



Newsletter

Issue 5 • Summer 2013

PROGRAMME

September to November 2013

Meetings are held at 7.30pm on the second Tuesday of the month in the Eyre Chapel, Newbold.

- 10th Sept** **Fair-trade Tea -**
James Pogson (Northern Tea Merchants)
- 8th Oct** **The Chamber of Commerce -**
past, present and future.
Scott Knowles
- 12th Nov** **“I recognise it, but where is it?”**
Pictorial quiz of Chesterfield

Chesterfield and District Civic Society - Executive Committee:

Chairman Bryan Thompson 01246 566211

Secretary Phil Whiteley 01246 211200

Treasurer Diana Wilmot 01246 768133

Jillian Butt, David Evans, Ann Hargreaves,
Yvonne Williamson.

YOUR CIVIC SOCIETY NEEDS YOU!

Do you have friends or colleagues
who can play an active part in the society?

Please ask them to contact Phil Whiteley on

01246 211200

The Civic Society and the Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI)

The Society is delighted to see the new railings in place around the Church.

It was the Society's suggestion as a member of the THI steering group that these be reinstated to the pattern of those that originally surrounded the Church. Our thanks to all who were involved in delivering the project.



Chairman's Report Spring/Summer 2013

Our talks programme remains popular. In November, Dr Pat Strange, an eminent authority on water mills, gave an interesting and instructive talk. Arguably Chesterfield's mills predated those in Cromford and Derby making them the first factories of the industrial revolution. Sadly many have gone, in particular the silk mill. However, Walton and Cannon Mills remain and hopefully a new conserving use will be found soon.

January brought us coffee from Columbia. James Pogson from the Northern Tea Merchants told us about Fair Trade coffee production from plant to roasted bean. He focussed on Columbian production which relies heavily on small scale coffee growers who live high up in the mountains. Coffee cherries are harvested precariously in remote areas, processed with the aid of sun and mountain streams. The beans are carried in sacks by mule to plants where the beans are graded and bagged for export. The process is highly regulated and transparent both to ensure Fair Trade farmers are properly rewarded and to protect the industry from unwanted exports. The Columbian model rewards sustainable farming and works well for all involved.

In February Ken Smith from the National Park Authority showed us the archeologically rich landscape of the Peak District and recent projects in the National Park: Bronze Age features and C19 tin town in the Upper Derwent; the Chatsworth landscape; a community project at Fin Cop Hill Fort near Great Longstone; heritage management on Stanton Moor; rescuing Throwley Old Hall and recording Ecton Copper Mines. He reminded us that heritage is about understanding the past for the benefit of the future. This work has earned national recognition from English Heritage. I cannot help but feel that similar projects in and around Chesterfield would help conserve our historic identity and further benefit the local economy as a tourist destination. The Eyre Chapel was full for Martin Smith's talk about the Lancashire Derbyshire and East Coast Railway. Based in Chesterfield it gave us the Market Station and Horns Bridge but never made Lancashire or the East Coast. It was conceived as a freight railway serving the lucrative north Derbyshire-Nottinghamshire coalfield with passenger services being incidental. The planned routes through Lincoln to a deep water port at Sutton on Sea and across the Pennines via Loundsley Green were bizarre and thankfully too expensive to build. Sections of the route do remain, such as west of Lincoln which is used as a test track. The Society is in negotiations

with Network Rail to install a plaque on the remaining abutment of Horns Bridge to mark the LDECR. We have been quite active on planning matters making representations on Council policies and applications. In particular we expressed concern over the applications to convert 2 local pubs into shops. I have written to Tesco asking the company to raise the quality of their proposals. The cumulative effect of 'deemed to satisfy' makes the area less attractive for local people and for those businesses which will only choose to locate in an attractive area. Architecturally every little counts, for ultimately a very ordinary environment is self defeating for all involved.

Finally, some of us took up the offer of an interesting tour around the Tourist Information Centre, the Museum and the Theatre.

Bryan Thompson,
Chairman

Solar panels update

Last year we suggested these should be more discrete through the use of dark edged panels and be more composed in appearance when fitted to a roof. The Peak District National Park Authority agrees and has produced a very good guidance note which shows the best types and place to put them: www.peakdistrict.gov.uk/renewable-energy-and-planning
The Society did comment on the note and has suggested to our constituent Councils that they consider adopting something similar. A related issue is a report of the ease by which melting snow can slide off the panels. So if you are thinking about having them, it is wise to avoid placing them above the front door and use proprietary snow guards above pedestrian areas. These too can be finished in a dark colour.

Rekindling Connections:

As some members will recall, during the 1960s the local Chamber of Trade helped in the formation of the Civic Society.

