



YORKSHIRE & HUMBER
Association of Civic Societies

Member of



SOCIETY INSIGHT

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PONTEFRACT CIVIC SOCIETY HONOURED WITH KING'S AWARD

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On Monday 17 March, Pontefract Civic Society received the King's Award for Voluntary Service - the equivalent of an MBE for voluntary organisations - announced in the Gazette on 14 November 2024.



The crystal award and certificate, which was personally signed by His Majesty, King Charles III, was presented by the Lord-Lieutenant of West Yorkshire, Ed Anderson, in front of over 40 VIP's and members ahead of a splendid lunch at Pontefract & District Golf Club.



VIPs and guests included The Mayor of Wakefield, Cllr Darren Byford, Claire Sutherley DL, Sqn Ldr David Dinmore MBE DL RAF (Rtd), Dwain Longley, and supportive former ward councillors David Jones and Lorna Malkin.

In receiving the award, chairman, Paul Cartwright said *"This award was the greatest achievement in the civic society's 56-year history, and a significant achievement in my personal civic service."*

In making the presentation, the Lord-Lieutenant said he had personally added to the nomination that *"This is no ordinary civic society."*

Paul Cartwright



VIEW FROM THE CHAIR

As we arrive in Hull for our YHACS Spring Meeting you may detect a touch of election fever in the air.

Devolution has arrived in Hull and East Riding, where mayoral elections will be taking place for the first time on Thursday 1st May.

The move has caused a division among our member societies. While Hull, Beverley, Goole, Howden and Hornsea are now part of the new Hull and East Yorkshire Combined Authority, our friends over the Humber Bridge in Grimsby and Cleethorpes come under the Greater Lincolnshire Combined County Authority. They will of course remain valuable members of the YHACS family.



*A bridge too far?
Devolution will split Hull
and East Yorkshire from
our friends in Grimsby*

There are many questions being asked as to what will change, what benefits the new devolved powers will bring to the region or whether the Combined Authorities are just another layer of expensive bureaucracy. Time will tell.

Hull and East Yorkshire is the last outpost in Yorkshire to get an elected Mayor. South Yorkshire was first in 2018 with West Yorkshire following in 2021 and York and North Yorkshire in 2024. Each of the areas will have their own experiences of the devolution journey.

In North Yorkshire, where I live, we're one year in and still grappling with how to engage with the York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority. Our friends at Ripon Civic Society, facing similar issues, organised a talk by James Farrar, Chief Executive of the York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority. They issued an open invitation to other North Yorkshire societies and I went along.

The key takeaway is that the Combined Authority is a partnership between existing local authorities covering a functional cross-boundary geographical area. Its role is to use money and powers devolved to it by central government and work with local leaders and communities to grow the economy, make communities safer and deliver strategies and projects to attract funding and investment to the region.

It does not take over the responsibilities of the existing partner authorities, which continue to function as normal, but works to enable "locally-owned change."

From a planning perspective, the Combined Authority is responsible for ensuring that each local area has its own up-to-date Local Plan to meet the Government's statutory housing targets. It has powers to make strategic decisions on major developments such as new towns, key infrastructure projects

and issues that span local authority boundaries. It also has devolved funding for brownfield housing and affordable homes, and a Strategic Place Partnership with Homes England.

Local planning authorities will draw up the Local Plan and handle the majority of planning applications, although it is envisaged more of these will be devolved to officers rather than going through planning committees in an effort to speed up the planning process.

Thank you to our new YHACS committee member Richard Taylor and David Winpenny, who are joint chairs at Ripon, for inviting me to the talk. I'll be watching developments in Hull and East Riding and would be interested to hear how other societies are interacting with their more established Combined Authorities.

University opportunities

Still in North Yorkshire, I was pleased to attend a workshop organised by Ripon Civic Society and York Civic Trust at the King's Manor at York University. It was a great chance to discuss issues with other North Yorkshire societies, with representatives from York, Ripon, Harrogate, Knaresborough, Scarborough, Whitby, Skipton and Richmond.

Prof Kate Giles, an expert in historic buildings from the Department of Archaeology at York University, explained about the National Civic Impact Accelerator (NCIA) programme, which brings together universities and civic partners.

