RIPON CIVIC SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER
September 2024

DISCOVER RIPON'S HIDDEN GEMS ON THIS YEAR'S HERITAGE OPEN DAYS



The Gazebo, off Blossomgate, which will be open for Heritage Open Days again this year. This new aerial view was taken by drone by Jon Garbutt for Ripon BID.

EVERY YEAR the national Heritage Open Days allow local people and visitors to find out more about the places in which they live - and here in Ripon we have the chance to visit places not normally accessible to the public, to hear about local initiatives and to discover some of the figures of the past.

Ripon Civic Society, as always is opening **The Gazebo**, the 18th-century garden building off Blossomgate - so if you've not yet been, here's your once-in-a-year chance. This time we have something new - for people who are unable to ascend the steps to the gallery, we have drone footage of the building to be shown on screen at ground level, giving everyone a new perspective on this fascinating building.

The **Library at Ripon Grammar School** will be open, too, allowing access to the building designed by George Corson and a chance to see some of the fascinating archives, including old school photographs and World War I memorabilia.

Also open is the Ripon and District Light Railway on Canal Side, Dallamires Lane, where Neill Clayton, winner of the Society's 'Outstanding Contribution' Award at our ceremony in October, will display this part of Ripon's rich industrial heritage, including light railway engines, memorabilia, signs and machines.



SUBSCRIPTIONS - A REMINDER

*Remember that our membership fees are going up for the first time in more than 20 years! Please make a note to change your Standing Order **now**, if you have one, or to pay the new figure on renewal at the beginning of next year. The new rates are:*

- *Single Membership £20.00*
- *Joint Membership (two people at one address) £30.00*
- *Corporate Membership £75.00*
- *Young Membership remains at £6.00*

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North Bridge - a walk will explore the history of the bridge from its first build to the present day.

At The Workhouse Museum the **Workhouse Garden** will be open, offering the chance to explore the Victorian Kitchen Garden to see the fruits, vegetables and herbs that residents of the Workhouse would have grown and eaten.

This year there are three guided walks, looking at different aspects of the city. The first, **Learning About Ripon**, will visit the sites, past and present, where education has taken place in Ripon, from the site of St Wilfrid's school in the 7th century right up to date.

Then our **North Bridge Walk**, led by Ripon bridges expert Peter Hills, will explore the fascinating history of the city's oldest bridge - and will look at the adjacent Duchess of Kent Bridge, taking the bypass across the river, as well as taking into account the vanished railway viaduct between the two existing bridges.

The third of these perambulations is the **Spa Tree Walk**, led by expert Sue Wood, which will look at the wide variety of trees in Ripon's Spa Quarter.

There's also a talk on a notable figure born in Ripon - the Rev'd George Hudson, a heroic and tragic Victorian mountaineer. Called **The Vicar on the Matterhorn**, the talk includes excerpts from a 1938 feature film about the climb.

There's also the chance to find out more about the Historical Map of Ripon when some of those involved will be able to chat about the process involved in creating it - see page 5 for more information on this new and important publication.

■ For more information about local Heritage Open Days visit https://www.heritageopendays.org.uk and search for Ripon

Heritage Open Days events in Ripon

■ Friday 6 September
RIPON WORKHOUSE GARDEN
10.00-16.00
THE GAZEBO
13.00-16.00

■ Saturday 7 September
THE GAZEBO
13.00-16.00

■ Sunday 8 September
RIPON & DISTRICT LIGHT RAILWAY
10.00-16.00

■ Monday 9 September
RIPON & DISTRICT LIGHT RAILWAY
10.00-16.00

■ Tuesday 10 September
RIPON WORKHOUSE GARDEN
10.00-16.00
WALK - LEARNING ABOUT RIPON
11.00. Meet by the Obelisk, Market Square

■ Wednesday 11 September
NORTH BRIDGE WALK
10.30. Meet at southern end of the bridge

■ Thursday 12 September
TALK - VICAR ON THE MATTERHORN
14.30-15.3. In The Woodshed, The Workhouse Museum

■ Friday 13 September
RIPON WORKHOUSE GARDEN
10.00-16.00
HISTORICAL MAP OF RIPON
10.30-14.30. Ripon Library

■ Saturday 14 September
SPA TREE WALK
10.30-11.30 and 13.30-14.30. Meet inside the gates of Spa Gardens, near the statue of the Marquess of Ripon.

