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Chairman's Report

John McDonald

Welcome to the 2019 edition of The Review. Tina, Dorothy and I hope that you find plenty of interest in its pages. As always we have tried to combine articles of history with an overview of the year's events in and around Richmond. I want to take this opportunity to thank all our contributors for their interest and hard work. Without them there would be no Review. Equally vital to the publication is the work of Tina, my wife and Dorothy Clague, our chief proof-reader.

As we all know, the Civic Society is a voluntary organisation and charity. It operates totally through the commitment and interest of just over a dozen key people, all unpaid, who want the society to flourish. This makes the society and the year's programme remarkable. The result of this collaborative effort in 2019 has been a programme of nine lectures focusing on the history, culture and landscape of our northern region, two day trips looking further afield in the north of England and a holiday visiting a completely different part of the UK, this year Dumfries and Galloway, again with an emphasis on history and culture. We can then add to this core programme this Review, given free to members, sold locally and lodged with all the key deposit libraries in the country. Such is the 'deal' we offer our members and it is rewarding to report that our membership has grown during the year.

However, the society has made a broader contribution to Richmondshire. Firstly, the five members of our planning group have met every three weeks to discuss and submit comments on all planning applications affecting listed buildings and conservation areas in Richmondshire. Our brief from the planning department is to focus on the heritage impact of any building work. Thus, the group aims to protect the area, which the lecture programme celebrates, for the general public. I want to thank all

four of my colleagues who make up this group: David Barraclough, John Clarke, Chris Shaw and Shirley Thubron.

Furthermore, I am pleased to report that we have recently undertaken a new, long-term project, working with Historic England: we intend to review the descriptions of the town's listed buildings as published on Historic England's website, updating the information and adding photographs wherever possible. Chris Shaw has volunteered to co-ordinate the work and we are grateful for his offer. I hope to be able to report on progress next year. Meanwhile, you can easily log on to Historic England's website and monitor progress.

It is a real pleasure to thank the people who have contributed so much to the year. Margaret Lowery has organised an extremely successful tour of Dumfries and Galloway's great houses which additionally struck lucky with the May sunshine. Marcia Howard has single-handedly maintained our Facebook page and made sure that our activities are broadcast on social media. Marcia is also one of our contributors this year, writing about an autograph book that was discovered through the project on conscientious objectors at Richmond Castle. Meanwhile, the society's core activity of nine lectures has been organised almost exclusively by Colin Grant, a major achievement and the result of months of work. We all owe Colin a major debt of gratitude. 2019 is the last year when we will be able to use the Influence Church's building. I would like to thank them for their support over so many years and to wish them well in all their activities in future. As you know, we start using the Methodist Church from Wednesday January 15th.

None of the activities described above would have been possible without the society's committee and I want to close by thanking them all for their individual contributions and joint working. We meet every month except August and ensure that the lectures organised by Colin Grant work well on the night. Graham Barber keeps our finances under scrupulous review and Carol Hillyard records these meetings and keeps us in close contact with other Civic Societies. Our thanks to both of them and to Peter Cardwell, Tony Dykes and Simon Scott-Priestley for yet another year well run and thoroughly enjoyable.

Collectanea

Tina McDonald

Reading, earlier this year, an article in the Sunday Times on house sales in North Yorkshire, I was intrigued by a property advertised for sale in Scorton. The paper described the village as 'very pretty', which it is, but went on to say that it had the added advantage of being close to the 'arty' town of Richmond. There are many who feel that Richmond has long lacked a nomenclature, a view first voiced, perhaps, by Oswald Harland in his book on Yorkshire. He began his chapter on Swaledale thus: 'About Richmond I have never been able to make up my mind, and I do not think that, finally and dogmatically, Richmond has ever been able to make up its own mind about itself.' His book is one of a series of 'County Books', described as '...engagingly informative about the life of the county, past and present.' However engaging, his view seemed ill-informed to those who knew and appreciated the town. Only a year later, Alfred Brown wrote, 'Richmond stands supreme among the market towns of Yorkshire and is one of the finest examples of an old market town in England.' Moreover, Harland had forgotten, perhaps, that Richmond had already been chosen by the British Council in 1945 as a typical English town which exemplified what was best in the English way of life. Sadly, Harland's view was one that lingered and time was, when visitors complained of lack of eating places and poor retail opportunities, even while acknowledging the beautiful architecture and stunning surrounding scenery. Those who looked for culture rather than commodities were better rewarded, however, as the arts began to proliferate in the town.

The list of artistic and cultural opportunities is long: the Station stages a series of interesting exhibitions, encouraging and promoting local artists; the town boasts three different art shops, and local artists have twice been chosen as official artists for the Tour de Yorkshire. The Richmond Subscription Concerts provide affordable, top-class classical music; the Georgian Theatre has, always, an eclectic mix of drama, comedy and the

one-man shows that work so well in this exquisite, small theatre. The museum, as well as making available much about the history of the area, runs lectures, workshops and provides a useful research facility. Festivals proliferate: the Walking and Book Festival brings interesting writers and interested walkers to the town and George Fest gives visitors and residents a true taste of Georgian life. Secret Salons, a musical perambulation, which last year delighted music lovers in the town, was back, by popular request, with recitals in Culloden Tower, where Alex Rider played a gothic style Erard harp, in Millgate House with the baritone Ed Joule and Jonatan Bougt playing theorbo, a plucked string instrument of the lute family, and in one of Frenchgate's elegant townhouses with Stephen and Andy Wardale on cello and guitar. The award–winning Swaledale Festival enjoyed a record-breaking year, attracting more visitors than ever before and we enjoyed the opportunity to choose from over ninety events featuring stars such as Tasmin Little, Sheku Kanneh-Mason, and the current BBC Young Musician of the Year, Lauren Zhang.

So the 'arty' description is well deserved and, to everyone's satisfaction, the business and retail offer has grown exponentially. The town is well served with restaurants and cafes and is fortunate to have several high quality independent retailers. The Richmond Business and Tourist Association, renamed last year as Original Richmond, has provided an enormous impetus to business activity in the town and deserves much credit for, not only, the many colourful floral displays which have enhanced the town, but for the growing sense of pride and enthusiasm that now pervades Richmond. This pride was further enhanced by the recent news that Richmond had again received a Silver Gilt Award in this year's Yorkshire in Bloom awards. Gold Awards were also given to Millgate House and Garden, King Street Kitchen and Gift Shop, Mr Yorke's Walled Garden and Just the Job. In total, the town's businesses received an impressive fourteen awards.

So it was, perhaps, no great surprise that Richmondshire was voted one of the best places to live in the annual Halifax Quality of Life Survey, and was placed second behind Orkney in Scotland, and ahead of Hambletonshire. Perhaps we can regard the proliferation of surveys which seem to abound in many newspapers and other publications with more than a modicum of scepticism, but the Halifax survey seemed to be

based on solid data: a low crime rate, reasonable traffic flows, population density and primary class size. Personal wellbeing scores were high, with life satisfaction, personal happiness and low anxiety all well above the norm. Richmondshire also scored highly for the ratio of pubs to population, although some might consider this to be something of a mixed blessing! However, the number of visitors, increasingly tempted to the area, might appreciate these more than the residents.



Baritone Ed Joule and Jonatan Bougt playing theorbo at Millgate House as part of George Fest

For visitors and indeed, residents, Richmond's *What's On* guide has been an invaluable resource. Established originally by Gillian Howells as part of the Richmond Swale Valley Community Initiative, it has been run for the last nine years by Doug Waugh. We were all sad to hear that Doug, who has compiled the publication, regularly collecting and collating all the relevant information, has decided to retire. Doug has distributed the leaflets to all manner of outlets, whatever the weather, warm, wet or worse, and residents and visitors alike have come to depend on this useful source of information. We are all immensely grateful for all his efforts on our behalf. When it looked unlikely that a replacement for him could be found, there was much consternation, not only from those who use the publication to find out 'what's on', but from the many organisations who use it to advertise their events. It was with much relief that we heard that Carol Watson (whose name is particularly apposite), from Castle Hill Bookshop, and Liz Graves from Mocha Chocolate Shop, were prepared to take over the organization. As members of the town's business association, they are well placed to continue the excellent work done by Doug for so long. Andy Thursfield, long responsible for the creative design and artwork of the publication, will, fortunately, continue to be involved.

Richmond Information Centre is another source of invaluable information for visitors and residents. Situated in Richmond library, it is run by Bev Lawrence and staffed by a team of volunteers. It offers varied information on Richmondshire and has a useful stock of guides and leaflets. It is currently negotiating a move to the more accessible Market Hall.

One major disappointment for the town this year was the failure of the Old Grammar School Regeneration Project to acquire the necessary funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, in order to proceed with their ambitious plans to turn the building into a vital community asset. In spite of strenuous efforts by a committed group of trustees and volunteers, who had already raised more than £340,000 towards the £800,000 of matched funding needed for the £1.8 million lottery grant, lottery officials thought it unlikely that further funds could be raised quickly enough to reach the £800,000 target essential for the bid. At the moment, the future of the building seems uncertain; Richmond District Council, however, has

expressed commitment to exploring any options that will ensure it is returned to community use.

Some organizations fared better: the Green Howards Museum received a National Lottery Heritage Fund grant of £40,000 for improvements to its medal room. This enabled the museum to improve displays of their 4000 medals and give greater prominence to their Victoria and George Crosses. The Georgian Theatre Royal, meanwhile, received an enormous fillip to its new campaign to raise £150,000 a year for the next four years, when Sir Ian McKellen selected the Georgian as one of a number of theatres in which to celebrate his 80th birthday. In a stunning one-man performance he entertained a thrilled audience with Shakespeare, Tolkein, poetry, life, history, wit and endless humour, then finally, manned the door with a collecting bucket, refusing to let pass anyone foolish enough to think they could leave the theatre without making a contribution.



Sir Ian McKellan with Clare Allen, Chief Executive and Malcolm Bryant, Chair of Trustees, launches the Living Theatre Campaign.

Courtesy: Richard Jemison

Other organizations in the town continue with fund-raising for future projects. Just the Job, a charity which enables adults with disabilities to extend their potential through work in the community, was delighted to receive planning permission for a new headquarters. To be called The Big Green Build, it will include garden and woodland space, meeting rooms and workshops. Hoping to raise £500,000, the charity has already been given a long-term lease on a suitable field by the Zetland Estate.

While others continue to fund-raise and entertain, the phrase 'lovely weather for ducks' was never more relevant as Richmond Duck Club embarked on its annual Duck Race. Despite the unfavourable weather, turnout was better than ever. On page 62 readers can find out more about this worthwhile organization that provides so much fun, as well as useful funds, for children and families in the town,

Richmond Meet was another event frustrated by unhelpful weather. Now in its 127th year, it was further restricted by new health and safety regulations which banned participants from riding on the backs of lorries during its parade through the town. Readers will remember that this was a great part of the fun of the show, as costumed participants interacted with the watching crowds, throwing sweets for children and sometimes drenching them with plastic water pistols! The Meet proceeded, however, with its usual enthusiasm and, working with Richmond Cricket Club, provided a full weekend of family fun.

Richmond Live was another organization that suffered from our unreliable climate. After last year's break, the organization was determined to make the 2019 event one to remember. Sadly, it was, but for all the wrong reasons. The dreadful weather conditions played havoc with the careful construction necessary for the event. Water rose from the river, across the Batts, bringing down barriers and stands and swamping much of the performance area. Concerted efforts by the committee and determined volunteers restored the damage, against all odds. Impassioned pleas, on television and social media, successfully convinced a possible audience not to be deterred by the adverse weather conditions and, in spite of all the difficulties, the event became the success its organizers had hoped for.

