



YORKSHIRE & HUMBER
Association of Civic Societies

Member of



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SOCIETY INSIGHT

25 YEARS OF YHACS LOOKING BACK AND LOOKING FORWARD

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Later this year, we will mark the 25th anniversary of YHACS. More immediately, 2024 will also be a time of change for the Association as I step down from the role of chair after 13 years and retire from the YHACS committee after nearly 22 years' service. As I pass on the baton to a new chair, I thought it might be appropriate, particularly for our newer members, to set out some of the YHACS backstory.

I doubt anyone could have foreseen what would happen when Civic Trust (our national body at the time) asked Kevin Grady, then director of Leeds Civic Trust, to set up a regional civic society association for Yorkshire and Humber back in 1999 – but it's a tribute to all involved – committee members and our member societies – that, a quarter of a century later, YHACS continues not only to exist but to go from strength to strength.

I can take no credit for those early days – I didn't join the YHACS committee until 2002: when I arrived on the scene, YHACS was fully formed and already well established. Kevin Grady (*right*) stepped down as chair after the first year, although he remained on the committee, and Peter Cooper had picked up the reins by the time I arrived on the scene. I had just become President (and Chair) of Wakefield Civic Society and one of Wakefield Civic Society's former Presidents, the late Jean Coppack, urged me to check out what was happening at regional level as she felt that this was something Wakefield Civic Society should be involved with. How right she was!

In the Beginning...

Back in 1999, what we now think of as YHACS was actually called YHASA – the Yorkshire and Humber Amenity Societies Association. We changed the name at the time we converted to registered charity status in 2005 and adopted a new constitution befitting our new charitable status.

The background to the formation of YHACS (or YHASA) was that Civic Trust had been keen to have a regional association in each of the nine government regions in England that were created by the government of John Major in 1994. Some regional civic society groupings already existed but Civic Trust wanted nine regional associations that would map directly onto the boundaries of the nine



administrative regions. In so doing, an intermediate network between the national Civic Trust and local civic societies would be created with the regional associations being able to represent the civic movement in discussions on regional planning matters. In our region, this meant that YHACS could not only liaise with the Y&H Government Office, but that we could also liaise directly with the Yorkshire and Humber Assembly which had been created in 2001 – and I remember going as a representative of YHACS to a couple of meetings held by Assembly staff in Wakefield where one of the Assembly's offices was. Who now remembers *The Yorkshire and Humber Plan - Regional Spatial Strategy Consultation Document* published in 2008, I wonder?

A Threat

For a long time, this arrangement worked well (well, up to a point). However, two things happened which directly contributed to the disintegration of at least some regional associations: Civic Trust went into administration in 2009 and the Coalition Government elected in 2010 decided that they didn't really like regional government, preferring instead to "shift power to local communities and businesses" (*). (The preceding Labour Government had already closed down the Yorkshire and Humber Assembly in 2009.) These two events rather pulled the rug out from under regional associations – we were no longer part of a national network of regional associations – and there were fewer and fewer opportunities, certainly within our region, for the regional associations to speak to government bodies on a regional level.

Even before the ultimate failure of Civic Trust, an organisation founded in 1957, an economic shockwave had rumbled through the civic movement. Civic Trust had been using its funds to finance the regional associations with each association receiving £2,000 per year. This was paid in four quarterly instalments of £500. This funding had been provided by Civic Voice as a 'subvention' – a grant paid from the Trust's annual income. Now, it is no secret that the civic movement never paid its way when it came to supporting Civic Trust and the Trust had to earn other income to cover its costs. That income came from contracts and services offered to a range of organisations, including local authorities and government departments. As funding started to dry up, largely as a consequence of the pressure on national economies that led to the financial crisis of 2007-2008, Civic Trust had to cancel the subvention to regional associations and ask that the associations become self-funding. (In the spirit of full disclosure – I was a trustee of Civic Trust at the time and it was me who recommended the withdrawal of funding to the Civic Trust Board – a recommendation that was accepted and implemented.) Of course, as we now know, this was not in itself, sufficient to save Civic Trust but it really brought home the message that regional associations would have to fend for themselves.

Below — YHACS 10th Anniversary Lunch in Ashville College, Harrogate. November 2009



Below — YHACS 20th Anniversary Lunch in The Principal Hotel, York. November 2019



A Rally

Here at YHACS, we moved immediately to find the necessary income to keep going. The YHACS committee decided to turn to member societies as it was felt they were best placed to undertake long-term fund-raising activities – and it would be a test of whether the civic movement across the region really wanted a regional association. Fortunately, they did and, starting in 2010, civic societies across the region began paying YHACS an annual membership fee. Originally, we had hoped that around 50 societies would be willing to pay £40 a year to give us the £2,000 a year lost in Civic Trust funding. Unfortunately, some societies declined to do so but 40 societies did pay and they also agreed to a fee increase of £10 per society the following

year so that, with 40 societies paying £50, we had the £2,000 back. And it has been that way ever since although some societies also generously top up their £50 with a donation and we now have a membership option for individuals who pay us £10 a year.

At the time we switched to the new funding model, we also had to work out afresh what YHACS was for. With few regional government bodies with which to interact, the representative role we had previously enjoyed was diminished. Meanwhile Civic Voice would represent the movement with national government and government departments. So what could YHACS do? Well, we settled on doing what we had always been doing: providing advice and support to members, offering networking opportunities (via our quarterly events), publishing member newsletters and, occasionally, running special training or education events. We realised that we needed to work in partnership with Civic Voice (rather than compete with it) and the partnership has worked. Indeed, when Civic Voice encountered financial problems of its own in 2022/23, YHACS was able to offer both practical and financial assistance. Many members will also remember the very successful Civic Voice Convention that we organised at the Piece Hall with the support of Halifax Civic Trust in May 2023.



