

HULL CIVIC SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

MAY 2009



The Boulevard Fountain

In this issue: Summer & winter programme, Hull Civic Society is Rebranding, Urgent Appeal, Meeting with Hull City Council, Newington & St Andrews Area Action Plan, A63 Castle Street Improvement Scheme, The Steve Shearsmith Award, Readers' Letters, Planning & Buildings, Book Review – A New Look at Kingston upon Hull (by Trevor Galvin), Officers & Committee.

Summer Programme 2009 Visits

Non-members are welcome to join us for all our meetings and visits.

Any further visits will be advertised in the media and by email. If you would also like to receive details by email, please send an email request to Ken Baker, Honorary Secretary, kbaker@goodwin-centre.org with a copy to the Newsletter Editor john.scotney@talk21.com.

Sunday 7th June, 1 pm – Coach tour of Hull (part 2), guided by Adam Fowler. *There are a few spaces still available. Fare £7 – please send a cheque with the attached booking form. Meet at Queens Dock Avenue, opposite the fountain (near the Maritime Museum).*

This year's tour will visit some different locations, including part of the docks estate.

Monday 15th June, 7 pm - Historic Cottingham - Guided Tour (1½ to 2 hours), led by Pat Elliot of Cottingham Local History Society. *Meet at Cottingham Green.*

Fully booked at present, but waiting list bookings still open. *If you have booked and cannot go, or if you would like to be on the waiting list, please advise Ken Baker. (01482 224767 or email kbaker@goodwin-centre.org)*

Sunday 12th July, 1.30 pm – Cleethorpes Guided Tour – led by Cleethorpes Civic Society. *Meet at Cleethorpes Library, Alexandra Road, opposite the sea front gardens, just east of the station. Cleethorpes will be looking its best, in preparation for the following week's Britain in Bloom competition. Please indicate on the booking form if you need or can offer a lift.*

Tuesday 21st July, 7 pm – Beverley Road Walk (part 2) (1½ to 2 hours), led by John Scotney. *Meet outside Beverley Road Baths. We will look at the buildings north of Stepney, returning via Cottingham Road, Newland Avenue and Queens Road.*

Winter Programme 2009-2010

All meetings are on Mondays at 7.30 pm (except 15th April) at the Quality Hotel Royal, Ferensway.

12th October – Hull Forward - John Holmes

9th November – Joint meeting with the Chartered Institute of Building

7th December – Hull's Decorative Arts, Craftsmen and Furniture – Robin Diaper

11th January – Arctic Corsair and Stand – Adam Fowler

8th February – The Jacobs Family of Hull – Norman Staveley

8th Yorkshire Film Archives – Graham Relton

15th April – 7 pm Annual General Meeting, followed at 7.30 by **The History of Hull's Parks and Gardens** – Paul Schofield.

Hull Civic Society is "re-branding"

As part of our campaign to increase ordinary and corporate membership and spread the word about the work of our society, your Committee has recently commissioned a new letter heading and a glossy information leaflet to replace those which have served us well over many years, but which now look a bit dated.

One of the new information leaflets is enclosed and I would urge you all to pass it on to someone else and encourage them to join.

We are also launching an invigorated Corporate Membership drive which is being led by Committee member Janet Green and the new leaflet will play a prominent part in this.

In these hard economic times, it is quite difficult to balance the books whilst still continuing to produce three Newsletters each year and cover the costs of our programme of public meetings.

So, if you haven't renewed your subscription for this year yet could I draw your attention to the paragraph below?

If you have renewed, then many thanks for your continued support of our work in seeking to make our city of Hull a better place to visit and to live, work, play and invest in.

John Netherwood - Chairman

URGENT APPEAL.

Would all members please note that membership subscriptions for the current year are considerably lower than were received last year, mainly because members have either forgotten to renew their membership, or have failed to do so. It should be noted that the Society is a registered charity and therefore the bulk of the work carried out by the Society both on behalf of members and towards the improvement of the city, is funded out of membership subscriptions. It is becoming increasingly difficult to improve our organisation and to maintain an effective voice, on both local and wider issues, if funds are insufficient for us to operate effectively, more especially in these difficult economic times. So, if you haven't renewed your membership for this year may we urge you to do so without delay and if you are able to make a donation, no matter how small, we will be doubly grateful to you.

Colin McNicol

Meeting with Hull City Council

On 5th May, three members of the committee - Chairman John Netherwood, Secretary Ken Baker and Vice Chairman John Scotney - met Mark Jones, Head of Regional Development and other members and officers of Hull City Council. We hope to meet regularly and it was agreed that the aim of meetings would be to promote ideas, give support where we agree with the council, highlight problems, share understanding on development issues and make the meetings an opportunity for early consultation. The topics discussed at the first meeting were: Tree planting to improve the streetscape; how to achieve or encourage a "continental feel" of vitality, especially in the Old Town; the regeneration of Trinity Market; car parking in the Old Town; improving the appearance of railway bridges and promoting tourist attractions.

