

# BOROUGHBRIDGE & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY



## NEWSLETTER AUTUMN 2016

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### AUTUMN PROGRAMME

**TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 13TH**

VILLAGE DANCE MUSIC IN THE DALES

BOB ELLIS

**TUESDAY, OCTOBER 11TH**

MEMBERS' EVENING AND AGM

**TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 8TH**

THE BATTLE OF MYTON

LOUISE WHITTAKER

**TUESDAY, DECEMBER 13TH**

GRACE AND GLORY: THE 500TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE  
REFORMATION – TIM CHESTER

MEETINGS ARE HELD IN BOROUGHBRIDGE LIBRARY JUBILEE SUITE AT 7.30

ALL WELCOME; MEMBERS FREE



## NOTES FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Welcome to the autumn newsletter. I hope you have enjoyed the summer break and that you have been able to take full advantage of the 'long days'. As autumn approaches you have another round of interesting talks to look forward to and opportunities to be actively involved in the Boroughbridge and District Historical Society.

It was Herbert Spencer (1820-1903) who compared society to the human body, stating that just as all the parts of a body need to be working together to produce a healthy person so all sections of society need to play their roles in order for a community to function harmoniously. This is true also of a small society like our own. Only through people volunteering to play a part in organising things can the society remain vibrant.

I mention this because we need people to volunteer for specific roles on the committee. After serving us so well two committee members feel they now need to relinquish duties they currently undertake. Christine Tasker needs someone to re-

place her as treasurer. Initially, this would involve supporting Christine to 'learn the ropes'. We also need a replacement for Anne Padden who currently takes the minutes at committee meetings. In both cases we do not need individuals with specific skills associated with the roles, we just need willing people prepared to give a little time to organising society affairs. Do please talk to Christine and Anne (or me) if you are willing to consider taking on one of these roles. This seems like a suitable time to thank not just Christine and Anne but everyone on the committee, and those who help in other ways, for the support they give the society.

Recently, David Bellwood has worked hard to develop our website (see below) and Mike Tasker is very actively involved in organising our book project (see page 3). Of course, writing a history of Boroughbridge is a major undertaking, but many of you have got involved in this and first drafts of chapters are beginning to appear.

It seems we have a busy year ahead.

## Members' Information & Announcements

### Have you visited our website yet?

<http://www.boroughbridgehistory.co.uk>

For access to the members' area please request a password by using the 'Contact Us' facility on the site.

### Boroughbridge and District Historical Society

*An active and friendly North Yorkshire group*



## Members' Information & Announcements (cont)

### VENUE ALERT

There are plans to partition the large room we currently use for meetings. The work is scheduled for the autumn. We hope this won't disrupt our Tuesday evening meetings and the Archive Days (the last Friday afternoon in every month). Should a venue change be necessary we will do our best to alert you to any change of location.

### Update on the story of the Canal Bridge — Mike Tasker

A whole new slant has evolved on the story of the Canal Bridge, and it now appears that our excitement about the bridge being the first iron road bridge in the world was misplaced. I have managed to make contact with Patrick Jones, 88, who wrote the article in the *Journal of the Railway and Canal Historical Society* in 1996. We have exchanged many emails on the subject, the gist of which is as follows:

The original canal bridge built in 1769 was a traditional stone arched bridge. However, as the locks upstream at Westwick and Oxclose were built to enable navigable access to Ripon, it was realised that the water level was still not high enough to allow navigation through these upper reaches. It was determined that the water level needed to be raised by a further three feet. Consequently, two re-building projects were needed. Firstly, the height of the Boroughbridge weir had to be raised three feet, and secondly, the canal bridge, now too low to take the river traffic of the time, had also to be raised by the same amount. It seems that the bridge was re-built in the 1771-2 period again as a stone arched bridge, to the new height.

Some 20 years later the re-built bridge and the roads either side were judged to be in a very poor state of repair. The re-build of 1771-2 would have been done quickly to minimise disruption to the busy Great North Road traffic, and the indications are that it was done badly. John Carr was commissioned in 1792 to carry out a survey. A plan he made of the bridge with the roads either side, a copy of which is preserved in the NYCC archives, not only confirms the dreadful state of the roads and bridge, but they also indicate a mismatch of the dimensions of the bridge and the iron girders of the later bridge, indicating that these must have been incorporated into the structure at a later date, probably in the 1820s. This sequence of events has been supported by Peter Cross Rudkin, a highly qualified Civil Engineer and retired university lecturer and a colleague of Patrick Jones in the RCHS Waterway Research Group.

