



November Sunshine

Our third plaque of 2025 will commemorate the long history of the Sun Pavilion in Valley Gardens.

The unveiling ceremony on 10 November will take place as this newsletter goes to press and a full report will appear in our next newsletter.

Meanwhile, on the right is the text of the plaque.

The Sun Pavilion

The Sun Pavilion and covered walkway were originally designed in the 1920s as part of a larger scheme to link the Royal Pump Room with the nearby Royal Bath Hospital. Opened in June 1933, it comprised the domed Art Deco Sun Pavilion, a glazed sun colonnade and two sun parlours. It became a venue for refreshments, entertainment and public events.

The Sun Pavilion was restored in 1998 with the support of Friends of Valley Gardens and reopened by Queen Elizabeth II in December of that year. Further refurbishment including a new roof was completed in 2022, when it received a Grade 2 listing for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee.

Harrogate Civic Society
2025

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**Come to our
Christmas Social
on Sunday 14
December**

at St Wilfrid's
Church Hall
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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

Roundhill Reservoir and Edward Wilson Dixon



A talk by Graham E Seel held at the West Park Centre on 10 September.

A summary by David Siddans

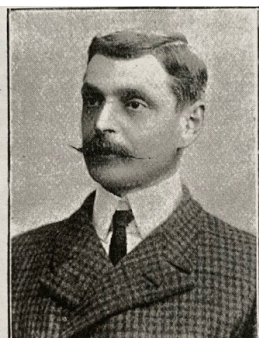
By the end of the nineteenth century, Harrogate's population had grown significantly, and the town faced the prospect of what the local press described as a water famine. Ironically there was a real danger that the taps would run dry in this increasingly popular spa town. The race was on to find a new source of water and the recently appointed Harrogate Chief Water Engineer, Edward Wilson Dixon, was tasked to find and develop a new reservoir to create a new supply.

The result was the construction of Roundhill reservoir, completed in 1911. Located in Nidderdale between Lofthouse and Masham, today it is barely visible from the moorland road which links the two.

Graham Seel's talk began with a slide showing today's tranquil rural scene within which the reservoir sits, but a closer inspection reveals the remnants of what, just over 100 years ago, was a heavily industrialised area. Construction works, buildings, a quarry, an inclined plane, railway lines, and a large workers' settlement have all left their marks on the landscape.

Graham described in some detail the way in which the reservoir was constructed and a tunnel created to carry the water 19 miles from the site to Harrogate, all in all a considerable engineering feat. The achievement was all the greater when set against the rivalry with Leeds Corporation who also wanted a site for their water supply from the same area. Leeds did not succeed in implementing their plans

*Edward Wilson Dixon in 1911
courtesy Ackrill Newspapers*



Mr. E. W. Dixon, M.I.C.E.
Engineer to
Harrogate Corporation.



Above: Roundhill reservoir today

Below: construction of the dam wall in its early stages



for a reservoir at Colsterdale, eventually building a reservoir nearby, at Leighton.

Edward Wilson Dixon, born in 1865, undertook other projects for Harrogate Corporation including the extension of Scargill Reservoir in Haverah Park. He lived for many years in and around Harrogate and died in 1951. Despite his great achievements, the only inscriptions left behind are on a faded tablet at Scargill dam and an inscription on a stone on the Harlow Hill water tower (pictured below).



Graham E Seel taught history for over 34 years and has published widely on English history. His current interest is in memorialisation of the fallen of World War 1 in stained glass windows in North Yorkshire churches.

