RIPON CIVIC SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER SEPTEMBER / OCTOBER 2022

As I write this edition I must ask forbearance with more on weather. It's the heat, of course. Probably by the time you read this concern will have moved onto flood management. Yet there's no doubt that while we might have enjoyed the green of early July, we may now be looking out on parched fields and gardens and the dark green and brown of drooping foliage and wonder what the autumn will display.

September sees the return of Heritage Open Days. Richard Taylor has kindly written about this year's programme and it's good to see new destinations amongst several familiar places. Thanks to all those who are welcoming visitors to their properties.

Our talk last March by Neill Clayton on *Ripon Industry Past and Present* has provoked further thoughts and provides the principal piece in this edition.



News of work on key development projects is welcome. Progress to restore the Spa Hotel can now be seen and we look forward to its re-opening in due course.

The Committee has agreed to keep on with our capability to hold meetings online as required, but we meet in person for our autumn talks shown on the last page.

Arrangements for the new North Yorkshire Council continue. Read about the latest news of Devolution Deals and Community Networks..

One aspect of the pandemic which has to be dealt with is the amendment of the Society's constitution to allow for online meetings and for a smaller quorum. Paradoxically, to do this we need the existing quorum of members to meet in person, so we'll be encouraging members to attend this year's AGM on 3 November. Paul Kershaw has agreed to talk with us about *Illustrations in Ripon's Early Travel Guides*. Please make that diary note.

Enjoy reading

Christopher Hughes

Ripon at Work

In March 2022 Neill Clayton spoke with Society members about his understanding of how Ripon has grown over the centuries and the industries that have flourished from period to period. Neill's thesis is that there have been three eras when significant amounts of capital came to be invested in Ripon.

First came Wilfrid in the seventh century establishing the original settlement. Next came the Archbishops of York in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.





Construction of the first ecclesiastical buildings and their mediaeval successors was an elaborate and lengthy business involving many craft skills and trades which themselves demanded services to support the enterprises. Not only is this revealed in Ripon Cathedral but also in the ruins of Fountains Abbey.



The archbishops initiated the establishment of Ripon with burgage plots which can still be discerned today in and around the Market Place. (Our information panels at each end of Lavender Alley explain this in detail.)

The third era was that of the Aislabies and their descendants throughout the eighteenth century and eventually into the early twentieth century.

The Aislabies are well known for their vision and creation of the Studley water gardens and wider landscapes in the area. These required substantial design and construction effort. Eventually their presence initiated business in service trades to meet emerging nineteenth century tourism.

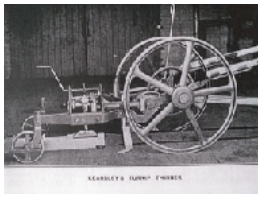


These eras are a fleeting introduction to Neill's thesis. He adds requirements for raw materials, power, transport, stability and customers. Together these factors have created Ripon's industry and work for an expanding local population.

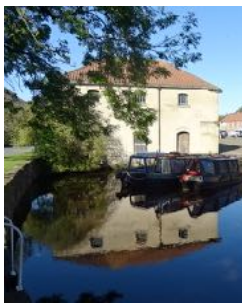
Industries change over time; for example, Ripon had a thriving cloth industry in the 15th century; others evolve such as varnish and paint.

Ripon became known for the quality of its rowels; this horse rider's aid remaining emblematic of the city today along with the ubiquitous horn.






Ripon also provided services such as tanning and brewing and grew to meet demands from the surrounding area for manufactured products, especially arising from the mechanisation of agriculture. This specialism, from the extensive Kearsley Foundry on North Street, continues with the engineering businesses of today. The Kearsley warehouse, though now derelict, survives.




Ripon was connected to the outside world by the canal, turnpike roads and the railway with its station and goods yard (but today is really only apparent in the bypass over-bridge at Fisher Green).

