

# Cockermouth & District Civic Trust Newsletter



President: The Lord Egremont, Chairman: Phil Campbell  
Secretary: John Dent, Treasurer: Elizabeth Silman  
**Issue no 139, August 2018.**

We hope that you have enjoyed this year's spring and summer, but we can now look forward to the autumn and a new season of activities. Please do remember to renew your subscriptions; your membership is important to maintain the size of our voice. Headlines for this newsletter are:

- The forthcoming Heritage Open Days. Please do visit our exhibition on Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> September.
- Brian & Margaret have put together another interesting programme of lectures for 2018/19
- Allerdale BC Development Panel have refused the application for a B&M Development on Low Road
- Following the repairs to Market Place, we have submitted proposals for panels to cover the now defunct uplighters, and have prepared a draft of a new booklet, 'Exploring Market Place'.
- We have submitted a nomination for Cockermouth in the national competition organised by Civic Voice to find the nation's 'favourite conservation area'.
- We now have a Local List & are preparing our next nominations

Please also read our statement on the holding of personal data under the new 'General Data Protection Regulation'.

## Subscription Renewal

The subscription renewal form is enclosed with this newsletter. The subscription rate is unchanged from last year.

## Heritage Open Days

Walking Tour of Cockermouth Conservation Area  
Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> September, 11am, from URC

This walking tour takes you round the historic core of the Cockermouth Conservation Area. The first part covers Main Street, its back lanes and yards and courts that originate in structure from medieval times, although much of what you see is Georgian. We then cross the River Cocker to the 'above bridge' area of town including Kirkgate, St Helens Street & Castlegate, before finishing at our Norman castle. On the way you will see many of the 226 listed buildings in the town.

Photographic Exhibition, Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> September  
10am to 3pm, URC

In 1967, members of the Civic Trust made a photographic record of Cockermouth. 50 years later, Brian Coley took photographs from the same locations. The exhibition presents these comparisons through both a rolling 20 minute presentation and mounted photographic displays. The exhibition will be formally opened by the Town Mayor, David Malloy, at 10.15, & Hospice at Home will be serving refreshments.

The following 2 photographs were taken from broadly the same spot on Low Road and will feature in the exhibition amongst many others.



## Other HODS Activities

Location	Day	Time	Book?
Isel Hall	Thurs 13 <sup>th</sup> Fri 14 <sup>th</sup>	2pm & 3pm 2pm & 3pm	TIC TIC
Wordsworth House	Sat 15 <sup>th</sup>	11am to 5pm	No
Banks Ironmongers	6 <sup>th</sup> , 7 <sup>th</sup> , 8 <sup>th</sup> 13 <sup>th</sup> , 14 <sup>th</sup> , 15 <sup>th</sup>	10am to 3pm	No
Percy House	7 <sup>th</sup> , 8 <sup>th</sup> , 13 <sup>th</sup> , 14 <sup>th</sup> , 15 <sup>th</sup>	10am to 5pm	No

The Castle Tour on Friday 14<sup>th</sup> September is already fully booked.

### **Lecture Programme, 2018/19**

The lecture programme is shown below. All lectures will be on the evening of the first Wednesday of the month at the Friends Meeting House, 7.30pm.

Oct 3 <sup>rd</sup>	Anne Moffatt	Cumbria Blood Bikes
Nov 7 <sup>th</sup>	Susan Allen	On the Road with Dorothy Wordsworth (preceded by AGM)
Dec 5 <sup>th</sup>		Christmas Social
Feb 6 <sup>th</sup>	United Utilities Project Team	West Cumbria Water Supplies Project
Mar 6 <sup>th</sup>	George Cooke	History of Higham Hall & Development of the College
Apr 3 <sup>rd</sup>	Rebecca Neal	Work of the Rivers Trust in the Derwent Catchment Area.

### **General Data Protection Regulation**

On 25th May 2018, a new data protection law, the 'General Data Protection Regulation', came into force with the intention of strengthening data protection for all individuals. Under this legislation, organisations such as Cockerthorn & District Civic Trust have to comply with strict requirements on what they do with personal data.

