



LANCASTER CIVIC SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

No. 122 September 2015

Programme for 2015-16

Enclosed with this newsletter you will find your programme card which lists the Civic Society events planned for the coming year.

Our programme opens on 21 October with a talk by Sarah Littlefield on *The Work of the Lune Rivers Trust*, a charity dedicated to the conservation, protection, rehabilitation and improvement of the river over its whole length.

Then on 18 November we have Andrew White, historian and former curator of Lancaster City Museum, speaking on *Magna Carta - Hornby and the Montbegons*. Roger de Montbegon (of Hornby) was one of the barons who signed Magna Carta.

On Wednesday 9 December we will have our annual Christmas social evening, which will be enlivened by a presentation by Robin Collins *Reflections from the Royal Yacht Britannia*.

The programme for the whole year is set out in your card, so please put the dates for the rest of 2015 in your diaries, and don't forget to note the programme for 2016 too. (We will remind you in a later newsletter....)

Changes of Venue Note that, because of work due to be carried out at the Town Hall, the Society's evening lectures this year will be held at the Friends' Meeting House, Meeting House Lane.

There are just two exceptions: the Christmas Social Evening on 9 December and the AGM on 15 June 2016 will be held at Lancaster Town Hall.

Lune Bank Gardens, Skerton

Lune Bank Gardens or Skerton Park opened in April 1905. Created on land given by Lord Ashton (James Williamson II) they provided a pleasant promenade walk along the riverside (low level) and Halton Road (high level). Lord Ashton provided £1000 to lay them out plus investments which were intended to provide for their maintenance in perpetuity, though this was subsequently eroded through inflation.

You can get to the Gardens by descending from Halton Road upstream of Skerton Weir - near the boat-house of John o'Gaunt Rowing Club.



The photo above, reproduced by courtesy of Lancaster City Museum, shows the gardens in the early 1900s, when they were in their pristine state, but they have been rather neglected in recent years: overleaf is a photo taken a few weeks ago.

The Friends of Lune Bank Gardens, a recently-formed group, hopes to restore the area from its current neglected state and raise the profile of this hidden asset. The group has recently received a grant from the National Heritage Lottery to begin this process. If you are interested in joining the group or would like to know more about the gardens please contact Winnie Clark (01524 33411 or clark4be@btinternet.com)



*The River Lune at Skerton looking north-east, with the Aqueduct in the distance.
(Lune Bank Gardens are above and to the left of the path.)*

Industrial archaeology walk

Nine members joined Jim Price on a rather wet Saturday in June and enjoyed a very informative tour illustrating some aspects of Lancaster's industrial past, including the sites of eight mills based along the Lancaster Canal. Jim outlined the history of the Lancaster Canal which offered efficient transport links both north and south before the coming of the railway.

We made a detour to view what we could of Penny Street station (the terminus of the original Preston-Lancaster Railway), before returning to the canal towpath to look at the White Cross Mills, the two Moor Lane Mills, and the sites of Greenfield, Bath and Albion Mills. We are most grateful to Jim for leading such an interesting walk and reminding us of Lancaster's varied industrial history.

Annual General Meeting 2015

There was a good turnout for the AGM held in Lancaster Town Hall on 10th June. Some 60 members and guests were present. Roger Frankland (Co-Chairman) took the chair. The minutes of the 2014 AGM were accepted and Roger then presented the Society's Annual Report. Martin Widden (Co-Chairman) reported on the activities of Lancaster Vision, and Winnie Clark (Treasurer) presented the accounts.

As no nominations for the Committee had been received, the existing committee was re-elected to serve another 12 months. Subsequently Jenny Greenhalgh decided to stand down because of other commitments. Jenny has been a Committee member since 2005 and Chair from 2006-14. Our thanks go to Jenny for her valuable contributions over the years.

The names and contact details of current Committee members are provided on the programme card, enclosed with this newsletter. The draft minutes of the AGM are available on the Society's website, www.lancastercivicsociety.org

After the formal business, Mark Cassidy (Planning Manager, Lancaster City Council) gave a presentation entitled: "Town planning: saving the nation's waistlines" which included an update of developments in the Lancaster District. The meeting closed at 9.15pm after which light refreshments were served

Membership numbers

At the AGM interest was expressed in the Society's membership numbers. Currently we have 246 members. During the course of the 2014-15 session, 12 new members joined, 2 resigned on leaving the area and 6 chose not to renew their membership.

Annual subscriptions and gift-aid

Subscriptions are due on 1 October, and we have included the renewal notice with this newsletter. The subscription levels are unchanged from last year.

The Treasurer would also find it very helpful if all members willing and eligible to gift-aid their subscription could complete and return the **revised gift-aid declaration** at the bottom of the renewal form. This will allow us to update our records and ensure that members have signed HMRC's most recent declaration. We are very grateful to those members who participate in the scheme which is **very helpful** to the Society's finances.

