



Wetherby Civic Society

SPRING 2026 NEWSLETTER

Dear Member(s),

A Happy New Year!

As a society, we have had a relatively good 2025 with excellent visits and talks and financially we are in a positive situation. The receipt of the assets from the dissolved Wetherby Historical Trust has resulted in extra work in cataloguing and sorting their archive material, which is being undertaken by Angela Winterbottom and Charles Stones along with former WHT Chairman Mike Bale, for which we are grateful.

AGM

Our AGM this year will be held on Monday 9 March at St James Church Centre at 7-30p.m. We shall present our annual report, approve the 2024/5 accounts, answer any queries from the floor and elect officers for the coming year. Immediately after the AGM, Peter Catton will give a talk entitled "Hallfield Hall - 200 years of History". This is another in the series about the vanished mansions of Wetherby and tells the history of what became known as "Hallfield Mansions" and was destroyed only 20 years ago. Visitors are also welcome to attend this meeting, but of course cannot vote in the AGM. The entrance fee is members - £4, non members - £7. Pay at the door.

VISITS AND TALKS

2026 will see another series of interesting visits and talks.

In April, we shall have a guided tour of Wentworth Woodhouse, near Barnsley, which is a Grade 1 listed building with the longest facade of any house in the UK. Begun in 1724, it is a classical Palladian masterpiece, which belonged to the Rockingham dynasty and subsequently to



Wentworth Woodhouse



Markenfield Hall

the Fitzwilliams. Our May visit is to the Leeds Recycling and Energy Recovery Centre, where we shall see how the contents of our black bins generate electricity.

Markenfield Hall is our destination for June, where we shall have a guided tour of this mediaeval moated house, near Ripon. The house, built in the 14th Century, was owned by one of the leaders of the pro catholic "Rising of the North" in 1569.

Our walking tour, this year in July, is a guided tour around East Keswick. Our Summer Talk, "Privas – Wetherby's Twin town since 1992", will be given by Cindy Bentley in August in the Municipal Offices. As usual, the talk will be followed by cake and fizzy wine.

Our final visit of the year will be a guided tour of Temple Newsam in September. This will be followed by our final talk in October by Roger Taylor, entitled, "RAF Boston Spa – a Brief Operational History".

You will be receiving your programme of events soon along with information on the AGM in March. We shall email application forms and details of each event to **ALL MEMBERS about 3 weeks before the event**

for you to register and pay for your visit. The obvious exception is the pay at the door events in March and October.

PLANNING

On a planning front the year has ended on a hiatus; the Stockeld Park applications for building on the edge of Wetherby off Harrogate Road and off Sicklinghall Road have not progressed but hang over us like the Sword of Damocles, we await the next step in the development of the new Leeds Local Plan and we have not yet had a substantive response to our application to have the municipal offices listed. 2026 looks as if it could be a difficult year for Wetherby.

We recently discovered that Taylor Wimpey were seeking to amend one of the conditions for building off Racecourse Approach, to allow houses to be occupied before agreements had been reached on the funding of pavements and crossings alongside Racecourse Approach and York Road. We have opposed this attempt to put cashflow before road safety.

ANGEL INN

We are delighted to welcome the successful reopening of the Angel Inn in Wetherby. For far too long we had to put up with the eyesore of a disused building in the middle of Wetherby. This was a planning application which we supported, only suggesting that the colour be returned from mustard to pale beige, the name returned to "The Angel" and that the Blue Plaque be retained. Wetherspoons accepted our suggestions and the building is returned to its former glory.

SWINNOW HALL



plaster & quern

The West Yorkshire Archaeological Service contacted us to say that they were about to discard the finds from their excavations at the building site off Racecourse Approach, and would we like to have any of them. Our Chairman and Treasurer visited their offices in Morley and after clambering over bricks and racking we decided to keep only some painted mortar from the Hall and a fragment of a Roman Period quern stone. They were also kind enough to provide us with two hard copies of their report, which featured our leaflet on Swinnow Hall in the appendices. The remains and one of the copies of the report have been added to the collection of documents and artefacts inherited from Wetherby Civic Trust and the other copy will be donated to the Wetherby library.

YORKSHIRE & HUMBER ASSOCIATION OF CIVIC SOCIETIES

Our committee member, Malcolm Gardner, gave a presentation and demonstration of AI at the AGM of the Yorkshire & Humber Association of Civic Societies. The talk included an AI biography of Quintin Rhodes and showed what AI thought he would look like today.



Quintin Rhodes – Then and Now

MEMBERSHIP

Membership organisations, such as ours, face a continuing task of replacing the departing membership with new members. As usual with our new year, numbers have fallen with members moving or no longer able to be active. We would be delighted to hear from anyone who wishes to join our Society in order to contribute to maintaining Wetherby as a pleasant place to visit and live. You can contact our secretary by email at jean.chapman930@gmail.com and can find out more at our website at www.wetherbycivicsociety.org.uk.

Please note that the AGM will be a final opportunity for those who have not yet paid their subscription for 2025/6 to do so.

Please feel free to pass this newsletter on to others.