



## Newsletter number 5

The Society was started 9 months ago and at the committee meeting this week we agreed to become a registered charity. This has several advantages including applying for Gift Aid on donations and membership subscriptions which would increase our income by up to 25%.

**Membership year.** We have also decided to move the date for renewal of subscriptions to the end of September so that those of you who have already paid your subscriptions will be covered until the end of September 2019.

### Future meetings:

The next meeting is on **Tuesday 17 July** as shown below. It has been postponed from 10 July in view of a World Cup match being held that night.

Christchurch, Great Yarmouth  
Tuesday 17th July 7.30pm

**A Life of Hotels**  
**A Talk by Rodney Scott**

Tickets on the door £3  
to non-members of the Great Yarmouth Civic Society

Admission free to Civic Society members.  
Annual subscription £10

From Hotel, Great Yarmouth



**Tuesday 11 September.** AGM and talk by Vanessa Trevelyan, Museum Consultant and Adviser who is also chair of the Norwich Society. She will speak about the Norwich City wall and the Norwich Society.

**Tuesday 2 October.** Aileen Mobbs will talk about the Maritime Festival.

**Tuesday 6 November.** Joe Mackintosh, SeaChange Artistic Director and CEO, will talk about Art and Culture in Great Yarmouth

**Saturday 22 September** from 11am to 2.30pm we are hosting a regional meeting of Civic Societies. The aim is to exchange views and to learn from each other. There will be a snack lunch and admission will be free followed by a short tour of some of our ancient buildings. As we are hosting the meeting it would be good to have a number of the Society's members there. Please let me know if you would like to attend at [hugh@sturzaker.plus.com](mailto:hugh@sturzaker.plus.com)

We are also arranging a trip on the Broads and hope to make a visit to Filby to see their magnificent floral arrangements.

**Roundabouts.** Fullers Hill roundabout has been planted with wild flowers. Two others have been covered with granite clippings but grass and weeds are growing through. I have been in touch with the Borough Council about spraying the weeds - this has now been done - and attention to the roundabout just south of the James Paget University Hospital. This is still in the hands of Highways, England. I have also brought up the problem of weeds throughout the town. Work has started on spraying the weeds.

**Greening up.** Cliff Park Ormiston Academy is making six planters which will be placed around St. George's Plaza. Yarmouth in Bloom has given us £100 to buy plants, the Society is providing the compost and we hope to have the plants in place this week.

**Litter Picking.** A group of up to nine of us meet to clear the areas around the town walls and the nearby roads the day prior to the guided walk of the walls. This Friday we covered the areas being visited by passengers from the cruise liner and in next week will clear the route that the judges will walk for Anglia in Bloom. Some of us will also be participating in a series of joint litter picking in July. Anyone is welcome and details are below.

**Heritage Trail.** Youngsters from Cliff Park Ormiston Academy have produced some wonderful models of our ancient buildings and they can be seen in St. George's Theatre Pavilion, The Minster, The Library etc.

**Awards.** We are finalising our plans for awards and intend to start with three categories initially. Paul Patterson has designed this award to be displayed in shop windows which have interesting displays but also have clean windows and exterior and have maintained the area in front of their premises to a high standard.





**Membership.** We now have 130 members but please encourage your friends to join as this will help to spread the cost of our activities. Non members may come to meetings for £3 and hopefully this may encourage them to join in which case their £3 will be refunded.

Hugh Sturzaker

### **CIVIC SOCIETY TRIP TO KINGS LYNN**

On a cold and windy Wednesday morning on 23 May, 14 members of the Civic Society visited King's Lynn where we were welcomed by Dr Paul Richards of the King's Lynn Society, a former Mayor and historian of the town. We met at the Rathkeller, a restaurant on the quay; rath meaning town in German rather than the rodent but indicating the town's long association with Hanseatic League trading area.

#### **Early History.**

Great Yarmouth and King's Lynn are very similar towns both being Norfolk's most significant ports but some sixty miles apart and both being connected to a large inland river system. Yarmouth by the Bure, Waveney and Yare to much of North Suffolk, Norfolk and the important city of Norwich. Whereas, King's Lynn has navigation via the Ouse and the Cam to Cambridge and as far inland as Bedford.

