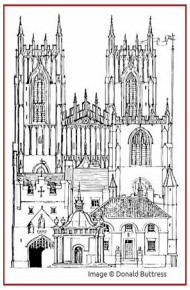


Newsletter:

January 2024

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

BEVERLEY CIVIC SOCIETY
Founded 1961

A Happy New Year to all our Members

Chairman's Remarks

Happy New Year to you.
Let us hope for a more peaceful one internationally, and a prosperous one for all.

Dawn in the Sarek National Park, Arctic Sweden - *Dick Lidwell*

We start our 2024 public talks series with one from ERYC's Principal Conservation Officer on 'Conservation', with special reference to Beverley's many Conservation Areas, and listed buildings. As you may well know, in Beverley we have some 500 listed structures for us to look after for future generations to appreciate and enjoy.

What has your Society been up to in 2023?

At the start of another New Year I thought it worthwhile to look back over the last year to examine the Society's many and wide ranging activities; not a comprehensive list but one that I hope shows the variety of our activities thanks to the hard work of our membership and the Executive Committee. The Executive meets monthly, and at the October AGM, maintained our membership, welcoming a new member, Peter Stevens.

Our team ran a highly successful Heritage Open Days programme on the theme of 'Creativity Unwrapped…' attracting some 12,457 individual visits. Do make a note for September 2024's treat - the topic being 'Routes, Networks and Connections'.

As part of our work to inform the public about our history, we restored one of the Westwood History Boards which had been damaged…well felled; and will be repairing the one at Burton Bushes. Another Westwood project was the repainting of sections of the Bylaws Board on York Road, and installing more protection from falling rain. We have also had to repair the frames of three pictures in the Elwell Trail, and are pressing for the restoration of the missing elements of the Town Trail. We have erected a new heritage plaque on North Bar Chambers for another of our American War of Independence refugees, John Harris Cruger, and we have contributed to Network Rail's new Station Interpretation Board (yet to be erected).

Public Meetings covered a wide range of topics, and despite the cold environment we have attracted large numbers and gained some new members. The logistics for an outing have become more challenging, but we held a 'Garden Party' in the summer in place of the outing - well with our inclement weather it was held indoors, courtesy of the *Monks Walk*. We are holding another one this summer to increase the opportunity for members to get together socially. Many stayed on for our Christmas drinks after the interesting December talk on the Humber Forest.

We hosted Barton Civic Society's summer visit to Beverley, and are planning a return visit this year. The Society is also a member of Civic Voice (whose Chairman is addressing us at our February public meeting), and YHACS (Yorkshire and Humberside Association of Civic Societies); their regular quarterly meetings are always worthwhile attending, both for learning from well informed speakers, but also for social interaction with similarly minded Civic Society members.

We continue to make many representations on individual Planning applications, many regarding Listed Buildings, and contribute to many ERYC Consultations and Surveys - amongst others: the Design Code; the Local Plan; the proposed Household recycling centre; Saturday Market Pedestrianisation; the Station footbridge; and the Green Energy converter locations.

We were consulted on ERYC's scheme for repainting of the Gentlemen's Club and the Market Cross, and are campaigning to get the 'all year' Market Cross lights removed from one of Beverley's iconic Grade 1 Listed structures.

Tree Planting is another area of our activity, gaining grants from Tesco and working with ERYC's Tree Team to plant more trees in Beverley's green spaces, including Swinemoor and Minster Avenue. We have also, through the generosity of one of the Executive, supplied the wood for nesting boxes for kestrels and owls on the Golf Course.

One of our objectives is to increase the diversity of the membership, especially the younger generation. To that end we co-operated with the Beverley branch of East Riding College to have their design and media students produce the imaginative 2004 Calendar. We intend to build on that initiative and develop further the relationship with the college.

You are reading this thanks to our enthusiastic Newsletter team who manage to produce our monthly newsletter on time; an amazing achievement given such a deadline, and dilatory contributors; 'mea culpa'. We are always interested in hearing from you about the content, and welcome contributions.

