

Press Release

Embargo: Immediate



WHERE ARE THEY? WHO ARE THEY?

SEARCH FOR DESCENDANTS OF 1811 WATERWAYS VISIONARIES

Next year sees the 200th anniversary of the meeting in Bedford when a navigable waterway between the Grand Junction Canal (now the Grand Union at Milton Keynes) and the River Great Ouse at Bedford was first proposed. The search is on to trace descendants of the eight signatories of the petition for this meeting which was called by then Mayor, Charles Short, for noon on 4th November 1811 at Shire Hall.

The search has been launched to coincide with the Bedford River Festival by the Bedford & Milton Keynes Waterway Trust (B&MK) which, as a result of over ten years of lobbying, has placed the proposed waterway – the missing 26km link in our waterway network – at the heart of local plans and onto the agenda of the bodies that have the resources and the scale to make it happen.

The signatories were:

John Foster (1765-1831, a landowner of Brickhill House, who also owned sugar estates in Jamaica); John Rawlins (wine merchant); R. W. Robinson; John Emery; Samuel Gifford; William White (corn merchant and miller at Kempston Mill. He died in July 1815 after falling from his horse in Clapham Road); Charles Bailey and Richard Leach.

Jane Wolfson, Trust chair, said, "The Trust is planning a celebration to mark this anniversary, and show how much progress has been made with the current project. It has been agreed that we should try to trace as many as possible of the descendants of everyone named on the petition, including the then Mayor, and invite them to join our celebrations."

"We would like to hear from anyone who is a direct descendant, or if they know someone who is. However, we would need to know details of the ancestry line."

If you can help, or have any information, please contact Alan Mayo (tel. 01234 409737 alanjbmayo@ntlworld.com) or Neil Hayes (tel. 01234 826216 Nhayes@aol.com).

ENDS



B&MK

BEDFORD &
MILTON KEYNES
WATERWAY

Notes to editors



This is the gravestone in Bedford Cemetery of Charles Robinson, who we believe to be the son of R.W. Robinson - one of the signatories of the petition proposing the canal nearly 200 years ago.

The inscription reads:

In affectionate remembrance of Charles Robinson
Surgeon of this town for upwards of fifty years.
Died July 31st 1885 aged 80 years.

VIR HUMILIS DOCTUS MISERISQUE FIDELIS AMICUS
HOC JACET IN TIMULO RURSUS ILLE RESURCET

Also of Harriett wife of the above who died April 1st 1860
Aged 47 years.

For further details contact

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