

# Newark Civic Trust

## MAGAZINE

*Caring about the town's environment*

Issue 74 | March 2017



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# A few words from the Chairman

Welcome to the 74th issue of our magazine.

We've again got an interesting mix of news and articles for you to enjoy. One article that is missing is a piece on the decision made by the Newark & Sherwood District Council Planning Committee over the Robin Hood Hotel planning application. The Committee was due to meet in early February and we were therefore hoping to be able to report back to you on their decision. Unfortunately, the Robin Hood Hotel application was dropped from the agenda, so instead will appear on the agenda for the 7th March meeting (although this has yet to be confirmed). The Newark Civic Trust has commented on the application and has written

to all of the individual members of the Planning Committee. We oppose the demolition of the former hotel and we are also extremely disappointed by the Travelodge plans. We feel that the former hotel still has a future, as demonstrated by the feasibility study commissioned by the Nottinghamshire Building Preservation Trust. We also feel that the Travelodge proposals will have a negative impact on our built environment due to the poor quality of the design. You can read more about this application in the planning section and the review of the AGM.

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome Paul Moore and Dave Godney to the Executive Committee. Both volunteered at the AGM and

I'm sure they both will have much to contribute to the Trust.

Members are reminded that subscriptions are due on April 1st. For those who pay by Standing Order your subscriptions will be taken around this date. For those paying by cash or cheque you can bring it to any of our talks, give it to any committee member or post it to the Treasurer or Chairman.

Enjoy your read!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michael Knapton', written over a light grey rectangular background.

Michael Knapton

Chairman of Newark Civic Trust

## Peter Stephens 1927-2016

By Rupert Vinnicombe, Civic Trust Member

It was with great sadness that I read an announcement in The Times of Peter's death on Saturday 27th August 2016 in Sevenoaks, Kent. I was surprised that the announcement was not followed up by an obituary after a long journalistic career that concluded as editorial director for Rupert Murdoch's News International popular papers. This seemed strange to me as I had been privileged to be asked by Peter to proof read a short biography he had written in 2003 entitled "P.S. on a Life in Newspapers". Peter jokingly said he had written this to ensure The Times produced an accurate obituary, though in the foreword he noted that he hoped his grandchildren at some point would be interested in reading his brief memoir. Peter expanded the shorter version into a fascinating biography, published by Melrose Books in 2006 and I am lucky enough to own a signed copy. All payments due to Peter from the sale of the book were donated to the Parkinson's Disease Society and it includes an introduction by Richard Briers, then President of the Society.

Peter was born in Nottingham in 1927 and was educated at



Peter Stephens (image courtesy of the Newark Advertiser)

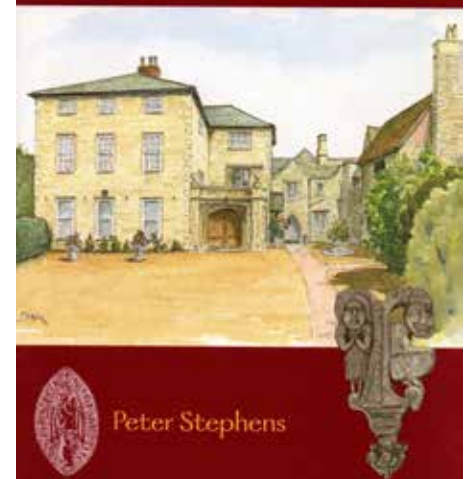
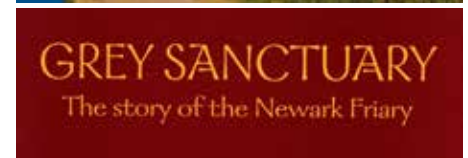
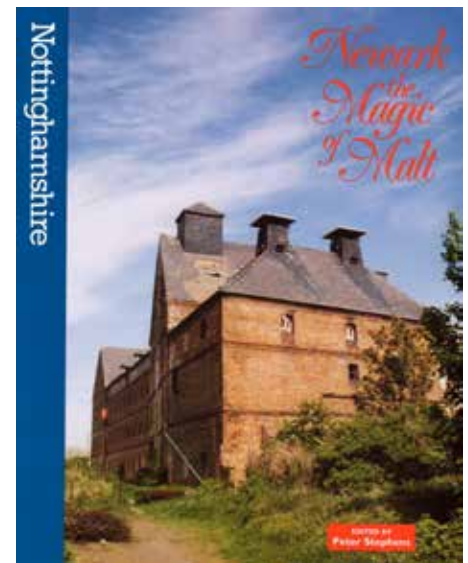
Mundella School. He followed his father's career, who was deputy chief sub-editor of the Nottingham Evening News. Peter's first job was with the Newark Advertiser for three years commencing in 1946 and included the famous libel case brought by Professor Harold Laski and is well worth following up in the Local Studies section of Newark Library.

During Peter's long career in journalism, he edited newspapers in both Fleet Street and the provinces and worked in a wide variety of papers including The Daily Mirror, The Northern Echo, The Daily Dispatch, The Newcastle Evening Chronicle and subsequently The Journal. In 1970 he was recruited to The Sun executive team and in the mid-seventies, edited the News of the World. Peter was of course present for the move to Wapping in 1986 and, whilst content to be on the winning side in one of the most important industrial disputes in history, he took early retirement and returned to Newark to live in an apartment in the Friary.

In 1988 Peter joined the Civic Trust and quickly became media officer and launched the regular newsletter, which gave him a platform to campaign on many local topics including conservation, potholes in the road, dangerous footpaths, bus fumes, graffiti, vandalism and, most importantly for the Trust, planning issues. The Trust presented a complete run of the newsletter to Newark Library in 1999 and in the same year the independent judges of the Newark Civic Awards gave the publication the award for the best nomination in the printed word category – a

great credit to Peter as editor for the whole period.

In 1993, Peter completed his editing of the Civic Trust book "Newark the Magic of Malt" a history of the once-great Newark malting trade. As District Librarian, I worked closely with Peter to design and proof read the book, which was published by Nottinghamshire County Council and proved a best seller; it was reviewed by many journals far and wide.



