

Newsletter:

June 2026

<https://www.beverleycivicsociety.com/>

**BEVERLEY
CIVIC
SOCIETY**

Founded 1961

Chairman's Remarks

Buttercups Galore and Cattle Rightly Rule!



Photos courtesy Dick Lidwell

Welcome to the start of summer, warmer at last, and to the resumption of normal life on Westwood! It's always good to see the cattle back after the long winter break, and with the sunny weather one sees greater activity on Westwood, mostly welcome and responsible in line with the rules, but the Society has observed some anti-social and illegal behaviour, car joy driving and parking beyond the limit, and barbecues. Shame when a few disturb the peace and enjoyment of others.

Once again our Public Talk attracted a large audience (103) for an enlightening and entertaining talk on the 'Battle of Flamborough Head; 1779'. A full report follows. There were a larger number of guests attending, some 22. The Society encourages members to bring guests and our publicity attracts some others. We hope it widens knowledge of the Society and its activities.

Our next talk, on Thursday 11th June, is to be given by Stephen Hunt, now Interim Executive Director of Planning and Economic Regeneration for ERYC. This is his Biennial update to the Society on Planning matters, and a great opportunity for members to get up to date on this ever increasingly important area of Policy.

Later in this Newsletter we outline some news on Green Energy generation around Beverley and some other topics of interest which may be relevant to this talk.

Dick Lidwell

Powering the Nation, Overpowering Beverley?

Beverley and its surrounding villages are facing an unprecedented concentration of major energy infrastructure proposals.

Viewed individually, each scheme is presented as part of the UK's transition to cleaner energy and improved national energy security. Taken together, however, they represent a significant potential transformation of the landscape around our historic town, and raise important questions about cumulative impact, democratic accountability, and whether local communities retain meaningful influence over decisions that could shape this area for generations.

The Beverley Civic Society Executive Committee are examining these proposals closely, and will shortly meet with our local MP and Civic Society Vice-President, Graham Stuart, who has already met local campaign groups and residents concerned by some of the schemes. Our Chairman, Dick Lidwell, has also met with James Chatfield from the ERYC Planning team to discuss the proposals. Stephen Hunt will also be providing the biannual planning update for ERYC at our June meeting.

This article summarises the principal developments currently affecting Beverley and its immediate rural setting. The map on the next page is from the ERYC website and those areas shaded red are subject to applications for solar farms. The blue dots represent wind turbine proposals. For more information visit: <https://eastriding.maps.arcgis.com/apps/instant/sidebar/index.html?appid=ddb8e07dba9e40cb91816b9269a13eb4>

