



YORKSHIRE & HUMBER
Association of Civic Societies

Member of



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SOCIETY INSIGHT

Winter 2025/2026

Volume 21, Issue 4

CELEBRATING ANNIVERSARIES...

... A TOWN'S BICENTENARY AND A SOCIETY'S 60TH

GOOLE CIVIC SOCIETY KICKS OFF TOWN'S 200th BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS



Goole's Bicentenary logo, designed by
schoolgirl Evie Wileman in a
competition that attracted more
than 400 entries.

Goole celebrates its 200th birthday this year and Goole Civic Society is going all out to ensure 2026 will be a year to remember.

Bicentenary celebrations have been three years in the planning, with Civic Society treasurer Stephen Walker chairing the Goole 2026 Bicentenary Community Group.

Celebrations got off to a flying start – with the Civic Society unveiling a Blue Plaque to the Aire and Calder Navigation Company via Facebook at 12.01 on 1st January. Goole was founded as a “company town” by the Company in 1826 to support its new docks and waterways network.

The society's second event, 'Goole on Film' is a sell-out ahead of its showing at Junction Goole theatre on 24th January. Over several months the society secured copyright to show films featuring Goole from Pathe News, the Yorkshire Film Archive and private collections.

It also commissioned two special projects for the event - Goole's community choir were commissioned to record a version of Goole's 1926 Centenary Song, Advance! Goole, and local film producer Joshua Daniels produced an aerial history by drone of the Knottingley-Goole Canal. Funding was secured by an application to the Goole Fields Wind



The Blue Plaque to Goole's founders,
the Aire and Navigation Company.

GOOLE ON FILM

FEATURING - HISTORIC FILM FOOTAGE OF GOOLE FROM THE PATHE NEWS, YORKSHIRE FILM ARCHIVE & PRIVATE COLLECTIONS, AND THE PREMIERES OF:

- AN AERIAL HISTORY OF THE KNOTTINGLEY & GOOLE CANAL BY JOSHUA DANIELS.
- ADVANCE! GOOLE - SONG BY THE 'WARBLERS' POP & SHOW CHOIR.

JUNCTION GOOLE
24th JANUARY 2026
MATINEE 2.30PM & EVENING 6.30PM
TICKETS £2 - VIA BOX OFFICE & JUNCTIONGOOLE.CO.UK

Presented by
Goole Civic Society

BOOK
YOUR
TICKETS
NOW!

GOOLE
CELEBRATING GOOLE
1826-2026

Farm Community Fund. Although the society had anticipated 'Goole on Film' would be popular, it had not expected the £2 tickets to be snapped up before the posters had gone out!

Throughout 2026 the society will be delivering a host of other bicentenary projects, including a children's pictorial history book to be presented to all the town's schoolchildren, a pop-up Goole 200 Timeline exhibition, a permanent heritage trail around the old town, a pop-up heritage shop, the Big Goole Treasure Hunt, Hobbies Exhibition, Civic Awards and a community cookery book.



The prototype for the Goole Clocktower money boxes.

After the success of the society's Salt and Pepper Pots, made in the shape of Goole's iconic water towers, it has commissioned souvenir money boxes inspired by Goole's Clocktower, built to commemorate the 1926 Centenary. These will go on sale later this month adding to the society's collection of Goole 2026 souvenirs, including mugs, limited edition prints, a calendar and pin badges. They are available from Goole Civic Society's online shop <https://goole-civic-society.sumupstore.com/>

From 17th-19th July, the whole town will come together under the Goole 2026 Community Group banner for a special Bicentenary Weekend, which will feature a flotilla arriving down Aire and Calder Navigation, pop-up theatre, music, entertainment and activities showcasing Goole's thriving voluntary sector.

We hope to see some of you for our Bicentenary celebrations and are looking forward to welcoming you all in Goole for the YHACS Autumn Quarterly Meeting.

*Margaret Hicks-Clarke,
Chair, Goole Civic Society*



LEEDS CIVIC TRUST CELEBRATES ITS 60TH BIRTHDAY



*Members gather for our 60th anniversary party
at the Leeds Left Bank*

Leeds Civic Trust was founded in 1965 when a certain Charles Crabtree, a local printer, supported the establishment of Leeds Civic Trust with a sum of £50,000.

To put this in context, you would need £1.25 million in today's money to purchase the same goods and services. Reading the newspaper clippings in our archive, Mr Crabtree sound like a bit of a professional Yorkshireman – he was unhappy with the brutalist buildings being erected (“concrete blocks with holes in”) and called for the construction of a new exhibition hall. The newspaper also refers him to being “driven away in a blue Rolls Royce,” so he clearly had some spare brass in his back pocket!

Fast forward 60 years and the civic movement may have changed but our founding principles have not. Our abiding interests remain the development of the city, our built heritage and history and public amenity. So 2025 was a year for celebration, a look back to our past achievements but importantly a look forward to the future.



Children gather at our teddy bears' picnic at The Bear Pit

One of the Trust's first acts just a year after it was founded was to buy “The Bear Pit” on Cardigan Road for £128. After nearly 60 years, we finally undertook a comprehensive restoration and refurbishment of this Victorian relic, providing level access to the site and landscaping of the whole site. We had a grand opening in the Spring with a “teddy bears’ picnic” during the summer holidays.

We had our busiest ever walks programme – covering everything from shopping centres to waterways, we visited Town Halls under restoration (Leeds and Morley) and for the 18th year, Dr Kevin Grady delivered a series of fascinating February lectures. We even had a 1960s themed bus tour on a vintage bus which, remarkably and by complete coincidence still displayed a notice from the 1970s advertising Leeds Civic Trust's guided walks!

One of the key activities for our 60th anniversary year was an oral histories project. We set out to record for posterity the thoughts of those people who have had a close association with the Trust over the decades. Sakshi Sharma was employed as an intern to do the research and ask the questions in a series of filmed interviews.



*Peter Spawforth
Architect, Town Planner, and former
Leeds City Council Officer*

A personal highlight was Peter Spawforth revealing how the phrase “Leeds Motorway City of the 70s” came about (a bunch of Leeds City Council staff brainstorming what slogan they could reproduce on the Council's franking machine – no marketing professionals involved!) Peter is undisputably our longest serving member having attended the inaugural meeting of the Trust in 1965.



