



# BEVERLEY & DISTRICT CIVIC SOCIETY

## JUBILEE YEAR

### NEWSLETTER SPRING 2012



Members of the Civic Society with sponsors, staff and pupils from local schools

### HM The Queen Elizabeth's Diamond Jubilee Year 2012

Last year Miss Pat Deans, one of our founder members, wrote to the Executive suggesting that the Civic Society might consider planting 60 trees to commemorate the occasion of our Queen Elizabeth's Diamond Jubilee. During 1897 trees were planted along York Rd and Newbald Rd to commemorate Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee and these trees are in their prime and still here today; so it seemed appropriate to repeat that gesture not only by planting more young trees but also by involving young people.

At some stage during the past year most of the executive had some part to play in making this happen, seeking the agreement of the Pasture Masters about where to plant and the appropriate number, the advice of tree specialists as to the species, the appropriate age of new trees, pricing, sourcing sponsorship for each tree, having the

Environment &  
Neighbourhood Services

13 MAR 2012

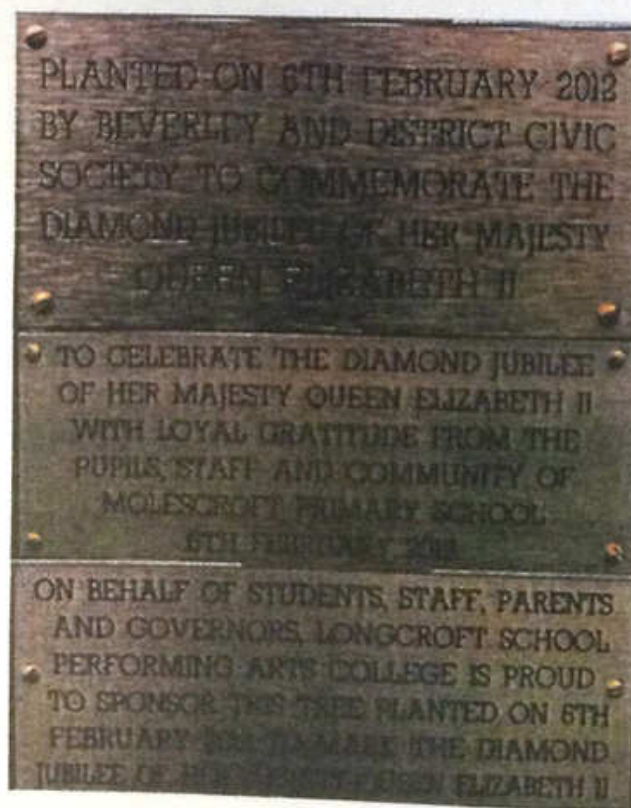
plaques engraved and attached to the fencing which needed to be placed around each tree, agreeing what time of year this should take place, etc. The sudden onset of snow at the beginning of February meant our first date had to be abandoned as the ground was too hard. Eventually, however, on the 28th February 2012, six Lime trees were planted, one for each ten years of the Queen's reign; and our President gave an excellent speech reminding all present of some of the Civic Society's past achievements and offering the following praise:

**If only we could bottle the enthusiasm and knowledge of the Civic Society members and send it to Westminster - so many of the problems of this country would be solved!**

I am sure that I speak for everyone when I express our thanks and appreciation to him for his support.

N.B. The Beverley & District Civic Society and the tree sponsors believe that planting trees represents a link with the future and the past. Trees live longer than anything else on the planet, and we are planting trees that should outlast everyone now alive on earth. The East Riding is particularly short of trees (only 2% of the Riding is wooded), and every tree planted helps to green the planet and improve the atmosphere by absorbing carbon dioxide. Beverley was once (around 720) all wooded, and the names Westwood and Norwood remind us that the landscape was formerly quite different. Of all our Beverley woods, Burton Bushes (a Site of Special Scientific Interest) is the only remnant of ancient woodland we still have. It is possible that this year David Hockney has made us all look at our trees very differently.

