



TRUST TOPICS

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See Planning Matters

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Member of



The Annual General Meeting 2010

The AGM was held on Thursday 11th November and included a few changes for the Trust's officers. As you will have read in the last newsletter, Eric Braim had announced that he would not stand for re-election as secretary at the AGM. His decision triggered a re-shuffle.

John Holmes, who had been the vice-chairman, was elected our new chairman. Archie Sinclair, who had been chairman since his election at the 1982 AGM, was elected to replace Eric as secretary. Lyn Cowles was re-elected as treasurer and Mairaid Smith as membership secretary. We hope that the re-shuffle can be a "seamless" change. The Executive Committee was pleased to welcome Julian Lloyd as he was elected to become its newest member.

Archie thanked Eric for his loyal service to the Trust, his dedication to local architectural and social history, and to getting things right. His research into local streets, spaces, architects and their buildings was a wealth of information. It had already been widely used by others, and would continue to be a wonderful resource in the future. Many of his display boards on local buildings had been on show at the Local History Fair in September.

Eric was presented with a recent book by architect Ptolemy Dean, *Britain's Buildings, Places and Spaces*, a collection of pen and wash sketches. Eric, never one for any fuss, thanked the Trust and was sure it would be in good hands.

Outgoing chairman Archie Sinclair remarked that Eric's service amounted almost to a career of some 40 years, and, had it been paid and not voluntary, he could have now retired on a full pension. But he was pleased with the book.

Eric and his wife Betty plan to remain as members of the Executive Committee

The Trust Finally Gets its Website

At last our website went live on 25 November 2010. It had been a long time in the making. At our Members' Forum in April it was agreed that a website was essential and that its completion was a priority.

We waited to launch the site until after the AGM so that it could include any changes made at the meeting. The address is www.doncastercivictrust.org.uk, although it can be found easily using search engines such as Google.

The site contains information on the Trust, how to contact us or become a member and has the last 12 Trust Topics newsletters, with colour images, to read. There is also a Town Trail, with photographs and details of the 22 buildings featured in the Trail, first published in 1980, as well as a page for the latest news. The information on the site will be expanded over time.

Another innovation is an e-mail address for the Trust, mail@doncastercivictrust.org.uk. This can be used separately or from someone logged on to the website.

Civic Voice was sent a link (an address, really) to our website and responded positively using our new e-mail address. Ian Harvey wrote, "*Many thanks for this. It is an excellent website and I particularly like the newsletter and town trail section*".

We have to thank Ian Moore at 20-20 Web Design for his work on the Trust's website.

Winter Programme 2010 - 2011

All events to take place at St Peter's RC Church Hall, Chequer Road

2011

Thursday 20 January 2011 at 7.30 pm

John Hoare on "The English Parish Church"

Thursday 17 February 2011 at 7.30 pm

Peter Robinson on "100 Years of Doncaster Museum"

Thursday 17 March 2011

Mrs Bowser on "Winthrop Park Nature and Sensory Garden"

Thursday 14 April 2011 Members' Social Forum

Another chance to review what we do, how we do it and why - and maybe what we ought to do.

Sheffield Botanical Gardens



Sue Kohler

Thursday 14 October 2010

Sue Kohler had been Chairman of the Friends of Sheffield Botanical Gardens for 16 years. Those years covered a period of dramatic change for the Gardens. Sue told the story of how the site was brought from "a shambles from top to bottom" to becoming one of Sheffield's finest public attractions.

In 1834 Robert Marnock (1800-1889), head gardener at Bretton Hall, Wakefield, was appointed by the Sheffield Botanical and Horticultural Society to design and lay out the Botanical Gardens on a 19 acre site. Marnock designed the Gardens in the then fashionable Gardenesque style. After two years' development, the Gardens opened and he became its first Curator in 1836.

In 1840, he left for London and Regent's Park, where he stayed for 29 years. Under the control of another good curator, the Gardens prospered. The conservatories were extended, and a tea pavilion and the present Curator's House were constructed within the next ten years. A period of steady development and growing international renown followed for the next 30 years. The Gardens were only open to the general public on four Gala days per year. Normally admission was limited to shareholders and annual subscribers.

By 1898, the Gardens' heyday was over. Faced with falling income, the Society proposed to sell the land for development. Fortunately, the Sheffield Town Trust bought out the owners and resolved that the Gardens would be opened to the public, free of charge. In the first part of the 20th century the Gardens did well, although the "ridge and furrow" glasshouses linking the three domed pavilions were demolished because of their poor condition. Only the repair of the domes could be afforded.

