

BOROUGHBRIDGE & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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



NEWSLETTER APRIL 2020

DEAR MEMBERS,

OUR SUMMER MEETING PROGRAMME HAS BEEN CANCELLED AS A RESULT OF NATIONAL GUIDANCE NOT TO GATHER IN GROUPS TO AVOID SPREADING THE CORONAVIRUS. THE TRIP HAS BEEN CANCELLED ALSO.

OUR ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS WILL BE RESCHEDULED ONCE THE THREAT FROM CORVID 19 HAS PASSED.

THESE ARE DIFFICULT TIMES. PEOPLE ARE HAVING TO ADAPT TO LIVING WITH UNPRECEDENTED RESTRICTIONS ON FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT AND ASSOCIATION. UNDERSTANDABLY, THERE IS MUCH ANXIETY ABOUT THE FUTURE. AS IN ANY CRISIS WE SEE THE BEST AND WORST ASPECTS OF HUMAN BEHAVIOUR ON DISPLAY. I'M SURE YOU WILL BE PLEASED TO HEAR THAT BDHS HAS DONATED £200 FROM OUR FUNDS TO HELP VULNERABLE PEOPLE IN BOROUGHBRIDGE AT THIS DIFFICULT TIME. THANKS TO LINDA FOR INITIATING.

PLEASE KEEP SAFE.

PETER FLEMING, CHAIR

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THE NEWBY HALL FERRY DISASTER OF 1869

In January Michael Abrahams gave us a very interesting talk on the Newby Hall ferry tragedy. Michael's unique style of delivery kept us amused despite the gravity of the subject.

In February, 1869, a tragic accident claimed the lives of James Warriner, the gardener of Newby Hall and his son Christopher Warriner, along with four prominent members of the York and Ainsty hunt.

The other victims were master of the hounds, Sir Charles Slingsby of Scriven Park near Knaresborough; Edward Lloyd of Lingcroft Lodge near York; Edmund Robinson of Thorpe Green and William Orvys, the kennel huntsman of Acomb and the hunt's whipper-in for the day.

The hunt got under way at eleven o'clock at Stainley House near Harrogate. A short while later some hunters and horses chased a fox across a ford over the river, while the people who died, along with survivors of the resulting tragedy, headed for a ferry boat almost directly opposite Newby Hall. James and Christopher Warriner from Skelton-on-Ure were in charge of the boat used that day to transport huntsmen and horses across the river Ure near Ripley.

Sir Charles Slingsby and his horse darted first into the boat, followed



Sir Charles Slingsby

just as inelegantly by twice as many occupants as the boat was designed to carry. Encumbered by a fast moving current and river swollen by heavy rain, the group made for the other side. About one third of the way across Sir Charles Slingsby's horse kicked the mount belonging to Sir George Wombwell. Wombwell's horse returned the kick and caused other horses to panic and thrash around and lose their balance.

The violent motion caused the boat to overturn, throwing its occupants into the water where the six men and eight horses died and some of the strongest swimmers escaped or were saved by spectators on the river banks. Of the six men who died, only Charles Slingsby was seen to emerge from the water and begin swimming to safety, only to give up a short distance from the river bank. An inquest returned a verdict of accidental death.

During the talk, Michael explained why this accident would have received national coverage in the press. Horsemanship was greatly admired at the time and horse racing and hunting were extremely popular. Indeed, the best riders and masters of the hunt were the equivalent to our celebrity footballers.



The 150 year memorial service of the ferry disaster
in 2019



The memorial stone in the grounds of
Newby Hall

The Story of the American West

In February I gave a talk on the history of the American West.

The Great Plains are the grasslands of the North American continent, and lie between the Mississippi River and the Rocky Mountains. Early European explorers found the Plains a very hostile environment, and the area was marked on early maps as the 'great American desert'.

From the 1830s to the end of the century the Great Plains were crossed and settled by the new Americans and the indigenous tribes that occupied the plains had their way of life destroyed. Treaties made with the Indian tribes were broken time and time again and the bison on which the Indians depended for their existence were all but annihilated.