Sandra Ryan





Sandra Ryan

### **Forthcoming Public Meetings & Events...**

All meetings are held in St Mary's Parish Hall, North Bar Within, Beverley. Meetings are at 7.30 p.m. unless otherwise stated.

Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> March

*Open Forum on Current Issues*

Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> April

David Neave

*Conservation or Cars? The Battle for Beverley in the mid 20th Century*

Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> April at 2.30 p.m.

Audrey Hickley MA

*The Victorian Country House*

Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> May

Dr Robert Wright

*Medieval Beverley*

### **Late Spring and Summer outings**

Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> May, Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> June, Monday 25<sup>th</sup> June, Friday 6<sup>th</sup> July

Please see the separate fliers accompanying this Newsletter for details of these trips.



# The Grandmother of Frankenstein!

Mary Wollstonecraft by John Opie c.1797

I eagerly made my way towards the "Ask" restaurant after an email from Barbara English told me that the blue plaque I was searching for was there on the exterior right hand wall of the restaurant.

The plaque reads:

## WEDNESDAY MARKET PLACE

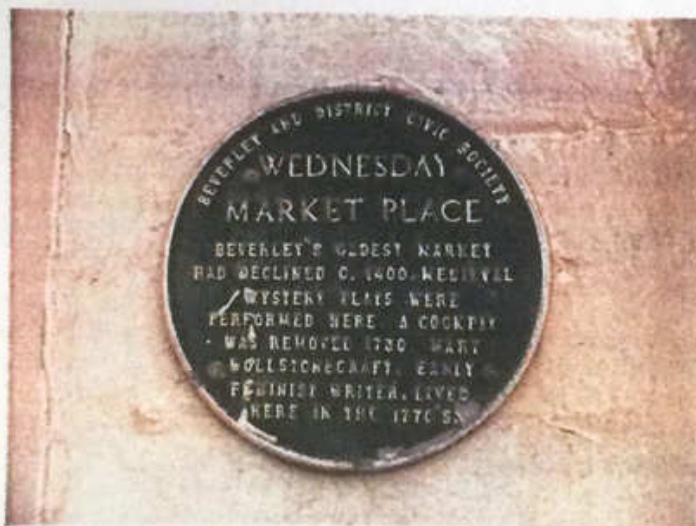
Beverley's oldest market had declined c1400.

Medieval mystery plays were performed here.

A cockpit was removed 1730.

Mary Wollstonecraft, early feminist writer, lived here in the 1770's.

BEVERLEY AND DISTRICT CIVIC SOCIETY



That was it! One sentence describing the fact that Mary Wollstonecraft, writer, genius, social innovator, author of *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792) had spent her formative years in Beverley, receiving her schooling here and forming a lasting affection for "her Westwood" and the town. This woman was given one line - and that beneath the removal of a cockpit! Oh Mary! What justification can there be for this, after your

lifelong struggle for women to be sensibly educated and their rights acknowledged. Beverley should be lauding you and your family's achievements; we should be shouting from the rooftops that this genius was once a resident of our beautiful, historic town.

Looking at the building I wondered if this old white doorway was the doorway of Mary's house, the house where Mary's family lived in Wednesday Market during their time in Beverley? The more I looked, the more likely it seemed.



Mary became famous throughout Europe for her work *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, which called for women to be given equal status with men and educated to allow them to be independent and take up work, instead of being educated purely to be infantilised and taught accomplishments to make them docile wives and entertaining hostesses. This had enlarged upon and expanded the scope of reform called for in her earlier work, *Thoughts on the Education of Daughters* (1786). Mary's life and those of her family who followed her were to capture the tragedy and romance of the Romantic era of the late 18<sup>th</sup> Century and early 19<sup>th</sup> Century. This woman, who gave birth to two daughters, Fanny Imlay and Mary Wollstonecraft-Godwin, both of whom were to have tragic and testing lives, was massively to influence the fascinating mix of people who have become known as "Shelley and his circle."

