
Wetherby Civic Society

Autumn Newsletter

www.wetherbycivicsociety.org.uk

October 2007

CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS - NIC SHEPPARD

Membership of our Society has remained at a steady level for the past few years. As previous members have departed so new ones have been welcomed. However, a considerable gap has been left not only in Wetherby Civic Society but also in the identity of the town as a whole, by the death this year of one of the Society's key founders Dr. James Lodge.

As a relative newcomer to the town, it was a privilege to meet, be welcomed and remembered by James. His infectious enthusiasm for all things Wetherby will continue to inspire and affect those who live here. As a tribute to James, one of the trees planted by the Society on the Ings has been dedicated to his memory and marked with a plaque. As a further memorial, the Society is offering as part of this year's Wetherby Festival a guided tour of the town which will take in many of the landmarks with which James was so closely associated.

This serves to remind me that in early May we entertained a group from Chester Civic Society who wished to see something of our town on their way north to Alnwick. On a lovely spring day we took them on a slightly shortened version

of our town trail. The group was most impressed by what they saw and in particular by the work put in by so many volunteers to make Wetherby the attractive place it is.

We now have a half a dozen or so members who are prepared to act as guides for any other group who may wish to see and learn something of the town and its history. Please contact

WETHERBY FESTIVAL 2007
Wetherby Civic Society
In memoriam James Lodge
Guided tour of the historic town centre starting
at the bandstand Wilderness Car Park at
10.30am
Saturday, 27th October 2007
Free tickets from the Festival Box Office or on
the day at the bandstand

our secretary if you wish to take advantage of this additional service which the Society is very happy to provide.

The Bath House and surrounding Jubilee gardens are fast becoming an established local beauty spot. To mark the restoration and development of the site, the Society has been successful in obtaining a Lottery 'Awards For All' grant towards the installation of an attractive information board. It is hoped the board will be in place by the time the combined efforts of

members of both the Civic Society and Wetherby in Bloom come to flower in the springtime.

We have continued to maintain links with Leeds Civic Trust and the Yorkshire and Humberside Association of Civic Societies. This helps in adding our voice to area, regional and even national concerns. During the year we have contributed to a

national consultation regarding planning law alongside Leeds Civic Trust. We have also taken on one of the challenges set by the Yorkshire and Humberside Association – to produce a document that clarifies our Society's purpose and plans. A copy of this is part of this Newsletter. Please let me know if there is anything you think should be added or amended.

This year we have developed our communications by means of our own website featuring the purpose and work of the society. For those of us more used to looking at websites, than actually creating them, we are indebted to recently co-opted Executive Committee member, Martin Rowe, for showing us the right buttons to press. On average the site has a thousand visitors a

month and has already attracted new members.

The Executive Committee, the working groups, and the Civic Society as a whole,

are fortunate to have such a wealth and variety of talents and experience to call upon. Whilst we will miss key members like James, there is a part everyone can play

in honouring the past, celebrating the present, and building for the future of Wetherby.

PLANNING - NIC SHEPPARD

The Planning Group has this year attended to a number of planning applications which have led to comment being submitted to Leeds City Council. We have no direct way of gauging the extent or effect the comments make. What we do know is that some plans are withdrawn completely, some return at a later stage with changes which often address our concerns, and yet others go ahead come what may!

I'm always quick to point out to those who despairingly think such involvement a waste of time, that I believe our best hope, and perhaps greatest value, is that we are influencing those who first put pen to paper. The fact that there are those like us who may question a proposal, inevitably generates greater care in considering the implications to the local community in the first place.

The focus of the planning group's attention is the designated conservation area in the centre of town. Apart from some change of use and minor internal development, there have been relatively few new planning proposals for the town centre in the past

twelve months. That is not to say there hasn't been change. Major works have now been completed in repaving and upgrading the pedestrian areas surrounding the Town Hall and into the Market Place. I believe most would agree that this has enhanced the heart of the town and created a safer and more pleasant place to meet and shop.

WETHERBY CIVIC SOCIETY
AGM Monday 12th November at 7.30pm
Ramada Jarvis Hotel, Leeds Road, Wetherby

"Pride & Prejudice"

Following the meeting our chairman, Nic Sheppard will lead us in what he promises will be a lively, informative and even fun discussion, focussing on some of the joys and sorrows of living in Wetherby, with at least one eye to the future, one ear to the ground, and quite possibly one foot in the gravel!

