



-TRUST TOPICS

Doncaster Civic Trust Newsletter ©

Issue No. 53

January 2015



Contents

Page 2

Some Facts about North Bridge

Page 3

Members' News
Education Projects

Pages 4

Tree Planting for the Braims
Landscape Gardens

Page 5

Mansion House Update
18 South Parade

Pages 6-7

Planning Matters

Pages 8-9

H L Brown, High Street

Pages 9-10

Report on YHACS Meeting,
Hull

Pages 11-12 The Back Pages

Beamish Revisited

The Brick Train Darlington 1997



**Very nice, but shouldn't
this A4 have been in Doncaster?**

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

Some Facts About: The North Bridge.



1. Crossing the Railway

Before the North Bridge was built in 1910 the only way for horse-drawn and motorised vehicles to travel over the railway was via a level crossing at Marshgate. There was also a pedestrian subway under the tracks. If people wanted to reach Bentley on the tram they had to travel to the crossing, walk down into the subway and get on another tram on the other side.

“The New Bridge” on a postcard sent in 1917

2. A Problem and a Solution The crossing was a problem. It caused delays and disruption but getting rid of it was complex. It involved the following amongst other things: setting up of a special level crossing committee in 1907, consideration of various alternative schemes, a poll of electors and the depositing of a bill in Parliament for a new bridge. Whilst the bridge was being planned, the crossing gates were carried away by a passenger train in February 1908.

3. The Opening Ceremony Half the bridge opened in February 1910 and the level crossing was closed. The bridge was planned to be formally opened on the 12th May 1910 by the Mayor, but whilst the commemorative brochure for the opening ceremony was still at the printers, King Edward VII died on 6th May 1910. The opening ceremony was abandoned but the brochure was still printed for public interest. The bridge still opened fully on 12th May and the subway was closed on the same day.

4. What’s in a Name? All the captions to the illustrations in the brochure called the bridge ‘The Cheswold Bridge’ whereas the text in the brochure referred to it as ‘The New Bridge’ or ‘North Bridge Road’. The simplified name ‘North Bridge’ which we tend to use today did not appear.

5. A few trams and then.....Traffic levels gradually built up as this was, of course, the Great North Road. Even so, motorised traffic on the Bridge was still relatively low in 1910. Numbers increased dramatically in the 20th century reaching 57,000 vehicles per day in 1994. This was 8,000 more than the A1! Major improvements and strengthening of the Bridge were carried out with the ‘Opening Ceremony of the Strengthened North Bridge’ taking place on Thursday 7th July 1994. A freestanding board was set up beside Tesco’s, next door. One side contains a plaque with information about the refurbishment. Mounted on the other side is the commemorative plaque of 1910 which was moved from its original location on the bridge.

Postscript: A New Bridge to the North. Eventually it was agreed that another bridge was needed. The new St George’s Bridge was opened in 2002. The North Bridge was closed to vehicles except buses, taxis and cycles in 2002 but it was re-opened to limited traffic in 2012. Over 100 years after it was built it still plays its part as a vehicle route to the north.

I would like to thank Trust members Philip Scowcroft and Andrew and Karen Goffin for providing me with the information on which this article is based.

References: ‘Formal Opening of the North Bridge Road’ 1910; ‘Opening Ceremony of the Strengthened North Bridge 1994 and ‘An Intolerable Nuisance: the Marshgate Crossing and its Line’ the latter by Philip Scowcroft

Peter Coote

Members' News

Winter Programme 2014 - 2015

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

All on Thursdays at 7.30 pm

2015

- 22 January** **Kevin Trickett on Wakefield Civic Society**
Kevin is President of Wakefield Civic Society and Chair of YHACS
- 19 February** **Scott Cardwell on Doncaster Update**
Scott is Assistant Director of Development at Doncaster MBC
- 19 March** **Carolyn Dalton on the History of Place Names of Doncaster**
Carolyn is Heritage Services Manager at Doncaster Museum
- 16 April** **Members' Social Forum and a talk from
Symeon Waller on "The Earl of Rosse"**
Trust member Symeon is a keen local historian and author

Education Projects

As we go to press, two of our education projects are coming to a climax. Our architecture competition for primary schools was launched in October. There was a modest response from schools and teams of architecture students from Sheffield University have been working to help local children develop their design ideas. We plan to announce the winners in February and present the winning school with the 'Eric Braim Prize' shortly after.

