Ilkley U3A Northern Towns Group visit to Thirsk

Thursday 19th April 2018
38 members split into two groups for a walking tour of this charming town.

Our guides on a glorious sunny day were Ted Naisbitt and David Tucker in association with the Thirsk Tourist Office.
Yes, even the drain covers were of interest.

The firm of A.C. Bamlett established in Thirsk to manufacture mowers and reapers in 1857. Adam Bamlett 1835-1912 was a farmer, turned inventor.

He applied himself to the design of mowers and reapers after seeing the trial of reapers at the Yorkshire Agricultural Show in 1858. He thought the implements shown there were unsatisfactory and decided to improve upon them. His first machine, a swath-delivery reaper, was shown at the Royal Agricultural Society’s Show at Warwick in 1859. The firm also made drain covers!
Hannah Packer was born in Thirsk in 1841. After the sudden death of her husband, she moved to Liverpool becoming a nurse and in 1879 Matron. She became Matron of York County Hospital where she met Dr Davidson.

They went to work in some of the poorest regions of Uruguay. There was then a Civil War and Hannah and Dr Davidson set up an emergency hospital, which received a commendation from the International Red Cross.

Hannah Packer brought professional nursing to Uruguay. She is revered in Minas de Corales and the local hospital has been renamed in her honour.
John Gilbert Baker lost his books and botanical collection in a house fire. The disaster prompted him to seek a post at Kew where he achieved an eminent position and high honours in his field of study. The plaque was unveiled in 2005 by Professor Simon Owens who, like his renowned predecessor, is keeper of the Herbarium at Kew.
Our guide explains this was the site of a 12th century castle in Thirsk, built by Robert de Mowbray but the castle was destroyed by Henry 11 in 1176.
Thomas Lord was a cricketer and shrewd businessman. His home is now Thirsk Museum. He had come to London in order to remake the family fortune, which had been lost in Jacobite Rebellion, and was employed at the White Conduit Club in Islington as a practice bowler and groundsman. In 1787, a group of noblemen at the club approached Lord, seeking a more private location to play their cricket. A year later, the newly-formed Club laid down a Code of Laws which were adopted throughout the game. MCC today remains the custodian and arbiter of Laws relating to cricket around the world.
This was once a single dwelling, timber framed, thatched and with an earth floor.

**Thomas Lord**

was born in this house

Born on 23rd November 1755, young Thomas moved to Diss in Norfolk and then went to London where, in 1797, he established a Cricket Ground in Dorset Square, Marylebone. This became the home of the M.C.C. and was usually known simply as “Lord’s”.

In 1811, Lord removed the turf, initially to Regent’s Park and then to St John’s Wood where Lord’s Cricket Ground is situated today.
Lunch was taken at “The Three Tuns”, part of the Wetherspoon chain.

Around 1740, the Dower House, in the Market Place, was adapted for use as a coaching inn. At that time, it was Thirsk’s only coaching inn and had the monopoly for many years. The London, Edinburgh, Newcastle, Leeds and Darlington coaches all used the Three Tuns Hotel for bed and breakfast. The original mangers, stalls and hay lofts for the horses may still be seen at the yard, behind the pub.
Thirsk Hall

Owned from the 15th century by the Earls of Derby, the Manor of Thirsk was sold in 1723 to a local landowner, Ralph Bell.
The parish church of St Mary's is a wonderful medieval building, full of historic interest.

The church is almost entirely a product of the 15th century, but sections of the tower may be as old as the 12th century.

The east window of the south aisle has large fragments of medieval stained glass gathered from other windows in the church.
In November 2016, the church was covered with handmade poppies as part of the Remembrance Day celebrations in Thirsk. Local people created a more than 40,000 knitted or crocheted poppies to decorate the town, with the main display consisting of a "river" of poppies flowing from the top of St Mary's Church, down the side and then across the wall of the church's cemetery.
These grooves were apparently made by local men sharpening their weapons before marching into battle in the Civil War.
This display in the church commemorates the link between Thirsk and the Magna Carta.