There were no markings on the iron girders which could provide clues on date of manufacture. It is not known whether there is any analytical procedure akin to carbon dating which exists for dating iron manufacture, this remote possibility will now be investigated.

In summary, there is no certainty about the date the iron girders were incorporated into the bridge, but indications from evidence presently available suggest they were probably built into the bridge in 1820-25. Sadly, the grounds for supposing it preceded the 1781 iron bridge in Shropshire as the first iron bridge in the world, cannot therefore be substantiated. The story was perhaps too good to be true.

### HISTORY OF BOROUGHBRIDGE BOOK PROJECT

Mike Tasker is leading on the society's ambitious project to write the definitive history of Boroughbridge. 25 people have expressed a willingness to be involved and some have already submitted first drafts of work they have undertaken. However, there are still some themes which no one has volunteered to cover. If you would like to be involved in research or writing please let Mike know. No former experience of historical research is needed! Mike can be contacted by e-mail at [boroughbridgehistory@gmail.com](mailto:boroughbridgehistory@gmail.com)

## ***A Quaker Dynasty: the Peases of Darlington*** **John Winn**

We were given an excellent talk by John Winn in April. John is one of BDHS members and his willingness to share his knowledge of the Pease family and their influence on the growth of Darlington meant we were all enlightened as to the significance of this family by the end of his talk.

The Pease family was a prominent English Quaker family associated with Darlington and descended from Joseph Pease of Darlington, elder son of Edward Pease (1711–1785). They were one of the great Quaker industrialist families of the nineteenth century, who played a leading role in philanthropic and humanitarian interests as well as the industrial development of the town. The family earlier came from Fishlake in Yorkshire.

They were heavily involved during the 19th century in woollen manufacturing, railways, coal mines, and politics. Notable events in their history include the establishment of the Stockton and Darlington Railway in the 1820s and the failure of the family bank in 1902. The latter forced several of them close to bankruptcy. Nine members of the family were members of parliament, including the first Quaker Member of Parliament.

Although the Pease riches came from the rail and coal boom in the North East of England in the 19th century, the family remains part of an English financial aristocracy that is still significant in the City of London. Nicola Pease and husband Crispin Odey are the finance world's Posh and Becks. But, unlike Victoria Beckham, Pease really is 'posh' - her family helped found Barclays.



Mowden Hall built in 1862 by John Beaumont Pease



Ornate drinking fountains are located on three of Darlington's main roads. They were donated by Joseph Pease to promote temperance to travellers and residents of the town. One can be found on Grange Road, set into what was the boundary wall of Joseph's Southend estate.



Darlington's Crown Street Library opened in October 1885 after Edward Pease left £10,000 – £1m in today's money – for a 'library or other educational purpose'

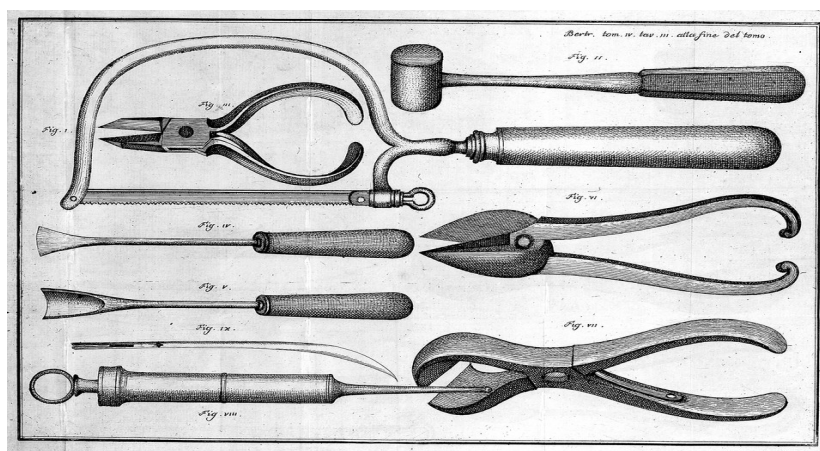
## ***Dr. Fotherley Pannell: C18th North Riding Surgeon & Apothecary***

### **Dr. David Severs**

In November we were entertained by Dr David Severs who spoke about his research into the life of Dr Fotherley Pannell. He concentrated chiefly on the way in which he had used various sources to gain knowledge of Dr Pannell. It seems research undertaken by an American student uncovered correspondence between Pannell and an American he had become friends with while studying at the Edinburgh Royal College of Physicians at the University of Edinburgh. Information was also gleaned from Pannell's correspondence with Professor Cullen from Edinburgh regarding various patients.

