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# Wetherby Civic Society

## August Newsletter

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www.wetherbycivicsociety.org.uk

August 2010

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Unusually, I wish to start this Newsletter by making an appeal. It's not for money but I am sure that amongst our members we have somebody who will take over from our long serving secretary at this year's AGM which will be on 22<sup>nd</sup> November at the usual venue of the Ramada Hotel. Derek Gulland is insistent that he does not wish to seek re-election. He says that he has done the job for long enough and that now is the time for someone with a fresh mind and new ideas to take over. When I took on this job as Chairman of the Society, I said it would be just for one year. However, with a new secretary it would be wrong to step down just yet and I am therefore prepared to serve for another year.

Derek says that apart from the usual qualities required, it is essential nowadays to be at ease with computers and very desirable to have a broadband connection to the internet since nearly all our external communications are through that route. The Society is also very fortunate that on our present committee we have several members who are experts and I know they will be only too pleased to help out with the more rarified aspects of computer working.

If you can help please contact me as soon as possible so that we may work to a smooth change over come November:

Peter Maun  
6 Linton Avenue  
Wetherby LS22 6SQ  
01937 585339  
hpmaun@hotmail.com

### *NEW GOVERNMENT -- NEW IDEAS ON PLANNING*

The new government has been in office for three months now, and already we are beginning to see changes in the planning system. Much of the planning system operates on guidance from the government as to how primary legislation is to be applied. One piece of such guidance was the treatment of gardens as "brownfield sites". Brownfield sites are sites which have been previously developed and were given priority over greenfield sites for new developments. In the eyes of many this led to a rash of planning applications for new houses in the gardens of existing houses to such an extent that it became known as garden grabbing. In some areas this activity changed completely the character of late Victorian and Edwardian suburbs and the new government has responded by removing gardens from the brownfield description.

This does not mean that we shall have seen the last of new build in what were gardens.

Garden ground is not defined in the new guidance and all it means is that an application to build in what was originally a garden will have to satisfy the same criteria as applies to any new build on a greenfield site.

In the same announcement the restriction that new developments must be at a density not less than 30 to a hectare was removed. Perhaps this may be less significant than it appears. Building land is now so expensive that speculative house builders may well wish to build at greater densities than 30 to a hectare in order to secure an adequate return on their investment. What they will not be able to do is call in aid government policy to justify their plans.

One announcement which should please communities on the edge of large conurbations was the abolition of regional housing targets. This will remove from them the threat of announcements that

nearby fields have been identified as possible sites for what appears to be a large number of new houses. Of course, such propositions were just that, and if they were to be realised they would still have had to satisfy planning guidelines.

Prior to the election the Conservative party supported the proposal that third parties should have the right of appeal against planning decisions. Since this smacks of

“nimbyism” it was stressed that such rights would be valid only on the grounds of breaches of procedures, processes or public policy. Appeals would not be allowed just because the neighbours did not like the idea of new development next door.

If this suggestion does go ahead it will mean that a decision originally taken locally will be replaced by being put in the hands of a government inspector.

### *I SPY WITH MY WETHERBY EYE*

Earlier this summer we had a successful morning at the Bathhouse spoiled only by the cold windy weather. Those attending were invited to identify some lesser known Wetherby sites. If you haven't already had

the opportunity to test your knowledge of the town now is your chance to do so. No prizes just the pleasure of seeing how well you may do. Walk the route and find the answers.

### *BRITAIN IN BLOOM*

11<sup>th</sup> August is judging day for Britain in Bloom when Wetherby will be representing Yorkshire in competition with similar sized towns from all over the country. If you have any responsibility for the public face of the town, please make sure that you do what you can to make as good a show as

possible. A couple of us have already cleaned up the town centre blue plaques.

Alternatively, if you are able, join the other volunteers from Wetherby in Bloom on the town hall steps at 5.30pm on 10<sup>th</sup> August armed with gloves, brushes and shovels for a town centre clean up.