*Peter Spawforth contributing to our oral histories project
and
The famous “Motorway City of the 70s” stamp*

We showcased these films at an event for our members in November but will soon be posting all the films on our YouTube channel. Watch this space.

Leeds Civic Trust co-organises the Leeds Architecture Awards and in 2025 we launched a special anniversary prize asking members of the public to nominate their favourite building constructed in the last 60 years. Nearly 1000 people participated in the vote and the winner was the brutalist, Chamberlin, Powell and Bon designed Roger Stevens building on the University of Leeds campus.

Heritage Open Days (our busiest ever) provided a backdrop to showcase the shortlisted schemes for all the awards using the Leeds Corn Exchange basement as an excellent venue for this purpose.

We made extensive use of social media during the course of the year. We use Facebook, X, Instagram and Linked-in, and gained 2681 followers across these platforms. Overall, there were more than 1.9 million views across all of our social media channels.

We didn't neglect "traditional" media, using our 60th anniversary to launch "The Owl," a new twice-yearly printed magazine for our membership.

We were keen to capitalise on the additional publicity presented by the anniversary to grow our membership. We set a target of 60 new individual members by the end of the calendar year. A target which we almost achieved. We established a new (and now growing) under-30s membership category, and we had a big push to recruit new corporate members, welcoming a couple of dozen new or returning members to the fold over the course of the year.

All of this was of course on top of our “normal” activity – we looked at 151 planning applications during the year, wrestled with the news that the West Yorkshire Mass Transit scheme was to be delayed again and we unveiled five blue plaques.

Finally, our big news – announced at the end of the year – was our planned move to new premises on York Place. Our current building has served us well, but we wanted to find somewhere that was more accessible (no stairs!) and a better environment for members, supporters and staff.

Subject to agreeing a lease, we expect to move at some point during the year. For the moment we are hanging on to our Wharf Street premises (which we own.)

So, a very busy and enjoyable year all round. Here's to the next 60 years!

Martin Hamilton
Director, Leeds Civic Trust



**The front cover of "The Owl"
— our new magazine**



**Rachael Unsworth models our
special 60th
anniversary tote bag**

VIEW FROM THE CHAIR

“Stronger together than apart” is a phrase that has been resonating around my head over the last few turbulent months for the civic movement. The phrase isn’t mine. It came from one of our member societies in response to a question in our survey: ‘What do you value most about YHACS?’

It is heartening to hear that societies value being part of YHACS. I certainly do. As Chair of a small society founded less than 15 years ago, I have found membership of YHACS key to our growth and the impact we are making in Goole.

For me YHACS is not just a formal association but more like a family. Our societies come in all shapes and sizes and focus on different aspects of the broad range of activities that come under the “civic” umbrella. We may have differing views on our priorities but we’re united by a passion for our places and giving our communities a stronger future.

There’s so much we can learn from our fellow societies and so many ways we can support and inspire each other. There’s been a lot of evidence of that in the last year, with societies “buddying up” to share their knowledge and help others. The growth in the number of societies involved in Heritage Open Days across the region is a great example of this.

I particularly look forward to our quarterly meetings, when we come together to enjoy each other’s company, find out more about other parts of our region and share our challenges and successes. I’m pleased to have seen some new faces last year, with attendance at each of our meetings over 50.



YHACS early birds gather for a morning walk exploring the ‘Snickelways’ before the Autumn Members’ Meeting in York.

This wouldn’t be possible without the generosity of our host societies. Hull, Addingham and York all really pushed the boat out last year. We learned about maritime heritage in a once mighty port, ecological co-operation in a Dales village and the origins and work of York Civic Trust, one of our oldest and largest societies, with more than 1,000 members.

We’re already planning ahead for 2026 – with our spring meeting in Doncaster in April and the autumn meeting in Goole. We’re still looking for a society for the summer meeting – perhaps a visit to the coast. Any offers?

Lottery Bid

For some societies YHACS has been a lifeline. Several have reached out for help and advice when finding themselves in difficulties after the loss of key committee members. The YHACS committee have helped where we can but are aware of our limitations in terms of capacity and funding.

That is why we embarked on our most ambitious effort last year - the submission of our £112,000 National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) bid entitled "Sustaining Heritage Champions". As I write, we still await a decision but we expect to hear in the next few weeks.

If successful, we will embark on a programme that includes:

- Rebranding and enhancing the YHACS profile
- Workshops (in person and online) for member societies on a variety of topics including succession planning and sustainability, communications and media, effective use of AI, and planning and heritage issues.
- One-to-one support for societies experiencing issues with long-term sustainability
- Seed-corn funding to help societies organise activities to engage with their communities.

However, competition for funding is fierce and there are no guarantees. If we're unsuccessful, we'll have learned a lot about the funding process and the needs and priorities of our member societies, which we can take forward into other bids.

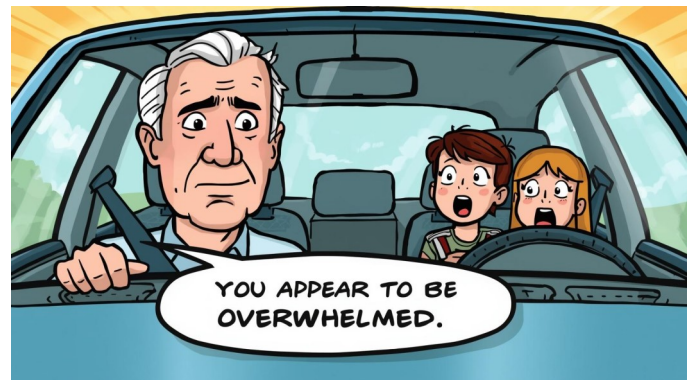
Artificial Intelligence

In the past few months, I and others have been getting to grips with generative AI. Gill Battarbee (Addingham), Malcolm Gardner (Wetherby), John Clarke (YHACS/Goole/Scarborough) and I are collaborating on a workshop to share what we've learned on the morning of the AGM. I'm sure you'll find it illuminating and inspiring but also quite scary when you think how it is set to impact on our lives.

