



## CHAIR'S REPORT TO AGM – September 2025

With it now being 50 years since the formation of the Luddenden Conservation Society, it is with sadness that I report the recent passing of two stalwarts of the Society: **Barry Dyson** and **Brenda McArdle**. Barry was a member since the 1990's and was Secretary for a number of years and a member of the Planning Applications Committee, being involved in some of our key campaigns against unsuitable development. Brenda has been a keen Bloom contributor, being co-organiser of the 2023 Open Gardens Day, recently a Trustee, and last year re-introduced refreshments at meetings, including home-made cakes, Pimms, mince pies and sherry. I'm sure you will join me in recognising the contributions they have made to the Society.

Prior to our November 2024 meeting, we had George Pickles (who was a founder member of the Society in 1975) explaining some possible plans for the **Old Slaughterhouse**. Members and a number of others who attended were keen that the building be brought back into use rather than fall down. Concerns were however raised about parking and overlooking of other properties. The building was sold at auction last week.

The phone box **Information Centre and Book Exchange** became fully functional before the end of 2024, and the Walk Leaflets have had to be replaced many times. Once the weather improved, it has also been painted again. A big thank you to Maxine who is tidying and removing books on a regular basis. The Walk Leaflets have also been taken to the Library in Halifax and CROWS have now published them on the "Heart of the Pennines" website. I'm also converting them into a booklet that contains all five walks (available shortly).

Once again we made a donation for the Church **Fireworks**, provided a village **Christmas Tree** and upgraded the Christmas lights with a new string and catenary wires to reduce the risk of the lights getting broken. Thank you to all who helped putting it up and taking it down. We also had a **Christmas Wreath** competition and supported a **Wreath Making** workshop run by Maxine and Mary Smith with proceeds to support Ukraine.

Regular **Bloom workparties** commenced again in March. Phil and Nigel organised a very successful meeting in July which agreed a schedule of works with two workparties each month, one on a Saturday morning and one on a Monday morning. Attendance at the workparties has been good, with many hands getting lots done in an hour or so.

We've continued to show videos at some of the meetings, with "Fire and Flood" in March and "Luddenden in Bloom" in May. We have a talk by David Glover on "Castle Carr" planned for the November meeting.

A number of villagers contributed to the renovation of the **High Street sign** that had fallen off Church House. This was unveiled by Sue Sheils, Mayor of Luddenden, in April.

At the May meeting, David Bowker came along to update us on the situation at the **Old Vicarage** following the rock fall in December 2022. As Chair of the Society I wrote to both the Ombudsman and RSA (David's insurer) to emphasise that villagers want to see restoration as soon as possible.

We held a very successful **Open Gardens Day** on 28 June. Many thanks to Maxine for co-organising it and to garden owners and other volunteers, especially Phil and Gill, who manned the Car Park and Plant Sale. We had one complaint after a lady scraped her car on the low wall leaving the car park, and I've now put a warning sign there. We purchased a SumUp machine so that we can take card payments now that many people no longer carry cash. This has proved very useful. Maxine also organised the **House Frontage** competition for the Ada Brooks Trophy, which was judged by Debbie Mills (Ada's granddaughter) and Diane Horsman and won by Sue Johnson.

The Society was formed fifty years ago on 15 June 1975, and to celebrate this, we put all the available **Newsletters** on the Luddenden.com website, including scans of those from before 1999. We also worked with the Church to hold a **Heritage Day** alongside the August Coffee Morning. I led three history walks around the village based on Rodney's walk leaflet and pointing out various locations and showing photos of how things were in the past. I also created a "virtual" walk that was shown, along with some of the other videos, in the Church. I repeated the walk for those who couldn't attend later in the month. Feedback has been very positive. Kevin and I also produced a booklet that brought together the "big photos" that we sometimes show around the village and the text that Rodney wrote explaining them. We sold many of these on the day, along with usb sticks of the videos we have previously sold as DVD's and also printed further copies of Rodney's **Down Memory Lane** and **Down Memory Lane Again**. For Mayormaking, we also created and sold a booklet pulling together the text and pictures from the 2025 Luddenden Calendar that I had created from lots of history publications.

The **Car Park** continues to generate an income, around £1,200, that exceeds costs and Nigel arranged painting of the entry barrier and replacement of the sign asking for donations. Thank you to Nigel and Ian for keeping it tidy and chasing the Council to remove fly-tipped materials.

During the year, we have had a number of new people move into the village and take part in our activities, through attendance at meetings and participation at Bloom workparties and Open Gardens Day. I'd like to finish by thanking everyone involved in any way, particularly Kevin and Ian who have taken on officer roles, and Roly who has decided to retire from Bloom responsibilities after many years.

Tony Hillyard

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