



# Trust Topics

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**DONCASTER CIVIC TRUST**

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**NEWSLETTER**

Issue No. 15

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## Contents

### Page 1

*Wanted: more green spaces*

### Page 2

*Spaces, Places and no-man's-land*

### Page 3

*Spaces, Places and no-man's-land (cont)*

### Page 4

*Spaces, Places and no-man's-land (cont)*

### Page 5

*Spaces, Places and no-man's-land (cont)*

*A New Auditor for the Trust.*

### Page 6

*Bits and Pieces*

### Page 7

*Doncaster—the last 20 years.*

### Page 8

*Doncaster—the last 20 years (cont)*

*Town Centre Masterplan*

### Page 9

*An Urgent Appeal*

*Winter Talks Programme*

*Readers' Letters*

### Page 10

*Trip to Wassand Hall*

### Page 11

*Trip to Wassand Hall (Cont)*

*'FLAG' Praising*

### Page 12

*The town where time stood still ..*

*Come along now ...*

# WANTED !



# MORE GREEN SPACES

**DONCASTER CIVIC TRUST: Hon. Sec. E.L.Braim, 2 Lawn Road, Doncaster DN1 2JF  
Tel: (01302) 367512**

## SPACES, PLACES AND NO-MAN'S-LAND

At a recent Community Forum meeting a senior planner reported on the progress of Doncaster's Urban Renaissance project. He said that our town centre had some fine streets but it had very few open spaces. Consultants had been appointed to produce proposals for improving the situation.

In February 1988 Hillier Parker, consultants appointed by Doncaster MBC to report on the town centre, said there were no public gardens in the central part of the town, there were few seats, covered shelters or toilets; these deficiencies should be rectified and priority should be given to the pedestrianisation of St Sepulchre Gate.

There was much optimistic plan making in the immediate post war years. In 1947 the government issued advice on the redevelopment of town centres. The guide stated *'the central area should contain a well distributed system of small open spaces, suitable for use during the lunch hour. They should be somewhat set back from main streets and contain trees, shrubs flowers and some grass areas'*.

Some individuals had their own idea of what Doncaster should be like. One gentleman wrote to the press suggesting that Doncaster should emulate Stratford upon Avon and have a theatre with lawns sloping down to the river. In December 1949 W H Price, the Borough Surveyor, produced his Outline Plan for the town. The area between Waterdale and Cleveland Street was to be re-developed. A large open space would link the two streets. Facing the open space would be offices, the library and a health centre. On the other side of Waterdale would be another open space providing a setting for a town hall. There was provision for law courts, a new technical college on the site of Beechfield Gardens, and a civic theatre and art gallery off Chequer Road. If the scheme had been carried out Doncaster would have had a green heart and a civic centre worthy of the town. W H Price died in 1951, having served the town for 31 years.

In 1952 the Development Plan was redrafted. The area to the north of Waterdale was changed from open space with offices, clinic and library to a shopping centre. Frederick Gibberd was appointed consultant for the civic centre. His plan produced in 1955 showed a ten storey town hall facing a central square with fountains, trees and shrubs. Also facing the square were the technical college, a civic theatre and a school of art.

In 1957 the Council engaged commercial consultants in connection with the proposed Waterdale shopping centre. In 1958 the Trust produced a report stating that the shopping centre should have buildings of good architectural quality grouped around a pedestrian precinct with trees, flowers and plenty of seats.

Gibberd produced a revised scheme for the civic centre in 1963 with provision for a tall block of NCB offices, law courts and a police station. Out went the civic centre and the school of art. The layout was more cramped and the buildings enclosed a series of pedestrian spaces, hard paved and overshadowed by tall buildings.

The site for the shopping precinct was auctioned on a 99 year lease, in 1963, to York-town Investments Ltd. at £108,500 a year for the ground rent. Building work started in 1965. The scheme was similar to Gibberd's but his central square was made even smaller. The shop units were difficult to let because of competition from the first phase of the French Gate Centre. In 1967 the Council released York-town from its agreement.

