



TRUST TOPICS

Doncaster Civic Trust Newsletter ©

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Member of



Doncaster Civic Trust : Founded in 1946
website: www.doncastercivictrust.org.uk
e-mail: mail@doncastercivictrust.org.uk
telephone: 01302 538225
Registered Charity No. 508674

The History of an Antiques Auctioneer

Peter Young Thursday 24 January 2013



38 members gathered to enjoy a very well delivered and illustrated talk by Peter Young, well-known to many of our members. Peter had been retired for 7 years from his life in auctioneering, which he claimed was the second oldest profession, and it had been his long-held ambition to become an auctioneer.

Auctions were held as far back as 500 BC when the Babylonians bid for their wives. The ancient Romans had slave markets where girls were sold to raise money for the war effort.

Back in Britain and on to Georgian times, a Samuel Baker was selling books in 1744, and used to take the highest offer. John Sotheby was his nephew and took over the business. James Christie was a Scot who joined the Royal Navy aged 30, found that it was not for him and bought himself out. He started a business selling houses' contents.

James Christie used a rostrum made for him by Thomas Chippendale. The auctioneer had become an entertainer, almost like the music hall. It was said that "Christie was a gentleman trying to be a businessman, while Sotheby was a businessman trying to be a gentleman". Peter told us of an early sale which included 44 works by Michelangelo and 12 by Leonardo da Vinci, where the top price paid was 44 guineas.

Peter started work at Retford for Henry Spencer & Son, where Rupert Spencer was in charge. It was the third most important auction business in Britain. He started selling sundries, like poultry (both live and dressed) and cheeses. He learned his trade from Harry Spencer, who one day had to go off from a sale and "left him to it". He continued with big poultry and farm sales, getting to know the farming community and their clandestine bidding techniques of winking, a "fag" behind the ear, or a thumb over the fork of a stick. Other signs were a handkerchief in the top pocket, or a hat put on the head. Farmers didn't want others to know their business.

Drovers, casual labour used to move the livestock around, would be paid for the morning's work and retire straight to the pub, where all the money would be gone, over the bar. The same afternoon they could become porters dealing with exquisite antiques.

We heard a good story about a late C18 "frog mug", where drinking the ale revealed a frog in the bottom of the mug. One had made £38 in London, but at Retford the bidding had reached £72 when the mug got broken. One of the porters shouted, "Good job it's not a new 'un, Mr Rupert!"

Peter progressed to meeting land-owners and got to know "the good stuff", like Meissen, while cataloguing house contents. There were wonderful tales such as a ship painting found in a garage selling for £8,000 back in 1964. A painting of a horse in a stable, by Arthur Clark, raised hopes that there might be another, as he normally painted them in pairs. The second one was found, but had to be prised off the dog kennel where it had been used to fix the roof. The pair made £4,500.

A majolica charger plate from Urbino had been cleared out by a widow. It had been an unwanted present from her late husband. She had given it to the local scouts for a stall at their fair. When it failed to sell, they brought it back. Just as well, as the C16 plate later sold for £19,000.

The final discovery we saw was from a farm at Hatfield Woodhouse. A painting of fruit found in a barn was there because their "Dad was a compulsive auction fan". It turned out to be the work of Thomas Steel, the famous fruit painter. After working at Staffordshire and Derby, he went to the Rockingham Pottery at Swinton which was sponsored by the Fitzwilliams of Wentworth Woodhouse.

Members' News

Winter Programme 2013

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

All on Thursdays at 7.30 pm

2013

21 March Keith Thomas on "Houses and Gardens of Derbyshire"

18 April **Members' Forum**

Your chance to influence what we do and how we do it - and to suggest what else we might do.

Dates for your Diary

Saturday 31 August and Sunday 1 September **Lions Doncaster Show 2013**

To be held at the Doncaster Deaf Trust, Leger Way

The Trust plans to be having a stand and display.

Two Summer Walks : Dates to be confirmed in the next Trust Topics

Peter Coote will lead a walk round **South Parade** for members only, pre-bookable, and Archie Sinclair will lead the full **Town Trail**, on another day.

Campsall Hall

An Illustrated History by Gordon Smith.

Campsall Hall was once one of the area's most imposing country houses. In this well-researched new publication Gordon Smith outlines the history of the house up to its demolition in 1984, together with details of the family who owned it.

