



TRUST TOPICS

Doncaster Civic Trust Newsletter ©

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The Work of the Friends of Hyde Park Cemetery



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News from the Exec. Committee

In our occasional series we look at a few of the recent decisions made by the Trust's Executive Committee which meets every two months.

Slide Copying: In a new project we have been looking at a large number of slides of buildings and other views, most of which were taken by Eric Braim, the Trust's previous secretary, in the 60s and 70s. We have decided that we will copy the most important slides on to a memory stick or similar digital format. We will be using a private company for this scheme. We have been receiving advice from Addingham Civic Society which recently won a YHACS award for its project of a similar nature.

Local History Fairs: After a gap of 3 years we are expecting that two fairs will be held this year.

Doncaster and District Family History Society has arranged its fair to be at the C-View building, next to the Minster on Saturday 14th October. We have booked for this event and plan to have a stand with publications, a display and a video.

The other event will be held in DGLAM and is expected to take place on Saturday 30 September. This will be confirmed by the Doncaster and District Heritage Association (DDHA) in July. We have indicated that we wish to participate.

Future Speakers: We have now finalised speakers for our talks up to next March and the details are on the Members' Page. It is a long time to next year but we have to plan ahead. A speaker for April is pending but we are hoping it will be someone from the Woodland Trust.

Touch-screen Monitor: We have been in discussions with DGLAM for some time about the installation of a touch screen monitor to be installed in the building. Visitors will be able to access the Trust's Heritage Trail. In addition we are in the process of creating two further trails for the project including one on the City's rounded corners. The Trust has contributed financially to the scheme and we hope installation will be in June. We think that this initiative will promote the Trust and should be an excellent advert for attracting new members.

Civic Voice Convention: We are members of Civic Voice, the national amenity societies' pressure group. For the first time since 2019 the convention has been revived and two of our members represented the Trust at this year's location, Halifax. The 2-day event included walks organised by Halifax Civic Trust, a dinner and a full-day conference with many speakers. You can read all about it in this issue.

Local Listing: Exec. members discussed the local listing project. Our first tranche of buildings has not yet been approved but we are hoping it won't be too much longer. We have now been advised that funding for the project run by the South Yorkshire Archaeology Service will continue for another year. We are now considering our next stage within the Trust.

Other items discussed at the May meeting of the Executive Committee included Planning, a new plaque, Education and Tree Planting.

The Executive Committee

Members' Page: Winter Programme Dates

All the meetings are at St Peter's Church Hall in Chequer Road, Thursdays, at 7.30pm.

The accommodation has been completely refurbished, with new lighting and furniture, a big screen, a new floor, a new kitchen where tea, coffee and biscuits will be available, and effective heating.

2023

21 September **David Hornsby on "The Story of Elmfield Park"**

12 October **Mandy Keating on "The Glasshouse,
90 Years of Pilkington in Doncaster"**

16 November **AGM and "Old Doncaster Photo Quiz"
by Malcolm Barnsdale & Philip Langford**

2024

25 January **Brian Sprakes on "George Gilbert Scott and Lord Grimthorpe -
An Unlikely Friendship"**

22 February **Ian Morgan on "Footpads & Highwaymen"**

21 March **Dr Ann Featherstone on "The Victorian Fair -
Freak Shows and Fisticuffs"**

18 April **TBA, possibly a speaker from The Woodland Trust**

Members' News

Special General Meeting

Following the Special General Meeting held on 20th April the following motion was passed by a majority of the members present at the meeting with a show of hands:

From September 2023 Annual membership of the Doncaster Civic Trust will be £7.50 (single), £10.00 (joint membership for any couple living at the same address) and £12.50 (family membership with children or young people under 18 all living at the same address).

We hope you will agree that it is still well worth the money. The reasons for the increase are due to the rising cost of room hire, printing and production of the newsletter and other sundry expenses. The annual membership has remained at its current rate since 2014 and remains one of the lowest of the civic societies in YHACS.

