

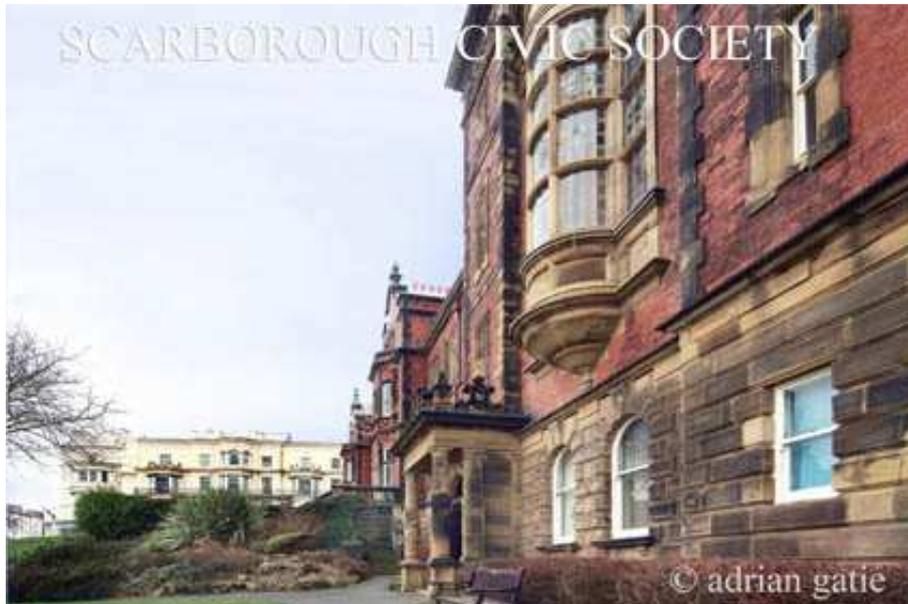
Scarborough & District  
Civic Society  
*50 years*



1964-2014

This is the complete text and a selection of photographs contained in a leaflet which was given to the Borough of Scarborough by Scarborough & District Civic Society in their 50th anniversary year. Photographs by Adrian Gatie.

## Welcome to Scarborough Town Hall



This building, occupying a splendid location overlooking Scarborough's south bay, is the civic heart of Scarborough. We hope you will enjoy your visit and that this leaflet offers you an interesting guide.

## Scarborough's History

Scarborough town dates from a Royal Borough founded by Henry II in about 1163. In the Middle Ages the herring trade made it one of the richest towns in the country.

The discovery of spa waters in the 17th century and the commencement of sea bathing saw Scarborough become the first seaside resort. The nobility soon started visiting the town.

It is truly said of Scarborough that it became a magnet for the mighty.

The building of the railways in the 19th century enabled the middle classes to travel to the town and allowed the consequent development of the resort and an increase in hotels and amenities.

Scarborough remains a popular holiday destination and during the peak season tourism can double the population. Other industries include printing, coach and bus building, steel fabrication and food processing.

## History of the Town Hall

In 1800 the Town Hall moved from Sandside (on the site of the former Bethel Mission, now a café) to William Newstead's Assembly Rooms on Long Room Street, as St Nicholas Street was then called.

All Scarborough Corporation business was conducted here until 1867 when a new town hall and court house were opened in Castle Road.

This building was eventually considered inadequate (it was demolished in 1971) and by 1898 the Corporation was seeking a site for a new town hall. In 1903 the building you are in today became our Town Hall.

The building that originally stood on this site was 22 Long Room Street (renamed St Nicholas Street in 1844). The house was the home of John Woodall, a member of a prosperous and influential Scarborough family, whose connections with the town date back to the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

One of the family businesses, Woodall's Bank, stood on the corner of St Nicholas Street until it was acquired by Barclays Bank in 1896.

A portrait of John Woodall is hanging in the Committee Room. In 1844, John Woodall had the house demolished and replaced by an impressive red-brick mansion named St Nicholas House. The building was designed by Henry Wyatt who displayed the design at the Royal Academy in 1852. The style of the house is Jacobean. There are two storeys and an attic, all in red brick with stone dressings, plinth, string courses, cornice and parapet. In 1898, John Woodall's son, John W Woodall, whose portrait hangs in the entrance foyer, and who had inherited the property on the death of his father in 1879, offered St Nicholas House to the Corporation, who purchased the building for £33,575.

The sale price included St Nicholas House, three properties on St Nicholas Street, Granby House (soon after demolished on the site of the sunken gardens), the St Nicholas under-cliff, the Exhibition Hall on the Foreshore Road (which, having survived as the old Olympia, was destroyed by fire in 1975), the adjacent Coastguard Station and the old reading room and library at the top of King's Steps. In the same year work began on the new town hall at a total cost of £18,522.

