



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

March 2023



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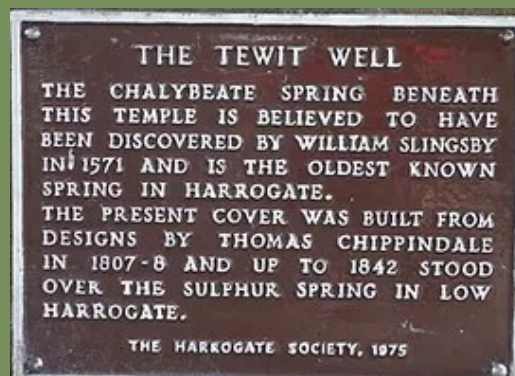
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Please note that whilst every effort is made to ensure accuracy, no responsibility can be accepted should any losses be incurred. Opinions expressed are those of the contributors and not necessarily of the Harrogate Civic Society.
David Siddans, Editor

No, not Harrogate, but a view of Terme Tettuccio in Montecatini Terme in Tuscany, one of Harrogate's twin towns. Like Harrogate, Montecatini is renowned for its mineral springs (terme). Photo: VisitTuscany.com

An article on Harrogate's twinning links around the world appears on page 7.

The Civic Society logo, at the top of this newsletter is a representation of the structure above the Tewit Well, the earliest to be recognised for its 'medicinal properties' by William Slingsby in 1571.



A zero carbon future: what does it mean for you?

A talk given by *Jemima Parker* to the Civic Society on 17 January

It was a pleasure to speak at a recent Harrogate Civic Society event and to have such an engaged and thoughtful audience. They had no difficulty in addressing my initial challenge 'How has the Harrogate landscape and culture changed in the past 10 or 20 years?' New buildings, internet shopping, electric buses, 40°C temperatures and home working were just a few of the responses.

However, most of us find change challenging, so it is not surprising that the transition we need to undertake to adapt and mitigate for our changing climate can be hard to embrace. Having a clear vision of what a low carbon society and economy could look like is critical to enable us to imagine what Harrogate could look and feel like in 10 or 20 years' time.

Zero Carbon Harrogate (ZCH) is a volunteer led, apolitical, charity seeking to set that vision, advocate for proactive change and taking action to help the local area decarbonise. With good decision making there are many co-benefits - warmer buildings, cheaper locally produced energy, better air quality, flourishing natural habitats, quality jobs, healthier diets and travel. To this end we work collaboratively with a range of partners such as the Civic Society.

Most of our local carbon emissions stem from energy use in our buildings and our travel. As well as regular conversations with local politicians and businesses, ZCH runs a pioneering retrofit programme with two objectives. To raise awareness with home owners about how to refurbish our homes to save energy/ carbon and to upskill local professionals and people in the building industry so that they are equipped to provide those retrofitting services. With funding from the Industry Energy Redress Fund, we are able to provide free training for local tradespeople.



What could a zero carbon future look like for Harrogate? Station Square imagined by James McKay

Over 50 local schools have participated in the ZCH Walk to School Days, which are supported by Harrogate Town FC, with their mascot Harrygator being very popular with the children as he comes along to journey to school with them.

My second challenge to the Civic Society members was to examine your own carbon footprint. The World Wide Fund for Nature have an easy to use carbon calculator at <https://footprint.wwf.org.uk/> It offers tips and hints on how we can play our part by reducing our personal carbon emissions.