We have a great programme of talks arranged for the winter and this summer have arranged a few walks and events. Details of these and other items of interest are circulated on email. If you haven't heard about them it could be we don't have you on the email mailing list. Please get in touch to update your details.

Rowena Mellows Membership Secretary

dct.membershipsecretary@gmail.com

Spotlight on Heritage Volunteers

The Work of the Friends of Hyde Park Cemetery

by Rowena Mellows, putting questions to Lynsey Slater



A guided walk in the cemetery led by Friends' committee members

Hyde Park Cemetery (originally called Doncaster Cemetery) was opened in 1856 and was one of the first municipal cemeteries outside of London. It was enlarged with a new extension in 1882 but by the 1930s it was filling up, resulting in a new cemetery at Rose Hill in Cantley being opened in 1934.

The Friends of Hyde Park Cemetery group was formed in 2003 to promote and protect the cemetery as a site of historic interest as well as a green space for the community. As the Friends of Hyde Park state, the cemetery is the “final resting place of many people who helped transform Doncaster from a busy market town into an industrial powerhouse”.

I spoke to Lynsey Slater who is a committee member and manages the website and social media pages.

What made you start volunteering?

I have been involved since 2017 and first became aware of the Friends through working for Heritage Doncaster. I've been fascinated by cemeteries since I was a small child. My mum and I used to go for walks in churchyards looking at the names on the headstones and imagining their lives. I was looking for a way to give back and also develop my own skills, and the Friends of Hyde Park Cemetery seemed to be the perfect fit!

How often do you volunteer and what are your main tasks?

As a lot of my work is online based, on most days I'm checking Facebook, Twitter and our email inbox. We have really dedicated followers who interact with stories and information we share, as well as sharing their own memories of Doncaster's history. This may often be information about their ancestors who are buried in the cemetery. In the weeks running up to the start of our guided walks programme I'm generally glued to my phone. I often plan content to go out on social media on specific anniversaries, so these are sometimes scheduled far in advance. I also generally compile our quarterly email newsletter, so I'm always looking for interesting things to include in there. I also liaise with the press and share information about our work elsewhere.

At the moment we are also working on a grave project to remember Len Goodson who was a Doncaster Rovers player in the early 20th Century.

Do you get involved in the Guided Walks Programme?

This is the main way we see the public in person and our annual guided walk programme is one of my favourite things about volunteering with the Cemetery. We change the topics every year and constantly revisit and update the walks. I help out in stewarding and delivering our guided walks and also help out where I can on our monthly work mornings. We have an interesting programme planned for this year with monthly walks planned until the autumn. My fellow committee members also deliver talks about the cemetery to groups. They're a great way of connecting more people with the Cemetery's rich history.

What volunteering opportunities are there available?

Our work mornings are always the second Saturday of the month from 9.30 to 12 noon. The tasks include litter picking, cutting back shrubs, weeding, tidying graves and more. There is something for everyone and we get a lot done in each session.

However, there are other volunteering opportunities such as researching family history and working on our graves projects. These are ongoing and flexible depending on how much time people can commit. We also provide a Grave Finder Service for the public.

What do you get out of the volunteering experience?

I'm definitely nosy, so being able to learn so much about the Cemetery and its history has been a huge perk for me. I find it really satisfying to know that more people are aware of the stories behind the headstones.

Can you tell me an interesting fact about Hyde Park Cemetery?

I was absolutely amazed to discover the interesting connection between David Bowie and the Cemetery. Robert Haywood Jones married Zillah Hannah Blackburn in Doncaster in 1909. The couple had two children, Roma and Haywood (later known as John). Robert was killed in action in the First World War while serving with the 2nd Battalion of the King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry. Just a few months later, Zillah died from diphtheria and was buried with her family in the cemetery. Their two children were orphaned, and went to live with separate parts of the family. John moved to London, married and had a son named David Robert Jones. David would later find world-wide fame as David Bowie!

