

CIVIC SOCIETY GREAT YARMOUTH

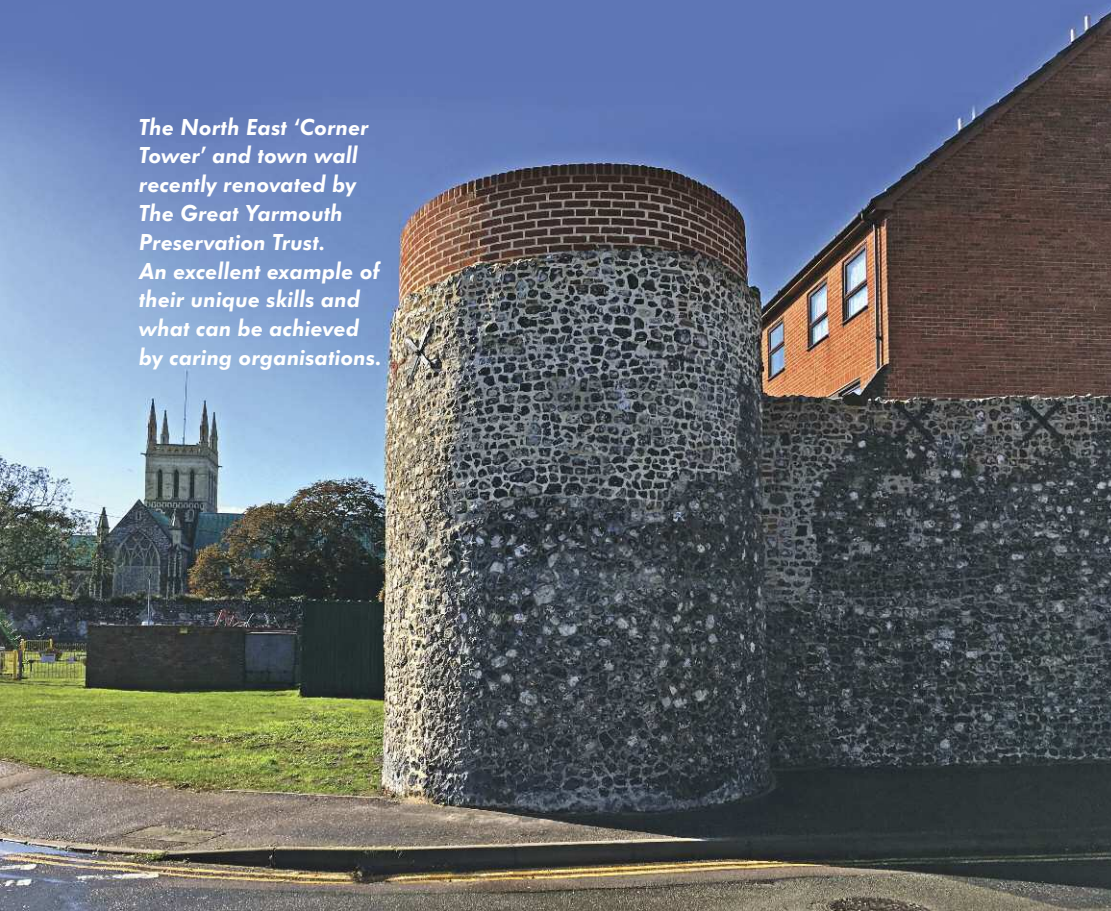


3rd Annual Report
2019~20

www.civicsocietygy.co.uk

"Your Town Needs You"

The North East 'Corner Tower' and town wall recently renovated by The Great Yarmouth Preservation Trust. An excellent example of their unique skills and what can be achieved by caring organisations.





The Covid Pandemic has wrecked havoc on the health, economy and social activities of the country. As a result, all the Society's meetings, visits and other activities have been cancelled. Nevertheless, your committee has been meeting via Zoom and as chair of the Society I was invited to sit on the Town Board which has been working on plans for multi-million pound grants provided by the government and other bodies. We have submitted an application to the Future High Streets Fund for £19.9M for regenerating the town centre and are working on the final stages of an application for £25M from the Town Deal. The purpose of this latter grant is to promote urban regeneration, planning and land use; develop skills and enterprise infrastructure and to improve communications.



Welcome to the third annual report of the Civic Society of Great Yarmouth.

