RIPON CIVIC SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER May 2024

NEILL IS FIRST TO RECEIVE SOCIETY'S OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTION AWARD



Neill Clayton (right) receives the Outstanding Contribution Award from the Right Worshipful The Mayor of Ripon, Councillor Sid Hawke.

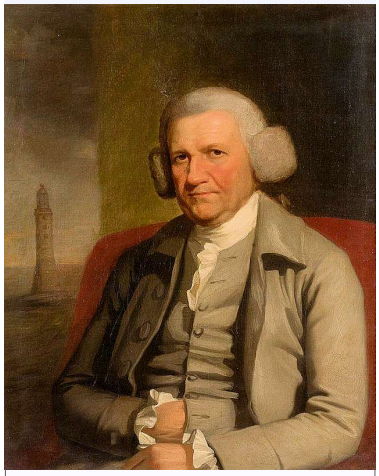
IN OUR RECENT AWARDS we instituted a new one – Outstanding Contribution – to honour an individual who has played a significant role in Ripon and the surrounding area. The first recipient was **Neill Clayton** whose narrow-gauge Ripon and District Light Railway will be familiar to many. Neill was praised for 'his unique knowledge of all things industrial in Ripon and around, always freely given to enquirers, all done with modesty and diffidence'.

Neill was presented with his award at a ceremony in The Workhouse Museum on Thursday 4th April. The Awards recognise good design, craftsmanship and environmental schemes from the area around the city as well as within the city's boundaries.

The Skell Valley Project, which has brought together sixteen collaborative organisations to help create a sustainable future for the 12-mile-long Skell Valley, won both the Sustainability Award and the Helen Whitehead Award for Best Project Overall. The judges were impressed by the range of its ambition and its successes, working not only with environmental professionals but also farmers, landowners, community groups and schools. *(continued on page 2)*

ADVENTURES FOR SUMMER

Although we don't have our regular monthly talks in June, July or August, we can still enjoy ourselves! We have arranged some special delights for our members - a trip on Ripon Canal to celebrate the 300th birthday of John Smeaton (*below*), and a visit to The Lower Ure Conservation Trust. ***Full details are on page 3.***



In this issue

Summer Events	Page 3
Planning Matters	
Cathedral	Page 4
Studley Royal	Page 5
Military heritage	Page 6
Telephone Kiosks	Page 6
Cathedral Plans	Page 4
Missing Pieces	Page 7
Bishop's Palace	Page 7
Programme	Page 8
WHS plan	Page 8
Committee/contacts	Page 8



Westholme Road Barns, Masham, winner of the Best Restored Building category

The Hazzard Cup went to **Maple Nook** on Heckler Lane, which was chosen as Best New Building, and which also won a Highly Commended certificate for its sustainability. The Best Restored building was **Westholme Road Barns** in Masham, which has sympathetically transformed former derelict farm buildings to create an attractive and versatile shop and workplace; it too was Highly Commended for its sustainability. **The Lower Ure Conservation Trust**, which manages the nature reserves around Nosterfield and runs a specialist nursery supplying plants to wetland sites throughout the country, was awarded the Younge Rose Bowl in recognition of Best Environmental Improvement.

The Craftsmanship Shield was won by the new green oak porch on the south side of **St Wilfrid's Catholic Church**, and **The Ripon Inn** was given the Taylor Plate for City Centre Revitalisation in recognition of its recent transformation. The John Whitehead Award, which allows the Civic Society to celebrate worthy local projects, was presented to Ripon Community Link for the **Ripon Walled Garden**, which has developed significantly since enabling the purchase of its site in 2018.

One unusual nomination in this year's Awards was the **ECON E-QCB Electric Gritter**: entirely made in Ripon and partnered with Volvo Trucks, it's the world's first all-electric road gritter, and was awarded a Highly Commended certificate for Sustainability.

David Winpenny, Co-Chair of Ripon Civic Society, says, 'This year's Awards again celebrate the variety and skill, not only of the winners but of all who were shortlisted. Congratulations to everyone; we hope, in two years' time at our next Awards, to see many more schemes that emulate the care, thought and craftsmanship that make this years' Winners, Highly Commendeds and Commendeds worthy recipients of our Awards.'

