



MAY 2016

## CELEBRATING OUR 21<sup>ST</sup> YEAR

The highlight of last year must surely be the erection of the blue plaque for Sir George Elliot who in 1879 made it possible and popular to enjoy seaside entertainment in Whitby by introducing his Saloon and Pleasure Gardens. For many visitors coming from all around it had been a place of happiness and interest. March 18th 2015 was a very happy day for us and we can all be proud that we made it happen.



Looking back to 1995. Whitby had not had a Civic Society for more than ten years when Mr Alan Whitworth advertised a meeting in Trinity Church to start a new Civic Society. The meeting was addressed by Mr Whitworth and a representative of the National Civic Societies. In his talk the Civic Society representative emphasised that a Civic Society's function was to educate people and make them proud of their local community rather than just protect endangered buildings and erect blue plaques.

Those present decided that they would get together to form a new society and a committee was formed with

Alan Whitworth as Secretary. Edna Whelan became Chairman, Frank Doyle, vice chair and Mike Dawson, treasurer. Other early members were Jean Dawson, Linda Jordan, Marie McCloud Kevin Devaney, Parry Thornton and Elizabeth Cheney. The committee met in a small room in Trinity Church. The new society asked the national body if they could have copy of a suitable form of constitution and when this came it was adopted more or less as suggested.

Alan Whitworth applied to the County Council for a grant towards plaques to commemorate famous people who had lived in Whitby and buildings of special historic interest. The County Council gave the grant and the Secretary made a list of buildings which he considered would suit those demands. Permission to put the plaques on the buildings was obtained by Alan Whitworth and soon plaques started to be placed on buildings without publicity or ceremony.

The first of the blue plaques put up was at the White Horse and Griffin public house



commemorating its association as a coaching inn. It is recorded that Charles Dickens stayed there and in a letter to a friend he mentioned the view from the window in his room.

## **CELEBRATING OUR 21<sup>st</sup> YEAR continued...**

By the end of the first year the new society had a constitution and evidence of its activity, not just in the plaques but the tradition of doing beach cleans. At the first AGM a new Chairman Mr Peter Thornton and a new Secretary, Mrs Anne Dennier were elected. Mr Frank Doyle was elected Vice Chairman and Mr Mike Dawson as Treasurer. Mr Parry Thornton pledged his support to the society but not as a member of the committee.

From the second year new traditions were started, such as the spreading of responsibility among the committee members, the newsletter, a website and contact with the local planning officer. We were fortunate that our Secretary Anne Dennier had experience in local government planning and was able to set up a robust planning procedure.

The new committee was to erect a plaque to Lewis Carroll on the house in which he spent holidays in Whitby. Mr Kevin Mulvany was put in charge of arranging this.



He got in touch with the local primary school and asked them to join us in unveiling the plaque. Mr Malcolm Barker was asked to unveil the plaque. The school children dressed as Alice and other characters in the Alice stories. Mrs Elizabeth Cheyne photographed the event. The success of this inspired the society to make a White Rabbit Trail.

This trail was produced by Anne Dennier, assisted by Elizabeth Cheyne but everyone on the committee provided ideas. I remember my wife Jean and I going over the route looking for carvings on buildings of the sort that might have inspired Lewis Carroll. Dr John Shorter investigated how Lewis Carroll might have come to Whitby. From all these, the material of the trail was established.

Various methods of funding were asked for help but eventually we got a grant of £50 from the Hoteliers Association and the Borough Council Tourist Office bought enough copies for the Trail to be printed.

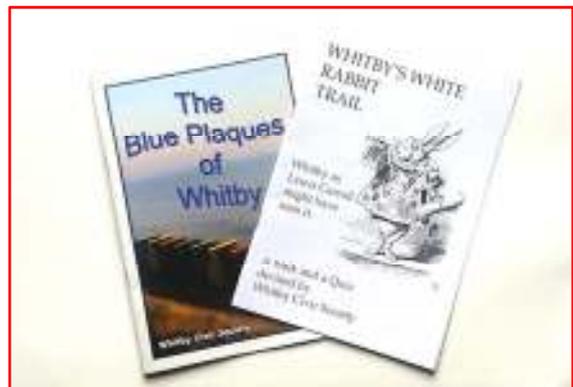
The society started to have a regular monthly lecture with an entrance fee, which built up a loyal following. The society also called free open meetings to discuss planning important issues.

