The Richmond Review

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Chairman's Report

John McDonald

Welcome to this, the 40th edition of The Review. As Editors, Dorothy Clague, my wife, Tina and I all hope that you will find plenty to enjoy within its pages. We are extremely grateful to the writers and researchers who, each year, make The Review a reflection of the life of this area of North Yorkshire.

We can all look back over the 2017 season with considerable satisfaction. The lecture programme has been highly successful with speakers of real quality and our membership has been consistent; as well as the annual coffee morning, we have organised three day trips during the spring and summer months and, thanks to Judy Farrar, members have enjoyed a cultural tour of sites in Scotland. Single-handedly, Marcia Howard has run our Facebook page. I recommend her photographic record of all our trips and events. In addition to all these, the planning sub-committee has met every three weeks and has discussed every planning application involving a listed building or within a conservation area. Members of that group have also worked with the Conservation Officer in the compilation of several Conservation Area Reports, an aspect of heritage work that is becoming increasingly important. We continue to maintain and promote the town trail with its information boards and our own plaque tour, thus helping make the experience of visitors to Richmond more rewarding. For example, this year we have introduced a link to an app for smart phones so that people can easily access the excellent town guide and walking tour, complete with commentary from North Country Theatre. Finally, we are linked to other civic societies, both nationally and regionally, so that we are very much aware of national policy and regional concerns in the world of heritage. In case all of the above strikes you, the reader, as PR hype, it is important to stress that the Civic Society is run by a very small group of active promoters of the area's past, present and

future. But like Richmond itself, though small, we can punch above our weight!

One of the most influential and industrious members of the Society, Mark Whyman, is retiring this year from chairmanship of the Planning Sub-Committee after seven years in the role. It is through this group that the Society influences the appearance of Richmond and the towns and villages in the district. Areas such as ours, rich in history and dependent on tourism for economic survival, need planning policies that protect heritage and yet allow buildings to adapt to modern living and to use modern technology and design. In the vast majority of cases, The District Council manages to hold this difficult line. In this balancing act, the Civic Society's role is a conservative one. We are more likely to object to an application that threatens an historic building or landscape or the harmony of a conservation area, than we are to welcome something contemporary in design. However, we realise that we are really one side of a balancing act and accept that old towns need new supermarkets, homes, public buildings, etc. More than anyone else, Mark Whyman has held firm to the Society's role as protector of heritage and he is going to be a hard act to follow. We all wish him well in his 'retirement' and thank him for his enormous capacity for hard work and achievement.

Our thanks are similarly due to Judy Farrar, who is giving up the organisation of the holidays that we have offered members in recent years. The best tribute to their quality is that each year the coach has been fully booked, wherever the destination. Fortunately, the holidays will not lapse since Margaret Lowery has taken on the role of organiser and, as I write, has just started taking bookings for the excellent tour of Norfolk that has been planned. Our thanks go to you both, Judy and Margaret, for providing us with this excellent part of our programme.

Finally, I want to pay tribute to the work of the Committee. Colin Grant leads on creating the lecture programme; Carol Hillyard is a very effective secretary and also links the Society to other civic societies; Graham Barber as Treasurer ensures that we stay in profit but keep our charges as low as possible and Simon Scott-Priestley, Peter Cardwell and Tony Dykes ensure the smooth running of everything we do. On your behalf, I thank them for all their work.

Report from the Planning Sub-Committee

Mark Whyman

This will be my last Planning Committee Annual Report as I am retiring at the AGM in December. I will explain some of the reasons for this later but my first duty is to thank my fellow members of the Planning Sub-Committee for the sterling work they have put in. John Clarke, Tony Dykes and Shirley Thubron are veterans with decades of service each. David Barraclough is a more recent member as is John McDonald, whilst Dan Gracey has been available as a consultant should we need specialist advice. The Society and Richmond owe an immense debt of gratitude for the considerable time and effort these stalwarts have put in over the years. I must also thank the Mayor and Town Council for the use of the Mayor's Parlour for our three-weekly meetings. In return, we have been able to loan them a projector until they have acquired one of their own.

In the 2005 Richmond Review, my predecessor, John Clarke, wrote of the Planning Sub-Committee, "the aim is to understand Richmondshire's historic character and liaise with other organisations, especially in relation to new development within the RDC's designated Conservation Areas and with Listed Buildings. Consequently, nearly all its work is concerned with study, analysis and the consideration of planning applications – within Richmondshire but excluding the National Park". This is as true today as it was twelve years ago but the legislative context in which we work could not be more different.

In 2005 the aims of the RDC were very much the same as the Society's. Most of our advice was in supporting views already held by the Planners. At that time the Local Plan 1999-2006 was still in place. This document provided a set of planning guidelines that were tailored to local conditions and recognised the value of heritage. Above all, it gave the Planners a framework to work within that was based on local needs. The 2006 plan was extended by two years and then lapsed. At the moment we have no

complete Local Plan. Of course in practice, as well as the Local Plan, there was a myriad of rules and regulations and to reform these, the 2012 National Planning and Policy Framework (NPPF) which drastically reduced the number of regulations, was introduced. This changed the emphasis of planning from a presumption in favour of heritage to one of sustainability. In the absence of the detailed local rules of a complete Local Plan, decisions must be based on the NPPF. This reliance on the NPPF has sometimes made it very difficult for the RDC to heed our advice. Indeed to fulfil our objectives of protecting heritage, at times we may well be asking the RDC to do things which they would like to do but are not allowed to, because they have to presume in favour of sustainability or to conform to other legislation.

This difference in aims and constraints does not contribute to a completely relaxed relationship but I can say that we have done our best to continue to exercise influence in favour of the built heritage. On the plus side, the RDC continues to employ a Conservation Officer, although she is part-time and has a much reduced budget. As she is no longer able to afford to employ consultants, the Society has made available expertise to assist in the preparation of Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plans. We have also coped with a major change in the way consultation takes place. Traditionally the documents relating to each planning operation have been supplied on paper but since April this year they have been delivered as computer documents. During the summer, the number of applications has been much reduced and we have been able to cope, but as we come into the winter, when the number of applications usually increases, it remains to be seen if we can absorb the hours of computer work involved in downloading over two hundred documents every three weeks.

It is my personal view that we are more likely to understand what is intended when we can compare large plans of the existing and proposed buildings on paper rather than view them in bits and pieces on a screen. I fear that the quality of our analysis will diminish. I also find that two or three hours spent at the computer, downloading several hundred files, is unrewarding and stressful but, as I say, this is a personal view, backed by the fact that no-one else wants to do it ! There are, however, advantages to the system in that committee members can have access to the plans

prior to a meeting. However, most of us have experienced difficulties in downloading and one member is completely unable to access any files.

2017 marks the 50th anniversary of the establishment of Conservation Areas. Since 1967, local authorities have been able to "designate any parts of their own area that are of special architectural or historic interest the character of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance". As you might expect in a district so rich in heritage, there are some forty-one conservation areas (CAs) and it is on planning applications in these areas and on listed buildings that the Society is consulted by the District Council. Historic England (formerly English Heritage), who are responsible for listing, has in recent years relied on the protection of the conservation areas rather than on listing, except for the most important buildings. Consequently the importance of conservation areas has increased considerably. Initially, the description of each CA was minimal: for most, a single page profile sufficed, with Richmond running to four. These profiles are now outdated and Historic England requires a much more in-depth appraisal. For the villages, this has now increased to between twenty-six and forty pages, with the amount of research required increasing proportionately. Historically, the District Council's part-time Conservation Officer would have been able to contract out much of this work but, with the draconian funding reductions to local government, she no longer has the budget to do this. Fortunately, the Society has been able to help with this aspect by working closely with the Conservation Officer. For example, the archaeology section of the Richmond Conservation Area Appraisal has been prepared by Peter Cardwell and Shirley Thubron; Shirley and I have worked on the overall document, of over one hundred pages, and I have written the first draft of one of the Area Profiles. David Barraclough, Colin Grant and I made a walk-about at Newsham in preparation for our comments on that appraisal. Thus, the Society has contributed scores of hours of volunteering to assist the District Council. It remains to be seen whether this level of support can be sustained when so much time has now to be spent on electronic consultation.

As I write this, the former Richmond House site, now called "The Orchard", is moving towards completion. It is a good example of what can be achieved if our advice is heeded as well as the result when it is ignored. We objected to the application: our opinion was that the block overlooking the registered park of Temple Grounds was rectangular and this would dominate the important vista from Round Howe; the buildings overlooking the junction of Reeth Road and Quaker Lane were out of scale and would also dominate. I and other objectors spoke at the Council Committee Meeting and the decision was deferred. I and Val Hepworth of the Yorkshire Gardens Trust were invited to meet the developer and succeeded in persuading them to soften the roofline of the block overlooking Temple Grounds and make a slight reduction in the height of the buildings facing Quaker Lane. They were unable to agree to a reduction in height of more than a nominal amount in the Quaker Lane elevation, despite it being pointed out that the block was out of scale and would dominate the area. I believe that the photographs below show that our objection was entirely justified. A case of win some, lose some !

Another project coming to fruition is the renovation of The Fleece on Victoria Road. Here we were consulted by the developer and, if the recently revealed, cleaned up exterior on Friars Wynd is anything to go by, the restored Fleece will be an excellent example of this style of architecture and a credit to the town.

Despite these difficulties, the Civic Society still has a vital role in influencing the RDC on Planning Applications across the District. The new style Conservation Area Appraisals & Management Plans should in theory give added protection to heritage factors and I very much hope that this positive relationship of assisting the Conservation Officer will continue under the new Planning Sub-Committee.



The Orchard development from the Reeth Road



A second view of the same development

Collectanea

Tina McDonald

When the Trinity Tower clock stopped working on April 3rd, we were reminded of a line from *Night-Thoughts* by the poet Edward Young (1683-1765): "We take no note of time but from its loss*"*. As the hands remained resolutely fixed at twelve noon (or was it midnight?), we realised how automatic it is to glance at its elegant face to check the time whenever entering the Market Place: this, in spite of the watches that almost everybody wears, or the constant recourse to the smart phones now in popular use.

As time passed but the hands stood still, Richmond grumbled as Richmond does on occasion. However, on June 30th, all was well, thanks to the expert restoration by Cumbrian Clocks. Rumours that the clock had been struck by lightning were not entirely accurate. The clock has four lightning conductors that are regularly checked and maintained but, apparently, potential damage during an electrical storm burnt out one of the clock's components. First installed in the early Stuart period, the clock continues its long tradition of informing residents of the time of day. It also reminds them of earlier traditions, for the Apprentice Bell, the Curfew Bell and the Pancake Bell still sound. Readers who would like to learn more about Trinity Tower should take advantage of an interesting booklet, *The Extraordinary History of Holy Trinity Church*, recently produced by Richmond U3A, and now available at Castle Hill Book Shop.

Sadly, some Richmond residents feel that there has been much to grumble about this year. Leaving aside the vexed matter of another election which many felt was unnecessary (though it did see our MP Rishi Sunak increase his majority substantially), the delayed completion of the A1 Improvement Programme has continued to anger many, its exits and entrances to and from the town causing frustration and delay. To everyone's relief, completion is promised by the end of the year.

Important archaeological finds have played a significant part in these delays; the news of the discovery of a major Roman settlement at Scotch Corner, pre-dating settlements in York and Carlisle by ten years, and the uncovering of more than 200,000 prehistoric and Roman artefacts was some compensation for the frustrations of continual changes in traffic flow.



Archaeologists working at Fort Bridge, Catterick *Courtesy: Richard Collier*

The decision by the District Council to sell the Gas-Holder Garden at The Batts has further irritated many residents who felt that it should be retained, its garden properly maintained and better reference made to its connections with Richmond's industrial past. An effective rallying group and a 200-strong petition persuaded the council to withdraw its plans, a decision much welcomed by residents and visitors.

