

Under *the* bridge

There is a real buzz in Barton-upon-Humber at the moment. Not only is this ancient historical market town a significant centre of archaeological interest and an area rich in wildlife, it has fast transformed into an exciting haven for creative industries.

Words: Josie Thurston and Alison Sandilands Photographs: Scott Murray and Lee Beel

A colourful explosion of contemporary creative talent is contained within an historic industrial building located on the waterside of the River Humber - an area now known as The Ropewalk.

This quarter of a mile long pan-tiled construction was once a bustling rope factory filled with the loud monotonous creaks and clangs of hard labouring. The ropes made here were used in the conquest of Everest.

It now exists as an exciting creative centre, called Ropewalk Contemporary Art and Craft, which nurtures local contemporary artists and creative businesses, offering them a place to work along with help and support.

Looking at the neatly bricked building, it is hard to imagine the vibrancy encased behind the walls. This sturdy structure, once an integral part in the development of Barton during the industrial period, is now a creative cocoon

driving forward the town's regeneration.

Thirteen resident artists are currently making use of the centre's studio space. Their eclectic contemporary collections, ranging from sculptures and ceramics to textile designs and paintings, can all be viewed on the Ropewalk Contemporary Art and Craft's website: www.the-ropewalk.co.uk

There is also a warming coffee shop which is now open seven days a week, serving home-cooked food and a wide selection of beverages. Several galleries will keep you occupied for hours, with a special tenth anniversary event, where they revisit their first ever exhibition. You can see the event from April 25th – May 30th.

Further along The Ropewalk is a state-of-the-art events space called Ropery Hall for live music, theatre and cinema; meeting rooms for community use and the Fathom Works, a base for creative

industries.

Located on the banks of the River Humber, Barton was once a thriving port, exporting goods such as bricks, tiles, rope and chalk around the world.

Before the Humber Bridge was opened in 1981, the only way of crossing the river over to Hull was by ferry. This was unpredictable and dangerous with reports of boats getting stuck on sandbanks. The bridge was considered to be a saviour, opening up the town socially and economically.

Walking along the waterside today, the Humber Bridge dominates the landscape spanning across the skies creating a breathtaking view over the River.

The Humber Estuary is considered to be one of the most important estuaries in Europe for wildlife and is a designated European

international centre for research, studying the bones has provided useful information on how diseases such as arthritis develop, helping to improve modern day treatments.

Ever since the Church of England left St Peter's in the seventies, the neighbouring St Mary's, a Norman construction, has been the parish church.

The Old Mill pub on Market Lane is a converted flour mill, Kings Garth Mill.

This impressive building is believed to have been built on a site which was previously a major Anglo-Saxon settlement called Castledyke South.



EVENTS IN BARTON-UPON-HUMBER

13th March until 11th April

Twitter Exhibition - The Ropewalk, Barton. Free admission. 01652 660380.

20th March until 18th April

Jake and Dinos Chapman Exhibition: My Giant Colouring - The Ropewalk, Barton. Free admission. 01652 660380.

Saturday 27th March until 23rd May

Dionne Swift Exhibition : New Grounds - The Ropewalk, Barton. Free admission. 01652 660380.

Thursday 1st April

Film: The Long Good Friday (18) - 7.30pm, Ropery Hall, Barton. £3. 01652 660380.

Sunday 4th and Monday 5th April

Open Days at 51 Fleetgate, Barton - 10am-4pm. Visit the oldest residential house in North Lincolnshire. www.bartoncivicsociety.co.uk 01652 632928.

Tuesday 6th April

Wild Art - 11am, Waters' Edge Visitor Centre, Barton. Please book, £3. 01652 631500.

Tuesday 6th April

Arabian Nights - 2pm, Ropery Hall, Barton. £3 / £2 under 16s. Suitable for 3-7yrs and their families. 01652 660380.

Thursday 8th April

Lip Balm and Soap Making - 10.30am and 1.30pm, Waters' Edge Country Park, Barton. Please book, £4, bring old apron or t-shirt. 01652 631500.

Thursday 8th April

Easter Outing - 2-4pm, Waters' Edge Country Park, Barton. Stroll round the park with wildlife quiz, children must be accompanied. £2.50, please book. 01652 637055.

Friday 9th April

Snake Davis Band - 8pm, Ropery Hall, Barton. £13 advance, £15 on the door. 01652 660380.

Saturday 10th April

Henry Priestman - 8pm, Ropery Hall, Barton. £10 advance, £12 on the door. 01652 660380.

Saturday 10th April

Ranger Ramble (13 miles with pub stop) - Meet 10.30am, Waters' Edge Visitor Centre, Barton. Free. 01652 631500.

Tuesday 13th April

Crazy Creatures - Junk Modelling - 1.30pm, Waters' Edge Country Park, Barton. Free drop-in session. 01652 631500.

Tuesday 13th April

Mercury and Venus - the Innermost Planets - 8pm til late, Far Ings Visitor Centre, Barton. Please book, adults £3.50, children, £2. 01652 637055.