Thank you for being a member; we look forward to another successful year.

Dick Lidwell

Planning Matters

Courtesy - *Dick Lidwell*

We would like to draw your attention to one very important application which has just been re-submitted; amended plans for the South of Lord Roberts Road site. There are many changes being proposed to the original application which need your urgent attention. This large area is one of the last remaining sites for possible development in the very centre of town with open views of the Minster's towers, a strong relationship to the East Riding Theatre, other listed buildings and the public gardens. It is vital that the plan complements the setting of the centre of our historic town.

The application reference number: **22/03203/PLF,** may be viewed on ERYC's Public Access website:
https://newplanningaccess.eastriding.gov.uk/newplanningaccess/
Please do send your comments directly to planning@eastriding.gov.uk.
The closing date for comments is Thursday 4th January 2024. Hence the urgency given this time of year.

Dick Lidwell

John Harris Cruger

An article in *The Journal of the American Revolution* of 2017 cites the Cruger family as one 'overlooked by history.' Since 2017 we have learnt more about the family and John Harris Cruger, who lived part of his life at 40 North Bar (lately known as North Bar Chambers) Beverley. There are now an overwhelming 557,000 references to John Harris Cruger online*, mainly in American sites concerned with Cruger's part in the Revolutionary War (1775-1783), but some are from English sites, including libraries and archives, that add more details of his life in Beverley.

Interest in the Crugers may have increased because of the connection between the family and Alexander Hamilton, a 'Founding Father' of the USA, first Treasurer of the States, still depicted on dollar bills, and the central character of a hugely successful musical.

Ten-dollar bill showing Alexander Hamilton
Wikicommons

John Harris was the eldest of four sons of Henry Cruger (d.1780 at Bristol), a merchant and politician who owned property in Bristol, Jamaica and New York, and his wife, Elizabeth Harris. John Harris's brother Henry became MP for Bristol alongside the famous politician Edmund Burke, and John ran his political campaign in 1784 while his brother was in America. (This brother was unique as being both a British MP and a New York state senator). After leaving America in 1783, John Harris Cruger perhaps lived in Bristol or London, but by 1788 he was living somewhere in Beverley.

As J.H. Cruger was on the losing side in the American War of Independence (1775-1783) his rich estates in New York were confiscated. His father-in-law, another even richer 'Loyalist', General Oliver de Lancey, bought a house in Highgate Beverley in 1785. They both successfully claimed compensation from the British government for their wartime losses.

John Courtney's detailed account of social life in Beverley often mentions Cruger: they dined together, often with military men: the Colonel was commander of the Beverley Volunteers from 1794 to 1802. Described by Courtney as a 'newcomer' Cruger applied to rent a pew in St Mary's church in 1788, his pew also being mentioned in 1800. In 1791 he was living at an unknown address in North Bar Street, and was evidently moving house in 1793 when Courtney visited 'Col Cruger's empty house to see the Highlanders march out of town.' In January 1795 he took a seven-year lease of the newly built 40 North Bar Within. He left Beverley in 1802 for London (there is an 1802 inventory of the fixtures and furnishings left in the house). He died in 1807 and was buried at St James Hampstead where there is a long memorial inscription recording key details of his life. His will of 1790 contains no reference to Beverley.

With thanks to David and Susan Neave

Barbara English

**It should be noted that the portrait of Cruger seen on websites was not painted from life but was created in 1978 by Robert Wilson, based on surviving family portraits.*

Dick Lidwell at the unveiling of the Cruger plaque – Courtesy *Beverley Life*

The Pulling family and Executive members at the unveiling - Courtesy *Beverley Life*

North Bar Chambers - on the East side of the North Bar

On reading the last edition of the Civic Society Newsletter, I noticed that the Society had placed a new green history plaque near the front door of North Bar Chambers. Next time I went through the Bar I stopped to have a look. The plaque part reads.

