



HARROGATE  
Civic Society



# NEWSLETTER

**Celebrate** our past - **Enhance** our present - **Shape** our future

July 2022



**Malcolm Neesam**  
**1946 - 2022**

## A great loss and a lasting legacy

Harrogate Civic Society mourns with great sadness the loss of Malcolm Neesam who was one of our founder members. A Freeman of the Borough of Harrogate, he was an inspirational source of knowledge about the history of the town .

He died on 28 June 2022 which was his 76th birthday.

His funeral will be held at Christ Church, High Harrogate on 28 July at 1.30 pm and afterwards at the Cedar Court Hotel.

On the next pages we print a few of the tributes to this exceptional man.



## heritage open days

This year Heritage Open Days (HODs) will take place between 9 and 18 September.

Thanks to the amazing work of our team of volunteers, we will be announcing a record programme involving around 30 venues, many of which are new, such as Harrogate Spring Water (pictured below).

Full details will be on our website from 1 August and in the August newsletter.



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*Please note that whilst every effort is made to ensure accuracy, no responsibility can be accepted should any losses be incurred. Opinions expressed are those of the contributors and not necessarily of the Harrogate Civic Society.*  
David Siddans, Editor

## Remembering Malcolm

*Stuart Holland, chair of Harrogate Civic Society writes*

Harrogate Civic Society mourns the loss of one of their founder members and an inspirational source of knowledge about the history of Harrogate which he described as a 'handsome town'.

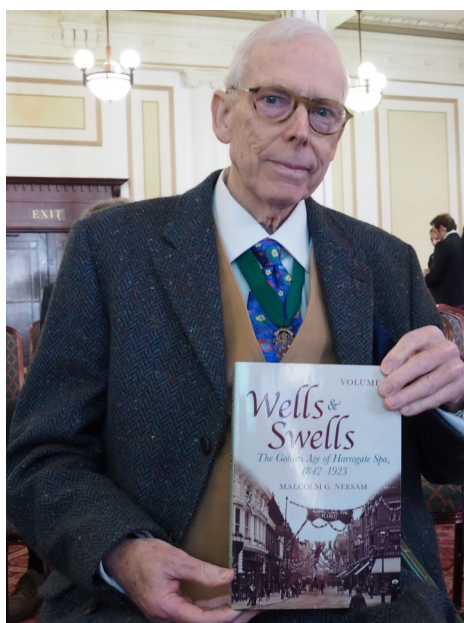
Always a gentleman in manner and appearance, Malcolm had an amazing way of recounting our history as a simple story.

In his 50 years of work with the Civic Society (originally the Harrogate Society), Malcolm was instrumental in establishing the listing of many buildings in the town and in establishing the first Conservation Area.

He had an encyclopaedic memory of facts, people and places which made his presentations at meetings fascinating, always illustrated by photographs or prints from the Walker Neesam archive.

He spoke fondly of his work following in the footsteps of Harold Walker, Historian and one time editor of the Harrogate Herald. Indeed, it was Malcolm who completed the *History of Harrogate under the Improvement Commissioners, 1841 – 1884*, largely compiled by H Walker. Both gentlemen set up the Walker-Neesam archive, ensuring their collective research could stay for ever within the town.

Malcolm went on to write and publish many books including Harrogate Great Chronical 1332 - 1841.



*Malcolm at the launch event held on 26 April 2022 of his major work chronicling the history of Harrogate between 1842 to 1923*

*He was working on the final chronicle at the time of his death. Completion of that work is one of our projects.*

It is the Chronicle, *Wells and Swells*, covering the Golden Age of Harrogate, 1842 to 1923, that he will more recently be remembered for, launched just two months ago to an audience of 150 townsfolk. Malcolm knew at that stage that he would not be with us for much longer but nonetheless, gave an inspiring talk about the Golden Years of Harrogate.

Alongside his research and writing, Malcolm, as a Civic Society member, was the founder historian of the Harrogate Brown Plaque scheme, compiling plaques on the Tewitt Well and Magnesia Well in 1975 followed by a few each year until we have a staggering 92 plaques around the town today. He has even left research notes for a number of future plaques.

His final gift to the Civic Society is the research for a 'Time Line' covering the period 800 BC to 2023 when the Borough of Harrogate ceases to exist.

Harrogate Civic Society will keep Malcolm's name alive by continuing in his footsteps, celebrating and recording our rich heritage and past and sharing it widely throughout the town.

*From Susan Amaku, vice chair of Harrogate Civic Society*

My earliest memory of Malcolm was of attending a meeting in his house, when I was a young architecture student working for the Council, and being most impressed by his library.

Over the years, as I became involved with the Harrogate Civic Society, I got to know him better and always enjoyed meeting him either informally or at the talks that he gave. His knowledge of Harrogate was impressive and his ability to bring its history to life meant that he always had a captive audience.