The Future

Membership of YHACS has fluctuated over the years – some societies have disappeared completely, having folded, others have come into existence (the newest being Keighley), while others have stepped out of YHACS membership for a while and then come back to us. At the end of 2023, we had 40 member civic societies, two building preservation trusts and two reciprocal memberships (Yorkshire Society and Action for Yorkshire Transport). No doubt that will continue although we hope more civic societies might join us in the future. (We have already said we will accept membership from societies that lie outside the Y&H borders but on the understanding that our focus will remain our own region.)

Of course, YHACS can only be as strong as the civic movement and we sincerely hope that civic societies around the region will take steps to ensure their own survival. Over the years, we have had to offer direct support on a number of occasions to help civic societies through difficult periods when they were threatened with closure. YHACS does not, sadly, have a magic wand, but an early call for help will give us more time to offer assistance where we can. We have seen societies turn themselves round – finding new enthusiasm and even new committee members – after a YHACS ‘pep’ talk, but we know it’s not always easy. Despite our best efforts, we failed to save Market Weighton Civic Society. Let us hope that there are no more of those.

Apart from the challenge of keeping the movement together, the main issues facing YHACS in the coming years are probably going to be around helping civic societies to deal with the effects of climate change and responding to the ongoing housing shortage, itself in large part caused by demographic change and changing lifestyles. Keeping pace with planning legislation is also going to be high on the agenda.

There’s an election on the horizon and it seems very likely we shall have a government of a different hue in place before the end of the year. That will no doubt bring new challenges and uncertainties to the planning system. Shall we see more liberalisation and relaxation of the planning regime or will the rules

harden? Will the law around conservation and re-use of our built heritage be strengthened – or weakened by further extension of permitted development rights? What will happen to the Green Belt?

All these questions, and likely many more besides, I leave for consideration by my successor as chair of YHACS. I hope to continue my involvement with YHACS in the coming years but more as a guide on the side, rather than as the sage on the stage.

**Kevin Trickett MBE,
Chair, YHACS**

(* *Regional Development Policy 2010 – 2015: a Summary*; Matthew Ward, September 2015, House of Commons Library; see <https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/SN07159/SN07159.pdf>

VIEW FROM THE CHAIR



So, this is it. My last ‘View from the Chair’ column.

As members will know from the papers issued recently for the Annual General Meeting, I am stepping down, as required by the YHACS constitution, as chair of YHACS and I have decided to take the opportunity to retire from the committee. In an attempt to engineer a smooth ‘handover of power’, the YHACS committee has agreed to recommend that our current Vice Chair, Margaret Hicks Clarke, be nominated as my successor. Although chickens cannot be counted until the vote takes place at the AGM, it seems likely that it will be Margaret’s photo you see at the top of this column in the next issue of *Society Insight*.

There are also some other changes – if Margaret becomes the new Chair, we’ll need a new Vice Chair – and this will be Alan Goodrum. That means we need a new Treasurer and I’m pleased to say that Jane Lee will take on that role. (Arguably, the Treasurer is the most important person on the committee – without a Treasurer, no one can bank money or make payments and the Association would quickly grind to a halt, so thank you Jane, and also Alan for having held the post over the last four years.) And we’ll also be saying goodbye to Malcolm Sharman and Tony Leonard who, like me, are also calling it a day.

Looking back over my period in office as chair, I am rather pleased with what we have achieved – and I say ‘we’ on purpose: I might well have been in the chair, but running YHACS has been a collective effort by the committee. Nonetheless, I do feel a certain pride in being able to say that over the last 13 years while I have been in post as chair, we have kept the plates spinning. More than that, we have recruited new members, made some changes to the way we operate, and improved the Association’s financial position.

One of the changes I introduced was the idea of holding a dinner on the night before the quarterly meetings. These have been very enjoyable and have given me the chance to meet people in a more relaxed setting – believe it or not, when I’m actually chairing the Saturday afternoon events, I don’t have much time to do the networking I see others doing. (Perhaps as I take more of a back seat, I’ll be able to chat more?) Some years ago, I attended an event in my day job where the guest speaker was Tim Smit, now Sir Tim Smit KBE, founder of the Eden Project. I remember him saying as part of his speech that setting up

the Eden Project had been really hard work, with long days that had made huge demands on his team. However, at the end of the day, they would often sit down to eat together and it was through those meals that bonds of friendship and loyalty were forged. This is something I took away and applied to my project teams whenever I could and introduced to the YHACS programme – I do think you become closer when you've 'broken bread together'.

Even if you don't share such a rosy view of life, the dinners do serve a very practical purpose as they ensure that I am in the right place for the Saturday meeting – I'm less likely to find myself stranded mid-journey if I arrive the day before and so I am more relaxed and composed than if I'd turned up with only five minutes to spare. So, thank you to all those who have 'broken bread with me' over the years; I have enjoyed the company and the conversation. I hope this is something that might continue into the future.

YHACS today is strong because it was built on firm ground – the initial work to establish what was then YHASA by Kevin Grady and the dedicated chairmanship of Peter Cooper who carried the organisation through the next decade or so before I took over in 2011. But its strength comes chiefly through its members who continue to support us, both financially and in practical ways – turning up for events and submitting articles for the newsletter. Long may that continue. There are undoubted challenges ahead but they are challenges to which I am sure YHACS will rise.

Charities and Gift Aid – does your society offer free/discounted tickets to members only?

I received an email a few weeks ago from a society asking for advice about Gift Aid and membership benefits. I replied to the email but then discussed the issue with fellow members of the YHACS committee who felt it might be useful to write a short piece on the subject for the newsletter to draw members' attention to the potential pitfalls that some might have missed.

