

The 'Spring Trip' 2014

At 0830 Monday 7th April ten members of the Friends of Pendle Heritage Centre met at the Holiday Inn, Burnley, the eleventh member did not turn up and when she was phoned she was found to have absent mindedly gone on holiday to Spain.

We should have been in Stamford for a guided tour at 2.00 pm but our minibus driver missed the turning off the M1 and we were late. The tour was postponed and a visit to Tickencote Church was abandoned. We went to a garden centre for lunch and an hour late we met a lady guide and were conducted around the beautiful Georgian town.

That evening the driver, with his faulty Sat-Nav and two members of our party with Google Maps, tried to navigate through the one way system of Peterborough. After going along a road for the third time the driver finally went down a 'No Entry Except Buses' street to the Bull Hotel, where we booked in.



On Tuesday after breakfast, we left the hotel in a fleet of taxis (well two) for the prehistoric archaeological site at Flag Fen,

A Neolithic track way once ran across a timber causeway from a dry land area known as Fengate, to a natural clay island called Northey, the causeway, and centre platform, were formed by driving thousands of posts through the peaty mud and into the firmer ground below. The resulting structure covered three and a half acres. Dendrochronological analysis, led to an estimated date for the various stages of construction of between 1365–967 BC.

Some of the timbers, such as oak, were not natural to the local environment, having been brought from some distance meaning, perhaps, that the people who constructed the causeway wanted to use materials that had some religious significance in their lives. A volunteer guide gave us a conducted tour of the site with its preservation centre and museum displaying articles and weapons found.

In the afternoon we visited Peterborough Cathedral. The building originally built in Anglo Saxon times and rebuilt in Norman style. Then, after completing the Western transept and adding the Great West Front Portico in 1237, the medieval masons switched over to the new Gothic style. Henry VIII's first wife, Catherine of Aragon (divorced), was buried there in 1536. Her grave can still be seen and is still honoured by visitors who decorate it with flowers and pomegranates (her symbol). It carries the legend "Katharine Queen of England", a title she was denied at the time of her death.

Some members visited the town Museum which had been a hospital. The operating theatre had been on the top floor, and had been reconstructed, complete with sound effects. Some visited John Lewis.



The following day we went by train to Ely where we walked to the Cathedral which dominates the town. It is known locally as "the ship of the Fens", because of its prominent shape that towers above the surrounding flat landscape. The first Christian building on the site was founded by St. Etheldreda, (daughter of the Anglo-Saxon King Anna of East Anglia), who was born in 630. The cathedral is built from stone quarried at Barnack in Northamptonshire (bought from Peterborough Abbey, whose lands included the quarries, for

8000 eels a year), with decorative elements carved from Purbeck Marble. The total length is 537 feet, and the nave at over 250 ft remains one of the longest in Britain. The unique Octagon 'Lantern Tower' is 74ft wide and is 170ft high. Completed in 1349, Ely Cathedral's Lady Chapel is the largest of its kind in the UK, 100ft long by 46ft wide. It was built in an exuberant 'decorated gothic style' and there is an extraordinary sense of light and the vastness of this magnificent space. Unfortunately many of the carved figures in the walls are either beheaded or defaced by iconoclasts.

After visiting the cathedral and stained glass museum we toured Oliver Cromwell's home, restored to provide a recreation of 17th century life, and then returned to Peterborough.



On Thursday morning we took the train again, this time to Lincoln and left our luggage at the hotel where we were going to spend the next two nights. At 1.30pm we had a guided tour of the town and cathedral by a Green Badge guide. The tour included a cream tea break as certain members consider that this obligatory at least once on a trip. Lincoln Cathedral was once the tallest building in the world, (the height of a fifty storey skyscraper), until the central spire, made of wood, blew down in 1548 and was not replaced. Yet, in spite of its size, it is filled with intricate detail including the famous Lincoln Imp.

Lincoln Cathedral owns one of only four surviving copies of Magna Carta, signed in 1215, which resides in Lincoln Castle.

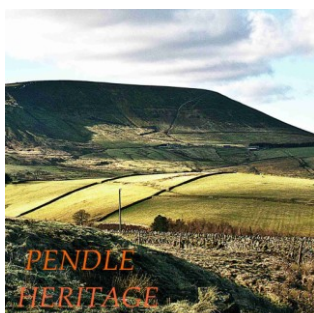
There is a replica Magna Carta you can view inside the Cathedral.

Friday was the next to last day and we were left to our own devices in Lincoln. Some of us had tea in Stokes Tea Rooms, a medieval building on Higher Bridge, some of us visited the Guildhall and the medieval Bishop's Palace. There was also a Roman Trail to be followed, which included the famous Newport arch, the only 'Roman' one to still permit road traffic and it is periodically damaged by vans and lorries which are too big to get through. (It was being rebuilt when we saw it). We all visited The Collection, an excellent archaeological museum.

On Saturday we left Lincoln in the minibus with the same driver who had returned to bring us home. We went back by a different route visiting Gainsborough Old Hall, which is among the biggest and best-preserved medieval manor houses in England. It is part timber-framed but mostly brick-built. It was built in the latter part of the 15th century with Elizabethan additions, and has an impressive kitchen with an enormous fireplace, and a noble great hall. Then at Barton on Humber we visited The Ropeworks, now divided into retail outlets but containing an interesting museum of ropemaking. After a look at the Humber Bridge we drove over it and arrived back in Burnley about 5.30pm.



Thanks are due to Roger for the logistics, and David and Georgina for the devising the itinerary.



Friends of Pendle Heritage

Pendle Heritage Centre
Park Hill, Colne Road
Barrowford, nr. Burnley,
Lancashire BB9 6JQ

Phone: 01282 677 150 **E-mail:** pendleheritage@gmail.com