We are, of course, not meeting the council as individuals, but as representatives of a society of nearly 500 individual and corporate members (one of the largest in Yorkshire). Please let us know your views on long-term issues that could be discussed at future meetings. Your letters and emails will all be taken into account. Emails received by any committee member are usually forwarded to other committee members for discussion and letters are circulated at committee meetings.

Editor.

Newington & St Andrews Area Action Plan

The city council has a vision for a regenerated Newington & St Andrews Area – virtually the whole of Victorian and Edwardian West Hull between Spring Bank West and Hessle Road and between the Boulevard and Wheeler Street with a population of more than 17,000 in 2008. The aim is to make it the kind of suburb which will be attractive to a wide range of households, providing good quality family homes for more than 18,000 by 2024.

We want to make Newington and St Andrews a location of choice for existing and new residents by making the most of its urban structure, excellent location and convenient local services. We need to do this whilst tackling the serious problems that exist in the area. These include social and economic issues: the area has high unemployment and high levels of deprivation. They also include housing issues – there are too many, and too concentrated, very small houses, many of them in “court” terraces with no road access, and persistent problems of vacancy. (Paragraph 1.3.1 of the Area Action Plan)

The Area Action Plan (AAP) proposes green links between the various parks, the river front and smaller green spaces throughout the area, improved community facilities and services and improvements to enhance Anlaby and Hessle Roads as the area’s main location for shopping, leisure and other services. There are also specific proposals for particular parts of the area.



Hawthorn Avenue This area will see the most change. Most of the houses are small, terraced houses, many of them in “court” terraces. There is also a shortage of green open space. Hawthorn Avenue will become a tree-lined boulevard, with new 3-storey townhouses. The site of the former Amy Johnson School will be redeveloped for housing and there will be recreational open space here and elsewhere as part of new housing development to the east of Hawthorn Avenue. There will also be improvements to the environment of the older streets that are to be retained. There will also be mixed use development on the disused Tradex site overlooking the Boothferry Road / Anlaby High Road roundabout.



Lizzie’s Ave, Rhodes St, Hawthorn Av.
(Photo: J.D. Scotney, 6.12.2008)

West Park Area The aim is to restore West Park to its former glory and make it more accessible with a “super crossing” at Anlaby Road and links into the “Green Lung” that will connect all the major green open spaces in the Newington & St Andrews Area. The proposals also include a new square opposite West Park on Anlaby Road with mixed use commercial development to replace derelict shops. There are plans to improve the environment of Walliker Street and other streets by “frontage improvements”, with a small amount of innovative new housing to replace the sub-standard “court” terraces in Granville Street.



West Park and Carnegie Library.
(Photo: J.D. Scotney)



Anlaby Road – half-finished renovation of shops opposite West Park. (Photo: J.D. Scotney)

Boulevard Area

Strangely, the area described under this heading lies entirely to the west of The Boulevard and does not include that street! Its western boundary is St Georges Road (both sides). The proposals centre mainly on the creation of the “Green

Lung” to provide “exemplary” community sports and recreation facilities at the Boulevard stadium (former home of Hull FC rugby league club) and Massey Fields (a group of public football pitches), all to be re-landscaped and linked by parks, smaller open spaces and green walks and overlooked for enhanced safety by houses. Most of the existing houses would be retained, with frontage improvements, though there would be a small amount of new building in Airlie Street and Massey Close. It is also proposed to build a new secondary school to the north of the Hessle Road shops, overlooking Massey Fields. A report in the Hull Daily Mail suggested that this would replace Endeavour School on Beverley Rd.

Hessle Road The report recognises that Hessle Road is a relatively successful and stable shopping and service centre, with no significant increase of vacant properties over the last four years. It contains a number of buildings of high architectural quality, which give it a distinctive character. The main proposals are to enhance the area by attention to shop frontages and improvements to the public realm to make it more attractive to pedestrians.

Anlaby Road The report recognises that Anlaby Road is a major radial route, but also identifies a need to make life easier for pedestrians by providing raised crossings at major crossing points and a raised surface at the entrance to each side street. There would also be “frontage improvement works” to all the houses on the main road to make them more attractive and to improve the perception of the whole Newington St Andrews Area for passers-by.

Albert Avenue Area The existing houses in Albert Avenue, De la Pole Avenue, Alliance Avenue and connecting streets would all be retained, with frontage improvements. The main change would

be the new ‘eco’ housing to be built on the site of the former Riley High School (more recently part of Hull College). There would also be a recreation ground.