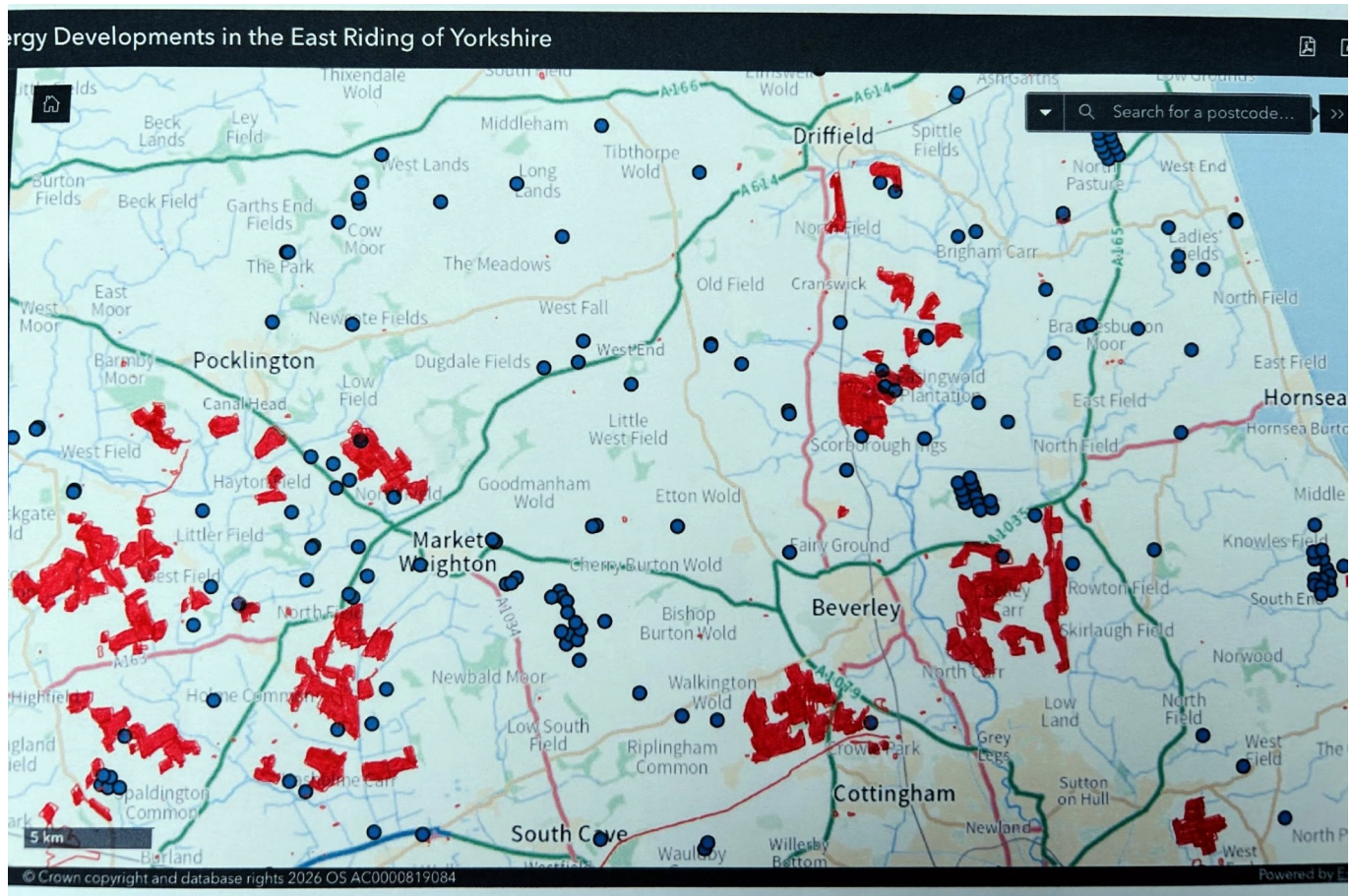
Two Major Solar NSIPs Surrounding Beverley

The most significant proposals are two Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) for utility-scale solar generation. Unlike ordinary planning applications determined by East Riding of Yorkshire Council, these solar farm projects fall under the national Development Consent Order process, with final approval resting with the central government.

Clean Air Solar Farm

Promoted by PS Renewables and Ørsted Onshore, Clean Air Solar is a proposed 500MW NSIP spread across two separate sites:

- A northern site approximately three miles north of Beverley, east of the A164
- A southern site south-west of the A1079, connecting toward the proposed Wanlass Beck substation extension near Creyke Beck



The combined site area is approximately 1,012 hectares (2,500 acres) — equivalent to around 1,400 football pitches.

The proposal has prompted significant concern in Skidby, Walkington, Bentley and Little Weighton, where residents have formed an active campaign group and met directly with Sir David Davies MP to discuss their concerns.

Peartree Solar

The second major proposal is Peartree Solar, east of Beverley in the Tickton / Weel / Routh corridor. This would introduce another extensive solar installation into the countryside forming part of Beverley's eastern rural setting. Its significance lies not simply in its own scale, but because it sits within an area already seeing multiple smaller solar developments either approved or progressing through planning.

The Emerging Tickton Solar Cluster

Alongside Peartree, several smaller solar developments — approved or at proposal stage — are also clustered in the Tickton / Weel / Routh / Meaux area. Taken together, these smaller schemes amount to approximately 250–300 hectares, equivalent to around 350–420 football pitches, creating a substantial cumulative impact in their own right.

