



LANCASTER CIVIC SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

No. 120 March 2015

Forthcoming Meetings

Wednesday 11 March, 7.30pm Town Hall
Lecture on The Grand Theatre by Mike Hardy,
Chair, Lancaster Footlights.

Wednesday 8 April, 7.30pm Town Hall
Presentation on the Heysham-M6 Link Road by
Tony Crowley, Community Liaison Officer,
Costain.

**Thursday 7th May, 2pm Robert Street
Baptist Church Friendship Centre**
An additional, daytime meeting has been added
to the programme. We hope this will provide
an opportunity for members to meet each
other and to discuss the work of the Society
and ideas for future activities over
refreshments. There will also be a talk by
Mike Winstanley on *Markets to Supermarkets:
200 years of shopping in Lancaster*. It will be
held at the Friendship Centre on Robert
Street, starting 2pm until approx 4pm. This
additional meeting is an experiment and we
hope members will support it. Further details
from Winnie Clark (tel: 01524 33411 or email
clark4be@btinternet.com).

Walks

Lancaster Cemetery Walks

Roger Frankland will be leading his walks round
the "Top" cemetery on Quernmore Road on
Sundays April 19th; May 17th; June 21st; July
19th; August 16th; September 20th; November
8th, starting 2pm. Meet by Lodge gates.

Lancaster City Walks

These will be led by members of the Society on
Sundays April 5th; May 3rd; May 24th, June
28th August 30th starting 2pm. Meet at Covell
Cross at the top of Church Street.

Summer evening walk, Wednesday June 17th.

This year we will be guided around Burton-in-
Kendal by Mrs Kath Hayhurst, starting 7pm.
There will be a charge of £2 per person for
this walk.

Industrial Archaeology walk around Lancaster

Local historian Jim Price will lead this walk on
Saturday 20 June, starting at 2pm. Further
details in the May newsletter.

*And, courtesy of Costain, the Link Road
contractors:*

Heysham-M6 Link Road "Welly Walk" Sunday 26 April 2-4pm

If you would like to walk part of the route of
the Heysham-M6 link road whilst it is still
under construction here is your opportunity!

Costain has organised this walk in association
with St John's Hospice. The walk is 4 km long,
starting at Lancaster & Morecambe College to
Costain's base at Halton. Along the route
there will be huge diggers, giant bridges and
the biggest crane in Europe! There will be
informative marshals along the route with
exciting facts about the new road. At Halton a
muffin and hot drink will be provided for
walkers and a coach back to the college car
park. Advance registration (essential) is via
the St John's Hospice website and the cost is
Adult = £10 Children = £7.50 Family of 5
(maximum 2 adults) = £30. All proceeds will be
split between St John's Hospice and the
charities which Costain support. Register by 21
April if you wish to take part. For more
information, including registration details
please see:

<http://www.everydayhero.co.uk/event/wellywalk2015>

The Lancaster Brand

Unless you're an aficionado of westerns, you may not use the word *brand* very often - but brands are clearly very important things in the world of marketing. Almost unconsciously, we all use brand names: perhaps for our favoured makes of car, of clothing, or of foods and drinks. They may perhaps give us confidence because of the reputation the products or their manufacturers have built up.

Among the numerous supplements that came with the *Guardian* newspaper of Saturday 7 March was one entitled *Superbrands 2015*. Apparently *Superbrands* is an independent organisation that has commissioned research every year since 1995 'to identify the country's leading brands.' Some of these top UK brands are of products - Rolex, Nike, Gillette, Mercedes-Benz and so on - but others are of services, like BT, Mastercard and the BBC.

To qualify for inclusion in this list, a brand has to have 'established the finest reputation in its field', and to offer customers 'significant emotional and/or tangible advantages over its competitors.' In addition, brands are judged on quality, reliability and distinction (see more on all this at <http://www.superbrands.uk.com/> - this web site is quite instructive).

Whilst clearly not in the same league as British Airways, which is the UK's current top brand apparently, Lancaster is in the process of establishing itself as a brand, with the help of Marketing Lancashire and Cairn Consultants. Morecambe is engaged in a similar exercise.

Lancaster's Branding Steering Group is chaired by Ian Steel, of Atkinsons Coffee Merchants. You can read all about the Lancaster Brand at <http://www.marketinglancashire.com/visitor-economy/lancaster-brand>, from which anyone can download the brand toolkit, including logos and fonts to be used in marketing materials.

Probably few members of the Civic Society will be in a position to make use of this, but you may like to look at the web site and see what is being done on our behalf - and the Civic Society may possibly want to use some of the brand materials itself.

