



BEVERLEY & DISTRICT CIVIC SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER WINTER 2014

Westwood Road puzzle



The photographs show two of the kerb stones close to 57 Westwood Road. They seem to be part of a reused tombstone from Bury: they record a first name but not a surname, the plot number in the graveyard and the stone mason. I have never seen anything like this before - perhaps it is regular practice to reuse tombstones in this way, but generally concealing the inscription, out of sight. Or more likely is this a stone that was rejected and never made it to the graveyard? Any further information welcome - it is one of those odd things you can walk past for years, and never notice. If we excavated all our kerbs....would we find many lost names like this?

Barbara English

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Beverley and District Civic Society Public Meeting Reports

The birds of Swine Moor in May

September's open meeting of the Beverley and District Civic Society was a very informative talk by Michael Flowers on the wide variety of birds to be seen on Swine Moor, east of the town. Mr Flowers, who takes classes on the subject, has identified over 90 varieties on this stretch of pasture and marsh land as compared with 64 kinds on Westwood.

In part this is owing to fewer human visitors but also to the quantity water and insect life which attracts both familiar native birds and more exotic ones, some of whom are only resident in summer. House sparrows and flocks of starlings which are becoming rare in town gardens are still common on Swine Moor. Despite the low ground cover and a frequent easterly wind, a number of species breed there such as mistle thrushes, swifts, reed buntings, lapwings and red shanks. However, some of their offspring are lost to sparrow hawks, buzzards, marsh harriers, kestrels and rooks which swoop over the landscape.

Michael Flowers took his audience on a virtual walk in May around the various habitats within this expansive grassland. His excellent close up photos of the groups of birds encountered, along with recordings of many of their individual calls, gave a vivid insight into a world that relatively few people see.

The work of the Woodland Trust

The Beverley and District Civic Society's open meeting for November was a very informative account of the work of the Woodland Trust by its East Riding Site Manager, Mark Feather, who is based in Beverley. However, he is responsible for an area stretching from South Lincolnshire to the North York Moors and west to north of Harrogate. The charity, founded in 1972, is the leading organisation in the UK for woodland conservation and promotion of new woodland.

Its aim is to protect and restore what remains of the precious multi-varied woods which cover only 2% of the country, as post-war government programmes concentrated on developing conifer-only forests until the policy changed in the 1970s. In spite of this we have more truly veteran trees than the rest of Europe. The Trust has responsibility for 1,000 sites, of which 350 include ancient woodland, where some trees date back to before the year 1600. Consequently a primary task is risk assessment and management planning to protect both trees and visitors.

Modifying some conifer forests is another aspect of work. Here pine trees are thinned out to provide space and light for traditional species trying to survive there, to take their place once again in the woodland scene. In addition the Trust has established 12 square miles of new woodland, including 250 new community

woods. For instance, it launched the commemorative Jubilee Woods project in 2012 to plant 6 million trees. A local initiative took place in Hull, which had been the least wooded city in the country. Working in partnership with local bodies including schools, 14 hectares of tree planting took place in 2012. Tree replacement has also become a necessary feature of their work, in the face of diseases such as Ash die-back which has destroyed up to 20,000 trees.

Another vital responsibility for Mark Feather is the raising of funds for his charity. Apart from grants, including those from the Forestry Commission which pay staff salaries, financial support comes from the Trust members' donations, plus some income from timber sales. Increasing public awareness of the value of both small and larger areas of woodland is essential work. The Trust is trying to participate in development planning regarding the use of land for new housing with the aim of maintaining some balance between trees and houses for the future.

Rosemary Major

Civic Society Study Day – Friday 7th November 2014 Houses, Architects and Gardens in Georgian Beverley

The Georgians: at Home and Abroad, 1714 – 1837

Professor Barbara English gave a presentation of great clarity. George I came to the throne almost by default. Queen Anne, the last Stuart monarch, left no surviving children, but there were at least 50 other royal relatives closer to the throne than this Protestant Elector of Hanover. (The Catholic claimants, however, inspired numerous rebellions throughout the first 50 years of the house of Hanover)

This Georgian period saw a wide spread of British citizens around the world. At home, ways of living and working changed extensively. Professor English reflected on how this could have happened. She attributed the strengthening of democratic governance directly to the extreme disagreements all three Georges had with their heirs. These developed the strength of two-party politics, giving greater power to attempts to cleanse the corrupt electoral system, the Reform Bill of 1832 finally introducing the secret ballot. (Beverley itself was a famously Rotten Borough, its MPs suspended)

Other major changes she attributed to the several European-wide 'revolutions' in ideas and practices: in agriculture and science; in engineering; in social affairs; in welfare; in architecture; and in financial practice. She illustrated these with many examples, including some from Beverley and surrounding areas. These included land improvements by Sir Christopher Sykes at Sledmere; gas works and street

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lighting, with several lamp standards still extant; the development of the Beck and its industries; the Assembly rooms described by John Courtney; the workhouse near the Sessions House; a great many beautiful houses still extant; and the repair, renovations and additions to the Minster by Hawksmoor. The spread of ideas per-se can be demonstrated by Mary Wollstonecraft, amongst others. She visited Beverley several times.

By the end of the Georgian period strip farming had gone. Toll roads and canals had changed transportation around the country. Streets, houses, and factories were lit, extending working hours. A search for new markets and materials took Britons all over the world. The financial revolution played a large part in this. The collapse of the South Sea Bubble had led to the founding of the Bank of England, and the growth of Insurance companies. Eventually, Lloyd's insured the whole world. Indeed, Professor English concluded, by the fall of Napoleon in 1815, Britain/England was the most powerful country in Europe.

