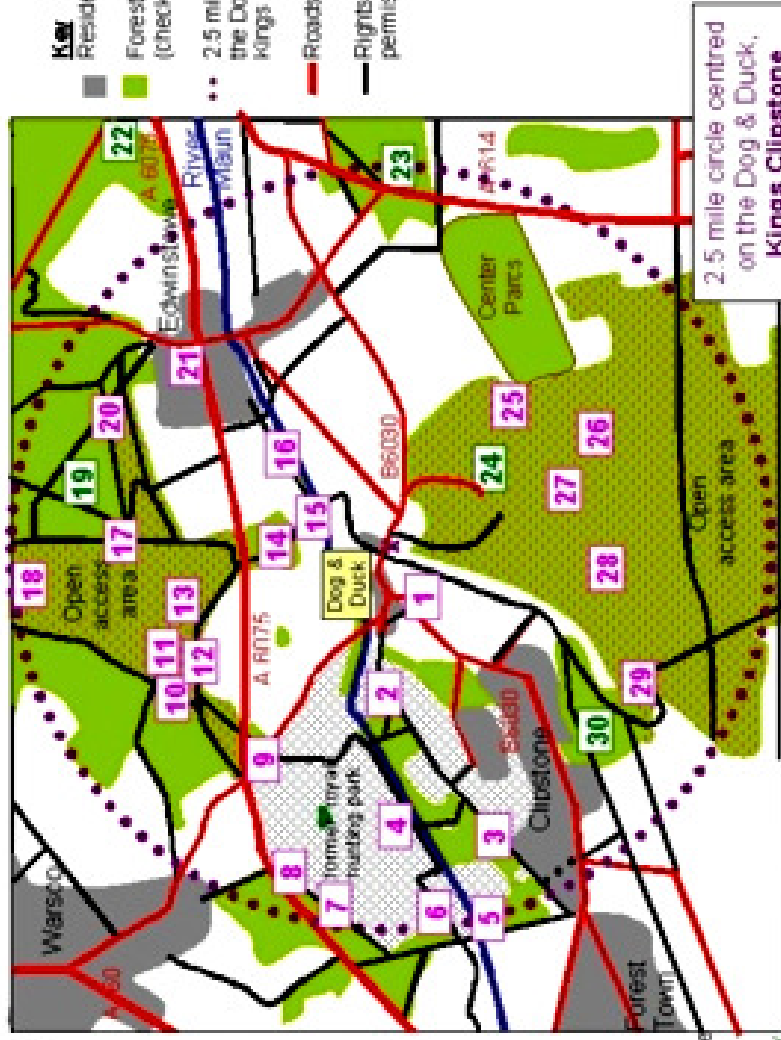
Cavendish Lodge

About 1745 the Duchess of Oxford, who was rebuilding Welbeck at the time, wanted a quiet place to escape to during the week. The house, or cottage as she called it, had a small hall, an octagonal dining room, a drawing room, a bedchamber and dressing room. These rooms were added to an existing house, which became the servant's quarters. The extension was built with stone taken from Clipstone Hall, which in turn had been built with stone taken from the palace. Lots of other recycled materials were used as it was only intended as a temporary arrangement. The duchess wrote 'as the roads around it are always good, I shall spend half the week there, taking only a maid and a footman with me'.



Cavendish Lodge in 1945

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30 Interesting places at the heart of Sherwood

20. Major Oak
21. Edwinstone Parish Church
22. Sherwood Health
23. Rufford Abbey Park Park
24. Sherwood Pines Forest Park
25. Parish meer stone
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29. Clipstone Army Camp (1915-1920) rifle ranges and training trenches
30. Vicar Water Country Park

Clipstone Park

The deer park was enclosed in 1180 with a fence 7 miles in length. To ensure plenty of deer, the fence had a ditch on the inside making it high enough to stop deer jumping out but at several points leaps were constructed that allowed the deer to jump in. Parts of the ditch and deer leap can still be seen in Kings Wood at the corner now called Warsop Windmill. Even after the palace fell into disuse the Park was maintained, changing little until about 1640. In 1630, Robert Butler, steward to William, Duke of Newcastle wrote 'the wood within the paling, the outwood and a little addition would pay the upkeep of the park itself'. The Civil War years saw the park plundered to provide timber and charcoal. At the restoration of the monarchy the Duke, who had been in exile after taking the royalist side during the Civil War, returned to the country and set about restoring the park. The park still appeared on maps as late as 1754.