#### **Church History.**

Both towns have similar ecclesiastic histories with fine churches; St Margaret's in Lynn and St Nicholas in Yarmouth both founded by Herbert De Losinga to atone for his sin of Simony, that is denying how much wealth he had amassed. King's Lynn has three medieval churches whereas Yarmouth has only one but it is said to be the largest parish church in England and is larger than some cathedrals. King's Lynn was known as Bishop's Lynn until Henry VIII acquired it in 1536.

#### **Port and Political History.**

Both towns seem to have their origins around the year 1000 a.d. and produced enough income to be able to be granted (or bought) charters from King John: Lynn in 1204 and Yarmouth in 1208.

This allowed the towns some measure of self-government and allowed the towns to thrive as fishing and trading ports.

### **The Hanseatic League**

King's Lynn and Yarmouth both had dealings with the Hanseatic League. Formed in the 12th century this was a sea trading empire of around ninety cities based in north Germany before that country was a single entity. It lasted until the 1600s. Although it was only a loose federation of merchants it could organise navies and armies to protect its vast interests and was able to provide dependable maritime trade when Europe was rarely at peace. Its writ ran from the North Sea and Baltic eventually expanding its links to the great Russian river systems and to the Bay of Biscay.

### **Famous People**

King's Lynn had two nationally significant people born there. Margery Kemp (1373 – 1440), dictated her memoirs at the end of her life and is considered to be the first autobiography written in English. She was the daughter of a Mayor of the town and at the birth of the first of fourteen children she had a spiritual crisis. This was redeemed by a 'visit' by Christ. She went on many pilgrimages as far as Jerusalem but not popular with fellow pilgrims as she cried hysterically and scratched herself constantly. She also preached which was not permitted for women by St. Paul and the medieval church. She was in danger of being burned as a heretic or a witch but she avoided this. As with many saintly people, she was more venerated after her death than in her lifetime.

Captain George Vancouver (1758 -1798) was born in King's Lynn but of Dutch descent. He joined Captain Cook's second voyage of discovery as an ordinary seaman but rose to command ships surveying the Pacific, particularly the coast of western Canada where a city bears his name.

### **Fine Buildings in King's Lynn.**

It has two Market Places whereas as Yarmouth had what was reputed to be the largest open market in England but is now partly under cover. Yarmouth has the best surviving medieval town wall in the country yet has no surviving gates but King's Lynn's arched South Gate still stands. The Greyfriar's Tower, two Guildhalls, the Red Mount Chapel, Thoresby College, the Duke's Head Hotel and the Custom House are notable buildings in King's Lynn.

### **The English Civil Wars.**

Great Yarmouth almost entirely supported Parliament during the struggle with Charles I but King's Lynn had royalist sympathies and was besieged and bombarded by Parliamentary forces for three weeks before it surrendering to the Earl of Manchester.

### **The Fishing Industries.**

Both towns had extensive fishing industries but had Yarmouth was the prime herring port whereas King's Lynn concentrated on 'The Whale Fishery' and shellfish.

### **Discussion during lunch**

During lunch at the Rathkeller with Dr Richards and some King's Lynn guides several points were raised.

- There was a programme of accommodating London 'overspill' moving population and work from the capital.
- The King's Lynn Festival has been running for many years receiving the backing of Lady Fermoy and others.
- Royalty visit King's Lynn when staying at Sandringham House.
- North Lynn over the River Ouse is not a major part of the town unlike Gorleston is to Yarmouth.
- King's Lynn was the first British town to become a member of the rejuvenated Hanseatic League and, as such has important cultural links with the wealthy port cities of northern Germany involving visits by replica medieval ships.
- The German businessman Herr Palme opened the largest paper mill in Britain in North Lynn but this is largely mechanised and employs relatively few people. The decision to build the plant in Lynn was thought to be partly due to the association with the Hanseatic League.
- Several retired academics from Cambridge University have moved to King's Lynn as housing is less expensive there and it is possible to reach Cambridge by train in about half an hour.

In summary, Yarmouth and King's Lynn are very similar but Lynn is nearer to London, Cambridge and the main transport hubs whereas Yarmouth is more remote from centres of wealth and power.

Andrew Fakes June 2018.