Peter's local authorship continued with a labour of love, when the County Council again agreed to publish "Grey Sanctuary: the Story of the Newark Friary", which was a superbly researched booklet and a valuable contribution to the town's written history. Working with Peter was an absolute pleasure for myself and other library colleagues, with his consummate professionalism showing through at all times.

Peter was Vice Chairman of Newark Civic Trust for more than ten years, until his retirement from the role in 2001 and he gave it a great deal of his time and experience. He found the Trust rewarding

and a total change from Fleet Street, which brought him new interests and rewarding friendships. Other honorary posts Peter held were Secretary of the Institute of Advanced Motorists and President of Newark Probus in 1977.

Throughout his retirement Peter followed two sporting passions – Nottinghamshire County Cricket Club and Derby County Football Club, the latter being a curious interest for a Nottingham born person. Peter and I travelled to a Nottingham Forest versus Derby County match together, which was an interesting experience for a lifetime Forest supporter. I cannot

recall the result, but Peter did give me a lift home afterwards.

In 2005 Peter and Mary, for health and family reasons, left the Friary and moved to Sevenoaks to be closer to their children. Peter remained a life member of the Civic Trust and continued to receive copies of the Magazine, which has developed enormously from his original vision of the A5 newsletter. Peter was a great supporter of both the Civic Trust and the town of Newark and his contribution to both is gratefully acknowledged. He will be sadly missed.

## Local Authority conservation capacity in England

Posted 23/09/2016 - <http://ihbconline.co.uk/newsarchive/?p=13810>

Institute of Historic Building Conservation research, funded and published by Historic England, shows the nation's local authority conservation services have continued to suffer, in what is now a decade of cuts, as conservation capacity is reduced by a further 0.5% in the last year, with a shocking cumulative decline of 36% since 2006.

James Caird, IHBC Chair said: 'The continuing decline in local authority conservation staffing is disappointing. This is not least as it ignores substantial evidence that local conservation services are the best way – and best value – for LPAs to carry out their statutory duties under the Planning Acts, as well as promoting heritage as a driver for urban and community renewal.'

'The IHBC is doing what we can to mitigate impacts that are otherwise outside our control. We collaborate sector-wide and in partnerships with

like-minded bodies, such as the Cifa and the RTPI; offer national and local training; publish guidance, such as our Research and Guidance notes in our Toolbox, as well as offer advocacy resources, such as our 'Why Local Authorities need conservation skills' website.'

IHBC President David McDonald, said: 'Our evidence, both statistically and anecdotally, shows that local authorities are increasingly unable to cope with the pressure of applications and therefore not able to play a full part in meeting the government's planning objectives.'

IHBC Director Sean O'Reilly said: 'It is especially unfortunate too that much the same long-term, sorry story is also told by the parallel archaeology service data collected by ALGAO, in work also funded by Historic England, which shows a structurally damaging 13.5% fall in local authority archaeological

specialists in the last year alone.'

Fiona Newton, who led the IHBC's role in the wider project, said: 'This Eighth Annual Report on Local Authority Staff Resources captures the dramatic impact of local government cutbacks on heritage management. Whilst the scale of the decline in conservation specialists has reduced to 0.5% in the last year, it still continues to fall each year and since 2006 the number of conservation specialists has fallen by 35.8%.'

'At the same time, in the last 12 months alone the number of planning application decisions increased by 3.6% and Listed Building Consent decisions increased by 0.62%. Whilst not the whole picture of the workload of conservation staff these increases illustrate the picture of rising workload and decreasing resources.'

# ExploreChurches - discover the UK's churches

Posted 22/11/16 - <http://www.nationalchurchestrust.org/news/explorechurches-discover-uks-churches>

ExploreChurches, a new website which makes it easy to discover the UK's most beautiful and fascinating churches, has been launched by the National Churches Trust.

The website - [www.explorechurches.org](http://www.explorechurches.org) - brings churches to life by using high quality images and providing information about the history and architecture of individual buildings. It's then easy to plan your visit as ExploreChurches also provides practical information, including opening hours, directions and access details.

Starting with an initial selection of 1,200 churches, users of the ExploreChurches website can search for churches based on location or by a particular feature such as stained glass or monuments.

Church of England, Roman Catholic, Methodist and Baptist churches and chapels are featured on the website. Also included are some English Heritage, CADW, Historic Scotland

and National Trust sites.

An innovative feature of the website is a selection of 'themed lists', which help visitors to find churches that fit with their existing passions and interests. These include: Capability Brown, Battlefield Crosses and Churches in Film and Television. Each list includes ten to fifteen churches and chapels around the UK which link to the particular theme.

Visitors can share their favourite churches on the ExploreChurches website, via social media and also comment on what they loved most about churches they have been to.

Claire Walker, Chief Executive of the National Churches Trust, said: 'An increasing number of people are visiting churches and other religious heritage sites and awareness of their significance as attractions is growing. ExploreChurches aims to make it possible for even more people to discover and enjoy visiting the UK's beautiful and fascinating churches.'

'Designed as a visitor facing website for churches, chapels and meetings houses across the UK, ExploreChurches has been developed by the National Churches Trust in close co-operation with partners in the tourism, heritage and church sectors. Launching with 1,200 churches, we will be adding more churches to the website on a regular basis.'

'As the national charity dedicated to promoting and supporting church buildings of historic, architectural and community value across the UK, our vision is that ExploreChurches will develop over time to become the leading source of information about churches for visitors, including both tourists and local people.'

'We would like to include all churches in the UK that are open to visitors on the ExploreChurches site. If a church that you love, or look after, is not listed please visit the website at [www.explorechurches.org](http://www.explorechurches.org) to find out how to get involved.'

## Planning

### Land off North Gate



The vacant land off North Gate

A new application has been made by Newark Property Developments for converting the large vacant site on North Gate into a retail park for bulky goods. The previous application for 6 warehouses was refused by Newark & Sherwood District Council but following an appeal to the Planning Inspectorate granted permission in 2013. The developers then appealed for costs which were refused.

