Richmond and District Civic Society

950th Review



Richmond from the Air Courtesy Richmondshire District Council

950th Review Introduction

The celebration of the 950th anniversary of the founding of Richmond Castle grew from a conversation among a small group of very committed and imaginative residents of the town. From these small beginnings grew the ambitious plan to mark the anniversary with a programme of events throughout the year. The achievement has been remarkable for there was no national pot of money to draw on and ambition was high: the resulting year's celebrations have been the result of sheer hard work and a refusal to let the plan fail. All of this in spite of Covid restrictions! Key to this plan has been the programme of lectures held monthly by the Civic Society throughout 2021. Early in the planning of their lecture programme, the Society decided to fund a community-based archaeological 'dig' in the Castle to try to uncover new material for the castle's history. Luckily, this decision attracted further funding from other agencies and trusts and the eventual project in July-August was a major dig across three sites inside the castle. To celebrate this lecture programme, together with the success of the whole 950th year, the lecturers have all written articles to go alongside their lectures. We are delighted to welcome these, and other related articles, as a permanent record of a really enjoyable and impressive year. We hope you will also enjoy reading them all.



Baroness Harris of Richmond
Patron of the 950th Celebrations



John McDonald
Chair, Richmond and District Civic Society



The Green Bridge, Courtesy Richmondshire District Council

950th 'Richmond Through The Ages'

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Celebrate Richmond 950 - Despite the Pandemic!

Marcia McLuckie

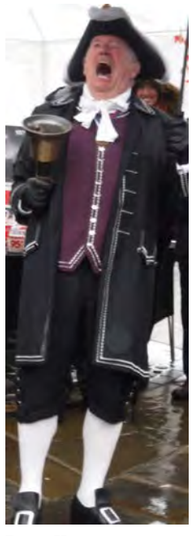
Our town of Richmond has a birthday this year
Nine hundred and fifty years it's been here
Do you think this deserves a loud Alleluia
Now it's officially as old as Methuselah!

From its birth by building the great stone castle
The town has watched life's struggles
and hassle

Then it grew to become a great market town
Which still brings in visitors from miles around

We have a racecourse and station with fine architecture
There's so much here you cannot conjecture
So look round at the sites and take your ease
Enjoy your day's visit - we aim to please.

God Save the Queen and the Lords of the Manor



Barry Heap, Richmond Town Crier
Courtesy Colin Grant.

So proclaimed Richmond's Town Crier, Barry Heap, on 8th May 2021, when *Celebrate Richmond 950* was at last able to commence celebrations. Following a Zoom meeting with our French twin town, St. Aubin du Cormier, our Patron officially opened the celebrations on what must have been one of the coldest, wettest, windiest and most awful days that May has seen for a long time!

Medieval musicians Trouvere played on whilst a historical market was in full swing and jesters, Lord Flame and Tom Fool, fooled in a hilarious manner and greatly added to the proceedings.

Despite the weather we had a good turnout of visitors, many of whom said they had come to support us, knowing how much effort we had put into the organising!

So, how had it come about that so many of us were spending our Saturday in such unpleasant weather but with much joy around?

Back in the mists of time, around September 2018, I bumped into Carol Watson enjoying a quiet coffee in Mocha. Having joined her, she whispered to me that Richmond Castle was to have a big birthday and what should we do about it?! It seemed important for us to do something, but what and how and would some other organisation already be planning and should it be 2020 or 2021? Many questions to be answered.

Carol gave a summary of the event at the October Original Richmond Business and Tourism Association (ORBTA) meeting, at which there was unanimous agreement that the celebrations should be run under the auspices of the Association. A budget was allocated to get plans moving and Phil Upton of Purple Creative decided to join with Carol and me and so the 950 Team was born.

Diligent checking informed our opinion that there were no other plans afoot by other Richmond organisations to honour the castle's anniversary. English Heritage confirmed that 1071 was the year the castle was commissioned by Count Alan Rufus, which meant we had almost three years to get our ducks in a row. What could be easier?!

We were immensely pleased to welcome Baroness Harris of Richmond to be our *Celebrate Richmond 950* Patron.

An enquiry was submitted to the National Heritage Lottery Fund and, in February 2020, I attended a National Lottery Workshop in Hull;

all was looking very positive for a grant of about £95,000. Not long after this, I remember hearing that there was an outbreak of coronavirus in China. Too far away – won't affect Britain! How wrong could I have been?! March 23rd the country went into lockdown and very soon we received notification from the Lottery to say that grants for one-off events were being withdrawn so that funds could be concentrated on existing heritage. The only money we possessed was that committed over a three-year period by ORBTA – just over £5,000. Disaster! Would all our plans have to be scrapped?

The cavalry, in the form of Richmondshire District Council, came riding in and 950 was awarded a grant from the Community Investment Fund. The Civic Society contributed £6,000 to the Community Archaeology Project, which we were planning to take place in Richmond Castle, and the Castle Studies Trust added a further £10,000. We were just £2,000 short for this key event to go ahead. With other donations from individuals and permissions in place from English Heritage and Historic England, we were able to commission a local company, Solstice Heritage, to take the project forward.

A logo for *Celebrate Richmond 950* was designed by local designer Kersty Jordan of G-Design. This was the selected choice from entries submitted by three other local graphic designers. Phil Upton's company, Purple Creative Studios, created the 950 website at no cost, which gave the castle's history, programme of events and more.

We discussed merchandise, the cost of which would be underwritten by ORBTA. Concerned that we might be left with boxes of unsold items, we ordered mugs, tea towels, car stickers, pens and pencils with much restraint. Our cautious plans paid off and, by the time the celebratory year drew to a close, we had repaid ORBTA and had a minimal amount of stock left to sell.

Through press releases and marketing plans, we announced the arrival of 950 and continued to promote throughout the year. Seeing the beautiful lamp post banners, which Kersty had designed, displayed in Dundas Street, Queens Road, Victoria Road and Station Road from the middle of January was an uplifting moment for we three organisers. They were wonderful heralds of Richmond's celebratory year.

From the outset, Phil, Carol and I had wanted the celebrations to be for our whole community. It was important that there were free events and a good variety to cover many tastes. We wanted local people to celebrate their town and to hear how people felt about Richmond.

Carol had the brilliant idea of asking nine hundred and fifty local people to give us their thoughts on their town. From the youngest to the oldest in our community, we wanted to involve them all. Our ambition was for 950 pieces of original writing, but, sadly, we fell a little short of this target as social distancing and time constraints created by the pandemic made this very difficult. However, we collected an excellent selection of written work telling what people love about their town, which is to be presented to the Richmondshire Museum along with other memories of *Celebrate Richmond 950*.

We had planned a celebratory opening to the year for 2nd January, but Covid restrictions thwarted our plans. The Town Crier, Barry Heap, could not permit the start of the year to go unannounced. In full uniform and with the ringing of his bell, Barry greeted the year:

This year, Richmond's age hits
nine hundred and fifty,
It's ageing gracefully, like a good malt whisky.
We bid the town well with a loud 'alleluia'
Now it's become as old as Methuselah.

Barry was joined by Ian Woods, the 'Victorian policeman' Charles Manley, who was the 3rd policeman employed by the Richmond

Corporation back in the 1840s. His main remit was to control the vast numbers of navvies who were engaged in building the railway line to Richmond and whose drunken brawls were causing consternation in Richmond! Fortunately, Ian had no brawls to contend with on 2nd January!

Richmond and District Civic Society had planned their customary year of talks around the theme of *Richmond Through the Ages*, starting with Richmond from the *Stone Age to the Normans*, moving, in February, to The Norman invasion and *The Harrying of the North*. The year of talks continued, culminating in January 2022 with a talk by Jim Brightman, lead archaeologist of the Community Archaeology Project. Jim rounded off the year of celebrations with his talk on the early years of Richmond's medieval settlement and a report on how the Community Archaeology Project came about, who was involved, what was found and how the dig increased the understanding of Richmond Castle's early medieval history.

