



YORKSHIRE & HUMBER
Association of Civic Societies

Member of



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SOCIETY INSIGHT

**"MEASURING
SUCCESS"**

MEASURING SUCCESS



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As I travel around the region (and even further afield) giving talks about the civic society movement, I always stress the importance of the work that civic societies do.

When I give talks about the work of my own society – Wakefield Civic Society – I talk about it in glowing terms as one of the most successful civic societies in the country! Now, that might sound boastful and you may or may not agree with it, but it's something I believe to be true. But what do we mean when we talk about successful civic societies? What makes them successful and is it possible to measure their success objectively?

One of the advantages of being on the YHACS committee is that I do get to visit other civic societies and, over the years, I may well have met people from just about all our member societies as well as others from outside the region. Wherever I go, though, there's always one question that gets asked: "How many members do you have?" To be fair, I'm as likely to ask it of you as you are to ask it of me about Wakefield Civic Society. Our fascination with membership numbers does suggest that, rightly or wrongly, size is seen as one of the key markers for success – the bigger the society's membership, the more successful it must be.

But is that the best measure of success and, if we are to use membership numbers as a measure of success, should we put it into context by comparing the membership numbers with total population? As an example, Wakefield Civic Society has a membership of around 250, which is very reasonable, but the city has a resident population of around 80,000 so, in broad terms, our membership represents just 0.3% of the population. Meanwhile, Addingham Civic Society has around 360 members, which is very impressive for a village and, with a resident

population of 3,800, it means that nearly 10% of the population are members of the society. Leeds Civic Trust has a membership of 485 out of a population of 450,000, so the membership amounts a little over 0.1% of the population. On this basis, Leeds, which looks the biggest of the three at first glance, is less successful than Wakefield, but Wakefield is less successful than Addingham. Yes, in percentage terms, Addingham is the most successful of the three societies.

But before we award that trophy, what happens if we use a different metric?

What if we don't use membership numbers, but instead look at overall annual income: in 2016, Leeds had an income of over £200,000; Wakefield just over £12,000 and Addingham around £3,000. Here then, Leeds comes out top and Addingham comes out bottom.

As can be seen, income doesn't necessarily relate directly to membership numbers: it's more complicated than that. Income comes from many sources, not just membership subscriptions, and subscription levels and types will have an impact on the income generated – those societies with an established corporate membership scheme, for example, will probably raise more in membership subscriptions than those societies that don't have one.

Money isn't everything, however, and societies might only set out to raise the money they need to cover the things they want to do so perhaps we should measure success by the number of activities that a society organises during the year? Now, I don't have comparison figures to hand to be able to declare a winner in this category but I'm confident that my own society, Wakefield, would score well. With our talks programme, our excursions and visits, our guided walks and blue plaque unveilings and not forgetting our very popular monthly Dining Club, we probably average close to three events per month – 30 to 40 per year – and sometimes more; quite an achievement.

Of course, a large proportion of the events we run at Wakefield are targeted at attracting new members (while retaining existing ones) – and it's not surprising that larger societies run more events so maybe it would be a little unfair to measure the success or otherwise of a society based purely on the number of events they run. We need some understanding of context, particularly if we are ranking societies against each other: horses for courses and all that.

We could look at projects, by which I mean those practical projects that lead to physical improvements to the public realm (such a litter picking, tree planting, repairing amenities, conservation projects to bring old buildings back into use, and so on). These projects are tangible, often highly visible and benefit local communities directly. I know some civic societies that have done terrific work in restoring, repainting, replanting, etc. My own society did lots of this practical stuff back in the 1960s and 70s – although I wasn't there at the time, there are photos showing our members cleaning off graffiti, picking up litter, and planting trees. However, times have changed. There are now many more agencies and organisations that routinely undertake this work so often



all it takes is a phone call or email to the right person or organisation to prompt some sort of response and the society doesn't have to do the heavy lifting. Does a lack of practical projects indicate an unsuccessful society? Not necessarily!

