

## **Down Memory Lane- and Steep Hill**

**Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> February**

Today, Chris Hewis took us through the centuries in photographic form, with a selection from the 7,000 images stored in the archives of the Saxilby History Group, of which he is president. Entitled "A Pictorial Tour of Bygone Lincoln," he reminded us of the rich historical heritage Lincoln possesses.

We began our tour at Newport Arch, the only complete Roman arch still standing, despite the best efforts of a large lorry in 1964! Our present BBC Radio Lincs building was once the Radion Cinema, requisitioned in 1939 as part of the war effort, closed in 1960. The word Bailgate comes from the word Bail, which means it was originally under the jurisdiction of the Castle rather than the Council, and you can still see the Grade 2 listed posts which mark this boundary. The Lion and Snake is a 15<sup>th</sup> century building and the oldest pub in Lincoln. If you notice circles of cobbles on the road in the Bail, these mark the presence of Roman pillars underneath, and at the back of the Lincoln Hotel you can still see the back of the Roman Forum. The Burton Hunt used to meet in the Bail, and Chris had fabulous shots of the hunt in all its finery, hounds at the horses' heels.

Moving down Steep Hill, Brown's Pie Shop used to be called the Bessie Bedlam Pub, as the landlord made a killing in the Derby on a horse of that name. The Jew's House Restaurant is the oldest inhabited house in England. Originating around 1170, it was originally the home of the Lincoln rabbi until anti-semitic fever spread in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, culminating in the expulsion of the entire Jewish community by Edward 1 in 1290.

Now, down in the High Street, have you noticed the numbers do not alternate but are sequential, so that number 1 is opposite number 590? Every year, Clasketgate hosted Lincoln's Lifeboat Day. A lifeboat was drawn from Skegness by a team of 10 horses and launched in the Brayford, then hauled all the way back. Poor horses! The front of the new Central Market is the original façade from 1725. We also saw photos of royal processions marking the accession of Edward 7<sup>th</sup> and the coronation of George V. Chris lamented the loss of some beautiful buildings in the 1960s and 70s, and the photographs seemed to bear this out, such as the original St Swithin's Church.

We ended our tour at the Brayford, where goods from Boston had to be unloaded then loaded once more, because of Stamp End Lock. The High Bridge stands on Roman foundations and the Stokes Café frontage was totally refurbished in 1559, only the original timbers remaining. The Freemasons

Theatre was the only building in Lincoln to receive a direct hit in the Second World War, May 1943. It hosted, in its heyday, Gracie Fields and George Formby. We also saw trams being drawn through Lincoln, first by horses, then electrified, though this was refined when sparks caused the fumes from the sewers to ignite and blow manhole covers off!

This is only a “snapshot”, literally, of the information Chris gave us. He reminded us of the incredibly rich historical legacy Lincoln has, exemplified in its architecture. It was a very informative and stimulating talk, and I will certainly try to be much more observant next time I’m in town! Thank you, Chris.

Barbara Pearce