



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

A Few Facts About: Conservation Areas



1. The Civic Amenities Act of 1967 gave us the concept of Conservation Areas. At the time there was much concern about the speed of development and loss of historic buildings.
2. The Act was introduced by Duncan Sandys MP, later Lord Duncan Sandys. Ten years earlier he had founded the Civic Trust at national level. Today the work of the Civic Trust is continued by Civic Voice to whom we pay a subscription and from whom we receive guidance and advice.
3. Designation as a conservation area means many things - far too many to list here - but the most important part is that it controls the demolition of unlisted buildings. A conservation area is an 'area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance'. (wording from the later Planning Act 1990)
4. The first Conservation Area to be designated was in 1967 in Stamford, a town described by John Betjeman as 'England's best town'.
5. In 1968 Doncaster Civic Trust suggested to Doncaster County Borough Council that the South Parade area should be designated but they failed to do so. By 1973, shamefully, they had not designated a single Conservation Area, although the West Riding had made nine in the rural areas.
6. The same year Doncaster Civic Trust produced 'A Conservation Report' which suggested two areas should be established - one along the main streets including South Parade and High Street, with a spur on Thorne Road, and the other around the Market Place. On the last day of its existence the Council designated South Parade as a Conservation Area.
7. Eventually all areas that the Trust had suggested were designated. Our pioneering work is now recognised by the MBC. Today there are 46 Conservation Areas in our area, nine of them covering most of the town centre and the others in the villages and towns such as Bawtry and Thorne.
8. In 1973 there were 2,000 Conservation areas in the UK. Today there are over 10,000.
9. Planning Authorities are obliged to designate Conservation Areas and carry out appraisals and reviews. For the last few years we have been fully consulted by the Conservation Officer and have been able to add historical information, details of building materials and successfully request designation of Key Buildings. If a building is designated as 'Key Unlisted' it is very unlikely that any permission to demolish would be granted. A 'positive' grading gives a slightly less but similar protection.
10. So far Doncaster Civic Trust has assisted with the appraisals of 12 Conservation Areas and reviews of six areas. A full list is available on request.

Peter Coote

Trust Topics is edited by:

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

e-mail: mail@doncastercivictrust.org.uk

telephone: 01302 538225

Members' News

Winter Programme 2015 - 2016

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

All on Thursdays at 7.30 pm

2015

- 17 September** **Scott Cardwell on Doncaster Update**
Scott is Assistant Director of Development at Doncaster MBC
- 15 October** **The Leader Brothers on Blue and White Pottery**
Return of the popular speakers who brought us their Mystery Box in 2012
- 19 November** **AGM and Buffet Supper**

2016

- 14 January** **Gary Brett on Old Hatfield and Hatfield Woodhouse**
Gary is a local historian with particular interest in the two Hatfield villages
- 18 February** **David Winpenny on Up to a Point – Pyramids in Britain and Ireland**
David is Chairman of Ripon Civic Society and sits on YHACS Committee
- 17 March** **Clive Howarth on Doncaster's Great Fire 1853: St George's Church**
Clive is Churchwarden at St George's and editor of *achurchnearyou* website
- 14 April** **Members' Forum**

Website Refresh

At the February executive committee it was decided that it would be a good thing to give the Trust website a makeover in order to make it more fresh, for example by including photographs and introducing colour into the format. Work has begun to this effect and it is anticipated that a new version will be up and running by the end of summer.

In addition to updating the format of the website, we plan to insert additional content to make it more useful for visitors to the site. For example, we are in the process of digitising all back copies of the Newsletter and Trust Topics dating back to 1970. These documents contain a wealth of research and information which some members (and members of the public) will no doubt find fascinating. This treasure trove of material will be uploaded onto the new website. Please feel free to let us know of any ideas you may have for website content.

