

# SPALDING & DISTRICT CIVIC SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

November 2018

## FROM THE CHAIRMAN

I WAS DELIGHTED to see recently in the national *Guardian* (not the *Spalding Guardian*) the headline 'COUNCILS TAKE INITIATIVE AND LOOK BEYOND SHOPPING', and the report that followed described the steps that some small towns are taking. As I indicated in our last Newsletter, for town centres to thrive they need to provide more than just retail outlets, as much shopping these days is done online. In the inspirational article above I searched in vain for any reference to South Holland. I realise of course that not everybody is a *Guardian* reader, but I hope this article about urban regeneration may have come the way of some of our councillors, as it has ideas that might be well worth exploring.

There are certainly things that I *am* grateful for here, like the South Holland Centre and Ayscoughfee Museum and Gardens and the weekly rubbish collections. (As a Yorkshireman who doesn't like waste, and in response to the Council's excellent service, I put out my black and green sacks only when they are completely full.)

It is now less than six months until the next District Council elections! Councillors standing for re-election will be called to account over what they have and haven't achieved for us. The Society's vision for a town centre that people will want to visit

for its sheer attractiveness as a place to meet and spend some time in (and some money too), enhanced by public art works in welcoming public spaces, does not seem to have much official support, whereas Boston has attracted generous funding for the enhancement of its centre because initiative has been shown. Is there a message here?

However, at this point, in view of her retirement as 'Spalding in Bloom' leader, I would like to single out from amongst others Councillor Angela Newton for all that she and her team have achieved in beautifying our town with floral displays. Not to mention the gold awards which these efforts have rightly won. She and her team have made an outstanding contribution to the attractiveness of Spalding town centre, and we would like to express publicly our gratitude for her work. I also have memories of her turning out on her bicycle many years ago to ride around Spalding with PEDALS to look at trouble spots for cyclists; and her commitment to so many causes has been much appreciated.

I look forward to hearing about other positive contributions that have been made by Spalding's district councillors. Let's be positive!

**David Jones**

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## AT THEN THERE WAS ONE

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AT FIRST THERE WERE FOUR – incongruous wooden bollards, mysteriously appearing in Hall Place, rural, and quite out-of-keeping with the urban cast iron and stainless steel ones elsewhere in the town centre. Two on each side of the road where the tactile paving invites partially-sighted and disabled people to cross. Given the incongruity and the hazard they seemed to be presenting to the above, we tried to find out their purpose from the LCC Highways Department.

The idea, they said, was to stop delivery vans parking on the pavement, making the block paving uneven and creating a hazard for partially-sighted and disabled people. (It was difficult to see the logic of dealing with one hazard by creating another.)

There was no noticeable reduction in pavement parking on the Superdrug side; and some weeks later two of the bollards were demolished in quick succession, splintered off at the base. A third has now gone the same way. One remains. None has been replaced.

In short, it seems, a sad story of penny-pinching and lack of any real analysis of the problem – if problem there was. There's far worse uneven block paving in the centre than outside Ladbroke's.





**How Well Do You Know Spalding ?**  
Answers on Page 5

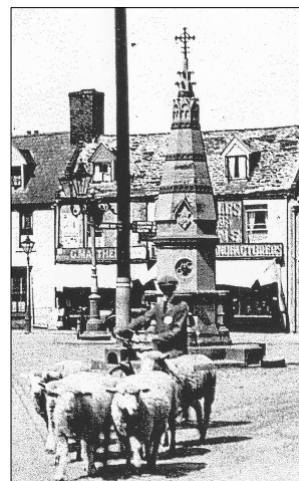


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## JOHNSON FOUNTAIN

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WHERE'S IT GOING TO GO? The general consensus seems to be strongly in favour of somewhere in the town centre. After all, that's where it was designed for – originally in the Market Place, then revised to Hall Place. As well as providing pure drinking water at a time when it was a luxury for many people in the town, it strengthened the distinctive character of Hall Place by giving it a striking central focus. That is, until it was removed to Ayscoughfee Gardens in 1954 to make way for a traffic scheme.



