RIPON CIVIC SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER - MAY 2022

We now know the results of the local government elections for the new North Yorkshire Council and Ripon City Council. This will be a curious period while the transfer of services is arranged in time for the handover from Harrogate Borough Council and North Yorkshire County Council next April. Will current service delivery be distracted?

Harrogate Borough Council straddled two parliamentary constituencies. How will our MP respond to this new dynamic? Will there be a more important relationship with Skipton now?

In the last edition I mentioned the prospect of community networks being a means for market towns to have more of a voice. How will Ripon's voice be heard and what will it sound like? We'll watch the coming months with interest. The experience of civic societies across North Yorkshire will be interesting.

The results of our Design Awards are reported. It was a pleasure for Ripon Mayor Eamon Parkin to present the trophies, polished and restored by David and Irene Hall.



A thought about new housing from the awards is that the small, niche builder is still capable of finding sites in the city on which to provide attractive and sustainable homes. Perhaps the volume builders circling Ripon could learn lessons from them about how to produce places where people want to live and dwellings fit for these energy and climate challenged times.

Regards *Christopher Hughes*

Design Awards 2022

The Ripon Civic Society Design Awards were presented on 7 April at the Workhouse Museum. A team had been set up to receive and assess well over thirty projects for the awards. Around sixty people attended from the projects teams, other guests and members. These are the winners.

The Taylor Plate -
39 Market Place South, Ripon



In previous years this has been awarded for shopfront design but with the agreement of the donors this year we considered the city's hospitality offer and vitality of the city centre. This is especially important owing to the dramatic effect which the pandemic had on this sector and for us to see the investment over recent months by Sterne Properties which is a true statement of confidence in the city.
The appearance of the former NatWest Bank on the Market Place has been the cause of disappointment for some people over the years. The building now trades at street level as the Claro Lounge with the apartments above successfully occupied. The new window pattern reflects the traditional appearance of many upper floors around the Market Place.

The Sustainability Award -
The Stoneyard, Stonebridgegate, Ripon



Development of three houses on a small unprepossessing piece of wasteland, Huis Homes showed commitment in place-making with a distinctive yet careful design which balances internal and external space. Many eco-friendly features to reduce energy consumption and minimise waste are standard and construction specifications require zero waste, reduced plastics and local materials sourcing.

The Younge Rose Bowl for Best Environmental Improvement - High Batts Nature Reserve, West Tanfield

This nature reserve has been established for nearly fifty years, but continues to be developed with the Pennycroft Restoration project being the latest stage. The site is mixed woodland with open clearings. Sand and gravel extraction continues nearby. Restored quarrying provides an angling lake ands conservation area. The reserve is adjacent to arable and interspersed with game belts.There are three hides and a viewing mound.
The reserve is managed to optimise biodiversity, conserve habitats and species as agreed with Natural England. Monitoring and recording of species and birds, mammals and insects are fundamental activities.
Education and community engagement are well established.



The Craftsmanship Award - 'Fallen Angels' at Ripon Cathedral

This project is the repair and restoration of the mediaeval misericords by Bainbridge Conservation which draw tens of thousands of visitors. The project was prompted by the fall of one angel directly above the choir stalls.
70 angels have been restored by vacuuming, dusting and a laborious cleansing with cotton swabs before a beeswax compound is applied.

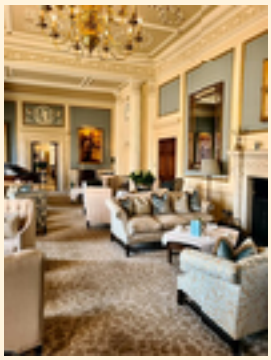


Every now and then the Design Awards are presented with a project that displays such an extensive competence and capability that it might be said to ‘sweep the board’. Such it has been in 2022 with the Grantley Hall Hotel and Wellness Centre. Not only did this remarkable project attract two commendations but it won three awards outright, notably the Helen Whitehead Cup for Best Overall Project. Architects were Bowman Riley.

The Price Flagon for the Best Restored Building

The Hall has seen a variety of owners and uses throughout its three hundred and more years, some better placed than others perhaps to respect and enhance its qualities. The exceptional level of the latest investment in restoration is remarkable.









Hazzard Silver Cup for the Best New Building

The accommodation and wellness retreat wing, the Three Graces Spa, is carefully composed alongside the original mansion. The internal planning makes for interesting spaces when moving through the building and the relationship with the outdoors.
However the opportunity to create the Garden Pavilion, a bespoke building for restaurant, private lounge, after-hours club has provided the architect with a special opportunity for a unique and memorable building.

The John Whitehead Award for Civic Excellence - Stuart Martin MBE

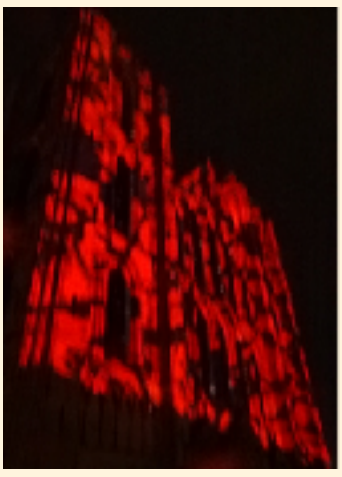
It is with this award that Ripon Civic Society attempts to promote and recognise, in accordance with our Constitution, the concept of civic pride in Ripon.
Despite our understandable focus on building and landscape this gives us the opportunity to think more laterally.
It's helpful to reflect on the winner of the John Whitehead Award in 2018. On that occasion we gave the award to the National Trust in encouragement of its public art initiatives under the Follies programme.

