



Welcome to the winter edition of the Huddersfield Civic Society newsletter.
Clare Madders, Newsletter Editor

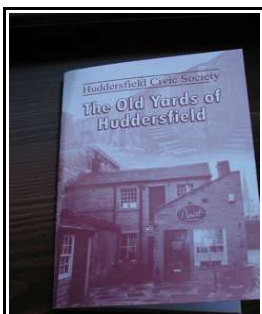
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'Old Yards of Huddersfield' Booklet

This booklet, originally written 20 years ago by Bob Senior and Lois Browning on the 68 yards which once existed within the ring road, went out of print some years ago.

Our members Betty and Michael Hill have revised it and brought it up to date. Surprisingly, many of the yards still exist and the three best known, at the lower end of King Street, have been rescued from near oblivion. The booklet describes all 68, with stories about the many, often colourful characters who lived and worked in them.



The booklet will be available soon 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.

Mike Green



Huddersfield in Bloom

Judging for this year's competition took place on 17th August and the Awards Ceremony was held at the Rock Cafe on 29th September, where prizes were presented by Richard Ward, President of Huddersfield Civic Society.

Winners of the various categories were:

Hotels & Licensed Premises	Central Lodge
Large Commercial	The Piazza
Small Commercial	McNulty's Funeral Parlour
Public Buildings	Alfred Street Car Park
Neighbourhood	St George's Square
Out of Town	Croppers Arms, Marsh



Jagvinder Singh Khela collecting the prize for The Piazza



Vicky Devlin collecting the prize for Shaw & Hallas

There were over 80 entrants in the Tidy Trader Competition, a considerable increase on last year. The winner was Shaw and Hallas.

Mary Hirst

Civic Society Outings & Lecture Meetings

As advertised in the Summer newsletter, an evening excursion to Beaumont Park was organised by the Society on 9th August.

What a joy it was to see this park being restored for modern day users as a place where you can stroll, ponder, listen to the band and watch children play safely. So much has been achieved.

Beaumont Park offers not just the delights of nostalgia but also the atmosphere of what a park in any age should be like. As you walk up or down the terraced pathways, you keep coming across nooks and crannies, little bridges and stone walls, steps, open clearings and vegetation of all kinds. And if it is a day when the band is playing on the beautifully restored bandstand, all is complete.

All credit must go to the Friends of Beaumont Park who have worked so diligently to reclaim large areas of neglect.

Older members of the Society showed in their faces the pleasure of seeing memories of the park in its former days of glory return once more.



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At the September meeting of the Society, Richard Blenkarn of Bramhall Blenkarn Architects gave a very thought provoking talk on "Modern Housing – An Oxymoron?". Regrettably however, none of the five national companies building houses in our area accepted an invitation to attend and nor did five housing associations who were also invited.

Is it surprising, with so little interest in quality and new developments, that no housing development in the whole of Yorkshire, let alone Huddersfield, has yet received a Gold or Silver 'Building for Life' award ?

These awards are made by CABA, the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment. You can find out more on their website (www.cabe.org.uk).

The Civic Society strongly advises anyone considering buying a newly built house to visit this website and to purchase CABA's publication, 'CABA, the Home Buyer's Guide 2004 ' You are entitled to much more design than you might be getting.

The November lecture meeting - "Civic Pride and National Responsibility - The Horizons of the Willans Family of Huddersfield" – was very well attended.

Professor Clyde Binfield gave a public lecture on the Willans family of Huddersfield and kept the audience enthralled by his story of a Huddersfield family and its involvement and influence in a hundred years or so of the history of religion, politics, culture and economics in the Huddersfield area.

What especially impressed those present was the effect a good tale well told can have. Without the aid of slides or Powerpoint presentations Professor Binfield simply talked with nothing except enthusiasm and well chosen words, in an elegant prose style, about a subject he had thoroughly researched. It was almost like a linguistic detox ! And not a bit of dumbing down.

Related press article from the Society:

More Australians from Huddersfield - Keen followers of the BBC's new family history series 'Who Do You Think You Are ?' will appreciate the important part the worldwide web now plays in this kind of research. The Huddersfield Civic Society was surprised and delighted to be contacted recently, via its website, by a Mrs Lois Barker from Sydney who is researching her own family history. She had noticed the Society's advertisement for a talk about a prominent Huddersfield family, the Willans (see article above) and had earlier discovered a connection to the Willans family and good old Google came up trumps again when she typed in the family's name.

Old scholars of Huddersfield College and Greenhead High School will remember the Willans family for the Willans cups presented on Speech Days. Far more important however was their political and economic influence in Huddersfield. Emily Willans was the mother of Prime Minister Asquith, while the influence of the family on Victorian Huddersfield's buildings and institutions was very considerable.

George Keith



Yorkshire & Humber Association of Civic Societies (YHACS) Report

The Association very much enjoyed its visit to Huddersfield on 9 October. I am grateful to those Society members who came along to the meeting and particularly to Albert Booth for also guiding a party round the town in the morning. The next quarterly meeting is on 29 January – I believe in Harrogate.