During the dig, which took place in late July and early August, Dr. Alice Roberts of BBC2's *Digging for Britain* series visited the site. The filming at the castle was broadcast in January the following year. During filming, Dr. Roberts met our team of community volunteers who were digging down beneath our castle, which is one of the country's oldest and best-preserved Norman Castles. The findings made by Jim and his team, who gave 978 volunteer hours to the Project, contributed to the 950-year story, from its origins as a Norman stronghold to the intimate role it played as a prison for conscientious objectors during World War One.

Most excitingly, on her very first day of archaeology digging EVER, one of our volunteers, Jenny Reid-Young, found a spectacular silver coin bearing the face of William the Conqueror. A silver penny, just short of 1,000 years old – a most fitting find for the castle's 950th anniversary.

The archaeology and finding the silver penny brought much publicity for Richmond, including the television programme showing the beauty of the town, other television coverage, press and more than half a million impressions from around the world on the Facebook page of Richmondshire Today.

What birthday would be complete without a drink? Richmond Brewing Company, located in the former Victorian Station, brewed up three ales for the anniversary – Home Front Mild Ale, Red Rufus Ruby Ale and 1071 IPA. Chris Wallace at the brewery teamed up with artist, Mackenzie Thorpe, who produced delightful artwork for the three celebration ales. The beer sold like hot cakes and the limited edition prints of the original artwork were equally popular.



Mackenzie Thorpe artwork for the Celebration Ales

At this time, when we are all thinking of the environment and governments worldwide are considering how to reduce our carbon footprint, an inspirational idea was put forward by Jo Foster of Kiss the Moon. At a public 'ideas' meeting for 950, Jo Foster put forward the suggestions that we plant a new community woodland of 950 native trees. A team of four local businesspeople, (Steve Biggs, Tim Crawshaw, Jo Foster and Phil Upton), worked with local landscape architect, Alistair Baldwin, to make the new wood come to life, under the umbrella of ORBTA. Landowners, Lord Ronaldshay and Michael Sunley, agreed a peppercorn rent lease of their adjoining pieces of land for planting and access.

To mark the occasion, the woodland has been named Rufus Woods after Alan Rufus, who first commissioned the castle. Outdoor social enterprise, Just the Job, are overseeing the project and the team, led by Steve Biggs, are to take control of the day-to-day management of the woodland.



Thea Grieg and Henry Coatsworth, Rufus Woods oak tree planting
Courtesy Jane Morris, Richmond Camera Club

Rufus Woods are south of the Old Racecourse, looking down towards Richmond and the castle. As the trees grow, visitors to the top of the castle keep will be able to admire the woodland from afar. Planting includes Beech, English Oak, Holly, Ash, Alder, Scots Pine, Sweet Chestnut, Bird Cherry, Downy Birch, Field Maple, Rowan, Silver Birch, White Beam, Wild Cherry, Alder, Blackthorn, Crab Apple, Dog Rose, Goat Willow, Guelder Rose, Hawthorn and Hazel.

Eleven Richmond people were chosen to plant a tree, with individuals born in a year ending in a number one – 2021, 2011, 2001 etc – invited to plant a tree to represent their decade. The Rufus Woods team wanted the family of a baby born in 2021 right through to a centenarian born in 1921 to reflect the generations of the town and remind people this space is designed to be enjoyed for all ages, now and in the future.

The hope is that Rufus Woods, which is already attracting wildlife, grows into a space where people of all generations will come to relax, learn, play and exercise. Every decade was represented, with baby Thea Greig and 100-year-old Henry Coatsworth helping to plant the oak avenue at Rufus Woods. A 12th oak in the avenue was planted by Colin Grant in honour of the naval frigate, HMS Richmond, which was at sea for much of 2021.

Several members of the 950 team, including Patron Baroness Harris of Richmond, enjoyed a fascinating Zoom meeting with Hugh Botterill, the Commanding Officer of the frigate.



Rufus Woods Team, Phil Upton, Jo Foster and Steve Biggs
Courtesy Chris Houghton, Richmond Camera Club

Other Zoom meetings were held to celebrate the year with Richmond Museum of History and Culture in California; Richmond Rotary Club in California, which also included members of our Richmond Rotary, and our twin town in France, St. Aubin du Cormier. St Aubin kindly sponsored prizes for the art competition held by the Station Gallery. *Celebrate our Town* received entries from local artists, with Sarah Drought creating the winning entry *Market Day* in collage.

Several other events for the year were created by the team at The Station including a jazz dinner in the Café Bar and the *Station in Wonderland*, which celebrated Richmond's former pupil of the Grammar School, Charles Dodgson, far better known as Lewis Carroll. Fairground rides, trails, crafts and a miniature train celebrated this famous author of the Victorian era.

Moving forward to the 20th century, in November the Charlotte Jacqueline School of Dance presented *The Station Master,* written by John and Jane Hunter. The immersive dining experience told the story of The Station during the Second World War with songs from the 1940s, memories and stories. During the war, Richmond Station witnessed many moving scenes, with troops going off to war, soldiers returning home on leave or prisoners of war returning home when the war was over.

Back in the Market Place, at the Town Hall in August, some members of Richmond Rotary Club had created an exhibition, *950 Years of Communication in Richmond*. Many varied stories of communications through the centuries, from the Normans to the present day were revealed through large, original, illustrated banners. 2,500 Souvenir Guides were printed for the three week event, with the surplus being distributed to all the local schools.

As part of the exhibition, the court in Richmond Town Hall was turned into the Post Office that was established in King Street by Albert Morton in 1907, with Warnock Kerr taking the part of Albert. Designed to appeal to all age groups, the exhibition also included a working model railway and even talking robot heads in the shape of Alice in Wonderland and Richmond's famous Drummer Boy.

The weekend of the August Bank Holiday, Richmond Amateur Dramatics Society (RADS) presented two short performances as part of the exhibition. The first, the opening scene from Richard Brinsley Sheridan's *The Critic,* saw Mr and Mrs Dangle (Gregan Davis and Barbara Hughes) reading their morning newspapers and discussing the state of 'theatre', when Mrs. Sneer (Kath Torbet) brought two new playscripts for 'the critic' to consider.

Postmaster Morton travelled back in time to deliver three letters from Jane Austen to her sister, Cassandra, which were written between 1796 and 1813. They were read to the audience by the recipient, played by Martha Templeton.

As part of the Communications Exhibition, but sometime after its end, as an addendum to the exhibition, racing returned to Richmond Racecourse! On a day of bright sunshine, a flock of 552 racing pigeons (sadly not 950!) took flight from their mobile loft below the grandstand and headed home for Tewkesbury. The sight of the pigeons as they turned south-west from Richmond racecourse in the early morning sunshine was a sight to behold as they flew overhead, shimmering like a silvery shoal of fish.



Pigeons against bright blue sky on Richmond Racecourse
Courtesy Jane Morris, Richmond Camera Club

The birds were taking part in the semi-final of the Royal Pigeon Racing Association One Loft Race from Richmond to their loft in Tewkesbury, a distance of 167 miles as the pigeon flies. The winning bird arrived back in its loft in 4 hours and 2 minutes – an average speed of about 40 miles an hour, with 200 of the 552 that left Richmond returning within 7 hours. A message from the *Celebrate Richmond 950* Patron, Baroness Harris of Richmond and Richmond Rotary President, Emma Fulton, was carried by one of the birds in a Second World War capsule with the message, "Greetings from Richmond, North Yorkshire,

celebrating our town's birth, 950 years ago". The message and capsule added three grams to the pigeon's average weight of 450 grams.
The race, which was the semi-final, carried a prize of over £3,000 for the winning pigeon's owner, with £25,000 on offer to the winner of the final race from Alnwick to Tewkesbury.
The pigeon release was organised by Richmond Rotary Club as a finale to the 950 Years of Communications exhibition. Organiser Colin Grant said, "It is fantastic to see racing return to Richmond's Georgian racecourse after a pause of 130 years, although the participants were of the feathered kind rather than hoofed!".

