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Timeline of Wakefield 1980-1990

The 1980s provide us with three or four main stories. There's the opening of The Ridings shopping centre, a very ambitious step for Wakefield at the time; then there's the year-long miners' strike with the attendant founding of Women Against Pit Closures; there's the marvellous rescue of the Theatre Royal and Opera House (detailed in Kate's book, *Right Royal*), and there is the winding up of the West Yorkshire County Council. There is the activity from 1982 of those aiming to found a Hospice in Wakefield (the story is told by Alan Kirkbright in Kate's book *Aspects of Wakefield*). From 1979 and throughout the decade there was the activity of the Gissing Trust, working to acquire funds to establish a centre in the Gissing family home (boyhood home of George Gissing, Wakefield-born novelist, 1857-1903). There are also the first out-of-town developments like the Wakefield 41 Industrial Estate, and the Asda Superstore. And there is a proliferation of private residential homes for the elderly, generally in converted premises like the Manor House, Heath.

1980 Work begins to create the Wakefield 41 Industrial Estate

1980 Ladbroke's cease their bingo operation at Wakefield Theatre Royal and Opera House and the building, erected in 1894 and listed in 1979, becomes redundant.

1981 Sandstone quarries discovered in the Upper Kirkgate/Southgate area during excavations for the Ridings Shopping Centre

1981 April, Rodney Walker (now Sir Rodney Walker) calls a public meeting to explore the future of the Theatre as a result of which the Wakefield Theatre Trust is set up and subsequently purchases the building.

1982 November, the Queen visits Wakefield and goes walkabout in the Cathedral precinct

1982 November, the Friends of Wakefield Theatre Royal and Opera House formed

1982 November, plans to provide a Hospice for Wakefield sit in motion at inaugural meeting

1982 December, Parkhill, the last colliery in Wakefield, closes.

1983 November, Wakefield's first out-of-town supermarket, the Asda store, Durkar, opens

1984 March, Miners' strike, against pit closures, begins affecting such remaining collieries in the locality as Denby Grange, Nostell, Sharlston, Woolley, and impacting on the Wakefield economy and on schools attended by miners' families.

1984 Snapethorpe Hospital (for infectious diseases) closed

1984 July, an earth tremor measuring 5.5 on the Richter Scale is felt in Wakefield

1985 5th March, the year-long miners' strike ends

- 1985** May, the Prince and Princess of Wales visit Wakefield
- 1985** Pugneys Country Park opens
- 1985** November, work begins to construct the Sharlston Haul Road to take waste from Sharlston Colliery to the projected Welbeck land reclamation and waste disposal scheme
- 1985** November, Wakefield-born David Hope enthroned as Bishop of Wakefield
- 1986** January, Trinity Methodist Church, Norton Road, opens
- 1986** March, the winding up of the short-lived West Yorkshire County Council. Disposal of its assets includes a grant of £400,000 to the Wakefield Theatre Royal and Opera House, and £100,000 to the Yorkshire Sculpture Park
- 1986** County Hall is occupied by the West Yorkshire Residuary Body.
- 1986** March, grand reopening of Wakefield Theatre Royal and Opera House, following restoration with a variety performance conceived as a tribute to the West Yorkshire County Council.
- 1987** The County General Hospital, used since 1972 for the care of the elderly, finally closed.
- 1987** After protracted negotiations Wakefield Council acquires County Hall
- 1987** David Hinchliffe succeeds Walter Harrison as Wakefield's member of Parliament.
- 1989** July, The Princess Royal to Pugneys Country Park for a gala marking the 70th anniversary of the Save the Children Fund
- 1989** October, the Business Park at the Wakefield 41 Estate is opened.
- 1989** November, Richard Attenborough opens the Access Trail for people with disabilities at Yorkshire Sculpture Park.
- 1990** April, the first patient admitted to Wakefield Hospice.
- 1990** May, the Gissing Centre, Thompson's Yard, opened in the childhood home of Wakefield-born novelist, George Gissing.

