



*Harrogate Theatre – one of this year's Heritage Open Days venues
Photo: Mike Worley, Harrogate Theatre*

Curtain Up!

Heritage Open Days will soon be here again, and this year the Civic Society has compiled a list of 29 venues in and around Harrogate which will provide a unique insight into their history and significance – and all for free!

The full list of events is shown on pages 2,3 and 4 of this newsletter. We are immensely grateful to our member, Geoff Brown, who has worked over several months to coordinate the programme.

In addition, a team led by Nigel McClea has worked hard to produce a full rolling programme of Civic Society events – now stretching well into 2027. The programme on page 16 lists events up to March 2027. More to come in the next 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 contributor and not necessarily of the Harrogate Civic Society.
David Siddans, Editor*

Heritage Open Days 2026



*September is coming and **Heritage Open Days** are back!*

***Geoff Brown**, who has coordinated the event on behalf of the Civic Society, describes the full programme:*



From 11 to 20 September Harrogate will once again be part of England's largest festival of history and culture and the unmistakable HODs pink bunting will be seen around the Harrogate area.

Supported by the Harrogate Civic Society, **Heritage Open Days** is a community event bringing residents and visitors together to share the charm and splendour of the area.

There will be 29 venues and events within the Harrogate area offering **free entry** over the 10-day festival. A wide-ranging mix of tours, talks, walks, exhibitions, music and buildings, some not normally open to the public, mostly with experts on hand. It's a chance for all of us to see hidden places and try out new experiences - all for free.

Come and celebrate the 90th anniversary of the magnificent **Harrogate Odeon**, view the exhibition and join a behind-the-scenes tour of the projection rooms. Pull on your wellies, switch on your torch and take an adventure exploring **How Stean Gorge**, including its caves and tunnels – look out for bats, trout and other wildlife.

The festival includes several interesting talks. Join **Sir Thomas Ingilby** at All Saints' Ripley to hear about his swashbuckling relative Rear Admiral Sir Robert Barrie, who is buried at the church.



*Harrogate Odeon at night
By permission of Odeon Cinemas Ltd*



*How Stean Gorge
Source: How Stean Gorge*



*Sir Thomas Ingilby at Ripley Castle
By permission of Sir Thomas Ingilby*

Visit Harrogate Library for talks on the story of **Milestones**, and on the history of the **Mail**. West Park Centre is marking the publication of the book **Schools & schooldays in nineteenth century Harrogate** with an exhibition and talk by the author.

Exhibitions hosted at **Old Magnesia Well Pump Room** and **New Park Heritage Centre** show how buildings and communities have evolved within the town. Bilton Historical Society is presenting an exhibition on the often-overlooked history and development of the **Bilton Grange Estate**.

Harrogate Theatre is hosting an exhibition on 'Life on Stage'. **Nidderdale Museum** in Pateley Bridge, showcasing Dales life, is waiving the entry fee.

There are guided walks, some new and some popular ones returning for 2026. The **Commonwealth War Graves Tour** at Stonefall tells of some of those who fought and died in the wars. Find out more about our famous Valley Gardens with the **Valley Gardens Walk**. Explore some of the **Heritage Plaques of Harrogate**. Learn the history of New Park with the **New Park Heritage Walk**. At **Harlow Hill Cemetery Walk**, see the graves of notable people such as the actor Michael Rennie. Hear the history of two fascinating villages at the **Pannal Heritage Walk** and **Ripley Village Historic Walkabout**. Washburn Heritage Centre is hosting **Fewston Can't Bury Its Dead** tours of Fewston Cemetery. All tours are led by knowledgeable guides and bookable via the HODs website.

Explore the fine Victorian churches in Harrogate centre: **Harrogate Baptist Church**, **Our Lady Immaculate** and **St Robert's Church**, **St Peter's Church**, **Wesley Chapel** - all different denominations, all opened within a period of twenty years, all within half a mile, all thriving but each with unique and distinctive features.



