
NEWSLETTER

September 2018



FIFTY YEARS ON

Here we are in the last quarter of our Golden Jubilee Year! The Society was officially inaugurated at a meeting in the Hugh Ripley Hall on 27 June 1968; Sir Richard Graham of Norton Conyers was appointed as President and Dr Richard Anning was elected as Chairman. This was an era for the foundation of such societies; in the 1960s there was a growing realisation that there were many threats to the fabric and the civic well-being of many town and cities around the country.

Between the two World Wars many of the larger urban areas had seen the formation of voluntary societies looking to protect their areas from unthinking development – and also to promote good, thoughtful, modern design and planning. In 1938 a national civic organisation, the Council of Civic Societies, brought many of them together and became a source of information for local groups and a means of encouraging places without such societies to consider setting one up. The Second World War delayed progress, though in 1943 it was reported that there were 33 affiliated societies.

After the war more were formed, and in 1957 the Civic Trust was started by MP Duncan Sandys as a successor to the Council. The impetus for many new Civic Societies was a particular threat to the fabric or wellbeing of the community. The 1960s proved to be a watershed for many; there was what

appeared to be a headlong rush to sweep away old buildings and replace them with new 'modern' structures.

This was true in Ripon, too; in September 1967 there were plans by Vaux Breweries to sell the Unicorn Hotel and redevelop the site; there was also a threat to the Café Victoria, and a general understanding that without action, more structures could be lost. The Claro Bank on the Market Square had already been demolished in 1962, and the current building, until recently occupied by the NatWest, had taken its place.

A committee to help preserve Ripon was set up, and after some preliminary meetings in late 1967 and early 1968, Ripon Civic Society was formally launched. Our aims, as set out in our constitution, have always been 'to promote high standards of planning and architecture...to educate the public...to secure the preservation, protection, development and improvement' of Ripon. Originally set up to serve just the city of Ripon, in 2010 we amended the constitution to include a wider area encompassing the surrounding villages.

Over the years we have been central to many of the decisions about the city – from the defeat of an inner ring road to the eventually achievement of the bypass and the subsequent re-organisation of the Market Square. We have not always been successful, but we have usually been vocal. Our Golden Jubilee is an opportunity to look back, to look forward – and to celebrate!

JUBILEE In May we marked the Jubilee with a dinner at the Old Deanery
DINNER Hotel. Thirty-seven members and guests enjoyed an informal evening



with an excellent meal and general good cheer. We kept speeches to a minimum, but we were very pleased to welcome as our guest of honour Richard Compton DL from Newby Hall. He spoke

about the value of having a group dedicated to the architectural and environmental good of the city, and wished us well for the next half century. Thanking Richard for his kind words, and proposing a toast to the Society, Chairman David Winpenny said, 'My predecessors as Chairman, along with the many people who served on the committee or joined as members, deserve our thanks for steering us through 50 years of service to the city and its surrounding area. And what will the next 50 years bring? None of us knows, but we cannot expect the pressures on the city to diminish. Whatever they are, let us be confident that Ripon Civic Society will continue to play its vital part in preserving and developing the place we call Ripon.'



As part of our Jubilee celebrations we invited other Civic Societies to come to Ripon for the quarterly meeting of the Yorkshire and Humber Association of Civic Societies (YHACS), the umbrella group for the region, on 28 July. Eighteen societies were represented, along with a representative of the North West's equivalent of YHACS. The weekend (a very hot one!) began with a meal in Lockwood's restaurant for more than 20 of the participants, followed by a visit to the Workhouse Museum to see the 'Ripon Re-Viewed' exhibition (see below). The following morning there was an hour-long walk, led by David Winpenny, around the centre of the city, and after that a talk in the Mayor's Parlour on the civic silver collection.