Members' personal data that we hold is name, address, telephone number, email address and class of membership. This is information that we hold purely for membership administration and circulation of relevant information concerning the Trust. We do not share this information with any third party.

The master membership list is held securely and administered by the Secretary, who copies the list to the Chairman, Treasurer and Membership Secretary when necessary. All of these are Trustees of the Trust. Only details of current members are held and if membership is not renewed these details are erased from the record.

### **England's Favourite Conservation Area.**

Civic Voice is holding a national competition to determine 'England's Favourite Conservation Area'. We are not sure how we will fare against the larger towns & cities and the nation's tourist hot spots, but we decided that we should nominate Cockerthorn. The text that we provided describing our Conservation Area is included below. There were further questions asking why we had nominated it and the community involvement.

*'Cockerthorn is a complex town resulting from over eight centuries of development. The Conservation Area boundary includes both urban and rural environments, with varied characteristics. The central core has*

*densely packed medieval streets and burgage plots, now with mostly Georgian buildings or frontages, which lead up to the Norman castle. To the south there are pockets of Victorian suburbs notable for space and richness of greenery, including the sizeable Harris Park. These areas contrast with the surrounding open fields, meadows and wooded river valleys containing remnants of an industrial past. Moving out from the central core, the rural setting of Cockerthorn on the fringe of the Lake District National Park becomes more visible.*

*Many water using industries have shaped the character of the Conservation Area. Mills, factories and tanneries were built fronting the banks of the Derwent and Cocker. Some of these remain albeit with change of use, generally now residential. Burgage plots have become yards and courts but still maintain the medieval structure. Many show evidence of development during the industrial revolution with the building of factories and worker's cottages.*

*In 1964, Cockerthorn was named by the Council for British Archaeology as one of the 51 'Gem Towns' that they considered to be particularly splendid and precious and should be protected in any planning or redevelopment proposals. A success of the Conservation Area is that, despite pressures, this objective has been maintained and a walk round the 21<sup>st</sup> century town reveals a lasting heritage over the eight centuries, set within the rural landscape that has been the town's lifeblood'.*



We also included 6 photographs in support of the application. These included obvious choices like Main Street, Market Place and Banks Court but also included this one of Jennings Brewery from the Memorial Gardens.

### **Market Place**

The roadway in Market Place has at long last been repaired although there is still work to be done on the section between Cocker Bridge and Castlegate.

As part of the project, the original 46 up-lighters that were installed as part of the original project are to be covered over with metal plates. They have not worked

well and they are expensive to repair or replace. We were invited by County Councillor Rebecca Hanson to propose an appropriate but simple decoration or inscription for each of the plates. We decided on text dating events from Cockermouth's history. The plates are now under construction & examples of what will appear are shown below.

Romans 125 - 410	Market Charter 1221	Castle Siege 1648
John Dalton b.1766	Railway 1847 - 1966	Harris Park Opened 1893

We also decided to write a new booklet, entitled 'Cockermouth, Exploring Market Place'. It will be divided into 4 sections, the history, the buildings, the artwork & mosaics and the new floor plaques.

### Visit to Barnard Castle, Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> June

Our visit to Barnard Castle went well & was well received by all. The only sad thing was that there were not more of us there to enjoy it so we lost money on the trip.



In the morning we had a guided tour round the back streets of the town itself. After free time for lunch, we transferred to Rokeby Park for a guided tour of the country house.



### A Vision for Cockermouth 2018 to 2029

The Cockermouth Vision Group has completed the Vision Document and it has been submitted to Allerdale BC. It can be viewed on our website. The overall vision is that:

*'Cockermouth be maintained & enhanced as a high quality place to live & work through active protection, innovative development & sustainable growth'.*

### Out of Town Development

We were pleased that the Allerdale BC Development Panel rejected the planning permission request for the proposal to build an out of town store for B&M on Low Road. A reminder that we are not opposed to B&M coming to Cockermouth, it is the large out of town store that is our concern for the following reasons:

- The out of town store would present unreasonable competition to the shops in the town centre to the detriment of the town centre
- The site is identified in the Local Plan as a site for industrial development, which would provide more sustainable employment
- The size of the proposed shop is more appropriate to Workington given that Workington is identified in the Local Plan as the Regional Centre.

