

# BOROUGHBRIDGE & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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



## NEWSLETTER APRIL 2022

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### SUMMER PROGRAMME

TUESDAY, 10TH MAY

HARRY PEARSON

THE BATTLE OF BYLAND

TUESDAY, 14TH JUNE

JOHN KENNY

COMMUNITY EXCAVATION AT SKIPWITH MANOR

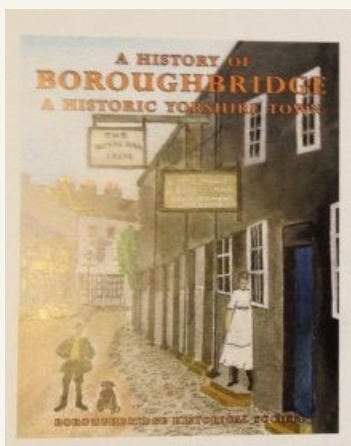
TUESDAY, 12TH JULY

BRIAN GROOM

NORTHERNERS FROM THE ICE AGE TO THE PRESENT DAY

MEETINGS ARE HELD IN BOROUGHBRIDGE LIBRARY JUBILEE SUITE AT 7.30

ALL WELCOME: MEMBERS FREE; VISITORS AND GUESTS £3.00



### A HISTORY OF BOROUGHBRIDGE

COPIES CAN BE BOUGHT AT MONTHLY BDHS  
MEETINGS

## Notes from the CHAIRMAN 700 Years since the Battle of Boroughbridge

On Saturday, March 12th Boroughbridge remembered those who died in the bloody Battle of Boroughbridge some 700 years ago.

A programme of events was organised by the Battlefield Trust in liaison with the town council and Boroughbridge Historical Society. I will take this opportunity to thank Linda Dooks and fellow project group members for their hard work in contributing to this event. Some members of BDHS helped on the day, for example 'manning' the display set out by society and accompanying groups undertaking a guided tour of the battlefield. Many thanks to all involved.

The weather was kind on the day and the town was buzzing with visitors, the local bakers and cafes doing a roaring trade as a result. Radio York and the Stray Ferret covered the event.

The most poignant part of the day was the wreath laying ceremony, held at the battle cross in Aldborough. This was attended by several dignitaries including Richard Compton, Deputy Lieutenant of North Yorkshire and Viscount Hereford, Robin de Bohun Devereux (descended from Humphrey de Bohun, killed in the battle).

Linda Dooks explained why there was a battle in 1322, pupils from Boroughbridge Primary School, Daisy, Ben and Jake Godley read their poetry and John Moss of St. James Church led reflection and prayers. John's words about conflict were especially moving, given the invasion of Ukraine that had taken place just days before this event.

We have waited 700 years for this...

# The Anniversary of the Battle of Boroughbridge

**Saturday 12th March\***

### PROGRAMME OF EVENTS

**9.30am:** Wreath Laying Ceremony at the Memorial Battle Cross, Aldborough.

**10-4pm:** Living History display on the Boroughbridge shared space (Back Lane carpark). Battle Exhibition and Boroughbridge Primary School Art display in Library Jubilee Room. Free Admission.

**10.30am:** 3 Swords Battle & Weapon demonstrations on shared space (Back Lane carpark).

**11.30am:** Battlefield Guided Walk\* (Battlefields Trust).

**2pm:** 3 Swords Battle & Weapon demonstrations.

**3pm:** Battlefield Guided Walk\* (Battlefields Trust).

**For further details please contact:**  
[www.boroughbridgehistory.co.uk](http://www.boroughbridgehistory.co.uk)

\*weather permitting





Viscount Hereford lays a wreath at the  
Battle cross





Members of the 3 Swords Group



Battle Cross plate in Aldborough



A number of 'battle boards' will be placed at sites relevant to the battle

## January Talk

### **'When I was a Lad' - David Barley reflects on Boroughbridge in 1952**

David began by answering the question: why reflect on Boroughbridge in 1952? To many of the older members seventy years does not seem that long ago, but to our grandchildren and younger people today it's ages ago, another era.

