



Whitby Civic Society

Summer Newsletter 2013

REPORT FROM FRANCE

Early in June we noticed an announcement in the local paper saying that a week-end event was to be held by the society celebrating the "Patrimoine des moulins de vent". As we knew of no wind-mills in our immediate area, only several water mills, we were surprised to see one available to view in Jouhet, a village very close to us. We duly set out to find it, calling at the local bar in Jouhet to pick up information. It was close by, in a main street leading to the beautiful river-side town of Montmorillon on the Gartempe.



The wind-mill in question turned out to be a 1 to 4 scale model, the same ratio as the Mini-Endeavour. Set in a spectacular Italianate garden full of water features, it had been built over some years by a retired builder using authentic plans, materials and techniques. We actually found we knew this man, having met him at many events in the village. Adults were able to enter and climb the narrow winding stairs to the top, everything worked and was used frequently to grind flour. He had also constructed a mini-four (bread oven)

in his garden -also used regularly for the production of different types of bread. His work was perfection, a labour of love.

It made me think of our Mini-Endeavour and the importance of the continuation of traditional craftsmanship. It was good to see that an official heritage organisation in France had also recognised the need to applaud these dedicated workers who created this excellent authentic reproduction of the windmill. A worthy project based on plans of the Vendéen wind-mills, the Vendeé being his region of origin. It was built by himself and a few friends with similar interests. You will see from the the photographs, taken by Mike, just how authentic it is. It was good to see it included in the recommended programme of visits for their Patrimoine week end. It also made me very happy that our Civic Society had recently awarded a Certificate of Excellence to the Mini-Endeavour to mark officially our appreciation of those people who sponsor and execute traditional skills.

Jean Dawson (from France)

General News

This year we have been very involved as a society in the reaction to the publication of the Scarborough Borough Council report "Whitby Conservation Area Appraisal 2013". This, with the work on listed buildings, represented a colossal effort by the retiring Conservation Officer, Chris Hall. There was much to admire and be pleased at in the Appraisal but it would be used in the future like a Domesday Book for planning so we needed to be critical in our assessment.

We have often heard derogatory remarks about the hospital/police station area as regards the architecture of the post-war period with its lack of sympathy with the rest of the town so we were not surprised that it was proposed that it should lose its special planning status. The fate of the hospital seems always in question and what would happen to this area, so close to the town centre, could cause damage to the town if it did not have some protection against poor development. We felt that the area should continue to have special planning restrictions to stop poor re-development.

The area around Spital Bridge also did not get the protection it needed as mentioned in the last newsletter. The society asked for comments from members which were then collated, examined by the committee and forwarded as the society's comment.

The Society also engaged itself to help the RNLI crew to have a special plaque on the pier to commemorate the Rohilla Shipwreck and Rescue. Several members have put in a lot of time and effort into fundraising for this purpose.

Our Programme organiser, Wynne Jones has gone through a very harassing period starting with the death of her husband, Walter Jones, and then suffering an accident that made her housebound for a long period. Nevertheless she continued to work on making the new programme, which we have enjoyed this year.

Many members of the Society went to John Shorter's funeral in Scarborough. It was an opportunity to remember all that he had done for the society and to learn of his life beyond the society. It was also the chance to meet his family and tell them of our appreciation of his work for the society.

The Civic Society has chosen the next Blue Plaque. It will be to commemorate Mrs Botham. Her story is one to inspire all of us. It will be known to those who attended the talk by her great grand son not long ago. She was not crushed when all the family's possessions were lost by a natural disaster but came to Whitby to try to make a new start.

Then by successive steps, using her skill as a cake maker, beginning by selling from a push cart, she moved to having a shop in a less prosperous area before opening in the town centre to gain the trade of visitors as well as local people. She established a business which continues to this day and exports Whitby produce around the world.

Mike Dawson. Editor

Report on the Society Events

The day for the first lecture of 2013 had the most miserable weather possible so it was a relief to be told that it had been cancelled even though the subject was one of great interest. If it had gone ahead then I think it would not have had the audience which it deserved.

In February at the AGM, after the election of Officers and Committee we had a showing of the the news reel of the Rohilla Disaster rescue in 1914 and a call was made to raise funds for a plaque to commemorate those who died and the bravery shown by the rescuers.

