



## HARROGATE CIVIC SOCIETY

### August 2010

#### Chairman's Report

Regrettably, there is no chairman to write this report. **Howard Hughes**, after many years as a member of our committee, becoming Secretary and then, latterly, on Lilian Mina's sad passing, Chairman of the Civic Society, has resigned.

I suppose we could not expect his role in our Society to be a lifetime commitment! We are, of course, very grateful for all his years of hard work on our behalf and for the benefit of Harrogate.

As many of you will know, **Victor Wild**, another very long-standing member of the committee has also resigned. He has been treasurer for quite a few years, taking over the duty from myself - who was only too pleased to relinquish it! Peter Brown has, I am pleased to say, agreed to become treasurer, along with the office of membership secretary.

It is with great sadness that I have to tell you that **Ian Brown** died in July. He was on the committee of the Harrogate Society (our predecessor organisation) many years ago, but went to work abroad for several years. He returned to the committee and has since given very valuable advice especially on legal matters. Ian's contribution to our meetings and the Society as a whole will be sorely missed.

I know you will join with me in sending sincere condolences to Elizabeth, Ian's widow, and their family who, very generously, decided that donations to the Civic Society, in lieu of flowers at his funeral, would be appropriate.



So you see, your committee is depleted and we will have to find interested persons who would like to be co-opted with a view to becoming elected members when they have 'tasted the water'.

We are planning several events for you which you will see later in this newsletter. Heritage Open Days (HODS) prove popular and most Civic Societies take part. There are many buildings that are not generally open to the public, but often owners can be persuaded to allow the public in for a limited number of days in September. We hope you will take advantage of these opportunities and make it all worthwhile. Some of you will have enjoyed the talk by Toria Forsyth-Moser recently, on the unusual topic of Medieval Symbolism and Gargoyles of Ripon Cathedral. Toria has offered to take a Civic Society party around the Cathedral to view it in general, not only to show us Gargoyles and Grotesques. This would be arranged before June next year.

**Henry Pankhurst**  
Vice Chairman

# Planning Matters!

Since the June newsletter, we have studied 70 planning applications and have made representation on 25 of these.

## SIGNS, SHOPFRONTS AND ADVERTISEMENTS

I previously noted a very large advertisement mounted on an obtrusive arrangement of scaffolding at *Flaxby*. Although this was refused, we saw another application for a similar structure. How they believed that permission would be given this time I cannot imagine and it has in fact been refused. The *Duchy Hospital* application for signs was approved. We would have preferred two pole signs at the front to have been reduced in size and the blanking of a window near the entrance to have been refused.

The camera shop at 6 *Beulah Street* has put up a dreadful fascia sign and applied retrospectively for planning consent. It is a very narrow shopfront but a very deep fascia sign at 1m. Not only that, the colours and complexity of the text are obtrusive in the conservation area. It has been refused consent, but how long will it be before it is taken down? We hope that planning enforcement are on the case, but these things usually move slowly through the system - or sometimes unfortunately not at all.

Another case where I believe the signs are in place without benefit of planning permission is at the *Hopper Lane Hotel at Blubberhouses*. This application has been withdrawn because planning officers required changes. A revised application is likely.

We responded because the application was at variance with its description and the 14 (yes, fourteen) floodlights would have rivalled Blackpool illuminations which are entirely unsuitable in the countryside!



The shop at 36-38 *Cambridge Street* was BHS, but is now Primark. Their application for signs was generally fairly reasonable but a very odd projecting sign was included. It was railway signal shaped - .95m long and .4m high, but modified to .712m long by .3m - an improvement. Illumination was also deleted from a high level wall sign and a fascia sign. (See also under 'Other Applications').

## LARGER HOUSING SITES

Once again there is only one entry under this heading and it is the same one as in the May Newsletter - namely the two sites linked in the same application, previously [Yorkshire Water Sites, at Harlow moor Road and Cornwall Road](#). The application is basically the same as the previous one that was withdrawn and we once again gave it our support because of the thoughtful treatment of the Duchy area of the conservation area and the provision of affordable housing.