> *'In this house, built 1793-4 lived John Harris Cruger, a New York merchant, with his wife, Anne de Lancey. Cruger fought for the Crown as a battalion Lt Col. in the American war of Independence'*

I remembered having read about someone who lived in Beverley when Lt Col Cruger came to live here who was not happy to see new inhabitants coming into the town.

John Courtney, a true Beverlonian, had been born in Beverley, educated at the Grammar School, and after his marriage in Hull lived in Newbegin House, Newbegin, where he and his family remained until his death in 1806. John Courtney was proud of his home town and was much involved in developments in the town- he was on a committee which organised the establishment of toll roads leading to and from Beverley; he gave money to the building of the Assembly Rooms in Norwood and was also a regular attender at St Mary's Church. Fortunately, we can read much about his life from his diaries written between 1759 until shortly before his death in 1806. The diaries are in Hull University archives at Hull History Centre..

On the 11th February 1788 his entry reads as follows:

> *'Attended at the vestry of St Mary's Church in the morning according to the request of the church wardens, about pews. I asked Mr Lockwood, the principal church warden, by what authority I was called to account for my right to a pew, which I had sat in for about half a century, it being the first pew I ever sat in when I first went to church. My* (sic) *Lockwood produced a piece of paper written with red and black ink. I told him I looked upon that as a piece of dumb paper and bid them produce the books. They did not. Mr Lockwood then asked me for my assignments. I showed him his assignments of my pew, wherein Mrs Dunne has previously sat, and of the half pew where Mrs Clough, the milliner, sat and also of Aunt Featherstone's pew and her maid's pew of which only my half and her maid's pew were questioned.*
> *I told him plainly that I could not find any assignment of my own pew, nor that of my manservant's, but that I had sat in my own pew above 50 years. I asked what was the occasion of the enquiry. He said several gentlemen, Col Cruger, Major Roberts, Major Hudson and Mrs Hunter had applied for pews. I said all but Mrs Hudson were fresh comers and it was very odd that they should wish to turn the old inhabitants out of their pews; the next attempt might be to turn them out of town. However I said if the Spiritual Court took my pew from me, I would not contest with that Court. If this Court were to take my pew away from me, I should consider myself very ill used.'*

Pamela Hopkins

In next month's newsletter Susan Neave, who co-edited the publication of the first two volumes of the diaries and is currently working on the later volumes, due to be published towards the end of 2024, will write more about John Courtney.

TROLLOPE'S IRON STUMPS

This sad picture of Beverley's only Victorian pillar box (outside 12 New Walk) in October 2023 alarmed the local residents. It appeared that Royal Mail had removed the 'door' with the royal cypher VR (for *Victoria Regina = Victoria the Queen*). Within a few days the door was returned, the tale being that the hinges had needed repair. It seemed a good time to investigate the history of this Grade II listed structure. It has interesting links: the invention of the penny post connects to the novelist Anthony Trollope, his post boxes, his failure in a Beverley election, and his books.

Before 1840 letters were paid for on delivery (although the recipient could refuse to pay), at a price that represented both weight and distance travelled. Rowland Hill, a Post Office reformer, is said to have noticed that his servant always refused to pay for a letter from her soldier son. When Hill asked why, the woman replied that as long as the letters came, she knew her son was still alive. There are other versions of this story, and it may be just a myth.

A block of four Penny Black stamps
Wiki Commons from the Metropolitan Museum NY

Pillar box outside 12 New Walk *Kloskk Tyrer*

Rowland Hill changed the system so that the sender paid, and introduced a postal service that delivered mail of a standard weight to all parts of Great Britain for one penny: the first 'stamp' used for this post was the famous adhesive Penny Black, showing Queen Victoria's portrait. Every British stamp thereafter by law has included the sovereign's portrait: but omits any country of origin, presumably in recognition of GB as the first country to issue stamps.

