

PETERBOROUGH SECTION EVENING MEETING 16 SEPTEMBER 2009 SITE VISIT TO JOHN CLARE'S COTTAGE HELPSTON, NEAR PETERBOROUGH

We started our 2009-2010 session off with a very pleasant evening at John Clare's Cottage. This meeting was organized by Katherine Moore. The recent refurbishment of John Clare's Cottage was partly designed and supervised by Royal Haskoning. Katherine was involved in all the stages of the refurbishment and it was a fitting way to demonstrate to local Structural Engineers the completion of the refurbishment works and also the construction of the visitor's centre.



Clare Cottage
The birthplace and family home of the 'Northamptonshire Peasant Poet' John Clare

The cottage in which he was born, and lived for many years, has been opened to the public for the very first time. The heart of the Cottage has been restored and transformed to its original 18th century state and will be used as a celebration of Clare's work and life. The gardens have been redesigned and populated with the flora and fauna Clare wrote so much about.

The Cottage along with the charming 18th century dovecote is set to become a dynamic centre of outside-of-classroom learning as well as preserving an important piece of local and national heritage. With magnificent surrounding countryside, glorious gardens and a fascinating house to explore, there's something for everyone at Clare Cottage.

A Little History on John Clare

John Clare (13 July 1793 – 20 May 1864) was an English poet, born the son of a farm labourer who came to be known for his representations of the English countryside. His poetry underwent a major re-evaluation in the late 20th century and he is often now considered to be among the most important 19th-century poets.



The Event consisted of a representative of the John Clare Society giving a brief history of this remarkable man, after which we then proceeded with a guided tour around his cottage and the adjacent dovecot. The gardens have also been prepared by local school children, planting herbs and flowers that would have been present at the time of John Clare.

After the event members of the committee and ordinary members retired to the local pub, conveniently adjacent to the site, for the Annual General Meeting and a pint of beer.

Report by Mark Palmer

Peterborough Section Committee Member