Claude Hamilton Verity - Our Latest Plaque

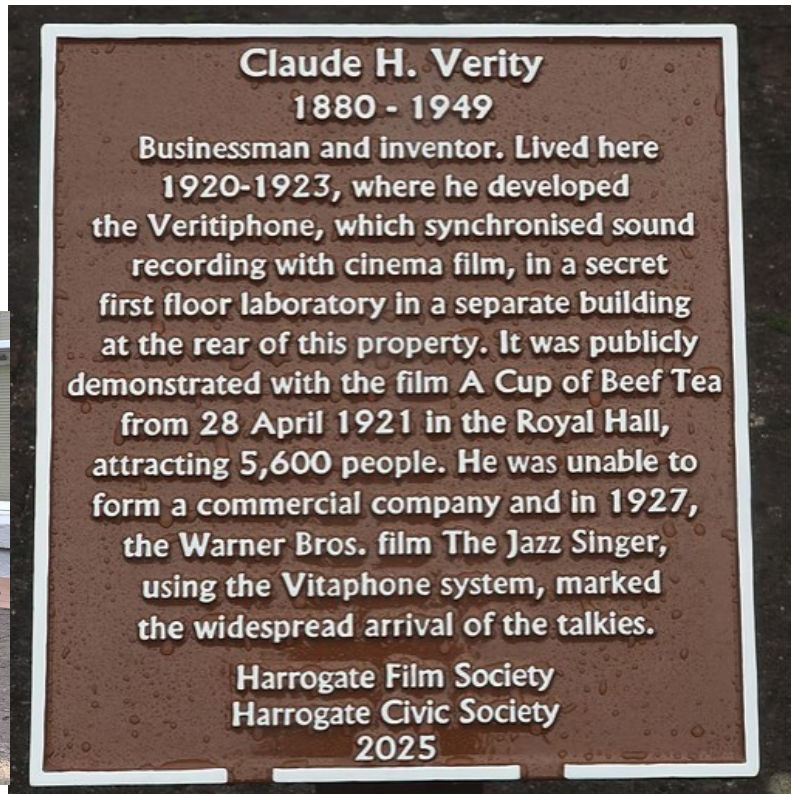
Number 96 in the series of brown heritage plaques was unveiled by the Harrogate Town Mayor on Wednesday 17 September outside the house on East Park Road where Claude Verity lived.



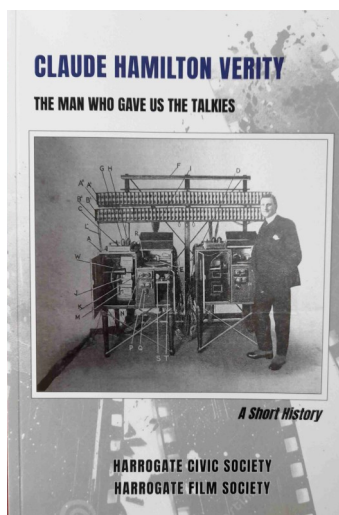
Above: The Mayor, Cllr Chris Aldred unveiled the plaque

The plaque was promoted jointly by the Harrogate Civic Society and the Harrogate Film Society, and followed a week-long exhibition at West Park Centre telling the story of the pioneering work in the 1920s leading to the establishment of the era of talking movies.

The ceremony was attended by both societies, the current owners of no 17 and by the Verity family, descendants of Claude. A reception was held afterwards in the Everyman Cinema.



*Above: The Verity family at the reception
Left to right: Hilly, Martin and James*



Nigel McClea adds:

The unveiling of the plaque was just one element in a wider celebration of Claude's life and work which included a special exhibition by Civic Society member Terry-Mike Williams and a short history of Claude's extraordinary achievements in synchronising sound with film. Produced as a booklet, this history is a joint publication by the Civic Society and the Harrogate Film Society, generously sponsored by estate agents Verity Frearson and the Verity family.

A few copies remain and will be available (donation appreciated) at the forthcoming Christmas social.

A look back on Heritage Open Days 2025

Heritage Open Days (HODs) is a nation-wide annual celebration of history and culture promoted by the National Trust and the People's Postcode Lottery.

*Harrogate Civic Society members, **Stella and Geoff Brown** spent many months planning and coordinating the varied programme of events for this year's programme. Here they review what has been a very successful outcome of HODs 2025 in the Harrogate area.*



Another HODs year has flown past - all those intensive months of preparation and planning over in 10 short days and now all the HODs participants can take some time to relax again.

A lot happened in those 10 days – 71 events at 23 venues. There was an eclectic mix of tours, talks, walks, music, exhibitions and buildings, which, as always, during HODs were completely free to attend. The Festival continues to be a fantastic opportunity for residents and visitors alike to see some of the amazing heritage within Harrogate and the surrounding area.

Many of the regular favourites were in the



programme, and there were also new walks, new talks, new exhibitions and new venues. Events were well attended, and

many of the booked events were oversubscribed.

