



HARROGATE
Civic Society

Celebrating 50 years

NEWSLETTER

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

August 2021



heritage open days (HODs) are running again after cancellation last year due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

This year we include a number of guided walks around some of the historic parts of the town. A full programme appears on page 2.

The event runs from Friday 10th September to Sunday 19th September.

The private chapel at Rudding Park, open to visit during HODs week on Tuesday 14 and Wednesday 15th September from 14.00

An early image of The Old Mill in Pannal. This is one of the places we will visit on our next walk in September. Details on page 6

Photo courtesy Anne Smith



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Established in 1994, Heritage Open Days has grown into England's largest community heritage festival, reflecting the rich and diverse cultural heritage of England and its communities. There are always new stories to tell and new places to open. It's a chance for communities nationwide to come together to learn, explore and have fun by sharing the treasures on their doorstep.

Friday 10th to Sunday 19th September 2021

Outline programme shown below



Friday 10 th	10.00—16.00	Knaresborough Castle Keep. Once a luxury royal residence.
Saturday 11 th	14.00	1.5 mile walk to Bilton Park Colliery Walk along the banks of the River Nidd. Book in advance if possible.
	11.00 & 15.00	Guided tour of The Harrogate Club , Victoria Avenue. Tel: 01423 540258 to book
	10.30, 11.00, 13.00 & 13.30	Stonefall Cemetery Tours (Commonwealth War Graves Commission) <i>(also Wednesday 15th, Saturday 18th and Sunday 19th)</i>
Sunday 12 th	10.00 - 11.30	Town walk 1: 1½ hrs. following brown plaques from opposite the Station and discovering our Spa Heritage. email: hods@harrogatecivicsociety.com to book.
Monday 13 th	14.00 - 15.30	Town walk 2: 1½ hrs. following brown plaques from Crescent Gardens and discovering our Spa Heritage email: hods@harrogatecivicsociety.org to book.
Tuesday 14 th	9.30 - noon	Bilton Study Group open day - discover old records of Bilton at the Bilton Community Centre, Tagg House, Bilton Lane.
	14.00 - 16.00	Rudding Park Private Chapel - spectacular architecture and masonry. No booking required.
	14.00 - 15.00	A walk on Valley Drive - look at the origins of this fascinating street. email: hods@harrogatecivicsociety.org to book
Wednesday 15 th	14.00 - 16.00	Rudding Park Private Chapel - spectacular architecture and masonry
Thursday 16 th	13.30 - 15.00	A Walk around New Park - explore this historic community. Tel: 01423 502840 or email hods@harrogatecivicsociety.org to book
Saturday 18 th	10.30 - 13.00	The Civic Centre - guided tour including the Council Chamber and Civic Silver email: corporateworkplaceandfacilities@harrogate.gov.uk to book.
	15.00 - 17.00	New Park Heritage Centre (officially opens today) - guided tours. 01423 502840 or email hods@harrogatecivicsociety.org to book
Sunday 19 th	11.00 & 15.00	Guided tour of The Harrogate Club , Victoria Avenue Tel: 01423 540248 to book.
Daily		Harrogate Walking Tours
Wed. 1 st and Sat 25 th	10.00 - 16.00	Royal Hall Open Days - Guided tours 11.00 and 14.00 This is not a HODS event but is supported by the Civic Society.

Also the following churches will open their doors to visitors:

St Peter's, St Mark's, United Reformed Church, West Park, St Robert's, St Wilfrid's, Wesley Chapel. Full details online.

For full information including booking details, please check online for the latest information.

www.harrogatecivicsociety.org or www.heritageopendays.org.uk

H&D Allotment Federation Show, Valley Gardens, 15 August

*Civic Society secretary, **Angela Fahy**, reports ...*

On Sunday 15 August the Society had a stall at the Annual HDAF show at the Sun Pavilion, Valley Gardens. Committee members and some society members took turns on the stall and we were delighted to speak to so many members of the public about the Society's work and activities. Our new banner was in use for the first time (see photo) and got a lot of attention, as did our stylish bookmarks.

We are already seeing new members join after meeting us on Sunday, and for existing members who dropped in to see us it was a reminder for them of the role the Society plays in Harrogate life. The Mayor and Mayoress also took a keen interest during their official visit to the show.

During the afternoon, society member **Dr Paul Jennings** led a walking tour of nearby Valley Drive, which we hope to repeat in the near future.



Above: David Siddans, Angela Fahy and Stuart Holland with our new banner. Several members of the HCS committee 'manned' the stall during the day.

Left: our table display

Below: our new bookmarks - a great success with visitors!



Plaque trails - how to get the app

The android walking app is now live. To download to your phone or tablet search for 'Harrogate Plaques' on the Google Play Store or visit www.harrogateplaques.org and use the tab marked 'Phone App'.