The penny post vastly increased mail and shortly afterwards roadside pillar post boxes were built to simplify posting for senders. The pillar box was the idea of Anthony Trollope, who worked for the Post Office before becoming a full-time writer.

Trollope was sent by the Post Office to investigate problems in Jersey and Guernsey, where the islanders had nowhere to store their outgoing letters while waiting for the intermittent mail boats. He solved this with the first British post boxes in 1852 (some already existed on Continental Europe). The following year the first mainland pillar box in the UK was installed at Carlisle. These early boxes were varied as each postal district chose their own manufacturer and design. Cast iron and about 2.5 m high, they were mostly rectangular and sage green (it was not until 1874 that they began to be painted the familiar 'Post Office Red' above a black base). Later, wall post boxes and lamp post boxes were also made. Early examples can be found in museums, particularly in the London National Postal Museum.

The House of Lords' box. Examples can be found in museums, particularly in the Postal Museum, London.
Courtesy of The Postal Museum

The House of Lords' box adapted for use.
Entry for letters was made first in the cap (RH side) and later in the pillar itself where it replaced the VR royal cipher.
Salford Museum & Art Gallery

In 1856 a House of Lords committee agreed to design a uniform pillar box: their Lordships produced their elaborate model (designed by Richard Redgrave) for their peers, but unfortunately they had omitted to put in the most essential part, the opening to 'post' the letters. Experiments in the following decades led in 1879 to the familiar standard cylindrical shape of the Beverley pillar, with round cap, horizontal aperture, front opening door and black painted base.

Trollope's personal link to Beverley (apart from the pillar box described below) was that he stood in the town's election for MP in 1868.

His unsuccessful campaign is described in his *Autobiography* and in two novels, *Ralph the Heir* and *Phineas Redux*, where he wrote of his hatred of the notoriously corrupt Beverley Borough.
A Royal Commission into this election (the printed verbatim evidence is immensely detailed and interesting) found that fraud and bribery was rampant, and an Act of Parliament abolished the constituency named Beverley (it was recreated in 1950).

Pillar box outside 12 New Walk, Beverley *Kloskk Tyrer*

Pillar box outside 40 High Street, Hull *Wiki Commons*

Pillar

According to Historic England's listings, there are just two Grade II listed Victorian pillar boxes in the whole of Yorkshire, one outside 12 New Walk Beverley and one outside 40 High Street Hull.

Both of these are the same type (B), made by A Handyside & Co at the Britannia Foundry, Derby, and carry the words POST OFFICE and the royal cypher, both first introduced to his pillar boxes by Handyside in 1887. Queen Victoria died in 1901, therefore the two pillar boxes can be dated between 1887 and 1901.

Each cylindrical box has a fluted frieze around the top. The postal slot is halfway between two horizontal lines, and on either side of the opening are the letters POST and OFFICE (these details help to date the box). On the box door, top central, within a metal frame is a white collection plate (changing over the decades) showing the times of collection at this box and elsewhere, and details such as a telephone number, email address, and the individual number of the box.

The Hull box has a metal strip to the right of the door, designed to keep the rain out: this is missing on the Beverley box which perhaps means it was the earlier of the two.

To the right of this white plate is a small square frame to contain a label for a day (MON in the case of the Beverley post box) showing the day on which the box will next be emptied. This day (or earlier, time) sign can only be altered when the box is open. Below, on the right-hand side of the door is a keyhole to the Chubb lock, and a little lower and central to the door, the entwined royal cypher VR. At ground level, the black base shows the makers' name 'A Handyside & Co Ltd, Derby and London'.