The 24-page book is well illustrated with photographs of the house and grounds throughout the years. There are views of the mansion in its prime whilst later illustrations show the splendid but empty interiors.

'Campsall Hall' is an enjoyable book, well worth the £3 purchase cost. The Trust has a small stock to sell. If you would like a copy please make out a cheque to Doncaster Civic Trust for £4 (to cover p+p). Then please send it to Peter Coote, 23 Heatherbank Road, Bessacarr, Doncaster, DN4 6EH.



The cover of the book is in colour.

The book is only currently available from Doncaster Civic Trust or Cusworth Hall.

Gordon Smith is a life member of Doncaster Civic Trust and is also the author of 'Cusworth Hall and the Battie-Wrightson Family'.

The Trust's New Education Programme



For some time now, the Trust has been thinking about how it can help Doncaster's young people become more interested in our rich built and natural heritage. From the original idea of providing student bursaries, we have developed a new education initiative which we hope will grow to fulfil one of the Trust's key objectives, namely to achieve an increased public awareness and appreciation of the built and natural environment.

Bursaries

Some of our early research showed that very few of Doncaster's sixth-formers were going on to study subjects such as architecture, building conservation, town planning and urban design. More worryingly, we observed that few students knew about these options. A few years ago, the Trust discussed how it could better use its financial resources to help young people become interested in these subjects and it was decided to establish a student bursary programme.

Sue Burley set the ball rolling in 2010 and in 2011, for the first time, the Trust offered cash grants to Doncaster students planning to study in these fields, to help support them through their time at university. This was an opportune moment to launch such a scheme, as university fees were about to rise dramatically. We received nine applications for support, of which we were pleased to select four students. These comprised three architects and a landscape architect. Three of these were already studying at local universities and the fourth had been offered a place at Lincoln University.

We plan to spend £3,000 a year on the bursary programme over the next few years. Doncaster Council's planning department is supporting our initiative by providing useful summer 'placements' for our students. One of the students has been taken on by the planning department to fulfil her 'year out' obligations for her architecture qualification. She will be working mainly on conservation projects.

We also give bursary-holders free Trust membership and encourage them to become involved in Trust activities.

Our expectation over time is that as Doncaster students get to know about the bursaries, more will show interest in pursuing studies in these disciplines.

An Education Project for Doncaster Schools



However, in reviewing the bursary scheme, we thought we could do more to get our young people interested in Doncaster's heritage.

That's why in early 2012 we linked up with Sheffield University to develop a learning programme for Doncaster schools. Through a joint-funding arrangement with the university, we took on architect/educationalist Lisa Procter to lead our project. Lisa has been working with Masters level students from Sheffield University School of Architecture to deliver an exciting learning package called 'The Toolkit'.

The Prototype Toolkit

In October and November last year, 12 students from a variety of countries, namely, Nepal, USA, Germany, China, Lithuania, Greece, Cyprus, India and UK worked in teams to prepare the 'Toolkit'. (Some of the background research for the project was undertaken by Lisa, Carol Hill and Keri Lynch, one of our bursary students.)

This work was showcased at a Trust event held at St Peter's Church Hall in early November.

The 'Toolkit' is a prototype and comprises a board game based on historic aspects of Doncaster town centre and a teachers' guide which includes over 30 activities aimed at getting young people better acquainted with some of the town centre's architectural qualities and its key locations such as the Minster, Market Place and Gresley Square.



Handing over the Toolkit. The Trust's bursary sub-group receives copies of the prototype toolkit from the architecture students.

Members can find out more about how the 'Toolkit' was produced by visiting the project 'blog' at www.toolkit4doncaster.wordpress.com



Trust members get a chance to try out the board game.



Students working with children from Bentley New Village Primary School

Members and invited guests who attended the launch were impressed with the work presented by the students and this has given the Trust's group leading the project confidence to explore options to develop and produce the 'Toolkit' in a format which can be distributed free of charge to Doncaster schools and youth organisations.

Lisa is already talking to Sheffield Hallam University Product Design School about getting the 'Toolkit' into production and we look forward to launching later in the year.

Thinking about an Education Programme

As a result of the establishment of the bursary programme and the development of the 'toolkit' project, it is clear that the Trust can have a useful role in encouraging Doncaster people to appreciate our wonderful built and natural heritage.