We were due to have a presentation in April about the plans for the Borough by Sheila Oxtoby, Chief Executive Officer of the Borough, and Darren Barker, Culture, Design and Heritage Manager, but this was postponed because of the Covid Pandemic. This will take place on Friday 13 November at 12noon along with the Annual General Meeting.

We are very conscious that in view of the pandemic you may wonder whether it is worthwhile continuing to pay your Society's membership fee.

However, nearly half our members have already done so and I thank them for that. Great Yarmouth has so much potential and there is so much to do. With your support we can make a really big difference to the town. We hope that this report will show you that we are still working very hard behind the scenes on your behalf. I trust you will want to play your part in achieving them and will encourage others to join the Society.

We welcome ideas and suggestions and if you have any motions you would like to put to the AGM please let me have them as soon as possible. We have some vacancies on the Committee and if you would like to stand for election to the committee let me know at: hsturzaker@icloud.com

Best wishes and remain healthy
Hugh Sturzaker

Our aims are to make Great Yarmouth a better place in which to live, and we will preserve, protect, improve and promote the town's cultural heritage with pride.

..... everyone is welcome to join us



Preserve, Protect, Promote with Pride

Email: enquiries@civicsocietygy.co.uk www.civicsocietygy.co.uk



COMMITTEE

We are very honoured to have our High Steward as our President and I am very grateful for the enthusiasm and hard work put in by our committee members.

President	Henry Cator, High Steward of Great Yarmouth,
Chairman:	Hugh Sturzaker, retired surgeon
Secretaries:	Anne Edwards, retired Mercury and Archant Coastal Editor, Rachel Moore, TMS Media
Treasurer:	Michael Muskett, retired accountant and chair of Macmillan Cancer Relief
Membership:	John Burroughs, Ex Mayor of Great Yarmouth and retired publican
Paul Davies:	Retired GP, author and trustee of Great Yarmouth Preservation Trust, etc.
Gemma Manthorpe:	Senior Planning Officer of Great Yarmouth Borough Council
David Marsh:	Leading light in tourism, local businesses and previously non executive director of Local Enterprise Partnership
Ian McCreddie:	Managing Director of SPP Digital, Chair of Enterprise GY, School Governor
Paul Patterson:	Historian and author. Retired from the energy industry and media design.
Graham Plant:	Deputy Leader of Great Yarmouth Borough Council and Norfolk County Council
Bruce Sturrock:	Ex Chairman of Palmers and Town Centre Partnership
Michael Zegerman:	Retired businessman

SPONSORS & GRANTS



We are very grateful for the generosity of the following:

Michael and June Fuller £500

East Coast College £100

East Norfolk Six Form College for hosting our Zoom meetings

TMS Media for maintaining our Website

SPP Digital for printing window stickers for the finalists in the Awards scheme

Sainsbury's donated many packets of seeds and bulbs

Pat Howe for making a Christmas Tree in the form of a helter skelter for the Christmas Tree Festival in the Minster.

Prom and Pier Hotels for their support advertisement.

Paul Patterson for designing and producing the Annual Report and producing certificates for the award winners

Promotion

TMS Media maintains our website free of charge and Anne Edwards looks after our social media. She will be working with two apprentices at East Norfolk Six Form College to further promote the Society. We had hoped to have a monthly column in the Great Yarmouth Mercury but we are still awaiting the go ahead on this.

Word of mouth is still the best means of promotion and we hope members will talk to their friends and colleagues about what the Society is doing and encourage them to become members.



Some very exciting plans are being developed for the Borough by the Town Board and, as your representative, our chairman sits on the Board. We are hoping for grants from two government funded schemes.



The £3.6 million facelift plan for the market

The Future High Streets Fund which is helping Town Centres to evolve with better transport and replacement of many empty retail units with housing and businesses. An application for £19.9M has been submitted. Also included in this application are plans for a Library and Learning Centre, a new covered market, building of homes on the Conge, a Heritage Centre etc.

The Town Deal has 3 strands: Urban Regeneration, planning and land use; Skills and enterprise infrastructure and connectivity. The application for £25M will be submitted in October.