1952 is in the living memory of anyone who was born before, during or shortly after the war.

David explained that around six years ago, not long after he joined the Society, we were asked by York St. John University to assist in a survey by The Education and Research Centre. The survey was called PLACE an abbreviation for 'People, Landscape and Cultural Environment' of Yorkshire. They requested information to record the land use of the central areas of market towns within Yorkshire to consider and record the use of property in the town centre: butcher, baker, candle stick maker, charity shop etc. Photographs were taken of all the properties, they were categorised, and the result was positive feedback and the production of a short book on North Yorkshire market towns.

This photographic record gave David the idea to reflect on the various shops and businesses, how he remembered them when he was younger, how they had changed usage or not, stories and memories of the places when he was much younger.

David explained how he was born and brought up at the Skelton end of Langthorpe, which is over a mile from Boroughbridge centre, therefore only had scant recollections of the town as a boy. To help him recall bygone history of the town he enrolled the help of a couple of folks around his age who have lived in the Boroughbridge all their lives, his brother-in-law, Andrew Willey, and memories from a lady's perspective, BDHS member Pat Smith, nee Hare.

One of the most significant features of 1952 and until the early 1960's, was that the A1 or 'The Great North Road' as it was often known at the time, this was the main route from Edinburgh to London, went through the town, going north it passed along Horsefair and over the river bridge, If you were travelling south or to York from the Kirkby Hill direction, over the river bridge, one had then to turn left at the corner of the Crown Hotel onto Fishergate, along High Street, past the fountain and along the old York Road, this heavy traffic was the cause of many disruptions and accidents over the years.

Most town folk at this time worked locally or travelled to Harrogate or Ripon; further afield to the West Riding or Teeside was out of the question as not many people had cars.

With the A1 passing through the town, much of the trade in Boroughbridge was based on the through traffic, garages, and petrol stations, such as Tommy Kemp's at Kirkby Hill, Markland Garage, before the bridge, Bob Graham at Canal Garage, Nicholson & Slater, over the bridge at the end of Mill Lane, Reeds Garage opposite Roecliffe Lane, Fairbanks where Charlton's car dealership is now and at the south end of town Kelly's Café, where Morrisons supermarket now is.

There was overnight accommodation for lorry drivers and travellers, lorries did not have in-cab sleeping facilities in those days, so a bed was to be had at Paul's Café or Kelly's Café.

Lorry drivers were a different breed in those days, speed restrictions, no power steering, they needed fore-arms like Popeye!

There were numerous stories of local people not able to sleep after the by-pass opened, due to the lack of passing traffic noise.





We were reminded of some of the events from 1952:

The Cup Final, Newcastle beat Arsenal 1- 0.

The Olympic games in Helsinki.

Churchill was the Prime Minister, again.

Eisenhower, US President.

Death of George VI.

Comet aircraft – First commercial flight.

Lynmouth floods.

Capital punishment still existed, Bentley was wrongly hung as an associate of Derek Craig, who had committed the murder.

David then began to guide us around the town with the aid of photographs of all the shops and businesses taken around five or six years ago; his recollections and memories, of owners, change of use and anecdotes. His tour started at the corner of Horsefair and Fishergate, where the Kitchen Shop is now, and proceeded through the town, down Fishergate, up the right-hand side of High Street up to St. James's Square, as far Church Street, across the road towards the fountain, returning down the opposite side of High Street, up Fishergate, turning right at the Crown Hotel on to Bridge Street, crossing the road before the bridge, back down Bridge Street, towards Horsefair, then cross the road by the Old Forge, towards Greenwoods butcher, On The Run Café, finishing at closed down Horticulture shop that used to be the vehicle entrance to Charlie Potter's garage.

A very interesting talk, enjoyed by all, as to how the town has changed and, in some cases, hasn't over the years.

