
CHESTERFIELD & DISTRICT CIVIC SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

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CHESTERFIELD: CRADLE OF THE GARDEN CITY MOVEMENT

The talk by Hugh Ellis at our AGM in September was by common consent of those present outstanding. The material was very well presented, with a good blend of national and local detail, and attracted a number of questions at the end.

AFTERNOON MEETINGS?

It would be fair to say that the attendance at the AGM was a little disappointing, especially in view of the high quality of the talk. For this reason, the committee has considered the possibility of holding future speaker meetings in the afternoon, rather than the evening. We wonder whether this would be more popular with our members, most of whom are retired. We would probably not change the venue from St Thomas's church centre, and could still hold some evening meetings if, for example, a speaker could only come then.

We would welcome a response from members to this idea, which we may try out for our next meeting.

TALGO COMES TO CHESTERFIELD

Members who read *RAIL* magazine will have seen the recent issue which included a sixteen-page supplement about the Spanish company Talgo, which is proposing to open a research and development centre at Barrow Hill as part of its expansion into the British railway rolling stock building market. It has occurred to us that it might be interesting to hear from the company about their plans in this area and we are trying to arrange a talk by one of their UK staff.

DON CATCHMENT RIVERS TRUST

This organisation has been working for some time to conserve and improve the natural environment of the Don and its tributaries, historically one of the most polluted rivers in England. About a year ago the trust received funding to extend its work into the Rother valley (including its tributaries) and contacted the Civic Society. We did not become involved directly but the North East Derbyshire Industrial Archaeology Society (which is affiliated to the Civic Society) did and has begun a survey of all the waterpower sites on the Rother and connected streams. These are very numerous and although some have been studied in the past (for example the lead smelting and ironworking sites), others have not, including most of the manorial cornmills.

The DCRT's work may also lead to some further environmental improvement in the Rother catchment and perhaps even a solution to the problem of the Hipper valley between Somersall and Wheatbridge. This was an area where waterpower was extensively exploited by several different industries, including a cotton mill which is now a grade II* listed building. The whole area has been derelict for some time and a solution seems no nearer than it was when the fire-resistant cotton mill was first identified. Cannon Mill is another of the water-powered sites in this area whose future remains uncertain.

BANK CLOSE, HASLAND

We cannot claim that there has been a great deal of planning news since we produced the July Newsletter, or at any rate not many applications on which the Civic Society's views have been sought.

Two applications have been made for alterations at Bank Close in Hasland, the former Chesterfield Tube sports and social club which is now a nursing home. These do not appear to affect the character of this fine early nineteenth-century house, probably built about 1830 by James Robinson, a partner in the bank of Maltby & Robinson of New Square. The details can be found on the Borough Council's planning website under the references CHE/19/490/REM1 and CHE/19/572/DOC.

Bank Close is listed grade II* (i.e. it is among the 6 per cent most impor-

tant listed buildings in the country) but this seems to be mainly because of the well-preserved interior of the original mansion. This will not be affected by the proposed work, which has been designed by a Sheffield firm of architects, Cordonnier Design.

HURST HOUSE AND TAPTON HOUSE

There is, we regret to say, no further news about the future of either of these former school buildings, of which Tapton House is also listed grade II* (Hurst House is grade II and in a conservation area). A county council officer stated in an email to our secretary several weeks ago that, acting as sole trustee of the Chesterfield Schools Foundation, the owner of Hurst House, his authority was close to completing the sale of the property. We have heard nothing further to suggest that the sale has in fact been completed. It is now nearly eighteen months since the county councillor immediately responsible

for the council's conduct as trustee of the Chesterfield Schools Foundation decided to offer Hurst House for sale, initially by private treaty or if (after six months) a sale by private treaty had not been achieved, by auction. The county council appears to have failed to execute the policy adopted in May 2018 and is still attempting to secure a sale by private treaty. We remain very unhappy that Hurst House is facing its fifth winter standing empty.

We have nothing further to report about our attempts to find a new use for Tapton House.

CHESTERFIELD COLLEGE WEST BUILDING

There is more cheering news about the former Chesterfield Grammar School building on Sheffield Road, which was taken over by what is now Chesterfield College after the school vacated in 1967. The

College has for several years used the older (northern) part of the buildings of 1846–1901, where the Old Cestrefieldians Trust has been able to reinstate the memorials commemorating masters and pupils who died in the two World Wars and a memorial to James Mansell, headmaster between 1894 and 1921. The trust hopes shortly to erect a plaque in memory of William Ernest Glistler (1906–98), headmaster between 1947 and 1968.

The College has now announced the official opening (on 9 October) of a new Sixth Form area in the southern portion of the old grammar school buildings, which date from 1901. The College has, of course, taught A Level courses for many years but this development should give this aspect of its work a better focus and A Level students a stronger sense of identity within a very large student body, most of whom are studying vocational subjects. It will also bring back into proper use the whole of this part of the College estate, which is a grade II listed building.