This will be your chance to give us your ideas on what you like about Wetherby and what you don't.
(Not just car parking problems, please!)

Leeds Highways have also asked the Society for its views on perhaps what some might consider a quite minor matter. One of the legacies of the town's past history as a centre for coaching inns and a working market town, is a number of cobbled entranceways to what were stable yards. Where these still relate to the clear evidence of an entrance, perhaps a retained archway for example, then we have urged their retention when pavements are up graded.

Many aspects of planning require a difficult

judgement as to what is deemed tasteful and what is not. There are basic guidelines regarding the kind of signage considered suitable for business premises in conservation areas and on listed buildings. This year, members felt two businesses had particularly overstepped the mark, and after the Society drew attention to them, they were removed.

On the whole the planning group has very limited parameters in which a valid objection can be raised. Whilst we may not particularly like something, an objective case has to be

made as to why we believe others may consider it unsuitable. We are indebted to Derek Gulland, who has developed a gift for penning a letter that raises our shared views in a concise and businesslike way.

Once the Victoria Court development was completed, work soon started on the new medical centre in Hallfield Lane. I don't think even those of us who carefully perused the plans, had envisaged such a large building. The hope is that its stature will echo the breadth and quality of medical services it will offer the community. No doubt

attention will soon turn to what will become of the

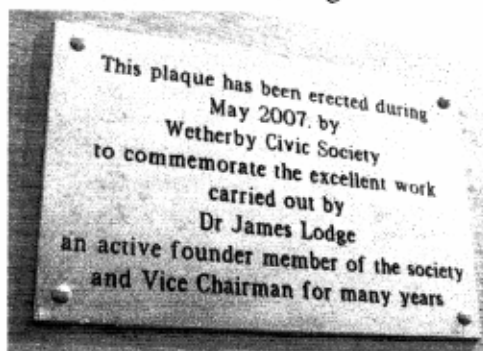
existing medical centre that

adjoins Crossley Street car park.

TREES - PETER MAUN

We drew breath this year on our planting programme on the Ings because of the need to replace several trees which had failed both here and on Hudson's Field. We are grateful to Andrew Pullan for his firms' financial assistance with the replacements even though it could be argued that the failure was down to the dry and hot weather of recent past years. That, of course, has not been a problem this year

We shall be continuing with



the programme this coming planting season. We are always pleased to accept a donation to nominate a

particular tree as a memorial but please do not think that this excludes any other reason for a donation.

Please let us know if you know of any area where tree planting would enhance the environment. We shall investigate the possibilities and take the matter up with the appropriate authorities. The only restriction will be that the land must be public or at least open and available to the public.

EVENTS- RUTH WHEELER

Every year we have two lectures: one in Spring and the other in Autumn and in between there are five outings to varied places of interest. Once again the number of members attending these events has increased and this year an average of 45 members turned up. Our fortunes regarding fine weather were sadly tried on two occasions this year in spite of me putting in special requests for sunny days!

In April we went to the Black Sheep Brewery at Masham and enjoyed a guided tour of the brew house, fermenting room and bottling plant followed by a free half-pint of beer. The guides were retired employees of the brewery and so were most informative and answered all our questions. Many of us were particularly impressed by the efforts this relatively new company had made, and was making, to

increase employment opportunities in this rural area.

Constable Burton Hall was our next destination in May. Several members enjoyed lunch at the Wyvill Arms opposite the Hall prior to our visit. We divided into two groups with the owner Mr Charles Wyvill guiding one around the house and the Head Gardener taking the other around the grounds.

Both our guides were excellent and informative but after we changed over disaster struck when the heavens opened and the second group tour of the garden was conducted in pouring rain fortunately sheltered by large umbrellas.

But worse was to come. When we arrived at Scampston Walled Garden near Malton, it was cool and

overcast but very soon the rain began to fall heavily and it became quite cold. There are no places to shelter in the garden except the restaurant and this became quite crowded. The introductory talk was very cursory so altogether a disappointing day. Conversely when David and I did our dummy run the month before (something we do before every outing) the day was so hot we had to retire to the restaurant to find some shade.

Happily our visit to Markenfield Hall took place on beautiful sunlit July evening. We were blessed with a fantastic guide who was a friend of the family and knew the history of this moated Hall from A to Z. She told us several local stories as well as some of the more dreadful times experienced by the family who has lived in this medieval Manor House for many generations.

