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BEVERLEY & DISTRICT CIVIC SOCIETY

DIAMOND JUBILEE YEAR

NEWSLETTER SUMMER 2012

Beverley & District Civic Society Open Forum on Current Issues Tuesday 13th March in St. Mary's Parish Hall.

Twice yearly the Society holds an Open meeting for members and guests to discuss issues related to the present and future development and protection of our town. On this occasion we were joined by Mr Ian Burnett, the ERYC Traffic Planning Manager, who brought us up-to-date on a current project: the development of a Coach Park for tourists and visitors. This has been an issue long championed by the Civic Society.

In summary, places for 6-7 coaches will be created within the existing School Lane car park, serviced by a new Puffin pedestrian crossing over New Walkergate. Medium-stay car parking numbers will be reduced to allow for the coaches and their necessary turning circle, leaving 27 medium-stay car places in all. This will displace a maximum of 49 cars to find alternative medium-stay places around the town. Daily charges for coaches are yet to be decided. Consultation with other coach parks and the Beverley Town Council suggest a figure of between £5 and £11. A final decision about the construction of the Coach Park was to go to the ERYC cabinet in April.

A lively question-&-answer session with Mr. Burnett followed, with the meeting particularly divided on the provision of another crossing over Walkergate, especially from the end of School Lane. Mr Burnett said that a pedestrian headcount by ERYC personnel, undertaken at that point over 12 hour periods, had found that 500 people crossed freely there each day, and 1,500 crossed on Saturdays. Almost nobody walked along the pavement to an existing crossing point. Mr Burnett emphasised Health and Safety issues. Other questions related to the chosen site, matters of drop-off and pick-up by coaches and the traffic impact on other junctions feeding into and out of New Walkergate. A debate arose as to the possibility of replacing the existing right turn into the M & S car park with a Left Turn Only in order to reduce the present hold-up to traffic flow.

Overall, Civic Society members and guests welcomed the Coach Park project, and Mr Burnett said that he would consider the suggested "left only" turn into the M&S car park. He then left the meeting, having been thanked by the Society for his input. A different matter was then raised by Mrs Berna Moody as she recalled the very many changes she had seen within Beverley over 60 years - many useful, others damaging.

She could not recall a time since the 1960's when so many proposals of such size had been around at the same time. She drew attention to the very large retail and housing developments now in planning for the North and South of the town, at Grovehill and Flemingate. She reminded us of the highly destructive developments which had been proposed for Beverley in the 1960's (fortunately never enacted) and which would have completely removed the town centre as we know it. She asked us to consider whether the size of these new retail centres would inflict another form of damage on the town, by taking away trade from the pedestrian centre and leading to the decline we see at the heart of many other towns.

Mr Richard Lancaster, Architect, gave us a resume of the need for a modest refurbishment of the Sensory Garden, within the Coronation gardens. This was developed by the Civic Society in 2006, landscaped by Mr Lancaster, and is maintained by ERYC gardeners. Members wishing to donate to this refurbishment can send donations to The Honorary Secretary, Mr Ian Munro, 1, Napier Close, Beverley HU17 8BL.

The meeting closed with a suggestion that these Open Forums should take place more often, and the work of the Executive be reported to members more frequently.

Sylvia Ashwell

Cars and Conservation - The Battle For Beverley in the Mid 20th Century
Dr David Neave - Senior Lecturer in Regional and Local History at the University
of Hull
Public meeting Tuesday 10th April

To mark the 50th Anniversary of the Beverley and District Civic Society, local historian David Neave treated a large gathering, including civic representatives, to a stimulating and nostalgic exploration of the reasons for the establishing of the society in 1961 and some of its subsequent activities. Dr Neave's talk described the crucial actions taken between 1960 and 1972 that were "so important in keeping Beverley as the beautiful town it is". Schemes such as the 1960 proposal by the Department of Transport to relieve town centre traffic congestion by the construction of a new road from York Road south across Wood Lane and down to the top of Lairgate, as well as a plan to widen two-way Hengate by demolishing a number of period properties on either side, caused outrage from many, including local historian, Ken MacMahon. His letter to the press accused the planners of attempting "the deep gutting of the town". Opposition gathered momentum, resulting in a public meeting on 2nd October 1961, called by the Rotary Club, with the object of forming a Civic Society to voice growing concerns over the town's heritage. This was supported by the Georgian Society of East Yorkshire and individuals such as George Odey, managing director of Hodgson's Tannery. However, further plans followed, including one to construct a ring road around the North Bar and neighbouring Georgian housing, effectively placing them on an island. In 1965, a relative newcomer to both the town and the Society, the indomitable Mrs Margaret Powell, joined the fray. Led by Mr Odey, a new tactic was employed to frustrate demolition: the purchase and renovation by individuals of certain old properties which lay in the path of the planners, starting with Hengate. By 1966 these road plans were abandoned in favour of a one-way Hengate and a new Sow Hill Road. In spite of carrying out an opinion survey in 1967, which was heavily in favour of saving the Globe