Below: The Award winners with the Mayor and the Civic Society Co-Chairs after the ceremony (photo: Andrew Curtis)

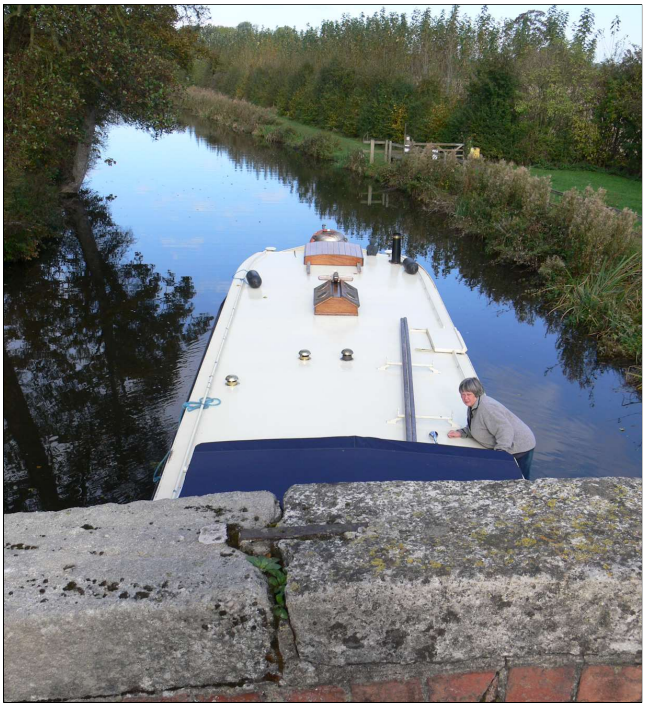


ALL ABOARD FOR TRIPS TO ENLIVEN THE SUMMER

WE HAVE TWO EXCITING OPPORTUNITIES for our members to enjoy themselves during our summer break. Do join us if you possibly can!

Smeaton 300 - Sat 1 June

A celebration of Ripon Canal's engineer



ENGINEER JOHN SMEATON, best known for building the first successful Eddystone Lighthouse, was also the designer of Ripon Canal, opened in 1773. Last September, as part of Heritage Open Days, Ripon Civic Society joined in an event at the Canal Basin to mark the 250th anniversary of the canal.

This year sees another anniversary - that of John Smeaton himself, born 300 years ago in Austhorpe, now part of Leeds. Dubbed by many as 'the father of civil engineering' Smeaton designed bridges, canals, harbours and light-houses throughout the country often using innovative techniques such as adding hydraulic lime in concrete.

To celebrate, the Society has organised a trip on the canal on the afternoon of Saturday 1 June. Ripon Scenic Cruises will take us on an hour-long return journey starting at the canal basin. Tickets cost £10 each and places are limited to RCS members. The first trip at 3.30pm is already fully subscribed. The next will leave at 4.45pm and if there is sufficient demand there will be a further trip at 6pm.. To reserve a seat please email **by 20 May** to: *membership@riponcivicsociety.org.uk*

Lower Ure Conservation Trust - Date to be confirmed

THE LOWER URE CONSERVATION TRUST was one of the category winners in the recent Ripon Civic Society Awards, taking home the Younge Rose Bowl.

As a follow-up we are arranging a guided visit to the Reserve and, exceptionally, to the nationally-acclaimed Wetland Plants nursery which is not normally open to the public.

For logistical reasons we are restricting this to 12 people though, if demand significantly exceeds supply, we will try to schedule a further visit on a future occasion.

Please email *membership@riponcivicsociety.org.uk* if you wish to reserve places -There is no charge for this visit but a suggested donation of £5 per person towards the work of the Trust is invited.

Once numbers are finalised further details will be provided.

Note: The Thornborough Henges are nearby so members might like independently to extend their day by visiting the Central and Southern examples. (The Northern Henge, though now owned by English Heritage is, as Neil Redfern from the Council for British Archaeology told us in our recent talk, not currently accessible).