The Development Officer has produced an extremely comprehensive Strategic Plan for the next two years with aspects as diverse as creating new Civic Societies (Bradford is where the principal effort is going at the moment) and becoming the regional voice of the people in relation to policymaking and economic development.

A survey of member societies has failed to produce a consensus on windfarms and a lively debate took place at one committee meeting and the matter is rumbling on. If anyone has any views on windfarms I would be delighted to hear them.

There was great disappointment when our application for a grant for the creation of a website was rejected. It is the view of the committee that a website is now an essential tool of any organisation and that we must have one – and soon. Urgent steps are being taken to find funding.

If you are interested in attending a quarterly meeting or have anything which you would like to be addressed at regional level please contact me at:

richard@rmward.freeseve.co.uk or via the 'contact us' page on the Society's website www.huddersfieldcivicsociety.org.uk

Richard Ward

Heritage Open Weekend

Our contribution, as last year, was to provide a guided walk round the town centre on the Sunday morning. Whereas last year 50 people turned up this year there were only eight. We think the number was so low mainly because the weather was poor and rain threatened but also because advertising the Weekend did not seem to be so effective this year. It was noticeable that no additional attractions were on offer this year compared with last, so publicity lacked a headline grabber.

In contrast two walks provided in August for the South Yorkshire and Manchester Groups of the Victorian Society were well attended and produced many appreciative comments about the town from people who had not previously visited it.

Mike Green

Awards for All Update

Following our successful application for an Awards for All grant, the majority of the equipment has now been purchased and a number of members are attending PowerPoint courses.

The first PowerPoint presentation programme has been developed entitled "Huddersfield Civic Society at Work" which incorporates a number of old 35mm transparencies that have been digitised, along with some newer digital images. This was shown for the first time in



early November to a Church group, with another presentation planned towards the end of the month.

The digital camera was also used to photograph one of the Town walks led by the Society on the Sunday of the annual Heritage weekend and also to take a number of images of the town for the new promotional leaflet the Society is producing.

The digital photographs of the town walk also came in very useful during the Yorkshire and Humber Regional meeting hosted by the Society in October, when one of the speakers was unable to attend. The opening speaker was able to extend his opening remarks by including some of these photographs and explaining the history and development of a number of the town's buildings. Other speakers made use of the new laptop for their presentations.

Ideas, photographs or articles for future presentations will be most welcome to assist in the development and use of this new equipment and to help promote the work of the Society to the wider community.

Michael Barron

Town Centre Working Group Report

There have been only two meetings of this group since the last newsletter. As I mentioned then much more work is being done by separate working groups of officers such as the Railway Group, presumably dealing with the railway warehouse, proposed access tunnel and multi-storey carpark.

Another working group is the St. George's Square Design Team. When I expressed anxiety that we were not in the picture David Wyles and Peter Steniulis (Partnership and Procurement Service) offered to come to our meetings and give progress reports. We must certainly take up this offer.

People are presently working hard to complete all the developments in the town centre before the Christmas shopping period and especially before November 18th when all the Christmas lights will be switched on and when there is to be a Festival of Light plus a Continental Market. All of which will have been completed by time of publication of this newsletter.

Schemes for the Macauley Street Triangle, Byram Street, Kirkgate and Westgate and new traffic junctions at Northumberland Street and Fitzwilliam Street are all nearing completion. Kirklees Council have been particularly pleased with the minimum disruption caused by Yorkshire Water whilst renewing water services throughout the town. This work will now be suspended until after Christmas.

Briefly, other matters which have arisen are:

- Problems of providing disabled access to buildings with a step up from the pavement.
- People feeding pigeons, pavements becoming slippery, people falling, people suing the Council!
- On-going discussions about moving the Open Market.
- Perennial problems of skateboarders.

John Lockwood



Huddersfield Civic Society Questionnaire - Results

With the last newsletter all members were sent a questionnaire about excursions and speaker meetings. 22 members, approximately 20% responded. This compares to 27 members the last time.

Without exception everyone felt that excursions should form part of the society's programme. 82% would themselves like to take part suggesting that last summer's problem would be unlikely to reoccur. There was little unanimity about whether a weekday or a Saturday would be best. A large majority would be happy with either.

Everyone voted for a budget for coach fare, lunch and extras of between £25 and £35 - £30 received the most votes. I cannot resist mentioning therefore what a bargain last year's excursion was at £20!

Evening excursions were equally popular. Suggestions as to which month varied too widely to be of assistance.

Among suggested venues "Market towns of the East Riding" was the most popular first choice whilst Newcastle was a clear winner in second choice category.

Virtually everyone felt that talks/ lectures should be part of our programme with 3 to 4 per year being the most frequent suggestion. One suggestion was that talks should be on dates other than on business meetings.

Just as excursions need good support if they are to be viable so do talks if we are to feel confident in inviting high profile speakers who may be travelling a considerable distance.

