

## 5W Gathering Beverley 1-9 September 2017

In gatherings we meet old friends and make new ones, explore and learn, all because wonderful 5W women host and showcase the diversity of their part of the world. That's what Hazel, Sandra and Sylvia did for 24 5Ws from eight countries last September. Yorkshire is the largest county in England – the Great Humber estuary in the south, the North Sea in the east and Pennine hills in the west.

Our 'home' was once a medieval Dominican Friary located in the shadow of the fabulous Beverley Minster. At our welcome meal the Town Crier, in eighteenth century costume, gave us, and the values of 5W, a rousing welcome!



The gathering coincided with the annual Freedom Festival in Hull, named because of the city's connection with William Wilberforce, leading slavery abolitionist and because Hull was also the 2017 UK City of Culture. In the packed streets among performers, a spellbinding high wire act, a "talk tent" and a carnival procession it was hard to keep together. In the old harbour area, where former fruit ripening sheds are now trendy bars and galleries we had our first taste of this vibrant city. Later, to the "Olde White Harte" for some R&R, we saw the room where the rebellion that brought Oliver Cromwell briefly to power was plotted. Around the old town of cobbled streets between the River Hull, the estuary and the docks, (some docks now filled in to make parks and marinas) the grand city grew up with its nineteenth century municipal buildings, monuments theatres and galleries.

What's in a name? In Beverley's case it was for the lake of beavers, which once adjoined it. But as for its fame and the magnificent minster, that was down to St John of Beverley. His healing 'miracles' made the town a place of pilgrimage. After a day of exploration of the town and its history, members of the York Waits – the revived medieval band entertained us – see & hear them online and imagine us in our medieval building listening to them live!

The gathering allowed time to explore independently, some went to historic York others to the coast.

The Yorkshire coast is the most northern extent of chalk in Britain. At the magnificent white Bempton cliffs we observed the huge colony of gannets. After typical Fish'n Chips and an attempt at making traditional seaside rock, we ended at a large country estate to learn more about Hull born Amy Johnson, aviator and first female to fly solo to Australia in 1930.

And so, to Bronte country and the Pennine village of Haworth and the story of the literary sisters who lived in the parsonage. The infant mortality, unsanitary conditions and hardship, which influenced them, are a far cry from the picture perfect village of today complete with steam railway. Lastly, a taste of Victorian industrial enlightenment at Saltaire, the huge mill and planned village created by Titus Salt, pioneer of improved working conditions. The mill now converted to galleries shows works by David Hockney who lives locally. Our last visit was to the Yorkshire sculpture park. Some strolled in sunshine among the work of world famous sculptors while, at a workshop, others tested their creativity! At our final celebratory dinner in Beverley, experiences shared, gifts exchanged we said farewell.

Thanks everyone – it was great!

Úna, UK