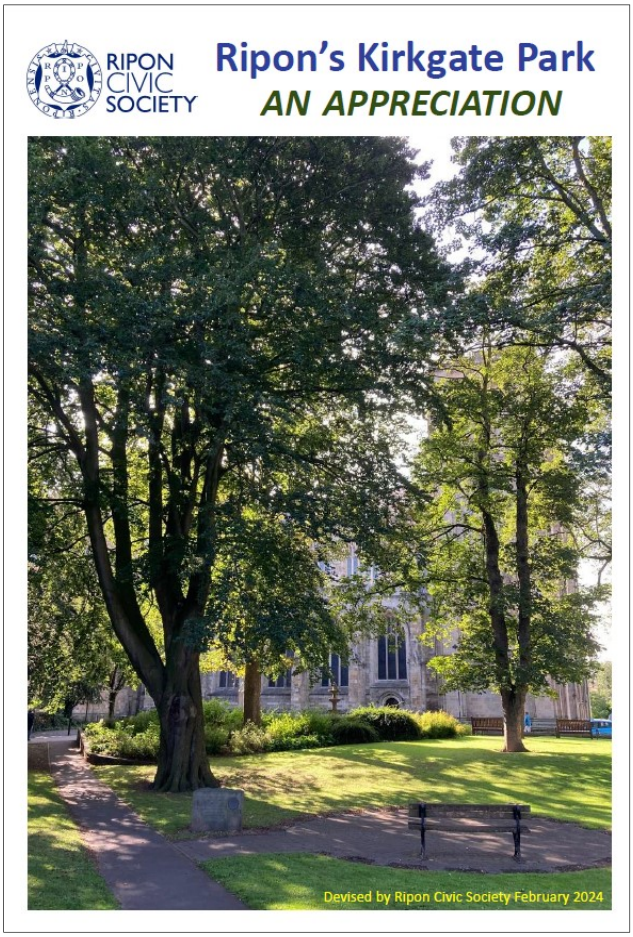
We are also hoping to arrange a garden visit in the near future - details are yet to be finalised, and members will be informed as soon as we know a date.

PLANNING MATTERS

RIPON CATHEDRAL

SINCE THE LAST NEWSLETTER in January the application for a new building to the north of Ripon Cathedral has been 'paused' by the Cathedral Chapter for consultation. It is unclear at the time of writing what the outcome of this consultation has been, though the Dean has promised to 'identify opportunities for areas of creative thinking' and 'potential practical adjustments to the plans'. The Society waits to see what such opportunities and adjustments encompass.

We have added a number of documents about the Cathedral's plans to our initial objections. We have compiled and published '*Kirkgate Park - An Appreciation*' (Kirkgate Park is an historical name for what is often referred to as Minster



Gardens). This sets out the history of the park and carefully lists the legal protections they are under - Scheduled Monument 'of national importance'; within the Ripon Conservation Area and protected under the Ripon Neighbourhood Plan. The area is surrounded by Listed Buildings (the Cathedral, Old Deanery, Courthouse, Old Courthouse) and surrounded on three sides with walls that are also listed. The trees are subject to protective policies within the National Planning Policy Framework and in the Local Plan.Policy Framework and in the Local Plan.

'*Kirkgate Park - An Appreciation*' document was prepared as a direct result of a meeting of members of the Society's Planning Sub-committee and the Dean and his advisers in March as part of the consultation exercise. At this meeting discussion with Oliver Caroe of Caroe Architecture focussed on the significance of surrounding buildings, structures and spaces and the impact of the proposed building upon them. The leaflet has been widely distributed.

We have subsequently produced a smaller leaflet, *'The Ownership of Kirkgate Park - Map and Q&A*'. The map shows how the area fits into the Scheduled Monument and what parts are owned by the Cathedral authorities and how much by the Local Authority - the latter owns the whole of the Kirkgate Park area. The Q&A sets out the current position as regards whether and how the land in local authority ownership might be transferred to the Cathedral if planning is granted permission for the building. There is a present no formal agreement.

Until now the Society has focussed its comments on the inappropriate siting of the building and has not commented on its design. The Committee has decided, however, that it is now opportune to make such comment. We have therefore prepared a critique of the proposed building.

All the documents, and all the letters we have sent to the local planning authority, are available on the North Yorkshire Council planning portal.

We also pointed out that, in relation to a separate (though linked) application for changes to the listed walls around Kirkgate Park the Planning Authority had not, as required, consulted the National Amenity Societies. That has now been done; the Georgian Group (one of the Societies required to be consulted) has heavily criticised the proposals.

STUDLEY ROYAL



WE HAVE PREVIOUSLY COMMENTED to the planning authority on plans by the National Trust for an enlargement and extension to the current building at the Canal Gates entrance to the paid portion of the Studley Royal estate to provide a new restaurant and enhanced visitor facilities. We offered no objection but made points about the unsightly car park in the deer park. We expressed the hope that this would be tackled as part of the application. We also expressed concern about the amount of traffic that currently passes through the village of Studley Roger, which would probably increase if the new building is constructed. We suggested consideration should be given to a new access, perhaps at Lindrick Gate or at another suitable location.

Since our original letter two new considerations have come into the equation. Studley Royal House (the former stable block, converted when the main house burned down in 1946) is for sale. This, it has been suggested, could provide the National Trust with an alternative location for new facilities, especially for people visiting the deer park. A new access road could be created off the road to the visitor centre above Fountains Abbey, and thus remove traffic from Studley Roger.

