



Winning

We mustn't crow, but in the last few months several of the changes we have campaigned for in the town have come about. Barclays Bank has reduced the size of its illuminated sign (slightly); Premier Store has decreased the garishness of its shop front; the smoking shelter behind the King's Head has been modified and several members of the Holt Society committee have helped to smarten up the Post Office frontage.

What might be less obvious is the work of the Holt Society committee in objecting to planning applications when these objections are upheld. Because we believe that a commercially successful town centre will, with appropriate care, be an attractive one which benefits all, we try whenever we can to support businesses in Holt. Increasingly we have been able to work with Holt Town Council and the North Norfolk District Council planners to achieve this. At our request, the new Head of Planning at NNDC, Nicola Baker, met representatives of the Holt Society who were impressed by her energy and commitment to conservation issues. We look forward to a new proactive working relationship.

Tony Leech

How do you like it? - an important message

A paper copy of this Newsletter has been delivered to all our members. In addition, an electronic copy has been emailed to those members who have already provided us with their email address so we can test whether these have been successfully received.

This is important because the Society wishes to move over to communicating with members electronically whenever possible in order to save on increasing postage, printing, and stationery costs and thus release funds to support our main aims and objectives. However we only want to do this with the consent of our individual members.

Therefore:

1. If you have already provided us with your email address but haven't received an electronic copy of this Newsletter, could you please email our Membership Secretary, Norman Cooker, at normancooker@gmail.com to let him know. However if you've now decided that you would prefer not to receive future communications from the Society electronically, please email Norman to let him know this.
2. If you haven't already provided us with your email address but would be happy to receive future communications from the Society electronically rather than by post, please email Norman as soon as possible to say so and include the message 'I am happy to be contacted by email in future.'

Thank you for your help.

□ DIARY DATES 2014 □

Wednesday 12th March

GEORGIAN LECTURE

Children and Schooling in 18th-Century Norfolk

by Margaret Bird

Small endowed schools in villages prepared boys for entry to the grammar schools in market towns like Holt, King's Lynn, and Fakenham. Find out what parents wanted formal education to provide for their sons and daughters.

**7.30pm Gresham's School
Big School**

£3 at the door. Open to all.

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**Friday 4th April
ANNUAL GENERAL
MEETING**

6.30pm Holt Community Centre

**Speaker: John Roebuck
History of Holt Volume 2**

See separate sheet for full details

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**Thursday 22nd May
Visit to Norwich**

**Coach departs Holt 9.00am;
returns ca. 4.00pm**

Cost £16 per person including transport, guide, donation and refreshments on arrival at the Assembly House. Please provide your own lunch.

To book, or for further details, contact Norman Cooker on 01263 712113.

GARGOYLE ALERT

We associate gargoyles with churches and other ancient buildings: dragons, lions, chimeras, grotesque demons and human forms which carry a rainwater pipe discharging from the mouth. The name gargoyle is derived from the Latin *gargula* (French *gargouille*) meaning throat, or gullet. Their main purpose was to throw rainwater away from the building to prevent loosening of the mortar but they were supposed, too, to drive away evil spirits.

Just before Christmas, Janet Hall, and her partner Robert, contacted us when their painstaking efforts revealed three gargoyles, previously hidden from view under thick black paint, set into the gable wall of Owl Cottage, Obelisk Plain. Strictly speaking, gargoyles without spouts are called 'grotesques', but why were they set into the wall of a cottage dated 1803?

The town blacksmith built the cottage and Janet wondered whether the man's sense of humour caused him to put up images of himself and his wife. But what of the smallest figure with its fledgling horns? A particularly naughty offspring?

It may be, of course, that the figures are much older and originally decorated a church or barn. Have a look at them and let us know if you have any ideas. There is at least one more grotesque in the town. Find it just off the High Street, near The Feathers. Does it look younger?

Steve Benson



Photos: Steve Benson (top); Susan Williams (close-ups).

Identity, signage and the visual environment

Many people don't realise that companies - whether banks, chain stores or restaurants - often adapt their signage to local context, especially in the case of a listed building and historic environment. When the local council's planning department is vigilant and the conservation society is proactive, a positive result can be achieved of benefit to both the visual environment and the commercial vibrancy of the town.

Many of you will have read in the Holt Chronicle recently that Barclays Bank reduced the size of their signage in response to the Holt Society's objections, which had not been passed on to the bank. At the time it seemed a long-shot because the damage was already done, and the building itself is not a fine one. Barclays has a good track record elsewhere in the UK for adapting its signage to the scale, design and context of buildings. You can read the full background story on our website (see Campaigns: A significant win!) and view the photos of more sensitive treatments of corporate logos (symbols) and lettering in other Georgian market towns.

We have started a photographic archive to record these adaptations and hopefully to increase public awareness that Holt need not accept a 'one-size-fits-all' approach. If you have any good examples do send them to us via the website.

Mary Alexander

Illustrated History of Holt Volume Two

A second volume of the Illustrated History of Holt was always planned but after the death of Keith Entwistle, the author of the first volume, those plans were put on hold. A further delay resulted from uncertainty over how to fund a further volume. Finally, in 2013, the Holt Society was able to take on the project and a writer was found amongst its membership who was prepared to take up the challenge. Since then the project has moved forward steadily and is now well on the way towards the goal of publication in 2015. Volume Two picks up where Keith ended his volume in the early 1930s and takes Holt through to the 1960s. Because the period of the Second World War has yielded up a great deal of material the subtitle for the book could be Wartime and Post-war Holt.

I have been enormously encouraged by the responses to appeals for help that have gone into the Holt Chronicle. One personal contact has led to others and the result is a growing mass of fascinating memories and pictures. I am working closely with Tony Leech who is storing the illustrations and helping with the layout of Volume Two.

John Roebuck

Spot the difference

The end of a year is often a time of reflection; much has changed in the centre of Holt during the last twelve months. The Meeting Room at St. Andrew's and the development of Hoppers Yard are two eye-catching and exciting additions, but smaller less obvious alterations may well have passed you by. For example, have you noticed the beautifully restored sash windows at 50 High Street, or the reduced signage at Adnams and Barclays? Such changes make an impact out of proportion to their size and provide a reminder that attention to detail plays a huge part in maintaining the architectural integrity of the town and creating an attractive and unique place that so many people choose to visit.

Wendy Roebuck