Great Yarmouth Local History and Archaeological Society

Cemetery Crawl – 23 August 2014

The Great Yarmouth Local History and Archaeological Society held their fourth cemetery crawl last Saturday. Over 50 members of the society visited and heard the stories relating to 15 graves. We visited Lilian Parmenter (1873), who was drowned when her carriage went into the River Bure when the horse bolted. As she was three years old, she had been tied in. Next visited was Harry Feek (1933), a publican and one of the Yarmouth’s lifeboat crew. This was followed by Joseph Plummer (1863), the head of the King Street Academy for 35 years, which was a boarding school for boys. Plummer boasted that each boy had his own bed. During his life he had accumulated 37 properties in the town. We moved onto George Palgrave (1893), who founded the Palgrave Murphy Shipping Line of steamers. James Sharman (1867) was next. He served on HMS Victory at the Battle of Trafalgar in 1805. In retirement he was the keeper of the Norfolk Pillar and talked often with Charles Dickens. We moved onto Lt. Ernest Huke, who died when his boat, HMS Dundee, was torpedoed in 1940, while on convoy duty in the Atlantic. A chest tomb marks the Rev’d Smith (1905), a Yarmouth Methodist minister, who became the National President of the Primitive Methodist Church. It was said that his best sermon was delivered on his death bed. A tragedy was revealed in the form of the grocer’s wife, Eliza Blagg, who was killed in 1881 by trucks being shunted by horses across Southtown Road. Another accident was the death of William Forder, who was killed with four of his colleagues of Trinity House when they attempted to blow up a wreck in the shipping lanes in 1909, not knowing that it contained gelignite. The long forgotten Yarmouth lifeboat disaster memorial contains the bodies of five crew members, who drowned in 1881, when their boat overturned during a rescue. The man, who they were rescuing, lies alongside the memorial. The next grave was that of James Spinks (1897) a fisherman, who died off the coast of Holland after his smack, the I’ll Try, was run down by a steamer. We moved on to the grave of James Taylor (1903), a tobacco pipe maker, who exported pipes all over Europe. His predecessor had shown a pipe in the Paris exhibition of 1878, claiming it was the largest pipe in the world. Its bowl held 14 pounds of tobacco. We paid our respects to Samuel Smith, who was killed in the Zeppelin raid of 1915. The Salmon family gravestone shows two people dying accidently in 1890. Herbert, aged three was burnt to death while playing with matches. His father drowned while assisting at a wreck. The last grave visited was that of Mary Bennett, the victim of the shoelace murder on South Beach in 1900.