RIPON CIVIC SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER - SEPTEMBER 2021






Just a reminder of Yorkshire Day activity on the Market Place. We are fortunate to enjoy this 'meeting place of choice'. Visitors also came to the Cathedral and Kirkgate.

Heritage Open Days will be held this year between Friday 10th and Sunday 19th September and you can read the Ripon programme in the following pages. Our current Ripon Reviewed Spa Quarter project, described in this edition, is worth a visit too. We have a stall at the National Trust's Skell Project launch on 11 September at Hell Wath including Ripon Reviewed material curated for the occasion.

Seeing the local enthusiasm for Yorkshire Day, how could the Society be making more of Heritage Open Days?

There are pieces about Allhallowgate Yards and the Ripon Camp too.

Enjoy reading. *Christopher Hughes*





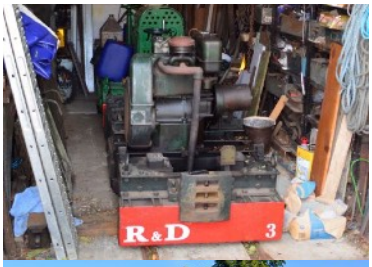
Heritage Open Days
September 2021

Chapel of St Mary Magdalen (the leper chapel), Magdalens Road.
Saturday 18 September: 10.00 - 16.00



Visitors will have an opportunity to see around an ancient Chapel built at the beginning of the 12th century, updated in the 14th century and altered very little since. It is a Grade I listed building and remains in regular use.

Ripon & District Light Railway
10-11 Canal Side, Dallamires Lane.
Sundays 12 and 19 September: 11.00 - 16.00





Part of Ripon's rich industrial heritage, this museum of portable light railways displays some of the machinery used on it along with artefacts, memorabilia, signs and rolling stock.

The Gazebo
Blossomgate.
Sunday 12 September: 14.00-16.00



The Gazebo is one of the undiscovered treasures of Ripon, and is a wonderful reminder of 18th-century life in the city, built to give a view of the countryside and beautifully restored.

St Wilfrid's Catholic Church,
Coltsgate Hill.
Friday 10 September: 10.30 - 16.00
Saturday 11 September: 10.30 - 16.00
Sunday 12 September: 12.00 - 16.00
Thursday 16 September: 10.30 - 16.00



St Wilfrid's Catholic Church was opened in 1862 to serve the growing Catholic population of the area.This Grade II* listed building is by the architect Joseph Aloysius Hansom. Edward Pugin designed the reredos, the stained glass windows are by Pollen and the mosaic medallions by Antonio Salviati. The church re-opened in July this year after extensive restoration.

Fountains Abbey & Studley Royal (National Trust)
Saturday 18 September: 1000-1630
(estate closes at 6pm and car parks at 6:30pm)



A World Heritage Site encompassing monastic ruins and a Georgian water garden, visitors will get free entry. Discover the bright and bold work of artist Steve Messam with the outdoor installation These Passing Things.

Nearby, Clifton Castle will welcome HODs visitors on Friday 17 September with tours of the house at 1100 and 1430 (booking required). For more information on this and if you're going to be further afield at this time, have a look at the HODs website www.heritageopendays.org.uk

Ripon Spa Quarter Exhibition



Our latest project to showcase the Ripon Re-Viewed historic images collection is an exhibition of six information boards in and around Spa Gardens to celebrate the city's Spa Quarter.

The boards display images of the quarter and together they show the importance of this area of the city centre. With the support of Harrogate Borough Council, the boards will be in place over the summer and autumn. They are already attracting a lot of interest and we hope that they will increase understanding of this significant but sometimes overlooked part of Ripon.

Particular thanks go to Sue Wood, HBC Horticultural Officer, for permission to display the boards; to Mandy Whitehead, Jill Freeman and Jane Furse for their help with the images and captions, to Paul Kershaw for designing the graphics and to Dave Rushton and Andrew Burns for help with installation.
Richard Taylor





Ripon Camp

How special is Ripon barracks? As vacating the camp draws closer (although planning permission for redevelopment has yet to be granted), RCS members have been researching this important subject. What they've found is fascinating and important. This is a brief summary.