John and I have a new car which is equipped with an AI assistant. We took our grandchildren for a spin and they were excited that we could give instructions by talking to the car (remember Knight Rider?) Unfortunately they got so carried away calling out from the backseat that Granddad had to shout for them to stop.

At this point our friendly AI assistant helpfully chipped in with the advice: "You appear to be getting overwhelmed. It is advisable to keep calm in these situations."

Well at least the grandchildren and I saw the funny side!



Keep calm and drive on. This cartoon was generated using Canva AI.

Civic Voice

After a turbulent few months, Civic Voice is moving forward, initially as a voluntary-led organisation but with a mission to restructure and find reliable new funding sources to secure its long-term future.

A working group is being formed to provide proposals for a revitalisation of the organisation with specific reference to improve governance, restore confidence, attract investment and re-establish national authority.

A meeting in London and online on 24th January will update members on progress and confirm co-options on to the board. An Extraordinary General Meeting is planned for the Spring, after the working group has reported.

Civic Voice trustees Martin Hamilton and Barry Goodchild will brief us at the YHACS AGM and answer any questions. Thank you to everyone in YHACS who has offered support to Civic Voice because, as we all know, we're "stronger together than apart."

Margaret Hicks-Clarke
YHACS Chair

HULL CIVIC SOCIETY 2025 REVIEW



2025 has been a good year for Hull Civic Society and the following summary only scratches the surface of the talks and events that have taken place.

In January, Michele Lewis gave us a talk about the "Pavement that walked; an archaeological mystery" featured in February's Newsletter and summarised by Susan Heritage, who also takes our committee meeting minutes when possible. Please see <https://hullcivicsoc.info/newsletters/>

February's talk was given by the Woodcarver to the Palace, O H (Howard) Boyd about John "Longitude" Harrison, which demonstrated how vital chronometers were to the safe navigation of ships.

March saw Michele and Alan Beadle visit us to give a very interesting talk entitled "Give us a 'V' (Hull Speedway)."

And our final evening talk of the season in April after our AGM was given by our Chair, John Scotney, about Joseph Hirst, Hull's first City Architect, which was very interesting. Cynthia Fowler was voted on to be our President at our AGM.

We hosted a Yorkshire and Humber Association of Civic Societies (YHACS) gathering when delegates were given a maritime tour of Hull by Captain John Tindall and a buffet at the Sailmakers Arms before talks at Wilberforce House. We started a trend with free lunches - apparently with Addingham Civic Society reciprocating in July and York in November.

We were treated to an excellent visit to Holderness House in May, which included a tour and buffet!

Simon Green and Ian Pearson made the journey to Skipton in May for the Yorkshire Heritage Summit and manned a table letting passers-by know about our Civic Society.

Also in May, members and guests were privileged to have guided tours of the recently renovated Maritime Museum - before exhibits were on show. It looks amazing.

A constructive meeting was had with representatives of Hornsea Civic Society, at the Floral Hall Cafe.



*One of the St Matthew's
Community Enterprise
preserved windows*

During the year a decision was taken to hold our monthly committee meetings at the Holiday Inn Express, generally on the first Tuesday of the month between 7 and 9pm; the minutes often being taken by Susan Heritage. Our committee has been strengthened this year by the arrival of David Ostler, however, Charles Trafford, our Press Officer, stepped down.

Our prestigious Good Marks were awarded to PBS Construction for restoration of Sculcoates Goods Depot, Gamebore for new cladding of their shot-tower, Giroscope for conversion of St Matthew's church into a community centre and CR Reynolds for improvements to Middlesex Road.



Gamebore shot-tower

Three committee members received an invitation to visit Flexi Works - Broadway House where we saw a very good refurbishment of the property had taken place. Paul Schofield gave an enlightening talk to invited guests about Ferensway.

The East Yorkshire Local History Society Book Fair which took place in the Heritage Open Days Week gave us an opportunity to meet old friends and make new ones many of whom came along to our Guildhall Get Together in November. It also gave us a chance to sell some donated books!

Ian Wolstencroft produced the film 'Hull Through the Decades,' available on DVD or USB for £15 on our website. It is a marvellous history of our great city from the 1960's to the present day.



*St James' Church clock in
Sutton on Hull*

A project was started, led by Simon Green, to photograph the Blue, Green and other colour plaques in the city, many of which do not feature on the Blue Plaque Trail, and these will be made into a leaflet available for distribution. It was decided to award Hull Kingston Rovers a Blue Plaque for their remarkable achievement of winning all three competitions in 2025 - the "Treble."

In August, the St James' Clock in Sutton on Hull, was started to be repaired by Terry Hill. We had donated £500 towards this project, and the repairs and refurbishment was well completed. What a difference it makes to the village!



Sutton Masonic Hall

For our talks and events for 2025/26, we decided to produce cards detailing the various activities, which included our new afternoon talks and events, held on the third Monday of the month at 2:00pm at various locations within the city. Briefly these talks and events included "My vision for Hull" by Councillor Mike Ross and "St Matthew's and "West Park Palace Redevelopments" by Richard Motley, in October; the prequel film of "Renaissance - A Hull Kingston Rovers Story" by Paul Sewell and a visit to Sutton Masonic Hall and talk by Alan Hatfield in November; In December John Scotney rounded off the year with "Chapels, Charity and Choirs."

During the year, Richard Clarke, gave walks and talks around our many parks in the city.

At the Monocle cafe - in a newly refurbished building on Ferensway, we met

Sally Groome from Nation Radio Yorkshire who offered to display our upcoming talks and events on their website and this collaboration is successfully continuing.

We were asked by Hull Independent Merchant Navy Association if we could support their request to the City Council to have the Merchant Navy Memorial, behind the Maritime Building, transformed to look more like a ship's bow moving through the water. This led to asking our members and guests to help by taking part in a petition which we had installed on our website by Trevor Ellis of Mariner Computer Services, to gauge their opinion. Meetings with council staff followed and quotes are being sought to have the work completed. We even submitted an entry for the YHACS Peter Spawforth Award based on this initiative.

We are very pleased that seven companies have remained as our Corporate Members this year, which we regard as a great honour.

We would like to place on record our grateful thanks to Joy, Sarah and Jim at Kall Kwik who produce our Newsletters and Programmes and many other documents in a most timely, professional fashion.

Most of all, we would like to thank our valued members for their support throughout the year.