Bursary Scheme

We mentioned previously that we had a poor response to the bursary scheme despite an article in the Free Press and all schools being contacted. We have awarded a further bursary grant to one of our current bursary holders who has extended her period of study. In response to this lack of interest the education group are applying the 'personal touch' by contacting all heads of sixth form by phone to promote the scheme. We have also decided to remove the deadline for applications to make the scheme more flexible.

Jeff Prior

The First Civic Society

York Civic Trust was founded in 1946 and is probably the oldest in Yorkshire. Doncaster Civic Trust was established just a few months later, with many others following, particularly from the 1960s onwards.

We thought it would be interesting to discover the name of the oldest Civic Society or Trust in Britain. A search of the internet revealed that it is the Sid Vale Association in Devon.

Astonishingly it is exactly 100 years older than Doncaster Civic Trust. Here is what their website tells us:

'The **Sid Vale Association** was established as long ago as 1846. This makes it the oldest Civic Society in Britain! On September 18, 1846, the first meeting of the Sidmouth Improvement Committee took place. It was the first expression of concern by our 'founding fathers', to conserve the charm and attractiveness of Sidmouth and the Sid Valley. Later the SVA was registered as a charity –

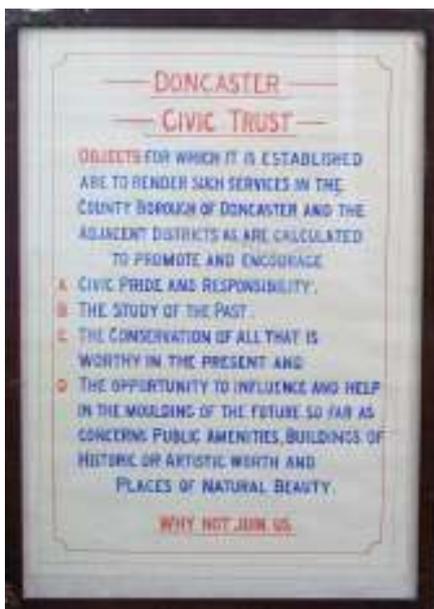
". . . for the Protection of the Beauties and Amenities of the Neighbourhood and to promote and aid its Cultural Development".

Through their foresight, together with the energies and activities of those who followed them down the years, many who come and discover Sidmouth are able to value and appreciate what they did; and what today's Members are continuing to do.'

What is particularly interesting is that this even pre-dates the national conservation organisations such as the National Trust. An early conservation group indeed.

Peter Coote

The Trust and the Objects for which it was established.....



Not long after I became Chairman of the Trust in 1982, I was entrusted with this early brief statement of the Trust's objects, for safe keeping. I suppose this would now be called our "aims and objectives" or "Mission Statement".

This hand-lettered and water-coloured piece of work was getting on for A2 size (think of two opened newsletters) and was neatly set in a frame of polished veneered wood.

It clearly pre-dated the Metropolitan Doncaster of 1974, and the tone and language of the opening sentence could possibly place it nearer the 1950s.

The four things set out to be promoted and encouraged are still very much at the top of our agenda today. What we have added now is a commitment to increasing public awareness of the built and natural environment, starting in primary schools.

Archie Sinclair

Who Lived There? No 5.

Leicester House, 4 Regent Square



Last year the owners of the Regent Hotel were given planning permission to turn 4 Regent Square into a 6-bedroomed house. It was originally a private residence, but since 1990 it has been part of the Regent. Before that it was home to 'The Club' a gentlemen's club with origins going back to the eighteenth century. Part of the building was also in use as flats until the Club moved out.

The house is remarkable for the number of owners and occupiers who had a marked impact on the life of the town and beyond. This article tells you about them.

In 1868 the local Board of Health approved plans for the house for a Mr Boothroyd. The designs were much admired. The house was known as Leicester House and is a large three gabled brick house designed by William Godfrey of 40 Bennetthorpe. It was described as a 'most commodious house for the residence of private persons with means'

In 1871 the house was occupied by Patrick Stirling, chief Locomotive Engineer to the Great Northern Railway Company. He was well known for his elegant and speedy engines. He deserves credit for changing the role of 'The Plant'. Before his arrival in 1866 it was a repair works only but in 1867 three locomotives were built in Doncaster. By 1874 the numbers had risen to 43 and the Plant became fully established as a locomotive building works. One of his engines, Stirling No 1, is owned by the National Railway Museum. It's very distinctive with its single pair of large driving wheels, hence its name "the Stirling 8 foot single".

