



Pickering & District Civic Society

Reg. Charity 502630

Newsletter

Issue No.29
April 2012

Annual General Meeting

The AGM will be held on the 27th May at 2pm in the Memorial Hall. The business will be kept to a minimum with the chairman's report, treasurer's report and annual election of officers. We will then hear our speaker Gareth Jenkins who is going to talk about the new Pickering Town Blog website which aims to publish local news and matters of interest to residents (see more detail below). We hope that members will attend to ensure that sufficient numbers are present. SH

Flood Scheme update

In the last issue, you may have noticed I put into print my frustration at the lack of progress. It went to a wide readership from the bottom, right to the top. Without relaying the gory details, it drew the desired response! In particular, I wrote: *'I still maintain that all necessary people (EA, NE, landowners, contractors etc) need to meet head on and thrash out problems, then get on with it instead of drifting lamely towards the next meeting.'*

In response to a request from Slowing the Flow (STF) chairman Jeremy Walker in February, I arranged an on-site meeting between the latest consultants ARUP, NYMR, EA and sundry others. At last, we got down to discussing practical issues and essential civil engineering factors. Firm resultant plans have not yet appeared, but I know that progress is being made. For the moment, RDC funding is still in place, so fingers crossed that tangible progress will be made in the next few months. Whether any serious construction will happen this year is another matter.

As I write, drought conditions have just turned to flash floods. This happens when the ground is baked hard, causing water to run off quickly, so there's never room for complacency. Resultant high river flows gave the first opportunity to test upstream debris dams in anger. The pictures show they appear to work effectively. More photographs should be available on our website www.pickeringcivicsociety.btck.co.uk under Gallery. MP

Woody Debris Dams

On the 12th April Radio 4s Nature programme was about experiments taking place with woody debris dams on rivers in various parts of the country. Most rivers now reflect our past actions to manage them to suit our needs. This often means they are uniformly slow in current and often have accumulations of silt. By felling trees into the watercourses variations in flows are created, natural river plants can take hold and gravel beds are scoured clean of silt. This improves the river condition and promotes wildlife of all kinds. Trout in particular seem to thrive where this work has been carried out. Yet words of caution were also expressed lest this sort of obstruction causes backing up of water in flood conditions. It was also pointed out that in some areas such obstructions could have benefits in slowing the river flows in flood conditions and thus prevent flooding downstream. This is of course exactly what is envisaged upstream of Pickering in the 'Slowing the Flow' project. As Mike mentions above the woody debris dams which have been built work efficiently to slow the flow and more work of this kind needs to be done. What this programme appeared to demonstrate was that such actions actually have a beneficial effect on the environment of the river system and the wildlife thrives as a result. A quick Google search on the net for woody debris dams shows that the concept is nothing new and the benefits have been known for years. There have been studies across the world including quite a lot of work in the USA and Australia. All seem to indicate beneficial effects by creating such eco systems. The sticking point with our proposed scheme seems to be the reluctance, in fact adamant refusal, by Natural England for any works within the SSSI. Yet this evidence seems to show that such works could only have a beneficial effect. In fact there is a stretch of river at Farwath where trees have died

and fallen into the river and nature is creating its own woody debris dams. It seems to me that it's time Natural England came down from its ivory tower, sniffed the air and got up to date with this long established research instead of always giving us the old Stalinist answer niet. When push comes to shove the Environment Agency should submit a planning application for all the ten bunds, including those in the SSSI and force Natural England to defend its entrenched position in the planning process. Frankly it's time to call their bluff because I believe they are in an indefensible position. Bund construction is very unlikely to have detrimental effects on the SSSI and in fact the opposite seems to be the case. Having studied the new planning rules I believe Natural England would be overruled providing the case is argued correctly. **SH**

Green Neighbourhood Challenge (GNC)

Also in the last issue, we were anticipating the final judging of the GNC. This was held at the de Grey Rooms in York on the 28th January when all participating groups gathered to hear the results. While we were fully committed to the challenge of carbon reduction, recycling etc, we honestly didn't take the competition seriously. It therefore came as quite a shock to win first prize. We're not complaining of course, as we shared £500 with Kirkbymoorside Environment Group (KMEG) to spend on 'sustainable projects'. In line with the ethos of Incredible Edible Todmorden, who gave us a particularly inspiring talk, we are funding Pickering in Bloom (PIB) to plant a communal herb garden on Smiddy Hill where the herbs will be free for town residents to pick. We are also looking to plant trees to celebrate the Queen's jubilee, so if anyone knows of suitable locations around the town, please let us know. Thought will of course have to be given to match tree species to location. **MP**

Pickering Town Blog

I was recently contacted by Gareth Jenkins, who has set up 'town blogs' for Kirkbymoorside and Helmsley. These blogs are simply a web page for the town, where members of the community can contribute up-to-date info of events and news. It also provides links to myriad locally relevant web pages of newspapers, businesses, organisations etc. Although principally designed for the community, it can also be very useful for visitors. I was very pleased to be able to assist Gareth in setting up the Pickering blog, which I recommend visiting regularly at www.pickeringtown.info to keep abreast of events. Much easier than the chaotic notice board next to Wrothwells!