Ian Pearson
Treasurer and Membership Secretary

'LEEDS IN YOUR LUNCH HOUR' RETURNS

Dr Kevin Grady will be returning for the 19th year to present four lunchtime lectures at Leeds Minster. Starting at 1pm on each Wednesday in February, the lectures address the following topics:

Wednesday 4 February:

'1626 and All That': The first Municipal Charter and 400 years of municipal and metropolitan government in Leeds.

Wednesday 11 February

'The Ingenious Mr Thoresby': First Historian of Leeds 1658-1725

Wednesday 18 February

'The Greatest Parish Priest of the Nineteenth Century': Dr Walter Farquhar Hook, Vicar of Leeds 1837 -1859

Wednesday 25 February

'A City Transformed 1965-2025': Leeds Civic Trust and 60 Years of Change in Leeds.'

The lectures are free of charge to attend (we will be taking a collection which we split equally between Leeds Civic Trust and the Minster) so please do come along if you fancy learning about the history of Leeds

Martin Hamilton
Director, Leeds Civic Trust





BUILDING PRIDE IN PLACE... YOUR PLACE IN 50 OBJECTS

There's been much debate recently about nationhood and identity.

What does it mean to be British/English/Welsh/Scottish etc? (And if you really want to 'light the blue touch paper, throw in 'European' to the mix and see where that goes!) How does nationhood affect the way we see ourselves? Does being British boil down to just our fondness for drinking tea?

This is not a new debate, of course, but the topic has been brought into sharper focus recently by what is happening not only in the UK but elsewhere around the world. We might be an island nation but we are not adrift in the middle of the Atlantic – we cannot escape the impact of global events and allegiances – and this is bringing into question whether Britain is more closely tied to Europe or the US.

Drill down a bit further though. How does the *place* where we are born, raised and/or live shape our personal sense of who we are? Is our idea of personal identity based on our place of birth, or does it shift if we move to a new town or city in pursuit of education or employment – or just because we choose to move away (*Escape to the Country*, anyone?). What happens if we move to another country, does our sense of personal identity change as a result of the move or do we remain 'loyal' to the place where we came from?

Well, Identity doesn't form in a vacuum, of course; it's a mix of 'nature and nurture', and very much influenced by the world around us.

- Nationality, ethnicity, and cultural traditions
- Language, religion, and spirituality
- Social norms, political environment, and the values of the society we live in
- The places we inhabit, the architectural style, the layout of the places we move through
- Landscape
- The 'things' we cherish

Some of this is directly relatable to the work of Civic Societies which means that we are in a good position to help build 'pride in place' through our emphasis on the built environment and local heritage.

At the end of last year, I was contacted by former Wakefield businessman Andy Green. Andy is someone I have known for nearly 20 years and is now a co-founder of [Grow Social Capital](#) – a social enterprise based in south Wales and east London working to address the challenge of changing levels of social capital in society. (Social capital refers to the networks, relationships, and norms that facilitate cooperation and trust among individuals and groups. It plays an important role in enhancing community engagement, improving organisational performance, and fostering personal connections. It can help to build interpersonal relationships, a shared sense of identity, a shared understanding, shared norms, shared values, trust, cooperation, and reciprocity.)

Andy wanted to discuss with me whether Civic Societies had a role in helping to shape local identity. To me, this was an obvious 'yes'; the work we do on place-making and place-shaping means that we are well placed to facilitate a discussion on local identity and to use this as a springboard for building pride in place.

Andy's idea was to call on the public to create a list of 50 'objects' that they think best represent the place in which they live – the things that they are proud of and would perhaps list if talking to a friend about why they like their home town or city.



Andy is working on a wider project looking at this at national level but wanted to see if Wakefield Civic Society might look at doing something for Wakefield – a *Wakefield in 50 Objects* project?

I shared this suggestion with members of the Society's Executive Committee and I'm pleased to say that they rather liked the idea. We are still at the planning stage but our approximate timeline is to run a campaign to solicit ideas during the spring, to sift and select (probably with a panel made up of Civic Society members and representatives from partner organisations) during the summer and then to announce the results in the autumn, most likely as part of Heritage Open Days.

We see some very positive benefits for the Society in doing this. Not only will we create a resource that can be used by all to promote Wakefield to visitors and residents alike, but the project will also raise the Society's profile and possibly attract new members. (In 2025, we ran a very successful architectural photography competition which certainly raised our profile and brought in new members – it also gave us a library of photographs that we can use in our publications.)

My purpose in sharing this with readers now is to ask whether any other Civic Societies in our region would like to run their own '50 objects' project? If so, do get in touch – drop me an email at info@wakefieldcivicsociety.org.uk – working together on the setting up and organisation of such a project could be beneficial as we share ideas and solve problems together.

To start with, I'll send you a more detailed background briefing note and then, if you are interested, we can look to set up a Zoom meeting to discuss how we get our projects off the ground learning from each other's experiences.

**Kevin Trickett MBE,
President, Wakefield Civic Society**



STREET SIGNS PART OF SCARBOROUGH'S CHARACTER

SPOTLIGHT ON TOWN'S HERITAGE HEROES BY RICHARD MANT

BBC local news recently reported that a mystery painter has been restoring heritage street signs in Newark. Then last week the Jeremy Vine show on Radio Two also featured this story.

So it is right to spotlight the small team of volunteers who have been doing exactly the same thing in Scarborough over the last four summers.



The borough has more than 200 historic cast iron street signs. Many of them really needed some tender-loving care!

And as far as I know, none have specific preservation orders on them; however, some may have a level of protection being located within conservation areas.



The project is coordinated through the Scarborough Civic Society. This is a charity dedicated to promoting civic pride in the beauty, history, and character of the town. It identified that this was a task where volunteers could make a real difference. So the society stepped in to support the resource-strapped local authority.

Everyone recognised that each restored sign lifts the area within which it is located, (and probably saves them from being carted off and replaced by plastic ones!)

So, for those that remain – and there must have been many more which have already been lost – the group selects those that need work and can be accessed safely. Each is then visited up to nine times during the course of its restoration – a labour-intensive process that the council could not hope to

complete without these volunteers.

The local authority provides the paint and materials for the work and uses specialist contractors for some of the less accessible and more treacherously located ones.