In 1875 the house was being advertised to let, unfurnished, as Stirling had purchased and then moved to Highfield House on Thorne Road. Now demolished, it stood on the site of Rectory Gardens. He died, still in post, at the age of 75 in 1895.

There is a listed memorial to Patrick Stirling. It's a drinking fountain made to celebrate his 70th birthday. It was originally sited at the junction of Station Road but has been moved three times since then. It is now outside Patrick Stirling Court, a sheltered housing scheme in Hexthorpe.

In 1881 the house was occupied by Richard Brundell, a civil engineer who had spent much time abroad. He, too, was involved with the railways.

Remarkably, yet another person who had a major influence on the railways lived here. He was H A Ivatt who succeeded Patrick Stirling as Chief Locomotive Engineer at the GNR. He moved to Doncaster with his family from Ireland in 1896 although he originated from the Isle of Ely. He moved into Leicester House on arriving in Doncaster. Ivatt designed the 'Atlantics'. The first was completed in 1898 and these fine engines were very successful. Indeed in 1902 a redesigned version was used by the advertising people as GNR's image.

Eventually 92 engines of this version were built. He retired in 1911 and in 1912 moved to Haywards Heath. There is no memorial to Ivatt in Doncaster but two of his Atlantics are in the National Collection, including 'Henry Oakley' the first one built.

We move on now to the 1920s when A O Edwards - or rather Arthur Octavius Edwards - lived at Leicester House. He was a speculator who was involved in various projects. He had previously worked in Ceylon on the railways but then moved to Doncaster. He developed the Wheatley Hills area for housing purposes and later erected both the Mayfair Hotel and then the Grosvenor House Hotel in London. The latter opened in 1929 and it was the only hotel in London to have a bathroom in every bedroom and running iced water in every bathroom. In 1936 Edwards married Countess Helen Kossakowska and eventually left for America. In the 1940s he developed a resort at Palm Beach Shores Florida, with a hotel as its centrepiece. He was Mayor in 1952 to 1954. He resided in a house with over 30 acres and Leicester House must have seemed a distant memory.

It looks as if the house has come full circle although it's doubtful if there will be any more railway connections. As for the name, Leicester House, it was removed from the frontage some years ago but you can still see the plaque that was made for the name.

Peter Coote

Information in this article is taken mainly from earlier research by Eric Braim and Malcolm Crawley.

Repairing Bennetthorpe's Townscape

continued from the front cover



Image from Peter Tuffrey's Streetwise 2009



The new housing featured on the front cover adjoins the former Rockingham Hotel and stands on the site of a row of small two-storey cottages that included a shop. These buildings were demolished in the 1960s and the site became the car park for the "Rock".

The Trust welcomed the proposed development, in traditional style and materials, and offered some design guidance on the front elevation, which fortunately was taken up. It "encloses" the street well. Although it looks like four terraced houses, the accommodation is actually 10 flats, mostly two-bedroomed, with another entrance at the rear to serve the 6 flats on the upper floors.

The front windows, which reduce in height on each floor, are vertical sliding sashes, double-glazed and made of timber. They have been made by JELD-WEN, the American based multi-national that took over John Carr of Bentley in 1999 but later moved its manufacturing elsewhere in the UK.

The new building looks like a promising addition to the Bennetthorpe Conservation Area. We await its completion and the removal of the scaffolding with great interest.

Archie Sinclair

Doncaster Town Centre Heritage Walk (North)

Saturday 18th April dawned bright and sunny – a perfect start for the return of Doncaster's famous Heritage Walks, now re-starting under the umbrella of Doncaster Civic Trust.