She also talked about the university-led StreetLife project, a UK Community Renewal Fund collaboration with York City Council, York Civic Trust and York Music Venues Network, which explored new ways to revitalise and diversify

York's ancient high street, Coney Street. It set up the StreetLife Hub in a vacant shop as a central venue for exhibitions and events. Out of this project grew an Urban Room, a space where people can come together to help create a future for their local area.

Prof Giles opened our eyes to the way universities are being required by the Government to help create civic strategies and how civic societies could fit into this process – something we should all be exploring more with our neighbouring universities. This has the dual benefit of strengthening the voices of our communities and engaging with a new generation of young people passionate about place.

I was also interested in how we might set up our own Urban Rooms to engage with the public about the future of our communities. They can be established permanently or for a few days or weeks, in a vacant shop (I'm sure we all have plenty of those), a community centre or outside space. You can find out more at the Urban Rooms Network website - <https://urbanroomsnetwork.org/>



**Prof Kate Giles
at the York and North
Yorkshire workshop**

Thank you to Andrew Morrison, York Civic Trust's Chief Executive Officer, for organising the excellent venue and connecting us with York University. We hope to hold a YHACS quarterly meeting in York in the future.

Civic Voice

We'll be welcoming Civic Voice's new Chief Executive Officer, Rob Hattersley, (*left*) to our meeting in Hull. He will join us for dinner on Friday evening and take part in all the Saturday activities. It will be a good chance for us to get to know him. He will tell us about his ideas for Civic Voice after his first few weeks in the role.



In February, YHACS committee member Paul Cartwright and I attended a Zoom meeting to revive the Civic Voice Regional Committee, bringing together societies across the country to share knowledge, experiences and best practice. Paul and Helen Kidman represented YHACS on this forum for a number of years before it went into decline. We look forward to re-establishing this important voice of the civic movement.

Lottery bid

Thank you to everyone who has responded to our questionnaire put together by YHACS vice chair Alan Goodrum as part of our National Lottery Heritage Fund bid. Gathering information about the current state of the civic movement in our region is important in setting our benchmarks and targets. It will give us the best chance of receiving funding in an extremely competitive process. If we are successful, we will have more capacity to work with you and for you to strengthen our societies and give our communities a stronger voice in the places they care about.



Alan will feed back at the spring meeting on what we have learned from you and we'll be seeking your views on what support would help you most.

Yorkshire Society

YHACS and the Yorkshire Society enjoy reciprocal membership of each other's organisations and I was pleased to attend the Yorkshire Society's annual awards dinner in Leeds in March. It was a very enjoyable event with awards going to, among others, sports broadcaster Chris Kamara MBE, singer Melanie Brown (better known as Mel B from the Spice Girls) and Chef Marco Pierre White, who received the Lifetime Achievement Award.



The YHACS stall at last year's Yorkshire Society Heritage Summit in Hull



On Tuesday 13th May I and other committee members will be representing YHACS at the Yorkshire Society's 4th Yorkshire Heritage Summit at Skipton Town Hall, along with some of our member societies. Follow this link to find out more <https://theyorkshiresociety.org/event/2025-yorkshire-heritage-summit/>

I hope to see you there.

Margaret Hicks-Clarke

BLUESKY.....YHACS SOCIAL MEDIA

YHACS has now joined the Bluesky social media platform.

You can find us on [@yhacs.bsky.social](https://bsky.app/profile/yhacs.bsky.social)



Why don't you join us there? It's simple to set up an account and you'll find Civic Voice, other civic societies and heritage organisations on there too.

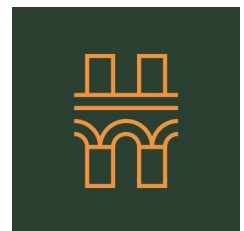
Summer Meeting

Addingham Civic Society will be hosting the YHACS Summer Meeting on Saturday 26th July.

Margaret Hicks-Clarke

HALIFAX CIVIC TRUST'S SPRING LUNCH

To celebrate their achievements during 2024 Halifax Civic Trust held a Spring Lunch event on 1st March at the elegant True North Restaurant in Dean Clough, Halifax.



