

**YORKSHIRE & HUMBER
ASSOCIATION OF CIVIC SOCIETIES**



**Annual Report
And Accounts 2012**

YHACS Member Societies in 2012

1. Addingham Civic Society
2. Allertonshire Civic Society
3. Barnsley Civic Trust
4. Beverley & District Civic Society
5. Bingley Civic Trust
6. Bradford Civic Society
7. Bridlington and District Civic Society
8. Brighouse Civic Trust
9. Castleford & District Civic Trust
10. Doncaster Civic Trust
11. Forest of Galtres Society
12. Goole Civic Society
13. Grimsby Cleethorpes & District Civic Society
14. Halifax Civic Trust
15. Harrogate Civic Society
16. Honley Civic Society
17. Horbury Civic Society
18. Hornsea and District Civic Society
19. Horsforth Civic Society
20. Howden Civic Society
21. Huddersfield Civic Society
22. Hull Civic Society
23. Ilkley Civic Society
24. Leeds Civic Trust
25. Market Weighton Civic Society
26. Ossett Civic Trust
27. Pickering & District Civic Society
28. Pontefract Civic Society
29. Pudsey & District Civic Society
30. Richmond & District Civic Society
31. Ripon Civic Society
32. Rotherham Civic Society
33. Saddleworth Civic Trust
34. Scalby Village Trust
35. Scarborough & District Civic Society
36. Selby Civic Society
37. Skipton in Craven Civic Society
38. Spen Valley Civic Society
39. The Oulton Society
40. Wakefield Civic Society
41. Wetherby Civic Society
42. Whitby Civic Society
43. York Civic Trust

Cover photographs © Kevin Trickett

Front cover - Bridgewater Place, Leeds,

Rear cover – Leeds & Liverpool Canal Company sign, Leeds

YHACS Annual Report 2012

Who we are

The Yorkshire and Humber Association of Civic Societies (YHACS) is a registered charity (no. 1112290) and a membership organisation for civic and amenity societies around the Yorkshire and Humber region.

We aim to be a distinctive voice for the civic society movement in Y&H and seek to strengthen and develop the movement by offering our members advice, support and networking opportunities. We also campaign on their behalf on matters of mutual concern and promote awareness of the work civic societies do through our website, publication of our quarterly newsletter and other publications, and through the issue of press releases.

At the end of 2012, there were 43 paid-up member societies within YHACS with a collective membership of around 7,000 individuals and organisations.

Civic societies are independent, grass roots groups of citizens who seek to enhance the quality of life in their communities. Mostly run by volunteers, civic societies have a particular focus on improving the public realm and built environment – through helping to preserve the best of our built heritage while campaigning for the highest standards of architecture, design and town planning. They often act as public watchdogs or mediators between local authority planning officials, developers and the general public on developments that impact on the quality of life for local people.

Civic societies can also be called upon to act as custodians of local history and heritage. As a result, they make an excellent springboard for fostering a sense of civic pride and community cohesion.

Many societies celebrate the heritage of their locality through publishing literature, organising walks, and erecting commemorative plaques.

YHACS encourages member societies to see themselves as part of a wider movement and to share ideas and experiences. We want to see new societies being created in places where currently there is none. In recent years, YHACS has been instrumental in establishing civic societies in Barnsley, Bradford and Sheffield.

While we still regard the protection of our built heritage as a key aim, we recognise that new development can be a necessary step in delivering vibrancy and prosperity in our communities. Where civic societies might once have viewed development sceptically, the civic society movement in our region looks to present development as an opportunity to create the heritage of tomorrow through good design. At YHACS, we are driven by a desire to reconcile the past, present and future of our townscapes with a vision developed by communities in their local civic societies.

YHACS is a member of Civic Voice, the national charity for the civic society movement in England, and collaborates with others, such as English Heritage, on matters concerning the conservation and preservation of our built heritage.

Our aims

Our aims are to promote and encourage:

- a high standard of architecture, building, and town and country planning;
- the preservation of beauty or amenity in cities, towns and villages or the countryside, and of land, buildings and features of beauty or interest in such cities, towns and villages or countryside;
- a sense of civic pride amongst members of the public general by the provision of support and advice to civic societies in the Yorkshire and Humber area.

YHACS Annual Report 2012

Membership

Membership of YHACS is open to any civic or amenity society that has aims in sympathy with our own. Membership is subject to an annual subscription (£50 in 2012), payable each January; we also welcome and encourage donations from societies that can afford to make an additional payment.