This is a controversial development on which we raised concerns regarding traffic and design of the warehouses, especially the view from the river.

The plans indicate that there are spaces for over 200 parked cars. The immediate consequences will be to exacerbate an already inadequate and congested road network to the disadvantage of the town. It appears that there will be

a short dedicated right hand lane into the site for traffic coming from the Lincoln Road end of North Gate. It is highly likely that this traffic will cause tailbacks, which will add to the delays and frustration for vehicles entering the town. Traffic leaving the site and wishing to turn right towards Queens Road and Castle Gate will have to cross North Gate and the dedicated lane, which may be occupied by vehicles wishing to enter the site.

In addition, extra traffic from Queen's Road turning right at the lights into North Gate will cause

increased tailbacks through the King's Road/Lover's Lane junction (which in part is only a single lane) and back up Sleaford Road.

The plan is to build four large units; three alongside the river and one at the site entrance. The visuals of this unit indicate a construction of solid walls of Composite Cedar Cladding board, coloured Anthracite Red 7016. We suggested the material and colour are out of keeping in a conservation area.

We also expressed concern that there is no indication of how units A, B and C will be seen from the

town and the river. The rear of the three buildings will be seen from many angles, particularly from the town bridge. Solid brick walls will certainly have a negative effect on the town.

We objected to the proposal on the grounds that it will have a detrimental impact on the town and suggested that a public meeting should be called to assess the long term implications in detail.

Full details are available by viewing the application online - 16/01958/RMAM

## George Street Maltings

We raised no objection to the conversion of the former Jack Spratt Antiques warehouse in George Street into eleven units comprising a mix of one and two bed apartments. The project will be in keeping with other former maltings on George Street. The developers will provide nine car parking spaces and a secure cycle storage unit.

Approval has recently been given for the development of another

former maltings on George Street. The conversion is for six apartments; five 2-bed and one 1-bed. Newark Town Council raised an objection, as there were only four parking spaces provided, but the county council's highways department raised no objection.

Full details are available by viewing the application online - 16/02090/FULM



The former maltings on George Street

## Charles 1st Coffee House

We are pleased to report that this splendid example of a medieval timber-framed building, which has been boarded up since it closed in September 2015, will be carefully restored and put to use. It is a late 16th century Grade II listed building with a 20th century pantile roof.

It is thought Queen Henrietta Maria may have stayed here in 1643 as the guest of Lady Leake when she was on her way to Oxford with reinforcements for Charles 1st, however it is more likely she was hosted at the Governors House.

The renovation will divide the ground floor into 2 retail units and a 1-bed

apartment and provide a 2-bed apartment on the first floor. The front of the building is slightly run down, and the developers say that the visual appearance of the building will be vastly improved following the renovations and all aspects will be retained to match its surroundings.

Full details are available by viewing the application (17/00002/LBC) online, and anybody interested to see the inside condition of the building can view the many photographs supporting the Condition Structural Survey. Clearly there is much restoration work to attend to!



The boarded-up Charles 1st Coffee House

## Robin Hood Hotel

The saga, or should we say horror story, continues. The latest application for a Travelodge (following the one submitted in February last year and featured in Issue 73) was due for discussion at the NSDC Planning Committee meeting on February 7th but has been postponed until March 7th.

A flurry of letters in the Newark Advertiser are, as usual, divided between preservation and demolition. But most share a common demand that the District Council bring this matter to a conclusion.

We are grateful to one of our members, Chris Lester, for writing our comment to the latest proposal:

The Design and Access Statement January 2016 (Para 4.4) acknowledges the importance of the site as a gateway to the town centre. It is our opinion that the proposed building is more suited to an industrial estate setting. It has no merit whatsoever either in terms of design or choice of materials. No attempt has been made to design the building to complement the

historic nature of the surroundings, as illustrated.

It can be seen that there is a variety of roofscapes comprising different pitches, both pantile and slate cladding and chimneys; relatively small Georgian-style windows flush with the facades; brick and rendered walls. In contrast the proposed building has a flat roof at the crucial point, large windows and an ugly box on the roof. It appears to be too tall and the pitch of the roof appears to be too shallow to reflect local roofs.

In order for a building to fit within an historic setting the design should complement its setting with materials of the very highest quality. The proposed design is at odds with its surroundings and the choice of materials implies a run-of-the-mill building, which it clearly is.

For instance the use of "Slate Tile" for the roof covering. This implies the unpleasant crushed natural slate mixed with resin, a material which has no place in this area. It features very sharply-defined edges and a reflective, shiny finish. It is laid in

perfect rows, often using tiles which are too wide for their length (i.e. wrong aspect ratio) in contrast with natural slates, which have a slightly feathered edge, a more pleasing aspect ratio and are laid in the traditional manner.

Another material which is unsuited to the area, but is proposed extensively, is powder-coated aluminium. Where else can that be seen at Beaumont Cross and what does it bring to the setting?

There is so little merit in the revised proposal that it would be a waste of time to go on further. This building falls far, far short of being an acceptable replacement for the cottages, which must stay and be restored, according to the original agreement, at the developer's expense or an alternative plan proposed that will enhance the character of this strategic site.

Full details are available by viewing the application online - 16/00914/FULM



# Barnbygate Methodist Church

## ...a finished and elegant place of worship...

*By Debby Smith, Civic Trust Committee Member (with thanks to Rev. Philip McDonald and Paul Swinney)*



**Barnbygate Methodist Church**

2016 marked the 170th anniversary of the opening of the striking Barnbygate Methodist Church. Methodism was thriving in Newark in 1846. Newark was just the sort of town to take to non-conformism. The industries on which it prospered were the 'new ones'; engineering, malting and brewing. The self-made business owners found Methodism appealing, as a reaction to, what was perceived by many as, the corruption, hypocrisy and entrenched conservatism of the land-owning Church of England.

Many of the local business-owning families were involved with fund-raising, administering and preaching at Barnbygate.

