

BOROUGHBRIDGE & DISTRICT

HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER AUTUMN 2013

AUTUMN PROGRAMME

Tuesday, 10th September

Medieval Market Towns: Boroughbridge and its neighbours - John Lee

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Tuesday, 8th October

The Royal British Legion - Geoff Craggs

also Society AGM

Tuesday, 12th November

Yorkshire Quern Stones - John Cruse

Tuesday, 10th December

The Way We Were: Burton Leonard 100 Years Ago - Vivienne Rivis

Meetings held in the Jubilee Suite, Boroughbridge Library at 7.30pm

Admission £3, including refreshments. Members free.

For membership details please phone 01423 322988.



NOTES FROM THE ACTING CHAIRMAN JOHN WHITEHOUSE

Looking back over the last four months quite a lot of activity has been evident, with exhibition road shows at various venues, preparatory work for and now submission of funding application to the Lottery Fund in respect of the Langthorpe Archaeological Project, a very successful coach trip to Raby Castle and three very interesting talks by visiting speakers which were well attended by Society members and non-members. All very encouraging to the committee and officers of the Society.

I am focusing here on the talks, the other achievements will be covered elsewhere in this newsletter. However, I must express my appreciation and gratitude to Linda for her titanic efforts in submitting the Lottery Fund application (surely over and beyond.....) also Margaret and Christine for arranging the Summer Trip.

Rievaulx

Tony Powell, the English Heritage representative from Rievaulx, presented the April lecture on the subject of The Rievaulx Valley.

After the dissolution the Abbey was stripped of its glass, lead and roof while the land was sold to the Earl of Rutland. Servants who had lived rent free under the church's sway now had to pay rent for their dwellings. Iron smelting was taken over from the monks and developed on a huge scale importing lead and iron ores from west and south Yorkshire. The first water-driven bellows were introduced to help expand the smelting furnace operation onto an industrial scale. So much so that by the mid 17th century the valley had been denuded of its trees, gone to make charcoal, thereby "creating" a wilderness with no vegetation, and obscured by a pall of smoke from the smelters. Agriculture had ceased to exist and the River Rye that flows through the valley was heavily polluted and unable to provide food or a domestic water supply. After the Civil War the Royalist Rutlands were stripped of their lands and Rievaulx fell into disuse. Subsistence farmers moved into the area, attempting to eke a living from small – holdings. In 1640 the Duke of Buckingham was granted the lands by Charles II but being in debt the estates were sold in 1689 to Sir Charles Duncombe, goldsmith and moneylender to the government and Charles II for the sum of £90K or £9 million in current value.

Duncombe Park was built in 1714 by Sir Charles' nephew, Thomas. Soon afterwards Rievaulx became transformed. Landscaping the area was preceded by the clearing of all industrial waste and the river was cleaned up also. Trees were planted and the ridge formed as a viewing platform with Ionic and Tuscan temples erected to provide cover for family and visitors as they admired the scene of rural tranquillity set out below them, represented by the estate village and landscaped parkland.



R i e v a u l x T o d a y

Banqueting facilities were provided in the temples which were paved with floor tiles from the Abbey. To maintain the perfect ambiance strict rules were imposed on the workers who occupied the estate cottages such as no hanging out of washing and no usage of the front door by family members. The houses were constructed of stone from the abbey nave. The Rievaulx valley became a tourist attraction visited by the great and the good such as Wordsworth and the artist Turner. Churches and a school house were built. After World War 1 the Ministry of Works took over the site. Ex -soldiers worked on clearances and the abbey was reinforced with railway lines to keep it perpendicular. The Ministry of Works became English Heritage but the Terrace with its temples became part of the National Trust, in lieu of death duties! Adjacent land is retained as pasture in order to easier enable archaeological surveys of the area. With the village population ageing houses are falling vacant. Being tied properties their use is restricted so some are being rented out as holiday homes thereby changing the estate village "atmosphere" inexorably. Sir Richard Beckett QC is the present owner of Rievaulx village.

College House, Masham

In May Jenny Deadman, historic building surveyor, presented a surprising exposition on what was to all appearances a very ordinary Victorian house.

"A History of College House Masham" started in the 13th Century when the second storey was added to the previously single storey structure to form The Old Court House. Situated on glebe land in the oldest area of northern Masham, its occupier, the Prebend of York Minster (also Rector of Masham Church), held jurisdiction over a large area of rich territory such as Fountains Abbey and Nidderdale, from which he extracted tithes, fines and taxes, enabling the church and himself to amass huge wealth.

Masham was classed as a 'Peculiar' which meant there was no constraint on the Prebend being exer-

cised by the Archdeacons of York. He had a free hand and the Ecclesiastical Court of the Peculiar of Masham served to legitimise his enterprises. At the dissolution Henry VIII gave the whole operation to Trinity College, Cambridge.