The Second World War and the rest of the 1940s were difficult times and the Trust could not afford the repairs and restoration needed.

The Trust offered the Gardens to Sheffield City Council in 1951 on a peppercorn rent. They invested heavily in the site, adding new attractions and carrying out repairs. It was restored to its former glory. All went well until a downturn in the economy during the 1980s meant a severe reduction in funding. Once again the Gardens were on their way to dereliction. Sue described a landscape of “sheets of dandelions and cascades of bindweed”.

In 1996 Lord Rothschild launched the Urban Parks Programme as part of the Heritage Lottery Fund. The Sheffield Botanical Gardens Trust was formed and, in partnership with the Sheffield Town Trust, the City Council, The University Landscape Department and the Friends of the Botanical Gardens, submitted a bid on the very last day for applications. The project required £5 million, and the grant needed 25% match-funding. Happily, the £4 million from HLF was matched by £1 million raised by volunteers, making the Gardens the only public open space in the UK where volunteers raised over £1 million.

The early work involved clearing large numbers of overgrown trees and shrubs. Specimen trees were retained and protected. Later work included refurbishing the buildings, using Welsh slate – “no Spanish rubbish”, said Sue – and terne-coated stainless steel in place of the lead that had been prone to theft. The site was now protected by CCTV inside and out to deter damage and theft.



The restored linking Pavilions with “ridge and furrow” roofs



The Curator's House - restaurant and tea rooms

The major building project was the reconstruction of the pavilions. This was a £3 million scheme where the linking glasshouses were re-created between the domed pavilions. The new roof structures were in stainless steel, not timber, as the short-lived originals had been. Specialist masons were employed to re-create the decorative stonework in parts of the buildings. The pavilions looked out over a Victorian-style landscape, the axis of which was a “broadwalk” with herbaceous borders on both sides, each 80 metres long and 5 metres wide, designed, planted (in 2002) and maintained by the Friends group. The Gardens were listed grade two and included a Bear Pit, one of seven listed structures within the site.

A new fountain had been installed at the lower end of the “broadwalk” to replace the Crimean War Statue which had been re-located there in 1963 from The Moor. It had replaced an earlier fountain! Changes continued to be made. The 1952 rose garden laid out by the City Council had gone, replaced by a new layout of beds in a complex pattern “best seen from a helicopter”, we heard. A rock garden from the 1920s had been revealed under a large creeping juniper. Unfortunately it now provided a bit of an adventure playground, which had not been the plan.

We had enjoyed a terrific talk from an enthusiastic speaker; a great encouragement for members to go and see the wonderfully restored gardens for themselves.

Archie Sinclair

The Vanishing Streets of Doncaster

Colin Bycroft

AGM Thursday 11 November 2010

Colin knew Doncaster well; he was born and bred here and is a member of the Trust. So, when he talked of the town, its buildings and its shops over the last 60 years, he spoke from personal experience.



To be able to speak about Doncaster's vanishing streets, he had taken the original images of local photographer Luke Bagshaw, who died in 1944 at the age of 69. Colin then visited the viewpoints of these original photographs and captured the contemporary views of the same street scenes.

While Bagshaw had used glass plates to record the photographs, using a large camera and often requiring long time exposures, Colin had been able to use the much easier 35mm colour slides.

Our journey began in Hyde Park, where the "Six Streets" had been built on land owned by the Bentinck family. In this area today, half of Cooper Street and most of South Street and North Street have been cleared for re-development. St Andrew's Terrace, the only linking "cross street", is to be preserved. We saw the first of a few surviving blue and white "tin plate" enamelled street nameplates.

Throughout the talk little nuggets of information were slipped in. For instance, if there was a tram in the picture, it had to be after 1902, when they were introduced in Doncaster. If the tram had a roof, it had to be later than 1909.

We learned that the only street named after a baby was Arthur Street, and there were three streets named after ladies: Catherine Street, (Jane) Ellerker Avenue and Frances (Arnold) Street. Jarratt Street was named after the Jarratts that lived in Elmfield House.

Colin suggested that one of the buildings, a hardware shop, would be the place to buy your donkey stones or Dolly Blue bags. The nostalgia was kicking in!

The landscaped mounds beside Trafford Way as it runs south to Carr House Road were really heaps of brickwork from the demolition of Bentinck and Catherine Street in disguise. Part of Cemetery Road was pedestrianised and, in response to the sensitivities of some elderly residents, was re-named Milton Walk.