Dr Fotherley Pannell MD was born in Stokesley in December 1748, the son of Hugh Pannell, a clockmaker. He qualified as a doctor in Edinburgh in 1775 and his thesis for his doctorate concerned tuberculosis. He first practised in Northallerton and then moved to Buckingham in 1783. He lived in Great Ayton from 1790 until he died on 19th December 1826. His name appeared in the Land Tax register and he was assessed for the Poor Rate until his death. He was listed in Baines' Directory as a 'surgeon'.

One letter uncovered from Fotherley Pannell to Doctor Cullen gives us some idea of the types of afflictions he was presented with. The letter gives the case history of William Bower, aged about 27, son of Mr Bower of Scorton. Formerly an attorney's clerk in London, 'living well and rather freely', he 'frequently sacrificed at the shrine of Venus' and contracted gonorrhœa. He had his right hand amputated by Lambert of Newcastle, after a shooting accident in 1782, and had been in declining health ever since. He became extremely emaciated, with severe breathing difficulties and cough, as well as digestive symptoms. Pannell had advised him to travel to Edinburgh to consult Cullen, but he got worse making the journey impossible.



C18 Surgeon's Instruments

## ***Steam In Yorkshire: Then & Now***

### **Derek Rayner**

In December Derek Rayner shared his enthusiasm for 'Steam' with us. Derek owns a steam roller called White Rose, bought in 1964, which he still shows at steam gatherings. As an ex British Rail mechanical engineer and a self-confessed train spotter his knowledge and passion were obvious and he kept us entertained with a number of amusing stories woven into his presentation.



Derek and his Engine

He talked about the Masham railway line, which had opened in 1875 as part of North East Railways. However, passenger services ceased in 1931 and in 1963 the line closed altogether. Photographs Derek showed helped us to see how the ground still reveals the routes of the earlier tracks. Masham remains the venue for an annual steam traction engine gathering.

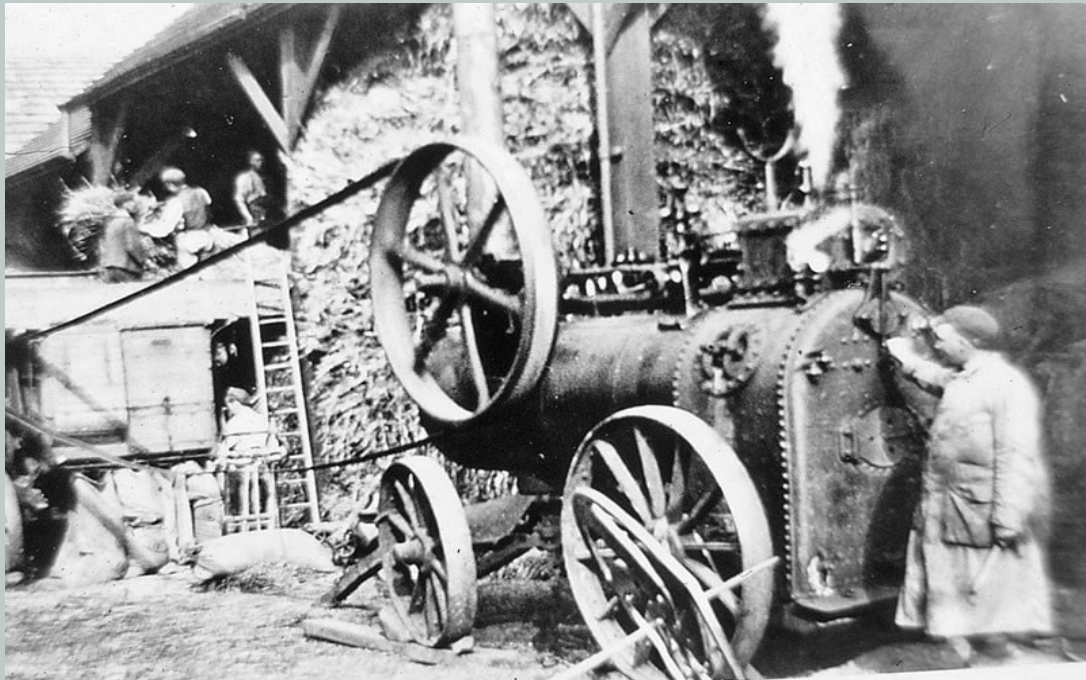
Road transport using steam was quite common in the early 1900s. Many firms produced engines including Thomas Green and Fowlers in Leeds. Richard Thorpe Removals of Ripon used such vehicles, as did Atkinsons of Masham. However, the weight of these engines caused considerable damage to the roads and so corporations nationally lobbied for more railway lines to get such traffic off the roads. Also, accidents involving runaway trains were not uncommon.

