

NWR visit to Hull

UK City of Culture 2017



Hull City Hall, Victoria Square

31st May 2017

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Led by our intrepid native-of-Hull (Mavis)

Six of us took a slow and stately train to Hull on a sunny morning in May (viewing the magnificent Humber Bridge from the train windows).



Hull station has a wonderful Victorian glass canopy and very long platforms – this is because, until 1914, Hull was the first arrival point for European emigrants to the USA. From here they took trains to Southampton or Liverpool to complete their journey.



The scale of this “transmigration” is celebrated in a large scale artwork on the arched windows of the station entrance. The images on the windows derive from the craft skills and tools which migrated through Hull station, as well as the people themselves.

We were greeted at the station by a statue of Philip Larkin, a “virtual” William Wilberforce, and some very enthusiastic Welcome volunteers who gave us a variety of leaflets to ensure that we became **Part of the Story**.

Much of the centre of Hull is now pedestrianised, so it was a pleasure to walk from Paragon Square along sunny streets passing a statue of Amy Johnson (a native of Hull).



We arrived at the central Queen Victoria Square where we saw the imposing facades of Hull City Hall, the Maritime Museum and the Ferens Art Gallery.



All the Museums and Galleries have exhibitions during Summer 2017, including a Rembrandt, on loan from the Queen's Collection, at the Ferens Art Gallery

<http://www.hcandl.co.uk/ferens>

Mavis told us how Hull was originally named Wyke, but when it was taken over by Edward I he gave it the name of Kingston ("Kingstown") – on-Hull. The city stands on two rivers, the Hull and Humber rivers.



One of the old mediaeval docks has been filled in and is now Queens Gardens.



Other medieval dock areas have become Princes Quay shopping centre and Hull Marina.



Mavis took us on a walk through the Old Town starting at Beverley Gate.



The remains of Beverley Gate are where, in 1642, Sir John Hotham refused Charles I entry to the city, an act of defiance widely acknowledged as the spark that ignited the English Civil War. The redevelopment of this site is ongoing.

We passed several fine buildings which used to be clearing houses or banks for money from the Hanseatic League, a North European trading organisation controlling Baltic trade. (They now include a Yates's Wine Lodge and a Wetherspoons.)

We saw England's smallest window in the George Hotel,



before walking past the magnificent Trinity House, former home to the Guild of Mariners.

Just around the corner is Holy Trinity Church (the largest parish church in England).



Inside we admired its colourful restored ceilings and Pre-Raphaelite-style stained glass windows.

Outside the church there is a statue to Andrew Marvell, poet and politician, and another native of Hull.



He stands outside the Old Grammar School which both he and William Wilberforce attended.

A walk along Hull Marina waterfront, past the Spurn lightship museum,



brought us to a delicious Spanish tapas lunch spot.



We walked along the Humber waterfront, past the Deep, a huge Aquarium (and Finalist in Visit England's Awards for Excellence in 2017).





A modern statue, which encouraged a return to friendship with Iceland after the Cod Wars of the Seventies, stands near the Deep.

Mavis led us past the golden King Billy statue,



through the magnificent Victorian Hepworth Arcades (where Marks and Spencer opened one of their first penny bazaars), along High Street.....



....to an area of old pubs,
warehouses and.....



Georgian houses,
including the Customs
House, later to
become the Corn
Exchange. This
building now houses
the Hull and East
Riding Museum.



This walk along High Street led us to the Museum Quarter, and the Wilberforce House Museum, the birthplace of Hull MP and slavery abolitionist, William Wilberforce.



We had time for a quick look inside at the exhibitions about Wilberforce's life and his work to abolish slavery.

Just around the corner from Wilberforce House, through the peaceful Mandela Gardens, is the Streetlife Museum of Transport.



We walked back to the City Hall via the magnificent City Exchange and Guildhall buildings.



Two intrepid tourists managed a visit to the Maritime Museum, but the rest of us succumbed to icecreams in the Kardomah before we all walked back to the station for a welcome cup of tea at the grand Royal Station Hotel.

Many thanks to Mavis for giving us such a wonderful and comprehensive overview of Hull in its UK City of Culture year 2017 – I'm sure many of us will want to go again to sample the city's delights in more detail.

Useful websites

<https://www.hull2017.co.uk>

<http://www.hullcc.gov.uk/museums>

<https://www.hull2017.co.uk/guides/theatres-museums-galleries/>