



BEVERLEY & DISTRICT CIVIC SOCIETY

DIAMOND JUBILEE YEAR

NEWSLETTER AUTUMN 2012

BEVERLEY AND DISTRICT CIVIC SOCIETY ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

NOTICE IS GIVEN that the Beverley and District Civic Society Annual General Meeting will be held at St Mary's Church Parish Hall, North Bar Within, Beverley on **TUESDAY 9TH OCTOBER 2012 AT 7.30PM**. Nomination forms for office in the Society or vacancies on the Executive Committee can be obtained from, and should be returned to, Dennis Peckett, 36 Thurstan Road, Beverley HU17 8LP, tel 01482 862014, by **Tuesday 25th September 2012**.

Agenda

1. To receive apologies for absence.
2. To approve the minutes of the 2011 AGM.
3. Matters arising.
4. To receive the Annual Report.
5. To receive the Treasurer's Report and receive and approve the Annual Accounts.
6. To receive the Membership Secretary's Report.
7. To elect the following Officers of the Society: President, Vice-Presidents, Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Hon. Secretary, Hon. Treasurer.
8. To elect members of the Executive Committee.

In accordance with the Constitution of the Society, the under-mentioned members will retire at the AGM but will be eligible for re-election:

Sylvia Ashwell
Berna Moody
Wendy Usher-Bacon
Dennis Peckett
John Bird (currently co-opted, seeks election)

9. Any other business.

NOTE: The under-mentioned will continue to serve on the Executive Committee for at least another year:

Barbara English, Harry Flynn, Mike Guest, Michael Hildyard, Pamela Hopkins, Jill Jones, Angela Mulford, Gerald O'Callaghan, Sandy Patience, Sandra Ryan.

Farewell

Margaret and Ian Munro are leaving Beverley Civic Society in August and moving back to the Nottingham area.

In mid 2008 two new members, Margaret and Ian, came on the scene in our Society. Soon it was clear that standing on the sidelines was not enough as Margaret, first, began to help with the organising of our monthly open meetings and Society outings and events. Soon we, on the Executive Committee, knew we had a real acquisition in energy and ideas; and so it has continued.

Ian brought his energy to the Executive Committee and at the AGM in October 2009 was elected Hon. Secretary by the Society and has been a great contributor, too. He will be remembered (probably for ever) as the chief activist in establishing the Society's "Outdoor Art Gallery" in Beverley. Month by month he negotiated sites for placing Elwell reproduction paintings around the town (even finding that one site was owned by a Japanese pension company). Sponsors to pay for each painting were found and he had to make sure that promised money was paid. He leaves us a beautiful legacy of his work.

Margaret and Ian gave us a cheerful and positive approach that enabled all of us on the Executive Committee to feel better and achieve more.

They leave us for the best of reasons – to help look after (soon to arrive) grandchildren of their daughter. We wish them all very well.

Gerald O'Callaghan

YHAC meeting, Cleethorpes

MORNING saw an early start with a guided walk around Cleethorpes. Unfortunately the area is not abounding in heritage because during the boom years of the fishing industry fishing vessel owners did not invest in the area. However, we walked past the Art Deco electricity board showroom which is now 'Twinkles' fancy dress and ballroom hire, passing through the remains of the Victorian railway station to stand on the Head Wrightson Pier, much of which is intact and beautifully restored. Su Pollard (UTube) had the desired effect, bringing out the sunshine. Cleethorpes in Bloom are the proud winners of the National Britain in Bloom Award, which added to the pleasure of that morning and the winning evidence was there before us in the immaculate beds, lawns and hedges.

Three miles south the Humberston Fitties still thrive with restored and new chalet bungalows.

(<http://www.nelincs.gov.uk/resident/arts--events-and-tourism/humberston-fitties/history-humberston-fitties/>). The decision makers at the time turned down Billie Butlin! - Another questionable financial decision for the area.

AFTERNOON The speakers were **Paul Genny**, Chair of Grimsby & Cleethorpes Civic Society, who opened the meeting and introduced **Austin Mitchell MP** for Great Grimsby and **Kevin Trickett**, Chair Yorkshire and Humberside Civic Societies and President of Wakefield Civic Society, who closed the meeting with future suggested actions.

