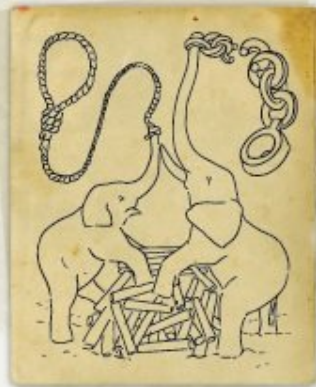


Thomas Fowell Buxton Monument

The Buxton Monument, here on Bingleaves Green, celebrates the achievements of philanthropist, prison reformer and slavery abolitionist, Thomas Fowell Buxton.

He was born in 1786 and died in 1845. He served as MP for Weymouth, 1818-1837. The Slavery Abolition Act of 1833 was the legislation for which he was responsible. In tribute to his life a friend said of him, "His sympathy was awakened by men he had never seen, and he gave the best years of his life to their welfare". His fame is indicated by the statue of him in Westminster Abbey and further memorials in London, Norwich, Sierra Leone, Jamaica, Guyana and Ontario, Canada. They reflect the local, national and international importance of his life.

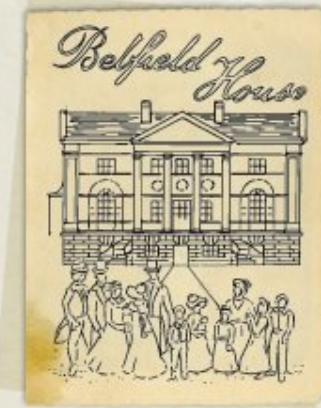


The Elephants

The elephant carving symbolises his anti-slavery efforts seen in the African elephant and the broken slave chains. The Indian elephant recalls his influence in 1827 in persuading William Bentinck, Governor General of India, to abolish the practice of suttee. This was burning of widows alive on the funeral pyres of their husbands. The pyres are represented by the bunch of faggots being trampled on by the elephants. The noose symbolises his work in Parliament helping to reduce the death penalty from 230 offences to 8. At school the young and very tall Thomas Fowell Buxton was nicknamed, "The Elephant".

Belfield House

His close Weymouth connection is further exemplified by the carving of Georgian Palladian-inspired, Belfield House in Wyke Regis which he inherited in 1814 from his grandmother, Sarah Buxton. It was rented by his Uncle Charles Buxton who served as Lord Lieutenant of Dorset. Thomas Fowell Buxton stayed at Belfield on his numerous electoral visits to Weymouth, as well as visiting his mother who lived in the town and his sister who lived in Bridport. The Buxton Monument reflects the neo-classical architecture of Belfield House.



The Buck's Head

In 1840, in recognition of his many achievements, Thomas Fowell Buxton was made a Baronet of "Belfield in the County of Dorset and Runton in the County of Norfolk". The carved buck's head with African slave medallion was part of his insignia and the family motto he adopted is also inscribed on the Monument: "Whatever your hand findeth to do, do it with thy might": Ecclesiastes 9:10.

www.thomasfowellbuxton.org.uk

This Monument has been erected by the Thomas Fowell Buxton Society and funded by public donations. The Monument was designed by Peter Loizou who together with students at Weymouth College Masonry Department undertook the carvings.

The Information Board has been erected with a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund to share Weymouth's Heritage with the wider community.