In December 1914 the War Office announced the establishment of a large camp for between 30,000 - 40,000 troops in Ripon. This "camp" was actually two – the North and South Camps - crossed by the Laver and Skell rivers.

For some while it has been possible to construct a map of the astonishing extent of the WW1 camp, so much of which is lost under south Ripon. Although much of the land was returned to agricultural use after WW1 (the extensive light railway being dismantled in the early 1920s) the military road remains in place from Galphay Lane.

It might be thought that it would be almost impossible to see any vestiges of the lost camp, other than in concrete works in the Laver and Skell and a few present day field boundaries. Whilst there are known WW1 concrete abutments on the River Skell just beyond Hell Wath Cottage, the camp's military road today bridges the Laver and this site and its surroundings contain extensive remains of WW1 alterations to the river including a weir, sluice with concrete slipway, concrete bridging island and the remains of structures relating to previous bridges.

Evacuation of the Military School of Engineering to Ripon in September 1940 and the important role that the Laver Banks area served in training troops and testing new bridging equipment, especially the Bailey Bridge itself, suggests that a number of bridges could have been built in this location.



Photos are from private collections other than the Twynham Hut (in use in Aden) which is from Wikipedia.

The decision immediately after WW2 to develop a new range of armoured vehicles was followed in 1946 by that to commission a new fixed Heavy Girder Bridge. The first reported example in the country was constructed upstream of Hewick Bridge on the River Ure in 1956, showing that Ripon was still being used as a commissioning and testing centre

The current Heavy Girder Bridge crossing the Laver was erected in 1992 when a Bailey Bridge was removed. Of all the bridge sets produced, it is thought that this is the only surviving example in England. There is a high potential for concealed archaeological remains and evidence of the continuing evolution of military bridging and associated river bank/bed alterations.

Deverell and Claro barracks of course remain today along with the Laver Banks training grounds. The Ripon Neighbourhood Plan argued for keeping much of the Claro Barracks buildings but as we know that's not found favour with Homes England and Harrogate Borough Council.

Deverell Barracks is characterised by the huts, the neighbourhood plan seeking retention of a representative example. We now understand that a few of these are more important than originally thought. Known as the Twynham Hut, this was the successor to the Nissen Hut and was more commodious, reflecting improvement in post-war living standards. Developed in 1959, it was trialled in Cyprus in 1960 and used subsequently in Aden, Libya, Northern Ireland and on Ascension Island.

A characteristic of the huts was their ability to be dismantled and re-used and they are closely associated with the Corps of Royal Engineers as this had responsibility for their construction during operational conditions.

Of the hundreds of Twynham Huts produced the only other traceable examples were destroyed recently, leaving only the four at Deverell Barracks to record this significant development in military accommodation.

This is an extensive subject. What role should Ripon Civic Society have in recording and interpreting the city's military heritage? Should we be campaigning for a military museum incorporating some of these identified assets?

Allhallowgate Yards







The yards are an action area in the Ripon neighbourhood plan Northern Quarter. They are the purple area shown on the extract from the plan. The green area G1 is the adjoining Temple Gardens. Why does this area need attention? Simply because it looks unsightly, unfinished and offers opportunities for improvement. Decent boundary walls or railings would help better define the public realm. There's also a planning permission for a small housing development which could make it feel less anonymous.

The telephone exchange is of its time. Similar examples can be seen in other towns across the country. It was built to accommodate different technology and with modern equipment one cannot help but wonder how much vacant space might now exist inside and what potential there might be for other uses. Access to digital technology across less populated parts of North Yorkshire is a concern so it will be nice to find out what role this building may be playing.