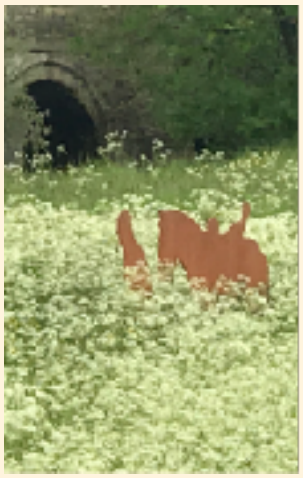
Shortly after our awards in 2018 the nation was reflecting upon the centenary of the Armistice. We had noticed the large art work in the cathedral of Fields of Mud / Seeds of Hope exhibition by local artists Dan Metcalfe and Jeanne Mundy. We later became aware of the metal profiles of the First World War characters. The knitting of the many thousands of poppies festooned the city and the Society had been involved in the artwork projected on the west front of the cathedral through the Ripon Reviewed historic photographic image collection.

Although we weren't able to hold awards in 2020 we kept the Armistice in mind and we believe that it still remains in the minds of the Ripon community. The poppies do appear from time to time. Accordingly we looked where the energy in coordination of the vision came from and, as in many cases, it's down to a very small number of people, yet with a lot of people helping and coming on board.

So to remember Ripon's recognition of the Armistice we presented the John Whitehead award for Civic Excellence to Stuart Martin in the full knowledge that Stuart brings together a team of dedicated colleagues and partners from across the city. We should like him to hold the John Whitehead Award for Civic Excellence for not only his own extraordinary efforts but also for those with him.







For the record there were several projects that received commendations which we should make space to mention.

At the head of this edition I mentioned the niche house builder and the role that might be played by them in Ripon. The projects at Cathedral Meadows and Low Mill Mews in Ripon in particular deserve mention.





Private owners have also commissioned accomplished work with a private house at Asenby and restoration at Palace Road, Ripon of particular note.





Photo courtesy of owner

The scale of the Grantley Hall project somewhat overshadowed that of Red House on Palace Road. However this comprehensive scheme, also by Grantley's architects Bowman Riley, has drawn together building restoration and new building in place-making of this residential community of 59 new homes. The drawing of architectural language from the original building yet incorporating new buildings of a contrasting approach has been successful through respecting scale and layout, especially the retention of mature trees within the parkland setting.







Excellent craftsmanship was evident in the Grantley Hall restoration and Saint Wilfrid's Catholic Church was revealed as well to have achieved high standards in the restoration of the reredos, high altar and window glazing.
Further work is anticipated in the not too distant future which we trust will continue this achievement.



Updates

Ripon Cathedral Renewed

Members of the Committee met recently with the Dean to hear about the new proposal for a standalone building north of Minster Road.



At the time of writing the new proposal is on display in the cathedral along with updating from the 2020 south side proposal, explanations and a model.

Society members are free to make individual comments to the Cathedral. The Committee will be responding formally to the Dean.

News of other projects

Clotherholme

A meeting was held in early April with Homes England and the Defence Infrastructure Organisation to explore how potential and proposals for military heritage might be incorporated. More information about the Ripon Barracks continues to be revealed. What is much less clear is how military heritage may be included in the current planning application.

Ripon Renewal

This city centre project has gone quiet. No information is available. Whether this arises from local government elections or the coming reorganisation is not known.

City centre properties.

Work is underway on restoration of the former Lloyds Bank for private offices.

Listed building applications have been received for the restoration and adaptation of the former Leeds Building Society offices and 19 Kirkgate retaining ground floor commercial activity and providing new and improved housing units. Confidence in the city centre.

Full Stop

Ripon Museum Trust at 40.

This was the title of Richard Taylor's talk to Society members on 5 May. Likening developing the three museums to eating an elephant - one bite at a time of course - he took the audience through the vision, ambition and opportunities seized by the original Society Members who initiated, step by step, what has become the Trust as we know it today.

The Trust is holding a collection of events and activities throughout the year. One is to collect forty items that are significant to various people and organisations - Ripon Civic Society is pleased to have been invited.

What we have chosen for the Trust's consideration is the Prison and Police Museum. This is because of the Society's interest in buildings and architecture. The museum was the first to be developed by the Trust and therefore holds a special affection.
There is a further reason for our choice. This is how it associates Ripon with the formalising of the architectural profession. Our green plaque explains that the design is by Thomas de Grey, Third Lord Grantham and the first President of the Royal Society of British Architects.



Finally, a new book has been published by Ripon resident John Richmond on his reflections in life and times in the city. Copies are understood to be available at Little Ripon Bookshop.