We have some great contacts in our local universities, schools and council. The Trust has a wealth of knowledge and expertise within its membership and the financial resources to make a contribution to the life of Doncaster.

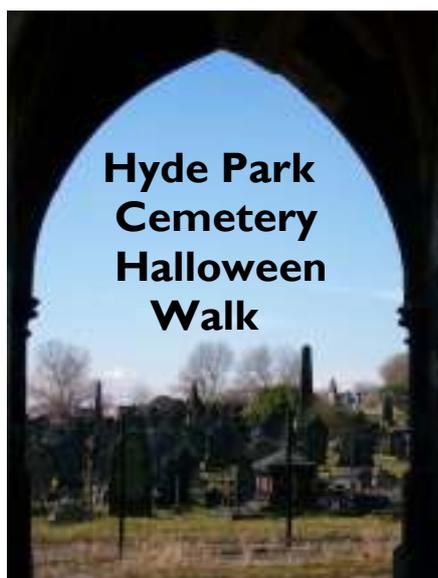
Over the next year, the bursary sub-group, comprising Ann Gray, Tina Anderson, Carol Hill, Julian Lloyd and Jeff Prior will be thinking about how these advantages can be exploited to create a long-term education programme for Doncaster.

Trust members are invited to contribute their thoughts and ideas.

Jeff Prior

t: 01302 728612

e: percyprior@yahoo.co.uk



The Friends of Hyde Park Cemetery held a very successful event on Wednesday 31 October 2012, (Halloween) when several local actors brought back to life notable Doncaster characters from the Victorian era, namely Alec Norton and Tony Lister (Richard Hodgson and Richard Hepworth, the renowned grocers of the town); Harold Armitage (Henry Senior, the Sand House man); Gordon Cross (Patrick Stirling, the famous railway engineer); David Hall (William Nuttall, the Mintoie man); Tony Powell (Carmino Massarella, the ice cream man); and a very glamorous Karen Powell (Harriet Vernon, the music hall star).

Harriet is of very special interest. She was born Harriet Whitehouse in London in 1858. She married William Thomas Gillett at the age of 16yrs 4 months, stating on her marriage certificate that she was 'of full age' (i.e. 21 or over). They had 3 children by the time that Harriet was actually 21, at which point she left her family to pursue a life on stage. The children were raised by their grandmother. In fact, Harriet later divorced William Gillett, re-married, left her second husband... and somehow still appeared as a spinster on her death certificate!

Harriet had a very successful career, performing not only all over Britain, but also as far afield as New York, Berlin, Cape Town and Johannesburg. In Chicago, she once won a contest for 'the handsomest woman in the world'. She was much sought after as a 'principal boy' in pantomimes, including 6 years at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, from 1888 onwards. Her song, 'Ting-a-Ling', was the most famous song in the music halls during the 1890s.

Harriet was never blessed with particularly good health and, for about 15 years in the early 20th century, she rarely performed. However, in 1923 she was persuaded to join a group known as the 'Old Time Artistes' to tour provincial theatres. On the Friday of the triumphant first week, at Liverpool, Harriet was taken ill. Nevertheless, she travelled with the troupe to Doncaster to perform at the Grand Theatre. But before the Doncaster run began, Harriet was taken seriously ill at the Grand Theatre on Tuesday and admitted to Doncaster Royal Infirmary, suffering from pneumonia. On Wednesday afternoon, 11 July 1923, Harriet died.

Perhaps because she had little or no contact with her family, the decision was taken that Harriet should be buried in Doncaster, even though she had no connection with the town. So on Saturday 14 July Harriet was laid to rest in an unmarked grave, 150 miles from her London home. And so Harriet's grave remained unmarked for almost 90 years, except for flowers that were placed by her fellow 'Old Time Artistes' in 1924 when they were passing through Doncaster.

But in 2011 the Friends of Hyde Park Cemetery received an enquiry from one of Harriet's descendants, which brought her story to our attention. So they published some information about Harriet on their website, which brought her story to the public's attention. As a result several other descendants then made contact. With their agreement the Friends put them all in touch with each other. The result was that they worked together to raise the funds to have a headstone erected on Harriet's grave.

