

Newsletter:

November 2023

<http://www.beverleycivicsociety.co.uk/>

**BEVERLEY
CIVIC
SOCIETY**

Founded 1961

Chairman's Remarks

Our new season's series of public talks has got off to a flying start with high attendances. There has been some feedback that, because of the architecture of the church, there is less opportunity to mingle and socially chat with other members. Our success in attracting larger numbers means that we can't revert to our previous location of the Parish Room, but the Executive will be thinking of how we might overcome this disadvantage, at least on some occasions. After the December talk, we will, as usual, be offering festive mince pies and drink in the South transept.

Our next public talk is our special Margaret Powell memorial lecture. To refresh memories and inform, this piece is taken from our website as to why this lecture is an important date in our calendar. 'In 1965 the formidable Margaret Powell joined George Odey to prevent the demolition of historic buildings in the town centre, with some but not complete success. John Betjeman helped raise the status of the town 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'.

For more information on her remarkable achievements please see the article below recording Dr David Neave's 2016 memorial lecture reproduced below.

We get some positive feedback from members about the quality and range of articles in the Newsletter; thank you. We would like to encourage all members to think about contributing articles and 'opinion pieces': maybe on controversial town topics, memories of early Beverley life, or other matters which might be of interest to our wide-ranging membership. Indeed, feedback on any aspect of our activities is to be welcomed.

Dick Lidwell

Report on the first Margaret Powell Lecture given by Dr David Neave at the Civic Society open meeting on 10th November 2016



A view of the west end of Norwood showing a group of 'lost buildings', on the right the Assembly Rooms, in the centre two Georgian houses at the bottom of Manor Road, and on the left can just be seen part of the porch of the 17th century Porch House.

Local historian, David Neave, delivered an outstanding inaugural lecture to an exceptionally large audience at St Mary's Hall on Margaret Powell, the woman who taught Beverley to revalue its heritage. He also went on to review

some of the historic architectural changes within the town over past centuries.

Margaret Powell, dauntless campaigner, arrived with her family in 1964 owing to her husband's job re-location. Mrs Powell "came upon unsuspecting Beverley with the suddenness of a storm cloud" (contemporary quotation from the Beverley Guardian). She was no ordinary housewife, but being from a distinguished family of architects, including her great grandfather Sir George Gilbert Scott and her uncle Sir Giles Gilbert Scott, she was imbued with a keen awareness of civic character and beauty. At a moment when the town was facing the implementation of drastic 1960s style road schemes cutting through its centre, her prompt opposition, together with Rupert Alec-Smith of the Georgian Society, helped to turn the tide. "The town should crucify traffic before being crucified by it," she declared. As a Town and County Councillor, as well as a member of the recently formed Civic Society and as Secretary of the Council for the Preservation of Rural England, she used every means to help thwart plans to carve up fine streets such as North Bar Within, including the encircling of the Bar by a roundabout. She gave evidence to at least three public inquiries. Her ally, Rupert Alec-Smith, invited along John Betjeman, along with other Fine Arts Commissioners, to join the fray over the fate of old Walkergate which was spared from the most radical plans. However, in spite of protests, the ancient Globe Inn was demolished to make

way for the new Sow Hill road cutting through to Saturday Market.

One of Margaret Powell's best known achievements was the rescue of the Friary from destruction, as planned by Armstrong Patents and with the consent of Beverley Council. In the early 1960s, already in a very neglected state, this reminder of Beverley's medieval importance received little public notice until she took up the cause of its restoration. She also spent her own money on purchasing old houses in streets such as Ladygate and Hengate, and by obtaining improvement grants she showed the way to keeping the street scene intact. Her activities brought her into conflict with some local councillors, in particular, Councillor Harold Godbold, who opposed the giving of advice to the public on such grants.

Finding new uses for old buildings became Mrs Powell's abiding aim. For example, the Ladygate Brewery was converted to become the Headquarters for the Girls Venture Corps, and in 1984 the Friary was brought to life again as a youth hostel.

Astonishingly, all Margaret Powell's battles on behalf of the town occurred within ten short years. In 1974 she moved with her husband, Leslie Powell, to live in Cornwall, where she remained until her death in 2014.

Rosemary Major



Beverley's Saturday Market pedestrianisation

By coincidence, following Barbara English's article last month on the High Streets' retail situation, the East Riding of Yorkshire Council is conducting a public survey on the Saturday Market pedestrianisation scheme. The current 18 month trial for the area finishes in May 2024 and the scheme could be made permanent after this time. ERYC is now seeking views on the current trial and next steps from stakeholders, businesses, residents and visitors. They would be pleased to receive your feedback to the questions on next steps for the pedestrian area. To ensure that your views are considered, please respond by 27th November 2023. (Plan on next page)

Today's layout of Saturday Market.