Heritage Open Days became an annual event which opened many buildings with a Civic Society representative to give information and answer questions.

In thinking over the last 21 years we should remember those who made a big contribution to the society but are now deceased: Peter Thornton, Brian Devany, Marie McLeod, Anne Barron, Walter Jones, Doreen Wort and Jean Dawson. The Society owes a debt to all of them for their work and enthusiasm.

While continuing to put up plaques, have lectures, Heritage Open Days, keep a continuous look at planning the society has just published a re-edited edition of the White Rabbit Trail and a Guide to Blue Plaques.

**ELIZABETH CHEYNE  
MIKE DAWSON**



A number of people have asked where you can buy the Civic Society's guide to the blue plaques of Whitby. Currently, the booklets are on sale at Holmans in Skinner Street and the Tourist Information Centre. They are priced at £2 and £3, depending on size. For postal sales please enquire by email: [susanmharty@hotmail.com](mailto:susanmharty@hotmail.com)

## GERMAN PLANNING

The German planning system is both highly decentralised and tightly regulated. There are two separate processes, governed by two separate laws: building and land use decisions are devolved by law to the lowest level of local government, the *Bezirk* (or district); spatial planning, or strategic area planning, is organised by the *Land* and municipal authority.

In practical terms, area planning is the responsibility of the *Land* of North-Rhine Westphalia and the city of Cologne. The two are expected to work together, and reach a consensus on whether a particular area is to become a new residential or industrial area, and they then have to plan for appropriate transport links, energy, water and other infrastructure. My impression is that in Cologne at least, this collaborative 'big picture' approach works well.

Decisions on specific pieces of land and buildings are taken by the *Bezirk*. The council looks at individual proposals and makes a decision; they do not refer it anywhere else, there is no right of appeal, and there is no legal review. The council decision is final.

I can't judge how well this process serves the city's heritage, but it produces quick and unambiguous decisions. Getting to this stage, though, is another matter. Cologne is a modern city that is built over its ancient predecessors. If you try to rip a building down, the odds are that you will find that it is built on archaeologically valuable ruins. For example, a planned museum extension in the old city centre has been halted for several years while archaeologists investigated the remains of the ancient Jewish quarter, which will now have to be preserved. Other obstacles include unexploded bombs and campaigning groups.

Local campaigning groups – known as 'citizens' initiatives' – have a real influence on decisions. I've been following one example, the Helios site, to the west of the city centre. The site was developed as an electronics factory in the late nineteenth century, then turned into a sports venue in the 1920s. Some of the buildings are rather attractive, including the symbolic lighthouse – yes, in the middle of the city – which today gives its name to the locally-produced Helios beer, which I warmly recommend.



2010 the site's owners decided to turn it into a shopping mall. Local people quickly formed a campaigning group, the *Bürgerinitiative Helios*, while from its side the city council convened an externally-moderated civic forum to debate the issue. Once the broad strategy had been agreed, the developers then had to apply to the *Bezirk* council for approval.

Instead of a shopping mall, the site will house a school (managed by the University) and small traders. While not everything will be preserved from the old factory, the most significant historic buildings – including the lighthouse – are under protection and cannot be demolished.

Clearly, there are advantages to this system as well as disadvantages.



And there are lessons to be learned. For me, the most important is the enthusiastic way in which local people worked together, and did their homework, so as to influence events. A well informed campaign seems to me much more constructive than pointless grumbling. Second, the city council and the *Bezirk* council are used to working with each other and showed themselves willing to listen to local people's concerns.

**JOHN FIELD**

## **A MISSION TO BEAT BEECHING: A STORY OF A RAILWAY'S PRESERVATION, REVIVAL AND FUTURE**

The North Yorkshire Moors Railway (NYMR) is considered one of the most beautiful railway lines on the British Railway network. The NYMR operates steam and heritage diesel trains along an 18 mile line between the market town of Pickering and the village of Grosmont, through the heart of the North York Moors National Park and on to the mainline to Whitby covering 24 miles of track. However, it wasn't always so.

