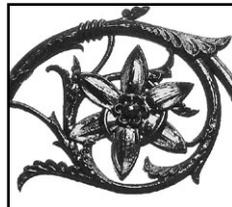


RIPON CIVIC SOCIETY
NEWSLETTER
SPRING 2015



OUT AND ABOUT THIS SUMMER



We have three visits lined up for this year – and we hope that you will join us! There is a booking form with this newsletter.
E-mail info@riponcivicsociety.org.uk or call 01765 608320 if it's missing and you want to book.

KNARESBOROUGH – **Thursday 21 May**

Think you know all about Knaresborough? We may be able to prove you wrong! Members of Knaresborough Civic Society have offered to show us round the town on an evening visit, starting at 6.00pm in the car park at Conyngnam Hall. We'll find out about its history, architecture and customs, discover a few surprises – and end up at a convivial pub to round off the evening. There is a charge of just £2.00 for this evening, which we shall collect on the night. (You will have to buy your own drinks and food at the pub, of course!) If you are intending to join us it would be helpful if you would let us know; call 01765 608320 or e-mail david@riponcivicsociety.org.uk.

YORKSHIRE SCULPTURE PARK and
WENTWORTH CASTLE – **Sunday 28 June**

If you went to Wentworth Woodhouse with the Society in 2013, you can now experience the other side of the family argument by visiting the rival Wentworth Castle! This is a visit by coach (leaving Ripon at 9.00am), starting with a visit to the Yorkshire Sculpture Park at West Bretton, near Wakefield. It is the country's leading sculpture gallery and there is plenty to see both indoors and outdoors – including a special Henry



Moore exhibition this year. There is a restaurant as well as a café and two coffee shops where you can enjoy lunch – or plenty of space to sit and enjoy your picnic in the hot sunshine (!)

After lunch we shall travel the short distance to Wentworth Castle, the great baroque house built for the Earl of Strafford to rival Wentworth Woodhouse, about 6 miles away. We shall have a guided tour that will give us a glimpse inside the house (not usually open) and a look at the recently-restored Conservatory (which you may recall from the

BBC's 'Restoration' programme some years ago). There will then be time to wander through the fine gardens. The visit also includes a cream tea! We should be back in Ripon by 6.30pm. The cost for this visit is £27.50 per person. Spaces are limited to 33.

*Note that this is a change of date from that published in the annual calendar; an event at Wentworth Castle on the Saturday necessitated the change.

MIDDLESBROUGH – **Saturday 15 August**

You may not have considered Middlesbrough as a suitable place for a day out, but think again! After travelling by coach (starting at 9.00am from Ripon) to the town, our first stop will be at the famous Transporter Bridge, where we can look at the new Visitor Centre and enjoy the ascent to the top on

the recently-installed glass lift. Operational restrictions permitting, we shall also travel to and fro across the river on the gondola – the moving roadway.

We shall then visit the gothic-style railway station and walk to the town centre to look at the Town Hall and Library. There will be time to visit MIMA – the Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art, where there is a café; there are, of course, other eating places nearby – or if the weather is fine, there are seats in the square for sandwich-eating. After lunch we shall take



the coach to the Dorman Museum in Albert Park. The Museum is home to a fascinating and eclectic collection and some unusual exhibitions, including one featuring the Victorian design pioneer Christopher Dresser, who founded the local Linthorpe Pottery.

On the way back to Ripon we shall call at Yarm, once an important port, to admire the fine Georgian High Street with its independent shops and cafes. We plan to be back in Ripon by 6.00pm. The cost for this visit is £25.00 per person.

PLANNING MATTERS

A number of important proposals have been made in recent months; two of them – proposals for houses at Bellwood Farm, near the Harrogate Road roundabout, and at West Lane – have not so far come forward as planning applications, but as preliminary testings of the water; we are watching them carefully. No plans have so far come forward for the former Cathedral Choir School site on Whitcliffe Lane.

We have objected to the proposed housing at Bellman Walk, pointing out that the site is outside the city development limit, which at this point remains the same as in Harrogate's 2001 Local Plan (the same argument will go for the first two developments mentioned above); access to the site would not be gained readily through the existing Doublegates estate because of its layout – nor could it realistically be proposed to purchase and demolish houses on Bishopton Lane to provide access from there; the development would increase traffic in the west of Ripon, where traffic is already heavy. If the neighbouring military estate is eventually developed for housing and the military road reopened, the traffic levels would be even greater; and this area provides a valuable asset on the city's countryside edge.

The proposal to replace the former Jewson's building has caused some controversy in the city; our view is that it is important to think of this site not in isolation but as part of its wider context. We felt that any development on this site will have some impact on views of the cathedral, and that some assessment should be provided as to how any development will affect these views. The site is within the City Plan's proposed Bondgate Green Urban Village Regeneration Area. We therefore recommend that that the site be looked at with this in mind as part of a master plan: the urban design dimension should not ignore Cathedral views. We believe that asking for the site to remain undeveloped is unrealistic; there are unimpeded (perhaps superior) views of the cathedral from the nearby bridge. The current buildings are mostly unattractive; modest two-storey dwellings here are likely to be an improvement.

