

**BRADFORD BUILDING PRESERVATION
TRUST
SUMMER NEWSLETTER 2006**



What 'Bradford' means in 'Bradford Building Preservation Trust'.

There has been some discussion as to whether the Trust should be renamed Bradford and District Preservation Trust. Apart from the fact that the Acronym for this would be B.A.D. it is important to remember that the word 'Bradford' represents far more than the City Centre. In fact the 'BD' postcode is still found as far afield as the Dales. Bradford Building Preservation Trust was founded in order to care for and restore buildings at risk throughout the whole District of Bradford and this it will continue to do.

In the 1980's a Local Authority initiative coined the phrase 'Bradford - A surprising Place'. Bradford has long been an area that has suffered a bad national press. Yet it is the doorstep to the Dales and the district contains wild moorland, some of the most beautiful and picturesque areas in the whole of England and has been the birthplace of politicians, writers, artists and musicians. It also contains a World Heritage Site and some of the best museums and galleries in the country.

It was remarked some years ago by a visitor arriving from London that instead of the expected grime and filth of any industrial city, the most noticeable feature of the area was the moorland surrounding the bowl in which the City sits. Bradford City is undergoing the greatest regeneration and development since the mid 20th century. The demolition of some of its most unloved buildings has brought into sharper focus many of its most beautiful structures. As well as allowing new developments which will, it is hoped, revitalise the City and the District, its historic buildings are also being refurbished and re-used. It is to be hoped that a renewed interest will be sparked in the media in Bradford, its historic buildings and in the plans for its future.

'Cometh the hour cometh the men'

On Saturday 25 March members of the Victorian Society and other guests spent a fascinating day in the company of John Ayers, the author of 'Architecture in Bradford'. John, the son of Bradford architect W C Ayers was also, before his retirement, a Bradford-born engineer and architect. He was President of the Bradford Society of Architects and Surveyors in 1969-70, a past Chairman of the Bradford Branch of the RIBA and lectured at the School of Civil Engineering at the University.

Throughout the day his astounding breadth and depth of knowledge of Bradford's buildings, dates, times and personalities was leavened with insights and the quiet, wry humour which made the day's walk all the more fascinating. We pursued a 'time trail' of historic buildings which ranged from the mid 17th century Paper Hall, (which was under construction at the time of the bombardment of Bradford Cathedral in the Civil War), past the late 18th century former dwelling houses of Cheapside, through the orderly designs of the warehouses of the pre-industrial revolution to the stately and grandiose structures of the 1870's in Little Germany, built with local golden sandstone from the Bolton Woods quarries.

Lunch at the newly re-furbished Victoria Hotel allowed glimpses of the conservation work on the ground floor. We learned more about the regeneration of 21st century Bradford standing between the Hotel and the new Law Courts with the prospect of the magistrates courts to be erected within the newly created Exchange Square.

**Chairman: Derek O'Hearne
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The wealth and confidence in the future that existed in 19th century Bradford is exemplified in the number of banks that were built at this time within the City Centre. The history of Bradford can still be read in many of the buildings of the 19th century when the names of the buildings and their owners were carved as part of the elevational design.

The demolition that has taken place in the heart of the City has opened views of its historic buildings that have been hidden for more than fifty years by the 1960's redevelopment of the city. The new buildings that have already been created, such as the Law Courts and the St John's Market complex complement its historic past and look to the future. Bradford is being revitalised with a new vision of the Future.

Which brings us to

'The Good, the Bad and the Ugly' by Christopher Hammond

Christopher Hammond's book, due to be published this month, will be launched at Waterstones Bookshop, Bradford on 17th June, where Chris will be available to sign copies. Later in the afternoon he will conduct a walk through the City Centre.

By the 1870's Bradford had become a great European city with world-wide trading links and buildings that were the physical embodiment of this status.



A century later, the vision was of a redeveloped, revitalised Bradford, but the buildings and pedestrian subways erected with such optimism in the 1960's and 1970's ultimately failed. Christopher Hammond considers that, had Bradford adopted a conservation policy at that time, the City would today have achieved World Heritage status.

Far from being a simple architectural guide to Bradford City's historic buildings, 'The Good, The Bad and The Ugly' is a studied and critical appraisal of development in the City from the 1870's to the present day. Written in the form of a perambulation round the buildings of the City Centre and Little Germany, the book's focus on the reality of those structures 'warts and all', provides the reason for its title.

Paradoxically this approach also provides the reader with a heightened appreciation of the great strides forward in Bradford's 21st century economic and environmental regeneration, so crucial to the City's future. This includes the Broadway redevelopment, the creation of Centenary and Crown Court Squares, proposals for urban villages along the Shipley Corridor and the restoration and revitalisation of the City's magnificent Victorian mills and warehouses.

The book, to be illustrated with maps and photographs and will cost around £5.

Architecture Week

Between 15 and 25 June, as part of the Bradford Centre Regeneration project, a series of events centring round the architecture and history of Bradford is scheduled to take place at St George's Hall and the National Museum of Film, photography and television. For more information see the leaflets in your library, the district tourist information offices and TV.

Eastbrook Hall

At the time of writing this newsletter, the façade one of Bradford's most loved historic buildings is at last being restored fifteen years after a disastrous fire left the building an empty and blackened shell. There was some alarm recently when, during work on the façade, part of the elevation suddenly dropped by nine inches, causing the closure of Leeds Road for a short time. Once the building is completed and the hoardings around it moved away, Eastbrook Hall will once more become one of Bradford's focal buildings restored to a new and appropriate use.

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