Sadly, people in the Dales fared far worse. Prepared for the thunderstorms predicted by the weather forecasters, nobody envisaged the devastating impact of the flash floods that followed. In Grinton, Bellerby, Reeth, Leyburn and other areas in the Dales, people watched helplessly as roads turned into raging torrents, and bridges, walls, barns and even parts of houses were destroyed. The owner of The Bridge Inn at Grinton described the force of water as of 'biblical proportions.' In all, it has been estimated that over 250 homes, over 40 businesses and 35 farms have been affected. As residents began the huge clear-up, many were heartened by the offers of help from communities far and near. Donations of cash, food, clothes, and promises of practical assistance, together with acts of real selflessness, helped residents cope with the enormous challenge that faced them. Fortunately too, local councils and other organisations reacted quickly. The B6270 reopened two days ahead of schedule and the involvement of Team Rubicon UK, made up largely of military personnel, as well as involvement from the county council's Major Incident Response team provided invaluable support. Sadly, for many, returning to their homes and restoring their lifestyles will not be accomplished quickly, and many businesses fear lack of customers, and the inevitable reduction in profits. Their plea, for us all to visit cafes, pubs and use local shops, is one to which we should respond easily, given that, in spite of the devastation, it remains a uniquely beautiful area.

It was not only music lovers who were sad to hear of Carol Gedye's retirement from the Military Wags Choir Catterick Garrison. As musical director, she has led this remarkable choir since its inception in 2010. Set up at the height of the war in Afghanistan, it has provided a welcome distraction for military wives and girlfriends, as well as wonderful and often moving entertainment. The Military Wives Choir concept has rolled out internationally, where British Forces are serving. The television programmes and albums featuring these brave ladies have been very much valued by the participants and audiences everywhere. Thanks to Carol seem inadequate for such a contribution to army life.

For those living with relatives with dementia, the new dementia cafe, opened in Richmond Town Hall, is indeed a blessing. Set up by Dementia Forward, it is run by Admiral dementia nurse Cath Peach and supported by volunteers, and offers tea, cake, light lunches and games, and, of



Carol Gedye with the WAGs choir at her final concert, Sounds of Summer, Georgian Theatre Royal. Courtesy: Carol Gedye

course, care and companionship. Open each Tuesday from 1:00pm till 3:00pm, it is a welcome addition for those living with dementia and those caring for them.

Richmond's flagship play park in Ronaldshay Park was officially opened this summer following a £140,000 upgrade. With equipment for adults as well as improved equipment for children, it offers an ideal recreation area for families. Parks at Whitcliffe Grange, Coronation Place and Riverside Road have also been improved, ensuring that the town's children are better served with recreational facilities than in many larger towns.

In 2019, UCI Road World Championship, returning to the UK for the first time since 1982, will see Yorkshire again at the centre of the cycling world. A thousand of the world's best riders are set to delight Yorkshire spectators, and cycling enthusiasts are thrilled to have the Junior Men's Race setting off from Richmond Market Place. The District Council has organised food and drink stalls as well as open air cinema to ensure this becomes a real family event. Moreover, a global TV audience is predicted to be around 250 million. Let us hope that the 250 million, or at least some of them, are as charmed by Yorkshire as we are.

The Highlights of South-West Scotland: 13th- 16th May

Margaret Lowery

It was a lovely sunny morning in mid-May, when fifty Civic Society members and friends left for a tour of south-west Scotland, our destination that evening being the Marine Hotel, Troon.

The first stop we made was at Houghton Hall Garden Centre near Carlisle for a comfort break plus an early retail opportunity. Then it was on to Dumfries House, passing through some very attractive scenery in the River Nith valley. On arrival at Dumfries House we were met and given a delicious light lunch of soup and sandwiches, followed by tea/coffee and cakes. We were then divided into three smaller groups for a very interesting and informative guided tour of the house, starting with a DVD presented by Prince Charles, giving us some background information about the history of the house. The house still has much of its original furniture, several pieces of which were specially commissioned from Thomas Chippendale. The house and various other enterprises on the estate are now run as part of a charitable trust set up in 2007 led by Prince Charles, to save the house for the nation as it was going to be sold off together with all the contents. Following the tour, there was time for a quick look at the extensive gardens and estate before setting off on the final leg of our journey that day.

Our base for the next three nights was the Marine Hotel, Troon which is set right beside the Royal Troon Golf Couse, with lovely views looking over the bay to the Isle of Arran. We were welcomed by the hotel staff and had plenty of time to get settled and for the energetic to make use of the leisure facilities, before dinner that evening.

After a good breakfast on our second day, with the sun still shining, we made the short journey to Culzean Castle and Country Park, which is owned and operated by the National Trust. The Castle and grounds were

gifted to the National Trust in 1945 by the Kennedy family but in doing so they stipulated that the apartment at the top of the Castle be given to Dwight Eisenhower in recognition of his role as Supreme Commander of the Allied Forces in Europe during the Second World War. General Eisenhower stayed in the apartment four times in all, once while he was President of the USA.

Our arrival was a bit chaotic, but eventually we sorted ourselves into groups for the guided tour of this dramatic clifftop castle which was designed by Robert Adam with an oval staircase being the main centrepiece. The Castle also has an enormous collection of flintlock pistols and military swords. The estate covers some 240 hectares and has many walks of varying lengths and other features to enjoy, such as a Swan Lake, a camellia house and a deer park. For those who did not want to walk too far, there was a very pleasant café to sit in and a shop to browse round, particularly enjoyable as the weather was so beautiful. We returned to our hotel in the late afternoon, some people choosing to be dropped off in Troon, to have a look round and then to walk back to the hotel along the esplanade.

Day three was yet another glorious sunny day; we could hardly believe our luck as we set off for a short drive to Wemyss, to catch the ferry to Rothesay on the Isle of Bute. With some time in hand before the ferry sailed, quite a number of the group took the chance to have a look round the railway station at Wemyss, which is mentioned in Britain's 100 Best Railway Stations and was one of only ten to be awarded 5 stars.

The sea was like a millpond for our short crossing and, once we had disembarked, we were soon on our way to Mount Stuart, which is a neo-gothic mansion, known as the House of Innovation and is a feat of Victorian engineering. The original house was built in 1719 but was severely damaged by fire in 1877. The wings of the house did survive, along with much of the contents and these were incorporated into the house which you see today. Inside, the design is inspired by astrology and mythology and in the Marble Hall there is a map of the stars on the ceiling. The house is filled with innovations, from an early telephone system to central heating, an indoor heated swimming pool and a

passenger lift. The grounds of Mount Stuart are wonderful, being full of native and exotic species which survive due to the proximity of the Gulf Stream. They are a must for any visitor.

There was time before our return ferry crossing to have a look at the Victorian gents toilets in Rothesay, which were built and opened in 1899. They are still in use today together with the showers – it is a grade 1 listed building right next to the waiting area for the ferry back to the mainland. Our return crossing was equally smooth and we returned with plenty of time to have a rest before dinner.

Day 4, our last day, still had the sun shining on us. Following our checkout from the hotel, we set off to drive to Drumlanrig Castle, or the "Pink Palace" as it is known locally, because of the red sandstone that was used in its construction. The views from the Castle's façade are breath-taking, down the Nith valley, which may well be why the first Duke of Queensberry decided to build his ancestral home here. Our guided tour took us through grand reception rooms, up and down magnificent staircases, seeing many ornate period features together with cosy parlours which give the Castle a very homely feel. The Castle is full of wonderful works of art, paintings and tapestries from the internationally acclaimed Buccleuch Art Collection. There was also time to enjoy the formal gardens which include a 183 metre Long Terrace Walk with a stone balustrade famous for growing tender climbing plants.

Our final stop on the way home was at the Royal Oak, Appleby, where we had a lovely two course meal to round off a very enjoyable trip. Everything went very smoothly, due in large part to the excellent organisation by Barnard Castle Coaches and, best of all, the weather was absolutely wonderful!



Dumfries House. *Courtesy: Maria Howard*



The railway station, Wemyss. *Courtesy: Marcia Howard*



Culzean Castle. *Courtesy: Marcia Howard*



The staircase, Mount Stuart. *Courtesy: Carol Gedye*

Catskins

Andrew Horn

In 1964 my parents sold thirteen acres of land, known as Catskins, lying between Holly Hill and Hudswell. They were advised that it was not necessary to hand over to the new owner the thirty eight surviving documents relating to the various sales and purchases, leases, mortgages, wills and tithe commutations that had been produced and handed down over the previous three hundred and sixty years. What follows is an amateur attempt to comment on the nature of the 'paperwork' and the changes of ownership during that time.

In 1935, the previous most recent document described Catskins as ‘closes, pieces, or parcels of land, namely, large pasture containing barn, cowhouse, and cart shed with meadow below, and piece of woodland together with meadow to the East.’ It was owned by Sarah Horn (my grandmother), and was let to a George Wilson, with either party to give six months' notice. Unsurprisingly, the document is plain, short and straightforward. Yet in 1880 - and for very many years before that - the majority of these documents begin with the words, ‘This Indenture ...’, drawn in an extremely florid style. Immediately below appears, ‘Sold by Waterlow & Sons Limited ...’, with a London address; a 'blank' form for a lawyer's use. The single sheet of vellum measures 32ins x 25ins. One side provides the legal detail of the transaction, the other side signatures of the parties and their witnesses. This document indicates that the sale of Catskins to William Lawson also included a ‘pew or stall in the chapel of Hudswell’. Lawson is described as a ‘painter’ - decorator, presumably, not artist nor farmer. I think he was one of my great-grandfathers. Other, earlier owners appear not to have worked the land themselves but to have invested in it.

Where indentures are written on two (or more) sheets, 'page 1' is below, not on top of, 'page 2', and the sheets are fastened together not at the top

or left but at the bottom with neat little bows themselves fashioned from strips of vellum.

In addition to the signatures of the parties and witnesses, there is typically a note of where the document has been registered. That of 1793 states, ‘A Memorial of the written Deed was Registered at North Allerton the [date] at Nine in the Forenoon in Book C.S. Page 54 Number 94’. This is followed by, ‘Thos. Walton, Deputy Registrar’. The seals of signatories around this time are impressed onto wax which itself is attached to small squares of linen that are fastened to both sides of the vellum by cutting through the vellum, thereby ensuring that they cannot readily be prised off.

The payment of Stamp Duty in the 1700s appears to be indicated by the fixing of pieces of dark blue paper stuck, pinned with metal, then embossed with a seal. This seal also has a small, numbered 'label' with “GR” (George Rex?) in a cipher on the other side of the vellum immediately behind the Stamp Duty seal.

What is not clear, to me at least, is precisely what the ‘hereditaments’ (property) were, each time an indenture was produced to record a transfer of ownership or lease. The only plan of the land on any document forms part of the 1877 conveyance, at a scale of ‘3 Chains to an Inch’. The lawyer, Charles Hunton of Richmond, described the property as ‘containing three acres three roods and thirty eight perches’, and listed ownerships or features (eg road, brook) on the property's boundary. Earlier documents are not so clear. An indenture ‘made the Twelfth day of November in the fourth yeare of the Reign of our Sovereign Lord George by the grace of God of Great Brittaine France and Ireland King defender of the faith and in the yeare of our Lord One thousand seaven hundred and seaventeen’ speaks of a number of ‘beast gates’ and ‘calfe gates’. Did a ‘gate’ represent a particular number of square yards according to the type of animal to be pastured on it? A 1703 indenture makes reference also to buildings and other land in Richmond. In 1777, however, an indenture lists the property as follows: ‘All those five several Closes or parcels of Meadows or pasture Ground commonly called or known by the Name of Catskins together with the Barn or House and Stable thereupon erected and standing formerly being one great Close or

Inclosure afterwards divided into four Closes and since divided into five Closes And also seven Beastgates or Cattlegates in a pasture called brox alias Brokes alias Broakes and two Calfgates in a pasture called Calf Hall All which said premises are situate lying and being within the Township precints or Territories of Hudswell ….' etc. Such verbosity alias prolixity alias tautology!