George Savery and Pupils
Source: Harrogate Library



Bilton Grange Estate
Source: Bilton Historical Society



Actor Michael Rennie
Source: Dr Paul Jennings



St Peter's Church
Source: Geoff Brown

Hidden Harrogate has many things to offer in 2026. Buildings that are normally not open to the public will also be flying the pink **Heritage Open Days** banners. The **Harrogate Club** is opening the doors for us all to enjoy the Victorian splendour and join a guided tour exploring its historic significance in the area. Visit the **Harrogate Masonic Hall** to view the building, meet local Freemasons and learn about a tradition rich in history and philanthropy. At **Pateley Bridge Playhouse**, learn more about the history of both the building and the Society with 'turn up' backstage tours.



Harrogate Masonic Hall
Source: Harrogate Masonic Hall

Visit two more beautiful churches just a short journey away from the centre of Harrogate. View the grave of Blind Jack of Knaresborough at **All Saints' Spofforth** with the opportunity to climb the 15th-century tower and see the 200-year-old clock in the bell ringing chamber. Just a few miles north is **St Wilfrid's Church, South Stainley**, where amongst the stunning windows and carvings they will be hosting a week-long flower festival.



Pateley Bridge Playhouse
Source: Pateley Bridge Playhouse

All of the events in the Harrogate area, including dates and times, are listed on the Civic Society website: <https://www.harrogatecivicsociety.org/hods-2026> where you can click on the photo of an event to get a full description and booking details. This website page also has a link to a printable brochure, including a calendar of local events.

Full details of each event can also be found at the national Heritage Open Days website: www.heritageopendays.org.uk.



St Wilfrid's Church, South Stainley
Source: Geoff Brown

'Once again I am delighted that the Harrogate Civic Society is able to support and promote Heritage Open Days. The Civic Society is committed to celebrate our past, enhance our present and shape our future. Heritage Open Days helps us to do the first by creating a better understanding of our heritage enabling us to achieve the other two aims.'

These events do not happen automatically and I would like to take this opportunity to thank, on behalf of the Civic Society, the team that has put this programme together as well as all the venues that have opened their doors and to those who are leading visits.'

Mike Newby – Chair, Harrogate Civic Society

A tour of Swinton Castle

On 7 May, about thirty members met at Swinton Castle, near Masham, for a visit to this beautiful house.

Paul Jennings, who led the group, writes:

The present owner of Swinton Castle, Mark Cunliffe-Lister, took us through the main rooms of the house, which is now a hotel.

The house dates back to the late 17th century, when it was built by Sir Abstrupus Danby. It was almost entirely rebuilt later in the succeeding century by William Danby in a fashionable gothic, castellated style. The house and a vast estate in Wensleydale were then bought in the 1880s by Samuel Cunliffe-Lister, the Bradford industrialist, who made further additions to create its present appearance.

Mark told us about several paintings on display, including a large portrait of the Duke of Wellington by Sir Thomas Lawrence, and those of many of his family. These include Ellis Cunliffe-Lister, the father of Samuel and one of the first two Bradford MPs after the Great Reform Act, Philip Cunliffe-Lister, a minister in several Conservative governments between the wars and during the Second World War and Lady Masham, herself disabled and campaigner on their behalf.



Paul Jennings (left) and Mark Cunliffe-Lister

After the tour we enjoyed afternoon tea in a lovely room under a portrait of Samuel. I couldn't help thinking of how I had walked past his statue in Lister Park, Bradford, not far from his mill and where he built the Cartwright Hall art gallery for the city, every morning and afternoon for nearly eight years on my way to and from school. And of my own family, many of whom worked at the mill, including my dad who was there for the whole of his working life.

Finally, to complete a memorable visit, we were able to explore the beautiful park and gardens. Thanks are due to Mark Cunliffe-Lister for making the visit possible and to Paul Fennimore for administering the arrangements.