To date, well over 150 of these distinctive name plates, many of which date back to the Victorian era, have been cleaned, repainted and brought back to their former glory by the team. Passers-by regularly stop to encourage the volunteers, commending them on their contribution to improving their local area.



The volunteers are motivated by pride in their town's heritage — and by the wish to ensure that small but important details of local history are not lost. The group have additionally been responsible for the restoring of the weather station on the harbour. They have also renovated two decorative rowing boats “Valotta” and “Suzanne” — one on South Cliff, the other on the roundabout adjacent to Lunar Park.

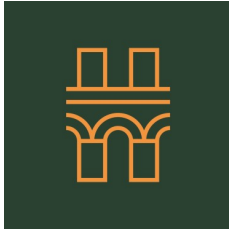


“It’s enormously satisfying to see the signs looking as they did a century ago,” said one of the volunteers. “It’s part of Scarborough’s character — and people do notice when they’ve been looked after.”

The group intends to continue the work in the coming years, and to branch out onto other projects.

Adrian Perry

This story was published in the Scarborough News on 18th December 2025.



HALIFAX CIVIC TRUST'S BLUE PLAQUE UNVEILED

Halifax Civic Trust, in partnership with the Northowram Historical Society and with support from the Northowram Scarecrow Committee, proudly unveiled a blue plaque commemorating the life and legacy of Rev. Oliver Heywood (1630–1702).



Pictured from L-R: Alan Goodrum Chair Halifax Civic Trust, Mayoress Linda and Mayor Steven Leigh MBE, Chris Toole.



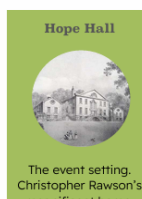
The blue plaque has been installed at Ebenezer Cottage (13-19 Towngate, Northowram, HX3 7DN), where Heywood lived, preached, and established a meeting house from 1672 to 1688. The site stands as a testament to his enduring influence and the flourishing of nonconformist worship in

the region. Chris Toole, who undertook a PhD at the University of Leeds on Heywood's life and his significance in the history of religious dissent...stated, "It's fitting that Heywood should be commemorated in the village where he lived for over fifty years and where he founded a thriving Presbyterian congregation. The plaque will ensure Heywood is remembered by locals and visitors alike for a long time to come."

Mark Fennelly

HALIFAX CIVIC TRUST EVENT IN FEBRUARY

"VOTES FOR WOMEN IN HALIFAX - AND ACROSS YORKSHIRE" BY JILL LIDDINGTON



Votes for Women in Halifax - and Across Yorkshire

Talk & Book Signing by Jill Liddington

Friday 20th February 2026 at 6.30pm Venue: The Albany Club, Halifax

Dr Jill Liddington is an Honorary Research Fellow at the University of Leeds and a leading authority on women's history, with particular expertise in gender and class in nineteenth- and twentieth-century Britain.

She is the acclaimed author of *Female Fortune: The Anne Lister Diaries 1833-36*, the book that inspired Sally Wainwright's hit television series *Gentleman Jack* (BBC One/HBO). So influential is the work that Sally Wainwright once chose it as her desert-island book on BBC Radio 4.

This special fund-raising talk is presented in collaboration with Dr Liddington, a member of Halifax Civic Trust, and will be followed by a book signing of her latest publication, *Rebel Girls: Their Fight for the Vote*.

Discover untold local stories as Jill brings to life the experiences of Halifax suffragettes such as Mary Taylor and Lavena Saltonstall, who campaigned courageously for the vote and were prepared to face arrest in 1907.

The event takes place at The Albany Club, Hope Hall, 57 Clare Road, Halifax HX1 2JP—a venue with its own Anne Lister connection as the former home of her coal rival, Christopher Rawson.

Proceedings begin at 6.30pm with a 40-minute talk, followed by a Q&A session. Tea, coffee and biscuits will be provided. There will be an open bar from 6pm.

Tickets are £15.00, with all proceeds supporting the work of Halifax Civic Trust. The event is open to everyone, including Trust members.

This is expected to be a popular evening, and early booking is strongly recommended. Scan the code to book via Eventbrite.

The event setting, Christopher Rawson's magnificent home.

Scan to book a place

Scan the QR code above with your smartphone to go direct to the event booking place and order your ticket.



Visit our Website to find out more about Halifax Civic Trust - our news and how to get in touch.



HALIFAX BUS STATION RECEIVES FIRST CIVIC TRUST ENVIRONMENTAL AWARD

Halifax Civic Trust Awards have been made since 1992 to encourage high-quality design and craftsmanship in schemes in Halifax and the surrounding countryside.

Winning projects have included restored mills, the People's Park, houses, shops and warehouses, new schools, medical centres and housing, everything from a walled garden to a restored 240-year-old sundial.

Awards are given for high-quality new building, the reuse and restoration of old buildings, landscaping or any other work of a high standard which makes a significant improvement to the fabric of the town or countryside of Halifax and largely carried out or completed in the previous calendar year. Winners receive a certificate and a green plaque.

Recent winners have been the Former Magistrates Court and Police Station, Trinity Academy, Duke of Wellington's Regimental Memorial, the former County Court converted to 14 much needed supported living apartments and the conversion of the former Magistrates Court to a Music Trust and Wellbeing Centre.

The new Bus Station met new environmental criteria and was a worthy winner of the first Halifax Civic Trust Environmental award.



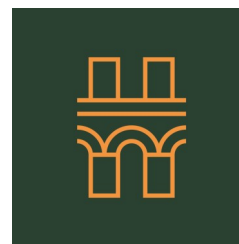
Pictured with the Mayor Cllr Steven Leigh MBE from L-R is Peter Carlill from the West Yorkshire Combined Authority, Phill Jolly the Bus Station Manager and Alan Goodrum, Chair of Halifax Civic Trust.

Alan Goodrum Chair of Halifax Civic Trust stated that, "The WYCA should be commended on an imaginative design, high standard of workmanship, carbon and energy reduction initiatives, inclusive design approach, safe and welcoming asset to Halifax."

The award in the form of a green plaque at the entrance to the new Bus Station was unveiled at a ceremony by the Mayor Cllr Steven Leigh MBE after a tour of the new Station with the Chair of Halifax Civic Trust and Phill Jolly, the Bus Station Manager.