From the above, it seems that the use of capital letters is random. Punctuation barely occurs, even as late as 1880, although in 1935 the rental agreement was typed, capitals used rationally, and commas appear. Catskins is still quaintly 'situate and adjoining Hudswell Lane, in the township of Hudswell in the County of York'. It was sometimes the custom not to leave any space at the end of a line of text, but to fill such space with a squiggle of some sort: an 'x' or two, a wavy line, or something akin to a 21st century 'hashtag', just as banks have encouraged us to put a dash, not a dot, between the pounds and pence figures on cheques.

Several of the documents are *abstracts of title.* These appear to be summaries of the past history of matters relating to ownership, leases, wills, etc. Perhaps the abstracts were drawn up to help the lawyer of the moment to be certain of ownership and commitments at the time when a change of circumstance required a new indenture to be produced. They are written on paper, not on vellum or parchment.

Notwithstanding the ageing of some of the documents, the text is generally discernible on those written after the early 1700s. One little peculiarity, however, is that the letter 'e' was commonly written backwards. Another, over two hundred years ago, was writing a double 'f', as in 'ffaith'. But the two earliest documents, dated 1604 and 1618, are written in Latin. The late Peter Wenham had kindly translated them for my mother.

Often throughout the three hundred and sixty years, it seems that those acquiring Catskins have done so for 'investment purposes' rather than to work the land themselves. Or was employment then a version of today's 'gig' economy where people had various part-time jobs? In 1641 Christopher Raine, cordwainer (shoemaker), sold the property to John

Bartlett, dyer. Both were Richmond men. And not only local personnel: in 1703 Edward Fawcett of Gateshead sold to Robert Bewick of Closehouse, Northumberland. Soon after, a lease names a Thomas Yorke, a London merchant, as a party. But perhaps most interesting to us Richmond folk is that the 1604 indenture conveys Catskins to Robert Willance, draper of Richmond, who already had been leasing part of it. Robert died in 1616, but by his will his cousin and heir, Bryan Willance, sold it to another Richmond man in 1618.

Note:

Jane Hatcher has been very helpful to me, but any misinterpretations and errors in this are entirely my fault.

Tom Gascoyne and his Autograph Book

Marcia Howard

Readers will remember an interesting lecture in November last year, Discoveries from the Cells at Richmond Castle by Dr Megan Leyland, with contributions from two of our members, Colin Grant and Marcia Howard. As Senior Properties Historian for English Heritage, Dr Leyland has masterminded a three-year project to examine, conserve and research the thousands of graffiti which cover the walls of the nineteenth century cell blocks at Richmond Castle. Some of the research has been ably carried out by volunteers, Colin and Marcia being two of them. Marcia's particular contribution has centred on an autograph book belonging to Tom Gascoyne, one of the conscientious objectors who spent time in the cells during the First World War. It provides a fascinating insight into the thoughts and mindset of the many conscientious objectors that Tom met in the various places he was imprisoned. We are pleased to include this abbreviated version of Marcia's research.

Editors

Tom Gascoyne was the eldest son of James and Mary Gascoyne, and was born 1st December 1891 at Marishes near Pickering in North Yorkshire. At the time of the 1911 Census Tom was still living at home and was an Apprentice Tailor, working under the guidance of his father James Gascoyne who was a Master Tailor. It would have been during this time, no doubt, that Tom was introduced to the Independent Labour Party (ILP). Founded in Bradford in 1891, originally as the result of consolidated action against wage cuts in the textiles mills, by 1914 the ILP was represented in Parliament and led by Keir Hardie.

In 1916 when Conscription was introduced for the first time, Tom was aged twenty four, and from archived Military Tribunal records it is clear that Tom had refused to fight, although his reasons for this were not based on religious grounds. He failed to convince the Tribunal Board at his

appeal, and as a consequence, spent the remainder of the War serving out a prison sentence alongside other Conscientious Objectors. Tom spent time in the Cells at Richmond Castle in North Yorkshire, then subsequently at Prisons in Northallerton, Durham, Warwick, and Dartmoor in Devon. Conscientious Objectors (COs) had become both an embarrassment and a problem for the Military and to the Government, neither of whom had previous experience in dealing with such men. The Government wasn't entirely unsympathetic, but it was a problem that had to be resolved. However, outrage was expressed from all quarters about the scandal behind some courts martial, the deaths of some men in the prisons, and the feeling that some men had unjustly been denied exemption. As a consequence, an alternative work scheme was quickly set up by the Home Office to deal with the problem of COs, known as The Brace Committee or Brace Scheme; the idea being that these men should make an "equal sacrifice" to the men fighting at the front. Men were allowed to state their objection to military service on the grounds of their conscience under the Military Service Act, 1916, but sympathy at local level was in somewhat short supply and many COs found their requests for exemption promptly dismissed. Those who lost their Appeals often faced harsh treatment, solitary confinement, and in some cases, death.

Under the Brace Scheme, two prisons, Dartmoor and Wakefield, were adapted as Work Centres, and Tom Gascoyne spent time at both, finishing his sentence at Princetown on Dartmoor. According to his son, John Gascoyne, Tom felt his experience at Princetown to be a positive one, not least because of the education he received while there. Having attended a small village school and only obtaining the basics of schooling for a young country boy, he ultimately met with many educated men during this time in prison, who came from all walks of life. He attended lectures ranging from Socialism & Marxism, to English, History and Politics. He felt that it had positively broadened his outlook and knowledge, and recalled those days of friendship and camaraderie with great affection.

Throughout his time in these various prisons, Tom remained a fervent believer in the principles that drove him to take the action he did. This had required a form of bravery as he was subject to personal abuse in his local community, and was spat upon as he was marched through Malton after his initial arrest.

After the war, there was not much work for tailors and Tom had a smallholding at Bulmer, later becoming an Insurance Agent for farmers in the area, whilst also selling socks out of the back of his car!

By 1933 Tom had met and married Anne Morell Butler a young lady twenty years his junior, who in August of that year gave birth to their one and only child, their son John. Work was scarce and it was interesting to learn from John that due to his parents going where the work was, John had attended fourteen schools in order to get his education. John loved school, but was frequently in trouble, and to get him to 'toe the line' his parents threatened to keep him away from his studies; that was the worst thing John considered they could do to him. His parents' relationship too was not always an easy one, and at one time Anne left Tom. John explained that during this period he would stay with one of them during the week where he went to school, and then he'd spend the weekend with the other.

In due course, his parents got back together, and while living in Newbiggin near Malton, they briefly managed a Singer Sewing Machine shop. Once WWII broke out, their source of Singer Sewing Machines from America stopped, and as a consequence, the shop was no more. John Gascoyne picks up the story in this way:

'During the second world war my father and mother managed a number of Agricultural Hostels, which were set up by the Ministry of Agriculture to provide farmers with labour, as all eligible men were enlisted. The hostel residents were Irishmen, as well as Land Army women and eventually POWs, who were used to provide labour on farms when necessary for food production. It was there my father met Jack Brocklebank, an Organiser for the National Union of Agricultural Workers. From then on he devoted his life to improving the lot of Agricultural workers, especially the abolition of the Tied Cottage.'

John explained that his father developed into being an eloquent speaker, and eventually found the role to suit his talents:

" He was a brilliant speaker and liked attending meetings. He was a primadonna if you like. That is what he enjoyed doing, so he became

Chairman of the Yorkshire Branch of the Farm Workers Union, and that gave him opportunities to be useful.*"*

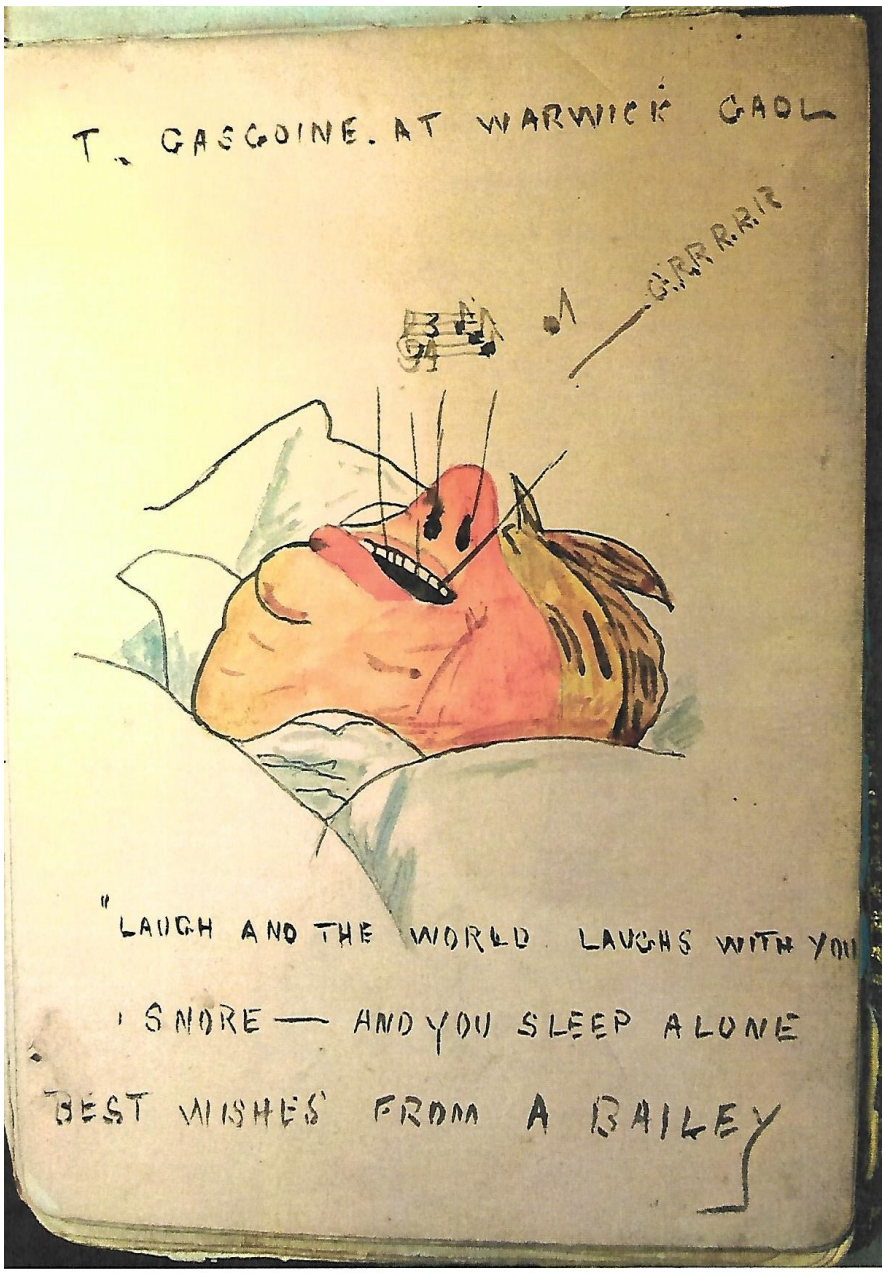
Tom was a Labour supporter, and became Chairman of the Constituency Party in Thirsk and Malton. Later the family moved to Bishop Auckland, where he joined the Labour Party, and became very active. Tom was passionate about the Agricultural Workers Union, and the Labour Party, and stood for the Council in Bishop Auckland. He was the Labour candidate in a strong Conservative Ward and was not successful in getting in, but it confirms the strength of his beliefs,

John Gascoyne considers that his father had found life very frustrating after leaving prison, although he would never have admitted it. He had finally got an education and found his voice which gave him a lot of intellectual ambitions, but he had no outlet for them.

While in prison, Tom had met Jack Brocklebank and they became lifelong friends, and kept in touch until Tom passed away in 1959. It had been Tom's wish for his ashes to be taken and scattered on Dartmoor, and this was honoured with Jack driving the long distance down to Devon, with John Gascoyne as his passenger. Afterwards, they made a hole and buried the urn, placing a stone on top of it.