## **SMALLER HOUSING SITES**

**I can bring you up to date** on *Duchy Cottage* that is situated behind St. Wilfrid's Church. The appeal against refusal of the first application that was just for conversion of the building to two dwellings (with extensions) was eventually decided. It was a happy outcome because the appeal was dismissed. The Inspector's reasons were all we could have hoped for and I repeat them here. *'The proposals would have a harmful impact on the appearance and character of the appeal property, the Harrogate conservation area and the setting of St. Wilfrid's Church'*. There has been a further application to change door and window openings and to use the building as two flats, which was its last use. This has been permitted. We made no comment.

**We were disappointed** that the proposal at *190 Skipton Road* to attach a new dwelling at the side of this attractive old cottage was approved. We have seen several applications recently to convert basements into flats. There were two that we did not like. The first was at *36-40 Franklin Road* and the second at *58 Franklin Road*. They both involve digging out a substantial part of the front garden, which we thought was poor treatment of the conservation area as front gardens contribute very positively to the street scene. The application at *36-40 Franklin Road* has been refused for the reason of loss of garden, plus that it would have provided a poor level of residential amenity for future occupiers. Lets hope for the same decision at No.58.

**Three years ago**, permission was given to build an infill house at *3 Warwick Crescent*. The application was never implemented, but a replacement planning permission was requested. We objected originally and so, of course, have

repeated our objection, which we think is stronger now because garden areas are no longer to be considered as brownfield sites.

**We are unhappy** about the demolition of the large garage and the over-intensification of buildings and hard surfacing on the site. The garage, which is of a similar age to the existing *Number 3 Warwick Crescent*, and the spaciousness of the site both make a positive contribution to the conservation area. The case officer recommended approval, but without the benefit of the conservation and design officer's opinion, which was too late to be included in the report to planning committee. The conservation and design officer's opinion was strongly against the 'garden grabbing' proposal but the case officer did not change his recommendation and the application was approved by the planning committee.



**A handsome stone building** that was once a school is the *Working Men's Club on Skip-ton Road*. The application to provide a total of four flats on the first and second floors seems reasonable in principle, but we felt that the building was not being given the sensitive treatment that it deserves. Our objections included the vast array of unsuitable roof lights and the loss of a large chimney stack, which would detract from the appearance of the building and the conservation area. I am happy to report that the planners came to the same view and the proposal has been refused.

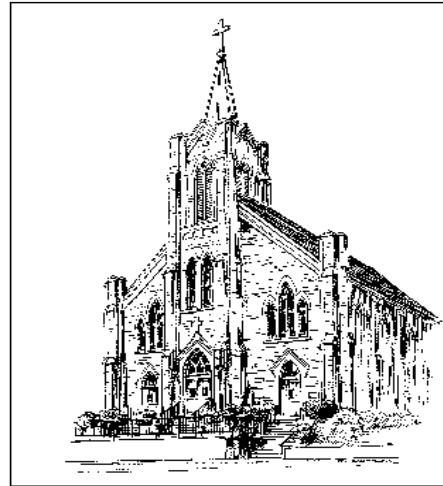
**There was an application** for an infill house at *31 Cavendish Avenue*, which we considered to be intensive and not well designed for the conservation area. It was recommended for refusal, the officer's report having already been written when the applicant decided to withdraw the application. The officer's reasons for refusal were similar to our own, plus a flood risk from Hookstone Beck. It is surprising that this application was recommended for refusal and 3 Warwick Crescent (see above) was not.

**Some years ago**, there were several planning applications for the *Stable/Coach house on Cambridge Terrace*. Cambridge Terrace is behind Cambridge Road and Parliament Street. The access is through an arch on Parliament Street at one end and via Oxford Street at the other. It had been proposed to demolish the building and build a restaurant, which was refused and also dismissed at appeal. Applications then came forward for residential use which were unacceptable. We were very keen that the building should be re-used and not demolished, because it is a rare and attractive original part of the conservation area.