If your society is a registered charity, you can apply to HMRC to claim Gift Aid on any donations made by individuals. For organisations like ours, membership subscriptions can be treated as donations provided that members don't derive any benefit from the membership payment other than membership of the charity and certain specified benefits.

giftaid it

In return for their membership payment, members are allowed to:

- receive newsletters you produce to explain your charity's work
- visit and view the work of your charity
- take part in activities that form part of your charity's objectives

The Benefit Rule

When someone makes a donation, you might want to give the donor something in return (an item or service) to say thank you. This is known as a 'benefit'. Literature that tells donors what your charity does, such as a newsletter or a simple plaque to thank a donor, do not count as benefits.

The value of a benefit is always the value to the recipient, not the cost to your charity. For most benefits, the value is the retail value of the item or



CHARITY COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

service. Any benefit given in return for a membership payment must not exceed 25% of the value of the membership fee – which doesn't leave a lot of scope if, for example, you charge £10 a year. In such a case, the maximum benefit for the year would be just £2.50.

Discounted tickets and admissions, entry to closed events

The above guidance, taken from the Charity Commission website, would appear to exclude offering member discounts on admission to your events. However, it is not quite as clear cut as that as it is possible to average the value of the benefit (entry fee) across the number of people attending a closed event. (The Charity Commission website is rather vague about this but, presumably, you would need to keep records to show how the calculation was made!)

Advice

YHACS cannot give tax advice, of course, but it does seem that civic societies can avoid the pitfalls by *not* offering discounted entry fees for members – and not providing free refreshments for members only. At my own society, we open nearly all our events to the general public as well as our members and most of our events are provided free of charge, even where light refreshments are provided. In that way, the admission and any refreshments provided are not a benefit of membership as they are available to all. When we make a charge for entry/refreshments, everyone pays the same amount, irrespective of whether or not they are members of the Society.

If you are at all unsure about this, please do look at the Charity Commission website here for more information: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/gift-aid-what-donations-charities-and-cascs-can-claim-on#membership-subscription>) And also have a look at the HMRC advice here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/charities-detailed-guidance-notes/chapter-3-gift-aid#chapter-337-membership-subscriptions>

And finally

Given the increased concerns about environment issues, it was good to see four councils in our region being recognised for taking bold leadership on environmental action and transparency in a new list published by renowned international authority the Carbon Disclosure Project (CDP).



Leeds City Council, Wakefield Council, City of York Council and Kirklees Council have all been granted A list status in CDP's 2023 list, ranking them alongside the likes of New York, Paris, Melbourne, Tokyo, Rio de Janeiro, and Cape Town.

For more information, see here:

<https://yorksandhumberclimate.org.uk/news/four-yorkshire-cities-achieve-global-environmental-leadership-status>

**Kevin Trickett MBE,
Chair**

THANK YOU KEVIN, OUR DRIVING FORCE

On behalf of the YHACS Committee and member societies, it's my great pleasure to thank Kevin Trickett for his unstinting efforts and dedication as our Chair for the last 13 years and for an incredible 21+ years on our committee. Throughout that time he has been a driving force and great ambassador for the civic movement, locally, regionally and nationally.

While we are sorry to see him step down as Chair, the Committee has invited him to take on the role of President, which we will formally ask members to endorse at the AGM. We look forward to seeing plenty of him in the future and will always value his experience and wise counsel.

Kevin has always led from the front, guiding societies in so many ways - from fledgling societies just starting out, such as Keighley, to long-established societies seeking to keep themselves relevant to new generations. He has offered advice and assistance to committees struggling with replacing key post holders and helped to save some societies from closing altogether – Horbury being a prime example. He has also been a great support to Civic Voice.

He has encouraged us all to move to 21st-century methods of communication and engagement – websites, email, social media, Zoom, Vimeo, taking cashless payments and setting up on-line shops.

He has advised on engaging with the community, organising successful events, increasing membership, dealing with the Charity Commission and making heritage fun – meals and wine seem to be a theme here!! We have thoroughly enjoyed socializing with Kevin and Brian, his partner, in numerous hotels around the county at our quarterly meetings. I'm sure we'll continue to do so.

I first met Kevin not long after he became Chair. We set up Goole Civic Society in 2011 and approached YHACS for guidance. Kevin was extremely generous with his time and came to speak to one of our meetings, ensuring that we set off on the right track. He's continued to give us advice ever since, for which I'm extremely grateful.

Of course, there was a quid pro quo – he encouraged me to join the YHACS Committee and later to become Vice Chair. As you all know, Kevin can be very persuasive!

I will also remember Kevin for his prolific emails on all types of subject – especially the ones dropping into my inbox at 3am in the morning! Does this man never sleep? Only joking Kevin, your advice is always appreciated at whatever time.

Without a doubt, Kevin has been the driving force in keeping the civic movement thriving in the Yorkshire and Humber region. He has set the bar high and the committee will endeavor to live up to his example.

We look forward to engaging with him in his new role as President and wish him and Brian well in all they are planning to do in the future.

Thank you, Kevin.

Margaret Hicks-Clarke, Vice Chair, YHACS



TROLLOPE'S IRON STUMPS

This sad picture (right) of Beverley's only Victorian pillar box (outside 12 New Walk) in October 2023 alarmed the local residents. It appeared that Royal Mail had removed the 'door' with the royal cypher VR (for *Victoria Regina* = *Victoria the Queen*). Within a few days the door was returned, the tale being that the hinges had needed repair. It seemed a good time to investigate the history of this Grade II listed structure. It has interesting links: the invention of the penny post connects to the novelist Anthony Trollope, his post boxes, his failure in a Beverley election, and his books.



Before 1840 letters were paid for on delivery (although the recipient could refuse to pay), at a price that represented both weight and distance travelled. Rowland Hill, a Post Office reformer, is said to have noticed that his servant always refused to pay for a letter from her soldier son. When Hill asked why, the woman replied that as long as the letters came, she knew her son was still alive. There are other versions of this story, and it may be just a myth.



Rowland Hill changed the system so that the sender paid and introduced a postal service that delivered mail of a standard weight to all parts of Great Britain for one penny: the first 'stamp' used for this post was the famous adhesive Penny Black, showing Queen Victoria's portrait. Every British stamp thereafter by law has included the sovereign's portrait: but omits any country of origin, presumably in recognition of GB as the first country to issue stamps.