Wednesday 14th April

Wet Felting - Pictures and Pebbles - 10.30am and 1.30pm, Waters' Edge Visitor Centre, Barton. Please book, £4.50. 01652 631500

Thursday 15th April

The Far Ings Great Egg-scape - 2-4pm, Far Ings Visitor Centre,

Barton Please book, £2.50, children must be accompanied. 01652 637055.

Saturday 17th April

Empirical - 8pm, Ropery Hall, Barton. £12 advance, £14 on the door. Winners of the EBU/European Jazz competition 01652 660380.

Saturday 17th and Sunday 18th April

Beekeeping Course - 10am-4pm, Waters' Edge Visitor Centre, Barton. Please book, £60. 01652 631500.

Friday 23rd April

Barton Civic Society - "A Brush with Aviation and Motoring" talk by Keith Woodcock, 7.30pm, Assembly Rooms. Members free, non-members £1. 01652 632928.

Saturday 24th April

Chris Sherburn and Denny Bartley - 8pm, Ropery Hall, Barton. £12 advance, £14 on the door. 01652 660380.

24th April until 30th May

Ten Years On Exhibition - The Ropewalk, Barton. Free admission. 01652 660380.

Sunday 25th April

Zoe Lyons - Miss Machismo - 8pm, Ropery Hall, Barton. £8 advance, £10 on the door. 01652 660380.

Sunday 25th April

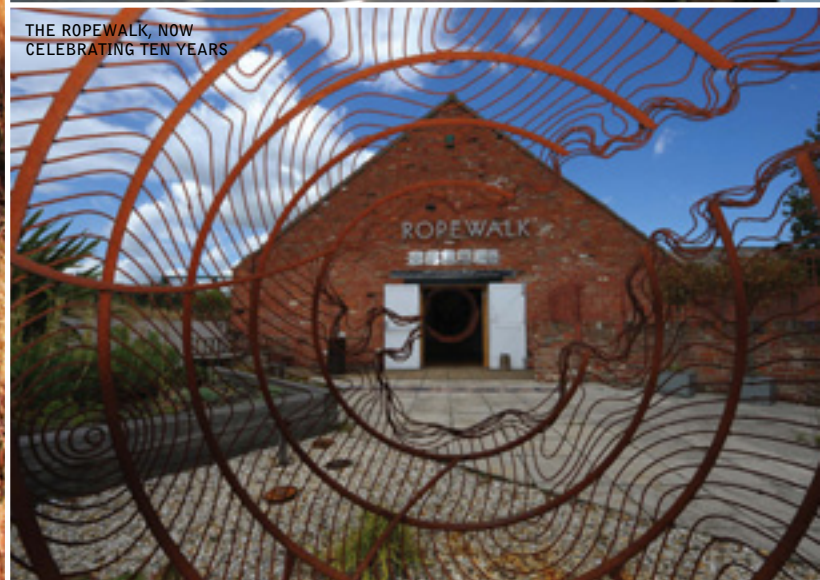
Wildlife Painting Day - 11am, Waters' Edge Visitor Centre, Barton. Please book, £3.50. 01652 631500.



THE HUMBER BRIDGE



THE ROPEWALK PRIOR TO RENOVATION



THE ROPEWALK, NOW CELEBRATING TEN YEARS

Marine Site. Celebrating and promoting this area's unique landscape, the Waters' Edge Country Park, an eighty-six-acre beauty spot, was opened in 2001. The award-winning Waters' Edge Visitor's Centre was subsequently opened here in 2005 offering interactive displays and information on how to care for the environment.

Speaking on the topic of the town's regeneration, Ann Tate from Barton Chamber of Commerce, said: "The development of The Ropewalk and Waters' Edge Visitor's Centre has given the town a new lease of life and a real buzz."

Also close by is the Far Ings Nature Reserve.

The architecture in the town centre is prominently Georgian, with numerous red-bricked buildings. The grandest Georgian building is Baysgarth House, located on Baysgarth Park. Built in 1731, this was once the centre for a massive thirty acre estate, occupied by the Nelthorpe family. It became the town's property in 1930 and is now open as a museum.

The town's history goes back much further than the Georgian times, and can be traced all the way back to before the tenth Century AD. Inhabited by the Romans, the Anglo-Saxons and the Vikings, it continues to be a relevant archaeological site.

In the seventies and eighties, the town's St Peter's Church, considered as one of most archaeologically

important churches in England due to its amazingly well preserved Anglo Saxon architecture, was excavated and repaired as part of a £600,000 project.

An ancient burial ground containing the remains of around 3000 people was uncovered, which was one of the largest discoveries of this kind in the country. Research carried out on the bones helped to build a picture of the people that lived in the town up to a thousand years ago. This information along with details of the extensive excavation work carried out from 1978 until 1984 is contained in an exhibition at the church, opened to the public in 2007, called Buried Lives. English Heritage owns the church and runs this exhibition between March and September. It features individual life histories of Barton's ancestors, along with reconstructed skeletons and evidence gathered from the medical research, which found that both arthritis and polio were prevalent in the town and that the ancient people were around the same height as modern people. After twenty years of research, the bones were returned to St Peter's Church, in an agreement with the Church of England, making them available for scientific research, whilst keeping them in a sacred space. Now known as an

DID YOU KNOW?

- Barton-upon-Humber was home to Isaac Pitman, inventor of the shorthand system bearing his name