RIPON CIVIC SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

Autumn 2026

BUTCHER'S ANIMAL TILING RETURNS TO RIPON TO MARK HERITAGE OPEN DAYS



Peter Hartley, pictured in a Ripon Gazette article from 1983 (below), with the full-sized replica of the tiled frieze that was formerly in the butcher's shop at 6 Queen Street in Ripon, now Big Bites sandwich shop. (Richard Taylor)

Richard Taylor, Chair of the Society, reports on a reminder of Ripon's past.

LOOKING FOR SOMETHING a little different for this year's Heritage Open Days (HODs) in Ripon we decided to reproduce the tiled mural that once graced a butcher's shop in the city.

I'd seen the tiling some years ago when down at the wonderful Ironbridge Gorge Museum. It's on display at their Jackfield Tileworks site where it was made and labelled as coming from Ripon but with no further information. I determined one day to follow this up and with this year's theme for HODs being 'Everyday Histories' it seemed as good a time as any.

Researches by Ed Jagger revealed that the tiling was from a former butcher's in Queen Street that closed in 1983. Local press archives produced an article from the Ripon Gazette recording that the Civic Society campaigned for the tiling not to be destroyed but to be removed carefully. The then curator of Jackfield brought a team up to do this, part-funded by Dewhurst Butchers who were the current owners. The article also showed a photo of the butcher standing proudly in front of the mural.



Animal magic on the tiles

RARE Victorian tiles in the former Handley's Butchers shop in Ripon Market are to be preserved.

Dewhurst Butchers who own the shop have agreed to donate the tiles and fund the rescue operation.

The main feature of the tiles is a 15ft. by 5ft. mural depicting a cow and two groups of sheep in a countryside setting. It is in excellent condition and Ripon Civic Society is keen to preserve it.

Salvaging the mural will be difficult, however, as the tiles are cemented to the wall and special techniques will be needed to remove them without damage.

Mr. Tony Herbert, an expert in antique tiles for the Ironbridge Museum, in Shropshire, has agreed to bring a team of workers to Ripon to remove the tiles which will then be displayed in the museum.

The Civic Society had originally hoped the mural could remain in the Ripon area but no suitable setting has been found.

Mr. Herbert said this week that no date had been fixed for the removal but added that he was "delighted" by the offer.

Ironbridge has recently been taken over by the National Trust and their helpful property curator there, Lauren Collier, was able to supply a high

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The tiled panel as it is now displayed in the Jackfield Tileworks, Ironbridge Gorge Museum, Shropshire *(image courtesy of the National Trust)*

definition photo from which we commissioned a full-sized replica on a vinyl banner. The present occupiers of 6 Queen Street, Big Bites sandwich shop, were willing to display the banner for HODs.



Mr Handley with the newly-installed tilework in 1925
(This image is part of the Ripon ReViewed collection created by Ripon Civic Society in partnership with North Yorkshire Archives)

Not only that, with the help of Ripon BID we managed to track down the butcher in the Gazette article, Peter Hartley, now retired and living in Harrogate. He agreed to return to the shop after 43 years and be photographed in front of the banner.

Ripon Civic Society can be proud of its actions to save the tiling all those years ago.

We have also been delighted to find a photograph from 1925 of the butcher who commissioned the tiling, Mr Handley. The image is one of the many that we were able to capture digitally as part of the Ripon Re-Viewed Project that we undertook some years ago with Lottery funding. The originals are now safely kept in North Yorkshire Archives.

HODs ROUNDUP AND THANKS

A FULL PROGRAMME of events was once again put together for this year's Heritage Open Days.



Visitors to St Anne's Chapel *(Richard Taylor)*

Several churches and chapels were open; the Medieval Chapel & Hospital of St. Anne *(above)* attracted 250 people on its first HODs opening. St Mary Magdalen (the Leper Chapel) had around 150 visitors on its open day - including a large crowd towards closing time! Holy Trinity Church had 63 visitors, some from overseas though most were local people and holidaymakers. There were almost 100 visitors to St Wilfrid's Catholic Church - with many appreciative comments being recorded. There was also a steady stream of visitors at Allhallowgate Methodist Church.