If successful the grants will be supported by other funds for the development the new covered market, a new library and learning centre in the Market Place, a Heritage Centre, the new Marina Leisure Centre, building of new homes on the Conge, the redevelopment of North Quay for housing and other uses, the purchase of buildings in the town centre for turning into housing, development of start up business areas near the port, moving of bus station, development of a winter programme of activities to extend the tourist season and this will include illumination of some of the heritage buildings.

High Streets Heritage Action Zone Grant

£2.4M will turn empty and underused buildings into creative spaces, offices, retail outlets and housing to support wider regeneration. Great Yarmouth was one of 69 towns and cities which successfully bid for funding. Part of this funding will go to building of affordable housing in keeping with the present Rows houses overlooking King Street Carpark.



The Great Yarmouth Preservation Trust has already received a grant from The Heritage Action Zone to refurbish ancient buildings in the town including 160 King Street which was a former Thai Restaurant, third building from the right.

Norfolk Strategic Fund. £6.75 Fund provided by government to help the county recover from the Covid Pandemic. GYBC has made 4 applications: Feasibility study to move the bus station, grant for education and skills centre in town centre, money for local cycling and walking infrastructure plan, grant for winter activities programme to encourage people to come into the town centre. The Society has been asked to coordinate an Arts Trail in Great Yarmouth during January and February and we would like to have a similar one in Gorleston.



CULTURE, HERITAGE AND TOURISM STRATEGY.

For over a year a group of us has been developing a strategy to promote Tourism in the Borough and this has now been adopted by the Council. For nearly two centuries the main selling points to tourists have been the sea, beaches and associated entertainments. We want to encourage visitors to come throughout the year by giving more publicity to our great heritage, our increasing cultural activities and easy access to the Broads and all that they contain. Tourism is worth over £635M annually to the Borough and 36% of employment is associated with the tourist industry. 7.6million people visit Great Yarmouth annually and one million of those stay for more than a day.

If we are going to attract more people here then it is vital that we continue with the Society's plans to clean up, green up and light up the town.

Conservation Audit

Conservation areas are places that have been designated as being of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. There are seven such areas in the Town, three of which are at risk: King Street, Market Place and part of the Seafront. In association with Darren Barker, Chief Conservation Officer and Azalia Sarkisyan a small group has carried out audits of these areas. The results are being collated nationally through Civic Voice (Umbrella organisation for Civic Societies). The group is concerned about the state of many of the properties in the conservation areas and has suggested that guidelines should be drawn up to produce minimal standards and this is being taken up by the Conservation Department.



Gillian Harwood FRSA

Gillian Harwood's career spans over 40 years. She was a pioneer of her time in the late 1970's when she undertook the mammoth task of converting an abandoned Victorian bus factory, restoring and transforming it with flair and imagination into a successful business hub for small

businesses; one of the first of its kind.

Gillian gave the society, via Zoom, an excellent talk about her brave fight to save and restore old buildings, rather than allow councils to tear down and replace with cheap housing. Having acquired St. John's Head, the public house on North Quay, it has now reopened as the Fourth Portal, a bar and a cafe. Gillian mentioned how the town still has both a hidden magic and many wonderful old buildings, which are in need of preserving. The future of the old Priory was discussed at the meeting, with the unanimous agreement that it should be saved and possibly be bought. (continued page 8).



Most people come to Great Yarmouth by car, bus or train and it is most important that these entrances are inspiring and well looked after. Sadly, this is not the case at present. However, after over nearly two years of discussions with Highways England, the Borough Council and Brandon Lewis MP work was commenced at the end of August to improve the A47 between Gorleston and Great Yarmouth by cutting back the trees and weeding the gutters and verges.

However, more work still needs to be done. Although the area outside the railway station has been improved the appearance of the interior of the station is dire and discussions are proceeding about how this can be improved. Similarly, the bus station is dark and uninviting and the Council has imaginative plans about how this could be rectified.



The dismal area of the Market Gates Bus Station

A47 between Gorleston and Great Yarmouth.

The hold up at the Gapton Hall roundabout continues. Hopefully this will improve with the opening of the third river crossing for traffic going northwards but delays on traffic travelling southwards is getting worse. We are hoping to have meeting about the new bridge in the new year and this could be an item for discussion.



Brandon Lewis MP



Gapton Hall Roundabout

The Silver Darling Statue?