We have no knowledge of how Tom obtained his own personal Autograph Book, but it was not unique in itself as other autograph books owned by COs have come to light over the years. However, Tom's book is unique in the fact that on many of the entries from fellow COs, Tom wrote pencilled comments, which give real insights into the character of those individuals and reflect Tom's compassion for his fellow man. Furthermore, many of the entries create a personal record of the prisons where the COs had been sent and the dates they were there and this helps to develop a more complete picture of their experience.

The book contains over one hundred entries from COs who wrote, often in beautiful script. These entries include religious texts, poetry and quotations from English and European thinkers. The verses and writings



Albert Bailey's portrait of Tom Gascoyne asleep and snoring.

seem to be without error, so either the COs were very well read, or they had access to many books of literature, history, and politics. In addition, the book contains coloured drawings and illustrated entries, one of them a humorous portrait of Tom himself painted by an Albert Bailey, a coalyard foreman from Norfolk, which, according to John Gascoyne, has a definite resemblance to his father!

On many of the entries, the men have listed, with dates, the names of the prisons in which they had been incarcerated. On other entries, the individual might have just written the current prison he was in at the time. From Tom's personal story, it seems that there was a certain amount of freedom while he was at Dartmoor, with men able to come and go almost at will. As a result there are group photographs taken of Tom with his fellow Yorkshire men, or in the educational classes he was able to attend.

Many entries show the home addresses of Tom's fellow COs and these range across the whole UK. Comparing military tribunal records of all these men shows a whole range of occupations and backgrounds, from rural locations to large cities, from modest cottages to something grander. The quality of their handwriting implies a high level of education, whether obtained from earlier schooling or by self-improvement. One Welshman, Aneurin Parker, a Musical Director from Porth in the Rhondda, wrote or transcribed a *Song of the Strad* with the musical notes to accompany it. On another page, Frank Pascoe Lye from Weston-super-Mare drew in ink an elegant looking lady wearing a hat, paired with a message in italic script about peace, happiness and truth. Another CO called George Peace Micklewright drew the head and shoulders of a man in uniform with a convict's arrow on the hat. It seems from records, however, that he really was a budding professional artist as he was an Arts & Crafts student prior to his imprisonment.

There are other entries in which Tom's comments conjure up an image of the writer. On the contribution from W.J.M.Pedlar Tom writes, 'A Dare devil who knew not fear. A wee mite with guts of a lion. TG,' and against that of Fred Bradley Tom comments, 'Possessed a mind like a tidal wave. Ebbed & flowed & yet a fine fellow. TG'.

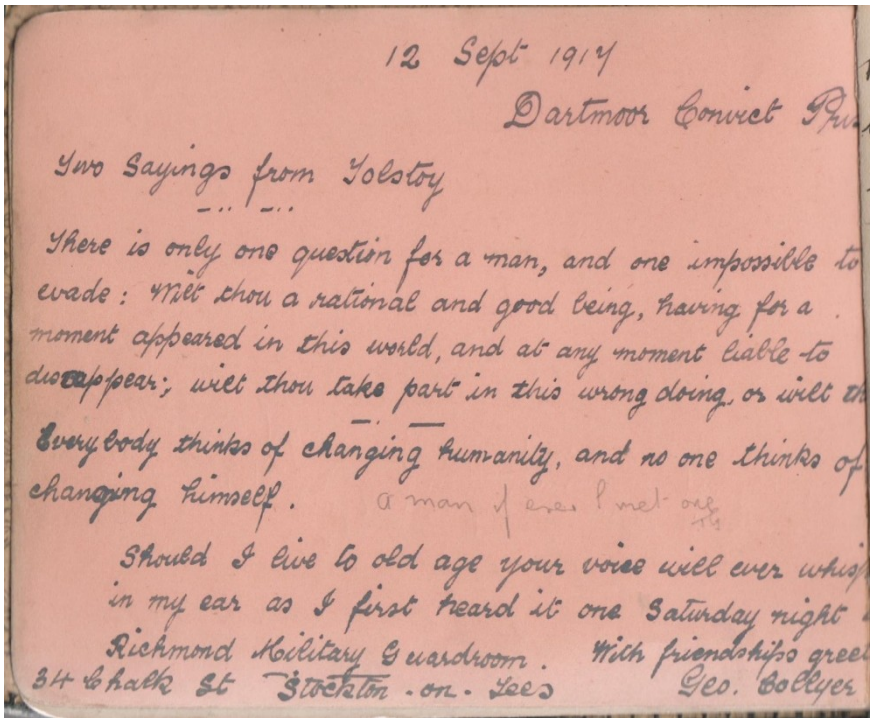
Another fellow prisoner who wrote in the book died in Dartmoor. He signed himself 'Paul L. Gillan (Sinn Feiner) 1917'. His records show that he regularly went on hunger strike. Tom's pencilled comment against the quote and signature on Mr Gillan's page of the autograph book reads: *'*An Irishman with just an Ideal. Gave his life for his Ideals'.

From Tom's many pencilled responses against those who had signed his book, it is clear that he kept contact and knew what had happened to his former comrades after their release from prison. Many comments showed what great compassion and empathy Tom had for his fellow man. One particular example is Morgan Jones of whom Tom wrote *'*First CO to Enter Parliament. Idealist, but a great comrade. TG'. When researching further information on Morgan Jones, it was discovered that a hundred years later, in 2017, Mr Jones had been honoured in his home town of Bargoed with a plaque which read:

*'*Morgan Jones was born in Gelligaer in 1885 and attended Lewis School Pengam before studying Education and Arts at Reading University, and later became a teacher at Gilfach Boys' School. During the First World War, Jones was a conscientious objector, a decision which saw him serve a prison sentence. He became Labour MP for Caerphilly in 1921, a post he held until his death in 1939. During his political career Jones served twice as Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Education, between 1924-1928 and 1929 to 1931.*'*

The date of Mr Jones becoming an MP in 1921 confirms that Tom's comment could not have been made before that year.

There are too many fascinating stories arising from the book to tell them all here, but it is interesting to note from information written by the COs, that at least twenty-two of them spent time in the cellblock at Richmond Castle, while there are at least eight of the men who can be identified as also having left graffiti on the walls. However, Tom Gascoyne was not one of them. Although he was certainly incarcerated there, his son is adamant that he would never have written graffiti! Instead, he has left behind this fascinating and very individual record of his time in prison and of his fellow prisoners whom he valued so highly. It is a rare and very special testament to his humanity.



12 Sept 1914

Dartmoor Convict Pri

Two Sayings from Tolstoy

There is only one question for a man, and one impossible to evade: Wilt thou a rational and good being, having for a moment appeared in this world, and at any moment liable to disappear; wilt thou take part in this wrong doing, or wilt th

Everybody thinks of changing humanity, and no one thinks of changing himself.

a man if ever I met one

Should I live to old age your voice will ever whisp in my ear as I first heard it one Saturday night Richmond Military Guardroom. With friendship's greet

34 Chalk St Stockton-on-Tees

Geo. Bockyer

One page from the Autograph Book.



Marcia Howard with John Gascoyne, reading the Autograph Book.

Marrick Priory: Two Perspectives

Mike Wood and Judith Clarke

The history of Marrick Priory is well documented. It is typical of late Medieval monasteries: it was founded by Robert de Aske between 1154 and 1158 at a time when twenty-four monasteries sprang up in Yorkshire with an income of less than £100 per year. Although a Richmond knight, Robert de Aske did not have the Baronial influence of the Earl of Richmond who was able to establish the magnificent monastery at Jervaulx.

Aske's monastery never seems to have attracted major grants of land, most coming from the local neighbourhood. Apart from ensuring his own passage to heaven, Aske's motives could have been to find a safe haven for his daughters who, we believe, entered the priory.

The following incident is one of many in the history of the Priory and you will see why I refer to it later. Around 1200, during the early days of the priory, the Archdeacon of Richmond made a visitation. He turned up with his entourage which included 97 horses, 21 dogs and 3 hawks. The Prioress complained to Pope Innocent 111 that they had consumed "enough to have sufficed the house for a long space".

My involvement with the priory came in 1959 when I was at Richmond Grammar School. I was asked (volunteered) to be part of a working party to spend the summer carrying out minor restoration and conservation work at the priory. The purpose was to evaluate the future use of the building. I was invited to attend a meeting in Trinity Church, Richmond chaired by The Archdeacon Ven. Harry Graham, the Rector Peter Beresford Pierse, the Headmaster Donald Frith and other interested parties. Many ideas were put forward but it was agreed that we should aim to convert the site into a 'Spiritual Outward Bound' that would benefit young people of all denominations.

I remember vividly arriving at the priory that summer with some of my friends. We had made the journey on a Percivals bus and set up base at Grinton youth hostel and from there we had walked to the priory. The

churchyard was completely overgrown, leaded windows were broken, tiles were off the roof, the doors were open and sheep were in the main building. On looking around, I noticed a small outbuilding and wondered what treasures it contained. Unfortunately an ash tree had fallen across the doors at the front and made the building inaccessible.

We soon had a visitation from the Archdeacon of Richmond – the second to the priory since 1200. He brought the good news that North Yorkshire County Council would be dropping off tools and materials to enable us to get started and, unlike on his predecessor's visit, he treated us all to a meal at the Buck Hotel that evening.



The tombstone on the far right is that of the Cowper family dated late 1700. Christabel Cowper was the last Prioress and was evicted from her priory in 1540 with a pension of 100 shillings. It is interesting to think that the family were still in the area in the 18th century.

The next day, as promised, the tools arrived and various pieces of timber and boarding. I picked up a scythe and, with the help of Mr Bainbridge from the farm, I became quite proficient. Luckily, health and safety had not been invented then!

The louvres in the belfry were in danger of falling on someone's head. Foolishly, I said I had been rock climbing with the school and was dispatched over the side of the tower to remove them. I then made new louvres and was again dispatched over the top to replace them. Climbing up and down the tower I noticed that some of the window heads were re-used stone coffin lids. They must predate the tower and I am reminded that I have not as yet gone back to photograph them and date them.



The bell that needed propping up.

Another thing that was very noticeable was that the bell was about to crash down the tower and required immediate attention. Again, because I was working in the tower, I got the job of propping it up. I had a large mash hammer and decided to chime the bell for a few minutes. When in Reeth that evening, I discovered that local residents had heard my efforts. I thought I was in trouble but one of the older residents said to me that hearing 'the sweetest bell in Swaledale' had brought back memories to him. The last time he remembered hearing it had been on VE Day.

Another major job was removing the box pews. We had hoped to recover the timber but discovered death watch beetle and were advised to burn them to prevent the beetles spreading into the roof timbers. At about the same time, we found a retired glazier from Wensleydale and he was 'volunteered' to conserve the windows.

I have been interested in archaeology from an early age. My father was in the Yorkshire Archaeological Society and did surveys to schedule local monuments, so I had been involved in many local excavations. I took the opportunity to dig a small trench in front of the east window. We had been clearing piles of soil from the north wall and had come across many human bones, so when the Vicar of Grinton heard of my excavations he restricted my ambitious project to a hole in order to find the floor level. This turned out to be about four feet down. In the process, though, I was able to retrieve some medieval stained and painted glass which was in good condition and the glazier was able to incorporate it into the east window. We later had a service and reinterred all the human remains in the church yard.

I mentioned earlier the tree that was blocking the doors to the outbuilding. We managed to find time to remove the tree and get the doors open. To my amazement there was a horse drawn hearse inside the building. We took advice on the best way to conserve it and I was tasked with the job. A conservationist from the British Museum came up to advise me and it created much interest from the press and radio. Below is one of the press photographs of a younger-looking me during the process of conserving the wood. I must have done something right as it is still on display at Beamish Museum.