Paul Genny introduced and raised some interesting dilemmas for Civic Societies:

- > As Civic Societies do we need to consider our own credibility by being aware of campaigning for sentimental reasons without due consideration to the financial viability of the buildings we want to protect?
- > Should we consider the practicality of campaigning to save historic buildings when there may be no possibility of a sustainable, financial future?
- > Do we wish to be the generation responsible for the loss of historical landmarks which future generations may regret?
- > Should Civic Societies be the providers of a forum to enable the members, the public and everyone interested to have their say?
- > Should Civic Societies work with Local Authority and Developers to ensure the preservation of old buildings and ensure the excellent quality of design and materials of new buildings?

Austin Mitchell MP (Parliamentary Thief, as he described himself) told how there was uproar from the public when there was a proposal to build a revolving restaurant on the top of the water tower. Given that Grimsby has no financial legacy and with the compensation for fishermen still being worked out, together with high unemployment, this was an understandable reaction but makes for some very difficult decisions. He went on to give further examples:

- > The Grimsby Dock Tower is a massive water tower built to provide pressurized water to drive the hydraulic gates of the docks (www.history.org.uk/resources/public_resource_4427_144.html). When built it was the tallest secular building in the world and of such national importance it was opened by Queen Victoria.
- > The Ice Factory - a decision could not be made at a public meeting and an appeal was made to the audience for resolutions. The first that the Ice Factory be delisted and demolished was not carried; the second, that the Civic Society continues to facilitate the search for a solution, was carried. As someone once said, not the beginning of the end, but the end of the beginning (<http://grimsbyice.co.uk>).
- > The Bull Sands Fort (www.islandofhope.co.uk) was once home from home to 200 men for months at a time, but has been allowed by the MOD to fall into disrepair. However the trustees, Streetwise Charitable Trust, with the help of volunteers from all over the UK, intend to transform the fort into a Christian drug and alcohol detoxification unit. It will be a huge task to turn this one time 'Guardian of the Humber' into a calm and peaceful haven, now renamed 'The Island of Hope', for those suffering from their addiction to alcohol and drugs, but the plans are slowly being realised.
- > Salts Mill, Bradford survived owing to Hockney (www.saltsmill.org.uk).
- > The recent conversion of the Grimsby Market Cross Pub by Tesco is another example (www.thisisgrimsby.co.uk/Retail-giant-Tesco-plans-outlet-pub/story-15052392-detail/story.html).

Civic Societies have to be wary of stopping progress by preserving buildings if there is no money. It is also very difficult to remove a preservation order once it has been made, so there has to be a commercial use to preserve a building.

Austin Mitchell told how London is heavier than any city in Europe, that the North has been drained by the South, and whilst there are plans to send 300 people from London to Hull where there are houses, there are no jobs. Prescott's earlier proposal to relocate regional government offices failed (BLAIR) yet much needed revenue would have been brought into the area. He related the example of America where their central functions are divided into three main areas which are much more efficient and spread the work thus revenue: California - Communications Centre; Washington - Federal Centre; and New York - Financial Centre. He believes we need to restore regional government: it was a mistake to centralize in London as it has destroyed Northern areas. He described how he and his wife used to drive to Sewerby Bridge Railway station and take a train in opposite directions to work. One morning they arrived to find it had been demolished overnight; it had completely disappeared with no warning! The Public are divided over the High Speed Train proposals. Would the alternative be to upgrade the East Coast Train? DEVOLUTION is the answer to give the North more power. The North East and Yorkshire are already building their own alliances. Austin Mitchell would also like to see English Heritage funded from central government to support and make projects viable. Leeds already have a number of agencies beginning to work together and the Metro recognizes the need to enhance travel but again need funds from Central Government. There is a huge need to train young people not only in trade skills but qualifications too, the latter being the short term aim. RESEARCH is available to strengthen the campaign from: The Rowntree Trust, Public Policy Research, Hannah Mitchell Foundation. Austin Mitchell gave many examples of disastrous decisions made from Central Government and reiterated the importance of politicians and elected members in parliament to fight for the future of our areas.