Indian Culture

There were numerous different tribes living on the vast plains of central America. Each tribe had subtly different cultures but there was much they had in common. The Indians were nomadic people. They followed herds of buffalo as they depended on these beasts for their survival. They used just about every part of the animal productively once they had killed it. The Indians did not understand land ownership; they believed the land belonged to the Great Spirit and no man should fence it or restrict nature. They were great horsemen and hunters, but only hunted what they needed to survive.



Indian Teepees

It is easy to see how conflict was inevitable given the culture and aspirations the European settlers brought with them to America. They left Europe behind in search of a more prosperous life and freedom. They believed in rugged individualism and thought it was manifest destiny that the whiteman, with his superior technology, would replace the redman. This was progress. They saw the Indians as savages and

As the century progressed the Great Plains were occupied by homesteaders, the transcontinental railway was built and towns and cities constructed. Buffalo herds were shot for their hides and obstructive Indians killed in battle. Add to this the impact of viruses from Europe (smallpox, measles, flu) and it is easy to see how the population of Indians was reduced by an estimated 90% between 1800 and



Most early European settlers on the Plains built sod homes

their way of life as a barrier to progress. They felt the Great Plains were a desert because the Indians had not tamed them.

A series of treaties pushed the Indians into smaller and smaller pockets of land on the Plains and eventually they were made to live on reservations. Every effort was made to turn them into farmers and convert them to Christianity.

1900. Some historians have described this loss as a forgotten genocide.

From the 1960s onwards historians in the USA have reinterpreted their national story, tempering stories of cowboy bravery and a belief in manifest destiny with an understanding of the brutality shown towards the indigenous people and the environmental downside of developing the Plains.

A forgotten Emigration: Yorkshire folk leaving for Nova Scotia 1772-1775

In March June Hill gave a talk on the migration of Yorkshire folk to Nova Scotia. June has visited Nova Scotia and has provided hospitality here in Yorkshire to the descendants of those early settlers.

Migration from Yorkshire to Nova Scotia occurred between 1772 and 1775 and involved an approximate one thousand migrants arriving to settle the colony following the expulsion of its Acadians (descendants from French colonists).

The immigration was the initiative of the Lieutenant Governor of the colony, Michael Francklin. The first settlers arrived in 1772 aboard the ship *Duke of York*. Between 1773 and 1775 several additional ships arrived, peaking in 1774 with the arrival of 9 vessels.

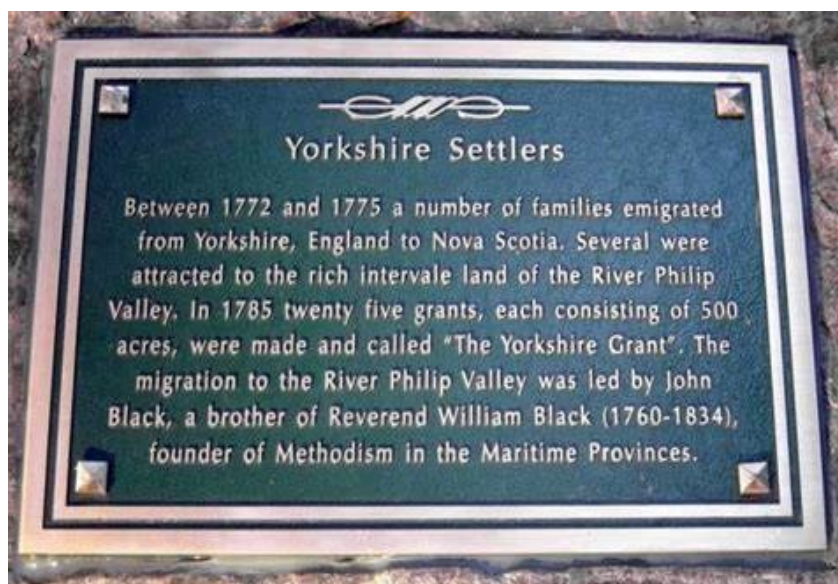
Many of the Yorkshire pioneers were Wesleyan Methodists and were responsible for establishing the earliest Methodist chapels in Canada (1790).