We did have some time off and I took a party to Maiden Castle armed with picks and shovels but sadly we didn't find anything. In fact we probably should not have been digging there anyway. We helped Mr Bainbridge dip his sheep, which was probably the hardest work we did whilst we were there. We also took a tractor and trailer up to Hurst to get material from the lead mines to mend the road down to the priory.

My final photograph shows the box pews and also the altar screen which we found in a rotten wooden box in the church yard. Sadly I think it did not survive. However, the stained and painted glass that was restored can be seen in the window.

The working parties continued for the next few years whilst plans were drawn up and funds raised. In May 1970, the Bishop of Ripon, Dr John Moorman, re-dedicated the chapel and formally opened the centre.

It was a wonderful experience and very rewarding to think I played my small part in preserving this special and historic building for future generations. Furthermore, it is particularly rewarding that the centre still



maintains its original aims and provides a unique experience for young people.

One final tantalising postscript: we did encounter a ghost late one evening in the priory. Could it have been Roger de Aske or even Cristobel Cowper?

Mike Wood, Director, Richmondshire Museum.

Times change, people change and over the years Marrick has changed: but all of that is good. Marrick Priory Outdoor Education Centre is exactly what it says on the tin, an organisation with a Christian ethos which welcomes many people through its doors, the majority of whom are children, to experience a time of excitement and development.

The children who visit are generally around ten years old and are drawn from all over the country, but mainly from the north of England. The visit usually begins on Monday lunchtime after a coach trip from school and ends with a departure on Friday morning, returning children exhausted but much changed by their experience. Whilst in Swaledale they take part in night walking, beck scrambling, a high ropes course, archery, kayaking, a zip wire and various skills challenges. Many of these children have never before been away from home or even into the countryside, so to discover milk comes from a cow rather than a supermarket or see that it is very dark outside without street lighting, can be a huge experience in itself.

The young people often have a number of 'firsts' during their stay: for instance, making sandwiches for their own lunch, making their own bed and living for a week without a mobile 'phone or television. This can all be a culture shock but lots of smiling faces are proof of the pleasure found in new challenges and a different lifestyle, if only for a week. Crucially, of course, there is much more to learn since many of these challenges are the levellers within the class: children who are not particularly academic may find they have so much courage they can face the high ropes course and its leap of faith, comparatively easily; a shy child may discover leadership skills when working in a group or team.

Having said that children are the majority of the guests, there are many others. The Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme is carried out from Marrick, which brings senior pupils from local schools back again; youth groups arrive for bonding exercises; refugees have visited to have a quiet, safe place to experience their own friendships, knowing that their children can run around in a huge area, but in safety; women who have needed to flee their own abusive homes to live in a refuge are delighted to have a brief holiday from their difficult lives.

We also offer an annual welcome to a particular group brought in association with St George's Crypt in Leeds. These men and women have already met their own challenges and are recovering users of alcohol and drugs who, with help, work through a programme to defeat their dependencies. Towards the end of their programme, they enjoy activities, peace and quiet at Marrick, often finding it difficult to return to the big city.

Marrick Priory is staffed by skilled instructors and managed by Jim Gleave, Head of Centre, together with a group of trustees, some of whom are appointed by the Bishop of Leeds, Marrick having a close relationship with the Diocese of Leeds.

Although we can already accommodate a small number of people with disabilities, we feel we can do better. However, more specially adapted spaces are required for this aspect of our work. There are also requests for visits which last for just one day and, again, we need extra space to make this opportunity happen.

Whilst the dormitories are cosy, a facelift is required: staff accommodation is adequate but not really fitting; a new building is required to take us further into the 21st century, which will enable us to expand our work to maintain this really special place for the future. As I have said, times move on and in order to continue this valuable work the trustees are searching for funds to finance and build extra space to take Marrick Priory into its future.

Standing still is not an option, we must grow to continue.

If you would like more information on helping or visiting Marrick Priory, our website is: marrickpriory.co.uk. The video is rather fun.

Judith Clarke, Trustee, Marrick Priory.

Georgian? maybe Georgian-ish

Dave Dalton

Richmond describes itself as a Georgian market town, and so it is – up to a point. But it also has striking buildings of other eras, from the middle ages to the twentieth century. And its charm and distinctiveness owe as much to its dramatic setting and townscape as to the quality of its Georgian buildings.

Every resident of, or visitor to Richmond will form his or her own impression of the town's architectural character. Some are more influential or authoritative than others. Historic England's Listed Buildings might count as definitive. There are seven Grade I buildings; 16 Grade II*; and a total of 345 listed buildings in or near the town. Nikolaus Pevsner (*The buildings of England: Yorkshire, The North Riding*, Penguin, 1966) is almost as authoritative as Historic England's list, but Alec Clifton-Taylor (*Six English Towns*, BBC, 1978) is a more personal and idiosyncratic account with a particular interest in building materials.

Grade I Listed Buildings

As might be expected from Historic England, the emphasis is on antiquity, so of the seven, all but one are of medieval origin:

- Easby Abbey and St Agatha's church
- Grey Friars' tower
- Holy Trinity
- Castle
- St Martin's Priory ruins.

The sole building of the Georgian era on this list is the Georgian Theatre Royal: 'one of the oldest and one of the best-preserved Georgian theatres in England' (Pevsner), but as Clifton-Taylor says 'all the interest is within'.

Grade II* Listed Buildings

Of the 17 buildings and structures, only three are medieval:

- Parish Church of St Mary

- The Bar (at the top of Cornforth Hill)
- The Eleanor Bowes Hospital. (Next to the petrol station on Darlington Road. According to the listing text it was 'founded in 1607 by Eleanor Bowes as an almshouse for three widows … a small one-storey rectangular building in uncoursed rubble incorporating the remains of the 12th century chapel to St Edmund the King') .

One is Victorian: the old railway station.

The remaining thirteen are of the Georgian era, but not all of them would fit the casual, lay-person's idea of Georgian architecture. The Garden Wall, Gates and Gate Piers at Hill House are obscured by vegetation; and Hill House is equally obscured.

The Old Grand Stand, the 'earliest known race course grandstand' (listing text) is outside the town; maybe a dedicated listed-buildings collector might take the trouble to find it; and he or she might be disappointed when they did.

Two items on the list are structures rather than buildings. The Cross dates from 1771. 'It is an obelisk with stupa-like entasis and stands on a base with pedimented niches' (Pevsner). 'The whole surmounted by a ball finial in granite' (listing text).Green Bridge, 1789, is by John Carr, and a fine example of his work.

Six entries on the list of II* buildings are reassuringly both Georgian and Georgian-looking:

- 15 Bridge Street
- 21 Trinity Church Square (Jacoubs fast-food shop, featuring rusticated quoins, keystones, and fine doorways and bay windows)
- 58 and 59 Market Place (Heron Foods)
- King's Head Hotel, 1718
- 9 Market Place (next door to the King's Head)
- The Grove, 1750.

The final two are of the Georgian era, but Gothick:

- The Temple (Culloden Tower) 1756, 'an octagon on a square base with an added staircase projection with a lead cap … a very early essay in the Gothick … for historical interest and aesthetic pleasure one of the major monuments of Richmond' (Pevsner).

- 47 Newbiggin, ‘a delightful stone house of three bays with two Gothick bay windows on the ground floor. They are rib-vaulted inside. … This may well be some people’s favourite house in Richmond’ (Pevsner). Clifton-Taylor also likes this house, which he describes as ‘decidedly entertaining’.

It is ironic that two striking buildings of the Georgian era are both Gothick, and it is hard to find a building which contains all the elements associated with Georgian architecture at its best. Symmetry is easily lost on steeply sloping streets; the hard local building stones do not lend themselves to ashlar; and many of the houses are of an older date, given a more or less approximate Georgian facade. Clifton-Taylor diplomatically says ‘the architectural pleasures of Georgian Richmond tend to be centred on details rather than the ensemble … Richmond cannot show us a single outstanding house’.

Beyond the listed buildings

Moving beyond Grade I and II* Listed Buildings, the picture is equally mixed. There are fine ensembles of more or less correct Georgian (or Georgian re-fronted) houses along Millgate, Newbiggin, with ‘almost consistently good houses left and right’ (Pevsner), Bargate, Cornforth Hill – ‘a nicely curved terrace of Georgian houses’ (Pevsner), and Frenchgate. As for details, we must mention the ‘pretty Adamesque doorcase’ (Pevsner) at number 11 Newbiggin. ‘Good painted stone doorcase with "Tower of the Winds" type engaged columns, frieze with swag ornament and small moulded pediment’ (listing text).

But it has to be admitted that many of the most striking buildings are of other periods and styles. For instance:

- The Market Hall, 1854
- The Fleece Hotel, ‘an extravaganza of brick and terracotta with tourelles’ (Pevsner)
- The Old Grammar School, 1859
- The Former Zetland Cocoa Rooms, 1889, an ‘extravaganza … in Norman Shaw motifs, and very pretty in a not too serious way’ (Pevsner).

Finally, anyone who has walked to the end of Newbiggin to enjoy number 47 need only turn around to see St Joseph’s Roman Catholic church,

George Goldie, 1867: '13th century Gothic, but with a naughty, very High Victorian north west turret with extraordinary things happening at the corners' (Pevsner).

Above all, the search for authentically Georgian buildings should not blind us to other charming features of our town:

- the intriguing and inviting wynds
- views of the landmark buildings from different angles
- views out to open country
- the plethora of oriel windows
- and individual idiosyncratic buildings – the stripes of sandstone and polychrome brick at 29 Frenchgate, the Venetian window in the charity shop on Victoria Road, or Blenkiron's castellated Gothick delight on Queen's Road.

To conclude, the range of buildings along the top of the Market Place gives a good representation of the variety of architectural pleasures Richmond offers. Seen from the Cross, left to right the frontage runs from mock-Tudor half-timbered , through 1930s and bankers' Baroque, to bizarre polychrome brick at the corner of Finkle Street. Of the twelve facades, eight are – or look – reassuringly Georgian. Perhaps that is a fair summary of the truth of the phrase 'Richmond – a Georgian Market Town'.

Roads

Doug Waugh

As so often, this research all started with one remark. We'd been discussing access to Reeth market place in centuries past when my well-respected historian friend finished the conversation with the clinching, sensible observation that, "They weren't daft; they would always choose the flattest route".

And that should have been that - until I was looking at the history of the link between Richmond and Reeth. Nowadays, we have a very pleasant, scenic road that snakes along beside the Swale. However, for many years, the only route was mainly on the high ground via Marske and Fremington, and involved very steep slopes.

So were those who built that road "daft"? If we look further back into pre-history, we find that roads went from top to top (there is an ancient link, for example, between Swaledale and Teesdale that uses the summits of Sail How, Frankinshaw How and Tallon How). The history of routes does show that initially they were created at the highest levels and only reached the valley bottoms in more recent times.

This must mean there were factors that outweighed the benefits of flatter routes. Perhaps the high route made navigation easier (you could see distant markers); building them was easier (valleys were often filled with trees and undergrowth) and made it harder for ne'er-do-wells to ambush travellers.

But why roads were built where they were and how they were built, well, it is the old story - as with much vernacular building - we are dealing with oral engineering. No-one thought what they did would be forgotten. Rather, they assumed the skills and the knowledge of how they did things would always be understood. So, we need to surmise just what was done and how, from the few notes that we do have.

Jane Hatcher makes the point in her *History of Richmond* that 'the Richmond-Lancaster turnpike road was built from 1751. Work began at

the Richmond end with the construction of a new road up Sleegill, taking a gentler ascent up the steep hill than had the older road, Boggy Lonnen'. This turnpike road gives a significant clue as to why routes were re-routed onto flatter ground. The Trustees claimed in 1756 to have 'made good travelling for Wheel Carriages in many places where none could pass before'[1]. In other words, the benefits of moving ever-larger loads using carts and carriages, rather than packhorses, demanded better, flatter roads.