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Intrepid ghosthunters pass the Cathedral's south transept during the Ghost Walk for Heritage Open Days (Richard Taylor)

There were four walks, too: a well-attended Ghost Walk, led by Heather Law, *(above)*, a tour of Hell Wath from the Friends of Hell Wath, which attracted 16 people, a tour organised by the Ripon Military Heritage Trust of the barracks area with 20 visitors, and 18 people for a 'Watery Walk' tour of Ripon's waterways, their history and former industries *(below)*.



Society Chair Richard Taylor (right) indicates the recently-discovered well behind Hall's store at the start of the 'Watery Walk' (David Winpenny)

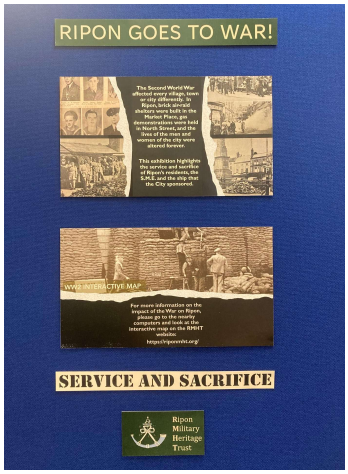
The Gazebo, off Blossomgate, had around 50 visitors on Friday and more than 70 on Saturday. They included people from Woodhall Spa in Lincolnshire, Stockport, Grange-over-Sands, York, Wigan and Newcastle - as well as many locals who had had no idea of its existence. The residents of Blossomgate Court, who are always generous in allowing us to open the Gazebo, this year provided tea, coffee and cake to raise funds for their Christmas Dinner. They enjoyed meeting the visitors and raised more than £100.

At Ripon Light Railway, by the canal, there were 100 visitors on Sunday and 50 more on Monday - one party of enthusiasts arranged to go back for a private opening to see the engines in operation.



A rare, restored 'Studley Royal' lawnmower was on display at Ripon Light Railway (Richard Taylor)

The 'Ripon Goes to War' display *(below)* in Ripon Library of personal stories from the Second World War was organised by Ripon Military Heritage Trust and proved to be one of the highlights of the week, with many library users commenting on its value.



Many of these events were facilitated by members of the Civic Society - detailed below - to whom we are very grateful.

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We thank Peter Sutton for his work at St Anne's Chapel; Neill Clayton and Robert Addyman at Ripon Light Railway; Andrew Curtis (who ably masterminded the whole HODs programme), Mandy Whitehead and Rachel Greenwood for opening the Gazebo; Diane Gaskill and her colleagues at Allhallowgate Methodist Church; Jill Freeman at St Wilfrid's Church; Peter Mudge for liaison with the Portly Pig in Kirkgate; Jane Furse and the Ripon Military Heritage Trust for the Library display.

And a special 'Thank You' to the Ripon Bid team of Lilla, Leyla, Juliet and Tim for all their help, and especially for the invaluable booklet listing all the events - they distributed 850 copies, to many venues in and around the city.

Our apologies to anyone from the Society we have failed to acknowledge; your work was very much appreciated by everyone who was attracted to the many events for HODs - if you have ideas for next year, please let us know!

Richard Taylor and David Winpenny,
with figures supplied by Andrew Curtis



The end of the 'Watery Walk' at Alma Bridge (David Winpenny)

EMAIL HELP REQUESTS

AS WE NOTED in earlier Newsletters, the Society regularly receives emails from people with specific questions relating to Ripon's past - so this may become a semi-regular column!

One recent question related to an early photographer called Booth in the Market Square in the 1850s. Our correspondent came across a reference to 'Booth' in M. N. Cohen's biography of Lewis Carroll which references Carroll's diary.



An early stereoscopic photograph by H C Booth shows cattle in the middle of Harrogate (National Library of Scotland)

Despite some further research, we were unable to find out much more information other than to note that H C Booth of Harrogate set up temporary portrait rooms in nearby towns following his establishment of a studio in Harrogate in 1847. So it is possible that the booth referred to in the email was actually one of Mr Booth's temporary rooms! If anyone is able to provide any more information on this it would be appreciated.

