



BOLAM LAKE NEWS

Logo design by Alice and Jessica

Celebration special edition by The Friends of Bolam Lake. 2016.

www.northumberlandlife.org/bolamlake

1816

2016



In 1816 Prince George was Regent as his father, George III was unable to rule, and it was a year since the Battle of Waterloo. Napoleon was in captivity (but not for long) and it was decided to stand down the survivors of the conflict and reduce the man-power in the Navy and Army. Huge numbers of men, many disabled by the war, were sent home. Naval personnel often had a craft, but the army were mostly unskilled. There were no pensions (or welfare state), so many faced destitution. Like many other landowners, Lord Decies, living at Bolam Hall, was moved to try and help. He had planned to create a pleasure ground on his estate, and consulted John Dobson, a local architect to help him. The result was the digging out and lining of the area known as Bolam Bog. Work was hampered by two bad winters, but by 1816 the ornamental lake was taking shape. The work force was well paid by the standards of the time, one shilling a day. This project must have helped the many families suffering from the war and the poor harvests. The lake and surrounding parkland was finished in 1819. The lake remained in private hands until 1972 when it was taken over by the County Council to provide a small country park, to be used for passive recreational activities, and it was to retain its unspoilt rural character

200 years later, the present Lord Decies, now living in Ireland, came with his wife to celebrate Bolam Lake, still beautiful, and much enjoyed by all who visit it. They joined the many Friends of Bolam Lake and invited guests for speeches, tree planting and lunch early in July. The band of the 2344 Air Cadet Squadron, who work as volunteers at the Lake, played as guests arrived. Councillor Kath Nisbet welcomed everyone, and speeches were made by Lord Decies and Chris Mullen from the NE Committee for the National Lottery, who have given a grant of £55,000 to mark our special year.

To thank them they were given beautiful turned bowls hand made from a yew tree recently felled in the park. Jim Grant, in costume, set the scene in 1816, and a group from the Northumbrian Pipers Society played during lunch. A cake was cut, Lady Decies judged a competition from Belsay School, and a toast was drunk to the future of Bolam Lake. Only one thing went wrong – it poured most of the day!

A PHOTO ALBUM OF A SPECIAL SATURDAY OF CELEBRATION IN JULY 2016.



The Band of 2344 Air Cadet Squadron.

Photographs by Chris Barlow and Tony Derbyshire



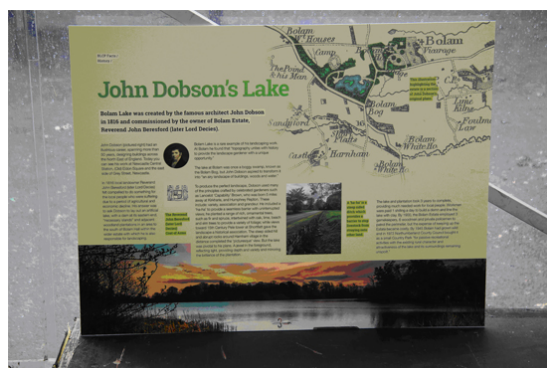
Local Story teller, Jim Grant



The Cake



Tree Planters.



New Information Board



Northumbrian Pipers



Belsay School Competition



Presentation of Yew wood bowls