Joining them was the Mayor, Ann Kingstone, and her Consort. They were honoured to welcome Jeremy Hall, Chairman & Managing Director of Dean Clough Limited, who presented an illustrated talk after lunch.

Mark Fennelly



PICTURES OF HALIFAX



On 15th March Halifax Civic Trust held a slideshow of old pictures of Halifax presented by their vice chair, well known local historian David Glover.

This was a free event to encourage attendance with donations requested at the end to cover the room hire and refreshments.

53 people attended and it was a very positive event with a few new members recruited as a result!

YHACS AGM

Alan & June, Halifax Civic Trust Chair and secretary recently attended the YHACS AGM. This is the wider Civic Organisation for Yorkshire.



Mark Fennelly

SCARBOROUGH'S BLUE PLAQUES

Scarborough Civic Society has *unveiled* a new plaque dedicated to one of women's suffrage's most prominent campaigners, Florence Balgarnie.



*Plaque unveiled on 8th March 2025, International Women's Day,
by Dr Kirsty Ryder, University of York and the
charter Mayor of Scarborough Councillor Janet Jefferson.*

Florence attended boarding schools in London and Germany. She became interested in women's suffrage because she was concerned by the limited educational and political opportunities for women. The writings of John Stuart Mill, Mary Wollstonecraft and the Italian revolutionary Giuseppe Mazzini all influenced her.

In Scarborough she studied political economy, passing Cambridge exams through the University Extension Lecture Scheme. She gained experience in public speaking and campaigning by being elected as a member of Scarborough School Board, one of the few political opportunities for women.

Florence became a Suffragist rather than a Suffragette. The Suffragist acted within the law; Florence believed that Suffragettes were a disgrace to their sex. She went on to lecture internationally in America and the colonies as a member of the Women's Trade Union Association, championing suffrage, temperance and trade unionism. Florence believed that the economic independence of women would lead to emancipation.

Click on this link for press coverage: <https://scarboroughcivicsociety.org.uk/documents/SNBalgarnieBlueplaqueunveiled.pdf>

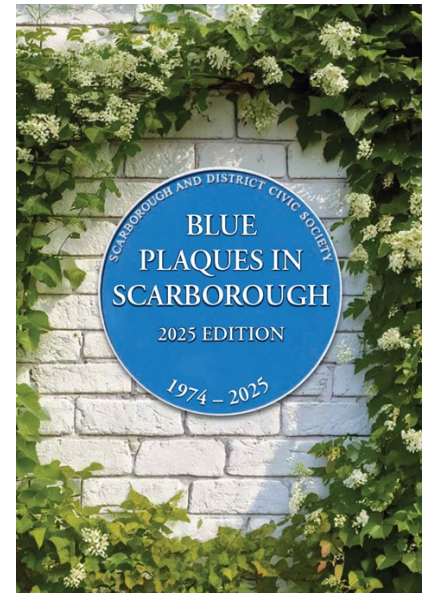
Click on this link for TV report: <https://youtu.be/xjc8D4X0SLQ>

Scarborough & District Civic Society have produced an updated Third Edition to their very popular 'Blue Plaques in Scarborough' booklet last published in 2018.

The Third Edition contains the details of 22 nominated figures and their plaques in the local area including such names as Anne Bronte, Charles Laughton, George Cayley, Max Jaffa and Wilfred Owen.

The 44-page booklet also includes a fascinating walking tour of the town which visits 18 of the area's 22 sites and will take about two and a half hours. Currently we are awaiting delivery of our new publication which has the following dedication:

"Peter Cooper sadly died in 2024. Peter's legacy, however, lives on; not only through the work he did for our Society - such as this publication - but also in the hearts and minds of all those who knew him."



Adrian Perry

HIGH STREET RENTAL AUCTIONS

Boarded up empty shops are an ugly blight on our high streets, with recent figures revealing that one in seven shops now lie empty.

In many cases it seems that properties are being held by faceless companies from outside the area, and sometimes abroad, who are happy to keep them empty waiting for values to increase. Meanwhile once bustling high streets that were the heart of our local communities have become neglected, unloved and unattractive places.

