



BEVERLEY & DISTRICT CIVIC SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER SUMMER 2013



Several members of the Executive Committee were present at the Guildhall on the evening of Monday 18th March to mark the occasion when Harry Flynn, past Chairman of the Beverley & District Civic Society, was appointed Honorary Freeman of the Town.

Harry had been nominated by Councillor Kate Gray and Berna Moody on behalf of the Executive Committee. Kate gave a full account of Harry's life and career, as well as his public service which totalled over 75 years.

Several members of Harry's family were present to hear him give a lively and insightful speech of acceptance in which he paid tribute to both the people of Beverley and his fellow nominee, the well-known and popular Bill Rice.

The mayor presented both gentlemen with a scroll bearing witness to their award, which all present agreed was a well-deserved honour.

ERYC's Local Plan of 2013 describes our town in these terms:

Beverley is a large market town situated alongside the River Hull, approximately eight miles north of the centre of Hull.

Apart from the fact that it is not alongside the Hull, and never has been, this seems to us Beverlonians rather like saying 'Stonehenge is a collection of stones not too far from Swindon.' Surely Beverley has more significance than its distance from Hull? My ambition is for it to be a World Heritage Site, as a perfect example of an English market town, with an outstanding Gothic minster. Whitby and York both aspire to World Heritage status, and good luck to them; they are marvellous places. But are we not in the same league? In place of the sea we have the pastures. We all have great churches, and many prefer Beverley to York Minster for its consistent style. And we have St Mary's too. We have 500 listed buildings, a fifth of all those in the East Riding, and around the town the vast expanses of the only urban commons surviving in East Yorkshire, placed by English Heritage in the highest category of all English commons.

But ERYC does not see that Beverley is special, and makes no special attempt to protect or promote it. We protest in vain.

Other people have more generous assessments of our town's quality.

In 1965 the Council for British Archaeology listed it with 56 other British towns as being worthy of special care in preservation and developments 'so splendid and so precious, that ultimate responsibility for them should be a national concern.' Nikolaus Pevsner calls it 'among the finest of England's small country towns'. It is regularly cited in lists of top towns: in The Daily Telegraph's list (2006) of ten top small towns, described as 'stupendous'; in 3rd place in 2006 of all small towns in Britain (Clive Aslet, Country Life); and 1st place in 2007 as top affordable town in Britain. In 2013 The Sunday Times listed Beverley as one of the ten best places to live in Yorkshire and the North East. Visitors for centuries have admired its magnificent churches, its range of buildings, and the Saturday and Wednesday markets that have continued for 800 years.

John Cornforth wrote in Country Life that a walk through the town centre 'is a memorable experience of townscape with one or two views as satisfying as any to be found in an English town'. 'It is a place made for walking and living in' (John Betjeman) and more recently 'the sort of town you always hope exists (Candida Lycett Green, Betjeman's daughter). The Lonely Planet Guide comments 'Handsome, unspoilt Beverley is one of the most attractive of Yorkshire towns largely on account of its magnificent minster – a rival to any cathedral in England – and the tangle of streets that lie beneath it, each brimming with exquisite Georgian and Victorian buildings.'

And then there are the churches. The historian Arthur Leach wrote of the Minster that 'there is no more beautiful building in England'; and in 1999 Simon Jenkins in England's Thousand Best Churches recorded: 'There are many candidates for best non-cathedral church in England but Beverley most often takes the palm...it ranks architecturally with the cathedrals and thus with the best Gothic churches in Europe.' He goes on to say that the town boasts not one but two churches of the highest quality, and if Beverley had no Minster, St Mary's would still draw crowds to the town.

If our rulers won't blow trumpets for us, let us blow our own on every possible occasion.

Barbara English

A War of Attrition

The following short article by Terence Blacker (www.terenceblacker.com) appeared in the Spring 2013 edition of *Countryside Voice*, the membership magazine of the Campaign to Protect Rural England', and is reproduced here with the kind permission of Terence and the CPRE:

In the last issue of *Countryside Voice* I wrote about a proposal to put three 125-metre wind turbines between four villages in South Norfolk. The local council had unanimously rejected the application. The developer, TCI Renewables, then appealed to the Government's Planning Inspectorate...

We won. Or at least we thought we won. The appeal was rejected on the grounds of the impact any development would have on a local church and houses. The six weeks required for an appeal to the High Court passed.

End of story? Not exactly. Earlier this year, TCI announced that it was to put in an entirely new application: same site, same number and size of turbines, but now placed closer together.

Here, then, is how it works. A local council rejects an application. Their decision is supported by the Planning Inspectorate. Thousands of pounds of taxpayers' money are spent in a lengthy, careful process to get the right and just decision. The developer then makes a small adjustment and reapplies. Right now that feels like corporate bullying, a cynical exploitation of the planning system and a war of attrition against our local community.

In the same edition of *Countryside Voice* the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Planning, Nick Boles M P, wrote:

"The National Planning Policy Framework puts the responsibility to draw up plans for sustainable development firmly in the hands of the local people and the councils they elect... I firmly believe that, in a grumpy old democracy like ours, you cannot force people to accept development."