Harry W Smith, the recently appointed borough engineer and surveyor, designed the new eastern (seaward) wing in a similar style to the original, to accommodate the council chamber and other offices. Royalty graced the opening of the town hall on 28th July 1903. HRH Princess Beatrice (Princess Henry of Battenburg), youngest daughter of Queen Victoria, was met on her arrival at the railway station by the civic heads of Yorkshire and by the five year old Sacheverell Sitwell who presented flowers. The Princess formally opened the town hall and unveiled the bronze statue of her mother, Queen Victoria. The ceremonial key that was used to open the Town Hall is displayed in the cabinet in the corridor. Further alterations to the Town Hall were made in 1962-64 with extensions in King Street and St Nicholas Street.

The statue of Queen Victoria in the Town Hall gardens is the only statue of a public figure to be found in Scarborough; it cost £600 in 1903. The Town Hall is a grade II listed building.

## A GUIDE TO SCARBOROUGH TOWN HALL

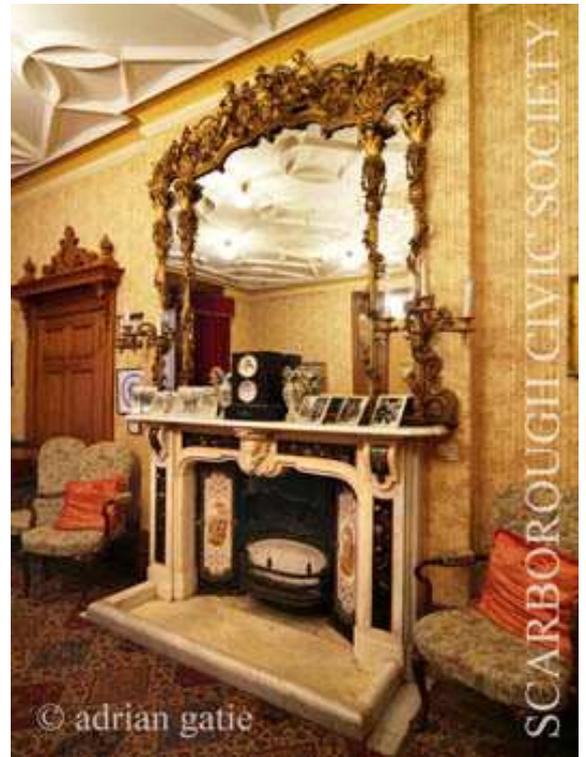


We enter the Town Hall at the main entrance on St Nicholas Street. The mosaic in the floor of the entrance foyer is the Common Seal of the Borough, which dates from the 13th century and was used as the armorial bearings of Scarborough until 1935. The Latin words surrounding the seal mean: 'The Common Seal of the Burgesses of Scarborough'. Behind the stairwell are stained glass windows bearing the coats of arms of some of Yorkshire's major cities and towns. From top left they are: Leeds, Bradford, Huddersfield, Hull, Wakefield, York, Sheffield and Harrogate. Civic representatives from these areas attended the official opening of the Town Hall in July 1903.

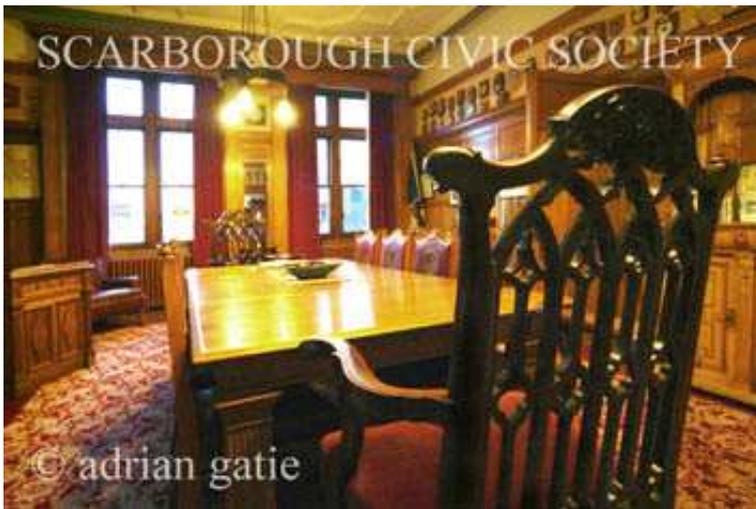
The Cabinet Room and the Members' Retiring Room, which are both off the entrance foyer, were respectively, the dining room and library of St Nicholas House. Both rooms contain the original fireplaces and overmantels. The one in the Members' Room bears the date of the completion of St Nicholas House, 1845. In the entrance foyer is a decorative cast iron incense burner, one of the 100 placed on London Bridge for the wedding of Edward, Prince of Wales to Princess Alexandra of Denmark on 10th March 1863.

