



# Wetherby Civic Society

## SUMMER 2023 NEWSLETTER

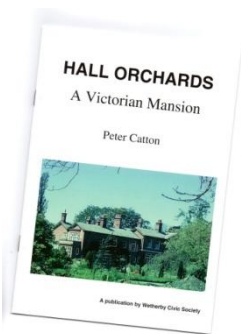
Dear Member(s),

We held our AGM in St James' Church Hall in March. Reports on our progress were made, with membership increasing slightly and a financial surplus being achieved. The existing Chairman Peter Catton, Vice Chairman Roger Taylor, Secretary Jean Chapman, Treasurer Angela Winterbottom and other members of the Committee were re-elected unopposed. Members were invited to join the Committee, but unfortunately no-one put themselves forward.



*Chairman Peter Catton*

### **VISITS AND TALKS**



After the formal AGM, Peter Catton gave a talk on the history of the now demolished Hall Orchards, now the site of Hall Orchards Avenue, Meyrick Avenue and Netherdale Court. The story of this house, its owners and its residents is in the new booklet, "Hall Orchards – A Victorian Mansion", published by Wetherby Civic Society. The booklet is now available at Castlegate Stationers for a price of £3.

In April, we visited Ogden Jewellers in Harrogate to be given an interesting talk on the history of this late Victorian jeweller who capitalised on the popularity of Harrogate as an up market holiday destination by moving from selling vegetables to fine jewellery. Indeed his account book had vegetables on one page and jewellery on the next! The founder was involved in funding and popularising the work of Howard Carter in Egypt, but eventually fell out with him. Unfortunately, unlike this visit, not many of our talks start with a glass of fizzy wine!

The visit in May on a beautiful sunny day was to Hovingham Hall, the home of the Worsley family. The house was built in the 1760s to meet Thomas Worsley's twin passions; architecture and horses. As a result, the house is in the Palladian style and entrance is through an indoor riding school with the main rooms on the first floor built over the original stables! Everyone attending was delighted with the tour led by a knowledgeable guide.

Our next event is a visit to Kadampa Meditation Centre located in the renovated White Cloth Hall, about which a talk is included, on Thursday 13 June. Following last year's popular tour of Tadcaster, we shall be having an evening guided tour of Knaresborough on Tuesday, 23 July. Our Summer Talk, "Buildings in the Great Sale of Wetherby" will be given by Victor Hawkins on Thursday, 15 August, in the Council Chamber of the Wetherby Civic Offices on Westgate.

Application forms and details of each event will be emailed to ALL MEMBERS about 3 weeks before the event.

### **SALE OF WETHERBY BICENTENARY**

Planning and fund raising for the celebration of the Great Sale of Wetherby continues. This is being undertaken by a committee, now chaired by Ian Leadley from the Old Men's Parliament. The commemoration plaque will be unveiled at noon on Saturday, 12 October, by the Lord Lieutenant of West Yorkshire. A grant of £900 from Wetherby Town Council toward the occasion has been approved.



### **RACECOURSE APPROACH**

There have been no further developments on the housing development off Racecourse Approach. We believe that the main emphasis for Taylor Wimpey is in finalising the price they will pay the owners of the land. (We are informed this is always a convoluted negotiation). We have had no further word on the Persimmon application. With the

current poor level of demand for new houses, we think that both developers are in no hurry, especially when the very high costs of the infrastructure that is needed before the first house can be built, is considered.

## **LIDL**

At the last moment, Lidl have lodged an appeal against the rejection of their plans to build a supermarket and retirement complex on the site of the Mercure Hotel. This means that a government planning inspector will hold an enquiry into the application. We are told that this will be between 6 months and a year away. Despite Lidl making confident claims that they will win, they will be facing the clear legal objections set out in Leeds Council's rejection. However, one never knows for sure the outcome of these enquiries. It is unfortunately only a forlorn hope that Lidl will seek a more suitable site in Wetherby for their store.

## **BATHHOUSE**

We have raised the problem of poor access into the Bathhouse with Wetherby Town Council, at the recent Town Meeting. Their consultant's report recommended improved handrails to make entry safer.

Their response was that further expenditure on the Bathhouse was a low priority. We shall be pursuing this further.

## **RIVER WHARFE**

We are delighted to hear that the Wharfe in Wetherby has been granted "bathing water" status. The monitoring point will be near the bandstand beside the Wilderness Car Park. This means that samples from the river will be analysed more frequently NOT that the water is suitable for bathing! It is, however, a first step towards improving water quality. We had previously provided a letter of support for the application.



*Wharfe Sewage Spill*

We have also pursued a member's notification, of a sewage leak from a manhole cover adjacent to the river, with Yorkshire Water. They have assured us that "*the problem has now been resolved*". They accept that "*There was an ongoing sewage spill from the manhole at the time which did enter the watercourse and it was reported as a formal Pollution Event to the Environment Agency*". Watch this space!

## **BALSAM BASHING**

Yes it's that time of year again. For the last three years we have been removing Himalayan Balsam from the Ings and Scour Bank. This immigrant is an annual, but spreads its seeds every year. We have made a significant impact on the problem, but we need to maintain momentum to eradicate it. This year we plan to have an evening event on Tuesday, 16 July meeting, at 7p.m. beside the arch on Scour Bank. More details nearer the date, but meanwhile make a note in your diary.

## **ARCHIVES**

We are concerned that the many old photos of Wetherby and surrounding villages could be lost to future generations as the owners pass away. Member Nic Sheppard has been tasked with identifying a practical way to make these images available on line for future generations to access. More details of the way ahead in future Newsletters.

## **MEMBERSHIP**

We are striving to maintain Wetherby as a pleasant place to visit and live. We would be delighted to hear from anyone who wishes to play a more active part in our work and anyone who wishes to join the Society. You can contact our secretary by email at [jean.chapman930@gmail.com](mailto:jean.chapman930@gmail.com) and can find out more at our website at [www.wetherbycivicsociety.org.uk](http://www.wetherbycivicsociety.org.uk). Note that as an introductory offer, new members joining now will receive their 2025 membership included in this year's fee.

*Please feel free to pass this newsletter on to others.*