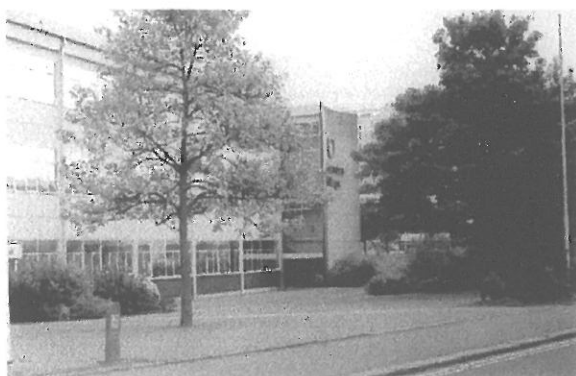
The law courts were built on the civic centre site and opened in 1969. Gibberd was paid off and the Borough Architect produced a design for offices for the new Doncaster MBC in 1973.

Gibbert's tower was omitted in favour of a four storey block around a courtyard. The offices weren't built and temporary offices known as Scarborough House were built in Chequer Road in 1974. They have continued to grow whilst Waterdale remains an unfinished building site - a no-man's-land!



Continued

For several years the land between the law courts and the Waterdale car park was left as rough ground. The Trust persuaded DMBC to grass the area. The frontage to Doncaster College was grass with a couple of paths. The Trust suggested to the College Principal that some landscaping would improve the setting of the building. The College carried out a substantial amount of planting which not only provides colour and interest throughout the year but also separates the site from the no-man's-land making it an attractive enclave. The Trust provided the specimen semi-mature tree.

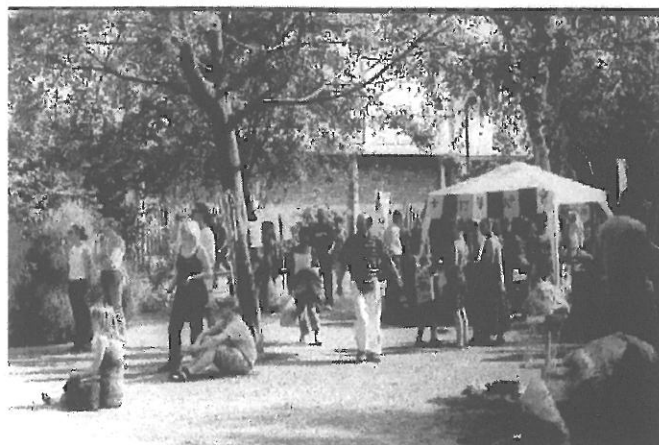


The Trust provided further tree planting in Waterdale; two trees were planted near the sitting area at the top of Wood Street. The trees are doing fine but the shrub boxes are empty. A similar sitting area across the road has lost its two seats and is used for car parking.



In 1981 the Trust carried out a planting scheme on land at the side of the Museum. In 1974 the site had been selected for the building of temporary DMBC offices but an outcry resulted in the offices being built on nearby land. A track used by pupils from a local school ran across the site but DMBC blocked it off. 18 trees were planted; some in a grove around an old archway from the hospital of St Thomas Almshouses and others in strategically placed groups but leaving a central area free for events. Evergreen shrubs were planted along the boundary walls. DMBC improved the pathway between South Parade and Chequer Road and planted shrubs alongside. It is now known as the Arts Park.

Two schemes for improving the park were made; one by the DMBC Landscape Section proposed hard paving for most of the site, the other by an independent designer proposed such features as a tree house and a rustic bridge - however the Doncaster Renaissance Master Plan says the character of this attractive and mature green space should remain largely as existing with some casual seating and an improved entrance from South Parade.



The central square in the Waterdale Shopping Precinct is a restricted space but it could be made more attractive. It is a poor advert for the town especially as it is close to the Tourist Information Centre.

The Arndale Centre was allowed to be built over Station Road despite a request from the Trust for some open space, which could have been in front of the Grand Theatre.



continued overleaf



There was much knocking down and rebuilding in the town centre in the 1960s and early 1970s. The Trust suggested that some sites awaiting development could be used as temporary green sitting spaces and offered to provide benches and plant containers which could be moved from site to site.. One proposed site was in Duke Street but Doncaster MBC wasn't interested. The DMBC developed the site in 1982 - the model showed an open square with trees but no trees , not even a seat, materialised.

The 1982 Town Centre Plan introduced a policy that all major redevelopment schemes should include attractive areas of open space in their development. There was much opposition to the application to build Cross Gate House in Wood Street but the planners said there would be landscaping in front - this turned out to be a two feet wide strip of bare earth.

The French Gate Centre is being massively extended without any open space provision at all - the planners say the malls, all of which will be at first floor level, are the equivalent but they are not; they are circulation spaces carrying large numbers of people, they will only be open as required, will have no greenery and will be stuffy in hot weather.