On 17 May 2012 a group of Harriet's descendants travelled up from Kent and West Sussex to attend the unveiling and blessing of this headstone, which was performed by Rev Alan Murray of St James' Church.

At the Halloween walk Karen gave an outstanding portrayal of Harriet, much to everyone's delight. All the featured characters were dressed in appropriate attire, kindly loaned by Doncaster Theatre Company and Doncaster Amateur Operatic Society. Several lady volunteers were dressed in Victorian costume and Nikki Windmill provided suitable make-up for the event.

Around 200 people attended and despite the rain half way through the event, everyone carried on under the large umbrellas provided by The Friends. The event was organised by Richard Bell (Chairman of the Friends of Hyde Park Cemetery) and Margaret Herbert (Vice Chair). Andria Johns assisted by selling Glo Sticks, to the delight of all the children. Other members of the Friends Group assisted in making the event go smoothly.

The purpose of the Halloween Walk was to convey to the children and the younger generation the way these particular characters laid the foundations to make Doncaster the great town we have today.

Margaret Herbert

Trust Topics is edited by:

Archie Sinclair, 43 Ellers Avenue, Bessacarr, Doncaster DN4 7DY

e-mail: mail@doncastercivictrust.org.uk

telephone: 01302 538225

Application for Listing Horse & Jockey public house, 154 St Sepulchre Gate West

On 13 November 2012 the Trust put forward this building for listing, by making its very first **Listing and Designation Online Application** to English Heritage. This is what we said about the building:



An early photo from "Doncaster Pubs", by Peter Tuffrey

"The building was completed in 1913 in a neo-vernacular "Tudor" Arts and Crafts style. It has a cellar and two storeys, the ground floor being faced in random rubble sandstone and the first floor in red 2 inch brickwork laid in Flemish bond. All openings have ashlar surrounds in yellow-buff sandstone. There are 2 projecting gables on the front elevation, one jettied and the other carried by the main entrance porch. The gables have heavy barge-boards and timber framing with brick infill in a herringbone pattern.

Original inscriptions of the building's name and date still feature prominently on horizontal timber beams at eaves level. The pitched roof is clad in small red clay plain tiles. It has interesting corbelled brick chimney stacks at both end gables. Walls at the rear are finished in white-painted rough-cast render above a red brick plinth. Windows were originally metal casements with leaded lights and were directly fixed to the stone surrounds. These still remain at first floor level.

It was designed by F N D Masters, son of F W Masters, who was Mayor of Doncaster in 1894, and the architect of a number of buildings which are now listed.



The left-hand gable carries the name

F N D Masters was born in 1882 and obtained his MA degree at Oxford. He was articled to Gibbs & Flockton, a leading Sheffield firm of architects. He commenced practice in Doncaster in 1907, but all his town centre buildings bar one have been swept away in the cause of comprehensive redevelopment. He designed four churches in outlying villages that still survive, but the Horse & Jockey is the only example of his attractive style of architecture to survive in the town centre.



The timber windows below plain cement-rendered panels

The 3 ground floor front windows have been altered, by removing the stone mullions and metal windows, and replacing them with timber casements. On two of them, the segmental window head and the masonry above have been replaced with a plain rendered panel.

Original fabric is believed to remain internally at first floor level in the timber panelling and fireplace in the public rooms, which consist of a function room and a bar servery, originally Club Room and Ante Room.

A doorway at the corner of the building which would have opened from the alley leading from St Sepulchre Gate to Stewart Street has been infilled and cement rendered



The entrance beneath the archway



The right-hand gable carries the date



Offers invited : guide price £250,000

The building has now been vacant and for sale for some time. The agents' leaflet is dated November 2010. The pub was closed and repaired in 2008, and was open again in 2009. There are 3 other pubs in the immediate area that are still trading. The Horse and Jockey is by far the best architecturally.

It is not protected by being in a conservation area, and listing would head off hasty demolition and allow new uses to be explored. Within the last year, 2 buildings in the street have been demolished and their sites developed as surfaced car parks. To lose the Horse and Jockey for that use would be unforgivable."

Archie Sinclair

Trust Topics: Would you like to write for your magazine?