However, when we get into the market towns we still find steep roads: for example, in Richmond, the approaches down Sleegill, Gallowgate and Hurgill Road, while, nearer the centre, we have Frenchgate and the Channel as well as Bargate and Cornforth Hill and Cravengate and, at the very centre, we have the Market Place, not exactly, as many know to their cost, a level area.

Perhaps you will now permit me, in looking at the roads within Richmond, to concentrate on my personal location - Frenchgate. Clarkson, in the 1821 edition of his *History of Richmond*, gives an extensive description of its development:

'The top of Frenchgate is supplied with water conveyed by a pipe from Dufton well, situated under the new walk on the north side of the road.

To prevent the accidents which happened to foot passengers, carts and other carriages, while passing in the winter season over the great channel at the bottom of Frenchgate, then an open place, the waste water, having no drains underground for its reception, formed a current in the middle, it was ordered that the same should be covered with an arch. This was done in the year 1746, and a regular pavement, the breadth of the street, made over it at an expense to the Corporation of ten pounds.

The south end of Frenchgate, opposite to the Low Church Wynd, was prevued in 1751, and the whole street levelled and paved in 1757 which raised it very much, particularly on the east side, when three yards in breadth were allowed as the front of every messuage.

In 1754 the channel leading from the market-place to the great channel was arched over as far as the old bar, when a salary of twenty shillings a year was allowed to the pinder for cleaning the Coal Hole, the Beast Market, and the several other channels leading from the market-place.'

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[1] *Hartley, Ingilby, Hall and Wenham: Alexander Fothergill and the Richmond to Lancaster Turnpike Road*

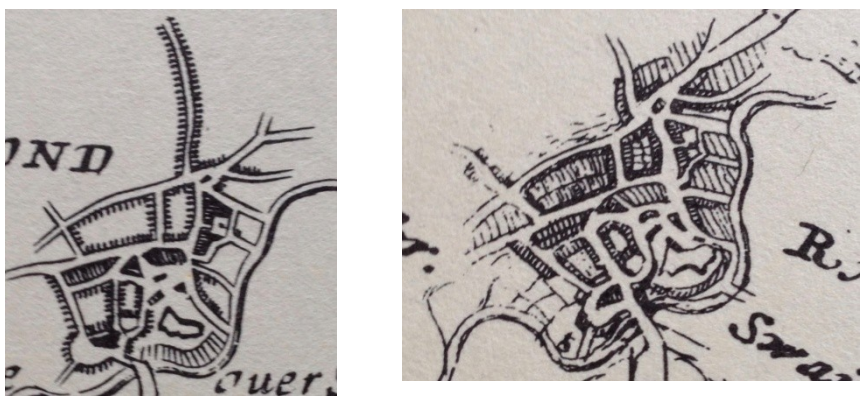
Clarkson makes clear that roads, in those days, were also very much open sewers. And that, of course, must have been an important reason for having steep roads and steep market places: you want this "material" to get away as quickly as possible. By the way, the pinder had an unpleasant but vital job.

It is interesting that the 1750s saw so much road activity, perhaps reflecting developments in building techniques and in transport and a wish for better sewerage facilities in the town.

To finish this short consideration of the history of our roads, here is an observation about Frenchgate and its steepness, from Whitaker's *History of Richmondshire* (1823):

'It is impossible not to be struck with astonishment at the supineness of our ancestors with respect to the most easy and obvious improvements in the course of roads, when we learn that for seven centuries, generation after generation were content to plunge headlong into the town of Richmond down a steep descent from the north, and to ascend an equal precipice into the market-place, when the short, rectilinear, and level approach which has lately been adopted presented itself to every eye.'

By the way, isn't it nice to find such caustic comments in old books - a touch of humanity amongst often dry, factual content. And it does bring us bang up-to-date: roads that are as flat as possible, delineated clearly, with services run out of sight.



Maps of Richmond from John Ogilvy's Britannia, printed 1675

The Legend of Roan Well

Gordon Alexander

Roan Beck rises high on Hurst Peat Moss, a mile north west of Hurst in Swaledale. Its waters flow down past Washfold becoming Padley Beck, Shaw Beck, Marske Beck, then on into the Swale. Its head waters are coloured reddish brown due to the iron salts in the rock from which it flows. Across the moorlands of the Pennines, such mineral springs, known as chalybeate springs, are not uncommon and chalybeate water was thought to have health-giving and even curative properties. At the top of a steep valley down which the coloured water tumbles is a pool formed by a cleft in the rock. This pool is known as Roan Well. A story, probably dating from pre-reformation times, tells of a lonely traveller who, crossing the beck high on the moors, was murdered by the evil water spirit of Roan Well and the waters of Roan Beck ran red with his blood. Legend has it that many years after this murder, the Virgin Mary appeared at the well, blessed its waters and gave them medicinal properties.

The idea of Romano-British lead mining at Hurst must remain apocryphal. Thomas Jeffery's map of 1775 shows the straight road, typical of Roman routing, running from Marrick to Hurst, and a pig of lead, identified as Roman but untraceable, is said to have been found at Hurst in 1885, but conclusive evidence has not yet been found. Records of lead mining in Swaledale exist from the twelfth century and a tithe of lead was given to the Benedictine nuns at Marrick. It is nice to speculate that the legend telling of the Virgin Mary appearing resplendent at lonely Roan Well points to a Hurst mining community during monastic times, drinking the red (roan) waters to cure their ills. It was not until the late seventeenth century, and under the ownership of Lord William Powlett, that workings around Hurst are known to have been substantial. In 1718, a lease on the Hurst mines contained a clause to ensure that 147 miners would be



The Standing Stone, Roan Head

employed as a minimum. Along with other supporting trades, as well as their families, the community centred around Hurst and Washfold would represent a very significant population concentration for Swaledale and Arkengarthdale.

In 1768, folk from Hurst gathered at the cross roads towards Marrick to see John Wesley as he passed by, riding to Richmond on a white horse. At that time the Methodists of Hurst belonged to the Reeth Methodist Society and their class meetings were held in the houses of the scattered settlement around the mines. In 1815 a piece of ground was bought from George Jones, the innkeeper, for £8 and the Methodists built a simple chapel. By 1847 eighty-six Hurst children were members of the chapel Sunday school, almost half of the 200 children recorded in the 1841 census when the population amounted to 418 souls including 87 lead workers. A large community but probably already declining from mid-1700s levels.

Around this time, the folk of Hurst were known in the dales as 'Red Hursters' and even as 'Red Shanks,' probably a reference to their use of the water from Roan Beck. The mines were also referred to as the Redd Hurst Mines. The origins of religious services at Roan Well, to mark the Virgin Mary's visitation, are not known, but could be ancient. They were taken over as Methodism became established in the eighteenth century. Roan Well became the site of a gathering of celebration in the Methodist tradition. The Love Feast is a simple communal meal, its origins being in the meals which Jesus shared with His disciples. The Hurst folk would walk up to Roan Head and gather by the standing stone which marks the well. With hymns and prayers, water from the well would be drunk from a loving cup passed around from person to person. Bread, or a specially baked cake, would also be shared. The Love Feast gathering recognised fellowship, promoted piety and mutual affection, and, on a fine day, it was, no doubt, also justification for recreation.

Throughout the remaining part of the nineteenth century, a diaspora extending to the coal mines, cotton mills and even emigration to America grew in pace, due to the changing nature of the lead market. As mine work declined, it was supplemented with knitting: jerseys of thick white wool



The Loving Cup used at the Love Feast

were a speciality at Hurst made for sale to travelling merchants. As well as knitting, there developed subsistence farming, keeping a cow and a pig or two, and grazing a few sheep. Ultimately, mining was wholly replaced by agriculture as the main occupation. In 1911 the community was made up of twenty-eight farmers and agricultural workers, an innkeeper, a teacher, a bootmaker, the district nurse, a few housewives and pensioners plus fifteen children. There was a population of only fifty-eight when the chapel and the fine school with its schoolhouse opened in 1880, much too late to make full use of its capacity. Built to accommodate seventy-eight children, the school was destined always to be underutilised.

It is thought that the ceremony at Roan Well took place until the early twentieth century when it finally died out. Folk living around Hurst no doubt considered themselves fortunate to be close to water attributed with healing properties and the spring became significant in local folklore. But folklore has its origins. Many such wells and springs were considered sacred according to early Christian and also pagan practices; the guardian spirit who killed the traveller at Roan Well, appears to be pagan in its

actions but is absorbed into Christianity in the form of the Virgin. Indeed, medieval Catholic practice often embraced traces of pagan rites. Does this legend hold yet another clue to the very early origins of lead mining at Hurst?

There is a tradition that lead mining in the Yorkshire Dales can be traced back to the Iron Age. Indeed, archaeology has shown that the Briganti peoples of northern England understood metallurgy to the extent that they were very skilled metal workers. Are the Love Feasts at Roan Well another echo from a colony of Romano-British miners digging bell shafts, smelting ore in windblown hearths and curing their bodily ills with the revered red water of Roan Beck?

The Robin Hood Tower of Richmond Castle

Bob Woodings

When I was a boy growing up in Nottingham, Robin Hood was never far away: whether in wooden sword fights (in which my younger brother was always painfully killed as the wicked Sheriff of Nottingham!), family picnics in the shade of the Major Oak, or stalking after Little John and Friar Tuck and, as I got older, Maid Marian. This is why I was flabbergasted, on moving to near Richmond some seven years ago, to learn that there was a Yorkshire Robin Hood Society which located my Nottingham hero across the length and breadth of the Yorkshire Ridings. Even more challenging was to be told, on my first conducted tour round Richmond Castle, "and on your left, ladies and gentlemen, you will see Robin Hood's Tower". Indeed, that was what the Official Guidebook said.

What was the evidence that associated Robin Hood with that tower? When was that name given to the tower and why did that particular tower continue to be known as Robin Hood's Tower right up to the present day?

At least there is no doubt about the location of the tower itself. It is the first substantial structure on the east wall running from the keep. Of its four storeys, the lower two belong to the earliest phase of the castle, with the impressive chapel on the ground floor level. Even so, from the available early documents it is clear that the Tower bore no name other than 'first tower', which so often is the pattern of naming adopted in other substantial medieval buildings. In any case, by 1500 or so, the Tower, like so much of Richmond Castle, was in decay and needing urgent repairs. Specifically, in 1538 that Tower required desperate attention to its leading, its timbering for the roofed floors and substantial repairs to its stonework.

But why, one wonders, should 'Robin Hood' have become qualified as the name for such a tower, especially when historians now tend to agree that the actual historical figure was alive around 1320? For whatever reasons,

by 1500 a ‘Robin Hood’ was fast achieving legendary status, as witnessed by ballads and songs, folk plays and May Day processions. With the Church's blessing, Robin Hood was being translated from the earlier reputation as criminal and woodland outlaw into an adventurer and ‘do-gooder’, performing good deeds for those who were helpless. Subsequently, ‘the old Robin Hood of England’ (Shakespeare, *As You Like It)* appeared on the stage and in romances, performing remarkable feats of all kinds. From the mid-eighteenth century, his name began to be attached to place names, farms and even topographical features. Given so many uses and abuses, when and why was Richmond Castle's ‘first tower’ converted to ‘The Robin Hood Tower’?

As with so much relating to Richmond's past, a significant clue appears in the pages of Christopher Clarkson. In his 1821 *The History of Richmond in the County of York,* the Castle's eastern defences are ‘doubly defended, not only by the outward walls of what is now called the Cockpit, but by those of the Castle, strengthened by a tower called Robin Hood’s’.