We do our best to answer any questions relating to Ripon or to direct enquiries to those better placed to provide a more detailed response. If you have a question - or information - or you know someone who does, then please email us at *info@riponcivicsociety.org.uk*

Ed Jagger



National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPF)

The Government published a substantial rewrite of the NPPF in August. This contains a core set of national planning policies for England. It introduces National Decision-Making Policies that override conflicting policies in local plans. It also contains National Plan-Making Policies to guide Local Plan preparation. The Society's Planning Group is looking at the policies, since they will influence the responses we make to planning applications.

PLANNING REPORT - ‘a relatively quiet time’

IT HAS BEEN a relatively quiet time on the planning application front. The Society has commented on the following applications since the last newsletter.

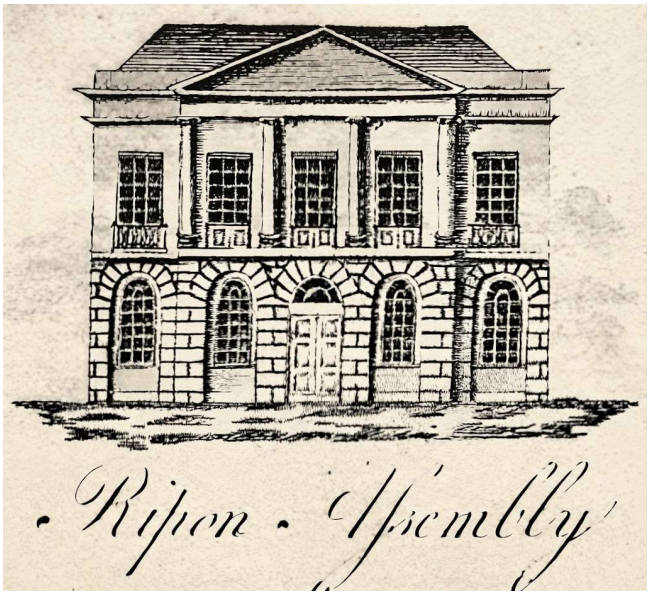


(Image from planning documents)

- **9 Fishergate, Ripon** *(above)* - we objected to the removal of the existing chimney stack which was part of this application for external alterations. We considered that the chimney could be easily retained and that its loss would represent a small but continued degradation of the character of the conservation area. The application has been approved - officers were of the view that retaining the stack could cause further damage to the building and that its removal would not be harmful to the area.



- **The Beeches, Magdalen's Road, Ripon** *(above - Google Earth)* - The Civic Society previously supported an approved application for two dwellings at The Beeches accessed by the existing road adjacent to the Grade I Listed Chapel of St Mary Magdalen. We subsequently objected to a new application for an alternative access because it would require the unacceptable felling of four trees protected by a Tree Preservation Order (TPO). We were consulted again in July on revised plans showing additional tree planting and we objected again because we do not consider that the additional planting would justify the felling of a group of mature and healthy trees protected by a long-standing TPO and which form part of the setting of a Grade I Listed Building. There has still been no decision on this application.



- **Ripon Town Hall** *(above, from an early 19th-century Assembly Room ticket)* - we wrote in support of the application by Ripon City Council to repair the Town Hall, including the replacement of the roof covering and windows to the front elevation. We believe that proposals such as this should be fully supported in demonstrating how proper maintenance can improve the character appearance of properties as well as offering energy efficiency benefits.



NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNCIL has placed on its website its timetable for the Local Plan with key milestone dates. The notice of intention to commence was scheduled for 2 October but is identified as yet to happen. The start of the scoping exercise inviting comments on what the plan should contain and the engagement process is scheduled for 23 October.

It is important that the Civic Society comments as appropriate at this early stage. We shall keep members updated on the timetable.

Rachel Wigginton

SHOPFRONT CHANGES - PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS

THE SOCIETY'S PLANNING GROUP has commented on several applications to refurbish or alter shopfronts in the city centre. Whilst many of these are of modern appearance, the City does have some very good examples of historic shopfronts as well as having a particular style of arched window formed within the wider frontage. This results in an important and distinctive aspect of the city centre that contributes significantly to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

Of course, many of the most important shopfronts are also on listed buildings and as such are given important protection, and the location of many of the shops within the conservation area also provide a degree of protection against demolition. But small changes and inappropriate colour schemes can erode the significance of individual shopfronts as well as the street scene character.