Community Rights and Localism

Civic Voice (the national organisation for civic societies) has invited the Society to take part in a project to encourage the take-up of the various community rights contained in the Localism Act 2011. We met two Civic Voice representatives and two Lancaster City Council officers in February to discuss the project. It is likely that our role will be to assist in disseminating information about the mechanisms which exist, through Lancaster City Council, to nominate Assets of Community Value, Local Heritage assets and (shortly) Local Green Space and to encourage local community groups to take advantage of these procedures and the additional protection they can offer. The Council has a very helpful webpage which gives information about these community rights and the criteria for nomination: see: <http://www.lancaster.gov.uk/community-right-bid-assets-community-value/>

With the support of Civic Voice we hope to host a Workshop later in the year to provide information and advice and to which representatives of community groups and interested individuals will be invited.

Winnie Clark

Golden Jubilee of the Civic Society

Lancaster Civic Society was founded in 1967, after its predecessor the Lancaster Amenity Society was wound up because of a disagreement over the post of chairman. Consequently, 2017 will be the golden jubilee year of the Civic Society. This is still two years away of course, but plans need to be made if this epoch is to be appropriately marked, so we need to be starting to make plans now.

Please could members give us your suggestions as to how best to mark the 50th birthday of the Civic Society in 2017? Send your ideas and proposals to any member of the committee.

We look forward to blowing out 50 candles in two years' time!

Planning Application responses

Application 14/01208/FUL Wheatfield Street: Erection of 41 houses and 24 apartments with associated access, roads and landscaping.

We welcomed the proposal to develop the site of the former railway sidings which lie between Blades Street and the main line; the site has lain derelict for many years. However, we pointed out that the proposed dwellings would be subject to noise and vibration from passing trains.

The development would inevitably result in an increase in traffic on an already busy road and cause further congestion at the junction with Meeting House Lane.

We said we would welcome a reduction in the density of the development and an improvement in the design along the lines suggested.

Applications 14//01295/FUL and 01376/LB Snooker Hall, Penny Street: Demolition of existing building to create new CityBlock development for 70 en-suite student rooms with retail on ground floor.

We wrote to welcome the proposal to demolish this structure which has been allowed to deteriorate and to present such an unsightly feature on this prominent gateway site to the City. We consider it most important that any building that replaces it should be of the highest standard, complementing the Penny Street Bridge facade and extending its features, without in any way trying to copy its style of architecture.

We considered the proposed design for the all-important King Street facade disappointing, representing an unhappy marriage between new and old. There followed a very detailed criticism of the design with suggestions for improvement, not reproduced here.

15/00081/ADV and 15/00088/LB Penny Street Bridge Hotel: Advertisement application for various external signs:

We were puzzled by the need to re-brand this property so soon after local people have started to become adjusted to the change of name from the Farmers' Arms.

We made no objection to the design of the proposed signage as such, but we were concerned that care should be taken in affixing it, in order to ensure that every effort is made to avoid further damage to the fabric by further holes being made in the stonework. The advice of the Conservation Officers about fixing should be sought and adhered to.

14/00989/CU and 14/01048/LB Galgate Mill, Chapel Lane, Galgate: Change of use, conversion and alterations of a mixed use showroom/warehouse with associated storage and office accommodation into 107 student studio apartments with associated communal facilities, a silk weaving museum , café, erection of a bicycle shelter and porch extension.

We wrote to express a number of reservations concerning the proposal to convert the premises into student accommodation.

We also wished to support the comment made by the Planning Policy Team, that the proposals took no account of the fact that the Mill is designated as a site for rural employment. The change of use to student accommodation would run counter to this policy. We believe that the building is large enough for a mix of uses which could provide skilled and unskilled employment opportunities.

We considered the density of the proposed development (107 apartments) unacceptable, and the amount of car parking proposed appeared totally inadequate for the number of residents.

[Note: this application was refused at the January meeting of the Planning Committee.]

15/00135/ FUL Demolition of Filter House on A6 Scotforth Road.

This prominent site on one of the main entrances into the city has been a shameful eyesore for a number of years. We wrote that it is to be regretted that no use could have been found for this unusual building, which could have resulted in its preservation.

It would appear that extensive demolition work had already been carried out, ahead of permission being granted, and contrary to the statement made on the application form. We were therefore faced with a *fait accompli*. We hope that strict enforcement will be applied to the site owner to ensure that there should be total clearance of the area, with every effort being made to leave no rubble etc. It is to be hoped that as far as possible the stonework can be rescued and recycled.

record be made of the interior of the stables before development. The loss of the original cobbled floor is regrettable but it would probably be impracticable to retain it. On a matter of detail one of the proposed Velux windows appears to be very close to the ridge line and may be difficult to flash properly.



