



Welcome to the Summer edition of the Civic Society's newsletter. Items covered in this edition are:

- ◆ **Forthcoming Visit to Wakefield**
- ◆ **Blue Plaque Award**
- ◆ **Civic Society Outings & Lecture Meetings**
- ◆ **Yorkshire & Humber Association of Civic Societies (YHACS) Report**
- ◆ **Planning Report**
- ◆ **Huddersfield in Bloom**
- ◆ **Awards For All**
- ◆ **Peter Stead Sustainable Architecture Prize 2005**
- ◆ **Heritage Open Weekend 2005**
- ◆ **General Updates**

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### **Forthcoming Visit to Wakefield**

Wakefield Civic Society members are to give us a conducted tour of their city centre to explain the various planning problems they are currently dealing with.

**When?** Monday, 8<sup>th</sup> August.

**Where?** Meet at the Westgate car park in Wakefield at 7.15pm ( on the left, just beyond the Westgate Station carpark)

**Cost?** £6-00 for buffet supper to be arranged by the Wakefield Society.

**Booking** - Names and payment for the supper to John Lockwood by Friday 29<sup>th</sup> July (contact details on the programme card). Please note that numbers are restricted to 30.

A coach would be too expensive and the train times are inconvenient, so please share cars wherever possible. If anyone would like our Society to organise a lift for them please ring Richard Ward on 01484 429173, who will be pleased to help.



### **Blue Plaque Award**

The last Blue Plaque was awarded in June 2002 to recognise the sympathetic restoration of a former school built in 1840 and now part of Huddersfield Technical College's New North Road complex.

The Society has now awarded a Blue Plaque to Lanson Developments and their architects/designers Acumen who have completed the restoration of Priestroyd Mills, a former iron works built in 1869 and Grade II Listed.

The building in Firth Street, now named '1535 The Melting Point' (to signify the temperature at which iron melts) includes 170 flats, a restaurant and a gym with pool complex. It is part of the first stage in a project to redevelop all the buildings along Firth Street up to Commercial Street.

The presentation of the plaque was made on 14<sup>th</sup> May by Michael Green, Chairman of Huddersfield Civic Society, to Joe Cookson, Managing Director of Lanson and to Jeremy Child of Acumen.

*Derek Bennett*

### **Civic Society Outings & Lecture Meetings**

#### **Excursion to Newcastle and Gateshead**

This years coach excursion took us to Newcastle and Gateshead. Our first stop was at the Angel of the North before a very interesting tour along the quaysides of Newcastle and Gateshead, led by a very informative blue badge guide.



*The Millenium Bridge*



*Sage Music Centre*

We were lucky enough to see the Millennium Bridge open twice to let boats through and we also had time to explore the Baltic Art Gallery and the new Sage music centre, where we were very impressed by the concert halls and the general spaciousness of the building.

This was followed by a walk around a new housing estate at Staiths, just upriver from Gateshead. This has been built in a variety of styles and materials with an emphasis on pedestrians rather than cars, with ample provision of communal areas. Most of us thought we wouldn't like to live there but agreed that many younger families would find it attractive. Certainly both the houses and the apartments have sold well.



We finished with a visit to the Metro Centre for much needed refreshments (and a bit of retail therapy for some!)

The whole day had been arranged with his customary thoroughness by John Lockwood and we are grateful to him for arranging such a splendid and varied day - we even had fine weather. The photographs accompanying this article were taken by Michael Barron with the Society's new digital camera.

For the first time in living memory the trip was fully booked and members had to be turned away. Only 3 weeks previously only half the maximum number (dictated by the number the guide could handle) had booked so some non-members were encouraged to come. The moral is book early next year!

*Michael Green*

### **"Balloon" Debate**

I really should not be the one to say so but the balloon debate at the May meeting proved to be a most entertaining and informative event. Five prominent speakers each spoke persuasively for seven minutes to champion their chosen proposal for the town centre: Lawrence Antill, who had travelled from his base in Wiltshire for the event, argued for more shopping in order to finance amenity developments.

John Moore tried to persuade us that a bridge over the ring road to link the town with the University was essential.

Suzanne North stated that a new art gallery and cultural centre was most desirable, to which we were inclined to agree.

Tess Butler's traffic free town centre certainly had its attractions.

Toby Hyam's Destination Market sounded fun.

The audience asked penetrating questions of each of the speakers but which project did we choose?

The second question is, "Where was the audience of Civic Society members?"

Had we not had visitors such as senior members of staff at the university, including the Vice Chancellor and principal Kirklees Council officers, our balloon would not have got off the ground!

Regrettably, as on the occasion of Professor Binfield's brilliant lecture on the Willans family last autumn, we have to ask ourselves whether we can risk inviting high profile speakers to talk to the Society on relevant topics. It is, as they say, a vicious circle and it is up to you. Inevitably people may be on holiday or indisposed but the committee needs to feel confident that the occasional speaker meetings will be well supported. It is at the business meetings where the serious matters concerning the town are discussed, speaker meetings are a bonus!