Summer Evening Walk

On 17th June members enjoyed a guided tour of Burton-in-Kendal, led by local historian Kath Hayhurst. Kath led us round this attractive village with its many interesting buildings and outlined its development as a

coaching stop on the route north, its market status and its varied industries. It was a fascinating evening and we are grateful to Kath Hayhurst for sharing her extensive knowledge with us and to Anne Stelfox for organising the event.

Pizza & Poetry

Pizza Margherita on Moor Lane in Lancaster is to host a bi-monthly 'Pizza & Poetry Lunch' in conjunction with the 'Life More Ordinary' initiative at The Dukes Theatre. Developed for people with dementia and their families, it will take a nostalgic journey with poems and music we remember from our past. It will be presented by Christine Burn. For further information contact Pizza Margherita on (01524) 36333.

Planning Representations

The Society has sent a number of representations on planning applications to the City Council since the last newsletter. A selection is summarised below.

15/00714/OUT Outline application for the erection of 20 dwellings on land at Bowerham Lane Lancaster

The Civic Society responded to an earlier similar application (14/00960 OUT) in January 2015. We re-iterated our previous concern about the density of the proposed development. Our concern about noise implications from the M6 had not been addressed and we believed a more detailed investigation was essential.

We note that acknowledgement is made of the need for easement for a major trunk water main which crosses all the proposed gardens. Our earlier concerns regarding traffic implications remain.

15/00600/OUT Outline application for the demolition of existing Derby Home and erection of up to 77 dwellings with associated new access. Land at Royal Albert Farm, Pathfinders Drive, Lancaster

While we found the proposed lay-out and overall design of the estate generally acceptable we had two principal concerns:

Derby Home: In spite of the detailed Heritage Appraisal carried out by Oxford Archaeology

North we regretted the proposed demolition of this building without a further feasibility study to assess whether or not it could be converted into residential units.

Access: Ashton Road is one of the principal entry points for traffic from the south-west and has become increasingly busy. For that length of the road fronting the Royal Albert and De Vitre Cottages, for much of the time only one-way traffic is possible.

It is unclear what proportion of the proposed 77 units would be classed as "affordable".

15/00754/ CU Demolition of existing industrial building and erection of 6 residential dwellings with associated car parking, Lune Valley Lawnmowers, Sylvester Street Lancaster

We regretted the disappearance of an old-established workshop, but felt the site, within easy walking distance of the city centre lends itself to a modest housing development. However we felt that the development was over-intensive, and that fewer units - possibly broken up into two blocks would be more appropriate for the space available, providing some variation in an otherwise bland and featureless frontage, as well as easing car parking.

The houses opposite are traditional stone fronted. If it is felt that a similar feature on the proposed new dwellings would be too expensive we urged that a rendered finish, rather than brick, be adopted. This, together with stone lintels round the windows and doors could enhance an otherwise uniform and boring frontage and would be more sensitive to the existing streetscape. We hoped that the opportunity would be taken to up-grade the footpath to the rear and that every effort would be made to protect existing trees and natural habitats.

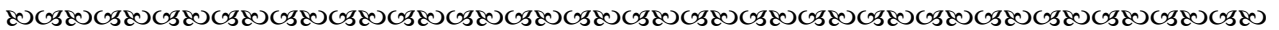
In spite of the findings of the noise and vibration survey, we found it difficult to imagine that the

proximity of the railway would not have a detrimental effect on the living conditions of the house-holders.

15/00813/FUL Demolition of existing maintenance buildings and erection of 36 houses, 20 flats and a mixed use building comprising a retail unit with 15 flats with associated parking, landscaping and access, land adjacent to Campbell Drive Lancaster (Moor Hospital Annexe site)

Having previously praised the work of the developer for the sensitive way in which the impressive edifice of the Moor Hospital Annexe is being brought back into use, we found it most regrettable that the open parkland fronting the development should be considered suitable for an intensive modern housing estate, which will contrast unfavourably with the backdrop of the hospital frontage and its historic setting. No doubt in common with many of the new residents of The Residence we had hoped that the open space featuring the original bowling green and the many mature trees surrounding the area could be conserved.

In detail, although there is a pleasant variety in design of the various units they are too densely positioned. Houses 'Type 6' which face on to Quernmore Road have the least to commend them. The apartment blocks, situated at the most low-lying area at the edge of the site, are not without merit. The inclusion of a convenience store is to be welcomed given the distance to any alternative shops, however great sensitivity will be needed in the design of signage in this setting. The design of the replacement Gatehouse is pleasing and it is hoped that the masonry from the original structure can be re-cycled.



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