



RIPON CIVIC SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

January 2016



A VERY HAPPY NEW YEAR!



CROWNING ACHIEVEMENT

You will, perhaps, recall from the last Newsletter that the carved crown that once decorated Ripon's Crown Hotel was being restored after shattering as the result of its falling from the front of the building, now Sainsbury's store, narrowly missing pedestrians.

Now the restored crown has been fixed safely inside the building. It has been skilfully and triumphantly restored by Fred Lee, a volunteer for the Ripon Museum Trust. Some of the paint needed to complete the job in its original colours was generously donated by local paint manufacturers T & R Williamson.

Sainsbury's generously funded the restoration costs and has provided a new location inside the store for the crown, above the trolley slope at the shop's east end. A sign explaining the significance has been added.

Richard Taylor, a Civic Society Committee member who is also Chairman of the Ripon Museum Trust, says, 'The Crown sign, which spent many years in the former museum in the Wake-man's House, was replaced in its original position on the front of the store a decade or so ago. Unfortunately, weather and time took their toll, so we are delighted that, after Fred's triumphant and skilful restoration, it is now safe inside the Sainsbury's store, where it will be easier to maintain. We are very grateful to Fred for giving his time and expertise, to Sainsbury's for so readily agreeing to help with the work and to house the crown, and to Williamson's for their help in supplying paint.'

Ripon Civic Society has one of its green plaques on the façade of the Sainsbury's store referring to the Crown Hotel's history and to the carved crown sign. We will place a small additional notice beneath referring to its change of location to inside the store.

The picture shows Fred Lee (centre) and Richard Taylor (front right) with Sainsbury's staff and representatives of T & R Williamson and the Society.

PLANNING MATTERS

Among the planning matters we have considered recently are:

A proposal to build five houses at the east end of Sharow Lane in Sharow. We felt that an eastwards extension of the village would be premature until the local plan sets a strategic role, and that what was proposed was not the best use of the site, given the character of Sharow Lane, which has an interesting arrangement of buildings and streetscape. This proposal was bland at best. We felt that if the site is to be developed it would be better as a set of integrated houses, gardens and garages – or as a site for a small number of self-build homes.

Plans for 98 houses on the site of the former Choir School, Whitcliffe Lane. We argued that the development as submitted would have a detrimental effect on the open space around it. The houses on the perimeter should, we said, have much deeper gardens that would allow, over time, the growth of

mature trees suited to the wider landscape; putting the affordable homes along the open edge of the site made this more difficult, and should be changed; for reasons of scale and urban design it would be better if the affordable homes were sited in close relationship with the school building. We also felt that the school building, formerly the racecourse grandstand, should be re-elevated to reflect its former use, perhaps by providing larger windows and balconies on the side facing what were the playing fields. Although this is not a listed building it is nonetheless a heritage asset and should be addressed with more thought. We recommended that the number of dwellings is too great for the site and needs to be revised as part of a much-better-considered development.



A proposal to fell four trees in the Conservation Area, and one tree with a Tree Preservation Order (TPO), at Ripon Bowling Club, Bondgate. We made the observation that, as a general principle, the Society wishes to see the preservation of trees within the city as far as is practicable. We appreciate that trees grow, and over the years may in some cases come to be seen as a problem. In this case, the four frontage trees are an important part of the street scene. There is some evidence of roots lifting the Tarmac surface around the building, though no evidence had been put forward that they are damaging the building, the nearest part of which appears to post-date the trees. We said that we should like to see a wider range of ages of trees; a comprehensive replanting scheme to the rear of the car park might make a useful first step in achieving this. Once these are established for some years a selective removal of the frontage trees – under a new application – could possibly be considered. We therefore objected to the felling of the four trees within the Conservation area, which continue to play a valuable role in the streetscape. We did, however, agree with Harrogate Borough Council’s Arboricultural Officers’ assessment of the tree with the TPO (a sycamore), that its loss would be unobjectionable.

Demolition of former caretaker's house at Outwood Academy, Clothholme Road, for the formation of a parking area and cycle storage. In an ideal world, the Society believes, the demolition of an apparently-reusable house should be a matter of last resort; but we said that in this case we believe that, having tested the market and failed to find an alternative use, along with matters of safeguarding the occupants on the site and the need for improved parking and access, the applicant has made the case for demolition. We asked if there was scope for further tree planting.

MAKE USE OF
THE WEBSITE

All our responses for planning applications can be found on the Society's website at www.riponcivicsociety.org.uk – click on the News tab and then on Planning. You will also find a list of all forthcoming talks and visits, and much other information. There is always the current article from the Ripon Gazette, and more than 400 past columns, too, to while away any spare time you may have!

MAY THE
ENFORCEMENT
BE WITH US

In December David Winpenney and Richard Taylor met two Harrogate Borough Council officials to walk round the city with them to point out some of the planning problems that require intervention by the Enforcement Officers. The aim was to establish which sites of concern are seen as a priority for encouraging action to secure improvement, and to see how best the Council and the Society can work together to achieve this.

The idea was not to berate the Council but to see how, by using advice and persuasion, we can help them to achieve the aims of improving the city, and to use the threat of adverse publicity, backed by planning and enforcement powers if necessary, on stubborn sites (and their owners).