Shopfronts and joinery more generally were painted in different colours at different periods in history and this tended to move from earth-based tones in the Georgian period to hard wearing dark tones in the Victorian period. The former Harrogate Borough Council produced a Shopfront Design Guide in 2007 which sought to reinforce historic distinctiveness - in which Kirkgate and Westgate featured - although colour (apart from signage) was sadly omitted.

If a building is listed the local authority has some control over the design and appearance of the property. If a building is not listed but in a conservation area, consent may be required but the guidance on this is vague and generally not enforced. If neither, there is little control.



(Ed Jagger)

Fishergate provides a good current example of how shopfront refurbishment can have both a positive and negative effect on the appearance of the street particularly with regard to colour. No.11 *(above)*, on the corner of Lavender Alley, is a listed building and the recent application by Alistair Baldwin included details of both colour and signage. This has resulted in a very elegant shopfront for his shop and studio which sits comfortably within the street.

In contrast, No.15 *(below)* on the corner of Fishergate and Old Market Place, has been painted a bright yellow colour. Whilst this retains the old shopfront with radiused corners to the windows which is positive, the colour makes the building stand out in this prominent position. It could be argued that this is what a shopfront should do, but in the conservation area, this detracts from the overall appearance.



(Ed Jagger)

The new cinema on the west side of the street, though it will retain the modern shopfront from the Original Factory Shop *(below)*, it, along with the render above, will be painted a dark grey. This approach helps blend the modern shopfront into the historic street scene as far as possible and this is primarily achieved with the use of a more traditional colour scheme.

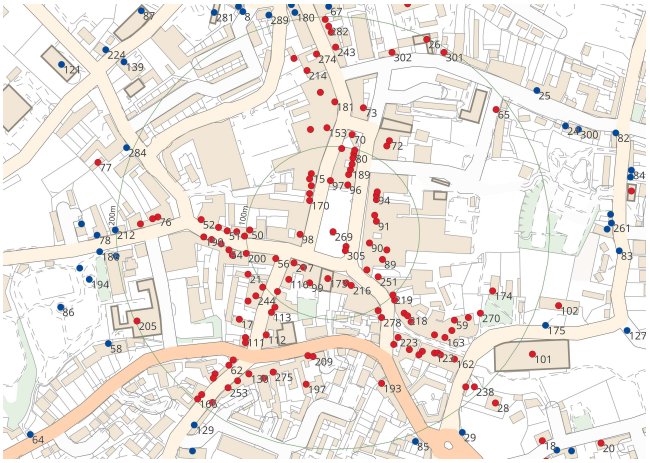
In light of the positive, and not so positive, changes to shopfronts in the city, the Society will be producing its own Shopfront Design Guide which will provide guidance to owners and occupiers wishing to undertake repair or refurbishment works. This will take that guidance provided by the former Harrogate Council and others as its basis, and seek to establish clear guidance that is Ripon-specific in terms of style, appearance, lighting and colour. It is hoped that this could be referenced in any future update of the Ripon Neighbourhood Plan.

Ed Jagger



(Wikimedia Commons)

PHOTOGRAPHS PROJECT NEARS COMPLETION



Map of central Ripon showing the location of the listed buildings in Ripon that have been photographed for the Society's project to capture images of all the city's protected built heritage.

AS YOU MAY RECALL from an article in an earlier copy of the Newsletter, the Society has been compiling a photographic schedule of all the listed buildings in Ripon. This is being carried out in order to assess the general condition of our listed buildings at the present time and to compare their condition to that in 1994 when the last photographic schedule was undertaken. The first phase of the current photos which encompassed all those listed buildings within 200m of the obelisk plus all the grade I & II* buildings was completed last year and included 136 buildings. Phase two is well under way with most of the remaining 147 buildings having been photographed. The intention is to complete this exercise over the coming weeks.