■ Sunday 15 September
Ripon Grammar School Library
13.00-16.00

In addition, several churches and chapels in and around Ripon will be open: look out for local publicity.

RIPON MILITARY HERITAGE TRUST



Huts in part of the 1939 Militia Camp at Clotherholme: this is the best-preserved site, containing the largest variety of specific groups of huts, in the country. These huts and other rare structures are all under the direct threat of demolition.

THE TRUST is in discussion with North Yorkshire Planning Officials, Homes England and the Ministry of Defence about the work to be done to establish a strategy that will secure some of the military heritage of the army camps and training ground at Clotherholme.

The draft Section 106 agreement* for the proposed development includes a sum of £100,000 to assist this work. It has been agreed that a full assessment of the significance of the site and the surviving heritage structures will form the basis of an assessment of options. That represents some positive progress but to date, Homes England has not been prepared to countenance the preservation on site of a group of huts, only of the placing of individual huts on areas of hard standing most of which will only have pedestrian access and all of which currently lack any servicing. Therefore RMHT continues to lobby widely for pressure to be brought on all interested parties to ensure the preservation and commemoration of the site's heritage commensurate with its high significance.

*Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 allows a local planning authority to enter into a legally-binding agreement or planning obligation with a landowner as part of the granting of planning permission. The obligation is termed a section 106 agreement.

PROTECTING LOCAL GREEN SPACES

FOLLOWING THE CREATION of the North Yorkshire Council last year, the first 'Call for Sites' was held in June and July this year. This process allows residents, landowners and other interested parties to put forward sites for a variety of uses. It forms an important part of the development of a new Local Plan for the Authority.

The Society felt that, alongside the usual proposals for development sites, it was important to protect open land from development and take further the work that the Society carried out in securing the inclusion of local green spaces within the Ripon Neighbourhood Plan in 2020. This is now particularly important as council-owned land enjoyed by residents now seems not to be safe from development proposals.

There are strict criteria against which proposals are assessed by the council and a long list was filtered down to those submitted by the Society in July.



Along with the seven sites previously included in the Neighbourhood Plan, a further thirty-one sites across the Ripon Parish have been proposed by the Society, ranging from allotments and play parks to nature reserves and other open land enjoyed by the public.

The council is currently considering submissions by all parties and a further 'Call for Sites' process is currently underway. The Society is considering if and how larger swathes of land could be protected by seeking their inclusion into the developing Local Plan.

PLANNING MATTERS

SPA BATHS



The current state of the Spa Baths building.

WE ARE PLEASED to see that this application is recommended for approval at the Skipton and Ripon Area Constituency Planning Committee on 2 September. The Civic Society strongly supports the scheme to conserve and provide new uses for these important historic buildings that continue to deteriorate. It is a sensitive approach that conserves the historic buildings and removes later additions, including the 1936 pool, and adds newbuild. We accept the need for newbuild residential development, done in an unashamedly modern but complementary style and materials, to make the scheme viable. We are pleased that the applicant has picked up our comments in relation to improving the frontage treatment and the planting scheme into the Spa Gardens. We hope that work will be able to commence as soon as possible to conserve one of Ripon's important historic buildings.



Drawing of the changes proposed to the Spa Baths, from the planning documents submitted to North Yorkshire Council.

STUDLEY ROYAL



A visualisation of the proposals for the new addition to the existing building by the Canal Gates of Studley Royal, from the planning documents submitted to North Yorkshire Council.

Canal Gates/Studley Tea-room

THE CIVIC SOCIETY has generally supported the National Trust's planning and listed building applications to extend the tea-room, remove later structures and improve the visitor entrance to the gardens.

Revised plans have been submitted which reduce the size of the extension and add extra planting. We appreciate that changes were made to the original scheme in response to consultation comments, including from the Society; these changes have met most of our concerns about the prominence of the new facility.



The existing arrangements at Studley Royal's Canal Gates, showing the existing tea room (bottom left) and the car park about which the Society has concerns. Image from Google Earth.

We are pleased that the National Trust is continuing to discuss with us our remaining concerns about the need to reduce the impact of the car park and also the interpretation within the remodelled building.