Mark Fennelly

Editor - There's more about Halifax Bus Station in "Society Insight" Summer 2025, Vol 21 Issue2 p 13





YORKSHIRE'S 5TH HERITAGE SUMMIT

Editor

A letter, sent to all Societies in December 2025, is reproduced below at the request of Paul Cartwright, Heritage Summit Leader for The Yorkshire Society



1st December 2025

Dear Heritage Organisation

**Yorkshire's 5th Heritage Summit – Barnsley
Wednesday 25th March 2026**



After the success of last year's Yorkshire Heritage Summit, The Yorkshire Society are well under way with organising 2026's event which will be held in Barnsley at The Civic Theatre in partnership with Barnsley Metropolitan District Council and Barnsley Civic Trust.

The event will take place on Wednesday 25th March 2026 and involve two key elements.

- The morning will feature a **Yorkshire Heritage Symposium**, running between 10am – 12 noon in the Old Art School of The Civic.

The theme of this year's Heritage Symposium is **Our Yorkshire Heritage, Our Yorkshire Future**. Presentations and Speakers include:

Barnsley Heritage Action Zones - Tegwen Roberts – Heritage Development Manager – Wakefield Council

How Yorkshire's History and Cultural Heritage has made us who we are? - Professor Richard Morris - Emeritus Professor of Archaeology, University of Huddersfield







3 events in 1
Something for everyone.

1. EXHIBITION. Barnsley Civic will be full of organisations displaying their work to protect every aspect of Yorkshire's history and heritage. **FREE to enter** 13.00-16.00.



2. SYMPOSIUM. Hear experts on 'Our Yorkshire heritage, our Yorkshire future' from 10.00-12.00. Scan the code for tickets just £7.50pp + booking fee.

3. GUIDED WALKS. A range of heritage walks around Barnsley showcasing the town's unique heritage, organised for the event by Barnsley Civic Trust: please email barnsleycivictrustinfo@gmail.com for **FREE** tickets.

Enquiries to: heritage@theyorkshiresociety.org





How Yorkshire's Natural Heritage has made us who we are? - Rachael Bice - CEO Yorkshire Wildlife Trust

- Then in the afternoon, a separate **Yorkshire Heritage Exhibition** opened by The Mayor of Barnsley, running between 1pm-4pm, which will be free to attend and open to the general public as well as symposium attendees.

We are offering our Yorkshire Heritage Guardians a priority opportunity to take a stand at this year's Yorkshire Heritage Exhibition – the cost of this is just £30.

This will be a great opportunity for networking with other groups and to promote your organisation regionally. You will also get to meet some of the other existing Yorkshire Heritage Guardians Network...

Barnsley Metropolitan District Council will be helping to co-promote the event to ensure a good attendance at the exhibition and Barnsley Civic Trust will be running guided walks on the day.

Please complete the attached Exhibition Registration Form and email it back to heritage@theyorkshiresociety.org to book your stand and confirm your attendance at the Summit. Barnsley has frequent train services from Sheffield, Rotherham, Leeds, Huddersfield and Wakefield.

The Civic is just 100 metres from Barnsley bus and rail interchange. There are large public car parks close by and a vibrant shopping area.

Tickets for the morning symposium are just £7.50 and are available to purchase at:

www.theyorkshiresociety.org/event/yorkshire-heritage-summit-2026

Please help us spread the word...

We would be grateful if you could let your members know about the event and invite them to attend. Could you mention the event in your next Newsletters and in any social media feeds you may use.

We look forward to seeing you there.

Yours sincerely



Paul Cartwright
Heritage Summit Leader – The Yorkshire Society
Tel. 07837281886

Barnsley Civic Trust will be doing a 1 hour heritage walk at 11am and 2pm, and details will be communicated shortly.

Bookings will be made directly with BCT.

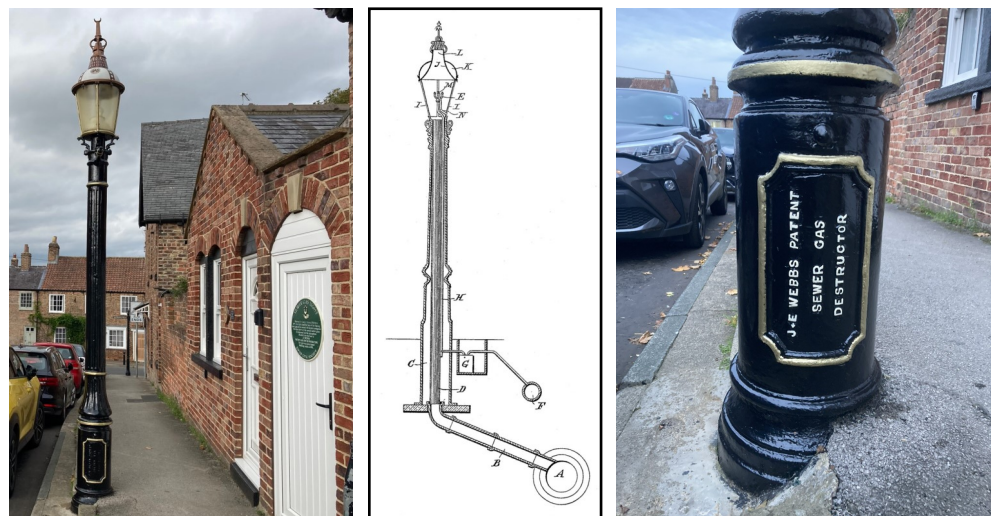
***Register at
[Yorkshire Heritage Summit – Symposium - The Yorkshire Society](http://www.theyorkshiresociety.org)***



RIPON'S SEWER GAS LIGHT

Whilst the big picture is important for civic societies, it's sometimes the small features of our town and cities which attract most public interest. So it has proved for one of the strangest structures in Ripon, our Webb's Patent Sewer Gas Destructor.

I first became aware of these unusual items of street furniture when I lived near Sheffield in the 1970s. What looked at first like a conventional Victorian gas light on West Street turned out to have had a different main purpose, that of venting the sewers. In the 19th century when dealing with waste was more primitive than today there was a problem of foul gases collecting in the sewerage system with the risk of dangerous (not to say distressing!) explosion.



