

VILLAGE HISTORY LESSON PART 5

Northerners have always been an awkward lot - which explains Boris Johnson's successful (but temporary?) wooing of many constituencies. William the Conqueror found this out early on and in 1069-70 ravaged our area "The Harrowing of the North" for failure to submit to foreigners speaking a different language and pay taxes to the new land owners.

At this time Morcar was Earl of Northumbria and after making an uneasy peace with William rebelled against him, supported by a large number both of English and Welsh; the clergy, the monks, and the poor were strongly on his side, and messages were sent to every part of the kingdom to stir up resistance. Morcar eventually submitted to William, was imprisoned, released on William's death and little is known of what happened to him then.

So why is there Morcar Hill just off the Barrowby Road in Kearby? Could it be he was buried there as some say, or is it just in memory of a hero to our ancestral peasants living there?

The first clear indication that the Normans were here to stay was the building of Rougemont Castle. This was originally held by the king but passed to Robert de Rumilly before 1096 and thence by a confused succession to the de L'isle family who gained the Lordship of Harewood in 1246. The castle was originally timber with evidence of stone used in an inner bailey now built into walls of nearby Healthwaite Hall. The site was abandoned c 1366 when the now ruined Harewood Castle was built.

The site on the north bank of the River Wharfe can be visited by permission of the Snowden family who have a small leaflet prepared by the Local History Group available if you knock at their farm in Dunkeswick (last building on the left when travelling towards Weeton). There is little to see except mounds in a copse (where you may spot a badger) though on the west side the boundary of Weeton is crossed by a fine packhorse bridge and there is evidence of fishponds. A bronze plaque was erected by the History Group some years ago.

Next time: hard times.

Part 4 quiz question: what is the furthest you can see from the village? The answer may surprise you. It is Siberia. Well I know "see" is stretching it a bit, but if you stand at the Trig point just off Barrowby Road and look roughly ENE there is no higher land across Holland, Germany and Russia until you get to the Urals. That's one to try on your guests.

Part 5 quiz question: where was the old butcher's shop?