The reshaping of British Railways, better known as the Beeching Report, rocked Britain to its core in the mid to late 1960's. In 1962, prior to the Beeching Report, Whitby had two railway stations, Whitby Town and Whitby West Cliff stations and three railway lines: Whitby to Malton, Whitby to Scarborough and Whitby to Middlesbrough. Indeed, BR cut a fourth railway line in 1958, Whitby to Middlesbrough via Loftus. Public outrage was plain to see and the Transport Users Consultative Committee (TUCC) had a record 2260 objections. Their report recommended retaining all three remaining lines. Following a public meeting in Whitby in July 1964, it was stated that the closures would cause grave hardship not only to the many users but also to those whose business was very largely dependent upon the large numbers of holidaymakers who come to the area.

The railways were an important part of Whitby and the surrounding areas, specifically the unreliability of bus services in winter weather and the transportation of school children from villages covering a widespread area, including Castleton to the West, East Barnby to the North and Goathland to the South. In addition, the effect on tourism was a major concern. As late as 1961, Whitby appeared on the timetable for the East Coast mainline from Kings Cross to Newcastle and Edinburgh as a place reached by connecting at York. However all did not seem lost, for whilst running for election in 1964 Harold Wilson wrote a letter to the Whitby Gazette pledging to stop the cuts to Whitby's railway line. In it he confirmed that major decisions, such as the proposed Scarborough – Malton – Whitby railway closures, would be covered by a statement in the Labour Party manifesto drawing up a national plan for transport and whilst these were being prepared major rail closures would be halted. Unfortunately, once elected as Prime Minister, it was discovered that the letter was a 'callous hoax' causing much controversy. The local MP Sir Alex Spearman pleaded in support of Whitby's case for retention of its rail services, but a clause in the 1962 Transport Act was used to prevent the Labour Transport Minister overturning the decision made by his predecessor, the Conservative Ernest Marples. Therefore in March 1965 the Whitby to Scarborough and Whitby to Malton lines were closed, leaving Whitby with one station and one railway line.

Further outrage followed when in 1965 and 1968 the roads between Whitby and Pickering were cut off by blizzard conditions and the road to Goathland was also impassable.

So it was down to local people to do something, which they did by preserving and reviving the railway which has now become the most successful heritage railway in Britain. After the controversy and heart break for the people of Whitby and surrounding communities, there was a lot of underlying animosity and demoralisation that nothing else could be done to save their railways. However, that would all change when a movement was begun to preserve the Grosmont to Pickering railway line. It is this story, which demonstrates the determination and dedication to saving a railway line, a story that exemplifies the phenomenon of



railway preservation arising during railway line closures from 1960's through to the present day. For the North Yorkshire Moors Railway Preservation Society (NYMRPS), their role model came from another famous Yorkshire heritage railway, the Keighley and Worth Valley Railway (KWVR), which was formed five years earlier in 1962, with the idea of continuing an all year commuter service from Oxenhope through to Keighley. Many of the preserved lines like the KWVR, had originally been set up with the intention of recovering their lost rail service. In reality they discovered that there was a reason why the line was closed, for a regular railway service was unfeasible in the long term. However, what a revivalist could do was to tailor their line to run only the services that people wanted and were prepared to pay to travel on, which aligned the preserved lines with the possibility of becoming a tourist attraction or providing tourist transportation. For the NYMRPS, they set out with the idea of running a railway for holidaymakers visiting the North York Moors National Park, which was popular for walkers and cyclists, but also helping the local community through re-linking Pickering and Goathland to Grosmont and ultimately the main line to Middlesbrough and Whitby. There was a possibility that a preserved railway would work between Grosmont and Pickering. It was all dependent on people having the determination, hope and the willingness to stand up and fight for what they believed in. Tom Salmon, aka 'The Father of the Railway', was the man who initiated the gathering of the founding members at his house on Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> June 1967.

The minutes of the first meeting show the overwhelming enthusiasm by the group to attempt to preserve the Grosmont to Pickering line, with the whole meeting showing the support they had received from local councils and local businesses like the Goathland Hotel and the Mallyon Spout Hotel. At the end of the meeting, the North Yorkshire Moors Railway Preservation Society was established and officers elected.

However the biggest issue the Society faced was the need to raise enough money to be able to purchase the line from British Rail (BR).

The sum BR wanted was no less than £120,000, which as ex-chairman of the Society, Fred Stuart, wrote 'we were horrified – not in our wildest dreams did we think we could ever raise it' but it did not dampen their spirit, determination or enthusiasm.