Our latest information is that a recommendation on the fountain's re-siting will figure in a wider review of the town centre. This will be carried out by a working group which Policy 25 of the new *Local Plan* requires to be set up to support the enhancement of the town centre.

Meanwhile, Council Chairman Rodney Grocock has spoken warmly of wishing to see the fountain back in the centre. At the District Council's AGM in May this year he said: "It is my ambition to seek to reinstate the Drinking Fountain within Spalding town centre. I am, however, keen to ensure that this happens in conjunction with a wider consideration of town centre improvements. I am also unsure that reinstatement within Hall Place is necessarily the most appropriate location given the changes that have taken place to the town over the past century and more." After referring to Policy 25, he went on: "I would hope the councillors would support me in proposing that officers embrace the opportunity, when implementing this new policy and considering the public realm within Spalding, to reintroduce the Drinking Fountain to a prime location in the heart of the town centre." (Council AGM Minutes, 16 May 2018.)

Councillor Grocock has the Society's warmest support.

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## PLANNING MATTERS

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AMONGST THE ROUTINE APPLICATIONS for house extensions and conservatories, three applications have stood out since the last Newsletter.

We are pleased to see that lifts are to be installed at Spalding railway station, so that disabled passengers can make full use of all train services regardless of which platform they arrive at.

A new building was proposed for the long-vacant plot on the corner of Station Street and the Sheep Market. We objected to it, however, as the five-storey block would have been far too big and out of character with most of the surrounding buildings. The fact that it would have served to obscure a view of the Telephone Exchange was in our view an insufficient argument. When the application came before the Planning Committee, opinions ranged from "It matches the BT building for sheer hideousness" and "looks like people [will be] living behind prison bars" to "I straightway liked this ... it [will make] a grot spot a nice place to live." The plans were finally refused, but it was a close-run thing: 7-6.

We also objected to the proposed residential development of the Fitness Centre in Spring Gardens. The development would be too large [Page 5 ►



## WHY DON'T WE ?

IT WAS EARLY EVENING and quiet. Our path through the nature reserve took us 3km along the shore line then back through the trees. It had been a perfect summer's day. Earlier the trails and picnic tables would have been full of family groups from the popular holiday spot not far away. **Yet we found not a single piece of litter in the whole of our walk.** And there were no litter bins either!

What was the secret, I wondered. Education, no doubt, and different social mores – for this was not England. But maybe it was also that striking collection of rubbish on the tables at the entrance – most of it plastic, from tangled fishing-nets to bottle crates to the extraordinary garland of babies' dummies (*lower left above*). That, and the slyly humorous invitation.

I half hoped I'd return with a couple of crisp packet treasures or a Coke can to add to the bizarre "exhibition" or, better still, something even more way-out than the computer monitor. And couldn't it lend itself to a treasure-hunt game for a family with young children? (An extra one or two from the Haribo bag for whoever finds the most or the most unusual pieces of litter?)

And there all the stuff was, gathered together in one place by the visitors themselves. No need for a warden trundling round to empty obtrusive bins into a cart, no need for a monthly volunteer clean-up.

The more I thought about it, the more astute the approach seemed. It was evidently successful. More so, it would seem, than the usual admonitions and fierce threats of fines. It wouldn't work in a town centre or a built-up area, of course, but the Coronation Channel ... Bourne Woods ... ? Why don't we ... ?

