

PARTY: Time to celebrate the 100th anniversary of Town Hall

Century Celebrations

PETER SAVAGE
Ossett Civic Trust

OSSETT Town Hall will be the focal point of celebrations in June when the centrepiece of the town reaches the centenary milestone.

100 NOT OUT will be a major event to celebrate the centenary of Ossett Town Hall and will take place in the town centre precinct with festivities to suit everyone starting from 10am on Saturday June 7th.

The celebration is being organised by the people of Ossett for the people of the town and provide a golden opportunity to join in these celebrations and show appreciation for one of the most beautiful pieces of architecture in the West Riding district. Inside the Town Hall courthouse there will be a display of photographs and memorabilia chronicling the one hundred year history produced alongside a book on the Town Hall history written by Ossett Historical Society's Ruth Nettleton. Outdoors there will be all the fun of the fair, street entertainers, food stalls, donkey rides and face paint-



CENTENARY: Ossett Town Hall dominates the skyline of the town

ing, stalls with local voluntary groups and charities showcasing their many and varied activities. One of the major events taking place in

'A golden chance to celebrate 100 years of history'

the afternoon will be a wrestling tournament in the main hall promoted by The Squared Circle Wrestling Store of Bank Street, Ossett.

There will also be lots of celebrations throughout Ossett during May and June at other venues commencing with the Gawthorpe Maypole Procession on Saturday May 3rd. Other celebratory events are in the listings on the back-page of this newsletter.

These celebrations have been organised by Ossett Civic Trust, Ossett Town Centre Partnership, Ossett Town Hall User Group, Ossett and Horbury

Neighbourhood Network under the guidance of VOX the Empowerment Agency for the voluntary sector in Wakefield and in consultation with many organisations and individuals in Ossett for which everyone concerned is very grateful.

For more information about these and other events please pick up a leaflet from the Town Hall, the Ossett Review Office or see the local press for details.

HERITAGE

IN THE 19th century Ossett was an independent community but in the last 25 years of the 1800's its pride showed when the Local Board portioned Queen Victoria for incorporation as a Municipal Borough under the act of 1882 *writes Alec Metcalfe.*

As Dewsbury had plans to extend its boundaries into Ossett and Soothill, the charter was granted on 30th June 1890. With this news, rejoicing was carried into the market place with a great procession from the Ossett station. Soldiers were in full state uniform on foot and horse, the streets were decorated with flags and bunting, it was a day for pride in a thriving town.

The Borough's first Mayor was Edward Clay a rag and mungo manufacturer. (The business still remains in Wesley Street). Ossett was ahead of its time in recycling clothing. It was the centre for manufacturing shoddy and mungo, with fifty plus enterprises. Wool rags from all over Europe came here to be sorted.

Looking at local Town Halls we find most of them were incorporated with a public hall for concerts.

The grand scale of the Ossett design and build shows the pride and independence of the 12,000 residents and the wealth of some businesses. There was immense enthusiasm when then the town Hall was opened in the summer of 1908.

The original decoration of town hall had a wonderful floor mosaic and wall tiles. Also the interesting fact that the clock took nearly an hour to wind !

Your town needs YOU!

RUTH AMOS
Ossett Civic Trust

WHO are Ossett Civic Trust I hear you saying? We are a non-political, non-religious group of people who meet on the last Thursday of every month at Ossett Community Centre at 7.30pm.

Our aims are simple, to represent Ossett in all aspects of civic and community matters, caring and raising awareness for the town and its buildings including planning matters. We speak out on behalf of the town to ensure Ossett receives its rightful share of any funds.

The Trust does this by

liaising with our local and WMDC councillors. We try to raise the profile of Ossett by promoting the town in different ways for example, attending and liaising at external meetings such as WMDC meetings and police meetings to ensure Ossett stays the lovely, exciting market town that it is.

At the same time we try to do this in enjoyable ways by organising excursions and arranging events with guest speakers. Our project for this year is to showcase the Town Hall centenary celebrations which will kickstart events to help raise funds so that the interior is brought to

a standard that will serve Ossett for the next 100 years and enable many more groups to use the hall.

HELP NEEDED:

Can you help the Ossett Civic Trust? If so, then we would like to see you at our next meeting on Thursday April 24th.

Also look out for our next edition of the **OSSETTtimes** newsletter which will bring you more news and views regarding **YOUR** town !

A WARM WELCOME

A VERY warm welcome to this special edition of the *Ossett Times*, the newsletter of the Ossett Civic Trust.