After calculations and seeking advice they believed it would be possible to raise enough funds to acquire a single track from Grosmont to Ellerbeck. Fund raising was the predominant priority for the Society, to raise enough money and to be considered a credible and serious option able to run the railway line.

Tom Salmon was so dedicated and enthusiastic he was known to single handedly go around local villages canvassing. The hard work of the Society paid off with hundreds of people paying membership and supporting the Society, which led to successful negotiations with BR, who subsequently agreed to the 10% deposit of £4,250 which was made in January 1969. But later in 1969 BR removed a single track segment of the double track line between Grosmont and Levisham, leading to panic in the Society and local County Council. As many were aware, if BR uprooted the track between Ellerbeck and Pickering, it would be considerably difficult both economically and time consuming to re-lay the track again. Ultimately the financial support by the English Tourist Board, North Riding County Council and the National Park Committee enabled the funding to pay the £42,500 to BR and ultimately buy the line. With heavy support



PRESENT DAY - GOATHLAND STATION

from membership, hitting 6000 members by 1971, the dream became more than a dream, it was becoming a reality and defied many sceptics who believed the whole thing was just "pie in the sky". Not only did the Society contest with the financial hardships, there were vocal objectors to the restoration of a railway between Grosmont and Pickering, with the main opposition from Pickering Urban District Council.

Pickering Urban District Council wanted to do what many local Councils were doing across the country, demolishing railway structures to allow 'road and retail schemes'.

This was the reason the railway was unable to have Pickering Station until 1973, three years after the NYMR started



running trains between Grosmont and High Mill (Pickering North). Additionally there was individual local opposition, such as one resident who attempted to object to the Light Railways Order in 1975 which would give the NYMR that ability to run passenger services on their railway line, also complaining that many of the volunteers who came to the railway were a "very rough class of fellows".

The success of heritage railways has enabled the continuation of a number of branch lines which were terminated by the Government. The NYMR was responsible for turning over more than £5m each year. It is one of the busiest visitor attractions in Yorkshire and with 350,000 passengers each year, it carries more people than any other heritage steam railway. Not only are heritage railways part of the British history and British culture, to be preserved for the future generations, they are also a substantial source of tourism, which has a notable, positive effect on local economy. The Heritage Railway All-Party Parliamentary Group in 2013 was able to calculate that for every pound that is spent on a heritage railway, there is a benefit to the local economy of £2.70, this suggests that the annual economic benefit is around £250 million. The NYMR estimated that their 'passengers bring about £30 million per annum into the Moors economy. Most is spent on local accommodation, catering and transport. From humble and simple beginnings, heritage railways have entrenched themselves into the British culture and the British tourism landscape. The imagination, dedication, passion, enthusiasm and determination of a small local group allowed the creation of one of Britain's national treasures which encompasses the British romance with steam trains and railways and has now been multiplied with a high number of preserved railways located all across Britain.

Adapted by **DAVID JAMES** with many thanks to Michael Gill of Lancaster University History Department for giving permission to use his History Dissertation as source

## APRIL TALK - DANGEROUS WATERS

Teesside artist Phil Boville gave a very descriptive account about the true story behind his painting entitled 'Dangerous Waters.'



The painting was inspired by a dramatic stormy sea rescue carried out by the RNLI and Police helicopter crews off the South Gare at the mouth of the River Tees, in October, 2011.

Phil explained to his audience how he researched the incident by meeting

and talking to the personnel involved in the rescue of a fisherman from York who had been washed off the pier and into the rough sea amid rocks and clashing waves. Tragically, although the fisherman was pulled out of the sea still alive, he later died in hospital.

The research and subsequent painting of the picture lead Phil on a journey of discovery and personal experience with an outcome that he could never have contemplated

As a finale to the very interesting talk the painting, (54"x38") which had up until now been under wraps, was unveiled for the audience to view and admire.



**CHRIS WHITLAM**

### **A NOTE FROM CHRIS WHITLAM MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY**

Just a reminder to members who have not yet paid their  
**2016 subscriptions.**

You can do so by sending your £10 per person remittance to  
Chris Whitlam, 16 Carr Hall Gardens, Ruswarp, Whitby YO21 1RW.  
Cheques made payable to WHITBY CIVIC SOCIETY

....."I know where you live"



## WHITBY WAR MEMORIAL SURVEY

Whitby Civic Society started an ambitious project to monitor all the local war memorials by way of research into their existence, the materials used, inscriptions found, any damage or decay together with taking a photographic record of the memorial and surrounding site, which is all recorded on [www.warmemorialsonline.org.uk](http://www.warmemorialsonline.org.uk). Whitby Civic Society has gone that extra mile to make sure the campaign receives all of the



**GUNNER ROBERT WATMORE R A**

recognition it deserves, with the campaign being advertised in the Whitby Gazette initially on 11th March, asking for community help and involvement.