Clad in their shiny new high-vis(ibility) vests, suitably inscribed with **Civic Trust** on the back, Andy Ward and Steve Kimber led 6 brave souls away from the Tourist Information Centre at 10.30 am.

They travelled via High Street, Priory Place, Printing Office Street, St Sepulchre Gate, and Baxter Gate and then around to the Minster before finishing on the mezzanine floor in the Corn Exchange. An added bonus was a display in the Corn Exchange café of photographs of old Doncaster, courtesy of market stall holder Mick Maye.

It was a great start to a summer programme of walks in the Town Centre, alternating between the north and south routes, and with this year's added attraction of walks in Bawtry with its fascinating history and architecture.

Andy Ward

2015 Walks Programme

About the Heritage Walks

All the walks last approximately 2½ hours and the cost is £5 per person. Numbers are limited to 20 per walk and advance booking is recommended. Bookings can be made by telephoning Doncaster Tourist Information Centre on Doncaster (01302) 734309 or by e-mailing tourist.information@doncaster.gov.uk

Doncaster North Walk

Saturday 13th June at 10.30 from Doncaster TIC*
Saturday 8th August at 10.30 from Doncaster TIC*

Doncaster South Walk

Saturday 11th July at 10.30 from Doncaster TIC*
Saturday 22nd August at 10.30 from Doncaster TIC*

*Doncaster Tourist Information Centre (TIC) is at 1 Priory Place, Doncaster DN1 1BN, immediately next to the Mansion House

Bawtry Walk

Wednesday 24th June at 6 pm from Cooplands Bakers*
Wednesday 15th July at 6 pm from Cooplands Bakers*

*Cooplands Bakers is at 1 Scot Lane, Bawtry DN10 6JT

Planning Matters

The last few months have been very busy for the Planning and Conservation Committee, with more applications than usual to peruse. We only look at planning applications which affect listed buildings or relate to properties in Conservation Areas. The only exceptions are large developments of importance which we also consider. We then decide whether to contact the Planning Authority which makes the decision to approve or refuse the application. Our comments might be objections or, in some cases, representations where we think what is proposed could be improved.

Entertainment: New Cinema at the Frenchgate Centre.

One application we studied in March was the proposal to build a multiplex cinema on the top of the Frenchgate Centre. We had major concerns about the impact of the new cinema block on the listed Grand Theatre. We felt that much more information was needed on the view from Trafford Way, the materials and the detailed design. We also felt that it was ironic that the two cinemas on Hallgate had been demolished with the sites lying vacant, yet this was the second cinema application in the town in recent months, the other being adjacent to Cast, the theatre.

St Edmund's Church, Sprotbrough



In the last Trust Topics we told you how we had objected to an outline plan to build houses on the site of St Edmund's Church. We thought the plan could be improved, but more importantly our preference was for the church building to be re-used and not demolished. Since then, on English Heritage's recommendation, the church has been listed Grade 2. It was converted from a barn by a notable church architect, George Pace.

Doncaster Mansion House

Planning applications for the Mansion House are usually well thought out, but we decided to object to an application for some solar panels on its roof, mainly because those on the north east corner would be seen from Hallgate. We were pleased to see the application later withdrawn.

Carr Grange Cemetery Lodge



Some members will be familiar with all the excellent work put in by the Friends of Hyde Park Cemetery, rescuing it from vandalism and neglect. Two structures were no longer required by the Council - the Lodge and the archway at the entrance.

The archway is particularly interesting. It is probably an early work by Robert Glassby, who also built the Glassby Arch at Mexborough, currently being rescued by a Trust. The new owner of the Lodge and archway had made a good job of restoring the adjacent old school.

However, we objected to a proposal to lower and simplify the archway, thus losing its character.

The proposals also brought objections from two heritage groups in the Dearne Valley and eventually the plan was dropped. We do recognise that the archway needs attention, as it is leaning and is supported by scaffolding. We feel that the correct solution would be to re-build it - exactly as it is.