14/01176/ADV Panel adverts on litter bins for city centre

We wrote to welcome efforts to keep street furniture in good repair and to reduce the amount in congested areas. It is hoped that the new bins will be placed close to seating areas, which are often used by those wishing to eat on the move. With regard to the proposals for replacement litter bins, we wrote to express a number of reservations. We also noted that a number of comments about this application had already been lodged by the City Council Conservation Team, and we wished to endorse them.

14/01322/FUL and 14/01323 LB: 75 Church Street: Conversion of vacant former stable block to form 4 student apartments

We wrote to welcome the proposal to bring these historic stables (actually on China Street) back into use. Although the residential units will be very compact they will be in proportion to the size of the building as a whole. We urged that a full photographic

Morecambe Bay and cycling

Congratulations to Morecambe Bay Partnership on its success in winning a £300K award from the Coastal Communities Fund to build cycle tourism. The plan is 'to create a new electric bike network and install new bike infrastructure such as public repair stands. This will create the UK's first long distance cycle route accessible by electric bike.' The route will be along the coast of the Bay.

Further information about the new bike network is available on the excellent web site of the Morecambe Bay Partnership, www.morecambebay.org.uk/.

Incidentally, the web site also shows the new logo proposed for Morecambe Bay.

writer on architectural history. In the 1840s he moved to a house on Fenton Street, joined the town council, was Mayor in 1848 and strongly promoted the improvements to the town's water and sewer systems. He founded local cricket and rowing clubs and a choral society, owned the Phoenix iron foundry and reinvigorated the Theatre Royal, now the Grand Theatre. He designed railway and tram systems for nearly thirty years in the UK and Europe, starting with parts of the Lancaster to Preston railway of 1840. His final church, St Paul's Scotforth, was near his final home, Brunton House. He was buried in 1877 in Lancaster Cemetery on Quernmore Road, near to the Paleys and Austins who carried forward his architectural practice from their offices on Castle Park.

Gordon Clark

Reports on Meetings

Christmas Social

About 40 members braved inclement weather to enjoy a very pleasant social evening on 10th December. Andy Hornby gave a fascinating account of "The Winders of Wyresdale," illustrated with pictures and musical examples expertly performed on a mandolin and tin whistle. This was followed by the traditional mince pies and mulled wine (organised by Anne Stelfox and her team) and a very enjoyable quiz devised by Gillian Sheath and Will Gale. Our thanks go to everyone who helped to make the occasion so successful.

January meeting

Edmund Sharpe, Lancaster's Renaissance man, was the subject of the meeting on 14 January. Nearly 50 members braved the weather and enjoyed the well-illustrated talk by Jim Price. Sharpe returned to Lancaster from Cambridge University and set up in Sun Street as an architect in 1836. By 1851, when he passed control of the practice to E.G. Paley, he had designed over 40 buildings, mostly in Lancashire, many being churches. Examples include St Thomas, Lancaster and Holy Trinity, Morecambe. His architectural style covered the transitional period into the Gothic Revival of the mid-Victorian era. He was also a noted



The Society recently installed a green heritage plaque outside Fenton House, now the headquarters of Mardon plc (see the photo above). A formal unveiling will take place at a future date.

February Meeting

Broadband is now nearly essential for businesses and even households, yet sparsely populated rural areas far from telephone exchanges have very slow broadband speeds. Broadband for the Rural North (BARN, pronounced 'barn') is solving this problem and Barry Forde told the Society on 12 February

how it is being achieved. B4RN uses a cooperative legal and financial structure, which greatly reduces installation costs and raises working capital from people who either buy shares or earn shares by working voluntarily for B4RN laying the ducting across the countryside. Once a parish has signed up, every house that wants it gets a fibre-optic connection 500 times faster than the recognised useable minimum speed. A BT landline need no longer be rented. Community effort and funding can greatly benefit everyone in the parish when BT and Virgin can struggle with even the basic speed. B4RN's breakeven point of around 1000 subscribers is forecast for March with over 2000 possible next year. Rural businesses and those working from home will see the greatest pay-off from their subscriptions. This Lancaster initiative benefits our area but the rural broadband problem is found across the UK. Let's watch and see if the B4RN model can be replicated in other counties.

Gordon Clark

City Museum opening hours

The City Museum in Market Square is now open on Sundays between 10 am and 5 pm - but closed on Mondays. We understand this is for a trial period.

All the museums are open on Bank Holidays between Easter and October.

Social media and the Civic Society

Do you know of anyone who might be willing to maintain a presence for the Civic Society on Facebook and/or Twitter? The Society needs to improve its communication with younger people in the District, and the committee feels this is more likely to be achieved if we can use social media as well as more conventional print.

And, who knows? We could find that others find these media useful, too.

Please tell any member of the committee if you can suggest likely people.



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Members are advised that the membership list is held in electronic form in accordance with the Data Protection Act
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www.lancastercivicsociety.org