Our final trip to Sion Hill Hall near Thirsk was on delightfully hot September afternoon. This Edwardian country house is filled with antiques and works of art many of, which have connections with the Percy family with whom the house has associations. We were guided by the present occupier who guided us around with knowledge and passionate love of his home. We walked around the

grounds, investigated the kitchen garden and then enjoyed tea and scones in the kitchen. Perfect!

Now to a question for next year. One of the problems faced by some members seems to be transport. Either they do not have independent transport or they do not like driving the distances involved in some of our outings. So far we rely on an informal system

of arranging lifts. Could we match up people who live reasonably close to others to offer a taxi service? Please let me know if you can help.

And finally, if you know of somewhere we could visit or if there is somewhere which you particularly would like to see please give me a ring on 01937 583186.

WETHERBY CIVIC SOCIETY

OFFICERS

Chairman: Mr Inc Sheppard Tel. No. (01937) 585440

Vice Chairman & Tree Convenor: Mr Peter Maun Tel. No. (01937) 585339

Treasurer: Mrs Hilary Maun Tel. No. (01937) 585339

Secretary: Mr Derek Gulland, 16 Chestnut Avenue, Wetherby, LS22 6SG, Tel. No. (01937) 583729
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LOTTERY FUNDED

WETHERBY CIVIC SOCIETY

Registered Charity No.1039127

PURPOSE & PLAN



1. Aims

Promoting

- > Civic pride
- > High standards of architecture and town planning

Encouraging

- > Improvements in public amenities

Influencing

- > The development of the built environment and the culture of the town

2. History

Since its formation in 1994 Wetherby Civic Society has:

- Planted over 300 trees on public open spaces within the town
- Published the Wetherby Historic Town Trail and a guide to the town's Conservation Area
- Encouraged and promoted the placing of blue plaques on historic buildings and new noteworthy developments
- Supported the restoration of the river-side Bath House and assisted in the restoration and continuing upkeep of the adjacent woodland garden
- Responded to and influenced planning applications relating to new developments within the town centre
- Agreed with Leeds Highway Authority and Wetherby Town Council a programme of town centre footpath and street lighting improvements
- Taken part in the nationwide Heritage Open Days programme
- Offered its members a varied programme of talks, lectures and outings

3. Membership

Membership is open to any person interested in the well-being of the town.

It is the Society's membership subscription which primarily provides the funds enabling it to carry out its tasks.

4. Communications & Profile

Every member receives a newsletter reviewing the work of the society at least twice a year.

The Civic Society Website - www.wetherbycivicsociety.org.uk - outlines the work and features projects of particular interest.

The work and activities of the Society feature regularly in The Wetherby News.

The Society is often approached and consulted by the Town Council and Local Authorities. Representatives are invited and attend planning consultations.

The Society regularly works in partnership with other groups in the town such as Wetherby Historical Society, Wetherby Historical Trust, Wetherby in Bloom, Wetherby Weir Preservation Trust, Wetherby Arts Festival and the Town Council.

5. Organisation

The work of the Society is led and monitored by an Executive Committee of up to twelve members elected each year at the Annual General Meeting.

The Executive Committee meets six times a year.

Ongoing tasks are currently delegated to three sub-groups which include other members of the Society:

a. Trees Working Party: overseeing an ongoing planting & maintenance programme.

b. Planning Working Party: monitoring and commenting on planning applications with particular attention to those within the town centre Conservation Area.

c. Events Programme Group: planning and overseeing a programme of outings and events organised on behalf of the Society.

In addition occasional task groups are appointed for time-limited objectives e.g. Wharfedale Lawn Working Party.

Every aspect of the Society's work and activity is regularly monitored and reviewed by the Executive Committee and reported back to members through the Newsletter and Annual Meeting.

6. Looking Forward

The focus of the work is governed by the Aims. (See 1. above)

The Executive Committee has become adept in identifying specific, tangible and manageable objectives on which to focus for a time-limited period.

In recent years these have included:

- The erection of Blue Plaques marking sites of historical significance.
- The establishment of a Lime Tree Grove in Hudson Park.
- The restoration of the Georgian Bath House and surrounding Gardens.

The Executive Committee will continue to be open to receive proposals put forward by members of the Society, residents of the town, and other groups to which the Society has affiliation.

Priorities will be agreed and reviewed in the light of the Society's Aims and available resources.