You can find more information about the Friends of Hyde Park Cemetery on their interesting and informative website: www.fohpc.org.uk

Rowena Mellows, with photos from Lynsey Slater



Volunteers lead a walk near the Chapels



Volunteers at work

The Doncaster to Selby Turnpike



In researching a previous article for Trust Topics, I came across a rather evocative and intriguing description....'The Summer Road to Doncaster'. This was written by pre-eminent landscape architect Humphry Repton (1752-1818) in one of his famous Red Book proposals (1793); in this case for the landscape improvement of Bryan Cooke's Owston estate, five miles north of Doncaster.

In the Red Book, Repton includes a map which focuses proposals for major re-landscaping of the estate based on retaining and strengthening the existing approach from the Great North Road a mile or so to the west via Skellow.

The settlement of Owston was served by a somewhat tortuous public highway linking Doncaster with Selby via Bentley, Campsall, Norton, Womersley, Whitley and beyond to Selby.

Trust members will be very familiar with the topography and hydrology of this flat expanse of countryside on the very edge of the Humberhead Levels. It is easy to see why the Owston to Doncaster section was referred to as the Summer Road to Doncaster and we can perhaps assume that northerly stretches toward Selby might have been described similarly.

The land between the Rivers Don and Ouse, featuring the lower reaches of the Rivers Aire and Went were and still are prone to flooding and it is no doubt safe to say that it must often have been a severe trial to pass along this highway in the worst of winter weather.

Jeffery's Map 1775, showing

- (a) The Summer Road: Doncaster to Norton
- (b) New turnpike sections: from East of Owston to Askern and northwards

Until the advent of the turnpike system in the late seventeenth century, the maintenance and upkeep of public highways was the responsibility of the parishes through which roads passed.

Justices of the Peace were obliged to ensure that roads were kept in a good state of repair but could not borrow money for this purpose. Local residents could be expected to give up some days each year to maintain roads but quality could be patchy and in general road transport was difficult and tended to be a drag on the economy.

(Nothing changes at Owston. The author is part of a volunteer team which mends potholes on a non-adopted section of the old Summer Road!)

A turnpike is basically a good quality toll road brought into being by an act of parliament promoted and supported largely by local landowners. Significantly, it removed the burden of new road creation and maintenance from parishes and laid it on to a board of trustees which had the power to acquire land for the purpose and could borrow money to carry out the works, including building bridges, toll bars and toll houses. The debt would be repaid by revenue from the tolls.



Causeway known as Bentley Flood Arches 1832-33. Listed Grade 2.

(It is worth noting that turnpike Acts were time-limited on the assumption that over, say, a period of two decades, toll revenue would repay the debt.)

The system was popular, with hundreds of turnpikes being established in the 18th century. The Great North Road was a series of connected turnpikes. For example, the Doncaster to Tadcaster turnpike (1740) was a key route between our own town and York. During the 18th century transport costs for goods fell by a third and between 1750 and 1830 average journey miles per hour in passenger services rose from 2.5 to 8 mph thanks to extensive 'turnpiking'.



Former Toll House at Toll Bar, Doncaster 1832-33: unlisted

However, not everyone was impressed.

Thomas Whitaker, an historian of Leeds writing in 1816 considered.....

"To intercept an ancient highway, to distraint upon a man for the purchase of a convenience which he does not desire, and to debar him from the use of his ancient accommodation, bad as it was, because he will not pay for a better, has certainly an arbitrary aspect, at which the rude and undisciplined rabble of the north would naturally revolt"

The revolt had occurred in 1753 when Selby people destroyed toll bars on the Selby – Leeds turnpike.

There was clearly demand to improve the route between Doncaster and Selby because local landowners came together in 1832 to request an Act of Parliament to create a turnpike. Doncaster Archives holds some interesting documents regarding the creation of the turnpike, not least of which is a copy of the Act itself, although the 1830 list of landowners affected by the proposal and their responses is interesting. While a big majority favoured the scheme, some abstained, simply recorded as 'neuters' thus....*'says he will consider of it'*.