A notable feature of many such schemes is that they were proposed at capacities just below the former 50MW threshold, which until December 2025 was the point at which solar developments became nationally significant infrastructure. By remaining just below that threshold, applications could proceed through local planning routes rather than the NSIP process. However, that threshold increased to 100MW in December 2025. This raises the possibility that future proposals may now be designed to

come in just below the new limit, enabling substantial developments to continue being approved locally while still contributing to significant cumulative landscape change.

This cumulative effect is often difficult for communities to assess because each application is considered separately rather than as part of a wider strategic picture.

Dogger Bank 4: Converter Stations and Underground Cable Routes

The proposed Dogger Bank D offshore wind connection infrastructure introduces two more major strategic energy scheme affecting Beverley's setting.

Plans include:

- Two major converter stations, south of Minster Way and close to Bentley to allow connection to the national grid at Cryke.
- associated infrastructure compounds
- underground high-voltage cable routes

Current indicative routing would see underground cabling pass around the western side of Beverley before connecting south of the town into the national grid network.

The converter station structures could reach approximately 25 metres in height. (For comparison, the towers of Beverley Minster rise to around 50 metres). Although half the height of the Minster towers, industrial structures of this scale placed within open countryside would be highly prominent.

Project Union: East Coast Hydrogen Pipeline

National Gas's proposed Project Union: East Coast hydrogen transmission pipeline would connect Teesside, Yorkshire, the Humber and the East Midlands as part of a future national hydrogen network. Early route indications suggest the corridor may pass north and west of Beverley, adding another major layer of nationally significant infrastructure to the area. Although still at an early stage, it illustrates how Beverley increasingly sits within a broader Humber energy corridor extending across East Yorkshire.

A Wider East Riding Pattern

Beverley is not alone. Large-scale energy infrastructure proposals are also progressing elsewhere across East Riding, including around:

- Howden
- Pocklington and Market Weighton
- strategic grid reinforcement corridors across the county

However, Beverley's concentration of proposals is particularly notable because of the town's historic significance and the sensitivity of its surrounding landscape.

The NSIP Issue: Who Decides?

A key concern for many residents is the NSIP process itself.

Under this regime:

- local councils are consultees rather than decision-makers
- applications are examined nationally by the Planning Inspectorate
- final approval rests with the Secretary of State

This means East Riding of Yorkshire Council does not have the power to approve or reject these developments in the way it would ordinary planning applications. For many communities, this represents a significant loss of local democratic control.

Why This Matters

No-one disputes the need for secure, affordable and lower-carbon energy. The question is whether Beverley and its surrounding countryside are being asked to absorb a disproportionate concentration of nationally significant infrastructure. Beverley's identity is inseparable from its landscape setting — its

open approaches, agricultural hinterland, views to the Wolds and the wider setting of the Westwood and Minster. These proposals deserve careful scrutiny not simply in isolation, but as part of their cumulative effect.

In helping to power the nation, we must ensure we do not risk **overpowering Beverley**.

We Welcome Members' Views

The Civic Society Executive Committee will continue engaging with stakeholders and decision-makers, including our forthcoming discussions with Graham Stuart MP. We would welcome members' views at any of our meetings to any committee member, or by email to bevcivicsoc@gmail.com or through our website <https://www.beverleycivicsociety.com/contacts> where the comment form is towards the bottom of the page.

Some Questions You May Wish To Consider

Do these proposals represent necessary national progress?

Is Beverley and its landscape being asked to carry too great a share of East Yorkshire's energy infrastructure burden and **overpowering Beverley**?

This is an important conversation about the future character of our town — and one to which all members should feel able to contribute.

Mike Farrimond and Nick Robinson



Some Town Matters

Green Energy Generation.