## The Civic Parlour

The Civic Parlour was the drawing room of the old house and the wall on the left was the end wall of the house. Here, on either side of the connecting door to the Mayor's parlour, are paintings by H B Carter of the original house, which stood on the site and of St Nicholas House before it was converted into the Town Hall. Of note in this room, and in the Committee Room, are the fire surrounds, which are adorned with semi-precious stones, all collected from the beaches between Filey and Whitby. They are mostly Cornelian, Amethyst and Whitby Jet, with some opal types and crystal formations. Also displayed in the Civic Parlour are photographs of visits to the Borough by members of the Royal family and paintings by H B Carter and other artists.



## The Mayor's Parlour



In the Mayor's Parlour, the plaques around the walls have been presented over the years by army, naval and air force units and other organisations that have made official visits to the town. The copper plates above the sideboard are from Scarborough, Ontario, one of at least sixteen other places around the world which share the name Scarborough, including Scarborough Hill (Oregon), Scarborough Reef (South China Sea) and Scarborough Bluffs (overlooking Lake Ontario).

There is a picture on the right hand side of the door of the town's former adopted Royal Navy ship, RFA Waveruler. The bell from HMS Apollo, another of the town's adopted

ships, is on display in the Mayoral Corridor cabinet. On the sideboard is the cap of a German naval shell recovered after it had been fired through the wall of the Grand Hotel during the bombardment of the town by two German battlecruisers on 16th December 1914 and later made into an ornamental inkstand. Also in the Mayor's Parlour is a photograph of Sir Winston Churchill, then Prime Minister, sitting in the Mayor's chair during his visit to the town in 1952 to attend the Conservative Party Conference. Note the illuminated address presented by the Council to John Woodall in thanks for the mayor's gold chain of office, which he presented to the town in November 1852 at the conclusion of his term of office as Mayor. Two of the paintings in this room, 'The Raising of the Green Howards' and 'Ardoyne Patrol', were presented by the Green Howards, the famous Yorkshire regiment, the only military unit to have been granted the Freedom of the Borough, which confers the right to parade through the town with 'drums beating, colours flying and bayonets fixed'. The Green Howards are now part of the Yorkshire Regiment, formed in June 2006. New colours were presented to the Yorkshire Regiment by HRH the Duke of York on 8th July 2010 at a ceremony in York. The Yorkshire Regiment, with the new colours, exercised their right to parade through the town on Armed Forces Day in June 2010 and a shell was presented to the Mayor which is now in the Green Howards corner of the Parlour. The Regiment exercised their rights again on Armed Forces Day in June 2014 when a formal parade took place.

## The Mayoral Corridor

The items in the display cabinet in the corridor are clearly identified so descriptions here are unnecessary. There are, however, one or two items of particular interest including the key which was used to open the Town Hall officially in 1903, the miniature silver maces, the tops of which can be removed to reveal a small snuff container, dating from the days when the Mayor or his guests would regularly indulge in snuff-taking, a commemorative set of mason's tools to mark the opening of the Marine Drive and a decanter



presented to the Borough by Sir Michael Shaw when he retired as Scarborough's Member of Parliament in 1992. Also of interest are the various types of freedom caskets. It will be seen that these have become much less ornate over the years.

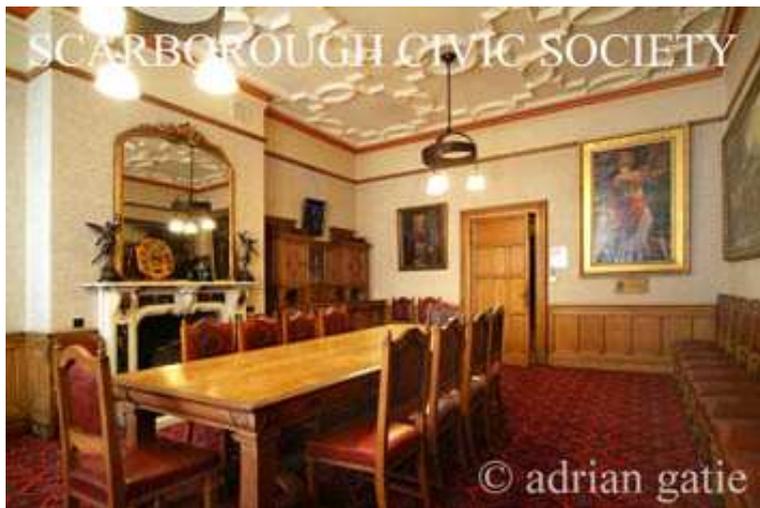
The large painting hanging in the corridor, 'Scarborough Spa Promenade' by Thomas Jones Barker, always attracts great interest when the story behind it is explained to visitors. The Prince and Princess of Wales and Lord Londesborough are prominent figures, depicted as visiting the Spa in 1870. For a fee, of up to 100 guineas, Oliver Sarony, the artist and photographer, took photographs of prominent people and passed them to Barker for incorporation in the picture. The higher the fee, the nearer your likeness would be to the royal couple. For their fee, their names were also recorded for posterity, as a key identifying everyone on the picture is displayed alongside it. The painting is fictitious, as the royal couple did not walk at the Spa in 1870, however it is believed they did visit Scarborough on other occasions. In his 'Book of Scarbrough Spaw' Sir Meredith Whittaker refers to the painting as a 'gigantic fraud'.