During the course of the evening we learnt that BDHS member David Barley's grandfather, Francis Barley, was a threshing machine contractor who went from farm to farm with a steam engine and threshing machine. This predated combined harvesters.





A Ripon train waits at Masham station c.1880



Steam Threshing



## VISIT TO VIEW THE AVRO VULCAN BOMBER XH558

On Monday 4th April 2016 six Society members made the journey to Robin Hood airport on the southern outskirts of Doncaster. In an earlier life this site had been titled RAF Finningley, itself a V bomber base in the Cold War. Our ultimate destination was a 1938 built hangar housing a giant 70 ton delta winged aircraft, serial XH558, the last Avro Vulcan bomber to be retired from the RAF; in 1993.

After a welcome cup of coffee we met our guide who would during the next 3 hours enlighten us as to the significance of XH558 and the force to which it belonged. The V bomber force was set up in the 1950s to deliver our nuclear “deterrent” to Russia. The aircraft utilised were new state of the art heavy bombers all with four gas turbine engines, capable of reaching Russia without refuelling at speeds of up to 650 mph, at heights of up to 65,000 feet while carrying up to 10 tons of bombs internally. Some aircraft were adapted to carry a stand-off nuclear missile, Blue Steel, which could be fired from outside Russian air-space so aiding the survivability of the attacking aircraft. In 1964 the force was probably at its peak, comprising some 159 operational aircraft, 50 Vickers Valiants, 39 Handley Page Victors and 70 Avro Vulcans.



Avro Vulcan Bomber in Flight

We were shown a spare gas turbine similar to the type fitted to XH558. At 19,000 lbs thrust it was slightly short of the 20,000 lbs attributed to the later Bristol Siddeley Olympus turbojets, variants of which were the only type ever installed in the Vulcans. These engines were later developed as power units for the Concorde supersonic airliner. XH558 was the first Vulcan B Mk 2 to enter RAF squadron service, in July 1960, and in fact was stationed at what was then RAF Finningley for nearly 7 years on pilot conversion duties, so it has come home to its “roots”. In 1984 the Vulcan ended its squadron service life and was assigned to the Vulcan Display Flight until 1992. The aircraft was bought by enthusiasts in 1993 and Vulcan to the Sky Trust formed in 2002, securing a lottery grant of £2.7m in 2004 leading to the acquisition of XH558 in 2005. Following a total rebuild it flew again in 2007. In 2015 escalating costs forced its withdrawal from flights although runway operations, i.e. wheels remaining firmly on the ground, will be conducted from time to time.

XH 558 has a crew of 5, the pilot and co-pilot sitting in ejector seats “up front”, the electronics officer and two navigators occupying rearward facing seats at the back. It was significant that a Vulcan crash in 1956 at Heathrow resulted in the deaths of the rear crew while the front pair survived. Before you ask; the toilet facilities on board are basic. A funnel and attached tube is available, while on intercontinental flights nappies were worn by all crew members. Even Ryanair hasn’t resorted to such cost-cutting measures-yet!

Maximum take-off weight is 99 tons. 650 mph was possible at 40,000 feet. 65,000 feet was the maximum ceiling with a radius of action of approximately 2,500 miles. XH558 is maintained in immaculate condition by an enthusiastic band of supporters and the long term survival of the aircraft is assured.

Altogether this was a most entertaining and enlightening visit. This article does not do it justice. I may have to delve into some of the operational aspects of this cold war warrior in the future if the editor has woken up by then!!

John Whitehouse

## Society Outing to Auckland Castle - Margaret Tasker

Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> July dawned bright & sunny after weeks of wet weather, so how fortunate we felt to be meeting for our annual trip that day. John was driving us in the BCCC mini bus, 17 in all. We soon arrived at Piercebridge, a small village now but of strategic importance in Roman times. After indulging in coffee and cakes Linda kindly led us first to the remains of the old bridge. This was a good way from the river, which over the centuries has changed course. Then we proceeded to the old fort ruins & with a little imagination it was easy to see it as a hive of activity, bustling with Roman soldiers.

