Isles Quarry West
Borough Green

Memories of a working man
1969 – 1980

I certify that the attached notes are as accurate as memory permits, and I also certify the photos and sketches attached as being a true record of those memories. I would be prepared to testify these facts on oath.

Francis Michael Taylor 28th March 2007.

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Deisel Point

The concrete wall at the centre of the left of the picture is the retaining wall that the diesel tank sat on, noted "A" on the map. This area was used for fuelling all road vehicles, and was usually awash with diesel. It was common practice for the Tarmac tippers to spray a gallon or two out of a can around the tipper body, to prevent the next load of tarmac sticking to the body. In later years a grit was manufactured at the tarmac plant out of dust and creosote that served the same purpose, but as this did not adhere to the sides of the body, and hence allowed the tarmac to, diesel continued to be used. Much of the diesel drained to the floor during filling and overnight parking.

Looking south from the diesel point, "B" on the map, is the site of the filler plant, and the old tarmac plant. Both sides of this road were used for truck parking in the 60's, and would suffer from draining diesel as noted above. It must be remembered that we are talking about coaltar, not the modern bitumen extracted from oil, and there will be coaltar contamination in this vicinity.

Old Workshops High Level Platform.

When I began work with ARC in 1969, my first job was helping an old fitter called "Tiger". Our job was the routine greasing and oil changing on all road vehicles. I have no recollection of any waste oil storage or collection arrangements, but what I clearly remember is saving all fuel and oil filters in a bucket, and as it filled during the day, I carried it across to the waste ground, together with dirty and greasy cotton waste, and every day or so, we would start a small fire and burn it. As the heap grew, we would just move along a bit.

Some time after this the water supply to the mess hut (a portable building now removed, at the south end of the workshops) failed. As a machine driver, I was asked to excavate back from the mess hut to find the break. I followed the old steel pipe across the end of the yard, and across the top of the bank edge of what is now called the high level platform, and then down alongside the road to the main tarmac road outside Isles Weighbridge. The pipe had corroded, and it was decided to replace it with blue plastic, which I believe I can still see sticking up out of the ground beside the workshop. The whole of the waste ground was a collection of old iron, old filters, bonfire residues and general waste that had accumulated over the years. In places it was almost impossible to dig because it continuously collapsed. I note ARC engineering have tidied it with a bit of rough surfacing.

Old Service bay is on the extreme right of this picture

This picture is taken facing south across the old workshop yard, and the land to the left, now rough surfaced, is where we used to dump filters and burn them and the oil. The white line roughly indicates the direction of the water pipe, eventually crossing the far end of the yard and going up behind the visible buildings.

I ceased employment with the then Amey Roadstone Corporation in 1977, but continued to visit the site regularly as a tipper driver and contract crane driver

Artesian Wells, storage lake and settlement lagoons.
The area shown as "residential allocation" on the Isles Plan attached, is an infilled lake. This lake was also used as the washout point for concrete truck mixers. The media plant in Stangate Quarry used water drawn from an artesian well that was situated roughly where the arrow is "D". This well pumped water, through a pipe of about 8" bore to the plant, and the silty return water was pumped into lagoons now marked "Public Amenity Area" to settle, the water returning via the now infilled lake to the artesians. The return water was so high in silt content that it could not be allowed to settle in the pipes when the pumps were stopped, and so the pipes were drained at the lowest point, which is the Bourne River valley, directly into the river without silt traps.

The above picture shows the draw to the left where the silted water drained to, the two pipes ran alongside this internal road, with a large drain valve in the return pipe.

This picture show more clearly the draw running down into the Bourne, note the grey post as a comparison marker with the previous picture. It is worthy of note that the steep sides of the Bourne Valley at this point are almost exclusively quarry waste tips. The washout from these waste tips and the drainage of the washplant silt are almost certainly the cause of the drastic silting of the Mill Pond lake at Basted Mill, currently only a few inches deep, with the edges slowly turning to marsh. There is very little trace in the Bourne of Limestone Dust anymore, the source has now been washed clean. These photos were taken at "E" on the Isles plan.

Francis Michael Taylor 28th March 2007.