



Pickering & District Civic Society

Reg. Charity 502630

Newsletter

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Newsletter Frequency

Members may have noticed that this issue of the Newsletter has slipped a bit in the time schedules. The last issue was late because we were awaiting some news we wanted to include. This issue as a consequence slipped too and also because your editor and contributors are at times rather busy with other things. We do try and keep things up to date but sometimes circumstances contrive against our best efforts and good intentions. **SAH**

Bill Breakell

Bill has recently moved from Pickering to Keldholme and has resigned from the committee. He has made a tremendous contribution to the society during his tenure and will be sorely missed. Judy contributed the following note:

I first met Bill about 18 years ago - he gave a talk about transport and in particular about the beginning of the Moorsbus which he was instrumental in instigating. This of course has given easy access to many more people from Hull, York and Teesside as well as enabling people living in the Ryedale towns to return to visit their birthplace and friends still living in the moors villages. And above all reducing the car journeys during the summer on the Moors roads. It is tragic that it is likely that next year 2013 could be the last Moors Bus. This year has had a truncated service just on Wednesdays and Sundays with part of the subsidy going on the 128 service during the summer between Sutton Bank and Scarborough.

Bill is a fount of knowledge about the Moors, covering many aspects including footpaths, roads, planning, legislation of all kinds as well as a wide countryside vision. He had that special insight into how civil servants tick and what the various rules and regulations meant and were administered. Although he said as he left the committee you can always ask me- but we never knew what he knew until any particular topic came up! **JD**

The Blue Plaque for Francis Nicholson unveiled by Cllr William Oxley Town Mayor of Pickering

We can now report that it can be seen above the garage of 3 Hungate so that hopefully he will not be forgotten in Pickering! Thanks due to Stuart for paperwork, Mike, Stuart and John Flintoft with fixing and to Leander the makers. And to Mrs Flintoft of no 3 for allowing us to affix it to the wall. FN also gets a mention on the interpretation board for Turner in the Market Place. The research on his family tree and his places of residence over his long life are a story in itself which will be told one day by Alan Hinton. We are not sure which house in Hungate was the Nicholson family home but efforts to identify it go on. His home in Whitby is not known, the Knaresborough street has been demolished, the exact house in Park Street, Ripon is not yet known and it could be that his last London home was bombed. Each month brings a new piece of information. We now know the whereabouts of a piece of art

work by each of his children. For instance a recent TV programme on Coulton Mill featured a drawing by George Nicholson which is in the York Art Gallery collection. **JD**

Traffic Issues

On 17 Sep, I attended a town council meeting as there were several topics of interest to P&DCS on the agenda. First was the vexed question of regular town centre traffic congestion due to both illegal and blue badge parking. NYCC have limited options available, mainly revolving round various permutations of 'no loading' restrictions, particularly on the north side of Market Place, meaning absolutely no parking would be allowed there, including deliveries and blue badge holders. This would require changes in other places to ensure the needs of both were catered for. Any change would probably be for a trial period of 6 or 12 months. Central to this issue is parking enforcement - or rather the lack of it. Responsibility is scheduled to switch from the police to county/district councils in 12 months, which could make a difference, particularly if there's money from fines to be made. Tied into this is the Market Day closure of Market Place, which most shopkeepers seem to strongly oppose. But what do the shoppers and stallholders think? It's important that a minority who shout loudest don't hold sway over the majority preference. We'll continue to monitor progress. **MP**

Wells Walk

We have been quietly talking with the Town Council and the NYCC public rights of way officer for almost a year in the hope of reaching a sensibly negotiated settlement to the Wells Walk/Porters Headland path blockage. Unfortunately, this proved futile, so NYCC had no option but to initiate legal proceedings to amend the definitive map, which is likely to take a considerable time and a lot of taxpayers' money. Consequently, we will now be making representations to the relevant authorities about illegal blockages, tipping and surface damage to the public right of way. We also suggest that every instance of unprovoked harassment or abusive behaviour be reported to the police. **MP**

Flood Scheme

PDCS has been at the forefront of negotiations to get viable flood protection for the town for far too many years now. It's both astounding and worrying that a relatively simple scheme can be dragged out for so long. However, despite a shortfall in funding as costs escalate yet again, the bund scheme is still edging slowly forward. It is still

hoped that the Environment Agency can begin construction next summer. We have been incredibly fortunate (so far) this year to avoid flooding. Although measures installed upstream by the Forestry Commission will be having a limited effect, we have been lucky to avoid the torrential rainfall that many parts of Yorkshire have suffered this 'summer'. On several occasions, we have had very heavy rainfall, but always with enough time for flood peaks to pass through the town before the next deluge. **MP**