Clipstone Hall

A new manor house was built at some stage after the Palace had fallen into total disrepair. A record from 1568 that mentions the 'site of the late castle' indicates that the palace had been demolished. It seems likely that a new manor house on Squires Lane (hence the name) had been built with stone from the palace. On 11th March 1603, James I granted Clipstone Manor and Park to Lord Mountjoy, (the victor of the Battle of Kinsale 1601), the 7th Earl Shrewsbury. From that time, with the

exception of the time under the Commonwealth, the estates remained in the same family for 350 years, passing from Shrewsbury to Newcastle to Portland by marriage or death. The Hall suffered the same fate as the palace and by 1710 it was in a state of disrepair with stone being removed for use in other buildings.

By 1844 a smithy was built on top of the remains of the Hall.



Old Barn Cottages (1945) may be survivors from the Hall complex.

Spa Ponds and Beeston Lodge

In 1316 at a time of great famine and much turbulence in the country, Edward II gave instructions for the building of a pele as a defence against his archenemies the King of Scots and the Earl of Lancaster. A defensive wooden wall was erected with a strong stone tower. The Maun, which meandered below the pele, was diverted to make a pond. 198 acres of land were enclosed from the park to make new pastures and arable land. The stone gatehouse with walls 3 feet thick guarded the entrance to the pele and sat on a hill above the Spa Ponds.

In 1327, after four good harvests and less unrest in the country, Edward III gave orders to Roger de Clipstone to remove all the buildings in the pele, except the stone gatehouse which became known as Beeston Lodge. This was still in use in 1670 when Mr Gosling, attorney at law lived there. The name of Peafield Lane derived from pele field and two field names are still in use that date back to this time, Peafield and Holmdale.

The Spa ponds, which are now a local nature reserve, are fed by a strong clear spring. Although now rare on the bunter sandstone springs used to be common before the pumping station was built. In a letter dated 23rd December 1749 sent from Welbeck to her friend Lady Mary Montague, the Countess of Oxford wrote 'There is a mineral spring no further away than in Clipstone Park which restores some to health but does not agree with me'. It is most likely that the ponds were formed when the pele (a defended farm) was built. Old stone culverts and sluices have been uncovered on the site showing the existence of a much earlier dam.



The early industrial revolution (17th Century)

If visitors take a walk round Kings Clipstone today it is hard to believe that it had a role to play in the very early part of the industrial revolution. There had long been a mill where the outfall from the Great Pond met the Maun. On the 23rd November 1220 Henry II, whilst at Winchester, directed his Exchequer to reckon with Philip Mark, sheriff, for the sum of £7 0s 8d that he spent on repairs to the great dam and mill and to the pale about the King's Houses. By the early 1600 this had become a fullers mill (cloth)..

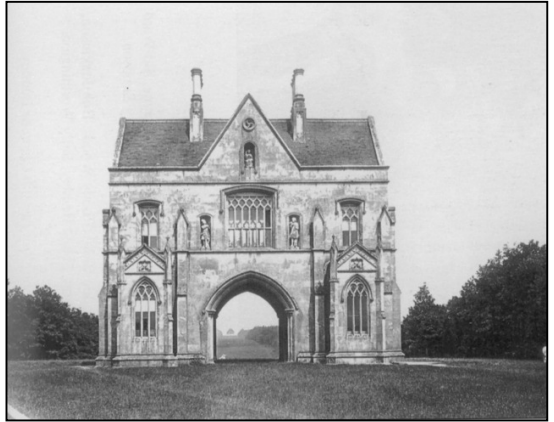
During the middle part of the 17th century the iron industry began to grow rapidly with the introduction of the blast furnace. Iron was smelted in areas where iron ore, limestone and charcoal were available. The pig iron produced was impure and brittle. Before it could be used it needed to be reheated to a high temperature and then hammered repeatedly to force out the carbon impurities. Village blacksmiths did this on a small scale, but large commercial operations needed a good supply of charcoal and waterpower for the hammer and bellows. The records mention a number of forges and slitting mills along the river. A 20 year period during and immediately after the Civil Wars saw most of the timber including the fencing and great oaks in Clipstone Park turned into charcoal.