Combat of a different form was represented in Richmond Castle in September, when Conquest Living History set up camp for a weekend. English Heritage gave free entrance to residents of DL10 and DL9 and visitors experienced the sights and sounds of Norman life at the castle. Norman soldiers drilled and showed their weapons and armour and trained to keep their fighting skills (and their bodies) in trim. The army surgeon gave insights into battlefield medicine 1,000 years ago – not for the squeamish – and the Norman cooks rustled up some interesting food that would grace the tables of the men who made up the garrison.

Apparently, fashion was already a concern in Norman times and this was confirmed by the clever and entertaining History Wardrobe, who created a whistle-stop tour of *950 years of Yorkshire Clothes* for a Zoom presentation. This was viewed far and wide, including by a few people from America. Towards the end of the year, The History Wardrobe entertained again with their "seductive, sensational, chic, stunning fashion presentation", celebrating the life and times of Agatha Christie, the Queen of Crime. With original costumes from the elegant art deco period, Lucy Adlington and Meredith Towne entertained with dramatic readings, costume modelling and even offered a crime to be solved with 950 organiser, Phil, playing an important role as the corpse!

There had been much talk of Gunnhild during the year. Alan Rufus, the man behind our castle, never married. However, the story goes that, at some point in his life (there are different theories as to exactly when – see the separate article on Gunnhild), Gunnhild of Wessex, who was the daughter of King Harold, eloped from her convent in Wiltshire to be with him. Gunnhild was enthusiastically introduced to me, even featuring in Chris Lloyd's weekly column in the Darlington and Stockton Times, and we felt that she should at some point play a part in the 950 celebrations.

Having already had two shows cancelled for 18th September, we were anxious to find a replacement. Theatre company Time Will Tell stepped in with enthusiasm! Simon Kirk of Time Will Tell has a soft spot for Richmond, having been a regular performer with Nobby Dimon's North Country Theatre. Knowing our interest in Gunnhild, he wrote a script in which Gunnhild and Alan told the story of Richmond in their play, *The History of Richmond in 20 Minutes! The Greatest Love Story Never Told.* Performed on the curtilage, the assembled audience thoroughly enjoyed this humorous take on the relationship between a rather exasperated Gunnhild and her huffy lord, who is angered by how he finds Richmond and its citizens, having time-travelled into the 21st century! He seemed particularly perturbed by our modern-day clothing!

The planners of the 2021 Richmond Walking and Book Festival embraced 950, organising castle walks and speakers to fit with the year of celebrations. Henri Ward, the Chief Researcher for the *Horrible Histories* TV series gave an inspirational talk at the Georgian Theatre. 950 funds enabled students from local schools to attend and Henri also spent time at Richmond School with older history students. Hearing about how he came to be Chief Researcher and what goes into making the programmes gave the theatre audience a fascinating evening.
We were also pleased to welcome the Poet Laureate, Simon Armitage to Richmond.

With planned events cancelled or postponed during the year, the 950-team found themselves planning and replanning. Local medieval musicians, Trouvere, who performed *Music for a Norman Court*, in St. Mary's Church in July, giving a flavour of the music played in the castle, stepped into the breach on more than one occasion. For this entertaining *Celebrate Richmond 950* event, we were transported back 800 years. Richmond Castle, celebrating its 950 birthday this year, would have been only around 150 years old at the time of their music.

Their retelling of the *Tales of Reynard the Fox* mixed medieval music and drama in a vivid and lively performance by the river down on The Batts. Reynard was the great trickster of the Middle Ages – the original anti-hero and the star of countless stories. Masks, slapstick and interaction with the audience, together with the authentic music of the period played on amazing medieval instruments, brought a selection of these stories and characters alive to adults and children enjoying a Sunday afternoon stroll by the Swale.

The audience were invited to pass judgement on Reynard based on the telling of three pleas:

Case the First: Reynard Goes to Church

Case the Second: Reynard the Doctor

Case the Third: Reynard and the Chickens

Reynard was on trial before King Noble the Lion – on trial for his life!

Another gap in the programme was filled by Trouvere with a speedily planned programme for *950 Years of Music*, held in the castle, Town Hall and Market Place. English Heritage again kindly gave free entry to local residents.

Over two days there was a pop-up tavern provided by Richmond Brewing Company and tasty treats from Granny's Kitchen outside the castle keep. Tom Fool, the silliest man in town, put in another appearance to entertain and rally the audience for the performers. Richmond's own medieval minstrels, Trouvere, entertained with lively music on bagpipes and drums. Durham based duo, the Ran Tanners, played on traditional instruments from Georgian to Victorian times and Norman Invasion played folk music from home and abroad using clarinets, melodeons and bagpipes. Dante Ferrara took us back to Elizabethan times playing his hurdy-gurdy, with Leeds Waits moving further back in time playing instruments from Tudor and Jacobean times and Aelfwine taking us even farther with medieval music to 'chill out to'.



Trouvere play a fanfare to welcome Baroness Harris of Richmond to *950 Years of Music* Courtesy Marcia McLuckie

So successful was the weekend that Trouvere are now organising MayFest, a weekend of music around the ancient festival of May Day and the start of summer. It is hoped that this will become a regular feature in Richmond's annual calendar of events.

Music was a key feature of *Celebrate Richmond 950*. Following *Music for a Norman Court* in June, a Swaledale Festival event, *Hildegard Transfigured: A Medieval Trance for the 21st Century* was held in St. Mary's Church. Two performances of this sublime piece of concert/theatre by the top female vocal trio, Voice were given. Their singing was accompanied by a psychedelic light show. The performance celebrated the 12th century composer and visionary Hildegard von Bingen.

Because of Covid restrictions the *Tudor Singing Workshop* and concert planned for July was postponed until late October. This workshop and concert, *Twentie Waies Upon the Bels,* was held by Susanna Pell and Jake Heringman of Pellingman's Saraband, Richmond residents and international performers, who bring some of the greatest music of the Renaissance and Early Baroque period to life. We are lucky to have so much musical talent in Richmond, including Richmondshire Choral Society.

The 950 team commissioned a piece of choral work to be written to celebrate the anniversary year that was to be performed by members of the society. *Cantique 950* was written by Mary Branigan, with additions by Mark Harrison, who also composed the musical accompaniment. The lyrics tell of Richmond's history from Hindrelac through to the present and on to the future. This is a short extract

Richmond drowses in beauty by
the sparkling Swale.
For near a thousand years this town has grown
Protected by the folk she calls her own.

Richmond has been my home for 35 years, other than a brief and unsuccessful attempt at village life. I am but a tiny part of this lovely town's 950-year history and it has been a privilege to help with the organisation of the celebrations for this auspicious birthday. For the past 21 months Carol, Phil and I have been a little like ducks paddling furiously to keep the show afloat, attempting to look serene! From the announcement of Covid restrictions in March 2020, the loss of Lottery funding and the cancellations, rescheduling and agonising over money, room capacities, social distancing and should the show even go ahead, we have charted difficult waters.

Without Richmond and District Civic Society, Richmondshire District Council, Richmond Town Council, North Yorkshire County Council, the Castle Studies Trust and many other donors and people who gave their time and enthusiasm we could never have got 950 off the ground. As our original password from when Phil, Carol and I first joined forces indicates, we wondered, still do and probably always will, arewe3mad?!

I hope that in 2071, another 50-years hence, someone will read this and be glad to take on the mantel of the thousandth anniversary of Richmond Castle.

Richmond Castle, Courtesy Richmondshire District Council



Collectanea[1]

Tina McDonald

In 2021, a year punctuated by 950th activities, Richmond also returned to the reassuringly familiar events cancelled or curtailed because of Covid.

The Swaledale Festival, struggling with Covid restrictions, successfully altered their format, spreading events across the year instead of the usual fortnight. A grant of more than £50,000 from the Government's Culture Recovery Fund provided a useful fillip to their planning and offered welcome financial security. Outdoor events featured largely and music by Reeth Brass Band together with students of the Janet Seymour School of Dance provided a striking opening to the festival on Reeth Village Green. The traditional maypole dance was greeted with great enthusiasm and, as the sky filled with Malcolm (The Kiteman) Goodman's amazing kites, the pleasure of the watching crowds was palpable.

