



# TRUST TOPICS

Doncaster Civic Trust Newsletter ©

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## **Dr Lisa Procter**



We are very sorry to report the sad and untimely death of the Trust's friend Dr Lisa Procter at the age of 36.

Lisa had worked with the Trust since 2012 until she took her life in November.

It is fair to say that without her work on our behalf, our education programme would be a shadow of what it is today. When she died, she was in the process of putting the finishing touches to our 'Doncaster Sounds' project and was brimming with ideas for how the work could be spread to schools in Doncaster and beyond.

Lisa trained as an architect at the University of Sheffield but transferred to the faculty of education where she was heavily involved in research into early-years education. Her architectural background gave her useful insights into how children interact with the built environment. On gaining her doctorate in 2016 she took up a teaching post at Manchester Metropolitan University.

She was in regular contact with the Trust's education committee where we found her positive, enthusiastic, full of ideas and very easy to get on with.

Ann, Tina and Jeff represented the Trust at her funeral where they were able to convey the deepest sympathy to her family.

## **The Education Committee**

### **A Christmas Walk**

A few weeks before Christmas we organised a festive walk at the request of the Tourist Information Centre. Steve dressed up as Charles Dickens for the event, reading extracts from 'A Christmas Carol' from the steps of the Mansion House.

During the stroll both Steve and Andy told everyone about how the traditions of Christmas have evolved over the years. The walk was an immediate sell-out with over 20 people attending. As a result we quickly organised a second walk. This was just as enjoyable but the weather had begun to turn very cold by then.

We didn't have time to tell all our members about these events in advance but we have decided to feature a "Christmas, Dickens and Doncaster" walk in our 2018 programme.



## Members' News Winter Programme 2018

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

All on Thursdays at 7.30 pm

**2018**      **You will see that the events for March and April have now been switched**

- 15 February**      **Michael Klemperer on Ornamental Landscapes in Doncaster District 1680-1840**      Michael is the senior gardens advisor for English Heritage's North & Midlands Regions
- 15 March**      **Members' Forum and Cheese and Wine Evening**  
An evening when we have an opportunity to socialise, reflect on the Trust's work and enjoy a heritage photo-quiz with Emma Williams from Doncaster's Tourist Information Centre
- 19 April**      **Michael Dowse on Fun with Antiques**  
Michael is a third generation auctioneer with Sheffield Auction Gallery

## Family and Local History Fair October 2017



We attended the Family and Local History Fair at the College for the Deaf in October for the second year running. The majority of the stands were connected with family history but there were also other organisations including representatives from the Sand House, Village Memories from Braithwell and the Friends of the Grand Theatre.

There was a good atmosphere and once again our display stands proved popular. The fair is a good advertisement for the Trust although it did seem slightly quieter than last year.

We would like to thank all of our volunteers who helped on the day and others who were 'in reserve'. We really couldn't do these events without you!



After a pretty hectic session of getting everything in, carefully setting up displays and laying out publications the show starts. When the doors close a few hours later, it's a much quicker operation for everyone to pack up and vacate the building.



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# The Great Mansion House Design Challenge 2017

For the fourth year of our architecture competition for Doncaster primary schools we decided to do something different.

It won't have escaped members' attention that it has been a big year for the Mansion House. After securing a substantial grant from Heritage Lottery Fund, the Council and Friends of the Mansion House have planned and hosted a wide variety of events to celebrate the Georgian era and the tercentenary of the birth of this lovely building's architect, James Paine.

So what better a context for us to change the format of our popular competition. This year, with the support of the council, Friends and Sheffield School of Architecture we invited schools to enter teams to compete in the Great Mansion House Design Challenge. And we had an encouraging response with ten teams entered and given the task of designing a Mansion House for the 21st century.



Contestants present their design to the judges

The teams were to be mentored by masters architecture and urban design students from the university.

So on 27th November over 100 children with their teachers came to the Mansion House to work with 60 students to produce some really innovative and exciting designs for a new Mansion House.

The children's work was judged by our chairman and former architect John Holmes and university course director Leo Care.



The judges assess a winning design

The winner of the Eric Braim prize worth £100 was a team from Shaw Wood Academy, Armthorpe.

