

Wakefield LitFest

Inside ~~~~~

A selection of
short stories and
articles exploring
Wakefield's past.



2022

There is evidence of people living in Wakefield dating back to prehistoric times. From Roman mines to revolutionary machinery, from women breaking down barriers to the transport links which connect us to the rest of the country. It's innovation, science and technology which form the building blocks of the city which we call home today. In this zine, we unpack the past, exploring the stories of the influential figures, innovations and industries which shaped Wakefield.

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CREATIVITY vs LOGIC?

by Amy Winder

Many people seem to consider mathematics and art to be a binary; they are two separate things, which you must choose between, with any artistic ability rendering you incapable of something so sterile as mathematics.

Growing up, many people took my interest in theatre, writing and crafting, to be incongruous with my passion for mathematics. And even now, my work in the arts industry confounds those who know me from my evening class in data science and AI.

However, even in making that metaphor comparing art and mathematics, I took a mathematical concept - a binary - and creatively applied it to another concept, and in doing so I effectively communicated a certain perspective to my reader. I fully believe that creativity and logic are related tools that frequently work together. I might even be tempted to say that they are such connected concepts that I don't think either one can be effective without making use of the other.

Despite having spent most of my life in Wakefield, I was surprised when I began to take notice of just how beautiful parts of my home are. When I came back from uni, having spent a little time away from the city, I noticed the countryside, the canals, the way of speaking, and even just how beautiful some of the architecture is in the city centre. The spire of the Cathedral, standing at 247 feet tall, is the highest in Yorkshire. And it was built back in 1860. Achievements like that one, to me, are some of the most obvious examples of how creativity and logic can work together. Large beautiful structures cannot exist without science and engineering.

As I spend time working in the arts and volunteering in creative spaces, I become more and more grateful for the analytical and logical skills that I honed during my mathematics degree. It's made me good at making plans, and looking over them to spot flaws and logical inconsistencies. The things I like to do - visit the Hepworth Art Gallery, The National Coal Mining Museum, or the Rose Garden in Thornes Park - all rely on scheduling, planning, and financial decisions. Basically maths.



It works the other way around too. At the very least, science and mathematics require creativity, but for me it's more than that; the way I do logic feels like a creative skill. I'm not capable of thinking through an action, its potential consequences, and the risks involved unless I can use creativity to come up with ideas about what might happen next.

During my degree, a significant strength in my work was my ability to come up with new approaches once I was stuck on a problem (and I would say that at least 99% of doing maths consists of being stuck on a problem). When I hit a roadblock, I could come up with ideas about what different approaches might exist, then pick the one which had the most potential as a solution.

I take a similar approach when I invent crochet patterns or decide which plot thread to highlight in my stories.

It's important not to undermine the value of communication in science. A person can make any number of groundbreaking discoveries, but unless they're able to communicate their findings and the evidence behind them, those discoveries are effectively useless. A stumbling block for many young mathematicians is a reluctance to engage in group work and

communication based projects, things which are often seen as unrelated to maths. However, teamwork is core to mathematics. According to a paper by Richard and Sun, in 2015 a mathematical paper had on average 2.4 authors, and this number was on the increase. Ideas are generated by discussion and developed by communication.

I know that many of my interests happen to fall into areas which are more traditionally considered strictly creative or logical pursuits. Not everything is considered to be such a strict binary; for example, many people would agree that a good politician should be able to communicate with the people who they represent, come up with ideas to solve problems, and logically think through the potential consequences to their actions.

I think the world at large would benefit from avoiding arbitrarily assigning everything as one thing or another, and embrace the concept of creativity and logic as tools which can be used together to create an improving, more comfortable, and more fulfilling life for us all.

Creativity or logic?
I'd pick both.

JOHN HARRISON

by John Broadhead

That's the thing about revolution: the sheer mundanity. The inventions and ideas that colour our history in the deepest hues are not always the most storied; not always the inevitable result of a tumultuous past yielding to an irrepressible future. To think of history as such diminishes it, until it is reduced to little more than the telling of time.

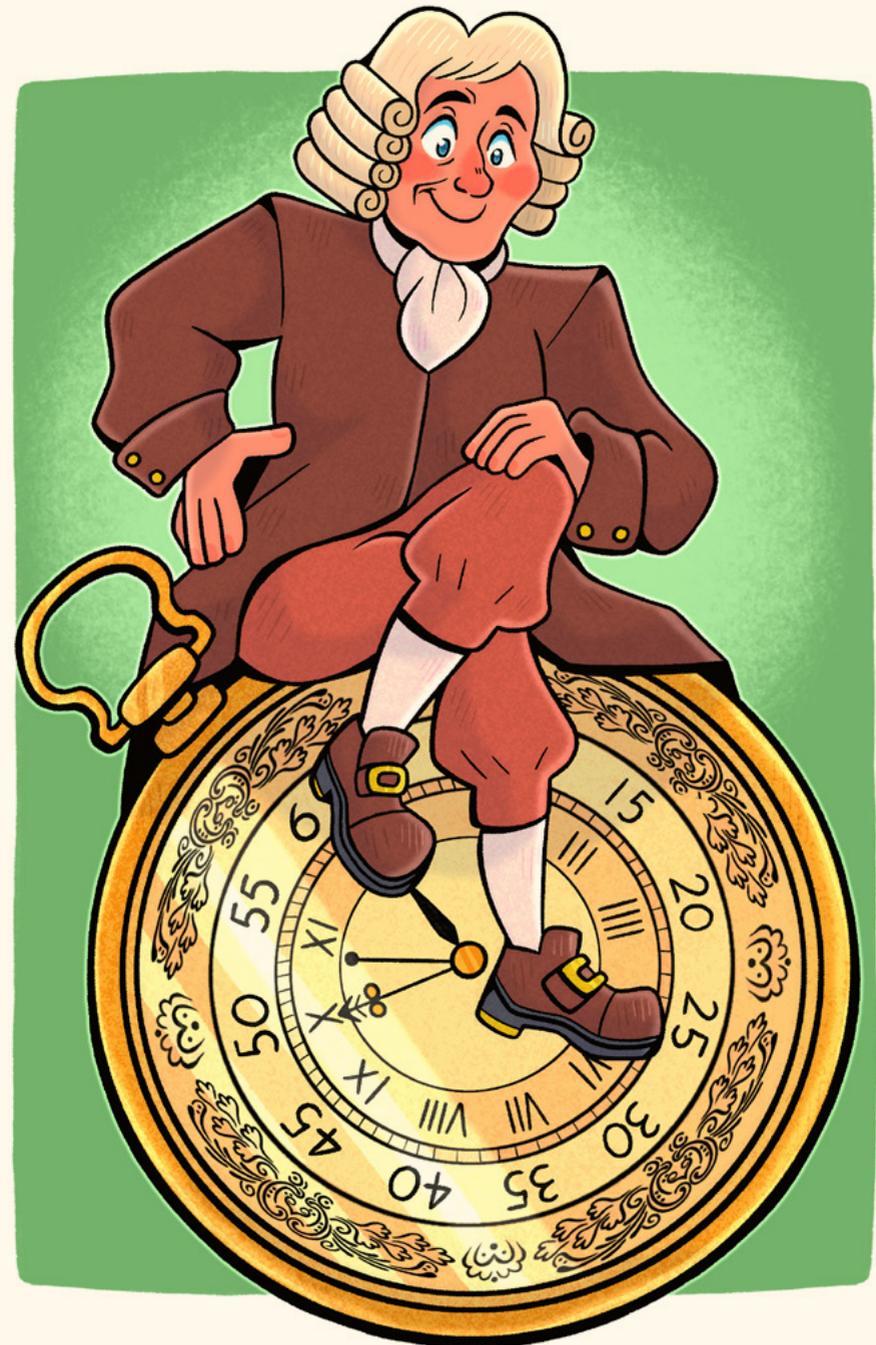
Appropriately then, I would like to talk about a man who liked clocks.