Coltman Street Area This area extends from the western side of Rawling Way to include Coltman Street and The Boulevard. The streets in between will see the main changes, with frontage



Left: Coltman St – listed 1840s houses
Right: Boulevard – equal in architectural quality to the Avenues (Photos: JD Scotney)



improvements to existing houses in Cholmley Street and the streets to the north. Some of the worst housing in the whole area is to be replaced by new houses, public open spaces and new thoroughfares on Wellsted Street and Gee Street, with a new connection to Hessle Road, where there will be a new “community facility”. Despite having some streets that are run-down, the area has many good Victorian houses. Coltman Street, now a Conservation Area, actually has 16 listed houses - more than any other street in the city outside the Old Town. The Boulevard, also a Conservation Area, is equal in its buildings to the more famous Avenues. There are also some fine public buildings, for example schools in St George’s Road and Dairycoates Avenue, the Western Branch Library in The Boulevard, St Matthew’s church and Hull’s oldest functioning police station, recently refurbished, in Gordon Street.

Dairycoates Area This is the section lying between the railway line and Hessle Road and between St George’s Road and Hawthorn Avenue. A large proportion of the housing is relatively modern and the proposals would replace most of the terraced housing remaining on and around Woodcock Street. Some of the replacement housing was given planning permission last year. The land to the west of Hawthorn Avenue will continue to be industrial.

Housing and the built Environment Housing is the most important element of the Area Action Plan. *“The AAP’s aim is to provide modern housing stock. (Paragraph 10.2.1) Housing renewal in Newington and St Andrews represents an immense opportunity to contribute to the widening of choice and improvement of the housing stock of the City overall. (Paragraph 10.2.2).”*

There is an emphasis on family housing with at least 50% of new houses having three or more bedrooms and no more than 10% being single-bedrooms properties. All sites will have a mixture of housing types and all new housing will be expected to meet the “Lifetime Homes standard”. Another significant statement in the AAP is that *“Planning permission will not be granted for the sub-division of family housing”*. This is especially important for the long-term future of the fine Victorian houses in Coltman Street, The Boulevard, St George’s Road and elsewhere in the district. The AAP also makes it clear that applications for new houses must meet standards of high-quality design, flood-prevention and energy efficiency.

An important feature of the plan is the acknowledgement that its historic heritage is an important part of the appeal of the Newington & St Andrews Area, with its three Conservation Areas (Hessle Road, Coltman Street and Boulevard), 28 listed buildings and 20 buildings on the Local List. The traditional street pattern with front doors facing the street is valued and to be perpetuated in new development. The AAP proposes frontage improvements to over 600 of the “court” terraces, which are characteristic of the city and have potential as starter homes, but the concludes that there are too many of them. Some will be replaced with “more desirable” houses.

Public Realm With the AAP, there is a Design Guidance booklet suggesting ways in which open space and streets can be designed with robust materials, be visually satisfying, contain public art, be and feel safe and encourage outdoor play and community uses.

Another consideration is that priority should be given to pedestrians and cyclists (with a more coherent network of walking and cycling routes) and public transport users, with more frequent and reliable bus services.

Delivery Strategy The AAP sets out not only what is required, but also how it is to be delivered. Gateway is to be the lead agency, working in partnership with partners in the private, public and voluntary sectors. Keepmoat Plc, a housing developer with experience in complex regeneration projects, has been chosen as the lead developer. There will be a “supportive approach” to relocation of existing occupants, where required and local labour will be involved in much of the work generated by the AAP. The programme of work will be phased flexibly and compulsory purchase will be used if necessary to assemble land in time for new development. 50% of the new residential development will be delivered by the “Lead Developer Partner” to agreed standards. Design competitions will be held where appropriate to ensure the highest standards.

To guard against new development becoming run-down and neglected, planning permission will only be granted if the applicant can show that provision has been made for long-term maintenance of both open spaces and property.

Phasing The scheme may take up to 15 years to complete. The first phase will be continuation of the Woodcock Street developments already in hand and an early start on the new development west of Hawthorn Avenue. At the same time, housing refurbishment and street improvements will start in the area north of Anlaby Road then working southwards for completion by 2014. Anlaby Road / West Park “gateway” improvements would start in 2011 for completion by 2014. Major park and public realm improvements would be carried out throughout the life of the AAP. The aim is for the whole regeneration to be completed by 2024.

Cost The total cost of the regeneration set out in this Area Action Plan is about £448 million. The public funding would come from a mixture of Gateway and City Council, the Homes and Communities Agency, Yorkshire Forward and Sport England; the private investment would be secured by the lead developer.

Annexe A: Design Guidance The design guidance booklet helps the reader to visualise many of the ideas contained in the plan and we welcome the fact that it includes examples of best practice from Europe as well as other British towns and cities.

