

ROTHERHAM DISTRICT CIVIC SOCIETY

July 2008

New Secretary

My name is Peter Hawkrige; I'm fifty nine and I have lived in Rotherham for most of those years. I started teaching at the High School for Girls and continued my career there when it became Clifton Comprehensive School. I've been a member of this Society for more years than I care to remember. Having retired, I now spend my time working for the National Union of Teachers, writing local history booklets and being a grandparent. I live on Scholes Lane and can be contacted on 0114 2464703 or phawkrige@blueyonder.co.uk



Have You Any Old Cine Films?

If so, are you willing to share it? Radio Sheffield and Look North have launched a new project to unearth the region's history on film and are aiming to uncover old cine film, in any format, which illustrates aspects of the social, historical or cultural life of South Yorkshire and North Derbyshire. It is a great pity that thousands of hours of cine film are being thrown out every year or are gathering dust in the attic. Much of it could reveal important aspects of life in this region in the 20th century. If you, or anyone you know, has old film you would be willing to discuss, telephone the Action Desk at BBC Radio Sheffield on 0114 267 5444

Herringthorpe Playing Fields

On March 8th, the Civic Society held an open meeting at Herringthorpe United Reform Church to give members of the public an opportunity to listen to proposals for the future of Herringthorpe Playing Fields. About one hundred people attended; the meeting was chaired by Stan Crowther; an Officer of the Authority, Phil Rogers, outlined the proposals and responded to questions and concerns.

It was emphasized that the proposals were limited to two parts of the Fields:

a) the old pavilion and nursery site; b) the Leisure Centre and all-weather pitches.

Concerns:

Increased traffic on Boswell Street

Teams changing in the car park adjacent to Middle Lane South

Security of the buildings

Suggestions were made that the fields should become a 'Town Green' and that all opportunities to reduce the development's carbon footprint should be taken.

It was emphasized that, although there are no codicils in the leases that were signed when the land was bought by the Council, there was a genuine commitment to keep the Playing Fields as a green space.



The proposals would allow limited development on the two brown field sites and in return the town would get excellent sporting facilities for football, hockey and netball, at no cost to Council Tax payers.

The Leisure Centre is thirty years old and has suffered from a lack of maintenance. The new facilities would be run and maintained by the developers who would upgrade the facilities over time.

The Officers of the Authority would continue to consult on the plans and local people would have an opportunity to comment on the details, if the proposals get to that stage.

A Heritage Pub?

The Cutlers' Arms was rebuilt in 1907 to present an impressive façade to a newly widened Westgate. It was designed by James Wigfull, of Sheffield, for William Stones Brewery. Well-appointed rooms radiate from a central lobby. Despite modern opening-up of the right hand and back areas, the original planning is easy to appreciate and the array of Art Nouveau-style stained glass is something quite special—as is the little-altered front bar with its original back-fitting, curved counter, and elegant full-height dividing screen.



Faced with the threat of demolition as part of a major redevelopment, the Cutlers' Arms was statutorily listed in 2004.

Pub Interiors of Special Historic Interest—Yorkshire Regional Inventory.

Making the Cutlers' Arms a Heritage Pub might help to ensure its future.

CAMRA would like to know if there are any other pub interiors in Rotherham District which deserve to be listed. Can you help?

The Draft Interim Planning Statement for the Town Centre

A proposal to transfer the TESCO supermarket from the Forge Island to a site in the heart of the town centre has been strongly criticised by Rotherham District Civic Society.

Commenting on the Borough Council's draft interim planning statement for the town centre, the Society says the present location of TESCO and the market on opposite sides of the town centre provides a balancing effect and moving TESCO to the east side of the centre would significantly harm the All Saints' Square area. If TESCO cannot go on to the Guest and Chrimes site, it should stay where it is.

"The Society seriously questions whether TESCO or its customers would accept the entire sales area being at first floor level," they say. And they add "The Society cannot see how a two-storey slab block with service yard looking on to Centenary Way will provide a suitably impressive gateway to the town centre."

The existing civic area could become a key regeneration site by refurbishment of the existing buildings and the addition of a new office block, built to the highest architectural standards, to replace Bailey House. Walker Place could be upgraded to "A real civic square" and the Arts Centre facade should also be upgraded and the big screen moved from All Saints' Square.

The principal buildings in Doncaster Gate and Catherine Street should be refurbished and an alternative use found for the Doncaster Gate Hospital which is soon to be vacated by the Primary Care Trust. The town centre and Eastwood conservation areas should be linked. The Society does not want to see any increase in "convenience" shopping, stresses the importance of the Market and expresses concern about further damage to the viability of the town centre as a result of 14 more retail units proposed at Parkgate Retail World.

Commenting on proposed changes to the traffic system, the Society is "completely at a loss" to understand how Bridge Street can be closed to general traffic between Masbrough Street and Centenary Way, and it "questions the logic" of closing St. Ann's Road to through traffic. The Society does have some words of praise for the council's statement. In particular, it welcomes the adoption of a "design code" for the river corridor and it "notes with pleasure" the emphasis on the re-use of stone and other locally derived materials.

A News Release by Stan Crowther.

Ebenezer Elliott

"Elliott always saw himself as a hardworking man, yet he had the impulse to write lots and lots of verse. Many poems dealt with his love of nature, while some reflected the Sheffield and Rotherham tradition of tramping into the Peak District and 'breathing in the scenery' in order to recover from the smoke and dust of heavy industry. Other poems told a very different tale, describing the conditions suffered by poor people. Here, Elliott's poetry was unique - he challenged the system that exploited poor people and he demanded change. Working people loved the Poet of the Poor and his poetry, but many influential people hated him."