Our quarterly newsletter will contain news, views, features, planning issues and a yearly Ossett events listing in each and every issue. Our aim is to spread the news across the town to help promote and encourage the development of Ossett.

The Ossett Civic Trust is proud to play a vital role in the town and the *Ossett Times* will keep you up-to-date with all the news.

'TRUST TALK'

'TrustTalk' is the section of this newsletter which YOU can become part of.

We would like to receive your views, comments, letters or questions for future editions.

Do you have a story to tell or an old photograph to share with Ossett?

Then please send your article, letter, photograph or comments to:

Ossett Civic Trust
C/O Ossett
Community Centre
Prospect Road
Ossett
WF5 8AN

Or via email:
ossettcivictrust
@googlemail.com

DISCLAIMER:

The views expressed in the articles of this newsletter are the views of the authors of the articles and not necessarily the views of Ossett Civic Trust.

TOWNtales

Ossett Town Hall officially opened in June 1908.

Ruth Nettleton of Ossett Historical Society explains why it was built.

IN 1890 Ossett became a Borough. Council meetings were held in the Temperance Hall, rates were collected and education was organised from the offices in New Street and the council met in the Technical School.

The Choral Society which was flourishing held its concerts in the Wesleyan School which was used as both Sunday School and weekday school. On the day of the concert the school had to be closed so that chairs could be brought in from other premises and arranged for the evening performance.

A site purchased in Bank Street, at the corner of Illingworth Street did not meet government approval and so no funds were forthcoming. The Grammar School build-

ing in the Market Place was below standard and had occurred a bad report from the inspectors. Other properties to the north and east were lined up for purchase,

An outbreak of smallpox at Flushdyke spread rapidly, through the immediate area. The source was night soil exported from Dewsbury by rail to Flushdyke Station and spread on the fields. The smallpox hos-



PROUD Mayor Edward Clay

pitals on Storrs Hill could note cope. Tented accommodation was erected and Park House was purchased. Once the epidemic was controlled, Park House was no longer required for medical purposes. It was however

suitable for conversion into a school and this assisted in the clearance of the Market Place site.

Tenders were put out for the design of the town hall and the contract was awarded to Hainstock & Sons of Batley. The first part of the Town Hall to be completed was the Public Hall, so it was appropriate that the first event to be held in the building was a grand choral concert in 1907.

London soloists were hired and the orchestra included members of the Halle.

The official opening was in June 1908 and from that point all Borough Council meetings were together under one roof. Ossett now had a focal point.

Celebratory events like coronations and jubilees were centred on platforms erected in front of the main entrance. Dances were a big feature of the events held in the Public Hall, the weekly ones being preceded by whist drives.

This handsome building both inside and out was a great asset to Ossett and still remains to be.

NEW MEMBERS NEEDED!

Ossett Civic Trust needs new members to help to develop the trust for the future of the town.

Would you like to play a part in our town for future generations?

If so, then visit us at one of our meetings held on the last Thursday of every month.

Membership forms are available from Ruth Amos or Caron Ryalls at the Ossett Review office.



Ossett Civic Trust yearly subscription rates are:

£10 Single

£15 Family

£25 Corporate

DIARY: Your guide to what's happening around Ossett

APRIL:

Saturday 26th: Spring Craft Fair at Ossett Town Hall (10.00am - 1.30pm)

MAY:

Saturday 10th - Trip to Harrogate and Harlow Carr organised by Ossett Civic Trust. Details can be obtained from the Ossett Review office.
Tuesday 20th - Friday 23rd: When The Lights Go On Again - An Evening of Pure Nostalgia at Ossett Town Hall

JUNE:

Saturday 7th: Ossett Town Hall Centenary Celebrations - All day in the Town Hall and town centre precinct.

JUNE continued:

Saturday 21st - Sunday 22nd : Horbury Street Fayre.
Friday 27th : Blitz Ball at Holiday Inn, Ossett.
Sunday 28th: Horbury Show at Carr Lodge Park.

JULY:

Saturday 19th: Ossett Gala - Ossett town centre precinct.

IF YOU HAVE ANY EVENT WHICH YOU WOULD LIKE US TO FEATURE, PLEASE SEND US THE DETAILS.

OSSETT TOWN HALL CELEBRATIONS

JUNE 7: Celebrations will take place in the town centre precinct with festivities to suit everyone. Inside the Town Hall courthouse there will be a display of photographs and



memorabilia. Outdoors there will be all the fun of the fair with street entertainment and many stalls. In the afternoon there will be a wrestling tournament held in the main hall.