Second, an important concern about the proposals has been received from the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), which has responsibility under the United Nations for nominating World Heritage Sites (WHS) such as 'Studley Royal Park ncluding the ruins of Fountains Abbey' - the official designation. ICOMOS says, 'the new structure will impact adversely not only on the key water features and main structures that have survived next to the lake and which provide a perfect appreciation of the beauty of the design and its views, as can be seen in the historical succession of images over the lake, but also importantly on the feeling and spirit of a sizable part of the Water Gardens and their circulation paths. This impact will not only be during the construction period as the assessment says, but will be permanent and, will indeed be worse when the visitor centre is open when, without doubt, there will be a need to put in place visual screening, to ensure that the tea gardens are not visible from the lake.'

Such considerations must carry a great deal of weight, opening as they do the possibility of the loss of the WHS status. The National Trust is currently considering this and other matters, and the Society will continue to review its own position.

The WHS Buffer Zone and the Cathedral

Views from the World Heritage Site are protected by a 'Buffer Zone'. This is a narrow corridor of designated land in which there is a presumption that nothing will be allowed to impact on the views. The farthest extent of the buffer zone, which runs northwest, is Blois Hall farm. Ripon Cathedral is the most significant structure in the buffer zone. The Society has looked at the impact of the Cathedral's proposed annex on the key views along the buffer zone. We believe that the proposed building would be visible from the park, particularly along the Oak Avenue from the Stables, and from the wider deer park, and would seriously detract from key views of the Cathedral as a landmark building. The removal of mature trees would also adversely affect the setting of the Cathedral in all these views. The Society has written to the planning authority about these concerns.

See page 8 for more on Studley and Fountains Abbey



MILITARY HERITAGE



RIPON MILITARY HERITAGE TRUST (RMHT) is urging the applicant, Homes England, which is planning the development of the army camps at Clotherholme, to provide space to preserve and display the most important of the surviving huts and other structures, including training bridges, when the camps are redeveloped.

Homes England's plans went before North Yorkshire Council's Strategic Planning Committee on 14th May, with a recommendation for approval. RMHT argued strongly that the report to the committee from the Council's officers in making their recommendation did not adequately protect the historic significance of the site's military heritage, which is of national - indeed international - importance.

Despite pleas from the Trust and the Society to defer a decision, and strong demands from Ripon's two County Councillors (not committee members) to safeguard the military heritage, the Committee unanimously approved the plans, but added a new clause to bring the heritage strategy back to the committee at the subsequent applications.

At the same time, a petition has been launched by the online news service The Stray Ferret to gather at least 500 signatures and have the matter debated at the Area Planning Committee. Members of the Society have already been informed about this petition and been urged to sign. It can be found at *https://edemocracy.northyorks.gov.uk/mgEPetitionDisplay.aspx?ID=18&RPID=3628409&HPID=3628409&LO=1*

Ripon Civic Society will continue to support RMHT in its work.



TELEPHONE KIOSKS REPAIRED



BT HAS REPLACED and repaired the glass of the four telephone kiosks on the Market for repainting only every 10 to 12 years, and were last painted in 2017.

This year is the centenary of the red telephone kiosk. It was designed by Sir Giles Gilbert Scott - who also designed Liverpool Anglican Cathedral and the Battersea Power Station, and was the grandson of Sir George Gilbert Scott who restored Ripon Cathedral in the 1860s.

As the Ripon kiosks, in common with most in these days of the mobile phone, have much less use it would be sensible to have three of them repurposed, as has been done around the country - perhaps as mini-information hubs. One should be kept working for emergencies and for people without mobile phones. The adjacent cabmen's shelter is needs a little timely attention, too, before expensive deterioration again sets in.

MISSING PIECES PROJECT

HERITAGE IS ALL AROUND US. The legacy of what we inherit from the past is part of shaping who we are now. If we value the best of the past and want to safeguard it for the future then it needs protecting and cherishing.

Historic England is the body which maintains the official list of protected sites. As their website notes: There are over 400,000 listed sites across England to discover, including parks, battlefields, shipwrecks, and buildings of all shapes, sizes and ages, from palaces and parks to pubs, petrol stations, and pigsties.