However, some flatly objected. For example, Lord Hawke, who owned land in the Selby district, was against the turnpike, his entry in the document mentioning his interest in creating a steam railway; a prescient sign of things to come?

The Act however received royal assent in June 1832.

'For the making and maintaining a turnpike road from the town of Doncaster to the town and port of Selby in the West Riding of Yorkshire'.

Doncaster solicitors Mason and Collison were appointed as clerks to administer the scheme and the board of trustees held its inaugural meeting at the White Swan hotel in Askern that same month. Records show that £14,000 was borrowed for the works (£1.26m today). This was supplemented by a subscription of £500 (£45k) from the city of York and no doubt bonds were sold to the general public, as was the tradition, offering a fixed and favourable rate of return.

In terms of the works carried out, the evidence of the major changes brought about can be observed when enjoying the nineteen mile drive along the present A19 from Doncaster to Selby. This often rather pleasant country route is characterised by long, straight and quite wide stretches of road which mostly bypass and smooth out the previous narrow and torturous country route. The Milestone Society calculated that the new route shortened the journey between the two towns by as much as five miles.



Former Toll House 1832-33, Selby Road, Norton: Grade 2

The Society also mentioned that, as of 2009, thirteen milestones had been identified along the route and we know that three of the four toll house buildings still exist.

The example at Norton Common is listed grade 2 as are four mile posts and four bridges within the Doncaster section including the impressive Bentley flood arches, still keeping Doncaster folk's feet dry after almost 200 years.

Some of the works undertaken involved making-good existing sections of the highway such as those from the York road in Doncaster through Bentley to Toll Bar. Not long before the Act, Philip Davies Cooke had diverted the Summer Road at Owston to complete his new parkland upgrade and in so doing had created what might be called the 'Owston Bypass'. The turnpike appears simply to have been connected into Cooke's new road, pushing on to Askern and to the current Doncaster boundary at the River Went bridge (Listed Grade 2) and beyond to Selby.

The Doncaster to Selby turnpike was one of the very last to be established in England. The revenue from tolls was never high and by 1850 was half of that received in 1836. This perhaps reflected a national trend.

Of the 1048 trusts that existed in 1864, only 20 still survived in 1886 and none by the turn of the century. The development of railways was an understandably major factor in the decline. The Doncaster to Selby Trust was wound up in 1877 by Act of Parliament.

The seeds of this failure were evident early on. At Birkin in the Selby district the Trust needed to acquire five acres of glebe land from the vicar of Birkin, Mr Green, valued at £355 (£32k).

The Trust paid Green the interest on the amount for two years after which they paid neither the interest nor the capital sum. Green took the case to court. We don't know the outcome but in a letter of 1841 held at Doncaster Archives, Green acknowledges that he was unlikely to be paid. Mason and Collison's archive contains several letters dealing with complaints against the Trust.

By 1838 the Trust had debts of £24,500 (£2.4m). By 1842 the trustees had thrown the responsibility for maintenance back onto the parishes.



Brayton Gate Toll House at Selby 1832 with additions! Unlisted.

Academics tend to agree that turnpikes were a good thing in that they transformed the transport system of the country from a slow pack horse and single horse mode to the relatively rapid, long distance carriage of bulk goods and passengers over largely good quality roads; a major precondition for the establishment of the first industrial revolution, as every high-school boy and girl should know?

The current A19 is quite a fast and direct road but the so-called Summer Road is perhaps a tempting option for the more leisured traveller.

Further Reading:-

<https://greatnorthroad.co.uk/turnpikes>

A good basic intro to turnpikes with a local context.