The immigrants were mostly tenant farmers in Yorkshire, although a few also came from Northumberland. They left for Nova Scotia "in order to seek a better livelihood". Rather than receiving land grants from the government, as had the previous immigrants, the New England Planters, the new arrivals came with money and purchased their lands from the government or from Planters who were at the time beginning to leave.

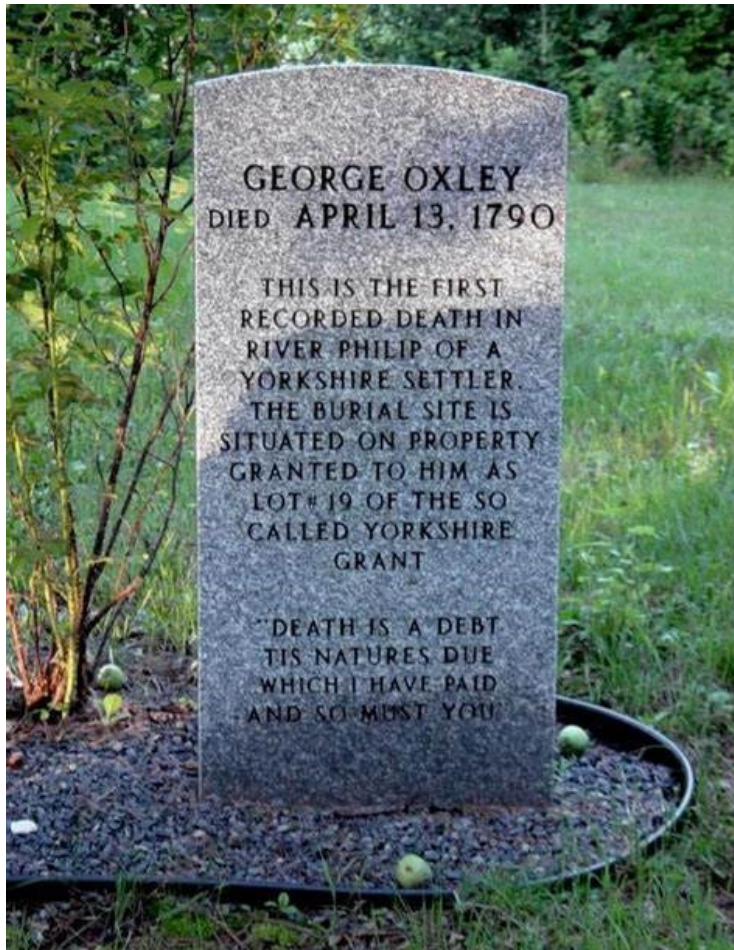
It has been argued that these pioneers were instrumental in preventing victory by American sympathisers during the Eddy Rebellion of 1776. Named for Jonathan Eddy, the Rebellion was an attempt to wrestle Nova Scotia from the British in order for it join the thirteen colonies in the newly created United States. Aiding British troops from Halifax, the Yorkshire pioneers helped subdue the

rebels, including some New England Planters that supported the American Revolution, in a three-week siege of Fort Cumberland.

In Nova Scotia today there remains evidence of Yorkshire's influence in the odd stone house, a contrast to the typical timber buildings of the region.



Plaque commemorating Yorkshire Settlers



First recorded death of a Yorkshire settler



The ground and first floor of these houses in Nova Scotia resemble houses in many North Yorkshire market towns

MAKING THE MOST OF LOCKDOWN: SUGGESTIONS FOR ON-LINE HISTORY RESOURCES

Boroughbridge and District

David Bellwood reminds members that if you want to pursue your own research, or maybe just browse, there is now a wealth of information in the members' area of the website – www.boroughbridgehistory.co.uk – articles written by members, and scans of hundreds of items from the society's archives. We now have over 500 photographs in the photo gallery section of the members' area.

