



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

February 2024



Castle Hill looking southwest towards Almscliff Crag.

The Harrogate Local Plan provides for development of 4000 houses on this side of the town, many of which will occupy the fields in this picture. Just one of the matters our Planning and Development group will be looking at as the proposals emerge.

Looking to the Future

This is an important moment for the town and for Harrogate Civic Society.

In April we will be gathering for our Annual General meeting (see page 2). After the formal business, three speakers, all members well qualified in their field, will be presenting their visions on the future for the town, with reference to its special qualities and its heritage.

Also in this edition we reflect on the future direction for the Civic Society and our own role in shaping the future of the town. The message by the Chairman on page 3 describes our achievements and how members themselves are important in shaping the future of the Society.

We welcome member's views and opinions.

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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

Annual General Meeting

After the short business of our Annual General Meeting, we have asked three members of the Civic Society to talk for just 8 minutes each on a topic they feel very strongly about and which would help ensure a strong future for the town.

David Rhodes: Putting the 'Spa' back into Harrogate Spa Town

David, a very long-standing member and a retired conservation architect, will give a presentation. David is passionate about our heritage and is keen that we prepare for 2028 which will be the 250th Anniversary of the 1788 Great Award, the Duchy provision of 200 acres (The Stray) in the setting of the spa springs.

Barry Adams: 'A Vision for Harrogate'

Barry joined us after retiring from a large multi-disciplinary architectural practice in Birmingham . His ideas are set out in recent reports with support from the business group Independent Harrogate as an alternative to the £11.2 million Harrogate Station Gateway project.

NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The annual general meeting of Harrogate Civic Society will take place on

Tuesday 16 April 2024 at

St Paul's URC Church Hall on Belford Rd, Harrogate.

7.30 pm with refreshments from 7 pm

Nominations for Officers and Members of the Committee shall be made in writing and signed by a Proposer and Seconder who are members of the Society and must be made not later than 5.00 pm on 2 April 2024.

Nominations should be sent to the Secretary, 108 Duchy Road, Harrogate HG1 2HB, or by email to events@harrogatecivicsociety.org

Paul Hatherley: 'Creating a Neighbourhood Plan'

Paul is a retired planner and sees the future of Harrogate being in the hands of Harrogate residents and businesses by encouraging all communities to join in creating a Neighbourhood Plan which could sit alongside the new North Yorkshire Local Plan due for adoption in 2028 . This would be a chance to plan the future for residents, rather than having our future dictated by outsiders.



Chairman's Message

Each time I see our newsletter, I am amazed to look at the articles published and reflect on how much goes on within our Society..... and how successful we are. For example, we have a team of five who look at planning applications – but only after one of the group has trawled through the weekly list to see what applications should be commented on by the Society. Sometimes North Yorkshire Council consult with us.

Such was the case when, a couple of weeks ago, a few of us met with the Architect for the new owner of Debenhams. He presented a detailed set of drawings illustrating how the building would be converted into 34 apartments and still retain some retail space. The scheme is a great improvement on the one we looked at a couple of years ago and, with a few relatively minor comments, receives a positive response from the Society.



Visualisation of the proposed Debenhams building proposals.

Courtesy: Nick Watson, NW-Architects

Our views are listened to and illustrate how important the Society is for the town - enhancing our present!

Our coffee mornings are increasing in popularity – held at the Cosy Club on Cambridge Street. Last time we were all surprised at how little we recognised buildings when all we could see was the upper part or the roof.



Our picture quiz on page 7 is thanks to Jenny Moore. (She has an even more difficult one coming up next time!)

It is a year since Brian and Beryl Dunsby took on the mammoth task of looking after our membership records, as well as dealing with the transition to a single renewal date.

Numbers attending our events are as high as ever and we have an imaginative and interesting programme coming up.

I could go on..... history group, newsletters, websites, plaques group, HODS etc but just wish to say that the Society is successful, not just due to leadership by the main committee, but as a result of the hard work of individuals and the different subgroups. I believe we have a good model for going forward but it needs future proofing.

I shall be standing down at the AGM but before I leave as Chairman, I would like to know that we have a few more volunteers to help take the Society forward.