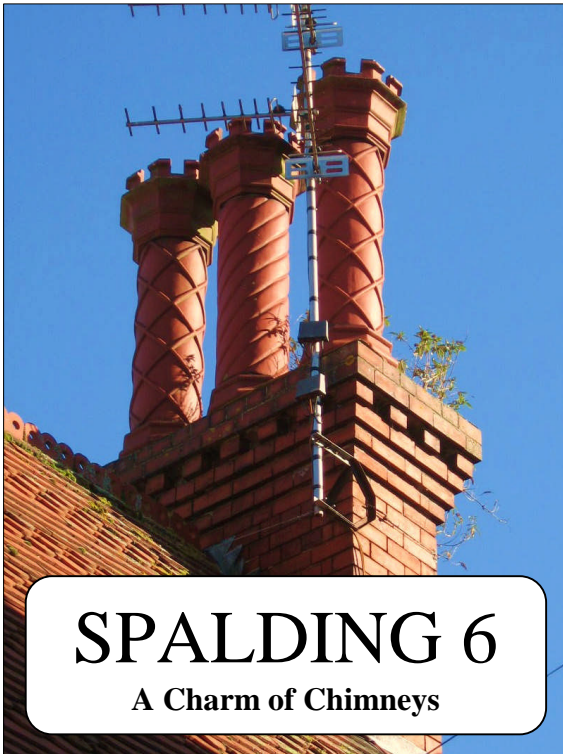
(Confession. It's not quite true that we found no litter at all on the walk. We found the cap of a toothpaste tube and two toffee papers. In 3km.)



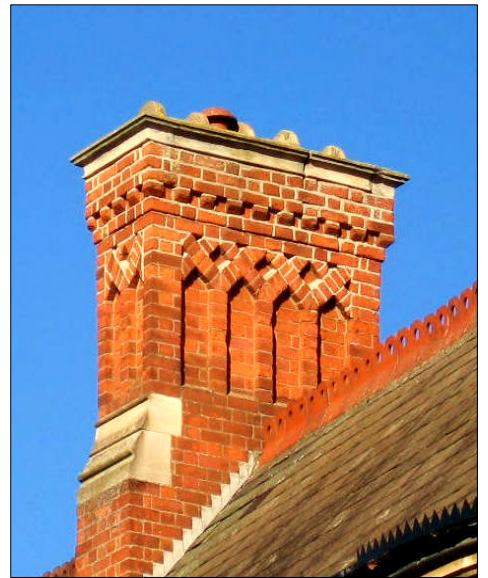
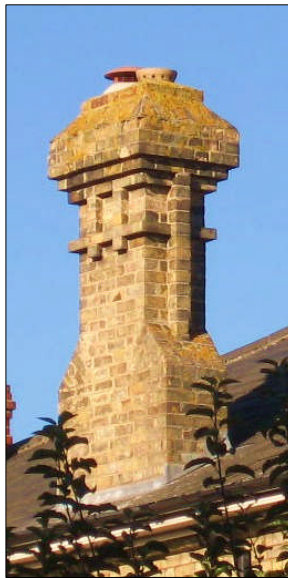
Part way along there were the remains of a ship driven ashore and wrecked in a late nineteenth-century gale, all blackened ribs and timbers – an invitation to any ordinary clambering youngster. But not fenced off in any way. Just a notice tied to a tree, with a simple message. *'Do not climb on Swiks, for your own safety and for the preservation of her.'*

Contrast the pipeline across the Weland with its recent spiked industrial palisading, at once both defensive and hostile. Anglian Water admits there have been no incidents there in the last 60 years or more. But, as a former county councillor remarked after the palisading had gone up: "If I were a teenager or a young man, I'd regard that as a challenge." And I wondered if an approach more like that to the wrecked 'Swiks' might not in the end be more effective: much cheaper, no ugly intrusion, no challenge, but showing a respect for people's ordinary good sense – even teenagers and young men. **John Charlesworth**





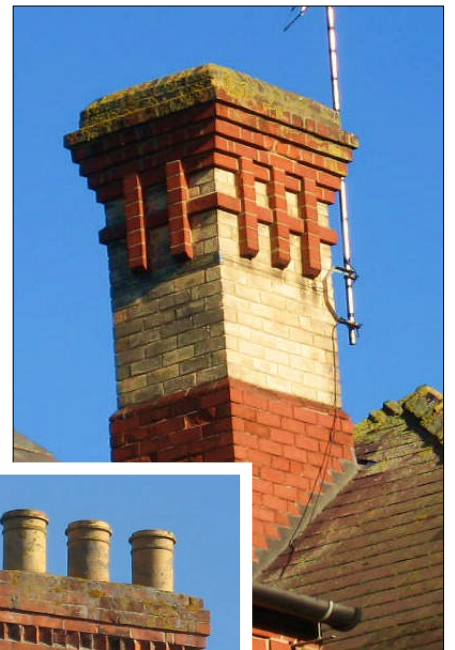
**SPALDING 6**  
**A Charm of Chimneys**