## February Talk

### Arms and Armour in the Middle Ages

Dean Davidson

Dean came to speak to the society about weaponry in the Middle Ages, ahead of our Battle of Boroughbridge commemoration event. He brought numerous replica weapons along, which members were allowed to inspect and hold. Dean is a board member of Combat Archaeology, an organisation aimed at disseminating knowledge about arms and armour through battle reconstructions and careful research of manuscripts and artefacts. You can learn more about them through their website ([www.combatarchaeology.org](http://www.combatarchaeology.org)).



Weapons extend human fighting capacity, they are merely tools used by combatants. Weapons in the Middle Ages reflect the technological knowledge and the morals of the time. There are many myths about warfare at that time, for example the idea of the Viking Shield Wall is now considered to be inaccurate. We now know more about combat at the time as a result of scrutiny and analysis of museum collections, contemporary manuscripts, art and wood cuts, tools and effigies.

Weapons evolved as the Middle Ages advanced and varied slightly from place to place, but the following were commonly used: sword and buckler (small shield), halberd (a pick with a pike head at the end of the staff), Dane Axe (for cutting through armour), daggers, spears, mace, lances and crossbows. Knights wore heavy armour, plate armour and chain mail. A chain mail cloak was called a hauberk.

When going into battle there would be highly skilled and equipped fighters but also mercenaries and ordinary citizens fulfilling feudal duties to fight. Many army support roles existed, providing food, shelter, medical care and supplies of weapons. After a battle, the weapons of the dead and their armour would be gathered up for reuse. Sometimes, locals would pilfer what they could from the dead. Many archaeological finds are where battles occurred and artefacts became trapped in the ground only to be uncovered centuries later.





Examples of weapons used in battle



## March Talk

### The History of Alcohol—Tony Goodall

Tony provided us with an interesting talk on the history of alcohol and current trends in alcohol consumption and associated risks. Having spent much of his professional life involved in alcohol prevention Tony was well placed to deliver this talk.

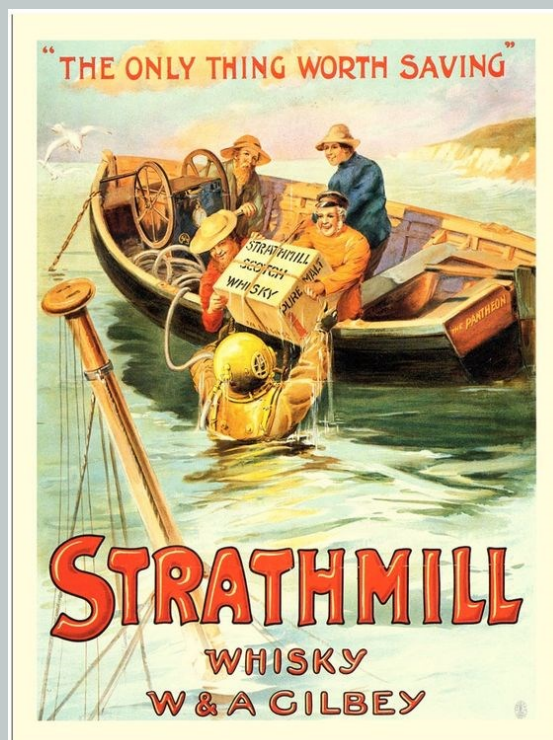
Nobody knows exactly when humans began to create fermented beverages. The earliest known evidence comes from 7,000 BCE in China, where residue in clay pots has revealed that people were making an alcoholic beverage from fermented rice, millet, grapes, and honey. In India, an alcoholic beverage called sura, distilled from rice, was in use between 3000 and 2000 B.C. The Babylonians worshiped a wine goddess as early as 2700 B.C. In Greece, one of the first alcoholic beverages to gain popularity was mead, a fermented drink made from honey and water. Greek literature is full of warnings against excessive drinking.