The penny post vastly increased mail and shortly afterwards roadside pillar post boxes were built to simplify posting for senders. The pillar box was the idea of

Anthony Trollope, who worked for the Post Office before becoming a full-time writer.



The House of Lords' box adapted for use. Entry for letters was made first in the cap (RH side) and later in the pillar itself where it replaced the VR royal cypher. Salford Museum & Art Gallery

Trollope was sent by the Post Office to investigate problems in Jersey and Guernsey, where the islanders had nowhere to store their outgoing letters while waiting for the intermittent mail boats. He solved this with the first British post boxes in 1852 (some already existed on Continental Europe). The following year the first mainland pillar box in the UK was installed at Carlisle. These early boxes were varied as each postal district chose their own manufacturer and design. Cast iron and about 2.5 m high, they were mostly rectangular and sage green (it was not until 1874 that they began to be painted the familiar 'Post Office Red' above a black base). Later, wall post boxes and lamp post boxes were also made. Early examples can be found in museums, particularly in the London National Postal Museum.

In 1856 a House of Lords committee agreed to design a uniform pillar box: their Lordships produced their elaborate model (designed by Richard Redgrave) for their peers, but unfortunately, they had omitted to put in the most essential part, the opening to 'post' the letters. Experiments in the following decades led in 1879 to the familiar standard cylindrical shape of the Beverley pillar, with round cap, horizontal aperture, front opening door and black painted base.

Trollope's personal link to Beverley (apart from the pillar box described below) was that he stood in the town's election for MP in 1868.

His unsuccessful campaign is described in his *Autobiography* and in two novels, *Ralph the Heir* and *Phineas Redux*, where he wrote of his hatred of the notoriously corrupt Beverley Borough. A Royal Commission into this election (the printed verbatim evidence is immensely detailed and interesting) found that fraud and bribery was rampant, and an Act of Parliament abolished the constituency named Beverley (it was recreated in 1950).

According to Historic England's listings, there are just two Grade II listed Victorian pillar boxes in the whole of Yorkshire, one outside 12 New Walk Beverley and one outside 40 High Street Hull.



The House of Lords' box. Examples can be found in museums, particularly in the Postal Museum, London.



Pillar box outside 12 New Walk, Beverley. Kloskk Tyrer



Pillar box outside 40 High Street, Hull. Wiki Commons

Both of these are the same type (B), made by A Handyside & Co at the Britannia Foundry, Derby, and carry the words POST OFFICE and the royal cypher, both first introduced to his pillar boxes by Handyside in 1887. Queen Victoria died in 1901, therefore the two pillar boxes can be dated between 1887 and 1901.

Each cylindrical box has a fluted frieze around the top. The postal slot is halfway between two horizontal lines, and on

either side of the opening are the letters POST and OFFICE (these details help to date the box). On the box door, top central, within a metal frame is a white collection plate (changing over the decades) showing the times of collection at this box and elsewhere, and details such as a telephone number, email address, and the individual number of the box.

The Hull box has a metal strip to the right of the door, designed to keep the rain out: this is missing on the Beverley box which perhaps means it was the earlier of the two.

To the right of this white plate is a small square frame to contain a label for a day (MON in the case of the Beverley post box) showing the day on which the box will next be emptied. This day (or earlier, time) sign can only be altered when the box is open. Below, on the right-hand side of the door is a keyhole to the Chubb lock, and a



*Pillar Box Avenue at the Postal Museum Store in Debden, Essex.
Courtesy of The Postal Museum*

little lower and central to the door, the entwined royal cypher VR. At ground level, the black base shows the makers' name 'A Handyside & Co Ltd, Derby and London'.

When Trollope came to Beverley, these boxes were not yet in place, and he never came back to Beverley to greet them with recognition and perhaps some pride. Trollope was well aware of the social significance of the change in postal services that Rowland Hill and he had introduced, and he mentions post boxes in some of his novels (e.g. *Mr Scarborough's Family*, *Marion Fay*). These described how young women could for the first-time post letters without their parents' knowledge, for some a dangerous freedom: it has even been suggested this freedom was a first flicker of women's rights.

The author also realised that not everyone liked the post boxes – in the novel *He Knew He Was Right* (1869) Trollope wrote:

Miss Stanbury carried her letter all the way to the chief post-office in the city.... As for the iron pillar boxes which had been erected of late years for the receipt of letters, one of which – a most hateful thing to her – stood almost close to her own hall door, she had not the faintest belief that any letter put into one of them would ever reach its destination. She could not understand why people should not walk with their letters to a respectable post-office instead of chucking them into an iron stump as she called it out in the middle of the street with nobody to look after it.

We are lucky to have still our 'iron stumps' in Beverley and Hull, protected by Historic England as Grade II listed structures in 1987 and 1994. In 2023 Christmas cards still filled them – but in the age of the mobile phone and email, for how much longer?

Barbara English and Klossk Tyrer

HERITAGE FESTIVAL RECORDS BEST EVER SUCCESS



With over 60 in person and online events planned this was the best ever Heritage Open Days festival for Pontefract and the surrounding area, even stretching out to Hemsworth, Womersley, Kellington and Pollington, this year.

Paul Cartwright, civic society chair and heritage coordinator said, “26 events were brand new, and we actually engaged with many partner organisations and places which were new to the festival, such as Archbishop Holgate Almshouses, RAF Snaith Museum, Pomfret Gallery, eight of the new bars in Pontefract staged entertainment, churches in Kellington and Womersley, Pontefract Choral Society; this was a remarkable collective achievement”.

Regular attractions included the town hall, the racecourse, masonic hall, Darrington farming walk, the Rosse Observatory, Pontefract Castle and the library.



