

PLASTIC BOTTLE DEPOSIT SCHEME



Five years ago I wrote an article for Outlook extolling the virtues from a deposit scheme for plastic and glass bottles and cans. I recalled the days of my youth, supplementing my pocket money by returning discarded (littered!) bottles to the retailer and claiming the deposit. And though I wasn't expecting a scheme, had it been taken on in 2011, to bolster my pension, it was and remains such a good idea I pleaded with the Government of the day to adopt the scheme - only for Caroline Spelman when Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs to dismiss the idea.

Cue huge disappointment in the Warwick office of CPRE and across the country.

So imagine my delight the other day to see Emma Bridgewater, our national president, on the television at an enormous plastic bottle recycling facility (suited and booted in full protective headgear and glasses thereby making her almost unrecognisable!) promoting the idea of a plastic bottle deposit scheme once again. Her words were music to our ears and to those of every supporter. "Billions of plastic bottles are thrown away every year, littering streets and polluting our landscapes alike. I want to see this tide turned back. Government has already made important strides in cutting our use of plastic bags - now we must do something similar for plastic bottles".

After the huge success of the plastic bag charge, that has seen the major supermarkets' usage of said bags fall by a staggering 80%, surely now is the time to introduce a similar levy on plastic bottles.

What would be involved is so simple.

The drinks manufacturer/wholesaler adds a sum to the price of every bottle sold to the retailer (this could be between ten and thirty pence say, depending on the size of the container); the retailer adds this to the price of the drink to the consumer; the consumer (or whoever picks up the container if it has been discarded) collects this sum when he or she returns it to the retailer or other return centre.

Yes, there will be a requirement for central administration, keeping track of all these transactions, but as return rates will never be 100% there will be a surplus within the system which can be used to fund such areas as set-up, administration and reimbursing retailers for their costs of storing and processing the returned containers. The beauty of the system is that the person who discards the containers by littering is penalised - they lose their deposit! And Local Authorities would gain through reduced collections of materials that they normally recycle.

A report commissioned by CPRE in 2010 called “Have we got the bottle?” concluded that there would be a net jobs benefit of the scheme. For although jobs would be lost in the area of Local Authority waste/recyclables collection, these would more than be made up by the creation of ‘green’ jobs in collection and processing of the containers - believed at the time to be more than 4000 additional jobs along with 400 engineering and maintenance roles and a further 100 office based administrative posts!

So come on everyone, get behind Emma and support this scheme!

Write to your MP; lobby your local councillor; write to your favourite newspaper - for with your help we can go along way towards stopping the horror of plastic bottle waste that so disfigures our towns and countryside alike!



By Myles Thornton

HONINGTON HALL VISIT

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Members visit to Honington Hall

Our visit to Honington Hall, the magnificent Caroline house, close to Shipston on Stour got off to a sticky start: so sticky it almost didn't happen at all, as there had been a mix up over dates. But thankfully our host, Benjamin Wiggin, sacrificed his appointment in Birmingham for the sake of our visit and thirty three members assembled in the house's courtyard at the designated time. One side of the courtyard was stables probably dating from the early 17th century and entered through an impressive middle arch carriage-way. And it was within the courtyard that we adjourned after our tour for cordials and cake!

But to the visit -

We started in the adjacent church, All Saints, built in the 1680's in a similar style to several of Wren's City of London churches. Full of coats of arms and monuments of previous owners, such as the large carved achievement of the Stuart Royal Arms on the west wall and the many memorials of the Parker and Townsend families. And intriguingly a wooden carving of a dove! (That looks like a duck!)

I went into detail about the house's architecture and materials - redbrick with rusticated limestone quoins - but need to point out a couple of items such as the busts of several Roman Emperors in the niches above the ground floor windows; the internal decoration including the wonderful plasterwork attributed to Italian craftsmen and some to Charles Stanley; the marble fireplace with overmantle in the hall; the wood panelled drawing room; and the simply



Honington Hall, 7th June 2012
Illustration by Mick Jeffs

outstanding octagonal salon with its decorated domed ceiling and painting attributed to Ballucci, rococo garlands down the angles of the walls, classical fireplaces and paintings depicting the four seasons.

Once we had finished our tour of the house we were let loose in the gardens with its terraces planted with specimen trees and shrubs, and the lawns that descend to the River Stour.

I think the mighty Nikolaus Pevsner's words, " Honington Hall is a gem of a late seventeenth century house" , can be relied on!

So many thanks to Benjamin Wiggin and his team of helpers for making the visit (happen at all, Andrew!) so enjoyable and such a success.