However, everyone deserved a prize. Each child took away a copy of the booklet 'Discover Doncaster' provided by the Trust as a memento of a fun day.

We think our architecture competition is developing a good reputation. It is certainly a lot of fun as Trust members observed on the day, noting the buzz of industry and excitement in the packed rooms of the Mansion House.

A teacher commented on the day that one of her pupils, who never speaks during the normal school day was transformed, becoming communicative and fully engaged with the university students. And it is worth noting here the role of the students.

Most have English as a second language so it is a challenge for them too, which they overcame with charming and effective enthusiasm



Announcing the winners

## A big thank you



The organising team with a winning design

We want to say a big thank you to the education team from Heritage Services at the Council, to the Mansion House staff, Friends and volunteers who made the day go with a swing and to Trust members who helped make the event a success.

**Jeff Prior**

## Future-proofing the Trust

As we celebrated the 70th anniversary of the Trust in 2016, our thoughts naturally turned to the future. Where will we be in another 70 years? What things will we have achieved? Will the Trust still exist?

Over the past year, your executive committee members have been thinking about the future and trying to answer some of these questions.

And this poses a challenge as we go forward. How do we refresh the Trust and make it relevant to a younger generation? How do we build on our strengths and achievements?

We do many things well. Our programme of talks is very popular. Our heritage walks initiative is a major success. The bursary scheme and education programme operates well and has the potential to grow. And our planning committee is influential and well-respected by Doncaster Council.

Importantly, and underpinning everything we do, is that we are financially sound. However, we also recognise some weaknesses such as, at a time when more needs to be done, active members increasingly find themselves multi-tasking for want of support.

For example, our secretary holds down a number of jobs: the role of secretary itself involving administration; being the public face of the Trust; acting as treasurer and editing and contributing articles to the newsletter.

There are plenty of roles for others to become involved in: treasurer, newsletter editor/contributor, manage a twitter account, keep the website up-to-date, build up the photo gallery, help refresh our exhibition content....you may have ideas of your own.

In addition, we think we need to develop activities that will attract families and younger people and consider strengthening our range of activities across the board. In terms of communication and promotion, we have been advised to 'get into the 21st century'.

So, here are two questions for you.....

How do you think the Trust should respond to the challenge of being relevant in the 21st century?

Might you be interested in being more active in the Trust?

**Answers on a postcard....or you could email: [jeffprior@outlook.com](mailto:jeffprior@outlook.com)**

## Doncaster Borough Police

Doncaster's first attempt at policing the town had been through a "Watch and Ward" function since medieval times. There had been a night watch supported by public subscription, but this was discontinued because of the difficulty of raising the money, even though the Corporation had agreed to give fifty pounds annually if the full cost could not be raised.

In the eighteenth century the town boasted its own gaol on West Laith Gate and opposite to where the Halifax stands today. With separate wings for males and females, it was based on the *panopticon* principle, where the minimum number of staff could control the maximum number of inmates. It boasted a gaoler as well as an under-gaoler, who was also the head police officer and constable as well as having responsibility for weights and measures, so the corporation had their money's worth from that gentleman.

The first attempt at a modern police force came in 1830 when the Doncaster Borough Police Force was established after the Act of Sir Robert Peel and was disbanded on 30 September 1968 to become the Doncaster Division of the West Yorkshire Constabulary, until local government reorganisation in 1974 when the South Yorkshire Police Authority came into being, so the Borough Police lasted for just short of one hundred and forty years.

In 1830, there was one constable who acted as a day watchman and four night watches. Day men were paid eighteen shillings a week, while the night men for some strange reason only received twelve shillings.

Later an application by beat bobbies for permission to ask for Christmas presents was refused, but a change of heart was made in 1839, when it was agreed that money seized at gaming tables at the races should be divided amongst the duty constables.

In 1843 an extra constable was employed because of robberies on the outskirts of town and the superintendent reported that 449 persons had been apprehended during the year. The following year in 1844 yet more officers were taken on as suspicious characters were being seen around town, but the officers got a ticking off for loitering and talking to men in the street when they ought to be traversing their beats. A further two years later the whole force was hauled before the watch committee for street loitering.