Pontefract Town Hall tours (above) and Almshouses (left)

Paul Cartwright went on to say, “We are still receiving updates in the number of attendees which is just short of 900. Top of the leader board currently is RAF Snaith Museum, followed by All Saints Church and St Botolph’s Church. We are really pleased with the positive response from all of our partners and the general public who were both enthusiastic and really interested in Pontefract’s rich heritage. Visitors from across Wakefield district and far beyond really enjoyed the variety in our extensive programme, and I was pleased to see some faces at multiple events, which must suggest that we’ve got it right”.

The civic society membership scheme for 2024 is already open, which means there’s no renewal needed until 1 January 2025, so why not join now!

For local information email info@pontefractcivicsociety.org.uk, call 01977 708658 or check social media @pontefractcivic.

Paul Cartwright

Editor’s note — This article was submitted for the YHACS Autumn Newsletter, was unfortunately omitted from that edition and so is published here.



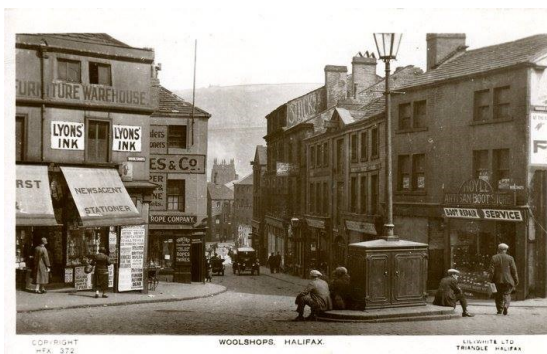
HALIFAX CIVIC TRUST UNVEILS NEW FILM ABOUT WOOLSHOPS

At 2 pm on Saturday 20th January, Halifax Civic Trust will screen the first public showing of their new film “Woolshops: the story” in The Copper Auditorium at Square Chapel Arts Centre, in the presence of the Mayor of Calderdale Councillor Ashley Evans.



They tell the story of Woolshops from its mediaeval beginnings to the situation in the 1970s, when it was at risk of destruction. Hear the voices of people who remember Woolshops before it was redeveloped and consider the impact a covered shopping mall would have had, removing all traces of history from the area. Halifax Civic Trust opposed the scheme and challenged the Council, and the case was heard in January 1979. They have in the film two people who were active at the time, a Planning Officer, and the Hon Sec of the Halifax Civic Trust, their chief witness and capture the memories of the people who were involved in this dramatic struggle.

The film was put together entirely in-house by members of the Halifax Civic Trust and people will be fascinated to know how much of it might have been lost under a monolithic concrete shopping mall.



Doors will open at **13.30 on Saturday January 20**, and the film lasts 43 minutes. Reserve your place now by visiting Square Chapel Website on <https://squarechapel.co.uk/shows/woolshops-the-story-presented-by-halifax-civic-trust/>

Admission will be free. Halifax Civic Trust will be grateful for donations to support their work.

Contact Details

For further information or to arrange a photo opportunity please contact: Mark Fennelly – Publicity and Communications tel. 07787 523 516

Email: mark.halifaxcivictrust@gmail.com

Website: www.halifaxcivictrust.org

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/TrustCivic>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/241127785949760>

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC94v8Zd-FS9cz-W9QYJW8oA>

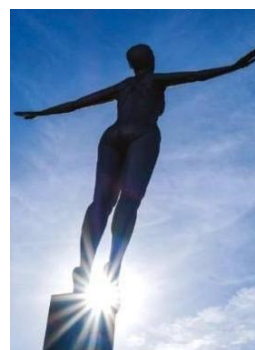
Podcasts: <https://shows.acast.com/halifax-civic-trust-podcast>

Eventbrite: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/o/halifax-civic-trust-49589573013>

Mark Fennelly

REFRESH, RESTORE, RENEW IN SCARBOROUGH

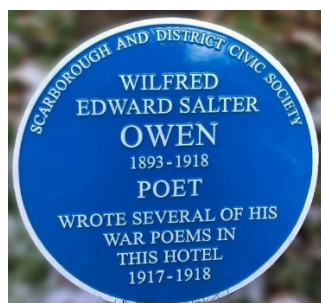
2024 is the 60th anniversary of Scarborough & District Civic Society and our theme will be to refresh, restore and renew. We all have the problem in our own homes; after a period of time things start to look a little sad or outdated. So, it shouldn't come as any surprise that some of the Civic Society past projects need some TLC. We have had a good record of renewal over the years, but this special anniversary is a good time to take stock and catch up with some much needed "housework."



Our first renewal project was updating our map of South Cliff Gardens near the Crown Spa Hotel.



Back in 2006 when this map was first created it was intended to encourage people to explore the gardens. We had great concerns for the protection of the shelter throughout the gardens. At that time the gardens were a little sad and neglected but with the formation of the Friends of South Cliff Gardens it has steadily been improved with the help of many kind sponsors and grant funders specially the National Heritage Lottery. This has been a story of the community and council working together to ensure that Scarborough retains and values the best of Scarborough's past and is in good shape for the future. The new map reflects the most recent changes/improvements made in the garden.



Three of our Blue Plaques to notable people have become almost illegible so we have decided to renew them over the next few months. We already have the replacements; they just need installing.

Adrian Perry

CHRISTMAS WINDOW WIN FOR TOOTH & TIGER

Pontefract Civic Society is proud to announce that Tooth & Tiger has set Southgate alight with the best Christmas shop window scoring 34 out of 35 from our judging panel of 14 primary school pupils from seven local schools.



Paul Cartwright, civic society Chair said “We were delighted by this year’s response of almost 60 decorated businesses, which bettered last year, giving the judges a challenge out of around a dozen shops and businesses which made an extra special impression to bring Pontefract’s retail and hospitality areas to life. We hope to see more people in Pontefract town centre exploring the Christmas displays, shopping locally supporting family businesses, and enjoying the Christmas spirit.”