## The Borough Mace and Chains of Office



The Borough Mace and original chains of office are on display in the mayoral corridor cabinets and the chains are now only worn on special ceremonial occasions. Replica chains are now worn for most events and these will be worn by the Mayor for tours of the Town Hall. The mace was presented to Scarborough Corporation in 1636 by Sir Thomas Posthumous Hoby of Hackness Hall. The mace is the symbol of the authority of the Borough Council and must always be on display during a meeting of the Council. It is also carried in front of the Mayor on civic ceremonial occasions. The mace of the City of London is a replica of Scarborough's mace, the original London mace having been destroyed in the Great Fire of London. The Mayor's chain was presented to the Corporation in 1852 by John Woodall, who has been referred to earlier as the owner of St. Nicholas House. The Mayoress' chain was presented to the Corporation in 1897 when a public subscription was held to purchase it to commemorate the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria that year. The date 1897 is included in the links of the chain. The Deputy Mayor's chain was purchased by the Corporation in 1925.

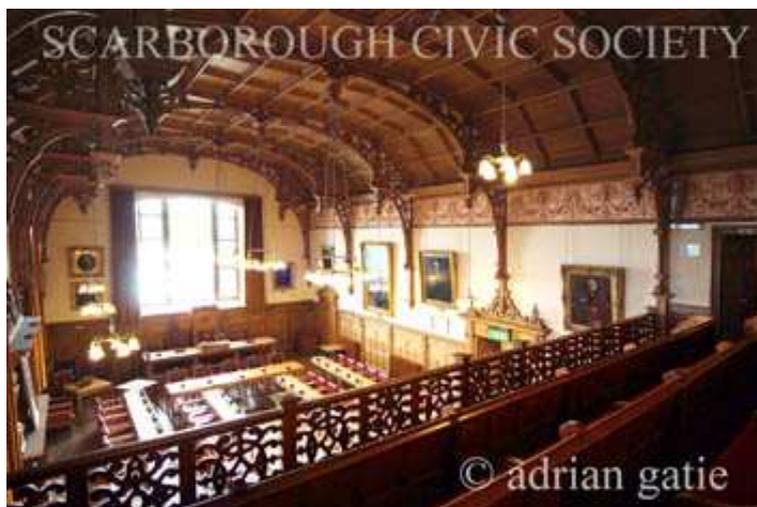
## The Committee Room



Note the fire surround (see notes for Civic Parlour). A piece of shrapnel from the bombardment is displayed on the cabinet in this room. The painting hanging by the doorway 'Remember Scarborough', by Edith Kemp-Welch, was suggested by the bombardment of Scarborough. It was presented by Miss Kemp-Welch to the Mayor and Corporation on 13<sup>th</sup> December 1915 and was later reproduced as a recruiting poster. There are also portraits of John Woodall and John W Woodall hanging in this room.

## The Council Chamber

The Council Chamber has some fine panelling created by a firm of local carpenters. The cypher 'CR' is prominent in the stained glass windows both here in the Council Chamber and outside in the corridor. This is the cypher of King Charles I, in whose reign the mace of the Borough was made. At the rear of the room, under the public gallery, is what is still referred to as the Robing Room, in which members of the Council used to don their robes before Council meetings and other civic occasions. The wearing of robes by Councillors ended at the reorganisation of local government in 1974.



**Acknowledgements and thanks:** Photographs: [Adrian Gatie](#) • Research and text: [Irene Webster](#), SBC Civic Officer • [Peter Cooper](#), Scarborough and District Civic Society • [Dr Jack Binns](#)

**The leaflet was given to the Borough of Scarborough by Scarborough & District Civic Society in their 50th anniversary year**