In 1848 extra police were appointed to prevent conflict between navvies and Irishmen during the extension of the South Yorkshire Navigation and that was also an auspicious year in one other respect when the police headquarters moved from the Market Place to a custom designed building, the Guildhall in French Gate. It had an imposing façade in the classical style, its pediment being surmounted appropriately enough by a "figure of justice" salvaged from the Old Town Hall, although it was later hemmed in by a profusion of shop fronts and taverns. Again in 1848 a detective constable was imported from Bradford owing to the number of thieves attending the St. Leger meeting from that city and as Doncaster expanded with the arrival of the railways, then more men were taken on, owing as the annual report stated "to the depredations in the neighbourhood".

From the pavement in French Gate, several stone steps ascended between four massive columns into a lofty portico, from which one entered the building through two heavily panelled doors into a spacious vestibule. Directly in front was a magnificent staircase leading to the upper storey, on either side of which were the various offices in which the administration of the law was carried out. The law courts and police headquarters together with a number of cells were accommodated within the Guildhall and for a time contained the official council chamber,

which was late moved to the Mansion House in 1881.

The building was provided with a new and enlarged court room and a further 24 cells added. However, after the new law courts were built in College Road the Hearing and Quarter Sessions were moved there. The narrow passage now called Old Guildhall Yard still survives and was once the entry through a side door to the left of the portico which led to the juvenile court and mortuary and was a useful short cut to the old library and St. George's Church.

Fixed to one of the pillars of the Guildhall was a mile plate indicating that London was 164 miles away and York 24. It replaced an earlier stone that had stood outside the Old Angel Inn opposite, but was in turn taken down by the estate department of the council in 1940 when invasion threatened. As far as it is known it has never been recovered, although it might have confused the Germans even more if it had been in place, because I would estimate the distance to York as nearer 40 than 24.

The same fate befell the figure of "justice" and a similar mystery surrounds its disappearance. It had been taken down as unsafe at an earlier date and when the new law courts were built in Waterdale in 1968, it was suggested that the statue be incorporated into the design. However, this idea was rejected by the architect who considered it unsuitable. In any case, close-up photographs of the statue reveal that it was extremely corroded, with no recognisable features. With the changed mind set prevalent today, I am sure that the façade would have been preserved with a modern addition at the rear.

Nevertheless, the local force couldn't cope with the massive influx of visitors, when the town almost doubled in size during Leger Week and by 1863 extra officers were being brought in to help and mounted police were

occasionally engaged to "check the practice of furious driving".

Things of course were constantly changing and in 1868 it was decreed that helmets should be worn by day as well as by night and the following year prisoners were cosseted when wooden covers were placed over the gaol's stone seats. The year book for 1871 makes very interesting reading. It was suggested that policemen should have half a day off on Sundays once a fortnight and one day off a month, in addition to the seven days allowed annually.

Other complaints were received about the need for more suitable summer clothing, about the quality of their boots, the provision of whistles, the necessity of appointing a matron and the formation of an ambulance class. It also goes on to note that two gang chains and three dozen shackles had been purchased during the year and a comment from a government inspector recommended that policemen should be able to swim. As the borough extended then so did the force and by the turn of the twentieth century the manpower consisted of a chief constable, a superintendent, a chief clerk and an assistant clerk, a detective sergeant, two detective officers, eight patrol sergeants and fifty-six constables.

By 1925 a police telephone box system had been installed throughout the borough and within two years they were equipped with electric heaters. Endeavouring to keep pace with modern technology, in 1929 photographic equipment was obtained, a patrol car was acquired in 1933 and in 1936 the force was increased to 91. At the same time the mounted section was disbanded, cycle patrols took their place and an A.R.P. department was formed.

During Race Week up to 240 uniformed officers and 38 detectives were drafted in. There were no specialist units such as drug, riot and vice squads and operational support units.

If such an avenue had to be explored, a group of officers would be banded together and allowed to get on with it.

In those days the public houses closed at 10.30 pm and the last bus left the town centre at 11.00 pm. There would be a policeman as well as a bus inspector standing

outside the Co-op. to keep order and he would blow his whistle sharp at 11.00 pm. After that the town centre would be almost deserted, so woe betide anyone missing this last bus since it could mean a long walk home.