Last year’s runner up was back again, with the Indoor Market Hall coming joint 2nd (below, left) alongside a new shop to Pontefract, Sense, on Market Place (below, right), both scoring 27.



Others which sparkled in the eyes of the school pupils were The Beastfair Vaults, Pomfret Gallery, Headhunters, Cromwells, The Prince of Wales Hospice, The Hideaway, 1902 Ropergate, and K Nails.

Richard Grace, St Giles Academy headteacher said “It’s always a real honour for the children of St Giles school to take part in this now festive annual event. It seems this year that the competition was stronger than ever. The children love taking part but find it really hard not to tell their friends who the winners are when

they return to school”.

James Parkinson, De Lacy Primary School said “We had a great time, there were so many brilliant looking window displays and we found it hard to judge the winner. Both our representatives had a fantastic time and I’m glad that our school, as well as others within Pontefract Academies Trust can take part in events organised by Pontefract Civic Society”.



For local information visit the civic society on social media [@PontefractCivic](#), the website at www.pontefractcivicsociety.org.uk or call 01977 708658.

New members are always welcome, you can sign up online, and there’s books and Pontefract merchandise available for those late Christmas gifts.

Photographs during judging: Peter Ferrari.
Certificate presentation photographs: Christine Cartwright.

Paul Cartwright

CASTLEFORD’S NEW CIVIC SOCIETY

When the government announced that it had awarded £24 million Town Deal funding to Castleford, folk began a discussion about the problems and opportunities for its town centre. Among the quotes was a call that the town needed a civic society.

However, the town already has one. The problem with the Castleford Civic Trust, as it was then called, was that it had dwindled to a few nice, caring people whose good points were erecting civic plaques and tending planters, but little else. One visitor, charmingly, likened the group to one more at home in an Ealing comedy.

Now, the group has changed. More members are already joining.

For a start, we changed our name to Castleford Civic Society because we aren’t really a trust and to differentiate ourselves from Castleford Heritage Trust. Some trustees of that now sit on our committee.



We were insular, now we work with other groups. We have joined up with Empath Action CIC, an arts actions group, who are helping us to erect a plaque honouring Alice Gostic, an arts teacher who inspired

many, including Henry Moore. Their theatre show about her ('Breaking the Mould') will be performed this month.

We are also starting a campaign called 'Pride in Castleford' to counter negative comments about the town. It will show the strengths and opportunities of the town, hoping people will volunteer to improve its environment.

The wider body will also serve as a quick and reliable consultation base. Because of tight government deadlines, the consultation for the Town Deal had to be hurried.

It's early days, but I hope the society can grow into the Civic Society that Castleford is proud of.

Tony Wallis



CLIMATE ACTION ADDINGHAM

Introduction

Following the formation of our Environment Group (AEG) in 2016 we met with our Parish Council and many of the village groups to explain our aims and, where appropriate, offer advice and practical support on environmental issues. Over the last seven years our subgroups, Zero Carbon, Zero Waste, Wildlife Friendly Addingham and Water Sustainability, have run a wide variety of projects across the village, working with village organisations and residents.

However, as the climate crisis deepens it has become increasingly clear that comprehensive action needs to be taken at all levels of society. Whilst the work of our 300 AEG members is effective, we are aware that we need to reach over 3000 residents. To this end, early in 2021, we approached the Parish Council to suggest partnership in leading concerted village wide action. As a result, in December 2021 the Civic Society and Parish Council came together to form Climate Action Addingham (CAA).



Photo: Rick Battarbee

2022 The formation of CAA

Whilst the day-to-day work of our Environment Group continued, behind the scenes much of 2022 was spent working with Parish Council representatives to create an agreed basis on which we could move towards a whole village approach.

By November 2022 we had agreed aims, objectives, working practices, some projects that the Parish Council would lead, and initial membership of the group and we were in a position to launch Climate Action Addingham.

A first Village Meeting was arranged for November 5th, fronted jointly by the Civic Society and Parish Council. The objectives for the meeting were to introduce residents to the aims of CAA, illustrate projects to date from both the Parish Council and



Photo: Rick Battarbee

Civic Society, hear from the team leaders of, Zero Carbon, Zero Waste, Sustainable Water, Wildlife Friendly Addingham and from representatives of the children’s group. Finally Andrew Willocks (RHS Harlow Carr) led a session sharing practical ideas for reducing food waste. Almost 150 people attended the event and the detail was reported in the Village Newsletter and local press.



Photo: Rick Battarbee

2023 Next Steps

Encouraged by the level of interest shown at the Village Meeting CAA planned four steps that we wished to achieve in 2023:

Step 1 To gather information regarding the attitudes of residents towards Climate Change.

Step 2 To reach a larger number of groups and individuals. One way to achieve this is via the village organisations. Representatives from a wide range of these organisations would be invited to join CAA via a letter of invitation jointly signed by the Chairs of the Parish Council and Civic Society.

Step 3 Create a CAA website for the sharing of information.

Step 4 Hold a second annual Village Meeting to provide a platform for village groups to showcase their plans and/or their progress in addressing issues of climate change.

Progress....

Step 1 In order to plan effectively baseline information was needed regarding the attitudes of residents towards Climate Change. The UK government climate change questionnaire was adapted, and 200 were hand delivered to randomly selected village addresses. The responses were returned online or in hard copy.

The Questionnaire brought a 54% response.

Of that 93% were concerned/very concerned about climate change.

91% trust in scientists at universities.

And 90% believe that individual action can make a difference.

These data not only provided baseline information but a clear mandate for the work of CAA.

Step 2

The first tranche of 19 village community groups, from almost forty, were contacted, of which 12 signed up to CAA with the aim of sharing information and exploring ways in which we can work together. One group declined the invitation.

Step 3

The CAA website is live and linked to the websites of the Parish Council, Civic Society and Civic Society Environment Group.