To view the consultation documents, and complete the survey see:

<https://consultation.eastriding.gov.uk/s/SaturdayMarketBeverleyPedestrianAreaTrial/>

Beverley Station Pedestrian Bridge

Work is progressing on the replacement pedestrian bridge at the station; see the photograph. The paint colour used on the refurbished cast iron structure is that which was used by the North Eastern Railway Company which took over the York and North Midland Railway in 1854. We hope that the works will be completed soon to enable passengers to once more cross the line easily.

Dick Lidwell



Photograph by Dick Lidwell

The Return of the Library Steps

Tennants Auctioneers of Leyburn, N.Yorks. held a Country House sale in September last year which included a 'metamorphic' oak chair, that unfolds to become library steps. The chair has a metal label showing it was made by local agricultural implement manufacturer William Sawney of Beverley, and dates from around 1862. BCS members Jim and Marlene Godfrey saw it, told Professor Barbara English about this interesting Beverley lot, and on the day of the auction, she set off to Leyburn to bring the steps back home. Unfortunately her car broke down on the way and unable to get there in time, the steps were sold and that would seem to be the end of the story.... But no, amazingly they were seen for sale at Hemswell Antique Centre in Lincolnshire, so Jim and Marlene generously acquired the steps to donate to the East Riding Museums in celebration of Professor Barbara English's 90th Birthday and her incredible contribution to Beverley.

It was decided that it would be most appropriate for the steps to be displayed at the Guildhall, and they are now in the Magistrates' Room. Home to Beverley at last - it would be fascinating to know where else they have been in-between.



Marlene Godfrey and Beverley Guildhall attendant Kloskk Tyrer show the Library steps

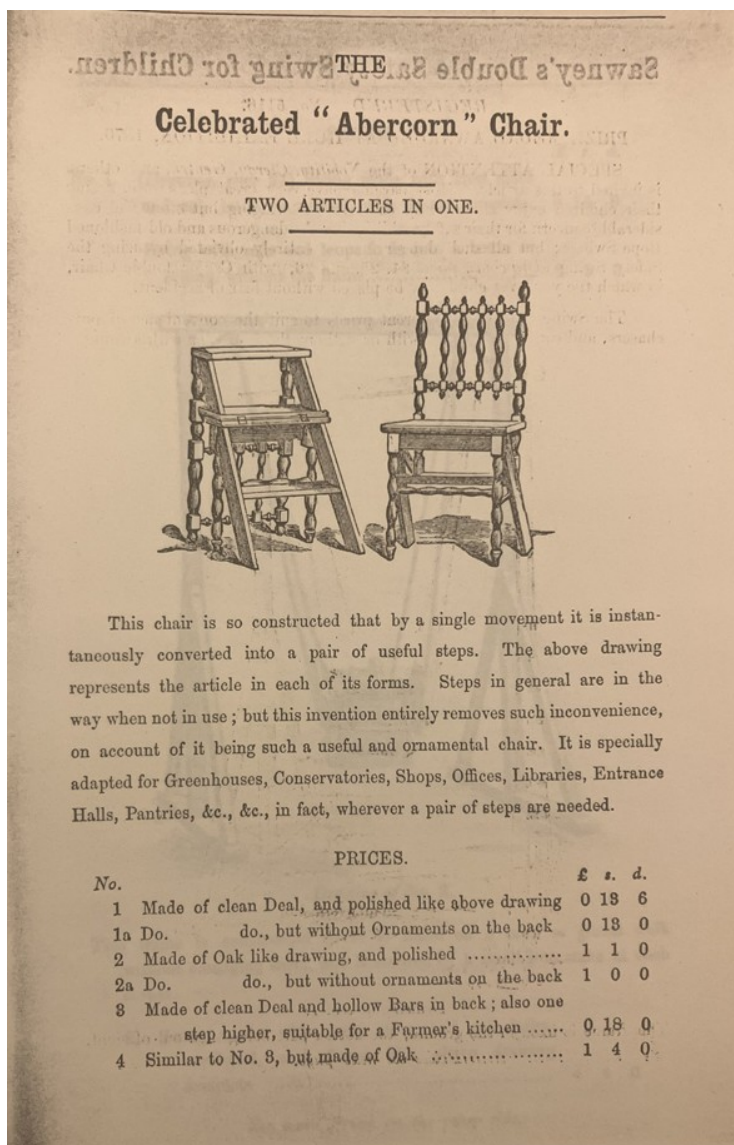




All photographs by kind permission of East Riding Museums Service and Kloskk Tyrer.