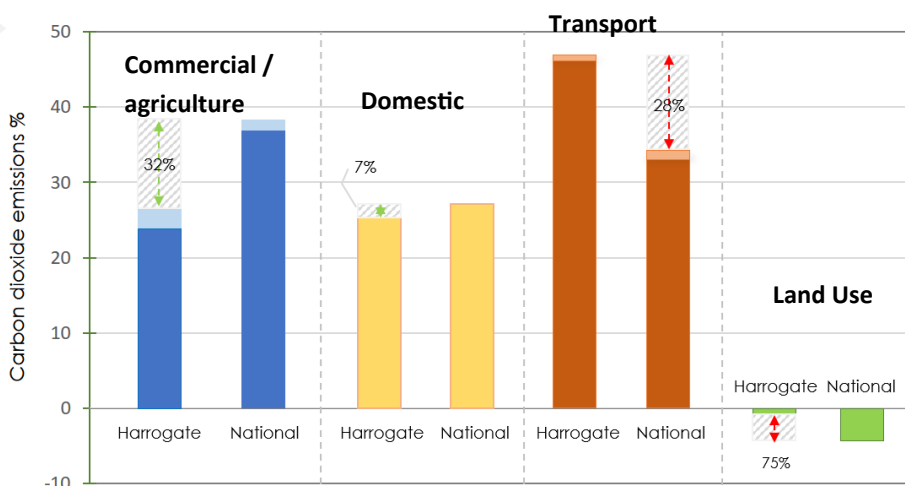
As a respected voice in Harrogate, the Civic Society can speak up for appropriate adaptations to decarbonise our buildings, transport infrastructure and green spaces both through the local authority planning process and in the local media. Members could reduce the impact of the society itself by walking or lift sharing to meetings.

Lastly, I invited the members to explore the ZCH website and consider offering us your support by joining our mailing list, becoming a member or by volunteering with us.

Jemima is Chair of Zero Carbon Harrogate (ZCH)

For more details of the ZCH organisation:

www.zerocarbonharrogate.org.uk



Graph showing percentage of CO2 emissions for Harrogate District compared to national emissions by sector

John Metcalf - 'Blind Jack' of Knaresborough

On 21 February we welcomed Bernard Higgins who gave a wide-ranging talk on Jack Metcalf and brought both Jack and his era vividly to life for us.

Born in 1717 in humble circumstances, Jack lost his sight due to smallpox at the age of 7. He grew up to be an imposing character. He was 6'2" in height when the average for a man at the time was 5'6" and, with the help of his friends, became an accomplished musician, huntsman and trader as well as drinker, gambler and smuggler. But what he is best known for locally is his road building. He saw the business opportunity presented by the Turnpike Trusts Act and in 1752 applied to build 3 miles of road between Ferrensby and Minskip, followed by the Starbeck to Knaresborough road and the road from Harrogate to Harewood Bridge. He used workers who he met in his career as a military adventurer which included recruiting men to the Yorkshire Blues, who fought at the battle of Culloden. He supervised the work closely and is now rightly remembered in the naming of part of the Harrogate



bypass as 'John Metcalf Way'. We can also remember him when next passing the Cedar Court Hotel. The hotel first on that site was the Queen's Head, where before his time as a road builder, he played the fiddle for guests.

Angela Fahy



Bernard Higgins addressing the large audience

Membership fees - a reminder

Our last newsletter gave details of the new arrangement for membership fees, which will apply from 1 May this year.

Whilst the fees have increased, members now enjoy free admittance to most talks (but remember to book), and the option to receive the newsletter as a hard copy.

All subscriptions will fall due on 1 May each year, so, if you have a standing order set up, please amend accordingly.

Those who joined after 30 January will not be asked to renew until May 2024.

NEW SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Individual members	£20
Two people at the same address	£30
Under 25s or on UC	£10

Please also remember that you can Gift Aid your subscriptions. See the January newsletter for details.

Those members who are fairly new (from the beginning of the first Covid lockdown in March 2020) will not have seen the fairly lengthy planning items that we previously published. The last article that detailed a good many of the applications to which we had responded appeared in the February 2020 Newsletter.

This article will not be a comprehensive resumé of planning applications since the previous issue but instead I will note two types of applications that we have encountered frequently in the past few months.

Street Hubs

There have been seven applications for 'BT Street Hubs', which have come under the heading of advertisement applications. We have responded to all of them, except one in Starbeck.