### A brief history

Mary Wollstonecraft was born on April 21<sup>st</sup> 1759 in Primrose Street, Spitalfields, London to Edward John, a silk weaver who inherited his wealth from his father and Elizabeth Dixon, whose father was a wine merchant in Ireland. Mary was the second of their seven children. Edward (Ned) was born in 1757, Henry (who rather mysteriously disappeared as a young man) in 1761, Elizabeth (Eliza) in 1763, Everina in 1765, James in 1768, and Charles in 1770. Ned was doted upon by his mother as the firstborn. At seven years of age he received an inheritance from his grandfather as large as his father's. The other grandchildren were left nothing from him. Mary often felt unloved and second best to Ned. She later opposed the principle of primogeniture and developed an independent spirit that came from having to look after herself and her siblings. Throughout her life she helped and cared for her younger sisters and brothers.

Mary's mother and father disliked life in London. Edward John planned to establish himself as a gentleman farmer, but his business sense was poor and, volatile and sometimes violent, he gradually lost his wealth, drinking and gambling his money away, even taking the money from Mary that was meant as her inheritance from her mother's

side of the family. Mary was keenly aware of the brutality of her father; he beat both her and her mother. She was also aware of the weakness of her mother to oppose him. She tried to protect her but felt embarrassed about her parents.

The family moved often as Edward John's fortunes declined, from Spitalfields to a farm in Epping (1763) to Barking (1765) to Beverley (1768) to the London suburb of Hoxton (1774) to Laugharne, Wales (1776) to the London suburb of Walworth (1777) where Mary made friends with and later lived with the Blood family.

In 1778 when Mary was 19 years old she left the family home and became a lady's companion for Mrs Dawson in Bath. Her family moved to Enfield. In 1782 she returned home to nurse her dying mother, afterwards returning to live with the Bloods and her adored friend Fanny Blood, earning money from needlework. In the same year her father remarried and settled in Laugharne, Wales. At 24 years old she established a school with her sisters Eliza and Everina, and Fanny Blood, in Newington Green, London; but the school failed when, after Fanny's marriage, Mary followed her to Lisbon in order to nurse her when she was ill with tuberculosis and giving birth to her baby. Sadly both mother and baby died. Mary later named her firstborn daughter after Fanny Blood.

Newington Green, London, housed many dissenters such as the famous radical intellectual Dr Richard Price, who was the minister there. He took an interest in Mary and she attended his chapel. John Hewlett was a schoolmaster who had ambitions to become a writer. He took Mary to visit Dr Johnson and suggested to her that she become a writer. Mary produced *Thoughts on the Education of Daughters* (1786). She became governess to Lord and Lady Kingsborough in Ireland, but was dismissed in 1787 following a scandal in which she was accused of corrupting her charges. She then decided on a career as a writer and was able to turn to the man who helped her most in life, her publisher and patron Joseph Johnson who had his office in St Paul's Churchyard. He produced "The Analytical Review" for which Mary wrote translations and reviews. Johnson helped house Mary and introduce her to fellow radical thinkers of the day at his dinners. One of these was the philosopher William Godwin, Mary's future husband; another was the married artist Fuseli. In 1788 the 29 year old Mary fell in love with Fuseli, who was 47 years old and married to Sophia, an artist's model.

Fuseli flirted with Mary: she was the complete opposite of his uneducated wife, and Mary developed an obsession which ended with her suggesting to Sophia that they all live together. Sophia threw her out of her house and in 1792, aged 33 years, Mary embarked alone on an expedition to revolutionary France, earlier planned for all of them, as an escape from the embarrassing situation.

The early phase of the French Revolution was a time of optimism and hope for change in social order. Mary mixed with the English expatriates and in 1793 met Gilbert Imlay, an American army captain, frontiersman and writer. Mary was always open and honest in her speech and opinions. She believed Imlay to be similar. Imlay, unlike her father and Fuseli, was even tempered, tall and handsome. He was 39 years and Mary 34 years old. He pursued Mary, which flattered her. She fell in love and was intensely happy for a while. After the execution of Louis XVI, war was declared between England and France; to protect Mary from being arrested during the Terror Imlay registered her as his wife at the US Embassy in Paris. Mary conceived a child in August 1793 and Fanny Imlay was born in May 1794.