So, if we are not going to use membership numbers, overall income, number of events, or number of projects as our overarching measure of a successful society, what's left? Well, how about influence and impact? A successful society will undoubtedly interact with a wide number of stakeholders – decision makers within local and possibly national government, property owners and local businesses as well as local residents. And these interactions will be used by the society to convey messages about planning, heritage and design that will influence stakeholders in their thinking so that the society can point to outcomes and claim it was these interventions that led to the result achieved – in other words, the actions of the society had an impact on the result. However, demonstrating cause and effect in these situations can be very difficult unless credit is given: sometimes, an outcome that chimes with the society's aspirations may be no more than lucky chance or pure coincidence. We might claim 'it was us that did it', but can we prove it?

As you've probably guessed by now, there's no easy way of measuring the overall success or otherwise of a civic society. The successful ones will be firing on all cylinders – doing lots of different things, or perhaps just a few big things, but doing them all really well. Context is important but so is reputation.

- How do your members regard what you do?
- What do people outside your membership think of you? (Have they even heard of you?)
- Do people come to you for advice?
- Are you the first place people come to for information and support when they need it?
- Do they trust your judgement?

If you can answer 'yes' to these questions, then no matter how many members you have, how much money you have, or how many events and projects you are running, to be held in high regard by others and to be trusted as 'honest brokers' is perhaps one of the true markers of a successful civic society.

Discuss.



Kevin Trickett

YHACS Chair & President of Wakefield Civic Society

VIEW FROM THE CHAIR



Let me be provocative (again)....

Members, eh? Who needs 'em? No, seriously, who really *needs* members? If you've read my front page article, you'll know that I have questioned the idea that membership numbers should be used as an indicator of a successful civic society: we tend to think that the more members a society has, the more successful it must be and most if not all of our civic societies in the region probably spend time and effort in trying to recruit and retain members. In my article, I posited that it is actually reputation and trust that really count: how others see you, and whether or not they trust your judgement and advice are the real markers of a successful society. If you agree with me, then the natural conclusion is that the size of membership is not really that important. In fact, dare I suggest that your members are holding you back? Let me explain.

As I said in my article, at Wakefield Civic Society we organise 30 to 40 events and activities per year, sometimes more. We do that because our members enjoy the events and, if the members are happy, they are more likely to renew their membership year after year. On top of that, a lively programme of events is a great way of attracting new members. In other words, our desire to recruit and retain members determines how we operate: we are a membership-based organisation so therefore we run events for members.

While often hugely enjoyable, these events take a good deal of work to organise and to run but only around a fifth of our membership turn out for them and sometimes attendance is even less which means we are going to a lot of trouble to put on events for a smallish subset of the membership. As well as effort, these events also cost us money – we subsidise at least some of the events we put on from our membership subscription income as part of our charitable mission. Having said that, our members (or at least those who attend) tell us that they enjoy the events and, if I'm honest, I enjoy hosting them! However, our charitable objects as a civic society are:

- To encourage high standards of architecture and town planning in Wakefield.
- To stimulate public interest in and care for the beauty, history and character of the area of the City and its surroundings.
- To encourage the preservation, development and improvement of features of general public amenity or historic interest.
- To pursue these ends by means of meetings, exhibitions, lectures, publications, other forms of instruction and publicity, and promotion of schemes of a charitable nature.

Nowhere in the charitable objects is there any mention of our being a membership organisation (this comes later on in the Society's constitution) and we could arguably deliver our charitable objects without the need to recruit lots of members. All we really need is enough people to form a committee.

What I'm getting at here is that the society could meet its charitable purposes with just a handful of really committed people serving as a sort of 'think tank'. Say we had around ten people willing to serve. They would need a mix of skills and local knowledge, including some experience of design, planning and architecture but with the right mix, they could review planning applications, offer advice, write position papers and even organise the occasional public event, exhibition or lecture. They would still need money, of course, but not so much. There are certain things you just can't get away from paying for (such as insurance). However, there are other ways of raising money than membership

subscriptions - donations, grants and sponsorships, for example – but the ten people willing to serve could also offer to pay some of the costs out of their own pockets (anything to make it easier!). I suspect that many civic society committee members already do this to some extent – spending money that they don't necessarily claim back on the work of the society.