One of the features of the HODs Festival is to provide a rare opportunity to visit places and events that are not available at other times, such as the Harrogate Club, and behind the scenes at



Pateley Bridge Playhouse. A highlight for 2025 was the guided tours of the Odeon projection room. Other talks and guided walks from local experts provided a fascinating insight into the Duchy Estate, New Park, Pannal, Stonefall, and Valley Gardens. Several churches, Bilton Community Centre and Old Magnesia Well were all open with exhibitions, bell towers to climb, stories being told – often accompanied by tea and cakes!



What made it a success? The people! The Civic Society helped in coordinating the programme and supporting events, but it was the individual event organisers and all of the volunteers who led the walks, managed the opening of buildings and turned out on the day – not forgetting the huge amount of behind-the-scenes research and preparation over the months before the Festival.

The evaluation process is now underway. To date the responses received have been very complimentary suggesting that visitors have appreciated all the hard work that the individuals and teams have put into events. As with previous years, the recurring theme of the feedback has been how much people have learned about the history and heritage on their doorstep.

The dates for the 2026 Heritage Open Days are
11 - 20 September.

A Rubbish History of Yorkshire

On Wednesday 15 October 2025, **Dr Henry Irving**, Senior Lecturer in Public History within the School of Humanities & Social Sciences at Leeds Beckett University, gave a talk to the Society at the West Park Centre with the intriguing title 'A Rubbish History of Yorkshire'



Paul Jennings writes:

Henry gave an erudite but engaging history of how the county has dealt with the hundreds of thousands of tons of waste its residents have created over the last couple of hundred years.

He began in Leeds, using some of the evocative old photographs in the collection of Leeds General Reference Library, with how the disposal of human waste was separated from household rubbish and local authorities compelled by Parliament to deal with it under landmark Public Health Acts in 1848 and 1875. This involved collection and disposal. He went on to chart how the latter was achieved, either by burning or burying it. Harrogate thought about the former but decided on the latter in landfill sites like the one at the former brickworks at Oatlands Mount, now a recreation ground, or the old quarry at New Park, where Aldi and B&Q now trade.



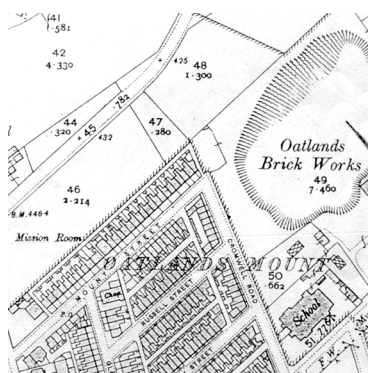
The Second World War brought an emphasis on recycling as 'Every scrap helps towards victory' and 'bombs and bullets from your dustbin' were urged in slogans. This declined after the war and most waste ended up in landfill sites. But from the 1970s it was revived with the Labour

Government's War on Waste report and, for example, the introduction of bottle banks nationally in 1981, kerbside recycling from homes in Sheffield in 1989, and wheelie bins trialled in Leeds in the early 1990s.

Today, little waste is buried and none in Harrogate.

The town has a recycling rate of 41.3%, about the national average, but still short of a government target of 50%. The talk ended with first a look at the work of the Allerton Waste Recovery Plant, which deals with it on behalf of North Yorkshire Council.

Secondly, with the thoughts that while we have advanced from managing waste to seeing it as a resource for reuse and energy, as a society we consume more than ever before, and how important it is to approach future policy making with an informed view of the past.



Left: An extract from the 1907 map showing the Oatlands brickworks

With the permission of the Ordnance Survey

Below: bin collection day in Harrogate

Photo: P Jennings



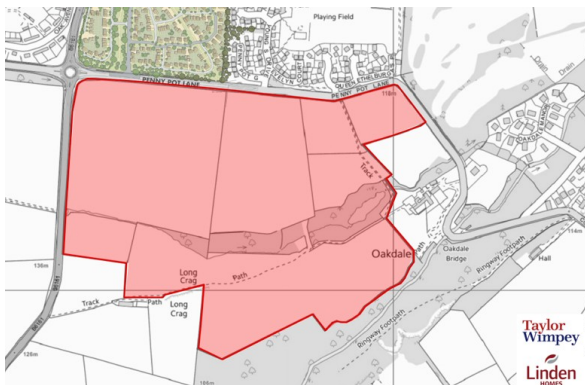
Many and pertinent questions were a sure sign that Dr Irving's talk had been very well received, for which we thank him.