YHACS
WEEKEND

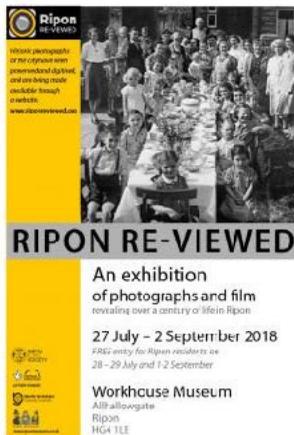


The formal YHACS meeting in the afternoon, led by its Chairman Kevin Trickett from Wakefield Civic Society, had two main, connected themes – The Northern Powerhouse and smaller settlements. Henri Murison, Director of The Northern Powerhouse Partnership, spoke passionately about the values of the Powerhouse, and answered questions from the floor.

After Kevin Trickett had given his Chairman's report, there was a brief introduction to our GAMAR green plaques initiative (see below). Then Chris Winter, Chair of Wells Civic Society, a committee member of the Cathedral Cities Alliance and a trustee of Civic Voice, spoke about the similarities and differences between her Somerset home and Ripon – Wells is a city even smaller than Ripon. David Winpenny, Chairman of Ripon Civic Society, then looked at our history and our future, before Helen Kidman, YHACS Secretary spoke about the Civic Voice Regional Forum. The meeting ended with reports from member Societies.

Thank you to everyone who helped to make the weekend go so well. We received several compliments on the organisation; the Chairman of Pontefract Civic Society wrote, 'Well done for pulling out all the stops for the YHACS visit this weekend...The afternoon speaker programme gave something for everyone – a great cross-section and perhaps quite a coup that we had Henri, and the technology project was a revelation... A really big well done to you and your whole team.'

Our major project, Ripon Re-Viewed, to conserve and make available thousands of old images of the city, has culminated in several important public projects. **RIPON RE-VEIWED**



Images on the streets: Twenty large images from the collection have been placed approximately on the route of the St Wilfrid's procession, as near as possible to the location that was depicted in the original. They were in place in time for the St Wilfrid's Procession on Saturday 4 August – and there's still time to see them, as these images will remain until Monday 17 September, so they'll still be up for the Heritage Open Days weekend of 8 and 9 September (see below)

Workhouse exhibition: The exhibition of photographs in the Workhouse Museum ran from the end of July until 2 September. Taking themes – like street scenes, shops, industry or working lives, and festivities, as well as World War I – the exhibition, in the Workhouse Dining Hall and adjacent rooms, showed the range of the images that have been conserved. The exhibition has proved extremely popular and has generated a great deal of interest in the project.

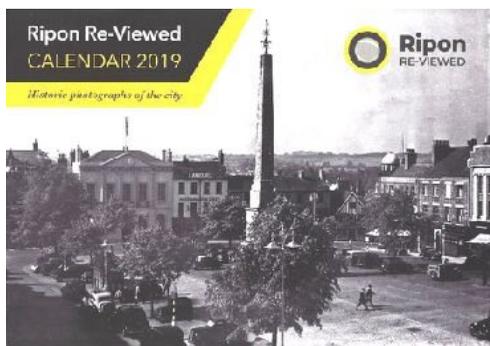
And on-line: The project's new website – www.riponreviewed.org – is now up and running and allows everyone to search the collection and to see the treasure trove of pictures from the past that has

been uncovered. The website will be regularly updated with new images, but there are already plenty for anyone with an interest in Ripon to find something to fascinate them. The images will be available for purchase as prints or for publications, subject to copyright restrictions.

In the future: Although the project's official term, as agreed with our major funder, the Heritage Lottery Fund, is now complete, the website's updating will be financed by generous local people who have contributed to our 'crowd-funding' appeal. We are very grateful to them and to everyone who has supported this very successful – and time-consuming – project. We are especially indebted to Sue and Mike Howard, to Mandy Whitehead, Richard Taylor and Christopher Hughes for all their sustained hard work.

AND NOW THE CALENDAR

A major spin-off of Ripon Re-Viewed is the new 2019 calendar. Thanks to a grant from Ripon City Council, we have produced an



attractive calendar that features fourteen fascinating historic images of the city. Copies of the calendar were presented as the City Council's official gifts to visiting dignitaries from around Yorkshire

when the city hosted Yorkshire Day on 1 August.

