Bawtry Heritage Group

Preserving our Past for the Future

Registered Charity No. 1188945

Note to readers.

This piece by Cadet Lennon Day contains a reference on page 6 to Bawtry being known as Babtry in Roman times. This is not an accurate fact as it is still uncertain if there was a settlement on the site that is now Bawtry in the Roman period; there certainly was not a place called Babtry.

Cadet Day is not responsible for this error he legitimately sourced it from the Welcome To Yorkshire on-line site where it was listed as one of their ten facts about Bawtry.

The Bawtry Heritage Group contacted Welcome To Yorkshire pointing out the error. No reply was received but this inaccurate fact has now been removed from their list.

Even if Cadet Day's discovery was by misadventure the BHG is very grateful to him for this discovery and to be in a position to correct misinformation about our town.

WELL DONE LENNON!

The Bawtry Heritage Group
July 2024.

The History of Bawtry

By Cadet Day 2008 (Bawtry) Squadron

Bawtry's Location

Bawtry was originally the site of a Roman settlement on 'Ermine Street' between Doncaster and Lincoln.

In 616 AD, the Anglo-Saxon King Aethelfrith died in battle against Raedwald, King of East Anglia, by the River Idle near Bawtry.

The Crown Hotel

The Crown Hotel is located at DN10 6JW and it was built in 1675. Many famous people have visited the Crown Hotel including: Olly Murs, Billy Connolly, Ronan Keating, Ed Sheeran, Vernon Kay, King George III and Tom Cruise.

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History of Bawtry

When it comes to Yorkshire, Bawtry is where it all begins (and ends). This is the definitive border town sitting on the River Idle where three counties converge and where the first house you come to traveling north is called 'Number One Yorkshire'.

Back in the mists of time it was actually in Nottinghamshire, but it was annexed to the White Rose County over 1,000 years ago.

During the day it has a prosperous 'county town' feel with plenty of bustle and lots of independent shops, from hardware stores to boutiques. But by night it comes alive with bars and an impressive choice of restaurants. Factor in the presence of half a dozen or so local schools and it is understandably popular with families.

It's far enough from Doncaster to feel rural, yet close enough to make it an easy commute. Sheffield is not too far away either as both the A1(M) and M18 are close by. And for traveling further afield Robin Hood Airport, built on the old RAF Finningley air base, is located five miles to the north. Bawtry exudes an understated charm and it's definitely worth a closer look if you are wanting to relocate.

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Explore

The oldest pub in Bawtry is the White Hart dating to 1689 and it's a great place to start a walking tour of this pint sized town.

There are attractive Georgian buildings on South Parade, Market Hill and High Street, giving the place a really stylish and appealing feel. The grandest property is the opulent Grade II listed Bawtry Hall, centrally located in seven acres of formal grounds. Today it has been refurbished as an award winning wedding and events venue.

Striking a more contemporary note is The Courtyard, a modern retail development hosting a variety of shops and businesses. Accessed through an archway, it dovetails really well with the town's historic setting and won a 'Green Apple Award' for enhancing local heritage.

Bawtry is a good base to explore many other interesting villages – you will be surprised how historic they are, especially Tickhill, a few miles to the west, which has a ruined castle. All are within easy reach by bike as the terrain is pretty flat.

There are also a couple of nice woodland walks to be had at Bawtry Forest and King's Wood just to the north of town.

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For a nosier excursion take a trip to see the nation's last remaining working Vulcan bomber which is housed at Robin Hood Airport. Now grounded, you can pre-book tours, some of which include engine start-ups and a close inspection of this post-war wonder. The aircraft – once at the sharp end of the nation's defense - has a real cult following and many of the old Cold War hangars it used are still in existence on the former RAF site.

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Bawtry's Churches

St. Nicholas Church was given to the Priory of Blyth by John de Busili sometime between 1199 and 1213, and it acted as a chapel of ease to the mother church at Blyth. A taxation order by the Pope in 1291 makes no mention of either Austerfield or Bawtry as they were under the Priory of Blyth at that time.