Throughout the year, further concerts were cleverly shortened and performed twice, often in larger venues, in order to circumnavigate Covid restrictions. Hildegard Transfigured was a wonderful, thought-provoking piece of music, performed by the top female trio 'Voice' in St Mary's Church, Richmond. An extraordinary psychedelic light show, it transformed the church and transfixed the audience. From The Hut People to the Australian mezzo-soprano Lotte Betts-Dean and Scottish/Japanese guitarist, the Swaledale Festival continued to delight its audience, and we all appreciated the careful and imaginative planning that made so many events possible. Chairman, Dr Susan Miller, has already revealed that their 2022 programme promises to be particularly exciting as it marks the Festival's 50th anniversary.

The Richmond Subscription Concerts, under the new chairmanship of Chris Shaw, one of Richmond's many talented musicians, provided further musical delights. The opening concert by vocal group Apollo 5 played to a very appreciative audience, largely masked and self socially-distanced. The promise of seven concerts instead of the usual six this season is a welcome bonus for Richmond music lovers.

The Georgian Theatre Royal reopened in September to the delight of theatregoers, not just locally but nationally. The very generous donation of £375,000 by Hamish Ogston has enabled the theatre to replace the uncomfortable seating and provide improved views of the stage, as well as new lighting and improved heating and ventilation systems. In addition to practical improvements, the theatre has been able to commission a witty mural featuring Georgian theatregoers; it sits proudly behind the boxes and is a much admired attraction.

Most importantly, the initial donation from Hamish Ogston prompted further grants from other bodies such as the Theatre Trust and the Pilgrim Trust to name but two, and the Government's furlough scheme further enabled the theatre to retain staff during the long period of enforced closure. Thus was the Theatre transformed, as if by pantomime magic, while other less fortunate venues struggled to survive.

The Walking and Book Festival was heartily welcomed this year by many tired of Covid restrictions and anxious to explore and enjoy again the beautiful countryside that surrounds us. Graded walks, led by knowledgeable and enthusiastic guides, offered ample opportunities to stroll, or strive to complete more demanding routes. An eclectic mixture of morning and evening talks offered stimulation of a different kind, with an impressive and diverse range of topics from Chinese poetry to hill farming and Horrible Histories.

[1] Collectanea: collected writings; also literary items forming a collection (1791)

Richmond writers were well represented: Ian Short's beautifully shot *Seasons on the Hill Farm* formed the basis of an excellent talk, as did Tim Clissold's *Cloud Chamber*, an enthralling collection of Chinese poetry in bilingual format juxtaposing the evocative English translations with the beauty of Chinese characters. Jane Hatcher's talk on *Richmondians* gave us a taste of some of the Richmond characters described in her book *Richmondians*. This collection of biographical profiles ranges from Whig politicians to knitting sisters, from a society hostess to a medieval entrepreneur. It is the perfect 'dip into' book and provides an excellent glossary of noteworthy locals. From Graham Berry we learnt much about the history of Richmond's racecourse and the accompanying book *A Short History of Richmond's Racecourse and its Grandstand* by Professor Mike Huggins and the Richmond Burgage Pastures Committee is another worthy addition to Richmond's historical records. Baroness Hale talked of her life in the legal profession, a career that culminated in her appointment to the Presidency of the Supreme Court and becoming famous for her prorogation decision and her spider brooch. Ever true to her Yorkshire roots, she finished this fascinating talk with a rousing chorus of 'On Ilkley Moor Baht'at', much to the delight of the audience. Her book, *Spider Woman,* is another prestigious volume in Richmond's lexicon of local writers.

Rod Flint has provided the Civic Society with two interesting talks on the Harrying of the North as well as producing several works of fact and fiction on the subject. David Dougan, a past member of the society, provides many interesting connections between Richmond and Siena in his book *Richmond and Siena – a Romantic Connection*. It was Prince Charles, of course, visiting Richmond in 2005 for its 850th celebration of the granting of its first Market Charter, who made a similar observation, comparing Siena's Piazza del Campo to Richmond's unusual market place.

Richmond's fund-raisers have worked with a fervour to equal Rishi Sunak's budget team this year. Indeed, such is their propensity for raising money, they might do well to find permanent positions in the Treasury, particularly as it is scheduled to move north! The McLuckies and the Hepworths again opened their beautiful gardens to the public, the Hepworths raising money for St Theresa's Hospice and the McLuckies for the 950th Celebration programme. The Duck Club, always front runners in raising money for Richmond's children's activities and charities, took the reluctant decision to cancel their famous Duck Race, and raised money instead by selling raffle tickets. A pop-up cafe at the Green Howards Museum raised £350 for its medal room improvements. Delicious cakes were provided by museum volunteers and the Veterans' Artisan Bakery. Locals and visitors alike enjoyed this unusual cafe experience, while feeling pleased to contribute to such a worthwhile cause.

Linda and Martin Curran's pop-up art and book shop in King Street raised an impressive sum for the Paul Curran Celebration Trust, as well as providing locals and visitors with an additional, interesting shopping experience. Money raised allows the Trust to offer match funding to parish and town councils in Richmondshire for play equipment in local play areas. This attractive shop has done much to raise awareness of a very worthy charity.

Even Richmond's dogs rose to the challenge of raising money this year! A ten-hour train-athon took place at Centrebarks, a daycare centre for dogs on the Gallowfields Trading Estate. Trainers and dogs completed the event and raised an impressive £300 for the animal charity 'Saving Yorkshire's Dogs'.

Mick Kirk, owner of Angus Morton Butchers in Finkle Street, provided forty families in Richmond with an unexpectedly happy and delicious Christmas by donating festive hampers containing chicken, pork, bacon, sausage and eggs. With help from various

suppliers and customers, he liaised with three Richmond schools to identify families in need. This generous gesture was all the more remarkable as it was organised in his busiest time of the year.

Staycations became very much the norm this year. Thwarted by Covid restrictions and changing regulations, large numbers of people made the sensible decision to holiday in the UK, and the Yorkshire Dales became a chosen hotspot, though not literally! Many took advantage of the extensive range of holiday cottages and excellent B&Bs in Richmond. The installation of outdoor seating at several pubs and cafes gave the town a festival air and the many, delightful floral decorations provided additional charm. It was no surprise when the Yorkshire Dales were named Europe's top National Park by users of Tripadvisor. Moreover, as well as being placed first in Europe, they were placed eleventh in the world. This was the first year that a National Park category was included and Yorkshire should be proud of its rating.

The town certainly had a buzz about it when Richmond Busy Buddies, a group started in 2017 to offer a range of social activities to those with mental health and physical and learning needs, decorated the town with knitted bees, all made during their monthly coffee meetings. Images of bees were shared on social media, thus publicising the activities offered by the group. Busy Buddies run a monthly coffee afternoon in Richmond Town Hall, on the first Wednesday of every month, from 2pm until 4pm.

Richmondshire Museum made a wise decision not to furlough staff during the Covid-enforced lockdown, choosing instead to use the opportunity to reorganise the museum. Without compromising Covid safety, the directors and volunteers restructured and extended displays, incorporating recent discoveries, such as a medieval coin hoard, and introducing many previously stored items. The newly developed first-floor gallery enables visitors to journey through time, moving from pre-historic times to the Second World War, thus gaining a fascinating insight into Richmond life through the ages. A donation of £1,000 from Richmond Rotary Club was warmly welcomed by the museum in September. Handing over the cheque, the President, Emma Fulton, said, "We are very fortunate to have such a brilliant local museum in Richmond" – an opinion we all endorse.