Among the sites visited were the three buildings – Sigma Antiques, the former Turk's Head pub and the building inbetween, all at the junction of Water Skellgate and Low Skellgate. There is particular concern about the rear of these buildings. On a more positive note, at the former Labour exchange building and the site of the former library next door the beneficial effect of screening was discussed, and it was noted that this was a promising redevelopment.

There was discussion about the small brick building, possibly a

former maltings, behind Sainsbury's building¹. This is now abandoned and surrounded with unsightly metal screening. It is not beyond saving, and new use could be found for it. Also discussed were the possible development opportunities on the Hospital and Spa Baths site; how best to improve the 'backlands' at the rear of



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North Street that face on to the Booth's carpark²; the conversion of Coltsgate Hill Chapel³, which has not received Listed Building Consent; a site at the rear of the east side of North Street where planning permission was given for demolition and rebuilding, but where the space created after demolition is now in use as an unauthorised car park⁴; the opportunities presented by the demolition and redevelopment at the Allhallowgate flats, and the desirability of screening the site during redevelopment.

The morning finished with a look at the Maltings at Ure Bank Top⁵.

It was useful to meet the officers, and we shall continue to keep in touch with them to progress these matters.

THE
PHOTOGRAPHIC
PROJECT

Things are developing with Ripon Re-Viewed, the project to digitise more than 6,000 old photographs of Ripon and to make them available on line. The Society has been awarded £59,000 for the work by the Heritage Lottery Fund, and has agreed to contribute £4,000, along with a generous legacy of £1,000 from long-time member Jean Denton.



In December we held interviews for a Project Officer, whose role will be to help deliver the project, overseeing the digitisation (which will be carried out by the professionals at the North Yorkshire County Record Office) and the recruiting, training and inspiring of volunteers who will work on identifying and cataloguing the collection. The chosen candidate will start in January, and we'll report progress regularly. And as you'll see from the Programme Card, Mandy Whitehead, who chairs the Ripon Re-Viewed sub-committee of the Society, will bring us up to date next November, before our AGM.

AWARDS
AND THE
NOMINATIONS

At a meeting of the Executive Committee earlier this year we took the decision that we will hold our Awards every two years; unlike larger cities, we do not generally have the number of developments and changes that warrant an annual ceremony.

And as we didn't have a ceremony in 2015, it follows that in October 2016 we shall have one!

So we need your help. Although we keep our eyes open as we go around, and we carefully monitor planning applications, we cannot always guarantee to spot everything that goes on. Please let us know of any projects that you think we should consider for the Awards. They should have been completed from July 2014 to June 2016 to be considered. They can be from anywhere in the

area the Society covers – that is, in the city of Ripon itself or in the villages around. We will particularly welcome suggestions for projects outside the city.

Just to remind you, the categories are:

Best New Building, which is awarded the Hazzard Silver Cup

Best Restored Building: The Price Flagon

Best Environmental Improvement: The Younge Rosebowl

Best Shop Front: The Taylor Plate

Best Craftsmanship: The Craftsmanship Shield

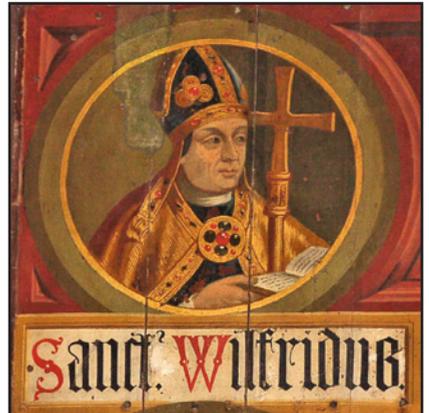
Sustainability Award: The Sustainability Bowl

To nominate a project call us on 01765 608320 or e-mail info@riponcivicsociety.org.uk.

Also with this Newsletter is our yearly programme card. As you will see, we have a wide range of talks lined up – thanks to our Programme Secretary Paul Kershaw and our friends in Ripon Historical Society – with plenty to suit most interests. We start on 7 January with a talk on ‘St Wilfrid and the formation of Ripon Township’, which should give us an interesting insight into the early years of the city.

WHAT'S IN
STORE THIS
YEAR

We also hope to run some visits this year, but plans are not yet finalised; we'll let you know where we hope to go as soon as we know fully ourselves! Wherever it is, you'll know, if you've been on one of our trips before, that we pack plenty in and have a good time! If you haven't, do sign up and find out what you've been missing.



As usual the AGM of the Yorkshire and Humber Association of Civic Societies (YHACS), of which Ripon Civic Society is a member (our Chairman David Winpenny is on the Executive Committee), will hold its AGM in Harrogate on 30 January, from 1.00pm to 4.00pm. It's held at the Cedar Court Hotel, Park Parade. The agenda this year includes a speaker from Historic England (the advisory arm of what used to be English Heritage, and a session

COME TO THE
YHACS AGM

on Strategy and Growth. There will also be the presentations of the YHACS Awards for Civic Society projects (we didn't enter this year, so it won't be us!) and news from other societies. It's also a great opportunity to meet and chat to others from around the region.

TIME FOR
SUBSCRIPTIONS

As the New Year dawns, it's time to pay your Civic Society subscriptions for 2016. To make it easier, you'll find a payment slip with this Newsletter (as an attachment if you get it by e-mail), with details of the costs and where to send your cheques.

If you could do so promptly it would make life so much easier for Jackie, our efficient and tenacious Membership Secretary. Thank you!