This Newsletter contains an informative article on this topic which is an important one for our Nation and Beverley. One particularly large Solar Farm proposal discussed in the article is the one proposed in the north and south west of Beverley by **Clean Air**. Members should be aware that the company is holding a number of Public Consultations with the Beverley one being on **Tuesday 23rd June at the Memorial Hall from 15.00-19.00 hours**. Please go along to see the plans and discuss with the company representatives, and then as importantly complete feedback forms; an essential element. For other meetings taking place in Lockington and Walkington see: <https://cleanairsolarfarm.co.uk/consultation/> Members should be aware that applications for projects generating over 100MW are now adjudicated on by Planning Inspectorate's National Infrastructure Consulting Inspectorate and not the Local Authority.

Lord Roberts Road:

Unfortunately there is no news to report. Hopefully a new plan will be put forward soon to 'Uplift' this important Town Centre site.

The Medieval Town Trail:

Plans are in hand to repair and rejuvenate the damaged and missing elements of the Trail. Keen eyed members may have observed the illegal 'Googly Eyes' painted on 'The Creepler' by the Beck. It increased his profile on Social Media, but they are to be removed soon! New informative plaques have been installed recently by the North Bar and at Flemingate which should raise the profile of these historically interesting trails in time for our summer visitors.

The Sensory Garden in Coronation Gardens.

Work has been undertaken to improve the function of the fountain which is flowing more reliably. The timber surround has been replaced with elm and is having some final work to settle it in.

Kitchen Lane wall.

Works to the repair of this wall undertaken by Beverley Town Council are proceeding well, using traditional materials.

Railway Station:

The Listed application to increase the length of Platform 2 with associated works has been approved. When completed this will improve access to the longer Hull Trains.

Dick Lidwell

All about BUG (Beverley Urban Gardeners)

The main reason BUG started was due to people being upset by the damaging and unsightly spraying of Roundup in many areas of Beverley. With the help of Karen Simpkins from Beverley Flower Box, who sent emails and helped liaise with the ERYC, we were able to adopt the sprayed areas ourselves to plant up and create no spray zones of which we now have twelve.

Karen and I went to meet HUG (Hornsea Urban Gardeners), run by June Greensmith who was a great inspiration, and she came along 20 months ago to help us on our first and flagship area, Grovehill Green.

We now have a Chairman, Treasurer and Secretary and hold 3 meetings a year to warrant constitution status, and work as a group on Sundays.

We have raised funds ourselves, the wonderful Doug Stewart did a talk last year, we have book sales and do a joint 'Open Gardens' with Dove House Hospice (90/10%). We have also benefitted from grants from Dogger Bank and Beverley Town Council, donations of plants from Wickes, as well as donations of signs from Alan Todd and posts from West Building Supplies.

BUG volunteers are passionate about the environment and gardening, and are from all walks of life. We have a professional gardener, nurses, teachers, HR personnel and a couple of Town Councillors. Our youngest member is just 7 and our oldest is our secretary whose age I will keep to myself.

When we adopt an area we involve the BUGs who live locally and hope other residents may want to join us. All are covered by insurance (kindly bought for us with the first £100 donation from Councillor Tony Henderson). All volunteers get a HI-VIZ vest and tools if needed.



Photos courtesy Pru Joy

We have helped Beverley in Bloom to plant up an area beneath a notice board about ship building by Weel Bridge, an excellent project funded by a local lady.

The children of Molescroft School gave us £500, all raised themselves by holding cake stalls and sponsored walks, and they chose us as their good cause! We also help with the garden at the Cherry Tree Youth Hub on a weekly basis. This is a stand alone community project as the area is not actually sprayed, but something BUG can help with and encourage younger gardeners to participate too.

Our latest project is at 'the Magic Roundabout' Swinemoor Lane, and funded by a grant of £900 from The Beverley Town Council.

We are now in our second year and have 12 No Spray Areas in Beverley. It is wonderful when community groups overlap and help each other as we all have the same aims- to make our town a healthier and even more beautiful place to live or visit.

If anyone would like to get involved and join our lovely group, please get in touch with me, Pru Joy on Facebook or telephone 07969 657454.

