

Branston History Group

Branston History Group is a thriving group of people for whom the history of their village is very important. They had already published a successful book about the history of Branston called 'Branston Remembered' and were considering what to do next when artsNK suggested different ways of depicting their history using art.

A bid for a grant from The Heritage Initiative was successful, which in turn opened the doors to other avenues of funding, and work began.

The group invited other members of the community to join them, and with the help of artsNK they learnt skills in mosaic design and making, photography, woodcarving, clay modelling, archeological digging and graphic design.

This has been a real village effort and all facets of the community have been involved at some point from school children to those of a more mature age.

The resulting photography trail and arts pieces are a dynamic representation of the history of Branston which we hope you will enjoy.

If you are interested in finding out more about the history of Branston please contact the History Group at www.parishes.lincolnshire.gov.uk/branstonandmere or read the book 'Branston Remembered'.

The village community has worked closely with Lincolnshire County Council and North Kesteven District Council to regenerate the Sheep Wash area to make it the starting point of the trail and an attractive information point for the Spires and Steeples route which is the heritage and arts works along the footpaths through the villages between Lincoln and Sleaford.

For more information on this or any other artsNK project contact: Arts.NK@leisureconnection.co.uk



How to get to Branston's Arts & Heritage Trail



Branston's Arts & Heritage Trail



A walk through time...
...now and then

Footsteps of the past - Branston's Time Journey

Branston is the centre of an ancient parish so enjoy following the footsteps of its past using the artistic markers to guide you ...

- 1** Start at the site of the former sheepwash by Branston's Beck trace its past in the art works and display boards about the archaeological dig and its findings in 2006. Enjoy a refreshment in Branston's former library building now a cafe, or at the pub opposite. A fire plaque in the corner of the car park shows where Branston's wartime Fire Station stood.



- 2** Continuing down Rectory Lane pass cottages built by the Leslie Melville family at Branston Hall for their workforce and find the marker on the right, which indicates the location of the village spring. Here residents would get their water together with the wells and the village pump that was installed by public subscription on Lincoln Road in 1891 and can still be seen. Older residents can still recall getting buckets of water from the pump and wells and the odd insect that the water contained.



- 3** It was not until 1932 that Branston had its first mains water scheme approved and some communal water fountains with lions faces on can still be seen on turning right into Hall Lane and along the High Street. Here can also be seen the Bertie Arms, formerly an Inn, then a dairy from 1912 until 1940. Older residents of the village remember buying ice-cream and milk.



- 4** Further along numbers 9 and 11 Hall Lane was the site of the Parkside School for infants established by the Hon A S Leslie Melville in 1837. School was very different from today, with children often having to be absent to work on the land, or help their parents in the home while they worked. Each paid 1d or 2d a week, which many would be unable to afford.



- 5** Follow the stone wall on the right until you reach the bridge at Waterwheel lane, pause to look across at the fine stone residence opposite. This was the site of Branston Old Hall that burnt down on the night of the Goose Dinner in 1903 despite the valiant efforts of Lord Londesborough of Blankney and his new steam fire engine.



The present Branston Hall was built by the Leslie Melville family in 1886. Described as a 'gentleman's moderate sized country house', it contained 38 bedrooms. When the Leslie Melvilles left in 1924 Branston Hall was first a sanatorium and is now an elegant hotel.

- 6** One of the more impressive structures left by the Leslie Melvilles is the remains of the waterwheel located at the end of the footpath in Waterwheel Lane. From 1879 with the Waterwheel and pumping apparatus Branston Hall and other large residencies could now rely on a constant and easy supply of water compared with their poorer neighbours. Before leaving Waterwheel Lane observe the Bothy, which was a home for itinerate workers.



- 7** Retrace your steps and turning right up Thackers Lane find the photographic lenticular by the old Kitchen Garden where residents played and enjoyed sledging in cold winters.



- 8** **9** Turning left into Chapel Lane enjoy the flower and wildlife plaque. Continue down Chapel Lane to the former Wesleyan Chapel on the corner. Built in 1883 and now a private residence it still retains its imposing character and history.



At the top of Hall Lane enjoy the carved seats on the village green where the stocks were once situated. Take a moment to enjoy the intricate carvings created by the village residents in 2006 to depict the themes of past present and future, how is this represented?

- 10** Return down Church Road and view the former Forge and Nurses Cottage known as Church Close. Before the NHS Branston's health needs were partly met in the community with the employment of a District Nurse by Branston Nursing Association for which labourers paid 4s 4d per annum and those on poor relief were exempt. To help do her rounds a bicycle was purchased in 1909 at the cost of 3s 6d, by 1935 Nurse Manning had been promoted to a motorbike.



- 11** The forge depicted by the attractive marker would have been central to the thriving farming community that then dominated Branston's economy.



In the church car park view the mosaic that tells Branston's story from Roman to present time. All Saints' Church has its origins in Saxon times, look for the 'long and short' Saxon storework in the tower. On Christmas Day 1962 a disastrous fire destroyed the large east window, choir stalls, the communion table and choir screen.

Its most 'famous' rectors were the Curtois family, 6 of whom were successive rectors from 1680 until 1891. As owners of the tithes they were wealthy and had a large new rectory, Hainton House seen on your left built in 1765. This is now divided into flats and is rumoured to be haunted by one or more of the Curtois rectors!



- 12** Walking down the hill, back towards the Sheepwash car park, you pass on your right an even older rectory whose garden contained a cockfighting pit, which is commemorated with the Curtois family in the marker.

A further mosaic is to be installed in 2011 on the Co-op store in Station Road which depicts a pictorial history of the Co-op in Branston.

Start Here



We hope that you have enjoyed seeing the footprints of Branston's past and return to find out more about our fascinating story. If you have why not visit the next village on the Spires and Steeples route at Nocton.