William Sawney metal plate and a page from the 1873 catalogue showing the entry for the chair
Image courtesy of East Riding Archives document refDDX1080/4



Sally Hayes from the East Riding Museum service says:-

“We were delighted to find an advertisement for the chair, described as the ‘Celebrated Abercorn Chair’ in a 1873 catalogue of items produced by William Sawney. Other items included ‘The Duck footed Scuffle Drag’ for turning soil, the ‘Improved Croquet Seat’ and ‘The Melon or Cucumber frame’”.

East Riding Museums Newsletter

Having read about the library steps, members might be interested to subscribe (free) to the East Riding Museums website. As well as their Newsletter you can access information about exhibits and events at 6 locations throughout the East Riding.

www.eastridingmuseums.co.uk

Views of our Grade 1 Listed Market Cross following restoration



Work in progress by Pinnacle contractors

The cartouche (unrefurbished) below forms part of a tablet carved in relief with trophies of arms etc. and contains this inscription: 'This cross was built at the expense of Sir Charles Hotham Bart, and Sir Michael Warton Knt. Members of Parliament for this Corporation Anno Domini 1714. Repaired AD 1769 Wm Leake Esq, Mayor'.



Hotham Coat of Arms



Wharton Coat of Arms

On the South side are four finely carved cartouches displaying the Royal Arms (Hanoverian), and the arms of Beverley, Hotham and Warton families in colour.

The Cross is an important town focus point, and features in many Civic events and Public announcements on notable National occasions, including the recent Coronation of Charles the Third.



The Royal Hanoverian Coat of Arms, and those of Beverley Town.

The Society is delighted that ERYC commissioned these works which were sorely needed, and which included the removal of the 'all the year round' Christmas lights. These detracted substantially from appreciation of this fine Grade 1 listed Market Cross, and spoiled many photographs taken by visitors and residents alike.

Photographs by Dick Lidwell.

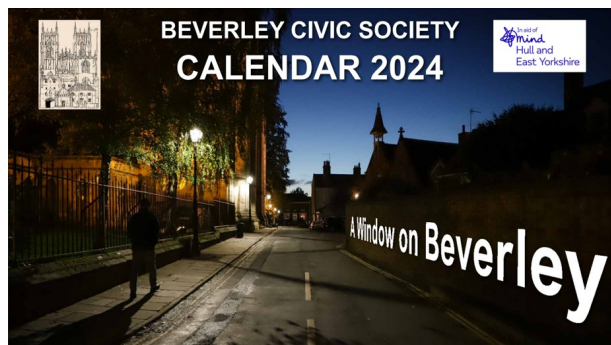
Some text has been reproduced from Historic England's listing of the structure.

Dick Lidwell

2024 Calendar

The members of the Calendar sub-committee have been working with the students and staff of East Riding College to produce our 2024 Calendar which is now available to order.

The calendar theme is “A WINDOW ON BEVERLEY” and features 13 photographs around Beverley that were taken by the students of East Riding College media class.



This year the charity, **HULL & EAST YORKSHIRE MIND**, was chosen by the students as they empathise with those who need this support. As in previous years the funds raised from the sale of the calendar will be split between the charity and the Society.

We have managed to hold the price at **£8.00 per copy** and £1.00 for postal envelopes. Copies will be available at our public meetings, from any member of the Executive Committee, at various outlets around Beverley (including we hope the Tourist Information Centre at its temporary location on Cross Street) and by emailing the Secretary at goodtymeshull@hotmail.com or by telephone (after October 14th) on 01482 866252.

Orders can also be made via the “Contact Us” page on our website at www.beverleycivicsociety.com.uk

Payments can be made at our public meetings by credit / debit card, cash or cheque made payable to Beverley Civic Society.

We would prefer Payments by bank transfer and our details are:

Beverley Civic Society Sort Code: **05-02-37** Account No. **27597439** and please use your name and “**CAL**” as the reference e.g. “Smith Cal”.

Subscription Reminder

A reminder to those members who are yet to pay their subscription for the coming year, which are now due. Payment can be made by bank transfer (details below) if you use internet banking, also by cash or cheque at the monthly meeting when you can alternatively pay by debit or credit card, or you can set up a standing order at your bank.

If paying by bank transfer, please remember to be sure your name appears in the “reference”; on the 5 October we were glad to receive three payments of £30 (two annual subscriptions) but with no reference. We’re delighted that six of you have renewed your membership but **please** make sure your name appears in the reference, then we won’t need to keep asking for your subscription when you’ve already paid (and you won’t get cross with us and our reminders!)