Origins of Bawtry

Bawtry is located near the River Idle and the A1 road, making it easily accessible for tourists. The town is known for its rich history, dating back to the Roman times when it was known as 'Babtry'. It was once a significant center in the 12th century for exporting goods, especially wool, to Europe.

Bawtry as a port?

Bawtry was one of England's busiest inland ports, certainly since medieval times and possibly earlier. It was probably at its peak in 1700, but was still going at the start of the 19th century. It closed in 1857 when the existing railway

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viaduct was built and caused the river to be diverted away from the town.

Is Bawtry a town or a village?

Bawtry was originally an ancient port on the River Idle but is now a busy market town with a variety of attractive restaurants and quality shops and a rich history as a former staging post on the Great North Road.

The Charm of Bawtry

Historically, Bawtry used its waterside location to become a thriving inland port, first exporting wool and then millstones. Today, it's an uber smart place that puffs out its chest to visitors with its fine Georgian buildings and neat market square.

Bawtry's Market Today

The Bawtry Retail Association has helped bring back the town's traditional market which took place each Sunday until the 1980s. The farmers market now trades on the first and third Saturday of the month at The Courtyard, which

was built in 2000 on land where the market used to be held.

Geography of Bawtry

Bawtry is where the western branch of the Roman Ermine Street crosses the River Idle in the Metropolitan Borough of Doncaster, South Yorkshire. It straddles the A638 road, previously known as the Great North Road.

Nearby towns include Gainsborough to the east, Retford to the south-southeast, Worksop to the south-west and Doncaster to the north-west. The town is just south of Doncaster Sheffield Airport, formerly RAF Finningley, and between Bircotes and Mission at the conjunction of the A614, A631 and A638.

In the 20th century Bawtry became a road bottleneck, until a bypass was eventually built in 1965. The county boundary with Nottinghamshire runs just to the south of the town – the southernmost house on the Great North Road names itself "Number One Yorkshire".

The town's former prosperity was based on communications: the River Idle (when Bawtry was a port), the Great North Road in the coaching era, and the Great Northern Railway. Its geographical location is 53° 25' 40"

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North, 1° 1' West, at an elevation of 37 feet (11.4 m) above sea level.

Bawtry's Community

Bawtry has a school called Bawtry Mayflower School named after the vessel Mayflower, which took William Bradford, leader of the Pilgrims, to the Americas, settling the first Plymouth Colony. Bradford came from Austerfield, about a mile from Bawtry.

The White Hart in Swan Street is the town's oldest surviving public house, dating from 1689. The older Swan Inn (on the same street) has been converted to other uses. Market Hill and High Street contain buildings of the same period, interspersed with more recent ones. The Crown Hotel in High Street was once a coaching inn.

South Parade is a terrace of Georgian houses. The Courtyard, a modern development of housing, shops and businesses, won the Green Apple Awards 2005.

From 1989 to 2013 Bawtry Hall operated as a Christian conference center and a base for several Christian bodies. It now serves for a wider range of events such as wedding receptions.

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Bawtry Hall

Originally constructed in 1785, it was a county family home for the prosperous Milnes Wool – Merchant family. The property changed hands and was occupied by Major George Peake, and also served as a site for the Royal Air Force during World War II, when it Bomber Command HQ.

The Age of Bawtry

Around 1200, a new town was developed adjacent to the older village, under the auspices of John de Busli or Robert de Vipont. In 1213, de Vipont received a royal charter specifying an annual four-day fair at Pentecost, and a market was first recorded in 1247.

RAF Bawtry

Bawtry Hall served the Royal Air Force from 1941–1984; first as HQ for No. 1 Group Bomber Command during and after the Second World War, then as HQ No. 1 Group as part of Strike Command up to, and including, the later stages of the Cold War.