### *HERITAGE OPEN DAYS 9<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2010*

Details of places in the Leeds Metropolitan District not normally open to the public are now published in a leaflet which should be available in Wetherby Library. Or go to [www.heritageopendays.org.uk](http://www.heritageopendays.org.uk) for a list of all places participating in this event. In our area places open vary from churches to libraries to guided walks and the largest preserved walking dragline excavator in western Europe at St Aidan's open cast coal site in Swillington.

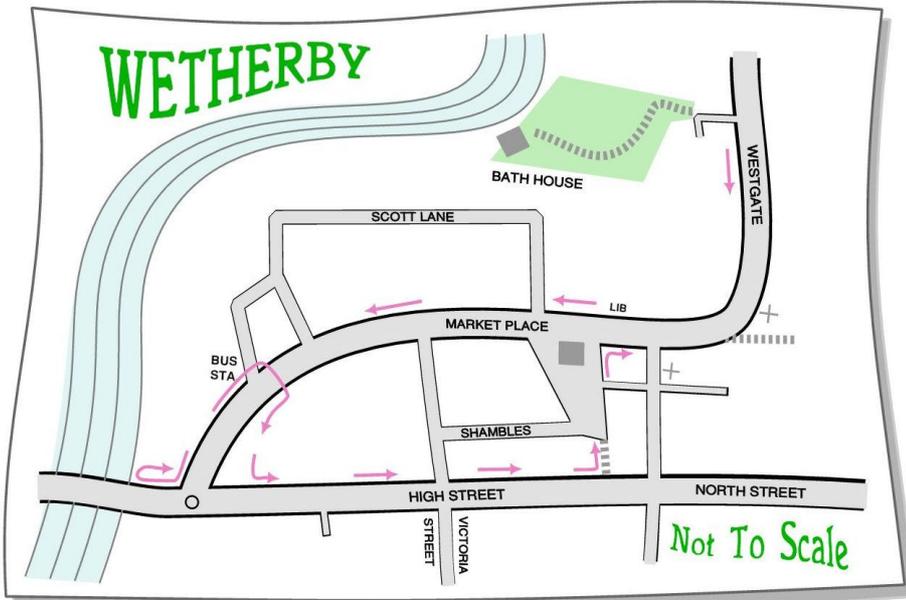
### **WETHERBY CIVIC SOCIETY**

**Secretary:** Mr Derek Gulland, 16 Chestnut Avenue, Wetherby, LS22 6SG,  
Tel. No. (01937) 583729  
Email: [derek@wetherbycivicsociety.org.uk](mailto:derek@wetherbycivicsociety.org.uk)  
Registered Charity No: 1031927  
A member of Civic Voice

*If you received this Newsletter though the post but would like to receive future Newsletters and other information from the Society by email, please email your address to [derekgulland@wetherbycivicsociety.org.uk](mailto:derekgulland@wetherbycivicsociety.org.uk). The Society will not divulge your email address to any other person or organization.*