I remember one year when we organised an annual dinner at Wakefield which made a surplus of around £200 – a tidy sum that was paid into our general funds. The dinner had been very hard work and there were some sleepless nights: we'd signed a contract with the venue to pay for a set number of places but then the bookings were very slow to come in and it was touch and go as to whether the event would break even, let alone generate a surplus, so it was relief all round when we achieved the result we did. In fact, we were in celebratory mood until one of the committee pointed out that if each of the committee (20 strong at the time) had paid £10 each directly to the Society, we'd have achieved the same result without the stress or the fuss. This was rather deflating but was a point well made, especially when you realise that we had each paid around £25 for our tickets to the dinner! The learning point here, of course, that our desire to put on an event for the members had taken a toll in time, effort and stress to achieve a result that could have been achieved without any of the fuss.



Before we all rush to dispense with our members, we need to remember that we all have our written constitutions to follow and that, for those civic societies which are also charities, care would have to be taken to ensure that the charitable aims were still delivered. While it *might* even be worth considering doing away with the charitable status – it removes the need for all those pesky compliance issues, after all – there are advantages to being a charity that should not lightly be tossed aside. These include fund-raising activities when some donors will only consider giving to charities and, of course, the ability to claim Gift Aid.

Now, I'm aware that some very small civic societies might already be the position of having a total membership of just a handful of people – and they might even feel that they are failing. They look at other societies with larger memberships and spend hours worrying over how to recruit more members of their own, almost to the point that the search for new members becomes a millstone around their necks when, according to my argument here, they should be celebrating the fact that they don't have to spend time and effort servicing a large membership! Surely, that thought alone should be positively liberating! I know that having members can be rewarding and there are many positives about being a membership organisation. Members provide income and, to a degree, credibility. They can help to spread the news about what the society is doing and what it stands for. They can act as eyes and ears, reporting back to the society on threats to the buildings and public realm in the area. Members form the pool from which your future committee members will emerge. Running events brings people together and helps strengthen community links; friendships are developed and networks enhanced. I personally have had a great deal of fun from being in charge of an active membership organisation – but it has been exhausting.

So, there we have it: let's re-think how our civic societies should operate. Do we really need to be large membership-based organisations running events primarily to keep our members entertained? Can we meet our charitable purposes in other ways – and if we can, do we really want to change?

ADDINGHAM CIVIC SOCIETY LAUNCHES NEW AWARDS SCHEME



The Civic Society is delighted to launch its Community Awards Scheme

Over the years the Civic Society has funded and supported a range of projects in the village, some of which required substantial amounts of money. One of these was the building of the Multi Use Games Area (MUGA). During the years in which the Civic Society maintained the MUGA it was deemed prudent for the Society to rein in its spending on major projects so that funds could be held to cover major maintenance costs. We are grateful that the Parish Council has now taken over responsibility for the MUGA and, as a consequence, the Society is keen to distribute some of these reserve funds for projects that will benefit the village and its residents.



We would like to introduce **“The Civic Society Community Awards Scheme.”**

In the first instance this will be a five-year project. The purpose of the awards will be to benefit the widest possible range of village groups and activities, both existing and new. They will be open to residents or organisations residing in, or based within the Addingham Parish Boundary.

There will be three types of grants:

Up to £1500 over three years for groups or organisations.

Up to £500 for one year for groups or organisations.

A one year £500 bursary for an individual.

If you would like further information and/or an application form contact:

Address: Addingham Civic Society Treasurer, 9 Main Street, Addingham. LS29 0PD.

Tel: 01943 839792

email: treasurer@addinghamcivicsociety.co.uk

Jim Robinson

NATHANIEL WATERHOUSE COMMEMORATED WITH BLUE PLAQUE IN HALIFAX

Halifax Civic Trust's latest blue plaque honours one of the town's most distinguished benefactors – more than 370 years after he died.

Nathaniel Waterhouse (1586 - 1645) set up many local charities, including lifesaving facilities for poor people in Halifax and district, such as the local workhouse. In his will of 1642 Waterhouse established almshouses (*right*) for 12 poor widows, and a school – named the Blue Coat School after the colour of its uniforms – for 20 poor boys and girls near Halifax Parish Church.