Civic Society Involvement The Publication Draft of the Area Action Plan is both the product and the subject of consultation. Our input for the initial April 2008 deadline was written by John Netherwood. His comments focussed on the area’s downtrodden appearance, the benefits of improving pavements and boundary walls (demonstrated in Plane Street), the importance of green spaces, green corridors and links to West Park and the river bank, provision of local squares and play areas, ways of breaking up long high density streets and providing more diagonal pedestrian routes, need to retain some of the “court” terraces, provision of local shops half way between Anlaby Road and Hessle Road, provision of community centres and attractions to draw visitors into the area, car park landscaping and boundaries at Hull Royal Infirmary, dereliction on Anlaby Road and local energy generation. Many of his ideas are reflected in the Publication Draft.

We were asked to submit our comments on the Draft by 8th December. Our general comments and suggestions included a “village hall” for each part of the district, distinctive house-styles for different areas, the need retain established employers, such as the West Park Hotel, threatened by one of the proposals, public ownership of surviving “court” terraces to ensure refurbishment, welcoming the environmental improvements already achieved and commitment to public art and drawing attention to the need to hide wheelie bins.

We also drew attention to issues in specific areas. In West Park there is a potential conflict between the proposed restoration of the open air theatre and the continued operation of the model railway, which uses the theatre building as a store. We made a plea for retention of the landmark Premiere Bar (former West Park cinema) and the West Park Hotel, even though the neighbouring derelict blocks need to be replaced. The “super crossing” to West Park needs to be controlled by traffic lights, to avoid the confusion of Newland Avenue’s painted crossings which have no clear legal status. We had



Premiere Bar (former West Park Cinema). (Photo: J.D. Scotney)

reservations about any speed bumps or raised surfaces on such an important thoroughfare. We suggested a north-eastward extension of the “wildlife ecology park” alongside the railway line.

Regarding the Boulevard Area, we commented that design should ensure that open space is overlooked for safety and useable for ball games and other play without the danger of children or footballs going into a road.

Following the experience of traders and users of Newland Avenue, we had reservations about the extent to which Hessle Road should be made “pedestrian-friendly”. An improved environment for pedestrians is to be welcomed, but care must be taken to ensure that the design does not make Hessle Road so frustrating for the drivers who make up the passing trade that they desert it altogether. The present mixture of pedestrians and traffic already enforces slow speeds and cautious movement by pedestrians, motorists and cyclists alike. It looks dangerous, so people take care and, in fact, stay safe.

Action plan or daydream?

Will the Area Action Plan succeed in regenerating Newington and St Andrews? We believe that it is a good, flexible, realistic plan, which has been well thought out. The important feature is that, unlike some regeneration schemes, it does not need to happen all at once and the need for continuity and evolution is recognised. Unlike the slum clearance schemes of fifty years ago, the plan recognises that people feel an affinity with the existing built environment and are attracted by developments that retain the best of the old, while replacing inadequate housing with something better. It also recognises the importance of high quality buildings and environment.

John Scotney

Western Drain flood alleviation scheme

The Environment Agency is studying how to reduce the risk of the Western Drain overflowing in Hessle and have recently carried out a camera survey of the culvert. The results will be passed on to the East Riding of Yorkshire Council, who are responsible for maintaining the culvert. One option would be to have large flood storage lake but some residents living nearby fear that it might overflow during torrential rain. A storage lake would reduce the risk of the Western Drain overflowing when rainfall was fairly heavy but it would not be adequate in prolonged torrential rain like we had on in June 2007.

One problem with storage lakes and “Aqua Greens” on absorbent alluvial silt is the difficulty of making them watertight. If the water soaked into the ground, it would cause the water table to rise in the large area of alluvial silt in low-lying parts of Hull and Holderness. There would then be the possibility of Groundwater Flooding in low-lying areas. The Environment Agency seems reluctant to spend money on pumping stations but it would be far better to pump the rain into the Humber rather than hopefully rely on storage lakes and “Aqua Greens”.

In June 2007, the Environment Agency’s Western Drain overflowed and much of the water entered the Hull and Haltemprise sewers, flooding them. As a result, Yorkshire Water had to pump untreated sewage into the Humber and they were fined by the Environment Agency. This seems unfair to me. When water from an Environment Agency Drain overflows into the sewers, Yorkshire Water should send the Environment Agency a bill for the cost of pumping their water into the Humber!

The Environment Agency held a second public drop-in session on 29th April. Plans of the flood storage option were available for viewing. I suspect that some experienced Environment Agency staff have doubts about flood storage but they have to obey rulings coming from above. I think that many of the Hessle residents affected by flooding in June 2007 will still be opposed to flood storage near their homes.

Walter Houlton.

The A63 Castle Street Improvement Scheme

The problem

Sad to say, there is no easy, cheap remedy for the geographical fact that Hull's main docks and industrial areas are now on the eastern side of the city but the traffic they generate needs to get to and from the western side of the city.

