

Conservation Award for Robert Holmes chapel

The high standards of conservation work used in the repair of the Robert Holmes Chapel in St James Church, Yarmouth were recognised earlier this year when the project scooped the IW Society's Tommy Bodycomb Conservation Award.

Yarmouth Town Council undertook the restoration project as part of the WWLP's 'Local Heroes' initiative. Works included cleaning the statue of Sir Robert Holmes which stands as the centrepiece of the Chapel as a monument to arguably the town's most significant historic character.



Statue of Sir Robert Holmes 1622 - 1692

Holmes was a brilliant, buccaneering adventurer and successful naval commander in the seventeenth century and was well-known at the court of Charles II who, stayed with him in Yarmouth. According to legend, the statue was originally intended to portray Louis XIV of France but Sir Robert seized it from a French ship and substituted a head of his own likeness: a reminder of the larger-than-life character of the man!

Twelve Men of Thorley

One of the first ways in which the WWLP helped Yarmouth Town Council to commemorate its local cultural history was in the production of a memorial to the 12 men of Thorley who gave their lives in the First World War.

In 2009 we put members of the local community in touch with Island illustrator Alan Rowe to produce a map showing the location of the homes of Thorley's dozen good men who didn't return from the Great War.



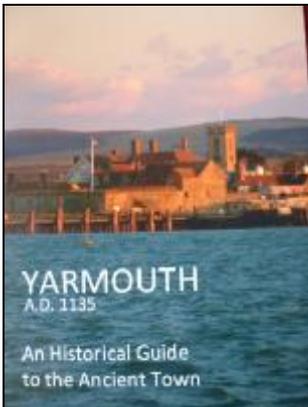
12 Men of Thorley map

The map has now been installed in St Swithins Church as a reminder of the sacrifice made by this small farming community during the war. To complement the plaque the village war memorial has also recently been cleaned and repaired and can be found in St Swithins Churchyard.

Historic Yarmouth - Old walls and Entry Gates

In 2011 the WWLP awarded Yarmouth Town Council a grant of more than £13,000 to help create a greater awareness of the town's long, rich and fascinating history from the time of its first charter in 1135AD to the present.

The grant has enabled the publication of an illustrated booklet that provides a comprehensive history of the town's development. It also supported the cost of plotting the lay-out of the town's historic protective walls and the four gateways that gave travellers and citizens access to the town from about the 12th - 18th century.



Booklet (left) New marker at 'Hither Gate'

The four gateways are now marked with interpretative panels, so why not go and see if you can find them? A new sign bearing the town crest has also been erected close to St James Church in the town centre. Particular thanks must go to Yarmouth Town Cllr Sylvia Mence for her determination ensuring the successful conclusion of the project and to Kevin Shaw who drafted the booklet. These are now available priced £4.95 from outlets in the town.

St James Day Fayre

Everybody loves a knees-up and that's what we got in July 2010 when the WWLP supported Yarmouth Town Council in celebrating St James Day.

Historically a day of celebration dating from the middle ages when the laws of the town would be relaxed to enable the townsfolk to 'let their hair down' St James Day was resurrected with music, dancing, eating and drinking all centred on the town square. It is hoped that this event can once again become a feature of town life and in doing so, help provide an important link with the town's historic roots for today's residents.



Maypole dancing in the town square