If anyone doesn't have a username/password to access the area, they can request one by using the contact form on the website, or emailing info@boroughbridgehistory.co.uk

Yorkshire

There are many free resources available through the Yorkshire Archaeological and Historical Society — www.yas.org.uk

You can access sources ranging from the Wakefield Manor Court Rolls 1433-1436 to a document on 'Forced Rhubarb in West Yorkshire 1852-2017'!



The UK and Beyond

Of course there are literally thousands of sites on-line with historical information of one kind or another. For those interested in locating newspaper articles about a particular area or theme the British Newspaper Archive is a good place to start. It has a search engine within the site to help you pinpoint what you need. The only downside is that you have to pay a fee to access the material. Some facing weeks of lockdown might find this a price worth paying to look at newspapers from years ago.

www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk

First Members of Parliament for Boroughbridge

It was the year 1299 in the time of Edward I that Boroughbridge first received a writ to elect two representatives to attend the parliament of the day.



Why Boroughbridge?

Why did the King choose Boroughbridge? From our standpoint over seven centuries later we cannot be sure, but the answer may lie in his conflicts with the Scots, and the wars he fought in his attempt to subdue Scotland after his successes in Wales. Besides being a warrior king Edward I was a very perceptive legislator who strove to bring law and order back to the kingdom after the chaos of his father's reign. He had enacted several new laws to improve justice and administration in the kingdom, and in 1295 he had assembled a large 'model' parliament which included 74 knights and 220 burgesses.

King Edward I His primary concern was undoubtedly to raise taxes to fund his war expenses, but equally such a gathering would also allow him to keep a wary eye on subjects from all parts of the kingdom, and to judge their mood in an age where the possibility of rebellion was real and never far away. In his three campaigns against the Scots in the second half of his reign he would almost certainly have passed through Boroughbridge. At that time at the turn of the century, before the devastation of later years it was a relatively prosperous small town based on its road and river transport links. He would undoubtedly have recognised its strategic importance as a transport hub, and it would have made sense to call for representatives from the town to the Parliament of 1299/1300. At that time the large industrial cities of today did not exist, and it was nothing exceptional for a small town like Boroughbridge to be nominated.

Voting Procedure

In those days there was no fixed procedure for voting in Parliamentary elections, but for Boroughbridge the right to vote was clearly specified, it was awarded to the male tenants of all the town's burghage properties. At that time there were some 65 burghage houses in the town, so the 65 male tenants were entitled to vote. They duly elected John Engleys and Nicholas son of Nicholas as their MPs. (note at that time the use of surnames was not yet universally established). No record is known to exist revealing how and where in the town the vote was conducted, who collected and recorded the votes, or whether the election was contested. It is likely that the vote would have taken place at a public gathering in the town, possibly in the Tollbooth, voting would have been by a show of hands, probably not contested, and in all likelihood the Borough Bailiff, perhaps one of the Tancred family would have announced the result and forwarded the record to the County Sheriff.

Records of the burghage houses which qualified for the vote did not survive. A strong possibility is that they would have been kept in Knaresborough castle, as the administrative centre of the Honour of Knaresborough, at that time including Boroughbridge. Unfortunately in 1322 John de Lilbourne, the keeper of the castle had sided with the Duke of Lancaster in the rebellion of that year and fearing a siege of the castle he burned all the castle's records, which may well have included the records of the qualifying Boroughbridge burghage properties.

This could explain why two and a half centuries later these specified burghage properties were only identifiable by the controversial 'memory of man'

Boroughbridge Downturn

In the years following this election the fortunes of Boroughbridge really took a severe turn for the worse, for several reasons. First of all there was famine due to crop failures, there was morain in the sheep from Fountains Abbey with loss of trade from the wool crop passing through the town. Then the competent King Edward I died and was succeeded by his son Edward II who ranked amongst the most incompetent and ineffective Kings of England. There the town was torched by the Scots, the battle of Boroughbridge took place and finally there was the devastation of the Black Death. All of these factors impacted severely on Boroughbridge, and one consequence of these calamities was that no further Parliamentary elections took place in the town for 253 years.

Despite the seemingly transience of this election, perhaps of relatively minor importance amongst the other significant events of the time, it was destined to have a profound impact on the town in later centuries.