The building of Castle Street and Myton Bridge in the 1970s solved the problem of lorries going through the main shopping area. Unfortunately it also divided the Old Town in half, creating a real barrier to north-south movement and destroyed many fine old buildings in Mytongate (renamed Castle Street) and Blanket Row, some of which were 16th and 17th century behind their Victorian or Georgian façades.

The Castle Street section of the A63 trunk road now carries about 54,000 vehicles a day. The traffic-light junction at Ferensway and pedestrian crossings at the Holiday Inn, Dagger Lane and Market Place are an added cause of congestion but still unsatisfactory for north-south movement of pedestrians and vehicles. Realistically, the regeneration of the southern part of the Old Town, especially the Fruit Market, could fail if this problem is not addressed and both the port and local industry will suffer if the east-west flow of traffic is not improved.

Proposed solutions The Highways Agency has evaluated six options for dealing with the stretch of the A63 from Porter Street to Myton Bridge. The two preferred options, which have the highest cost-benefit ratio, have been put to public consultation. These both involve adding a third



Castle Street in 2004 (Photo: JD Scotney)



Preferred Underground Option (left) – an underpass and Preferred Overground Option (right) – a flyover - taking the A63 below or above the Ferensway – Commercial Road junction. (Pictures by courtesy of the Highways Agency ©)

eastbound lane between Ferensway and Market Place and replacing pedestrian signal crossings at Porter Street, the Holiday Inn, Dagger Lane and Market Place with pedestrian bridges. For the junction with Ferensway and Commercial Road, the options are an underpass or a flyover.



One of the rejected options was a cut-and-cover tunnel under Castle Street, which Hull Civic Society has proposed for many years. According to the Highways Agency person at their exhibition, they have an obligation to maintain the flow of traffic throughout construction, so, although the completed tunnel would not be any wider than Castle Street is at present, a much wider corridor would be created to provide for traffic to pass either side of the tunnel work. This would entail demolition of the Holiday Inn and part of Marina Court

on the southern side and all the buildings on the northern side, despite the fact that the illustration shows these buildings.

Two other rejected options were a flyover extending from Porter Street to Myton Bridge and a wide “land bridge” over the road. Unfortunately, the exhibition didn’t give any details of pedestrian bridge design.

The Civic Society’s response

It would appear that the cut-and-cover tunnel that has long been our preferred solution would come at too high a price, not only in money and disruption of traffic to the docks, but also in destruction of historic property in Castle Street.

Our focus, therefore, needs to be on the nature and quality of provision for north-south movement of pedestrians, wheelchair users, cyclists, and motor vehicles across Castle Street at several key places: Market Place to Queen Street and Princes Dock Street to Humber Dock Street are the most important pedestrian routes. While it is reasonable to limit north-south motor vehicle movements to the High Street and Ferensway / Commercial Road crossing points, it is much less acceptable to divert pedestrians, wheelchair users and cyclists via a longer route in order to reduce the number of pedestrian crossing points.

One possible crossing point, which has been mentioned in previous editions of the Newsletter, would be in the form of a first floor-level extension of Princes Quay across the road. This is a practical solution, which could be very popular with shoppers but would, of course, be a long-term project that depended upon an improvement in retail prospects and would involve co-operation between the owners of Princes Quay and the Highways Agency.

Editor

The Steve Shearsmith Award Presented to Geo. Houlton & Sons Ltd for the reconstruction of The Maltings Unit 3a. (also a Good Mark to Bird Johnson Associates, architects)



The Steve Shearsmith Salver (Photo: JD Scotney)



John Netherwood, Steve Shearsmith and Richard Houlton of Geo. Houlton & Sons Ltd (Photo: JD Scotney)

Wednesday 4th February 2009 saw the first ever presentation of the Steve Shearsmith Award, to celebrate the “best Good Mark” of the Civic Society’s season, earned by Geo. Houlton & Sons Ltd (builders) and Bird Johnson Associates (architects) for the reconstruction of The Maltings, Unit 3a, Jarratt Street.

Thanks to the generosity of Mr Steve Shearsmith, Hull Civic Society has a new way of celebrating a project which stands out significantly from other Good Marks. It is in the form of a

fine silver salver, hallmarked London 1763. It was bought for, or donated to the Hull Club, a society founded in 1840 by some of Hull's most eminent businessmen. Names of members include Cuthbert Brodrick, W.B. Jalland, J. Burstall, Henry Cooper, Zachariah Pearson, Joseph Robinson Pease, Charles Henry Wilson, Lord Londesborough and many other eminent Hull men. The original inscription in the centre of the salver was erased and replaced by the Hull coat of arms with a florid surround and the words, "Hull Club". The club was disbanded in the early years of the 20th century, the salver passed into private hands and Steve Shearsmith inherited it through his mother's side of the family.