*This month, **Henry Pankhurst** looks at some planning proposals that have been recently revived.*

Penny Pot Lane

I noted in August the proposed amendments to the Persimmon housing site on Penny Pot Lane - King Edwin Park. Taylor Wimpy now proposes 320 houses on the other side of Penny Pot Lane.



Penny Pot Lane: Extract from the Taylor Wimpy consultation map (our pink colouring added)

We have expressed concerns to the developer about the suitability of this site for development. An application was lodged in late 2017 for 350 dwellings on this site which was refused. North Yorkshire now falls far short of a 5-year supply of housing land, nevertheless we have serious reservations about damaging the Special Landscape Area and views of the Pinewoods and Birk Crag. The proposal is for 30 fewer homes than previously and includes more greenspace, woodland planting and an orchard but even this cannot mitigate the impacts of urbanisation.

Penny Pot Lane has to take all the traffic from King Edwin Park, and from the Queen Ethelburga's development. The narrow Oakdale Bridge with its bends and steep gradients is not suitable for ever-increasing traffic. The proposal to reduce the promised bus service for the King

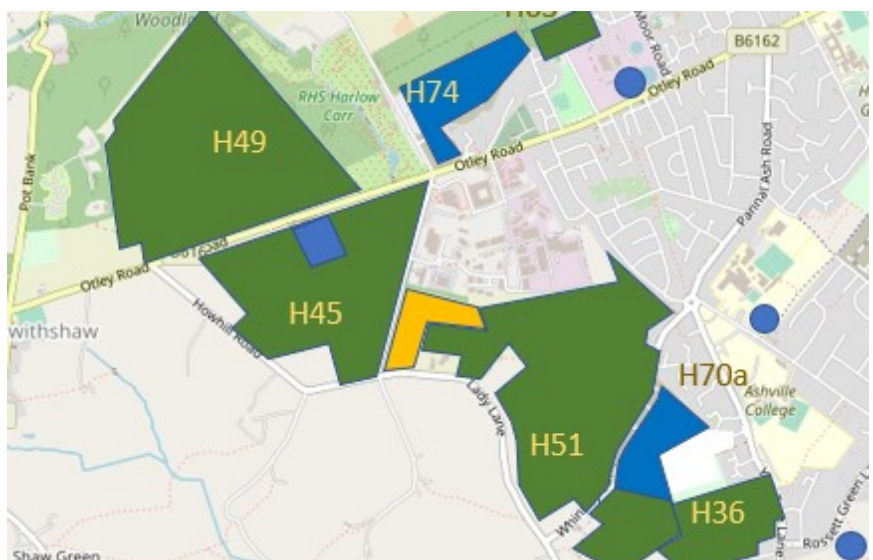
Edwin site is a retrograde step. Provision of bus services is lacking in the current consultation.

Developers should pay keen attention to sustainable methods of construction and the Future Houses Standard. Biodiversity net gain is also an important element of caring for the environment, hopefully strictly on site.

Windmill Farm, Otley Road

The large Windmill Farm housing proposal on Otley Road just before Beckwithshaw has been revived. We responded to this application in March 2022. The site is allocated in the Local Plan with a potential yield of 776 dwellings - one of the many additional sites that were unexpectedly considered in July 2017 when we thought allocations for the imminent new Local Plan would have been decided. The Draft Local Plan was published in January 2018. The original proposal included 770 dwellings, but an area of the site was marked for further development of 100-200 dwellings, so it could have been nearly 1000 homes which could still be the case. The new plans include 649 houses, a primary school, a community and commercial hub (with convenience store), 70 apartments for the elderly and provision for 24 self-build residential plots.

Below: the Windmill Farm site is shown as H49 on the plan of new housing developments below.



Street Hubs

Also from 2022 we see BT street hubs rising again. To date I have seen two such applications. One is at the junction of Cheltenham Parade and Oxford Street and the other is outside the Post Office in Starbeck. These hubs are over 9 ft high and 4 ft wide and sometimes a replacement for 'phone boxes but have LED digital advertisements on both sides.

The advertising facility is available for anyone but can include public information and free phone calls to mobile phones. In 2022 there were 7 such proposals, all of which were refused due to intrusiveness, street clutter and the ever changing illuminated advertisements. Hopefully this view will apply again.



Computer-aided impression of a street hub.