In the sixteenth century, alcohol (called “spirits”) was used largely for medicinal purposes. At the beginning of the eighteenth century, the British parliament passed a law encouraging the use of grain for distilling spirits. Cheap spirits flooded the market and reached a peak in the mid-eighteenth century. In Britain, gin consumption reached 18 million gallons and alcoholism became widespread.

The nineteenth century brought a change in attitudes and the temperance movement began promoting the moderate use of alcohol—which ultimately became a push for total prohibition. In 1920 the US passed a law prohibiting the manufacture, sale, import and export of intoxicating liquors. The illegal alcohol trade boomed and by 1933, the prohibition of alcohol was cancelled.



Today, alcoholism is a significant problem in most countries and in the UK alcohol related disease costs the NHS a staggering £3.5 billion a year. Data suggests the people of Northern Europe consume more alcohol and engage in binge drinking more readily than those of the south. The UK is especially bad in this respect with a recent cultural trend being binge drinking among young women. In our society, drinking and being drunk are generally regarded with amusement rather than disdain. Adverts promoting alcoholic drinks have been all around us for decades and the alcohol industry has considerable influence on government policy.





N<sup>o</sup> 60

## GIN LANE.



*Gin* cursed Fiend, with Fury traugbt,  
 Make human Race a Prey,  
 It enters by a deadly Draught,  
 And steals our Life away.

Published according to Act of Parliament 1751.

Virtue and Truth, drivn to Despair,  
 Its Rage compells to fly,  
 Bid, exprober with hellish Care,  
 Theft, Murder, Perjury.

Damnd' Cup! that on the Vitals preys,  
 That liquid Fire contains  
 Which Madness to the Heart conveys,  
 And rolls it thro' the Veins.

Hogarth's famous illustration showing the evils of alcohol, GIN LANE, from 1751.



## April Talk

### History of English Canals

#### Eric Jackson

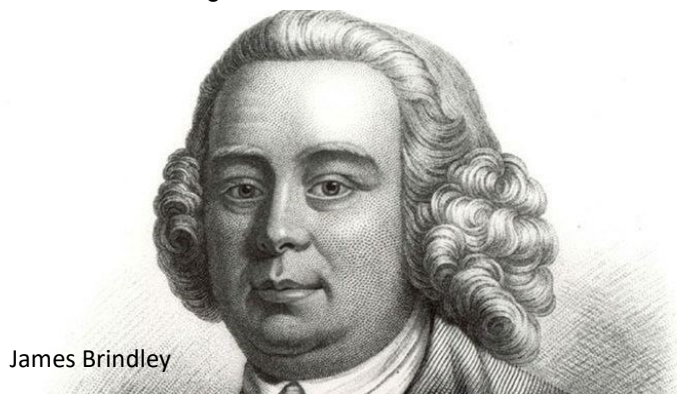
Eric Jackson gave an interesting and informative talk on 'The History of English Canals' at the April 2022 meeting.

The talk began with him explaining how the canal system came about. Although canals had been built by the Romans, an example is the Fossdyke from Lincoln to the Trent at Torksey in Lincolnshire, it was not until the C18<sup>th</sup> that they really took off in England. It was the early Industrial Revolution that drove the building of canals, the credit for creating this heavy transport system, the basis of the Industrial Revolution, must go to the third Duke of Bridgewater.

Prior to the canals the only way to transport goods, coal or more delicate, breakable goods was by pack horse or wagons pulled by horses, over rough roads which only improved slightly after the 1663 Turnpike Act. Pack horse trains or wagons and horses could travel, in favourable conditions, around a maximum of twenty-five

miles a day. By contrast, a barge could carry 30 tons, only required one horse and boy plus one man on the boat to achieve 4mph.

The Duke, who had travelled on the Continent and seen their canals (which had long been known to engineers and travellers) decided to build a waterway to carry coal from his collieries. The Duke was introduced to James Brindley (1716-1772) one of the great canal engineers. He obtained an Act in 1759 to build a canal from his mines at Worsley to Salford



James Brindley

and from Worsley to Hollin ferry on the Mersey. It took two years to build and in 1761 the canal was opened. It cost of £168,000 (£23m today).