The withdrawal of the Co-op supermarket in November 2016 left the town without a major supermarket and the subsequent purchase by Lidl was met with mixed feelings. Proposed alterations to the building and car park appeared to pay more heed to following Lidl's own standard shop designs and less to acknowledging the historic nature of Richmond. Public

consultation brought about some welcome alterations in design. As yet, however, there appears to be no information about a future opening date. Fortunately, Richmond still retains some excellent independent retailers and with two butchers, a grocer, a greengrocer, two delis and a very popular cake shop, as well as a weekly market and monthly farmers' market, most culinary needs are more than adequately catered for. Some retailers deserve special approbation for their contribution to the town's appearance. Lucy Pittaway's gallery has provided a colourful addition to Finkle Street, its vibrant window displays creating a kaleidoscope of Richmond's best features. The King Street Kitchen and Gift Shop and the elegant Grey's Interiors both have fine floral displays outside their premises, both much praised by residents and visitors alike. Similarly, Rosemary Lane, already not without its own particular charm, is further enhanced by pretty hanging baskets, as is Wetherspoons in Queens Road.

We were relieved to see the Mercury Bridge repaired and traffic flow restored. Damaged last year when a tractor carrying hay bales lost control, the bridge required substantial repair, not for the first time in its life. Heavy floods in 2000 caused serious damage and the resultant closure frustrated residents and visitors then, as it did last year.

Thankfully, there was good news in the town as well as bad. Castle Hill Book Shop was delighted to receive in February the David Doorbar Award for excellence in retail. With independent book shops closing at an alarming rate, we feel fortunate indeed to have in Richmond one that not only provides such an excellent retail experience, but also organises a splendid Walking and Book Festival. This has offered this year, at least three walks a day of varying lengths and talks by local and best-selling authors, famous names such as Val McDermid, Jo Baker, Jill Dawson and Lonely Planet's Neil Wilson, as well as the former MP Clare Short. With such a varied programme, it seems as if everybody is catered for. And for those for whom 'the play's the thing', North Country Theatre offered 'Nightmares in Norfolk', a double dose of terrifying tales, with a tour beginning at The Georgian Theatre in September and running at various venues until December 2nd.



Mr Yorke's Walled Garden, with the Culloden Tower in the background
Courtesy: Marcia McLuckie

In August, Georgefest 17 offered a fascinating programme of events celebrating Richmond's Georgian heritage: walks, talks and workshops, many free of charge, brought the Georgian era and the town to life. One much anticipated event was the opening of Mr Yorke's Walled Garden, beautifully restored by its owners, Marcia and Dennis McLuckie. It proved a particularly popular event, with over six hundred visitors, and raised an almost record-setting £4,200 for National Garden Scheme charities. This charming one acre garden was originally owned by John Yorke and was part of the large estate surrounding his mansion on The Green. Sadly, the mansion was demolished early in the 1820s but two remaining buildings, Culloden Tower and Temple Lodge, built originally as a menagerie, stand as testament to the Yorkes' love of landscape and gardening and the estate was much praised at the time. Arthur Young, in 1770, wrote, 'Mr Yorke's gardens are well worth seeing.' Georgefest offered the opportunity also to visit the Culloden Tower, now owned by the Landmark Trust, and enjoy a walking tour of Temple Grounds with Val Hepworth from the Yorkshire Gardens Trust.

The Swaledale Festival in May provided an increasingly eclectic mix of musical experiences, workshops, art exhibitions, talks and guided walks. This year saw its highest ticket sales to date, with 7,500 audience members attending sixty events.

Furthermore, The Station this year celebrated ten years of success and to mark its tenth anniversary organised a variety of events, including a very successful kite festival for which they were blessed with a wonderfully windy day and a great many appreciative visitors. Having provided the town with cinemas, restaurant, art exhibitions and some excellent retail opportunities so successfully, we can only applaud again this magnificent achievement and continuing asset to the town.

The Georgian Theatre Experience, featured in last year's edition, is deservedly attracting an increasing number of visitors, and the ever-improving Richmondshire Museum and Green Howards Museum provide further attractions for visitors. The Richmond Town Ticket, which gives discounted admission to all of them, as well as to the castle, is an excellent incentive for visitors. That this year it includes a 10% discount for several cafes and restaurants, is an added bonus.

In August a new town shopping map was released, promoting and listing over one hundred businesses in the town. With more than 20,000 copies distributed to shops, pubs, hotels, campsites and caravan parks, it provides an interesting and informative addition to the tourist information already available in the town.

We wrote last year of the magnificent effort by the St Mary's fundraising team whose strenuous actions raised sufficient funds to finance the casting of new bells, refurbishment and display of their historic bells and the replacement of the bell frame. The removal of the old bells meant, of course, no clock or chimes, and when this coincided with the silence of Trinity Tower clock, there was much ribaldry about Richmond being the place where time stands still! In a sense, it is, of course, with its careful preservation and conservation of so many beautiful buildings.

The new bells were cast by John Taylor & Co of Loughborough, the last company in the country to manufacture bells. The new bells arrived in April and, in a moving ceremony, were blessed by the Bishop of Ripon,

the aptly named James Bell. As they ring again, we echo with profound thanks the words of the Bishop: "We thank God for the skill and generosity of all who have helped to restore these historic bells".

We have, in the past, acknowledged with enormous thanks and pride the contributions to Richmond life made by many of its talented and hardworking volunteers. And this year is no exception. From knitting props for the Georgian Theatre productions to walks, talks and research, as well as daily duties at museums and events, they continue to impress with their commitment and professional aplomb.

Richmond library is another organisation which benefits greatly from its excellent team of volunteers. Now managed by Catterick, Richmond and Colburn Community Libraries (CRACCL) in partnership with North Yorkshire County Council, it recently underwent a £68,000 refurbishment and now offers a very smart, new reception area, improved research and study areas, a more accessible tourist information desk and a particularly attractive children's section.

Richmond has always had a long list of notable residents, and these are often added to, year on year. This year, we offer congratulations to Daphne Clarke, a United Reformed Church lay preacher, who has received a special award for sixty years' service in the pulpit, believed to be the first time that anyone has received this distinction. In July, Richmond was delighted to read that Lady Hale made history when she was confirmed as the next president of the Supreme Court, the first woman to be appointed to that position. That this appointment came amid a furore over gender divide at the BBC and much media criticism of the small number of women in top positions, made it all the more significant. The news had extra meaning for the town since Lady Hale is an ex-pupil of Richmond High School for Girls.

With a plethora of beautiful buildings and an abundance of cultural opportunities, Richmond remains much valued by visitors and residents alike. Less tangible but enormously satisfying is its strong sense of community. This was most aptly summed up by Jane Hatcher in her book, 'The History of Richmond':

"....here can be found the nearest thing to those eternal values so difficult to define, but which are sensed when found. Here is neighbourliness and a sense of community."

When we read that owners of holiday accommodation in North Yorkshire were to offer free holidays to the firemen involved in the dreadful Grenfell Tower disaster, we felt pride in the county. When we heard that the first firefighter to take up the offer was welcomed to the delightful Garden Cottage in Richmond, we could only applaud its generous owners and hope that the firefighter and his family felt, in a week, 'the neighbourliness and sense of community' that the rest of us experience on a daily basis.

Scottish Tour, 14th – 17th May 2017

Judy Farrar

Early one bright May morning, forty seven members and friends set off for their annual holiday starting from Hudswell and picking up from various places in Richmond. This year we went to Scotland with the guidance of Wayne and Rose Taylor of Barnard Castle Coaches.

En route we made a lunchtime stop at the town of Moffatt where everyone enjoyed going round the Sunday market. We then travelled to Rosslyn Chapel, south of Edinburgh. This is a very ornate Chapel built in 1446 with unique and ornate stone carvings much admired. Anyone who has read *The Da Vinci Code* will remember it being mentioned in that book.

We stayed at the Athol Palace Hotel in Pitlochry. This beautiful hotel was built in the 1880s as a hydrotherapy spa for the Victorians, and although in its early days it had been bankrupt three times, it is now deservedly a thriving hotel serving excellent meals. There were lovely grounds for us to walk in (when it was not raining) with tennis courts and putting greens. The museum at the hotel described its early use as a hydrotherapy centre and was most interesting.

The next day after a very good breakfast we set off for Dunkeld. The original ninth century monastery established Dunkeld as the first ecclesiastical capital of medieval Scotland. Unfortunately it was raining but our main visit was to the present day Cathedral which was begun in the twelfth century. Set in a peaceful area of the town near the River Tay, it made a very pleasant stop despite the rain.

Then on to Scone Palace, a Category A-listed, historic house built of red sandstone with a castellated roof. It is one of the finest examples of late Georgian Gothic style in the United Kingdom. Scone was originally the site of an early Christian church and later an Augustinian priory. In the

twelfth century, Scone Priory was granted abbey status. Scone Abbey was severely damaged in 1559 during the Scottish Reformation but survived to become, in 1600, a secular Lordship and home. The Palace has thus been home to the Earls of Mansfield for over four hundred years. In 1802 David William Murray, the 3rd Earl of Mansfield, extended and updated the Palace, with the majority of work finished by 1808.

Scone was for nearly a thousand years the crowning-place of Scottish kings and the home of the Stone of Scone. It is a site of immense historic significance. Further work was undertaken in 1842 to make the Palace ready for the visit of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert. Some of the group managed short walks in the grounds in between the showers of rain.

The next day, after a leisurely Scottish breakfast, we went to the House of Bruar widely acknowledged as Scotland's most prestigious independent store. After a quick look round, several people (mostly men!!) walked up to Bruar Falls which had plenty of water flowing down.

A short drive took us to Blair Castle, the seat of the Dukes of Atholl. The Castle has had a varied history as whoever held the land around Blair Castle was gatekeeper to the Grampians and the route north to Inverness. A fortified tower at Blair was built in 1269 and this remains the highest part of the Castle. It was enlarged and adapted to suit the needs of its occupants and has been home to the earls and dukes of Atholl: soldiers, politicians, agriculturists and family men whose fortunes have been mixed. The property is now run by the Blair Charitable Trust as the 12th Duke (Bruce) was born and lives in South Africa. The Estate is therefore managed by the half-sister of the 10th Duke. The grounds surrounding the castle are very attractive and the nine-acre walled garden is a delight to discover. On the way back to the hotel some went to visit the Blair Atholl Distillery and others had a look around the centre of Pitlochry.

A special visit on our journey home was an exclusive private tour of Balcarres House situated about three miles from the Firth of Forth, and the home of Lord and Lady Balniel who only allow about ten tours of the house each year. We were welcomed by our hosts who gave us coffee and cakes before the tour of the house. Many interesting pictures and

French furniture were shown to us. We all felt that this was a true family home and we were made to feel most welcome. We looked around the lovely gardens which had been planned and laid out by Lord Balniel's mother, who, in fact, was sitting in the garden answering our many questions. This was a really special finale to our 2017 tour.

On our homeward journey we had an excellent meal at The Royal Oak at Appleby, a delicious way to complete a very enjoyable tour.



Outside Scone Palace *Courtesy: Mark Whyman*



Arriving at Rosslyn Chapel *Courtesy: Mark Whyman*



The gateway to Scone Palace *Courtesy: Mark Whyman*

Richmond's Tourist Economy

Colin Grant[1]

During the early part of this year, the Civic Society committee spent some time evaluating and discussing the current economic health of Richmond and some of the major issues which in our view would face the historic market town over the next few years. We started off in early 2017 by taking a look at how the shops were performing and if any trends had emerged over the previous five years. In 2011 the town had achieved full occupancy of retail outlets. By 2015 the vacancy rate had risen to 4% and at the end of 2016, 6% were vacant (some of these being the result of the tragic fire in Finkle Street in 2015). Looked at against a national retail vacancy rate of 12% in market towns, Richmond town centre, although small by modern standards, continues to trade reasonably strongly. However, the temporary closure of one of our main anchor retailers, when the Co-op closed in December 2016, was, of course, concerning. Over the past five years, three shops had been converted to residential properties (the former Rodbers and CB Furnishings in Queens Road, and 1a Castle Hill) and by January 2017 the following shops were vacant: the former Co-op including Dorothy Perkins, One Stop Shop (Tescos), Tasty Macs, Urban Retreat, Red Cross Charity Shop, and the former TIC/tea shop, Victoria Road. In addition, one former estate agent and one former cafe were also vacant. Of course, this was only a snap shot and there will always be gradual changes with new high street retailers opening as others close.

Over the years, Richmond's relative retail trading position has been recorded through programmes which rank similar shopping destinations according to the numbers of multiples, anchor stores and other factors. In

[1] *Colin worked as Town Centre Manager in Richmond from 2002 to 2012 and is currently a member of the Civic Society's Committee.*

2011 Richmond's retail ranking was 1496 out of 3133 and by 2016 this had improved to 1276, 1 being the best and 3133 being the worst[2].