To see the website click [here](https://www.climateactionaddingham.info/index.php) or go to:

<https://www.climateactionaddingham.info/index.php>

Step 4

So, this was our latest event.

The second annual Village Meeting “One Year On” was hosted jointly by the Civic Society and Parish Council and was again supported by residents and representatives from groups and organisations. At this meeting the questionnaire results were explained, the next steps for CAA were outlined and many questions followed a keynote presentation “Valuing Water” by Miranda Foster (JBA Consulting and previously Yorkshire Water).

But, perhaps, more importantly this was an opportunity for the organisations



Poster: Henry Makin



which had “signed up” to CAA to describe the actions they are already taking or are planning to take in order to become more environmentally friendly.

Anne Hodgson and Lucy Comerford from **St Peter’s Parish Church** described the Church’s plan to reach a carbon emissions target of net zero by 2030, as required by the Diocese. Adding battery storage to the solar panels already on the Church Hall roof is being investigated as a first step.

Rita Leleux of **Addingham Garden Friends** spoke about moving away from the use of bedding plants to grow pollinator attracting perennials in the pocket gardens they manage along Main St. and beginning to use harvested rainwater for watering rather than tap water.



Ross Pearson of **Bracken Ghyll Golf Course** explained the difficulty of managing every aspect of any golf course in an environmentally friendly way but stressed the club’s commitment to the principles of sustainability. Finding ways to cope with increasingly extreme weather conditions is a challenge and discussions within the club to increase water storage on the course are ongoing. For the **Beer Festival**, Richard Hunter-Rowe described the steps taken this year to minimise waste by reducing the use of paper, reducing the number of T-shirts being given to volunteers and taking care not to order surplus supplies. As there is always some beer left-over, one question was how it might be used rather than poured away.

Geoff Mills of the **Allotments and Gardens Association** described how the Association had been successfully re-launched by a new committee and was ready to explore ways of encouraging members to manage their gardens and allotment plots in a wildlife friendly way, eliminating, for example, the use of harmful chemicals.



Photo: Linda Spinks

Addingham Primary School Year 6 pupils with headteacher Linda Spinks and Year 6 teachers, Mrs Whelan and Mr Hughes, also contributed to the event by bringing in examples of their work in school on environmental issues. Their display highlighted the issues in both a local and global context and included waste, recycling, flooding and air pollution. Miss Spinks said “it was a fantastic opportunity for our Year 6 children to present their work to members of our community, sharing their learning and passion for the environment. Global Mindedness is one of our school values, we have a global outlook. We think about and care for all of humanity and our environment. Our children want to be partners in creating a better world in our local, national and communities. I was very proud seeing the children filled with knowledge discuss this topic so confidently.”



Photo: John Fontana

Other displays were by the **Environment Group** including a demonstration of the Group’s thermal imaging camera used to detect heat loss in homes (Ian Viner), a display of the results from the village climate change survey (Malcolm Secrett), the pop-up refill shop selling laundry liquids and soap bars (Jan Hindle), a demonstration of a wormery and a Bokashi bin for dealing with food waste (Briony Holdsworth) and maps of the whereabouts of compost bins and water butts in the village (Dave Johnson).

Friends of Wharfedale Greenway brought their pull up stand and Sallie Lloyd, clerk of the **Parish Council**, promoted the Council’s Bin and Butts Project, signing up residents wishing to have a free water butt, compost bin or waste food caddy.



Photo: John Fontana

The event concluded with a keynote talk from **Miranda Foster** of JBA Consulting (and formerly Yorkshire Water (YW)). She spoke about “Valuing Water” explaining how water supply reservoirs are connected and managed in the face of increasing variability in rainfall and natural riverflow. Finding a balance between maintaining water supply to the Bradford treatment works and maintaining environmental flows in the river is especially challenging. She described attempts by YW to save water by reducing leakage from pipework and outlined ways YW are encouraging customers to reduce their water consumption, aiming to decrease per capita usage from an average of 130 litres per day at present to 110 litres per day by 2050.

Dr Foster answered questions after her talk on a range of topics including understanding rapid variations in Wharfe river levels in Addingham, the viability of building a national water grid, the effectiveness of metering to reduce household consumption and how leakage in pipework is estimated.

CAA into the future.....Year 3 2024

Step 1 Growing the group. Follow up the groups who did not respond, contact the next tranche and open a discussion with the business community.

Step 2 With all members, establish the agenda for the year to include:

- Annual review, progress and impact
- Village wide projects such as Managing Water Wisely
- Plan village events to reach a wider audience.

Watch this space.

From the involvement demonstrated at the second annual meeting we are hopeful that CAA will make a difference. It's not often that such a varied group meets and shares common concerns, interests and ideas. And from the conversations it was obvious that other links and relationships were being created.

Working in joint leadership on a long-term project with our Parish Council is a new venture for ACS. We initiated the partnership in order to bring the community together to tackle the challenges of climate change, biodiversity loss and move our community to a more sustainable style of living.



So far so good, but none of us can afford to take our foot off the pedal.

For more information please visit: <https://www.climateactionaddingham.info/> or email aeg@addingham.info

Photos courtesy of Rick Battarbee, Linda Spinks, John Fontana

Gill Battarbee, Chair of Addingham Civic Society
Rick Battarbee, Chair of Addingham Civic Society Environment Group
Simon Tennant, Chair of Addingham Parish Council



Hull Civic Society
Promoting the future
Protecting the past

HULL AWARDS 'GOOD MARKS'

Several times a year, Hull Civic Society awards 'Good Marks' to anyone whom the Committee feels deserves recognition for their contribution to the enhancement of the built environment within the city. We prepare a certificate, and then we present it to the recipient(s) at the beginning of one of our monthly meetings.

If you wish to see examples of the individuals and organisations which have received this honour, there is a list on our website of the past twenty years' awards at <https://hullcivicsoc.info/good-marks/>.