Kevin Trickett focused his presentation on new landmarks, e.g, The Sail, Portsmouth, and The Shard and The Gherkin in London, all of which create interest and pleasure and are fine examples of the quality of new architecture which we should also be campaigning for whilst still fighting for a sustainable future for our historical heritage.

The meeting was attended by Mrs Berna Moody & Mrs Sandra Ryan.

Sandra Ryan

Beverley's Long-Lasting Benefactor

A packed public meeting of the Beverley and District Civic Society on Tuesday 8th May enjoyed an illuminating talk on the distant but enduring figure who brought both religious significance and then wealth to a backwater known in the 8th century as Inderawuda, (the wood of the Deira people). Historian Dr Robert Wright told the story of a local man from Harpham who, after a distinguished ecclesiastical career as Bishop John of Hexham and then York, returned to his roots to found a monastery in the rather unpromising wetlands of what is now East Yorkshire.

Entitled "Medieval Beverley", Dr Wright traced the remarkable effects of this exceptional man, deemed to be graced with divine powers of healing before his death in AD 721 and, later, also as a protector of the king's forces in battle. For example in the 10th century King Athelstan twice sought his blessing as he took his army north to defeat the Scots, possibly visiting his shrine here in 934. In gratitude, royal privileges were given to

the town, freeing it from much outside control. The Minster which housed John's shrine attracted pilgrims from far and wide and archaeological evidence points to a thriving community around it.

Such was St. John's renown that the arrival of William the Conqueror made little difference to Beverley's fortunes. It escaped the excesses of the "Harrying of the North", and retained its former privileges through the reigns of successive kings. Seen as of special value in military matters, his image would be carried on a banner into battle as at the Battle of the Standard in 1138, when only one man to carry the standard was required of Beverley, rather than the usual supply of fighting men. In 1301 Edward I was moved to waive taxes on the town in honour of John and on 25th October, 1415, on the feast day of his translation, his banner was carried at the Battle of Agincourt.

By the Middle Ages, apart from its ecclesiastical distinction, Beverley had accrued outstanding commercial successes, benefitting from its charters and privileges. It was a major centre for the wool trade with many merchants involved in the export of large quantities of fine wool. In the 15th century it gained royal patronage for its cloth production, which on the Continent was popular as far as Spain. The town's wealth was reflected in the large number of guilds which contributed funds towards the building of the two great churches we still use today, the Minster and St Mary's.

Sadly, Beverley lost its premier position in the 16th century with the transfer of much of the wool industry to the West Riding, the development of Hull as a port and the destruction of St. John's shrine in the Protestant Reformation. The saint's burial place is now marked by a simple floor slab in the Minster. However, his influence is still felt, even at a great distance. Mrs Berna Moody, in her vote of thanks, pointed out that recently members of the Russian Orthodox Church, which venerates him, made another visit to the Minster. Such is his significance that they took water from the well there all the way back to Russia.

Rosemary Major

Christmas trees in Beverley Minster.

Last year Beverley Minster had a display of 50 large Christmas trees sponsored by firms, charities and organisations promoting their individual activities, etc.

This year my husband and I decided to sponsor the Civic Society with a tree to promote our aims objectives and show what our society is all about.

I understand there will be about 70 trees on display this year. Please go and view these trees: they are a wonderful sight. Look for dates of viewing in the press later in the year.

Wendy Usher-Bacon

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 11th September

Belinda Hakes

Larkin: which Larkin?

Tuesday 9th October

Annual General Meeting and Topical Matters

Friday 26th October

Annual Dinner (see separate form with this newsletter for application)

Tuesday 6th November

Study Day (see separate form with this newsletter for application)

Tuesday 13th November

David Bacon

Opera, Theatre and Me

Tuesday 27th November at 2.30 p.m.

Mrs Ronni Hewer

A Tour of Yorkshire Abbeys

Tuesday 11th December

Paul Schofield

Hull City Centre – From Georgian Suburbs to the Present Day

Do stay for a festive drink and mince pie after this meeting

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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 Winter 2012 Newsletter is **30th November 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.