Malcolm was a gentleman, and wherever you met him he was always immaculately dressed. He will be missed but will live on in his many books about Harrogate and I (like many others I'm sure) will enjoy reading the 'secret messages' that he said he had left in his latest Chronicle of Harrogate - *Wells and Swells*.

Rest in peace Malcolm.

*A tribute from Henry Pankhust, past chairman of Harrogate Civic Society*

I first met Malcolm on joining the Civic Society Committee in 1991, when he was on the committee. After a number of years (I think it was when Lilian Mina was Chairman) he retired from the committee because he needed to give all his time to the immense amount of writing he was engaged in of which we are all aware. Gradually over the years we got to know each other, although I was always conscious of not wanting to burden him with too many requests, but sometimes informed him of a planning application to which I thought he may wish to respond.

In more recent years we would go for a coffee and occasionally invite him home for a meal. Clearly we talked about Harrogate and the Civic Society, but also music of which he was extremely knowledgeable. We often gave him a lift to concerts but generally he was a very independent and self-sufficient person and liked to keep active by walking to and from town.

I shall miss Malcolm greatly for both his incredible knowledge and his friendship.



*Malcolm (standing) at an early meeting of the Harrogate Society, c1971*

*Fiona Movley is the chair of Harrogate International Festivals and a member of the Civic Society*

Malcolm was an unrivalled advocate for the history of Harrogate and his incredible work to record the history of the town is a wonderful legacy for future generations.

He was a vice president of Harrogate International Festivals, he encouraged and supported my love of Harrogate history, and he was a dear friend. I will miss him greatly.

*Nigel McClea, chair of the history group of the Harrogate Civic Society remembers*

Our first meeting was a guided walk that Malcolm led around the town, pointing out the interesting and the quirky, just as Harry does now. I had the temerity to ask why Harrogate had no local history society. He said that, if we *really* were interested, we should buy his books (which we have) and join the Civic Society (which we did). We have never regretted either.

By the time the Civic Society finally created a history group, Malcolm was already too frail to be an active participator. Nevertheless, he was always our inspiration and our hero. We enjoyed many conversations, seeking his guidance, plundering his formidable knowledge. And even when very ill, when others would have been concentrating on their health, nothing was ever too much trouble.

Malcolm was so keen to encourage us, to promote anything that he saw as good for the town. He had such generosity, and it was a privilege to be able to repay just a little of that by helping him in these last difficult months. And none of us will forget the recent launch of *Wells and Swells* - a triumph and a phenomenal team effort that involved so many in the town and beyond. It was an enormous tribute to a much loved man and a rich celebration of his lifetime of achievement.

But my abiding memory of Malcolm is not of the public figure, but of a very human being; a man who helped you to think better of yourself, just by the time he spent with you.

*Anne Smith joined the Harrogate Society soon after its inception and was chairman in the 1980s*

Malcolm, whom I have known for over fifty years, was a very dear friend to myself and my family. We first met at a Harrogate Society meeting and we were friends from that moment on. I saw a side to Malcolm that few people saw. He had a wicked sense of humour so we laughed a lot.

We will all miss him as there will never be anyone like him ever. He was a one off and I am really proud he was my friend.



## What Next after Harrogate Borough Council Goes?

On 31 May, a capacity audience of society members heard Wallace Sampson and Cllr Graham Swift (Chief Executive and deputy leader respectively of Harrogate Borough Council) describe the process leading to the creation of a new council for North Yorkshire.

In April next year, all seven district councils, including Harrogate, will cease to exist.

Among the matters to be discussed in the period ahead will be a decision on the creation of a town council for Harrogate, and what powers and responsibilities it might have. The map below shows the area of town which is currently unparished.

Our speakers described the process by which a town council might be set up, namely a 'community governance review'.

Finally, there would be a move towards devolution, involving an elected mayor for North Yorkshire and York. It suggested that this could unlock around £2.4 billion of investment over 30 years.



*One of the slides in the presentation, showing the final steps of the reorganisation of local government in North Yorkshire*

## What is the role of the Civic Society?

At the last committee meeting, it was agreed to set up a small sub-group to monitor the activities which are taking place in the period before the new council is established. This would ensure that the interests of the Civic Society could be represented as the new policies and procedures evolve.

The sub-group consists of David Siddans from the committee and John Fox and Tony Thorndike who have volunteered from the membership, both having a wealth of expertise.

Initially we will be seeking to meet with newly elected members of the council to hear their views and cement relationships.



## Some of the services that a town council might do (subject to agreement)

- Minor highways functions
- Open space management, grass cutting
- Fly tipping
- Street cleaning
- Recycling management
- Community libraries
- Community transport
- Community safety
- Local tourism
- Local town economic development
- Local climate change initiatives
- Homelessness and social housing
- Control of markets
- Street naming
- Licensing, such as street trading
- Abandoned vehicles

## Harrogate on Film

Since the dawn of cinema, Harrogate has been lovingly recorded on film; the images preserved in the remarkable library of the Yorkshire Film Archive.