Forge
Bridge

Archway Lodge – the Duke’s Folly

After a fire in 1835 destroyed the Houses of Parliament, the 4th Duke Of Portland offered stone from his quarries at Mansfield Woodhouse for the replacement building. Whilst 50,000 cubic feet were used for the foundations and lower part of the building, the stone was not thought



durable enough for the main part of the building. The Duke disagreed and set about proving his point by building Archway Lodge, as a hunting lodge and accommodation for his estate foresters. Started in 1842 and finished 2 years later, it was intended as the first of a number of archways along a 30mile private drive from Welbeck to Nottingham and cost £16,000. This is the only one built.

Externally the design is based on Worksop Priory Gatehouse. Straddling Broad Drive (the Duke changed the name to Green Drive) through the forest, the building was sited so that the centre tree, a mile and half away, could be seen through the arch. The niches contain statues of the forest’s folklore heroes.



On the ground floor were two homes for Estate workers, one either side of the arch. The upper storey contained a long schoolroom, the first school for children on this part of the estate.

Clipstone Drive speed trails

William, 6th Duke of Portland, had a keen interest in motoring. In 1900 the Automobile Club organised a 1,000mile trial. The Duke made available the private straight mile section of Clipstone Drive (from New Mill Lane to Cavendish Lodge) for speed trials, as part of the Nottingham to Sheffield leg.

Clipstone Drive became a popular venue for racing events. After some straightening work, the Automobile Club adopted the site for speed trial and braking power tests. In 1902, with special permission from the Duke, Charles Tarrot made an attempt on the world speed record over a kilometre in 70hp Panchard. He made 5 runs over the 'flying kilometre' exceeding the record on three of them.

The drive was tarmaced when Clipstone Army Camp was built in 1914. After the war it become a venue for motorcycle speed trials. At one event in 1923, George Brough, a prominent designer, manufacturer, and racer was riding his famous SS100 in the standing start half mile. He was doing 110 m.p.h when the front tyre burst, George crossed the line in a cloud of dust and stones a few lengths behind the bike. In May 1924, in front of a crowd of 12 to 15 thousand, world famous riders raced. The highlight of the day was the 111.1 m.p.h achieved by Bert Le Vack, 8 miles faster than the previous timed record for a British road.

Brough Machines continued to be tested at Clipstone -

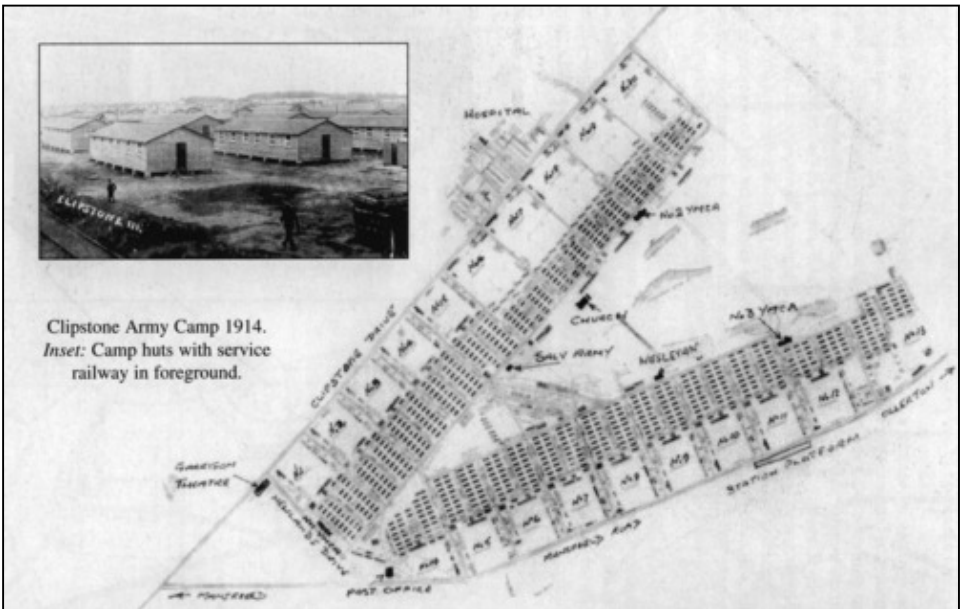
'Every SS100 will be dispatched with a written guarantee signed by the maker, that the machine has actually been timed over 100 miles per hour for a quarter of a mile. A private road (Clipstone Drive) one and three quarter mile long has been kindly offered to the manufacturer for the purpose.'