At our meeting on Tuesday 20 February, after we have heard Paul Jennings talk on the Census, we will join in a discussion on our future.

Please join us that evening and consider how you could help ensure our continued growth as we enter our 53rd year.

Stuart Holland

Chairman

Our 2023 Christmas Social



Reflections by Kevin Hales

Anyone standing in the rain outside the hall might have believed they were hearing a professional choir performing inside! But no, the dulcet tones were those of Civic Society Members, in hearty voice as they sang along to songs and carols as part of the Society's Christmas social event.

Over 70 Members came together in the hall of St Wilfrid's Church, on a thoroughly wet and grey Saturday afternoon, to make and renew friendships, to enjoy a glass of wine or juice or a good old cup of tea and to take the lead from Christine and Mandy in exercising their vocal chords.

Jane and Paul did brisk trade at their bookstall. Stuart spoke at the end about the Society's achievements during



Above: in the splendid Church Hall

Below: Before the guests arrived!



2023 and what's on the agenda for 2024. Just a tiny few lonely mince pies remained untouched when the party came to a close.

One minor hiccup arose in the lead-up. The hall's boilers had been a bit on the blink. Would members have to shiver inside, clad in their thermals, bobble hats and woolly gloves? Well no, of course not! The church had swiftly arranged back-up heaters but then, a couple of hours before the party, the boilers miraculously came back to life. In the end, the heat from the radiators was matched perfectly with the warmth and friendliness of the party atmosphere in the hall.

Entertainment was provided by Christine and Mandy (on piano) from the Harrogate Dramatic Society

Heritage Open Days: A final round-up of the 2023 programme

*The 2023 Heritage Open Days programme was regarded by organisers and participants as a tremendous success. Here **Kevin Hales** reports on the event held at St Wilfrid's Church.*

The Society was privileged on 22 November 2023 to welcome to Harrogate Sarah Holloway, the national programme manager of the Heritage Open Days (HODs) festival, who gave an evening talk to us in the magnificent surroundings of St Wilfrid's Church, the town's only Grade I listed heritage building.

While Members are familiar with how Harrogate participates in this festival each September, it was fascinating to hear from Sarah about heritage at a wider, national level, and her talk highlighted some particularly intriguing and unexpected heritage finds across the country. We also learnt that HODs in England involves over 2,200 local organisers and an astonishing 44,000 volunteers, and were reminded that HODs next year is not far away - for your diaries, it's 6 to 15 September 2024!

The talk and visit were also an opportunity for members, and the Society as a whole, to show off to a national leader of heritage how Harrogate promotes its own rich history and culture. To that end, it was especially pleasing that so many of our local



Sarah Holloway speaking to the audience of members

volunteer HODs event organisers and hosts were at the event. They stood to take a bow and accept a most warm round of applause from the audience for all their efforts to make HODs such a success in the town. The evening also included a short talk about the heritage of St Wilfrid's itself, and how the church regularly welcomes visitors to its own varied HODs events.

There was plenty of time before the talks for members to share a drink of wine or juice, to meet our speaker and to admire the splendour of the St Wilfrid's setting. Next morning, before Sarah took the train back to London, a small group of members accompanied her to visit some key heritage - and HODs - sites in the town, including Valley Gardens and a short tour of the Royal Pump Room Museum hosted by its curator. The walk ended in Wetherspoon's for a coffee and chat, a fabulous example of a fine and prominent heritage building with a modern-day use, which we hope left our speaker suitably impressed!

Sarah Holloway with Paul Jennings at the Magnolia Well, Valley Gardens



Park Life: Our January Talk

A report by Angela Fahy

Sue Wood, Horticultural Development Officer at North Yorkshire Council, took over 40 members and guests on a virtual tour of the many parks and gardens under her care. While most of us know and appreciate Valley Gardens we also had our eyes opened to the history of Ripon Spa gardens, established by the Marquess of Ripon whose statue looks over the gardens. We heard about the work being done there to ensure its continued success in competitions such as Yorkshire in Bloom (Platinum winner in 2022). Unfortunately, like many public spaces, antisocial behaviour is a challenge but rather than remove areas of planting that attract such behaviour NY found a creative solution. Instead of removing trees completely their trunks were carved by Mick Burns ('Chainsaw Mick') in 2013 into amazing Alice in Wonderland Characters (*inset - the Cheshire Cat*).