*John Lockwood*



### **Yorkshire & Humber Association of Civic Societies (YHACS) Report**

This has been a very busy six months for YHACS. The year kicked off with the AGM at Harrogate, where I was joined by our Chairman. It was a packed meeting, probably because of the speaker David Fraser, Head of English Heritage in York.

He showed us some wonderful pictures of the region and spoke about 'Development Control' (or rather the lack of it!).

The April meeting was a joint one with our neighbouring group NWAACS (The North West Association of Civic Societies) and was held in Todmorden Town Hall where we were welcomed by The Mayor of Todmorden.

The speaker on this occasion was from CPRE and the topic was The Northern Way.

The July meeting will have passed by the time you read this article, but it is being held in Scarborough where the speaker topic is Sustainable Development, a subject dear to all our hearts.

Alongside the general gatherings, the Committee (which meets at least every six weeks) work on a variety of matters. Currently we are producing a shopfronts policy for the region and also finalising the regional website; as well as applying for charitable status for YHACS to facilitate the obtaining of grants.

As part of the support package for members, John Lockwood and Michael Barron have accompanied me to the faltering Penistone Civic Society where we gave them a taste of what a "proper" Civic Society should be doing. I think they were a little shell-shocked and likely to become more so as the year progresses.

The National Committee (headed by Kevin Trickett who is President of the Wakefield Society) is on a campaign to "modernise" and streamline the movement. Those societies whose sole purpose in life is to be a walking group (such as Penistone) or to organise the local gala are likely to be asked to remove "Civic Society" from their name. This has the full support of the YHACS Committee so we had better watch out!

Finally, our Association Development Officer has been working extremely hard to get a Bradford Civic Society off the ground and now an inaugural meeting has been arranged for 28 July. The YHACS Committee is organising the event and so I will be attending to "press the flesh". I think the next target could be Sheffield which also lacks a Civic Society.

If you are interested in getting involved at regional level please contact me for details. It's very rewarding and very inspirational.

*Richard Ward*

### **Planning Report**

In my last report I predicted that by the time this newsletter was issued we should know the result of the application to list Queensgate Market Hall. Although the decision was due in February, after consultation closed last November, inevitably there has been some slippage. At the time of writing therefore we are still waiting but understand that an announcement is imminent. If the listing is confirmed then any of the plans involving large-scale redevelopment of that area will have to be re-considered, since listed building consent to demolish the market would be difficult to obtain.



Meanwhile mill conversions are pushing ahead. Phases III and V of Commercial Mills, and Newsome Mills are two recent applications that we supported. The former will complete the conversions on the extensive site in Firth Street and will be supplemented alongside the canal by Phase IV, a block of new-build, partly in traditional mill style and partly more modern, a hybrid design to which we objected. We would have liked a building of one sort or the other but KMC approved the plan.

The plans for Newsome Mills will entail conversion of the main mill buildings and the building of 27 town houses alongside, giving residents a bird's eye view of Huddersfield.

Folly Hall Mills, long in need of restoration and due to be converted, obtained listed building consent for the plans and we now look forward to progress so that this very visible building is put to good use.

A proposal to build flats on the former Hepworth's site in Queen Street South has been turned down by KMC on the grounds of scale. The proposed building was slightly higher than its surroundings but in our view not unduly so. We hope that a compromise can be reached and this site put to residential use.

A scheme to build flats and other facilities at the very bottom of Queen Street South, replacing some uninspiring buildings, seems to be in abeyance at present.

Listed building consent has been granted for the demolition of buildings on the site of the latest phase of the Media Centre. We look forward to seeing the new building, whose design and materials promise to make it a landmark.

Less prominent items which have come our way include:

- \* The erection of an electronic display on the front of the library, for which there had at first been no planning application and to which we objected. The display has been removed.
- \* An application to convert Birkby Lodge Hotel for multi-residential use and to build in the grounds was approved despite our opposition. We were keen to preserve the unique interior.
- \* The Heaven and Hell Club in the town centre closed suddenly. Its frontage had not appealed to us and we shall try to ensure that, whatever its new use might be, the design of its "shop-front" will be more appropriate to the building.

Finally, two schemes in gestation are likely to be of great interest to us. Firstly, the current owners of the YMCA building, Yorkshire Forward, have indicated that they wish to partially demolish it and put a new building on the site. This is a prominent but not much loved building so perhaps something more worthy will replace it.

Secondly, plans have recently been unveiled to develop the large site bounded by Chapel Hill, the Colne and Manchester Road with flats, offices and leisure facilities. Such large scale redevelopment would transform the appearance of a gateway to the town centre, would provide jobs and leisure outlets and would bring many more people to live in town. Watch that space!