From the BT website: <https://business.bt.com/public-sector/street-hubs/>

Our Social Media Channels

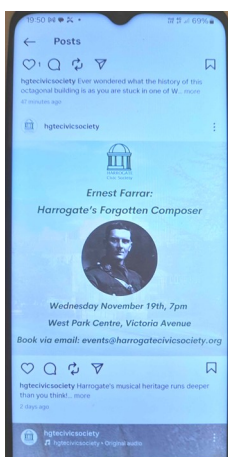
Mike Newby describes some of the ways we communicate our activities:

Have you been keeping up with Harrogate Civic Society through our social media channels? Yes, we are on Facebook and Instagram where you can find announcements about events that are in the pipeline and reports of the talks that we have had.

More and more people are finding out about HCS through these channels. Over the last three months there have been nearly 57,000 views (the number of times that our content was played or displayed) and over 50 new followers.

But its not just events that feature. You can also find out

a little more about our plaques. I am currently producing short video clips each week highlighting a particular plaque, be it celebrating a building or one of the many people who have made Harrogate what it is today. You can also see the latest three plaques being unveiled (Mary



Fisher, Claude Verity and the Sun Pavilion. We are nearing the 100 total so do look out for future new plaques. Here is one of the earlier videos about Crown Place and the 'Great Harrogate Water Heist' (<https://bit.ly/47sa4e9>) to whet your appetite for more.

As the nights are drawing in why not explore our website from the comfort of your own home (<https://www.harrogatecivsociety.org/>) where you will find lots of interesting articles on our town's history. There are also a number of videos (<https://www.harrogatecivsociety.org/history-videos>) including a fascinating interview with Sheila Pantin who was recently made a Freeman of the Town, the first person to be so honoured by our new Town Council.

Our plaques website www.harrogateplaques.org/ has information about each plaque and a selection of trails to follow. There is also a checklist you can download to record when you have seen a particular plaque. If you have an android phone there is even an app you can download.



Local Council Issues



Nick Brennan is the Civic Society's representative on the Harrogate Town Council Neighbourhood Plan subcommittee. Here he brings us up to date with developments.

appointed project manager. Depending on the outcome of that review the subcommittee may choose to take a recommendation for a revised Plan area to the Town Council or continue with the current designated area.

Harrogate Town Council

The Neighbourhood Plan

The Town Council has now begun to develop the neighbourhood plan work previously undertaken by the **Harrogate Town Plan Forum***.

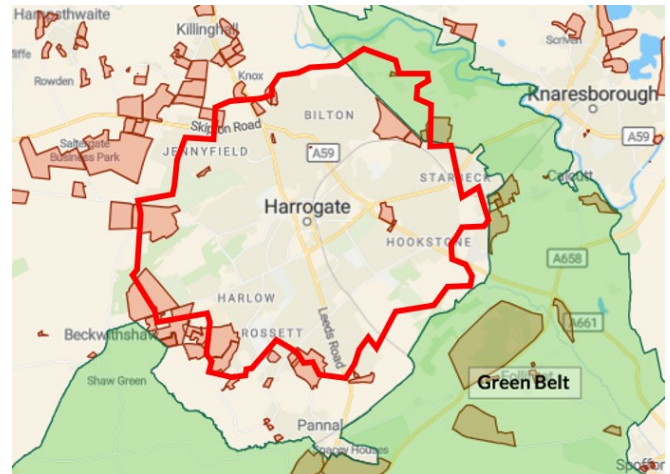
A New Subcommittee

Meetings of the new 'Harrogate Neighbourhood Plan subcommittee' (a subcommittee of Harrogate Town Council) were held on 9 September and 22 October (unfortunately neither of which I could attend). **Paul Hatherley** presented the Harrogate Forum's work to date at the September meeting. The 22 October meeting dealt with various administrative matters.

Councillor Viv Poskitt has been elected to serve as the Chair of the Harrogate Neighbourhood Plan subcommittee with Jonathan Foggitt elected as Vice-Chair. Co-opted members of the subcommittee are Jan Arger, George Eglese, Jonathan Foggitt, Jack Towse and myself representing the Civic Society.