Flood Barrier Provision

One positive aspect of flood defence provisions has been the actions of Ryedale District Council in providing flood barriers to local householders in affected areas. Residents may have noticed installers at work over the last few months fitting these to the doors of houses in Wells Walk, Park St, Bridge St etc. Houses in Mill Lane have also been fitted with barriers. These are removable and easily fitted to the affected doorways in minutes with four bolts. The barriers have a rubber seal that compresses against the door frame and sill to keep out flood water. Hopefully they will never need to be tested in anger but we desperately need the bunds to help ensure that doesn't happen. **SAH**

Local Planning Strategy (LPS)

The formulation and ultimately the adoption of the Local Planning Strategy known as the LPS rumbled on recently with a public inquiry at Ryedale House chaired by a member of the Planning Inspectorate. This is a very important piece of planning for Ryedale as it sets out future policy for building and development in the district for the next 15 years. An earlier attempt to institute such a plan was rejected by the government inspector and it has since been reformulated over an extended period.

After responding to RDC's initial consultation, the society had formal representation at the examination of the LPS, meaning we were also able to comment verbally. I quote the planning inspectors 'key issue' from the agenda, which explains the point of the exercise:

Does the LPS make appropriate provision for the effective delivery of the overall amount of new housing required in Ryedale, including the scale and distribution of new housing, affordable housing and provision for gypsies and travellers and other special needs, having regard to national policy, and is it soundly based, fully justified and supported by an up-to-date, credible and robust evidence base?

It was most disconcerting to see that highly paid lawyers and consultants representing several major property developers almost outnumbered all the others present. I found their hypocrisy quite staggering and a sad reflection of the mercenary nature of big business. Without exception, they talked at length about building 'affordable housing', (without defining it), and how this should affect what THEY considered the correct total provision of housing for the whole of Ryedale over the 15 year course of the LPS. (Cllr John Clark drily commented later about hen houses being built by the fox community!) Ryedale DC was arguing for a minimum total of 3000 new houses (750 for Pickering). The developers talked of 4,500 and 8,250 totals. For some perspective, the population of Pickering is about 7000. The planning inspector gave the council a hard time over justifying their 3000 figure, yet strangely, I wasn't aware of him grilling the developers on the credibility of theirs. RDC based theirs on estimations of population growth in the district, which have since proved to

For anyone wanting uncontrolled development in the hope that it might 'stimulate growth in the economy', while conveniently ignoring recent financial history in Ireland, it would demand a vast increase in population. To anyone analysing figures based on true demand and need, this would suggest an overall reduction was needed from the 3000 in the LPS. We eagerly await the inspector's final judgment, but yet again with scant optimism.

I received a minor slap on the wrist when my verbal comments were not solely based on our consultation response, but on up-to-date info i.e. what I'd just heard said, plus the census figures. I expect I'll live with that! My comments were roughly as follows: The concern of developers is admirable, however, why does a sufficient level of affordable housing require a proportionate large increase in commercial house building? The inspector's own key issue demands an up to date, credible and robust evidence base, so surely the ACTUAL census figures of 1.6% population growth per annum should now be used in place of the wildly inaccurate 5.3% growth projection that was used for RDC's 3000 figure. There would be a need to adjust figures for people moving into the district to reflect demand, whether potential commuters or retired, but the attraction is to live in a rural area with small market towns. To overdevelop risks destroying the idyll that attracts people to move here. Building houses to attract employment is putting the cart before the horse, so we need sensible evolution of towns, no major re-organisation.

I hope this reflects the views of our membership – please speak up if you have a different view.

I also represented PDCS at the 'economy' hearing, to discuss the delivery and distribution of employment and industrial land. As the only Pickering representative, I was acutely aware that my views needed to accurately reflect the future needs of the town. The LPS proposes 37 hectares of employment land, with an additional 8 if needed. 95% of this would go to Malton, Norton and Pickering, although realistically the majority would go to Malton/Norton due to transport links.

My comments – mainly Pickering based - were as follows:

- Future viability of the town needs commercial and employment land – PDCS supports this.
- There appears to be no great clamour for employment development land.
- We have serious concerns that land earmarked for employment and not then taken up would be forced by NPPF to transfer to housing development land. In terms of strategic planning, this would make a nonsense of providing suitable and necessary buffer zones between housing and employment land.
- In terms of the previous point, would it not be more sensible to allocate a smaller amount of employment land, with scope for additional allocation if there was sufficient demand.
- It makes no sense to expect employment to follow housing development and even if this is expected to happen, how can figures for housing development possibly be estimated on this basis.