'Yes, but what can I do?' you may ask. Well, HE is calling on anyone who fancies adding information or photographs to the list to take part in their Missing Pieces Project. No specialist knowledge or professional equipment are needed. Details of how to take part are set out at *https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/missing-pieces/*

If you search for 'Ripon Parish' in the Advanced Search facility within the Heritage List there are 284 entries. For Masham there are 70 entries and Sharow has 8. HE holds information on each of them including often a photograph or two but the information is patchy and not always very recent. You can search for the Ripon entries via this link: *https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/advanced-search*

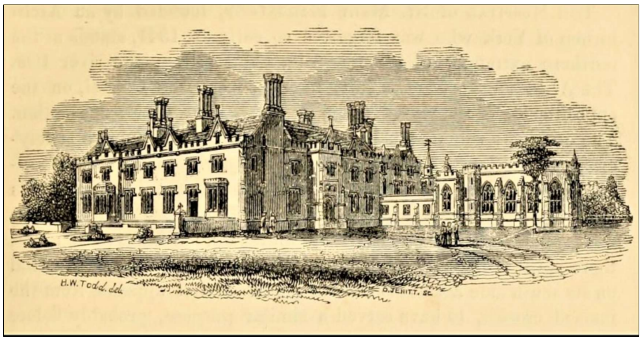


As an example of the incompleteness of the list the entry for Abbot Huby's Wall (*above*) at St Marygate shown at *https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1150146* has no photographs despite the structure having being listed in 1977.

Ripon Civic Society its keen to encourage members to take part in the project and ensure that Ripon's heritage information is as comprehensive as we can get it. The more information we upload the better the resource will be and the more likely that listed items will not be lost or ruined by ignorance. Note that there are restrictions on what can be photographed and these are set out in the website.

If you decide to join in and add some Missing Pieces do let us know how you get on by emailing *info@riponcivicsociety.org.uk*. We can share your experiences in a later newsletter.

BISHOP'S PALACE RESEARCH



Our colleagues at the Yorkshire Gardens Trust (YGT) have a volunteer team researching and recording Yorkshire gardens. They have recently clocked up 75 research reports all of which are available on their website *www.yorkshiregardenstrust.org.uk/research/sites.*

Some are for sites in the Ripon area, most notably that for the former Bishop's Palace on the Masham Road. The report records how the designed landscape was designed by the architect of the Palace, William Railton, with the encouragement and assistance of the first Bishop of Ripon, Charles Longley. It was developed over a century by a succession of bishops before the site was passed to Barnado's Homes.

YGT is noted for its thoroughness of research and this report is no exception. It has detailed descriptions, maps and illustrations including this from J R Walbran's 1851 book *'A Guide to Ripon, Fountains Abbey . . . and several places of interest in their vicinity.'*

OUR PROGRAMME

Here's the programme of talks and events until January 2025.

■ **5 September 2024**: Commonwealth War Graves – *Elizabeth Smith*



■ **6-15 September:** Heritage Open Days *(details in next newsletter)*

■ **3 October**: 'Rattle His Bones' - Burial practices from Prehistory to Victorian - *John Buglass*

■ **7 November** Annual General Meeting, followed by a short presentation by *Mick Stanley* on the completion of the Ripon Historic Map

5 December: 'Spital' - The Medieval Hospital of St. Mary Magdalen in Ripon and the development of early English Hospitals - *Peter Sutton*



■ **9 January 2025** ***(note the date)***: 'Science and Sand' - Charles Piazzi Smyth - *David Winpenny*

All our talks take place at the Workhouse Museum, Allhallowgate, Ripon HG4 1LE, starting at 7.30pm; tea, coffee and biscuits from 7.00pm. Everyone is welcome; non-members pay £3.00.

FOUNTAINS AND STUDLEY MANAGEMENT PLAN LAUNCHED



A NEW MANAGEMENT PLAN for Fountains Abbey and Studley Royal World Heritage Site has been published. It builds on the previous plan, published in 2015, and sets out the aims and policies for the site up to 2029, as well as key actions.

The Plan sets out key themes - Overall Management, including presentation of the site and its visitor infrastructure (*see page 5*) Conservation and Climate Action; Access, Learning and Inspiration; Local Community links and Partnerships.

The Society is pleased to note that the Plan acknowledges the importance of views from Studley Royal deer park, and that 'poorly planned developments outside the boundaries of the site but within its buffer zone could affect the reasons the site is internationally important.'

You can find more details and download the complete plan at *nationaltrust.org.uk/fountainsabbeywhs*

RIPON CIVIC SOCIETY
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THIS YEAR'S COMMITTEE

President - Nigel Rawlinson
Co-Chairs - Richard Taylor and David Winpenny
Treasurer - Paul Jackson
Membership - Alison Brayshaw
Planning Lead - Rachel Wigginton
Website, Talks & Visits, Awards - David Hall
Heritage Open Days - Andrew Curtis
Skell Valley Project, Ripon ReViewed, Ripon Together - Mandy Whitehead
Members - Rachel Greenwood, Ed Jagger (coopted)
Communications - David Winpenny
Newsletters and External Relations - Richard Taylor and David Winpenny