We introduced Trust Topics in 2000 with a view to having various contributors writing on historical or environmental matters. This worked very well but we believe we have strayed from our original aim in the last two or three years. The magazine is often 16 pages long, so we hope you think it is good value. However some of the historical articles may have been too lengthy. We wish to change things: we still plan to have historical articles, but of a shorter length. We have already made a start with this magazine with excellent contributions from Jeff Prior and Margaret Herbert. However, for the future we badly need more contributions from our members. You don't have to be an expert on history or the environment. Indeed, if you would just like to write about matters that concern you, however brief, then we would be interested. Or perhaps you would like to write a letter commenting on articles in the magazine? Or do you have a photograph that tells a story? The Trust's remit is: *to educate the public in the geography, history, natural history and architecture of the area*, so any topic within this broad heading would be most welcome. Remember you don't need to be an expert!

We cover the whole of the Doncaster area so we would be pleased to hear about anywhere in the vicinity. Whatever you decide- it is YOUR magazine.

Letters, images, comments or articles should be submitted to the editor, Archie Sinclair

Planning Matters

Members of the Trust's Planning and Conservation sub-committee meet each month to decide whether objections or comments should be made on planning applications, mainly those relating to listed buildings or within conservation areas. We also consider other applications of interest.

At our meeting on 7 January 2013 we reviewed one of the largest and most significant applications ever to come our way. It was an application for listed building consent and planning permission to sub-divide Hickleton Hall into 38 dwellings, and build a terrace of 5 units in the grounds. Such was its importance that we devoted an additional meeting on 21 January entirely to the application.



The Hall had been vacated towards the end of 2012 by the Sue Ryder Foundation which had run a residential care home there for many years.

The applicant had been reported as preparing the current submission in order "to achieve good value when (the site) is put on the market in spring 2013".

Hickleton Hall, east (entrance) elevation
Photo: www.lindleyancestry.com

Having pored over the numerous drawings at some length, we concluded that the proposals had been worked out with care, as they would minimise changes to the buildings' historic fabric. In many cases, existing non-original sub-dividing walls would be removed, restoring original room sizes. Much of the building had been altered to provide a large number of single rooms, which would all disappear with the proposed works.

The Trust would be very pleased to see the buildings put into viable use, particularly the disused stable block, which seemed vulnerable. However, the Committee had a number of concerns:

Some rooms of high architectural importance on the ground floor would be located within private apartments and even occasional public access to them would be very difficult or impossible to achieve. The Hall, built 1745-8, is listed grade II* (two star) and was designed by James Paine.

It was vital that all the historic architectural features were preserved. Decorative plasterwork and fireplaces were the obvious priority. Where there were door openings no longer needed, the doors, door-cases and architraves must be retained, and where doors and floors needed to be up-rated for fire protection and sound insulation it must not be done at the expense of the historic fabric. Original windows should be retained, with secondary single (or double) glazing.

It was likely that the eventual developer might wish to vary the scheme, which could result in a significant delay before the works start on site. The Trust was already concerned about the vulnerability of the listed buildings and their materials, while the buildings stand unoccupied.

Although it is for the developer to decide, the proportion of one-bedroomed units was considered too high. These units were often less popular, particularly if they were very small, as on the ground floor of the Stable Block.

The Trust also felt that the historic buildings, with their valuable fabric and fittings, would be best cared for and maintained by owner-occupiers, rather than tenants renting buy-to-let apartments.

On 10 December 2012 we reviewed another significant application, again for listed building consent and planning permission. The Grand St Leger Hotel, Bennetthorpe, had submitted applications to extend on both its Bennetthorpe and Carr House Road frontages, to provide a new restaurant, function room and bar, 33 new bedrooms and ancillary facilities, following the demolition of the existing stables to the rear of the present grade II listed building. There would be a new access off Bennetthorpe, leading into a large new car park and new hotel entrance to the rear of the buildings.



The Committee thought that the general arrangement and the scale of the proposed extensions, together with the proposed site layout, were satisfactory. They would allow the listed building to dominate the larger extended complex. However, the proposed use of three facing materials, brick, stone and render, seemed over-complicated, and a simpler and less fussy design could be an improvement.

Grand St Leger Hotel in 2013

After much debate we decided to raise no objections to the contemporary approach, but it needed to respect the proportions and elegance of the listed building. The application is still pending.