John Harrison was born in 1693, in a hamlet southeast of Wakefield. His stepfather returned home one day, to a house which now bears a blue plaque, and found his son stricken with smallpox. Now, it's difficult to place ourselves in his shoes. We exist in a different universe - before vaccination and before germ theory, when all a father could do was hedge bets against fate and be strong. He took his pocket watch, and entrusted it to his son in some attempt at comfort. Young John Harrison took it up

into his hands, and a life-long fascination was initiated. The exact time of the event is, frustratingly, unknown.

To move from the smaller setbacks of the age to the larger confusions: the further you are from home, the harder it becomes to navigate. This is rarely ideal in modern times, and was a seemingly unsurpassable hurdle for seafarers of the age. The finest navigators of the time were able to estimate speed, wind, and direction to roughly gauge where in the ever-expanding world a boat was; a practice called 'dead reckoning'. It was desperately inaccurate. For each stumbled-upon new world was a lost shipment, a missing merchant, a ship cast away into the merciless sea never to return. Dead reckoning led many sailors to meet their reckoning, assuredly dead - and a superior means of navigation was needed.

There are, in a sense, two components to accurate navigation: measuring longitude, and measuring latitude. Measurement almost always requires



a reference - rulers for distances, scales for weight, etc. The sun is the ultimate reference, as we know where in the sky it is, and where it will go. The angle from the horizon to the sun's highest point is, conveniently, related to how far north or south you are. With that relatively simple observation, the measurement of latitude was no longer a problem. The trouble is, knowing how far north you are isn't much help at all, unless you're travelling directly to the poles. East and west were next up, and attention was returned to the sun.

We know the sun rises in the east and sets in the west. It undergoes this journey along a path we may predict, and does so every day. It is so reliable in this transit that we keep time by it: noon being the time at which the sun is highest. Noon in London, however, is not the same as noon in Tokyo, a phenomenon which seemed to depend upon (gasp!) east and west. One would need only to make measurements of the sun, compare the time where you are with the time from where you set off and your location was no longer a mystery. You just needed a clock.

Now, accurate clocks are engineering miracles, particularly at sea. Pendulums were unreliable with the rising and crashing of a ship's bow; springs corrode from salt and expand with heat. A seafaring clock would make navigation possible, but it was beyond some of the

finest minds of the age. Isaac Newton threw his hands up, declaring 'when longitude at sea is lost, it cannot be found again by any watch'. A bounty of £20,000 (£3.2m today) was offered by Parliament for a clock that had been deemed impossible.

But John Harrison *really* liked clocks.

Set upon a lifelong love of gears, teeth, pendula, springs, and hands by the comforting gesture of his stepfather, it was John Harrison who solved what is now ominously known as the Longitude Problem, with his H4 sea-watch, in 1730. The finer points of his mechanical chronometry aside, we owe our present world to him. The Age of Sail and the Age of Empire were initiated with his clocks. He received the bounty (and used it to make more clocks) but the reward in a broader sense was his place in the annals of history - his name etched indelibly on the chronicles of human progress. And all for making very, very good clocks.

It is a beautiful thing; that the passion of one person can drive the world. The fires inside us fuel the great foundry of human progress, ignited by sparks as insubstantial as the giving of a gift to a son. Securing a future for ourselves, then, may be best accomplished by stoking the fires and passions of the people around us. Perhaps not. We will not lament in years hence, however, having built a truly better world.

CHARLES WATERTON

by Jeevan Ganatra

Charles Waterton is well known for being an innovative explorer, naturalist, taxidermist, and most importantly, a great British eccentric. There simply is no other way to describe a man who acted as a butler in his own home to tickle his visitors' ribs with the coal brush!

Waterton was always known to have an eccentric and adventurous personality – for example, he enjoyed dressing as scarecrows and sitting in trees as well as pretending to be a dog and biting his guests at the door. Several attempted to give him and his personality a bad name, however, truth be told, Waterton's eccentricities are one of the reasons he was such a successful naturalist. Even at a young age, his love for nature was evident; he recalls "there was an ample supply of woods and hedgerow trees to ensure a sufficient stock of carrion crows, jackdaws, jays... merlins, and sparrow-hawks, for the benefit of natural history

and my own instruction and amusement" at Tudhoe School, as well as "escaping through a thicket of yew trees" to a neighbouring wood to visit a carrions crow's nest at Stonyhurst College.

After leaving college, Waterton took over an estate in British Guiana, South America, which was ironically also called Walton Hall, although it was a sugar plantation employing over 200 slaves. Perhaps the similarity in the names but the difference between the estates shows how Waterton's moral values were significantly different to the rest of the world. Charles made it clear in print that he was against the slave trade, saying 'it can never be defended' and calling it 'the devil's invention', and so he sold the plantations. Waterton was keen in exploring more of South America, so undertook four trips between 1812 and 1824 (The Wanderings), which were made harder by his enthusiasm, impatience, and blatant clumsiness. The



most important discovery to come from this was Curare, which he brought back from his first trip in Portuguese Guiana (Brazil). Initially, he thought the drug would be useful to cure rabies, but it had much more potential. He investigated how it affected animals by injecting it into a female donkey, who was expected to die as its breathing shut down. It survived for a further 25 years due to Waterton's quick thinking with artificial breathing. Frustratingly, it wasn't until 1940s that Waterton's discovery was used properly in clinical settings to cure tetanus and as anaesthetic.

Throughout his journeys, Waterton collected over 200 South American birds and other animals. This includes the famous capture of a caiman crocodile by riding on its back - which has been retold in a painting currently at Wakefield Museum - and a boa constrictor captured by supposedly punching it on the nose (to which I respond with 'pics or it didn't happen'). A lot of scientists at the time, who Waterton called 'closet-naturalists', were taken aback by his stories with some, namely William Swainson, claiming he masked the truth in the 'garb of fiction'. He developed a unique method of taxidermy, where he soaked specimens with alcohol and bichloride of mercury and hollowed their insides to preserve the animal, which he taught to John Edmonstone, who later taught it to a teenage Charles Darwin. Waterton helped

inspire generations of environmentalists but seems never to get enough credit. On his third wandering in Demerara in 1820, he collected over 200 birds, two tortoises, a sloth (one of the first known descriptions of them), armadillos and a caiman. He often created satirical and comical characters with his new skill, some of which can be seen at Wakefield Museum, with my personal favourite being John Bull: a porcupine in a tortoiseshell with an almost-human face, weighted down by the national debt of £800 million surrounded by six devils, poking fun at the Church of England.