Many more members applied to go on this visit than we were able to accommodate, so Paul has arranged a repeat visit which will take place on Thursday 6 May 2027.

Members will be contacted later when booking arrangements are finalised. As before, numbers will be limited.



More on the Cunliffe-Listers of Swinton Castle

During the tour of Swinton Castle, Paul gave the group more information about the history of the owners:

Paul spoke a little more on Samuel Cunliffe-Lister and his career, making huge fortunes from first the mechanisation of wool combing and second the processing of silk waste to make the world-famous Lister's velvet at his colossal Manningham Mills in Bradford, completed in 1873. The mill also saw the great strike of 1890-91, provoked by wage cuts imposed after the US imposition of import tariffs.

The strike failed but led to the creation of the Independent Labour Party in Bradford in 1893, the forerunner of the Labour Party. Troops were seen on the streets of Bradford during that dispute and Lister was also involved in another big strike after wage cuts at a colliery he owned near Featherstone. On this occasion, in September 1893, two strikers were shot dead by soldiers – the Featherstone massacre as it became known.



Paul also described the years from 1939 to 1946 when Harrogate (Ladies') College occupied the house, while the Harrogate school was used by the Air Ministry, after agreement with the Minister, Philip Cunliffe-Lister, and his wife. There is a display of photographs taken from the *Illustrated London News* of 2 December 1939, showing the school's time there, including having a lesson under the eyes of the Duke of Wellington and a dormitory in one of the long corridors.

Civic Society Committee

We are very pleased to welcome **Anita Langford** as a co-opted member of our committee. This brings the total strength of the committee to ten members.

Anita writes:

I have lived in Yorkshire all my life apart from 11 years when I was undertaking 'missionary' work in Cheshire. We moved back to the Harrogate area - Dacre Banks (previously lived in Ilkley) - two years ago and am really enjoying being here. Harrogate is such a wonderful place to live.

I worked in finance all my life and on a voluntary basis was treasurer for a church, U3A and a community centre in Tarporley, Cheshire.

I am currently shadowing Paul Fennimore on finance and membership, both of which I have done previously.



The Challenges of The Stray Ferret – in a fake news world

On 10 June a rapt audience heard Tamsin O'Brien, the founder of the digital news outlet The Stray Ferret, talk with elegance and passion about media in the modern world, the rise of artificial intelligence and the threat posed by fake news.

Nigel McClea summarises her talk:



Tamsin O'Brien

Tamsin told the audience that, with the rise of digital platforms and artificial intelligence (AI), the traditional print media business model is dying. Her talk focused on how AI harms the money needed to make local news and the potential for misinformation.

Historically, physical newspapers have relied on printed advertisements and copy sales but that will no longer be enough to cover the high costs of real journalism. She observed that competitor newsrooms are having to cut staff and lower quality to make the sums add up, filling their remaining pages with annoying pop-up ads just to survive.

She also warned of a 'misinformation epidemic'. Online algorithms and automated social media tools prioritise speed over facts. Anyone can post unverified information that spreads quickly. Real journalism requires skill, human experience, and external regulation. AI cannot replace a human reporter who goes out to investigate local councils or environmental issues. Without trusted human filters, communities risk losing accurate information entirely.

To survive the threat of digital and AI changes, Tamsin strongly advocated paid-for digital subscriptions. That is why, under her direction, The Stray Ferret has switched from a free, ad-supported website to a paid subscription model.

She argued that in the past, readers thought nothing of paying for a printed local newspaper. Today, most people read the news on their phones where the potential for AI-generated content, fake news and bias is an ever-present concern. By asking readers to pay a small monthly fee, independent news outlets can detach themselves from tech giant algorithms and AI search engines.

In summary, Tamsin is convinced that, if we want to keep local, trustworthy journalism alive, reader funding is the only realistic way to achieve it.