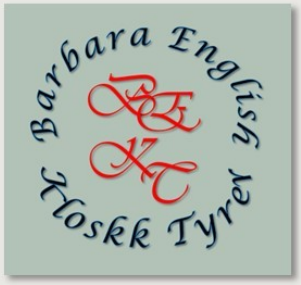
Pillar Box Avenue at the Postal Museum Store in Debden, Essex. *Courtesy of The Postal Museum*

When Trollope came to Beverley, these boxes were not yet in place, and he never came back to Beverley to greet them with recognition and perhaps some pride. Trollope was well aware of the social significance of the change in postal services that Rowland Hill and he had introduced, and he mentions post boxes in some of his novels (e.g. *Mr Scarborough's Family, Marion Fay*). These described how young women could for the first time post letters without their parents' knowledge, for some a dangerous freedom: it has even been suggested this freedom was a first flicker of women's rights.

The author also realised that not everyone liked the post boxes – in the novel *He Knew He Was Right* (1869) Trollope wrote:

Miss Stanbury carried her letter all the way to the chief post-office in the city…. As for the iron pillar boxes which had been erected of late years for the receipt of letters, one of which – a most hateful thing to her – stood almost close to her own hall door, she had not the faintest belief that any letter put into one of them would ever reach its destination. She could not understand why people should not walk with their letters to a respectable post-office instead of chucking them into an iron stump as she called it out in the middle of the street with nobody to look after it.

We are lucky to have still our 'iron stumps' in Beverley and Hull, protected by Historic England as Grade II listed structures in 1987 and 1994. In 2023 Christmas cards still filled them – but in the age of the mobile phone and email, for how much longer?



John Carr of York - Book Review

John Carr of York: Collected Essays by Ivan Hall, edited by Kenneth Powell (Paul Holberton Publishing Ltd, 2023). Pp 600

John Carr of York by William Beechey, 1791.
Wikimedia Commons

This splendid volume celebrates the life of John Carr, greatest of Georgian architects of the North. It is also a fitting tribute to the lifetime study of Carr undertaken by Ivan Hall, historian of Beverley, who with his late wife Elisabeth led conservationists in trying to protect our town and also Hull from the ravages of demolition and development in the last century. Beverley Friary was a notable victory: a significant defeat was the building of housing on the greenfield SE of Beverley Minster. Beyond Beverley and Hull, Dr Hall researched the subjects of Carr and the Georgians in Yorkshire, across England, and as far afield as Carr's Hospital at Porto. His family have now published this very attractive work.

The book is in three parts: Carr's Biography, his Commissions for Buildings (country houses, churches, hospitals, public buildings, and town houses, as well as more than 60 Yorkshire bridges), and Dr Hall's Reflections on a wide range of Carr-linked topics such as chimneypieces, colour, craftsmen and staircases. This third section is surely exceptional and shows one of Dr Hall's outstanding qualities: his interest in studying everything, from a fragment of paint to the design of the country house with all its ancillary buildings and parklands. He has also a remarkable memory for the origins of ornament: he could, for instance, tell you the origin and cultural pedigree of Egyptian detail on Beverley's famous gas lamps, or the Roman detail at Harewood.

The book contains 148 superb illustrations and plans, £50, with lower offers from some booksellers on the web.

Howsham Mill, North Yorkshire, designed by John Carr.
Wikimedia Commons

The Humber Forest Project

The December Civic Society talk, *The Humber Forest Project*, was greatly enjoyed by members. Hayley Little, the Partnership Manager, shared with the audience insights into the concept of a Community Forest Tree planting organisation within the Humber Area. This was described as 'The Community under One Canopy'

There are 15 of these community forests in England and the Humber Forest is one of four within the Northern Forest which stretches from Liverpool/Manchester to Hull. These community forests are not actual forests but a collection of all the trees, woodlands and hedgerows within the local area.

The project began in 1990 with the aim of supporting regeneration and growth, particularly in areas of economic deprivation and poor tree cover. The aim is to create better places with biodiversity, opportunities for recreation and leisure, but above all to support local communities and get people involved. The Humber Forest which was launched in 2002 covers Hull, the East Riding and North Lincolnshire.