Sylvia Ashwell

Houses and People of Georgian Beverley

Local historians, David and Susan Neave, gave a richly illustrated account of the growth of an increasingly confident and stylish society within Beverley during the 18th Century. Apart from prosperous trades people, residents now included landed gentry, the professional classes, and the military. The population expanded from 2,939 in 1721 to 7,485 by 1831. The work of the Quarter Sessions, and the social opportunities offered by the races, theatricals, and the new Assembly Rooms in Norwood, brought increasing numbers of visitors and residents to the town.

Handsome houses and streets such as North Bar Within still bear witness to their elegant origins when fortunes were made and lavished on the latest architecture. Henry Ellison, for example, used his new money to purchase the original St Mary's Manor plus the neighbouring house, next to St Mary's Church. He demolished both and built a mansion on the larger site in 1802. This three storey home would later be reduced to two storeys in keeping with the regency style.

Much contemporary observation comes from the diaries of wealthy John Courtney, who lived in Newbegin House in the latter part of the 18th century. He married Mary Smelt. A focus of interest was the growing presence of military men and their families. The wars in North America, followed by the Napoleonic campaigns, increased the number of soldiers, both serving and retired, in Britain. At one stage Beverley became a major attraction for officers seeking a place in which to enjoy gracious living at not too great a cost.

It provided a retreat for those on the losing side in the American War of Independence, such as Brigadier General Oliver de Lancey, from the colony of New York. He settled in Beverley in 1785 at 25, Highgate. His grandson attended

Beverley Grammar School and Sir William Howe de Lancey, as he became, would later fight at the Battle of Waterloo. Captain Henry Law, a native of New York, bought Keldgate Manor in 1784. A returning member of a Beverley family which had emigrated to North America, William Beverley, married Miss Mary Midgley. Her father, Jonathan, had built Norwood House and the couple would live there from 1795.

Georgian Gardens in Beverley – Changing perceptions and new opportunities



Lenore Greensides, Chair of East Yorkshire Hardy Plants Society, gave an illuminating talk on the development of gardening in Beverley from the second half of the 18th Century to the early 19th Century. In response to developments both nationally and internationally, some Georgian gardens would become much more than a piece of land for food cultivation.

Town plans of the period show how and when these changes were taking place. In 1774 the often large plots of land attached to houses within the town usually indicate orchards and areas for culinary production. However, Norwood House plans for the Midgleys show separate areas for ornamental planting, including a fish pond. Prosperous citizens, under the influence of notable designers such as William Kent, now sought to transform their outdoor spaces for display and entertainment. Ideas brought back from European travel led to the creation of terraces, formal walks and arbours.

These ambitious schemes provided new opportunities for employment in

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Beverley and by 1828 16 teams of gardeners were in operation in the district, creating and maintaining the gardens of the wealthy. Plant nurseries also featured prominently. For instance, nurseryman and writer William Tindall had a market garden on the north side of the Minster which was also open to the public as a leisure facility. (See accompanying illustration). The widening interest in new varieties of plants and fruit trees led to increasing sales of both plants and seeds to Beverley people in general.

Rosemary Major

Membership 2014-15

Members are reminded that subscriptions were due on the 1st October for 2014-2015, and standing orders on the same date.

Please can members check their standing order amount and date.

Yearly membership is £15 per member.

Wendy Usher-Bacon
Membership Secretary

Annual Civic Society Dinner

The 13th annual Civic Society Dinner was held at Cerutti2 on Friday 24th October, attended by 47 members, friends and relatives. Our guest speaker was Councillor Cox, last year's Beverley Town Mayor, who spoke to us about his year as mayor and his day job as a special needs teacher, for which he was enthusiastic and devoted.

Tom Martin, our retiring President, was also present, and was thanked by Sandy Patience, our Chairperson, for all the time and support he had given the society. He will be very much missed. Mr Andrew Marr, our new President, was welcomed to the society and it is to be hoped that he enjoyed the evening.

Tina Cerutti served us here usual delicious meal, for which we thank her.

Wendy Usher-Bacon

Forthcoming Public Meetings & Events...

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

Tuesday 9th December 7.30 pm

Councillor Margaret Pinder

On becoming a political woman

AGM and Open Forum

Please join us for a festive drink and a mince pie after this meeting

Tuesday 13th January 7.30pm

Andy Mason

Spurn – a changing landscape

Tuesday 10th February 7.30pm

Mrs Marilyn Walker

Wentworth Woodhouse – the forgotten country house

Tuesday 10th March 7.30pm

Tim Stimson

Waterloo – Lady Butler's battle pictures

Tuesday 14th April 7.30pm

Discussion between Jill Jones and Christopher Coles re housing and planning policy. Followed by Open Forum.

Tuesday 31st March 2.30pm

Titanic – the local connection

Tuesday 12th May 7.30pm

John Tibbles

Archaeological excavations in and around Beverley

Friday 5th June

**Day visit to Wentworth Woodhouse and Wentworth Castle and gardens
(details to be given later)**

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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 Spring 2014 Newsletter is **Saturday 28th February 2015.**

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 able and willing to join the e-circulation list, please could you let me know via the above email address. Many thanks.

Wishing all readers

A Peaceful Christmas

&

A Happy New Year