They take the form of free standing fixtures that have a large changeable LED screen front

and back. The structures are 2.98m high X 1.23m wide with the two LED screens each 1.67m high X 0.95m wide. The displays can change at a minimum of 10 second intervals. Just 5% screen time per annum would be given to local authority content, plus 1000 hours per annum as a community notice board. This content could be devoted to education, local news and events, warnings and services, maps and directions, weather and transport information. Other benefits are use as a public phone box, phone charging and free Wi-Fi.

These street hubs seem to have been designed for London initially with the screens on the roadside facing



A computer impression of a street hub in Cambridge Street.

the traffic in the eyeline of drivers.

When Harrogate Council was approached, I believe the reaction of the planners was that these structures (the main purpose of which seemed to be to display illuminated advertisements) are unsuitable anywhere in the town – hooray! But nevertheless applications came forward. The sites proposed were two on Cambridge Street, two on Oxford Street, one on Prospect Crescent and one on Station Parade, to which we sent objections. All six, plus the one proposed outside the Post Office in Starbeck were refused permission, despite the various benefits listed. The refusals were due to the impact of the street hubs, along with the advertisements, on the character and appearance of the conservation area. They are viewed as street clutter. Our objections also included (where this was the case) that the setting of listed buildings would be adversely affected.

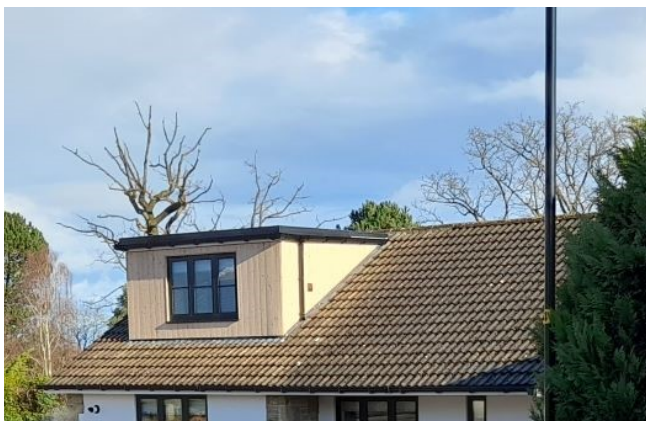
Loft Conversions

Another type of application that we have encountered frequently in recent months is loft conversions - not that we have objections in principle to such developments of course but it is the way they have been designed.

Often the description of the application is for a rear dormer sometimes combined with a hip to gable extension, or a side dormer. The term 'dormer' tends to be used rather loosely and what is actually being proposed is often a flat roofed extension covering almost the whole of the existing roof slope, usually at the rear. These so called 'dormers' often extend vertically from the back wall of the house and horizontally to almost meet the ridge. They will be almost the whole width of the roof and if combined with a hip to gable extension, will be a very large and ugly flat roofed roof extension. You will no doubt see side dormers that spring outwards from a main roof which are not particularly aesthetically pleasing and unbalance a building, especially in relation to one

house of a pair of semis. Harrogate Borough Council has a House Extensions and Garages Design Guide (adopted in 2005) that goes into some detail about dormers that are acceptable and those that are not. It says that *'they should not be so numerous or large that they dominate the roof. Especially wide flat roofed dormers are unacceptable. Dormer ridges should be set down from the ridge of the original roof and set back a minimum of 1m behind the original wall.'*

We wholeheartedly agree with this advice. As much as hip to gable extensions unbalance a pair of semis, we do not find them as bad aesthetically as some of the poorer dormer constructions that the Council Design Guide deplores. When the guide was being drafted, the Civic Society was consulted and I did manage to achieve one or two small amendments.



Unfortunately, much more recently the guidance has been superseded by new and looser regulations on permitted development that rely more on arithmetic calculations regarding position, size and volume than what we would consider good design.