**Eventually** an acceptable proposal came forward in 2003 to convert the stables to three dwellings without too much alteration, which was passed but never implemented. Currently a re-submission of that scheme is under consideration by the planners. We support it and hope that conversion will take place and secure the future of the stables.

**It is worth** going to have a look at the site. The terrace of five houses with stable block still intact right in the town centre is probably unique.

## **PROPOSALS** **AFFECTING CHURCHES**



**The proposal to convert *St. Mary's Church*** off Cold Bath Road to a health spa has been approved with several conditions regarding the treatment of the interior. Obviously great care has to be taken with a Grade II\* Listed Building. I gave some detail of the conversion in the last Newsletter and we are content with the scheme.

**There is still** no final outcome regarding the application to build a Primary Electricity Sub-Station in the grounds of *St. Wilfrid's Church*. CE Electric seem to be seriously (at last) looking at other sites for this project. It is very disappointing that English Heritage have not been persuaded to object to the building but only suggest minor amendments to landscaping and car parking. The Yorkshire and Humberside Association of Civic Societies (YHACS) do not normally comment on individual planning applications but have made an exception in this case because of the importance of the Grade 1 Listed Building and possible implications for the operation for planning policy in future cases. YHACS have published a very nice article on the topic in their Newsletter 'Society Insight', which we have reproduced in this Newsletter.

**A better scheme** for a disabled access ramp at *Trinity Methodist Church* has now been passed. You may remember that we wrote to the Council more than a year ago to object to a very obtrusive example that was refused consent.

### **OTHER APPLICATIONS**

**We responded to** North Yorkshire County Council regarding three new windows proposed for the *Library on Victoria Avenue*. They did not line up with or match any other windows on the building so we objected. I believe that our planners were also unhappy about the proposal, but I expect North Yorkshire will once again foist their wishes on us. There is a shop opposite the bus station that was, until recently, a gents outfitters. The address is *28 Station Parade* and the proposal was to change the use to hot food take-away. We are pleased to say that it has been refused for the reasons we put in our representation. These were the likelihood of casual parking near the corner causing danger or obstruction and lack of information regarding ventilation and extraction equipment and in fact nowhere to put it!



**Permission has been given** to re-build the *Q8 Service Station on Leeds Road*. This is the one between the Mercedes agents and the Tyre Services on the left as you leave Harrogate. There will be a larger shop and repositioned car-wash which we found unobjectionable. However, we did not care for the fact that the canopy over the fuel pumps would be built out much nearer to the road than at present, and so be more obtrusive. Service Stations are never visually attractive structures.

**I have already referred** to *36-38 Cambridge Street (Primark)* under advertisements, but there was another application that included new shopfronts and a second floor extension. The extension did not make any difference to general viewpoints of the building, but we were unsure about the impact of one aspect of the shopfronts (Cambridge Street & Oxford Street). The drawings noted security shutters and transparent security shutters on the same doorways. We did not understand the double security treatment for which there were no detailed drawings. Security shutters can look so obtrusive and ugly. The application has been passed, but there were some revised drawings submitted at a late stage, which we have not seen.

**There is a very nice** restaurant a few miles out of Harrogate on Skipton Road - *Millstones Restaurant*. It is opposite the Knabs Ridge windfarm, but just within the Niddendale AONB. The application was for a wind turbine but much more modest than the ones across the road, although you may not think an 18m mast plus the rotors to be modest! I was a bit surprised that it has been approved because of the usually strict attitude to development in the AONB.

**Another County application** that we looked at was for the *Oakdale Bridge on Penny Pot Lane*. The bridge is to be repaired and strengthened. The general scheme of work looked good and Harrogate Council has given further advice about pointing and recording of flagstones, kerbstones etc.