What is fascinating is that in Clarkson's original edition of his *History of Richmond*, published anonymously in a much reduced format by Thomas Bowman in 1814, Robin Hood’s Tower gets no mention. So what happened between 1814 and 1821? The answer is *Ivanhoe.*

Published in 1819, Sir Walter Scott's novel became a bestseller overnight, going from edition to edition as Scott's most widely read novel in so many different formats in Britain, Europe and America. Here for the first time is the Robin Hood that we – and Hollywood – all know. ‘King of Outlaws and Prince of Good Fellows’, aided by the likes of the drunken Friar Tuck, muscular Little John and honest Allan-a-Dale, he leads his foresters in Lincoln green in their loyalty to Richard Coeur de Lion against the barbarous knights and impious churchmen who have been milking the very poor whose feudal rights such men should have been upholding. What Scott has done is draw together, through his own imaginative plotting and extensive reading, the many skeins of existing tales and fantasies to portray *the* Robin Hood of Sherwood Forest. *Ivanhoe* depicts Robin as the English hero, half-feudal knight and half-abused outlaw, defiantly pitched against the French knightly threat. Noting features that early reviewers cited, it is true that many of the novel's characteristics

seem to echo features found in Richmond and its countryside - and Scott certainly knew his North Yorkshire. There is not only Torquilstone, the great Norman castle that Robin Hood and King Richard besiege, but also the related graphic landscapes of foaming river and rich woodlands, the very pictorial dreamlands that subsequent Richmond commentators imagine once existed:

[bearing] 'the imagination to distant scenes of alternate splendour and distress, of toil and watching, of danger and escape, of triumph and despair. All these elevate and expand the mind …. the magic power of association.' (Whitaker, *An History of Richmondshire,* 1823*)*

Once that 1820 date is established for the naming of the Robin Hood Tower, other factors come into play. For the previous three hundred years the Castle had been a ruin and entirely derelict. In 1745, for example, the then Duke of Richmond found that the keep was in danger of collapse! This meant that for visitors in the eighteenth century, the Castle had to be seen from a distance or from the security of the Castle Walk below. Accordingly, as Clarkson had pointed out in 1814, 'Richmond, on account of its great natural beauties, is now become one of those fashionable Places which Travellers generally call at in their route to the Lakes and other romantic parts of the Kingdom'. The Castle remained primarily a preserve for a select few, being 'highly interesting to the landscape-painter as well as to the antiquary'. That began to change, of course, once the Castle itself became a part of the Richmond visiting experience. By the 1820s and 1830s, visitors were being encouraged to enter the Castle ruins. This was a consequence of earlier rebuilding and more recent repairs. But, more than this, there was a growing awareness of the actual ruins of the Middle Ages and a growing sense of the lost magic of those times, all of which Sir Walter Scott and *Ivanhoe* had stimulated. The arrival of the 'custodier' and guides no doubt stimulated this development. Coming by road and rail, as set out in the guide books, visitors could achieve the Richmond 'excitement' as they explored the Castle. With the emergence of the 'Concise Guides', routes were laid out for finding one's way round the ruins:

leaving the keep and proceeding along the walk to the left we meet with "Robin Hood's Tower". (pub. Phillips, c.1860)

What is remarkable is that, following Clarkson's *History* (1821), virtually all the histories and guides to Richmond, up to William Edwards, *The Early History of the North Riding* (1924), not only draw attention to Robin Hood's Tower, but, to a man, adopt the same words that 'from time immemorial has it been so named'.

The status of the Robin Hood Tower is so very different to that of the other named tower, the Gold Hole Tower. First recorded by Christopher Clarkson (1821), the explanation of the name is always given as 'commonly termed' or 'popularly named' because of its origin: 'an appellation [arising] from the discovery of a considerable sum of money in its recesses by some exploring antiquary.' (pub. Phillips, c.1860)

This is classic folk-tale usage, with no starting date, and carrying no ongoing significance. Its popularity may even have been helped by the Tower's function as garderobes for the high status apartments! So different is this to the historically sourced root of Robin Hood Tower. Its prehistory and historical status were clearly too much to be challenged even by the Ministry of Works when the Castle entered its guardianship in 1910. Sir Charles Peers, Chief Inspector of Ancient Monuments, wrote the Ministry's first *Guide to Richmond Castle* in 1934, and duly celebrated the Robin Hood Tower as bearing a name which had been duly 'preserved' across the centuries. He said the same in 1943 and 1953.

That was to change when English Heritage entered the fray, and issued its first *Guide to Richmond Castle* in 1989. Written by John Weaver, also one-time Inspector of Ancient Monuments, the Guide comments on the Robin Hood Tower thus: 'the name is modern'. Published shortly afterwards by English Heritage as an 'Information [Leaflet] for Teachers', the same knell is sounded: 'The Robin Hood Tower. The name is modern'. And in the most recent official Guide, written this time by a medieval historian, Dr John Goodall, Ph.D., the tourist is informed: 'You are now standing in front of the so-called Robin Hood Tower.'

And yet, of course, legends once made, and sanctioned by time, do not die. For visitors and readers, Robin Hood's Tower is still just that, both in the guidebooks and in the displays in the Castle grounds. Without Sir Walter Scott, Richmond would be short of that Nottingham hero.

North Country Theatre, 1996-2018

Nobby Dimon

Richmond, of course, has a world famous Georgian Theatre but it also has a more contemporary international theatre connection. In 1996 a small scale touring theatre company was formed in the town, and launched itself with a 6 week tour of an original adaptation of John Buchan's famous ripping yarn, *The 39 Steps*. Devised and rehearsed in the Dramatic Society rehearsal rooms on Castle Walk, the show was a great success and had a second longer run in 1997 and, as many people now know, went on to be a long running West End, Broadway and International hit. Billed by its London producers as 'the world's favourite comedy seen by more than 3 million people', they could have seen it first in Richmond or in a village hall in North Yorkshire!

In 2018 that company, North Country Theatre, finally closed the doors of its offices in Rosemary Lane after twenty two years of creating and touring theatre to rural communities from Shropshire to the Scottish Highlands. What follows is a brief history.

A vision

The idea of a company which took entertaining and intelligent professional theatre out to rural communities in North Yorkshire and beyond was first and foremost the vision of Richmond resident Nobby Dimon. It was not a new idea or a unique vision, (actor/manager Sam Butler had after all done something similar from the Georgian Theatre in 1788), but Nobby had been working as director of Theatre in Education for Harrogate Theatre for 8 years, serving North Yorkshire Schools, and was ready for a new challenge. He knew the area well and he knew there was a real demand for cultural experiences. '*If the material was suitable we would often play our theatre-in-education work to adult audiences in the evenings and the response was positive from Rosedale Abbey to Richmond from Giggleswick to Gilling West. The audience was so keen to*

enjoy good quality theatre on their doorsteps rather than travel to Leeds or York or Newcastle that I felt sure a new company would have a chance to survive.' At the time his wife, Gillian Howells, had a 'proper' job so they thought they might just make ends meet and he decided to leave Harrogate and give it a go.

Kitchen Cabinet

A group of people met around a kitchen table at Nobby and Gillian's house in Richmond, including Amanda Cook, local journalist Debbie Walker who became the first chair, playwright and TV script writer Ken Blakeson and Shea Connolly, Drama Officer from what was then called Yorkshire Arts [now Arts Council England,] along with local councillor Clive World. They discussed how the company might work, what sort of shows to produce and whether it could attract some grant aid and earn enough from village hall audiences to pay the wages.

With the help of a £1000 grant from Yorkshire Arts, the company devised and then toured a new adaptation of *The 39 Steps,* which opened at the Georgian on May 3rd 1996 followed by a 28-date tour which took in venues as varied as Pateley Bridge Playhouse, Skipton Auction Mart, and the old Elite Cinema Leyburn (now converted into apartments). Many of the venues were volunteer-run village halls, so the company had to carry and each night set up staging, scenery, lighting and sound equipment, then perform, then pack it all away again and move on to the next venue.

Taking the theatre to the audience

So the Company began with a huge success which might have been used to propel it on to bigger and bigger venues, but that was not the vision. '*We didn't just want to perform in village halls as a stepping stone to something 'better' or ' proper'. We actually liked the atmosphere, the proximity of the audience, the sense of a shared space, the fact that actors were the guests of the audience, and shared a cup of tea at the interval and had to use the same loos and yet still transported them five minutes later to other worlds. We liked the hospitality, the strange once a year friendships we developed with regular bookers, from Shropshire to the Scottish Borders. Yes, sometimes we had to change in a sheep shed or sleep on somebody's floor; sometimes the set would not fit the space;*

sometimes the raffle took twenty minutes; once the electricity meter ran out of ten pence pieces in the middle of a show. There was certainly no glamour, but mostly the atmosphere was and is brilliant.' The tours got longer and the audiences bigger.

In 1998 they went through the tortuous process of an application to the newly available National Lottery Fund to enable the purchase of a specially adapted van, office furniture and some technical equipment. The ultimate success of that bid and generous support by sponsors and patrons helped the company to become an established part of North Yorkshire's cultural life. The popularity of the shows encouraged more and more village hall committees to promote theatre, and tours of 40-50 nights were often fully booked within weeks of being offered. Although travelling as far south as Oxfordshire and as far north as the Scottish Highlands, the core audience was found in and around their home region. Outsiders were often astonished that the company could fill the Georgian Theatre for two nights and then go on to fill halls in Reeth, Catterick, Gilling, Hunton, Bellerby and Leyburn.

Popularity without compromise

Over 22 years the company produced many original new plays and adaptations of forgotten classics like *Moll Flanders*, tongue-in-cheek comedies and witty spoofs like *2001 Space Idiocy*, moving historical dramas like *Meantime,* based on the Longitude story, and *Home on the Range* about daleswomen on the Oregon Trail. Great authors from Jane Austen to Conan Doyle, from Kipling to Ian McEwan were presented with wit and theatrical innovation, and often with a local accent, - not just Lorca's *Blood Wedding*, but *Blood Wedding in Wensleydale*, often with beautiful and ingenious sets by Barnard Castle-based designer Simon Pell.

The Richmondshire Community Plays

Amongst many highlights, Nobby Dimon also wrote and the Company produced a series of community plays in which a large company of volunteer performers worked with professional actors and production team to stage large scale theatre with local themes or connections. First *The Passion Plays* at Easter 2002, with the awe inspiring set by artist Mackenzie Thorpe, played in St Mary's Richmond and in several

surrounding village churches before a grand finale in Ripon Cathedral; then in 2005 *Last Dance of a Dalesman* with open air performances in Richmond Castle and Middleham Castle; and in 2014, in collaboration with our Norwegian twin town, a Yorkshire Dales Peer Gynt, *Blame it on Bartle*. With more than 40 actors and musicians in each and large audiences and with local history myth and legend at their hearts, these plays proved a genuine community experience. It is worth noting that some of the full cast rehearsals and scenery workshops for *Last Dance* were accommodated in the large cleared space of the Richmond Railway Station prior to its conversion into cinema, cafe and shops.

Home grown

North Country Theatre produced, in all, thirty-six plays, all original scripts or new adaptations and gave 1230 performances to a total audience of over 110,000.

'*We developed an expectation in our audiences of something different, something fresh: male characters presented as hats on sticks in an all women show, a four poster bed turned into a coach, a ship, a prison; there was a hand pulled revolve, doubling, mask work, live sitar and tabla music, puppetry, projection, even a levitation on stage, and, above all, seriously good ensemble acting. We often employed the same actors more than once giving our audiences an opportunity to see that these are skilful professionals able to adapt and change. Our most regular performer has been Wensleydale-based actor Mark Cronfield who has played roles as diverse as an heroic sea captain, a daft Shepherd and a disturbed adolescent. We showed too that the rural north was a creative, productive region not just a passive recipient of 'rural outreach' from the metropolitan centres.'*

Educational

All the time they were doing all this, the company was also running a continuing programme of educational work in primary schools especially in the first ten years: participatory dramas about Inuit culture and environmental destruction, modern art, local archaeology, as well as a 17-year collaboration with the National Trust at Studley Royal and Fountains Abbey where they created site specific participatory dramas for more than 10,000 visiting primary school children over that time. They used similar

perambulatory drama to introduce local primary school children to the extraordinary historic landscape around Temple Grounds and Culloden Tower.