The Humber Forest Team works with DEFRA, the Woodland Trust and the Forestry Commission as grant providers. It reaches out to the local community in partnership. These include Mires Beck, the TVC (The Conservation Volunteers), Rewilding Youth and the PATT Foundation. These groups are all looking to provide local knowledge, better environmental practices and the reduction of our carbon footprint. Individuals involved include veterans, adults with disabilities and local colleges. The aim is to significantly reduce the impact of climate change, and to allow both business and wildlife to flourish.

Project officers cover discrete areas of the region so they can fully understand what each area needs and build up relationships with the local area. It is hoped their knowledge and expertise will feed into the forthcoming 25-year plan which is currently under development, and which is funded by DEFRA.

It is important to plant the right tree in the right place. Every planting site has a rigorous check for possible environmental, historical or geological factors which might impact on making sure a planting project is successful. Once that is assured, the project provides 100% funding for the planting of native woodland and hedgerows, their delivery and maintenance, and any associated costs for five years; and the landowner is under no obligation to make this land publicly accessible.

The benefits of tree planting are becoming increasingly obvious to us all. They provide shelter and food for wildlife, reduce flooding and are important for our mental wellbeing. The Project reached out with advice and guidance for the general public at the Great Yorkshire show and Driffield show last summer.

Recent local projects have included Beverley Archery Field, and planting in Pickering Park in Hull. In 2021/2 the Project planted 45,000 trees in 17 hectares. In 2023/4 they hope to plant 300,000 trees over 100 hectares.

The talk possibly gave rise to the most questions ever asked at a Society talk – perhaps indicative of the importance of the project as we face the reality of climate change.

OF INTEREST TO OUR MEMBERS?

A Lost Medieval Island: Ravenser Odd and its afterlives - an online presentation by National Archives

Around 1231, an island emerged near the mouth of the Humber. It existed as a wealthy, if lawless, port for 130 years before being washed away.

The story of Ravenser Odd is elusive and dramatic. It involves shipwreck, piracy, naval warfare with Scotland, and corpses unearthed by floods. Previously confined to local histories and antiquarian studies, it is now becoming a staple of internet folklore. This talk will explore what records at The National Archives can tell us about the island, and investigate its postmedieval afterlives.

This talk will be delivered by **Kathryn Maude, Head of Medieval Collections at The National Archives,** and **Emily Robinson, Reader in British Studies at the University of Sussex.** Kathryn and Emily are co-investigators on the project *Ravenser Odd: Tracing a Lost Medieval Island.*

What's Online is a series of talks, in conversation events and webinars delivered by the National Archives' experts and special guests. Events last approximately one hour, including an audience Q&A. This event will be presented on Zoom. For the best experience we recommend using either a laptop or desktop computer. For more information on attending a Zoom event, please visit: https://bit.ly/3fojVtn

Once booked via the link below, you will receive a reminder email, including a link to join the presentation sent in advance of the event.

Talks are available to watch on catch-up for a limited period of 48 hours only. You will receive a separate link to view the recording once the event is over.

When: Friday 22 March 2024, 14:00
Where: Online

Book via this website - https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/a-lost-medieval-island-ravenser-odd-and-its-afterlives-tickets-753845711817?utm_source=e-shot&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=What%27sOnPre-SaleJan-Mar%2724

Civic Society Subscriptions

Civic Society subs are now overdue, still at the bargain price of £15.00! We thank those members who have already renewed their subscription.

Can we remind members that bank charges are now in place when cheques are processed and so the preferred method of payments are as follows:

1 - Standing order
2 - BACS transfer via web banking app
3 - By debit or credit card using SumUp at a monthly meeting
4 - Cash at a monthly meeting
5 - Cheque

If you would like to pay at the next monthly meeting, this will be at the next meeting on 11th January in St Mary's Church

Beverley Civic Society Event

East Riding of Yorkshire Council's Conservation Team will talk about managing planning restrictions within Beverley's conservation area.

7.30pm, Thursday 11 January 2024
St Mary's Church, Beverley
Non-members are welcome £5

MEMBER YHACS

CIVIC VOICE talking civic sense

DISCLAIMER

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