Upon his return to Wakefield, between 1821 and 1826, Waterton began his signature project. After seeing how the world treated wildlife, he decided drastic measures needed to be taken and built a 3 mile long, 8 feet tall wall around his 250 acres of land in Walton, creating the world's first nature reserve and bird sanctuary. At the time, this was a controversial development as most people enclosed an area to hunt wildlife, not to preserve and study it. He introduced several measures to ensure the preservation of bird life: he invented the Bird Nesting Box (birdhouse); hollowed out mature trees to provide a natural home; built sandbanks with 50 recesses to encourage the nesting of Sand Martians; and provided areas that the public can use (The Grotto), along with private spaces just for birds so that they



weren't constantly disturbed. Waterton enjoyed studying birds, inventing the Bird Hide (watchtowers where he could observe the birds without disturbing them) and built tall towers for Starlings to roost in (as they prefer high, exposed places) - he watched them through the telescope in his bedroom. Waterton banned shooting within the park, and to deter poachers he randomly placed easily identifiable wooden birds in trees in the estate, and if a gun was fired at them, they would be alerted.

Over 30 years there, 120 species of bird were spotted, some being rare at the time, such as Merlins and Peregrines. Waterton's favourite bird species were the Heron, of which there were many of in the park, hence the name of the lake (The Heronry).

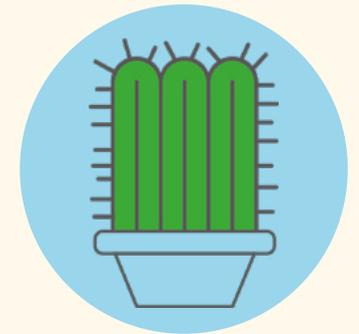
At age 82, Waterton had a heavy fall, fatally injuring his ribs and liver. He made it himself back to the house, where he asked for his windows to be open so he could pass with the chirping of the birds. Waterton was buried at the far end of the lake where he could be reclaimed by nature.

Charles Waterton's legacy still lives on today, with Walton Hall still being a natural home for birds, especially wildfowl, as well as educating visitors on the importance of preservation.

At the time, Waterton's scientific contributions - the discovery of curare, unique taxidermy, and bird conservation methods - were miniscule, however are now globally known, with there being over 200,000 protected nature reserves in the world. Waterton always dreamed of a world where people and nature coincided, but it is currently facing a climate crisis, with nature still being destroyed for personal gain. There is a great deal of work to be done before Waterton's dream is fulfilled.

'Waterton was one of the first people anywhere to recognise not only that the natural world was of great importance, but that it needed protection as humanity made more and more demands on it'

- Sir David Attenborough





DAME ELSIE MARJORIE WILLIAMSON

by Toni Stephenson

Recently dubbed “Professor Quantum,” Dame Elsie Marjorie Williamson’s achievements took her from Wakefield to Durham, to Royal Holloway College. This is the story of how a girl from Belgrave Terrace in Wakefield became a doctor in theoretical physics and transformed the landscape of education in some of the country’s most historic university colleges.

Marjorie Williamson PhD was born in Burton-on-Trent in 1913. Before her first birthday, her family moved into a two-bedroom terrace in central Wakefield where she remained for her childhood, gaining a scholarship to the Wakefield Girls’ High School. At a time when most women’s career choices were limited and those who attended

university were steered towards teaching, Marjorie subverted social pressures. She gained not only one, but two degrees in mathematics and physics from Royal Holloway College, University of London.

It was at this university that she began her career as a physicist, first working as a demonstrator, undertaking various practical experiments for students to observe. She first began lecturing at what was then the University College of Wales in Aberystwyth during the Second World War, before moving to Bedford College in London in 1945. Here, she remained for a decade, and began to throw herself into research in ground-breaking theoretical physics for her PhD.



Marjorie’s research focussed on three areas of physics, the first being quantum mechanics. This field seeks to explain phenomena on the scale of atomic and subatomic particles. Scientific research in this area surged in the late 19th and early 20th centuries when scientists began to discover the limitations of classical physics which only explains phenomena on a scale familiar to human experience, essentially, things that humans can see. This overlooked huge elements of large and minute scale science, which quantum mechanics opened the door to.

Her second area of research was in the theory of relativity. This is made up of two elements proposed by Albert Einstein: the theories of special relativity and general relativity, published in 1905 and between 1907 and 1915 respectively. The theory of special relativity explores the relationship between space and time, taking into account the speed of light as a constant. The theory of general relativity explores the effects of gravitational pull on objects within its field. These theories gave physicists the framework with which to explain black holes, neutron stars and gravitational waves.

The third element of Marjorie’s research, electromagnetic theory, is the study of electronically charged particles which create phenomena such as the Northern lights. The research in these fields in the early to mid-twentieth century were transformative in the way we view space and time, and Marjorie’s achievements within these are doubly impressive given the male dominance in the field.

Alongside her participation in some of the most ground-breaking discoveries in twentieth century physics, Marjorie’s later career ensured that the landscape of education in the universities she worked at was brought up to date. Following her PhD, she moved to Durham to become the principal of one of Durham University’s oldest colleges, St Mary’s.





This was originally established in 1899 as a pioneering women's only college. Marjorie embodied the pioneering element of the institution by overseeing its expansion and supported plans for the development of new buildings.

In 1962, she was invited back to Royal Holloway College as principal, where she studied her undergraduate degrees. Here she followed the same path as she did in Durham, working to expand the university, overseeing the development of new buildings, and hiring of staff from more disciplines such as music and computer science, demonstrating her championing of all scientific and artistic disciplines. The most notable development at Royal Holloway under her stewardship was its transformation to a co-education university. Much like St Mary's at Durham, Royal Holloway had previously been women only, but by the time Marjorie returned, she felt the separation of men and women in education was outmoded. She also continued to lecture whilst working there in order to stay in touch with students and their needs.

From 1970, she spent three years as Deputy Vice Chancellor of the University of London and was awarded the Order of the British Empire on her retirement, becoming a Dame. Even after she had retired, Marjorie continued to contribute to the administration of universities, being involved in selecting candidates for Commonwealth Scholarships for international students to study in the UK.

In recent years, Marjorie's achievements have been recognised by the Forgotten Women of Wakefield Project with a heritage blue plaque on her childhood home. This included her work in the field of physics being honoured at Wakefield's 2019 Festival of the Moon, with a play titled "Professor Quantum" having been written by Wakefield playwright Caleb Shepherd.

Dame Marjorie's legacy lives on, not only in the field of physics, but also across her universities and the lives of those who have attended them. She was a pioneer in both science and society and a remarkable credit to Wakefield.

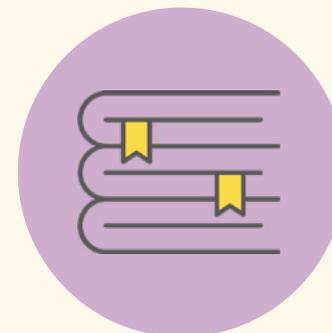


GEORGE DUNHILL

by Olli Watkins

The Pontefract Cake may be one of the Wakefield District's most well-known and widespread exports, although perhaps more in terms of concept than the actual finished product these days. This liquorice-flavoured confectionery was invented in its modern form by local apothecary and liquorice farmer George Dunhill, when in 1760,

at the age of just seven, he added sugar to medicinal liquorice lozenges, creating the sweet we know and love today. Within a few decades, manufacture of Pontefract Cakes was a major industry in Pontefract, with factories producing around 25,000 a day. Liquorice farming in Pontefract remained popular until around the 1960s, when it became cheaper to import liquorice from its native Middle East than grow it locally. Production of Pontefract Cakes is now significantly done by Haribo, who acquired the Dunhill company in 1994 and operate factories in Castleford and Pontefract.





From those tall intrepid plants
Growing spritely in the fields,
Comes a tar as hard as coal-
The most unusual of yields.

Add a spoonful of sugar-
Help the medicine go down.
Add a spoonful of sugar-
Change the history of a town.