Pru Joy (a Founding member)



Photos courtesy *Rosie Ryan*

Obituary For Rosemary Major

29th October 1940 - 12th April 2026

Rosemary Major, who has died aged 85, will be remembered by many members of the Beverley Civic Society as Membership Secretary in the early 2000s but her most important contribution and the one of which she was most proud was her lead role in establishing a Sensory Garden in the Coronation Gardens, North Bar Within.

Rosemary, already a Life Member of the Society, joined the Executive Committee in 1999 as Membership Secretary. In that role she was always very keen on engaging the membership to canvas views to inform the Executive and she worked hard to increase membership. When the idea of establishing a Sensory Garden somewhere in Beverley was suggested, Rosemary's love of gardens and her enthusiastic support for the proposal led to her agreeing to lead the project. The idea for the garden came from another member who took groups around the town, often people with specific requirements, perhaps visual impairment or mobility difficulties. She identified a need for suitable places to sit and enjoy a peaceful and accessible environment.



Rosemary - photo with permission of her family

Rosemary was born in Hartlepool and brought up there with her younger brother. She was sent away to school at St. Hilda's School for Girls at Whitby where she was somewhat of a rebel. Refusing to abide by the rules to wear her hair long and neatly tied back, she took a pair of scissors and cut her hair very short. She went on to study Art in London, then at the Brighton College of Art. Her particular interest was in the plastic arts and sculpture. She taught Art until in her forties, she had a change of direction and became a social worker.

Rosemary married John Major whom she had met while they were both students and working for Royal Mail. They went on to have two children. John, who was at Chatham House at the time, accepted a post in the History Department of the University of Hull so they moved to Beverley, then Cottingham and finally settled back in Beverley. When John brought home a stray dog who was wandering about the University Library, they named him Woolfie and he became a much-loved pet.

They were both very active, committed and generous supporters of the Liberal Democrats and Rosemary could still be found distributing leaflets well into her eighties.

Rosemary loved her own garden and she became devoted and utterly committed to the development and ongoing care of the Sensory Garden. She was just as heavily involved in a second project in 2012 to acknowledge the late Queen's Diamond Jubilee as she had been in 2002-2005 when the garden was first established. More recently (2018-2019 onwards) she was an integral part of the Steering Group for numerous attempts to upgrade the planting and features in the Sensory Garden along with the revitalisation of the Old Burial Ground at the rear of the site. Her involvement gradually reduced but the Garden remains for us all to enjoy which is what Rosemary wanted above all. It is a great asset to the town and a great tribute to her tenacity and the time, effort and resources she devoted to it.

Angela Mulford

The following information is reproduced from the HEY History Calendar FaceBook page, by kind permission of Carol Osgerby, developer of the site. Each month we will attempt to include entries from her website which have relevance to Beverley and the surrounding areas.

1st June 1798, William Wickham, Superintendent of Aliens, wrote advising on the tightening of the Aliens Act, with particular relation to Italian pedlars landing at Hull.

2nd June 1537, William Wood, prior of Bridlington, Sir Thomas Percy of Leconfield, George Lumley of Thwing and Sir Francis Bigod of Settrington were found guilty of treason and hanged at London's Tyburn for their part in the Pilgrimage of Grace.

3rd June 1642, a few weeks after being refused entry into Hull, King Charles I called a meeting of the Yorkshire gentry at Heworth Moor, near York, and 70,000 attended. 200 young men volunteered to form a bodyguard for the King. The two Hilyard brothers of Winestead, Henry and Robert, attended, and volunteered.

4th June 1369, 49 men and women of Hull formed themselves into a guild in honour of the Holy Trinity, and bound themselves to help each other in poverty and sickness. This guild developed into Hull Trinity House.

5th June 1915, German Lieut-Capt Boemack made the first Zeppelin air raid on Yorkshire, dropping bombs on Driffild and Hedon before aborting the mission.

6th June 1651, George Fox, Quaker preacher, proclaimed his Quaker beliefs in reply to the sermon at Beverley Minster.

