

The Newsletter

NEWS AND VIEWS FROM THE HORNCASTLE HISTORY & HERITAGE SOCIETY

Autumn/Winter 2025

Free to members

Our next exhibition:

William Marwood, executioner

**What's in a
name?**

**Heritage
improvements
for our town
centre**

**The
railway that
Horncastle
built**



Major £0.5m boost for Horncastle's heritage

Dear Members

We were delighted to hear a few months ago that Horncastle has been allocated nearly £500,000 for heritage projects, through the Government's UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

About half of the money is for heritage and regeneration schemes to help improve Horncastle's town centre. The funding has been awarded to Heritage Lincolnshire, a charitable trust which works to conserve the county's heritage for the benefit of all. We have been working with other local organisations, including Horncastle Town Council, East Lindsey District Council and the Sir Joseph Banks Society to suggest how the money could best be used.

Some of the projects which we have suggested include:

- Conservation of one or more “ghost signs” in the town centre (similar to the work we carried out on the old Batemans sign in East Street)
- Restoration of some of the old blue enamel street signs around the town
- Repair of one or more shopfront canopies around the market place or further afield
- Improving green utility boxes by using vinyl wraps with a heritage theme
- Clearing of high level guttering to minimise water damage to buildings
- “Public realm” improvements such as additional seating, signage and so on in the market place and beyond

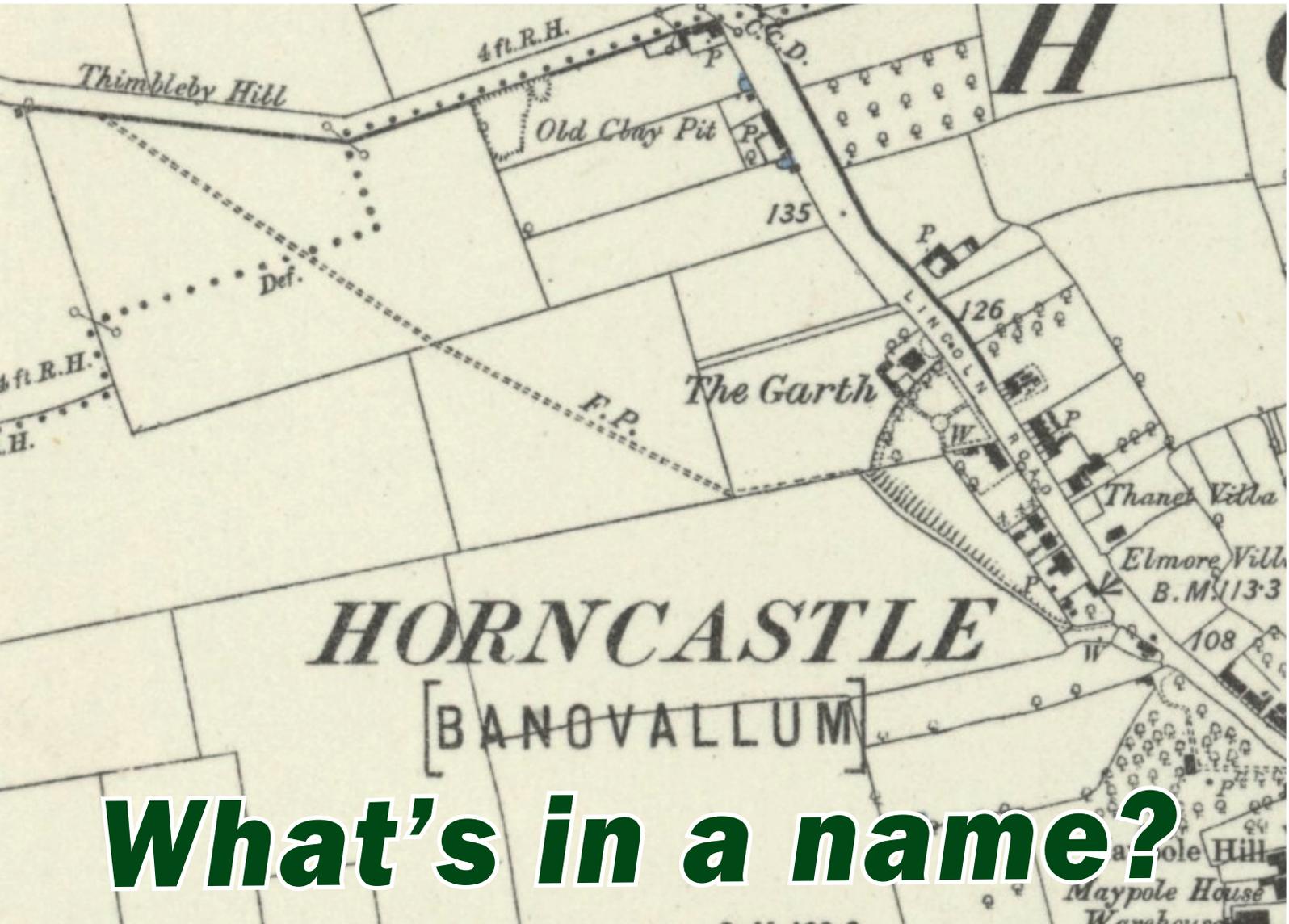
A team from Heritage Lincolnshire visited Horncastle a few weeks ago, when they were shown around by us, Paul Scott from the Joseph Banks Centre and some of our Town and District councillors and officers. They are now evaluating these options, and others that have been submitted, and seeking advice from specialists in particular areas.