The first Methodist chapel in Newark was in Millgate, between the White Horse and Water Mill pubs (the White Horse long gone, but the Water Mill extant). It was opened in 1776. The attractive little building is still there, now used as offices, with a distinctive plaque indicating its first use.

Dr Bernard Wilson (he of Wilson

Street in the town), the controversial Vicar of the Parish Church of St Mary Magdalene, and the Duke of Newcastle, the major landowner, resisted the building of non-conformist chapels, but it is interesting to note that in 1787, when John Wesley himself opened the second Methodist Chapel in Guildhall Street, the ceremony was attended by the Mayor and some of the Aldermen.

The Primitive Methodist Chapel immediately opposite Barnbygate Chapel opened in the early 1840s and closed in 1933 after the union of the three branches of Methodism. Having been used as a restaurant, picture framing shop, travel agents and no doubt suffered many other indignities, including virtual dereliction, it has recently been tastefully converted into flats.

Barnbygate Methodist Church was opened in 1846, replacing Guildhall Street chapel, which had become too small (although the building was retained and used as a Sunday School and later as a primary



**The first Methodist chapel on Millgate, the building to the rear was the Salvation Army Hall from 1887**



**Guildhall Street Methodist Chapel**



**Barnbygate Primitive Methodist Chapel**



The music stands to the first-floor gallery

school. It has now been converted into housing). The new church was designed by J Simpson of Leeds, a noted church architect of the time, in the Wesleyan Methodist tradition of an airy, two-storey renaissance style. Barnbygate is considered to be amongst the finest surviving examples of his work and is a Grade II listed building. The organ was removed from the Guildhall Street chapel and installed in the new



The first-floor seating viewed from the top of the gallery



Retained box-pews to the right of the pulpit

building. The official opening took place on 2 July 1846.

In April 1871, the Methodist Messenger extolled the Chapel's virtues thus: 'It is ... a finished and elegant Place of Worship. Plain persons will see nothing in it to which they can reasonably object, and fastidious persons will find nothing in it to offend the most correct taste'.

The exterior of the chapel is austere and classical, but inside we find something rather special. It was built to accommodate 1,400 (at a time when the population of Newark was only 11,000) so is a large space blessed with excellent acoustics and thus much in demand by local music societies, orchestras, opera and choral societies and the Violin and Piano Schools. The interior escaped the heaviness of Victorianism, having been conceived when the airiness and delicacy of the Georgian period was still fashionable. The balcony, such a typical feature of Methodist

churches, has a most unusual feature; the music stands for the choir look like so many deer antlers. They are golden, magnificent and very striking.

The body of the church is supported by slim iron pillars topped with elegant finials, such as one often finds in Georgian factories and mills. There are Victorian stained glass windows (some now blocked off unfortunately), the most significant of which, to the left of the organ, is in the Arts and Crafts movement-style depicting Sir Galahad. The magnificent pulpit is an outstanding feature.

As well as being a place of worship for Newark Methodists, the building would have been used in the early days for other forms of public meeting. This aspect was reflected in the planning behind the refurbishment that took place in 1995. In the early 1990s an in-depth review by the church membership of the chapel's purpose and future led to the conclusion that its traditional layout was no longer appropriate to modern worship and its wider use as a facility for the people of Newark. Refurbishment of the church was therefore proposed, with a view to increasing versatility, heating, lighting, comfort and facilities. A feature of the building was its box pews, for which members in years' past would have paid pew rents and had their family name on the pews.



Looking towards the Barnbygate end of the church from the first-floor gallery

Each block of pews was constructed on a timber dais with stone flagged aisles between. Examples of the original stone flagged floor may be seen behind the pulpit and flags from the aisles were used in the construction of the external disabled access ramp. At the insistence of the Methodist Church's Conservation Officer, examples of the box pews have been retained to each side of the pulpit and their brass name-card holders, the pew catches and the umbrella holders can still be seen.

Beneath the pews to the left of the left aisle (looking towards the pulpit) was situated the original boiler, accessed via a hatch in the floor. During the refurbishment, the original warm air ducts were discovered, passing beneath the stone flags to two flues rising in the south wall behind the parapet.

In carrying out the flooring works it was observed that the rooms at the north end, behind the pulpit, were originally part of the open seating area, the present walls having been added at the end of the 19th century. Lifting of the floors revealed evidence of previous use of the site in the form of a dry, circular, brick-lined cistern – could this be part of the original Warwick and Richardson Brewery which was on the site? This has now been bridged over with a concrete beam to support the floor above.

The 1995 refurbishment scheme, broadly, comprised removal of the downstairs box pews, extension of the dais in front of the pulpit, with modification of the original communion rail to suit, construction of the glazed screen towards the rear of the church, construction of a kitchen and toilets, provision of inner glazed doors at the main entrance, removal of the two stained glass windows from the south frontage and their relocation to the west wall, and upgrading of the heating, lighting and sound systems. The works cost £120,000 and were completed under the



The glass screen installed in 1995

leadership of Rev John Ingyon, minister, and Mr David Atkins, architect. The official re-dedication of the church took place on 20 January 1996.

Since 1996 much effort has been put into maintaining the condition of this historic building. The last 20 years have seen extensive work on the roofs generally but particularly the church roof, the concealed lead-lined gutters and the cast iron rainwater pipes.

In August 2004 Newark was hit by a ferocious storm and the church was inundated with water along its west side; a rainwater outlet in the concealed gutter had been blocked by a polystyrene cup. Substantial damage was caused to carpets and furnishings but, most seriously, to the plaster frieze and dentil detail around the top of the wall. Drying out and repair took some time and highly specialised craftsmen from Birmingham had to be brought in to restore the ornate plasterwork.

In 2011/12 an extensive refurbishment of all the external joinery on the premises was undertaken. Decaying timber was removed and new timber grafted in prior to re-painting. There were many broken panes of glass in the church windows. The Victorian glass was very thin and breakages had

occurred, particularly at high level, in many places due to bird strikes. All the damaged glass was replaced. The work included refurbishment and re-painting of protective grilles to the stained-glass windows and re-painting of the cast iron downpipes. The work cost around £80,000 in total, which was raised through grants from various sources and by the fundraising efforts of the Church membership.