There is an attractive sitting area in Thorne Road which shows what can be done in a small space. The land was once used for storing road materials until the residents of Bass Terrace complained and the site was improved. An elm tree - the central feature - died and the Trust provided a semi-mature replacement and DMBC provided new seats and paving. Open spaces require proper maintenance. Regent Square garden has only one bench left and that was provided by a resident.

Christ Church graveyard is seen by the Master Planners as an important green space, a place for rest and reflection - others see it as a receptacle for litter; (five litter bins have been removed from the area). Graves are being overgrown with ivy, self sown trees are growing on graves, gate pillars have been knocked down, paving stones are broken, the historic railings are rotting away and 15 heavy crosses were broken in one day. Not a good advert for the town!

In 1971, the highway engineers sliced Church Way through St George's Churchyard, a designated Garden of Rest. The Trust produced a scheme for restoring the peace. A dense planting of shrubs along Church Way and Church View would screen the traffic and reduce the noise; groups of trees would provide shade whilst maintaining strategic views of the Church. The Church and their architect agreed the scheme but the Parks Superintendent would not give his permission. Eventually the Council carried out a similar scheme but too many trees were planted and hide the Church from view. The shrubs have grown tall and leggy and traffic can be seen through them.



continued

In 1984 the Trust said a long term development plan should be drawn up for the St George's and Greyfriars area. The Trust planted many trees but most were removed for the new bridge - some were transplanted elsewhere, several to Trafford Way by Sainsbury's, opposite the station forecourt, where the Trust had persuaded British Rail to plant some trees.

For some years the Trust has been pressing for a waterside park in accordance with the dictum of Lord Rogers ( the Government's advisor on the environment) that all towns with a river should have a riverside park. The Master planners think so too. They have included one, of a semi-rural character, in their plan.

Perhaps Doncaster will look something like Stratford upon Avon. Oh no it won't! The highway engineers have beaten them to it and made the land into a temporary car park, which could mean for twenty years.

ONCE AGAIN IT IS THE GREEN SPACES THAT ARE SACRIFICED.

**Eric Braim**

### **A New Auditor for the Trust**

For many years the Trust's accounts have been audited by Allotts, with offices close to Christ Church on Thorne Road. Originally this was a small, local firm with links with the Trust, and work was done on a "favour" basis. As with all companies, people changed, firms merged or were taken over, yet we still managed to have a special relationship with Allotts, and enjoyed very favourable costs.

But all good things must come to an end. As the costs rose to over £500 last year, the Executive Committee discussed the option of not having an audit, just an inspection, in order to save money. This would have needed a change to the Constitution, and an Extraordinary General Meeting. However, it was determined that the accounts should continue to be fully audited, and the Trust would seek out smaller, local firms who might be less costly.

Phyll Smith, our treasurer, did her usual very thorough detective work on the possible local firms, and she and I arranged to speak to the short-listed three. Fortunately, we managed to do it all the same day, and we were very impressed by the people we met. We reported back to the next Executive Committee, and the decision was taken to ask Joanne Outram, of Outram & Co, 4, South Parade, to do the work for us.

Like all the best decisions, it was based on a number of good things about the firm: you dealt with the principal, the costs were reasonable and the office was a listed building in the town's oldest conservation area. Oh yes, and one more thing - it's stop number 11 on the Trust's Town Trail.

**Archie Sinclair**

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## BITS AND PIECES

The speaker at our March meeting was Mr Geoff Bennett, ably assisted by his wife Joan. Geoff is well known as the founder, editor and publisher of the very successful West Bessacarr and Cantley Times. He is also an outspoken contributor to the Urban Renaissance Town Team, making the views of Doncaster people heard. A further passion is local history and so the Chairman fittingly introduced him as Doncaster's Renaissance Man. But tonight he was speaking as a collector, as the array of memorabilia spread before us made clear.

He began by saying that his magazine was started because of his interest in local history but mainly through the encouragement of his wife. Distribution had grown from small beginnings but had now reached some 3,000 copies. As the magazine developed so did his collecting habit as readers supplied him with information and artefacts. *'Everything is history. Do not throw your bits and pieces away, someone will want your "rubbish" and it will help to preserve the town's past.'* He called it reminiscence therapy.