Colin painted a vivid picture of Doncaster street life as he explained that, when the Plant Works buzzer sounded, thousands of men on bikes would flood the streets making for home, often to Hyde Park. Not long after, the process would be reversed as they headed back for work in Hexthorpe in time for the 2 o' clock buzzer.

The construction of the Cantley Estate in the 1950s was one of the new developments that allowed people displaced by the clearance of the street in the St James area to be re-housed.

The YMCA at the junction of Cleveland Street and St Sepulchre Gate had originally been built as a hospital by a Dr Dunn.



He was the doctor for the Plant Works and he favoured the use of homeopathy. This incurred the disapproval of the local medical profession, and Dr Dunn emigrated to New Zealand.

The building was purchased by Miss Beckett Denison, well-known as a hospital benefactor, before becoming the YMCA.

St Sepulchre Gate was becoming a commercial area as people lived and worked in the same converted buildings. This is where Bagshsaw had his business. It continued there until 1978, having been run by his widow, and then by a loyal employee. Just round the corner into Union Street was another “tin plate” street nameplate.

Evidence of another vanishing street was to be found on the side of the Corporation Brewery Taps public house on Cleveland Street. When the pub was rebuilt in 1935, it stood at the end of Corporation Street, and the nameplate is now all that remains of the street.

As we moved in to the centre, we looked at an image of the long-disused former ABC cinema. Colin remarked that if it were to be demolished after all this time, the town could have three cleared ex-cinema sites. There was little to say about Spring Gardens now, except that Kevin Keegan had been born there.

We learned that between 1890 and 1910 many of Doncaster’s streets were widened by demolishing one side and rebuilding. Wood Street, named after Dickie Wood, a carriage-builder, was widened on its west side.

At the north end of town, in the days before the North Bridge was opened in 1910, Marsh Gate was the main road into town from the north, which then led over Friars’ Bridge into French Gate. An old view of Grey Friars’ Baths brought back some memories; apparently the baths water was very highly chlorinated because water was drawn from the River Cheswold and presumably of dubious quality. The baths had been built on the site of the monastery burial ground. Once again, just the Grey Friars name survives. The Old Dispensary nearby lasted until the 1960’s, having been shaken by the railway and North Bridge traffic for many years.

An interesting comparison was to be made between French Gate at the start of the 20th century and the street today. As part of the Great North Road it had a long view to the south between many fine buildings. Today, above the trees in the pedestrianised street, only the clock, its stepped ogee-domed roof and the weathervane of Clock Corner could be seen.

Perhaps the biggest loss of any Doncaster street was that of Station Road. Built in 1898 to connect the station directly to the town centre, it was a curved street with elegant buildings of larger scale and more detail than the much older High Street and Hall Gate.



Unfortunately, this was lost in the 1960s when first Trafford Way was driven through in front of the railway station, cutting through the street, and then the Arndale Centre was enlarged, removing the street altogether. Colin had managed to get a photograph from the same vantage point as the older image, from the top of the former Co-op Emporium, as he called it. The old view showed a real civic space, with interesting streets leading out and all nicely enclosed by fine buildings.

By contrast, the present view showed car parking on flat roofs and commercial buildings, hardly architecture, of poor quality design and materials.

As the evening drew to a close, we were reminded of Jacob's Corner, now the Halifax, Factory Lane with its Employment Exchange, a "trackless" trolley bus reflected on a wet street, Oriental Chambers with its Turkish Baths, and Priestnall's Café with its frothy coffee, hamburgers and juke box. Happy days!

Two things occurred to me from seeing the slides. The first was the vast amount of land taken by the construction of the ring road dual carriageways, often with service roads and many acres of grass verge; and the second was that rarely in the second half of the 20th century was a new building any better or even as good as than the one it had replaced.

These images and more of Bagshaw's work can be found in books by Peter Tuffrey: "Luke Bagshaw's photographs of Old Doncaster" (1984) and "Doncaster: Through the Lens of Luke Bagshaw" (2008).

Archie Sinclair

The Changing Face of Doncaster: Bass Terrace, Thorne Road



Amongst a large number of interesting photographs that recently came my way, one (above left) really stood out. It showed a not unusual sight in the town c.1970 when it seemed that nearly every available gable end had been given over to advert. hoardings. The present day view (right) seems almost serene by comparison – although the shapes of the adverts are "grinning through".