7th June 1672, the residents of Sister-Kirks (Owthorne and Withernsea) reported hearing the sound of the naval battle of Solebay, off the coast of Suffolk. A fleet of 75 Dutch ships surprised a fleet of 93 Anglo-French ships at anchor.

8th June 1300, a year after Hull's establishment, King Edward I gave a charter to allow the mayor and aldermen to pave the major streets, with a central gutter for ease of drainage. The work began in 1301.

9th June 1786, a servant of Rev George Lambert of Hull gave notice that she was leaving after living with the family for 15 years, to live with a sailor who had recently sold his wife to another man.

10th June 1913, the Assembly Rooms, Seaside Road, Withernsea, were destroyed in a fire; the area became a skating rink, and later a fun fair and amusements.

11th June 1312, a miracle was recorded when some boys whose sight was failing had their eyes smeared with oil which flowed from the tomb of St John of Beverley. Their sight then began to improve.

12th June 1799, Capain Angus Sadler and the crew of the whaler Molly returned to port after a voyage of 87 days, with 11 whales, 300 butts of blubber and 5 tons of bone. This was the earliest recorded return to Hull of a whaler.

13th June 1943, Withernsea Central School teacher Miss Longdon reported in the school log that incendiary bombs fell on the school, burnt out Classroom 8 and caused 'holes in the hall and on the platform'. Some classes had to be accommodated in the Methodist Chapel.

14th June 1505, Thomas Wryght, husbandman of Hull, claimed sanctuary at the church of St John, Beverley; the register does not state for what offence he was being pursued.

15th June 1795, Hull Trinity House agreed to give £100 to the mayor's fund to buy corn and resell it to the poor at a discount, as war was causing food scarcities.

16th June 1487, John de la Pole, Earl of Lincoln, died aged 22 (or 25), in the Battle of Stoke (near Newark) fighting against Henry VII, attempting to place Lambert Simnel on the English throne.

17th June 1763, it was the 3rd day of Beverley Races, held on Westwood, between the Newbald and Walkington roads. On each morning a cock fight was held for a prize of 4 guineas, 40 to the overall winner. An assembly was held every night at the new Assembly Rooms. In Whitsun Week 1765, the Races were held on the Hurn for the first time. In 1769, a stand was built.

18th June 1920, Ian Gillett Carmichael was born in Hull. A film and TV actor, particularly in comedy. Awarded an OBE in 2003, he died in 2010.

19th June 1837, Rev Joseph Coltman died in Beverley at the age of 60. He was known for his support of local charities, of the emancipation of Catholics, and of the abolition of slavery. Born in Hull, Coltman Street was named for him, as was Beverley's Coltman Avenue. At 37 stone 8lbs, he was reputed to be the heaviest man in England, and his death may have been caused by his weight. He employed a manservant to turn him in bed, but he fell asleep and Coltman suffocated in his sleep.



20th June 1761, Beverley widow Elizabeth Courtney, of Walkergate, paid the bellman to go round the town announcing a reward of 3 guineas to anyone with information about bricks thrown through her windows the previous night.

21st June 1908, Hull women hired a special train to London for a "Women's Sunday" rally organised by the WSPU, attended by 300,000 to 500,000; the Hull contingent is said to be the largest from any provincial society.

22nd June 1900, Herbert Hebb of Leven, private in Volunteer Service Company, 2nd East Yorkshire Regiment, died aged 22 at Winburg, South Africa, in the Boer War.

23rd June 1898, Winifred Holtby was born at Rudston. Social reformer, novelist and journalist, she was famous and respected for her work in South Africa and elsewhere. 'South Riding' became her most famous novel, published after her death. She is buried in Rudston. (d 29.9.1935)

24th June 1381, King Edward III issued a writ ordering rebel supporters of the Peasants' Revolt to be arrested and punished.

25th June 2007, Michael Barnett died of hypothermia in Hessle during catastrophic flooding when he became trapped trying to unblock a drain; 10,500 homes were evacuated in Hull and East Riding; many people were unable to return home for several months.