There's other good news too: the rest of the £0.5m will go towards the campaign to buy the freehold of the Joseph Banks Centre, which will enable the Joseph Banks Society to secure this precious asset for the future. The Centre is home to our Archives and offices, of course, so we are equally pleased at this development as well.

We'll keep you updated on this major funding news for Horncastle.

I hope you enjoy this Newsletter. This edition has come out a bit later than I'd hoped and I think we may not always manage four issues a year, but we'll do what we can to offer you a good quality Newsletter. If you'd like to write an article, contribute a photo, send us a letter, or you just have a question for us, do please drop us a line. Hope to hear from you soon!

Adam Cartwright



What's in a name?

Quite a lot, when you value our history and heritage, as NICK FOX explains

As part of our remit to protect and preserve our local history and heritage, we have had a lengthy dialogue with East Lindsey District Council concerning the re-naming of Thimbleby Hill to Thimbleby Road. Many of your readers will, I am sure, have always referred to this road as Thimbleby Hill. It was certainly pleasing to see that the advertisement for the recent firework display stated that it was located on Thimbleby Hill.

Despite providing a multitude of sources to ELDC referencing this road as Thimbleby Hill, we acknowledged that any change back to its original name would prove to be prohibitively expensive and logistical-ly challenging. Working collaboratively with Horncastle Town Council

we have agreed a compromise, in principle, with ELDC, who have supported the installation of additional signage to mark the former name of this road.

This is important, because in time, the name Thimbleby Hill may disappear from living memory, like so many other street and road names. The preservation of these names will help slow the gradual erosion of our history and heritage and keep the name relevant for generations to come.

We are now discussing the funding of the additional signage, with support from Horncastle Town Council, and will let you know more as this story develops.

ABOVE: The name “Thimbleby Hill” appears at the top left of this extract from the 1888 Ordnance Survey 25-inch map



NEWS

JOSEPH BANKS CENTRE SCOOPS TOP AWARD

Huge congratulations to our colleagues at the Joseph Banks Society, who received the Judge’s Choice Award at the Midlands Museum Awards which took place this November. Not only that, but they were highly commended in the Green Spark Award.

The judges were impressed by how the museum overcomes its relatively small size, using outdoor space as well to engage with visitors. They also liked how the museum works with partners to achieve its objectives. We’re delighted to hear this news; you can read more at <https://md-midlands.org.uk/power-of-place/power-of-place-midlands-museum-awards>.



OUR NEXT BOOK

The Railway that Horncastle built

It doesn't seem all that long since we published our last book - the best-selling *Horncastle at War*, by Len Blades - but here we are again, about to launch our next one!

The Railway that Horncastle built, by Society member Chris Batres, tells the story of our town's branch railway. Opened 170 years ago this year, the passenger service lasted not quite a hundred years, ending in 1954, but goods traffic lingered on for another 17 years. If only we still had a train service today!