Because of the modest number of entries, the university has directed some of its students to survey Doncaster people on behalf of the Trust about their attitudes to architecture old and new. This project is in collaboration with the Council and its results will inform both the Trust and the planners and so help both organisations better assess their priorities. The students are due to submit their report in February.

Details about the competition and survey outcomes will be uploaded on to the Trust website later in spring.

We are approaching the deadline for applications for bursary awards. To date we only have interest from one person. If this remains the case, the Trust may consider leaving the application process open-ended to allow students to apply at any time.

Finally, we are pleased to announce that the Trust has been approached by Dr Lisa Procter from the university inviting us to be involved in a fascinating project exploring children's perceptions of sounds in the urban environment. This will lead to the production of a companion to our 'Toolkit' for use in Doncaster schools.

We will report on all these projects in 'Trust Topics' and through the website.

Jeff Prior

Tree Planting at Cusworth Hall to Remember the Braims



On the fine autumn morning of 24 November last year members of the Executive Committee and the Braim family gathered to watch the planting of the first of two specimen trees at Cusworth Hall. The Trust has sponsored them in memory of Eric and Betty Braim who worked so tirelessly for the Trust. Betty had worked in the Hall, and Eric liked to visit the Park and enjoy the panoramic view over the town that he knew so well. This tree by the path from the car park is a Chestnut-leaved Oak, *Quercus castaneifolia* 'Green Spire'. Trust Chairman John Holmes, top right, lent a hand with the planting, which was appropriate as he had worked with the Braim family and the Council to create a lasting memorial that everyone could be happy with.

Archie Sinclair

Landscape Gardens

Michelle Stevens Thursday 18 September 2014



Michelle was a practising landscape architect, originally from Doncaster, working with environmental charity Groundwork whose slogan was "Changing Places, Changing Lives". She told us how her own life had been changed by some good computer-based careers advice. This recommended Landscape Architecture, so she embarked on a BA Hons. course at Leeds Metropolitan University. After that she had a year's work experience, and then spent another year gaining her Graduate Diploma. Only when she completed her professional practice exam did she finally become a chartered member of the Royal Landscape Institute.

Michelle said that without that careers advice, she would still have been at Polypipe! She took us on a world tour of all kind of gardens, from city pocket parks in the USA to the informal English landscape style of Capability Brown. We saw local examples, like Sheffield's Heart of the City Project with the Winter Gardens, the new Peace Gardens and the Station Forecourt which gave a new and exciting entrance to the city.

Michelle's talk had been enthusiastic, interesting, honest, committed, amusing, lively, natural, fluent, and entertaining. She was a terrific ambassador and advert. for the landscape profession. **AS**

Doncaster Mansion House – Update

After the Annual General Meeting and before the always-excellent Buffet Supper, the 64 members (8 tables of 8) enjoyed a short talk from Amie Rowland, the new project manager for the Mansion House. She had been with the local authority just 3 months and was positively brimming with enthusiasm for her project. She needed to establish the Mansion House at the very heart of the community, and was putting together the vision for the building's future, which would be the basis of an application for grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund in February 2015.

There were any number of strong possible themes connected with both the town and the building: there was its architect James Paine, the Georgian town, the Great Northern Railway and Denison, and the Mansion House's great kitchen – all good subjects. Amie was keen to use the building as a base for collecting oral history, people's own stories of the town and its principal building.

The scope for the future uses of the building was enormous: the ballroom was a great venue for weddings, award ceremonies, music or even poetry readings. There was talk of a new home for the collection of railwayana (it's in the dictionary) currently housed in the tower at Hallcross Academy, the former Grammar School. This could be a major visitor attraction. But any plans for the building would have to chime with the local community's wishes

The building needed improvements to its mechanical and electrical services, and better means of both access and escape to increase the visitor capacity. It was a grade one listed building and about 270 years old so any work would have to proceed with great care, and inevitably higher than normal costs.