In the past five years, there have been two significant retail developments locally. The development of Catterick Garrison Town Centre has brought into use 400 free car parking spaces making a total of 1080 parking spaces including Tescos and the Catterick Leisure Centre; the second development is the successful planning appeal for the proposed Designer Outlet Centre (DOC) at Scotch Corner, with 70 shops and 1138 free car parking spaces.

The committee noted two quotations, the first from the Garrison Retail Impact Assessment:
The retailer and household surveys undertaken reinforce the results of other recently-undertaken surveys in Richmond. Residents stated that if facilities were improved in Richmond they would shop more locally. The problem is the historic nature of such towns, their conservation areas, and the lack of sites for expansion. The level of trade diversion from the Catterick Garrison town centre development and the resultant impact on Richmond town centre is fairly small. This trade diversion may, in part, be offset by the development, which if it serves to complement Richmond, may help to draw more visitors into the area, who may also visit Richmond town centre as part of a linked trip[3].
The second came from the DOC Retail Review:
There could potentially be a small adverse impact on Richmond town centre because of the proximity of the Scotch Corner scheme to Richmond. Local residents are likely to find the Designer Outlet Centre an attractive alternative for some types of shopping. However, Richmond does not have a fashion-based comparison retail offer, which would compete with the Scotch Corner. The Scotch Corner scheme has the potential to complement Richmond town centre through spin-off benefits from visitors

[2] *Our thanks to consultants at GVA Grimley for this data.*

[3] *Nov 2006 GVA Retail Impact Assessment.*

to the designer outlet centre making linked trips to Richmond town centre[4].

It is interesting, and perhaps understandable, that both of these impact assessments highlight the importance of linked trips to Richmond.

We then looked at the tourism sector, the value of tourism, and visitor trends over the past five years and were given a great deal of help with data by the District Council and Welcome to Richmond, the group representing Richmond's attractions. Over the years, the value of the tourism/visitor spend[5] in Richmond has been assessed by using a number of estimates and tourism computer models, the main one being a model called STEAM. Tourism and visitor spend supports the retail, food and drink and evening economies as well as the town's attractions, hotels, guest houses and B&Bs. We estimated that the tourism economy in the town currently supported about 1,000 people or about 1 in 4 of the economically active people in the town. In 2012 Welcome to Yorkshire estimated that the 2011 Richmond annual visitor spend had reached £52m, based on the proportion of the STEAM Richmondshire spend they allocated to Richmond. Visit England calculated that by 2015, day visitor spend was about £35 per person and staying visitor up to £618 per 4-7 day visit. This underlines the economic importance of staying visitors. For 2016 no up-to-date STEAM data for Richmond or Richmondshire was available. However, the Yorkshire Dales National Park STEAM model showed that visitor income (adjusted for inflation) remained fairly static between 2009 and 2015 with a peak in 2014 for the Tour de France, Grand Depart.

We looked at the available data for Richmond's staying visitors and day visitors. Visit England data showed that the small town, room and bed occupancy rates for Yorkshire had increased by 7% in the past four years. The Dales National Park 2015 monitoring report stated that staying visitors had a disproportionate effect on the local economy, accounting for 13% of visitor numbers but providing 53% of the economic impact and

[4] *2015 England and Lyle Retail Review.*
[5] *The total spending in the town by visitors and tourists.*

68% of direct employment supported by visitors. Unfortunately, Richmond has no occupancy figures for visitor accommodation. There are currently 49 hotels, guest houses and B&Bs listed on Trip Advisor serving Richmond, but these include out-lying hotels. In Richmond town itself, there are 32 hotels, guest houses and B&Bs. Anecdotal evidence indicates that the numbers of guest houses currently for sale in Richmond is quite high. The reason given by several accommodation providers was that demand had fallen since the Premier Inn at Catterick Garrison opened, as their tariffs undercut those in Richmond and, further, that there had been fewer Passing Out Parades since the army reduced recruitment in 2011. However, there is no data available to support this.

Since the National Park figures show that 90% of day visits to historic towns are made by car, a good indicator of the number of day visitors is those using the long stay Nun's Close car park. Taking 2011 as a baseline, these numbers showed annual fluctuations from +10% to -5% over the past five years. Visits will be affected by seasonal factors like the weather and access to the town. In 2009, 85,000 people visited the Richmond Tourist Information Centre in Victoria Rd[6]. On the basis of these figures, Richmond visitors were estimated at 850,000 per annum. The TIC then moved to Rodbers, where there were no facilities to record numbers, and eventually to the library. The data on visitor numbers to the town's attractions showed no clear trend over the past five years.

With the data that we were able to obtain it has been very difficult to assess the numbers of staying and day visitors in Richmond and the only general conclusions that we could reach were that visitor numbers to Richmond had remained reasonably static over the past five years.

The last area that we looked at was car parking. One of the first towns planned by the Normans could not possibly have foreseen that it would be straining to cope with the weight of twenty-first century traffic. Richmond's car parking and its management have always been complex because the Market Place and surrounding streets are part of North

[6] *This figure is derived from an automated counting system used by the TIC.*

Yorkshire County Council Highways' 2 hour disc zone and the outlying pay and display car parks belong to the District Council.

There is no detailed breakdown available of how many existing visitors to Richmond arrive by car, but the adjacent Yorkshire Dales National Park receives around 92% of its visits by private car, the remaining 8% shared between public transport (around 3%), cycling (2%) and other modes including coach/minibus (3%). In spite of the fact that Richmond is served by relatively good bus services, it is safe to assume that about 90% of visitors to the town arrive by car and will continue to do so if there is adequate car parking space and capacity.

The car parks within ten minutes walking distance of the centre of Richmond and the number of parking spaces are as follows[7]:

Nuns' Close	longstay	228 (over 4 hours)
Victoria Rd N	shortstay	12 (max 2 hrs)
Victoria Rd S	shortstay	20 (max 2hrs)
The Fosse	longstay	31 (over 4 hrs) mainly serving the Batts and the riverside
Yorke Square	longstay	43 (up to 4 hrs) mainly serving residents and visitors
Total		334 of which only 260 really serve the town centre

In addition, the Richmondshire District Council's Station Road car park, with 65 places, is available during evenings and at weekends. The Station and Leisure Trust car parks have 128 spaces open to the public to serve their needs. The Co-op/Lidl car park with 205 places now provides free parking, and this temporarily doubles long stay parking serving the town centre. Richmond also has approx 360 2 hour disc parking spaces available for convenience shoppers, some residents' parking and others in the Market Place and adjoining streets in the disc zone. The 2015 benchmarking report, undertaken by Welcome to Richmond, indicated

[7] *Data is from the website Parkopedia.*

that Richmond town centre had no long-stay (over 4 hrs) on-street parking spaces, compared with 22% nationally. Clearly, Richmond has a very high percentage of restricted 2hr on-road and off-road car parking and a low percentage of long-stay and this impacts significantly on the time that local people, shoppers and visitors are encouraged to stay in the town centre.

Nuns' Close car park was built in 1967 and the Co-op in 1997/8. However, despite the Co-op, in the past twenty years, there has been very little additional car parking for residents, local people, businesses and visitors provided in Richmond other than through new residential development. During that period, car ownership has increased by about 3% per annum according to the RAC, so we can estimate that there are about three times the number of cars and car visitors than there were 50 years ago.

After this analysis, we made a comparison of car parking places in neighbouring market towns[8], which highlighted our comparatively poor amount of off-road parking. The results are as follows:

Name	**Population 2011 Census**	**Car Park Places 10 mins from centre excluding on-street parking**	**Supermarket Places 10 mins from centre**
Skipton	14,623	1,656 off-road plus Seasonal Park and Ride facility	Tescos & Morrisons: 700
Whitby	13,213	1,922 off road plus Seasonal Park and Ride facility	Co-op: 180
Richmond	**8,400**	**334 off-road**	**Lidl: 205**
Keswick	5,500	1050 off road	Booths: 140
Malton	4,880	730 off road	Asda(?) Morrisons: 210
Settle	2,560	342 off road	Booths: 192

[8] *Data from Parkopedia*

In 2007 the Regional Development Agency, Yorkshire Forward, published their Renaissance Market Towns Car Park research prepared by Steer Davies Gleave, the Leeds based transport consultants. Richmond was used as a case study and data from GVA Grimley's Retail Impact Visitor Survey was included. 36% of those surveyed said that they would come to Richmond to shop if there were better parking. This was an important piece of research that recommended that market towns should view their parking as a 'customer service' and should actively manage their parking to benefit residents, workers, shoppers and visitors.

In Richmond, tighter civil parking enforcement has been introduced but the high proportion of 2 hour disc parking spaces and the limited number of long-stay spaces serving the town centre do not encourage visitors to stay for long enough to shop, eat and enjoy Richmond's wonderful heritage to the full. In the spring of this year, traders in the town became so frustrated with the parking situation, they took to complaining on BBC TV Look North. Bad publicity is never good for the town, but their frustration was understandable. How to provide additional capacity in sensitive conservation areas is always a daunting prospect. And yet, historic towns here and all over Europe are addressing this issue of adequate parking in innovative ways, with park and ride schemes, underground parking and carefully concealed multi-storey car parks. Richmond is blessed with some superb heritage and a magnificent setting. It is important to remember that, over the past five years, all the town's key attractions have improved what they have to offer. The Green Howards Museum, the Georgian Theatre Royal, the Richmondshire Museum and Richmond Castle have all benefited from Heritage Lottery funded grants and could potentially attract more and more visitors. The attractions have introduced a Town Ticket so that visitors can fully enjoy the town's heritage. In other words, they are doing their very best for the town's economy but if much of our parking is restricted to two hours, then there is not enough time for our visitors to park and discover what Richmond has to offer. It is surely time to revisit this issue of Richmond's parking capacity and management. Are there some longer term solutions like, for example, extending the amount of long-stay parking or looking at the potential of a seasonal park and ride using the school car parks, the

Garrison Town Centre and the new Designer Outlet Centre at Scotch Corner?

In conclusion, despite some lack of detailed data, this report shows that over the past five years, Richmond has continued to be a vibrant and thriving market town, but a town that perhaps is not addressing the difficult challenge of modern day traffic volumes. We hope that this report may act as a catalyst for constructive discussion and longer term strategic planning to address the issue of parking and thus help our historic town to continue to thrive in the future.

The Italian Wool Traders of Medieval Yorkshire

Gordon Alexander

That wool exports were central to the economy of England in the later medieval period is well known and that trade took place with the densely populated Low Countries, where large scale manufacture from wool had developed, dominates our thinking on this aspect of our commercial and industrial past. What is less well-known is that significant trade took place with more distant Italy. In the period from the late 1200s to the mid fourteenth century, Italian traders were active in Yorkshire, taking over the trade from the Flemings. In Richmondshire *fattori,* Italian wool traders, visited abbeys and priories, Fountains, Jervaulx and Rievaulx and even small producers such as Easby, Eggleston, Marrick and Ellerton, to barter for wool for the cloth manufacturers far away in the communes of northern Italy.

Florence's Baptistery of San Giovanni and its magnificent Cathedral Santa Maria del Fiore illustrate the power and wealth of two of the twenty-one guilds of Florence. The *Calimala* Guild, merchants of foreign cloth, maintained and decorated the Baptistery and the *Lana* Guild, manufacturers of woollen cloth, enabled construction of the cathedral. In precedence, following only the Guild of Judges and Notaries, these guilds regulated the activities of a highly developed system of *compagnie,* trading companies, complex organisations often characterised as banking houses but more widely engaged in manufacturing and commodity trading. Originally based on family partnerships, companies developed to incorporate non-family partners who supplied capital and actively managed trading. Whilst no other commune had a guild system so well developed as Florence, other communes including Lucca, Pistoia and Siena, often hostile to Florence, possessed similar trading companies.

Fine cloth manufacture was an essential cash cow in northern Italy. With plentiful water for washing and dyeing and deposits of dark, slimy earth ideal for fulling, Tuscany and Umbria were noted for growing woad and saffron, the basis for many dyes. Alum for fixing the dye was mined in their rolling hills. The geographic location was excellent for trade. Routes radiated out to the Levant, to North Africa, to France and to the Iberian Peninsula but the Achilles heel to building an integral woollen cloth industry was the poor quality wool of the sheep. Cultivation of pasture was never a priority: grain, olives and vines took precedence. Sheep fed on marginal grasses, tree leaves and vine shoots.