The ingenious solution developed by Joseph Webb in Birmingham was his Patent Sewer Gas Destructor. This was a street light with a wider than normal hollow column positioned over a high point in the sewerage system to allow the products of decomposition to escape. Powered as elsewhere by a town gas supply fed by a separate pipe in the column, the light served not only to illuminate but to safely burn off the sewer gas, largely methane, by mixing it with the town gas supply. Webb patented his light in 1892.

When I came to work for the Civic Trust Ripon Project in 1989, I knew only of the Sheffield West Street light. How gratifying then to discover that Ripon had one too! Finding out about them was not easy as this was in the days before the internet but, armed with some basic information, we put the structure forward for listing and this was accepted. That gave the impetus for the light to be restored and Harrogate Borough Council technical officer duly delivered with the column being repainted and the gas light made to function once more. With the passage of time and changes in personnel and indeed local authorities, the Ripon light was first converted (without listed building consent) to electricity, then neglected with its light ceasing to work and its column once again looking shabby. An ugly plate with parking times was added, again without LB consent.

2025 brought a change in fortune. The new North Yorkshire Council were now responsible for the structure and Neil Jackson, their lighting engineer, agreed to repaint the column, to remove the parking plate and to get the light functioning once more.

The Civic Society was given permission to repaint the lettering on the column base and this expert work was done by our volunteer, Neill Clayton.



*Ripon CS volunteers
Neill Clayton and
Robert Addyman
and the Society's plaque*

Owners of the nearby holiday accommodation, appropriately now called Gas Light Cottage, approached the Society about having one of our historic plaques. With a generous contribution from them, this we were able to arrange and the plaque was unveiled during last September's Heritage Open Days. Passers-by can now learn about this curious feature on Ripon's streets.

Courtesy of listed building records on line, I now find that there are indeed more Webb's lights in Sheffield (Wikipedia says 24) and other towns. I've spotted one on the seafront in Whitley Bay. There's a working Webb's light near the Savoy Hotel in London and this is still gas lit. There may well be other surviving Webb's lights which are not yet listed. If you know of one then do consider approaching Historic England to have it recognised and duly protected.

Richard Taylor
Chair, Ripon Civic Society

BEVERLEY CIVIC SOCIETY'S 'OLD BURIAL GROUND'

Beverley tends to be well known for its Minster but the town church of St Mary's is equally fine: see: <https://www.stmarysbeverley.org/heritage/history/timeline/>

St Mary's has had a history of several graveyards, originally in the Church yard, then across North Bar Within on ground donated in about 1827 by Henry Ellison, the owner of St Mary's Manor opposite. The Eastern portion of this land was sold to St. Mary's Church for the Parish burial ground. This area was in use from 1829 until its closure in 1869 when a new graveyard was established to the north of the town on Molescroft Road. But unusually the smaller Western end of the ground was reserved as a private cemetery for the Ellison family and other paying Beverley citizens.



*The Graveyard in
2023 and in 2025*



In due course the North Bar Within Graveyard was conveyed to East Riding Council and in 1955 the Eastern part became the 'Coronation Gardens' with the gravestones being moved to the edge to create a Public Garden. The Civic Society in 2005 created a Sensory Garden within the Coronation Gardens including a fountain and suitable sensory planting, and later in conjunction with Hull and East Riding Sight Support it erected a tactile sculpture of a head by Peter Brown for those with Sight Loss to explore.

Over the years the Western private graveyard had become rather 'sad' so the Civic Society in 2022 decided to apply for a Grant from the Do-it-for-East-Yorkshire fund (DIFEY) for a project to 'open it up' more to the public by carrying out some restoration but with the aim of retaining the tranquillity of the space. The plan included providing information boards on its unusual history, carrying out suitable natural planting and, to explore the wildlife of this quiet off the beaten track area by installing a night time camera and a bird song recorder. Being a redundant churchyard it was necessary to obtain permission for the works from both St Mary's, and the East Riding Council in addition to a Faculty from the York Diocese.

Having applied for the Grant and the Faculty, a working group of many volunteers from the Society and other interested helpers (eg from the local Bishop Burton College which specialises in land-based subjects, and from St Mary's) was established, and was led by a qualified Landscape architect.



The wild area

Having gained the approvals very many working parties took place over the following two years undertaking clearance/tidying up work (though the damaged gravestones being the responsibility of the Council were left untouched but made safe), followed by the planting of many flowering plants, and two small trees to supplement the well established yews. One small less accessible area was left wild and untouched to further encourage wildlife.

Two information boards were designed and erected; one telling the story of the Burial Ground, and the other recording information on some of the many burials. These include well known worthies, including a military man who fought at the battle of Waterloo, but others from the town's population; for example a lady who worked for very many years in the households of King William the Fourth and Queen Victoria, and the last recorded burial which took place in 1959 of an 89 year old woman who joined her two younger brothers who had been buried as babies in 1871 and 1872.



Information boards

The night time recording device has revealed a regular fox visitor, a domestic cat with four delicate white feet plus a magpie investigating the camera, and a fine sparrow hawk devouring a blackbird. We are hoping for more, including hedgehogs, in the future! At dawn one day in July the audio-moth device recorded some 33 different bird calls; remarkable for an urban area, though

not far from Beverley's ancient Westwood Common.

As a result of the project many more people are visiting the graveyard, some locals discovering it for the first time, appreciating the planting and the continuing tranquillity, escaping the bustle of the town centre. Surveys record that they appreciate learning about its history too with many exploring the gravestones.

The Society is grateful to the many volunteers, to St Mary's, the Diocese and the East Riding Council for their support, and in particular for the awarding of the grant funding from the 'Do It For East Yorkshire' scheme.

Dick Lidwell

PONTEFRACT'S CHAIR TO MAKE WAY FOR A SUCCESSOR



At our September 2025 board of trustees meeting, our chair, Paul Cartwright gave notice that he and Christine would be relocating out of Wakefield District in 2026, though they would remain members of the civic society.

Over the past 14 years, Paul Cartwright has been a pillar of strength and a guiding light for our organisation since becoming a trustee in 2011 and then Chairman from 2015. Paul's wisdom, expertise, and dedication have shaped our growth and success. We are forever grateful for his long-term commitment and the lasting impact he has made.