'a rapt audience'

Flying from the Stray

Right: Peter Rix



On 12 May, following the AGM, a packed audience in the West Park Centre enjoyed an illustrated talk by local historian Peter Rix. Our Chair modestly acknowledged that the talk might be the greater attraction so conducted the AGM at exemplary pace before introducing our speaker and 'Flying from the Stray'.

Nigel McClea writes:

Peter took us back to the earliest days of aviation or (as he was at pains to point out) the earliest days of heavier-than-air, manned flight, as distinct from hot air balloons, gliders and the like. The key date for Harrogate was 24 July 1911. This was when a round Britain air race, sponsored by the Daily Mail, reached the town. We were reminded how early in the development of flight this was; only eight years after the Wright Brothers first took off; only two years since Blériot crossed the Channel.

The race started from Brooklands with a short flight to Hendon and then on Monday 24 July the race continued to Edinburgh, with the Stray in Harrogate as the first staging post on the way. We were fortunate to be chosen as, only a few months earlier, our Council had resolved against air landings on the Stray. Happily, they were persuaded otherwise.

Thirty competitors entered the race but, for mechanical and other reasons, not all started. Only five reached Harrogate within the allotted time and found a town at fever pitch. Over 70,000 spectators crowded the Stray to watch.

First to land was Jules Védrines followed by André Beaumont. Both were Frenchmen. This was unfortunate. Local businesses had commissioned a silver tea set for the stage winner but quickly revised the rules, ignored the inconvenient Frenchmen and awarded the prize to the next to land. At least James Valentine was *an Englishman!*

The success of the race resulted in immediate pressure for joy rides from the Stray. Not everyone was happy. There was a complaint concerning the distraction the Sunday flights were causing to the congregation at Christ Church. But with the First World War, pleasure flying was prohibited and never really recovered. In 1922 a council committee resolved against such flights and, although this appears to have been occasionally ignored, the last fixed-wing flight is thought to have been in 1934. Prohibition is now firmly enshrined in the Stray Acts. Peter's excellent talk was greeted by prolonged applause and hopefully he will be happy to repeat it as part of the upcoming 250th anniversary of the Stray. We shall certainly hope so.

Below, left: Jules Védrines' aircraft arriving first at 7am on 24 July 1911

Below, right: André Beaumont's aircraft arrived second



Tour of All Saints Cemetery, Harlow Hill

On Saturday 6 June, about 25 of us gathered in alternating thin drizzle and occasional fine spells for a guided walk around the cemetery at Harlow Hill.

Paul Jennings, who led the walk, writes:

All Saints was opened in April 1871. Covering over three acres, it provided capacity to deal with the needs in the SW area of Harrogate.

There are 3,231 graves in the cemetery, the first being that of seven-month-old Percival Goodrick. We walked around looking at the graves of a range of individuals who featured in the life and history of Harrogate, such as Catherine Gurney, who founded the Northern Police Orphanage on Harlow Moor Road. There is also Antonio Fattorini, who developed the famous jewellery business and Walter Albrecht, a merchant shipper and clothing manufacturer who, like so many businessmen, settled in Harrogate.

The cemetery is also the last resting place of several teachers and school principals, including George Savery of the boys' school, Harrogate College, and who founded the Ladies' College in 1893. Next to him is the grave of Elizabeth Jones, Headmistress of the school from 1898 to 1935.



Art is also represented, with the grave of painter Bernard Evans, who settled in Harrogate in the late 1880s. Film is also here, with the grave of the Hollywood actor Michael Rennie, most famous for his role in *The Day the Earth Stood Still* (1951). He died on a visit to the family home on Otley Road in 1971. A plaque at the house commemorates his life and career.

We also took in several war graves, including those of two Wooler brothers who died during the First World War and who are also remembered by their parents with a window in the church.

All of us were struck by the parlous state of the graveyard, with many monuments still laid flat years after this was done following the death of a child at Grove Road cemetery. The church is now closed and is being converted to a private house.

I acknowledge with thanks the help of Bereavement Services at Stonefall Cemetery and the tour booklet prepared for Harrogate Borough Council by the late Malcolm Neesam.