Prior to the canal the Duke was paying 6/8d to transport one ton of coal, transported on the canal the cost was 2/6d / ton. With 100,000 tons of coal being transported per annum, this gave an income of £54,000 p.a.. The canal paid for itself in a little over three years. By 1773 the canal was so successful that Josiah Wedgwood, paying a visit to Worsley, was impressed enough by it to build the Trent & Mersey canal, which opened in 1777. This enabled Wedgwood to export his china wares from the potteries safely to Liverpool and the around the world.

By 1860 there were over 4500 miles of canal in England. They were all built by skilled workmen who dug the canal navigations – to use the older term. These men were called 'cutters', the unskilled being labourers. The word 'navigator' seems to have appeared in the 1790's as a term used by the public, it was later shortened to 'navvy'. Some of these cutters were English labourers who previously left the land because of the Enclosure Acts; some were Fenmen, used to digging and embanking drains; and many were Scots and Irish migrants.

The construction gangs moved through the countryside, creating shanty towns. They were rough men, creating problems to any nearby villages and towns, with heavy drinking, fights, robbery and even murder. The jobs carried many risks of injury and deaths. The men involved in canal building also included other skilled trades; carpenters, tunnellers, brick layers, blacksmiths, cooks etc.

The canal structure is about five feet deep, to ensure it is waterproof, it is lined with around two foot of puddle clay, which was packed down by the navvies walking over it, or if available herding cattle to do this work. The building of canals also involved the construction of locks, lock keeper's cottages, toll houses, aqueducts, bridges, tunnels, pathways etc.. To ensure that there was sufficient water in the canals, supply reservoirs also required construction.





Lock Keeper's Cottage Stratford Canal

The canal companies that built the canal, did not operate the boats themselves and therefore, tolls had to be paid on a ton per mile on goods being transported, by the boat owners, these were collected at the toll houses located along the canal.

The coming of the railways was the start of the decline of the canals, for the mass movement of goods and materials and it is ironic the canals were used to aid the construction of the railways.

As railway companies became more established, they started to buy up canal companies, thus further reducing competition.

The standard narrow boat was 70ft long and 7ft wide and was able to transport a 30-ton load. Goods often had to be transferred from bigger boats to smaller boats or to holding warehouses, whereas railways could move goods and materials greater distances with less handling. Once motor power became available, horses were no longer needed. Soon, families started to live on the boats, to save on the cost of having a home on land. As canal use diminished, there was a gradual decline in the maintenance and upkeep of the canal system.

On the outbreak of war in 1939 the railway-owned canals came at once under the control of the Ministry of Transport and on 1 January 1948 the British Transport Commission took over most of the waterways, from the Ministry of Transport. Under the commission responsibility for the canals was given to the Docks and Inlands Waterways Executive. From the beginning of 1955 the docks and waterways undertakings were separated. British Waterways was now a separate division run by a General Manager under a Sub-Commission.

Between the wars the literature of canal cruising partly transferred itself to the motor boating and yachting magazines, but the only book on the subject, which interested the public was the very popular *Narrow Boat*, by L.T.C 'Tom' Rolt, based on his canal cruising experiences on his boat 'Cressey'. The formation of the Inland Waterways Association in 1946, and of other societies and organizations, helped to increase sharply the use of canals for pleasure purposes. Several useful books appeared, written with the pleasure boater and canal explorer in mind, notably '*The Inland Waterways of England*' by L.T.C. Rolt and '*Know Your Waterways*' by Robert Aickman.



Bingley Five Rise Locks

A renewed public interest in the canals, followed by the growth of the leisure boat industry and a great deal of time and effort by volunteer groups, has seen a resurgence in the canal system. In 2012 The Canal & River Trust was launched, taking over the guardianship of British Waterways' canals, rivers, reservoirs and docks in England and Wales.