<http://www.turnpikes.org.uk/>

A massive amount of facts and figures on turnpikes.

https://sites.socsci.uci.edu/~dbogart/Bogart_transport_revolution.pdf

A recent academic paper on the importance of turnpikes to the 18th century transport revolution.

<https://www.gutenberg.org/files/52087/52087-h/52087-h.htm#>

Edwin A Pratt (1912): writer on transport issues with a perspective on turnpikes.

Lots of great testimony about corruption and incompetence in the turnpike age.

Jeff Prior

Our Executive Committee Members

Here are some backgrounds to more of our Executive Committee members. We are lucky to have a number of members who have been on the committee for a number of years and have worked tirelessly to ensure the effective running of the Civic Trust. However, we do need more new members to keep the organisation running smoothly. They bring in new ideas and enthusiasm to continue to offer members a varied programme. So please consider asking to join the Executive Committee – just let me know if you're interested.

Mark Waterhouse



I trained to be a History Teacher but ended up in the Civil Service before becoming involved in a Video Production Company based in Copley Road in 1982. Some 40 odd years later I still work in the industry, producing videos and websites mainly for non commercial clients.

The company Videotech, later Fern Creative Media, filmed in and around Doncaster, and has an extensive video library amounting to 6000 tapes, featuring many companies and scenes in and around Doncaster. This archive is currently looking for a home.

During this period, I was also involved in setting up a company called Bygone Films. The company produced 40 odd programmes including Bygone Doncaster/Sheffield/Rotherham/Barnsley and many more up and down the UK. These are still on sale via Amazon.

In my 60s, I received a set of Digital Hearing Aids. For 40 odd years, I had been told that analogue aids were not suitable for me. I have a damaged nerve in my right ear, caused by measles when I was 3. With a newfound confidence, this hearing experience gave me, I rekindled my interest in local history, becoming a volunteer for the Museum service, filming and producing video material for them.

I later produced a series of video programmes for the Trust, and I joined the Executive Committee in 2018/19. Becoming involved with the Trust family and learning its history has become the primary focus in my daily life, for which I am extremely grateful.

I am also a trustee for the Sand House and the Battle of Britain Memorial.

Sue Burley



I am a former Primary and Special Needs teacher. My interests are antiques, visiting old houses, gardening, and travelling the world.

I cannot remember the year I joined the Doncaster Civic Trust but Sue Barnsdale and I were “the young ones” and with no discussion were put on the Executive!

I joined because I was so frustrated at the way the Council allowed old buildings to be pulled down and replaced with soulless architectural rubbish. Hodgson and Hepworth Ltd and the Guildhall were two of the best-known examples.

I was on the Environment Week committee for years and enjoyed planning events, notably Hanging Baskets for Hall Gate, putting up Plaques, holding competitions and designing mugs to celebrate 50 years of the Civic Trust.

When we had our annual buffet evening at various venues the food was often not worth the expense, so along with Tina Anderson, Sue Barnsdale and John Holmes we decided to do it ourselves, along with coffee and cakes at our talks.

I joined the planning committee so I could have a say on what is done to our city and district. I admit to being ashamed of some of the many eyesores that visitors will now see like Denison House and the Pillared Houses on South Parade. The Trust battles on. I feel the more you join in the work of the Civic Trust the more you will enjoy.

Archie Sinclair



I joined the Trust in 1978, and was soon on the Planning & Conservation Committee. I joined the Executive Committee and at the end of 1982 was asked to become its chairman. It was a bit daunting, but our secretary, Eric Braim, was very capable and I learned the ropes “in post”. When Eric stood down in 2010 I took over his role as secretary, and John Holmes became chairman.

Along the way I became the newsletter editor in 2009 when the last one stood down, on the condition that other people provided me with plenty of material. When the previous treasurer moved to York in 2011 and no replacement came forward, to keep the Trust in business, I became “acting treasurer”. And I’m still acting.