In the New Year it was planned to set up a Friends' Group made up of representatives of interested groups from the local community – like this Trust. I feel sure we will be involved and be able to report further progress in Trust Topics.

Archie Sinclair

18 South Parade, Doncaster – Inside Knowledge

We were fortunate to be able to see the interior of this building. Not only was it stylishly decorated when built; it has also managed to retain almost all of its features for over 200 years.



Planning Matters

The Trust's Planning and Conservation Sub-Committee meets every month. Here are a few of the issues discussed since the last Trust Topics.

Updates: In August we reported that we were not happy with the proposed designs for some new flats on Bennetthorpe, next to the former Rockingham Hotel. We are pleased to say that our concerns resulted in considerable changes, principally the proposed front elevation which was redesigned to incorporate fanlights over the front doors, larger single ground floor windows and windows diminishing in height with each upper floor. Our suggestions were accepted and approved by the Council's Planning Committee.

In another case we reported on the inadequate detailing for the Listed Building Consent application for 18 South Parade which has permission to become apartments. The amended plans were much better and the MBC is monitoring the proposed changes to this important building effectively. We have also met the owner who is interested in the history and fabric of the house. He gave us a tour of the property and permission to take photographs. Some of these feature on page 5.

Glassby Arch at the Almshouses 76-84 Church Street, Mexborough



We were pleased to see an application for the erection of the Glassby Arch in the grounds of the almshouses. This was built by an important sculptor, Robert Glassby, and had had to be moved from its position in the rear garden of a house. It was recently dismantled and stored but a Trust has been formed to re-erect it in the new location. There is no space here to give you the full history but we are fully aware of the venture and we support the plan to save a valuable local landmark and site it close to the public highway for all to enjoy.

Old photograph of the arch featured on the information board about Robert Glassby, Sculptor to Queen Victoria, erected by Mexborough & District Heritage Society, 2013

The Old Vicarage Stonegate Thorne

This listed Georgian house situated in the Conservation Area and close to the church has unfortunately been in a poor state for many years. It became an elderly persons home but then fell vacant. So we welcomed this scheme to convert it into eleven flats. The proposal included restoration and retention of key features including the hall and stairs. The application also included a proposal for a new rear wing. Whilst we were happy with the extension in principle, we objected to the design which was institutional in appearance. They could do better, we thought. However, the planners disagreed with us and approved the application.

Hickleton Hall

The local newspapers have mentioned the proposal to turn Hickleton Hall into a wedding venue. Previously occupied by Sue Ryder and used as a care home, it became surplus to requirements. An application for conversion to flats followed, closely studied by English Heritage and ourselves. This revised application proposed to use the lower floors of the main building as a wedding venue whilst converting the rest of the building and outbuildings into apartments, as per the original plan. We thought that this scheme would have less impact than the previous one but there was a contentious proposal to merge rooms. This had been investigated and studied by English Heritage who suggested ways forward.

Kirk Sandall

Shortly after we listened to the excellent talk on the old church at Kirk Sandall by Gill Johnson, a new application for 95 houses, close to the church, was lodged. This was discussed at length by the committee. We had objected to a previous scheme of apartment blocks by the canal side so this mixed two storey development was certainly an improvement. Our biggest concern was that visitors needed to be able to park near the listed but redundant St Oswald's Church which still held open days and special services. We asked that parking be accommodated to secure the future of the church. We had no objections to the proposal to convert a nearby listed barn into three dwellings.

St. Edmund's Church, Anchorage Lane, Sprotbrough

Another church which we discussed at our meetings was St. Edmund's, situated just off Sprotbrough Road. We objected to an outline planning application for nine houses on the site because there was insufficient information and detail about the proposals. We were very disappointed to see a proposal for the demolition of this church in any event. We considered it an interesting building, being a distinctive conversion of an old limestone barn by Diocesan Architect George Pace in the 1950s.



Unfortunately it has been declared surplus to requirements by the Church. The Trust would like to see it re-used rather than demolished. It presents an interesting and attractive appearance from the road.