Uncovering the history of a war memorial, who built it, how it was funded, why it is located

where it is, is a fascinating and

important in helping to understand and manage the memorials.

The survey has been instigated by the War Memorial Trust, English Heritage and Civic Voice, the latter provided a training workshop for the assessment and monitoring details required to complete a survey.

Our team is led by Joyce Stangoe and assisted by Heather Rowland and Chris Whitlam.

Our first survey took us to Whitby's West Cliff where adjacent to the Metropole is a plaque commemorating Gunner Robert Watmore who at only 19 years old was tragically killed in a German air raid. His Royal Artillery regiment was stationed at the Metropole Hotel for anti-aircraft battery training and on the night of 6<sup>th</sup> September 1942, whilst on guard duty, the hotel car park where he was positioned received a direct hit killing him instantly.

This terrible event gave Gunner Watmore the sad distinction of being the only British Soldier to be killed in Whitby by enemy action in the Second World War.



Whilst recording the details of the plaque we were approached by a lady living nearby who was able to supply a photograph of Gunner Watmore and was able to tell us where the gentleman who organised the plaque lived. Again, fortune was with us as when we arrived at the address given, Mr John Porteus was able to tell us a fascinating story about when he was a lad living with his parents close to the Metropole Hotel. His mother was in the habit of making a mug of tea for the soldier on guard duty and young John Porteus duly delivered it. John can remember chatting to Gunner Watmore who told him he would return the mug later, but just after returning to his home the bomb was dropped onto the car park.

The memory of this meeting with the young soldier stayed with John and exactly 50 years to the day after the incident, on 6<sup>th</sup> September 1992, he arranged for a bronze memorial plaque to be unveiled by Councillor Richard Wastell, the then Town Mayor, with an army representative from Catterick Garrison and local army cadets also present.

Our survey continues and further details of our research will follow in later Newsletters.

**CHRIS WHITLAM  
JOYCE STANGOE**

**WHITBY CIVIC SOCIETY**  
**2016**  
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COMMITTEE MEMBERS

George Dawson      Julie Cownden      Susan Harty      Joyce Stangoe      Peter Craggs

**LECTURE PROGRAMME – 2016**

May 16 <sup>th</sup>	<p><b>Stuart &amp; Adrian Fusco</b> will talk about the growth of Fuscus in Whitby , discussing the past, present and future of the award-winning business.</p> <p><i>Chris Whitlam</i></p>
June 20 <sup>th</sup>	<p><b>Bernie McLinden</b> of the North Yorkshire Moors National Park Authority will talk about his work as a Senior Ranger and the work done in the Coast Area. This will include how they work with volunteers. He will also give an update on the National Park generally.</p> <p><i>Joyce Stangoe</i></p>
July 18 <sup>th</sup>	<p>A walk around Whitby in photographs, presented by <b>Neil Williamson</b>.</p> <p><i>Betty Bayliss</i></p>
August 15 <sup>th</sup>	<p>A report on the research carried out by delegates on the local history course, with <b>Charlotte Walker</b> and <b>Steven Blockley</b> of the WEA and members of the group.</p> <p><i>Susan Harty</i></p>
September 19 <sup>th</sup>	<p>Neighbourhood Planning: a talk by <b>David Walker</b>, Chief Planning Officer SBC and colleagues on how planning applications are approved.</p> <p><i>Joyce Stangoe</i></p>
October 17 <sup>th</sup>	<p>The History of Hornes and the Whitby Gazette'. A talk by <b>Debbie Horne</b>.</p> <p><i>Libby Thompson</i></p>
November 21 <sup>st</sup>	<p>Bagdale Hall: In its 500<sup>th</sup> centenary year, John Cattaneo will talk about the history of the hall and some of its notable residents. After the talk, there will be a tour around Bagdale Hall</p> <p><i>Joyce Stangoe</i></p>
December	<p>Christmas meal. TBA</p>