Surrounding Parishes

The Neighbourhood Plan currently confines itself to the administrative area of Harrogate Town Council but one of the first tasks is to review the area of the Plan given the considerable amount of new housing being proposed just outside the town. The Plan will rightly address the impact of this new housing on the town itself but it is prudent to consider whether the Plan should work with surrounding parishes to increase its scope and area. A review of these issues is expected to be one of the first tasks of an



Proposed new housing sites just outside the town boundary

An Open Meeting of the Forum

A follow-on meeting has been arranged for **6.30 pm on 8 December** at West Park URC. This will be an opportunity to meet the Town Council subcommittee. The Forum will hold a short annual general meeting to approve a revised constitution to reflect its new supporting role and there will then be a talk by Councillor David Goode of Knaresborough Town Council about their Town Plan work.

The meeting will end with a discussion about ways the Forum can help the Town Council produce a Town Plan. This is an open meeting so it would be good to see Harrogate Civic Society members come to give support to the Town Council subcommittee and the Harrogate Town Forum.

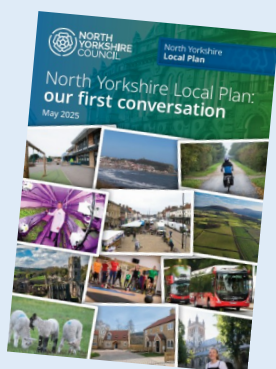
The **Harrogate Town Plan Forum comprises members from Harrogate Civic Society, Zero Carbon Harrogate and several other organisations within Harrogate who joined forces over a year ago to carry out the groundwork leading towards a Neighbourhood Plan for Harrogate, in anticipation of the establishment of a town council.*

Developing the Plan

There remain significant challenges ahead for North Yorkshire Council in developing its new county-wide plan, not least the allocation of an increased annual housing target.

While the previous Harrogate District Local Plan (2014–2035) remains in effect until a North Yorkshire Local Plan is adopted, there are several speculative non-allocated housing sites beginning to test that Plan, (notably in and around Killinghall, Bilton and west of Harrogate).

The **Call for Sites** stage of the emerging Local Plan has been kept open until the end of 2025.



Five Year Housing Supply

It has been noted that North Yorkshire cannot currently demonstrate an adequate 5-year housing supply under the new *Standard Method* calculation for homes. This could lead to some opportunistic development applications within Harrogate and its bordering districts.

Proposed Site on Penny Pot Lane

On behalf of the Civic Society, I have responded to Taylor Wimpey about their proposal on Penny Pot Lane for 350 homes but have not received any response to the points raised. However, I note that Taylor Wimpey has been advised to proceed with an Environmental Impact Assessment before submitting a formal application.

The Story of Harrogate at West Park Centre

Stuart Holland, Chair of the West Park Centre board, reports that the exhibition showing the *Story of Harrogate* is now hibernating for the winter having been open to the public for the last three months. It will open again next Spring.

During that time over 1600 visitors have been recorded, two-thirds being visitors to the town.

The Centre has recruited a team of 20 volunteers to guide visitors around the exhibition and provide refreshments.

The Civic Society is pleased to have provided financial and personal support for the work of the Centre.

Top right: Part of the Story of Harrogate exhibition



Above: A performance of The Armed Man: A Mass for Peace by Karl Jenkins held on 1 November

Our next Event: Ernest Farrar - Harrogate's Forgotten Composer

Discover the music and story of **Ernest Farrar**, Harrogate's forgotten composer, in a concert of excellent orchestral recordings in spectacular sound,

introduced and narrated by Andrew Hitchen.

Wednesday, 19 November 2025

7.00 for 7.30 pm

**West Park Centre, Victoria Avenue,
Harrogate HG1 1EQ**



Nigel McClea writes:

How much does anyone now remember the name Ernest Farrar, a young man killed on the western front in the last months of the First World War, just one of the 1163 names inscribed on Harrogate's war memorial? But if only he had lived, if only he had been able to resume his career as a composer, might he now be as famous as, say, Edward Elgar or Ralph Vaughan Williams?

'I think that quite a possibility,' says renowned music enthusiast Andrew Hitchen, founder of the Wesley Chapel concert series. 'Although he was only 33 at the time of his death, Farrar left behind a significant body of work, compositions of great quality and beauty'.

Andrew will be talking about Ernest Farrar, his life and work, at **The West Park Centre, Victoria Avenue** on **Wednesday, 19 November (7.00 pm for 7.30 pm)**. This will also be a rare opportunity to hear, reproduced at concert quality, recordings of some of Farrar's most spectacular orchestral compositions.

Farrar was born in 1885 in Lewisham but grew up in Yorkshire where his father was Vicar of Micklefield. Educated at Leeds Grammar School and Durham University, he was awarded a scholarship in 1905 to the Royal College of Music.