And now you can own one, as well! The calendars cost £6.00 and will be available at all Ripon Civic Society meetings. You can also buy them from Ripon Tourist Information Centre; Ripon Library; The Little Ripon Bookshop, Westgate; Stuff4Offices, Fishergate; David Harrison Gallery, Kirkgate; Treasure and Relish, High Skellgate; Ripon Cathedral Shop; and Ripon Workhouse Museum

Don't forget, Christmas will soon be here – why not buy several as Christmas presents? Buy now while stocks last!

We have three additions to our green plaques ready to be put in place over the next few weeks. One will be in High St Agnesgate on the house where author and actress Naomi Jacob was born 1 July 1884. She combined an acting and broadcasting career with writing more than seventy successful novels. Monocle-wearing and with cropped hair, she entertained troops in the Second World War with her humorous sketches.



NEW
PLAQUES
SOON TO
APPEAR

A second plaque will be on the house in Blossomgate occupied by John Walbran, Ripon's most important 19th-century historian and archaeologist. Born in 1817, his best-known work, the 'Guide to Ripon, Fountains Abbey, Harrogate, Bolton Abbey and Several places of interest in their vicinity' first appeared anonymously in 1837, when he was 19, and was quickly reprinted in many, ever-expanded, editions. He supervised the clearing the detritus of centuries from the ruins of Fountains Abbey, and carried out diligent and, for their time, careful excavations there over several years.



The third plaque is for St Wilfrid's Church, which is currently planning its major refurbishment. The plaque notes its architect Joseph Hansom (inventor of the Hansom Cab), and interior work by Edward Pugin, mosaics by the Italian Salviati company and glass by John Hungerford Pollen.



Look out for the plaques as they appear – and look out, too, for a new edition of our plaques trail booklet, 'Ripon Revealed'. A very successful publication, the first edition has sold out, so we have now revised it, with the addition of the three new plaques, and it will be published in the next month or so.

TAKE THE TRAIL THE MODERN WAY



There is another way to enjoy our green plaques. With the help of the technology company GAMAR we have set up a method of getting extra information on a smart phone. If you want to try it out, you'll need to download the app from www.gamar.com. Once you've done that, all you need to do when you're out and about

is point your phone (switched on and with a wi-fi signal) at any of the plaques; you'll be given a series of pictures and some spoken text filling in the background story to that particular plaque. You'll also be able to find out where other, nearby plaques are situated.

When the technology was demonstrated on the walk and during the meeting on the YHACS weekend, there was considerable interest. Since then, Leeds Civic Trust has shown a desire to know more, and we have demonstrated it further to one of their staff. As the first Civic Society in the country to introduce the technology, we have achieved a certain cachet.

And we also have a presence on Facebook and on Twitter; search for Ripon Civic society and you'll find us.

HERITAGE OPEN DAYS

We are marking Heritage Open Days this year with the following events:

Ripon Revealed – a walking tour around the city from the Market Square, starting at 11.00am for about an hour and a half, on Sunday 9 September

The Gazebo – we shall be opening the Gazebo on two days this year - Saturday 8 and Sunday 9 September from 2.00pm to 4.00pm
Entrance off Blossomgate – look for the signs.

The Masonic Hall – Water Skellgate on Sunday 9 September from 2.00pm to 4.00pm

Ripon Cathedral Ringing Chamber – Two tours, each limited to 10 people, will be given this year at 3.00pm and 4.00pm on Saturday 8 September. Tickets for tours available from the Cathedral gift shop.

Ripon Grammar School Library – Clotherholme Road; see the building and find out about WW1 connections in the local area. Sunday 9 September, 1.00pm to 4.00pm

We are very grateful to our friends at the Masonic Hall, the Cathedral and the Grammar School for arranging to open, and to the staff and residents of Blossomgate Court for allowing access to the Gazebo.

We continue to try to achieve a satisfactory outcome to the long-running saga of the former Girls' High School (or the Old Lecture Block as it's known). The latest twist in this particular tale is another application to demolish the building and to build a care home on the site. Demolition has already been refused once, and we have urged the Planning Authority to refuse again. We have also criticised the low quality of the proposed care home.

PLANNING
MATTERS

We have commented on plans for a change of use at the former Wolseley offices, Bondgate Green. While we did not object to the change, we urged the Planning Authority to work with the applicant to get improvement to the setting of the building, especially on the riverside.