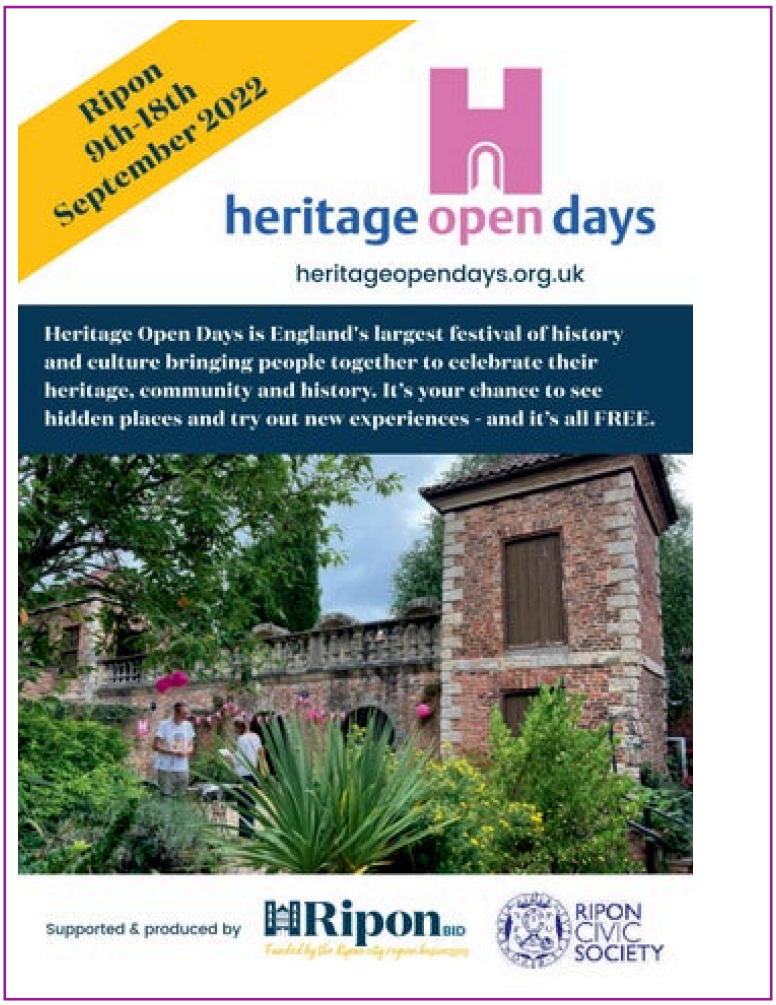
A once prominent example of economic diversification in Ripon was development of the College, the railway complementing this through grand housing along North Road.

Changes in the economy have resulted in changes in Ripon's footprint. While the Archbishops established their church on higher ground followed by the Market Place, industry and trades, especially following the post- C14th pandemic, would be found along the River Skell in water-powered mills. Records showing a mill at Duck Hill as early as 1228, with Bishopton Mill in 1305, North Mill in 1431 and High Mill in 1531.

The path of mill races and ponds is retained today in street names, street patterns and a small number of sites east of the Alma weir where traces of sluice machinery remain. The Society's *Millers' Walk* is a useful guide to this footprint.

So many of Ripon's industrial sites and premises have been redeveloped that it can be hard to imagine the noise, steam, smoke, fumes and congestion that will have accompanied them. Replaced by shopping and housing we now look to business parks on Boroughbridge Road to find today's jobs, and of course commuting and the internet.

Heritage Open Days 2022



Ripon Civic Society is once again pleased to be promoting Heritage Open Days, the annual celebration billed as 'England's largest festival of history and culture'. Volunteers across the country are organising events to provide free access to heritage locations during the ten days from 9-18 September. This year there are 24 events in the Ripon area at 14 locations including some which RCS is facilitating. Thanks to Society member Andrew Curtis for his energy once again making HODs happen.

To spread the word we have joined forces with the Ripon Business Improvement District who have funded a brochure showing the events which is being distributed locally. This is also available digitally on the Society's website:

Heritage Open Days Ripon Events

Please come along to enjoy these free events. They all serve to show just what a rich heritage we have in the Ripon area - a heritage which adds greatly to the area's appeal to residents and visitors throughout the year.

Progress on North Yorkshire Council

Ripon Civic Society supported the single council for North Yorkshire from the start. North Yorkshire Council comes into place on 1st April next year and there is obviously much to be done. The most recent progress report to interested organisations has much to mention. A couple of items are of particular interest.

We wanted a single council to provide a voice for the special character of our rural economy and community, especially the market towns. The importance of both North Yorkshire and City of York Councils working together is important for this voice to be heard not just within Yorkshire as a whole but also at national government level.

