

Getting a Gong Roy Tricker

For our April meeting we had a very entertaining talk by Roy Tricker who described himself as an “undeserving British Empire Medal (BEM) holder”.

Roy told us about the history of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire and how he had been surprised and amazed to receive the BEM award in the 2018 New Year’s honours list for services to local heritage in Suffolk. Roy found out that unknown to him the award had followed an application and 4 years of paperwork completed by his friend Pam from the St Edmundsbury Cathedral who had decided that he deserved an award for his work for the Churches Conservation Trust and set about making the application that involved obtaining reports from friends and colleagues. In 2017 Roy had received a letter from the Cabinet Office informing him that he had been nominated but this was to be kept strictly confidential as he might not actually receive the award. However, in April 2018 Roy attended the investiture by the Lord Lieutenant of Suffolk, Lady Clare Euston at Euston Hall and was presented with his British Empire Medal, which he brought along with him to his talk for us to see. The award had also led to an invitation to a Royal Garden Party at Buckingham Palace hosted by the late Queen Elizabeth II.

Roy told us that two other BEMs had been awarded to local people on the 2018 New Year’s honours list, Alison Evans a fundraiser and church organist from Beccles and James Manning from Ipswich who worked with children from deprived backgrounds and was one of the founders of the Whitton Youth Partnership, a charity which supports young people in north west Ipswich.

Roy told us of his local connections with Suffolk and how he had arrived as a child in December 1957 in Felixstowe from Hertfordshire and attended the Felixstowe Secondary Modern school and had gone on to become a religious education teacher at Copleston High School in Ipswich for 20 years and then worked for 11 years as a regional field officer for The Churches Conservation Trust, travelling all over the south east of England. Roy told us that even as a child he had been fascinated by churches and how as an eight year old child he had been allowed by his parents to go on his own on “church crawls” which had developed his interest in church buildings, services and church organs. Subsequently Roy became a Lay Reader and had written over 200 church guides and his interest and enthusiasm for historic churches continued.

In 2020 Roy told us that he had received another honour being nominated by the Bishop to receive the Royal Maundy money and that he was looking forward to receiving this from Queen Elizabeth II in person and had booked his accommodation, however, COVID-19 intervened and the ceremony was cancelled. The Maundy money, the coins presented in two leather purses, a white one containing coins to the value of the same number of pence as the years of the monarch's age and a red purse containing a £5 and a 50p coin was later received delivered via the post with a letter from the Queen included that was now framed and hung in pride of place at his home. Roy kindly brought the Maundy money with him for us to see which was most interesting. Roy was thanked for joining us and sharing such an interesting and entertaining talk about his life and receipt of his very well deserved British Empire Medal.

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