Imlay spent increasingly longer periods away from Mary and Fanny, finally returning to London in 1794. In 1795 Mary returned to London at Imlay's bidding but he did not wish them to carry on the relationship. She could not accept that Imlay did not have the idealistic view of their relationship that she had, and that they could not live as a family. She made a suicide attempt using laudanum. Imlay responded by asking Mary to follow up his business matters in Scandinavia; and Mary, grasping at straws that this was Imlay showing that he needed her, sailed from Hull in June 1795, taking Fanny and her maid with her. She returned in September and after finding that Imlay had set up home with his actress mistress she attempted suicide again by jumping from Putney Bridge. Imlay eventually moved to France with his mistress. In 1796 Mary's book *Letters Written during a Short Residence in Sweden, Norway and Denmark* was published and she slowly accepted the end of the relationship.

She re-entered the London intellectual social life in 1796. Re-introduced to William Godwin at a dinner party, she took the unheard of step of going to visit him at his home, supposedly to take him a book. Godwin was 40 years old and at the height of fame as a philosopher having produced *Political Justice* and a popular novel *Caleb William*. He had many interests and friends, but had spent most of his life pursuing intellectual and religious matters. His interest in women had really just begun and Mary did have rivals. However, they started a relationship although they did not live together at first. They wrote letters to each other and saw each other most days. When Mary became pregnant they married on 29<sup>th</sup> March 1797 and Mary moved into Godwin's house. Mary had been known as Mrs Imlay and was dropped by some of her friends when it was realised that she could not have been married previously. Early on August 30<sup>th</sup> Mary went into labour and gave birth to her second daughter. The placenta did not come away and was removed by a doctor. Mary appeared to be in good health after this ordeal but slowly weakened as septicaemia spread through her body. She died on September 10<sup>th</sup>. Godwin named the baby Mary after her mother.

He wrote *Memoirs of Mrs Godwin* very quickly after Mary's death, which brought her notoriety as her way of living was brought into public view. The illegitimacy of her daughter, and her beliefs that marriage was unnecessary and that divorce should be easier, meant that her influence and her writings were discredited - until recent feminist views emerged and Mary was again given the recognition that she so deserved.

Gill Goldie

To follow: "Mary's life in Beverley and the lives of her daughters"

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**Please send material by email if possible: this saves re-typing.** However, if you do not use email, no matter – all contributions and letters, no matter how brief, are welcome. **The deadline** for copy to be included in the Spring 2012 Newsletter is **31<sup>st</sup> May 2012.**

21% of our membership now receives this newsletter in electronic form via email, thus saving valuable Civic Society resources for other use, not to mention the distributors' shoe-leather and time. It is appreciated that many do not use email or prefer to receive their newsletter in hard copy form, but if you are able and willing to join the e-circulation list, please could you let me know via the above email address. Many thanks.

PS. Apologies that some members who receive their copies electronically and may also in error have received hard copies of the Winter 2011 edition of the Newsletter.



## Beverley and District Civic Society Summer Outing Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> May 2012

### The Bar Convent Museum, York

This year's outing will take us to the Bar Convent, the oldest living convent in England. As well as the museum, the buildings house libraries and archives and there is a gift shop, café and garden to enjoy.

The coach will leave the Durham Ox, Norwood at 10am for York. On arrival we will be given a talk on the Bar Convent by Sister Agnes. A two course lunch is included and there will be time to tour the museum and buildings. We will leave York at 3.30pm for Beverley.

If you wish to join us, please complete the form below and return it, with a cheque, to Margaret Munro, 1, Napier Close, Beverley HU17 7AU, tel 01482 862655, enclosing a stamped addressed envelope for the return of ticket/s. You will need to complete your choice in advance for each course for lunch as the chef is preparing this on the day especially for us. We also need to know if you have any special dietary requirements.