He started with such mundane items as old tram tickets, milk bottle tops, glass bottles of all shapes and periods - some from long lost dairies. Then followed old newspapers such as the Gazette and Chronicle, many dating from the pre-1900s. He had paper bags from shops like Hodgson & Hepworth and Ellands, and vinyl record covers from Fox's, Dodds and Fields. By this time the nostalgic sighs and comments were flowing freely round the fascinated audience.

Eventually it was the turn of the array of tins which dominated the tables. They came in divers shapes, sizes and conditions from a small rusty tin still containing Mintoes to a beautifully decorated example showing a kingfisher in all its glorious colours. These boxes reflected the long history of the Nuttalls, Parkinsons and Radiance sweet factories from the mid-1800s to closure of the last one in 1975. It was fascinating to see how the packaging and products had changed over the years and seasons. All three factories produced butterscotch and a wide range of other sweets. At one stage Parkinsons produced over 300 items!

His collection reflected the last 200 years of Doncaster's social history. Many of his items had been donated, some found on rubbish tips,



**An assortment of colourful toffee tins from the collection**

others bought at car boot sales and flea markets after much keen haggling. The prices of tins are increasing as they become harder to find because so many items are being destroyed. This makes the tasks of collecting and research much more difficult.

Geoff concluded by reminding us to preserve our 'rubbish' for future generations. After a flood of questions from the audience, members had the opportunity to examine the collection at close range.

So, another stimulating evening as we adjourned for tea, coffee and the usual lovely biscuits.

**Mary Bateman**

## Doncaster – The Last Twenty Years From the Doncaster Civic Trust Perspective

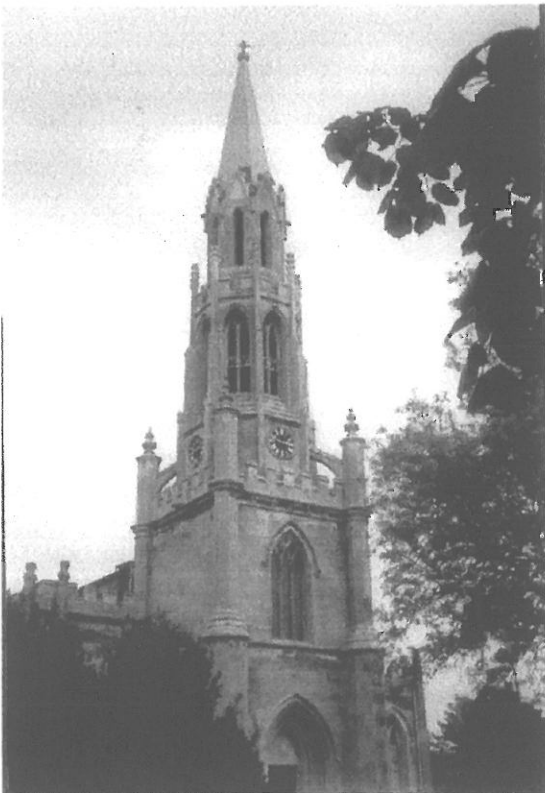
The Doncaster Star has recently been celebrating 20 years as our local newspaper. It asked a number of local organisations and personalities what significant changes and events had taken place during its lifetime. This is what I wrote from a personal viewpoint, but I tried to represent an accurate Trust view. There were, of course, both good and bad things.....

### Good

#### Christ Church Saved from Demolition

In 1989, after the listed grade II\* Church was proposed to be declared redundant, the Trust began a vigorous campaign against its demolition. During 1990 the national bodies were lobbied, and in January 1991 500 copies of our booklet 'A Church in Crisis' were distributed, which resulted in national and regional press coverage. We had meetings with the Provost of Sheffield and the Church Commissioners, who nevertheless ultimately declared the Church redundant.

Our attention turned to alternative uses and a site meeting with all interested parties took place in February 1993. In June 1993 the Church was put up for sale. The Reachout Christian Fellowship boldly decided to take on the building, becoming its owner in March 1995. In 1996, the Trust's 50th anniversary year, we donated £10,000 towards the repair of the decorative stonework on the tower.



### Good

#### Grand Theatre Saved from Demolition

In late 1994, plans were submitted to the Council to extend the Frenchgate Centre on to the site of the Theatre, which would have necessitated its demolition. The Trust immediately launched a campaign to consider seriously the future of Doncaster's only "proper" theatre, and applied to the Department of National Heritage to have the building spot-listed. This was successful, with the listing coming through just before the application was to go before the Council's Planning Committee. The planning application, however, was approved. At the end of 1996 an application was made for listed building consent to demolish the listed building, and after a good deal of public opposition, the proposal was eventually refused by the Council in October 1997. With the threat of demolition now fended off, the future of the theatre depends on a new user Will the Grand Theatre Group be able to make it happen?