26th June 1920, the National Federation of Women Workers called its Hull laundry worker members out on strike, as they were paid less than in other towns. Hull Trades Council supported the strike and organised a parade on 17 July. Strike breakers were reported being smuggled in to work in laundry baskets.

27th June 2010, Barbara Buttrick was inducted into the Florida Boxing Hall of Fame, aged 80. Born in Cottingham in 1930, she began boxing in 1945, married her manager and moved to Florida in 1952. At 4' 11", she was known as the Mighty Atom.

28th June 1904, Hull City AFC was founded; early matches were played at the Boulevard.

29th June 1870, Frederick William Elwell was born in Beverley. Painter and member of the Royal Academy, he painted portraits of King George V and TR Ferens, amongst others. His wife Mary was also an accomplished artist. (d 3.1.1958)

30th June 1945, Hull Aldermen Hewitt and Stark acted as driver and conductor on the last ever Hull tram, illuminated with 800 fairy lights, and watched by up to 50,000 people. Trams had operated since 1899.



For your Diary



Of Interest to Our Members - Lots of Societies are taking a well-deserved summer break but we still have a few Spring events to enjoy

Friday 5th June 12.00 noon

The Pilgrimage of Grace and East Yorkshire's
Dominic Black
Hull Minster

Friday 19th June 7.30pm

Barton Civic Society
Reuben Chappell (1870-1940)
Alex Ombler
Joseph Wright Hall, Queen's Street
Barton Upon Humber

Wednesday 10th June 6.00pm

Alyce Chaucer and the De La Pole Hull connections
Christina Hardymeny
St Mary the Virgin, Lowgate, Hull

Sunday 21st June 3.00pm

Hull Civic Society
Re-dedication of the clock and other activities
St. James' Church, Sutton on Hull

Thursday 18th June 7.15pm

Hessle Local History Society
Allotments in Hull and the East Riding
Paul Lever
Hessle Town Hall

Monday 29th June 7.00pm

Hull Civic Society
The Georgian Walk
Walk led by Colin Cooper to meet a Kingston Square

Subscriptions – An early reminder

An early reminder about the annual subscription of £20, which is due from the AGM in October. As members may recall, subscriptions were increased from £15 to £20 at the AGM in October 2024. Many members pay by standing order which were set up some years ago, and those orders will continue to pay £15 unless they are changed in person at the bank, or by using the bank's app on a mobile phone.

Following improvements to our website, members can now renew their subscription via the Civic Society website, which accepts credit and debit cards - <https://www.beverleycivicsociety.com/copy-of-membership>. Subscriptions can also be paid in person at one of our meetings which recommence on 10 September following the summer break .



The Battle of Flamborough Head

Margaret Hicks-Clarke & John Clarke

Beverley Civic Society
Talk on Thursday
14 May 2026

103 Attendees

Members of Beverley Civic Society were treated to an excellent and vividly delivered presentation by husband-and-wife double act Margaret Hicks-Clarke and John Clarke of Filey, both members of the Yorkshire Coast 1779 Research Group.

Their talk brought to life the remarkable story of the Battle of Flamborough Head, fought on 23 September 1779 during the American War of Independence.

Although many Americans assume the battle took place off the eastern seaboard of the United States, it actually occurred just off the Yorkshire coast, within sight of Bridlington, Filey and Scarborough. Contemporary accounts suggest thousands of local people gathered along the cliffs to watch the battle unfold by moonlight.

Britain, America and France

By 1779, Britain was fighting not only the American revolutionaries but also France, which had entered the war in support of the American cause.

A small Franco-American squadron under the command of John Paul Jones had been raiding British shipping along the east coast. Jones's flagship was the *Bonhomme Richard*, a converted merchant vessel carrying a large and multinational crew. In Britain, Jones was already notorious following earlier raids and was viewed by many as little more than a pirate.

On 23 September, Jones encountered a large British merchant convoy returning from the Baltic carrying vital naval supplies including timber, hemp and tar. Protecting the convoy were two Royal Navy warships: HMS *Serapis*, commanded by Captain Richard Pearson, and the *Countess of Scarborough*.