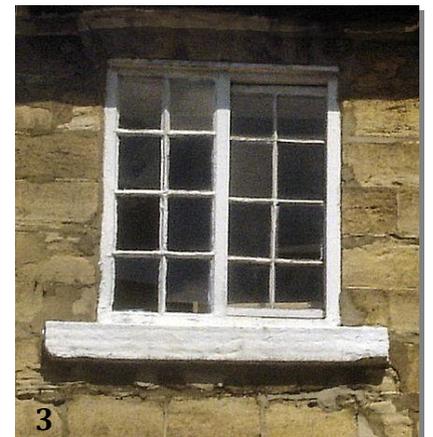
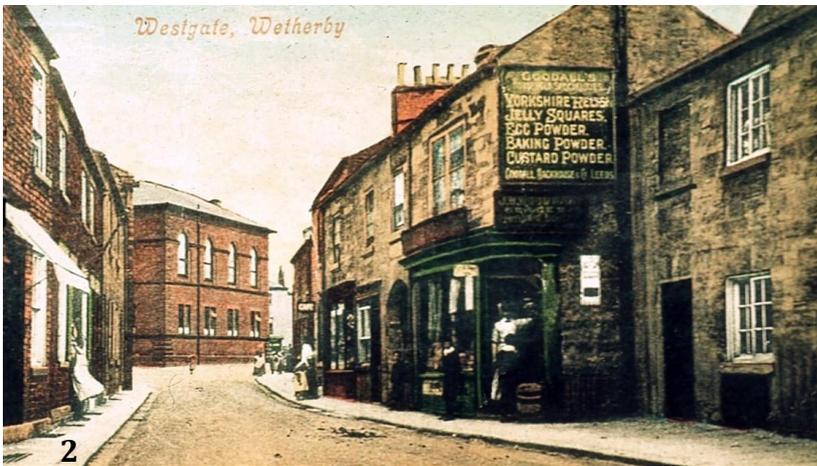
Using the map below pick out and mark where the bygone pictures and present-day features might be viewed from. If you follow the marked route from the Bath House they are in the correct order.



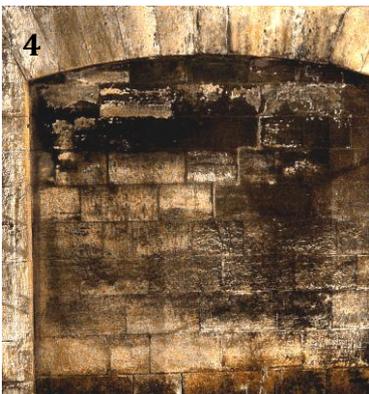
1



The Old Police Station



One of Wetherby's last remaining horizontal sliding 'Yorkshire Windows'



This time not one of Wetherby's many Georgian dummy windows

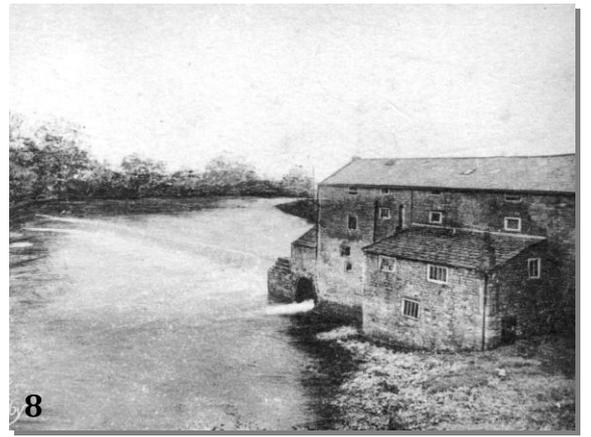




Retained original yard entrance



The town's 1st intercom



8



A grand Civic use for the last of the wooden telegraph poles



10



From the days when sheep were penned in Cross Street on Market Day

11



12

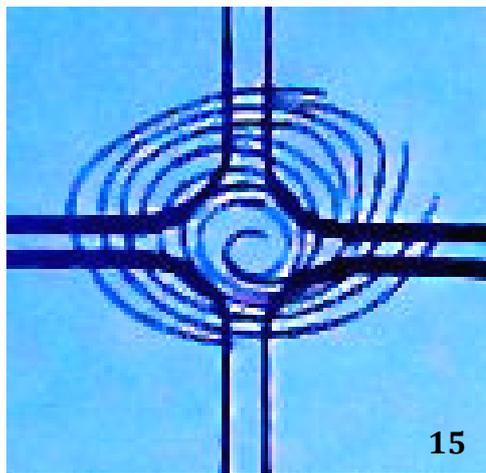


13

This doorway was added to prevent prisoners having to be marched through the schoolroom



14



15

The pinnacle of an architectural award-winning building