A huge amount of effort (and fund-raising) over the years has gone into keeping this beautiful and interesting building at the heart of the community and allowing it to continue to provide a focus for the Christian mission of the congregation. The church celebrated its 170th anniversary year with a very successful series of events, including cream teas, open gardens, a craft fair, concerts and a display of its history.

A Nativity Festival is held each December and coffee mornings take place every Wednesday and Saturday, when the church is also open to visitors. Do please go along and have a look inside this not-so-hidden 'gem' in the heart of Newark.

# Newark Civic Trust AGM 2016

The Newark Civic Trust AGM was held at Newark Library on the 29th September 2016.

The Chairman welcomed those attending, before introducing the Town Mayor, Councillor Dean Hyde, who was kind enough to attend the event. The Civic Trust invited the Mayor to present Michael Constantine, Business Manager Heritage, Culture and Visitors with the 2016 Newark Civic Trust Award for the combined National Civil War Centre/Visitor Hub/Palace Theatre development. We felt that the development should receive the award, not only for the restoration work carried out but also for the impact the development had, and continues to make, on tourism in Newark.

The Mayor said: 'I had had an opportunity to visit the Old Magnus Buildings before they were refurbished and went into the old headmaster's quarters and the Tudor Hall and thought what a fabulous set of buildings they were. I was absolutely thrilled when the project went ahead to join the two buildings together and thought it was a stroke of genius. It is now a multi-functional building, which is very welcoming and has become an asset to the town and will attract many visitors both now and into the future.'

On receiving the award Michael Constantine explained that: '... Newark's special nature is its built environment. It is to the credit of both present and past members

of the Civic Trust and the hard work they had done that the town remained a jewel in the crown of the East Midlands. Whilst I came to Newark to run the National Civil War Centre, part of my remit was to attract tourists to the town so that they could appreciate this amazing town that the Trust has played a part in maintaining.'

## Chairman's Report

The Chairman thanked the officers of the Executive Committee for all their support and hard work over the past year. Everyone had contributed and he valued all their efforts. In particular, he wanted to thank Neil Hinchley, who he had hoped would be in attendance, who was stepping down as Membership Secretary. He had held this post for a number of years, taking in subscriptions and contacting new members and had performed the role admirably. Neil had a good sense of humour and always livened up our meetings and would be sadly missed, although he will remain a member of the Trust and be available to provide advice. We have a small gift for him, which will be passed on, but he particularly wanted to publicly thank Neil for all his hard work.

The Chairman also thanked the members for their contributions to the magazine, but also for writing to the Advertiser to express views on matters affecting the built environment and for talking about what the Trust does with friends and family. It is very important to spread the word about what we are trying to achieve as a Trust. The past year seems to have flown by, but the Trust had achieved a lot, not least the refurbishment of the



Michael Knapton (right) awarding the plaque to Michael Constantine (left) (image courtesy of the Newark Advertiser)

Town Pump with funds provided by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF). This project had first been discussed to mark our 50th anniversary and now it was complete Michael was very happy with the work carried out by Malcolm Lane and Sons, who had been recommended to us by Nottinghamshire County Council. He was also pleased to have received a number of positive comments about the work and that we had conserved an important historic asset, whilst smartening up that corner of the Market Place. His only disappointment was that none of the original pump remained, only some piping that led to a tap. He had hoped that when the panel was removed it would reveal the original workings, but sadly it wasn't to be. We had received just over £6000 from HLF, which was spent not just on the refurbishment but also on an interpretation panel, upgrades to the website and a talk and visit to Papplewick Pumping Station, as well as many other costs associated with the project. As well as the physical work being successful it was also hoped that people would have learnt about the pump, other town pumps, supply of water and also public health in the 19th century, which had been a prime aim of the project. It had also taught the Chairman that, as a Trust, we had the understanding, expertise and support within the community to successfully bid for grants when required. He thought this was something we should pursue in the future, although what those projects should be was yet to be decided. It was something the committee could discuss, but input from members would be welcome. If anyone has any suggestions for future projects, which needn't necessarily be refurbishment of street furniture and could be educational, web based, research projects or a combination of a number of ideas, they should contact a committee member. They don't have to just involve the Trust and could be in conjunction with schools, youth groups or

other groups. Any ideas would be considered.

We have again produced two excellent magazines over the last year, with articles contributed by members and non-members. A lot of work goes into producing the magazine and it is very much a joint effort. The Chairman thanked Michael Hawes for all the work he does for the Trust, but particularly writing reports on our summer visits, editing the draft magazine, liaising with the printers and finally arranging delivery to members. Feedback on the magazine was vital for it to meet the requirements of our members and we did not want it to just remain the same, but to get better. Any ideas of what members would like to see, or possibly see removed, would be greatly received as would any articles that members might wish to contribute.

The Chairman had also been pleased with the closer relationship with Newark Town Council that had been progressed throughout the year. They had been very supportive of the Town Pump project and now owned the pump, which had been owned by Newark and Sherwood District Council at the beginning of the project. Michael also thanked Amy and Oliver from the District Council Conservation department for their support during the project. The Civic Trust Award would now be presented in conjunction with the Town Council, who would be involved in the decision on who it should be awarded to. Recently the Town Council had invited us to hold our committee meetings at the Town Hall rather than the CVS building on Northgate. This saved us costs of £16 per meeting and brought us closer to the Town Council. The Chairman asked the Mayor to pass on his thanks to Alan Mellor and David Lloyd.