Richmond's remarkable history is, and always has been, celebrated, researched and well-documented for many years but, all the more remarkable is the number of historians, both amateur and professional, that the town can boast. Barry Heap, The Town Crier, has provided an authentic link with the past for the last fifteen years. His extraordinarily loud 'Oyez, Oyez, Oyez' has captivated visitors and pleased residents, proud that Richmond can maintain so many worthwhile traditions. His splendid costume, commissioned and redesigned by Barry himself, paid heed to the original: black, silver and white reflect the Quaker influence of the original and to this Barry added a burgundy waistcoat to reference Richmond's Georgian period. Responsible for the Septennial Boundary Walk proclamations, as well as countless town cries and witty verses to celebrate special occasions, Barry was always happy to share interesting historical facts with visitors to the town, his wealth of information on the history of town crying revealing that the origin of the word 'news' was an anagram of the four points of the compass, as all town criers proclaimed their news from North, East, West and South. We were all sad to hear that Barry decided to retire in 2021; he will, indeed, be a hard act to follow and proclamations may never be the same nor as loud!

"There's nothing on television," was a familiar complaint throughout the pandemic when entertainment became, inevitably, home-based. Little did we imagine that paucity of choice would become no choice at all when transmission faded completely on 10th August 2021. The Bilsdale transmitter, a familiar landmark on the North Yorks Moors for over fifty years, caught fire, apparently due to an electrical fault. Sadly, replacement of the mast was a major logistical nightmare and even when service was restored on October 13th, some 23,000 viewers in what were described as 'not spots' across the region were still without a signal. A planning application for a permanent replacement of the Bilsdale transmitter, replacing the temporary masts, has been submitted.

Television transmission was not the only thing in short supply this year. A petrol shortage in September led to country-wide queues. Richmond, already used to restricted access for fuel after the Harvest Energy fuel station on Victoria Road was destroyed by fire in August 2020, did rather well. Brooke's garage on Darlington Road kept the town well supplied and their closures were limited. Residents have watched the progress of the new station with interest; with initial planning difficulties resolved, there is impatience now for the building work to be completed. Most residents were pleased to see (and hear) tanks being installed and building work moving at a pace.



Victoria Road garage Courtesy Jen Capewell.

Richmond's retail offer has remained surprisingly buoyant during Covid, and the empty shops so familiar in many towns do not dominate here. An attractive flower shop, 'Wild and Dandy', sits well in the striking 'Old Cocoa Rooms' in King Street and another home bakery is planned for the Market Place. The Tunstall Meat Company won the Northern Echo's Best Butcher Award in December and Northern Echo readers voted The Little Drummer Boy Tearoom the best cafe in the North East and Yorkshire. A new restaurant, Elixir, is already attracting a large number of customers and a further cafe is planned in the former HSBC building in the Market Place.

Donald Cline and Nick Reckert were particularly prescient when they instigated a move to improve and relocate the Information Centre in 2020. With its vast store of leaflets, guidebooks and interesting publications (*Richmond Castle Walks* by Richmond Ramblers, *Richmond Lives* by the Camera Club, *Pootling Round Richmond and Swaledale* to name but few) and, of course, its friendly and well-informed volunteers, it has become the 'go to' source of information for the increasing number of visitors Richmond has been pleased to welcome. A revised and much improved version of *What's On* provides visitors and locals with up-to-date information on events and organisations.

It is gratifying that so many others are beginning to realise what we who live here have always known, that Richmond is a special place. Mark Harrison's moving *Cantique 950* with words by Mary Branigan, commissioned by the 950th Committee and performed for the first time by Richmondshire Choral Society, spoke for us all:

Sing out for Richmond,
Sing out with pride.

Richmond from the Stone Age to the Normans

Michael Wood

I have a selection of Middle Stone Age (Mesolithic) axes and flints found around the Richmond area in the late 19th / early 20th century. They were given to me by Mr Metcalfe who had the gun shop in the Market Place. People would bring them in to him and he would give them a few shillings for their efforts. The triangular perforated axe, shown within the cup and ring photograph, is very rare and unusual. It has been described as a loom weight, but I think it is too ornate for that. It has also been described as a possible axe or hammer, but it is too ornate and the shaft would not be strong enough for purpose. I believe it was more likely to have been a ceremonial mace indicating the high status of the owner.

Other than their weapons and tools, there is no visible evidence of Mesolithic settlements in Richmond. They were hunters and led a nomadic life, no doubt along the Swale valley close to the river.

Some of the stone and flint used in my collection is not local and must signify that they were travelling and trading far away from here.

There is some visible evidence close by. To the north of the town are some wonderful examples of Neolithic rock art. Better known as Cup and Rings, it is thought that there may be some correlation between the location of the stones and Middle Stone Age hunting sites. The sites were, in all probability, only occasionally visited, which adds to the theory that they may have been some form of location marker or wayside shrines. Again, we are not certain why they were carved and to what purpose they

Cup and Rings with insert local stone axes and flint arrowheads Courtesy Mike Wood

were used. There are several other theories, from religious rituals to solar maps and even a place where stone carving was taught. Whenever I visit the ones in the photo (which, incidentally, are regarded as some of the best in the country) I can't help thinking and feeling that there is something strange and magical about the site.

To the east of the town they built an impressive monument, often referred to as a 'Magico-Religious Structure' and known as the Scorton Cursus. This consisted of two parallel ditches. From the evidence available and flint flakes and pottery recently discovered it would appear that the monument was constructed in the late Neolithic / early Bronze Age. Terminating near the river Swale, these sacred spaces were often associated with a river. It is possible to trace these earth works for about 2.1 kilometres.



Scorton Cursus Courtesy Mike Wood

Recent excavations have shown that the ditches had been re-cut, which may reflect a longer period of use. It is unusual in that there are gaps or causeways that lead into the interior. Much of the site was lost during the construction of the airfield and later gravel extraction.

More evidence of the late Neolithic/ early Bronze Age comes in the form of a Burnt Mound which I recently discovered to the west of the town. It consists of a large heap of burnt stones and charcoal adjacent to a stone or wooden trough. They are always associated with a stream or spring and the trough would be filled with water and heated by placing hot stones within. The mound is made up of the discarded remains of heated stones that had been used. The purpose is speculative and still not fully understood. Theories range from a sweathouse (an early type of sauna), a bathhouse, some form of religious ceremonial site or a place to cook meat. I personally believe that they were used in the tanning and processing of skins to make leather.

Another substantial linear earthwork known as Scots Dyke runs north to south between the Swale at Richmond and the Tees at Gainford. The best preserved section lies on the eastern boundary of the town, off Darlington Road. Christopher Clarkson in his *History of Richmond* describes it as "One of the greatest curiosities of antiquity in this country. The stupendous effort of human labour is supposed to have been a boundary between Britons and Picts before the Romans". Sir Mortimer Wheeler concluded that it was associated with the Brigantian Stronghold at Stanwick. We now think that it predates that, but may have been incorporated into its defences.

It wasn't until 2007 that new light was shed on the Dyke's origins. As part of the Scotch Corner to Greta Bridge road improvements, Oxford Archaeology carried out excavations on the Dyke north of Gilling. Their radiocarbon dating of charcoal pushed the date back to late Iron Age and certainly before 100BC. They concluded that more work was required but, although it was regarded as a classic defence configured bank and ditch, it was unlikely that it was defensive and more like a tribal boundary marker. The human resources required to man a 14 kilometre long earthwork would be impossible to defend. They also concluded that it may have been re-used in the 6th or 7th century, again as a boundary marker.

Returning to Stanwick and Sir Mortimer Wheeler. He was a great influence on my love of history and archaeology. I was fortunate to meet him when I was involved with excavations at *Cataractonium* and still remember him standing

there and telling us all that "to understand what is going on in the present you must first understand what has gone on in the past" – true words even today. In 1951, when he was head of archaeology for the Ministry of Works, he was asked to find a site of National Importance to excavate as part of the Festival of Britain celebrations. He had no hesitation in choosing Stanwick. No one knew where it was, but he described it as one of the most impressive late Iron Age fortified towns, possibly the last stronghold of the Brigantes. Recent excavations show that the site was occupied up until the middle of the 1st century AD and that, during the reign of Queen Cartimandua, the Brigantes at Stanwick enjoyed access to luxury goods imported from other countries of the Roman Empire, including amphora jars and ceramics from southern France and German and Italian glass. There are romantic tales of the Brigantian Queen Cartimandua living there, her alliance with the Romans, her betrayal of Caractacus and her estranged husband Venutius' rebellion against the Romans.