Crown Hotel Bawtry

We have said before that we look at applications right across the Borough. We know that places like Leeds, Bradford and Wakefield for example have several civic trusts within their boundaries, whereas we cover the whole of the Borough. A recent application was for the Crown Hotel at Bawtry who wanted a glazed balustrade to the front which we felt would have a detrimental impact on the listed building and could prevent pedestrians taking refuge on the footway. We put our objections in and an improved and amended scheme was soon submitted.

Signage

Sometimes we see applications for inappropriate signage in conservation areas. One example was for an illuminated projecting box sign at 24 Baxtergate, a listed building in a conservation area. Such signs are usually unnecessary clutter so we objected to it. Fortunately the applicants then submitted a revised scheme with which we were content. At other times the signs may be too large. This was the case at the Town Fields Sports Club where proposals for two signs were unduly obtrusive. Some restraint was needed, we felt.

Houses in Multiple Occupation (HiMO)

Over the last few years we have noticed an increase in the number of properties being converted to residential use and multiple occupation. In the commercial town centre this can bring otherwise disused buildings back into use and, if they are done well, then we have no objections. Mostly these are for one bedroom apartments. Unfortunately we are now seeing applications for poor quality accommodation in very large properties, bedsits usually, often referred to as HiMOs. Two of these have given us particular concern.

Nether Hall

Nether Hall is a listed mansion which has been in use as council offices since the 1920s. It was once a private house set in countryside, but by the end of the 19th century housing had completely surrounded the Hall. With the building of its new offices on Waterdale, Doncaster MBC no longer needed it and it was put up for sale. The new owner decided to change the use from offices to residential, mainly HiMOs. We accepted that there was a need for affordable accommodation for single people in the town centre and the exterior would be unaffected.



However, we were unhappy with the quality of the proposals for the interior and suggested that more easily manageable apartments would be preferred.

At **Axholme House** the proposals were even worse. This is a large Victorian house on Thorne Road which has been a home for autistic children for some time. It has not been a private house for many years. We objected to a revised scheme to convert the house into 24 bedrooms many of which would have no en-suites - just a room. We believe that the conversion standards of a building of this quality must be much better than proposed.

Development in Gardens

Perusing plans for developments in back gardens in Bessacarr Conservation Area is a regular feature of the committee's meetings. In many cases we make no comment as we recognise that some development is acceptable as the gardens are often very large. Since January though we have objected to two applications. Over-large houses, too many houses on one plot and removal of too many trees will result in objections from the Trust. It is ironic that the popularity of the area could result in its attractiveness being destroyed if we are not careful. This is not just a Bessacarr problem either. We recently made a representation about development on backland at Hatfield High Street which would have resulted in the removal of nearly every tree on the site, to the detriment of the character of its conservation area.

Conservation Area Appraisal Reviews

The Trust has a good working relationship with the Conservation team at the Council and we are regularly asked to help with reviews and appraisals of conservation areas. An appraisal is where the area has been designated but no full study of the area has been undertaken. A review is an update of an appraisal, usually several years later. Our contributions can include providing more historical information, commenting on building materials or expressing views on boundary changes. We are pleased to assist and regard this as a vital part of our work. Since January we have assisted with two reviews, for Bawtry and Conisbrough. We had not been involved with Bawtry before so we undertook a detailed site visit and sent in a report but there were no major issues. With Conisbrough we had previously assisted with the appraisal but even so we suggested improvements, notably the introduction of a photographic list of Key Unlisted Buildings. This suggestion was immediately adopted. There are proposals to extend the boundaries of both conservation areas and the Trust supports all the proposals.

Planning and Conservation Sub Committee



A New Trust for Cusworth

Many readers will be familiar with Cusworth Hall and the Park which are open to the public to enjoy. This article, containing information supplied by Gordon Smith, relates to a part of the Cusworth Estate not currently accessible.