It has now become the Nottinghamshire Derbyshire Chamber of Commerce and the northern area is based in Chesterfield. In preparation for our Jubilee Year, our Executive Officers met with the Deputy Chief Executive, Scott Knowles, to discuss how we could work together again for the benefit of the town and district.

There is the prospect of corporate help towards small projects, a link on the NDCC website and Scott will attend our committee meetings. Hopefully this will be a fruitful and long term relationship.



Bryan Thompson and Scott Knowles at the NDCC Office

If anyone has a burning desire to lead or help on a project or event during 2014, please contact any of the committee members.

House Extensions

Today the, coalition government is seeking to relax planning requirements on house extensions. This is only for England and is being exercised in the curious belief that this measure will stimulate part of the national economy.

In permitting larger extensions to houses without the need for permission, there is no doubt it will lead to unnecessary neighbour disputes, long lasting unsightly changes and possibly issues within flood plains. The greater certainty of construction for builders and their clients will be more than offset by the wider uncertainty of what will happen to the character of residential areas. More fundamentally, the Society is quite concerned that we see yet another dilution of democratic control and loss of local influence over development.

I am aware that disputes over proposed house extensions can take a lot of time for council officers and elected members. However, it is a good price to pay when the outcome makes for places where people want to live, work and enjoy life. Most planners will tell you that the regulations are a good reality check and it is not uncommon for applicants to be privately grateful for their intervention. Unfortunately such benefits get a deaf ear nationally.

An alternative we would prefer to see is that local planning authorities be given the option to decide whether to relax these and other planning controls. At least that helps the local democratic deficit.

Pavement Parking - Who will act?

Until a few years ago it was not a local issue, now it is becoming the norm. So today you can be walking along a pavement and see a car, van or even lorry driving towards you in the expectation you will move out of the way to allow it to be parked. Curiously it is a consequence of authorities trying to deliver more sustainable ways of access and travel.

The national approach is to plan and manage our towns and rural areas to reduce traffic movement and promote sustainable modes such as walking, cycling and public transport for passenger and freight. Higher density developments help to make public transport more viable. Integrated transport planning is an ideal to which we aspire.



Our councils have similar aspirations. Despite improvements, there is not enough highway capacity to accommodate all users comfortably. Public transport and other ways of getting around must be a more credible alternative to attract people out of cars. Pavement parking is not well controlled here. It can be particularly problematic near shops and secondary schools.

In 2011, government recognised that there is a national problem and suggested that it would favour orders to control pavement parking. However, they have limited application and it is time for the councils to recognise that the problem will grow unless other issues are addressed.

Local list

Planning procedures take special care to protect Listed Buildings and buildings located within Conservation Areas.

However, there may be a building, structure, memorial or location that is not listed or within a Conservation Area that you feel has importance and which reinforces local distinctiveness providing a valuable contribution to the local community.

How can it be protected?

Chesterfield Borough is establishing a Local List which, whilst not providing legal protection, will ensure that the desirability of conservation and enhancement of such buildings/places is recognised and considered in planning applications. There is a more detailed description of the scheme and the nomination process at the following internet address:

www.chesterfield.gov.uk/Local-List-of-Heritage-Assets/Local-List-of-Heritage-Assets-888-921.html

or go the Chesterfield Borough Council website: www.chesterfield.gov.uk and SEARCH for Local List.

Chesterfield Shopping Festival, April 1914

(an extract from the programme: part two)

On four days ... Mr B C Hucks, the famous aviator, will give Exhibitions (weather permitting) of Flying, Upside-down Flying, and "Looping the Loop", for the first time in the Midlands.

Thursday April 30th, Tradesmen's Tableau Turnouts; Decorated Motor Cars and Cycles; Historic and Comic Costumes; Messenger Boys' Cycles; Perambulators and Push-carts; Ambulance Squads, Boy Scouts etc.

On four days ... Free Cinematographic exhibitions will be given on the Balcony of the Market Hall. The pictures, in addition to comedy and general subjects, will include reproductions of the work in progress in local factories.

Green spaces

It has been long known that patients get well more quickly if they are able to look out on greenery but recent research by various universities has confirmed that parks, gardens and green spaces in urban areas can improve the wellbeing and quality of life of people living there. One study into this is described here: www.richardcoyne.com/2013/03/09/the-brain-in-the-city

Chesterfield is quite good at landscaping on new developments and safeguarding existing green margins but they need to do better in replacing lost trees and planting up important spaces before they are lost to utility companies for their equipment just as has happened to the space shown in this photograph. The Society is encouraging the Council to take green spaces more seriously by looking after them more carefully and suggesting how areas can be enhanced.



Would trees not enhance this space?