RIPON CATHEDRAL



SINCE THE LAST newsletter in May there has been little progress on the planning application for a new building on Minster Gardens to the north of the Cathedral. The application was 'paused' in January by the Cathedral Chapter to allow them to carry out their own 'consultation' exercise.

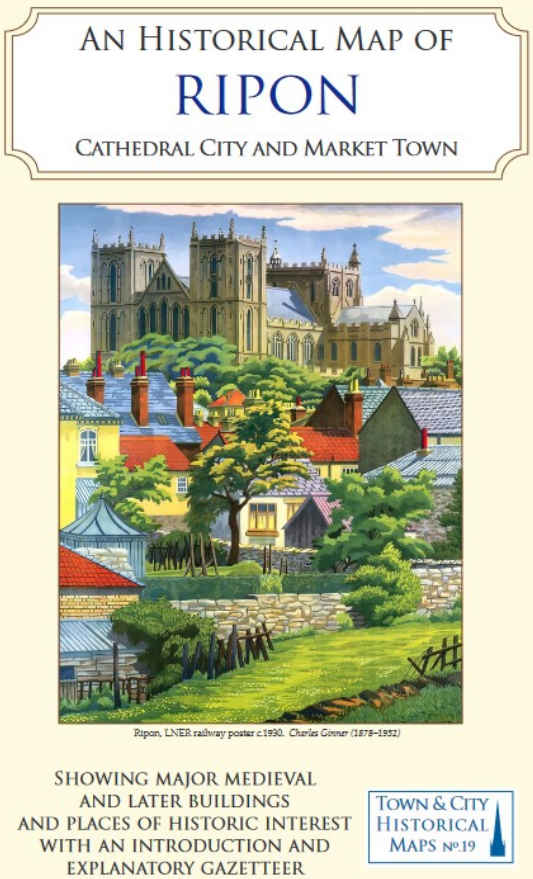
The deadline for consideration of the application has recently been extended to December and we understand that new plans may be forthcoming in September.

The Civic Society is waiting to see what these changes encompass and whether they go any way towards addressing the many concerns about the scheme that we and many others have registered.

Meanwhile, the Society has written an open letter to North Yorkshire Council asking for a definitive statement on the future of Minster Gardens - we have asked that the council rules out any sale or transfer of this publicly-owned land; such a move would establish that it is not available for building. That in turn would enable the current conflict over the cathedral's plans to reach some resolution.

■ All the correspondence from the Society on planning matters can be found on the website: www.riponcivicsociety.org.uk and on the North Yorkshire Council planning portal at www.northyorks.gov.uk/planning-and-conservation/view-and-comment-planning-applications

NEW HISTORICAL MAP FOR RIPON



IN OCTOBER a 'Historical Map of Ripon' is to be published. Based on the 1892 Ordnance Survey map, it will show medieval and later buildings still standing at that date, as well as the sites of many of the city's lost buildings. It will also detail the street plan with medieval and later names, indicate schools, churches and industry and details of the vast army camp that wrapped round Ripon in World War I (see page 7).

An introduction to Ripon's history is included, along with historic images, as well as a comprehensive gazetteer of Ripon's streets, buildings and sites of interest.

Compiled by expert historians from Ripon and beyond, the map is part of a series published by the Historic Towns Trust. There are plans later to publish a more comprehensive historical atlas for Ripon, too. Meanwhile, look out for the map!

■ Find out more about the Historic Map at the display in Ripon Library for Heritage Open Days on Friday 13 September from 10.30-14.30.

OUT AND ABOUT - IN THE LOWER SWALE VALLEY AND ON RIPON CANAL



Society members visiting the wetland plants nursery area at Nosterfield (above) and in the hide at Nosterfield Nature Reserve

ON TUESDAY 2ND JULY, eight Civic Society members (along with two very well-behaved dogs!) visited the Lower Ure Trust Reserve at Nosterfield.

The Nature Reserve comprises 150 acres of wet grassland and open water situated between the Rivers Ure and Swale and is generally regarded as North Yorkshire's premier wetland grassland.



The assembled group was addressed firstly by Project Officer, Emma Higgs, who outlined the history of the Trust and explained its work and its ambitions for the future.