'A new charitable trust has been created for the preservation, repair and maintenance of the land and buildings comprising the Grade II listed bowling green and pavilion, terrace, rose garden and 18th century walls situated at Cusworth for the benefit of the public. The working title of this independent charitable trust is The Cusworth Hall Gardens Trust and is UK registered charity no. 1152888.

The Trust has been founded by Gordon Smith who is a Life Member of Doncaster Civic Trust and also Trustee of the Cusworth Estate. For 26 years he was also agent to the late Mrs Barbara Pearse [nee Battie-Wrightson]. There are seven trustees, all of whom have a long association with the old estate. Meetings are held regularly at the Hall and trustees work closely with Nick Stopforth, Head of Libraries and Culture, and the Hall's garden staff.

Gordon has donated £40,000 as initial funding and agreed £5,000 a year for at least the next three years.

So far, the trust has provided grants to Doncaster MBC of £5,000 for an apprentice gardener, £500 for an archaeological survey and £5,360 to level and seed the bowling green site. A further £3,500 has been allocated for the purchase of a high powered lawnmower.

The next phase will be to restore the lawn on the terrace, replant the Rose Garden and carry out work on the Pavilion. This may need attention at ground level because it is suspected that the main cross beam, supporting the upper chamber, may need strengthening.

These gardens were, until March, 2004, still in the ownership of the old estate. Doncaster MBC asked to purchase them intending to include them in the Hall and Park National Lottery scheme but, unfortunately, the work was not carried out.

Gordon first approached Doncaster MBC to seek its views and approval about founding this independent trust. Its reply was "The trust will greatly benefit Cusworth Park, and the walled gardens in particular, and allow Doncaster Council to preserve and enhance this hidden gem for the benefit of the local community and visitors from around the country". The Council also expressed its appreciation "of this generous proposal" and thanked Gordon for his "longstanding support of Cusworth Hall which will continue through the work of the new trust".

The Bowling Pavilion was originally built in 1726 as a summer house to serve the large front garden of the old Hall, which was situated in the village. An entry in the Cusworth Estate cash book is interesting. It reads "3rd June 1726 B Whitaker paid £2.2s.0d for the Summer House". It didn't have that name for long because in 1733 estate owner William Wrightson banked up the sloping garden to create a bowling green. Consequently the summer house became known as the Bowling Pavilion.

If you would like to read more about this important charity please have a look at its website.

Just enter **Cusworth Hall Gardens Trust** into a search engine such as Google.

Photographs (reproduced by permission): These show the first restoration which took place in July and August 1991. Much more work remains to be done.

The two-storey Bowling House and attached garden walls were listed Grade 2 in March 1990.



The trompe l'oeil painted ceiling by Scottish artist WWG Scott in the bowling pavilion at Cusworth



The Bowling Green set out for croquet



Restoration of Bowling House roof summer 1991

Education Project Update

Architecture Competition

We are pleased to announce the results of the primary schools architecture competition.

- First Prize - The Eric Braim Prize worth £500 – Hexthorpe Primary School
- Second Prize - £250 - Stirling Primary School
- Third Prize - £100 - shared between Woodfield and Edlington Victoria Primary Schools

A special presentation was made to the children from Hexthorpe School at the school on 2nd March. Representatives from the Trust, University of Sheffield and Doncaster Council judged the competition and attended the event.

The Eric Braim Prize was awarded by our Chairman, John Holmes.



You may have seen the Free Press article. You may also have seen the charming Free Press video of the event featuring our chairman and the children. You can find it here:

<http://www.doncasterfreepress.co.uk/news/video-doncaster-pupils-on-track-for-competition-win-1-7137942>



As we go to press, the university is producing a booklet to record the competition. It will be available on the Trust website soon. The plan now is to send out the booklet to all primary schools in the coming few weeks to advertise the next competition which will begin in November this year in the hope of attracting entries from more schools.

Meanwhile, we are arranging for some of the school children to visit the university in June to view the student exhibition and have a lesson about architecture from a lecturer.

Jeff Prior