Now, your Society, in partnership with the Harrogate Film Society, has commissioned a feature length film celebrating the life and times of Harrogate and Knaresborough.

Harrogate on Film will be shown - one day only - at

**The Odeon Cinema, Harrogate**

**Monday, 19 September 2022**

**2:30pm (matinee) or 7:30pm (evening)**

Please support this unique event and encourage your friends and family too.



Unreserved seating (to include tea and biscuits at the interval) can now be booked through

<https://www.harrogatefilmsociety.org>

Harrogate Civic Society members	£10
Knaresborough Civic Society members	£10
Harrogate Film Society members	£10
All others	£12

**Important note: this event is NOT bookable through the Civic Society events page.**

### Harrogate & District Allotment Federation

**Show: 21 August, Valley Gardens**

Harrogate Civic Society will be having a stall at the annual HDAF show in Valley Gardens on the Sun Colonnade. Members of the committee will be there to answer questions about the society and its work. Various leaflets will be available.

The show provides the opportunity for plot holders to display their excellent fruit, flowers and vegetables and there will be a range of craft and charity stalls along the Sun Colonnade.



### New Play:

**The Man who Captured Sunlight**

**23 September at the Royal Hall**

**Full details will be in our next newsletter**

**Tickets are available through the Harrogate Theatre Box Office**

*Portrait of Samson Fox (1838-1903), Mercer Art Gallery*





## Detail of Events Coming up Soon

### 30 - 31 July Harrogate Railway Station 160th Anniversary

On Saturday and Sunday 30-31 July, there will be a public exhibition in Harrogate Railway station showing the development of the station since its opening on 1 August 1862. A civic reception will be held on 1 August.

The exhibition is the work of our member, Terry Williams, with the full support of the Civic Society.

Opening times are 10am to 4pm and entry is free .



### 23 August Royal Walk

In this Queen's jubilee year, we are launching a new walk highlighting places in the town centre with a royal connection.

Details of the launch are shown opposite and will include refreshments at The Crown Hotel, followed by a short one-act play staged by The Harrogate Dramatic Society.

Please remember to book a place on the walk by email to:

[thebirdsatk1@outlook.com](mailto:thebirdsatk1@outlook.com)



### INVITATION TO THE LAUNCH OF A ROYAL WALK

*A joint venture between The Harrogate Dramatic Society and  
Harrogate Civic Society with support from Harrogate Borough Council.*

#### 23rd August 2022 including the Royal Walk and a One Act Play.

The walk will be led by **Harry Satloka** and will commence at 1.45pm  
adjacent to the West Park United Reformed Church.

It will finish at The Crown Hotel with refreshments, followed by the  
One Act Play presented by The Harrogate Dramatic Society  
in the presence of

**The Worshipful, The Mayor of the Borough of Harrogate,  
Cllr. Victoria Oldham.**

Numbers are restricted and attendance will be on a "first come, first  
served" basis with a charge of £5 towards refreshments.

To book your place, for either the walk and launch or just for the launch  
event, please email by 12th August 2022, stating your preference, to:

[thebirdsatk1@outlook.com](mailto:thebirdsatk1@outlook.com)



### 15 September Allerton Castle Visit

There are a few places left for our private guided tour of Allerton Castle on 15 September. Meet at 2pm, for a tour of the house followed by tea and cake, then the chance to see the grounds. Cost £15 pp. Please email to

[events@harrogatecivicsociety.org](mailto:events@harrogatecivicsociety.org)

as soon as possible to reserve your place. Car sharing can be arranged.

See page 8 for payment methods





## New Members Social Evening

We have been most fortunate that many new members have joined the Society since the start of the year. The committee felt it appropriate to welcome new members by extending an invitation to a social evening where they could meet the committee and each other in the convivial setting of The Club on Victoria Avenue. This took place on the evening of Wednesday 6 July.

There were short presentations from our chairman, Stuart Holland, and other committee members followed by lively discussions about the role and the future of the Society.

The next such event of this nature will be held in October. The possibility of future lunch or dinner events is also being considered.

*Below: the social evening in The Club lounge.*



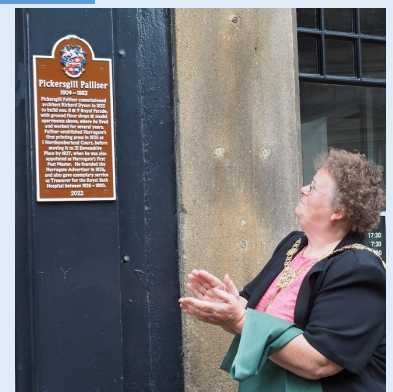
## Two New Plaques Unveiled in June .. .. and a New Edition of the Town Centre Trails Map

Following the unveiling of two new plaques, shown below, the total number of plaques on the Civic Society register is now 92. More are in the pipeline for next year.