The Government has pledged to tackle this issue and has given local councils a new tool to force owners to rent or sell their properties. **High Street Rental Auctions, (HSRAs)**, introduced at the end of last year, give local councils the power to auction off leases for commercial properties that have been empty for long periods.

East Riding of Yorkshire Council officers are looking into the possibility of piloting this in Goole, where £25m is being spent on revitalising the town centre. As chair of Goole Civic Society and a member of the Town Deal Board, I've been looking into how these new powers work.



A boarded-up empty shop in Goole, which could become a pilot HSRA project.

What are High Street Rental Auctions?

High Street Rental Auctions were introduced in Part 10 of the [Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023](#) by the last Government and came into effect on 2nd December 2024.

The legislation empowers local authorities to require landlords to rent out persistently vacant commercial properties to new tenants such as local businesses or community groups at a fair market rent and to a Minimum Standard. The Government has committed £1m to help fund the initiative.

How does it work?

It is the responsibility of local authorities to identify properties or areas eligible for a rental auction. Civic societies, who are the eyes and ears of our high streets, may wish to suggest appropriate buildings or streets.

When considering whether a rental auction will be appropriate, a local authority has to consider whether the premises in question meet the requirements of the legislation or whether alternatives might be more appropriate.

The property is assessed against two conditions:

Vacancy condition: Premises must have been unoccupied continuously for 12 months, or for at least 366 days (non-continuously) within a 24-month period.

Local benefit condition: The local authority must be satisfied that the occupation of the premises for a suitable high-street use would be beneficial to the local economy, society or environment.

Once satisfied that a High Street Rental Auction is the right course of action, a local authority must go through several preliminary stages before beginning the process:

- Designating a street or area where a High Street Rental Auction can be used, including a 28-day minimum community engagement period;
- Satisfying the vacancy condition and local benefit condition;
- Obtaining information about the premises in question (local authorities may want to capture this information in a vacancy register);
- Engaging with landlords to encourage cooperation between parties;
- Surveying the premises to assess the suitable high street use and/or the works needed for the premises to reach the Minimum Standard.

Notice Period

This stage takes 10-12 weeks. The local authority serves an initial notice on the landlord of the premises and the landlord is given eight weeks to enter into their own tenancy. If the landlord fails to enter into such a tenancy, the local authority may serve a final notice informing the landlord of the local authority's intention to run a High Street Rental Auction. The landlord has the right to object and appeal. Assuming the final notice is not withdrawn by the local authority following appeal, the process will then move to the Auction Period.

Auction Period

The local authority then has 12 weeks to auction the premises and complete the tenancy contract. It engages with the landlord to create an auction pack. The landlord is required to provide information about the premises and is given the opportunity to make representations on the proposed terms of the tenancy contract and tenancy.

A marketing period (operating during weeks five to nine at a minimum) follows, where interested parties can register their bid with the local authority. In weeks 10 to 11 of

the Auction Period the local authority must serve the bids on the landlord before a successful bidder is chosen.

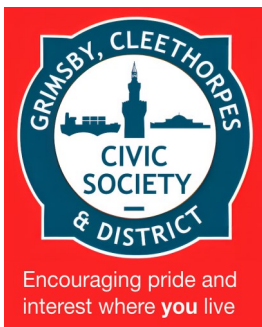
The auction process concludes when a tenancy contract is exchanged between the successful bidder and the landlord. The successful bidder will enter into two legal agreements with the landlord. The first is the tenancy contract, which governs the landlord's required works prior to the tenancy commencing, and the second is the tenancy itself, which will set out the specific obligations on the tenant and landlord during the term of the tenancy.

High Street Rental Auctions will not be suitable for all high street premises - for instance, large former department stores that may be subject to long-term, complex redevelopment plans - but they're worth exploring with your local authority as a way to bring life back into our high streets.

