



LANCASTER CIVIC SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

No. 121 May 2015

Forthcoming events:

Wednesday 10 June Society's AGM (notification enclosed): Lancaster Town Hall, 7.30 pm. Guest speaker: Mark Cassidy, Planning Manager, Lancaster City Council.

Wednesday 17 June Summer walk in Burton-in-Kendal. Guided tour by Mrs Kath Hayhurst. Charge of £2 per person. Meet in the village hall car park at 7 pm. Further details from Anne Stelfox (tel: 01524 823299).

Saturday 20 June Industrial archaeology walk led by Jim Price. Meet at 2 pm at the foot of Lower Regent Street (where it meets Aldcliffe Road), by the Aldcliffe Triangle (opposite the new housing on the canal basin). Walk will last approx. 2 hours.

[Saturday 27th June This was to have been the date of the Summer Outing, but we very much regret that it has not been possible to organise a Summer Outing this year. We apologise for this and hope that normal service will be resumed next year.]

Other events:

City walks will take place on Sundays 28 June and 30 August. Meet at 2 pm at Covell Cross (at the top of Church Street).

Quernmore Road Cemetery Walks on Sundays 21 June, 19 July, 16 August and 20 September. Meet at 2 pm at the Lodge gates, Quernmore Road.

Welly Walk

On Sunday 26th April, about 2700 people took part in a "Welly Walk" along the route of the Heysham-M6 link road. This event was superbly organised by Costain with support from other organisations and provided a unique opportunity to see a major civil engineering project under construction. The talk by Tony Crowley earlier in the month had prepared us for some of what we saw, but the scale of the project is breathtaking and walkers were dwarfed by the size of the diggers, earth movers and trucks used in construction - see the photo overleaf.

At the end of the walk (at Halton Army Camp), there was a welcome cup of tea and a muffin and coaches to take us back to the starting point. The funds raised from the walk were divided between St John's Hospice and the four charities which Costain is supporting in its 150th year.
Winnie Clark

Reports of meetings

March talk

How has the Grand Theatre survived for 233 years? That was the question answered by Mike Hardy of Lancaster Footlights which has owned the building since 1951. There has been continual adaptation to changing circumstances, tastes and markets. As Lancaster has changed, so has the Grand, the country's third-oldest continuously-operating provincial theatre. The building has been remodelled four times from the Georgian style of the 1780s to the Edwardian style we see today. New lighting, heating and audience



*Welly Walkers on the Heysham-M6 Link Road
26 April 2015*

(continued from page 1) comforts have been added. Owners have come and gone, each chasing profits in their own way. The building's name has changed seven times. Fire and the threat of compulsory purchase have been overcome. The offerings have included at various times London theatricals, touring companies, local groups, concerts, music hall, talks, cinema, bingo, a lecture theatre and today's very wide range of attractive events including comedy.

And the future? The ownership of the Grand is secure in the hands of a Trust. It is Grade II listed so the fabric is protected. There are plans for an extension to the left of the frontage to form a new foyer. £1 million is needed and fundraising is underway.

Gordon Clark

April talk

The Heysham to M6 Link Road is probably the largest single investment in public infrastructure in the Lancaster area since the M6 itself was built. On 8 April Antony Crowley described the progress made by Costain in constructing the Link Road. So far work is on schedule and on budget

(£124.5 million and 1 million man-hours). The cost is high because 12 major structures are needed to cross local roads, the canal, railway and, biggest of all, the Lune. In addition Junction 34 on the M6 is being upgraded with much safer slip roads to the north and south. There are extensive environmental measures and local unemployed people are being upskilled. The Link Road was very controversial and its approval hard fought. The aim is the economic regeneration of Heysham and the port area. Will this happen? Can the Park and Ride at Junction 34 be made to work well? Will there be some reduction in congestion on some local roads? The traffic congestion more widely in Lancaster is a task for the new Transport Masterplan. The large and knowledgeable audience received Mr Crowley's talk most warmly.

Gordon Clark.

