

Chairman's Address to the Yorkshire Society AGM Tuesday 6th September

This has been another very exciting year for the Yorkshire Society which is now in its 36th year. Following on from last year's AGM and History Awards, we attended the Yorkshire Awards Dinner in October where our candidate for Lifetime Achievement was Sir David Wootton, former Lord Mayor of London 2012. As from the 2016 Awards Dinner, the Society is taking over the main award category which is Yorkshireman of the Year which will be announced at the dinner on the 14th October.

Thank you again to Linda Atkins, our Events Organiser. Linda has devised a brilliant and most varied programme from visiting the manufacturers of lock gates in Wakefield to the Shepherdess in North Yorkshire; The British Library in Wetherby to Wakefield Theatre this week. Do visit the web site for details of all forthcoming events. We are currently in the process of organising a Christmas Dinner for Members in December following an excellent evening last year at Corporate members, Unity Works, Wakefield.

Probably one of the main events of 2016 was the Dinner at the House of Lords in February organised by our new Vice President, Lord Patel of Bradford. One hundred and twenty-three Members and Guests sat down in to the marquee on the Terrace and enjoyed what can only be called a fantastic evening. Yorkshire Society London was launched with Sir David as President and his former school friend, Ken Wootton (no relation!) as Chairman. We wish them every success in representing the Society in London and in their aim to recruit more Members who love our County. This should also help the business sector with many connections to be made.

Our Annual Dinner in May was another wonderful evening and thank you to Leeds Hilton for providing a great venue and excellent food. Bishop Nick, Vice President, gave a very entertaining address 'The Spy who came into the Fold.' We introduced a few more categories to the Awards Ceremony including an Award for Cadets of the Combined Cadet Forces operating in Yorkshire Schools. 3 young people were recognised.

Yorkshire Day in Halifax was another superb day from start to finish. Thank you to Sue Hanson and her Team from the Civic Office for ensuring it was up to the standards of when they hosted Yorkshire Day 2003 and also congratulations on finishing before the scheduled time! This year Yorkshire Day started on the Wednesday before when The Times rang and asked for comments on a DNA Survey on Ancestry. Apparently, there is more 'Britishness' in Yorkshire people than any other County at an amazing 41%! This article prompted interviews with BBC 5 Live and Talk Radio.

Corporate Members, Naylor Wintersgill, held their regular pre-Yorkshire Day Celebrations on Friday 29th July attended by the Lord Mayor and many other well-known Bradford people. Thanks to the T & A for their subsequent article. On the Sunday, Society Members Wensleydale Railway, ran a Yorkshire Day special and provided a fine lunch for us. On Yorkshire Day we enjoyed a memorable day in Halifax with interviews by Committee Member Geoff Walsh on Radio York and myself on Radio Leeds. Thanks to all our media partners for their coverage. This was followed by the reintroduction of the Yorkshire Day Dinner at The Leeds Club, also Society Members. We were told on good authority that the #Yorkshire Day had more hits on Twitter UK than any other on the 1st August demonstrating the positive effect we are having in promoting our very own day. I am sure Sheffield will give us a great time in 2017.

All this can only happen when you have a great Team which is something we have in the Yorkshire Society and I thank them all sincerely for all their work and support. This brings us to tonight and the re-election of Officers.

Subsequently the following were re-elected:

Chairman Keith Madeley

Membership Secretary Rod Scholes

Secretary Chris Madeley

Events Organiser Linda Atkins

The position of Treasurer is still to be filled.

Then followed the Yorkshire Society History Awards and supper with thanks to Committee Member Michael Bradford for 30 years of terrific work in making this happen, to Professor Ted Royle, Chairman of Judges and to Patricia Cullum from the University of Huddersfield who will be taking over the administration of the Awards to support Michael. They will also ensure they use all their social media channels to ensure we obtain maximum publicity for the History Awards and to hopefully encourage sponsors of this very worthwhile event.

The winner this year was Michael Reeve. On 'The Darkest Town in England: Patriotism and anti-German Sentiment in Hull 1914 – 19.'

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