Hopefully, the blog will successfully work in

conjunction with the Beacon until the almost inevitable time when print is forced into obsolescence by computers (assuming we can still rely on electricity at the flick of a switch – but that's another argument!). **MP**

Heritage Group

This group, which aims to encourage more people and particularly the children in the town to enjoy and appreciate the Pickering Castle, are as usual planning some family events this year. However, with savage cuts in funding to English Heritage, which is affecting local management staffing, it is unclear presently what events will actually happen. Indecision on the part of EH last year meant that the proposed Easter event was cancelled and the same has happened again this year. Whilst this is dispiriting the group will continue to press EH to allow our events to take place. Before the castle passed into the Guardianship of the Office of Works and subsequently to EH it was the public park for Pickering. In recognition of this residents are allowed free entry with a pass obtainable from the Town Council. **JD**

Francis Nicholson (1753-1844)

Painter, Printmaker and Drawing Master
Exhibition in Ryedale Folk Museum 31 March – 20 May 2012

Paintings in oil and watercolour and prints.

Landscapes and Portraits.

Although I have been involved in researching and planning for this event, I was totally unprepared for the quality of the work on show. Francis Nicholson spent his whole life researching and learning (no art college for him) working up to the lovely watercolours of the two lake district paintings (loaned by the Wordsworth Trust) and then in his seventies exploring the new art of lithography and pioneering the use of it in England for reproducing pictures and plans. Finally in his last years when he could no longer leave the house, getting out his oil paints once again to paint landscapes and self-portraits. The final self-portrait greets the visitors at the entrance to the Gallery.

Professor Gordon Bell has done splendid work in assembling this collection by persuading public bodies, museums and art galleries, trusts and many individuals to loan their pictures to celebrate the bicentenary of Nicholson's Presidency of the Society of Arts. There are also some works by his teacher Conrad Metz and by some of his pupils, his son Alfred, daughter Marianne, his Malton nephew George Nicholson and John Jackson of

Lastingham and others. Sadly no paintings by his eldest daughter Sophie Ayrton have been found nor any views of Pickering!

A limited edition catalogue/book of the same title with coloured illustrations is now available which contains much material previously unpublished about this talented Pickering born artist's life. Edited by Gordon Bell with chapters by the Nicholson Group and is published by Blackthorn Press £9.99 and is available from Tourist Information Centre, Beck Isle Museum and Local shops.

I will be available to be at the Gallery at Ryedale Folk Museum on..22April 2-5 and 9May 1-4pm for any members of the Society and their friends who would like a mini guide round the exhibition. I will give a lift to those without transport. Judy Dixon 473488

A blue plaque for Francis Nicholson is still in hand.

More information will be posted on the Beck Isle Museum website www.beckislemuseum.co.uk and at www.pickeringcivicsociety.btck.co.uk **JD**

New National Planning Guidelines

The new planning regime is now law and some 1300 pages of planning guidelines and rules have been condensed down to around 58 pages! After much outcry, led principally by the National Trust, some aspects have been changed from that originally proposed, especially the default position that the answer to any application should be yes. How it will work in practice remains to be seen but it does appear that the worst aspects have been removed or at the least watered down. In a cutting article in **Private Eye** 1311 page 10, entitled **Money's Worth?** The contribution of £510,000 by the construction industry to the Conservative Party was pointed out and also their heavy lobbying for planning reform. They had 28 official meetings with government officials against only 11 by environmental groups. The industry also sent a letter to government pushing hard for instant reform with a no holds barred attitude to development in the Green Belt and on greenfield sites- in other words a planning free for all. The public outcry against the reforms was such that the government backed down and changed their original proposals. This was apparently much to the chagrin of the Home Builders Federation that represents the big builders. Yet the Eye also points out that the wording is so vague in many places that it *'will keep m'learned friends busy for years. So at least the lawyers will be happy'*. It will be interesting to see how the new rules work in practice. We are used to seeing the big builders get their own way and then flaunt any planning conditions imposed by the council. That was under the old regime so how things will work under

the new rules will be interesting to observe. Here in Pickering it is perhaps notable that David Wilson Homes has now appealed against the refusal of their planning application to build homes on what is basically a swamp off Outgang Road. If developed this site would push the town boundary closer to the industrial estate with the possible conflicts that might cause between residents and industry. It looks like they are trying to get the site accepted before the Local Development Framework which sets out the preferred development sites, has been ratified. At the moment we are still working under the old plan which is time expired and builders have been sneaking in sites not nominated for development by the council. We will object to the site at the appeal on various points. **SH**