Quite often the problem as we see it is not only that a large flat roofed dormer is ugly in itself, but this is compounded by poor fenestration or materials. Sometimes they appear to collide with a chimney! Because of permitted development rights, roof extensions have been approved purely on the legal basis that they conform to the calculations.

Some examples that we have commented unfavourably on are at St. Mary's Walk, St Winifred's Road, Pannal Ash Grove, Beech Road, Arncliffe Road, Hookstone Drive, St Catherine's Road, Plompton Drive, Lynton Gardens and Kirkham Place. Not all the applications for loft conversions are poor in every respect and a few, such as one we saw at West End Avenue, only needed a small amendment. We were also able to comment very favourably on a loft conversion at Wedderburn Road. You may notice that none of the above is situated in the extensive Harrogate Conservation Area or on listed buildings, where there will be more limited development rights.

Heritage Open Days 2023 Can you help?

The Society supports and coordinates our town's participation in the national **Heritage Open Days** (HODs) festival, which this year is from **8 to 17 September**.

We're keen to broaden even further the appeal of HODs, to include more local or less well-known aspects of Harrogate's heritage and to welcome new visitors and event hosts, especially those who are not (yet) society members. Perhaps you can help us with our planning by considering two questions:

1. **What type of heritage-related events in Harrogate would you like to see?**
2. **Who do you know locally who might want to organise, host or support a heritage event?**

The HODs national focus for 2023 is **Creativity Unwrapped** so we're particularly keen to include heritage sites, buildings and subjects with an arts, design, music or sports theme.

Have a think! Ask your family members, friends, colleagues, neighbours

Email info@harrogatecivicsociety.org or kevinhales@me.com (the society's HODs coordinator) with your ideas.

There's lots of good information on the HODs national website: <https://www.heritageopendays.org.uk/>.

Harrogate's 2022 programme is at: <https://www.harrogatecivicsociety.org/heritage-open-days-hods>.

And watch for updates on the society's Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/HarrogateCivicSociety>.



2023 Annual General Meeting

On 13 March we held our AGM at Harrogate Theatre. Over seventy members attended, despite the miserable weather. Following tea and coffee, we enjoyed a tour of the theatre led by Ash Miller, the customer experience manager.

Following the tour, David Bown, the theatre's chief executive, gave a short talk on the history of the theatre since it first opened in 1900, including various occasions when circumstances forced it to close.



David Bown (bottom right) speaking to Society members at the AGM

Stuart Holland, our chairman, then led us efficiently through the business of the evening. The curtain fell at 8.30 pm at the end of a very successful evening.

You can read our Annual Report on the website:
www.harrogatecivicsociety.org

Harrogate Railways Exhibition

Nigel McClea writes:

Earlier this month a ceremony attended by a number of society members saw the final closure of the exhibition *Welcome to Harrogate Railways*. Possibly the most ambitious project ever to be proposed and supported by the Civic Society, *Welcome to Harrogate Railways* was hugely successful, far more than we ever anticipated.

Originally intended to last for only three days last summer, *Welcome to Harrogate Railways* lasted for eight months. Over that period it was seen by many hundreds of enthusiasts and visitors, raising in the process over £1325 in donations for Cancer Research UK.

The exhibition was a partnership between the Civic Society and the railway companies LNER, Northern and Network Rail. It involved a significant team of volunteers but was the brainchild of just one man – society member Terry Williams, seen here with a gift presented to him at the closing ceremony.

Thank you, Terry and well done!



Twin Towns - Spa Heritage and More

By *Michael Newby*

2023 is a year of anniversaries for Harrogate town twinning. We have three twins and one sister city but where are they?

The oldest link, dating back to 1953, is with the spa town of Luchon in the French Pyrenees. Possibly one of the first such twinning arrangements in the country, the link grew out of the post-war bilingual movement. Reports in the Harrogate Advertiser suggest that 1953's French Week was a major event. Following a dip in activity in the 1980s and 90s recent years have seen an upturn with a Harrogate decorated float and local bands regularly taking part in the annual Fête des Fleurs and local runners participating in the Luchon Aneto Trail.