Despite some technical issues, it remains the intention to make as many of the photos as possible available to the planning team; this will help them to coordinate responses to listed building applications by having readily available images to hand. The photographic database should also be easily updated in the future.

As reported previously, the condition of our listed buildings is generally very good although there are some areas of concern, and the Society will continue to keep a watchful eye on those. However, there have also been some very positive improvements and sensitive alterations, not least to the Workhouse Museum.

Ed Jagger



The obelisk from Low Skellgate (David Winpenny)

RIPON CANAL - OUT OF USE!

The Ripon Canal reopened completely on 8 September 1996 after a fourteen-year restoration. The linear park offers leisure opportunities to residents and visitors and enables boats to reach one of the most northerly points on the connected waterways of England & Wales.

For the last two summers, though, water supply problems from the River Skell have closed the three locks and, effectively, the canal for many months during the peak cruising season. With the climate changing, summers are now drier and warmer so such closure may well continue in years to come.

There is a simple solution: back pump water up the canal at each lock. This recycles the water flowing down for filling the locks. A scheme has been put forward to the Canal & River Trust, the national charity that owns and maintains the canal, but it will not pay for the installation or maintenance of the pumps. A sum of around £25,000 is required to install pumps at the three locks; the most difficult is Oxclose, which will have to be solar powered.

The Mayor's office has been approached for support, as have with Ripon City Council, Aquavista (Marina owners) and Ripon Motor Boat Club. It may come to a crowdfunding enterprise; if so, your support would be appreciated.

Richard Willis



Rhodes Field Lock with padlocked sluice gear (Richard Willis)

PROGRAMME - NOVEMBER 2026 - MAY 2027

HERE'S THE PROGRAMME of talks and events until our break next summer. All meetings are in Allhallowgate Methodist Church, at 7.30pm; tea, coffee and biscuits from 7.00pm. We hope to see you there!

- **5 November (after the AGM): Humphry Repton;** 18th-century landscape designer - Michael Smart
- **3 December Levelling up in the 12th Century**
  How the Cistercian monks rebuilt the Yorkshire economy after William the Conqueror's Harrying of the North
  - Peter Lewis

Yorkshire Wildlife Trust

- **7th January 2027 – The Yorkshire Wildlife Trust** *and the vital work its teams do across Yorkshire (speaker to be confirmed)*



Nosterfield Nature Reserve, Lower Ure (David Winpenny)

- **4th February – The work of the Lower Ure Conservation Trust** – Simon Warwick



(David Winpenny)

- **4th March – From Unloved to World Class** – The National Trust at its best – David Banks
- **8th April – "The Glistening Dale"** – a study of Nidderdale – Rowena Moir (Note the date which avoids a clash with Easter week)



One of the Society's green plaques that refer to Ripon's links with Lewis Carroll (David Winpenny)

- **6th May – 'Once Upon a Time in Oxford and Ripon'** – the origins of Lewis Carroll's Wonderland – Mark Davies

PLEASE NOTE: Security at Allhallowgate Methodist Church has had to be tightened up. Please make sure you arrive between 7.00 and 7.30pm. The door will be locked at 7.30, and after that you'll need to ring the bell - which we can't guarantee to hear!

RIPON CIVIC SOCIETY

Registered Charity No: 517434

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THIS YEAR'S COMMITTEE (TO AGM, 5 NOVEMBER)

- **President** - Nigel Rawlinson
- **Vice-President** - David Winpenny
- **Chair** - Richard Taylor
- **Vice-Chair** - Ed Jagger
- **Treasurer** - David Wilson
- **Membership** - Alison Brayshaw
- **Planning Lead** - Rachel Wigginton
- **Talks** - David Hall and Richard Willis
- **Heritage Open Days** - Andrew Curtis
- **Uredale Community Partnership, Ripon ReViewed, Ripon Together** - Mandy Whitehead
- **Plaques** - Richard Willis
- **Members** - Rachel Greenwood, Peter Goldsbrough, Michael Exley
- **Website** - David Hall
- **Communications, Newsletters and External Relations** - Richard Taylor and David Winpenny