We hope so.



### Good

#### The improving quality of architecture in Doncaster

Recent buildings like those at the Earth Centre at Denaby, The Foyer on Chequer Road, The Point on South Parade and the latest Green Flag offices at Lakeside are of a very high standard. Some have already received national and local design awards. Some of the country's best-known architects' practices are now becoming involved in new Doncaster projects.

### Good

#### Very significant landscaping of all kinds

Whether the planting is large scale, like the structural landscaping on the Lakeside Boulevard, or small scale, like the Town Centre summer bedding for Britain in Bloom, it has been carried out comprehensively and imaginatively. It is well maintained and of immense environmental benefit to the town.

Council tree planting over many years, often with trees funded by the Trust, has enhanced many of the major roads in the Borough and it will be of long-lasting value.

continued

## Bad

### The Old Infirmary (former Education Offices), Wood Street, and its replacement building

This 1868 building was demolished in 1993 without warning or any public debate. It was not listed, so the Council was legally within its rights, but the Trust and many local people were outraged by the precipitate action taken. The reasons became clear when the site was redeveloped. Conservation of the historic building would have been completely incompatible with the development of the large office block which now dominates the street. This building is out of scale with not just the street, but also most of the rest of the town, but at least this development is probably responsible for prompting a changing attitude towards the town's heritage and the quality of new buildings in our streets.

## Bad

### The changing character of the Town Centre

Although the regeneration of Doncaster Carr and the Lakeside has created opportunities for investment, jobs and leisure activities, life in the town has been changing. There is less major employment and fewer shops, as a greater range of goods is available from out-of-town retailers, once primarily regarded as food stores, but now much more. Traditional patterns of living out of the centre, and working and shopping in it, have changed. The Town Centre is now focussed equally on drinking, eating and shopping, plus the administration of the metropolitan area. The exodus of many firms from the historic core of the town has left vacant buildings and a lack of activity.

The proposed Interchange may create a major retail attraction and reduce the desire to visit Meadowhall, but it is hard to see how it will not have a further detrimental effect on the Town Centre, including the markets.

## Jury Still Out

### Public Art in Doncaster Town Centre

Public art can often be visible evidence of a town or city's history, achievements and culture. It is usually developed over a long period, with features marking national celebrations, such as the Millennium, notable local people or events, or royal connections. Doncaster's recent programme of installations has introduced many new high quality landmarks in the town in a very short space of time, totally at the public's expense. It's always 'European money', we are told, but we all pay for that.

Although some works, like the Time Line and the Town Map, have a sound historical basis, many seem to have no real significance in time or place,

being simply decorative pieces which could go anywhere in the country, and at any time.

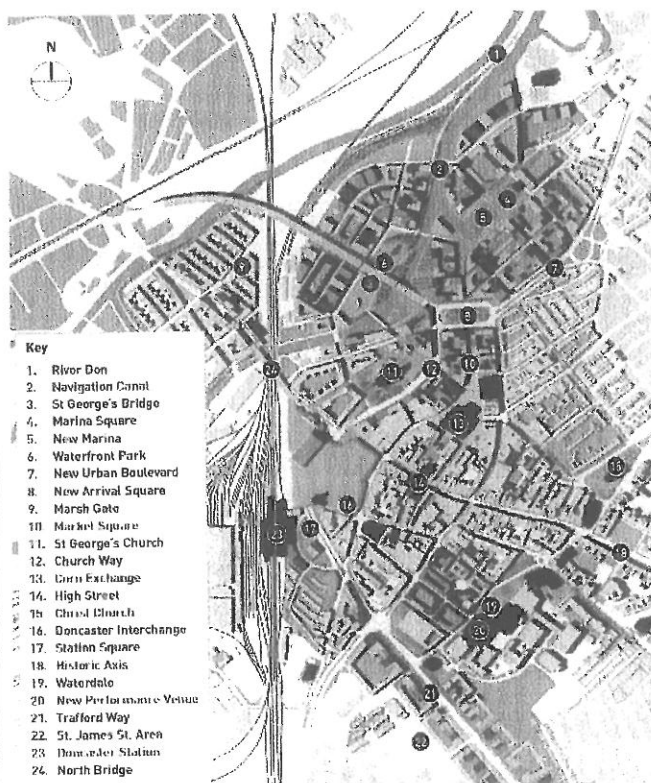
As years go by, it is quite possible that some will become familiar landmarks, even part of the cherished local scene, as they say. But it is the concept of suddenly importing such a significant amount of public art, a kind of high impact instant heritage, which some people consider to be bogus.