There remain many wonderful canal era structures to admire today. One of these is the Five Rise Locks on the Leeds-Liverpool canal at Bingley. When this 'staircase lock' opened in 1774, 30000 people turned out to celebrate and witness the first boat take twenty eight minutes to navigate the rise.

### **News from the Secretary - Linda Dooks**

Now we are back onto a more even keel, I would like to welcome all the new members who have joined BDHS during the last few months. I also have to announce that due to my having to spend more time on family commitments I would like to stand down as Secretary and as a Committee member in September.

Having been on the organising side since the Society began in the nineties. I feel it is the right time for me to step aside and let someone join the committee with new ideas and interests to help move the Society forward. I hope you will continue to give the society the support you have all given me over the years.

Thankyou, Linda

### **Archivist's Notes - Linda Dooks**

We have had research enquires about the history of the cottages at the end of Roeclyffe Lane. Why were they built? If you can help with this and any other enquiries do let us know. The Primary School at Marton Cum Grafton has requested some help with researching life in Marton during Victorian times. Peter has kindly agreed to go into school to help with this.

We also had a request from the company who have refurbished The Anchor, for old photographs of the area to display in the lounge. We did supply some of them, for which they kindly gave us a donation. We have been consulted about the Easingwold to Alne railway; it is possible a lottery application will be made to fund a rail trail around the Station Hotel at Easingwold, which is being refurbished. It should be noted that in September it is the platinum anniversary of Boroughbridge Primary School.

Several people have asked about the funding for the Battlefield Anniversary. The funding was given by Millers Homes under their condition of planning for the Milby site. They donated £15,000 to the Battlefields Trust for the research and development of the Battlefield Trail. Most of the expense on the day of the anniversary was involved in the armament display on the shared space, a much larger proportion of funds went on research, design and production of interpretation boards. Costs include copyright on images used and on the erection of the Battlefield trail boards and the publication of the accompanying leaflet. It was hoped to have had them in situ for the anniversary day but the trail boards are still awaiting planning permission for erection from HBC. A ring-fenced amount will cover any future expense relating to this project. BDHS funded a wreath for the ceremony at the battlecross and the hire of the Jubilee room for the exhibition.

Work is well underway thanks to Mike Tasker on the project to design and publish a heritage map of Boroughbridge, this is in conjunction with the Tourist Information and Langthorpe Parish Council. We have applied for funding to help with this from Harrogate Borough Council and other sources.

Lastly, we have had to cancel the project meeting on Friday 6th May and move it to the 13th at 2 Pm in the Jubilee room above the Library. New members are very welcome to attend and become involved.



## Halifax Piece Hall - Peter Fleming

In the last newsletter I wrote a short piece about Masham Stone Circle. For this edition I decided to look slightly further afield and provide some information about the Halifax Piece Hall, a Grade 1 listed building that was almost demolished in the 1970s but which, thankfully, we can now see in all its glory due to a magnificent restoration.

During the Industrial Revolution the population of the West Riding of Yorkshire grew rapidly. Small villages were transformed into mill towns producing the finest woollen cloth in the world. In the years before the Industrial Revolution, however, cloth making was already the staple industry of the area, with spinning and weaving being done at home under what is called the 'domestic system'. Numerous weavers' cottages still dot the valleys around Halifax, their distinctive long second storey windows a clue to the fact that weaving looms were once housed within. When visiting the area in the 1720s, Daniel Defoe remarked, 'almost at every house there was a tenter (cloth stretching frame) and almost on every tenter a piece of cloth'. As cloth production grew it was decided a cloth hall was needed to make the buying and selling of woollen cloth 'pieces' easier.

The Piece Hall opened in 1779. It had 315 separate rooms from which manufacturers sold cloth every Saturday. The rooms were arranged around an open courtyard. We know the Piece Hall cost £12000 to build but, amazingly, we do not know for sure who the architect was, though Thomas Bradley is considered the most likely candidate. The no-nonsense Yorkshire traders wanted a building that reflected the importance of their trade and in the Piece Hall they certainly got one. The design uses neo-classical features, derived originally from the Romans. On a bright summer's day it is possible to imagine you have been transported from Halifax to Italy as you look in awe at the colonnades and arches that make up this masterpiece. One can only wonder what the stone used to construct it would cost now!