Statement of Public Benefit

Our vision is to enhance the quality of life for all citizens in the region by engaging people not only in the protection of local heritage but also in the promotion of sustainable economic development and urban renaissance. Through our campaigns and networking and through the provision of advice and support to civic and amenity societies, YHACS aims to help make Yorkshire and Humber a better place in which to live, work or relax. This is for the overall benefit of the general public, whether or not they are members of any particular civic society and whether they be residents of or visitors to the area.

How to contact us:

YHACS has no premises of its own but can be contacted by email at the following address: info@wakefieldcivicsociety.org.uk

Further information is also available on our website: www.yhacs.org.uk

Written correspondence can be sent to our chairman, Kevin Trickett
c/o Wakefield Civic Society,
PO Box 380,
The Orangery,
Back Lane,
Wakefield,
WF1 3WT.

Governance

As an unincorporated registered charity, YHACS is managed by an Executive Committee of volunteer trustees in accordance with our written constitution, dated 24th September 2005 and amended on 26th January 2008. The Constitution provides that the charity shall be managed and administered by a committee comprising Officers and other members duly elected at the Annual General Meeting held in January each year. Such persons are also the Trustees of the charity.

In addition to the Executive Committee, YHACS also has an elected President. The role of President is honorary. The President, who is also elected at the Annual General Meeting each January, is consulted for advice and is invited to attend meetings of the Committee to take part in discussion but does not vote.

The officers and committee who held office during 2012 were as follows:

President	Peter Cooper
Chairman	Kevin Trickett
Vice Chairman	David Moss
Secretary	Helen Kidman
Treasurer	Richard Ward

Committee members:

Kevin Grady
Tony Leonard (*)
Cyril Oliver
Malcolm Sharman
David Winpenny

(*) Tony was elected to office at the AGM in 2012.

Chairman's Report



It is change, continuing change, inevitable change, that is the dominant factor in society today. No sensible decision can be made any longer without taking into account not only the world as it is, but the world as it will be

[Isaac Asimov]

I came across the above quote recently and thought how well these words could be applied to civic societies and the work they do. Our concerns with the built environment are necessarily wrapped up in wider issues such as climate change, care for the environment and use of natural resources. Long-term population and demographical trends inform political decisions on the provision of infrastructure, housing targets, health and transport systems while technological developments continue to present new opportunities that are shaping the way we lead our lives.

The places where we live and work, where we socialise and relax, are evolving, sometimes in ways that are exciting as our city and town centres are regenerated but also sometimes in ways that bring despair as shops and offices fall empty and some of our most cherished heritage assets fall into disuse and even dereliction.

All of which present considerable challenges for civic societies if we are to continue exerting influence on decisions that shape the places we care for. We need to be informed, alert and persuasive in our arguments; perhaps more so than ever now with the legislative changes that are being proposed and implemented by a pro-growth and pro-development government seemingly

prepared to throw babies out with the bathwater when it comes to planning matters. I remain convinced that civic societies have an important role to play but we have to be at the top of our game if we are to be effective bulwarks against inappropriate development, standard bearers for excellence in design, and proponents of good practice in the conservation of our heritage assets.

However, and I would say this, of course, as chairman of YHACS, I do not think societies can work in isolation. As a movement, we need to be able to operate nationally and locally. Lobbying ministers and government departments, building a strong media profile and developing a heightened awareness of what the civic movement is all about among the public and other stakeholders is something that is best done by a strong national body that represents our interests. Having helped to set up Civic Voice, I continue to be an advocate not only for its continued existence but also for its future growth and I hope that civic societies across our region will continue to support, it.

However, there is also a place for an energetic and vibrant regional association. As just such an organisation, YHACS offers services, benefits and support to our member societies that complement and enhance the work of Civic Voice. Our geographical proximity, frequent contact with member societies, our culture and our traditions, all mean that YHACS is ideally placed to bring local societies together to share ideas, information and inspiration in a way that no other organisation in our region can offer.

There is strength in numbers and, as I review the past year on the pages that follow, I would like to thank all those societies that have supported us in 2012. I look forward to continuing our relationship in 2013.

YHACS Annual Report 2012

2012 – another successful year for YHACS

There are a number of ways we can measure the success – or otherwise – of our organisation. Perhaps the most important gauge of our success is the number of societies that have joined – and stayed with us in 2012 and I am pleased to say that we actually increased the number of member societies last year, despite a decision to increase the membership fee from £40 to £50 at the end of 2011.