The grass lands of Britain were one of the few areas that could produce soft, high quality wool on an industrial scale before the development of pasture farming commenced in Spain during the late fourteenth century. Initially, the Flemings captured the market in English wool and an agreement between England and Flanders in 1236 was an attempt to establish good trading relations. However, from the mid thirteenth century, export of wool to the Low Countries began to suffer from the political turmoil in England, especially when conflicts between supporters of the de Montforts and Henry III disrupted the stability of government. Disruption of trade became a recurring problem with frequent stoppages and expulsions of Flemish merchants. There was much hostility to alien merchants in Flanders and, in response, Flemish property in England was seized and piracy directed against Flemish mercantile trade by English ships. In August 1268 a Flemish ship carrying Douai merchants was attacked off Whitby. Despite attempts to restore relations, serious disruption continued well into the reign of Edward III when his suspension of wool exports to Flanders, at the start of the Hundred Years War, provoked a revolution amongst the Flemings. By the end of the first quarter of the fourteenth century, Flemish merchants had almost withdrawn from the wool trade to be replaced by Gascons, Brabantines, a few Spaniards and the Italians.

Francesco Pegolotti (1301-1347) was a *fattoro* of the Florentine merchant Company of the Bardi. Pegolotti compiled and published *La Practica della Mercatura* (The Practice, *or Knowledge (?)*, of the Merchants), which listed details of both lay and monastic wool producers throughout the British Isles compiled during the period when the Flemings were

withdrawing from the English trade. Pegolotti's list contains details of thirty nine wool producers in Yorkshire and helped to encourage an influx of Italian merchants in the north, identifying the *cogliette* or collecting places for wool in Yorkshire as Leeds, Elmet, Thirsk and York. Pegolotti's list gives details of wool prices and production levels for different grades of wool. Production is measured in sacks per annum, a sack weighing about fifty-two pounds. Pegolotti identified that the Cistercians of Fountains produced 118 sacks each year of which 21 sacks were best quality wool. Jervaulx achieved 17 sacks of best quality, 10 of middle quality and 59 of coarse and unsorted wool, totalling 86 sacks per year. By comparison, the nuns of *Maricche In Chosta Ricciamonte* (Marrick) produced 8 unsorted sacks and 11 sacks of 'wool from the high ground' possibly very coarse wool. The Gilbertine Priory at *Elertana* (Ellerton) appears to have done better with 15 best quality sacks, 9 of middle quality and 10 unsorted, a production of 34 sacks compared with 23 sacks each year from the Premonstratensian Canons of *Santa Aghata* of which 13 were graded fine.

The employees and agents of Italian companies, who held powers of attorney to enter into contracts and settle disputes with wool producers far distant from their head offices in Lucca or Florence, were not autonomous. Policy and major decisions came to company branches from Italy irrespective of distance and unstable routes of communication, and accounting information was sent back there. Company agents travelled around the country to inspect the wool-clip bought. Monasteries frequently arranged transport to ports saving the buyers both inconvenience and toll payments; their wool was priced accordingly. Early examples of sophisticated futures trading are seen in some of the contracts made by *fattori.* Fountains Abbey was paid the full value of its clip in advance for several years by the Riccardi Company of Lucca, the contract outlining the process under both English law and the rulings of the Apostolic See, in case wool was not delivered. In 1288 the inability to deliver clip against advanced payment because of sheep disease increased Rievaulx's debts to Italian companies to over £3,000. The Cistercians prepared their clip carefully for merchants, the wool being sorted into four grades: coarse wool, short clippings, black and grisled wool and pelt wool. Italian companies were particular in specifying how wool should be

packed in view of delays and damage that could occur and the many months it took when transporting wool to Italy. Yorkshire wool-clip for Italy was exported from the ports of Hull, Newcastle, Yarm, Whitby and Scarborough. During the 1270s the longer sea routes across the Bay of



A destination for Richmondshire wool-clip: a 15th century fulling mill on the river Arno, Florence, photographed before demolition in 1867, the Palazzo Vecchio and the roof turret of the Uffizi in the background.

Biscay, and very occasionally through the Strait of Gibraltar, were opened up by Genoese and Catalan shippers. By the second decade of the fourteenth century, English wool was reaching Italy in great quantity. It was shipped into the Bay of Biscay, unloaded on the Gironde and taken over land from Libourne to Aigues-Mortes near Montpellier then shipped



The same view, 2017: the ramp of the fulling mill still exists and can be seen to the right of the white van.

to Italy where Pisa became a distribution centre. This route was less risky than sailing greater distances in the Mediterranean where pirates lurked. Routine transportation of wool to Italy wholly by sea developed as the land routes became unstable following the outbreak of the Hundred Years War in 1337.

Whilst many different Italian companies traded wool in England, two companies shaped the era of Italian trading into two distinct periods: firstly, the Luccese period and later the Florentine period. Merchants of the Commune of Lucca were the first Tuscan merchants to establish regular patterns of trade beyond the Alps. Lucca was also a major centre for money changing. Pilgrim traffic along the Via Francigena to Rome and vigorous trade generated considerable wealth, enabling the Luccese Riccardi Company to become bankers to the English monarch Edward I. This gave them a dominant position in the English wool trade, with six *compagnie* of Lucca trading. Twenty four of their *fattori* are identifiable in records. At least three of these companies, the Riccardi, the Bellardi and the Bettri, shipped wool-clip from Yarm, Hull and Newcastle.

In 1294 Gerald de Wyspayns, Archdeacon of Richmond, owed £388 10s 10d to the Riccardi. It is not known how this debt was incurred, whether it was personal or whether it involved wool deals within the archdeaconry. Whilst records of Italian dealings in Yorkshire are sparse, it is likely that Luccese merchants, including the Riccardi, bought wool-clip from the smaller Yorkshire houses of Easby, Eggleston, Ellerton and Marrick all mentioned in Pegolotti's list. Royal wardrobe accounts refer to a northern branch office of the Riccardi situated in York, naming the person in charge of that office as Tomasino Guidiccioni. Rievaulx and Jervaulx supplied significant wool-clip to the Riccardi.

Riccardi dominance in royal banking and consequently in the English wool trade came to an abrupt end in 1294. In that year Philip IV of France summoned Edward I to Paris and the Parlement of France declared that Edward should forfeit Gascony. Hostilities commenced between England and France. Edward expected his royal bankers to fund the war. However, to assist in raising the huge sums required, the Riccardi needed the co-operation of their branch in France, which was denied to them through actions taken by King Philip. The Riccardi were unable to

bankroll the king. Edward's reaction was swift: in September he seized the wool and all the assets of the Riccardi. In that year its merchants had contracted with the Cistercians of Fountains to receive the Abbey's total clip. The trading pattern of Fountains in the years leading up to the fall of the Riccardi demonstrates that Florentine merchants were beginning to put pressure on the Luccese companies. The Riccardi had been taking the bulk of the Abbey's production but the Florentine *compania* of the Cerchi, the Bardi and the Mozi also took 298 sacks between 1279 and 1295 amounting to a quarter of Fountains' wool output. The period of the Luccese as major players in the Yorkshire wool trade was closing and Florentine ascendancy began.

Following the fall from grace of the Riccardi, Amerigo dei Frescobaldi and Company of Florence became the next bankers to the Crown and opportunities in the wool market opened up. Trade in wool became the main activity of the Frescobaldi and, in the north, Taldus Janiani and Coppus Cotenni, described in the patent rolls as merchants of the Society of Frescobaldi, were granted custody of the exchanges of Newcastle-upon-Tyne and Hull in March 1300. In Yorkshire, Rievaulx soon became indebted to the company.

The Florentines far outnumbered companies from other northern Italian cities with twenty companies active in the wool trade and one hundred and fifty-eight of their employees known by name. By the 1320s they apparently intended to remain in Yorkshire for some time as the Florentine Peruzzi Company entered into a ten-year lease with the Bishop of Durham for the manors of Howden and Riccall near York. These manors were probably acquired as collecting points for the wool-clip from large areas of Yorkshire. However, by the late 1330s, the dominant years for the Italians in the English wool trade were nearing their end. It was believed that loans to the English Crown alone caused the failure of these companies but recent historians consider that operational problems were also a major factor. Florentine companies, notably the Bardi and Peruzzi, were hit by falling wool prices as producers were unable to fulfil the quantities of wool-clip promised by Edward III as security for loans. The Frescobaldi became discredited as royal bankers and lost the advantages to trading that such a position provided. Trading connections, particularly with religious houses, suffered harm by this fall from grace and whilst

Italian companies continued to trade in English wool they abandoned Yorkshire and the north, contracting to the southern counties and the Welsh borders. Such failures had an inevitable human cost. Nicholas Marini, a merchant of the Florentine Bardi Company, was outlawed in the county of York for non-payment of debts.

These changes brought about an expansion of English activity in the wool market. In 1338, William de la Pole, a native of Hull and one of the great business men of his time, gained control of the custom at all the ports of the northern coast including Newcastle and Hull. De la Pole became the first Englishman to rival Italian merchants as a banker to the Crown. De la Pole and his partners came to replace the Italian merchants in Yorkshire and the north, buying up the wool-clip from Fountains, Jervaulx, and Rievaulx, amongst other wool producing houses. De la Pole stored the wool-clip bought by his company at Richmond, Northallerton and Myton-on-Swale. He and his fellow English merchants, many from York, who had once acted as middlemen to foreign merchants, took over the wool trade. The fifteenth century saw increasingly repressive measures on sales to the remaining Italians. Domestic cloth production grew, as did wool-clip export to the Low Countries.

English wool, including clip from Richmondshire, enabled the Italians to make a superior product, but trading relationships were complex and based on the control over credit by the Italian companies, not only for the Crown but also for wool producers. As secure domestic sources of funding developed, the Italians increasingly had to seek high quality wool much closer to the Mediterranean and *fattori* no longer wandered the dales.

Fire Insurance Signs in Richmond

Barry Heap

After the Great Fire of London in 1666, an anxious populace was concerned by the severe financial losses suffered as a result of losing buildings and contents in the conflagration. It took some years to sort out, but fire insurance companies began to be set up by 1700. Several were up and running in the early Georgian period and protection thus established for all those citizens who were happy to pay a premium to cover their property in the event of loss or damage by fire. After a premium was paid, the policyholder was issued with a metal badge, usually denoting the arms of the company and a policyholder's number. This badge was fixed to the property in plain sight, but high up out of harm's way, as others were not averse to appropriating the signs to fix on their own buildings without having to pay the fee. The insurance company then set up a team of fire fighters with suitable equipment to tackle a fire when called out to do so. It was likely, in a small town like Richmond, that one insurance fire brigade operated here to serve call outs for other companies. When the firemen arrived at the scene, the first thing they did was to ensure that a valid sign was displayed. If it was there, they tackled the fire - but if it was not displayed, they cleared off and let the place burn! Hard luck, old chap - you should have paid up!

Over the years that I have been involved in guided tours of the town during the summer months, I had always thought that there were only two of these fire signs left in Richmond. One of these is painted and located in Finkle Street, opposite Chantry Wynd where the French restaurant is located. It is between the two green windows sited on the building where Thornton's chocolates used to be found. This sign was used in business by the Phoenix Insurance Company, although in this case the painter has used an incorrect spelling for the company, probably due to his ignorance. The other sign is on the premises occupied by St Theresa's Hospice shop (which used to be Threshers wine store) on Victoria Road, to the rear right

hand side of the Black Lion public house car park. This sign is located above and to the right of the large decorative first floor window but was difficult to identify because of rust damage. When conversion work was taking place, the builders were persuaded to respect this historic sign and gave it a coat of grey paint to inhibit the rust. After a conversation with the occupiers of the property, the owner, Mr Mike Sunley, was contacted to enquire if he would be prepared to sanction the painting of the sign in its original colours. He very generously agreed to renew the sign in the early part of 2017. Some research then took place and the sign was identified as belonging to the Royal Exchange Insurance Company and its original colours of red, black and gold were established.

Due to this last research, I also discovered that, unknown to me, there were two more of these fire signs existing in Richmond. One of these is from The Sun Insurance Company and currently held in Richmondshire Museum in Ryder's Wynd. Apparently it was rescued from the building of Swale House, the former headquarters of the Richmondshire District Council, and was given to the museum for safe keeping by a previous Chairman of the District Council some twenty or so years ago. The last remaining sign is on the front face of Silvio House in Hurgill Road and can be identified as another example from the Phoenix Insurance Company, although it differs slightly in style from the example in Finkle Street.