He left many other legacies, including support for Halifax's Free Grammar School of Queen Elizabeth, and money to maintain local roads.



Photo from <http://www.waterhousecharities.co.uk/>



Unveiling of the Nathaniel Waterhouse plaque, from the left, Waterhouse trustee Dr Hazel Barker, Halifax Civic Trust chairman Dr John Hargreaves, the deputy mayor of Calderdale, Coun Jane Scullion, and her consort, Andrew Bibby.

In the 19th century the school and almshouses were relocated to Harrison Road, Halifax. The school closed in 1958 and the almshouses were rebuilt on the same site in 1967.

....Waterhouse established alms-houses for 12 poor widows and a school for 20 poor boys and girls near Halifax Parish Church.



Nathaniel Waterhouse's blue plaque (left) was unveiled by the Deputy Mayor of Calderdale, Coun Jane Scullion, at the now 50-year-old almshouses in Harrison Road at a special ceremony during the Heritage Open Days festival, organised with the trustees and managers of the Waterhouse Homes.

The event also included the 4th Halifax Civic Trust Annual Lecture, given by Helen Caffrey, expert and author of books on almshouses, who gave an illustrated talk on Halifax Almshouses in Context. Trust chairman Dr John Hargreaves spoke about the life of Nathaniel Waterhouse.

The Waterhouse plaque is the twelfth to be erected by Halifax Civic Trust.

Previous citizens to have been commemorated include John Crossley, founder of the carpet-making firm John Crossley and Sons at Dean Clough, Halifax; John Mackintosh, the Halifax "toffee king"; stage and screen actor Eric Portman; catseye inventor Percy Shaw and Nobel Prize-winning geneticist Oliver Smithies. More recent plaques have honoured the Halifax sculptor Jocelyn Horner, historian E P Thompson and Halifax author and thespian Dr Phyllis Bentley.

The trust also erected a blue plaque to commemorate the centenary of Halifax Town Football Club in 2011.

YHACS DAY AT THE SEASIDE... ...SUMMER MEETING IN HORNSEA

YHACS held its summer meeting for members in Hornsea's Floral Hall.





HERITAGE OPEN DAYS ACROSS LEEDS

The bunting fluttered, balloons bounced and the pink notices declared sites were 'OPEN', ready to welcome visitors.

We have thanked all who prepared handouts, quizzes and exhibitions, made teas, led walks, answered questions and showed visitors around, - their enthusiasm and knowledge shone through. There were 121 events (a record for us) across all parts of Leeds with an amazing array of history and heritage.



Back-to Back houses in Harehills

How to measure success? Is it by the number of events? Is it by the number of visitors attracted to sites? Is it the demographics of those visitors? Is it by the variety of 'heritage'? I suggest it is all of the above.



Hindu Mandir Temple, Leeds 6

Heritage Open Days was 'launched' by the Lord Mayor of Leeds at the beginning of the week. It's a photo opportunity really, and was tweeted, sent onto various Facebook pages and was part of the build-up. We chose an attractive site, which illustrated one of this year's themes, 'Heritage and Nature'. The fact that the Lord Mayor agreed to pose with an over-sized leaflet says a lot about co-operation between City and Civic Trust!

From feedback gathered, we know that many sites had a record number of visitors including on some of the walks, despite the rain in some cases. We had worked to have registered 15 Conservation

**How to measure success? Is it by the number of events?
....the number of visitors attracted to sites?.... the
demographics of those visitors? the variety of
'heritage'?**

Area walks – most of them full, - which we count as a success. We have had many complimentary and appreciative comments from visitors.

We had 10,000 leaflets printed and distributed widely: we had good coverage from the Yorkshire Evening Post, North Leeds Life magazine, the Wharfedale Observer, Leeds Inspired website, 'Made in Leeds' tv and BBC Radio Leeds. Our website was linked to others and both our Director and Administrator tweeted in the lead-up to the first day, as well as during



*Launch at Skelton Grange Environment Centre by the Lord Mayor of Leeds with Leeds Civic Trust's Director and volunteers, Skelton Grange staff and exhibition artist.
Photo courtesy of Graham Fotherby*

visits they made, - we're pleased that our followers are getting younger! The dedicated Heritage Open Days website continues to attract more visitors year-on-year with an increasing number coming from outside the city. We count all those factors as successes.

