



# ROYSTON & DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY ANNUAL NEWS SHEET

## Preserving Royston's Heritage

### 2009 -2010

Welcome to all our members, to those who have been with us since the conception of the society and to those who have joined us in recent times.

Formed in 1965, the main purpose was to provide a Museum for Royston. It took many years to bring the present collection of artefacts together which can be seen on display at the museum's present site in Kneesworth Street that was opened in 1984.

The Curator and part time assistant are supported by volunteers, who provide a valuable service to the public by assisting with research and answering enquiries on the history of Royston.

The Local History Society is responsible for the selection and appointment of the Trustees who ensure that the Museum Collection is managed and developed appropriately. To this end, the Society recently acquired an important oil painting, "The Thunderstorm", by E. H Herbert Whydale, an artist who lived in Royston in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The purchase was supported by a generous grant from the Brian Racher Trust and the painting was then donated to the Museum Collection



The Thunderstorm

(By kind permission of the Royston Museum)

The Royston & District Museum & Art Gallery welcomes new volunteers and for the coming summer they are looking for Sunday Wardens. The work is paid and members who wish to support the heritage service can obtain further information by calling in to the museum or ringing the Museum Curator on 01763 242587.

The Society also looks after the Royston Cave on a day to day basis ensuring that the cave remains open to the public and that it is marketed as widely as possible.

As a Society we contribute financially to its upkeep and recently paid for the refurbishments of the steps and the replacement of the audio system.

The Society also makes up a large part of the Cave Trustees who ensure that the Cave is not only managed and developed appropriately but that the Cave is properly conserved for future generations.

Many of you will have read articles on the current state of the Cave in both the local newspapers and, more recently, in The Observer and on Anglia News, and some of you may be concerned about damage to the carvings.

However, a long term conservation plan is now being put in place with the help of English Heritage and this will hopefully slow down the deterioration in the Cave and help to better inform future conservation decisions.

If you are interested in helping to keep the Cave open and have the odd spare Saturday or Sunday afternoon, why not join our team of guides?

You won't need to learn the entire history of the Cave because an explanatory CD is played to visitors during their visit. All you need is a healthy interest. The work is paid and all you need to do is contact the town hall on 01763 245484 or email James Robinson on [james@robynson.plus.com](mailto:james@robynson.plus.com) for further details.



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The 2009 – 2010 season began on the 1<sup>st</sup> October with an illustrated presentation by Dr Twigs Way on “An Incitement to Early Marriage” - a social History of the Allotment.

November 5<sup>th</sup> - our talk by Bill Sargent was on “Plastering & Pargetting” and presented an insight into traditional house building craft. We also welcomed members from the Friends of the Royston & District Museum & Art Gallery who produced and sold Calendars and Christmas Cards to raise funds for the town’s museum

December 3rd - Alan Fleck gave a talk on “Modernizing History-Exploring Hitchin.”

Our Christmas raffle raised £60.00

A heavy snowfall and adverse weather conditions meant that our January lecture on the 7th had to be cancelled but the speaker has now been rebooked for our December 2010 lecture.

February 4<sup>th</sup> - the lecture was on the “Pioneer Years” – the founding and development of Letchworth Garden City up to 1920” presented by Victoria Rawlings.

March 4<sup>th</sup> - the presentation was on an illustrated talk by Mark Pardoe on the “Inns and Outs of Pub Names.”

April 1st - “Cambridge’s Victorian Buildings”, a pictorial and informative presentation by Tony Kirby, an ex Cambridge lecturer.

Our Easter raffle raised £39.00

This year our Annual General Meeting in May was followed by a drama presentation entitled “The Voyage of Charles Darwin” presented by Geoff Hales and ending with our usual buffet and drinks prepared by the committee members.

Every June the treasurer of the Local History Society, David Allard, organises an outing for our members which is always well attended. Last year our group visited Greenwich and the day out began with a trip from Westminster Pier to Greenwich. Our visit coincided with the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of King Henry VIII.

There were many attractions and activities on show in the grounds of the Royal Hospital and the group had a guided tour to the Chapel and the Hall. There was also an opportunity to visit the Maritime Museum and some of the antique shops in the area.



Tour Guide at Greenwich 2009

The Society outing this year is on 12<sup>th</sup> June to the medieval city of Warwick. Please contact David Allard, our Treasurer for more information. For those who have booked, we look forward to seeing you on the trip.

We hope you will enjoy a wonderful summer and look forward to seeing you again for our 2010 – 2011 season on 7<sup>th</sup> October 2010 when our first lecture on “The Gunpowder Plot” will be given by Richard Thomas.

The Royston & District History Society also produce various publications on local history ranging from architecture, folklore, biographies of famous Roystonians and other subjects of local interest. They are available for sale at the Royston Cave Bookshop, the Royston & District Museum & Art Gallery, and at all History Society lectures.

Useful websites:

Royston and District Museum and Art Gallery  
[www.roystonmuseum.co.uk](http://www.roystonmuseum.co.uk)

Royston Cave  
[www.roystoncave.co.uk](http://www.roystoncave.co.uk)

Royston & District Local History Society  
[www.roystonlocalhistory.org.uk](http://www.roystonlocalhistory.org.uk)

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