Of course, we can also assess our success and relevance to the movement in our region by counting the number of people who turn up for our meetings, contribute articles for our newsletter and reply to our emails.

Generally speaking we do very well although we had a bit of a wobble with our July meeting in Cleethorpes when the number of people attending fell somewhat below our usual expectations – I have been assured that this was to do with the choice of location (a little far for some to travel), bad weather (there had been torrential rain and floods in part of the region), and unfortunate timing (the date chosen just happened to coincide with other diary commitments for many of our regulars). It was not, I am persuaded, due to any loss of interest in the affairs of YHACS or the material we cover at our meetings!

I think we can legitimately claim to have had a good year. We ran five events including a special event with Griff Rhys Jones (President of Civic Voice), published our regular newsletters and occasional bulletins, garnered attention in local and regional media, and strengthened our financial position. I will now elaborate on our activities using the priorities I laid down when first elected as chair in January 2011:

Financial stability – I am very keen that YHACS achieves a position of financial strength. To enter into contracts for room hire often months in advance of our quarterly meetings can only be done when we are confident that there is going to be money in the bank to pay the bills. While it is, of course, important that we live within our means, we also want to be able to do the best for our members by providing attractive and comfortable venues.

Our decision to increase membership subscriptions for 2012 was not taken lightly but was implemented because we ended 2011 with a deficit of £255. As can be seen from pages 9 & 10, we have managed to reverse that deficit in 2012 – producing a surplus of almost £1,500 and boosting our end of year bank balance to over £4,200.

That turnaround in our financial affairs did not come about just by charging 40 or so societies and extra £10 a year, although it clearly made a significant contribution. Other factors included some societies topping up their subscription fee with an additional donation and the money we collected for tea and coffee at our meetings.

We also asked local societies to help us where they could with the cost of hosting our quarterly members' meetings in their area. We received donations towards refreshments and/or room hire from Ossett, Halifax and Leeds Civic Trusts while Grimsby & Cleethorpes Civic Society took care of the bill for us for hiring the venue in Cleethorpes – so we never saw any money but we didn't see the bill either. On behalf of YHACS and our members I would like to pass on our thanks to these societies for their generosity.

Finally, I must record our thanks to members of the YHACS committee who once again waived their expenses or donated them back to us.

YHACS Annual Report 2012

Membership growth – 2012 was a case of ‘some you win, some you lose’. We were delighted to welcome three societies – Bingley Civic Trust, Goole Civic Society and Spen Valley Civic Society but saddened that two others then dropped out – Aireborough Civic Society and Sheffield Civic Trust – citing the £50 membership cost as not being affordable or not within their priorities. I hope that they will come back to us at some point.

At the end of the year, then, we had 43 societies, one up on 2011, and I think we can still claim that our member societies have a collective membership of over 7,000 individuals. However, as our relationship with individual civic society members is very much dependent on the way civic society committees communicate news about our activities to their members, when a society drops out of YHACS, we lose contact (real or potential) with all their members.

This is something that the YHACS committee is going to look at in 2013. Would there be any demand, we wonder, for individual membership of YHACS? We shall have to test the water on that one by looking at the possibility of running some sort of individual membership scheme. This would also allow individuals who live in places where there is no civic society to participate in our activities.

We also recognise that the number of civic societies in our region is finite. However, we have speculated on whether or not other types of amenity associations and community groups might be interested in joining YHACS and again, we intend to explore this as a potential opportunity in 2013.

Finally, we also propose to consider how we might offer corporate membership for those who share our aims and values.

Increased profile – Thanks to press releases issued for us by David Winpenny, we have continued to command attention from the media with a number of articles appearing throughout the year in regional and local press. In fact 2012 started with YHACS being quoted on the front page of the Yorkshire Post.

We have also started to use Twitter to communicate with people who are interested in the work we do. Increasing numbers of civic societies across the region and beyond are making use of social media and it is important that we keep up. Promoting our activities on line is an important means of raising our profile and can lead to our messages being brought rapidly to the attention of politicians, councillors and local government officials as well as journalists and organisations such as English Heritage.

Of course, it is also important to develop the YHACS brand and 2012 saw us working on a new-look website which went live just as this report was being prepared. Peter Cooper has done the work to load content and will continue to act as our ‘webmaster’.