The other major proposal is for the Police Station site on North Street. We have no objection to the demolition of the Police Station, which is an unattractive block – though we would wish to see firm proposals for its replacement somewhere in the city. We believe that, as the site is in a sensitive location, within the Ripon Conservation Area, very close to a major road junction at the Clock Tower and on the main approach to the city centre from the north, it merits a building that is fully in keeping with its prominent position. The proposal put forward is not suitable for this site; it is overwhelming in its bulk and pedestrian in its detail. In particular, the token ‘gables’ in the façade to North Street are a barely-credible nod to the Victorian terraces adjacent to the site and across the road. The remainder of the blocks, with their clad upper storey, are both dull and intrusive. The access arrangements, with a new entrance adjacent to the next-door terrace, are unsatisfactory. In addition, the traffic flows projected seem unusually low for a development of this size; it is more likely that there will be an increase in traffic, with consequent problems on this already-congested street, with the Coltsgate Hill junction nearby and the filling station immediately next door. We believe that the arrangements for pedestrians and cyclists need more thought; there seems to be too much roadway and not enough other circulation space. We should like to see a proper linkage through the site to enable walkers and cyclists to move with safety from Tower Road to North Street. We would look for stronger safeguards to protect the trees adjacent to the site. We have, therefore, formally objected to the proposals.



We have written formally to Harrogate Borough Council (HBC) asking for enforcement to be undertaken at three particular sites in the city – the former filling station on Skellbank, which was overgrown and untidy; the mess left by the demolition of the former library on Skellgarths; and the Station Hotel on North Road. The filling station site has now been tidied, and we are assured by HBC that a plan for the site’s redevelopment is to be forthcoming. New boarding has been put around the library site, replacing the metal Heras fencing; we hope work will start on the site soon. The Station Hotel, though, remains an eyesore, and one which is yet to be resolved. We believe that a use needs to be found for this building as soon as possible.

We have also made representations about the former Girls’ High School building, which is in danger of dereliction after an application to demolish it was refused and where trees have been felled illegally; and about the false ceiling inserted, without the required Listed Building Consent, in the former Coltsgate Hill Chapel.

RE-CROWNING IN THE SQUARE

The wooden crown that was the sign of the former Crown Hotel at 5, Market Place used to grace the façade of Sainsbury’s store until it fell down last year. Now, thanks to the efforts of Ripon Civic Society committee member Richard Taylor, it is to be restored by a volunteer at the Workhouse Museum. The work will be funded by Sainsbury’s, and the restored crown will not be replaced high on the building but somewhere in the area of the store – a final location has not yet been determined. Sainsbury’s will also fund a small plaque to be placed below the Society’s green plaque that mentions the crown, to point out its eventual change of location. We are grateful to Sainsbury’s for their generous help in preserving this memory of a former use of the building they occupy.



The American Oak tree near Booth's supermarket, generously funded by the Harrogate Soroptimists and planted to mark the



Civic Society's 45th anniversary, is now flourishing. It had good autumn colour and will soon burst into its spring glory. We now have a small plaque on the wall nearby that marks its planting.

The Committee needs more people to help run the Society. With changes of job, illness and (let's face it) age having their effect, we do need to make sure there are enough volunteers to keep our work going – not just in running our monthly Members' Meetings and visits, but in ensuring that our vital role of commenting on planning applications

and that we do the best for Ripon and the area around can continue.

Civic Societies are vulnerable; in the last couple of months two in Yorkshire – at Horbury and Market Weighton, have decided to close, though the Yorkshire and Humber Association of Civic Societies (YHACS), of which Ripon Civic Society is a part, has been trying to keep them afloat and attract new members.

If you can help in any way, please let one of the committee know; we're all very friendly, and we have even cut down the number of meetings, to make things easier!

FLOURISHING
TREE

WILL YOU
JOIN THE
COMMITTEE?

7 May 2015

TALK: 'The Role of the Modern Archaeological Consultant'
by Simon McCudden

FORTHCOMING
EVENTS

21 May 2015

VISIT to Knaresborough (evening) – see above

4 June 2015

TALK: 'Discovering Civic Ripon within its Jacobean Context'
by Kirsty Hallet

28 June 2015

VISIT to Yorkshire Sculpture Park and Wentworth Castle
(full day) – see above

15 August 2015

VISIT to Middlesbrough (full day) – see above

3 September 2015

TALK: 'Public Lettering in Ripon' by Paul Kershaw

The Committee has decided that the Society will now hold its Awards every two years; so the Awards set for **2 October** this year will be replaced by an evening of photographic history, based on the Society's forthcoming 'Ripon Re-Viewed' project; come along to the Spa Hotel that evening and hear all about it!

If it has slipped your mind to pay your annual subscription to the Society, have a quiet word with Jackie Fox, the Membership Secretary – she will be delighted to take your money for this year!

SUBSCRIPTIONS