

## **LOCAL EXPLORERS**

A group of Local Explorers recently visited Kirkby Lonsdale on a pleasant spring day. The party was split into 4 sub-groups each of which was accompanied by a guide from the local Tourist Information Centre.

We learned about the history of the busy town square and heard stories of people who had either lived and worked in the town or simply had a passing connection. The guides pointed out the many styles of architecture and revealed secret alleyways and cobbled squares which may remain hidden from casual visitors.

A notable citizen buried in the churchyard is Brigadier General Whyatt who was responsible for choosing the fallen soldier, who is buried in the tomb of the unknown warrior in Westminster Abbey.

Our tour also included a visit to the Vaults which, as the name implies, used to be a bank vault but is now used as a secure storage facility to hold materials relating to the town's history. Several videos are also displayed in the Vaults.

Kirkby Lonsdale is a busy town and when the tour ended members of the group were free to browse the many shops and places to eat.

The Local Explorers group meets every second Tuesday of the month to enjoy discovering the local area together. If you would like to join us please contact Liz Jackson

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In April we visited the 'Auschwitz to Ambleside' exhibition at Windermere Library, which tells the remarkable story of 300 children - mainly boys - who in 1945 were brought by the government to live at Calgarth Estate, Windermere.

We began with a talk given by 'Nicki the Artist' Smith, a very interesting and talented lady. She had met fellow artist Trevor Avery, Director of Another Space and had assisted him in the assembling of the exhibition. Due to the now national and international interest in the project, Trevor was unable to be with us and Nicki very kindly offered to stand in for him. She was at pains to point out that she was not Trevor but her telling of the story, through her work in art projects with children, gave us a fascinating insight into the events of 80 years ago.

We learnt how the orphans reacted to having their own rooms, the wonder of clean sheets and pillows; their secreting of bread in their clothing, in case there was no more; how they 'borrowed' bikes and returned them to the same spot. Nicki's emotional connections to the stories made them very real.

After her talk we saw a moving BBC film about the now elderly children and then there was a chance to look at the many photographs from the early 1900's onwards - including Flying Boats, Short's Aircraft Factory a fascinating aerial photo of Calgarth Estate and to see some of the very few archaeological remains found there recently.

The Estate site is now home to The Lakes School and some of the children have met some of the very elderly survivors, an extraordinary group of people, who have been active in charity work and set an example of how to conquer hatred and retain common humanity.

*Hilary Wade*