It is certainly not coming about as a result of public initiative, demand and fund-raising, as in Victorian times, and because of this it does not seem to be connecting very well with local people, who often ask "What, Why and How Much?"

Time will tell. Apparently almost all our best loved works of art and buildings were criticised, misunderstood or even hated for their first 50 years.

Archie Sinclair

## TOWN CENTRE MASTERPLAN



What a pity that the Masterplan exhibition was only on display for four measly days in the Frenchgate Centre! This is not nearly enough for the general public to get a proper chance to see a model, which is so much easier to understand than the couple of leaflets available in public libraries. The plan is launched as an aspiration (ie aiming at higher things). But don't hold your breath. As our main article shows, we keep having endless Town Centre plans and strategies from expensive consultants-but not much actually happens. When will we get that upgraded Market? Or that riverside green park?



## AN URGENT APPEAL

Doncaster Civic Trust has a problem - and it is urgent. After 17 years of dedicated service, our Treasurer Miss Phyllis Smith feels she must relinquish her post as soon as possible, and certainly by the end of the financial year at the end of August. This means that as a matter of urgency a new Treasurer must be found from amongst our members. Miss Smith accepted extra work beyond the normal duties of Treasurer by also keeping track of the Trust's membership. It is felt that this dual role could be too demanding for just one person and so it has been decided that the work should be divided into two functions. So we now need someone to come forward as the group's Treasurer and a second person to look after membership records.

The Treasurer will receive monies from various sources, pay bills, do the necessary banking, prepare accounts for presentation to the auditor and automatically be a member of the Executive Committee which meets four times a year.

The new post of Membership Secretary involves keeping full records of all Trust members, collecting members' annual subscriptions and passing the total monies received to the Treasurer. It will also mean keeping close contact with an existing small group of volunteers who arrange distribution of Newsletters 3 or 4 times a year. This is to ensure that new members start to receive their newsletters and lapsed members are removed from the system. Computer access would help but is not essential. Guidance will be given on how the system operates at present.

### Two volunteers wanted

This, then, is an urgent appeal for two volunteers to come forward. Trust members have much to gain in return for their exceedingly modest annual subscription: periodic newsletters, opportunities to hear fascinating talks and go on interesting summer outings. But more than all that, they benefit indirectly from the Trust's diligent work over many years for the protection of Doncaster and the environment by means of tree planting and a careful watch on developments. For this vital work to continue there must surely be a few active members able and willing to play a constructive part, to give a little of their spare time to further the Trust's vital work.

To offer your help or to get more information please contact either:

The Chairman, Archie Sinclair (Tel: 01302 538225) or The Secretary, Eric Braim (Tel: 01302 367512).

Don't be shy - the Trust needs you!

And it needs you **NOW!**

## WINTER TALKS PROGRAMME

Please note that all talks will be held in Hall Cross School, Thorne Road but that the starting times vary

- 1 Thursday 9 October 2003 - 7.30pm  
Anthony Wells-Cole, Curator and Historian, on  
*Temple Newsham House Restoration*
- 2 Thursday 13 November 2003 - 7.15pm  
A.G.M. - Speaker to be arranged.
- 3 Thursday 11 December 2003 - 7.15pm  
**Buffet Supper** Mike Higginbottom  
Freelance Historian and Lecturer, on  
*Derbyshire Eccentrics*
- 4 Thursday 22 January 2004 - 7.30pm  
David Horcastle, Official Speaker for the  
National Trust, on  
*The History of Clumber Park*
- 5 Thursday 19 February 2004 - 7.30pm  
Brian Elliott, Freelance Historian and  
Lecturer, on  
*Discovering South Yorkshire*
- 6 Thursday 18 March 2004 - 7.30pm  
Prof. Melvyn Jones, Retired Lecturer  
from Hallam University, on  
*The History of Wentworth Woodhouse Gardens*

Refreshments available

## READERS' LETTERS

Dear Sir,

As our winter programme closes and the summer outings beckon, I would like to thank our 'Speaker Finders' for another well planned programme. Again, as in years past, we have been educated, stimulated and entertained by a variety of excellent talks.