I was born in Doncaster but spent a lot of time in Glasgow and then Leeds where I qualified first as an architect, and later a town planner. I spent most of my working life in Design and Conservation at Barnsley’s planning department. It was a really interesting and varied career, and with my current Trust “jobs”, I suppose I haven’t really quite retired yet. I really care about the need for good design and good designers. They both seem to be in quite short supply these days, sadly.

As well as the Trust, and an interest in new and old towns and buildings, my hobbies include bird-watching, gardening, DIY and fixing things. Fortunately, I managed to grow up and out of a long-lasting passion for playing popular music. I spent too many years in smoky clubs, and on the road in vans. It was fun, though, mostly.

Planning Matters

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

We usually look at about 8 applications per month from across the whole area. This is out of up to 200 that appear on the website, although of course many of these are not relevant to the Trust. With those we do review we are satisfied with the majority but in some cases we do make objections. With others we send in representations; this is where we broadly agree with the application but suggest changes to some details.

Demolition Proposals: The Former Central Library

We perused a proposal to demolish the Central Library and to landscape the site. There were no objections to the demolition itself, but we thought that the building should be replaced to provide a sense of enclosure to the Gresley Square. The present proposals would just open up views to the backs of properties of the Waterdale Centre.

Listed Buildings:

South Parade, Town Centre

We were disappointed with the revised plans to redevelop Linford's Garage site at 15A South Parade. This was part of the adjoining Hall and care needed to be taken with the proposals to convert and extend the building into apartments and a commercial unit. The revised scheme showed the removal of the carriage entrance, which was originally planned to be retained, and its replacement with a rectangular opening. The carriage entrance shape should be retained. In addition we were unhappy with the choice of materials for the rear addition which were alien to the area. So we sent in our objections to all these issues.

East Farm, Owston Lane, Carcroft

We reviewed the three applications relating to the site. These were for new stables and linked equestrian paraphernalia, installation of solar panels on the garage roof and new windows and doors for the main house. We were quite happy with all of it except the proposed new doors which appeared to be fully glazed. We did not think these were appropriate for the character of this charming listed building.

46 Sunderland Street, Tickhill



This was a particularly interesting application partly because its Heritage Statement gave a good history and analysis of the house. The listing is brief and states it is 18th century. However, photographs of the rear of the property indicated it was 17th century with a Georgian frontage. This view was also expressed in the Heritage Assessment. Permission had previously been given by the Conservation Officer to replace the front windows.

46 Sunderland Street is the central, 3-storey dwelling

This application was for major roof repairs, a small rear extension, a car-port, new rear windows, and other internal changes as well as demolition of a garage. It was evident that renovations were needed but the character would be retained. We raised no objections to any of the proposals.

Conservation Areas Applications

Town Field Villas

We looked in some detail at a proposal to replace two houses at 21 Town Field Villas and replace them with two blocks of 4-storey apartments. We were unanimous in objecting to this proposal. The houses on site are of minor interest so we had no objections to their demolition. However, the replacement proposals were completely unacceptable to us for a number of reasons. The scheme paid no attention to the character of the buildings in the surrounding conservation area of Bennetthorpe in terms of form, scale, style or materials. These would be tall buildings on high ground which would be obtrusive, affecting a large area.

In addition the site was poorly served by highways. An objection was sent to the whole scheme which we felt should be refused. It is perhaps the application that has caused us the most concern this year.

St Chad's, Hooton Pagnell

The former vicarage at Hooton Pagnell is split into two houses. The application related to the house known as St Chad's. The listing states that the whole building is Victorian but the Trust had also discovered it was the work of local architect William Lambie Moffatt. The proposal was to demolish an archway with an elaborate chimney stack, which was possibly once a laundry, and build a very large conservatory. The chimney stack reflected the design of those on the main house. We didn't object but instead sent in a representation. We thought that it would probably be difficult to construct the conservatory in the way that was proposed and asked if that was the case could ways of retaining the chimney be explored? Despite this being a key unlisted building in the Conservation Area, the Planning Officer felt that, as the chimney stack could not be seen from a public highway, its demolition was acceptable. Nor, in the summary, was there any reference to the architect. Disappointing.