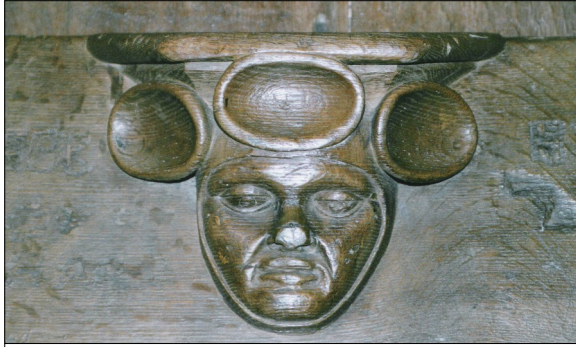
**An unwelcome proposal** has come forward for the old *Dunlop Site at Pannal* for a concrete batching plant. This would surely be a very un-neighbourly development for local residents, due especially to noise and dust. The fact that they would intend to keep the operation to reasonable hours, and claim the number of vehicle movements would be modest, could not make it acceptable. A new access road is proposed (in the green belt) off Princess Royal Way to the south of the site. There is currently a farm gate at this point.

**We saw an application** for an external landing and stairs to the first floor flat at 9 *Alderson Road*. It was to enable the occupants to have easy access to the rear garden. We thought that it was an unwelcome precedent - there are many houses converted into flats in the conservation area. Apart from any effect on the conservation area, the landing being the full width of the house, was like a balcony that would give grandstand views into neighbouring gardens. The application has been withdrawn.



**Moving the Police Station** out of the town centre is contentious in itself, as is, I believe, the possible demolition of the Police Station on North Park Road. The application says that the existing police station building would be re-used, but can we have confidence in this statement? At our AGM in June, those present unanimously felt that the police station should remain in the town centre. The current application is to build the new Police Station at *Beckwith Head Road on the corner of Otley Road* on what is said to be formerly a cricket ground. In the Local Plan, though, it is a designated employment site, the principle of development of some sort is set. As far as this application is concerned, we have objected to the large loss of trees, which are protected by a TPO. Replacement planting seems meagre - mainly I think a few small trees around some sections of car parking. The other concern is traffic at this crossroads. It is often a very busy junction with all the offices around and Harlow Carr Gardens on Crag Lane opposite. The Otley Road traffic travels at speed which adds difficulty, particularly to the right turning manoeuvre out of Beckwith Head Road and Crag Lane.

**My last item** also concerns a cricket ground - the *Harrogate Cricket Club at St Georges Road*. The application is for a new pavilion to replace the one that burnt down in 2008. The proposal is obviously purpose built and very practical and in some respects an interesting design. The mix of materials (red cedar cladding glass and render) adds interest, but the preponderance of long vertical glazed panels on the elevation facing the main pitch is very unimaginative - a wall of glass. The elevation facing the second pitch is more interesting with the inclusion of a scoreboard to break up the length. The roof is disappointingly dull because of its outwardly flat appearance, but it does offer a wide overhang, giving some visual benefit. The exterior concrete seating is very stark in appearance and lacking in comfort!



### Mythological Creatures and Symbols in Ripon Minster

**This was** the somewhat mysterious title of an enthralling illustrated talk given to members on 21st August at Grant's Hotel by Toria Forsyth-Moser, the Heritage Project Manager at Ripon Cathedral.

**The pre-stated** objective of Toria's presentation was to demonstrate that mediaeval man's world was filled with mythical creatures representing eternal archetypes that transcend time and geography. This involved close examination of the symbolism drawing on a selection of disciplines.

**Using a wealth** of power point illustrations, she depicted the great variety of wood and stone carvings throughout the Cathedral and examined their significance. Toria explained how in the Middle Ages images were invested with meaning at a time when the populace was largely illiterate, religion was expressed in Latin and any culture depended almost entirely on the visual.

**Although** this ethos is now almost inconceivable, one way in which mediaeval culture can still be appreciated is by the examination and study of carvings in wood and stone in places of worship, which dominated society until the Reformation. These carvings found on wooden misericords beneath the seats of choir stalls, on stone carvings, pillars and roof bosses and in stained glass, allowed the populace to express their piety; but were also an opportunity to display everyday tomfoolery, lewdness and social satire that were as much a part of the Middle ages as religious devotion.