The gardens at Conyham Hall and the gardens around Knaresborough House and Castle also featured.

Of course we also heard about Valley Gardens, and the recent projects renewing the New Zealand and Japanese Gardens. Valley Gardens is one of the few public gardens still featuring the once traditional summer dahlia display bed.

It remains to be seen how the gardens that were under the management of Harrogate Borough Council will fare under North Yorkshire Council control. Unfortunately cuts in budgets are feared which would reduce the already limited funds available for the excellent gardening team, and possibly see the replacement of dramatic, and often themed, seasonal flower beds with easier to maintain grass.



*The **Pou whenua** sculpture was presented by the City of Wellington and its iwi partner Port Nicholson Block Settlement Trust. It was air freighted over by Air New Zealand.*

It is shown (right) after being removed from its packaging and before installation.



Left: In 1972 a leading Harrogate Councillor was visiting the Chelsea Flower show where he saw a sculpture created by a young Australian called John Robinson. The Councillor took it upon himself to order the piece, which was presented to the then Director of Parks, Mr Alan Ravenscroft, on the 23 May 1972. It was installed upon a circular stone surround in the centre of the Valley Gardens.

Think you know Harrogate? Can you identify these town centre buildings?



The Civic Society Coffee morning on 17 January at the Cosy Club was very well attended. We were very pleased to welcome over 25 members who braved the near-zero temperatures outside.

Jenny Moore from our events team put on a challenge for those who wanted to take part. The challenge was to identify the buildings from the photographs of the upper part of their facades.

There were dozens of photographs on the tables, and six of the ones which people found most challenging are shown above. Can you say which buildings they are?

Answers on page 11

Our next Coffee morning will be on Tuesday 19 March (10 am to 12 noon).



Planning Matters

Henry Pankhurst reports on some recent applications that have undergone significant and welcome revision following our comments.

The White House estate off Leeds Road consists of four roads: Norfolk Road, Carlton Road, Vernon Road and Kenilworth Avenue. It is a very handsome part of the Conservation Area. The proposal we saw was on **Vernon Road** for conversion of part of a garage to create a study and a bedroom in the roof space. Works were to include a rear and a side dormer. There have been many unsuitable dormers proposed in recent times although these were not extreme examples.



Vernon Road

We commented that the side and rear dormers at Vernon Road could be better designed to be in keeping with the handsome and period nature of the dwelling, although the window frames matched those existing on the house. It was very pleasing that the applicant made amendments, the side dormer being omitted in favour of a conservation style roof light and the design of the rear dormer modified.

A house on **Oatlands Drive** on a large plot in the conservation area was proposed to be extended and largely rebuilt. The extensions were very dominant and the design completely changed the character of the property and impacted upon the amenity of neighbours. 'Go back to the drawing board' was the opinion of one of my colleagues! The application was refused.

Soon came a considerably revised application which better preserved the character of the house with less impact on neighbours. It was a less substantial re-working of the house but we were not keen on the proposed large flat roofed dormer on the cat-slide roof at the front. This application was withdrawn. As is often the case, we do not know why.

In June last year there was an application to convert the 1st and 2nd floors of **6-14 Cambridge Street** (on the corner with Beulah Street) to 8 apartments for short-term letting. A mansard roof was planned to facilitate the 2nd floor apartments which we thought would be assimilated satisfactorily into the conservation area. The proposal included new and improved shopfronts for 6-10 Cambridge Street and around the corner into Beulah Street. The shopfronts were of a handsome design, most appropriate for the conservation area, but why were numbers 12-14 not included? We remarked on this in our response and happily the developer put



6-9 Cambridge Street

forward an amendment to complete the shopfront for the whole block. Excellent! BUT the case officer in the report on the application said '*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*'. This we could not understand - amendments are frequently put forward during the passage of an application. However it is delightful to report that a new proposal specifically for the matching shopfronts has come forward for numbers 12 and 14 Cambridge Street! Someone is listening – all we need now is for it to be approved!