Next the Chairman discussed the planning applications we had commented on, which was a very important part of our role. The first of these had been the proposal to

build a Sainsbury's store on the former council depot on Kelham Road. Objections were submitted by the Trust, the Town Council and local residents and the application was unanimously rejected by the District Council Planning Committee. Most of the objections were focussed on the potential traffic congestion which would have been caused and the effect on trade in the historic core of the town. For a thriving and vibrant town centre we need to encourage trade within the town, rather than on its outskirts. The Chairman had agreed with a number of councillors in their views that the population of the town would grow over the next few years and that supermarkets would be needed to cater for this growth, but their siting was something that needed careful consideration. The Chairman of the Planning Committee had stated that it was the wrong plan in the wrong place at the wrong time, which the Trust whole heartedly agreed with. The Trust, Town and District Councils had also objected to plans to convert the former Piano School on Mount Lane into studio style accommodation. Objections focussed on the density of accommodation, lack of communal space and its location next to retirement homes. The District Council rejected the plans, but on appeal the Planning Inspector had ruled that there were other buildings with similar high density in the area and that it would bring a non-designated heritage asset back into use. Whilst the Chairman applauded this aspect, he was not convinced that it was the right solution. Recently an application had been submitted to convert the Violin School on Kirk Gate into a restaurant and cafe. This is a fantastic Watson Fothergill designed building and the school has been there a number of years. The Chairman agreed with Chris Lester's letter in the previous weeks Advertiser that we needed to encourage diversity in

the town centre, rather than yet another café. He would be sorry to see the Violin School move from that property, although they had provided assurances that they wanted to remain within the town. In 2012 they had suggested that the Violin and Piano Schools may be housed in one premise and there was scope for this at the old Police Station. Whilst there was as yet no indication that this was the plan it was hoped that wherever they moved to it would be close to the town centre.

Finally, the Robin Hood Hotel. An application to demolish the listed building and build a hotel had been submitted earlier in the year and our objection had been published in the latest edition of the magazine. To summarise; we opposed the demolition of the listed buildings as it could not be proved conclusively that an alternative use could not be found, which he believed was in line with the National Planning Policy Framework, which is the Government guidance on planning. We had also opposed the new build over what we considered flawed plans for parking, the size and scale of the building and the wider impact on the conservation area. It was unsure when the Planning Committee meeting to consider the application would be. Ralph Harrison asked what the parking provision was and the Chairman responded that they had an agreement with NPC car parks in St Marks to use their car parking facilities. Joel Marshall mentioned that hotels in town centres weren't new, but there were a number of questions over the access and security of the car park, which were less than satisfactory. He queried whether patrons would feel it was safe to leave a car in the car park overnight. Whilst less than ideal he thought it would not raise an objection from the Highways Authority. Oliver Scott suggested we could discuss this further during his presentation. The argument in its favour that the

Chairman had heard, suggested that Newark had over 350 listed buildings, so therefore what would the loss of a couple matter. The Chairman said that it mattered a great deal and listed buildings are not just a game of numbers. Listed buildings are listed because of their uniqueness, therefore losing even a single listed building means we have lost something unique and irreplaceable. It was not just their age that was important, it was the fact they were made by local workers, using local materials and had become a living place for local people. The historic environment is a complex thing and many things contribute to it; losing any part of it would have wider consequences overall. The demolition of the buildings would not just mean losing the buildings themselves, but would mean a gradual further erosion of the historic context of the town. Newark's conservation area is judged as being at risk by Historic England and at risk of further decline. Expanding the ASDA development, which has largely led to this assessment, would in our opinion be an error and the Chairman believes the District Council has a duty to protect our conservation area and prevent any further decline. As already stated we also oppose the proposed replacement for the listed buildings, which the Chairman thought were badly thought out, badly designed and had no place in an historic town, such as ours. Buildings such as that proposed could be found all over the country on industrial estates etc. is of very poor quality and would not reflect the local architecture in the Beaumont Cross area. He had read that the architects think it reinforces local identity through its design and materials, in particular its use of red bricks which are reflective of Newark traditions! The Chairman wondered if that was the best they could come up with. The Trust had been set up over 50 years ago to protect and promote the towns

built environment and it would be a failure on our part not to oppose this development. Whether that objection was successful or not he believed it was important for us to oppose the development and ask questions about how it had come to this situation. He hoped Oliver Scott (who gave a talk on the role of the Conservation Department at Newark & Sherwood District Council) may be able to clarify some issues as part of his presentation later. Finally, it must be recognised that many of our listed buildings are not owned by Newark people, but by developers etc. who might never have set foot in the town. Those people should not be given the message that if you left your building to deteriorate you might one day be allowed to demolish it. It would appear this was not an uncommon practice, albeit it was difficult to prove. The Chairman had been disturbed at the comments of an unnamed Town Councillor that enough was enough and it had gone on long enough now. Unless it could be proved that no use could be found and the building was not capable of repair then enough was never enough and that this was a very dangerous message to send.

## Treasurer's Report

Louise Knapton Carter read the Treasurer's report, copies of which had been placed on the chairs.

### Income

Money from subscriptions had decreased by £80 this financial year, due to a drop in existing members and the fact we have now written off several members who hadn't paid subscriptions for over two years. There are 8 new members, including 2 children, which looks promising for the future. There are now 124 active members, of which 6 are corporate members.

A small amount of income was received through donations, but Gift Aid was claimed back for the previous three years, which totalled

£246. There was also the grant of £6300 received from HLF for the Town Pump project. The total income for the year was £6557, compared to £2519 last year.

## Expenditure

The main expenditure this year was on the magazine, which totalled £1139 and speaker's fees rose to £315, which was £200 more than the previous year. Website fees had decreased by £300 this year. Total expenditure was £2166, an increase of £8 on last year.

The overall surplus over expenditure was £6543.

During the current financial year the payment for the Town Pump refurbishment and associated costs will go out of the funds. Gift Aid will be claimed back straight after the year end and fees for room hire for committee meetings will reduce, due to the move to the Town Hall. There will be another push to recruit new members.

Total assets on the balance sheet for 2015/16 were £8819.52, compared with £2276.33 last year.

Thanks again to Duncan and Toplis for auditing the accounts again this year for free.

Ralph Harrison queried what the Christmas Tree costs were and it was explained that this was for the purchase of a Christmas Tree for the festival in St Mary Magdalene, which had been kindly decorated by Debbie Smith. This was a good way of publicising ourselves and we would be doing the same again this year.