Extract from a biography of Ebenezer Elliott by Keith Morris and Ray Hearne.

The new PCT Health Centre is being built where Ebenezer Elliott lived in Masbrough. It would be a suitably apt way to commemorate him by placing a statue in the foyer of the new building.

Any Ideas?



This stone has inscribed on it "Extent of the Rotherham Liberty 1821". Do any members know what it refers to?

Clifton Lane - No Change!

The controversial traffic system in operation at the bottom of Clifton Lane, which has been the subject of widespread criticism ever since it was "experimentally" introduced nearly a decade ago, is here to stay. That is the message in a letter to our Society from the Council's Strategic Director of Environment and Development Services replying to our request for a report on the recent "review" of the system. The saga began in the early 1990s with a suggestion that an "all red" phase in the traffic lights would be the best way to allow pedestrians to cross in safety but that was turned down on the grounds that it would delay the traffic!

After various schemes had been considered and dropped and a lot of correspondence exchanged - including a letter to us from the Chief Executive apologising for his colleagues having "got into something of a muddle" - the Council decided to ban traffic turning left or right at the bottom of Clifton Lane or turning left into Clifton Lane from Doncaster Road. We said that would inevitably cause severe congestion in Middle Lane and Wellgate and that prediction has certainly proved true but it does not get a mention in the Consultants' report referred to in Karl Battersby's letter and set out below: -

Consultants WSP have undertaken traffic modelling of the junction to determine the effects of returning its operation to that prior to the changes made prior to 1999, reflecting 2007 traffic flow volumes.

The existing operation of the junction has been modelled using appropriate specialist software to assess the performance of traffic signal junctions. The junction was then assessed using 2007 flows incorporating traffic assignment and turning proportions of traffic that occurred prior to the prohibited turns, to include appropriate pedestrian facilities. The assessment was undertaken both for the recommended maximum cycle time for junctions containing all red pedestrian stages, and the maximum recommended cycle time for junctions in urban areas. This latter assessment would not generally be recommended with the all red pedestrian stage, due to pedestrian safety issues, but is included to determine if additional capacity could be gained from operating at a higher cycle time.

The results from the assessment are attached in the attached extract from the Consultant's report, although these may be summarised as follows:

Existing Situation (Scenario 1):

The junction operates within capacity for the morning peak period, and within capacity for the evening peak period.

Re-instatement of prohibited turns 60s Cycle Time (Scenario 2):

The junction becomes overloaded during the morning peak period with severe queues forming on Clifton Lane and Doncaster Road. During the evening peak period, the junction becomes overloaded with unacceptable queues on three of the four arms.

Re-instatement of prohibited turns 90s Cycle Time (Scenario 3):

Even with the junction operating with the maximum cycle time advised (and this being in excess of the maximum with an all red stage) the junction remains over capacity with queuing in both the morning and evening peak periods.

In conclusion, the junction, in its existing form, cannot satisfactorily operate without extensive queuing if the prohibited turns are removed. If this proposal was to be progressed further, then a major junction improvement would need to be considered which would require land to be taken from Clifton Park and possibly the acquisition of private land and properties fronting Clifton Lane and Doncaster Gate.

Blue Plaques

The Rotherham District Civic Society believes that it is important to celebrate the lives and achievements of Rotherham people. One way to do this is by placing blue plaques on buildings most associated with them. The Society is investigating how this can be done,

with the help of the Local Authority. If any member would like to sponsor a plaque, please contact the Secretary. One person who might merit a blue plaque is Raymond Unwin.

He was born in Rotherham on the 2nd November 1863. His father had a currier's shop on College Street, which was remembered with great affection years later. In 1871, the family moved from Clifton Bank to Moorgate Grove.

Inspired by the ideas of John Ruskin and William Morris, he moved to Manchester in 1885, becoming Secretary of the local Socialist League. In 1896 he formed a partnership with his brother-in-law, Barry Parker, and together they worked on the design of houses in the Derbyshire mining villages.

Their first major planning task was to design, in 1902, the New Earswick Model Village, near York. Experience gained was then applied on a larger scale at the first Garden City, founded at Letchworth in 1903. Unwin and Parker then followed this by designing Hampstead Garden Suburb, which was opened by King George V in 1907.

In 1913, he was amongst a group of twenty distinguished men who met together to create the Town Planning Institute, and, in 1915, became its second President.

His work directly influenced men like Alderman George Caine and through him, housing developments in Rotherham. In Herringthorpe they were 'built and laid out, twelve to the acre, on garden city lines, artistically grouped, allowing of ample garden space and a maximum amount of fresh air and sunlight'.

Climate Change—Refurbish Buildings

The Government intend that all houses built from 2016 onwards must reach a zero carbon rating. In recent years the relative energy inefficiency of old houses has been one of the many factors used to justify the demolition of properties in some of the Housing Market Renewal Areas. New research recently published by the Empty Homes Agency aims to counterbalance the argument. It asserts that it can take more than 50 years for a new home to make up for its embedded emissions through lower energy use. Nearly 70% of embedded carbon dioxide in new housing comes from bricks and mortar. It found that new homes give off 50 tonnes of embedded carbon dioxide, a figure that includes manufacture and transport of materials. Refurbished homes emit 15 tonnes. "New Tricks with Old Bricks" is published by the Empty Homes Agency.

