



Pickering & District Civic Society

Reg. Charity 502630

Newsletter

Issue No.25
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Pickering Flood Defence Scheme

Some of you may have noticed that this edition of the newsletter has been somewhat delayed. This was due to a number of circumstances, mainly your editor's lack of time and also the cancellation of the Pickering Flood Defence Scheme. This issue has been evolving over the past few weeks and it would have been premature to publish the newsletter until we knew more details.

The Environment Agency had been trying to design and build bunds to slow the flow of floodwater into Pickering. Due to the proximity of houses at Newbridge it had to be a Class A structure under the Reservoirs Act. Yet the EA and their consultant engineer thought that it could be built at a lesser safety level but as the work progressed the engineer revised his opinion. In March he decided it must be full Class A. That meant a much larger structure capable of withstanding a 1 in 10,000 year flood. The costs rocketed and the scheme was cancelled. From a layman's point of view it seems strange that there should be some grey area in the guidance for building reservoirs that meant the EA thought a class A structure could be built to a lower specification. It seems that a gamble was taken that backfired spectacularly.

Since the announcement there has been much activity at the highest government level prompted by Anne McIntosh our MP. She has assured us both in writing and at meetings that she will strive to find a way forward on this matter. Legislation might be

one route as the new Reservoir bill is still passing through parliament. Another might be a different scheme for smaller and more numerous bunds. The EA has said that it will look afresh at the whole scheme and reassess all the options. The original study by the Ryedale Flood Study Group suggested building multiple bunds but the EA decided on one big one instead. Unfortunately we have no idea how this will eventually progress but we have made strong representations through our MP and she in turn to Lord Chris Smith the head of DEFRA.

Most of you will know how much work our chairman Mike Potter has put into this scheme and it is particularly galling for him personally to see it falter like this. He is working all the hours he can to try and help resolve the situation. I too have had correspondence and a meeting with Anne McIntosh.

We all have a pretty jaundiced view of the efficiency of the EA but simply hurling brickbats at them for incompetence would probably be counter productive and wouldn't help to move things forward. Personally I think the low-tech simple small bunds solution is the right way to go but the EA don't seem able to think about small things. Yet if you build a large number they give the same or greater result than the one big bund. **SH**

Pickering Town Guides.

Three requests for group guided walks are challenging us this summer. The York Art Fund had a guided tour of Francis Nicholson, Wall Paintings, then half walked on to Eric Gill and Rex Whistler and the other half to the Railway with Belcher and today's artist Chris Warne. Our next one is for the Yorkshire Quakers in which the theme will be Pickering's Dissenters and in September Hull History Society will travel from Wall Paintings on the low road to the Railway or on the high road to the Castle. It is really interesting to take out a special interest group as they are likely to have expertise among them to add to our store of knowledge! One Art Fund member has kindly offered to lend a portrait by Francis Nicholson to the Exhibition next spring. **JD**

Pickering Census Group.

For some months now Betty Halse formerly of Levisham Local History Group has headed up a group looking at the census's on microfilm in the library and in particular how the jobs have changed from 1841 to 1911 which has led to further questions. It meets as and when (two months or so) and on a Wednesday morning when the library is closed. Gradually a picture is emerging of how the town has changed. Next meeting on September 7 Libby will show us how we could store information gathered on a website map!

If you would like to join in - front door at 9.55 or come to the back door after 10.am Ring Betty 476114 for details

Heritage Group

This spring our two events in Pickering Castle were pioneer events for us - a Spring Nature Day to see what fauna and flora could be found and an Acoustic Music Afternoon.

Unfortunately because of the hiatus (due to pending cuts) in the management structure of EH our permission to do these came late and disrupted advertising and the weather also brought problems of keeping dry and

discouraging people to have a day out with us. Our first list of flowers and birds was made - especial thanks to Tom Denney our bird man. This list could increase as grass cutting is being cut so there could be exciting years ahead! Nan Sykes will be helping us keep an eye on the flowers at the edge of the moat. The Acoustic Day brought us 12 musicians from the Pickering Acoustic Group with fiddles, guitars, and woodwind as well as basic percussion; several families and local people came to listen and a number of children and adults drew and crayoned to music. The event had finally to retreat into the chapel where the acoustics are lovely for this kind of music. (medieval, folk, jazz and ballads) The very talented musicians really enjoyed the day and asked that it should be repeated in the future. Many thanks to Alison Lawson for bringing them along.

In August two days are planned - a textile day on August 15 arranged by Hilda Sissons and a games from the ages for all ages on August 29th arranged by Mike Flyn the curator.