The Silver Darling Herring Statue

Last year the Society backed Paul Patterson's plans for the "Herring of the East". Since that time Patterson has remodelled his design by giving it greater definition, representing the herrings main features, as some thought the original design was too simplistic.

Positioning the structure on Vauxhall roundabout (if allowed) would be a huge statement for visitors entering the town and seen strategically as a landmark to be seen at a far off distance and at night by its illuminated eye. Failing permission to position the statue at the entrance of Yarmouth there is perhaps the possibility of placing the statue in the market place? The structure would be made from either stainless steel or aluminim, illuminated with small LED solar powered lights, the eye as a bright beacon.



Impression of the Silver Herring Statue in the market place. Could this be an adornment for the new planned Market Design?





Saint Georges Theatre area

St. Georges Theatre

Working with students at East Coast College planters were designed to be placed around St. George's Theatre. Unfortunately, just when the students were about to start construction the College was closed due to the pandemic. We hope this work can be resumed this coming term, however planters around St. George's Plaza have been planted with Sedums. Many hundreds of bulbs donated by Sainsbury's have been planted around the town by Society members and several flower beds have been created especially near the Blackfriars section the Town Wall.

The Benedictine Priory

The future of the old Priory was discussed at a Civic Society Zoom meeting with guest speaker Gillian Harwood.

The Society felt that there could be a possibility to purchase the building, which would be discussed at a later meeting.

The Grade-1 listed Priory Centre is reckoned in the top 5pc of listed buildings in the UK and is up for sale for the same price as a three bed semi in Great Yarmouth. Founded as a Benedictine priory in 1101, the building was enlarged in 1260 and the hall was rebuilt in 1300. It was home to 15 monks until it was dissolved in 1539, and played host to King Richard II in 1382. It was significantly refurbished in 1978, and again at the turn of the millennium.



The Benedictine Priory



Great Yarmouth's Victorian era of South Quay adorned with trees



Trains running along South Quay

Trees on South Quay:

We were very keen to have trees planted along South Quay and arranged for the Borough Council to carry out a soil analysis as trees previously planted there had died. Unfortunately this showed that the ground was so heavily contaminated with heavy metals that trees would not survive there. Presumably the contamination resulted from the trains that used to run along South Quay.

Tree audit of town.

In view of the disappointing soil analysis results on South Quay a small group of Society members accompanied by Graeme Watson, Assistant Grounds Manager and Arboricultural Officer, walked around the town on 4 March making suggestions of where trees could be planted. We hope that this will be the basis for increasing the number of trees in the town and we are working with the Great Yarmouth Preservation Trust to that end.

Last year we praised the design of the new Fullers Hill roundabout by Norfolk County Council but were critical of the fact that there were no plans to water the trees. As a result many of them are now dying. This is a shameless waste of public money.



Litter is a big problem in some areas of the town and we have had three positive meetings with Penny Carpenter, chair of the GYBC Environment Committee, to discuss this and other issues. At the last meeting we met Chris Silverwood, Director of Operational Services of the Executive Leadership Team.



Aerial view of South East Tower and Black Friars area. Society volunteers spent many hours cleaning up this area removing brambles, nettles and litter.

In recent weeks a focus group has been working to clear rubbish and weeds from certain areas in the town and the finance for this from Norfolk County Council will be continued until the end of October. This mirrors the work that has been done voluntarily by some of our members and examples of this are shown below. Anyone wishing to join us may do so on Fridays at 10.30am behind Skipplings Art Gallery on King Street.



Society members Ann Hacon and Angela Powley having a well earned break. Flower beds along the Blackfriars section of the town wall and near the Sainsbury's carpark have been maintained with new ones created around Blackfriars. Hundreds of bulbs have been planted around the Borough which were donated by Sainsbury's.

We were pleased to learn that the Council has purchased an electric sweeper and a vacuum cleaner for dealing with litter and dirt in the gutters and other areas and these should produce dramatic results. The Council is trialling some new refuse bins and machines for removing chewing gum. We feel that if areas are kept clean and litter-free then people are less likely to drop litter. It would help if owners of businesses and houses would be responsible for cleaning the area in front of their properties including the gutters. We are setting up a meeting of individuals and representatives of various organisations to see how best to tackle the litter problem. Many pavements are uneven and are made worse by utility companies digging them up. We feel that there should be a strategy to have decent pavement surfaces and that utility companies should be responsible for returning them to their proper state.



