

St. Mary's Meadow

We recently received the following enquiry from Beccles and District Historical Society:-

One of our committee members has said that about 10 years ago there was a plaque/notice in St Mary's Meadow giving the interesting history of the Meadow (once a leper colony), St Mary's house (residence, hospital etc) and the London Plane Tree circa 230 years old and one of the best in Suffolk. The notice then disappeared.

He mentioned it to the Beccles Society some time ago that it should be replaced.

Barry Darch.

Several members of our Executive Committee were able to throw some light on this matter, and it is reported here for interest purposes. Their comments are as follows:-

Dear Paul

We, Julia and I, have walked the Meadow, via Puddingmoor etc as part of an evening walk for over three decades (not every evening that is but occasionally). We both recall the plaque, certainly about the London Lime Tree and if I recall accurately (and this is a diminishing mental skill) I associate the name of the recently deceased, David Sayer and the Woodland Trust being associated with it. I also think there was a plaque referring to the leper colony above the Meadow at Fauconberge House - area.

Jeff Harris,

Hi Paul,

I am not sure which plaque/notice Barry is referring to but when I did the survey of Beccles plaques I took the two photos of plaques attached to the wall of St Mary's house. Do these help you?

As an aside I am still finalising the "Plaque Book".

Best regards,
Bob



Dear Paul,



Dear Paul,

Thanks for sending on Barry's email.

I wrote the information on the upper of the two plaques on St Mary's House about 20 years ago. Ted Goodwyn wrote the other probably 35 years ago. As far as I am aware there has never been a plaque on Waveney Meadow produced by the Beccles Society. I do not remember having seen one. The Leper Hospital was situated in the grounds of St Mary's House not on Waveney Meadow. There is ample evidence for this in the gift by Charles II in the 1670s which is included in the "Grant of the Hospital Lands" in the "An Account of the Corporation of Beccles Fen" published in 1826.

The plane tree is not on Waveney Meadow but is part of the lands of the Leper Hospital/ St Mary's House site.

Regards

David Lindley.

I hope you will find these responses of interest.

Paul Fletcher