The cost of the day is **£20**, which includes coach fare, lunch, talk and tour, gratuities and a donation to the convent. Please note that no drinks are included, but these can be purchased on the day.

**NUMBERS LIMITED TO 50 PEOPLE.**

### Outing Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> May 2012

Please send me ( ) tickets for the outing to Bar Convent York. I enclose a cheque for £\_\_\_\_\_ made payable to "Beverley and District Civic Society". Choices for lunch are listed below:-

Name	Main	Main	Pudding	Pudding
	Plated Ham Salad with minted new potatoes	Chicken Breast in White Wine + Mushroom Sauce with new potatoes and vegetables	Cheesecake served with fresh cream	Apple Pie served with fresh cream

Special Dietary Requirements \_\_\_\_\_

**Summer Event Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> June  
6.45pm, St Mary's Parish Hall**

This year's summer event is slightly different as we have a speaker. Dr Diana Wyatt will talk on the importance of Beverley's medieval plays and pageants, followed by supper in St Mary's Parish Hall. The evening is envisaged as follows:

- 6.45 – arrive and welcome drink.
- 7.15 – talk by Dr Diana Wyatt
- 8.15 – supper with wine/soft drink

Entrance will be by ticket only for this event and the cost of the evening is **£10 per person**.

Please complete the form below if you wish to attend this event and return it to Margaret Munro, enclosing a stamped addressed envelope for the return of ticket/s. You will also be able to purchase tickets at open evenings.

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**Summer Event Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> June 2012**

Please send me \_\_\_\_\_ tickets for the summer event for the following guests:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Please note any special dietary needs \_\_\_\_\_

I am enclosing a cheque for \_\_\_\_\_ made payable to "Beverley and District Civic Society".

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Number \_\_\_\_\_

Please send completed forms with cheque and envelope for the return of tickets to Mrs M Munro, 1, Napier Close, Manor Road, Beverley HU17 7AU

**Views of York Exhibition:  
Portrait of a City 1610 to the Present Day  
Private Curator's Tours, Fairfax House, York YO1 9RN**

This major exhibition will document aspects of York which have captured the imagination of artists and photographers, showing how perceptions have changed over time. Over 100 paintings, watercolours, photographs and maps will be on display. Profits from the exhibition will raise funds towards projects aimed at improving public realm in the city. More information is available on [www.yorkcivictrust.co.uk/viewsofyork](http://www.yorkcivictrust.co.uk/viewsofyork)

We have the opportunity to book a special curator's private tour of the exhibition. Tours last about 2 hours, including a glass of wine served at the conclusion of the tour, and cost £10 per person, without transport. We are booking 2 separate tours, each accommodating 20 people, on the following dates:-

**Monday 25<sup>th</sup> June 2012, 3.15pm**

**Friday 6<sup>th</sup> July 2012, 5.15pm**

We have chosen an afternoon and an evening tour so that people can decide which suits them best. Both times fit with X46 buses from Beverley to York (1.42 and 3.42 respectively from Sow Hill). Other transport options include train or car (possibly using the park and ride). The groups will meet at Fairfax House on Castlegate at the tour time.

We are not organising a supper after these tours, but many of you may wish to stay on in York to eat afterwards. We're sure people will be able to arrange something between them for this.

If you wish to go on one of these tours, please complete the form below and return it with cheque for the correct amount made payable to "Beverley and District Civic Society".

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**Views of York Private Curator's Tour**

Please reserve \_\_\_\_ places on the following tour/s:-

Monday 25<sup>th</sup> June, 3.15pm \_\_\_\_\_ and/or Friday 6<sup>th</sup> July, 5.15pm \_\_\_\_\_

I understand that the cost is £10 per person and enclose a cheque for £\_\_\_\_\_ made payable to "Beverley and District Civic Society".

I also understand that own transport will need to be arranged.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Contact Number \_\_\_\_\_

Please send completed forms with cheque to Mrs M Munro, 1 Napier Close, Beverley HU17 7AU.