The Minister of State for Local Growth and Building Safety, Alex Norris, launching the new powers said: *"We're bringing shops and shoppers back to the high street, boosting trade, creating jobs, supporting our communities and driving local growth through our game-changing High Street Rental Auction rollout."*

For guidance on High Street Rental Auctions, follow this link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/high-street-rental-auctions-non-statutory-guidance/high-street-rental-auctions-non-statutory-guidance>

Margaret Hicks-Clarke
YHACS Chair



FROM FAKE GRIMSBY DAY TO GREAT GRIMSBY DAY

Grimsby, Cleethorpes and District Civic Society recently completed a campaign to move the date of Great Grimsby Day...one of the most bizarre anomalies in British history.

In 2008, Youngs Seafood launched a range of Grimsby frozen meals and declared a special "Grimsby Day" on 22nd January backed up by photos of Grimsby MP Austin Mitchell posing outside Parliament with a giant fish finger.

"Grimsby Day" passed almost without note at the time, apart from an article on the BBC Radio Humberside website. It then faded into obscurity until 2019 when a Grimsby Telegraph journalist spotted a reference on Wikipedia to Great Grimsby Day and wrote an article, *"To honour the occasion, which usually passes without mention (sic)."*

Since then, every two or three years, the entirely fake festival has been revived on one of the gloomiest and most dismal days of the year, sometimes with local businesses being bludgeoned into "showing their love for Grimsby."

The Civic Society had been convinced for some time that a more appropriate day to celebrate Great Grimsby was 11 March, the anniversary of the date in 1201 when King John granted the town charter to the burgesses of Grimsby.

Unfortunately, while North East Lincolnshire Council tried to boost interest in Charter Day, there was some confusion because Great Grimsby Day in January

comes before Charter Day in March and tended to steal the thunder.

With the support of the Enrolled Freeman of Grimsby, the Mayor, Leader and Chief Executive of North East Lincolnshire, and Melanie Onn, MP for the new constituency of Great Grimsby and Cleethorpes, the Civic Society launched a campaign, “From Fake Grimsby Day to Great Grimsby Day” to move Great Grimsby Day from 22 January to 11 March.

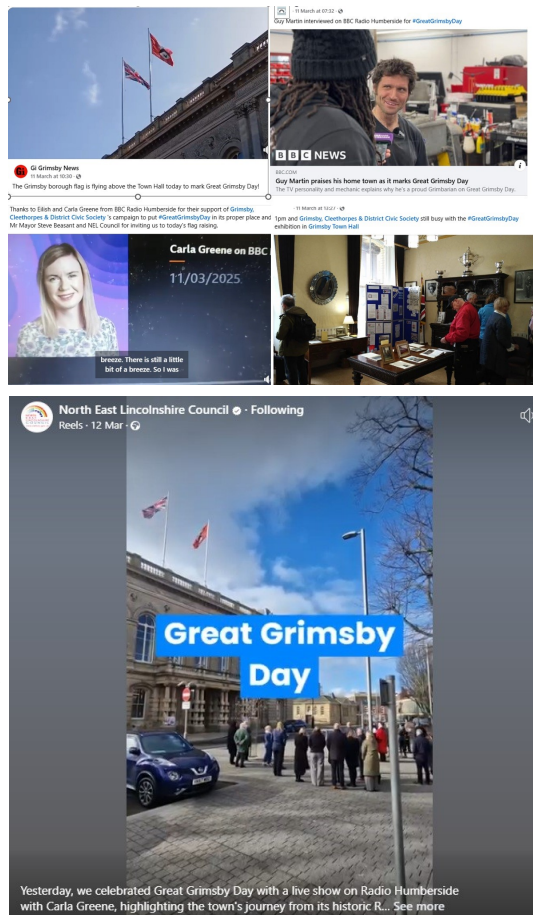
It’s important to remember that very few “awareness days” have any legal basis. Apart from something like Armed Forces Day, which was put in place by the Government, the “awareness days” are just there because someone thought it was a good idea at the time. When it comes to something like “Great Grimsby Day” – which was never intended to live past the initial advertising campaign – there is no formal process for moving it.

The Society took a two-stage approach: first by publicising the facts and putting forward the proposition that 22 January was “Fake Grimsby Day”. The campaign generated a lot of media interest and generally helped to ensure that the wet and misty 22nd January was low key.