It was queried why there were no liabilities shown for this year for the Town Pump project and it was explained that this would be reflected in next year's accounts. The Chairman explained that there was still some money remaining and this would be used to produce new membership forms.

The Accounts were unanimously approved by the meeting (proposed

by Peter Duncan, seconded by Paul Moore.)

The Chairman thought we were in a sound financial position and should be able to maintain membership subscriptions at the same level for the foreseeable future.

## Election of Officers

Dave Godney asked what the role of Events Co-ordinator consisted of and once it had been explained offered to fulfil the role.

Debbie Smith offered to fulfil the role of Membership Secretary, in addition to Recruitment Secretary subject to a good handover from Neil Hinchley.

The following officers were elected with unanimous approval of the meeting:-

- Chairman – **Michael Knapton**
- Vice-Chairman – **Kevin Winter**
- Secretary – **Kevin Winter**
- Treasurer – **Louise Knapton-Carter**
- Planning Chairman – **Michael Hawes**
- Planning Vice-Chairman – **Vacant**
- Membership Secretary – **Debbie Smith**
- Recruitment Secretary – **Debbie Smith**
- Conservation Watch Co-ordinator – **Mick Gill**
- Awards Co-ordinator – **Michael Knapton**
- Events Co-ordinator – **Dave Godney**

The above were elected en-bloc.

## Election of Executive Committee Members

In addition to the officers elected above, the following were unanimously elected to the Executive Committee, as ordinary

Committee members:-

- **George Wilkinson**
- **Paul Moore**

The above were elected en-bloc.

## Any Other Business

There was a question from the floor asking whether the Trust was aware of the planning application for the former Millgate Museum. The Chairman responded that he had heard about the planning application. This referred primarily to the plans to licence part of the building as an entertainment venue from 0730 until 0130 seven days a week. There were members present who were also part of Millgate Conservation Society, who had raised objections to these plans. Their primary concerns were that it was in a primarily residential area and therefore a venue similar to the nightclub in the Corn Exchange was inappropriate. The Chairman mentioned that we had discussed it briefly at our last committee meeting, but we did not have a lot of information at that stage to be able to comment on any planning application. He was unsure what further information had become available, but if there was anything we would pick it up at our next committee meeting. There was discussion amongst members that there was a meeting planned for 12th October for those objecting to the plans and it was thought that this was the licensing hearing. Jane Williams mentioned that there had been a representation from the Millgate Conservation Society and the Chairman responded that we had presumed that would be the case. The Vice Chairman asked if anyone was aware of a planning application that we could then respond to as a Trust. However, it was thought that this had already happened and had been approved. The Vice Chairman wondered if, as work has been progressing there for quite some time, the planning application was

long since passed and it was now the licensing application that was being processed. He therefore thought it would be difficult for us to object to anything unless there was a planning application to object against. Ralph Harrison mentioned that there would need to be a planning application for change of use, however the Vice Chairman mentioned that the building was already being used for several purposes. He was aware that an internet printing company had already been set up in part of the building, so parts of it were already in use. The Chairman suggested that those concerned should check the District Council planning website to see if there were any applications outstanding, but it was thought this had already been checked. Those who were Millgate residents thought that they should have been notified if an application had been submitted, but this had not occurred. The Chairman wasn't sure on the rules for public notification beyond seeing applications taped to lampposts or in the Advertiser. He thought that this might suffice as public notification and there didn't need to be letters posted individually through resident's letter boxes. Members thought that resurrecting the Corn Exchange as a late-night venue might be more appropriate, but were not sure what the current situation with the building was. Oliver Scott said that he would give an update as part of his presentation. The Vice Chairman said that if anyone found details of a planning application that they wanted us to comment on to let us know.

The Newark Castle Signal Box was mentioned, as one member was part of a group trying to conserve it. He had been in touch with Network Rail who didn't want to know and a plan had been formulated around what it would cost to conserve it, however points of access were proving problematic. He wanted to know what the Civic Trust can do

to help and what else could be done. It is the first thing that people see when they enter Newark from that direction and Network Rail plan to just board it up and let it rot. Because it is in a conservation area it can't be demolished, so it was presumed that Network Rail planned to let it get to a condition where it had to be demolished. This couldn't be allowed to happen. It was thought it would take 10 – 15 days' work by volunteers and around £200 to do the work required. Once conserved it could be opened to the public to visit. All the signalling equipment was still inside and could be viewed. Joel Marshall wondered whether it could be moved to the opposite side, near the new District Council headquarters, to make it more accessible. Network Rail had said that because it was so close to the tracks it couldn't be moved. They had said that it couldn't be knocked down because it is in the conservation area, but that the public couldn't gain access to it. It was argued that you could gain access to it from the car park on the other side of the nursery. The Chairman asked whether it was proposed that Network Rail maintain ownership. The response was that in other places groups had undertaken to look after and maintain signal boxes, whilst they remained the property of Network Rail. The group were quite prepared to pay for maintenance and insurance etc, but were unable to get any response from Network Rail beyond saying they were going to board it up. Oliver Scott would again be able to provide a bit of an update as part of his presentation.

Peter Duncan mentioned that the plaque presented to Michael Constantine earlier was using the new town colour, which had been adopted by the Town Council following advice from Kevin Winter about the colours used for Royalist regiments clothing and banners. It was a form of 'madder' red, derived from the madder plant and is similar to the red used on some

street signs around the town. It had been adopted by the Town Council and they hoped to get other people to use it when appropriate, such as when Trent Bridge is next repainted by the County Council. It was all part of a rebranding by the Town Council that Peter hoped would distinguish us from other places.

The subject of the profusion of signs and banners was discussed. The Chairman mentioned that Mick Gill, who was unable to be present, ran our conservation watch and was in regular contact with the District Council about the inappropriate use of banners, particularly when attached to listed buildings. The Chairman encouraged members to let us know if they saw something which they thought was inappropriate, so we could pass the information on. It was then mentioned that there is a sign just over the bridge saying that there is no left turn onto the Wharf. It has been there for a couple of years, so surely people are now aware of this. It was felt that its size and colour had a negative impact of the view of the town from the bridge. However, this was a County Council Highways Department sign so any comments would need to be passed to them. Oliver Scott mentioned that the issue of street furniture is something that the Trust and District Council may be able to work together on, as there are some practical steps that can be taken. The Trust might want to take a survey of street furniture on as a project and make some recommendations. There is some useful guidance available, which could be used to get rid of redundant signage.