However, we're not complacent. Whilst we are always keen to add more participants, we're also keen to support the few we know who had low visitor numbers, - might have been the rain, or the cycle ride through Leeds on the Sunday when many city centre roads were closed. We know that local and 'tweeted' publicity pays dividends, so perhaps that was lacking – but there's never one clear answer.



On a personal level, my colleague and I feel successful as volunteers, to have co-ordinated these 4 days with no glitches. We've put in at least 140 hours each and had expenses, mainly petrol! This when many areas have paid staff for whom Heritage Open Days is one of their responsibilities, working 9-5pm and claiming a mileage allowance.

I congratulate all YHACS members who took part in Heritage Open Days. We were part of an amazing national effort with over 5500 events, mostly involving volunteers. As a result of work done at national and local levels, the whole festival continues to grow in popularity and we know that people look forward to it.

Next year's feast of heritage will be **Thursday 13th – Sunday 16th September**. It's worth the effort to show residents and visitors what there is to be proud of in our areas, - those local stories associated with buildings and events.

I hope all YHACS members will be taking part, and measuring their successes!

Lynda Kitching
Heritage Open Days Co-ordinator, Leeds Civic Trust

Photos on page 9 courtesy of Lynda Kitching

RIOTS AND SILVER TANKARDS IN KNARESBOROUGH



KNARESBOROUGH
CIVIC SOCIETY

Earlier this year Knaresborough Civic Society had an interesting talk about a neglected episode in Yorkshire's history.

Townfolk probably know about the siege of Knaresborough Castle by parliamentary forces in 1644 but a much more recent event seems to have slipped from collective memory and from the history books, namely the Knaresborough Riot in 1866. Howard Johnson, who is the great grandson of one of the rioters, explained how he had researched the event over recent years and would like to make contact with other descendants of the 11 men involved.

We hope that Howard's talk and this article will help to publicise this attempt by the citizens of Knaresborough to preserve their rights of access to the Castle Yard and to footpaths down to the River Nidd. In many ways the event can be compared with the 'mass trespass' events on Kinder Scout in the 1930s or the Tolpuddle Martyrs in the 19th century.

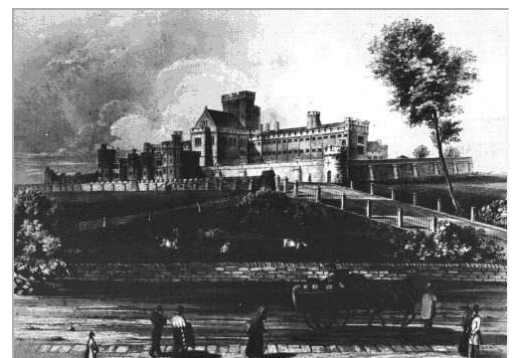
Dr John Simpson owned Castle Lodge in a lane off Kirkgate. He illegally enclosed land by his house and so stopped citizens enjoying access to part of Castle Yard, a right given to them by Oliver Cromwell. The townfolk successfully challenged his actions in the courts over many years but Simpson, who was wealthy and a Justice of the Peace, ignored the court decisions.

.....the event can be compared with the 'mass trespass' events on Kinder Scout in the 1930s or the Tolpuddle Martyrs in the 19th century.

The final straw for the townfolk came in 1865 when Dr Simpson obtained an injunction against the vicar and churchwardens to stop children laughing and singing in the playground of the school next to Castle Yard and close to his house.

A meeting was called and afterwards a group of men broke down Dr Simpson's fences and gates and removed his shrubs and trees on the land illegally taken into his garden. The Riot Act was read and 11 "honest working men of Knaresborough" aged from 17 to 62 were brought to trial at York Assizes. After a failed appeal, the eleven were sent to Armley jail in Leeds (*right*) for 3 months.

