RIPON CIVIC SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER - JANUARY 2022



2018 Design Award winners



Into a New Year. Best wishes.

Now is the time to confront the delay to our biennial design awards with *Design Awards 2022*. Having committed to the awards event this April and despite having informally collected several possible candidates already, January sees a formal request for suggestions. Readers' ideas are invited for projects completed in the Ripon area from 2018 to help the Society's Committee in compiling the long list for projects in the following categories:

The Hazzard Silver Cup for the Best New Building
The Price Flagon for Best Restored Building
The Younge Rose Bowl for Best Environmental Improvement
The Craftsmanship Shield for Best Craftsmanship
The Taylor Plate for the Best Contribution to City Centre Revitalisation
The Sustainability Award

Please send as much information as you can by 31st January 2022 to info@riponcivicsociety.org.uk or by post to Ripon Civc Society c/o The Workhouse Museum, Allhallowgate, Ripon HG4 1LE.

Details of the awards event to be held on Thursday 7 April will be published in March. Please reserve the date if you plan to attend.

The principal article in this edition is *Ripon in Brick*. You can read as well about Heritage at Risk, some updates and the second in our full stop series.

Enjoy reading. *Christopher Hughes*

Ripon in Brick

There's always been brick. From the earliest civilisations of the middle east and beyond to today's ubiquitous housing estates, the regular rectangular block has provided a convenient method of providing shelter. Suitable for decorated high status building as much as the humble abode, brick has featured across the continents. This is the briefest of accounts of brick in Ripon drawn from a recent presentation to Ripon Civic Society by Mick Stanley (but in no way attempting to do justice to its extent and scope).

Brick is England has a long heritage, notably St Albans Cathedral, a Norman church initially completed in 1115, built from bricks and tiles saved from the ruins of Roman Verulamium.





The magnificent Tattershall Castle, in Lincolnshire, built in 1443 in bricks fired locally by Bawdwin Docheman, a German Brekmaker and Breckmason, shows an early use of brick in high status building, tradition that would develop further in Tudor and Jacobean times.

Brick would have appeared in Ripon from the sixteenth century and most likely before. A sweeping generalisation perhaps but one explained by the increase in trading links through mediaeval mercantile activity with northern Europe. This influence can be seen for example in the North Bar at Beverley where a Northern European Brick Gothic style uses crow-stepped parapets and blind recesses.



While high status buildings used stone, the humble would have been wood framed. In 1697 Celia Fiennes commented …
***From Knarsborough we went to Rippon a pretty Little market town mostly built of Stone, 8 mile, a Large Market place with a high Cross of severall Stepps;* … Yet by that time Ripon was seeing already the significant use of brick, notably Minster House and Ripon Old Hall. Thorpe Prebend House, although of C16 timber origins, was clad in brick around 1700.**





Courtesy of Ripon City Council collection

Where stone was not readily available or expensive to quarry, clay extraction and firing could provide an effective and local alternative. Firing of clay followed long established traditions and produced a cheap option for cottages and farmstead buildings.

Brickyards have been recorded in eastern England from C14. As the demand for brick grew so did the size of brickyards, some expanding and surviving for long periods while others quickly ceased operation.

The pottery at Littlethorpe is an example of this local tradition for Ripon.

(Ordnance Survey map extract courtesy National Library of Scotland.)



Example of a traditional vernacular cottage terrace



The city's growth as seen in houses for the gentry and public buildings reveals the use of brick in late Georgian times.





The Victorian period added another dimension with the coming of the railway and the ability to export higher value brick products around the country thereby diluting vernacular building traditions and local distinctiveness.

Victorian public buildings in brick include the Workhouse, the latter in its curiously archaic Flemish gable style, church and chapels.




While workers cottages and smaller terraced housing continued to follow a simple, vernacular tradition, higher status terraces would have contrasting brickwork dressing to cornices and openings.





The Edwardian spate of city improvements can be seen in the distinctive use of smooth faced imported engineering brick. The Spa Baths is the prime example of this period along with lengths of Fishergate, Queen Street and Westgate.





Inspecting brick masonry reveals differences in construction. Before the C20 requirement for cavity walling, brick could be laid in forms known as bonding, bricks being laid either with the smaller face - the header - or with the larger, longer face - the stretcher facing outwards. Arising from trading between England and northern European countries it is not surprising that a prominent option should be the Flemish bond (left) with alternating headers and stretchers on each layer or course. The English bond used alternate courses in header and stretcher.




A cheaper variation was the English garden wall bond (right) found with a single header course and several courses of stretchers, often five but varying from three to as many as seven. The variety of brick bonds is a study in itself.

Sadly, the need to maintain brick walling by pointing has resulted in the easier practice of rendering. Brickwork also can appear dull and there are attempts by painting to freshen the appearance and in commercial use to draw attention to a particular property. Both practices are disappointing and it is heartening to see restoration and cleaning of brickwork.

Next time you pass a brick wall, do take a closer look. Even contemporary brickwork sometimes rises to the occasion.