Sometimes, it really does pay to look well above eye level, to observe some of the history of our fine town and one example of this can be seen in Friars Wynd on the former offices of Richmondshire District Council which are now living accommodation. If you look up at the walls of the building from the archway in the wynd, you can see some fine examples of decorative stonework removed from the Franciscan Friary and used later as decoration on this site. But here I go, digressing, off on another tack……..



The Phoenix Insurance Company sign in Finkle Street



The Royal Exchange Insurance Company sign in Victoria Road



Phoenix Insurance Company sign, Silvio House

A Note on 'Lewis Carroll'

Jane Hatcher

I recently looked through a small bundle of papers which Peter Wenham had received when he was preparing for publication his *History of Richmond School*. One was a letter dated 1958 from a Canadian stockbroker, G. Fielding Biggar, a great-grandson of James Tate, the renowned headmaster of 'Richmond School, Yorkshire' as the grammar school was then known. His name 'Fielding' came down through the family from Tate's wife Margaret, daughter of the actor Fielding Wallis.

This James Tate was succeeded as headmaster by his son of the same name when he moved to London in 1833 to become a Canon of St Paul's Cathedral. One of the younger James Tate's pupils was Charles Lutwidge Dodgson, more famous as the author Lewis Carroll, who began his formal education at Richmond School in 1844, boarding in Swale House with the headmaster's large family. After he moved on to Rugby School, and Oxford, Dodgson kept in touch with the younger James Tate, and often visited the family when back home in Croft.

Mr Fielding Biggar's letter provides elaborate details of his branch of the Tate family. The writer's mother, whose name is not given, was the daughter of Thomas Fielding Tate, son of Rev Francis Blackburne Tate, another son of Canon Tate. Thomas Fielding Tate settled in Canada and married a judge's daughter there, but died young in 1881, and his widow brought their young family over to Richmond to be brought up by their grandfather, Rev Francis Blackburne Tate, and two of his unmarried daughters, Charlotte Tate and Caroline Eliza Wallis Tate, their father's younger sisters.

Mr Fielding Biggar's mother and her sister Gertrude obviously later moved back to Canada. His aunt remained single and, as Gertrude Tate, had a career as "the first woman real estate broker in Toronto". His letter

sets out his mother's memories of Dodgson from her younger days in England. She was acquainted with him mainly through her maiden aunts, Charlotte and Caroline, who, after their father's death in 1887, moved to Guildford in Surrey. Dodgson had moved his unmarried sisters there in 1868.

He says, "Charlotte and Caroline Tate later moved to Guildford, Surrey, where they ran a very small private school for girls and my mother spent most of her time there. While the family were friends of the Dodgsons in Richmond, it was really in Guildford that my mother got to know Charles Dodgson, who used to take the children on picnics along the river Wey, as did his brother Edwin, who was a missionary but often went to Guildford to visit his six spinster sisters. I understand that all the Dodgsons, with the exception of Fanny, the eldest, were inclined to stutter and it was for that reason that Charles refused to become a priest but remained a deacon and a don at Oxford."

Our Theatre and its Origins

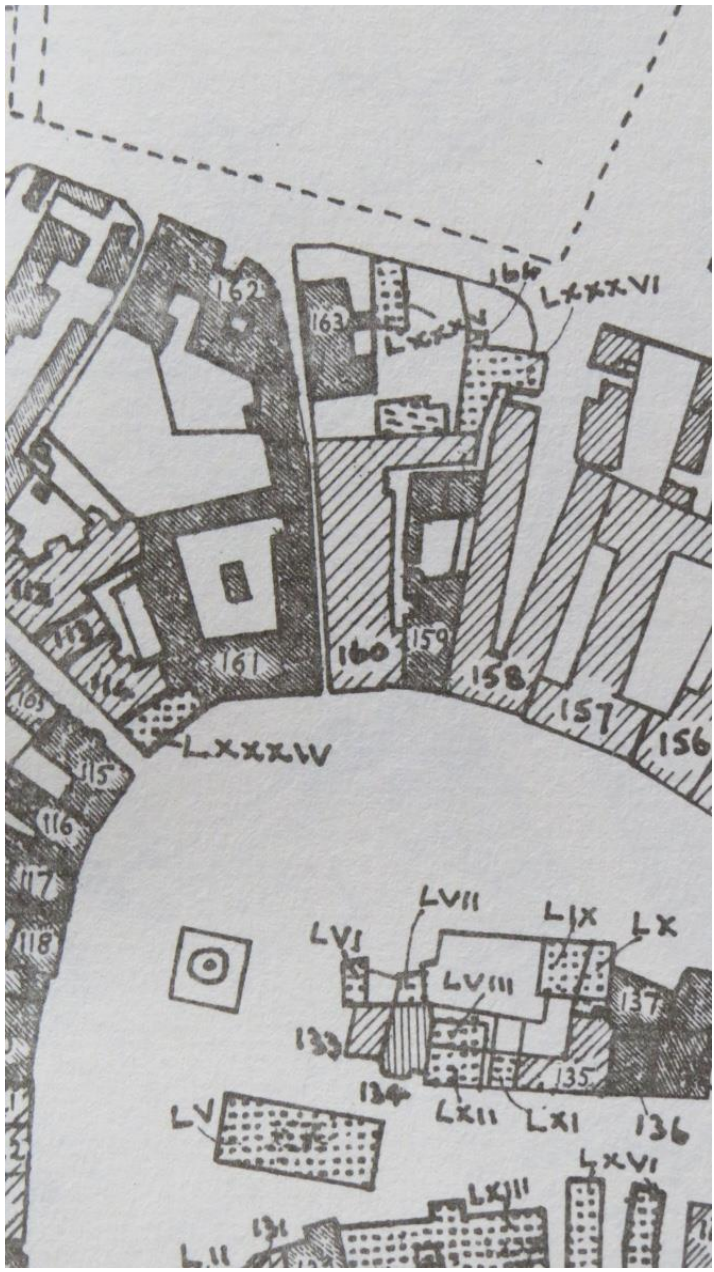
Doug Waugh

Talks on Wensleydale Quakers might be interesting but rarely cause anyone to sit up suddenly, break into a smile broader than Fremington Edge and stifle a need to shout Eureka. But that is what happened to me during June Hall's talk to the Middleham and Dales Local History Group.

So what had brought about this excitement? Simply, June had mentioned that many Quaker meeting houses had 'stables attached to house the horses of visiting Quakers'. And that may have answered a longstanding question.

Those of us who have been ensnared by the wonderful theatre, tucked neatly alongside Friars Wynd, sooner or later start to wonder what came before the Georgian Theatre Royal. And it is very difficult to find the answer. However, being a stables fits with a lot of scraps of information we have: let me piece together some of the bits.

The theatre and its museum form one side of the wynd, from the Town Wall to Victoria Road. What helps with understanding the history is when you realise that what is now the museum actually consists of two buildings. These two buildings were a Quaker Meeting House (QMH) - which abuts the theatre - and a low extension which fills the area between the QMH and the Town Wall. Dating from 1677 the QMH was one of the earliest in Britain, which later, by 1820, became a schoolhouse. This building, in any other location, would be of considerable importance in itself. The extension was built in 1894 by Robert Spence and Co., after a fire in their warehouse. (What was their warehouse is now flats and was the RDC offices on the Market Place side of the Town Wall). Here, in the



1773 map showing the site where the theatre was built, marked 163. The property marked 160 is now Greggs. Courtesy Peter Wenham: 'Richmond Burgages'

extension, the company would store and sell their flammable materials (another threat the theatre survived!) and glass.

So what do we know about this area before the theatre was built in 1788?

Looking at the available documentation in some detail reveals that there were two areas between the Town Wall and Victoria Road and alongside Friars Wynd. The first was owned by Robert Gosling, a Quaker, and he sold his area and the building on it to the Quakers in 1677 for a Meeting House. The lead signature on the deed for the Quakers is that of Philip Swale. The second area, from the boundary with Robert Gosling's area to Victoria Road (more or less where the theatre is), belonged to the Corporation. However, in 1629, again in 1651 and also in 1671, one Richard Harrison took out twenty-one year leases with the Corporation for this area. Then, in 1684, seven years after the QMH was opened, the existing lease was endorsed to Philip Swale for a hundred and one years.

Why did he want it? What could he have used it for?

As June Hall had said, at this time QMHs often had stables attached. They would have been as important then as parking spaces today. However, stables occupying as big a space as this, would have been rare. On the other hand, meeting houses and stables were usually built to utilise the space available - in Richmond's case that was a large space!

Later, in 1690, the Quakers bought a hearse. Surely they would not have done so if they did not have a place to keep it?

There is little more documentary evidence (though there is some) about this building being stables for the Quakers, but I would suggest that the circumstantial evidence is more conclusive. After all, what else would it have been used for, given the Quakers would have bought it with some use in mind?

Let me add some thoughts about Philip Swale, the key Quaker in obtaining properties:

1) He was fifty-four when the QMH was bought. From his farm at Hartforth to Richmond, it was five miles. Is it likely he - and his wife - would have walked there and back - ten miles each Sunday? William Orton of Marrick was also an important Friend attending Richmond - again some distance to come. Indeed, Friends came from many parts of Swaledale for the Richmond Monthly Meeting.
2) Philip Swale was a wealthy man; he lent several thousand pounds to friends. He and his wife, Isabel, had no children and he willed his money to charities and various good causes. No doubt he would have helped fund a stables if he thought it the right thing to do.
3) He had a farm at Hartforth with several hundred animals. He also had "extensive dairies" - are they not similar in construction to stables?
4) He was estate agent to Lord Wharton's Aske estate and acted as surveyor and architect when the house and gardens were altered. There can be little doubt that he would have had knowledge of and the right contacts to source the materials and men to build a stables.
5) He was a horseman: we know he was thrown from his horse in 1685.

Is that enough to make the case for stables?

How did this area become a theatre?

Now cast your mind back to 1684. Remembering that the lease had been endorsed for one hundred and one years, that would mean that it would have lasted until 1785. It seems the Quakers were thin on the ground by this time (in 1795 the Meeting was discontinued) which would explain why the Corporation would have to take back the building and area.

We can imagine the Corporation would then be keen to find someone to take on this area, especially if the building had been a stables for a hundred years, with little maintenance carried out in the latter years.

We don't know how it happened, but we do know that the manager of a troupe of actors who came regularly to the town, Samuel Butler, presented a petition asking to build a theatre on this site on the 1st November 1787 and was granted a lease "for the term of 21 years from the 12th day of May next…… on condition that the said S. Butler shall at his own

expense, pull down the present buildings and in the place thereof erect a proper theatre" and that Masterman, the existing tenant (presumably short-term as he does not appear to have had a lease), was to be given notice.

One big question haunts theatre historians: if Samuel Butler got his lease on May 12th 1788 and opened his theatre on Sept 2nd 1788, how could he have demolished and built the theatre in that time? Sybil Rosenfeld in her book about the Georgian Theatre says: "The demolition and rebuilding took under four months". But can this be true? Remember, Butler was granted a lease "on condition that the said S. Butler shall at his own expense, pull down, the present buildings and in the place thereof erect a proper theatre". I'd suggest it is even arguable from that wording that the theatre had to be built before the lease began. It has been assumed that Masterman, who was to have been given notice, would have been occupying the premises until May 12th. However, if the building was old and decrepit, Masterman might have been happy to give it up long before.

Therefore, it is theoretically possible that the demolition and building started earlier than May 12th and took much longer than the four months hitherto assumed.

But do we know what building work was carried out?

I think we can assume that the shared wall with the QMH (i.e. the southern wall of the theatre) must have remained in place since the QMH was still in use. However, there are cracks on the Friars Wynd side where the side wall joins the rear wall and there is a buttress on the Turf Hotel side. This suggests that the east and west walls were rebuilt, the west on the same line alongside the wynd (as shown on the 1773 map) while the east wall appears to be located about four feet further east than shown on the map.

We now need to link this with the fact that the north wall must have been built by Butler in the odd wedge shape that we all know, thus altering the building line. The 1773 map shows a rectangular building without the wedge that follows the edge of Victoria Road. If the north wall was built by Butler, we should be able to see building lines where it joins the west and east walls if these were older, original walls. There are no such lines,

suggesting that all three walls were rebuilt. Furthermore, if the existing walls had been used and raised in height, then there would again have been building lines but, again, there are no signs of these.