We then transferred to the quarry area where a short walk took us to the Wetland Plants Nursery area: there, ecologist Martin Hammond took time out to talk about the recent history of planting in that part of the Reserve - the failures as well as the successes - designed to restore the former quarrying area and create a habitat suited to encourage the returning wildlife.

Finally, volunteer lead-botanists, Laurie Reed and Pandora Thoresby, introduced us to their work in the plant polytunnels; in the process showing us many of the (relatively) unassuming but nevertheless extremely scarce wetland plants that they are helping to cultivate and preserve for future generations.

It was, we were agreed, a most fulfilling, informative and interesting morning and our grateful thanks go to all the Trust staff who gave so generously of their time.

Congratulations, too, to the Society member(s?) who also took time to visit the adjacent Thornborough Henges.

To any members who were unable to join us on the day we can thoroughly recommend a visit to any/all of the above.



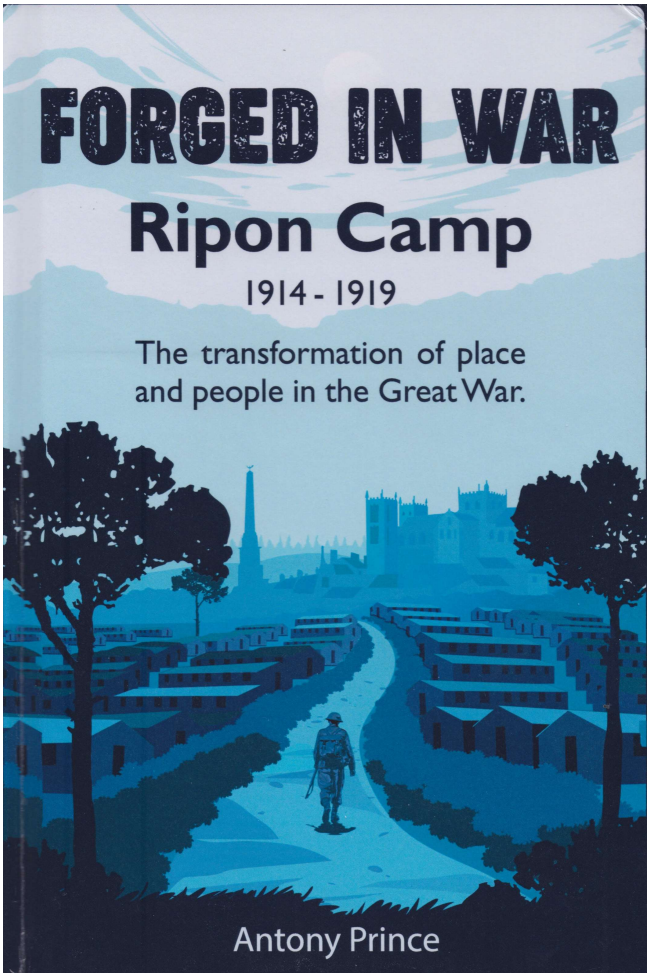
CELEBRATING THE 300TH anniversary of the birth of engineer John Smeaton, designer of the Ripon canal, twelve hardy souls set forth on the *Pride of Ripon*, ably skippered by John from Ripon Scenic Cruises. The trip took us safely through Rhodesfield Lock and on as far as Bellfurrows Lock.

On board we enjoyed a specially-commissioned birthday cake made by Sarita from Realitea, with extra decorations supplied by Lindy Webb (whose death so soon afterwards was very much mourned).

We were able to sing Happy Birthday to Smeaton, and we toasted his memory with bubbly kindly supplied by our President Nigel Rawlinson.



RIPON'S WORLD WAR I ARMY CAMP DETAILED IN FASCINATING NEW BOOK



SOCIETY MEMBER Antony Prince has done Ripon an important service by detailing all aspects of the huge military camp that surrounded Ripon on its north and west during the Great War.

Created to house part of Kitchener's New Armies, the camp soon included thousands of huts - accommodation, stables, social and welfare - and provided work for hundreds of Ripon citizens. It had important effects on the city's water and electricity supplies - as well as on the clientele of the local pubs!