This is an edited version of Paul's report.

The full report is on the HCS website:

www.harrogatecivicsociety.org/past-events



Left: The grave of George Savery

George Hudson – The Man who Brought the Railway to Harrogate

Robert Beaumont's lecture to the Civic Society on 14 June was both entertaining and informative regarding the Victorian period of 'Railway Mania' and some of the business ethics employed at the time. The central focus for Robert, a prominent Yorkshire journalist, author and PR professional, was George Hudson of whom Robert has written the definitive biography in his book 'The Railway King'.

David Poole summarises Robert's talk:

The 1840s were a period of frenzied speculative building of railway infrastructure. George Hudson, born in 1800 near Malton, was orphaned at 12 and evicted from his village in 1815 for fathering an illegitimate child. He moved to York, became apprenticed to a draper and eventually married the daughter, Elizabeth Nicholson.

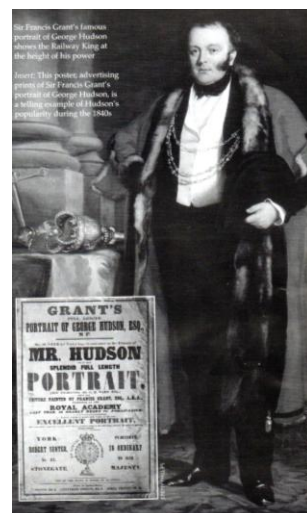
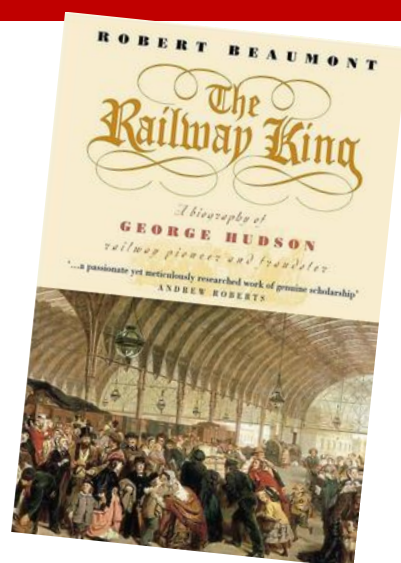
In 1832 he inherited a massive fortune of £30,000 and land from a distant uncle. He teamed up with George Stephenson and from his relatively humble origins rose to dominate the early railway industry. At his peak Hudson controlled over 1000 miles of track and nearly a third of the country's rail network. Harrogate played an integral role in Hudson's ambitious local and national vision. He aimed to make the prosperous spa town as well connected and economically vibrant as York. Under Hudson's direction, the York and North Midland Railway pushed infrastructure into the region.

The line from Church Fenton to Spofforth opened in August 1847 and by July 1848 the tracks successfully reached Harrogate, terminating at Harrogate Brunswick station. Consequently, this connection fundamentally transformed Harrogate from an isolated wellness destination into an accessible hub for affluent travellers visiting its famous healing springs.

Hudson's entrepreneurial vision and opportunism created great wealth and influence. He became a Conservative MP, purchasing the estate at Newby

Park (which later became Queen Mary's School) and also a grand house in London which subsequently became the French Embassy. However, Hudson's influence also brought immense controversy. A ruthless capitalist who fiercely protected his regional monopoly, he routinely used his vast political and financial clout to block rival network proposals. He had a long-standing and bitter feud with his main local rival George Leeman, also from York, who was instrumental in Hudson's subsequent downfall. Hudson's empire was built on a fragile foundation. He utilised unscrupulous financial practices, and bribery of MPs to secure rail routes. By late 1848, his fraudulent financial model collapsed. Hudson experienced a dramatic fall from grace, became reliant on alcohol, was eventually imprisoned for debt, and died in penury in 1871.