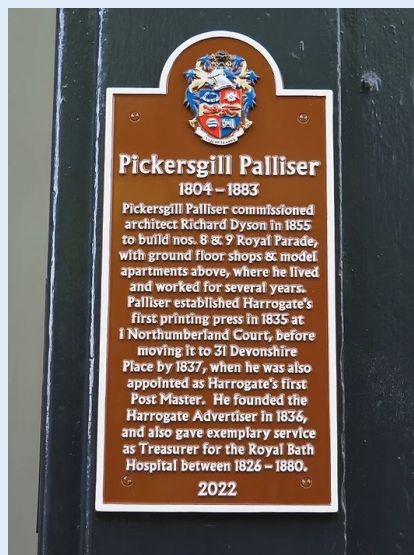
In the meantime, we have produced an updated version of the Heritage Plaques Town Centre Trails map which is available online and as a printed brochure from the usual outlets such as the tourist information offices, libraries and town centre hotels.

Our website [www.harrogateplaques.org](http://www.harrogateplaques.org) is regularly updated and contains a wealth of information about each plaque. Do visit it.

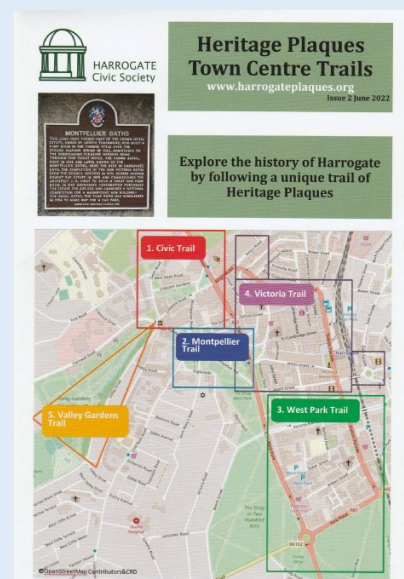
*Below: the Mayor unveiling the plaque to Pickersgill Palliser, 6 June 2022*



19 West Park



9A Royal Parade



# Forthcoming Events in 2022

Sat - Sun <b>30 - 31 July</b>	<b>Harrogate Railway Station - 160 Years of History</b> A free exhibition in the station concourse, 10am to 4pm on each day. See also page 6
Sunday <b>21 August</b>	<b>Harrogate and District Allotment Federation Show.</b> Harrogate Civic Society will have a stand at the show being held in Valley Gardens
Tuesday <b>23 August</b>	<b>Launch of A Royal Walk</b> See details on page 6
<b>9 – 18 Sept</b>	<b>Heritage Open Days</b> A full programme will be available on our website from 1 August and will also be included in our next newsletter.
Thursday <b>15 September</b>	<b>Visit to Allerton Castle</b> See page 6 for details
Monday <b>19 September</b> <b>2.30 and 7.30pm</b>	<b>Harrogate on Film</b> Booking now OPEN - See page 5 for details including how to book.
Tuesday <b>25 October</b> <b>7.30pm</b>	<b>Schooldays in Edwardian Harrogate</b> A talk by Dr Paul Jennings to be held at St Paul's URC hall, Belford Road (off Victoria Avenue)
Tuesday <b>29 November</b>	<b>The Harrogate Convention Centre: its purpose and future</b> A talk by the Centre Director, Paula Lorimer (to be held at the Centre).
Sunday <b>11 December</b>	<b>Christmas Social for 2022</b> (details to follow)

## Paying for events

By bank transfer: Name: Harrogate Civic Society. Sort Code: 05-04-54. Account: 167 465 95

By cheque: post to Mr C R Dicken, HCS Treasurer, 74 Otley Road, Harrogate, HG2 0DP

Reference: please use your name, followed by the date DDMM (day/month) of the event.

All details are on our website and are continuously updated. Full information and reminders will be issued via the newsletter, by email and via facebook.

Talks will be advertised to our link groups and the general public. They will be free for members unless otherwise stated. There will be a £5.00 head charge for non-members. Early booking is recommended.

Unless otherwise stated, please book by email to [events@harrogatecivicsociety.org](mailto:events@harrogatecivicsociety.org)

## Contact us:

General matters	..	..	<a href="mailto:info@harrogatecivicsociety.org">info@harrogatecivicsociety.org</a>
Membership queries	..	..	<a href="mailto:membership@harrogatecivicsociety.org">membership@harrogatecivicsociety.org</a>
Event bookings	..	..	<a href="mailto:events@harrogatecivicsociety.org">events@harrogatecivicsociety.org</a>

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