**Colin Bycroft**

## **Civic Voice Convention 20 - 21 October 2017**

Civic Voice is a national organisation which gives advice to local civic societies and acts as a national pressure group. Its president is Griff Rhys Jones. Most Civic Trusts, including ourselves, are members.

Each year they hold a two-day Annual Convention. We have never attended before but in 2017, as it was being held in Wakefield, we decided to go. This was the first time the convention had come to Yorkshire. There were 150 delegates in total with representatives from Alnwick in the north to Dover in the south.

Each day you had to choose workshops to attend, and one of the main benefits of attending was meeting people from other societies. We spoke to Birmingham Civic Society about their Education Programme, sought advice from Lytham Civic Society on Heritage Listing and were even invited by Blackpool Civic Trust to view a vintage tram they are restoring. Listening to the problems of other societies and how they had been resolved was very useful.

On the first day we also went on a visit to Wakefield County Hall, a remarkably intact and very grand Victorian building. Other delegates toured the Cathedral and the Theatre. Both of us attended workshops on Heritage Listing and Community-led Conservation Appraisals on the first day.

We also went to a talk by Laura Sandys, Civic Voice's Vice President, on the plight of some conservation areas. This is a major concern in some areas where there is a shortage of local authority conservation staff and deterioration in the quality of conservation areas. Civic Voice is raising these issues nationally.

We did not attend the dinner but returned the following day for the AGM. This was followed by another speaker and more workshops including a good one on reducing street clutter. During another session we exchanged details about good practices with other societies and listened to presentations from Goole and Pontefract. We were pleased to learn that Doncaster Civic Trust's membership fee is one of the cheapest in the country at £5 each. We always knew this Trust was great value! By comparison, one Trust charges £35 per person.

The day ended with various awards. One of these was the Marsh Young Civic Volunteer Award to Hannah Seager of Altrincham for an outstanding contribution made by a young person in the Civic Movement. Hannah is a student and had made an excellent film about issues relating to conservation areas.

This was an enjoyable two days, friendly and not too technical. The Conventions are open to all members. The next one will be held in Birmingham later this year.

**Peter Coote and Tina Anderson**

## YHACS Meeting Sat. 30 September 2017 at Bradford City Hall

I caught the 08.27 train to Leeds and shared the carriage with a commuting busker - apparently well known to BR staff - along with his solitary tom-tom and a newly-opened bottle of San Miguel. "Thought I'd try Leeds today - fed up with Sheffield". I was going to ask him where his sheet music was but thought better of it. At Leeds Station I hopped round to Platform 4a for the Shipley train and then at Shipley to Platform 4 for the Bradford train. At this point I wished I'd taken the car...

Arriving in Bradford I made my way to Sunbridge Mills ([www.sunbridgemills.com](http://www.sunbridgemills.com)) and found the bar called Wallers Brewery for the 10.30 guided tour.

Local developer Graham Hall led the walk and gave us chapter and verse how he has remodelled a long-forgotten set of historic tunnels, cellars and the buildings above to create an intricate set of bars and restaurants, all interconnected by stairs. Originally a brewery and bottling house accessed by a tunnel under Sunbridge Road from Aldermanbury at the side of Bradford Beck, the site was bought by Charles Waller in 1868 and extended into Wallers Brewery. Various uses followed but by 2006 it was mostly derelict when first spotted by Graham "through an open garage door". Graham went in and started taking photos with his mobile phone. Seven years and several millions of pounds later, the sympathetic restoration, including many heritage artefacts bought off eBay and also borrowed from local museums, has won a "Highly Commended" award from Civic Voice in its "Historic Buildings" class as well as winning an award in the "Special Conservation" class. Well worth a visit if you are in Bradford looking for a place to have a drink and/or something to eat.

Then back to the City Hall - in itself a heritage gem - for 1pm for the YHACS meeting. Following a welcome from Si Cunningham of Bradford Civic Society and the Deputy Lord Mayor of Bradford Cllr Doreen Lee the minutes of the last meeting held on the 26 July 2017 were approved with no matters arising.

The Chairman's report i.e. Kevin's bit ...he said he'd been on holiday and done lots of reading! He had also led a heritage walk round Wakefield for Huddersfield Civic Society. He had also given thought to the focus on membership numbers - wasn't quality and usefulness more important than the number itself? The Treasurer's report followed - all is well at the bank.