Phil Cook, vice chair said:

"Paul, thank you for being an extraordinary chair and a true asset to our team. I must also add our thanks to Christine for not only being a valued and active member of many of our groups, but for allowing Paul to have the time to modernise and drive the civic society forward."

Due to Phil's own health and personal circumstances of which the Executive have been aware for some time, he is not in a position to fill the role that Paul leaves, therefore it is now a matter of urgency that we start the search to find Paul's successor.

The trustees are keen to work with the new chair, to ensure that the civic society continues to grow from the very healthy position that Paul has worked tirelessly on with other volunteers over the years.

As Paul and Christine continue to plan for their future, all our trustees wish them well, and hope that some connection with the civic society is maintained.

**Board of Trustees
Ponterfract Civic Society**

NEWS FROM PONTEFRACT CIVIC SOCIETY

More blue plaques

Following 10 months of delays, we were able to install the final blue plaque of eight in the series funded by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and that was to Mary Lucy Turner who died after poisoning at the Barnbow factory. Mary was born and lived in Pontefract and through that blue plaque she represents so many “Barnbow Canaries” who gave their lives so that others could be free at a time of war.

We have also project managed two self-funded blue plaques for the West Yorkshire Astronomical Society and the Featherstone Rovers Foundation.

Other news from Pontefract

Earlier in the autumn, we concluded our Heritage Open Days review which confirmed that over 1500 visitors attended the events as part of the programme we curated for HOD 2025.

In the past three months, we’ve recruited two new trustees with another potentially on the horizon, though we still have gaps to fill.

Members have supported Ackworth & Pontefract Royal British Legion selling poppies and participating in the Remembrance Parade and Armistice Day service.

Two trustees, Paul Cartwright and Dr Colin White were invited to do filmed interviews for Wakefield Council’s ‘Our History, Our Stories’ project to talk about Pontefract Dispensary & Hermitage.

Paul Cartwright and Phil Cook have continued to support The Prince of Wales Hospice Club 5 business network, and the Friday Revival business network, for the same purpose.

On the more social and festive scene we’ve had two Society Social lunches, we’ve hosted a one-man show ‘A Christmas Carol’ by educator and entertainer Chris Cade, we hosted three Christmas wreath making sessions as a fundraiser, we hosted Christmas with the Liquorice Singers at King’s Croft Hotel, and 37 Members attended our Christmas Gathering at The White Horse pub in Sharlston.



Above, Judges of the Christmas Window competition, and, left, a winner

By working with various member categories, we hosted a tour of Pontefract Town Hall for one primary school with 90 pupils in three sessions in one

morning. We supported Castleford & Pontefract Lions Club display in the Market Hall of over 100 Halloween lanterns, followed by hosting their Santa's Grotto in Pontefract town hall as part of the council's Light Up event and market. We supported the official opening of Pontefract Collieries FC pitch & grounds enhancement phase 1, and civic society members attended Carleton High School Christmas Extravaganza and the King's High School Carols by the Tree.

School pupils also formed the judging panel for Christmas window displays by businesses, as well as helping us with their Christmas card designs which we added to vinyl banners around the town's tree.

Whilst we have a good range of merchandise on sale, we've now introduced liquorice sweet jars (*right*), a Yorkshire T shirt and two Pontefract tote bags.

Our AED/defibrillator project has funded or supported eight installations, and we're currently advising Darrington Parish Council.

By the time you read this report, we will have held our 2025 Design Awards ceremony, and we'll share that news in the next newsletter.

Paul Cartwright, Chair, Pontefract Civic Society

STEP INSIDE THE BRONTË BIRTHPLACE

DISCOVER THE HOUSE WHERE THE BRONTËS' STORY BEGAN

Are you a group with an interest in literature, heritage or culture, or looking to host a memorable event in a truly historic setting? We would be delighted to welcome you to the Brontë Birthplace in Thornton for a guided tour of the childhood home of Charlotte, Emily, Anne and their brother Branwell.

Your visit offers a fascinating insight into life in Regency-era Thornton and the Brontës' early years from 1815–1820.

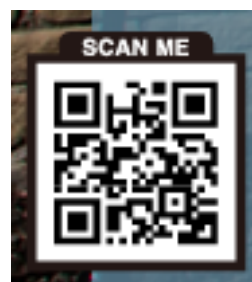
Led by one of our friendly, knowledgeable volunteer guides, you'll explore every room of the house, many still featuring original fireplaces and architectural details.

The house on Market Street is where Charlotte, Branwell, Emily and Anne Brontë were born and spent their early childhood, before the family moved to Haworth in 1820. Patrick Brontë said of his five years in Thornton, "My happiest days were spent there."

Following a successful crowdfunding campaign supported by over 700 investors, together with grants from Bradford 2025, the Community Ownership Fund, National Lottery Heritage Fund and the Rural England Prosperity Fund, £650,000 was raised. The house has since undergone a major nine-month restoration programme and is now under the care of Brontë Birthplace Limited, a Community Benefit Society.

To mark 210 years since the Brontë family arrived in Thornton on 19th May 1815, Queen Camilla was invited to officially open the Brontë Birthplace on 15th May 2025.

The Birthplace can now be enjoyed by visitors from all over the world as a visitor, literary and education centre.



For more information go to:
www.brontebirthplace.com



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.

Future Events/Dates In 2026

Sat 24th January 2.00pm - Civic Voice Zoom meeting - update on the
Strategic Review - [registration here](#)

Sat 18th April - YHACS Spring Members' Meeting - hosted by Doncaster
Civic Trust in their 80th Anniversary year

Autumn 2026 - YHACS Autumn Members' Meeting - hosted by Goole

NEXT YHACS MEETING

SATURDAY 31ST JANUARY 1:00 - 4:00 PM

AGM & MEMBERS' MEETING IN HARROGATE, OLD SWAN HOTEL

INCLUDES

OPTIONAL MORNING SESSION: 10 AM – 12 NOON - "AI FOR CIVIC SOCIETIES"
PRESENTATION OF 2025 PETER SPAWFORTH AWARD

CONTACT: [INFO@YHACS.ORG.UK](mailto:info@yhacs.org.uk)

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