The meeting was closed. Following the meeting Oliver Scott gave a presentation about conservation issues within the town and the work of the Conservation Department at Newark and Sherwood District Council.

# Palace Theatre Refurbishment

*Images and text courtesy of Carys Coulton-Jones – Assistant Business Manager for Heritage, Culture and Visitors*

August 2015 saw the start of probably the largest refurbishment the Palace Theatre has undertaken in 30 years, as we embarked on an ambitious construction programme to link the building with the newly opened National Civil War Centre next door. The scheme included creation of an open-plan reception, retail space, visitor information centre, foyer and café-bar, along with an external courtyard seating area, new toilets and a 1st floor commercial kitchen! A fiddly prospect for any construction company, the project was further complicated by the need to work around the theatre's programme,



The installation of the new steel beams and columns



New steelwork and original Victorian detailing

and in particular to ensure that the pantomime could go ahead unhindered.

There were of course a number of challenges in delivering the project – not least in how to sympathetically connect the 1920s theatre with the modern, glazed reception and Grade I listed museum with consideration for the original streetscape. Much concrete was excavated to expand the ground floor level visitor information centre, and much steelwork brought in to re-shape the space. Careful demolition work ensured that the original features in the foyer were not damaged, and a dynamic colour scheme brought those details back to life.

However, further problems brought a chill to the air as one of the theatre's ageing gas pipes sprang a significant leak, leading to a last minute decision to upgrade the boilers and zone the theatre into front of house and backstage areas, generating efficiency savings for the future. This left the theatre without heating for 10 months; not too problematic until an extreme cold spell in November left theatre-goers feeling a little blue!

Christmas 2015 was a festive mix of pantomime stars, flying horses, builders' hard hats and hoarding, and we successfully ensured that nearly 17,500 customers navigated their way into the auditorium to see Cinderella without meeting too many workmen! But by far the most difficult time was from February 2016, re-opening the theatre for Toot Hill School's production of Little Shop of Horrors with half the bar out of action, concrete floors and temporary lighting, then working the refurbishment programme around the theatre programme to complete the job and

reveal the final piece of the puzzle – the new visitor information centre.

Straddling the divide between the theatre and the NCWC, the visitor information centre's clean, white space, interactive technology and big screens showcasing the best Newark and Sherwood has to offer certainly has the wow factor. Guiding customers through the differing aspects of the combined site, leading them into the new café or out into the town and wider district to sample more of what we have to offer locally, the project is a great example of what can be achieved with vision, a flair for design and one eye on the future sustainability of two much-loved, historic assets. This project ensures we will be keeping heritage, culture and the visitor experience at the heart of Newark now and for years to come.



The cafe before refurbishment



The cafe after refurbishment

# Newark Castle Station: Restoration of main building

*Text and images courtesy of the Railway Heritage Trust*



Newark Castle Station

Newark Castle was Newark's first station, opened in 1846 by the Midland Railway (MR) as part of George Stephenson's Nottingham to Lincoln line, six years before the Great Northern Railway opened its rival Northgate Station. Both stations remain open, and both are Grade II listed.

Newark Castle's Station building is a single storey structure, on

the Nottingham bound side of the station, and dates from the opening of the line. Unusually for the MR it is in a mainly classical style and its rounded ends give it a unique appearance. The station was unmanned in the 1970s, as part of the general run-down of the rail system at that time, but the building survived and was initially transferred to the British Rail

Property Board.

The Trust made its first grant to the structure in 1987/88, when it contributed towards general restoration works. Between 1995 and 1997, with the building transferred back into the maintenance of the operational railway, the Trust awarded a further three grants, as part of a major restoration. This coincided with the creation of a Conservation Area for the part of the town between the canal, which borders the castle itself, and the railway. On conclusion of this project, Railtrack, the then infrastructure controller, let



The original entrance to the station

the building out as a wine bar but, sadly, this was not a success, and, after only a few years' operation, the structure was once more abandoned.

Nearly a decade of legal arguments followed before the railway was



The newly refurbished interior

able to reclaim it, and by then there was considerable deterioration, with the new roof that the Trust had funded being allowed to leak, with consequent damage to the interior. Network Rail has now transferred the structure into the train operating company's lease, and East Midlands Trains (EMT) has led a further restoration, with the help of a grant from the Trust. In a completion of the circle, the line has now become so busy that EMT

considers it appropriate to once more have a manned booking office on the station, and it has installed this in the west, Nottingham, end of the building.

The east end of the structure has been refitted for use as a café/newsagent and EMT has now identified a tenant to take this space on. The restoration of this station has been a long and, at times, heart-breaking slog for the Trust. We hope that, after this third

set of funded works, the building will now have a happier future than its experiences of the last thirty years.

Sponsor: East Midlands Trains, Derby

Architect: William Saunders LLP, Newark, Nottinghamshire

Contractor: Bowmer & Kirkland Ltd, Heage, Belper, Derbyshire

# Dates for the Diary

\* 30th March 2017: Gareth Davies – 'Archaeology of Nottingham Trams' with an update on archaeological projects undertaken by Trent & Peak around Newark

\* 27th April 2017: Ros Nicholson – '1-3 Northgate, Newark'

\*Summer visits to be confirmed

Full details of any changes to the programme can be found on the website (<http://www.newarkcivictrust.org.uk/events>) and will be announced at meetings as necessary.

Talks take place in Newark Library and commence at 7.30pm.

## Back Cover picture

The Palace Theatre foyer during refurbishment and the new visitor gateway to the National Civil War Centre. Photos courtesy of Carys Coulton-Jones, Business Manager Palace Theatre

# Newark Civic Trust

## MAGAZINE

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