May meeting

On 7 May the Civic Society held its first afternoon meeting, aiming to attract members who are unable to come to the programme of evening meetings. Mike Winstanley gave a lively talk on

shopping in Lancaster, from the medieval street markets to the present day. His well illustrated talk charted the changing fortunes of street trading and covered markets; the city-centre shops and those in the suburbs; and locally owned shops versus national chains. After his talk there was a broad discussion on the future of retailing in Lancaster, helped along by tea and biscuits.

Gordon Clark

Planning applications: the Civic Society has sent the following responses to the City Council

14/01280/FUL Fenham Carr Lane, Wyresdale Road, Lancaster: Erection of 31 dwellings with associated access

We have serious reservations about the siting of the proposed development, in view of concerns expressed about flooding risks. We find the layout and design of individual houses unimaginative, which is disappointing, as the site is on the edge of the Williamson Park Conservation Area and at the foot of the Park, which is on the English Heritage list of historic parks and gardens. The existing Standen Park development should be adopted as a benchmark rather than the Potteries estate under construction on the other side of Wyresdale Road. The density is too great and there is a lack of open space for a play area. We are generally in sympathy with the concerns expressed by existing Fenham Carr Lane residents with regard to likely increase in traffic movements. There is a lack of clarity about the building materials proposed. It is unclear if the development will include any affordable houses.

We believe that the application is premature and should be rejected, as the forthcoming Land Allocations DPD is likely to contain guidance for the future use of the whole of the Grab Lane area. Pending the publication of the Land Allocations DPD, or at least until further investigations have been carried out, further thought should be given to the overall design and layout and to the suitability of the site for housing development as opposed to retaining it as open space wetland.

15/000362/CU 37 Sun Street: Change of use of restaurant to offices and installation of new and replacement windows and doors to the side and front elevations

We welcome the proposals to convert this disused restaurant building into office accommodation. Care has been taken to preserve many of the original features of the elevation facing Sun Square, which will generally enhance that unsightly corner of one of Lancaster's hidden historic features which deserves to be included in the Listed Building category. The sensitive restoration of the side elevation provides an attractive focal point from the entrance ginnel from Market Street.

Lancaster joins England's Heritage Cities

The others are Bath, Cambridge, Carlisle, Chester, Durham, Greenwich, Lincoln, Oxford, Stratford and York. (You may wonder how Greenwich comes to be in a group of cities, when to most of us it looks like a suburb of London. Even the Heritage Cities web site calls it a village. But we have to admit it has some very grand Christopher Wren buildings.)

These eleven destinations are clearly on the tourist trail for many visitors to the UK, so becoming a member of this group has to be a great opportunity for Lancaster to attract more visitors. Congratulations to Marketing Lancashire (if it was they) for getting Lancaster added as the eleventh of England's Heritage Cities.

Lancaster Vision Seminar: *Transport in Lancaster District - the Way Ahead* held at The Storey, 24 March 2015

Lancaster Vision organised this seminar, in association with the Chamber of Commerce, to coincide with the publication of the draft Transport Masterplan for Lancaster District. It was attended by over 60 people, including representatives of the City and County Councils, local businesses, transport undertakings, educational institutions and others.

Besides officers of the County and City Councils, there were speakers from York (another Heritage

City, which now has six park-and-ride routes, and attracts 7 million visitors per year, supporting 20 000 jobs in the City), and from Preston, whose shared-space project on Fishergate carries the same traffic volume as before, but without traffic lights or intrusive signage, and without impeding pedestrians.

Brief presentations were given in favour of safety and security for cyclists, better rail links to Morecambe and other local centres, a cable-car link from the Castle to a car park at Snatchems/White Lund, and a third bridge over the river.

We learned that Seatruck has invested £275 m in new ships for the Heysham Irish routes, on which traffic is expected to increase significantly following the opening of the Link Road.

Clearly good transport links are vital to the economy of the District.

AGM

This year the AGM will be held in **Lancaster Town Hall**, a break with recent tradition.

Enclosed with your newsletter is the notification and nomination form. We are always keen to recruit new Committee members so if you are willing to offer your services to help us run the Society please get in touch. Contact any existing Committee member - contact details will be found on your programme card or on the Society's website www.lancastercivicsociety.org.

We would love to hear from you.



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