

# Kirkbymoorside History Group

## Chairman's Report 2023/2024

In the spring of 2023 two projects were carried out by the Kirkbymoorside Town Council in conjunction with the Kirkbymoorside History Group. The first was the completion of the restoration of the town pound in Manor Vale. Local metalwork artist Michael Bennett of MUST Forge produced three bespoke life-sized sculptures of the types of animals that would have been held in the pound when it was in use to hold stray animals. A wooden five-barred gate was installed and a weather-proof display board was added, with information and images provided by the History Group.

The Town Council also paid for and installed a bench at the top of Piercy End to commemorate the life of Robin Butler who was a founder member and chairman of the History Group. Robin had been a life-long resident of Kirkbymoorside for over 90 years and had contributed to the life of the community in many ways during that time.

In May the History Group developed its annual Heritage Day into a Heritage Month with an expanded programme of events spread over several days throughout the month. This was done in conjunction with Kirkbymoorside Library's focus on local history and the theme for this year's event was "Victorian and Edwardian Kirkbymoorside". The principle events were a two day exhibition, hosted in the upstairs room of the library, and an illustrated talk, repeated on two evenings at the library. A guided walk on "Victorian and Edwardian Kirkbymoorside" and another on "Kirkbymoorside's historic town centre" were also provided during the month. This format of providing a variety of events during May proved to be very popular and will form the basis of planning for the 2024 Heritage Month.

Heritage Month also saw the launch of two new local history books. "The big house on the hill", written by Jenny Asquith and Judy Barker, tells the story of the Kirkbymoorside Workhouse. "St. Gregory's Minster" was published by local historian and author David Brewer shortly before his death in 2023 and tells the story of the original lost village of Welburn which occupied the adjacent site.

Later in the year we launched "Reaching back into the dark", written by Louise Mudd. This is a second collection of ghostly tales and local stories to follow on from last year's very popular "Hiding in the dark".

Our final book launch was for "Knock Off. Make Up" which is the history of Kirkbymoorside Fire Brigade and written by Chris Boddy. Chris, who is in his 90s, is one of the original members of the History Group and served in the town's Fire Brigade for 17 years. At this same evening event at the Gavel and Bean café, he and local artist Mhairi Maxwell unveiled a painting of the 1871 fire that gutted the Toll Booth (now the Memorial Hall). The family of local resident Olga Hammond made a donation in her memory, requesting that it be used to commemorate a significant event in the town's history. Mhairi was commissioned to paint a picture of the fire incorporating details from contemporary photographs and newspaper reports.

We are very grateful to Michael and Lyn Clarke for making available a window in their gift shop in Howe End for a notice board to display information about the town's history and the group's coming events. We would also like to thank Dian and Nick at Moorside Store and Tracy and her volunteers at Children in Distress for their continued and much appreciated support in selling tickets to our events and our publications.