Rather than dismissing him entirely as a villain, we should applaud Hudson's incredible vision. While his financial ethics were deeply flawed, he single-handedly drove the rapid creation of the early British rail infrastructure.



Planning Matters - Some Positive News



Here, **Henry Pankhurst** reports on three planning applications, two of which are within the Harrogate Conservation Area and one that is in a small area that was deleted from it.



Number 87 Skipton Road (shown above) is no longer in the conservation area. However, the area immediately to the rear remains conservation area and this proximity is taken into account in the determination of any planning application. An application to convert the building into six apartments, including raising the roof and building a new external stair tower at the rear, was withdrawn in July 2024. Shortly afterwards a much-revised proposal came forward to convert the building into four apartments, demolish a rear storage building, keep the staircase within the building, retain chimneys, create four car parking spaces at the rear and provide two small garden areas, but still raise the roof a little. We were in touch with the developer during the planning process and we now regard the result as an exemplary development and an enhancement for the area.

The shopfronts at **6-10 Cambridge Street** were redesigned in an application in 2023 which mainly concerned the conversion of the upper floors of **6-14 Cambridge Street** to short-term lets.

We are pleased to see upper floors in the town centre brought back to full and beneficial use of course, but

improvement and coordination of the shopfronts including numbers 12-14 were strangely not part of the proposal. We suggested that these shopfronts should not be left out and pleasingly the developer presented drawings to include them. Strangely, in his report, the case officer said that the scheme was briefly expanded to encompass all the shopfronts as sought by the Civic Society, *but that went beyond the scope of the submitted application*. A coordinated design was approved in 2024. Recently, however, almost identical designs have been submitted which we would hope and expect to be approved.



Last September we were pleased to be asked by North Yorkshire Council to comment on a pre-application enquiry about plans for **16-18 Lancaster Road** (above). This is a rare privilege, so we made a detailed response, especially as it is a handsome, unmolested building in the conservation area. The frontage has not become devoted to car parking as so often happens and a TPO has been placed on the grand and valuable trees. The proposal was to convert the lower ground floor to two flats and to create 8 car parking spaces at the front, which would involve breaking through the boundary wall for access. The good news is that much of this work has been omitted, leaving just the conversion of the lower ground floor to two flats and a few minor changes to facilitate it. The application has been approved.

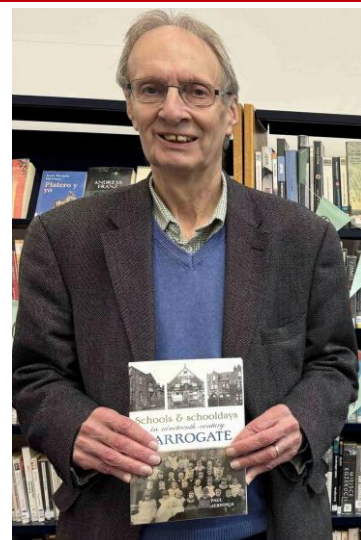
Schools and Schooldays in 19th Century Harrogate

On Friday 15 May, around fifty people gathered at Harrogate Library for the launch of History Group member Paul Jennings's new book: 'Schools & schooldays in nineteenth-century Harrogate'. The book was complemented by an exhibition at the library and a series of four public talks.

In a short address, Paul explained how the book grew out of his previous one, *Working-Class Lives in Edwardian Harrogate*, which had looked at their children's experience of school, and a realisation, from the servants who worked in them, that Harrogate was an important centre for private schools for boys and girls.

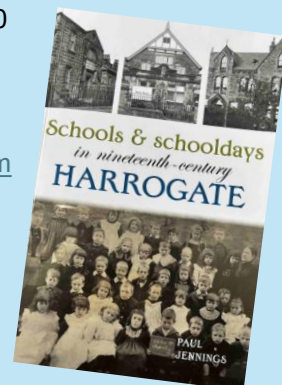
The book examines the two, almost entirely separate, systems of schooling through the lenses of class, religion and gender. Paul also noted how his parents' experience of education, leaving school at fourteen and his own, moving from a state primary school, via a council scholarship to a direct grant grammar school and then to Cambridge, had influenced his views on the subject.