Back on the bus we were soon to Auckland Castle, the impressive home of the Prince Bishops of Durham. From the time of William the Conqueror to the 19<sup>th</sup> century, these men were commanded to guard the boarder against the Scots & as such had powers to raise armies, taxes, mint coins & hold courts. St Peter's Chapel, thought to be the largest private chapel in Europe, contains coats of arms of all successive Bishops. In 1756, Bishop Trevor, an important figure in the Church of England at the time, bought paintings of Jacob and his 12 sons by Zurbaran. These larger than life art works represent the foundation of the Jewish Faith & made an appeal for religious freedom at a time when most other faiths were treated with contempt by the Church of England. They are now displayed for all to see in the beautiful dining room.

The music room was inspiring to walk through, listening to the sound of 40 voices through individual speakers, joined in a glorious sound. Some of our party went on the conducted tour. The park surrounding the castle has 200 acres of what was originally used as hunting ground. In 2012 Jonathon Ruffer, a local man, set up a trust to buy, restore & improve facilities at this site and in the town. To this purpose the castle is to be closed for repairs, but the park will remain open throughout, and hopefully be ready for visitors again by 2017/18.



Prince Bishop's Palace



Christine & I would like to thank all who came on the trip & especially Linda & John.

The Magnificent Music Room



## Rush Bearing in the Parish of Aldborough

Rishbearing or Rush bearing is a medieval Ecclesiastical festival, where the rushes usually Sweet Flag (*Acorus Calamus*) were collected from local farms and strewn on the floor of the Parish Church. The tradition goes back to the 12<sup>th</sup> Century at least, when church buildings had earthen floors and no pews, they were used for fragrant cleanliness and insulation. Letitia Elizabeth Landon writing in the 1800s wrote:

*The Green rush, the Green rush we bear it along,  
To the church of our village with triumph and song,  
We strew the cold chancel and kneel on it there,  
While its fresh odours rise with our voices in prayer,  
Hark the peal from the old tower in praise of it rings,  
Let us seek the green rush by the green woodland springs.*

The Ceremony usually takes place on the Sunday nearest the Saints day of the village Church. In many places it was regarded as a festival day with Church bells ringing and cake, wine and ale being provided for the rush bearers. In some town the rushes were borne on a decorated cart and the parishioners dressed up in disguise with garlands, long hair and coloured dresses accompanied by a group of Morris dances who also provided the music.

In looking for details of this ceremony locally, when Aldborough was the mother church and the churches at Roecliffe and Boroughbridge were Chapels of Ease, little is to be found, however in Kathleen Reynolds book "A History of the Christian Community in the Parish of Aldborough from 1330" Reynolds quotes Tudor Parish Documents by Purvis of York as a source for an incident that happened in the Aldborough Parish during "rish bearing" but it is not clear whether this happened at Aldborough, Roecliffe or the Boroughbridge chapel of Ease. While bringing the rushes into church after remonstrations to act respectfully a gun shot was discharged at the minister.

Reynolds does describe one tradition at Aldborough, again attributed to Purvis which details the use of a Marmot, for the floure of thwell (The flower of the well) ceremony held on Twelfth Night. The Marmot, being a large doll in a decorated cradle, was said to have been brought into the church by the revellers during prayer time which caused great upset, this had happened as local opposition was growing to the Elizabethan settlement.

There were two main reasons for the opposition to rush bearing.

The first was that it was seen by the post reformation church as an activity with too much association with the Church of Rome. Grindal who was appointed the Archbishop of York in 1576 was given the express mandate to get rid of all things popish. Also, the more secular activities such as music and dancing were not to the liking of the puritans, it is a wonder it survived anywhere. Puritan ministers opposed Sunday rush bearing because of the "lack of decorum". After the replacement of earthen floors with stone in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> Century, many places, town and villages discontinued the ceremony. However, some carried on having competitions for the best decorated rush cart, music and fancy dress. The Grasmere Rush bearing which still continues today was recorded by Wordsworth in his poem Rural Ceremony.