More recent excavations at Scotch Corner have revealed what is thought to have been a satellite settlement to Stanwick and possibly a specialist metal working centre based on the copper mining at Middleton Tyas. Copper alloy pellets found may have been used to mint coins for Queen Cartimandua and her forbears.

Within the western Borough Boundary of the town is a massive Romano-British settlement. The main feature is a square enclosure with still substantial stone walls and features. There is evidence of Iron Age hut circles and Roman pottery has been found. I have a theory that this was once the site where the Romans mined lead and the enclosure was a penal colony for slave workers. A similar site has been discovered recently in Northumberland. There are some very early (typical Roman) lead mines to the rear of the site. I have also discovered evidence of a road heading from the site in the direction of Richmond.

Further evidence came when, in the 1950s, my father and the then Keeper of the Yorkshire Museum, George Wilmot, visited the site. I was invited along and, as a young boy, was completely captivated by his knowledge and portrayal of Roman life. We surveyed the site and I had remembered the farmer, Mr Carter, showing me some unusual stones and pottery he had ploughed up near the river. We went to have a look and Mr Wilmot immediately recognised them as Roman hypocaust tiles and pottery, probably from a Roman villa or bath house. I have been unable to locate the site but, again, it adds to the existence of Roman occupation there.



Romano-British enclosure with inset lead mine
Courtesy Mike Wood

The nearest Roman site is *Cataractonium*, established in about AD70. The name could be derived from a Greek/Latin mixture literally translated as 'place of a waterfall'. Was the original fort established near the Richmond falls to establish a safe crossing for the lead being transported from the mines? A possible site could be in the fields in front of Priory

Villas where there are some visible earthworks. The site was probably moved to a more strategic position where Dere Street crosses the Swale but still retained its original name. It is recorded that, in 1720, a great quantity of more than 600 Roman coins of Constantius, Julianus, Valentian and Victor were found on the hillside below the castle. Although they date to the 4th century, by when *Cataractonium* was well established at its present site, it could indicate that some Roman occupation remained at Richmond to maintain the river crossing.

Cataractonium is often described as one of the least understood but most important Roman sites in Britain. I was fortunate in 1959 to be involved with the excavation of the Bath House before it was bulldozed away to make way for the Catterick bypass. Professor John Wacher, the dig archaeologist, regarded it as one of the best and most complete in the country and was saddened and disappointed when he was unable to persuade the authorities that it should be preserved. From the excavations it was evident that *Cataractonium* was a major centre for the manufacture of leather goods. One of the Vindolanda tablets recently excavated confirms the despatch and movement of hides from the fort.



Bath house with inset demolition Courtesy Mike Wood

Recent excavations prior to the A1 upgrade have confirmed the importance of the site. Evidence of an extensive Vicus to the north of the river has also confirmed that, in the early years of the third century, it became recognisable as a town. The site was still occupied in the late 4th century, when there was an apparent resurgence in building activity. They identified several substantial stone structures and, although very little survives, the foundations indicated that the buildings were two stories high. They also discovered that a metalled road within the town had been overlaid with flagstones in the late 4th century, signifying that the town was being maintained into the 5th century. The evaluation of these latest excavations will help us understand the evolving nature of the site and its role as an economic base within the northern region.

When the Romans departed, the remnants of the old British tribes tried to enforce their influence on the area. In around AD600, led by the Gododdin, they marched south and met the Angles of Deira at Catreath, which is now thought to be Catterick. The battle is wonderfully described in a poem, Y Gododdin, attributed to the Welsh poet Aneiran. It may be the earliest surviving Welsh literature and is now widely studied. The poem tells that Aneiran was present at the battle and was one of only two or four survivors taken prisoner until a ransom was paid. One verse contains what may be the earliest reference to King Arthur as an example of bravery with whom the warriors could compare themselves. The Gododdin were completely overwhelmed and annihilated. This was an important and forgotten battle on our doorstep that was the turning point in taking all of modern England from its native owners. Local legend in the village of Catterick has it that the brave warriors are buried under the large mound adjacent to the church. The poem is now part of the Welsh school curriculum and I was recently asked to do a programme for BBC Wales from the top of the mound. This has created a new interest in the battle and its possible location.

Records tend to show that, during the Anglian period, Catterick continued to be a place of some consideration. Symeon's History of the Kings records that in 762 Æthelwold Moll, King of Northumbria, married his queen Æthelrhryth at the church there. There was a further royal marriage in 792 when Æthelred wed Ælffaed, daughter of no less than Offa King of Mercia.

By the time the Normans arrived, Saxon Earl Edwin was residing at a high status Saxon site at Gilling. I have a local publication dated 1896 that states that "Vestiges of the ancient castle were still visible about 80 years ago". There are now no signs of buildings or earthworks there (they could have been constructed in stone or wood) but we are at present carrying out some investigations to see if they can be located. It is quite conceivable that when Alan Rufus arrived in 1071 he took over the residence temporarily for himself and could have enlarged and defended it.

The name of Richmond did not exist until the Normans built the castle. It is certain that an Anglo-Saxon settlement existed close by. Evidence comes from Domesday (1086). The entries were often in some geographical order and, included with Asebi (Easby), Brunton (Brompton on Swale) and Schirebi (Skeeby), are Hindrelag and Neutone. Both the latter have long since disappeared. It is now, I think, accepted that Hindrelag was located somewhere near the present town. The entry states that there were 5 carucates of land there, a church with a priest and the area covered 1½ leagues long and ½ league wide. A carucate was the land a plough team of 8 oxen could plough in a year (around 120 acres) and a league was the distance a man could walk in 1 hour (around 3 miles). It was, therefore, a substantial village and you would think that there would still be some visible evidence.

We can only speculate on the location of Neutone. My thoughts are that, when the Domesday scribes arrived at Hindrelag, the castle would be 15 years into its construction and an army of workers and their families would be encamped there. The scribe would enquire as to the nature of this settlement and be told it was the New Town (Neutone).

There are two locations worth considering for the site of Hindrelag. Firstly St Nicholas, the former home of Lady Serena James. There was a medieval hospital there. Its foundation is unknown but there is documentary evidence



St Nicholas grave cover and marker Courtesy Mike Wood

in a Pipe Roll of Henry 11 dating back to 1171/2. The possibility that this was the site of Hindrelag was brought to the attention of Peter Wenham and myself in the 1980s when Lady Serena asked us to look at a stone that her husband had found in the 1920s whilst excavating foundations for a new extension. He thought it was a fossil and incorporated it into the wall of the building. It had been forgotten and hidden from view by a rose until the bush succumbed to a storm. We photographed it (see picture) and sent it to Peter Ryder, a leading authority on medieval grave covers. He confirmed that it was not a fossil and could be of Anglo-Saxon origin. We were given permission to excavate a trench in the garden close to the stone. We did uncover some foundation walls which could have been part of an earlier building, but the ground had been disturbed and latterly used as a cemetery. The only other evidence that came to light later was a bell. I was having a coffee with Lady Serena on her veranda when she said she had forgotten to mention that the old church bell was hanging there next to us. Upon investigation it had an inscription 'ANACOED' which no doubt was intended to be 'DEOCANTE' (Chant to God), the omission of the 'T' being less of a blunder than the reversing of the text. I had arranged to show the bell to the archivist of the Worshipful Company of Founders to obtain a date but, unfortunately, in the meantime the bell has been stolen. Further work is required to determine the exact date of the site. A geophysical survey of other parts of the garden indicated that that there

were features that could have been foundations of buildings.