Inn, and gaining the support of John Betjeman, the society failed to prevent its destruction. But Betjeman's visit in early 1968 helped to raise the town to national status with his assessment that "Beverley is one of the most beautiful towns in England, a town to be walking in and not driving lorries through". Plans for the demolition of part of Ladygate spurred the Civic Society into commissioning Chris Woodhead and Dick Swaine to publish an architectural study of the street indicating the potential losses from such action. This road-widening scheme, along with one for Lairgate, came to nothing, but a similar plan proposed by the County Council for Walkergate required greater resistance. In response to strong protests, the Borough Council employed Max Lock to draw up plans for an alternative new road to the east of the medieval one. The Walkergate Enquiry of February 1972 resulted in the Secretary of State's refusal of the County Council's plan. The Civic Society purchased numbers 98 and 100 Walkergate for renovation, completed in 1974, and New Walkergate was finally built in 1980.

Rosemary Major

Sandra Ryan adds:

Dr David Neave gave a very informative and at times amusing presentation, punctuating historical pictures with animated cartoons of cars moving through the streets! Over a hundred people attended this lecture, the most we have had for some time. Two of John Betjeman's messages stood out in my mind very clearly: "Both parties, council and public need to talk to each other to understand the concerns and priorities of each" and "If listed historical buildings are not used and become empty they will not survive." So we were very pleased to welcome councillors and officers from the East Riding council with whom we are always striving to build a good relationship. They took a great interest in the history of developments in Beverley over the years, and noted how we are fighting similar threats today from increasing traffic and proposed new developments for Beverley and district.

The officers attending were Nigel Leighton (Director of Environment & Neighbourhood Services), Peter Ashcroft Head (Planning & Development Management), John Skidmore (Head of Street Scene Services), Austin Lillicoe (Town Improvement Group), Cllr David Elvidge and Matt Snowdon of Longcroft School. We thank all of them for attending, and in particular Dr David Neave for his highly informative and skilful presentation.

Cllr David Elvidge told me that he was one of six siblings brought up at no 98 Walkergate, one of the two terraced houses purchased and renovated by the society, and a photograph of which is inside our new brochure. He wrote a letter to the Beverley Guardian which was printed on 27th April 2012 under the heading 'Long May Society continue' and which, with the newspaper's permission, is reproduced below:

"I would like to thank local historian David Neave for his talk on 'The Battle for Beverley' which I attended as a guest of the Beverley & District Civic Society. The evening was both informative and humorous in parts; although many of the battles were before my time, I was intrigued to see how my home town had been shaped by these custodians of our culture. Long may the society continue to challenge those who would alter our heritage." Councillor David K Elvidge, Beverley.

From the Archives of October 1963

Membership has increased in the last year, as follows:

Life members 28
Ordinary members 190
Junior members 5 TOTAL 223

The realisation of a target membership of at least 500 members would be a great asset to the finances of the society. Membership cards are available from most committee members, and we would ask you to do every thing possible to enrol new members.

Wendy Usher-Bacon... also writes:

I am in charge of archives for the society now and would be most grateful if any members have articles or pictures that could be added to the collection we have at the moment.

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 12th June at 6.45 p.m.

Summer Event

Dr Diana Wyatt

The importance of Beverley's medieval plays and pageants

Followed by supper and wine / soft drink

See elsewhere in this Newsletter for details and an application form

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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 Autumn 2012 Newsletter is **20th August 2012. Please note that this is earlier than the usual 31st of the month.**

22% 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.

**Summer Event Tuesday 12th 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.

Summer Event Tuesday 12th 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