Let's hope that the 20% who replied reflected the views of the whole membership

John Lockwood

Planning Reports

Three major planning matters have taken a good deal of our attention since the last newsletter: the Railway Warehouse, Queensgate Market and Castle Hill.

The **Railway Warehouse**, for so long a prominent dismal sight, may now be given a new lease of life. The current proposals do not relate to the ground floor, which is likely to be the subject of a later application for retail use, but to the four floors above. While the first two of these would be converted into offices, the third and fourth would be made into apartments, the interior lighting of all floors being increased by a light-well in the roof. The car park would be asphalted, with some of its space reserved for the building's occupants. A link from the car park to the railway station, considered essential by the Society and others, does not form part of this application but is subject to separate negotiation.



We discussed the proposals fully at our meeting in October and decided to give them our warm support, but with queries about the adequacy of parking space and the reinstatement of the parapet, together with a regret that the other buildings on the site were not included in the plans.

The town in general, and the view from the station in particular, can only be improved by the refurbishment.



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Two projects which we recently supported have now been referred to the Secretary of State for listed building consent: Phase 3 of the Media Centre and the conversion of Folly Hall Mills, both of which were mentioned in the last newsletter. We await the minister's decisions.

Just across the St Thomas Road from Folly Hall is a large site cleared after Brook Motors contracted. This could be used for a new and interesting building for Huddersfield Christian Fellowship, if their application is successful. Although we were not sent the plans, I looked at them on behalf of the Society and thought them promising. We could therefore see the slightly unexpected construction of two new large buildings for worship in the town in recent years, the other being the Methodist Mission. This development will extend the line of construction and refurbishment that starts at the Wakefield Road end of Firth Street, a street whose character continues to change with the completion of a major block of student accommodation and the on-going mill conversions opposite.

On a much smaller issue, one of detail but important nonetheless, we objected to a proposal to paint the doors and windows of Scream (O'Neills) on Queensgate yellow, which we thought would be an unsympathetic colour. The application was refused.

All of our members will be aware that the Library was listed recently, materially raising the opposition to those plans for the area, which involved its demolition. At the same time **Queensgate Market** was listed, but only provisionally, because it was constructed after 1945. Public consultation now follows, at the end of which the listing will or will not be confirmed.

In the larger schemes for the Library and Piazza area, the market would have been demolished, and it was to make this demolition more difficult that these applications for Listing, to the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), were made.



If confirmed this listing, coupled with that of the library (shown here), could well make the larger schemes of redevelopment impossible. Listed building consent would be needed before demolition or alteration could take place so, if the listing is confirmed, the market will enjoy some measure of protection.

After a full discussion at its meeting on October 18, the Society supported the listing by a large majority and we have informed the DCMS of our view.

What some members may not know is that the market building was designed using innovative techniques. English Heritage mentions "innovations in patent glazing to produce a dramatic space full of natural lighting," while the DCMS announcement referred to the "stunning structure based on 21 deliberately asymmetric hyperbolic paraboloid shells designed to allow maximum light into the market. From the outside, roof sections of differing heights cantilever or appear to fly above the structure." The Minister's decision should come some time after late November, when the period of consultation ends.

With many large projects under consideration, it looks as if, by the time of the next newsletter, there should be some important developments to report.

Michael Rayner



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The proposed plans for the replacement hotel on **Castle Hill** were considered at the October meeting of the society and were unanimously recommended for refusal. As the original hotel had been demolished, information was taken from the previous planning applications submitted for the refurbishment of the original building.

There had been three previous applications:

1. Bradford Design Exchange – in January 1998
2. Close, Grainger, Grey & Wilkins in August 1998
3. One 17 AD in February 2001.

Comparing the latest application with the original building:

1. The height of the eaves originally was 6.10 metres above floor level – now 7.50m.
2. The height to the ridge was originally 9.30m – now 10.90 m.
3. The height to the top of the tower was originally 11m, now 12.4m.
4. The floor areas was 1084m², and is now 1524m².

The civic society's majority view on a replacement building was that one should only be allowed providing it is no bigger than the original, built in a style similar to the original and in sympathy with the Victoria Monument. It was agreed that the present structure was intrusive on the skyline from all directions and must be removed completely.

The planning authorities have been informed of the society's position. I understand from planning that the new application will not be considered until after the Public Enquiry to be held at the Town Hall on 16th December at 10am.

David Hinchliffe

.....STOP PRESS.....STOP PRESS.....STOP PRESS.....STOP PRESS.....

The Thandi Partnership has abandoned its appeal against Kirklees Enforcement Order. There will therefore be no Public Inquiry and the existing half built structure must be demolished and the site made good by 11th January 2005.

Still outstanding is their application for a hotel not as big as the current structure but bigger than the original hotel. Kirklees Council are likely to determine this in the next month or so and the chances of rejection are thought to be high. The Thandi Partnership might decide to appeal against such a decision.

Michael Green

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

Meetings:

The next business meeting of the Society is on 20th December 2004 and the next speaker meeting will be our member Albert Booth talking about "Beautiful Stone" on 17th January 2005.

Both meetings will be in room F035 of Huddersfield Technical College.