Christmas in the Dales



Julian Lloyd and Andrew Firth

Andrew Firth Buffet Supper Thursday 9 December 2010

On what was a dreadful evening weather-wise the Chairman and Secretary opened the meeting which was to be followed by the annual Christmas Buffet. Our guest speaker, making a return visit, was Andrew Firth.

Mr Firth informed us that his talk was a collection of photographs of various towns in the Yorkshire Dales. It would highlight the many local customs and festivals that take place during the festive season.

The slide show commenced not too far away, on The Moor in Sheffield. It was taken during the 1970's. The most striking feature was a lack of both traffic and litter. Sadly how times have changed. Next to Clifford's Tower in York. This was originally surrounded by water. Moving through the city to the ice rink erected outside the Castle Museum, The Shambles and on to Kings Square where the Last Supper was remembered.

The next sets of photographs were of Hebden Bridge in November with views of the River Calder, Rochdale Canal and a bonfire gala. Wooden toys were on display in the market located in Walkley's Mill. Moving north took us to Haworth, the home of the Bronte family. In those days the shops in Haworth opened on Sundays before Christmas. A local custom was the "scroggling the holly" parade to the Parish Church. A quick reference to the internet indicates that scroggling is to gather for Christmas decoration. Further images included those of the Keighley and Worth Valley Railway. The film *The Railway Children* was filmed on the line. We then move on to Halifax, the home of the children's museum Eureka and the Piece Hall. Cloth has been traded from the Piece Hall since 1779.

Knaresborough has an annual Edwardian Christmas Festival when livestock are fetched into the market. Images were shown taken from the Castle (built 1307-1312) looking down on the River Nidd. Further slides showed the famous Mother Shipton's Cave and Petrifying Well. The next set of slides took us to another town's castle, that of Skipton. The castle has been owned by the Clifford family since 1310. The Leeds to Liverpool Canal also passes through the town. The canal is 127 miles in length and was opened in 1816. A more recent addition to the Canal Basin is a statue of the late Yorkshire and England cricketer Fred Trueman.

Next to Grassington in Upper Wharfedale and the highwayman on a white horse. The town was granted a market charter in 1282. The railway was the theme for the next series of images. Shots of the Ribbleshead viaduct took us to a snow covered Dent station, the highest in England. The viaduct is passed by those undertaking The Yorkshire Three Peaks Challenge Walk. I know from personal experience that this 26 mile walk is very hard, yet exhilarating. Progressing north took us to the Eden Valley and Kirkby Stephen.

The final set of slides was from Lincoln: firstly the Lincolnshire Life Museum followed by Lincoln Christmas Market. Sadly the recent bad weather meant that the 2010 Market had to be cancelled. The secretary thanked Mr Firth for being able to join us and for giving an informative talk. The party then commenced and thanks must be extended to those who organised what turned out to be a most enjoyable evening.

Julian Lloyd



The Local History Fair was held at Doncaster Museum on Saturday 18 September 2010. The next Fair is planned for spring 2012.

Our displays and publications once again proved to be very popular.

Thank you to those members who worked a stint on the stand.

Annual Buffet Supper

Right:
Self-service



Far right:
Always stars of the show -
Tina's trifles



Right:
Special-service



Far right:
Tina and two
satisfied
customers



Planning Matters

The Planning and Conservation Committee consists of eleven Trust members who get together every month to consider whether we should comment or object to certain planning applications within the Borough. Applications considered include those likely to affect listed buildings, those within conservation areas and any other major applications.

Since the last Trust Topics we have met three times, although we did have to cancel a meeting due to the snow in December. There are regular applications for houses to be built in back gardens of the larger houses in Bessacarr. We always examine these to consider over development, loss of character or threats to trees. During this period we objected to one such application in the Bessacarr Conservation area as we felt the original house would be left with insufficient land.



In the town centre we objected to a proposal to turn part of a house on Christ Church Terrace into an acupuncture clinic. We felt this was an inappropriate use for a residential property particularly one without an adequate road frontage. Despite our objections, and indeed those of the residents, permission was granted, although there are restrictions on the times and space that can be used. We were disappointed with this decision. This is the second business to be permitted on the Terrace and we believe that both are inappropriate. In both cases these businesses could have gone elsewhere given that so much office space is vacant. For example, most of Regent Terrace, just round the corner, is to let - all of it as offices!

We do not doubt that all the issues were seriously considered by the planners but, even so, it is ridiculous that historic buildings lie empty and neglected for lack of a commercial occupant whilst historic private houses are permitted to become commercial, whatever restrictions might be applied. Despite these decisions, the Trust will continue to fight against proposed commercial intrusion into residential parts of conservation areas. The numbers of historic dwellings are limited and once lost to commercial uses it is unlikely they will ever become proper family homes again.