Our newsletters, edited by David Moss, continue to generate very favourable feedback and are now issued to a wide stakeholder group by email outside the immediate membership of YHACS. We do this to promote our activities to a wider audience and in return we receive copies of newsletters put out by some of the other regional associations. This is having a positive impact on the way others see us and it has led to interesting dialogue with some outside Y&H who have been keen to learn from our example.

Members of the YHACS committee also attended a number of conferences and meetings throughout the year, which all helps to remind people we exist!

YHACS Annual Report 2012

Improved communications – We ended 2011 with all our member societies being contactable by email. This situation has continued throughout 2012 and I hope we will now always be able to rely on societies finding someone in their midst who can act as liaison point for email communications. Not only does this keep costs down, but it also speeds up the exchange of information considerably.

As already mentioned, YHACS moved on to Twitter in 2012 and we encourage our members (individually and collectively) to consider making this brave step into the 21st century for themselves. It is surprising just how many societies are now on Twitter!

We continue to print our quarterly newsletter and to post two copies to each society. If this service is still required, we will continue with it but we do need to keep the matter under review – more and more organisations are ceasing to print and post information and, at nearly £500 a year for printing and postage, this is our second largest recurring expense.

Meeting societies and understanding their needs and priorities – We held five events in 2012.

We started the year with our AGM in Leeds in January. Unusually, we moved the AGM to a morning slot so that the afternoon session could be wholly turned over to a joint networking event with Civic Voice and it was good to have Tony Burton and Ian Harvey there for the meeting. As the afternoon session was open to Civic Voice members as well as YHACS members, we also met some new faces.

In April, we went to Ossett Town Hall for a lively meeting which included a debate on

whether or not societies thought HS2 would be good for the region (probably best described as a tie rather than an overwhelming victory for either view). Ossett Civic Trust looked after us admirably and provided some delicious cakes!

In July, we were off to Cleethorpes. Fancying time at the seaside, several members of the YHACS committee travelled through the afternoon before the meeting and we met up with members of Grimsby and Cleethorpes Civic Society for dinner at a local restaurant overlooking the beach on a beautiful sunny evening. This proved to be a very enjoyable social occasion that was rounded off by a walk along the promenade where the pride of the local society members in their town was tangible. At the meeting the following day, Austin Mitchell, MP for Great Grimsby, gave an entertaining and thought-provoking talk about how he thought London drained resources from the rest of the country. Some of his views of the conservation of certain local heritage assets proved controversial.

Then, in September, we went to the Shibden Mereside Centre, a newly built conference centre and café in Halifax. As it was possible to do so, we organised lunch at the venue and this proved extremely popular with nearly everyone who attended taking up the offer of lunch at a reasonable price. The afternoon session was made up of presentations of local and topical interest and the presentation of our Civic Day Awards (Scarborough & District Civic Society carrying off the prize for a second time).

We also got wind late in the year that Civic Voice President, Griff Rhys Jones wanted to visit so a hastily organised itinerary was put together. Thanks here must go to Kevin Grady at Leeds Civic Trust for the work he did on this, organising a special breakfast event for Griff with Leeds Civic Trust corporate members,

YHACS Annual Report 2012

media interviews that included Griff being interviewed on BBC1's Look North, and then our special members' event where, once again, we organised lunch and there was a reasonably good take up.

We are already well advanced with our plans for 2013 but what we are keen to do is to provide a good mix of social and business activity – so to break away from the meeting/speaker format to allow greater opportunities for our members to network informally. If your society would be interested in helping to host an event with us in the future (2014 onwards) do get in touch.

I have also visited four civic society meetings and events during 2012 – speaking to members of Bingley Civic Trust (with Helen Kidman) and Wetherby Civic Society; attending the 40th anniversary celebration of Castleford & District Civic Trust; and presenting some of the awards at Barnsley Civic Trust's Shop Awards. At the time of writing, I have already accepted invitations to speak at meetings of Goole, Beverley and Ripon Civic Societies in 2013.

Responding to the wider context – As mentioned in my introductory remarks, the context in which we operate is changing rapidly and it is important that civic societies keep up. That requires us to pay attention to the proposals coming out of government and responding to the various consultation exercises as and when they emerge.

2012 saw the National Planning Policy Framework coming into effect and then relaxation to the rules on permitted development being proposed. Meanwhile a government minister calls for green belt land to be used for new housing while many brownfield sites remain unused.

There is ongoing tension between the localism agenda and the need for national infrastructure projects and the lurking possibility for planning applications to be "called in".