In October 2012 we objected to the change of use of 28 - 29 High Street Doncaster from retail shop (Class A1) to financial and professional services (Class A2). This unit had been Mothercare until they left town for the Danum Retail Park off York Road. The Committee objected to the change of use of this large retail space to a relatively small A2 unit for cheque cashing, payday loans, pawnbroking and similar services.

The Trust was disappointed to see yet another application for this type of business in a key part of the town centre. They bring no vitality to the street scene, having no displays of goods and usually obscuring their (former shop) windows for privacy. They may cite their high footfall, but it would still be a "dead" frontage in townscape terms. Furthermore, it would result in quite a cluster of similar uses around the High Street/Hallgate junction. Fortunately the applicant withdrew the application a few weeks later.

At February's meeting we were pleased to see new listed building consent and planning applications for Handley Cross on Cantley Lane. The house has been vacant since before our feature in Trust Topics May 2008 and has suffered some vandal damage. There were new plans to erect six detached dwellings and refurbish the existing listed dwelling.

The Committee welcomed the applications which show the house being restored sensitively as one fine dwelling, and the building of 6 detached houses in a sympathetic style.



Handley Cross in 2008

Planning and Conservation Sub Committee

Clumber Park Walled Garden Christopher Margrave



Photo: National Trust

A wonderful audience of around 65 members turned out for the first talk of our Winter Programme, by Christopher Margrave. Christopher had been the head gardener at Clumber Park for eight years.

He explained how the Kitchen Garden's role had been to provide food all year round. One acre of garden required three gardeners and would feed 12 people.

The elite garden provided food for the Duke of Newcastle's family at the house and their staff. There was a garden staff hierarchy, from the head gardener down to the journeymen, so called because they were migrant labour; or possibly because they were paid on a daily rate (from the French *la journée* – the working day). But Clumber House had hit hard times by the 1930s and was ultimately demolished in 1938.

The garden's walls were laid in Flemish bond. The sunny south-facing walls acted as storage heaters and created a microclimate, making it possible to grow choice fruit like peaches, nectarines and apricots. From 1850, wires were used on the walls, replacing the trellis where plants were tied on with pieces of cloth, rags or sacking. Locally-grown coppiced sweet chestnut was used as stakes instead of bamboo. Fruit trees were fan-trained, with apples on the north-facing walls and plums on the east and west-facing. There were "hot walls", hollow walls with coal-fired flues and chimneys, which enabled more exotic fruits to be grown.

Christopher told us about the Medlar plants, and a variety called "Nottingham". This was a highly decorative fruit which had to be left until late in the year to develop its colour, flavour and texture. It was left until "nearly rotten", he said. Another speciality was the Globe Artichoke, its consumption said to promote the production of male offspring. Rhubarb and sea kale were also grown. There were 25-30 gardeners at Clumber in its heyday, but no longer. There was now just a nucleus of three with trainees and volunteers. To speed up the rate of growth of the crops, they would have used the glasshouse, bell jars or cloches. Clumber Park had the longest glasshouse of all of the National Trust's properties, 400ft. in length. The garden was fenced to keep out both four and two legged pests.

For decoration in today's restaurant and café, old "Grandiflora" varieties of sweet pea were grown and picked. He said you could smell them from Worksop! The herb borders used different colours to give a sense of distance. They also screened the vegetable crops from the eyes of dignitaries on their way up to admire the glasshouse.

Mayan varieties of potato were used, for their distinctive, nutty flavour. The best strawberries were "Royal Sovereign", an old variety now rarely found. In fact, ten varieties of strawberry are grown at Clumber, none of them commercial. In Victorian times, special fruits were grown for family birthdays, and having strawberries ready for Christmas was a great treat requiring special efforts from the garden staff.

Until 2004, a touring caravan site covered over half of the walled garden. The garden was originally laid out in the 1770s and, being orientated 28 degrees to the south-east, even the north wall gets some sunshine. Trees shelter the garden on the north and west sides. The garden slopes so that very cold air can be expelled.

The “must-have” in the 1700s was the pineapple, which took 18 months to produce, but you could hire them for swanky dinner parties. Peach blossom used to be pollinated by hand using a rabbit’s tail; now it’s done with a brush. The kitchen garden wanted a succession of crops, and would use “hot beds” over a deep layer of fermenting manure.