A final thought: the north and west walls of the theatre contain a mix of stone shapes and sizes. Could they be a mix of stones from the old demolished walls with some new ones added to raise the height? In contrast, the west QMH wall contains the one size and type of stone.

My conclusion is that all the walls, bar the south one that is shared with the QMH, were rebuilt, and I think the shared one was adapted for the needs of the theatre.

Although the building was constrained by the size and shape of the site, I want to give two examples of how effectively the space was developed for the needs of a theatre. Firstly, the unusual wedge shape at the front of the theatre is superbly well designed inside to provide the paybox and give access to the box and gallery floors, thus maximizing the size of the auditorium. Secondly, the inside of the theatre follows some well-established ratios with measurements based on "rod, pole or perch" (about sixteen and a half feet or, approximately, five metres). The pit is a rod square and the area above the pit is a rod cube, for example. If the original, old walls had allowed that, then it would have been a coincidence indeed. This all supports my conclusion above concerning the rebuilding of three of the walls and the adaptation of the fourth, shared wall.

There are lots more questions. Who designed it? Who built it? Who paid for it?

The designer/architect is a mystery. Samuel Butler was a man who had run a group of actors for fifteen years, following his marriage to Tryphosa whose two previous, deceased husbands had managed the troupe. However, he had no experience, as far as we know, of building theatres, although it is a fair guess he would have had some very definite views based on the wide variety of pubs, barns, halls etc. that he had had to perform in. Yet, in a few short months in 1788 he built two theatres, Richmond and Harrogate, and he also planned their opening and then ran them for several weeks with all that that must have entailed in recruiting

performers, selecting programmes and rehearsing. The Harrogate theatre was built in Church Square beside the Granby Hotel, then part of High Harrogate. This was no surprise because the Mrs Gilks, who ran the hotel, paid for the theatre as a replacement for a converted barn on her farm that had been used as a theatre. When the Harrogate theatre was started we do not know, but Sybil Rosenfeld records it opened on July 1st 1788, and others say the season here was from July into September - and Richmond's theatre opened on September 2nd.

Few theatres, other than the enormous ones in the biggest cities, have identified architects or designers. So how much did Butler leave to his builders and how much information did they have? Lots of theatres were built around this time, but few close to Richmond. Doncaster and Wakefield both in 1776, Lancaster in 1782 (which had been the site of the consistory court for Richmond from 1718 -1748) and Whitby in 1784 were of similar sizes, so we can assume that the knowledge was available. There was even a book entitled 'A Treatise on Theatres' by George Saunders published in 1790, which details rules for theatre building. We must also remember that Butler had to produce a plan and elevation to the aldermen at Richmond before he was to be allowed to proceed, though no copy or record of them has been found. It should also be noted that Harrogate and Richmond were less than a day's travel apart by horse, so it would have been possible for some of the same people, perhaps skilled craftsmen, to be involved with both.

Who paid for our Georgian Theatre is even more of a mystery. Theatres could cost anything from a £1000 upwards. As we know Mrs Gilks paid for the Harrogate theatre and the Whitby one had been paid for by public subscription, so it would seem to be a fair bet that it was not Butler in person who paid for Richmond. Noting that the people at the opening night included the local gentry, then we could again make a guess that there might have been contributions from them. (Any volunteers to examine the relevant papers of the local gentry in case there is a reference?) Certainly, if Butler was replacing an eyesore with an asset for the town, surely the great and the good would have been helpful to him. After all, many of them would have been very keen to have theatrical performances locally.

The theatre was and has always been in the possession of the Corporation. It is unlikely, is it not, that Butler, or anyone else, would pay for its building and then hand it over to the Corporation? And he was asked to pay a very small rent for what was a new, fine building - perhaps a reward from the Corporation for his efforts on their behalf? So possibly the money came from those local personages who could afford to contribute and who wished to have a theatre and who would be happy for ownership to be communal.

So does this contribute to our understanding of the theatre's origins? I hope it puts forward some plausible theories that may suffice until more evidence emerges or what we know is analysed in greater detail and new theories developed.

Acknowledgements:

All the content of this article is solely my responsibility, but this piece would not and could not have been written without the inspiration, cajoling and sharing of knowledge by Jane Hatcher and contributions from Maureen Stockbridge, Sheila and Jim Russell, Dennis Edmundson, Bob Woodings, Tony Wilcock, Jane Waugh, Bristol University Theatre archives, David Wilmore, the NYCC Record Office, the papers of several earlier, eminent researchers and several well-thumbed books.

Memoirs of the Fleece Hotel

Vera Selby

In 1948 I left Richmond High School to go to Leeds College of Art where I spent the next six years, returning to Richmond for vacations only. As an impoverished student, finding work during the long summer break became essential and during my first year I found work at a biscuit factory in Leeds, but enjoyed neither the location nor the work which was very boring. In 1950 I found myself better employed at The Fleece Hotel in Richmond, as barmaid and waitress. The hours were long, 7:00am until 11:00pm, six days a week, and the wages poor, at only £4 a week. However, the work was varied and often fun. The manageress was very stern and would sometimes throw cutlery at me if she felt it had not been polished correctly, but she did run the hotel very efficiently. She appeared to receive little support from her husband who obviously preferred going to race meetings. And, in fact, after a week or two, she left him and the running of the hotel was taken over by the chief housekeeper, a kindly, middle-aged lady who explained that changes would have to be made.

I was given the job of looking after the dining room during the evening and this involved not only taking food orders but also suggesting appropriate wines! Given that I was nineteen, knew nothing about wine, had received no training and was dealing largely with the officers from Catterick Camp, it was a daunting task. I was simply told to do my best and this I was determined to do. I devised a plan – having taken an order and then having been asked for an appropriate wine, I would go downstairs, grab a bottle at random and pour a sample. This I then offered, with the assertion that it was the perfect accompaniment to their beef, lamb, pork, etc. I would wait with fingers crossed for their reactions which, to my relief, were always favourable. I can honestly say I never had one complaint and can only assume that they thought they were being offered the very latest in food and wine combinations and were reluctant to show their ignorance of such fashionable expertise. Truth to tell, I was

the ignorant one, and, indeed, it has made me cynical about wine and wine waiters ever since.

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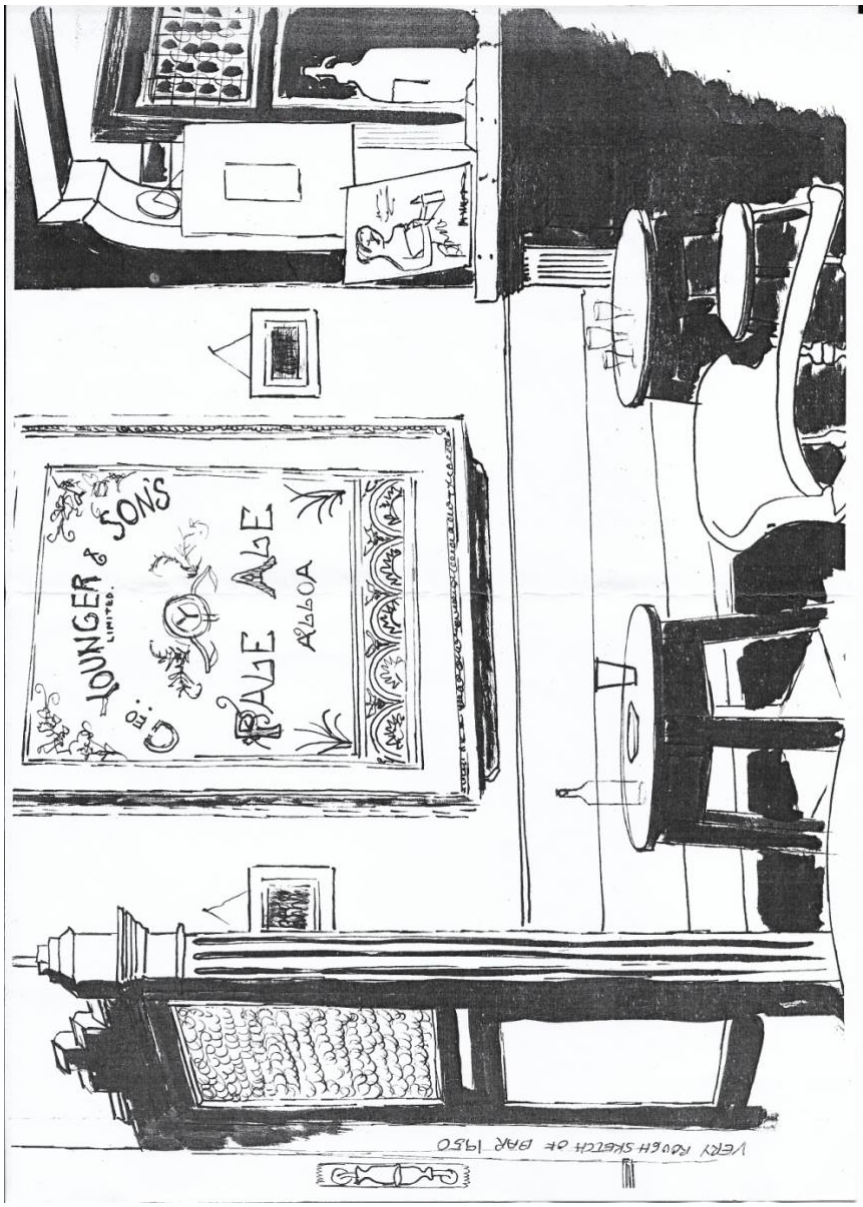
At one time, I was shown how to make an Alexandra Cocktail, in honour of a recent visit by Princess Alexandra. This, I suspected, was simply a mixture of little-used and leftover items, topped with a cherry and an umbrella. This too was regarded as the height of sophistication by unsuspecting customers.

If visitors came in for afternoon tea, it was my job not only to serve it but also to cook it. Ham and eggs were a favourite and I could manage that easily. Once, finding fruit cake in a tin, I added that as 'afters', and very much appreciated the tips left by grateful customers. Tips were always a welcome boost to my meagre wage.

As a temporary member of staff, I had to wear the only spare uniform they had, which, sadly, was two sizes too large. The compulsory cap was wide as well as large and one morning, entering the dining room with a breakfast tray, it fell over my eyes, completely obscuring my view. I was rescued by a kindly business man who lifted the cap with a smile and a cheery, 'Good morning'. I was very embarrassed at the time but he was probably highly amused.

The housekeeper and I made all the beds each morning while visitors were at breakfast. Once, I remember, we had the Bishop of Ripon staying and one morning, thinking he was still at breakfast, I donned his stole which had been hanging behind the door, and jumped out shouting, 'Boo' to the housekeeper, I thought, coming to help with the room. To my absolute embarrassment it was the bishop but, thankfully, he laughed. What a nice man he was, I realised gratefully.

Yes, The Fleece was a lovely place in those days to work, play and stay.