**SPALDING** has a wealth of interesting chimneys – particularly in what has been called “the town’s first housing estate”, developed during late Victorian and Edwardian years to the west of the centre. If only we looked up from our smart phones or litter-strewn pavements.....

The three chimneys above were clearly architect-designed, prestige features signalling the wealth or local importance of the new building’s owners. But the rest? They’re mostly on quite modest villas or humble terraces. It would be interesting to know if they if they’d been individually designed or been copied from pattern books or were the product of the ordinary working brick-layer being given free rein to exercise not just his skill with mortar and trowel but scope for his creative artistry too. If the last, then the pride and pleasure he must have felt in his work speaks loud and clear still after a hundred years.

Will our 2018 rooftop features be being admired a hundred years hence? [*Bottom right.*] Will they even still be there?





The return of our popular

# SLIDE QUIZ

HOW WELL DO YOU KNOW SPALDING?

**Get your friends and relatives to join you in a team (4).  
Or just come along and join in the fun anyway.**

**Tuesday, 5 February, 7.30 £1 Catholic Church Hall, St.Thomas's Rd.**

Answers to P.2 pictures, from the top:- White Hart, Market Place; **Johnson Hospital, Priory Road**; Hole in the Wall Pub; **Telephone Exchange**; New Horizon and New Look, Market Place.

## The Hiring – Overview November 2018

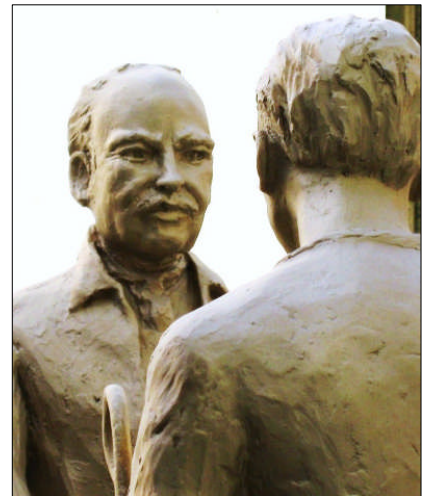
ONCE UPON A TIME there was a farm labourer, looking to seal his employment by a Lincolnshire farmer with the shake of hands, as depicted in a beautiful bronze sculpture to be sited on the very spot of the traditional May hiring fair in Spalding.

And the story continued, but became a complicated one, involving permissions, licences, approvals, utilities here and not there, and the uprooting of a finger post to be re-planted in a planter. But the struggle to raise the funding for the purchase of the stone plinth and the installation to make it happen during times of austerity proved the biggest challenge.

But the good news is that all these complications are now behind us, the funding has been found and a contractor has been commissioned to undertake the installation of the plinth and bronze sculpture by Laury Dizengremel, to be unveiled in Spring 2019.

This is not the end of the tale of the Spalding Trail, however. It is the beginning. The small, determined Civic Society subcommittee are turning their attention to the next commissions celebrating the town's agricultural heritage.

“Once Spalding really was a market town, with sheep in the Sheep Market, cattle in New Road, pigs off Red Lion Street, horses on Pinchbeck Road, and poultry replaced by the Heron Frozen Foods Store.” The Market Art Project aims to see them back – as further works of public art.