During restoration the Victorian superficialities were stripped back to reveal 12th and 13th century windows, doorways and floor joists. These features have now been covered up again by more modern structures. The one outstanding feature is the cylindrical medieval chimney stack, a veritable manifestation of wealth in those times. In the 19th century the house was used as a Methodist and Baptist meeting house and later as offices for Theakston's Brewery. It was electrified in 1959.

College House, now renovated, was recently placed on the market for £595,000.



C o l l e g e H o u s e , M a s h a m

Barrows, Badgers and Bunkers

June's talk was entitled "Barrows, Badgers & Bunkers" and given by Archaeologist Philip Abramson, one of only four such specialists employed world-wide by the M.O.D.. Their brief is to co-operate fully with English Heritage in the preservation of specific features also to comply with planning legislation, manage lands and buildings while being accountable to English Heritage, parliament and the general public. Soldiers recovering from mental health conditions can be helped by participating in digs and other archaeological activities.

Military land is rich in historical features and artefacts, including Iron Age Circular Forts, Norman Motte and Bailey castle, Phoenix cinema and Nissan hut briefing room, Sandhurst barrack blocks (1938), Dockyards, Martello Towers and Blue Streak missile site.

The speaker offered to assist in arranging visits to the Fylingdale Early Warning facility and the training area at Otterburn.

Winifred Jacob-Smith MBE

During the Second World War, the Women's Land Army in the North Riding of Yorkshire was organised by Miss Winifred Jacob-Smith, who is buried in All Saints' churchyard at Kirby Hill. Miss Jacob-Smith, whose father farmed at Humberton, near Boroughbridge, later became a breeder of pedigree Ayrshire cattle at Scriven, near Knaresborough. She was very efficient, but somewhat formidable. She went on to take over as Secretary of the WLA organisation throughout Yorkshire.

Some of her methods would raise eyebrows today. She kept an individual record card for every girl - the only Land Army records to have survived. Her records classified members into types and included phrases such as:

"A particularly good type of girl" - "A strong girl but inclined to grumble" - "Always grumbling" -

"Very fat and podgy" - "Has queer brother, mother a bit difficult too"

On one occasion she visited a girl who was absent from farm work with a claimed ankle injury, only to find her "wearing fairly high heels and no trace of bandages".

According to the Knaresborough Post, dated 16 March 1940, Miss Jacob-Smith had the honour of being selected as a Women's Land Army representatives at a reception held by the Queen in London. In 1949 she received an invitation from the Lord Chamberlain, to attend a Royal Garden Party at Buckingham Palace. She was awarded the MBE for her work and received her honour from King George VI at Buckingham Palace on February 28th, 1951.

The Yorkshire Land Army headquarters were in Harrogate. It started in four rooms and eventually occupied two large houses. The county secretary had a staff of 23. The work was planned by a voluntary committee, which included Lady Katherine Graham, the chairman; Lady Bingley, vice-chairman; Lady Celia Milnes-Coates, vice-chairman; Mrs Dunnington-Jefferson, vice-chairman; Lady Mountgarret, treasurer; Mrs Campbell Fraser, distributor of Land Girl magazines. Lady Mountgarret and Mrs Campbell Fraser gave up to four or five days a week to the work.

All Saints' Church

Kirby Hill



Uniform distribution was supervised by Mrs Bridget Cuthbert, who was the daughter of Lady Celia Milnes-Coates, of Helperby Hall. Mrs Cuthbert, who later became Lady in Waiting to Princess Mary, the Princess Royal, had a staff of seven. A large number of Women's Voluntary Service members attended daily and packed the parcels with assistance from a youth group from Harrogate Grammar School. Two tons of uniforms were sent off each week. The uniform was said to be most attractive. WLA officials said: "We have every reason to be proud of our Yorkshire Land Girls who display it to advantage."

Winifred Jacob-Smith and her sister Dorothy lived at Somerley House, Boroughbridge Road, Scriven, Knaresborough. Their father bought Somerley after the family had farmed for many years at Burton Grange, Humberton, near Boroughbridge. Since 1710, generations of the family, originally with the surname Smith, had farmed in the Boroughbridge area, initially on the Newby Hall Estate at Givendale. Successive male members were all called Jacob. Winifred Jacob-Smith's father adopted Jacob-Smith as his surname after he married Dora Smith. He died in 1941, but Dora, lived to be 100 - dying in 1974.