Natwest Bank, High Street

In December we discussed the proposals by Natwest to increase dramatically the number of advertisements for the bank on the façade of their High Street branch. We objected to most of the proposals which would significantly detract from the architectural style of the building. Some signs were also superfluous and could damage the polished granite. This is one of the town's finest buildings, in a key position opposite the Mansion House. We want its character to be retained, not spoilt.

Conservation Area Appraisals

In August we reported that we had commented on the appraisal of the Burghwallis Conservation Area which was recently sent out for public consultation. We are pleased to report that many of our suggestions have been incorporated in the appraisal. The Council's Conservation team has also updated three town centre conservation appraisals: Market Place, High Street and the William Nuttall Cottage Homes. We were pleased to have contributed successfully to the review of the first two, adding local notes about architects, dates and materials to a revised list of Key Unlisted Buildings. We also successfully suggested that the Arnold building on Printing Office Street be added to this list. We supported all the review including concerns about the condition of some buildings, as well as proposals to extend the Conservation Areas originally proposed in 2007. Full details of our involvement are on line on Doncaster MBC's website or can be provided on request to members.

Planning and Conservation Sub-committee

A Jewellers for 200 years



The announcement in October by H L Brown that they were vacating their premises in High Street marked the end of an era. H L Brown is a well-established firm which has been trading at the same premises since before the war. Remarkably, their building has been a jewellers ever since it was built over 200 years ago. It was constructed by Thomas Mandall, a plumber and glazier, who owned various adjoining properties in Scot Lane including his own house and workshop. In 1810 he also bought the corner property and rebuilt it. This is the building that still stands today.

In 1822 the business became well known because of a crime. The jeweller at the time, Philip Bright, came downstairs to discover that forty gold watches and silverware worth several hundred pounds had been stolen during the night. It was described as a 'most alarming and daring burglary.....its extensiveness almost unparalleled in the town'. Two men were eventually caught, one of them in Manchester. They had broken into the jewellers whilst on the run after escaping from York Castle which was a prison at the time. They were caught, returned to York, found guilty and hanged. This seems barbaric to us today yet at the time it was one of over 200 crimes which could result in the death penalty.

Other jewellers have lived and worked here too including the Woodmansey family. Henry Woodmansey became Mayor in 1866.

Today the building is listed Grade 2 and retains some original features, notably all the top floor windows. However, some glazing bars were removed on the first floor, probably in the nineteenth century, no doubt for a better view from those rooms. The roof is slate and is probably original. Of particular note is its rounded corner. This is quite an early example of a feature for which Doncaster became known. The first rounded corner also appeared on Scot Lane, at the Market Place end in the eighteenth century, but it has long since been demolished. The High Street rounded corner is only noticeable by looking at the upper floors.

And the Future? The history of the building is important, but its future is of great concern. Much has been written about empty shops in town centres, although Doncaster has fared better than many other places. Even so, the building is now to let as are other historic buildings nearby. An adjoining shop and a converted bank on the opposite corner are also vacant. The restaurant across the road is empty. It would be nice for the shop to continue the jewellery tradition but this seems a remote possibility. At the very least we hope it will still be a retail unit. The Trust's Planning and Conservation Sub-committee will be monitoring any proposals for change.

Although the property has been well maintained, its shopfront fascia is overlarge and any opportunity to reduce it in size would be welcome. Some Trust members have already commented on the loss of the coat of arms which added a touch of style to the corner. However, this was not part of the listing description and belongs to H L Brown who we believe have removed it.

H L Brown and Bell Brothers

It is disappointing that H L Brown have left their historic building, but they haven't left town. Instead they have moved into the Frenchgate Centre and are now trading as H L Brown and Bell Brothers, a Doncaster firm that they took over as long ago as the 1920's. H L Brown is an old Sheffield firm, established in 1861, but Bell Brothers is even older. It was established by Joseph Bell whose father was a gardener and who had held positions at Serlby Hall and Kew Gardens.

After completing an apprenticeship as a watchmaker, Joseph set up business in Bawtry sometime after 1783, later moving to Doncaster. His son James took over the business and another son, Thomas, worked initially as a watch and clock maker but then became a soldier. He was killed at Waterloo. One of Thomas' clocks was sold recently. James' sons took over the business and it was probably at that point it became Bell Brothers. Although the business was first established as a watch and clock makers, today it is a jewellers.