An application to change part of the Regent Hotel into 'hostel' type accommodation raised much controversy, attracting discussions in the press and a major campaign of opposition from the residents. We considered this application in detail but decided that this was really not an issue for the Trust to comment upon, mainly because no changes to the building were proposed. Nevertheless we were unhappy with the application which was poorly put together and with many questions unanswered. The Trust wrote to DMBC expressing its concerns. The Council decided that it would grant a one-year temporary permission which would enable the Council, residents and indeed the Trust to assess the impact of this new use.

This month we were astonished to see an application for a proposed 30 storey building at Marshgate which would be mixed use hotel, offices and apartments. We objected to this application as we felt it would be inappropriate in Doncaster. We had major concerns about the impact not just on the visual attractiveness of The Minster, but also on the whole of Doncaster's central conservation areas.

Much of the committee's time during the quarter has been spent on Conservation Area Reviews. The Conservation team at Doncaster MBC consulted the Trust on three reviews simultaneously which made us very busy indeed! We looked at three documents: Conservation Areas Draft Appraisals for 1. Doncaster - Thorne Road, 2. Doncaster - Christ Church, and 3. Doncaster - Town Field. All the documents proposed changes to the boundaries. As the Conservation Areas had all been established at different times, much of this made sense.

For example altering the Christ Church Conservation Area boundary around the old Gaumont Corner, incorporating some properties currently in the Bennetthorpe Conservation Area seemed a good idea. Also, in general, we were in agreement with many of the proposals. One of the interesting aspects of all the Conservation area reviews is that all buildings are noted as listed or key buildings, with others rated as positive, neutral or negative. Again we agreed with nearly all of the assessments.

However, in the Thorne Road CA we suggested that 109, Thorne Road, designed by JG Walker, as well as Avenue House and Axholme House on Thorne Road, should be upgraded to key buildings.



109 Thorne Road Architect J G Walker



Avenue House, Thorne Road

Our biggest concern was a proposal to drop most of the 'back streets' behind Town Moor Avenue, including the buildings shown below, from the Town Field Conservation Area. We put forward proposals to limit the buildings to be removed and amended proposals have been substituted.



All of this work involved looking at many houses - indeed we undertook site visits to look at every single house around the Town Moor Avenue area, for it was only in this way that we could gain full appreciation. Our responses to these documents - which ran into several pages and are too detailed to report on here - were all fully agreed with the Committee and we are really pleased that our suggestions have received such a positive response from the DMBC Planning Conservation team. The documents are currently out for public consultation, so we could see further changes, but we hope we have been able to play an effective part in the protection of these key conservation areas for the future.

(NB Full details of our comments are available on e-mail request to our web site)

The Planning and Conservation Sub-committee

The Back Page - What's in a name?

CHRISTCHURCH TERRACE

When we received the draft Conservation Area Appraisals documents from the Council, I noticed that the Christ Church Conservation Area was called the "Christchurch Conservation Area". I knew that Christchurch was a place in New Zealand, but was now wondering whether there was also one in Doncaster.

So I checked the postal addresses on Royal Mail's website. There, Christ Church Road was three words, but Christchurch Terrace was just two. So, is that where it came from?

Real investigation on the ground was called for. This revealed that Christ Church Road had a relatively recent street name plate with three words, below left, and Christ Church Terrace had an older enamelled dark blue and white sign, also with three words, below right. That would do for me.



A check on the Council's list of street names showed both streets with three word names. So Royal Mail got it wrong. Having contacted the Council, it agreed that Christ Church would now always be two words, whether it was the conservation area, the road, the terrace or the church itself.

This started a debate on the Town Field. When we were young we played games and even went sledging on the "Town Fields" or "the Townies" as they were known. Always plural to us. We were kids and knew no better.



The oldest 19th century Ordinance Survey maps showed it as "The Town Field"; the later 20th century ones as simply "Town Field". Once again, investigation on the ground was called for. This revealed a very weathered bronze plaque, shown left, on the gate pier to the left of the entrance off Thorne Road. There was no doubt about it. The plaque read "THE TOWN FIELD LAID OUT FOR RECREATIONAL PURPOSES 1927".

In checking that it was two words, and singular, I found the postal address of Townfield Villas on the Royal Mail website.

It stated clearly: Townfield Villas, Town Fields, Doncaster DN1 2JH. You can't win!

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