In April we had the meeting cancelled in January, and watched scenes filmed by the Whitby Photographic Society of life around the port of Whitby of years gone by. Sue Boyce then very skilfully introduced us to the new method where people who have interesting items on Whitby history can tie them to the spot mentioned on a map of Whitby. This new venture promises to be a very valuable way of recording history in Whitby following on from the successful Baxtergate Project.

About 30 members and friends attended the May meeting to hear Derek Green, the new Conservation Officer for SBC, giving a presentation on the "Conservation Area Appraisal of Whitby" followed by a forum for questions and comments. Details and maps can be seen on the Borough website, www.scarborough.gov.uk or at the Whitby Tourist Office.

The June meeting was a part of "Love Architecture Week - 21-30 June" and was held in the usual venue at 7.15pm on Tuesday, 25 June instead of Monday. Sarah Stead - Architect, RIBA charter member, presented a talk on "A CHANGING FACE OF WHITBY: and spoke about current design trends and developments against a background of Whitby's architectural history and its influence on Sarah's work. Light refreshments were available.

Whitby Civic Society had a very busy time in June and July. Apart from the lecture in June, members took part in Armed Forces Day at Dock End on the 27th June, with a stall publicising the society and also holding a bottle raffle, thus raising £175 towards the Rohilla Memorial Fund. Another outside visit was made to St. Mary's Church on the 26th June to take part in bell-ringing practice. Some also followed up the invitation to build sand-castles on the beach to celebrate Architecture Week In June !

This pace continued in July when a small number visited the Jet Museum near the 199 Steps to the Abbey, where the owner, Hal Redvers-Jones told the fascinating story of finding an 1867 jet workshop where visitors can see the heritage of this old Whitby industry as well as his own modern designs. There will be an opportunity for people to see it for themselves during Heritage Open Weekend in September. On Sunday, 7th July, Susan & Nicholas Harty opened their house and garden to host a cream tea, proceeds towards the Civic Society's contribution for the RNLl commemoration in memory of the Rohilla tragedy. Many thanks to all who helped. The winning name of the teddy bear was 'Harriet', chosen by a local resident, and the NYMR tickets were won by someone attending the event and a previous visitor from West Yorkshire who bought a ticket although they would not be in Whitby at the time. Proceeds of just over £150 have been added to the efforts for Rohilla Fund.

The July meeting on the third Monday was a presentation by Mike Yates giving a detailed history of the buildings of Spital Bridge and lower Church Street and stories of the past. Over 60 attended and there was a follow -up walk along Church Street on Sat. 20th July, 2-4pm with features pointed out by Mike. **Susan Harty**

Still to come: In August (Admission free) there will be a talk at the Youth Hostel on the Cholmleys and the background of the Civil War. A cream tea is available for £3.00.

With Heritage Week-end in September there will be lots of places to visit and guided walks. A programme will be available from the Tourist Office. There will also be a video talk by Norman Scoles of Bay Films on Whitby history on Monday 16th September at Whitby Museum at 7:15pm

In October there will be a food demonstration by Rod Lister followed by a tasting while in November we are having a forum on the future of the Theatre and Pavilion after its lease to a private company which hopefully will run it for Whitby people. Leading the discussion will be Councillor David Chance from Scarborough Council, Helen Broadbent, the manager and Elizabeth Cheyne who has written a book on the theatres of Whitby and is a member of Friends of Whitby Theatre.

In December there will be a Civic Society Christmas meal to which all members are cordially invited. Venue and cost will be given later. **Editor**