I would like to thank Margaret Herbert for her help in preparing this article. Some of the information on Bell Brothers varies according to different sources but I believe the information given here to be accurate.

Peter Coote

YHACS (Yorkshire and Humber Association of Civic Societies) Meeting 26 July 2014 at Hull History Centre, Worship St., Hull



A short walk to my local railway station (Kirk Sandall) saw me on the 9am train to Hull arriving at 10.02. A 15 minute walk through the centre of Hull and I arrived at the Hull History Centre.

This very futuristic building was completed in 2009, designed by architects Pringle, Richards, Sharratt who won a competition. The building houses Hull's Archives and Local Studies, together with the University's collections. It was a joint project by the City and its University.

By 10.30, 22 of us had gathered to be met by Paul Schofield (01482 878535) for a guided tour of the Old Town prior to lunch at the White Hart and the meeting proper at 2pm back at the History Centre. Paul has been undertaking tours of Hull for over 26 years and is a very experienced and entertaining guide.

After a few words of welcome by Malcolm Sharman of Hull Civic Society we set off. Paul said that Hull's links were via the docks across the North Sea and were more European than most. It boomed in Victorian times but suffered badly during the Second World War – it was the 2nd most bombed city in the UK after London with over 1500 dead and nearly 200,000 homeless.

Past Queens Park – named after the original Queens Dock built in 1778 and renamed in 1854 after a royal visit – and onto the Guildhall, built in stages between 1862 and 1916. From there we went on to the High Street, the oldest street in Hull.

Hull has placed all its museums in this street – the Wilberforce Museum, Street Life Museum, Hull and East Riding Museum along with the ‘sidewinder’ trawler Arctic Corsair, moored to the rear on the River Hull. We also visited Scale Lane Bridge over the River Hull which Paul informed us is the only bridge in the UK you can stand on when it is opening – but not this morning!

From there we went on to the Hepworth Arcade - opened in 1890 – which contains only independent retailers and Hull’s only joke shop. This leads into the indoor market and from there to the Holy Trinity Church and the street known as The Land of Green Ginger – only no-one knows why. The George Hotel on this street has the smallest window in the UK – it’s the width and depth of the pointing between 2 stone blocks and was used by the stable boy to check for ruffians before opening the gates to let coaches in – life must have been rough in those days!

It was approaching 12 noon at this point so we headed for the White Hart Hotel for a buffet lunch courtesy of Hull Civic Society. As well as the food we were entertained by Peter Asquith-Cowan dressed as Sir John Hotham MP. Hotham goes down in history as the Governor of the town who, on St George’s Day 1642, and on the instructions of parliament, refused admission at the Beverley Gate to Charles I, thus starting a chain of events leading to the English Civil War.

We left at 12.50 to return to the History Centre for the start of the meeting at 1pm. After some words of welcome by John Netherwood of Hull Civic Society and Kevin Trickett of YHACS the meeting commenced.

The first presentation was by consultant Andrew Dixon who successfully led the bid for Hull as UK City of Culture which resulted in a win for 2017. Hull had heritage but not capacity – it needed more than just “Maritime” and the team asked residents to bring in items of culture – they were overloaded! A vision was drawn up, issues listed and the whole thing packaged and transported by bicycle – Hull’s Green Heritage – to London. The package included a short film which was very moving.

It’s available on line at www.youtube.com/watch?v=mXjkDgBUR9c, or just Google “Hull City of Culture 2017 video”. Andrew talked though a list of events for 2017 – it will be a great place to visit.

The next presentation was “Twitter Demystified” presented by Wayne Willis of @yesyesbd. He gave some key pointers for Twitter usage but was met by an audience very sceptical as to its value.

Ian Henry of Civic Voice then spoke on arranging a local listing of buildings on the theme of “meaning something locally”. i.e. this is what we care about. This would give a level of protection through local planning policy. Lots of public participation would be necessary and some funding might be available through the Heritage Lottery Fund.

