



# Beverley and District Civic Society <sup>1</sup>

## NEWSLETTER

### SUMMER 2016

#### **Achieving the Objectives of the Society**

The objectives of the Beverley and District Civic Society, listed in our brochure and on our website, are:

To stimulate civic pride in the beauty, history and character of Beverley and to seek to preserve those features upon which the character of the town depends,

To encourage development which leads to improved conditions in which to live and work,

To support high standards of architecture and design,

To pursue these ends by means of meetings, lectures and the promotion of specific projects

To liaise with local government authorities and other organisations.

The society has been in existence for 55 years and during that time has been active in trying to achieve these objectives. Wherever possible we like to increase our activities as a result of suggestions from our members.

To undertake these tasks we have an elected Executive; members meet at 7pm on the first Monday of each month to discuss any issues which arise and to plan future activities. Most members of the executive have worked for the society for many years. But we are always keen to have new people to join us either by becoming members of the Executive or to be co-opted to work on one of the various sub committees. There are a number of sub- committees where we work together on new projects, organise public lectures, arrange study days, or day visits, and investigate any new planning developments.

To learn more about developments do visit our recently updated website [www.beverleycivicsociety.co.uk](http://www.beverleycivicsociety.co.uk).

Before the AGM in October we shall be looking for new members to help us to continue with the work of the society. If you feel that you would be interested in becoming more involved, at any level, we would be delighted to hear from you. Please do get in touch with any member of the Executive (names are listed on the website) and/or the Secretary – Pam Hopkins ([prhopkins@prhopkins.karoo.co.uk](mailto:prhopkins@prhopkins.karoo.co.uk) or 01482 861836)

Pamela Hopkins – Secretary of the Beverley and District Civic Society

Dick Lidwell – Leader of the development Group

Rosemary Major – member of the Executive

**PTO**

## **Beverley Civic Society Open Meeting Report Wood Carvings in Beverley Minster**

On Thursday, May 12th in St Mary's Church Hall The society enjoyed an amply illustrated account of the wooden furnishings within the Minster. John Phillips, the Secretary to the Friends of the Minster, demonstrated his wide knowledge of this outstanding building, while focusing on the various types of oak screens, seats, doors, pulpits, etc. which have come and sometimes gone, or changed, during its long history. Of special interest were the choir stalls which have remained largely intact since the 1520s. These incorporate the famous misericords under the seats with carvings of people, animals and birds, often used for satirical comment or allegorical allusion. The style and subject matter was probably influenced by the Ripon School of Carvers whose very fine carvings from the late 1400s into the 1500s set the standard. They were active in various parts of Yorkshire and beyond.

For example, a leading carver, William Bromflet, is known to have carried out work at Bridlington Priory in 1519 and also to have visited Hull to receive imports of Baltic oak around that time. With little documentation on Beverley's carvings, the date of 1520 and name of William Wight, Chancellor of the Church, carved on his seat, serve to date them all. While two carvers appear play-fighting on a misericord, their names are sadly but typically absent.

John Phillips described how changes in religious worship and design taste were often most readily reflected in the wood fixtures and fittings within the Church. These could entail considerable alterations from the Reformation onwards in arrangements in the nave. For instance, during the 18th century elaborate galleries were installed to provide raised seating in the side aisles to then be removed in the 19th century restoration work. His new book entitled *Of a fair uniforme making*, which is due out in October, will no doubt add much more on a fascinating subject.



Photographs with the kind assistance of the Minster  
(a noble member of staff lay on the floor to take the best possible shot!)

Rosemary Major

## St Mary's

On Sunday 29 April 1520 the west side of St Mary's central tower collapsed into the nave, killing 55 men, women and children. Restoration began very quickly, and money or materials were collected. Sir Richard Rokeby, comptroller of the household of Cardinal Wolsey, and Rokeby's wife Jane, gave £200 to the rebuilding, Peter Craue, draper, gave 20 marks, Robert Halitreholme gave 20s and other men and women contributed.

The south nave aisle has carved heads on both north and south sides, placed where the arches between the pillars meet (technically 'label stops'), without inscriptions, although two have the date '1524' which probably marks the completion of the rebuilding.

The north nave aisle has interesting carvings of men and women, label stops, also on both sides of the aisle, with scrolls declaring those people paid for the restoration. The writer has not seen this in any other church – Huby's tower at Fountains abbey has the motto and arms of the abbot carved on it, but this is not like the St Mary's labels. Inscriptions in churches are usually on funeral monuments (every where and every age), on wall paintings (as at Pickering), in stained glass windows (a superb example in All Saints, North Street, York), rarely on fonts (St Mary's Beverley). But on the structure of the building? In the middle ages this would have been most unlikely – in the 1520s, however, on the brink of the Reformation, medieval anonymity was shifting towards modern individualism.

The labels in the north aisle are on both sides of the pillars, English on the south face and Latin on the north. The inscriptions are worth a closer look.

The pillars at the west end, south face, (nos 1, 2 and 3) read:

XLAY  
AND HYS WYFFE MADE THES  
TO PYLLORS AND A HALFFE  
Crosley and his wife made these two pillars and a half



Two Pillars and a half

Good wives

On the north face of the same western pillars (nos 1, 2 & 3), there is a slightly different message in Latin. Whereas the English labels are read from west to east, on the north face the Latin has to be read east to west, so:

**PTO**

ORATE PRO ANIMABVS  
IOHIS CROSLAY MERCATORIS  
ET IOHANE VXORIS EIUS

Pray for the souls of John Crosly merchant and Joanna his wife



John Crosby...