Useful Points of Contact

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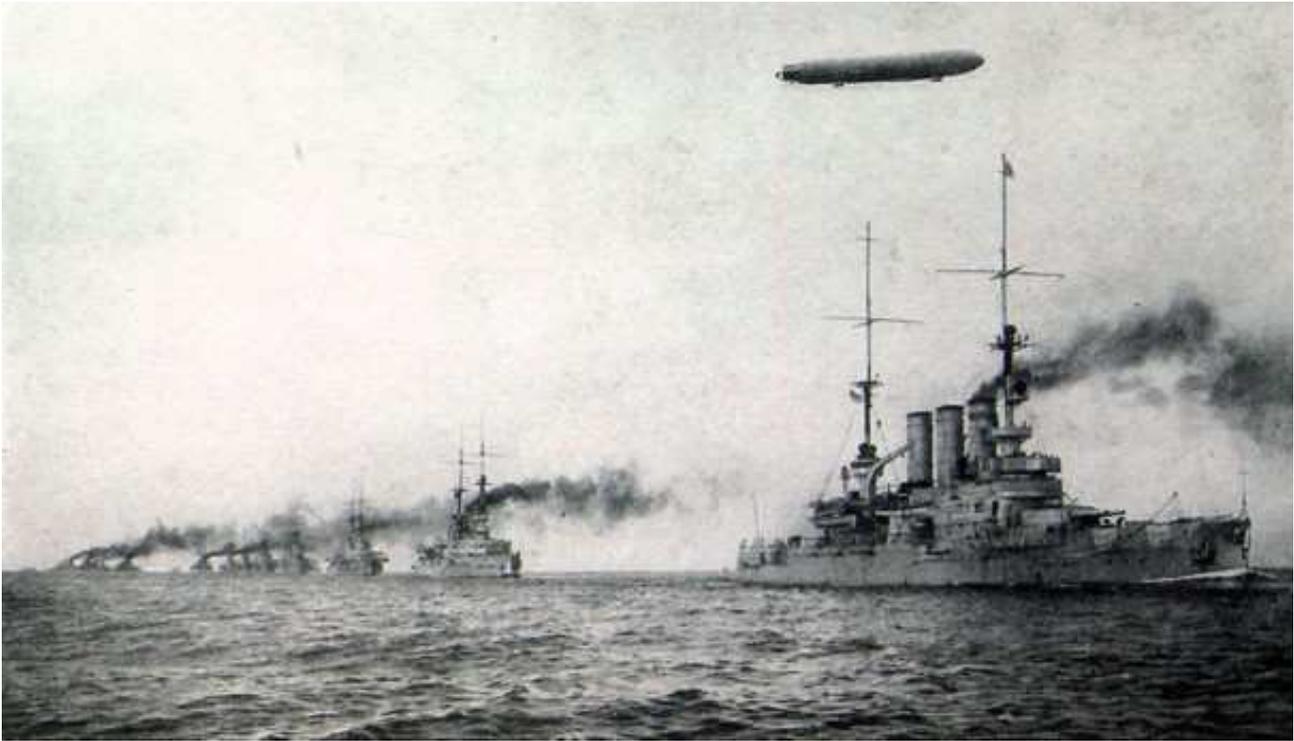
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1st World War German Fleet

From Wikipedia. *In the 1st World War, the British Fleet cut off the Atlantic from the German Fleet and the Germans tried to entice the British Fleet to face them in the North Sea where they felt that they had an advantage. The shelling of seaside towns was part of this tactic. This might also account for the Rohilla being so close to the coast at Whitby*

Whitby 1914

One hundred years seems a very long time but I was lucky enough to listen to a talk by someone who vividly remembered Whitby in 1914. He was then a young boy who lived in Church Street in what is now Monkshaven. His father was a barber and even though he was only 9 or 10 he was expected to work at setting up the shop for his father. Sometimes he would lather up a customer ready for his father to shave with a cut throat razor. He remembered doing this early morning work because sometimes it meant that he was a few minutes late for school. The teacher was known for his severity. Even a single minute got the unfortunate pupil punishment by being beaten on the hand with a strap and it was not a gentle stroke but as hard as the teacher could make it. The year 1914 saw the end of this teacher's reign of terror. The German Fleet sailed up the East coast of England and shelled the seaside towns. Whitby too received its shelling and this teacher forgot about the pupils and rushed to hide himself under the desk to save himself. After the shelling the pupils no longer accepted punishment from this tyrant and he didn't have the courage to insist.

Another memory was the coming of a new fangled cinema to Whitby. This caused great excitement. That cinema is now Boyes shop and the date of the cinema 's opening is still on the front. He remembered seeing the Whitby men who volunteered to go as soldiers in the war as they marched along Church St while he looked out from an upstairs window. His father was among them and he was one of the lucky ones who returned.

He remembered the Rohilla shipwreck though he was too young to be allowed to see the rescue. **Mike Dawson**

WHITBY CIVIC SOCIETY

Invites you to our

GIVE OR TAKE EVENT

Metropole Ballroom

Saturday 5th October
10am – 2 pm

Bring any unwanted goods you have, however
there is no need to donate anything....
Just come along and take anything you fancy.
For FREE!

Whitby Heritage Open Days

September 14-16

A chance to see inside heritage buildings

Events: Guided tours of historic parts of Whitby.

Video tour of history of Whitby- Monday

A printed programme available at Whitby Tourist Office
soon

For information on buildings and events
see

www.heritageopendays.org.uk

Look for Whitby, North Yorkshire