Following the death of their father, Winifred and her sister, Dorothy, inherited Somerley House. After Scriven Park was sold by the Slingsby family in 1955-56, they bought the 30 acres of parkland, which became home to their Ayrshire cattle. Dorothy Jacob-Smith died in April, 1984, and Winifred died in May, 2003. They are buried together in the family plot at All Saints' Church, Kirby Hill, Boroughbridge. The sisters had no heirs, so Scriven Park was left in their will to Harrogate Borough Council for use as public open parkland.

Somerley, their family home, deteriorated and was pulled down. Somerley survives as the name of a housing estate built on the land.

Written by Linda Dooks

Sources:

Ian Pearce, Great Ayton.

The Scriven Archives.

Harrogate Herald.

All Saints' Church, Kirby Hill.



The Grave Stone (right) and Jacobs Park

Today (below)



NOTES FROM THE SECRETARY LINDA DOOKS

I would firstly like to thank everyone who has helped at the events the society attended over the summer. We particularly enjoyed our visit to the 100th Aldborough and Boroughbridge Show.

The Annual General Meeting is fast approaching and, as you will be aware, Marjorie retired from the post of chairman earlier this year. John Whitehouse has been standing in for Marjorie over the past few months, but due to other commitments, he does not wish to take on the post full time. If you are interested in becoming the next chairman, please let us know. It is just a matter of chairing meetings and helping to make decisions on how the group should move forward. You do not need



a history degree! We will be approaching members at the September meeting for nominations.

We would also like to recruit some more committee members. This involves attending a committee meeting about once every two or three months and helping at any events we organise. So, being a committee member is not an onerous task. We cannot run the Society without a Chairman or Committee members.

I would also remind members that I am standing down as your secretary in October, 2014.

Proposed Website

We have felt for some time that the society should have its own website as we are falling behind in the digital world. We have been looking at ways that a website could be achieved. We need someone with experience, who could keep it and any other social media sites up to date. If you are interested or know someone who might be, please contact myself or a committee member.

The Historic Environment

We have recently completed a survey about the work of the NYCC Historic Environment and the services they offer.

It is really worth looking at their site www.northyorks.gov.uk/archaeology to see the range of maps and data on historic sites that is available to view locally or through links to other sites.

Langthorpe Archaeology Group – The Dog Kennel Lane Project.

We have finally managed to complete and send in our application for a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund for the above project. We are grateful for letters of support from North Yorkshire County Council Archives Department, Newby Hall, Skelton-on-Ure Primary School, Langthorpe Parish Council, Yore Vision and Walkers are Welcome. If we have ticked the right boxes, the decision should be with us by the end of October.

The application will be available to view at our September meeting, together with the proposed programme.

Commemoration of the First World War 1914-1918.

Part of the events in 2014 to commemorate the centenary of the start of the First World War include the design and laying of special paving stones in the home towns of every UK soldier awarded the Victoria Cross. Boroughbridge has its own Victoria Cross recipient Archie White. The specially-commissioned stones will be given to councils in the areas where those awarded the VC were born. A total of 28 will be unveiled next year to commemorate medals awarded in 1914. Others will be laid in every year up to 2018. Plans to restore war memorials around the country have also been announced. Help will be given to local communities and a website will be launched so that people around the UK can obtain funding and support to ensure all memorials are in good condition by November, 2018. Communities Secretary Eric Pickles has revealed that there will be a national competition to design the paving stones, which will have a QR barcode. This means people can scan the code with a smartphone to learn more details about the recipient.

I recently attended a short service and presentation of a plaque at Norton-le-Clay to celebrate it being "A Thankful Village". Norton-le-Clay and Cundall were both villages which sent men to the First World War all of whom returned safely. There are only 51 "thankful villages" throughout the country. Each has been visited by a group of motor cyclists - raising money for the Royal British Legion on their tour. Photographs of the ceremonies and one of the bikes will be part of a new Imperial War Museum Exhibition commemorating the First World War, which opens next year. For further details and photographs of the event visit: <http://thankfulvillagesrun.com/>

Project meetings.

We hope to concentrate on compiling an inventory of the contents of the History Society's archive cupboard over the next few months. Meetings will be held on the last Thursday in the month starting in October from 2.30pm. Please telephone 01423 322988 to check that the project meeting is on.

The next committee meeting is on Tuesday 24th September at 7 30 pm subject to the room being available.

YOUR HISTORY SOCIETY NEEDS YOU

ARTICLES WANTED

Please could anyone who is willing to write a piece for the next newsletter e-mail their ideas to Peter at peter.fleming57@btinternet.com

For an informal chat about a possible submission please ring Peter on 01423 322808.

SUPPORT NEEDED

As already mentioned in Linda's notes, if you would like to volunteer to become chairman, join the committee or you simply feel able to offer occasional assistance to officers please ring Linda Dooks for a chat. Linda's number is 01423 322988.