Building on that, the second stage was to make 11 March a Great Grimsby Day. North East Lincolnshire Council supported the effort with publicity and offered the Civic Society the Mayors Parlour in Grimsby Town Hall, to mount an exhibition together with the Borough archivist. On 11 March the Grimsby Flag was raised on the Town Hall roof, in the presence of the Mayor and covered by Radio Humberside. We also sponsored a well-attended guided walk led by Carla Linford which took us through the varied and sometimes not so glorious history of Grimsby. We also generated some Grimsby Day merchandising in the form of tea towels from a local print maker, and a printed pamphlet on Grimsby’s history. We estimate that around 70 people attended the exhibition (pretty good for Grimsby on a Tuesday in March).

We also recorded a healthy number of Grimsby Day posts on social media, being topped off in the evening with an item on BBC Look North interviewing Guy Martin about why he loves Grimsby.

This is only the first phase, but plans are already in place for a bigger Great Grimsby Day on 11 March 2026.



Graeme Bassett
Grimsby, Cleethorpes and District Civic Society



SKIPTON'S YORKSHIRE HERITAGE SUMMIT TO BE "BEST EVER"

The Yorkshire Society are expecting that the fourth Yorkshire Heritage Summit, due to take place on Tuesday 13th May in Skipton's beautifully restored Town Hall (below), will prove to be the "best ever".



Around 30 different heritage organisations from all over Yorkshire will be coming to Skipton to take part in this popular annual event. The Yorkshire Society's CEO Phil Bell commented: "Given the interest and support coming from as far away as East Yorkshire and the Yorkshire Coast, there is every chance that our 2025 event will be the best Yorkshire Heritage Summit



ever. The thinking behind the Heritage Summit is to create an informal forum, which voluntary groups large and small, concerned with natural or cultural heritage from every part of the three ancient Ridings of Yorkshire, can get together to meet, share ideas and showcase all that they are doing."

A Heritage Exhibition will take place in the Concert Hall in Skipton Town Hall and be open to the public, FREE of charge between 10am and 4pm. The Exhibition will be the central attraction, giving visitors a chance to get to know what different groups are doing to protect and enhance the rich and varied heritage of Yorkshire.



1. EXHIBITION. Town Hall. More than 30 organisations covering every aspect of Yorkshire's history and heritage...FREE to enter 10.00-16.00.



2. SYMPOSIUM. Town Hall. Hear expert speakers on 'A Sense of Place'. 13.00-15.00. £7.50pp*.

3. GUIDED WALKS. Learn about interesting parts of Skipton on foot. Details and tickets from Skipton Civic Society.



4. ENTERTAINMENT. Enjoy a lively open-mic night at the Black Horse Pub. 19.00-22.00. £5pp*.

ORGANISED BY THE YORKSHIRE SOCIETY

Colin Speakman Heritage Lead for The Yorkshire Society said: "This is all about sharing awareness of all the great things that there are to see and do in our wonderful Region. There will be displays to enjoy, conversations to be had, events to put in your diary and campaigns to support. And the Society has already been overwhelmed by the warmth and friendliness of the welcome from the people of Craven."

As well as the main Heritage Exhibition, the afternoon will also include a pre-bookable Heritage Symposium with speakers and discussions. There will also be three very special guided walks within Skipton town centre led by members of the Yorkshire Society's partners for the Summit, Skipton Civic Society. These walks, led by local experts, will look at various aspects of Skipton's long history as an iconic Dales market town and industrial centre.

Those staying into the evening can take part in a session of traditional and modern Yorkshire folk music in Skipton's historic Black Horse Inn.

For full details of the Yorkshire Heritage Summit 2025 in Skipton and to book places for the Symposium, Guided walks or Evening folk sessions visit: <https://theyorkshiresociety.org/event/2025-yorkshire-heritage-summit/>

For further information email - heritage@theyorkshiresociety.org

Tim Barber
Yorkshire Society

DESIGN AWARDS 2024

PONTEFRACT PLACEMAKING AT ITS BEST!

PONTEFRACT
CIVIC SOCIETY
Charity No. 513509



On Mon 27 January, Pontefract Civic Society hosted its Design Awards for 2024, in the Georgian Nelson Room of Pontefract Town Hall which were presented by Cllr Darren Byford, Mayor of Wakefield District Council accompanied by his Consort, in front of a gathering of business and property owners, contractors, community volunteers, representatives from Wakefield Council, and civic society members.