Coming up on 20 February: The Story of the Census

An illustrated talk by Dr Paul Jennings
7pm for 7.30 pm at St Paul's Church Hall, Belford Road

A census of the entire population of the UK has been taken every ten years since 1801, only excepting 1941. It provides an unrivalled source for history and family history. From 1841 to 1921 we can see individual details of the entire population. This illustrated talk guides you through its history and how it was taken, focusing on the many individuals involved, their roles and how this affected the surviving records we see today.

James Wells	"	mill	30	1881	James Wells	1882
Harriet Jewett	head	wid	42	1881	Binding	1882
May	"	serv	21	1881	"	1882
Fred	"	son	19	1881	Postman	1882
George	"	"	17	1881	Apprentice	1882
Robert Marshall	Boarder	"	25	1881	Postman	1882
Richard Widdowall	"	"	33	1881	Drapery	1882

From the 1901 Census (Valley Road)



Coming up on 12 March: A tour of Allerton Waste Recovery Park



See what happens to 320,000 tonnes of North Yorkshire waste that does not involve landfill. Waste is anaerobically digested or burnt, providing enough electricity for 40,000 homes. This will be a two-hour visit. Suitable clothing essential: thick soled shoes with no open toes and legs covered preferably by trousers, leggings or similar.

Meet on site at 10 am

Tour will take 2 hours

Car-pooling will be arranged nearer the time.

Courtesy of Thalia Waste Management

Coming up on 23 April: Wildlife and Ecology of RHS Harlow Carr

Andrew Willocks will lead us on a walk through the garden, telling us about the native flora and fauna which make their homes there and detailing the efforts the gardeners make to encourage and support them.

The walk will take approximately 2 hours and you will need to be prepared for whatever the weather might be!

Assemble in Car Park 3 for a prompt 10.00 am start. There is no fixed charge for this event but donations to RHS Harlow Carr will be accepted by Jenny Moore (HCS) on the day (cash please). We suggest £5-£10 per person for this special event.

Spaces are limited to first come first booked in.



Coming up on 21 May: The Yorkshire Dales Rivers Trust



River Nidd



River Ouse



River Swale



River Ure



River Wharfe

Charlotte Simons, the YDRT Senior Project Manager – Catchment Partnership, will give a talk on the work of the Trust: what they do and how, if you wish, to get involved.

The Yorkshire Dales Rivers Trust was established in 2004 as a Registered Charity, working to enhance and protect the rivers of the Yorkshire Dales for the benefit of everyone. By working in partnership with landowners, businesses, land managers and the public, they aim to care for the rivers, streams and catchments of the Swale, Ure, Nidd, Wharfe and Ouse as sources of pure water, as habitats for aquatic and other wildlife, and as havens of quiet recreation for anglers and everyone to enjoy.



The Wharfe near Barden Bridge

The talk will begin at 7.30 pm at St Paul's Church Hall, Belford Road.

Tea and coffee from 7.00 pm

Coming up on 3 July: Headingley Water Treatment Works



Following on from our talk by the Yorkshire Dales Rivers Trust, we have arranged a visit to Yorkshire Water's treatment works at Headingley.

This will take place on the morning of Wednesday 3 July. There will be an overview of Yorkshire Water, a water treatment presentation and a guided tour of the site.

The address of the Education Centre is Headingley Water Treatment Works, Otley Road, West Park, Leeds, LS16 5LG. The entrance is located next to The Village Hotel on Otley Road.

Parking on site is limited and we ask that visitors car share as much as possible when coming onto the site. There is off street parking locally should this be needed

Numbers are limited to 20 for this tour so please book by emailing us at events@harrogatecivicsociety.org and say whether you can offer (or need) a car share from Harrogate.

The tour starts at 9.45 am and will take approximately two hours.

Please book events by email to events@harrogatecivicsociety.org

Our events team are finalising the details of a range of events coming up in the second half of the year. Details of these will be included in the next edition of the newsletter.

Harrogate's Heritage Plaques

A review by Chris Dicken

As many of you will know, the Harrogate Heritage Brown Plaques scheme was run so successfully over the years by Malcolm Neesam. Now that Malcolm is no longer with us, the Society has taken on the mantle and formed a small working group so that we can continue to celebrate people and places of Harrogate's rich history. The group is meeting quarterly and has a list of potential plaque subjects to consider; new ones are regularly being suggested. Taking a subject from suggestion to installation of a plaque can take some time and inevitably requires a lot of work, not to mention funding, so the current subjects we have in mind are all at different stages of progress.