In 2023, we awarded Good Marks to the following:

For the **flood defences along the Humber**—to the Environment Agency and contractors. Hull had serious flooding in many parts of the city in 2007, and then there was further flooding close to the Humber in 2013. With the threatened rise in sea levels, good flood defences are very important to the city.

For the **Makerspace in the Central Library** (*below*)—to Hull Culture and Leisure. The Makerspace provides equipment such as 3D printers and digital cutters for any member of the public to use.



To **Hull Fishing Heritage Centre** (*below*), which has recently moved to enlarged premises on Hessle Road, a street which historically had a strong association with the fishing industry.



To the **Trinity Room at Hull Minster**—a café which constitutes an extension to Hull Minster. It was a brave venture to make an addition to the structure of one of the country's largest mediaeval parish churches. Those of you who attend the Yorkshire Heritage Summit in May will have the opportunity to see this building for yourselves, and to enjoy the café.

To the **One Stop convenience store in Silver Street** (right) — a new shop in the heart of Hull’s Old Town, where we feel that the staff are offering a very high standard of service.

You will see that our list covers a wide range of organisations, and that it is not confined purely to architectural enhancements. At the presentation ceremonies, the recipients often make it clear that they feel very honoured to receive one of our Good Marks.

We look forward to awarding further Good Marks in 2024, and in future years.



Simon Green

STREET VOTES CONSULTATION



A consultation has started on “Street votes” for new developments.

The government has launched a consultation on plans for residents to propose and vote on new developments on their street. These street vote development orders are a new way to gain planning permission introduced in the [Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023](#)



Residents will be able to propose development on their street, such as adding an extra storey to their houses. Then they can vote on whether the development should be given planning permission. The policy was inspired by recent successful [estate regeneration ballots in London](#) where a majority of residents have often voted for redevelopment.

The idea is that a successful street vote will create a mandate for new housing that overcomes the power of blockers to veto the development. Views received from the consultation will inform secondary legislation that will set out more detail on how street votes will operate.

The consultation is open until 2 February. You can respond [here](#) .



NEWS FROM SPEN VALLEY

Spenn Valley Civic Society last featured in the Spring 2023 newsletter, reporting our ambitious project to create a large wildlife pond at our Jo Cox Community Wood in the Spenn Valley, West Yorkshire.



Summer 2023 saw the wildflowers bloom, the pond come alive with pond-skaters, water beetles, and newts, whilst white water lilies established themselves and flowered for the first time. Swallows swooped down to snack on insects, and birds used the shallow margins for bathing and drinking during the long hot spell. Around the pond a palette of blue, yellow, purple and red developed as the cornflower, corncockle, field marigolds and poppies burst into flower.

Yorkshire in Bloom judges visited in July because we'd entered the wood and pond in their "It's Your Neighbourhood" category. We were delighted and humbled in September to find that we'd been awarded "Level 5 Outstanding", the highest-ranking category.

Away from the pond, our trees experienced their fourth summer. A boundary hedge that started as 4" baby saplings from The Woodland Trust was big enough for birds to nest in. Owls, woodpeckers, a buzzard and sparrowhawk were spotted alongside a badger and foxes. The wood has become a valuable local resource, and we've continued to offer our "Tree for Life" sponsorship scheme, which brings in a little income for future maintenance costs.



Mary Taylor was an amazing Spenn Valley woman whom we decided should be recognised with a Blue Plaque at her childhood home The Red House in Gomersal (*right*).

Our project came to fruition during September's Heritage Open Days festival. Our plaque on the gable wall of The Red House faces the A651, to be





visible to all passersby, because the Grade 2* Listed house (formerly a council museum) is closed and its future uncertain.

Mary Taylor is probably most well-known as a life-long friend of Charlotte Brontë. The two met at school: Charlotte a poorly dressed, under-confident introvert; and Mary a stubborn, outspoken and unconventional extrovert. Without Mary's encouragement and advice, Charlotte might never have persisted to become a published author, nor to have ventured to Brussels to teach at the Heger's school. Mary's family were Non-Conformist textile entrepreneurs, well-travelled and well-informed about international affairs. Charlotte Brontë visited their home frequently and revelled in the family's spirited debates and sociable hospitality. She portrayed them as the Yorke family in her novel "Shirley", set in the Spen Valley and depicting the social unrest unleashed by industrialization, including the Luddite uprisings.

A trailblazing feminist, Mary refused to be constrained by the social norms for 19th century middle class females. Unlike Anne Lister at Shibden Hall, whose actions were based on satisfying her own needs, Mary tried to advance the position of women from an altruistic perspective. She advocated that women should retain their assets on marriage and be able to conduct their own financial affairs. She became a teacher and taught boys, which was unusual at the time. She travelled widely, led climbing expeditions in the Alps, and lived in Belgium and Germany. She emigrated to New Zealand where she lived for many years and set up her own business, which gave her financial independence.



Mary Taylor in old age

She eventually returned to Gomersal where she resided until her death. Her grave is in St Mary's churchyard, Gomersal. Mary Taylor wrote regularly for feminist publications and also published one novel. In New Zealand she is celebrated as a pioneer of women's rights.



YORKSHIRE & HUMBER
Association of Civic Societies

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The Yorkshire and
Humber Association of
Civic Societies (YHACS)
is the distinct voice of the
civic society
movement in the
Yorkshire and Humber
region, and our vision is
to enhance the quality of
life for all citizens in the
region by engaging
citizens not only in the
protection of local
heritage but also in the
promotion of sustainable
economic development
and urban renaissance.

Sat 13th April - YHACS Spring Meeting in Wakefield

NEXT YHACS MEETING

SATURDAY 27TH JANUARY 1:00 - 4:00 PM

**AGM AND MEMBERS' MEETING AT
THE OLD SWAN HOTEL IN HARROGATE**

CONTACT: KEVIN TRICKETT ON 01924 361180 OR [INFO@YHACS.ORG.UK](mailto:info@yhacs.org.uk)

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