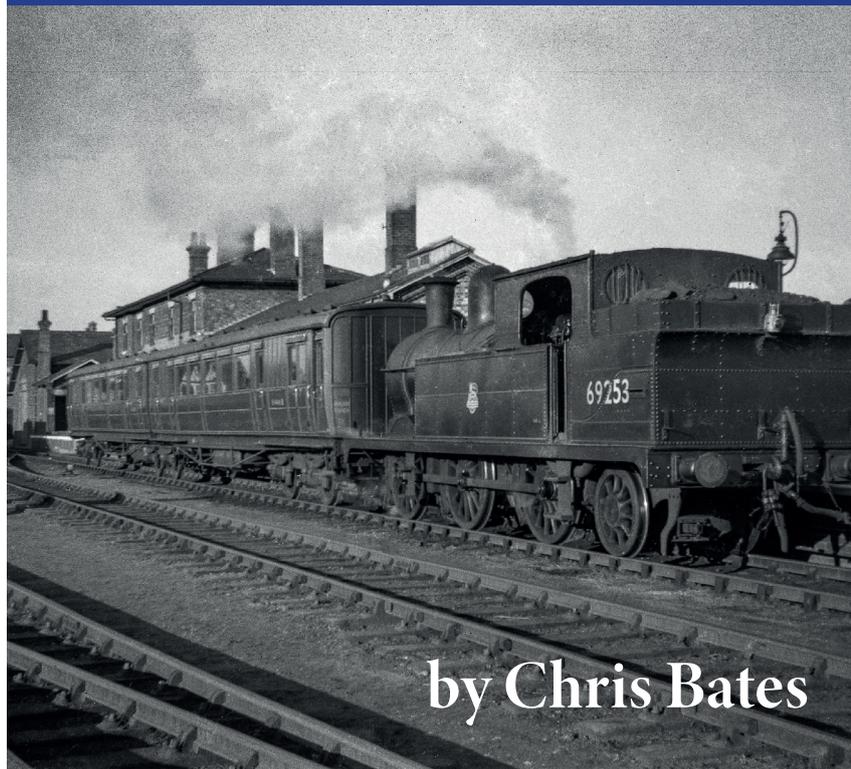
The railway was funded, opened and run by local people, and for many years it was very profitable. The Horncastle Railway Company remained independent until 1923, unlike many other local branch lines, so it really was a railway that meant a lot to local people.

We ran an exhibition about the Horncastle Railway a few years ago, during Covid times. As you may remember, we also had an online version because lockdown conditions made physical exhibitions difficult to stage.

So many people came forward as a result of our award-winning exhibition with stories and more information about the railway that Chris Bates decided to record all the new discoveries for posterity in a book - and this is the result. Chris's fascinating text is accompanied by a wealth of colour and black-and-white images of the line at work and since closure.

We hope to launch the book at our January talk, which will be about the Horncastle branch line. The price will be £10, and we'll also be making the title available online, both through our website and - hopefully - Amazon. We will also be aiming to have it on sale at all good bookshops - keep an eye on our Facebook page for more information.

The Railway that Horncastle Built



by Chris Bates

Horncastle History & Heritage Society



Autumn at South Ormsby

October was a great month for walks! First we had Nick Fox's Lincolnshire Rising walk around Horncastle on the 4th. That was followed by the Battlefields Tour around the civil war sites in the Winceby area on the 12th, both of which were very well attended.

Our third and last event that month was a heritage walk around the South Ormsby Estate on the 22nd. The walk, which was specially devised for us, formed a circular tour, starting in the small village, then taking in St Leonard's church and then stopping off for tea and cake beside the highly impressive vineyard, on a south facing hillside overlooking our glorious countryside.

The estate covers over 3,000 acres across four villages. The owner has ambitious and sustainable plans to secure the estate's future, including the sale of beef, flour and wine, all from its own farmland. He is also keen to see the church (owned by the C of E) restored to its former glory; the tower suffered damage recently and is in need of repair. Work is already proceeding on the historic South Ormsby Hall.

ARCHIVE REPORT

Our Treasurer and archivist MARY SILVERTON provides a full update

Our volunteers have been working really hard lately, taxing their brains in re-compiling many of our full files, and also tackling the very routine tasks that are essential in keeping our archive up to date and accessible. This work is ongoing as the quantity of archive material grows and as it outgrows its initial format. Space is at a premium as most of our cabinets are now full and there is little room for more.

Members and the general public will once again get the opportunity to view many of these files, together with pictures and artefacts which are part of our collection, at the next Open Day. So please put January 24th in your diaries now.