Steve felt that it was appropriate for the salver to return to the public realm again and has offered it to Hull Civic Society as an award to be presented annually for the best Good Mark of the year. It is mounted on a modern wooden display base with shields around the edge of the base, for engraving the recipient's name.

The reconstruction of Unit 3a of the Maltings was chosen because it was a clever and technically challenging project, which involved creating a new, modern office block while retaining the original façade of the main Hull Brewery building on Jarratt Street. The building was originally to be retained in its entirety, but the differences in floor levels and condition of the interior structure led to a decision to construct a completely new office block behind the façade, with an additional storey in modern style above. This involved constructing a special steel framework to hold the façade while the new building was being erected. The result is a building in which the office workers have a completely modern, light and spacious environment with good views over Kingston Square, while its exterior preserves the original townscape of Jarratt Street. Even the distinctive lantern roof has been recreated.

Our congratulations go to Bird Johnson Associates for the design and to Geo Houlton & Sons Ltd, for the careful and skillful execution of a very difficult project.

John Scotney.



The Maltings, Unit 3a - retained original Jarratt Street façade, new structure (rear), and interior.
(Photos: JD Scotney)

Readers' Letters (1)

26 John Street, Kingston Square, HULL, HU2 8DH, Yorkshire, UK.
01482.225009 - a.gill@hull.ac.uk Web = www.hull.ac.uk/php/cesag
Blog = <http://academicreflexions.blogspot.com/>
Flickr = <http://www.flickr.com/photos/34788179@N03/>

3rd MAY 2009

Thank you very much for your kind greetings and best wishes for me being awarded the MBE in the Queen's New Year Honours list. Since the announcement, I have been overwhelmed with over fifty cards, scores of letters, tons of emails and lots of phone calls. Actually, it was as if Christmas was never going to end. I was especially delighted to receive official letters from a variety of societies, historians and governmental bodies appreciating my research over the last 35 years. The Fishing Families of Hessle Road are certainly close to my heart and I hope to be writing about them for the next 35 years.

I should have attended the Investiture on 18th February, but requested it be changed because I am currently on an intensive, month-long, online, VLE computing course funded by the University of Hull. The Palace agreed to change it to the end of May. It will be a big event for Audrey and I.

So thanks again for all your support over the years.

Please thank everyone at the ^{Alec Gill MBE!} Hull Civic Society for the wonderful card. Yours is the only address in my book, so I have sent this to you John. Cheers to all. Alec Gill

Readers' Letters (2)

I would agree with virtually all of your Positive and Negative Points listed in the latest edition of The Civic Society Newsletter.

"**Completely flat**" would only be a positive point if this was exploited by a network of well maintained and attractive cycle and pedestrian routes.

The "**Unusually hard edges**" again would only be a positive point if the city boundary extended out to this hard edge. At the moment having a city administration with no representatives from the outer suburbs is a distinct disadvantage (a negative point). Hull is a one class city and in the evening the people in the East Riding outer suburbs, who see themselves as citizens of East Yorkshire, only venture into the city centre for the orchestral concerts, special exhibitions at the Ferens Art Gallery and Opera (although Opera North have chosen to no longer visit Hull)!! Shopping, eating out and visits to ("anything but Godber style!") theatre are done in Beverley, York or Leeds. I don't see the awful draughty St Stephens development changing any of that (to me St Stephens makes Princes Quay feel positively attractive!).

On Friday and Saturday evening Hull also becomes a one age city, intimidating to the middle-aged and elderly. This is a definite Negative Point summed up in a piece I submitted for a recent arc event: "**Does our city close at 5 o'clock?**"

Unfortunately good design in architecture cannot alone change the quality of the ambiance of a city centre after 5 pm.. There has to be a major change in the culture of the city for this to happen. This could take generations. Shop and office workers flee the city after 5.00 pm. for their suburban houses with gardens, and they are replaced later in the evening by the pubcrawlers and clubbers.

Recently I watched a middle aged Dutch couple in Lowgate at about 8 o'clock looking for somewhere to have a reasonable meal. I felt very sorry (and embarrassed) for them - and very sorry for Hull - as they peered into the various pubs in that street, all blaring loud music with burly intimidating bouncers on the doors, and surrounded by loud mouthed intoxicated young men and women moving from one pub

to another. Where was this couple to go, when most people over the age of thirty (ie. over half the population of Hull and its surrounds) venture into the city only to go to the theatre or the cinema now and again, but rush away as soon as possible afterwards because of the lack of suitable places to have a quiet meal or drink."

Most obviously missing from your Negative Points is the fact that the southern part of the Old Town conservation area is split from the northern part by an immensely busy dual carriageway. Hull Civic Society and Hull City Council must continue to push for the solution which allows easy pedestrian access between the two parts, i.e. the road should be in a tunnel or a cutting with a lid on. There should be no compromise here.