Kings Street's uneven paved area, dangerous?
The many repairs and service lids to the paved area in King Street has become a mishmash of surfaces, sizes and uneven heights. This adds difficulty for people with walking difficulties and the blind.

Other issues we discussed with Penny and Chris were:

- Stencilling yellow fish near drains to remind people the harm done to fish and other animals by dropping litter which ends up in the rivers and sea.
- Provision of free water fountains in the town to discourage the number of single use plastic bottles.
- Developing an educational garden by the playground opposite the Time and Tide Museum which would be overseen by members of the Civic Society.
- The need to kill weeds around buildings and kerbs rather than cutting them down. This will prevent them regrowing.
- GYBC to declare a Climate Emergency to focus its aims on becoming carbon neutral and reducing global warming.
- The council now has a policy whereby litter is removed from an area before the grass is cut. This prevents the litter being cut up into tiny pieces which take far longer to be removed.
- The council should aim to become the cleanest seaside resort.



After a tidy up, the inner wall at Black Friars is once again adorned with flowing plants.



Penny Carpenter



The fight against constant littering



Above: Paul Patterson's impression of Shave's Tower and New Gate.
Rebuilding any of the gates is a challenge, however the reward would create a national interest.

Secretly tucked behind the old Nurses Home, now converted into flats, is one of Great Yarmouth's hidden gems. The feasibility has been discussed many times with the hope that at least one gate could be rebuilt to recreate an important period of the town's history. There are several gates that could be reinstated without causing major upheaval; Pudding Gate, St.Nicholas Gate and Market Gate, but there is one gate that is viable for repair and possible to revive it to its former glory. Shave's Tower, once had a small gate connected to it. The spacious paved area south of the tower also allows for the gate to be rebuilt and reconnected to the tower, as it was in the late 16th century. This would add even more beauty and medieval interest to this already improved area of the town.

Shave's Tower that once guarded the centre of the town wall is now rarely seen. Like many other towers it has become partly merged into another building. The top section has been removed, however much of it remains and compared to all the towers it has the most decorative squinch arch, adorned with alternating brick, flint and small decorative cuts.



South side of Shave's Tower, which would need to be disentangled from the modern brickwork building.



Aerial view of Deneside, illustrating the spacious area for the possibility of New Gate to be re-erected.

SIDE ELEVATION



END ELEVATION



Illustration above reveals the plan and finished appearance of the repair of Shave's Tower and reconstruction of the New Gate



North side of Shave's Tower, as seen from behind the Nurses Home.
Right of tower shows the squinch arch.

History of Shave's Tower and New Gate:

A gate was added to Shave's Tower circa 1590. This became necessary after a central gate was removed (possibly called Middle Gate) after it was planned to install a vantage mount up against the wall. The Mount was badly constructed and consequently pushed this section of the wall over. In 1588 Queen Elizabeth sent her trusted officer Thomas Leighton to oversee a new mount, which later also included the Ravelin. With the town's middle gate now removed it was decided to reinstall a new one further north, against Shave's Tower, hence its name 'New Gate'.

A 21 foot (6.5m) section of wall was cut out on the south side of Shaves Tower for the installation of a new gate. Over time the gate also became known as Mount Gate from the adjoining mount; and after the erection of St. George's Chapel, now St.Georges Theatre, it was called Chapel Gate or St.George's Gate. The gate was removed from Shave's Tower in 1776, and in 1789 the opening was further enlarged by the space of six feet. 1840 July 16th the Council decided to level the mount area for the installation of a new Hospital. Source :The Great Wall of Yarmouth.



The Elizabethan map depicting how New Gate and Shave's Tower appeared in 1588



2019 September 3rd

The Organ and Organists of St. Nicholas Church (The Minster). Andrew Hayden, Organist and Choirmaster at Thorpe St. Andrew, Norwich

September 10th

Guided tour of St. John's church, Lancaster Road, by Dr. Paul Davies

October 7th

My vision for Great Yarmouth. Carl Smith, Leader of Great Yarmouth Borough Council

November 26th

Harbour Radio and Views about Great Yarmouth. Nevv Moore, Founder of Harbour Radio.