And Site Specific

Not many companies can say they have performed (*A Very) Brief Encounter* actually on a moving train, a platform and a waiting room on the Settle-Carlisle Railway. They were also commissioned to create a ten minute history of North Yorkshire for the Royal Show at Stoneleigh; they cut and performed participatory Labyrinth events in Rievaulx, Lindisfarne and Whitby Abbey for English Heritage, presented interactive, interpretive dramas in Water Gardens, Castles and in stately homes like Brodsworth and Kiplin Hall, and performed street theatre for the Yorvik Festival and Richmond's Georgian Festival.

Into thin air

It is the nature of theatre to come and go. Theatre companies are not theatre buildings and only rarely outlive those who created them or made them famous. North Country Theatre has been a small and vibrant part of Richmond's cultural life for two decades and will be missed but as Shakespeare put it, in the mouth of Prospero:

> 'Our revels now are ended. These our actors,
> As I foretold you, were all spirits, and
> Are melted into air, into thin air.
> ..……We are such stuff
> As dreams are made on; and our little life
> Is rounded with a sleep.'



Nobby Dimon in The Electrical Wizard of the North.



Blame it on Bartle, a community play, performed in Richmond Castle, 2014.



Mark Cronfield in Blood Wedding in Wensleydale.



Twelfth Night performed at Aske Hall.



The set of Thirty Nine Steps.

The Duck Club

Tina McDonald

Most Richmond residents are familiar with the town's Duck Club and are well aware of its charitable contributions to the town. Its annual Duck Race, now attracting visitors from far and wide, as well as residents in droves, is, for many, its most significant event, and one which appears to explain the club's curious name. However, the name comfortably pre-dates its famous race and how it came about is no less intriguing. Sadly, written records of the club's early days are scarce but something of its history can be pieced together from the memories and reminiscences of its members, passed down with pride over decades.

The club was started around 1900 by a group of small business owners and master tradesmen. Their aim, to provide an annual outing for members and a sports day for the children of the town, was financed by regularly collecting small amounts of money from members. Their halfpennies and farthings eventually mounted into useable sums. Early outings involved the hiring of an open top charabanc, its forty seats thus restricting club membership to the same number. The charabanc (from the French *char à bancs*, meaning carriage with wooden benches) originated in France in the early nineteenth century. Then horse-driven, the first one in England was presented to Queen Victoria by Louis Philippe of France in 1844. Motorised versions became available in the early 1900s. One early photograph of the club shows proud members alongside a horse-driven charabanc. However, a further photograph dated 1912 shows an improved motorised version outside the Buck Hotel in Newbiggin.

Early trips were probably to the nearest resort town, seaside or picturesque villages. Peter Harrison, a former member of the club, traced one photograph to Barnard Castle, a reasonable journey in a vehicle capable of achieving only 12 mph. These outings must have been a source of great



An early club outing by charabanc.



A club outing by motorised transport, 1910. Outside The Buck Inn, Newbiggin.

pleasure at a time when annual paid leave was not yet established and days off were rare. Motorised transport was generally used only by the wealthy, so the charabanc, with its exotic name must have seemed like luxury indeed, even though its wooden seats, solid tyres and primitive springs could hardly have provided a comfortable ride.

Legend has it that, as the charabanc proceeded along Newbiggin, the overhanging branches in this tree-lined road caused many cries of, "Duck!". This chorus would continue as the charabanc encountered low bridges and the inevitable overhanging branches of minor roads. Eventually, it was decided that the constant cries of "Duck!" having caused much hilarity but been of such real purpose, would be the ideal name for the club: so, Duck Club it became.

The Duck Race, which eventually followed, arrived in the same, largely incidental but amusing way. Two members of the club saw a consignment of rubber ducks for sale and bought it for the club on a whim. After all, it was called The Duck Club! George Tempest, secretary and treasurer at the time, was annoyed that they had acted without consultation, but suggested that the ducks could be sold at a pound each and thus make something of a profit for their charitable funds.

However, a better idea emerged and thus the famous Duck Race came into operation. The Duck Race was, and is, one of the Duck Club's main events of the year and takes place on the first May Bank Holiday. The two thousand ducks bought all those years ago have, of course, been added to over time; worn out ducks have been retired and modern replacements acquired.

Now, over two and a half thousand ducks are tipped into the River Swale from the Green Bridge, cheered on their way by the many visitors and residents, who never tire of this spectacular sight. Excited spectators follow the race along the course of the river, as ducks crash over the Falls to the finishing line at the Batts, near Station Bridge. Club members and volunteers use canoes, kayaks, nets and sticks to ensure that no duck gets stranded or abandoned. Money is raised through ticket sales, each ticket with a corresponding duck, and generous prizes are awarded for 1st, 2nd and 3rd, with a consolation prize for the last duck home.

When the Town Council asked the Duck Club to take on responsibility for the Christmas lights, the club responded with characteristic enthusiasm and generosity, and the switching on of the lights has become another important event in Richmond's calendar. Large crowds gather in Friary Gardens for the official 'Switch On' by the mayor; people dress up in Christmas costumes, wear Santa hats and even Father Christmas puts in an appearance. The delighted faces of so many children must greatly gratify the Duck Club and its volunteers, who put in so much hard work and effort to make this event such a success.

Like much of the Duck Club's history, the acquisition of the lights has more than a little humour attached. In order to add to the council's lights, the Chamber of Trade bought a consignment of unwanted stock from Blackpool Corporation. The purchase, while not necessarily festive, provided an economic way of enhancing the town's display. Finding a parrot in the bargain pack of lights might have led some organisations to abandon that particular item, or sell it on. The Duck Club, with characteristic humour, instead incorporated it as part of their display. Though there was some initial reluctance from residents, it eventually became a firm and much loved feature, the more so when immortalised by Tom Carr in a specially written book, *The Christmas Parrot*. Such is the parrot's fame, she has been kidnapped on several occasions. As the Duck Club refuses ever to pay a ransom, and given the extreme fragility of this now elderly parrot, it is the club's fervent hope that no more kidnapping attempts will be made!

The Duck Race is one of the club's biggest earners and, remaining true to its original aim of providing for the children of the town, the club has extended its fundraising activities over time, using raffles, collecting boxes and sponsorship.

The now famous Sports Day is held each year at Richmond Cricket Club on August Bank Holiday. Children and, indeed, parents take part in traditional games and races, and spectators as well as contestants enjoy an afternoon of true community spirit and real family fun. An early trophy which used to be awarded is now stored for safe keeping in the Museum.



Duck Club Sports Day, 1902.



Duck Club Sports Day, twenty-first century.

All these events, which punctuate Richmond's calendar so well and provide the town's children with so much fun, stay true to the original aims. However, over the years their reach has extended far beyond providing entertainment for the children of the town (and, indeed, the parents) to supporting a great number of sporting activities, providing equipment, prizes, sportswear and trophies.

Throughout the years, junior football clubs have been presented with new strip, clubs have been awarded substantial amounts for improvements to pitches and contributions made to the costs of coaching. Junior Sports Awards are made to the best, all-round, male and female 14-16 year olds and recently the club gave a generous donation to Richmond Triathlon Club for the purchase of safety equipment. Indeed, last year saw over four thousand pounds given to worthy causes in the town and their promise is that no disadvantaged child will ever be overlooked.

When the news is full of the plight of so many children, throughout the country, who are denied sporting and recreational activities, we are lucky, indeed, to have in Richmond a dedicated organisation for which the needs of young people are paramount. The Duck Club members work quietly but effectively to support them, while, at the same time, providing colour and entertainment for the rest of us. Early members would be proud to see how their organisation has developed to become such an intrinsic and worthwhile part of Richmond life.

Note:
I am indebted to Geoff Edmundson for his help in charting the history of the club.

Obituaries

Harold Dick: a tribute

With the death of Harold Dick this year, the Civic Society and Richmond, as well as his family, have lost a key and influential figure in the life of the town. Never someone who acted or looked his age - he was 90 - Harold was a consistently active individual, maintaining his interest in historical, artistic and social matters, and especially his large and extended family.

Born before the Second World War, he was brought up in Hull, where he witnessed the destruction of the bombing raids on the city, which also killed his father. Moving to Cottingham, he first worked for the local council in Beverley, then eventually moved to Richmond where he set up a successful architectural practice. He bought the Station House in 1969 to make it a family home. This was a challenge in itself as the station complex was then an open, derelict site, just as it had been left, before it became the Farm & Garden Centre, and without the swimming pool which was eventually developed there. At Station House he, along with his devoted and supportive wife Shirley, filled his time with his family of two girls and two boys, along with numerous animals, and an extensive garden.

A huge achievement was the excellent charts he produced that map every sailing ship that had served the British Navy. His display of these was a feature of the major exhibition that accompanied the bi-centenary commemoration of Trafalgar in Portsmouth. These charts are now on permanent display in his old school in Hull. Less well known, he recorded all regional buses from the turn of the 20th century and, as an organiser and artist, he contributed significantly to the local art scene, was a respected Rotarian and remained actively interested in the Civic Society.

Our Society owes Harold a considerable debt. He was for many years the Honorary Architect for the Society's Planning Committee which, at times, can be a crucial role in monitoring and commenting on planning

applications for building work in the Richmond Conservation Area and on Listed Buildings in the town and district. He also ensured that the Society was the recipient of the funds that came from making redundant the original Richmondshire Preservation Trust [not to be confused with the present body which restored the Station].

As the architect member of the original Richmondshire Museum committee, Harold drew up the initial plans to convert an old workshop into the museum building. With no large funds available, it was Harold who proposed and oversaw the conversion being undertaken in small stages. This was no simple task, involving the co-ordination of a widespread group of supporters, including local builders, staff and pupils from Richmond Hill School, plus local traders and individuals. Harold and Peter Wenham were key figures in the establishment of this important addition to the town and area.

Those of us who knew him remember a good, interesting and thoroughly entertaining individual who will, of course, be sadly missed.

Bev Joicey
Jane Hatcher

Deaths

George Brown
Lewis Harrisson
Rev. Canon Christopher White

The 2019 Lecture Programme

January 10th : Lord James Crathorne
Being Lord Lieutenant and some Richmond memories

February 14th: Jane Ruffer
The Auckland Project – Auckland Castle

March 14th : Suzanne Stirke
Sister Dora

April 11th : Hannah Phillip
Georgians and the Pursuit of Pleasure

May 9th : Chris Lloyd
Lewis Carroll – the Croft Connection

June 13th: Graham Berry
Aftermath of WW1, 1918 – 24

September 12th : Dr. Graham Rodgers
The Bells of St. Mary's, Richmond: a social history 1650 – 1914

October 10th : Richard Morris
Yorkshire – a lyrical history of England?

November 14th : Rod Flint
The year 1071, Resistance and Revenge – Harrying the North

Please Note: The 2020 programme of lectures will be available at the AGM in December.

Officials for 2019

Chairman:		Mr. J. McDonald
Secretary:		Mrs. C. Hillyard
Lecture Secretary:		Mr. C. Grant
Treasurer and Membership Secretary:		Mr. G. Barber
Honorary Architect:		Mr. J.G. Clarke
Editors:		Miss D. Clague
		Mrs. B. McDonald
		Mr. J. McDonald
Committee:	Mr. P. Cardwell	Retires in 2020
	Mr. T. Dykes	Retires in 2020
	Mr. S. Scott-Priestley	Retires in 2021
Planning Sub-Committee:		Mr. J. C. Clarke
		Mr. D. Barraclough
		Mr. C. Shaw
		Mr. J. McDonald
		Mrs. S. Thubron
Lecture Sub-Committee:		Mr. C. Grant
		Mr. P. Cardwell
		Mr. T. Dykes
Auditors:		Paul Tranter & Co.

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.

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Editors