Sort code 05-02-37

Account 27597439

Mike FARRIMOND

Hon Treasurer

The Westwood History Board on Hill 60

As members will recollect, the Society's History Board at the bottom of Hill 60 was damaged last summer. The base of the white oak wooden posts had rotted at the junction into the soil, and with some human or cattle pressure being applied, it was felled! In order to avoid similar decay in the future, the wooden posts have been trimmed and bolted into galvanised post holders above the ground surface level, with the holders set in postcrete. It has also been re-sited away from a steep exit into the Pits and nearer to the Newbald Road



Courtesy Dick Lidwell

parking area, to increase visibility. Its slight realignment should also reduce pressure from the prevailing winds; it is a very wide board! As it is now positioned closer to the second World War gun emplacement, readers of the board should become more aware of this, often unknown, element of Beverley's war time history.

This board is one of three on Westwood, the others being on the north side of Westwood Road as it enters Westwood (this one is double sided to facilitate easy reading), and at the northern entrance to Burton Bushes beyond the Racecourse. The Burton Bushes one is in need of similar care as it has developed a 'wobble' and the Society intends to repair this one next. The Westwood one remains stable for now. There is also one to the same design, featuring the fascinating history of Hall Garth, on the northern boundary of Hall Garth in Minster Yard South. It is likely that these other two will also need attention sometime in the future.

Dick Lidwell

Correction to Programme of Events 2024

Could members be aware that there was an error on the Programme of Events hard copy given out at the recent AGM?

The March talk should be entitled '**The Beverley Emigrants of 1906**'

Apologies for any confusion and the mistake has been rectified on new copies of the Programme of Events. These are available at the next talk on the 9th November.

Beverley & District Civic Society – Programme of Talks 2024

Time and Date	Title of Talk, Name of Speaker
Thursday January 11 th 7:30pm-9:00pm	East Riding Council Conservation Team
Thursday February 8 th 7:30pm-9:00pm	Civic Voice Martin Hamilton
Thursday March 14 th 7:30pm-9:00pm	The Beverley Emigrants of 1906 Jane Bowen
Thursday April 11 th 7:30pm-9:00pm	Beverley's part in The Peasants' Revolt
Thursday May 9 th 7:30pm-9:00pm	East Riding Yeomanry Neil Hutton
Thursday September 12 th 7:30pm-9:00pm	Photos of Bygone Beverley Kloskk Tyrer
Thursday October 10 th 7:00pm-9:00pm	Annual General Meeting, Beverley Civic Society followed by Planning Update ERYC
Thursday November 14 th 7:30pm-9:00pm	The Scott Family of Beverley David Neave MARGARET POWELL MEMORIAL LECTURE
Thursday December 12 th 7:30pm-9:00pm	Past and Present Taverns of Beverley Paul Schofield

Slavery in the East Riding

The October talk for the Society was the very topical, Slavery in the East Riding.

Dr Nicholas Evans of Hull University and the Wilberforce Institute, talked to the Society members about his work and that of others, in identifying the lesser-known connections between the Slave Trade, Slavery itself and the East Riding.

This was of particular interest because the City of Hull and its understandable civic pride in the work of William Wilberforce has led to a kind of 'amnesia' regarding our area's involvement in slavery. At the same time the greater prominence given to Liverpool and Manchester in relationship to slavery meant that detailed research has been comparatively delayed. Dr Evans cited the work of Gordan Jackson in the 1980s in identifying slave trade journeys that either began or ended in Hull itself. These journeys involved the Caribbean, initially the jewel in Britain's colonial Empire and Sierra Leone.

The East Riding and Beverley itself, were not unique in their involvement and the proceeds of slavery built or contributed to the vast wealth of many Georgian gentlemen and built their magnificent houses, many of which still stand today. However, involvement with the slave trade began in the 17th century when Sir John Legard of Anlaby was rewarded for his loyalty in the English Civil war with land in Barbados. Charles II, Governor of Barbados, was advised that the labour of one African man was worth that of 3 white men, so that subjugation and dominance was an inevitable result.

In the 18th century the abolitionist movement began to gain traction amongst some groups. When slavery was declared illegal in Britain itself, many newly freed ex-slaves were sent to Sierra Leone to form a new, free colony. This project was supported and financed by many local notables including Christopher Sykes of Sledmere as well as people from Wassand, Hotham and Cherry Burton. The project unsurprisingly failed and the money disappeared. Many people of influence were still heavily involved with the economic benefits of slavery.