Pearson's orders were simple — protect the convoy at all costs.



John Paul Jones and Richard Pearson
Wikipedia Commons

The Battle

Pearson positioned his ships between Jones and the merchant convoy, allowing the merchant vessels to escape toward Scarborough.

Jones's flagship, the ageing *Bonhomme Richard*, was slower and less manoeuvrable than *Serapis*, despite carrying heavier armament overall. The ships exchanged devastating broadsides at close range.

Early in the battle, two of *Bonhomme Richard*'s guns exploded, killing members of the crew and placing Jones at a severe disadvantage. His ship was badly damaged and beginning to burn. According to tradition, Pearson called out asking whether Jones intended to surrender.

Jones is said to have replied with the immortal words:

"I have not yet begun to fight."

Whether those were his exact words or not, his refusal to surrender was very real.

Realising he could not win a conventional artillery duel, Jones took the extraordinary step of lashing *Bonhomme Richard* to *Serapis*, locking the two ships together. For hours the battle descended into brutal close-quarters combat: cannon fire blasting through hulls at point-blank range, musket fire from the rigging, grenades hurled onto enemy decks, and fierce hand-to-hand fighting.

One grenade dropped from the rigging of *Bonhomme Richard* exploded near *Serapis*' powder stores, causing devastating casualties and crippling British resistance.

After around four hours of fighting, Pearson finally surrendered. Around 450 men and boys were killed or wounded during the battle. At the time, boys as young as twelve served aboard naval vessels as "powder monkeys", carrying gunpowder from the magazine to the guns during combat.

Who Won?

The answer depends on perspective:

Tactically, Jones captured HMS *Serapis*, allowing the Americans to claim victory.

Strategically, however, Captain Pearson achieved his primary objective: the merchant convoy escaped safely.

For that reason, Pearson was hailed as a hero in Britain and was later knighted despite losing his ship — a remarkable outcome in an era when captains who lost vessels typically faced court martial.

Meanwhile John Paul Jones became an American naval legend and is still widely regarded as one of the founding figures of the U.S. Navy. Ironically, the badly damaged *Bonhomme Richard* sank two days later.

A Yorkshire Story with International Significance

For East Yorkshire, the battle remains one of the most extraordinary events ever witnessed off the local coastline:

- It was fought within sight of shore
- It brought the American War of Independence directly to Yorkshire
- It became part of the founding mythology of the United States Navy

Today, a memorial marker near Flamborough Head Lighthouse commemorates the battle.

Standing on those cliffs today, it is remarkable to think that one of the defining moments in early American naval history unfolded just offshore from the Yorkshire coast.

The Yorkshire Coast 1779 Research Group

The Yorkshire Coast 1779 Research Group is a local heritage and education charity dedicated to raising awareness of the Battle of Flamborough Head and strengthening its place within the Yorkshire coast's visitor and heritage story.

Originally established as *Filey Bay 1779* in 2020, the organisation later broadened its scope to reflect the battle's significance to the entire coastline between Bridlington and Scarborough.

Its activities include:

- Educational talks and school projects
- Heritage displays and interpretation boards
- Annual commemorations in Filey each September
- Promotion of a proposed "1779 Heritage Trail"
- Planning towards the battle's 250th anniversary in 2029

The group is also associated with ongoing interest in locating the wreck of the *Bonhomme Richard*. Claims made by marine exploration company Merlin Burrows that the wreck has been identified off Filey Bay attracted considerable international attention, particularly in the United States. However, the identification remains unproven and continues to be debated within the maritime archaeology community. In fact, the US Government has already spent some £2-300m trying to find it. However the mystery of its exact location continues.

Beverley Civic Society Event

Stephen Hunt, Director of Planning and Economic Growth, East Riding of Yorkshire Council gives his biennial planning update



7.30pm, Thursday 11 June 2026

St Mary's Church, Beverley

Non-members are welcome £5



DISCLAIMER

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