Keep up the good work. I continue to dream of living in York!

Paul Priestley-Leach.

Planning and Buildings

Old Town

The buildings at 62-71 High St, between Church Lane Staith and Myton Bridge, have been demolished and a new application was submitted in March for 178 flats and a 141-bed hotel on the site, rising to a maximum of 20 storeys overlooking the bridge. Although on the May Planning Committee schedule, a decision is still pending.

Two applications by the same developer, Mr G Rhodes, to build flats at 66-68 Humber St and on the north-eastern corner of Pier St and Wellington St were turned down February. Despite the design and uses being acceptable, they did not accord with the council's aim of comprehensive development for the fruit market area.

We objected to the extensive cosmetic work that has been approved for Humber Dock St and the Marina Promenade: re-instatement of granite setts and railway lines along the street, partial re-paving with York stone, removal of the shelter, wishing well, raised seating areas, and tree-planting edges and replacement with alternative designs is all a waste of money. Our strongest objection was to putting the winding engine into storage for an unspecified period "pending relocation to Victoria Dock" (why not wait until the new location is ready?) and the replacement of the brick paving patterns which show the line of the town walls with "steel inlay banding and text". Brick is a much more durable and appropriate material for indicating the position of the town wall. This application also included site landscaping following the demolition of Pepi's, also approved.

City Centre

When Ferensway was first opened to traffic in 1931, people probably expected it to be built up on both sides with grand shops, offices and public buildings within a few years. The opening of Hull Truck Theatre in April represents the long-delayed completion of that dream. A new gap will, however, be created with the imminent demolition of the Lexington Avenue (LA's) night club, closed since 2005. Readers may have memories of it as the Locarno ballroom (early 1960s) or Tiffany's and Peppermint Park (1970s). So far, there has been no planning application for any development on the site, now owned by the city council. In May, permission was granted to Wykeland GP and Realis Estates Ltd to build an 80-bed hotel for Travelodge on the Pryme St surface car park at the corner of Prospect St and Freetown Way.

In May, permission was granted to Wykeland GP and Realis Estates Ltd to build an 80-bed hotel for Travelodge on the Pryme St surface car park at the corner of Prospect St and Freetown Way. Hull City Council submitted an application in April to convert the disused Kwik Save supermarket in Prospect St into a Customer Service Centre and support offices. Grattan's store in Story St, built in the early 1950s as Jordan's cycle, motorbike and car showroom, is a building which has been



Hull Truck Theatre. (Photo: JD Scotney)

disused for much longer. In April, approval was given to replace it with a 5-storey medical centre offering a walk-in centre, the relocated Quays GP surgery, specialist medical treatment and offices for the Primary Care Trust.

Numbers 83 & 85 George St, the two houses formerly used by the YPI, have been converted into ten spacious apartments with very sensitive and skilful renovation by Darren Hooson, (son of Ben Hooson, who restored the Pease Warehouse and Prince St among other projects). The restoration even included the complete rebuilding of the steps up to the front doors. Built in 1782, these two grand houses are attributed to the architect George Mountain senior.



83-85 George St, formerly the YPI. (Photo: JD Scotney)

The restoration of 10, 11 & 12 Dock St, three less grand Georgian houses that were nearly lost a few years ago, is now complete.



10,11 & 12 Dock St, before and after restoration. (Photo: JD Scotney)

Houses in George St, Dock St and other nearby streets were built as part of the Northern Suburb, created when The Dock,



now Queen's Gardens, was opened in 1778. In April, an application was submitted to create a new western entrance into Queen's Gardens near the fountain.

Building work is now finished and a show flat is open at Trade Winds, the new flats next to North Bridge.

North

Watkin Jones' revised and greatly improved designs for Anderson's Wharf student flats were approved in February. The important difference is that the original monolithic block has been replaced by five separate blocks. The two long blocks at the southern end of the site have attractive mansard roofs and are only 4 storeys high, so that they don't overlook the Charterhouse, while the three to the north are 9 storeys, but arranged so that the windows don't overlook the neighbouring houses. There could still be an impact upon the Charterhouse if the students are not well behaved, but, to be fair, the student flats in High St have always been very quiet and even where we live, surrounded by student houses on Cottingham Rd, there are very few disturbances.



Architects' model, viewed from the east bank of the River Hull. Anderson's Wharf is between the River Hull and Wincolmlee and comprises the two long, low blocks in the foreground and the three higher blocks further from the camera. (Photo: JD Scotnev. by kind permission of

After a few months' closure, the listed Bull Inn at Stepney is back in use. The licensee and local residents will, no doubt, be glad that Grade3 Ltd were refused permission in May to turn an industrial site in nearby Temple St into a waste transfer station handling asbestos

The new Community Church at the corner of Newland Ave and Cottingham Rd, which opened in June 2006, is being enlarged by adding a third storey to the Newland Ave range of buildings. Work started in April.