A small black liquorice coin,
To which the world will take,
Stamped with Ponte Castle,
The newfound Pomfret Cake.

And within forty years or so,
Come near a dozen factories,
Churning out those small black discs,
With love and soul and practise.

It may not be liked by everyone,
A lozenge potent and sweet,
But for those of us that love it,
It's a classic Yorkshire treat.

Let Wakey have their rhubarb.
Let Haworth have their Brontes.
We'll keep to our liquorice cakes-
The pride and joy of Ponte

MINING IN WAKEFIELD

by Amy Winder

As the home to the National Coal Museum, it's clear that coal mining plays an important part in Wakefield's history. From the people who made their living from coal, to the communities they built and the innovations they made, coal has left its mark on the city.

In Castleford, Roman coal-fired pottery kilns have been found, indicating that some level of local mining operation must have been happening nearly two thousand years ago. A better recorded example of coal mining in Wakefield is the Augustinian Monks from Nostell Priory, who mined in Crofton starting from the 1200s.

Similar small-scale mining operations continued over the centuries, but it was the Industrial Revolution which kicked off Wakefield's connection to coal in a big way.

In operation by 1775, Newmarket Colliery is the first recorded major pit in Wakefield. The newly built canals meant

that the colliery had the export links needed to make the venture profitable. It certainly must have been successful, because the pit was in operation all the way up until 1983. At one time, 99 percent of men living in the village of Bottomboat worked at Newmarket Colliery.

Across the district, enough mines were sunk that by 1869 there were a total of 46 mines in Wakefield. Eventually the National Coal Board became Wakefield's largest employer.

As an industry which employed so many working class people in often dangerous conditions, it's no surprise that the history of mining is tied up with the fight for workers rights.

During the industrial revolution, model villages were settlements built by industrialists in order to house their workers. Often built by those who recognised that supporting the welfare of their employees improved productivity,



model villages provided a better standard of living for workers. Henry Briggs built one such village after purchasing Methley Junction Colliery in 1866. As well as providing housing, Briggs used his spare time to educate local youths.

Despite this apparent support of his workers, Briggs took a harsh stand against unionism. In 1862, Briggs evicted 41 families from their cottages after a dispute two years earlier in relation to trade unionism.



Perhaps inspired by this sort of conflict, Briggs made a significant innovation in colliery management: he decided to allow workers to reinvest a portion of their bonus to buy shares in the pits. The scheme meant upward of £40,000 was divided among the working people and more than 300 workers became shareholders. In a further step towards shared management, space was made for two employees to be elected towards the board of directors in exchange for an agreement that the workers would not strike, and instead settle issues by arbitration.

To say this deal was a straightforward improvement would ignore the vital changes which have been earned by unions and striking throughout history. However, workers having a seat at the table is also essential to improved working conditions, and this scheme did set out to put more of the profit where it belonged – in the hands of the workers.

Technological advancements are also among the innovations brought about by Wakefield's mining industry. Richard Sutcliffe was born in Ireland in 1849, and eventually moved to Yorkshire. During a time when many pits were still sunk by hand, Sutcliffe started designing mining machines. In 1892, he took out a patent on a coal cutting machine, and eventually

licensed it to the Diamond Coal Cutter Co. in Wakefield. Later, in 1905, Sutcliffe patented his coal belt conveyor, which removed the need for miners or pit ponies to haul heavy loads of coal away from the coalface. He started production at "Universal Works" in Horbury, named so because he believed his invention had universal application.

Wakefield's impact on mining reached across the country, leading the way in both worker rights and machinery advancements. Unfortunately, similarly to the rest of the UK, mining in Wakefield drew to a difficult close. Under the government of Margaret Thatcher, the coal mines around Wakefield were the first in Yorkshire to close. Between 1979 and 1983, the pits at Lofthouse, Manor, Newmarket, Newmillerdam, Parkhill, and Walton were all shut.

The lasting effects of mining can still be seen throughout the local area. Many towns and villages proudly display their pit head wheels as a memorial for the work and workers which used to sustain their communities. The National Coal Mining Museum continues to employ ex-miners to give underground tours and help educate local people about the history of mining, workers rights, and the important work of unions.



WHO WAS SIR EDWARD GREEN, 1ST BARONET?

by Wynn Crawshaw

Sir Edward Green was born on 4th March 1831. He was the son of Edward Green, a Yorkshire ironmaster who founded E. Green & Son. Edward Green Snr also patented 'Green's Economiser', a device that increases the steam-rising efficiency of the boilers of stationary steam engines. Modern-day boilers are still fitted with economisers which are descendants of Edward Green Snr's original design.

Sir Edward Green went to West Riding Proprietary School in Northgate. The building was erected in 1833 and is now home to The Queen Elizabeth Grammar School. Green was also educated at Eton College and at Oxford University. Later, Green went to Germany to study ironworking. After this he became an engineer in his father's business.

He served in the 1st West Yorkshire Yeomanry as a lieutenant and later

captain. Yeomanry stands for Volunteer Yeoman Cavalry and was formed in 1794 during the French Revolutionary Wars. This volunteer cavalry was proposed by Prime Minister William Pitt the Younger. He proposed that counties should form a force of Yeomanry that could be called on by the King to defend the country against invasion or by the Lord Lieutenant to subdue any civil disorder with the county. In 1897, the regiment became known as the Queen's Own Yorkshire Dragoons after the Sheffield squadron had the honour of escorting Her Majesty, Queen Victoria, at Sheffield.

In 1859, Green married Mary Lycett, daughter of William Edward Lycett of Bowdon Cheshire. Then, in 1865, they leased Heath Old Hall: an Elizabethan house (1584). This building was demolished in 1961 and was said to have been haunted by a Blue Lady, Dame Mary Bolles of Osberton, 1st Baronetess (1579-1662).



Green stood in the 1874 general election as a Conservative, where he was elected as Member of Parliament for Wakefield, however the election was declared void on petition. The accusation was bribery. Green was vice-president of a society where many of the members were his political supporters. These supporters bribed other people who attended this society's meetings.

In 1877, Green purchased the Snettisham Estate in North West Norfolk. He built a retreat called Ken Hill that was to be used primarily as a shooting lodge.

Later, Green became a director of the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway, and he was also a Justice of the peace for the West Riding of Yorkshire and for Norfolk. Additionally, he held the office of Deputy Lieutenant (D.L.) of Yorkshire.

Between 1874 and 1878, Green was a Governor of Wakefield Grammar School.

Despite Green's earlier unsuccessful run, in 1880 he stood for election again in Pontefract. He was not elected. However, when he returned to Wakefield at a by-election in July 1885 he won the seat, which he held until he stood down from the House of Commons at the 1892 general election.

On 5 March 1886, he was created a Baronet of Wakefield and Ken Hill (Norfolk, where he had his shooting

lodge). A Baronet is a hereditary dignitary, which ranks below barons but above all knights except, in England, Knights of the Garter and, in Scotland, Knights of the Garter and of the Thistle.

In 1890, Sir Edward and Mary's eldest son Edward Lycett Green achieved some notoriety as he was involved in the Royal Baccarat Scandal. This was a British gambling scandal involving the Prince of Wales – the future King Edward VII.

Lady Green died in King's Lynn on 7 November 1902, she was 67 years old.

Sir Edward Green died on 30 March 1923 at the age of ninety-two. Edward Lycett Green succeeded to the baronetcy on the death of his father.