Knaresborians were incensed and within weeks a considerable sum of money was raised through public subscription. The money was used to cover the men's legal costs and to feed and clothe their families while they were in prison. But this was not the end of the generosity of the townfolk.



Armley Jail in the late 19th century

When the men were eventually released it was a huge cause for celebration in the town. A public holiday was declared, shops were closed and the church bells were ringing. The streets were decked out with flags and bunting. After being met at Armley by a reception party the men were taken

by train to Harrogate and then by carriage to Knaresborough. Greeted by thousands of well wishers the men processed through the streets behind the town's brass band. There were speeches at the Market Cross, and 200 people sat down in the town hall to a "good substantial well-cooked and warm dinner soon after 2 pm" as reported in the Knaresborough Post.

At the dinner each man was presented with a specially commissioned and inscribed silver tankard.

All that is except for James Fletcher (62) who had sadly died in prison and Thomas Barker (22) who was too ill to leave his cell, though he recovered and came home later. In the evening an estimated 3,000 people attended a gala where "Rustic games were indulged in with great gusto and no disturbance or accident marred the proceedings."



...."They embodied everything that was good about being British".



Despite each man now having a criminal record they were treated as heroes. As one commentator at the time said: – "They embodied everything that was good about being British".

The text on one of the tankards reads:

"Presented to Thomas Johnson by his fellow townsmen, as a token of their deep sympathy on his having suffered three months imprisonment along with ten others, for alleged riot in the Castle Yard, when asserting the right of the public against the aggression of Doctor John Simpson, Knaresborough June 26, 1866."

As regards the other tankards, Howard knows of one in Ireland, one in Doncaster and has made contact with another descendant in Newcastle. He is keen to learn the whereabouts of the others.

For our part we have unveiled a blue plaque near the Castle to commemorate the Knaresborough Riot and the 11 brave men who were sent to jail for defending the rights of the citizens of the town.

Ian Wright

Photos courtesy of Howard Johnson



Reg. Charity No. 1112290

www.yhacs.org.uk

Please send any articles, comments, letters or questions to the editor:

David Moss

Sat 30th September YHACS Autumn Meeting in the Banqueting Suite, Bradford City Hall

Sat 27th January YHACS AGM at Cedar Court Hotel in Harrogate

NEXT YHACS MEETING

MEMBERS MEETING

**AT
BRADFORD CITY HALL, BANQUETING SUITE
CENTENARY SQUARE
BRADFORD BD1 1HY**

GUEST SPEAKERS:

**BARRY LERNER - FRIENDS OF BRADFORD BECKS
SI CUNNINGHAM - BRADFORD CIVIC SOCIETY
MARGARET HICKS-CLARKE - GOOLE CIVIC SOCIETY**

CONTACT: KEVIN TRICKETT ON INFO@YHACS.ORG.UK

Executive Officers, Committee Members and Portfolios

The Yorkshire and Humber Association of Civic Societies (YHACS) is the distinct voice of the civic society movement in the Yorkshire and Humber region, and our vision is to enhance the quality of life for all citizens in the region by engaging citizens not only in the protection of local heritage but also in the promotion of sustainable economic development and urban renaissance.

- **Chairman**, Kevin Trickett (*Priorities for Growth*)
- **Vice Chairman**, David Moss (*Newsletter and Communications*)
- **Secretary**, Helen Kidman (*Planning*)
- **Treasurer**, Richard Ward (*Legal/Financial; Towns, Cities & Public Realm*)
- **Exec Committee Member**, Malcolm Sharman (*Heritage & Culture*)
- **Exec Committee Member**, David Winpenny (*Design Quality*)
- **Exec Committee Member**, Tony Leonard
- **Exec Committee Member**, Margaret Hicks-Clarke (*Civic Pride & Engagement*)
- **Exec Committee Member**, Jim Robinson (*Infrastructure*)
- **Exec Committee Member**, Paul Cartwright
- **Exec Committee Member**, Martin Hamilton
- **Exec Committee Member**, Phyllis Barnes
- **President**, Peter Cooper (*Website; Towns, Cities & Public Realm*)