Wells Walk

After the last protracted access issues surrounding Wells Walk took so long to negotiate, we became increasingly concerned that it was all happening again with the blockage of the Porters Headland path. A letter to the relevant authorities produced a suitable response, in particular from Brian Mullins, NYCC Rights of Way officer. The upshot is that the 'legal option' is by far the slowest and most costly route to resolution, so Brian is patiently picking his way through the minefield of negotiating a solution that meets the approval of all parties. As such, the committee has agreed to allow him to proceed in relative peace until September, when we will review our options. Confrontation, either first hand or via the local press is only likely to inflame the situation. I am confident that Brian is doing his best and will keep us informed of progress. **MP**

Lidl

Information indicates that nothing will be done this year and the earliest construction will start is sometime in 2013. One would have thought that they could at the least have made the required improvements to the traffic junction since they have to be done first. **SH**

Events

Saturday April 28 10 – 4.00pm WEA Study Day Francis Nicholson Memorial Hall and RFM with Gordon Bell. Book David Clark 476118 or email jdsc Clark@btinternet.com

Fri/ Sat/Sun April 27/ 28/29 Natural History Weekend at Wass Village Hall. Celebrating the life of their former resident Moth Researcher Dr Archie Heron.

Monday May / Pickering Town Walks start 10.30 at the TIC and continue to end of October

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27 May 2pm Memorial Hall Civic Society AGM Reports and Agenda available shortly

Thursday May 24 Visit of Forest of Galtres Association (Easingwold Civic Society) for Guided Walk. Walk, lunch in town and afternoon visit to Beck Isle or a tour of our flood defences.

Monday May 20 – June 30 A mini exhibition about Francis Nicholson with material by children of year 7 of Lady Lumley School will be in Pickering Library

Monday June 4 Pickering Town Beacon Jubilee Event. Lighting of the Beacon at top of Market Place.

Tuesday June 5 P&DCS will have a stall at Pickering Castle at the event to celebrate the Queen's Jubilee. Rather than the same old faces, we would warmly welcome the assistance of members to man this stall, even if it's only for the odd hour or so. If you are willing to do so, please contact Mike Potter.

Monday June 18 Olympic Torch arrives by train in Pickering and thence to Scarborough

Olympic Torch Monday Morning June 18 Although it will not take long for the torch to pass through Pickering, the Town Council are looking for Volunteers to help steward the route, as a lot of people are expected in town. Various voluntary bodies including the Civic Society are being asked to help with this - contact the town council if you can help please.

Pickering Town Guided Walks. Mondays 10.30 Pickering Tourist Information Centre **May to Oct.** Welcome to our new guides who have been training this Spring. We wish them well in their capacity to welcome people to the town and to help residents and visitors to enjoy its diversity and history. A Newbridge Walk is not planned this year but if anyone or rather four or more would like to have a guide this could be arranged – do contact us. This includes woods, water, quarries and limekilns and can include a tea stop. 1½ miles and takes 1½ hours depending on how long you stop and look! **JD**

ROSEDALE HISTORY SOCIETY HISTORY WALKS 2012

WED. 9 MAY 2.00p.m. (2-3 hrs)
EAST MINES & DALE HEAD, starting at School Row, Updale.

Your Committee

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Committee

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SUNDAY 10 JUNE 2.00p.m. (1 hr +)
ROSEDALE ABBEY VILLAGE WALK starting on Village Green.

SUNDAY 15 JULY 1.00p.m. (3-4 hrs)
THORGILL, MEDD'S FARM & SHERRIFF'S PIT, starting at White Horse car park.

SUNDAY 12 AUGUST 1.00p.m. (3hrs)
NORTHDALE via Douker and Bell End starting Rosedale Abbey Village Green

WED 12 SEPTEMBER 10.30a.m. (approx.5 hrs with bookable lunch stop)

DALE HEAD via THORGILL, EAST MINES starting Rosedale Abbey Village Green.

Contact Sec. on: rosedalehistory@hotmail.co.uk
or : 01751 417071 to book walks and for further details. <http://rosedale.ryedaleconnect.org.uk>

**The closing date for letters, notes or
articles for the next newsletter is 20th
June**

*Any opinions, beliefs or views expressed in this
newsletter are not necessarily those of the Civic*