On his passing, his obituary stated that "Sir Edward Green, Bart. [was] the head of the engineering firm of Messrs. E. Green and Sons, Ltd. [...] Under his care the business expanded enormously, and a sister company, the Green Fuel Economiser Co., was founded in New York."

On researching Edward Green, I have found him to be an ambitious man who did a lot with his life. His many jobs would indicate he had many passions: engineering, politics and more. I would say he was a successful man who followed his passions.



GERTRUDE MCPHERSON

by Toni Stephenson

Have you ever come across the name Gertrude McPherson? What if I were to tell you she was an author, artist, and educator with a pioneering voice, who was born and raised right here in our Merrie City of Wakefield. Born in 1882 and passing away in 1948, she lived through a time of huge social change, including suffrage movements and two world wars. The very existence of her work and what we can tell of her spirit from it, show that she consistently challenged the boundaries of the Victorian domesticity that was expected of her as a middle-class woman by the world she was born into.

Gertrude was born in St Johns, Wakefield. She was the ninth of 10 children, and her father was a merchant and worsted manufacturer, a type of high-quality wool, that was likely sold to local mills and traded world-wide as part of West Yorkshire's booming textile industry. She attended Wakefield Girls' High School between the ages of 10 and 20, and took

extra night classes for art. During her time as a student in Wakefield, she taught a Sunday School class at her church. This could be where her love for education was first founded as in 1902, she accepted a place at Liverpool University's School of Art to get a Drawing Teacher's Certificate.

Both her admission and her attendance were extraordinary achievements for the early twentieth century. The first women to be allowed to attend university in England were only admitted in 1868, just 34 years before Gertrude. Discussion of women's rights and suffrage were beginning to take hold in the later decades of the 1800s with petitions and marches becoming commonplace. However, on the whole, attitudes towards women and their education remained focussed on them finding a husband and having a family. They were expected to attend finishing school to refine their manners and learn to manage a household rather than gain more academic qualifications. Gertrude

however, crusaded out of this prescribed role by graduating in 1904 and beginning her career in education, teaching art at a school in Bury St Edmunds.

Aged 22, Gertrude decided she wanted to use her teaching experience for missionary work, travelling to provide

aid and education with the Church abroad. She was taken on by the London Missionary Society and undertook further training with the Women's Foreign Mission project of the United Free Church of Scotland, before being placed in Hong Kong where she lived for 17 years. Here, she lectured in Art at the Chinese Canton





College, now Lingnan University. While living in Hong Kong, Gertrude married and had four children, but still found time to paint and write, whether this be novels, essays, or articles. Following her return to England with her three daughters in 1925, she held an art exhibition in London, which featured her pen and ink paintings.

Gertrude's novel, "Few Things Are Needful," was published by the Macmillan Company in 1933. They also published it in the USA under the title *The Grey Cottage*. The story is about a group of strangers who meet up secretly and discuss current affairs, their lives, and experiences, while remaining strangers to each other in their day-to-day lives. The premise was inspired by actual events when, during a walk, Gertrude came across a group sat on a veranda, deep in conversation. Gertrude's children said they believe she used the novel as a conduit to express her thoughts about society through basing the main character loosely on herself. It's interesting, yet not surprising for the time, that Gertrude used a male character as a conduit to express her views on life and society. She likely felt this gave her more artistic freedom in the topics she could discuss. The book was also published under the penname 'G. McPherson' likely since this genderless name avoided the barrier of women not being taken seriously as authors.

Gertrude was still creating art right up until her death. Even after a stroke which hindered the mobility in her left arm, she continued to find solace in creativity and was planning another exhibition for her artwork, when she passed away in 1948, aged 65. While Gertrude only spent a third of her life in Wakefield, it was without a doubt the most formative and influential period. The surroundings of her upbringing were essential to her achievements. The opportunities she had were made possible because of her family's involvement in the city's booming textile industry, its nurturing of women's abilities through education and most likely through the influence of its early suffrage movement. Gertrude was fearless and uncompromising in achieving the life she envisioned for herself. Having been born into a Victorian society with strict limits on what women were able to do, her achievements were way ahead of her time. She attended university and forged her own path, from Wakefield all the way to Hong Kong, all before she even had the right to vote. Had she grown up in a different city, Gertrude's life might have taken a completely different path. Gertrude McPherson is therefore a pinnacle of what Wakefield can and has made. From where she came from to what she created, she is a culmination of the city's industrial, artistic and literary history.



ON CONCRETE

by John Broadhead

The manner in which we interact with the past is self-contradicting. We feel nostalgia; we look backwards to the foundations of our culture and our practices with fondness, yet we venerate invention. We encourage our children to change the world, but are at pains to inculcate in them an appropriate reverence for the world they must change. Whilst this contradiction is not inherently harmful, it leaves us at a perpetual nadir. We look forwards and backwards and in both directions see a better world. We are dragged ever downwards by the impossible weight of the present.

To begin this tale with the past: in the first century CE, Caesar Augustus busied himself with the pertinent questions of empire. Difficult though it is to believe, the most important matter in Rome at the time was skyscrapers. Dense cities need housing, but space comes at a premium; and since at times the only way to go is up, they built upwards in a

fashion we would not see again until the 20th century. Concerns of collapse and fire forced the hand of the government to establish a height limit for new buildings of seventy feet. It seems planning permission is not a new phenomenon, but this seems anachronistic. How could it be that the Romans were building 7-story blocks of flats? In fact, taller! How their building practices not only required a law limiting buildings to 7 stories, but Roman health and safety - *sanitas et salus* - determined 7 stories to be safe and economical?

The answer is concrete.

Roman concrete is the reason we have Rome today as we know it. Marvels such as the Pantheon dome and aqueducts were facilitated by an ancient building material which seems explicitly modern: a combination of lime and *pozzolana* - volcanic sands rich in silicates and aluminous compounds. The resulting mixture was *hydraulic cement*, becoming

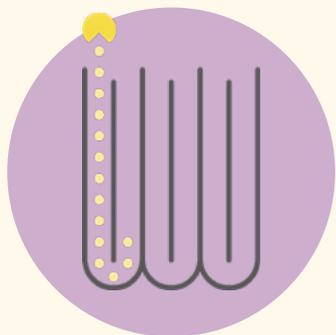


strong not by drying, but by chemical reaction with water. Hydraulic cement does not become brittle when rehydrated, accounting for phenomenal resistance to water and erosion, even allowing underwater construction. This is the secret to Roman longevity. These structures endured far beyond the fall of the Roman Empire, withstanding sacking by the Visigoths. Unfortunately the key to their construction did not, and Roman concrete became lost knowledge.

More than 1,300 years after the Fall of Rome, it was in Wakefield that the secret to mass construction would be discovered once again. Joseph Aspdin, a bricklayer, was granted the patent entitled *An Improvement in the Mode of Producing an Artificial Stone* in 1824, obtained a second patent for lime production in 1825. That same year he established a cement plant in Kirkgate.

The process and patents rendered in Aspdin's own words are dense, concerning argillaceous earth and the expulsion of carbonic acids. To briefly describe it: heating limestone then slaking it with water produces calcium oxide powder, sidestepping the difficult grinding of limestone rock. This powder is mixed with clay and heated, yielding a stony material called clinker, which is ground into Portland cement (named so by Aspdin himself for the Isle of Portland in Dorset, known for fine stone). When mixed with water, this substance undergoes a reaction wherein water in the slurry gradually becomes part of the stone itself, rather than drying out as we may intuitively expect. This process was relatively simple - feasible at industrial scale with the technology of the time, but not immediately understood for the world-changing invention it was. This was before rail; before the easy delivery of the quantities of limestone that could be processed, and Aspdin's patent refers specifically to the production of cement from road sweepings. The streets of Wakefield may not have been literally paved with gold, but they were paved with Pennine limestone, which to Joseph Aspdin was near enough. Ever industrious, he was twice prosecuted for the theft of paving blocks.