Heritage at Risk

Historic England produces an annual assessment of heritage assets at risk. This is prepared for each of its operational regions and by local authority area; Ripon falling within the North East and Yorkshire and Harrogate district.
Reports include the asset's current condition, vulnerability to risk and the trend of the risk. There are no reports within the City of Ripon.

The assets at risk in the Harrogate district comprise:

Listed Buildings -
Church of St Mary, Harlow Terrace, Harrogate:
Temple of Victory with raised enclosure, Allerton Park, Flaxby;
Orangery with flanking walls, bothies and pavilion (Ripley Castle), Ripley;
Listed Place of Worship -
Church of St James, Wide Howe Lane, Baldersby;
Scheduled Monuments -
Dob Park Lodge, Dob Park Lane, Weston;
Cairnfield, enclosures, boulder walling, hollow way and carved rocks toward edge of Snowden Carr centred at 370m south east of Crag House, Askwith;
Henge Monuments north of Nunwick, Hutton Conyers;
Hutton Hall (site of), Hutton Conyers;
Round barrow in Harland's Plantation, Hutton Conyers;
Mediaeval monastic fishponds immediately east of Park House, Markenfield with Wallerthwaite;
Howe Hill motte and bailey castle, North Deighton;
Registered Parks and Gardens -
Allerton Park, Allerton Mauleverer with Hopperton / Flaxby;
Swinton Park, Swinton with Warthermarske;
Registered Battlefield -
Battle of Boroughbridge, Boroughbridge / Langthorpe / Milby

The four scheduled monuments close to Ripon are in a declining condition (except for Hutton Hall (site of) which is stable).
The two registered parks and gardens are risk assessed as Allerton Park improving and Swinton Park stable.

You can find out more by visiting www.historicengland.org.uk

Updates

1. North Yorkshire County Council has recently completed the installation of 50,400 LED streetlights as a climate-friendly alternative to traditional lamps. This was fundamental to North Yorkshire's two national parks - the Yorkshire Dales and North York Moors - achieving International Dark Sky Reserve status last December - one of the largest areas in Europe to be simultaneously designated. The council's carbon footprint will be reduced as well.

2. Did you know that the Highway Code is being updated?
The'Hierarchy of Road Users' is being introduced which is a concept that places those road users most at risk in the event of a collision at the top of the hierarchy. The hierarchy does not remove the need for everyone to behave responsibly. The road users most likely to be injured in the event of a collision are pedestrians, cyclists, horse riders and motorcyclists, with children, older adults and disabled people being more at risk.
Changes to the Highway Code called Rule H1, Rule H2, and Rule H3 are planned to come into effect from 29 January 2022 can be found online.
We are all road users in one form or other, so please be aware.

3. If you are at all interested in the work of the government Department for Levelling Up, Housing, Communities and Local Government you might like to view the meeting of the Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee held on 8 November 2021 with questions to Rt Hon Michael Gove MP, Secretary of State at the Department.
Go to www.parliament.uk and search under Committees.
A White Paper on Levelling Up is anticipated shortly and a new Planning Bill is expected.

4. We support Civic Voice as the national organisation promoting the interests of the civic society movement, especially with government.
The recent Civic Voice AGM passed the motion (supported by 93% of civic societies who voted) that if the Planning Bill removes the right of individuals to make representations at the individual planning application stage, Civic Voice commits to working with the APPG Civic Societies to:
(1) Amend the Planning Bill to prevent this from happening, but, if it does,
(2) We commit to building on the excellent work of civic societies by working to ensure civic societies are named as 'formal representatives' at the local plan stage.
In the event that the government takes a different format to a Planning Bill, notably given a Levelling Up White Paper, Civic Voice will adapt these steps for the campaign for Civic Societies to have a formal voice in the planning system.

Full Stop

Picking up the last newsletter's piece on *trulli*, here's another brief offering of something a bit different.

Ripon's three museums - Workhouse, Prison and Police and Courthouse - are branded as Yorkshire's Law and Order Museums and they are together unique. To these we may add also the Ripon Liberty heritage, sanctuary and the Cathedral's consistory court.

There is another small town that has taken a comprehensive approach based on its own set of heritage assets and their role in Crime and Punishment - Oakham in Rutland.

So, instead of a cathedral, Oakham has a castle, or rather a fortified manor house built 1180-90. The surviving great hall is recognised as one of the finest examples of domestic Norman architecture in England (the earliest surviving example of an aisled stone hall in the country).

Oakham Castle is said to be the longest-running seat of justice in England and was first recorded being used as a court in 1229. It is still used as a Crown Court, with proceedings being held in the castle every two years.

There are still stocks in Oakham but the pillory has gone. The gibbet is also long gone, but the nearby appropriately named Swooning Bridge, a listed building, remains.

Justices visited Oakham and their lodgings remain in the elegant late C17 Yule House listed II*.

The Old Gaol remains in name only at Gaol Street, its Victorian successor being traced in Oakham School as are remains of the workhouse.