Whilst this is only a part of the work the committee does on our behalf, it plays a significant role in keeping us aware of the many things- past, present and future- which reflect the aims and objectives of the Civic Trust, Thank you!

Name and address supplied.

## TRIP TO WASSAND HALL

Thursday June 5th saw the start of our summer outings with a visit to Beverley and Wassand Hall near Hornsea.

Beverley is a very pretty market town boasting many interesting and historic buildings - notably the ancient Minster and the medieval church of St Mary's. Enjoying the atmosphere of the town, we walked to the Minster where there was much to see, including the tomb of St John of Beverley who, according to the guidebook, became Patron Saint of the Deaf for restoring the speech of a young boy in the 14th century. We also viewed an exhibition of skilful embroidery by the East Yorkshire Guild of Embroiderers. Then back to the coach through the Market Square but sadly finding St Mary's church closed for lunch. At Wassand Hall we were greeted by Mr and Mrs Rupert Russell the present owners.



The estate came into the Constable family in 1529 and the house is the second to be built by the family. In 1995 Mr Russell inherited the property from his aunt, Lady Sarah Constable who stated in her will '*that the estate was to be managed to protect and preserve the wild birds, plants and animals*'.



**Hornsea Mere seen from the House**



The present house, begun in 1813, was designed by Thomas Cundy. After many alterations and restoration it is now a pleasant country residence with extensive and well kept grounds.

The Entrance Hall is lit from above by a semi circular cupola and on one wall hangs a huge panel of unique Mortland tapestry dating back to Henry VIII. The first of the four rooms we visited was the Drawing Room and like all the others contained many beautiful pieces of C18 furniture, much of French origin, together with ceramics and paintings - some by Constable, Romney and Gainsborough. The Library, containing over 2500 books, has three large windows giving an attractive vista to Hornsea Mere which is part of the estate. The Music Room and Dining Room are again beautifully proportioned and display many objects of interest. The broad staircase with its many paintings brought us to the Swan Bedroom, so named because of the rosewood double lit bateau bed of 1815 with its graceful swan head terminals on either side.



**Mrs Russell playing with one of the dogs**

Leaving the house after taking a last leisurely look round, we wandered down to the peaceful walled garden. with its statues and water features.

continued

Here we sat in the sunshine enjoying the scene along with luscious homemade cakes and tea.



Before leaving for home we had time to explore the two woodland walks created by the present owners, including an avenue of recently planted Norwegian maples.

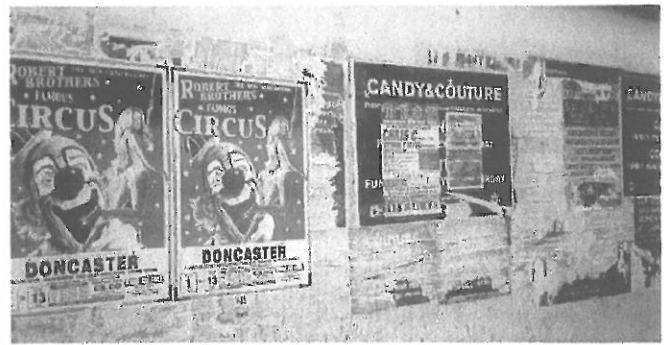
We left Wassand at 5pm after an enjoyable visit with a cordial invitation from Mr and Mrs Russell to 'come again'. It is evident that they love their home and take great pleasure in restoring and maintaining the estate in accordance with Lady Sarah's wishes.

**Mary Bateman and Peggy Wasley**

### 'FLAG' PRAISING

There has been justified praise for the recently introduced 'FLAG' scheme with its nifty acronym indicating its purpose - to Fight against Litter, Abandoned cars and Graffiti. It seems that many calls from the public have resulted in a rapid and effective response.

It would spoil the acronym but there should be an addition to their remit - Fly Posters. These are a real eyesore in the town centre. Some of the town's most important streets are gravely disfigured, first by boarded-up shop fronts which then quickly become bill boards for masses of unsightly posters.



These are another great blemish on the town's image which should be vigorously tackled. They should be removed promptly because one such poster quickly attracts others. Not that they come singly; there are usually a whole string of identical posters at each location.