Concrete is perhaps the most significant building material of our age. Made from sand, aggregate and vast quantities of Portland cement, it has been employed



in nearly all construction since it became widely available. Reinforced with steel, it has loosened the bounds on humanity's ambition such that we now have skyscrapers which are almost vulgar in their disdain for gravity.

But it isn't perfect.

The production of Portland cement liberates vast quantities of carbon dioxide from the stone it is made from. This carbon accounts for one third of all industrial carbon emissions, and 8% of all emissions worldwide. Having opened

this article with an examination of our attitudes toward the past and the future - and having discussed the past - we must reflect very briefly on that future.

It is now a truth inarguable that climate change is an existential threat to our way of life. The practices bequeathed to us by inventors of the past are unsustainable, and the moment has been forced to its quick by our collective hesitance to act. We are in need of innovation to secure a future, and if we do not, we risk a future article detailing the lost secrets to the buildings of our age.

SANCTUARY

by Aoifké Madeleine

The creation of Wakefield Westgate, was by cutting through a house owned by John Milnes, to then create the station house. This incision opened the city to surrounding areas of Leeds and Doncaster, and further developments created further distance-- to cities like Newcastle, Ipswich and London. This, the inland ports, the

River Calder, all framed by Wakefield Cathedral's High Spire-- opened the city to the rest of the UK and thus the world. Industries prospered, and upon his visit, John Ruskin, as quoted in the final stanza of the poem-- realised Wakefield's might and importance. What was once an isolated town, became a connected and prospering city.

SANCTUARY *(continued)*

they cut right through
 that house^[a1]
 to make room for the influx;
 created the station
 built its viaduct; for
 people like
 Ruskin
 who stood by the Calder
 and realised the might of this town--
 the inland waters, distances, civic pride.
 and spilled out from that incision—
 was you and me. The beginnings of industry:
 only so much coal,
 only so much corn,
 only so much wool for warmth--
 given to the rest of the world, but not as we once knew it
 now Westgate announcements are towns and cities that you and I had never seen.
 Newcastle, Ipswich, the *Big Smoke*^[a2].

--

a floating chapel provides God on that river's waters^[a3]
 and carried us beyond the loop. further^[a4] than we
 could have
 ever dreamed.

*as the best of science and human skill can do little avail,
 against the force of nature*^[a5]

the 'two most frightful things, ever seen in life^[a6] '—

can never beat that high spire, its might and
 mosaicked history
 remains invincible. the sanctuary always found in
 our home-town.

[a1] Westgate was made from the cutting through of a mansion.

[a2] Reference to the new towns available because of the inland port--
<https://www.wakefieldhistoricalsociety.org.uk/wakefield-history/essays-on-aspects-of-wakefield-history/when-wakefield-prospered-as-an-important-inland-port/>

[a3] Reference to floating chapel on Thomas Wharf <https://www.wakefieldhistoricalsociety.org.uk/wakefield-history/essays-on-aspects-of-wakefield-history/when-wakefield-prospered-as-an-important-inland-port/>

[a4] Reference to the Calder's loop

[a5] Reference to the Wakefield Express' article on the Titanic disaster, <https://www.wakefieldhistoricalsociety.org.uk/wakefield-history/essays-on-aspects-of-wakefield-history/wakefield-and-the-titanic-disaster/>

[a6] What John Ruskin said when on the bridge, viewing the city -- <https://www.wakefieldhistoricalsociety.org.uk/wakefield-history/essays-on-aspects-of-wakefield-history/john-ruskin-and-wakefield/>



REGENERATION

by Jeevan Ganatra

Wakefield: a city with little opportunity and little character. Perhaps you're right, perhaps you're wrong. However, that's not how it used to be, and that's certainly not how it will be.

Imagine, the year is 1894. Wakefield's industry is booming as a successful market and inland port; it was a time before pedestrianisation, so shopping streets were shared with old Victorian motor vehicles; and photographs were still taken in black and white. Already there was the Wakefield Cathedral, Corn Exchange, The Six Chimneys Tudor House (which nowadays you probably know better as 'Spoons) and the industrially important Kirkgate train station. So, think of the town's excitement when Wakefield Theatre Royal opened, boasting itself in a quaint Victorian building designed by Frank Matcham; it really is Wakefield's little gem with it being his smallest surviving theatre. This wasn't Wakefield's first experience with theatre; in the late

Middle Ages, the "Merrie City" hosted the Towneley Mystery Plays. This was a cycle of 32 religious plays, which are well-renowned for being superior to other cycles from a literacy perspective, some being considered as the greatest work of mediaeval England drama.

In the heart of the city, home to people's worship for over 1000 years, stands the Wakefield Cathedral, a Grade I listed building with the highest spire in Yorkshire. Being one of the oldest functional buildings in Yorkshire, surviving through wars and storms, it really is Wakefield's best example of "triumph over adversity".

Perhaps one of the most culturally important buildings from the 1800s was The Wakefield Corn Exchange, a commodious and decorative stone-built structure with Grecian Revival style architecture: symmetrical with Corinthian-style columns; large, double-hung rectangular windows; classical pediments and an innovative glass roof.

Initially, the Corn Exchange was used as a venue for corn merchants, but later became host to numerous exhibitions and organisations, such as a roller-skating rink, with the most memorable being the Grand Electric Theatre, Wakefield's first cinema.

Now, before I fast-forward to 1986, travel halfway across the world, and see the travellers from Hot Tub Time Machine; I want to look at Wakefield three years prior. Wakefield had been a centre of shopping and trade for over 1000 years, and they finally decided to take advantage of this. In 1983, The Ridings Shopping Centre opened its doors to the public. A mixture of American and Canadian influences saw the revolutionary design come to life. Visitors could enter and exit on all levels, with the UK's first food court and glass wall climber lift, an exact replica of those in Hyatt Regency Hotel, Atlanta. This made it one of the most innovative developments of American-concept shopping centres in the UK at the time. It attracted over 4000 people before the centre even opened, with its queues to enter, and on busy days had to employ a lift attendant! At the time, the city also had an open market near the Bull Ring, and an indoor market, holding 387 stalls overall. These were as much of a shopping attraction as The Ridings, with a small fairground for children three days a week – a sight very different from today...

Today, Wakefield is but a shadow of its former self. Many of the historical structures I've mentioned are all but gone. The Tudor-era Six Chimneys Pub was demolished in the 1940s after a partial collapse and later replaced with modernised buildings (yes, including Spoons) that lose the original aesthetic. After a minor fire, the Corn Exchange was replaced with what is now a Sports Direct, Subway and Exchange House – 30 self-contained contemporary studio apartments.

Despite the demolition of many timber-framed buildings in the name of modernisation, there have been some cases of restoring the façade to recreate the original look; Fino Pizzeria's, 53 Northgate, front was restored to make it similar to the original Tudor 15th century aesthetic. The Civic Quarter regeneration is perhaps the largest completed project in the Wakefield district, which sees a part of the Westgate area restored to preserve the architectural and historic character. This includes developments such as Wakefield One which houses the Library and Museum, Merchant Gate mixed-use development, a modernised Westgate station, and smaller refurbishments such as cobbled paving.