On 5th March 2015 the Mayor of Thirsk, Mrs Janet Watson received this copy of the Charter from the Lord Lieutenant of North Yorkshire.

Attending the presentation to Thirsk was Lord Mowbray, the titular successor to William de Mowbray, one of the 25 barons who negotiated with King John at Runnymede.
James Alfred "Alf" Wight was born in Sunderland in 1916, and raised in Glasgow. He came to Thirsk in 1940, where he worked out of a veterinary surgery at 23 Kirkgate. Alf Wight died in 1995.
In 1970 Wight published the first of his 8 full length books of the life and misadventures of a fictional vet named James Herriot. They proved enormously popular with a worldwide audience.

Despite his success as an author, Wight continued practicing as a veterinarian. His former surgery is now The World of James Herriot, an award-winning museum dedicated to Wight's life and writings.
A 4000 piece archive showcasing veterinary instruments from the past to the modern day. It is the largest collection in the world.

Castration and Ovariectomy

19/20 Century
Metal Clamps, hot irons, wooden clamps, Emasculators, Ecraseurs and Burdizzo's.

Only the best bulls and stallions are kept for breeding, the remainder are castrated as it makes them quieter. Once spayed or neutered, mares would be better carriage animals and heifers and gilts would gain weight appropriately. Nowadays administered with anaesthetic.

Each of these items had the ability to clamp, crush, or incise the spermatic cord. Ovaries were cut out or an ecraseur was used, grasping the ovary with the chain.
The Royal Army Veterinary Corps

Until the 19th century the army depended on the availability of horses for all forms of transport, not only as mounts for the cavalry but also for hauling all types of supply wagons. In the 1790s there was public outrage at the warsport of these valuable animals – the army was being more horses from foxes or rats and them alive from enemy nations.

In 1956 the army decided that a veterinary surgeon should be attached to each regiment of cavalry. But the London Veterinary College had only recently been established and few men had qualified. The college reduced the course of training from three years to three months, which enabled people to qualify to exist in the army as Veterinary Officers. The first to do so was a captain named John Stagg in 1856.

Veterinary Officers were appointed to the rank of captain for the rank of the regiment, and in addition they would be based at Point Venture and Veterinary Hospital behind the lines. Wounded horses, even with broken legs, would be brought forward for examination. During the First World War there were more than 5000 horses wounded in the Battle of Tannenberg. During the Second World War there were more than 35000 horses wounded in the Battle of the Somme.

The only horses saved by the Corps today are those used for ceremonial occasions. But the operations of the RAVC remain the same as they were in 1914, to provide good veterinary treatment to war horses, in general and especially stable mares and whippets. Since the Second World War, the RAVC have been responsible for the care of the horses of other nations, including the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and the British Army in Afghanistan.

RAVC has been involved in the training of veterinary surgeons from all over the world, including those from India, Pakistan, and South Africa. They have also provided veterinary services to the United Nations Peacekeeping Forces, and have worked with the World Health Organization on the control of diseases such as anthrax and foot-and-mouth disease in Africa.

The RAVC has also played a major role in the development of veterinary medicine, particularly in the area of infectious diseases. They have developed new treatments and vaccines for diseases such as Newcastle disease, equine influenza, and Rift Valley fever. They have also developed new diagnostic techniques, such as polymerase chain reaction (PCR) and ELISA, to help detect and control these diseases.

The RAVC has also been involved in research into the effects of pollution on animal health, and has developed new techniques for detecting and monitoring these effects. They have also worked with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations to develop new methods for improving the health and productivity of farm animals.

In recent years, the RAVC has been involved in the development of new technologies for the care and welfare of animals, such as automated feeding and watering systems, and systems for monitoring animal health and behaviour. They have also been involved in the development of new methods for the humane disposal of animals, such as the use of carbon dioxide as a method of euthanasia.

The RAVC has also been involved in the development of new methods for the conservation of endangered species, such as the use of artificial insemination to help increase the genetic diversity of captive populations. They have also been involved in the development of new methods for the control of pests and diseases, such as the use of genetically modified organisms to help control the spread of disease.