Finkle Park is the idea for the site of the demolished Council flats opposite the Workhouse behind the hoardings which have overstayed any welcome they might once have enjoyed. Remember the Ripon Reviewed display? This would be an important addition to city centre public realm. Perhaps a suitable way to commemorate the Platinum Jubilee?







Celebrating heritage

Celebrating our distinctive heritage is a recent report prepared for the York and North Yorkshire Local Enterprise Partnership and Historic England. Prepared by LUC (Land Use Consultants Ltd) it reports on how the historic environment of York, North Yorkshire and the East Riding can achieve good growth.

This is an interesting read arguing that the historic environment is more than the sum of its parts which it addresses in chapters on Market towns, Coastal towns, the Lowland agricultural landscape, Estate landscapes, The Uplands and York.

Ripon doesn't get a mention (cathedral cities?) but the lessons from other places should be useful in setting up the new organisations and networks that need to flow from the unitary county council from 2023. (We are in discussion with current NYCC staff about the potential role of civic societies in the county.)







What are these?
Answer on the last page.

Updates

We hear that work is proceeding well on the *Ripon Renewal* masterplan for the city centre. Unfortunately the presentation which would have been reported in this edition has been deferred into September. Hopefully more can be revealed next time.

Work has been going on behind the scenes with the *Ripon Barracks* planning application. Highways England has been involved with the traffic assessment. Cycling and walking into the city centre continues to be studied. We hear that it's likely that parts of the planning application will be resubmitted and republished for comment. This will be up to Harrogate Borough Council.

Commenting on *planning applications* goes up and down from month to month. Recently we've made representations on:

- details of the proposal for housing and work space at Hutton Bank
- the appeal against lack of a decision at the vacant site at North Street / Coltsgate Hill
- a proposed agricultural building in the Bishopton Local Green Space
- enclosure at Highfield House put up without planning permission.

We did make comments on the practicality of the public art works for the Rome to Ripon project which, not unexpectedly, weren't too well received.

We realised that we're looking more at sustainability. Questioning whether existing buildings can still be used rather than demolished and how projects are minimising energy use, such as at Moss Arcade.

We are bemused at the lack of progress with implementing the planning permission for the former *Girls High School*. The owner assures us of best intentions but the continued lack of action does invite scepticism. Winter is coming and the building needs urgent protection. Can the owner and Borough Council ensure that this happens?

The lack of a decision at *Tower Road* at the time of writing continues to be a puzzle. The applicant has reduced the number of houses several times but we still argue that as this is a designated Local Green Space refusal should be straightforward. It obviously isn't for the Borough Council.

Footnotes

Our **Annual General Meeting** will the held on Thursday 4th November.

Some of the Committee members will be standing down this time so if anyone reading this fancies a spell at helping take us forward then please let the Chairman know by introducing yourself using info@riponcivicsociety.org.uk Age is no barrier!

Our constitution was drafted before this era of online meetings was thrust upon us. We need now to amend various provisions to provide us with more flexibility. We need to be quorate to agree amendments so the AGM will need to be in person in order to agree alternative arrangements. The Secretary will be sending out the proposals shortly for members' consideration.

The Society's **Design Awards** event was unable to be held in 2020 for obvious reasons. We had started the process to hold it this year but for several other reasons have decided to defer this to 2022.
Meanwhile, if you would like to make a nomination for a project that you think should be considered, these are the initial categories:

- New Building
- Restored Building
- Environmental Improvement
- Craft Exemplar
- Sustainability
- High Street revitalisation
- Physical well-being and regeneration

Please send nominations to info@riponcivicsociety.org.uk

What are these?
The white boxes recently fitted to lighting columns in and around the city centre are the manifestation of the public wi-fi network project being delivered by NYnet for North Yorkshire County Council as part of its digital infrastructure programme. Important as this is, RCS has expressed concern that this equipment is unsightly in the conservation area. NYnet has taken this up with the manufacturer who have stated that not only is white the only colour but also that painting the equipment would affect its performance and crucially render the warranty void. At least we know.