The Bar at The Fleece Hotel, 1950; sketch by Vera Selby

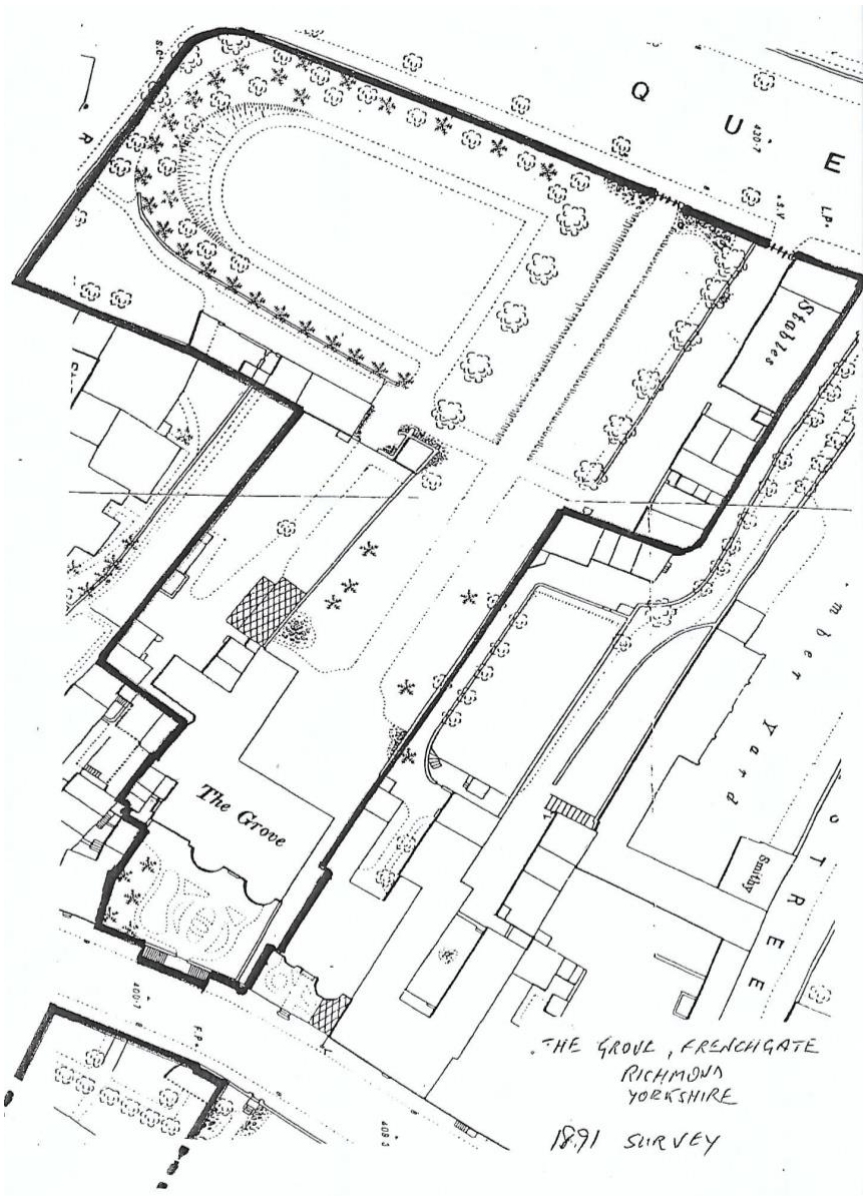
The Grove

Tina McDonald

The Grove is a substantial and elegant town house built at the bottom of Frenchgate around 1750 by Caleb Readshaw. History reveals that its owners have almost all been as significant as its architecture. Taking its name from the avenue of trees that were planted in its rear garden, its front elevation enjoys splendid views across parts of Richmond and down the valley towards Easby. It is said that even the North Yorkshire Moors are visible on a clear day.

The original house was built in red brick in a symmetrical design, with three floors and an impressive vaulted cellar running across its width. Building in brick rather than the usual stone was not only fashionable at the time, but very much an indication of wealth. The existence of Binks Brick Kilns, at the rear of the house, roughly on the site of the old post office, now Wetherspoons, was clearly a convenient source and further incentive to use this material. In 1724 Caleb Readshaw was given sole right to dig in the corporation wastes for clay for brickmaking, so it seems most likely that Binks were the source of material for his mansion.

The original site extended to almost two and three quarter acres, stretching from the front of the house (across Frenchgate itself) to rear gardens which reached Queens Road and Ryder's Wynd. There was an impressively grand carriage drive which stretched from the main rear door of the house, through a grove of lime trees to Queens Road. A magnificent Venetian window set in yellow sandstone columns overlooks the grove of trees and provides light to the elegant and richly carved staircase. Off the first floor landing is Caleb Readshaw's retiring room and bedchamber. The bed recess is framed by fluted Doric pilasters and a plastered Greek Key design beam. It is suggested that Caleb Readshaw enjoyed an almost



This 1891 survey shows the full extent of the grounds, stretching from Frenchgate to Queens Road and Ryder's Wynd.

perfect view of his carriageway from here and was thus able to identify his visitors easily, judge them creditors or debtors, and react accordingly. Welcome visitors were probably entertained in the impressive drawing room which extends across the whole width of the original house, five windows giving access to the picturesque views.

At some point, probably in the early nineteenth century, the house was extended, a substantial south wing of three floors added, this time primarily in stone, but with a matching red brick front elevation.

Caleb Readshaw was a successful merchant and twice Mayor of Richmond. Clarkson describes him as 'an opulent and eminent merchant, and one of the first who established in this town the lucrative trade of exporting knit yarn stockings and woollen night-caps to Holland and the Netherlands.' He was Mayor of Richmond in 1722 and Warden of the Company of Mercers, Grocers and Haberdashers five times. His first son, also called Caleb, became as distinguished as his father, becoming Mayor in 1742 and 1750 and serving as Warden of the Mercers' guild three times. When he was elected as Mayor in 1750, *The Newcastle Courant* published a special verse acclaiming Richmond's choice:

'Hail Happy Richmond! Which so firmly stood
To choose a Magistrate so just, so good...'

A younger son, Cuthbert, was similarly distinguished, becoming Mayor in 1754 and 1768. When Caleb Readshaw died in 1758 it appeared that, though the business had been left to Caleb Readshaw II, The Grove had been left to Cuthbert and was then left to his son, Caleb Readshaw III. Sadly, he appeared possessed of much less business acumen than either his father or grandfather and The Grove was sold in 1786 and the piteous state of his finances revealed by a notice in *The Newcastle Courant* on Saturday 14th March 1789. There, under the list of 'Bankrupts', was Caleb Readshaw of Richmond, North Yorkshire, Merchant.

In 1793, the house became the property of the Stapleton family who were Roman Catholic and rather grand. A notice in the London Evening Standard in June 1836 stated: 'by the death of the late Miles Stapleton of Carlton Hall, Esq., the claim to the Barony of Beaumont devolves on the

only sister of the deceased, Lady Throckmorton, Bart; and, in case of her demise to Thomas Stapleton, of The Grove Richmond, as lineal descendant and heir of Lady Joan Stapleton, eldest daughter of Lord Lovel, of Tichmersh, and Joan, only sister of William last Viscount Beaumont.' This was without question an impressive pedigree.

As a leading Catholic family, the Stapletons had constructed a private chapel, complete with stained glass window in The Grove. Dr Nicholls, the present owner, can find no trace of this; however, he does wonder if it was located in the cellar where the vaulted ceiling does resemble a crypt. Though Catholicism was becoming more widely tolerated following the passing of the Catholic Emancipation Act, there was still a deal of anti-catholic feeling. Indeed, it was said that in 1763 Father Hunter S.J. was banished from Richmond after having been found guilty of baptising a baby there.

Sadly, the Catholic family who followed the Stapletons into The Grove in 1840, fell victim to some very unpleasant, discriminatory attacks. Peter Constable Maxwell was brother to Lord Herries and third son of Marmaduke Constable Maxwell and Theresa Appolinca of Everingham Park. He married in1834 one Helena Mary Bowden from Derbyshire, and over the next seventeen years, the couple produced nine children; the final child, Alice Clare, was born in March 1851, the year of her father's death. When Agatha Mary Constable Maxwell married Edward Pilkington in 1867, *The York Herald*, recording the marriage, described the Maxwells thus: 'The merest tyro in history knows that since the days of Maccus, who may be looked upon as the founder of the family seven hundred and fifty years ago, the Maxwells, whether as Barons of Carlaverock, Lords Herries, or Earls of Nithadale, having taken a leading part in national affairs, and having a heritage of high renown, which throws a lustre over the house that is certainly not dimmed by the character and deeds of its present representatives.'

Socialising with the very best of local Catholic gentry, such as the Lawsons of Brough Park, the Maxwells, nonetheless, showed a true sense of 'noblesse oblige', and were unusually kindly disposed towards their servants. *The York Herald* records in January 1841, 'Peter C. Maxwell,

Esq., of The Grove, Richmond, on Saturday last, in the true old way of English hospitality, celebrated the feast of Christmas, by a ball to his servants. About thirty sat down to an excellent supper, after which dancing commenced. Mr and Mrs Maxwell opened the ball, and with some of their friends, joined in the dance till its conclusion, appearing heartily to sympathize in the innocent pleasure of their dependents'.

Further generosity of spirit was demonstrated when, in 1850, offensive slogans were posted on the Maxwells' doors. Mr Maxwell's response was: 'In all Christian charity I freely forgive them.' In the same year, jeering mobs gathered round the church in Newbiggin at Christmas, making Midnight Mass impossible. Peter Maxwell was unusual in becoming Mayor of Richmond in 1843, in spite of being a Catholic, and as Richmond's first Catholic Mayor he was clearly held in high esteem by the people who mattered. Sadly, Peter Maxwell died in 1851, at the age of 44 and his wife Helena followed some months later.

The sale of The Grove's contents which followed these unfortunate early deaths took place at York, the catalogue containing a vast range of valuable silver, china, books, and furniture. Also included was a nearly new Clarence carriage, a four-wheeled dog cart, a good pair of carriage horses, a Bay Mare, an Alderney cow and two setter dogs.

The next owners, the Ropers, both father, Stote Donnison Rowe Roper, and eldest son George, were successful bankers with investments in lead mining in Swaledale. George made good use of The Grove, producing ten children to enjoy its generous accommodation. Mr Roper Senior had enjoyed a term as Mayor of Richmond in 1855 but his son, George, did very much better with terms of office from 1881-1884 and 1890-1891. George Roper and his large family clearly enjoyed a very active social life. They are recorded attending a 'fashionable concert' in the Assembly Rooms at the King's Head in 1888 with the Misses Van Straubenzie, Miss Barclay from St. Nicholas, the Crofts and other members of Richmond society. When Prince Albert visited Aske in 1889 for a private visit to hunt with Lord Zetland's famous hounds, George Roper was one of the guests.

Admirably, and like the Maxwells before them, the family had a strong sense of duty. In 1889, Mrs Roper, along with two of her children, took part in a concert in the schoolroom at Skeeby, organised to raise money for a new harmonium. In 1891, *The Yorkshire Gazette* recorded that 'Alderman and Mrs Roper of The Grove, Richmond entertained the members of the Richmond Volunteer and Temperance Band to tea, and afterwards treated them to Mr Newell's Pavilion Theatre in the cricket field.' And even earlier, in 1884, informed its readership that, 'Miss Roper and Master Roper, of The Grove, Richmond, yesterday gave a treat to the inmates of the workhouse'.

Notices of George Roper's death in *The Yorkshire Post* and *Leeds Intelligencer* in January 1920, revealed him to be living at Gilling Lodge. A long list of his achievements paid homage to a life well lived.

After the Ropers, The Grove was bought by two maiden ladies, the Misses Hickman, Sarah and Alice, who turned it into what would now be described as a 'boutique hotel'. Their brochure declared that they ran it, 'not as an hotel nor a Boarding House in the accepted use of these terms, for it is the aim of the proprietresses to create for their visitors by all means in their power, a veritable home from home'. The Misses Hickman were not short of business acumen having previously run a dancing school in Darlington where they described themselves as 'professors of dancing'. They both seem to have retired by 1920.

Albert Brand, a business man, famous for creating a bus service between Richmond and Catterick Camp was the next owner and in 1925 he used some of the land to build a garage, where Calvert's Carpets is now sited.

The following owner, a Mr McDougal from Darlington, began a more determined process of selling off The Grove's land: first, the area that became a cinema and later Rodbers, now, of course, developed as flats and shops; then later, Albert Brand's garage that became Calvert's Carpets, and finally, on Queens Road, the area that became the Post Office, and is now Wetherspoons. This left The Grove with only a quarter of an acre, sufficient for recreation and generous for a town house but a considerable reduction of the original size of the site.

During the 1930s, the house was rented by Colonel Bayne and his family.



Rear elevation of The Grove in the 1970s *Courtesy: Dr. M. Nicholls*

Dr Nicholls has been able to meet a member of the Bayne family who gave an assurance that the house was well-cared for during Colonel Bayne's tenure. He had made alterations in order to adapt the house to accommodate more than one family, and was able to do this with appropriate sensitivity and without compromising the many fine architectural features.

After the Second World War, circa 1945/50, a Mr and Mrs Mudd bought The Grove, pleased to find such a fine home for their family. Unfortunately for them, the land behind The Grove was compulsorily purchased by the Post Office, in order to provide a vehicle maintenance depot, and a rather utilitarian building replaced what had been a pleasant area of garden.