On Yorkshire Day came the announcement and signing of a proposed 30-year **Devolution Deal** for York and North Yorkshire with the Government. This could deliver funding for key policies and strategies, providing better roads and public transport, increasing affordable housing, improving education and career opportunities locally, boosting the economy and placing the area at the forefront of climate friendly business growth.

The deal could also give people the chance to directly elect a mayor for York and North Yorkshire - a combined authority. A mayor would be a champion at national level, increase access to new and more funding and perhaps take on responsibilities (such as the Police, Crime, Fire and Rescue Commissioner). Currently, we hear that the deal offer is being reviewed by councillors in York and North Yorkshire and in September they will decide whether to take it forward to public consultation before the end of this year. We trust they will.

Our other interest is in plans for **Community Networks**. We see great potential in these networks and the opportunity for Ripon to show that it has the capacity and capability to take part. The idea is to:
Mobilise communities, unleash energy and ambition and give them a stronger voice;
Be action oriented - developing local priorities and action plans utilising the skills and assets in communities;
Provide a vehicle for inclusive and effective local engagement with communities;
Provide a vehicle for accessing external investment.

A North Yorkshire consultation is to take place between September and January and the first topic, *Lets Talk Local*, will be launched on 19 September. This will help shape community networks. We need to take part. Ripon's voice is not merely that of Ripon City Council, much as it might imagine this to be the case.

Updates

Zero Energy Homes
Ripon Civic Society has been keen to support measures to reduce the energy requirements of the housing stock. We have referred to the *passiv-haus* accreditation scheme in the past and Highfield Coach House was recognised for its sustainability in our 2016 Design Awards

Advice on how to use site planning for energy saving has been promoted within Planning guides for some time. The impacts upon historic buildings have been covered in guidance from Historic England.

In July an important revision to Part L of the Building Regulations came into force. This sets out new requirements for thermal efficiency of buildings with an interim target reduction of 31% in CO2 emissions over standards last set back in 2013.

All new homes that submit plans after June 2022 or have not begun construction before June 2023 must comply with the revision. Air pressure tests will need to be carried out on every new home to ensure air tightness performance is achieved.

It is accepted that it will be difficult to achieve the required CO2 emissions performance through building fabric alone. Accordingly, low or zero carbon heating systems or photovoltaic panels will be required increasingly in new development and for retro-fitting .

Former Girls' High School
As well as works at the Spa Hotel mentioned already, evidence of works at a long-standing concern for the Society appears to have begun. Scaffolding was seen being erected at the derelict building College Road, most recently used as lecture rooms for Ripon College.

After applications to demolish the building were refused, permission was then granted to convert the building to apartments along with a number of new houses within the site.



Let's hope that this is the start we've been waiting for. We'll be watching.

Full Stop

Harrogate Railway Station
Harrogate Civic Society's free exhibition to celebrate 160 years of Harrogate Station has been extended at least until the end of December. This will be held at the station 10.00 am - 3.00 pm.
As well as dealing with the central station, the exhibition also provides detail about the Barber line (taking coal to the gas works of New Park) and the connections that at one time or another radiated from Harrogate to Knaresborough, Pateley Bridge, Wetherby and, of course, Ripon and beyond.

October talk confirmed
We'll be going across the sea to Ireland on 6th October to hear from architect Andrew Burningham about *Belvelly Castle Reborn*. He tells me that this restoration project near Cork will be a challenge - you'll either love it or hate it. Yet that's what we should be about, informed opinion. As usual, please meet at the Workhouse Dining Hall for the 7.30 pm start.

December talk reminder
Our meeting is on 1st December when we'll hear Gail Falkingham explain *Researching Garden History at the North Yorkshire County Record Office*. Attendance arrangements as normal, please. It's not time for a social event but I'm sure we might be able to celebrate the end of a challenging year before we look forward to the next in January.

Civic Voice
Over four hundred civic societies are members of Civic Voice. It's been of concern to hear recently that the organisation's bank account has been compromised. At present the Committee is exploring how it may support Civic Voice so that it can continue its work on behalf of the movement providing an effective channel with Government.

Member survey
Civic Voice has provided a format for civic societies to assess how they carry out their roles. Understanding what matters to members is important and the Committee is putting together a survey to gather members' thoughts. More soon.

The November / December edition will be published following the Annual General Meeting.