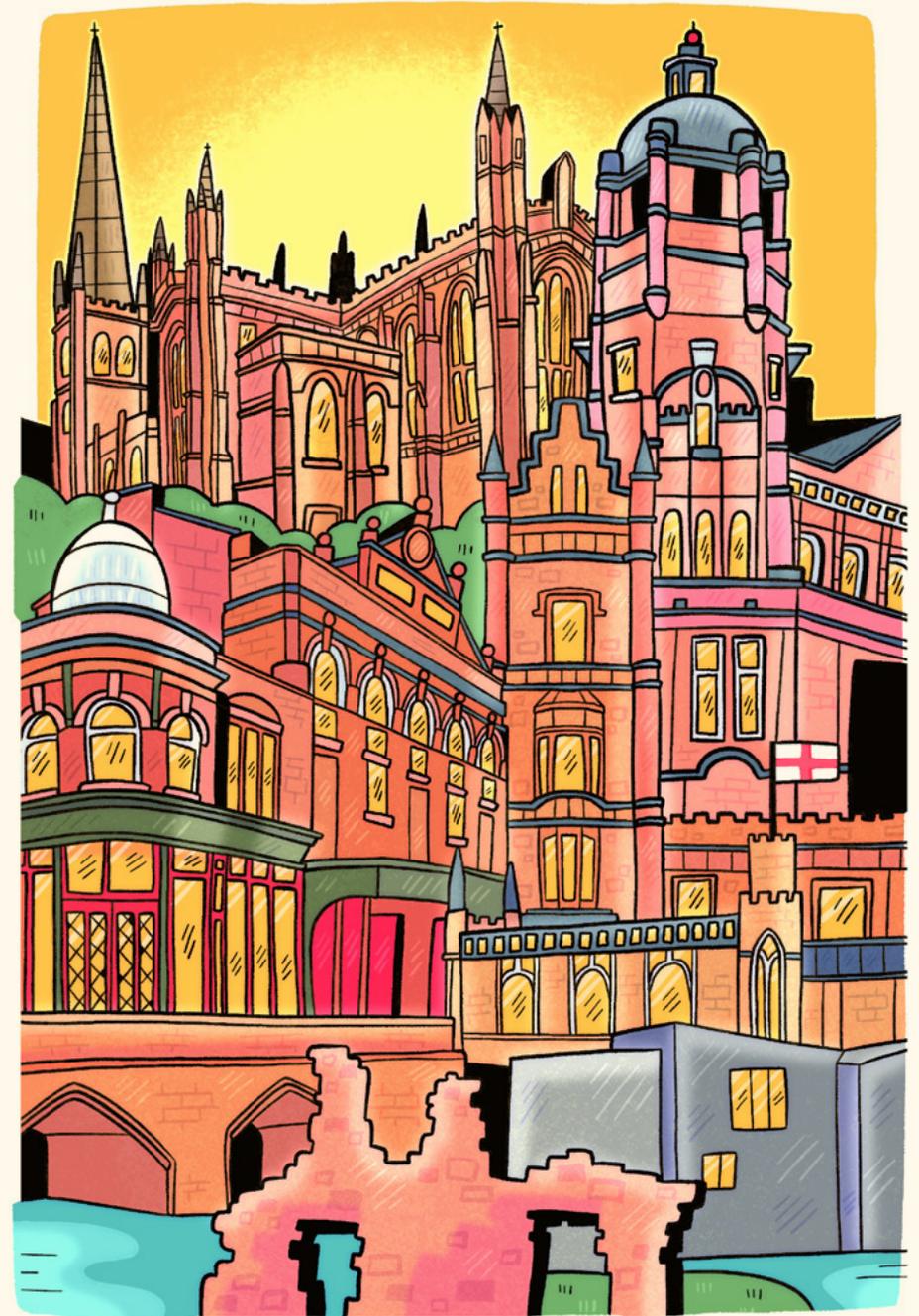
Shopping in Wakefield has significantly changed over the past 20 years. With more competition arising from around the region. The Ridings gradually lost popularity, but there have been two renovation projects at a total of £7.5 million, which saw the redesign of entrances and elevators, a new food court and space for 'pop-up' shops. However, it still suffers from empty units and low footfall. In 2011, Trinity Walk opened its doors for the first time, a partially enclosed shopping centre which originally had over 50 stores, including Sainsbury's, Next, Topshop and H&M. There has been some debate that this caused the downfall of The Ridings, and that more should've been invested in linking the two, rather than them competing in opposition; it seems Wakefield has a history of replacing the existing rather than expanding what we have.

Today, the collapse of leading retail brands has caused viability concerns over Trinity Walk, with there now being large vacant units, with more closing such as H&M in early 2022. But the council still insist Wakefield is "resilient". Other areas in Wakefield which contribute to its shopping aspects are Beck and Cathedral retail parks, which have undergone several regeneration projects over the years and are currently thriving with little derelict space. With a decreasing

number of independent shops and high street shops, Wakefield is becoming more and more like a clone town.

The entertainment sector in Wakefield has changed in the last decade alongside people's interests. Despite in-store shopping less, there is still an array of things to do: nightclubs such as Nocturno; bars such as RBT Video and The Establishment; and family attractions such as Theatre Royal, Cineworld and The Hepworth. The latter is an award-winning art gallery home to an extensive collection of works by some of the most significant British artists of the 20th century, including Barbara Hepworth and Henry Moore, with a garden designed by the distinguished Tom Stuart-Smith. The brutalist architecture of the building itself is interesting, being composed of ten trapezoidal blocks using self-compacting pigmented concrete to emphasise the gallery's sculptural appearance reflecting Barbara Hepworth's work, the first of its kind in the UK.

Despite this, a study was completed in 2020 evaluating the number of overnight trips to local attractions, including Wakefield Museum and The Hepworth, and the overall trend shows a loss of 150k trips in the past ten years. Wakefield's regeneration has been slowed by a lack





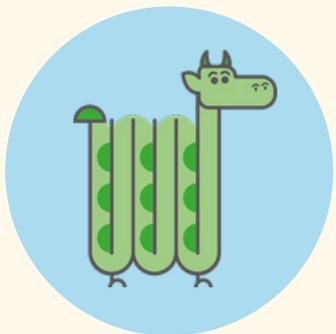
of funding from the government after the financial crisis 2008, with there being a 30% cut in council spending per person. After being listed as the sixth worst city to live in England, it is evident that work needs to be done.

Now I'd like you to imagine the year is 2042: Elon Musk finally got around to making both a flying and submarine car; hopefully the world is not like a game of Battlefield 2042; and obviously the Wakefield City Masterplan has been fulfilled.

The Masterplan highlights key areas where future regeneration projects, of which I'll only describe a few, will "drive spatial transformation to create a distinctive and vibrant centre at the heart of the district's economy". It will also make use of the £24m given through the Towns Fund. With over 50,000 sq ft of part-vacant surplus retail space, the council have plans to reduce this in The Ridings by 30% and repurposing to create over 100 residential or commercial units, for example, BHS has been derelict for 8 years, and the proposed plan is to convert it into Connect Wakefield – a museum, library and rooftop terrace café.

As for the Market Hall, after plans for a new cinema were thrown out, the council will make use of the Cultural Development Arts Fund to create a new arts gallery and turn it into a creative business incubation space. Already it has been used for the Festival of the Moon which attracted 30000 visitors.

