

SCANDAL, SPITE AND SHUTTLECOCKS: WENTWORTH WOODHOUSE, BRITAIN'S LARGEST AND LEAST-KNOW COUNTRY HOUSE

DAVID WINPENNY



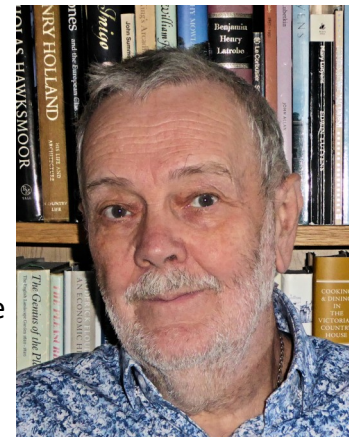
The Arts Society Fylde, Lowther Pavilion Theatre, 2 April 2025 at 2.00pm

This has to be one of those “who knew?” moments - when asked to say which area of England has one of the country’s grandest country houses, there’s a fair chance that not every member of The Arts Society Fylde would unhesitatingly have picked South Yorkshire - and even fewer would have said “Rotherham”. And yet, there it is: a façade more than twice the length of Buckingham Palace and some of the finest 18th century rooms anywhere. On his first visit to The Arts Society Fylde, David Winpenny will speak about Wentworth Woodhouse, seat of the Marquesses of Rockingham and then of the Earls Fitzwilliam and will outline how, in his words, “it is being awoken from more than half a century of slumber”. David promises to outline the history and architecture of the house, alongside the story of the warring families that built and owned it – a story of political execution, madness, child -substitution, socialist vindictiveness, royal visits...and badminton. Surely there must be a Netflix series in there somewhere?

DAVID WINPENNY

David studied English at Birmingham University and taught for several years before joining the Countryside Commission as Co-ordinator of its National Parks Campaign. He worked for the Central Office of Information in Leeds before setting up his own public relations company.

David is the author of '*Up to a Point - in search of pyramids in Britain and Ireland*' and has written and contributed to several books for the AA. He has written for *BBC Countryfile Magazine* and the English Heritage magazine. He is chairman of Ripon Civic Society and lectures on architectural and related subjects on cruise ships and, he hastens to add “on dry land”.



SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

Black Diamonds - Catherine Bailey, Penguin 2007

The Wentworths of Wentworth - Geoffrey Howse, Trustees of the Fitzwilliam Wentworth Amenity Trust, 2002

The Big House and the Little Village - Roy Young, Wentworth Garden Centre, 2011