He then went on to thank a range of individuals, among them several society members, who had been generous with time and information, including Alan Gould on Bilton, Anne Smith on Pannal, Terry Mike-Williams on New Park and Nigel McClea and fellow old boys of Clifton School.



Thanks were also extended to Harrogate Civic Society which made a contribution towards the cost of publication, the staff of Harrogate Library for all their help over many years and, not least, his family.

The book is available for £20 from local bookshops, or from the publisher at www.carnegiepublishing.com (with a 10% discount) or, if preferred, direct from Paul at paul.jennings@cantab.net



*Below: two of the illustrations from the book
Left: Western School, right: Grosvenor House*



99 – and counting!

The 99th Heritage Plaque in Harrogate was unveiled on 17 June in honour of probably Britain's greatest ever sportswoman, the cyclist Beryl Burton OBE.

Chris Dicken writes:

A large crowd assembled by the house at No 9 Mount Parade, where the plaque is located, consisting of people who knew Beryl, her daughter Denise, members of Harrogate Nova Cycling club and Civic Society members.

After a short introduction by Mike Newby, Denise gave a wonderful, insightful talk on her mother and the time she spent living at this house. The plaque was then unveiled by the Town Mayor, Cllr Viv Poskett and afterwards we were all treated to canapés and drinks courtesy of Firat, owner of Konak Meze which is next door to the house.



Beryl dominated the sport of women's cycling in a time when it had little publicity and was not even an Olympic sport. Allowing for the equipment that was current at the time it has been shown that, even today, she would still be holding virtually every one of her records.

The plaque unveiling generated much publicity - including an interview with Mike on Radio York and an article on the BBC website.



Cllr Viv Poskitt and Mike Newby



Beryl Burton's daughter, Denise

2026 Allotment Show

The annual show of the Harrogate and District Allotment Federation, held this year on 16 August in the Sun Pavilion, is an occasion in which the Civic Society has been privileged to take part by having our own stall at the event.

We showcase our activities to visitors and locals, even attracting a few new members!

Last year's event



Health in Harrogate: 200 years – a Review

The exhibition, Health in Harrogate, which ran during April and May at the West Park Centre, marked the 200 years since the opening of the first hospital in Harrogate. A tremendous amount of research went into its production and the material will continue to be accessible for reference, education and other purposes.

*Here, **Nigel McClea** sums up the project:*

Thank you to everyone (including many Society members) involved in *Health in Harrogate 200* as we celebrated the bicentenary of the Royal Bath Hospital. We at the Society conceived this community project as part of our ‘anniversaries’ series and were delighted when the idea was taken up so enthusiastically by the Harrogate Medical Society. During the planning stages the project grew and grew until it came to involve many other generous organisations and individuals, not least the support of Harrogate District Hospital.

The exhibition in the West Park Centre (to whom we are also indebted), was seen by more than 1250 visitors with at least the same number enjoying the extensive supporting programme. After clearing costs, nearly £4,000 has been donated to St Michael's Hospice. Congratulations to everyone involved, but most particularly to our energetic partners at the Harrogate Medical Society.

Although the exhibition has now closed, it is hoped elements will be available to view at Harrogate Library later in the year. In the meantime, the scripts for the exhibition can be viewed on our website by choosing ‘History Articles / Aspects of Harrogate Past’.

Health in Harrogate: 200 Years Exhibition & Events



Proud of Our Past, Inspiring the Present, Educating the Future

‘After clearing costs, almost £4,000 has been donated to St Michael's Hospice.’



Working with Harrogate Town Council



Harrogate Civic Society has been working closely with the Town Council since its creation.
Mike Newby is Chair of the Civic Society and outlines its involvement:

While it is great that the Harrogate Civic Society should be considered by the Town Council as a key stakeholder, the relationship has not been without its frustrations although it should be said that a lot of that frustration is due to North Yorkshire Council (NYC) rather than Harrogate.