The other location is Anchorage Hill. This was the site of a chapel dedicated to St Edmund the King, traditionally thought to have been founded by Whyomar, Count Alan's Steward. There was an Anchoress's cell there, possibly attached or close by. In 1607 Eleanor Bowes converted the chapel into an Alms House to house three poor widows from Richmond and Easby. It still remains an Alms House and is administered by the Company of Fellmongers.

In the 1930s, historian G W Waine, who, although living in Surrey, was passionate about Richmond's history, took the opportunity to look at the east gable end. It had for many years been concealed by a building forming part of Mr Crudace's garage. He sent drawings to Professor Alexander Thompson, who at the time was a leading authority on the study of medieval buildings. He concluded that the 'stringing' course of stone could be of Norman origin but, more importantly, he noticed within the fabric voussoirs (wedge shaped stones used to build an arch) which could have been reused from an Anglo-Saxon window.

Undoubtedly, when the Normans arrived they would want a church and a priest to fulfil their religious needs. One theory is that they initially worshiped at the church of Hindrelag and, finding it not grand enough, established a new church nearer the castle.

More evidence came to light when, some years after excavating at St Nicholas, Lady Serena contacted me to say her gardener had come

across a large slab of stone whilst digging in her daughter's vegetable patch. The location was about 100 metres west of where we had been digging. I recovered the stone, which turned out to be an upright grave marker (now in the Richmondshire Museum). Peter Ryder looked at it and concluded that the carved sword on the front and the weathering that it had led him to believe it had been mounted upright, denoting an important male. The date could be from the late 12th century, putting it within the Norman period of the castle.

The present St Mary's is the obvious site for a new church. Alan Rufus had dedicated the Benedictine Abbey at York, which he had founded in 1088 on the site of St Olave's Church, to St Mary.

Part of the nave and aisles of the Richmond church date back to the middle 12th century but some of the columns are believed to predate this. I was given the opportunity to enter the vault under the east end of the church to investigate any signs of an earlier Norman church. I did discover a walled up doorway that could fit the period but rebuilding work by Sir Gilbert Scott in 1858 had destroyed or covered up much of the original masonry.

So, although the evidence is sketchy, I believe that St Mary's was built to replace the original church of Hindrelag. Hindrelag and Neutone were absorbed into Richmond after the Normans had arrived.

Richmond – a Town Born out of Rebellion

Rod Flint



The Harrying of the North by Pat Nicolle (1907-95). Copyright: Bridgeman Press.

When the Normans invaded England in 1066 they didn't have the strength to take immediate control across all of the country. The North was a remote and largely inaccessible place and Norman attempts to impose control through taxation resulted in a series of uprisings and escalating violence. Over the previous 200 hundred years the North had developed a very Anglo-Danish culture, and, if they were going to be controlled by anyone, many northerners preferred the Danes to the Normans. This culminated in 1069 in a rebellion in which Northern lords were supported by the Danish king.

William the Conqueror reacted quickly. He marched north, defeated the rebels and bought off the Danes. Instead of returning south, as he had done after the previous uprisings, he spent Christmas in York and, early in 1070, used his army to destroy northern society to ensure that it could never rebel again. This was known as the harrying.

The harrying would appear to have been pre-planned, structured and coordinated, with a multi-pronged advance through the Vale of York, the Vale of Pickering and possibly into Holderness, West Yorkshire north of the Aire marshes, and eventually, across the Tees as far as Jarrow and the Tyne valley.

It is hard to say exactly what happened as there are no immediately contemporary accounts of the harrying and the assessment of later accounts varies.

Some medieval chroniclers said that the Normans murdered 100,000 people across Yorkshire and destroyed all the settlements.

I don't believe that to be the case because the Normans needed people to farm the land for them, and many of the settlements survive to this day and have not been lost to history.

What is clear is that the Norman attack was constrained by time and manpower. The Normans are thought to have had in the region of 7,500 men at Hastings. Given that they subsequently had to garrison castles and control unrest in the South West, on the Welsh Marches and in East Anglia, even 5,000 might be a generous estimate of the force available for the harrying. Time was limited too, as King William is known to have returned to his court in London by Easter. The Norman troops could sustain themselves by living off the land during the harrying, but those that remained to occupy Yorkshire needed to be maintained thereafter. Theirs would have been a grim life, for the harrying certainly did result in the destruction of settlements, and the slaughter and destruction of grain and livestock created destitution in the middle of winter and the total dislocation of northern society.

Harrying is, and always has been, an accepted form of warfare – from the Romans to the present day. The Normans practiced it regularly when trying to impose control or prevent uprisings in both England and in Normandy. In modern warfare, we will deliberately destroy enemy logistics, industry, energy sources and communication centres as a matter of priority. The burning of grain, slaughter of livestock, and the killing of those people who work the land was the medieval equivalent.

The reason the harrying was so severe is, I suggest, because it was in response to a rebellion against the crown. Many were forced to flee and those that stayed had the bleak choice of starving to death or becoming serfs to a Norman overlord.

We can see in the Doomsday (Domesday) Book, compiled in 1086, that society in the North had been completely changed and that the people were far more impoverished than elsewhere in England. In 1086, there were three times as many freemen in Nottinghamshire as in Yorkshire. Most social classes were replaced by a disproportionate number of villeins, with 80% of the Yorkshire population classed as such. Villeins were a class of feudal serfs who held the status of freemen in their dealings with all people except their lord. They held a small amount of land from which to sustain their family at a subsistence level, and they typically owed their Norman lord two days unpaid work a week, and six days a week during the five weeks of the harvest. This was the most efficient means of exploiting free labour.

York was a focus for the Norman occupation, as was Richmond. The settlement of Hindrelag that preceded Richmond was of no significance, but it occupied a naturally defendable location, and the high ground around it commanded the ancient trunk routes which have evolved into the A1 and A66. Neighbouring Gilling West had been the principle home of Earl Edwin of Mercia, the former Anglo-Saxon Lord of the North and a leading rebel against the Normans.

The Normans had the strength to control the urban centres and the routes between them. They could also control the more fertile and lower lying farming areas, but they couldn't control what became known as the 'Free Zone' of the upper dales and hills.

Those that didn't accept serfdom were forced into the dales and hills as outlaws, from where they resisted the Normans. The Normans called them Silvatici, or men of the woods. We know them as the Greenmen, or Robin Hood and his merry men. The resistance couldn't survive. The Normans imposed harsh penalties for killing a Frenchman. These were called the Murdrum Laws. They also introduced Forest Laws that turned most land that wasn't farmed into forest hunting grounds, where the English serfs were not permitted to catch game or gather wood, fruit or berries.

It was rather like France in 1942 – when the French resisted the Germans. The difference was that the French struggled on in the growing expectation that Britain would save them. By 1072 the English had lost all hope that Denmark could help them. Instead, they were forced to accept a very repressed way of life.

Richmond became a strong point for the Normans and the centre of Count Alan's extensive power across England. One of the country's first stone-built castles was begun in, or shortly after, 1071 and the land around was intensively farmed. Earl Edwin's lands around Richmond were granted to William's relative, Count Alan Rufus of Brittany, either immediately after the harrying or upon Edwin's death in 1071. Count Alan was one of the most powerful amongst the Norman nobility. He focused on building one of the county's first stone castles at Richmond, which was known as 'the strong hill' in Norman French. It was to be the Norman's centre for their regional control, replacing Gilling West. Building started in 1071, perhaps indicating that the harrying had been strategically planned.

Richmond would have been established as a strategic hub on the new northern border, controlling communication links and food production and enforcing a barrier between the fertile valleys and the inhospitable and dangerous free-zone of the upland dales.

But, was Richmond the only castle that the Normans built? There are historical references to a 'Gilling Castle' and a site is marked on Ordnance Survey maps at a location overlooking Gilling West from the south-west.

Richmond's first stone castle is now known as Scolland's Hall. It took many years to build and would not have provided any form of defence in 1071. Norman practice at that time was to quickly construct wooden castles on top of man-made mounds and surround them with a wooden palisade; the stone structure followed later. These were known as motte and bailey castles, and an example of a local motte and bailey castle replaced by a later stone castle is at Middleham.