The first guest speaker was Barry Lerner of the Friends of Bradford Becks. Not the beer, some will be pleased to know, but the 58kms of either culverted or walled waters that flow through Bradford's inner confines. Website [www.bradfordbeck.org.uk](http://www.bradfordbeck.org.uk)

Second speaker was Kate Welham who had been leading - successfully - a project to bring back to life Bradford's 1934 Odeon, closed down in 2000. Now bought by the NEC team from Birmingham, it will be a 4000 person music venue receiving £15m of Brum money! Website [Bradford One | A bid to restore Bradford Odeon as a live venue owned by you](#)

Joan Humble of Civic Voice spoke next on the future of Civic Voice and gave extensive praise to Graham Hall and the Sunbridge Mills project.

The last guest speaker of the day was Margaret Hicks-Clarke of Goole Civic Society on the use of video to promote your local society. Having received £2k from Hull's City of Culture bid they are now working on the video and are using a drone for overhead shots! The video was to be launched - no drone pun intended - at The Lowther Hotel in Goole in November 2017.

Helen Kidman of Civic Voice then spoke about Civic Voices regional forums and some of the items under discussion. There followed "Just a Minute" with a number of speakers on different subjects, before the meeting closed.

**Steve Kimber**

## Planning Matters

With each edition of Trust Topics we bring you details of a few of the cases we have reviewed, mainly affecting listed buildings or buildings in conservation areas. We also look at other applications of interest, including large development proposals.

Since we brought you the last edition of Trust Topics we have reviewed 55 applications.

### Pubs and Hotels:



We recently objected to a proposal to demolish the **Red Lion at Mexborough**. This is a key unlisted building in the conservation area. No reasonable justification for its demolition was given. Indeed it has permission to be extended and converted to apartments and the Trust felt this work should proceed as soon as possible. Mexborough Heritage Society is campaigning (at the time of writing) to prevent its demolition and urging local people to object to the application. Photo of the Red Lion in its heyday reproduced by permission of Mexborough Heritage Society.

Last year we became concerned about the **Lonsdale Hotel in Intake** which had fallen empty and was no longer required as a pub. Designed by Wilburn and Atkinson and built in 1932 it has plenty of character and stands on a prominent corner. An application came in to convert the ground floor to retail. We felt this change of use was acceptable despite some changes to the frontage which would alter its appearance. At least the building would have a new use. Yet the application seemed incomplete. There was no information about the type of retail, no mention of the upper floors and an apparent proposal to remove a staircase. We were particularly concerned that there would then be no covered access to the upper floors for which no use was proposed. We decided to lodge an objection stating the application was incomplete. We feared abandonment of the upper floors which has happened elsewhere leading to deterioration. The Planning Authority disagreed with our thinking and approved this application.

### Success and Failure on St Sepulchre Gate

Some time ago we objected to an application to turn 1, St Sepulchre Gate, on its corner with High Street, into a betting shop. This has a wide shop front in a prominent position in a retail area. This application also resulted in retailers lodging an objection. So we were pleased that the Council refused permission. However the applicants appealed and the local decision was overturned by the Planning Inspector.

### The Markets

We have a long history of supporting the character of the market and fighting change which would damage it. Doncaster was, first and foremost, a market town and this tradition has continued. In the 1970s we objected publicly to a proposal to demolish the Victorian market buildings and replace them with a modern box. Later there was a proposal to demolish a quarter of the Market Place which would have wrecked the character of the whole area. We produced a booklet to support this campaign to prevent it. Fortunately both schemes were abandoned. Recently the Council has proposed changes to revitalise the market. We have looked at two applications since the last Trust Topics. Firstly there was an application to refurbish the **Wool Market** with new market stalls for retail, eating and drinking facilities.

Then, secondly, came an application to extend the car park into the **Irish Market** following demolition of its market stalls. This time though we have had no campaign and made no comment on the applications. Although these proposals related to only part of the market, many people feel that revitalisation is necessary. Change is always controversial but it seemed that there could be no “do nothing” option. We just hope that these changes will be successful and that traders will return to the refurbished Wool Market.