Some immediate response from RDC as follows: There is protection in the NPPF to support buffer zones (*this would be irrelevant if stand-alone employment land was reallocated for housing*). Most employment sites are on industrial estates and therefore not conducive to housing (*this may be true in Malton/Norton, but less so in the other market towns*). Malton/Norton is likely to attract private investment due to easier transport links, whereas North Ryedale would need public money to fund commercial development. **MP**

The Weekly Planning List: an Economic Barometer?

In view of Mike's comments above about the LPS for Ryedale, our members should know that as a society we monitor the weekly planning list issued by Ryedale District Council Planning Department. It lists all the planning applications made that week and for a long time has been in decline to a relatively small number. Moreover nearly all are for very small-scale extensions or alterations to existing buildings and are largely delegatable decisions. In the latest list only one application rated a full committee decision. This situation we feel shows exactly how moribund the building industry has become throughout the district and as such is a good indicator of overall economic activity and business confidence.

A look at our recent local history on sites also reflects this situation. The old garage site on Eastgate granted permission at appeal for 48 flats but standing forlorn. The more recent hugely unpopular Burgate site, again granted on appeal, which it seems no one wants to build on. The former Cinema in Burgate, again granted on appeal for conversion to flats, stands derelict and boarded up. The corner site on the Ropery, next to the granary, won on appeal but no one is interested in it. Spire View, an award-winning finished, but largely unsold and bankrupt, development off Eastgate. Note how many of these were granted on appeal! One wonders also about other sites such as the David Wilson Homes development in Whitby Rd- how well are those houses selling?

When things do improve and building starts again the recent changes to the planning laws will come home to roost with a bang as the big builders lay into Ryedale and start building sprawling estates wherever they please.

The building industry big guns may have been lobbying hard at the LPS public inquiry but at the moment they are building hardly anything in the district. Hard times may be upon us all, but they obviously wish to secure their future prospects for a beanfeast once things improve. Only then will this government realise what they have actually unleashed on this green and pleasant land. **SAH**

Ryedale Folk Museum visit with Edward Harrison was fascinating. A third of the Harrison Collection is now on display but a walk round with one of the brothers telling the story of many of the "sales finds" is so much more fun. If enough of those who were unable to come in October request it, we can arrange another visit next autumn. The intention is to change the display from time to time until another barn is built. A few years ago we enjoyed the visit of Richard Harrison, who has written the Story of Blansby Park (awaiting publication), who brought their field finds including some of the Roman collection which is not at Ryedale Folk Museum. **JD**

Nicholson Tea sets and Dinner Services.

Another informant tells us that castles and abbeys drawn by Nicholson are on blue and white pottery –tea sets and dinner services made after his lithographs were published and before copyright laws were made. (1822 and 1838?) This collector of over 70 pieces of blue and white ware decided to research the whereabouts of the images and then the artists and came across the picture of Richmond (Surrey) Bridge by Nicholson in Kingston upon Thames Museum. He was puzzled as to who was this Francis Nicholson who isn't mentioned in usual artist books? He found us through the internet and now believes he has 7 pieces with FN images including Helmsley Castle, Byland Abbey, Richmond Castle and St Mary's Abbey, York. He is trying to locate the lithographs which were copied and then photographing the scene today. I have only found

Chinese/Japanese ware and of course Rington's Anniversary pieces in Pickering antique outlets but it would be great to locate a Nicholson for the Beck Isle Museum! **JD**

EXHIBITION of Nicholson Prints and Drawings at Whitby Pannett Museum until December 2 (closed Mondays) gallery free but charge for museum.

Two years ago we had a mini display in the Memorial Hall of perhaps a dozen prints. At Whitby there is a magnificent collection of about 80 which give a good idea of his range of styles. The opening on Wednesday 24 October followed a presentation by Prof Gordon Bell to the Whitby Literary and Philosophical Society and the Town Mayor Cllr John Freeman himself a well known local watercolour artist performed the ceremony! A second Blackthorn book was also launched "Francis Nicholson. Lithographs and Engravings of Georgian Britain" by Gordon Bell ISBN 978 1 906259 32 7 £20 (80 b/w prints) – contact Alan Avery, 15 Middleton Rd. or Beck Isle Museum to buy. **JD**

Sunday November 25 2.30pm Memorial Hall Pickering.