Dr Evans identified a number of notable 18th families who were involved in owning slaves on their Jamaican plantations. Many named these plantations after their local area. Others returned from Jamaica with their fortunes made to live in and around Beverley, such as Stephen Denton of Beverley Parklands. Simon Taylor of Etton, a merchant and plantation owner held 43 slaves on his estate in Jamaica. Richard Watt purchased the estate of Bishop Burton with the profits from his Jamaican estate.

When slavery was abolished in 1833 slave owners were compensated with 7% of Britain's GDP for their losses.

Conversely, Hull's involvement seemed to accelerate in the 19th century. The Blaydes shipyard in Hull, for example, was involved in the provision and transportation of cheap foodstuffs for slaves in the Caribbean. Tar, hemp and ropes, from Barton, were also transported. The trade in high value goods such as mahogany and tobacco increased following the abolition of slavery. During the American Civil war, whilst support for the North and Abraham Lincoln was high, there were also protests against the boycott of the Southern states as 4,000 local workers were involved in aspects of cotton manufacture from the 1840s.

Clearly the East Riding had a complex and troubling relationship with slavery.

Feedback from the talk -Slavery in the East Riding

Following Nick Evans' talk on Slavery in the East Riding we received a number of comments from audience members who let us know that more recent research had been carried out on the Robertson Tablet. This tablet, which can be seen in Beverley Minster was referred to when Nick was discussing profits made from slavery in Jamaica and attitudes to slavery and people of mixed race at that time.

We are grateful to Susan Neave for sharing the most recent findings concerning the Robertson plaque and we attach them below so that Society members and possibly the wider community are not mistaken in the reading of the monument.

MEMORIAL TO EBENEZER ROBERTSON, BEVERLEY MINSTER

The wording reads:

SACRED TO THE MEMORY OF EBENEZER ROBERTSON, FORMERLY OF JAMAICA, LATE OF BEVERLEY, ESQ. EXEMPLARY IN ALL THE RELATIONS OF LIFE HE EXALTED THE MORAL VIRTUES INTO CHRISTIAN GRACES BY GUIDING HIS CONDUCT ON THE PRINCIPLES AND BY RESTING HIS HOPES ON THE PROMISES OF THE GOSPEL. HE WAS BORN AT TAIN IN SCOTLAND FEBRUARY 25, 1761, AND DIED IN THIS TOWN AUGUST 19, 1825. BELOVED AND LAMENTED.

At the base is the coat of arms of the Robertson family. Below this is an unusual figure showing a man with his hands and feet chained. At first glance this might be thought to represent a slave (although the figure is 'white'). In fact the chained figure represents one of the murderers of James I of Scotland in 1437. It was a chief of the Robertson clan who apprehended the murderers; for this service James II granted the family a crest showing a hand holding a regal crown. The chained man lying below the coat of arms was also adopted to commemorate the event. It has no connection whatsoever with slavery.

Ebenezer Robertson was the eldest son of Reverend Gilbert Robertson and his wife Margaret. He spent many years in Jamaica, where he made his fortune. No record of him owning estates on which slaves worked has been traced, although given the Jamaica connection there is, of course, a possibility that he benefited in some way from slavery.

His long-term partner was Margaret Dunbar. Although Margaret, the granddaughter of a planter, is described in documents as a 'free quadroon', a term then used to refer to a person of $\frac{1}{4}$ African and $\frac{3}{4}$ European descent, she was a wealthy 'widow' of independent means, with a young daughter, when Robertson met her. Margaret and Ebenezer had ten children; one of their sons became a senior civil servant in the East India Company and another went to Cambridge and became a clergyman.

In 1800 Robertson purchased Keldgate Manor in Beverley, where he spent the last two decades of his life. He was a trustee of at least two charities in the town. He died at his house in Keldgate on 19 August 1825 'after a very severe but short illness'. His death notice in the Evening Mail (22 August) described him as 'a gentleman of most unsullied integrity of character, and unbounded generosity of conduct'. In his will he left substantial sums to Margaret Dunbar, who was then living in Kingston, Jamaica, and to his children, to the poor of Tain in Scotland and to the academy there, to the Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge in Scotland and to many charities that looked after those less fortunate, and to which he had subscribed during his lifetime.

BEVERLEY CIVIC SOCIETY



The National Garden Scheme And One of the Gardens

An illustrated talk by Helen Marsden



Thursday, 9th November 2023 7.30 p.m.
St. Mary's Church, Beverley

Non-members welcome £5.00

www.beverleycivicsociety.co.uk

DISCLAIMER

The Beverley and District Civic Society assumes no responsibility or liability for any errors or omissions in the content of this Newsletter.