Tileyard London is Europe's largest creative hub with over 200 creative organisations, and now Wakefield is welcoming its very own – Tileyard North will be the largest creative community outside of London which will make it a new innovative destination for creative partnerships in the North of England. Work began in April this year which will



oversee the restoration of the Victorian-style mill buildings, creating a new boutique hotel, and creative centre of events square.

Possibly the largest future project is the £2m restoration of at least 20 Victorian and Georgian buildings on Northgate, ensuring that older buildings and medieval street patterns are preserved. The council wants to create a much more mixed economy so they can attract people back to living in the centre, with more small businesses rather than banks, building societies and bars.

Despite the plans in place, some have been controversial. For example, the demolition of the ABC Cinema has begun, but received over 50 objections, including from the London-based Cinema Theatre Association, as there are no current plans to retain its historic significance. Another suggested issue of the Masterplan is that as you regenerate one area, other areas which receive no attention seem even more run-down; a clear example of this is the new Merchant Gate neighbouring the derelict Cheapside.

Transformation on this scale doesn't happen overnight, and an immense amount of planning is required, but in time, Wakefield will hopefully be back on the map.

Despite its many problems, Wakefield is a city I am proud of because it's been my home for almost 19 years, but I want others to want to come here and say that they are impressed. Everyone living here has created so many memories, whether it's watching your first movie at the Great Electric, watching your first play at Theatre Royal, or in my case, wanting to repeatedly ride the glass elevator in The Ridings. I want people to be able to make memories as great as that today. It has an abundance of impressive Victorian architecture, but hardly anyone appreciates this until it is pointed out. That's where the Masterplan comes into place – preserving and acknowledging its built heritage. So many people want Wakefield to be, in some way, connected to its past, including myself, and are disappointed in the number of historical buildings lost. But perhaps relying entirely on Wakefield's history to move forward isn't the right move; it needs to blend, recreating the past with creating a modern, digital city. Wakefield is changing, and soon, it won't be a city that seems forever lost, but it will be a city to be proud of.





ABOUT THE WRITERS AND ILLUSTRATOR

Amy Winder is a 23 year old freelance writer, maths graduate and data scientist in training from Wakefield. She's passionate about lots of things, from crafting an ever growing supply of crocheted stuffed animals and building creative partnerships, to gaming and reading up about the Pythagoreans. One of the things she enjoyed about writing for the zine is gaining a better appreciation for the history of her home; there are so many new old buildings that she now knows the stories behind.

I'm John Broadhead, a local boy done average - if you can't sit on the shoulders of giants there is still joy in walking in their footsteps. Because as a child your life is bound by the horizons and a bus pass, it's easy to fall into a trap of thinking of your hometown as constraining. The post-industrial North is still fertile with promise, and perhaps we should cultivate a more hospitable environment for now-embryonic dreams to flourish. Populating your hometown with tales of history lends auspices under which to find inspiration, and I dearly hope others find the same inspiration in these stories that I did.

Toni Stephenson is an historian and journalist from Wakefield. She is passionate about social history and drinking Yorkshire Tea. When not watching period dramas, she can be found telling her non-Yorkshire friends that Wakefield, not Leeds, is the historic hub of the West Riding. Alongside writing, she researches for the Forgotten Women of Wakefield Project. Writing for this zine has reaffirmed her appreciation of her home city and fostered an affinity with those who walked these paths before us.

Hi, I'm Olli Watkins, a 19-year-old erratic, generally blank-verse, poet based in the Wakefield area. I write about anything from spirituality, to my experiences as a gay non-binary person, to now, apparently, Pontefract cakes. For me, poetry is an escape, a kind of therapy where I can write down what I'm thinking much easier than I can say it out loud. So, I try to write a lot, to help make sense of the world. If you're interested, you can find more of my writing at @orangeberetpoetry on Instagram.

Wynn Crawshaw is a third year Maths student at The University of York. They



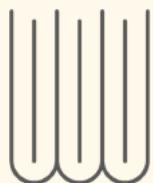
enjoy many aspects of mathematics, especially areas of applied and pure maths. They particularly enjoy helping others understand and get interested in the subject. After university they hope to work as a researcher to advance further understanding of mathematics. Alongside their degree, Wynn is University Radio York's Assistant Station Manager, so will often be found in the radio station on campus. In any other spare time they find, Wynn plots Dungeons & Dragons campaigns, makes many many hot chocolates and settles down with a tea and a good book.

Jeevan Ganatra is an 18 year old currently on his gap year. In his abundance of spare time, you can usually find him at his piano playing Taylor Swift, but he also enjoys drama (the theatre kind, that is) and gaming. Recently, however, you may find him at his computer with his new profound interest in writing. What he found so inspiring in his research about Charles Waterton is how he paved the way for future generations of scientists. It is important he gets the recognition he deserves. Furthering his passion for geography, Jeevan has also explored Wakefield's history and regeneration; with such a fascinating story, Wakefield has so many links to science, technology and art that aren't acknowledged nearly as much as they should be. After living in Wakefield his entire life, writing for the zine has

allowed him to further appreciate its past and look forward to its future, and hopefully it can do the same for you.

Aoifké Madeleine is a third-year English Literature student at Durham University, originally from Selby in North Yorkshire. Having creatively written from a young age, it was in the first lockdown of 2020 where she started to write on a regular basis and submit her work to publications. You can read her poetry on her Instagram account 'aoifkeswords' where her debut pamphlet 'collections' is linked. She has worked with Wakefield Literature Festival many times; including a panel event and on their last zine.

Molly (@MollyPukes) is a queer non-binary artist creating illustrations, animations and cartoons from their studio in Leeds, UK. Since graduating from Leeds Arts University in 2017 they've worked as a freelance artist with a variety of clients and projects including, but not exclusively, DC COMICS and Iron Maiden. Being a lover of autobiographical comics they're often found creating 4 panel diary comics about what they've been up to - which they post regularly on their social media. After adopting a tiny fluffy and black kitten during lockdown much of their work now involves Hilda (the now larger fluffy and black cat).



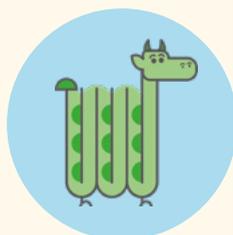
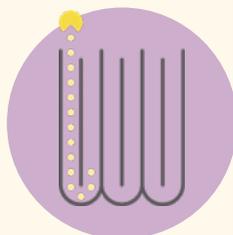
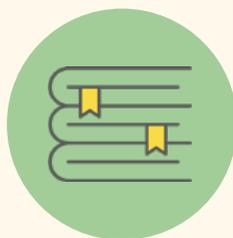
**Wakefield
LitFest**

About Wakefield LitFest

LitFest is a literature festival created for and by young people. The Programme Board is made up of nine young people aged between 14 and 25 who share a passion for and vision to champion words, literature, and creativity in Wakefield. We set up during the pandemic to provide creative opportunities for young people in a way that gives them creative control. The way we do this is through co-production, placing emphasis on it being youth led, with industry professionals providing support, without dictating outcomes.

With special thanks to

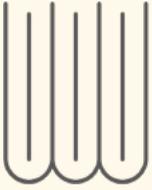
- Dream Time Creative's
Forgotten Women of Wakefield Project
- Hatch
- SPARK



WAKEFIELD
LITFEST IS A
LITERATURE
FESTIVAL
CREATED FOR
THE YOUNG
PEOPLE OF
WAKEFIELD
BY THE YOUNG
PEOPLE OF
WAKEFIELD.

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Wakefield LitFest has
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