Antony is particularly good in telling the stories of local lads who joined the army, and others who were passing through the camp. We learn about the weapons and armoury the troops used, about, church-provision, entertainment and education.

Many of the photographs in the book come from the Society's Ripon ReViewed project.

For anyone interested in Ripon's history, this book is very much worthwhile.

WHAT IS THE RIPON BID?



THE SOCIETY is increasingly finding common cause with Ripon BID in working to make Ripon a better, cleaner and more prosperous city. But what is the BID and how does it operate?

London had the UK's first Business Improvement District in 2005, and today there are well over 300 in England - locally in in Harrogate, Northallerton and Skipton. Local businesses in a defined area relevant to the stated aims of the BID vote to set one up, and once approved (initially for five years) all relevant businesses in the area must pay a small levy on their business properties. The levy is collected on the BID's behalf by the local authority along with existing business-rates.

Ripon BID was established in 2021 and covers a wide area stretching from Grantley Hall to Newby Hall and from Lightwater Valley to Markenfield Hall. This reflects the importance of the visitor economy to Ripon's prosperity. The £170,000 that local businesses contribute each a year has allowed the BID to open an office on Westgate, with two staff including the energetic manager Lilla Bathurst. One of the main tasks is to manage the *Visit Ripon* website and produce promotional campaigns and trail leaflets (*like the above*).

BID money is used to carry out projects additional to those already done by the local authority. Of particular interest to the Society is a recent trial scheme for small grants to refresh tired shopfronts. Another is a project to install artwork showing the history of Ripon in empty shops. The Society is likely to be commissioned to help in realising this with the opportunity to make further use of our Ripon Reviewed images.

Ripon BID is now a significant player in Ripon and the Society will continue to strengthen links with it to further our aims.

■ https://visitripon.co.uk/ripon-bid/

OUR PROGRAMME

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

■ **5 September 2024**: Commonwealth War Graves – *Geoff Dickson*

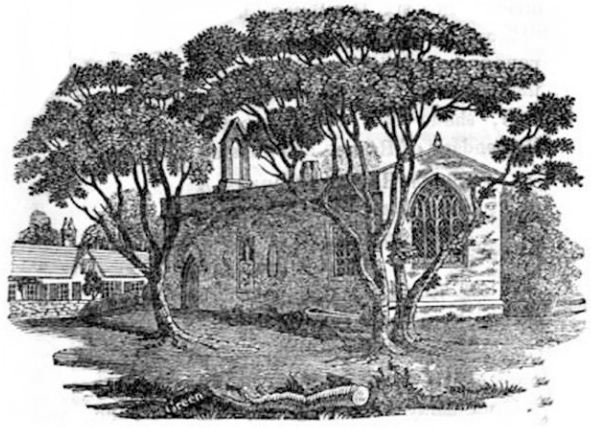
■ **6-15 September:** Heritage Open Days *(see page 1)*

■ **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 £5.00.**

CAN YOU HELP ON THE COMMITTEE?

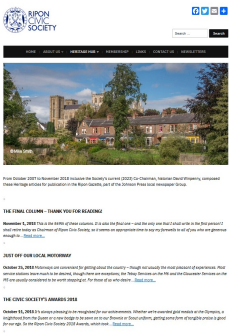
IN NOVEMBER the Society holds its Annual General Meeting, at which we report on the year's activities and elect officers of the Society and committee members.

We are always keen to welcome new committee members - it's good to have new points of view, and we're a friendly lot! We meet five or six times a year, and the work is not onerous!

From November we shall need a new treasurer - Paul, who has very efficiently held the office for some years, is moving from Ripon. If you have an interest in helping us with our finances - again, it's not too hard! - we should be glad to hear from you.

The Society must always be looking to the future, so if you think you can play a part, please come forward.

A REMINDER to pay a visit to our website - **www.riponcivicsociety.org.uk**, where you can find a wealth of information about our work.



Under the Heritage Hub tab, you'll find information about our green plaques and the Ripon ReViewed photographs project, and also more than 500 articles that appeared in more than 10 year's weekly editions of the *Ripon Gazette*, on all manner of Ripon and architectural matters, written by the Society's Co-Chair David Winpenny. Do have a search and see what you can come up with!

www.riponcivicsociety.org,uk
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Registered Charity No: 517434

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