The most developed subject is **Claude Verity**, who invented a method of synchronising sound and film. He went on to project the first talking movie here in Harrogate.

We are also following up on the last two plaques that Malcolm wanted installed to complete the Spa history of Harrogate: the Valley Gardens and the Sun Pavilion. Further down the line are subjects like **Charles Taylor** (Taylor's tea) and **Mary Fisher**, the first female mayor of Harrogate.

If you would like to help out with the plaques group, please let us know.



On 28 April 1921 Claude Verity (left) gave the first demonstration of his talking pictures in the Royal Hall, Harrogate.

According to the Harrogate Advertiser, 'although the conditions in which the film "A Cup of Beef Tea" was shown were far from ideal, the appreciation of the audience was shown in the spontaneous applause which broke out'.

Source: Wells and Swells, *The Golden Age of Harrogate Spa 1842-1923*, Malcolm Neesam, 2022.

Subscriptions 2024

Members are reminded that as agreed at the last AGM in February 2023, subscriptions will be renewable annually on 1 May each year, rather than the anniversary of joining the Society.

Rates are £20 per year (individual) and £30 (joint - two people at same address). Under 25s are £10.

We request that any existing standing orders based on the old rates and renewal dates be cancelled and new orders made out payable on 1 May 2024. Many

have already done this and we thank you.

New members who join part way through the year will pay a part subscription, as detailed on the HCS website, taking them to May of the following year.

We thank all members for their patience while we transition to the new rates and renewal date.

Any queries to membership@HarrogateCivicSociety.org or

ANSWERS TO QUIZ (page 7)

- 1 Old North Eastern (Station) Hotel, corner of Station Parade and Albert Street
- 2 Boots, Cambridge Street
- 3 White Stuff and Fat Face, Princes Street
- 4 Costa, Beulah Street
- 5 Russell and Bromley, James Street
- 6 Old Post Office, corner of Oxford Street and Cambridge Road

Forthcoming Events

Unless otherwise stated, please book by email to events@harrogatecivicsociety.org

Tuesday 20 February 7.30 pm	The Census - a Guide for Users See page 9 for details Venue: St Paul's Church Hall, Belford Road - tea and coffee available from 7.00 pm
Tuesday 12 March 10.00 am	A tour of Allerton Waste Recovery Park See page 9 for details
Tuesday 19 March 10.00 - 12.00 am	Informal Coffee Morning At the Cosy Club, Cambridge Street
Thursday 11 April 10.30 am	The Census - a follow-up with coffee A day time coffee meeting at the Library where members can bring along the results of their own census explorations, or just hear what other members have discovered.
Tuesday 16 April 7.30 pm	Annual General Meeting See page 2 for details Venue: St Paul's Church Hall, Belford Road - tea and coffee available from 7.00 pm
Tuesday 23 April 10 am	Visit to RHS Harlow Carr A tour focussing on the wildlife and ecology of the gardens. See page 10 for details
Tuesday 21 May 7.30 pm	Yorkshire Dales Rivers Trust See page 10 for details Venue: St Paul's Church Hall, Belford Road - tea and coffee available from 7.00 pm
mid-June	Talk at St Paul's Church Hall, Belford Road details to be confirmed
Wednesday 3 July 9.45 - 11.45	Headingley Water Treatment Works See page 9 for details

Paying for events - (Where applicable) By bank transfer: Name: Harrogate Civic Society. Sort Code: 05-04-54. Account: 167 465 95
Reference: please use your name, followed by the date DDMM (day/month) of the event.
By cheque: post to Mr C R Dicken, HCS Treasurer, 74 Otley Road, Harrogate, HG2 0DP (include 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.

Occasionally, talks will be advertised to our link groups and the general public. **Events are free for members** unless otherwise stated. Early booking is recommended.

Contact us: Chairman: Stuart Holland .. stuart@harrogatecivicsociety.org Tel: 01423 500089
General matters info@harrogatecivicsociety.org
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Event bookings events@harrogatecivicsociety.org

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