**As demonstrated** by her excellent slides, Ripon Cathedral is particularly rich in its collection of misericords installed in the late 15th century. Subjects shown ranged from a man suffering from toothache representing the tortures of hell, to a mermaid with a looking glass symbolising vanity; and a male headless figure with facial features in his torso known as a "Blemya" described by Pliny as a man from Africa. Other strange and exotic examples included a fox in a pulpit preaching to a goose and a cockerel—a warning of the devil in disguise and the inevitable Green Man with head wreathed in leaves—an ancient Celtic divinity of nature and fertility.

**Judging by the numerous** questions following her talk, it was greatly enjoyed and Toria has since offered us a personal tour of the Minster, which it is hoped can be arranged in Spring next year.

**Peter Hacker**



## A Note

### From the Treasurer and Membership Secretary

**I would like to thank** all members for their continued support of the Civic Society; it is only through your generosity that we are able to meet our running costs.

**One of the major expenses** is the cost of communication and many of you have already given further assistance by providing an email address and by setting up a bank standing order for the annual subscription. I appreciate that some members may prefer not to receive electronic communications or are averse to standing orders, but I would ask that all who have not yet done so now consider both these possibilities. Email addresses may be sent to [p.brown0@talk21.com](mailto:p.brown0@talk21.com) and a standing order form may be found on the enclosed application form.

**It is a sad fact** that many of the younger generation, whilst no doubt fully appreciating the benefits of living in our special town, have such busy lives that they have no time to think about the ongoing need to protect Harrogate's heritage.

**We are seeing a decline** in numbers (down 19% over the past two years), and another way in which you can help is by encouraging any of your family and friends who share your pride of Harrogate to become members of the Civic Society. A membership form is enclosed and more may be obtained through our website ([www.harrogatecivicsociety.org](http://www.harrogatecivicsociety.org)) or direct from me, by ringing 01423 504079



**Peter Brown**

## Forthcoming events

**Thursday, 9th to Sunday, 12th September:** Heritage Open Days, in co-operation with English Heritage. Venues in and around Harrogate.

**Thursday, 21st October at 7.30 p.m.** An illustrated talk by Michael Bevington, entitled "Mediaeval Life in Fountains Abbey". Venue: Grant's Hotel

**Wednesday, 10th November at 7.30 p.m.:** Harrogate Borough Council's Chief Executive, Wallace Sampson, talking about "The Future of Harrogate—The Council's Viewpoint". Venue: Grant's Hotel

## HERITAGE OPEN DAYS – HARROGATE

**Thursday, 9th to Sunday, 12th September, 2010**

Please make a diary note to support this year's important event which runs throughout the country during the above dates.

Harrogate Civic Society, working with the Council, has arranged for over twenty properties to be viewed; literally on your doorstep with free admission to all.

In addition, properties in Knaresborough and Ripon will also be open.

A leaflet giving full information on the properties will be available at the Tourist Information Office and local libraries as well as appearing in the Harrogate Advertiser and on line at [www.harrogate.gov.uk/harrogate-5561](http://www.harrogate.gov.uk/harrogate-5561)

As joint co-ordinator with the Council you can telephone me on 01423 569563 or any committee member.

**Mike Burke**



**Properties open for viewing** include, Grove House, the Turkish Baths, the Harrogate Synagogue, Knaresborough Castle and Stonefall Cemetery.



**Please check the day** and precise opening times of each property as these do vary.



**St. Wilfrid's Church  
Yorkshire and Humberside  
Association of Civic Societies  
Opposes Planning Application**



**Can You Help?**

Last year a planning application was submitted to build an electricity primary station in the grounds of St. Wilfrid's Church at Harrogate. The station is a substantial building, 30 metres long, 8 metres high and 8 metres wide. It is understood that the church will receive much needed revenue from the electricity company if the development goes ahead. In an article about the application, **Private Eye** magazine said that St. Wilfrid's was a "*magnificent church designed in 1903 by Temple Lushington Moore and completed by his son-in law Leslie Moore and that John Betjeman considered Temple Moore to be one of the greatest of Victorian and Edwardian church architects and St. Wilfrid's one of his finest works*".