*This day, when, forth by rustic music led.  
The village children while the sky is red,  
With evening lights, advance in long array  
Through the still churchyard, each with garland gay.*

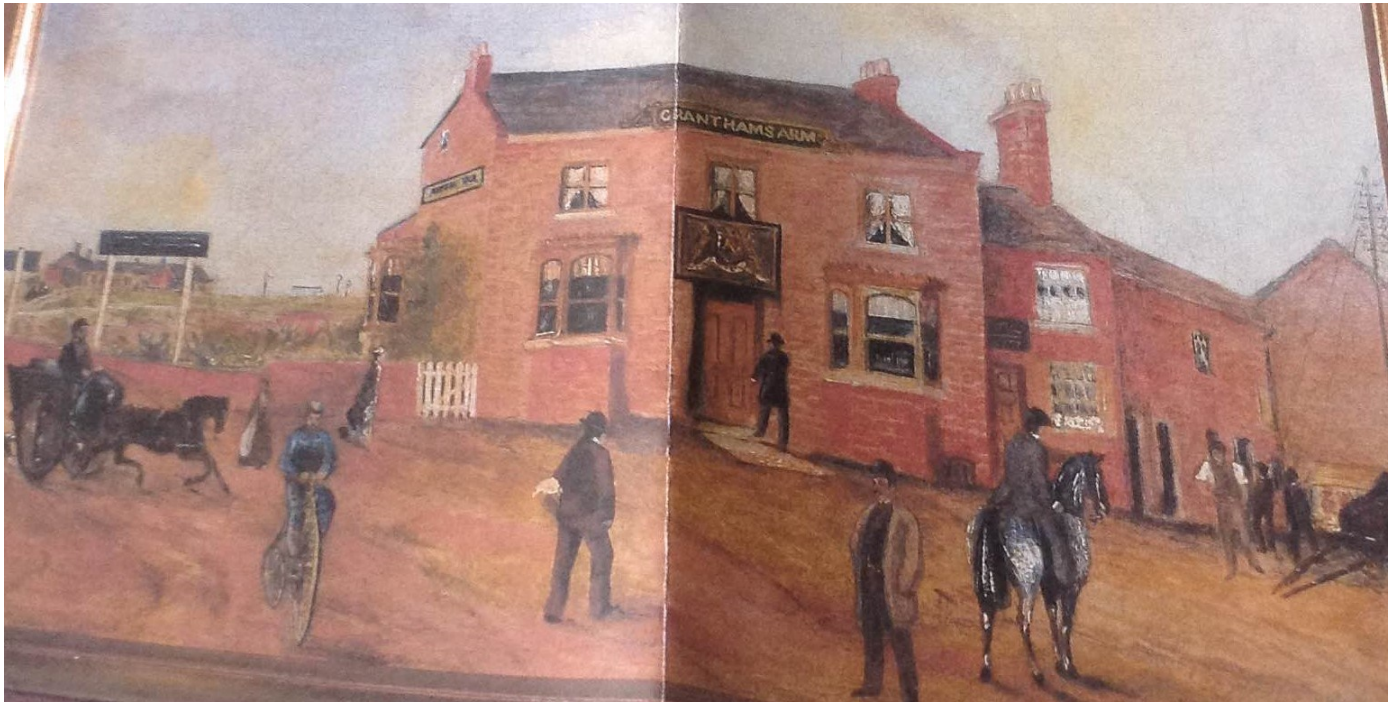
Linda Dooks

**Anyone with information on  
rushbearing please contact Linda  
on  
boroughbridgehistory@gmail.com**



Rushbearing ceremony in Grasmere

## Old Painting of the Grantham Arms



Grantham Museum in Lincolnshire was given a painting of a pub called the Grantham Arms. It was given to them because of an assumed connection with the town. However, the museum contacted BDHS believing the image was actually of 'our' pub. Although not dated or signed members will recognise immediately that the painting is indeed of 'our' Grantham Arms.

Linda Dooks kindly provided the museum with the following information, which is sure to be of interest to members also.

The Inn was named after Lord Grantham who lived at Newby Hall at the beginning of the 19th Century, it his coat of arms which is above the door.

In 1889 The Grantham was recommended as having accommodation for thirty horses it being adjacent to the Great North Road. By the turn of the Century it was popular with cyclists from Leeds and Bradford riding out for a day in the Dales.

Behind The Grantham was the local cattle market and for many years was the local for the auctioneer George Freeman who was also Borough bridge's only famous cricketer, taking eight wickets against Lancashire for eleven runs. In 1936 the AA had given the Grantham a single star. It cost three shillings and sixpence a night Bed and Breakfast. (We have a photograph from that time showing the coat of arms but the building rendered.)