The day will also be a celebration of the 60th anniversary of the Civic Society (now HH&HS). Pearl Wheatley, one of our founders and a great continuing supporter of the work the Society does, and also remembered by many as the Deputy Head of QEGS, will be opening the day with some special memories of the beginnings of the Society.

We will need plenty of members to help on that day as the precious files need to be protected and the public's queries pointed in the right direction. It is a very popular event and all help would be appreciated.

We can report that a student from Lincoln University will be coming for work experience in the archives on Tuesdays in the New Year. Young people can bring some new ideas which are always welcome.

Our extensive library is available to members free of charge. And, if you have Horncastle related material that needs a permanent home, please email me at horncastlecivic@gmail.com.

WILLIAM MARWOOD, Executioner

We have ambitious plans for our next exhibition, which will be about the Victorian executioner William Marwood, who was born locally and lived in Horncastle for most of his life. Marwood's day job was shoe making and cobbling, but his invention of the "long drop" method of execution, which offered a more humane way of carrying out death sentences, meant that he was in frequent demand by the justice system. He executed over 170 convicted prisoners across Great Britain and Ireland between 1872 and his death in 1885.

Marwood was perhaps the first well-known state hangman and his methods were continued and improved after his death. The last execution by hanging in the UK took place in 1964, and capital punishment was abolished for most of the country five years later.

Do you have, or know of, any Marwood memorabilia? We know that some of his possessions were on show in some local pubs in the 20th century, but they now seem to have been lost. If you know differently, we'd very much like to hear from you.

**Our website now has an online shop as well!
Why not take a look at horncastlehistory.co.uk/shop**

Contact Details:- Email - horncastlecivic@gmail.com

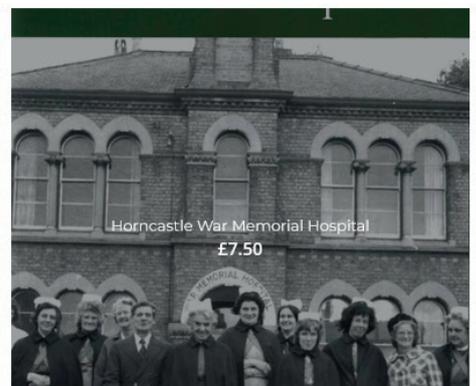
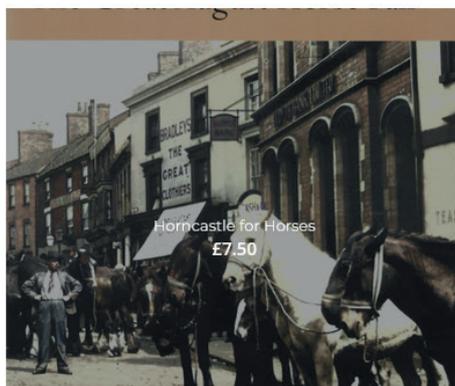
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FORTHCOMING EVENTS



Dec 7 Horncastle Christmas Market *and Society Tombola*

Town Centre, 10am

Dec 10 Christmas Party Masonic Hall, Horncastle, 7.30pm

Jan 21 Talk: The Railway that Horncastle Built Community Centre,
7.30pm

Jan 24 Archives Open Day Community Centre 10am - 4pm

Feb 18 Talk: Ran-tanning and Riding the Stang Community Centre,
7.30pm

March 18 Talk: Torrington's Tour of Lincolnshire, 1791 Community
Centre, 7.30pm

April 15 Talk: W K Morton, Media Baron of Horncastle Community
Centre, 7.30pm

OUR CONTACT DETAILS

Need to ask us something? Is there something you'd like to tell us about? Have you some feedback for us?

The best way of getting in contact is via our email address
horncastlecivic@gmail.com

Or visit us at our Archive Room at the Joseph Banks Centre,
7-13 Bridge Street, Horncastle LN9 5HZ (side entrance)

We are open Tuesdays and Wednesdays between 10 and 12

Editorial Team: Adam Cartwright, Gillian Mauger

CHOCOLATE TOMBOLA

We're running our tombola again at the
Horncastle Christmas Market
on Sunday, December 7th.

Volunteers and chocolate urgently needed!

If you can help with donations of
chocolate, of any size or type, please drop
them in to the Joseph Banks Centre
by 5th December.

**And if you can help with the stall,
please let us know. Thanks!**