A great deal has recently happened, is happening, and will soon happen to the fabric of Huddersfield. The next few years will give the Civic Society plenty to do.

*Michael Rayner*



### **Huddersfield in Bloom**

Following Huddersfield's success last year, when we came second in the Yorkshire Town Centre category, there is hope of doing as well or even better this year; and of winning the Regional Tidy Trader trophy again.

As 2005 is the 50th Anniversary of the Town's twinning with Besancon some funding is being made available for red, white and blue flowers for beds in St George's Square and baskets on lampposts in New Street. Additionally, 274 baskets and 58 boxes are being put up around the Town Hall and on new posts in Macauley Street.

Yorkshire Water has also agreed to donate £500 towards the cost of self-watering troughs on railings.

Work has also started to improve the beds round the Civic Centre, in particular by the Register Office and on Albion Street.

Finally, a successful plant sale took place in New Street on 11th June and there will be another one on 16th July.

*Mary Hirst*

### **Awards For All**

It is now over 12 months since the Civic Society was successful in its application for a lottery grant under the "Awards of All" programme. The grant has enabled the Society to purchase a laptop computer, projector, camera and other items to produce promotional materials. The last two items purchased with this grant have been a 35mm transparency scanner and a spare lamp for the projector. This has brought the total spend to £4745.91, just a few pounds below the value of the Award.

For the Chairman's Annual Report at the Civic Society AGM in March, Mike Green and I used the equipment to produce a PowerPoint presentation entitled "HCS First 40 Years". Thanks must be given to Albert Booth, John Lockwood and Lanson Developments for the help given in providing photographs for this presentation.

In March we were also required to submit an "End of Award Report" to the Awarding Committee, along with the original receipts for items purchased costing over £250. As expected everything was in order and the award was closed in early April. There is an ongoing requirement to keep all financial records and accounts for a further 2 years.

Earlier this year John Lockwood, Richard Ward and I attended the AGM of the Penistone Civic Society where our first PowerPoint presentation was shown again, to demonstrate the work of our Society to encourage them in the future.

PowerPoint & Digital Photograph training has been completed and this has proved most beneficial in developing these presentations. It is essential that we extend our library of PowerPoint presentations, so suitable photographs, materials and ideas are most welcome.

These presentations are important to promote the working of our Society and to encourage new members, so please do forward proposals of where these presentations



could be shown.

*Michael Barron*

### **Peter Stead Sustainable Architecture Prize 2005**

Each year the Society awards a prize to a student of The School of Architecture at Huddersfield University in memory of one of our members, the late Peter Stead. The award is made to the student who has done the most to address within his or her project the question of sustainability, recently defined as 'design which caters for our present needs without prejudicing the needs of future generations'.

This year's winner was chosen on 10 June by a panel consisting of Carl Meddings, Albert Booth and Richard Ward.

The winner is Julie Ann Bennett and her project is for a Lakeland Visitor Centre. The Centre has a very interesting design which snakes down the hillside to a lake and makes use of locally available materials. It is anticipated that Julie will attend one of our meetings and explain her design – in return for receiving her prize.

*Richard Ward*

### **Heritage Open Weekend 2005**

Our contribution this year will again be a Town Centre walk, starting outside the railway station at 10.30am on Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> September.

The walk is open to everyone, but Society members are especially welcome to come along.

*Mike Green*

## **General Updates**

### **Trees**

Now that Summer is here it is most pleasing to see how green Huddersfield is becoming. Trees have been planted all round the ring-road, and there are new plantings around the bus station, along John William Street and along Byram Street too. Maybe not quite as many as we would have liked, but we know there are other considerations to be taken into account. Kirklees Council are also actively considering new plantings in St Georges Square and in the gardens by the Parish Church.

Now that the trees in John William Street have been planted in decorative planters there can be no excuse for not using similar planters in the Market Square - where trees have been recommended for many years.

As Huddersfield is now beginning to get its fair share of trees, some attention needs to be paid to also planting more trees on the approach roads into Huddersfield.

*Peter Broadbent*



**Publications**

As reported in the last newsletter (Winter 2004), Civic Society members Betty & Michael Hill have revised and brought up to date the 'Old Yards of Huddersfield' booklet. Sales to date have covered printing costs and we hope sales will continue. The booklet is available in local bookshops and information centres but you can help the Society more if copies are bought direct from us at Baxter Caulfields, 13 Station Street – where they are available by kind permission of our President Richard Ward.

Many members will also be familiar with David Wyles's excellent book of architectural walks "The Buildings of Huddersfield." The Society plans to work with Mr.Wyles to produce an expanded and updated edition of this guide.

*Michael Hill*

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**Contacting the Civic Society:**

All officers' contact details are given on the annual programme card.

Alternatively you could email via the 'contact us' page of the society's website:  
[www.huddersfieldcivicsociety.org.uk](http://www.huddersfieldcivicsociety.org.uk)

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*Clare Madders, Newsletter Editor*