Persimmon Homes have abandoned their scheme to build houses on the western edge of the Newland Homes site and they have sold it to another developer, who still intends to turn the existing listed orphanage houses into student accommodation. It is a beautiful green oasis in this part of the city and is to be hoped that work is not long delayed. A little further west at the other side of Cottingham Rd, the former Hull Grammar School site still only has four show houses out of the 45 houses approved.

Amongst its attractive, mainly brick-built, campus buildings, Hull University has the “1960s Brutalist” Wilberforce Building, a reminder of the time when architects believed that concrete still bearing the grain of the wooden shuttering would somehow mellow into something attractive. It hasn't, but work started in mid-May to give it a new entrance lobby, link corridor between the two divided ground floor sections and, best of all, new windows to let some natural light into the bunker-like ground-floor rooms.

Tesco were refused permission in February to rebuilt their Hall Rd store on a larger scale. Whether they will appeal until the decision is overturned remains to be seen.

East

Until recently, the former East Hull Gas offices, no 2 Holderness Rd at the junction with Clarence St and Naylor Row, opposite the Windmill Hotel, had an attractive open ironwork dome. The present owners, Bodyshop Supplies Ltd, received permission in March to reconstruct the brick turret and replace the openwork dome.

A much larger scheme, by Reckitt Benckiser Healthcare Ltd for a factory extension facing Mount Pleasant is a reminder that some parts of our industrial economy are still expanding.

An outline application for housing on the Princess Royal Hospital site was submitted in March.

West

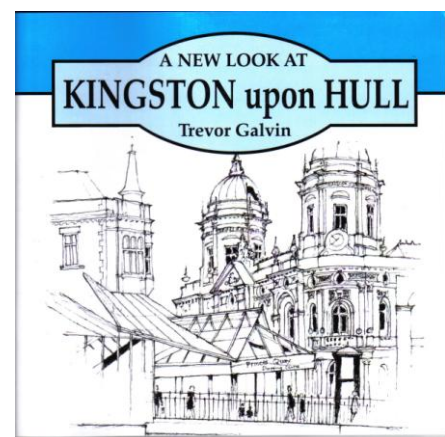
Newington Hall, the dance hall on Albert Ave was demolished some time ago but the proposed flats on the site have not materialised. In May, approval was granted instead for a residential care home for the elderly on the site.

Book Review - A New Look at Kingston upon Hull by Trevor Galvin

Published by Highgate Publications (Beverley) Limited at £7.50

In his first two books, *A New Look at Beverley*, Volumes 1 & 2, Trevor Galvin captured the atmosphere of his native town through a fine series of sketches, accompanied by historical notes. Now Highgate Publications have produced *A New Look at Kingston upon Hull*, the city in which Mr Galvin worked for twenty years for the Port Authority.

This book is a real celebration of some of the scenes which give Hull its special character and which many Hull people would choose to show off to visitors. The sketches capture today's scenes and the text explains the historical context with enough information to stimulate the imagination, but not so much that the reader feels overwhelmed with detail. A very useful feature is the “Location Plan” inside the front cover, which makes it easy for readers to find the buildings portrayed. The combination of artistic and intellectual appeal make this a book which is a pleasure to read and re-read.



Editor.

Civic Society Officers and Committee 2009

President	Mike Killoran	(day) 586622
	mike@princesquay.co.uk	
Chairman	John Netherwood	653657
	jnetherwood@jnetherwood.karoo.co.uk	
Honorary Secretary	Ken Baker	224767
	kbaker@goodwin-centre.org	07766 654955
Vice Chairman, Newsletter Editor, Planning	John Scotney	492822
	john.scotney@talk21.com	
Treasurer, Planning	Walter Houlton	375605
	walter@houlton1.karoo.co.uk	
Programme, Good Marks Heritage Open Days, marketing	Malcolm Sharman	561611
	malcsharman@hotmail.com	
Planning Sec, CAAC, Good Marks, Minutes	Cynthia Fowler	377434
	pinkhouse1@hotmail.co.uk	
Planning, Museums, Transport, Industrial Heritage	Colin Cooper	863339
Recruitment	Janet Green	589787
	janet@bengreen.karoo.co.uk	
Marketing	Colin McNicol	229891
	cmcnicol@cmcnicol.karoo.co.uk	
Public relations and Visits	Chris Lefevre	815132
	chrisblefevre@chrisblefevre.karoo.co.uk	
Co-opted member	Bill Moore	0779 459 6980
	asmilingworld@googlemail.com	

There are still a few spare chairs, so we would still welcome expressions of interest from members of the Society who would like to be considered for election to the committee. Please contact our Secretary, Ken Baker.

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