Civic Society Chair, Paul Cartwright said "This is an evening to celebrate regeneration projects which enhance the historic streetscape, destinations, and open spaces which make Pontefract a great place."

Paul Cartwright was MC for the night and the awards being presented were:

- Heritage Award – The Galway Girl
- Improvement Award – The Weighing Room complex at Pontefract Racecourse
- Special Commendation – Friends of Friarwood Valley Gardens
- Regeneration Award – Galileo's Show Bar
- Environmental Sustainability Award – Copley's Kitchen, Farmer Copley's
- Façade of the Year Award – The Galway Girl (Photo below)



Tony Lumb, The Galway Girl owner, said, "We are beyond proud to receive these awards from Pontefract Civic Society."

The evening was also an opportunity for the civic society to launch their new category of Environmental Sustainability where Ted Newton, Marketing Coordinator at Farmer Copley's said "Sustainability has always been at the heart of what we do – from sourcing

local, seasonal ingredients to reducing waste and implementing eco-friendly practices throughout our kitchen and farm."

Canon Andrew Sage, the civic society's newly co-opted Planning Group Coordinator said when looking around any town or city centre, that we should look up to admire the rich architecture that is all around us.

Cllr Darren Byford, thanked Paul Cartwright for showing leadership in Pontefract supported by a group of active volunteers, and in congratulating the winners he went onto say, "The town is very lucky to have a civic society that does things differently to many others, led by a chair that knows which buttons to press for Pontefract."

For local information visit the civic society website at www.pontefractcivicsociety.org.uk or call 01977 708658.

Paul Cartwright

Photographs courtesy of Medlock Photography



EIGHT PLAQUES FOR POMFRETIANs

Ponterfract Civic Society heritage group researchers have been hard at work over the past eight months working on a UK Shared Prosperity Funded project to deliver eight new blue plaques to celebrate Pomfretians.

The £5000 UK government grant award to the civic society was supported the Mayor of West Yorkshire Tracy Brabin, West Yorkshire Combined Authority, and is monitored by Wakefield Council.

Civic Society Chair, Paul Cartwright said *“This is an exciting project shining a spotlight on people who have made an impression on Ponterfract, and in some cases given their lives to the country.”*

A number of invitation-only ceremonies were staged by the end of February to recognise:



- **Barnbow munitions factory worker Mary Lucy Turner** representing many others. Civic society member, Claire Crossdale and her colleagues in *“Remember Barnbow”* spoke about the truth of munitions factory workers from the Five Towns who were erased from the respect that they deserved having given their lives. A plaque was unveiled to Mary Lucy Turner to represent the tragedies at Barnbow. The Turner family lived in Lemon Alley, just off Beastfair, where the plaque will be installed.



- **Violet Pritchard**, Ponterfract’s only female Mayor in 400 years. Her daughter, Christine Howarth, who was actually a teenage Mayoress alongside her Mum in 1961-62, talked about the balls and dinners that Violet presided over, as well as many other duties, including a visit from HM The Queen Mother to Ponterfract. Christine was accompanied by Tracey Mitchell and David Pritchard, granddaughter and grandson of Violet, and the plaque will be installed on the Assembly Rooms entrance on Bridge Street.



- **The many liquorice lasses** across the industry from the Dunhill family onwards. A plaque to the many thousands of Liquorice Lasses commemorated across more than a dozen factories. It will be erected where the confectionery industry began at the Dunhill family drug store and liquorice garth on the corner of Micklegate and Broad Lane. Deborah Burnley and family members of a now 91-year old Ewbanks worker were on hand to unveil the plaque.



- **The Perfect family** of market gardeners and fruit tree growers to the great country houses of Yorkshire and the North Midlands from Nostell, Temple Newsham and Harewood House to Normanby Hall and Welbeck. They innovated by creating a produce catalogue, which the rest of the industry then adopted.