Your Editor recently wrote to our MP, Graham Stuart, noting his criticism of our 'overly centralised planning system' and how the government is taking action to put decisions back into local hands - 'localism in action'. I asked him how this squared with the government's imposition of a target number of houses to be built in the East Riding in coming years.

I thought that members might be interested in his reply:

Dear Neil... over recent months numerous press articles have quoted North Bar Homes stating that the 3,200 homes for Beverley is a Government target for the town. This is incorrect. Government guidance requires Local Authorities to set their own housing target to meet the full housing needs of their area.

I was under the impression that it was not only North Bar Homes but the ERYC who were claiming that we have to build 3,200 homes in Beverley as a result of central Government policy. Is ERYC wrong?

Neil King

Car parking on Westwood

In early April I raised with the Sally Masters, the Clerk to the Pasturemasters, the matter of cars parking all day on the fringes of Westwood, and the fact that the 4 hour limit is not policed. She told me that the Council say that it is a police matter, and vice versa, which is also my experience. However, she also says that there are negotiations in progress for the limit to be policed and penalty notices issued. Perhaps, two months on, some policing of the situation is in evidence. Watch this space.

Neil King

Norwood house

On the 15th March fifty-four civic society members and friends visited the newly opened Norwood House for a short tour and supper. Members were divided into four groups and Professor Barbara English very kindly took each group for a short tour of the ground floor and gave a history of the house. After four tours I am sure she was very tired.

Heidi, the co-director of the house, gave us a very interesting and enjoyable supper, for which we thank her. David Bacon thanked Professor English for giving her time to lead the tours of the house – and also for researching, writing and publishing the book on Beverley Pastures, which has proved to be a great success and will be reprinted.

Wendy Usher-Bacon

Forthcoming Public Meetings & Events...

All meetings are held in St Mary's Parish Hall, North Bar Within, Beverley.

Monday 8th July

Summer Outing to Gilling Castle and Ampleforth Abbey

Tuesday 10th September 7.30pm.

Peter Birch, Yeoman Warder R.V.M.

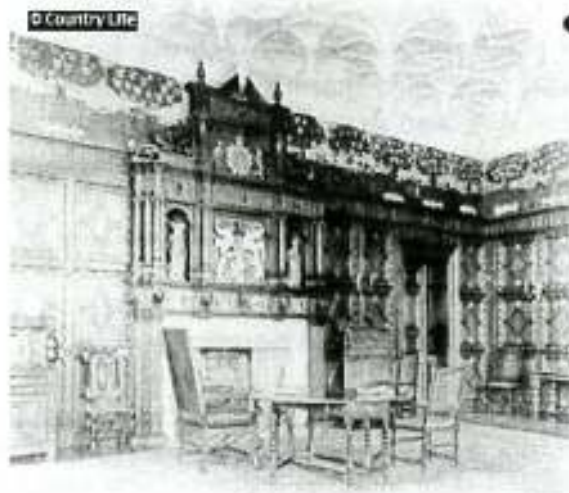
The Tower of London

NEWSLETTER EDITOR: Neil King, 1 Woodlands, Beverley HU17 8BT

Tel: 01482 862752 email: neilandsarah@mansle.karoo.co.uk

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 2013 Newsletter is 30th August 2013.**

A quarter 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.



AMPLEFORTH ABBEY AND GILLING CASTLE
Monday 8 July 2013

A guided coach tour with visits to the amazing Elizabethan Great Chamber of Gilling Castle, and the famous Benedictine Abbey of Ampleforth

The Great Chamber of **Gilling Castle** is one of the finest Elizabethan rooms in Britain, decorated by Sir William Fairfax around 1585. The panelled walls are crowned with an elaborate frieze of trees growing in flowery meadows among real and fabled animals: in one corner musicians are playing stringed instruments. From the trees' branches hang 450 coats of arms of Yorkshire families. The room contains, as well as this astonishing frieze, Elizabethan stained glass, an elaborate chimneypiece and a plaster ceiling with animals.

Ampleforth Abbey has been the home of Benedictine monks since 1802 and is now the largest Benedictine community in Britain. It is set in 2000 acres of land in the Howardian Hills, facing south overlooking the Vale of Pickering. A famous public school, the centre of the abbey is its great church. There are orchards (the monks make cider and sell apples) and walks through the grounds, amongst the many interesting buildings that form part of the school.

Timetable:

- 9.45 Leave Beverley by Pearson Coach, starting at the Durham Ox
- 11.30 Tour of the Great Hall, Gilling Castle (guide Barbara English)
- 12.30 Leave Gilling for Ampleforth Abbey
- 1.15 Lunch (included) at the Abbey
- 2.15 Tour of the Abbey Church (guide a monk)
- 3.15 Visitor Centre, Abbey Shop, tea if wished (own arrangements)
- 4.00 Leave Ampleforth
- 5.45 Arrive Beverley, the Durham Ox

I would like to join the Gilling and Ampleforth Excursion and enclose a cheque for £25 made out to 'Beverley & District Civic Society'.

NAME:

ADDRESS.....

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PHONE

Please send the form with payment and SAE for ticket to: Mrs. Angela Mulford, 7 Hengate, Beverley, HU17 8BL.