Avenue Care Home, 5 Avenue Road, off Thorne Road, Doncaster



We perused a revised application for this site, a large detached house in a tree lined Avenue. The house dates from c1869 and was a private dwelling until the 1970s and then it became a care home for many years. Unfortunately it has now been unoccupied for a long time. The new proposals showed that they wished to use almost the entire house, including two later extensions, to be converted into apartments. These were principally two-bedrooms. We supported the application and welcomed the plans to bring it back into use.

We had two concerns: firstly we asked that replacement windows should be sash, in either timber or pvc, as these were a key feature; there is some background to our second request: the last private residential owner embellished this property, adding huge ornamental shields and heavy balustrades, all in concrete. The whole house had its brickwork painted. Although the additions seemed a strange idea at the time for the location, it is the painting that is causing the problem today. We would like to see the paint removed and the brickwork cleaned, thus restoring its original appearance.

New Houses

Woodbine Cottage, Park Drive, Sprotbrough

This was a revised application for the site. We had objected to the original proposals as the proposed house was too large for the site and was alien to the character of the area. This revised application was disappointing and although changes had been made we felt our original objection was still appropriate. There were no concerns about the demolition of the bungalow. It may well be that the proposed building would be fine in a different and more appropriate location.

Civic Voice & YHACS Spring Convention, 19-20 May 2023, Halifax

The event began with a choice of guided walks: Dean Clough, the Town Centre or Georgian Halifax, which we chose. Our guide, Ann Kirker from Halifax Civic Trust, was infectiously enthusiastic, and although the relative prosperity of Halifax during the 19th century meant that many Georgian buildings had disappeared, there are some fascinating survivals, mostly in yellow Elland sandstone. We were introduced to the concept of the West Yorkshire warehouse, a pair of warehouses at each side of a Georgian town house, (similar to the barns on either side of Palladian villas). Most impressive was Somerset House, and other examples included the Albany club, and a more humble version now, the Courtyard pub.



Somerset House with warehouses, listed grade 2*

Sadly, the earliest surviving Georgian building had been converted to 'studio' apartments.



The finest Georgian building was the venue for our event, the Piece Hall, left, built in 1779 to serve as a marketplace for 'pieces' of wool and, amazingly, originally opened only for two hours every Saturday morning. Photographs cannot capture the magnificence of the space, 66,000 square feet, and comparable with many European squares. After a chequered history it now appears to be thriving; on a sunny May Saturday it hosted a colourfully dressed brass band, shoppers, people using the numerous cafes, and some simply sitting and enjoying the atmosphere.

A convivial dinner on the first evening was followed by a speech from **Nicholas Boys Smith**, Founding Director of the Create Streets Social Enterprise, who also spoke first on Saturday morning in the Sense of Place session. His key points were that good design was not subjective: there were links between place and beauty with health, both physical and mental, happiness, prosperity and sustainability, that better places, civic pride and empowering neighbourhoods can level up, and that planning should be deep green rather than shallow green.

He talked about what people valued in their neighbourhoods and their homes: easy access to local services, greenery, (provided that it did not increase perception of crime), symmetry in design, low density traffic, colour that had a positive impact on mood, and some contact with neighbours. He reported on research which showed that street trees resulted in cleaner air, slower cars, more walking, fewer accidents and improved health. Traditional block patterns of building were associated with lower crime. He regretted that in the UK planning documents were more about policy than regulation, resulting in bigger developers being able to play the system. In the UK less than 10% of development was done by self-build or SMEs, as opposed to 50% in parts of Europe. He referenced the impact on the environment of different building types, showing that very high buildings used a lot of energy.

He was also against UPVC windows, since they lasted only 20-30 years, as opposed to hundreds of years for wooden windows, provided that they were adequately maintained. Evidence showed that the greenest buildings are the ones that already exist, since the carbon cost of new build means that even those with the highest energy efficient specification would take over 100 years to catch up.