Under any other civic business, Erica Amende of Spen Valley spoke on local housing issues; Kevin Trickett was in discussion with Jonathon Foyle about the marriage bed of Henry VII (I kid you not). He also asked for societies to volunteer as hosts for 2015 meetings.

The YHACS AGM will be held at Harrogate on 31 January 2015 and the Trust will be represented.

Steve Kimber

Trust Topics is edited by:
Archie Sinclair, 43 Eilers Avenue, Bessacarr, Doncaster DN4 7DY
e-mail: mail@doncastercivictrust.org.uk
telephone: 01302 538225



Nearly the Back Page : Beamish Revisited

I had been to Beamish before, but it must have been about 20 years ago or more. So a re-visit with friends was planned. We had to collect one of our number from Darlington Station, and that gave us an excuse to visit an important modern industrial building, completed in 1965 and already listed grade 2 star. This was the Cummings Engine Factory designed by Kevin Roche and John Dinkerloo, American architects. The single-storey building consists essentially of Cor-ten steel and glass, and follows the style of Mies van der Rohe in its structural clarity and simplicity.



It was the first building in Britain to use Cor-ten, a steel which rusts to form a dark, purple-brown protective finish. Doncaster residents will never forget the “rusty car park” by North Bridge where the same steel had been fixed to enhance its concrete structure. Instead, it stained it rusty. But, when used correctly, the steel looks fine and never needs painting.



Searching the internet for information on the Cummings factory, I chanced on details of how to get to the “Brick Train”, also at Darlington and luckily not far away. It is on the east side of the town and you would drive past it as you skirted Darlington on the A66 heading for Teesside. It is quite a feat: a full-sized locomotive and tender, complete with billowing smoke, apparently emerging from a tunnel, and all built in red Accrington Nori bricks, 185,000 of them actually.



It was completed in 1997 at a cost of £760,000, funded by the Heritage Lottery, Morrison’s Supermarkets, Darlington Council and the Department of National Heritage. It was designed by sculptor David Mach RA. The feature celebrates the rich railway heritage of Darlington, but you cannot have failed to notice that the locomotive is modelled on a Gresley A4 Pacific, built in Doncaster’s Plant Works.



The view from above – the billowing smoke and the A66



The Back Page : Beamish Revisited

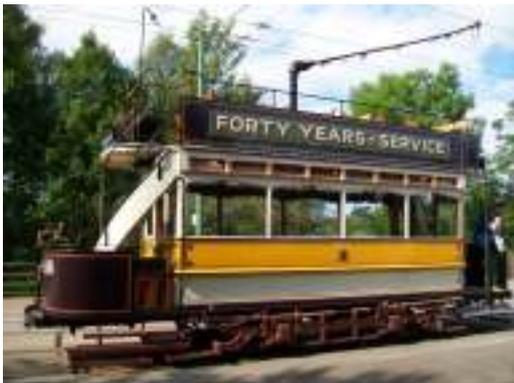
And so to Beamish, set in lovely rolling countryside that used to be the Durham Coalfield. There were trams, trains, old buses and vans, plenty of buildings to see, inside and out, and a great attention to small details for us nit-picking types to enjoy.



We liked the way they had carefully re-built the chimney stacks with non-matching pots. We sampled the fish and chip shop (coal-fired), top right, and the pub (hand pumped), centre left, and had a good walk about.



This church from another site had recently been rebuilt here, with every stone numbered, but its jumble of stonework made it look as if it had been rebuilt before!



A big part of the attraction of Beamish is the way that the exhibits really work and are used and enjoyed by the visitors.

As it calls itself:

Beamish the Living Museum of the North

Archie Sinclair

Sir Nigel Gresley 1876-1941

Although we Doncastrians love to claim Gresley as one of our own, he was actually born in Edinburgh while his mother was visiting. His father was a clergyman in Derbyshire. He was resident in Doncaster from 1905 when he joined the Great Northern Railway. He lived in 3 different houses. When GNR became the London and North Eastern Railway in 1923, his office moved to Kings Cross and he moved south, eventually to Salisbury Hall near St Albans. So he wasn't living in Doncaster in the 1930s when his most famous locomotives were being built here.