Eric Jackson referred to their support for the hospital of St Nicholas and Perfect’s Hospital. Alderman Willam Perfect was Mayor of Ponterfract three times; others in the family held the title eight times. The current owners of Perfect’s Hospital, Peter and Eileen Moss were delighted to unveil the blue plaque, and they will also take care installing it on Micklegate, for which Ponterfract Civic Society thanked them.

- **Charles Pears** artist; the first elected president of the Royal Society of Marine Artists. Born in 1873, an illustrator, marine and travel poster artist and First World War Royal Marine who grew up above the family outfitters and hatter’s business on Beastfair. He also went on to illustrate

Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, 1922, and the works of Charles Dickens. The plaque was unveiled by Michael & Lisa Potter, guests from Ackworth & Pontefract Royal British Legion.

- J S Fletcher, a Darrington author** of over 200 novels. A blue plaque to this prolific author was unveiled by his great granddaughter, Juanita Hatcher, who had flown from Canada for this event. Fletcher was born in Halifax, though from a very young boy he was looked after by his maternal grandmother Hannah Smith at Denby Farm on Escourt Road in Darrington, where the plaque will be installed close by. Fletcher had three sons from his first marriage, and the eldest son, Wilfred John Liddon Fletcher, emigrated to Canada in 1907. The couple's only child, Joan Churchill Fletcher, married Edward J Polley in 1939, having two children Lydden R Polley and Juanita Polley. Lydden has extensively researched the Canadian branch of the family. In unveiling the plaque, Juanita said, *"J S Fletcher wrote his first detective novel, The Middle Temple Murder, in 1914. These books became very popular, especially in the United States, where sales were greatly helped by an endorsement from President Woodrow Wilson and the energetic activities of Alfred A Knopf, a leading American publisher. My great grandfather wrote over 300 short stories, published in magazines. Thank you, Pontefract and Paul, for today honouring this remarkable writer!"*
- Barbara Castle (nee Betts)** who went on to be a Labour minister. Mayor of Wakefield, Cllr Darren Byford presented the early life of Barbara Betts, through her time at Love Lane School and Pontefract & District Girls High School (now New College). Growing up in a politically conscious northern family, Barbara's father Frank Betts was a tax inspector and an active member of the Independent Labour Party. Cllr Byford said *"As a small child, Barbara always had the wild dream of being in the cabinet."* Three students studying history and politics presented Barbara's political life. Ella described her as *"an inspirational woman"* referencing all her major political achievements. Daisy focused on Barbara's A level studies, specifically the repression through the British Empire using Kenya as an example, and Thomas covered the meeting Barbara had with victims and whistleblower officials whilst visiting the prison camps, after which Thomas described her unwavering commitment to truth and justice which serves as an enduring inspiration to this day. Yvette Cooper, MP for Pontefract, Castleford, Knottingley and Altofts said: *"Barbara Castle was an one of the most inspirational campaigners of the 20th century and it was wonderful to be able to pay tribute to her with the blue plaque launch here in Pontefract, where she lived and went to school in the 1920s. Fierce, funny and formidable, as a Labour MP and Minister she brought in the Equal Pay Act to stop women being paid less than men, and she brought in the seat belt and breathalyser, undoubtedly saving so many lives. Barbara's values were forged here in Yorkshire in the poverty and injustice she saw during the 1920s miners strikes, and she's a great Pontefract hero. Thank you to Pontefract Civic Society and to great student speakers from New College for honouring Barbara in this way."*
- Nine King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantryman** who were recipients of the Victoria Cross.



Paul Cartwright



YORKSHIRE & HUMBER
Association of Civic Societies

Reg. Charity No. 1112290

www.yhacs.org.uk

Please send any articles,
comments, letters or
questions to the editor:

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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 26th July - YHACS Summer Meeting in Addingham.

NEXT YHACS MEETING
SATURDAY 26TH APRIL 1:00 - 4:00 PM
IN HULL, WILBERFORCE HOUSE LEARNING CENTRE,
23-25 HIGH STREET, HU1 1NQ

GUEST SPEAKERS :
ROB HATTERSLEY - CEO OF CIVIC VOICE
JOHN SCOTNEY - CHAIR OF HULL CIVIC SOCIETY

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