

John Moray-Smith – the Adventure Goes on

Eat your heart out, Indiana Jones! Intrepid researchers from the Norwich Society are on the trail of Norwich's most elusive and prolific public artist again. In the best tradition of such adventures, vital new clues have been discovered in a box hidden for decades in the Forum's Local History Library...



Seriously though, publication of our booklet on Moray-Smith (circulated to members with the last Annual Review) and discussion between our friends at Gressenhall, where several of Moray-Smith's plaques are stored, and librarians at the Forum, led to the discovery of a box-full of unpublished research undertaken by the Tretts, a husband and wife team working in the late Seventies.

Some of the information gathered by them matches our research. Some of it, though, is more detailed (since they were a good two and a half decades nearer in time to the death of Moray-Smith and his wife in the Fifties), and some of it is new and unknown!

The Tretts, for example, knew of and *photographed* works in three pubs we didn't know existed – six in the Men of March in March, Cambridgeshire, and one each in the Harnser at Stalham and the Flying Fish at Carbrook, near Watton. They also reveal the existence (at that time) of three oil paintings in the Old Ship at Brancaster and an extra plaque in the Ship Hotel, Cromer. They also took pictures of works that we knew existed but hadn't seen before – including a splendid Norse warrior in full rampage at the Viking at Sprowston and a mail coach at full gallop from the Coach and Horses in Red Lion Street, Norwich – now the Bella Italia restaurant.

The team that produced our booklet – Spencer Chapman and myself – has reformed for the new expedition, and has been given extra muscle by Bill Brennan, who's recently joined the Environment Committee. Ahead of us, much research and travel round pubs in Norfolk and Cambridgeshire. It's a difficult and dangerous job, but somebody has to do it!

Alec Hartley