Charles Campion from JTOP Architects and author of “2020 Visions, Collaborative Planning and Placemaking” advocated strongly for the power of people to change places, given the opportunity. He described the now internationally recognised Charrette - a series of interactive workshops designed to bring the public’s local knowledge and creativity into the design process - and gave examples in Hackney and Scarborough. Experience showed that it was important for there to be loopbacks of engagement, rather than just an initial consultation. Local Authorities were now required to develop a Design Code, and he felt that Civic Societies should be involved.



A presentation from **James Lodge** and **Alex McIntosh** of Wakefield-based Rhubarb graphic design showcased the new logo for Wakefield Civic Trust, and the clever one for Halifax Civic Trust incorporating a stylised Piece Hall arch, but also referencing the rectangular windows of Dean Clough, the mill chimneys, railway viaduct, and contained the letter H! It could also be used as a framing device for images of buildings – as shown on the right.



Kevin Trickett stated that since Wakefield gained a new logo 3 years ago, despite Covid they had gained 100 new members, including some younger ones. A good logo was modern, relevant and distilled the essence of what the organisation was about.

The afternoon speakers focused on Heritage-led Regeneration. **Jeremy Hall**, managing director of Dean Clough, is the son of one of the two people who bought the vast empty site in 1983. He described the transformation of the million square foot property, built from 1840-1870 and the former Crossley carpet factory, which now hosted around 150 business and arts venues, and was the workplace of around 3,300 people, even more than when it was a factory. It was now a major events venue, with conferences, restaurants, galleries, weddings and a theatre. He quoted his father’s approach saying, “Stay ignorant - once you get clever you know it can’t be done”.

Nicky Chance-Thomson, Chief Executive of the Piece Hall, talked about how the Piece Hall had changed its functions over the years to survive. It had been under threat at different times in its history but, following a £19 million transformation project, it re-opened in 2017. It now housed 30 independent businesses and was a venue for trade, culture and heritage. It was visited by around 2.7 million people a year and a new innovation was the Piece Hall academy.

Peter Vardy and **Richard Macfarlane** from Calderdale Council recounted the success of the Calderdale movie map in bringing visitors to the area, listing such television and film successes as Gentleman Jack, Happy Valley, Last Tango in Halifax, Peterloo and Ridley. They emphasised the need to welcome film companies, understand their needs, and also to build an accompanying tourist infrastructure of transport, toilets, cafés and hotels. The final speaker, **Jess Davidson** from Park Page architects, described some of the firm’s projects including alterations to Leeds Playhouse and Leeds Town Hall.

She underlined the significance of the 'battery pack', the package of changes such as lifts and toilets essential to ensure that heritage buildings were ready for their next stage of use. She also emphasised the importance of doing work well, if necessary at a slower pace, rather than rushing to complete it at a lower standard.

Some take home messages from the event:

- Civic Societies need political support to achieve their aims
- Community action can be very powerful in achieving change
- Positive emotional responses to the built environment and appreciation of beauty are important for physical and mental health

Jackie Gladden and Tony Wrigglesworth

Kirk Sandall Walk

25 May 2023



Trust members outside St Oswald's Church, Kirk Sandall

17 members met outside the church on a warm summer's day for our walk led by Gill Johnson.

We started inside the church where Gill told us a little of the building's history. We then learnt all about the arrival of Pilkington's Glass Works, a firm which completely changed the area.

Not only did they build the works but they also created a village for the workers.

We were then taken on an interesting tour of this 'new' village led by Gill with more information from Steve Kimber, who provided support. I am not going to go into any detail as that would spoil it for others for any possible future walks. After about an hour we reached the pub for refreshments and then most members walked back to the church.

It had been an enjoyable walk and our thanks go to Gill and Steve too.

Peter Coote

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