The app will give you access to all the plaque trails, with the maps and your current location marked, making it easy to follow them.

It would be very helpful if society members could try this out and give any feedback on how they found using it.

Please send feedback to: web@harrogatecivicsociety.org

**HARROGATE
Civic Society**

**Harrogate Heritage
Plaques
Walking Trails**



Latest news:
An Android App is now available for the Walking trails. Search for "Harrogate Plaques" on the Google Play Store, or visit www.harrogateplaques.org

Shaping our Future - our planning report for 2020-21

From individual building modifications to large-scale redevelopments, the planning system shapes the future of our town. Here, **Henry Pankhurst** presents his annual report which summarises the Civic Society's activities in monitoring and commenting on a wide range of proposals which come forward.



We commented on the redevelopment of Tate House, Wetherby Road, in January 2021. The application to demolish the present building and build a new care home was subsequently approved.

My report covers the year up to the end of February 2021 (the end of our financial year).

Due to obvious uncertainty and difficulties because of Covid 19, our 2020 AGM was not held until 23rd February 2021. We have now caught up somewhat and the 2021 AGM was held on 28th July 2021. Over the decade up to 2019 it was held on various dates from 23rd May to 24th June and I was in the habit of giving a planning report for the year up to near the AGM date. I have now standardised it in line with our financial year end.

The Harrogate District Local Plan 2014-2035 was adopted on 4 March 2020. Hopefully this will help direct development to allocated sites and reduce the uncertainties to a degree, albeit that some will argue that land for housing has been over allocated. The 5 year supply of housing land required by Government was healthy over the year at around 6.9 – 6.7 years.

Changes to the Use Classes Regulations were made from 1st September 2020. The effect is to allow far more changes of use without specific planning consent. A new Class E 'Commercial, Business and Service' encompasses a wide range of retail, financial and professional services including cafés, restaurants, offices, medical centres, gyms and certain recreational premises.

The Government is working on a Planning Bill that would most likely have the effect of reducing the involvement of the ordinary person in planning decisions by means of dividing land into several

categories for development purposes. There could be design parameters, but once set, discussion could be denied or reduced on individual proposals as long as they complied with the general presumptions for that land.

The number of planning applications that we looked at during the year March 2020 to February 2021 inclusive is 227 (a reduction on the previous year of 24). Of the 227, responses were sent regarding 71 (31%) of them, which compares to 65 (26%) of the 251 applications in 2019-2020.

The Council consulted us on 24 applications which compares to 41 on average over the last few years. I have no idea why the figure is comparatively low – possibly pure chance.

Regarding the 57 decisions received during the year on applications that we responded to, we can record as follows – 30 (53%) were good from our point of view, 11 (19%) were fairly good, due usually to welcome amendments to the proposals, 6 (10%) were withdrawn, leaving 10 (18%) unwelcome decisions.

Most applications that we have commented on have been studied by Peter Hirschman, Barry Adams, Andrew Brown and myself with occasional input by others of our planning sub-group.

Henry Pankhurst

Bilton Conservation Group

1982 to 2021

We are grateful to Keith Wilkinson MBE, Honorary Secretary of the Bilton Conservation Group for supplying this article.

On 19 May 1982, 60 Biltonians held a Public Meeting in the Richard Taylor Primary School to halt the desecration of Bilton's countryside. Weekends were becoming a misery as 40 to 50 Salford scramble bikers descended on Nidd Gorge where off-roading churned woodlands into a mudbath. Fly tippers dumped fridges, freezers, gas ovens and rubble on the old railway lines. Cars, stolen in Harrogate, were driven to Nidd Viaduct, set alight and tumbled into the river Nidd 30 metres below. Bilton Conservation Group collected £60 in donations – something must be done!

Harrogate Borough Council and the Countryside Commission appointed surveyors to assess the potential of the undeveloped urban fringe of Harrogate from New Park, Knox, Bachelor Gardens, Bilton and Nidd Gorge towards Starbeck – then north-east to 'capture' Mackintosh Park and Conyngham Hall. Their 1983 report created the framework for conserving Oakdale Park, Knox Country Park, Nidd Gorge and Bilton Fields (Harrogate and Knaresborough) as we know them today. Bilton Conservation Group liaised with the Army Apprentice College at Pennypot and the Royal Engineers at Ripon and a major clean-up began in May 1983. Twelve 4-tonne skips between Bilton Lane and Nidd Viaduct were filled to overflowing with the fly tipped debris. A tank recovery vehicle hauled out five car wrecks and the Nidd Gorge Project began. A smaller project tackled Knaresborough's neglected Mackintosh Park and Foolish Wood.

The Nidd Gorge Advisory Partnership was established between HBC, Knaresborough Town Council, Bilton Conservation Group, Knox Valley Residents Association Group, Knaresborough Nidd Gorge



The wildness of Nidd Gorge

Conservation Group, Woodland Trust, Ramblers, HDNS, CPRE and others. It continues to this day.