**Nick Jones**

[Editor: *Nick Jones is the Programme Director of Transported Arts; and is far too modest. Without Transported's warm commitment and the substantial Arts Council funding that that brought with it, the long-dreamed project would never have got off the ground. Not to mention Nick's own invaluable know-how and know-who.*]

◀ Page 2] and the wall on the east side would be relatively windowless and would by its nature and presence place restrictions on any developer of the adjacent ex-Sorting Office site. As with the unsatisfactory block of flats approved for Draper's Place, we regard it as essential that adjacent development sites be regarded as a whole. It again underlines the need for development briefs for key vacant sites – the Bull and Monkey is another that springs to mind – something the authority is strangely reluctant to do.

We are also not the only objectors to comment that the proposed building would prevent the Sessions House from being visible from Spring Gardens. In a town where even a building as large and significant as the Parish Church is visible from relatively few angles, the visibility of key buildings may be of particular importance in the townscape, as both the existing and proposed local plans recognise.

It is expected that the new *South East Lincolnshire Local Plan* will be adopted this next month.

**Planning Sub-Committee**

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## SOCIETY NOTES

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### Apologies

..... for the extreme lateness of the Newsletter, but the editor went down with an infection in late summer, which has taken a good deal longer to clear up than it ought to have done, and which was followed by the onset of a further succession of health upsets. At which point the technology decided to join in! His printer packed up and had to be replaced, then the laptop was reluctant to cooperate with the new printer and shortly afterwards simply went dead. However, with both editor and technology now restored to working order – touch wood – November finally enabled a start to be made on the October Newsletter. Apologies again all round.

### Don't Be Shy

Members may have noticed that our town centre Postman Pats had stopped discarding their rubber bands all over the pavements a few months ago. Also that the silly-stringed obscene graffiti in the Hole-in-the-Wall Passage had been removed – albeit weeks after they'd appeared on Pumpkin Parade evening.

These two small improvements in the street scene were the result of just one of the Society's members writing to the local Royal Mail manager and to the CEO of the business concerned. As individuals we *can* make a difference. Don't be shy of writing to the top. It only takes a few minutes.

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- Thanks to Robert West for the 'Chimneys' idea.
- Do take the opportunity over Christmas get-togethers to get your team(4) together for our slide quiz in February. Past ones have been great fun.

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## MUCH APPRECIATED

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### Mainly Shops

- **LCC Highways** for repainting the flaking Hall Place planters.
- **Charmed Interiors** for taking over the large empty premises in Bridge Street. Spalding is well supplied now with household furnishings and textiles – goods you won't find at Springfields.
- **Shops in the town** for their Halloween window displays, more generally stylish and imaginative than previously.
- **Woodgreen Animal Charity** in Swan Walk for its bowl of drinking water for the dogs-about-town.

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## SHOP WATCH

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- Pumpkins: Sainsbury's **£2.** (Market, same day, same size: **£1.**)
- 20-pack autumn and winter pansies: Baytree **£5.99.** (Birchgrove: **£4.99.**)

- *"The ENGLISH Tableware Company....* Artisan is hand-crafted look and feel range of kitchen and tabletop items. Using the beautiful countryside as inspiration, we use natural forms and illustrations as inspiration.... The wood-cut effect illustrations and artisan ceramic will give an earthy natural look to your home. *Made in China."*



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### SPALDING AND DISTRICT CIVIC SOCIETY

I enclose a cheque for:-  £8 for individual membership;  £12 for 2 persons in the same household;  
 Free if in full-time education;  Details of a standing order mandate.

Name.....

Address.....

Post Code..... Telephone..... E-mail.....

Please send to: Melvyn Price (Hon.Treasurer), 34 Avebury Gardens, Spalding, Lincolnshire, PE11 2EN.

**Chairman:** David Jones, 19 Ladywood Road, Spalding, Lincolnshire, PE11 2DA.

**Secretary:** Marian Boxall, 78A Edinburgh Drive, Spalding, Lincolnshire, PE11 2RT.

**Treasurer:** Melvyn Price, 34 Avebury Gardens, Spalding, Lincolnshire, PE11 2EN.

**Newsletter:** John Charlesworth, 37 Regent Street, Spalding, Lincolnshire, PE11 2YN.

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01775 766145

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