After graduation, he became an organist at Dresden, before being appointed choirmaster and organist at St Hilda's Church, South Shields. In 1912 he moved to Harrogate where he took up post as organist at Christ Church, augmenting his income by teaching composition to pupils, such as the youthful Gerald Finzi.

In August 1916 he joined the Grenadier Guards, undergoing two years of training. It was during this period that he composed *Heroic Elegy*, perhaps his most moving work, dedicated to his fellow servicemen. He himself conducted the first performance at Harrogate's Royal Hall on 3 July 1918 but it was to be the last music he was ever to hear. On 6 September 1918, he was posted to France where, only 12 days later, he was killed by machine-gun fire as he was leading his men into battle.

To book a place at the talk, email
events@harrogatecivicsociety.org

**Free for Civic Society Members and Wesley
Concert goers**

**Other guests are welcome - suggested
donation £5 on the door**

Our Christmas Social 2025

Our very popular annual social gathering will take place at St Wilfrid's Church Hall (Duchy Road) on Sunday 14 December 2.30 - 4.30 pm. As usual there will be wine, soft drinks and mince pies, but most importantly the chance to chat with fellow members. This event is free for members. Guests are welcome and a voluntary donation would be appreciated.



First Event of 2026 - Our New Town Council: Tuesday 13 January



With Harrogate Town Council approaching the end of its first year, we will welcome the Mayor, Cllr Chris Aldred, to speak about the process by which it was established, what it has done so far and what its plans are for the future.

The mayor will also be joined by one of the members who has never been a councillor before to say a few words on what attracted them to stand and how they have found the experience so far.

Freedom of Harrogate awarded to Sheila Pantin

Nigel McClea, Chair of the Society's History Group writes:

Last month saw a moment of living history when the Town Council voted to award the Freedom of Harrogate to one of the town's most treasured residents, Sheila Pantin. The Society was privileged to make the nomination; the honour being bestowed by The Mayor, Chris Aldred, at a special ceremony held at the Council offices on Tuesday, 21 October. This was also Sheila's 102nd birthday.

In a long and eventful life, perhaps Sheila's greatest achievement was the selfless work she carried out, under appalling conditions, when she was, we believe, the first British service woman to enter Bergen-Belsen concentration camp following its liberation. You may remember she was our guest of

honour at *Harrogate on Film* and, even more appropriately, our 'poster girl' at the war memorial centenary when she vividly recounted her wartime experiences to a packed and rapt audience.

The award of the Freedom was a relaxed and happy affair followed by a birthday tea.

Sheila beamed throughout but expressed relief, tinged with slight regret, when told she would not be expected to drive a herd of sheep over Station Bridge!



Summary of Forthcoming Events

Talks are held at West Park Centre, Victoria Avenue, unless indicated otherwise

Teas and coffees will be available from 7 pm

Wednesday 19 November 7 for 7.30 pm	Ernest Farrar, Harrogate's Forgotten Composer Orchestral recordings introduced and narrated by Andrew Hitchen See page 10 for details
Monday 8 December 6.30 pm	Open meeting of the Harrogate Town Plan Forum An opportunity to meet the people involved in developing the Harrogate Town Plan See page 8 for details
Sunday 14 December 2.30 pm	Civic Society Christmas Social At St Wilfrid's Church Hall - see page 11 for details
Tuesday 13 January 7 for 7.30 pm	The Town Council - How is it going? A presentation by the Mayor, Cllr Chris Aldred See page 11 for details
April Date to be confirmed	Annual General Meeting Full details to be announced later

A number of potential talks and visits for 2026 are in course of preparation.

Following the retirement of Angela Fahy, the Civic Society is seeking volunteers, including for the role of Events Coordinator, to help deliver this programme.

Other members of the Society are on hand to assist

Please email events@harrogatecivicsociety.org if you can help.

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 P Fennimore, HCS Treasurer, 9 Merryfield, Harrogate, HG2 9DH (include event)

All details are on our website and are continuously updated. Full information and reminders will be issued via the newsletter, by email, Instagram and 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: Michael Newby ..	chair@harrogatecivicsociety.org
General matters	info@harrogatecivicsociety.org
Membership queries.. ..	info@harrogatecivicsociety.org
Event bookings	events@harrogatecivicsociety.org

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