St. Wilfrid's is the only grade 1 listed building in Harrogate.

Sir Nikolaus Pevsner thought that St. Wilfrid's was "*easily the most valuable of the many churches of Harrogate*".

Harrogate Civic Society has objected to the application as has the Victorian Society.

There is a website: [www.save-stwilfrids-harrogate.com](http://www.save-stwilfrids-harrogate.com).

There is obviously a pressing need for the electricity station but are the grounds of a grade 1 listed church the right place for it to be sited?

YHACS does not normally comment on planning applications, we do not have the resources to build up the necessary knowledge, but this application affects a grade 1 listed building and we have a remit to support our member societies. When framing our response we took into account PPS 5, Planning for the Historic Environment, which has replaced PPG 15, and we also consulted the English Heritage document "Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance. Our conclusion was that, owing to its scale and proximity, the proposed development would cause substantial harm to the setting of a grade 1 listed building. We noted the statement in PPS 5, Policy HE 9.1: "*Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting*"

So we also considered that owing to its scale and proximity, the proposed development would cause harm to the significance of the listed building.

In summary, we considered that the public benefit derived from having the electricity primary station in this location would be outweighed by the harm that would be caused to a nationally-significant listed building and we urge that every effort be made to find an alternative site for what is obviously a necessary item of infrastructure. We have objected to the proposal.

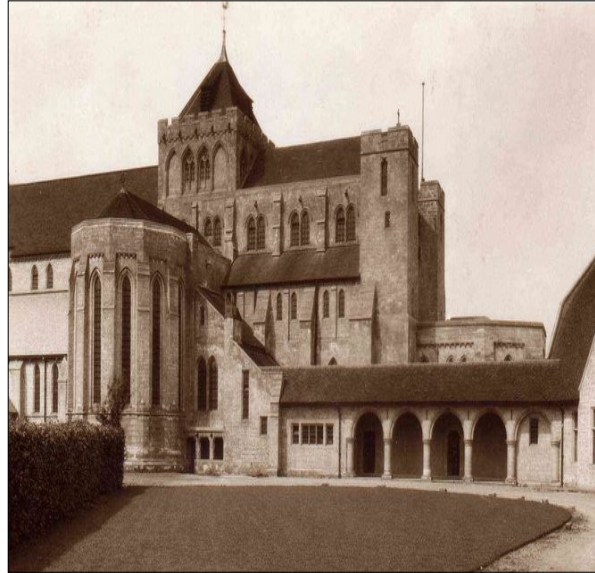
It is to be noted that, in this case, we are at variance with English Heritage who, in their guidance to Harrogate Borough Council, have advised that *“the proposed electricity station will not lead to substantial harm to the church or conservation area”*.

We understand that the electricity company is trying to find an alternative site but that this is proving difficult.

**Peter Cooper  
Chairman  
Yorkshire and Humberside  
Association of Civic Societies**

The above article first appeared in the summer edition of Society Insight

**.....St. Wilfrid's  
without .....**



**.....and with the electricity primary station**



## Obituary

### Ian Keith Rae Brown

17th September, 1938 to 10th July, 2010

### A Fair Minded, Gentle Man

It is with sadness that we announce the untimely and sudden death of Ian Brown who passed away after a short illness at the end of July.

Ian was a long standing member of both the Harrogate Society and the Harrogate Civic Society, having been a committee member of the latter for many years.

Ian will be greatly missed, not only in his legal advisory role, having been both a lawyer and later a barrister, but also for his compassion, wit and understanding shown over a long period of dedicated service through many different and difficult situations.

Over the years Ian's legal experience has been invaluable to the Society, particularly with issues regarding The Stray. His expertise was never more welcome than during the Society's opposition to the controversial five-phase motorway scheme which, had it been successful, would have destroyed the Harrogate we enjoy and take for granted today.

Ian was an example of integrity, professionalism and loyalty; his memory will remain with all who knew him.