### **A Threat to the character of Arksey**

In November we were appalled by a proposal to build a very large house in the grounds of the Old School Tea Rooms in Arksey. This is a Grade 2 listed building, parts of which go back to 1683. In addition it is in one of the area’s finest conservation areas. Next door are historic almshouses and nearby is the church and rectory. It was clear that the new building would be detrimental to the character of the area and we urged refusal.

### **Elmfield House and 6 South Parade: Flats and Houses in Multiple Occupation - HiMO**

At nearly every meeting we look at applications for converting houses into apartments and/or HiMO. The applications affecting listed buildings have so far been for apartments but we are now getting HiMO applications too.

**6 South Parade:** This is at the heart of Doncaster’s finest area of Georgian houses and the application was to convert the building into 7 flats and a 7 bedroomed HiMO. This is currently office accommodation and the application attracted objections from all the surrounding businesses. We too would like it to be used as offices. However, if it is to become residential, then at the very least there should be good-sized apartments and the HiMO element should be refused. The application would allow far too many people in the building which could erode the character of the conservation area, so we lodged an objection.

**Elmfield House:** We understand the need for the Council to sell assets. It probably has little choice. However the decision to sell Elmfield House has caused a number of heritage problems. It is an integral part of its park, so an earlier application to put up a large and unsightly fence across the frontage resulted in an objection from us. Then, in January, we reviewed an application to convert the property into 25 apartments, with a 15 bed HiMO proposed for the nearby Register Office. We had hoped the House would become offices which would have been better, but some apartments seemed acceptable provided all the architectural details were preserved. However, we urged refusal on the HiMO use for the Register Office. Apartments would have been the answer here too. It was important to limit the number of units and the associated cars which could impact on the trees in the car park. These trees contribute greatly to the character of Hall Cross Hill.

### **A New Start: Licensing for HiMOs**

The problems created by the massive increase in the number of Houses in Multiple Occupation have resulted in Council intervention. Smaller properties have no licensing or planning control. Many HiMOs are causing environmental problems as well as other issues. The Council has recently been running a consultation process about introducing HiMO regulation over a large area including parts of Wheatley Hills and Balby. It is proposed to bring smaller properties under Council control, needing both a licence and planning permission. We supported the initiative but wanted to see it accompanied by policies for refusal together with limits on the rooms-to-let signage.

### **Bawtry Hall**

Bawtry Hall is to become a wedding and events venue. This is a good use for the building as it is very fine with nice gardens. However we were disappointed to see an application for new signage recently. Six new signs at high level above the wall would be inappropriate. We objected and suggested they should be reduced in number and set at a lower level.

## The Back Page : Some Interesting Stuff

### H Bingham & Sons Ltd Gates



Furnace-men casting seen from rear of gate



The steel art in the right gate now obscured by site signage

The Trust was alerted by a former employee to the very interesting gates to the Bingham's works on Wheatley Hall Road. A look at them on Google Street View showed they were worth a closer inspection. They feature, on one gate, a cut steel sheet image of a welder working and, on the other, another of furnace men casting. As my informant rightly said, they are easily missed but are a nice piece of work that could easily just be cleared and scrapped. Unfortunately, the left gate has lost some of its decorative art work; the right gate, however, although partly obscured by site signage, appears intact when viewed from the rear.

At present all the buildings have been demolished and the site is most likely being decontaminated. It has outline consent for mixed-use development. The robust gates and posts are being used as part of the secure perimeter of the development site, so could be needed for some time. The land is being developed by Harworth Estates, Catcliffe.

### The Hall, 15 South Parade, Doncaster, has been sold.



In the last Trust Topics we featured the current plight of The Hall, 15 South Parade, where there had been no progress at all since 2015. This was when the property was acquired and all the necessary permissions were received. A recent search on the internet revealed that the building was sold at auction by Savill's in London on Monday 11 December 2017 for £280,000. So, the property is in new hands and the previous owners have just lost £43,500, having paid £323,500 back in 2015. In reality, it is worse than that, as they will have paid commission (and VAT probably) on both its purchase and its sale.

Let's hope for some better news now on the site. The approved scheme for apartments by local architects was a good one, so please – not another HiMO!

**Archie Sinclair**