The Stained Glass Legacy of Charles Kempe and Studio 1837 -1907

Presentation by Jennifer Caunt of Pickering. Charles Kempe was a leading stained glass artist of the Victorian period and his legacy is in every county and in many cathedrals. Locally in Ryedale and Scarborough are many examples to enjoy. I have heard people say I don't know anything about stained glass – well here is an introduction. Ryedale churches in particular have lovely windows some by Kempe and others more modern by leading 20th century glass artists which could lead us to arrange to a great day out! Do invite your friends to come along. **JD**

Events in 2013 – suggestions welcome of speakers and visits – these could be historical or geographical or civic. **Nicky Milner (York University) the leading light** of the Flixton Mesolithic Dig (10,000 years ago) (next to Starr Carr) is willing to come in March. I visited this dig on Heritage Open Days and was amazed to see horses' footprints in the mud at the edge of the lake. Each day the sifters on the site found flints and one lucky person a fish bone! The digs run from July to September when the meadow birds have fledged. Sifters of soil welcome!

Prof Gordon Bell is also happy in the Spring to come to update us about the last three years of his research on the artistic merits etc of Francis Nicholson and family.

Two town walks have been suggested round town – a geological walk round the walls of Pickering inspired by geologist Richard Myerscough and a Dissenters Trail. We also welcome offers from other members to share their expertise. **JD**

Yorkshire and Humberside Civic Societies.

This quarterly gathering of some of the members of Societies around our region is always lively. The many changes to local planning laws and also the loss of Heritage sites are causing concern and objection by civic and conservation societies. Harold and I, who attend occasionally, were not able to attend the last meeting in September when the annual YHACS Civic Awards were presented. Scarborough won this year with their "Paint the Town" project. Perhaps other members might be interested in attending future meetings –

the next one **26 January** is in York and the spring one is on **20 April**.

Usually there is an optional guided walk in the host town or visit in the morning leaving time for a snack then the meeting starts at 1pm finishing at 4pm with a tea break. There is also a joint YHACS /Civic Voice meeting with **Gryff Rhys Jones** CV president as speaker on **15 November** in West Yorkshire (Leeds?). If you would like to see the minutes or know more email me or ring. **Judy Dixon**

York Minster Developments

Since my recent appointment as the cathedral archaeologist life has been quite hectic. I thought a short note on what is happening at the minster might be of interest to members. Works at the minster are going on to redevelop the undercroft exhibition, repair the stone of the east front and the glass of the east window. This is under the York Minster Revealed project funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund. Further works are also taking place to improve the access at the south transept doorway. Partial dismantling of the south transept steps revealed traces of the earlier arrangement and it seems that in 1848, when the present stairs were constructed, the old, possibly medieval, steps were simply partially dismantled and the remainder encased. Retrieved from the packing fill were two important vault shaft clusters reused from the twelfth-century choir of archbishop Roger that was destroyed in the fourteenth century. An excavation for a lift shaft revealed more reused twelfth-century masonry and cutting away concrete for new steps in the undercroft revealed a soil section from the construction of the first Norman cathedral.

These finds were of particular interest to me as I have been working on the eleventh and twelfth-century form of the minster for the past seven years.

The restoration of the east front and the glass from the east window is shown in a new exhibition in the Lady Chapel of the cathedral. A specially designed exhibition structure called the Orb has recently opened and will feature periodically changing restored panels of the east window glass. The restoration of the panels is being undertaken by the York Glaziers Trust and gives visitors a chance to see the high quality of the glass painting close up. They have managed to remove many interpolated leadings and reveal much of the window as it must have first appeared when it was installed in 1407. The glass was created by the workshop of the Coventry glassmaker, John Thornton, who was paid £45 for the work. The theme of the glass is the creation and the Revelations of St John the Divine.

In addition there are features on the stonework restoration and a video showing the changing development of the minster from the eleventh to the fifteenth century. This shows 3d computer models that gradually change as alterations were made. Much of it is based on our recent research on the earlier minster funded by English Heritage. The Lady Chapel exhibition will continue for several years until the east window works are completed and all the medieval glass is reinstalled in the window. When it is finally complete the window will be awe-inspiring as it will be possible to read the panels quite easily. Works to the undercroft and the installation of a new exhibition will go on until late spring when hopefully it will reopen to the public. Access to the cathedral, especially for disabled visitors, will also be much improved. **SAH**

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letters, notes or articles
for the next newsletter
is 20th January**

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