In 1973, Dr Nicholls and his wife Meredith purchased The Grove, delighted to be the proud owners of such a significant and elegant building and charmed by its earlier illustrious owners, many of whom had had such



Front elevation of The Grove in the 1970s *Courtesy: Dr. M. Nicholls*

an important impact on Richmond society and life. Photographs of the time indicate only too clearly that the house needed renovation as well as admiration, and the Nicholls embarked on a programme of sensitive restoration. Particularly pleasing to them both was the opportunity that came later to buy back, albeit at some considerable cost, the land that had been compulsorily purchased. Dr Nicholls oversaw the demolition of the ugly brick building that had been the maintenance depot and began to restore the garden area. With clever design he has been able to recreate the sense of the original grove that gave the house its name and develop a garden that enhances the house with an elegant simplicity.

After nearly fifty years at The Grove, for Dr Nicholls, the house still delights and its beautiful architectural features remain a source of constant pleasure. Dr Nicholls cites as particular favourites, the wonderful Venetian window and first floor landing with its dentil frieze and five matching doors, the beautiful tiled floor in the spacious hallway, and the large bay windows that offer such a rewarding view. Especially pleasing is Caleb Readshaw's elegant bedchamber overlooking the now restored garden, and, of course, the wonderful drawing room, a fireplace at each

end, with its beautiful doorcases and five windows looking out towards Easby.

As Dr. Nicholls himself says, ‘It humbles one to experience living in such a house’.



The Grove, 2014: front elevation, complete with Tour de France flag

Courtesy: Dr. M. Nicholls

Acknowledgement: I am grateful for information recorded in Jane Hatcher’s article ‘More Plaques’ in the 1990 Review and similarly for the information recorded in Sister Clare Veronica’s article, ‘Maxwells and Martyrs’ in the 1989 edition of the same publication.

H.M.S. Pimpernel: the Ship Richmond Adopted during 'Warship Week' 1942

Harold Dick

During the past year, when everybody was considering how the government would deal with the referendum vote to leave the European Union, only a very small number of Britain's population knew about the passing of a 75th anniversary during the month of May, entitled 'Warship Week' in 1942.

By the end of 1940 Britain was in a desperate situation: Germany had occupied most of Europe and the whole of its western coastline from north Norway down to the French border with Spain was under Nazi control. British troops had miraculously been brought home from Dunkirk, but all the army's equipment had been left behind. Italy had also declared war and invaded Egypt, forcing the British army there to retreat towards the Suez Canal. Japan had signed a pact with Germany, causing the Royal Navy to be stretched beyond its limits in maintaining fleets in the Pacific, the Mediterranean and a home fleet, together with providing naval escorts to the Merchant Navy convoys around the world, supplying Britain with badly needed raw materials, machinery and food. Hitler had proclaimed that he would be marching his troops through London before the 1st January 1941.

The reality of an invasion became imminent by the mid 1940s when serious air attacks by German bombers and fighter planes began in the south of England on RAF aerodromes and towns around the coast. The famous 'Battle of Britain' had commenced and the Royal Air Force faced superior odds with tremendous bravery, gaining Britain some valuable time to prepare for the worst. Between the 8th August and 31st October, the RAF had destroyed nearly 2,400 German aeroplanes, with a much smaller loss to themselves of about 375 planes, plus another 350 damaged. Hitler was in a rage over this situation and ordered night bombing of

Britain's towns and factories, together with U Boat packs attacking the Atlantic convoys supplying essential goods to the British Isles, also carried out at night.

Such was the situation at the beginning of the new year 1941. Furthermore, over the next six months, matters became more serious. Financial costs in the production of new aircraft and military needs increased; food was rationed to a degree never experienced before; petrol was unavailable to the public; clothing was rationed and building materials were scarce, making it difficult to repair the considerable amount of bomb damage around the country.

During this period, as morale was getting low, the government made attempts to raise money by borrowing abroad. This only created greater problems for the future through the very high interest rates charged because of the risk of conflict. A trial in obtaining money from the population had also been made after the Dunkirk evacuation: the appeal, called 'War Weapons Week', had aimed to raise money to replace the lost equipment. This concept was not very successful, but was the catalyst for another, carefully planned, appeal to the public for help.

The true figures of losses at sea were released; they had been disastrous ever since the U boat packs had attacked convoys in prearranged formations, to confuse the convoys' naval escort ships. A total of 315 merchant ships was lost between June and December 1940, amounting to 1,659,000 tons. During the next six months, the total was greater, amounting to 369 ships and a further 1,902,000 tons. At the beginning of 1941 Germany had ninety U boats in commission in the Atlantic Ocean with twenty-two in operation at all times. This number increased to 250 U boats in commission of which ninety were operational by June 1942.

After the first two years of conflict, the Royal Navy was in urgent need of additional ships to replace losses and for operational use, to cover the extra, vast areas they were now required to defend. An appeal to the public to donate money for more Royal Navy ships to combat these losses on the convoys bringing food to the nation, was entitled 'Warship Week'. It proved a huge success. Every city, town, Urban and Rural District

Council identified a date, advertised well in advance, as the national gift aid week for May 1942.

The Admiralty allocated a vessel to each local authority that participated, depending upon the size of the population in each area, offering the name of the ship, its details and the name of the Captain or Commander, together with the target sum to be raised for the event. Cities and large towns were given capital ships, gradually diminishing down in size for the small Rural Districts to sloops or tugs as minesweepers. From May 1941 until May 1942, a total of 1178 Warship Weeks were held by 1273 Districts around the British Isles, raising the massive sum of £955,611,589. In today's money this would equate to almost £1 trillion.

Many large companies in Britain also joined in and adopted a ship themselves. The London Insurance Companies, The London Stock Exchange, Glyn Mills Bank and The Baltic Exchange all adopted a battleship each. It must have been a shock to some people realising that 'Britannia no longer Rules the Waves', especially after hearing the news of the loss of the Royal Navy's mightiest battlecruiser, *HMS Hood*, on May 23rd 1941, followed by *HMS Ark Royal* and *HMS Barham* in November 1941. Japan declared war on the USA and Britain on 7th December 1941, immediately after their attack on Pearl Harbour, sinking several capital ships of the American fleet. The following day, *HMS Prince of Wales* and *HMS Repulse* were attacked and sunk by Japanese aircraft.

The total money raised covered the cost of adopting eight battleships, four aircraft carriers, forty-nine cruisers, three hundred and one destroyers, twenty-five submarines, one hundred and sixty-four corvettes and frigates and two hundred and eighty-eight minesweepers. Many areas corresponded with the crews and hosted them when on leave. After this event, the Government confidently introduced a National Savings Bond which was to be repayable after the end of hostilities. The Borough of Richmond, together with its four Rural Districts of Croft, Reeth, Richmond and Startforth[9], participated jointly and settled on a target sum

[9] Startforth Rural District is no longer part of North Yorkshire, having been transferred to County Durham in the 1974 boundary changes.



HMS Pimpernel (K71) leaving Belfast Lough, after being commissioned into the Royal Navy, to join the escort for her first convoy operation, February 1941

of £120,000 and adopted *HMS Pimpernel,* a flower-class corvette of 940 tons, built by Messrs Harland and Wolff of Belfast.

During a council meeting in June 1942, the mayor of Richmond read out a letter which he had received from the Secretary of the Admiralty expressing 'the pleasure of the Lords' Commissioners of the Admiralty on learning that, as a result of the successful Warship Week campaign, Richmond and the Rural Districts of Croft, Reeth, Richmond and Startforth reached their financial objectives, thus enabling them to adopt *HMS Pimpernel*. Five commemorative plaques were being made for Richmond and each of the four Districts.'

The mayor concluded by stating that the target of £120,000 had been overtaken, the final sum raised being almost twice that amount. Barclays Bank, who held the Council's accounts, had helped by depositing the fund money as it was raised in the same account as the Local Rates, thus earning a higher interest rate. Finally, it was agreed to have a further plaque made to present to the Captain of *HMS Pimpernel*.

This corvette had been ordered by the Admiralty on 19th September 1939, sixteen days after the outbreak of war. She was launched on 16th November 1939 and completed on 9th January 1940, a total of five months and twenty-one days. The original design of this class of corvette was based on a Whalecatcher, *The Southern Pride*, and modified by Smiths Dock Co. Ltd. Of Middlesbrough who built the prototype. They could be built easily and quickly, within six months, and their plans and specifications were sent to many shipbuilders around the country. Costing around £30,000 each in 1939, they were also inexpensive to operate, having a single screw propeller driven by a four-cylinder, triple expansion engine giving 2,750 ihp, allowing a maximum speed of sixteen knots. A crew of forty-nine initially operated these vessels but, as modifications were gradually introduced, the complement was increased to eighty-five. This was needed because of the additional armament of anti-aircraft guns, increased depth charge equipment and other anti-submarine detectors.

Given the Flag Pendent No. K71, *HMS Pimpernel*, when commissioned, was put on to escort duties on 1st February 1941, joining an outward bound convoy No. OB281 on that date from Liverpool. Serving the whole

of her life on these duties she escorted a total of seventy-two convoys in both directions across the Atlantic, finally arriving home with Convoy SC177 on 6th June 1945. During this period she had only five breaks for repairs or refits, allowing leave for the crew. These breaks occurred from September to Christmas 1941, September 1942 to 17th January 1943, July to December 1943, May to September 1944 and January to 11th May 1945. After being in reserve she was scrapped at Portaferry, Northern Ireland in October 1948. During the whole of this active service, thirty-six of her sister ships had been lost.

Note on the Plaque (following page):

The Admiralty presented this plaque to every city, town, borough or district council that participated in the appeal. Some councils also produced their own versions for display. The wooden shield bears the Admiralty badge which, in Heraldic terminology, is described as follows:

Rouge, A Fouled Anchor proper surrounded by a Garter bearing the abbreviated Latin inscription 'Duty of Administration for the Protection of Britain'. All surmounted by the Admiralty Crown.

The brass plate at the base is inscribed: 'Presented by The Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty to the Borough of Richmond in the County of York to commemorate the adoption of *HMS Pimpernel* during Warship Week May 1942'



The plaque presented to Richmond Borough by the Admiralty, for raising the funds to adopt HMS Pimpernel

The A1 Roadworks

Richard Collier



The sign that says it all!



View near Brough St Giles



Archaeologists at work, Fort Bridge



Traffic grinds to a halt



Equipment grinds to a halt



The concrete of Hope



Assembling the Fort Bridge footbridge

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Wright, Mr. & Mrs. R.
Young, Mr. & Mrs. A.

We regret to announce the deaths of the following members:
Fred Jary
Gill Espin
Col. Philip Newlyn
Dorothy Walter
Jean Wrangham

Obituaries:

Gill Espin
It is with sadness that we record the death of Gill Espin, a life member, who died in February this year. Gill lived in Richmond for more than fifty years and was Hon. Treasurer of the society in the 1990s. She moved to Suffolk to be close to family but always made time for several visits back to Richmond.

Jean Wrangham
We have, sadly, received the news of Jean Wrangham's death just as we are going to press. Jean died after a long period of infirmity and will be very greatly missed by people in Richmond. She joined the Civic Society committee in 2006 and served for five years before her health meant that she had to retire. Her contribution to our debates was always progressive and this was seen elsewhere in her life. At the point when most people downsize in readiness for old age, Jean upsized and restored a large, derelict but important town house in Millgate. Through her marriage, she was directly connected to William Wilberforce and this link to a social reformer suited Jean's outlook very well indeed: free-thinking, she quickly became a patron of the arts and cultural life of the town. However, we in the Civic Society, will remember her fondly as the elderly lady with the tall stick, sitting on the front row of every lecture, asking questions which would often bewilder the lecturer.

Acknowledgements:
We would like to thank all of this year's contributors. Without their interest and industry there would be no Review.
The illustrations have been provided by the contributors unless otherwise acknowledged.

Subscriptions are due after the A.G.M.
New members joining after the summer recess are asked to pay half the current year's subscription, with a full subscription for the following year, due after the A.G.M.

Copies of back numbers of The Review and its Indexes are available from the Hon. Secretary.

The Society has its own website and Facebook page where you can keep up to date with activities and lectures. Google 'Richmond Civic Society' or use the full web address: www.richmondcivicsociety.org

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		Mr. J. McDonald
Committee:	Mr. P. Cardwell	Retires in 2017
	Mr. T. Dykes	Retires in 2017
	Mr. C. Grant	Retires in 2018
	Mr. S. Scott-Priestley	Retires in 2018
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		Mrs. S. Thubron
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