Do come and join in the fun. **JD**

Green Neighbourhood Challenge with Energy Saving Trust.

This joint venture with Kirkbymoorside Energy Group may seem odd to those who have always tried to have a low carbon footprint (although it was not called this in the old days - it was living carefully on a small income). With the present fast moving range of products and increasing use of electricity and plastics, it is good for us to re-examine what we actually need in our lives. In the film "Learning from Lashka" we saw the reaction of people from this remote Himalayan valley, who were used to living with all waste recycled to the earth or to other people, to our prolific wanton wastefulness in a London rubbish tip. We also saw the care of everyone in the community in this remote place as we did in the film about how Cuba coped with Peak Oil. It showed how people pulled together to produce food in Cuba when Cuba suddenly found itself without oil and fertiliser

because Russia in crisis could no longer help them sustain the "modern economy".

We see now how the oil companies are desperately trying to get access to remote places to extract oil from tar sands or from deeper and deeper sea beds. Plus the process of extracting oil and gas from shale deposits by drilling and then firing off explosives to shatter the shale and release the deposits. This is known as Hydraulic Fracturing or 'fracking' some FAQs on this process are answered here- www.gaslandthemovie.com/whats-fracking

A Guardian report on controversial fracking for natural gas near Blackpool can be seen here-

www.guardian.co.uk/business/2011/mar/01/fracking-shale-gas-energy-mps

You may perhaps take the internet and its marvels for granted but there is a large energy downside to it. The massive ever growing size of the servers that power the internet use huge quantities of electricity. In some cases this is as much as that used by a small city. Multiply that by umpteen servers across the world and it amounts to a large amount just to serve a communications medium. It also seems to be continually growing to serve an ever increasing worldwide demand.

Our volunteer group are trying to reduce our energy usage by around 11% and for most of us who have been energy wise for a long time it will prove to be a hard task. The first meeting was to tell us about our energy profiles, worked out from a survey we all answered and the second was about Energy Efficiency (home insulation, reduction in wasting electricity).

Some measures such as turning off appliances when not in use are fairly obvious but to really save energy things that sit there on standby should also be turned off. A relation is very profligate with electricity, especially since he stuck £15,000 worth of photo-voltaic cells on his roof. He leaves lights on all the time, umpteen appliances on standby and cannot grasp that turning them off

saves money and energy. He works on the principle that the start up of things uses the most electricity. That is correct up to a point but after a low energy light has been off for three minutes and isn't switched on again for a while energy is being saved.

In my own case I was surprised to come out bottom in our group in terms of the energy profile. That is perhaps because we have coal fires, and a conventional- not a condensing boiler. The house is also old and listed which doesn't help much. It is however fairly well insulated, apart from the small modern extension, so it looks like improvements there will help a lot. Our car usage is also fairly modest, less since the price of fuel rocketed and I use a bicycle for popping up to the town. I've not travelled abroad by air for nearly four years but had to take a flight to Slovenia for our son's wedding earlier this year. Fortunately business trips are not counted otherwise I would be in trouble as I've made one trip already this year and another three are planned. Unfortunately alternative methods of travel are simply not really available to get to Trondheim in Norway and the Faroe Islands! **SH**

Future events are listed below and anyone can come along-

Sat 23 July 0930-1230 **Kirkbymoorside** Memorial Hall. Renewables (alternative energy such as solar, wind and water).

Thu 25 Aug 7-9pm Pickering Memorial Hall Beckett Room. Water (not wasting it)

Tue 20 Sep 7-9pm Pickering Memorial Hall Beckett Room . Transport

Tue 18 Oct 7-9pm **Kirkbymoorside** Memorial Hall dugout. Waste/Shopping (recycling. Food supply chain, shopping locally)

Mon 21 Nov 1000-1200 Pickering Memorial Hall Beckett Room. Event of our choosing - to be decided nearer the event

Heritage Open Days in September

The Kirk Theatre will hold a Coffee Morning and Open Back Stage day on Saturday September 6 and Beck Isle Museum the Finds Open Day on Sunday September 7th.

Rosedale Local History Group are planning activities over the weekend.

Our contribution is from Mark Sissons giving a presentation on Thursday September 4 and a Newbridge Walk will take place on Sunday afternoon September 7th.

The visit to Robin Hood's Bay little "not open very often" museum had to be cancelled due to lack of bookings might this weekend be the best time for our visit?

PLEASE contact Mark if you are interested to go so he can arrange a mutually convenient time in September-

Contact Mark Sissons 475784

JD for MS

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**The closing date for
letters, notes or articles
for the next newsletter
is 20th September**

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