Today the four-acre walled garden is a hive of activity. Its mantra is recreation, conservation, education and production. Every square inch of soil and every wall is covered by plants. A soft fruit garden has taken the place of the caravan site. All its fruit, including its black-fruited raspberries, is caged to ensure that it is for human, not animal, consumption.

The trainees serve a 3-year apprenticeship. There are 50 regional apple varieties, as both espaliers and cordons, and 41 different potato varieties. There is a Garden Trail, and they hold a Scarecrow Competition for children.

We were left with this poser: what do the crimson-flowered broad bean, Robin Hood and Billy the Kid have in common? Answer: they are all outlaws.

But the Heritage Seed Library says the crimson-flowered bean was re-introduced in 1978, having been mentioned as long ago as 1778. It seems that all three were historic outlaws.

The Development of St Sepulchre Gate

Colin Bycroft AGM 15 November 2012

Colin began his talk with the visit of Queen Victoria to Doncaster in 1851, when she stayed at the Angel Inn in Frenchgate. Following her stay, the hostelry was allowed to become the “Angel and Royal” Hotel and to display the Royal Coat of Arms above its entrance. Another Angel Inn, opposite, known as the “Old Angel”, was demolished to make way for the Guildhall, having been completed in 1848.

Doncaster had been a Roman settlement and the area around what we know as Clock Corner had been identified as part of a civilian encampment attached to the military fort. A millennium later, in 1203, Doncaster suffered a great fire, and it took 10 years to rebuild the town in timber and thatch.



Baxtergate had been widened in 1894, and the present Clock Corner building was completed in 1895, designed by architect James Greenhalgh Walker. We saw the street decorated for the coronation of King George V in 1912, the same year that saw the widening of St Sepulchre Gate.

The rebuilding of the curved corner that now houses the Santander Bank allowed a double tram track to be laid.

St Sepulchre Gate c.1960 looking towards Clock Corner, with Taylor & Colbridge in the centre of the picture

A number of buildings had been replaced in the 20th century: the site of the Elephant Hotel (rebuilt in 1914) became the Yorkshire Bank in the 1970s and the site of Dennis Roberts & Son became the large Burton's in the 1930s. The Burton's building was faced in "Marmo", a white ceramic cladding made in Burmantofts in Leeds, close to Burton's tailoring factory, incidentally.

The rebuilt Nag's Head pub was a strikingly modern design by architect Tommy Johnson, originally from Hull. We saw Taylor & Colbridge and the Public Benefit Boot Co. premises, whose buildings remain today even if the companies have gone. Colin explained that "gate" was from *gatta*, meaning street, while "bar" meant gate, hence the 1996 Gillot Bar public art in St Sepulchre Gate in front of the former Co-op Emporium, pictured below.



This building was another by T H Johnson & Son, in partnership with William Crabtree. Building started in summer 1938, with completion delayed by the war, allowing the building to be used as forces' billets. Like many Doncaster buildings, it had rounded corners, this time in its curved glass display windows.

Beyond Printing Office Street we saw Gregory's leather shop and Elland's store.

Some facades had been faced in red sandstone from Dumfries. Scarborough Brothers' premises were open-fronted and served customers off the pavement. Their giant stuffed tuna was quite a feature.

St James' Church was designed by Edmund Beckett Denison, who also paid for it. Its spire was added later. Denison was also the man behind St Jude's, Hexthorpe, and St Mary's, Beckett Road, Wheatley. Also on the north side of the street were the almshouses of the Thomas Ellis Hospital. Their gateway was saved by Bernard Cuttriss and re-erected in the Museum's gardens off Chequer Road.

Colin told us that West Laith Gate would have originally gone to Hexthorpe, across the railway, with a level crossing before the later Hexthorpe Bridge. The old cottages beside the street still remain, as Staveley's paint shop. Hexthorpe Bridge was just one of four locations for the Patrick Stirling Monument. It was erected by public subscription to commemorate his 80th birthday. It is now at a housing scheme in Hexthorpe, although the artwork in the concrete still remains on the Cleveland Street side of Hexthorpe Bridge.



Finally, we saw Hodgson & Hepworth's, Doncaster's own Fortnum and Mason's. After their previous premises were burnt out, they built a striking new store, shown left. The business was taken over by a Hull firm in 1948, and in the 1960s they became part of the Arndale Centre, then a Fine Fare supermarket, before disappearing.