We have objected strongly to the proposal to build bungalows on the open ground off Tower Road, north of the Workhouse Museum, pointing out that no assessment has been undertaken to shown clearly that the open space is surplus to requirements and that the loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location.

The Tower Road site is identified in the Ripon City Plan as important open space, and was explicitly recognised in the Green Infrastructure study prepared by HBC as being a 'green lung' near the centre of the city and one which links to others to form a significant green corridor. Many of the trees surrounding the site are protected

with tree preservation orders. Building on the site would put them under threat – if not immediately, then in future years as the owners of property on the site may find the trees over-powering, leading to their loss.

Although the application is only for part of the site, this puts the rest under pressure; we argued that this development should be refused because of the threat it would pose to the whole site. It is also surrounded by listed buildings and by the Workhouse Museum and its garden; the development – and any further changes to the site – could seriously damage the setting of these important city assets.

We have objected to a proposal to build a petrol filling station at the foot of Hutton Bank, pointing out that this is a very prominent site when looking from North Bridge and any development – especially petrol pumps under a canopy – will be particularly conspicuous on this raised ground. There will undoubtedly be pressure for 24-hour operation with a significant amount of lighting. There was also the risk that the tree screening between the site and the A61, some of which was recently planted by Harrogate Borough Council with support from the Society, was at risk as the developers sought to make the site even more visible.

All our planning comments to Harrogate Borough Council can be found on our website: www.riponcivisociety.org.uk.

BEYOND
HULL Our visit this year was a foray into the far east – East Yorkshire, that is. In fine weather we travelled by coach to the east of Hull, stopping first at Hedon, where we were given an excellent and informative tour of the impressive church – known as ‘The King of Holderness – and the chance to look around the local museum, too. Then it was on to Patrington, where the parishioners of St Patrick’s church provided us with lunch before we were taken round the church – ‘The Queen of Holderness’.

Our final stop was a complete contrast to the two churches – an underground bunker with concrete walls and ceilings ten feet thick. RAF Holmpton is a maze of tunnels packed with reminders of its purpose – to monitor nuclear attack and its aftermath; it was built

in the 1950s and ceased operation only in 2015. It was certainly a very different experience!



Remember that when October falls in a year with an even number, we hold our Awards Ceremony. So, as it's 2018 – and our Golden Jubilee – we are preparing for this year's event, which will take place on THURSDAY 4 OCTOBER at the SPA HOTEL, starting at 7.30; wine and soft drinks will be served from 7.00pm. As always, we have some interesting projects to consider for our Awards.

AWARDS ON
THEIR WAY

We always get a good turnout from people whose projects are on our shortlist, but not always from our own members! It would be good if this year we could field a lot more of you, so if you are able, please come along to support both the nominees and the Society. It's always an interesting evening – and you get a free drink, too!

On 1 November we have our Annual General meeting, following our talk on the Landmark Trust (see below). This is your opportunity to hear how the Society has been doing over the last year and, if you wish, to make your voice heard. This year Society Chairman David Winpenny will step down, so there will be some changes at the 'top'; come along and see what the future holds.

CHANGING
THE PILOT –
THE AGM

Our move to the Dining Hall of the Workhouse Museum has been successful, not least because of the impressive size of the screen and the opportunity to serve refreshments. If you haven't yet been to an event there, why not give it a try?

FORTH-
COMING
TALKS AND
EVENTS

This is what we have lined up for the rest of the year:



6th September: Talk – ‘Secret Ripon’ – David Winpenny. David’s new book of the same title is published this month.

4th October: Golden Jubilee Awards Ceremony at Ripon Spa Hotel (see above).

1st November: Talk – ‘The Work of the Landmark Trust in Yorkshire’ – Linda Lockett, Regional Property Surveyor, The Landmark Trust. The Landmark Trust takes on challenging but interesting buildings and converts them for holiday use – The Ruin at Hackfall is one of their properties; other Yorkshire properties include the Culloden Tower in Richmond and The Pigsty at Robin Hood’s Bay. **This talk will be followed by the Society’s AGM** (see above).

6th December: Christmas Social Evening: further information will follow.