The economic situation continues to take its toll – the ongoing debate on the state of the high street and the outcome of the Portas review being close to our hearts while cuts in public spending impact on local services and also on the ability of English Heritage to perform its usual role in heritage protection.

Against all this, societies somehow manage to keep going. The much vaunted Olympic Legacy that was supposed to lead to an upturn in the number of people volunteering has not noticeably impacted on civic societies and we're still no clearer on what the Big Society is all about. Meanwhile civic societies are encouraged to get involved with – and even lead on – neighbourhood planning.

It's clear that civic societies are going to have their work cut out again in 2013.

And Finally

In many ways, 2012 was an exceptional year – the Olympics and the Diamond Jubilee don't come along very often, but civic societies kept calm and carried on, as I am sure we shall all do again in 2013. YHACS will be there to help, bringing societies together to celebrate the work they do and inspiring and motivating members to continue their good work.

YHACS is a collective made up of the committee *and* the membership and we need to help each other where we can. I am indebted to my fellow committee members and those society representatives who have actively supported me and given words of encouragement throughout the year.

Kevin Trickett

YHACS Annual Report 2012

Income and Expenditure Account for year ending 31st December 2012

	2011	2012
	£	£
Income		
Subscriptions		
- 2011	1,160.00	0.00
- 2012 (see note 1)	400.00	1,750.00
- 2013	0.00	800.00
Donations		
- sundry (see note 2)	1,005.50	450.90
- refreshments (see note 3)	261.00	1,225.00
Bank interest	2.81	3.41
Sale of equipment	200.00	0.00
	3,029.31	4,229.31
Expenditure		
Subscriptions	15.00	15.00
Meeting expenses	959.60	635.40
Stationery and Newsletter printing	265.19	369.95
Postage and Telephone	207.60	128.93
Travel - M Giboulot	427.75	0.00
- other (see note 1)	832.90	261.90
Insurance	245.00	245.00
Civic Societies Day/Week		
- Prize	250.00	250.00
- Certificates	32.00	60.00
Misc	50.00	0.00
	3,285.04	1,966.18
Reserve		
Griff Rhys Jones event 15/11/2012	0.00	764.50
	(255.73)	1,498.63
	£3,029.31	£4,229.31

Notes:

- (1) There were 43 paid-up member societies in 2012 who each paid a subscription of £50, total £2,150. Some societies paid their subscriptions early, at the end of 2011.
- (2) Donations include those made by societies in addition to their annual subscriptions, those made by societies who contributed to room hire costs when they helped us to co-host meetings in their area, and expenses donated back to YHACS by committee members.
- (3) Refreshment income refers to money left in our collecting boxes at our quarterly meetings and payments made for lunches at the Halifax meeting and Griff Rhys Jones event.

YHACS Annual Report 2012

Balance Sheet as at 31st December 2011

	31.12.11	31.12.12
Balance of Accumulated Fund brought forward	2,600.91	2,345.18
Surplus/deficit for the year	(255.73)	1,498.63)
	<u>£2,345.18</u>	<u>£3,843.81</u>
Represented by:		
Unpresented cheques	100.00	200.00
Cash with CAF Bank	2,365.18	4,441.43
Less unpresented cheques	(120.00)	(33.12)
Reserve	0.00	(764.50)
	<u>£2,345.18</u>	<u>£3,843.81</u>

Accounts prepared by Richard Ward, Treasurer, and agreed by Kevin Trickett, Chair

LEEDS AND LIVERPOOL CANAL

MOTOR CAR ACTS 1896 AND 1903

NOTICE

THIS BRIDGE IS INSUFFICIENT
TO CARRY A HEAVY MOTOR CAR, THE
REGISTERED AXLE-WEIGHTS OF ANY AXLE OF WHICH
EXCEEDS **THREE TONS** OR THE REGISTERED
AXLE-WEIGHTS OF THE SEVERAL AXLES OF WHICH
EXCEED IN THE AGGREGATE **FIVE TONS** OR A
HEAVY MOTOR CAR DRAWING A **TRAILER**
IF THE REGISTERED AXLE-WEIGHTS OF THE SEVERAL
AXLES OF THE HEAVY MOTOR CAR AND THE AXLE-
WEIGHTS OF THE SEVERAL AXLES OF THE TRAILER
EXCEED IN THE AGGREGATE **FIVE TONS**.

PALL MALL,

BY ORDER,

LIVERPOOL. LEEDS & LIVERPOOL CANAL COMPANY.