Do not local authorities have some powers to deal with this menace? The offenders clearly blazon their names on their posters so the culprits are known. Why cannot they be forced to remove them or compensate the Council for the cost of their removal? Or threatened with a fine if they re-offend? It is usually some pub or night club, or a travelling fun fair or circus or perhaps some activist group calling for some mass protest who indulge in this behaviour. There are plenty of legitimate advertising outlets so these people should not be allowed to disfigure our town with their ugly, irresponsible habits. Do fly posters qualify as litter? Or do we need a name change to FFLAG? Or, better still, a couple of high profile prosecutions!

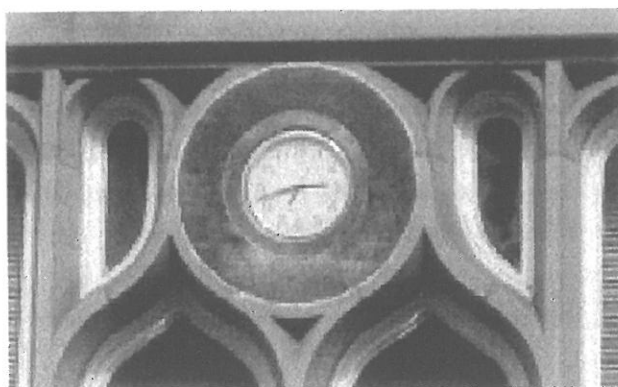
## THE TOWN WHERE TIME STOOD STILL ...

*Stands the Church clock at ten to three?  
And is there honey still for tea?*

So wrote Rupert Brooke in his poem 'from THE OLD VICARAGE, GRANTCHESTER' and perhaps a clock not working in a sleepy Cambridgeshire village didn't matter too much. At least it inspired a memorable ending for a well-loved poem by a nostalgic poet. Some might say that it doesn't matter much in a busy town centre either. Nowadays, when almost everyone has their own trendy, digital, quartz, high precision, waterproof, fashion statement timepiece with built in stop-watch and goodness knows what other refinements, who needs a public clock that tells the right time? Well, lots of people do. It is so quick and easy to glance at the Clock Corner to see if you will be in time for your bus or if the parking meter is about to prepare your car for the attentions of the Traffic Warden. If you are in a hurry it is inconvenient to have to stop and put down your heavy shopping bag to get a look at your tiny wrist watch. Not everybody wears a watch anyway. In addition to these practical considerations there are other, subtler effects when the public clocks aren't working. They send out negative messages. What sort of a town is it that doesn't care about its clocks? Where is the civic pride? This is clearly a town where people just can't be bothered. When the clocks are on important public buildings, the blatant demonstration of neglect reflects on the organisation concerned. It says 'sloppy standards' and 'lazy indifference'. The following effort is hardly up to Rupert Brooke standard, but what about this?

### **Time gentlemen, please**

*It's about half past nine in the morning  
But in Priory Place I can see  
That the clock in the GPO window  
Is stuck fast at 2.43  
And then at the Scot Lane corner  
On the jeweller's shop can be seen  
A prominent OMEGA timepiece  
That just registers 7.19  
The Nat West Bank in the High Street  
Should be proud of its image, I'd say  
But their digital clock didn't function  
So they quite simply took it away!*



The clock on an ornate building in St Sepulchre Gate which was once the Public Benefit Building Co (on the opposite corner to the Halifax) is permanently stuck at 12.20. Luckily, the clock on the Railway Station tells the right time, as does the Tesco clock, the Clock Corner and the less noticeable clock on the Market Hall, overlooking the open Market. So, that is four working.

Others not working are: Quicksilver in the High Street, the Hall Cross Pub on Hall Gate, on the old Beechfield School (opposite the Museum), the clock on the corner of Sunny Bar and the Christ Church clock. All were checked on Sat. 19 July 2003.

If Doncaster is to live up to its billing and 'discover the spirit', more attention should be given to these symbols of pride in the town. Here is a job for the Town Centre Manager - to persuade organisations to get their clocks working.

So, can we please have our public clocks back - and we won't insist on having honey for tea!

Perhaps at the same time the Manager could really do something about the swivelling signposts that keep pointing in the wrong direction so that they confuse visitors and annoy local people.

**Philip Mottram**

### **COME ALONG NOW ...**

Have you seriously thought whether you might be one of the volunteers for our two vital job vacancies? Consider it carefully. The need is crystal clear and urgent. Could you possibly help? Or do you know of some other member who might reasonably be approached and encouraged to come to the rescue? Speak now!

**Your Trust has need of you**