There is potential for the Developer to appeal, which unfortunately we feel was made more likely by the Development Panel not being as robust as they could have been in their reasons for rejection.

### Trees on St Helen's Street

In the last newsletter, we reported our intention to plant some trees along St Helens Street, on the bank on the left hand side as you approach the road junction near Cockermouth School. Cockermouth Travel, (Paul Cusack), had agreed that they could provide funding for the trees and Cockermouth School indicated that they would help with the planting. We had agreement in principle from Cumbria Council, who own the land, to plant 30 trees around 10 metres apart, 15 rowan and 15 birch. We had hoped to plant in Spring but needed a formal Licence from the Council which was not forthcoming in time. For once, we are glad of the delay because the Spring and Summer drought would have been hazardous for the newly planted trees. We can report that the required Licence has now been issued, (to Allerdale BC), and an autumn planting can go ahead.

### Local Heritage List

We also reported in the last newsletter that the Allerdale Local Heritage List Panel had agreed in principle to 15 of our nominations for the Local Heritage List. These have now been ratified and so we now have a formal Local Heritage List for Allerdale, albeit just covering Cockermouth at the moment. We are currently preparing a further set of nominations, the first set were always just the start of the process. The Panel will only

consider a minimum number of nominations per meeting, so if you are aware of any building or asset that you think deserves the protection of local listing, please let us now so that it can be added to our list to take forward.

### **Castle Visits**

Due to retirements, we could do with more people to lead our castle tours. You don't have to be an expert & training will be given. If you are interested, why not let us know and perhaps you could accompany one of the groups on the Castle tour scheduled as part of Heritage Open Days on Friday 14<sup>th</sup> September.

The twinning with Marvejols has an important anniversary this year and we have been asked to lead some castle tours for up to 80 French visitors as part of the celebrations, on Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> October.

### **Himalayan Balsam**

Himalayan Balsam has rapidly become one of the UK's most widespread invasive weed species, colonising river banks, roadways and urban spaces & gardens, and it successfully competes with native plant species thereby reducing native biodiversity. It dies back in the winter and it can leave river banks bare of vegetation and liable to erosion. We reported in the last newsletter that we hoped to be arranging some 'balsam bashing' in June.

As a Civic Trust, we tackled 2 areas of river bank this summer, the west bank of the River Cocker behind the flood barrier down to Cocker Bridge and the south bank of the River Derwent in the area below Wordsworth House. We were very successful in what we achieved on the day but really repeat visits are needed as younger plants continue to grow. Other groups such as the Wordsworth House Gardeners and the Soroptimists also contributed.



The picture above shows one of the many concentrations of Himalayan Balsam on the River Derwent downstream of Cockermouth. It looks pretty, but it shows how invasive it can be if left to its own devices. We therefore wrote to the Environment Agency to ask what the national and local policy is towards

controlling the spread of the balsam. They made the following points:

1. National focus is on developing a 'biological agent' as the spread of balsam is too far gone to hope to remove it through clearance alone. Current research is on the use of a fungus but clearly this has to be proved to have no unintended affects
2. Current local EA priority is on the up stream areas, such as keeping Borrowdale clear.
3. EA has been more pro-active in the past in working with local groups but funding & staffing reductions has made this more difficult.
4. Ideally you carry out 2 or 3 'bashes' through the season rather than just one, as new stuff will keep coming through.
5. EA are prepared to help us and other local groups with a forward strategy to protect the Cockermouth river banks and to put us in contact with other organisations such as the Rivers Trust.

**Phil Campbell, Chairman**