As I wrote last year, the Town Council has taken on responsibility for the **Neighbourhood Plan**, an important initiative led by the Civic Society and Zero Carbon Harrogate. Our committee member Nick Brennan has been co-opted to the Council's Neighbourhood Plan sub. Meanwhile I continue to attend the Council's Key Stakeholder and Signage Working Groups and attended a meeting of the Council's new Events, Culture and Heritage Committee on your behalf.

The Council's Signage Working Group has been busy looking at new **'Welcome to Harrogate' signs** that will also feature our twin towns. The good news is that locations and design have been more or less finalised. The less good news is that further progress now depends on North Yorkshire.



Tourist Information Board, Montpelier Hill

I had hoped that the Signage Group would have picked up on the extensive work that Civic Society members had done on proposals for **interpretation boards in the town centre**.

Unfortunately, it is going along with a NYC project to introduce fingerposts instead. These will not help visitors to understand Harrogate or strengthen our sense of identity. At the moment I do not know if these will be replacing existing fingerposts or be in addition to. If it is the latter, we are going to end up with yet more street clutter. I have expressed mine, and your committee's, disappointment with this outcome.

The question of having a single **online noticeboard of town events** that both residents and visitors can use came out the Society's History Group's discussions with other organisations with an interest in Harrogate's history. As part of a Stakeholder Group initiative I have taken this up at a meeting of Full Council and was received very positively. It is now a case of watch and see for any further progress.

Finally, following a meeting of the Events, Culture and Heritage Committee, the Council will be establishing a steering group to help develop plans for the 2028 celebration of the **250th Anniversary of the Great Award** which led to **the Stray** being created. Here at the Civic Society, we know of a number of definite expressions of interest and plans by Harrogate organisations, but it would be useful to know of any other organisation's plans. Please let us know.

Summary of Forthcoming Events

in the next few months

Unless otherwise stated, talks are held at West Park Centre, Victoria Avenue, commencing at 7.30 pm. Teas and coffees from 7.00

Date	Event	Booking website
Wednesday 16 September	Harrogate Rocks – popular music in Harrogate Speaker: Derek Shelmerdine, author and radio show presenter	trybooking.com/uk/GIGF
Tuesday 13 October	Harrogate in World War 2 - the impact of the war on Harrogate (and vice versa) Speaker: Guy Wilson, ex-Royal Armouries Museum	trybooking.com/uk/GIGH
Tuesday 10 November	The Bilton Grange Estate - a largely forgotten name Speaker: Alan Gould, Bilton Historical Society	trybooking.com/uk/GIGI
Sunday 6 December	Harrogate Civic Society Christmas Social 2.30 to 4.30 pm at St Wilfrid's Church Hall	trybooking.com/uk/GTRG
2027		
Tuesday 12 January	The Building of a New Council for North Yorkshire - four years on from the formation of a unitary authority Speaker: Richard Flinton, Chief Exec of NY Council	trybooking.com/uk/GTTM
Tuesday 9 February	Montague Burton – The Tailor of Taste - the life and achievements of Sir Montague Burton Speaker: Jeremy Burton, grandson of Sir Montague Burton	trybooking.com/uk/GTTN
Tuesday 9 March	The Good, the Bad and the Lovely - the history, layout and architecture of Harrogate's urban landscape Speaker: Michael Goodliffe, Harrogate geographer	trybooking.com/uk/GTTO

Payments (where applicable)

by bank transfer: Name: Harrogate Civic Society Sort Code 05-04-54 Account 16746595

Reference: please use your name followed by the date DDMM of the event

By cheque:

Post to Mr P Fennimore, HCS Treasurer, 8 Merryfield, Harrogate, HG2 9DH

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

Contact us

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Published by Harrogate Civic Society

Registered Charity no. 501055

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