...and his wife

The next two pillars, south face (nos. 4 & 5):

THYS TO PYLLORS MADE GVD  
WYFFYS GOD REWARD THAYM  
These two pillars made good wives God reward them

The north face of nos 4 & 5 [partly illegible], read from east to west:

ORATE P[RO] [ANI]MABVS  
ISTARVM [BON]ARVM M[VLI]ERVM  
Pray for the souls of these good women

The final pillar, south face (No. 6):

THYS PYLOR MADE THE MEYNSTRYLS  
This pillar made the minstrels

And on the north side:

ORATE PRO ANIMABVS HISTERIORVM  
Pray for the souls of the waits

A detailed discussion of the minstrels' pillar and its links to York is on line at [http://www.townwaits.org.uk/essays\\_st-marys.shtml](http://www.townwaits.org.uk/essays_st-marys.shtml).

The designer of the inscriptions assumed that churchgoers could read in both English and Latin, with the English text on the south side given more prominence. Within a few years the Latin Bible and the Latin service books used in St Mary's would all be in English: here on the pillars, language is at a watershed between the old and the new.

The English sentences record the people who paid for the re-making of the pillars, while the Latin equivalents have in each case 'pray for the souls of...'

which would very soon be discontinued by the Reformation church as 'popish' with links to the doctrine of purgatory. God is asked to reward the good women, in English, in Latin the reader is to pray for them – a different attitude. An additional shift, the prominence of the names of some donors shows the advance of individualism as opposed to the anonymity of the middle ages.

The labels record the great prominence of women's contribution to the rebuilding. Joanna Crossley and the good women of Beverley between them were responsible for 3¼ pillars, Crossley and the minstrels for 2¼ pillars. Although the legal position of women in 16th century England is a debatable area amongst historians, under Henry VIII women's rights at law deteriorated, and later in the century it might have been impossible for the women to have money to give to the church.

St Mary's has other inscriptions of the 15th and early 16th centuries, on the font with the name of its donor, the chancel roof with its list of kings, and the vestry roof. In the Priests' Room an old pew records the fall of the tower in 1520.

The merchant John Crosley, whose portrait this probably is, occurs in other Beverley records. Crosley (the spelling varies) rented three shops in Saturday Market, in the Dings, in 1502-3, and was one of the 12 keepers or governors of Beverley between 1515 and 1530. He was a St Mary's churchwarden, and in 1530 (over a disputed rent) he and his three fellow churchwardens, armed with swords, shields, bills, bows and arrows and other weapons, attacked and drove out the occupant of the Bull Inn (where the Rose and Crown now stands), for which they were reported to the Star Chamber for riotous eviction: it was said 'they came on like a pack of butchers' dogs'.

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The illustrations are less than glorious – the light, and the height above ground, make for difficulties, and no-one seems yet to have photographed them professionally. Worth a look, next time you are in St Mary's.

Barbara English

### **Photographic Evidence for Listed Buildings in Beverley**

The importance of an unobscured quality photograph for all listed buildings taken at the time of listing creates a reliable benchmark to work with. Unfortunately, the old English Heritage site for Beverley Town does not have such a reliable database with many pictures missing and incorrect information. The new Historic England database is even worse as it has no photographs at all and still contains the same incorrect information.

In view of the above and with very little prospect of a remedy, my company, Ancestry Hunters, during 2013 decided to act in order to establish a reliable database for the 504 listed buildings and 88 other listed items within Beverley. Over a twelve-month period we took unobscured high definition photographs of all listings and included on a C.D. these together with a full description and an Ordnance Survey plan showing their location.

To our dismay we found a very high percentage of listed buildings with illegal development (up to 95% of properties in a particular street) and complained to the Chief Planning Officer regarding the state of Beverley. It became apparent that without photographic evidence very little could be done in many cases to resolve matters. To that end we found over 2500 old, dated photographs of the majority of the listings and included under each property these dated photographs in order.



1980s



1992

The project is now completed and as a simple exercise we established that the plastic drain pipe between nos 2 and 3 Cross Street had been fixed after its listing in 1969. The two photographs we used to make our point were one taken in the 1980's showing no down pipe at all, and a later one taken during 1992 showing the plastic downpipe for which no planning permission had

been applied . We approached directly the owner with this evidence and he is replacing it with a more suitable cast iron one.

With our new database we are now able to extend this process to deal with many other cases. Without accurate dated photographs this process would have been impossible. Perhaps other Civic Societies could establish their own database to stop the rot of our listed heritage?

John Dawson  
Ancestry Hunters & Beverley DCS

The above is reproduced from the Yorkshire & Humber Association of Civic Societies Summer 2016 newsletter, with the kind permission of John Dawson

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**Forthcoming meetings...**  
**... which will be in St Mary's Parish Hall until the end of 2016,**  
**and all meetings will commence at 7.45pm**

**Thursday 9th September 2016**

Karen Adams  
Iron Age Settlements in East Yorkshire

**Thursday 13th October 2016**

AGM, followed by a film show about old Beverley

**Thursday 10th November 2016**

David Neave  
Lost Buildings of Beverley (the MARGARET POWELL LECTURE)

**Thursday 15th December 2016**

Chris Blackburn  
The Mercy Ships  
This will be followed by wine and mince pies

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**PTO**

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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 Summer 2015 Newsletter is **Wednesday 31st August 2016.**

**Please note this date in your diary if you are likely to contribute**

Over a third of our membership now receive 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 willing to join the e-circulation list, please could you let me know via the above email address. Many thanks.

Affiliated to Civic Voice and Yorkshire and Humberside Association of Civic Societies

[www.beverleycivicsociety.co.uk](http://www.beverleycivicsociety.co.uk)