As a child I lived three miles away from Halifax. I remember well the buildings and even the valley sides being black from the belching mill chimneys. The textile industry was in severe decline and the Piece Hall was at that time being used as a wholesale fish, fruit and veg market (see picture on next page). Some go ahead councillors planned to do with Halifax Piece Hall what had already been done with so many other grand buildings, that is bulldoze and replace with concrete in the name of progress. Fortunately, the majority of councillors saw sense and opted instead to use government grants to improve the Piece Hall as a retail and community space. After the spending of £350,000 the Piece Hall was reopened in 1976 and regular markets were soon held there. However, market shopping fell victim to the supermarkets and by the turn of the century the Piece Hall was again in trouble. By now, though, the historical value of the building was understood. It is the only surviving Georgian cloth trading hall in existence. This time £19 million pounds has been spend on repairs, refurbishment and conservation and the result is outstanding.



The Piece Hall as it was around 1970 and what it looks like today





Finally, welcome to everyone who has joined the society recently. Apart from attending talks provided by the society you might want to get involved in project meetings (please see our website for dates). Also, we are always in search of 'new blood' to be involved in helping BDHS through joining the committee. Minutes from our last meeting are provided below. Do have a word with me at our next meeting if you are interested.

### **Boroughbridge and District Historical Society Committee Meeting**

**Minutes** for Tuesday April 19<sup>th</sup> 2022

**Present:** Peter Fleming (chair), Jackie Akers, David Bellwood, Linda Dooks, David Barley, Peter Audsley, John Winn.  
There were no apologies

**Minutes** of the meeting held on February 15<sup>th</sup> were approved.

**Matters Arising:** the donation of pictures to the Anchor Inn together with pictures from other sources make a good display.

The speaker on The History of Alcohol had requested that the donation of £40 intended for an alcohol charity should be sent to Ukraine.

**Treasurer's Report:** There are 42 members, 39 of whom have paid, 2 not paid and 1 'away' member.

#### **Archivist's Report:**

A new member Frank Johnston-Banks is researching the Easingwold Railway Trail.

Graham Coverdale had enquired about the origins of houses on Roecliffe Lane.

Peter is to speak to Marton cum Grafton School children about Victorian life in the village.

Linda has replied to an enquiry about money raised for the battlefield anniversary and the battlefield trail. The society paid £44 for the hire of the Jubilee Room on the day and £25 for the wreath laid by the Earl of Hereford.

The chairman thanked Linda for all the hard work she had put in on behalf of the society which had contributed to a very successful day.

David Bellwood had had an enquiry about the parish records for Aldborough.

**Constitution:** working from a template provided by Historical Societies' Association the committee approved a new constitution to be put before members at the 2022 AGM.

**Project Group:** Application had been made to Harrogate Borough Council from the Platinum Jubilee Legacy Fund for a grant of £850 towards the cost of the 'Points of Historical Interest' map. Printing costs would be £847 for 10000 copies, £655 for 5000. This would be in addition to the cost of art work and design. £150 had been donated by Langthorpe Parish Council and £500 by tourist board.

**Website:** Jackie raised her concerns about the poor quality of compressed photographs on the website. David Bellwood will look into costs of Microsoft Office.

**Tea Rota:** The following rota was agreed: May-JW, June-PF, July-David Barley, September-PA, October-David Bellwood, November-LD, December-JA. Jackie would buy in a supply of tea bags.

**Trip:** Linda will enquire about support for a possible trip to Pontefract.

**AOB** This September will mark the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Boroughbridge High School. Linda has been contacted re some input from the society. On 29<sup>th</sup> April YO51 Residents can gain free entry to Aldborough Roman Town. Proof of residence required.

**Date of Next Meeting** Tuesday July 19<sup>th</sup> at 7:00