Public Appeals in 1985 and 1992 purchased 120 acres of the Nidd Gorge for the Woodland Trust. Oakdale Park is now a designated Local Green Space and the Nidderdale Greenway (Public Bridleway) has been created along the disused railway lines between Harrogate Station to Bilton and Ripley, and Bilton Lane to Starbeck – enabling safe and easy access to our local countryside. Knaresborough's Beryl Burton Way links Bilton Fields, Knaresborough to Bilton and Nidderdale Greenway. Continuous tree planting since 1985 has created new woodlands with about 55,000 trees; with more planned as COVID-19 Regulations ease.

Sadly some founder members of the BCG are no longer with us and we owe much to the inspiration of the late Peter Barnwell who kept us going during the tribulations of the 1980s.

Many of us have served for 30 years or more as active volunteers and committee members. Chairman Warren Considine has brought his invaluable civil engineering and draughtsmanship skills to our major projects since 1989.

The last 18 months have been a trying time for everyone as we donned our masks and awaited an effective COVID-19 vaccine.

Since January 2020, over 900 hours of effort across 75 work sessions have kept footpaths open and in good repair, improved wildlife habitats and constructed an information board. Some volunteers were detached to assist HBC plant 60,000 crocuses and 3,500 wild flower plugs across The Stray in its latest green initiative.

We look forward to some form of normality returning in 2022.



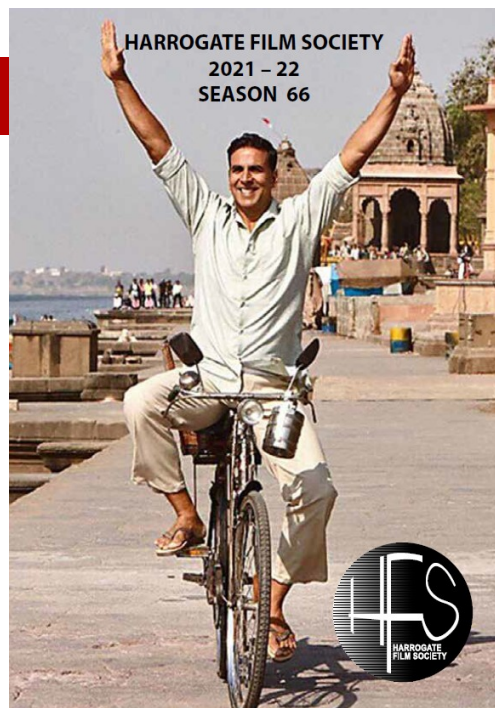
Volunteers laying a walkway in Nidd Gorge

More on our links with other local organisations

Harrogate Film Society

As part of our anniversary drive to strengthen our links with the many other excellent organisations operating in the town, we are delighted to be in dialogue with the Harrogate Film Society. In collaboration with the HFS and the Yorkshire Film Archive we are seeking to develop a project with the working title of 'Harrogate on Film'. This is designed to capture some of the history of Harrogate through the moving images that exist. But more of that in due course. Meanwhile, HFS, now in its 66th season and now screening at the Odeon, has issued its exciting new film programme. Details of this and of the Society can be found at [Home | Harrogate Film Society](#) and is well worth a browse.

Nigel McClea



Celebrating our past: the opening of the New Park Visitor Centre

We are proud to announce that, on Saturday 18 September, the New Park Visitor Centre will be officially opened by the Mayor of Harrogate with **free tours available to the public between 3pm and 5pm as part of Heritage Open Days**. The Centre celebrates the



fascinating history of New Park, not least the Barber light railway that, for many years, served Harrogate by bringing coal from Bilton junction to the gas works on Ripon Road. The Centre, the brainchild of Civic Society member Terry Williams, is located in the New Park Academy on Skipton Road.

Terry has kindly acknowledged the support of both the Academy (for which the Centre will be an educational facility) and our Society. Thus we hope as many members as possible (with guests) will take the opportunity of visiting the Centre on the day.

Refreshments will be available.

Our next event: A walk around Pannal

Sunday 26 September at 2pm

Join local historian, past Chair of the Civic Society and founder of Friends of Valley Gardens, Anne Smith for a circular guided walk of Pannal. As Pannal is older than Harrogate expect to hear a great deal of interesting history, especially since Anne is the author of several books on Pannal. This gentle walk, with no steps and

frequent stops, will include St. Robert's Church, Pannal Memorial Institute and the Old Mill.

Duration 1½ hours

Please book places by email to events@harrogatecivicsociety.org



Contact us:

General matters	info@harrogatecivicsociety.org
Membership queries	membership@harrogatecivicsociety.org
Event bookings	events@harrogatecivicsociety.org

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