We had enjoyed an encyclopaedic trip down St Sepulchre Gate, looking at buildings and their occupiers.

We had also learned some useful tram facts: if a post card image showed tram tracks in the street, it was later than June 1902. If it also showed trams with roofs, it was later than 1908.

Planning for Barnsley's Dickie Bird Statue

Archie Sinclair

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I had thought that the story behind the statue of Dickie Bird would make an unusual and entertaining topic for the talk at our Buffet. But I had no idea that the talk was going to prove to be rather more unusual and entertaining than I had intended.

Our laptop and projector were not on their best behaviour, and seemed to have fallen out badly, as the images began to appear in random order. This was very frustrating for me, but raised the entertainment factor for many of our members, as they watched me struggle to “deliver” the planned talk.

I did eventually manage to show almost all the images. I was reminded of the great Eric Morecambe and his response when accused by “Mr Preview” of playing all the wrong notes on the piano. Our members thought I was showing all the wrong slides, but I can state here quite definitely that I was showing all the right slides, but not necessarily in the right order.

So, with my apology over, you can read something about the Dickie Bird statue. My involvement began when I returned to my job with Barnsley Council after the New Year of 2008, only to find the sobering message “Please ring the Chief Executive”. After the initial thoughts of “What have I done now?”, and then, “What haven’t I done?” I made the call, to discover it was something interesting that I knew nothing about. I was being asked to co-ordinate the planning aspects of a statue of Dickie Bird, the well-known former test cricket umpire and Barnsley celebrity.

The statue was to be made by Graham Ibbeson, another local celebrity and a sculptor, now probably best known for his Eric Morecambe statue at Morecambe. My job was to work out exactly where to place the sculpture, provide its setting and decide how it should be fixed. There was also the requirement to secure planning permission for what was proposed. Until everyone was happy with the plans, the project had to remain hush-hush.



In February 2008 the project was launched at an event that was well-attended by the press and TV news. Dickie was in his element with the media attention, and the scheme went public, with good coverage. The planning application was submitted in February and approved in April. My work was done, and the project went quiet while sponsorship was sought to fund the sculpture.

Dickie Bird was a real expert when it came to handling the media at the launch event.

I had applied for, and failed to get, “flexible retirement”, where I would work part-time, so I took early retirement in July 2008. In October, 3 months later, I was offered 6 months part-time work, 2 days per week, as a planning consultant.

I heard nothing more about the statue until, in late March 2009, I had a call from the sculptor, Graham Ibbeson, telling me that the statue had been cast (in bronze) and a date for its unveiling had been set for mid-June at a meeting of Council grandees. I tried to establish who was to design and manage the project, and Council departments, in turn, told me that it was not their job; they would need an expenditure code just to look at it, and so forth. Time was not on our side.

Ultimately, I put the issue to the Development Director, telling her what I thought needed to be done. She asked me who could do the design work. I said that I could, and so, at the end of April, I was given a clear instruction to design and co-ordinate the work. The key construction drawings were produced quickly, and a machine started stripping the site on Sunday 10 May.

From that point, there was terrific progress. The stone faces for the statue's plinth were ordered on 22 May; the stone setts paving was completed by 2 June; the concrete plinth was cast on 10 June; the stone plinth faces were delivered and fixed on 16 June, and the statue was brought from London to Barnsley and lifted on to its plinth on the morning of Sunday 21 June.

Although a week had been allowed for contingencies, it was not needed. The statue remained well wrapped up and protected until its unveiling on Tuesday 30 June 2009. Come the big day, the sun shone, the crowds came, and Dickie Bird had the rare honour of unveiling his own statue.

Three years later, Dickie, already MBE, was awarded OBE in the 2012 New Year's Honours; the Prince of Wales met Dickie and saw the statue on his visit to the nearby Barnsley Chronicle offices in January 2012; and in May Dickie Bird received his OBE from the Prince of Wales at Buckingham Palace.

And, as for my 6 month consultancy: it had turned into almost 9 months, thanks to Dickie Bird and his statue.



Sandstone setts paving complete



Concrete plinth complete



Stone facings being fixed



Subject and sculptor watch the statue being installed



The finished bronze sculpture

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Dickie, and later, in 2012, with the Prince of Wales