After passing through several hands, George Brough's famous bike 'Old Bill' was bomb damaged in Kensington during the World War Two. It was restored to celebrate the anniversary of the British Motorcycling Club. The photo shows George riding the famous bike for the last time along the historic drive in 1959.



Clipstone Army Camp.

The village of New Clipstone did not exist before the First World War. At the outbreak of war a large army camp was set up between Clipstone Drive and Mansfield Road. The camp quickly became one of the largest in the country, housing 20 battalions of 1000 men each. Clipstone Shrogges was used as a training ground. The first troops arrived in 1915 having marched from Mansfield or Edwinstowe after arriving by train. Five battalions of Royal Fusiliers made up the first contingent. They helped to set up the camp, established firing ranges and trenches. Some of these can still be seen in Sherwood Pines. Other battalions followed, including a footballer's battalion from Middlesex. Mansfield Town Football Club finished top of the league in 1915 thanks to the help of these talented soldiers.



The Camp was closed in 1920 and a lot of the huts were sold off. The village had an example at the garage that stood on Main Road until 2001. The village of New Clipstone stands on most of the site, with Cavendish Park being built on the rest.

Clipstone Pit and the model village.

In 1912 the Bolsover Colliery Company leased 6,000 acres of mining rights from the Duke of Portland. A test bore found the 6ft Tophard seam of coal at a depth of 640yd. At the outbreak of war in 1914 the work on sinking of the shaft was suspended at a depth of 50 ft but the surface buildings such as the winding house were completed. The railway branch line reached the pit in 1916 with a short spur to serve the army camp. In 1919 work on the shaft recommenced and by 1922 two 21ft diameter shafts had been completed.

Production on the Tophard seam began in 1927. A serious underground fire occurred in 1932. The fire was so bad that the district had to be sealed off using 2000 tons of sand and 35,000 bricks. In the early days the only holidays were Christmas, Whit Monday and Good Friday. The first one-week paid holiday was granted in 1936.

Despite the collieries unbroken profit-making record it was closed and mothballed in 1993. Re-opened in 1994, it finally closed in 2003.



The headstocks erected as part of the modernisation from 1947 to 1963 are the tallest all metal headstocks in the country. Together with the winding of the colliery buildings they are 'listed'.

The Railway.



The photo above shows the sidings at Clipstone pit in 1922.

The Mansfield Railway Company's 11 mile branch line connected at its northern end to Lancashire, Derbyshire and East Coast Railway. Large concentration siding were built in to Kings Clipstone to serve Clipstone, Mansfield, Thoresby, Ollerton, Welbeck and Rainworth pits The lines were connected by the east and west junctions with a signal box situated on the East Junction above Archway Road. The signal box is a rare survivor and, except for the UPVC windows, is probably one of the best preserved boxes in the county.



With only Thoresby left, the sidings have been lifted and have rapidly returning to scrub and forest (Oak - Birch woodland).

Clipstone Shrogges and Clipstone Forest

Clipstone Shrogges, which was on the site of Sherwood Pines, was the common land for the village. In 1609 it covered an area of 972 acres and was still well forested. Most of the trees had been cleared by 1650 so the land, which was too poor for farming, became open heath land. This remained the situation until it became a training ground for troops based at Clipstone army camp during First World War. Between the Great Pond and the Shrogges were two areas known as the warrens, 70 acres of poor open heath land with few trees over which the rabbits had free range. There are plans to restore some of the area to the original habitat.

The Forestry Commission was created in 1919 to replenish the huge swathes of woodland that had been felled during the First World War. The 999year leases for the 3000acre Clipstone Forest were acquired in 1927. The land had to be cleared, not only of the heath, but also of the 1000's of rabbits that lived in vast warrens thorough out the site. A twelve acre tree nursery was set up to provide the young trees and smallholdings were set up between the forest and the railway line to act as a firebreak. In the age of steam it was all too easy for track-side vegetation to be set alight. In 1995 a small fire near the visitors centre created an opportunity for an outstandingly successful heath land regeneration trial.

During the Second World War a practice bombing range was set up in the forest. Small bombs were dropped aimed at a 20 ft square block of concrete. It didn't always go according to plan, as Mr Aincliffe, a tenant in the Forestry Commission homes in Deerdale about half a mile from the target, found out when a bomb crashed through the roof and ended up on his bed. The Forest has a resident population of fallow deer thanks to another wartime accident when a tank knocked down an electric fence keeping the deer in Rufford Park.

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