Harrogate has been twinned with the spa town of Montecatini in Tuscany since the early 1960s. Despite initial enthusiasm the link fell into abeyance and forgotten until a copy of a certificate, dated 18 June 1963, emerged whilst clearing out the former Council Offices. Is 2023 the 60th anniversary of this link?

Barrie, Ontario is the most recent twinning but with origins dating back over two centuries. Barrie (56 miles north of Toronto) is named after Sir Robert Barrie, a naval officer prominent in the War of 1812. He married Julia Wharton Ingilby in 1816 and both are buried at All Saints' Church, Ripley where a stained glass window is dedicated to the couple. Another significant link is the Royal Canadian Airforce. Barrie is near to Camp Borden,



Barrie, Canada:

The Spirit Catcher sculpture with Harrogate's Tewit band

Below:

The Harrogate float at Luchon's Fête des Fleurs

historic birthplace of the RCAF whilst Stonefall is the final resting place for 666 Canadian airforce personnel including Flying Officer William Porritt from Barrie. It is 10 years since the formal signing at Ripley Castle on 7 June 2013. Since then, 7 June is now officially 'Sir Robert Barrie Day' in Barrie.

Harrogate's link with Wellington in New Zealand is not a formal twinning but a 'sister city' relationship that dates back to 1953 when Wellington City Council donated plants for the New Zealand Garden in the Valley Gardens. In 1954 Harrogate Council presented Wellington with a gold mace that is still used at Council meetings and on ceremonial occasions.

Marking this year's anniversaries will be a twinning inspired garden at the Spring Flower Show (20 - 23 April), a ceremony in the refurbished New Zealand Garden (Sat 22 April), ANZAC Day at Stonefall (Sun 23 April) and the first leg of an under-16s rugby exchange between Harrogate and Barrie at the end of July.

There is much more information on the website:

<https://harrogatetwinning.org/home/>

Michael Newby is a trustee of Harrogate International Partnerships, a former Mayor and a Civic Society member.

Photo credits: M Newby/HIP



Forthcoming Events

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

Monday 27 March 2.30 and 7.30 pm	Harrogate on Film To be screened at the Odeon cinema. Booking now closed, but if you are desperate not to miss it, please contact Nigel McClea on mccleas@yahoo.com
Wednesday 26 April 2.30 pm	Ripley Castle A private group tour of Ripley Castle with cream tea. Not only is this historic building on our doorstep but it is easy to get to on the No36 bus from Harrogate. Cost £18.00
Tuesday 16 May 7.30 pm	The work of Destination Harrogate A talk on the vital role of this body in the promotion and the economy of Harrogate. At St Paul's URC hall
Saturday 27 May 10am - 4pm	Royal Hall Anniversary The 120 th anniversary of the formal opening of The Royal Hall is being celebrated by the Royal Hall Restoration Trust with a free public open day. There will be performances in the auditorium and other attractions.
Sunday 11 June 2 pm	A tour of Grove Road cemetery Led by Dr Paul Jennings. Meet at the cemetery entrance. Maximum of 25 people, so early booking advised.
July (date to be confirmed)	Arrangements are in hand for a talk from a local community organisation that has undertaken an exciting environmental project.
Late August (date to be confirmed)	A guided tour of a local 'hidden gem' site of interest. Further details to follow
8 - 17 Sept	Heritage Open Days A full programme is being developed and will be advertised nearer the time. See page 5

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. There will be a £5.00 head charge for non-members. Early booking is recommended.

Contact us:

Chairman: Stuart Holland	..	Tel: 01423 500089
General matters	info@harrogatecivicsociety.org
Membership queries..	..	membership@harrogatecivicsociety.org
Event bookings	events@harrogatecivicsociety.org

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