2020 January 7th

My role as editor and my views on Great Yarmouth. Andrew Fitchett, Coastal Editor and Editor of the Mercury

February 25th

Reflections on my year as High Sheriff. Lady Agnew, High Sheriff of Norfolk.

Regional Meeting of Civic Societies in

Colchester. Held on 5th October 2019

John Hughes and Hugh Sturzaker attended from Great Yarmouth. There were two representatives from Norwich and one each from March, Ipswich and Hunstanton. 6 from Colchester. Colchester has visits but no lectures as these are covered by the Friends of Colchester. They have monthly coffee morning/discussion groups. They have an Eyes and Ears Group which reports on graffiti, potholes, dead trees etc. Norwich publishes 'Aspects of Norwich' which is free to members but retails at £5. After the meeting there was a conducted tour of parts of old Colchester.

These meetings are very useful for exchanging information and learning from each other. March in Cambridgeshire was to be the venue of the next meeting but was postponed because of the pandemic.

Postponed events

Various planned talks and visits did not take place because of the Pandemic. For the same reason awards for shops and businesses in the town did not happen, nor did the Mediaeval Faire, planned for August.

Future Meetings - These will be held via Zoom

Monday 19 October at 12 noon. "Believe in Yarmouth: Catch the Tide"

by Gillian Harwood, FRSA who has devoted her life to large successful businesses that transform localities. In the last three years she has started to do the same in Great Yarmouth.

Friday 13 November at 12noon The AGM of the Society which will be followed by a presentation by Sheila Oxtoby, Chief Executive of GYBC, and Darren Barker, GYBC Culture Heritage and Design Manager and Project Manager of the Great Yarmouth Preservation Trust. Subject: **The Regeneration of the Town.**



The Organ and Organists of St. Nicholas Church (The Minster)



Colchester Town Centre



The following are our priorities:

- **Roundabouts.** Work with the Borough Council, Norfolk County Council and Highways England to improve their appearance. Install a prominent sculpture on Vauxhall roundabout designed by Paul Patterson. (Photo) Treat the weeds along the A47 effectively and clear the litter.
- **Litter** Encourage people and businesses to look after the area in front of their properties.
- **Pavements.** Work with the Council and Norfolk County Council to develop decent pavement surfaces which are well maintained and that utility services which dig them up are responsible for returning them to how they were.
- **Attracting Youngsters.** Work with Schools and Colleges to encourage students to get involved with our various projects
- **Motivating Communities.** Work with community workers and the community to develop civic pride.
- **Greening up the town.** Work with GYBC, GY Preservation Trust, Great Yarmouth in Bloom and other organisations to green up the town and increase the number of trees in the Borough.
- **Lighting up the town.** Work to achieve illumination of all heritage sites, the town wall and all the bridges leading into the town. Make sure the Rows are properly illuminated. Some of this will be happening this winter.
- **Town Centre Master Plan.** Work with the Town Board and the Council on the development of this plan.
- **Awards.** Make annual awards to encourage shops, businesses and individuals to take pride in their properties.
- **Conservation Audit** Follow up on the recommendations of our audit, to have proper illumination of the Rows and to have minimal standards for all properties in the conservation areas.
- **Planning Applications.** Review planning applications and make our views known to the Council. Ensure that the Council revokes licences where Homes of Multiple Occupancy are not kept up to standard.
- **Tourist Information Centre** Continue to press for the establishment of a Tourist Information Centre in the Town Centre. Hopefully this will be in the new Heritage Centre.
- **Rebuild New Gate.** This will enable people to see what one of the town wall gates looked like, the construction will be educational for school children and will help to bring the community together.
- **Hanseatic League.** Work with other New Hanse towns to encourage visitors to the town
- **Grants.** Apply for grants to help us achieve our goals
- **Membership.** Continue to increase membership. Encourage each member to get at least two members to join.
- **Arts Trails.** Work with local art societies and other groups to arrange an Arts Trail in Great Yarmouth and Gorleston to attract visitors in January and February.

Conclusions

From the enthusiasm shown at meetings and visits it is clear that all members feel passionately about the town. This report shows what we have achieved and what are our plans for the future. We are most grateful to all members for their support and together we will show that we can make a difference. Please encourage new members to join and let us have your ideas and suggestions.





Proud members of the
Great Yarmouth Civic Society

Scott fine Norfolk hotels
on the sunrise coast