Whilst there is no archaeological evidence, is it possible that a wooden castle was built on the bluff above the river at Richmond whilst Scolland's Hall was built? No evidence was found on this summer's community dig, but it is an open question.

Richmond Castle dominates the lands to its west, south and east, but it has no control to the north. The site of Gilling Castle as shown on Ordnance Survey maps would have provided perfect protection from the north, inhibiting any Silvatici operating from the wooded high ground, as well as dominating Earl Edwin's former hall at Gilling West. It would have demonstrated to the English that their Norman masters oversaw everything.

In the summer of 2021 the Swaledale and Arkengarthdale Archaeology Group (SWAAG) conducted a geophysical survey of the Gilling Castle site. There are records of a series of stone structures at the location, but these state that the ground was cleared of all remains in the 19th century. The survey found no indication of the earlier structures but did identify anomalies worthy of further investigation.

Was there a late 11th century wooden castle on the high ground above Gilling West? It is another open question.

If you would like to read more about what life may have been like at this time then please do explore Rod's *Harrying of the North* series of historical novels. They are set in Richmondshire in the early 1070s and are available from Castle Hill Bookshop or on Kindle. See **www.hindrelag.uk**

The Early Years of Richmond Castle: a late 11th century imitation burhgeat and a 12th century tower of presentation and spectacle

Dr William Wyeth (English Heritage)

1. Introduction

Castles were not functional devices which 'did' things, as if they were living entities. Rather, they were cultural and political artefacts of one or several particular points in time. Though Richmond Castle does not have a large number of resident kings and queens to call upon to explore a national political history, a closer examination of its history and buildings reveals how the early story of the castle was entangled with big events like the Norman Conquest and the changing fortunes of its owners, residents and neighbours in its early years.

This paper is divided into three parts. The first explores why Richmond Castle was built and when it was built, delving into the politics of the Conquest and the North and the lives of some key figures at Richmond. The second part undertakes a detailed study of the buildings in the castle's core around Scolland's Hall. The final part is an examination of new thinking on the castle's keep or (the preferred term here) Great Tower of the castle. I want to show how the architecture of the castle can lend a richer understanding of medieval politics and society.

2. Why was Richmond Castle built, and when?

Contrary to some views of how castles were used, and what the process of the Norman Conquest actually meant, Richmond Castle was not solely constructed to subdue a rebellious Swaledale and Richmondshire. There was certainly a violent beginning to the story of Richmond's origin: the Northern rebellion against King William in 1069, which crystallized around Edgar Ætheling, last male of the old ruling house of Wessex, resulted in conflict. William travelled north several times that year and tried to subdue further rebellion in a campaign of the winter of 1069-70 now known as the 'Harrying of the North'. A closer look at the underlying causes of the revolt suggests that there was violence brewing in the North for which William was only partly to blame: strife between the ruling families of Northumbria existed before the Conquest, which William did not adequately manage.

The Northern rebellion may have alerted William to the fact that the area needed not just a strong royal presence, but also strong local leadership. It is unlikely that two major pre-Conquest English figures in the North in 1068, Edwin, Earl of Mercia, and Morcar, Earl of Northumbria, took part in the Northern rebellion. But Edwin lost face among his supporters, and presumably also wealth, in the aftermath of its failure. When Edwin died in 1071, many estates reverted to royal control. In 1072, King William travelled to Scotland to settle affairs there. This may have been the time at which he took the opportunity to reorder the northern political-social hierarchy to prevent further rebellions, but also to extend royal power here. This would be achieved by replacing the topmost figures of local society, either by pushing existing leaders down the social hierarchy or by promoting new leaders from outside. Among the recipients of estates in the North was a Breton cousin of the Conqueror's, named Alan *rufus* ('red' or 'ruddy'), who received two 'hundreds' (large units of lands) which comprised the rump of the lands of what would come to be called Richmondshire. The old political centres of these two hundreds were at Gilling and Catterick. In physical terms,

these centres likely resembled later manorial complexes, hosting a great hall, service and accommodation buildings, surrounded by a wall and ditch, with a formal entrance (perhaps a gatehouse). Gilling and Catterick were astride or near to Roman roads heading to Durham or Carlisle. While these places were not demolished, they were pushed down the hierarchy of importance as local political, social and economic centres by Richmond. Richmond had different characteristics: it was removed from major roads through the region, and at least one consideration in choosing a new castle site in Swaledale was in order to manage raiding from the west. Incidentally, it is likely that this raiding route had been a problem for the pre-Conquest rulers of the region before 1066. Richmond also offered a 'clean canvas', a space to create an impressive and striking new hill-top residence above a rushing river.

Though the political rationale for building Richmond is clear, the social world of North Yorkshire in the 11th century also touches upon the way that Richmond Castle itself was built. The population of northern Yorkshire around the Conquest are variously labelled 'Anglo-Danish' or 'Anglo-Scandinavian'. The region called the 'Danelaw', where they resided, was different from the rest of England: its cultural and political sensitivities were oriented as much towards the Scandinavian kingdoms of the North Sea as to the English political heartland of Wessex. The Danelaw had established and entrenched ways of taking part in politics and society which, from a royal perspective, were impractical to undo. So, rather than undo them, the Crown sought to influence and control relations, through attracting and co-opting – 'soft power'. Places like Richmond were as much about directly engaging with the existing leadership in those places to forge new loyalties as with a consideration for internal or external threats. By encouraging Norman rulers like Alan *rufus* to reside in these places, rather than acting as absentee landlords, the Crown hoped to build greater local support for the new regime. This mixture of hard and soft power was not just an abstract political aspiration by people like William and Alan, but as I hope to show, this was manifested in the architecture of the castle of Richmond itself.

How old is Richmond Castle? The frailties of our dating evidence mean that a more productive question to ask might be, 'Why is the year 1071 an important watershed date for the history of Richmond?' A recent examination of Scolland's Hall, one of the earliest buildings at the castle, suggested a range of late 1070s - mid 1080s, based on the decorative style of column capitals which flank its main doorway. If we incorporate interpretations of stylistic evidence around the castle from previous studies, a broader (if less mutually viable) range of dates is c.1070-c.1086. We can turn to written sources, which, although no more decisive, give us reason for thinking of 1071 specifically as a watershed moment. The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* records how, in 1071, Edwin of Mercia and his brother Morcar were wandering in woodlands and open fields, after which Edwin was killed by some of his followers. The reason why this is important is not because Edwin had any connection to Richmond directly, but rather because of who his estates ended up being controlled by: Alan *rufus*. The old centre at Gilling, within later Richmondshire, is recorded in *Domesday* as belonging to Edwin in 1066 and in Alan's control in 1086. We don't know when Alan took over ownership of the Gilling estates, but it can only have been after Edwin's death. This is why 1071 is such a watershed date, even if it is only a place-holder for the lack of a clearer starting point for the history of Richmond Castle.

Can we see a more precise date from the documentary evidence? There is a period of charitable expenditure by Alan *rufus* which places him in England. Alan re-founded St Olaf's Abbey in York as St Mary's in 1088, and founded a small priory at Swavesey in Cambridgeshire, where building works began between 1080-88. A document of 1088/9 granted possession of 'the castle chapel' (probably that in Robin Hood Tower) to St Mary's in York, which suggests that the castle was completed by that date. Perhaps

Alan was on a sort of spending spree in the 1080s which saw foundations of, and grants to, religious houses. I remind you that the best dating evidence in Richmond Castle itself, from Scolland's Hall, is also from this decade. To sum up, the documents provide no decisive evidence, but they tend to suggest a moderately heightened likelihood that castle construction either began or was completed in the decade of the 1080s. It is possible it was begun earlier than this, perhaps as early as 1071 after Edwin's death, but we don't know.

The final point I want to make is that I see Richmond Castle as fitting into a pattern of lordly behaviour which Alan was enacting across his English estates, which make the year 1071 more important. Alan's receipt of Edwin's lands marked his introduction to Northern landholding society, but I think his approach to relations with the existing Anglo-Scandinavian gentry was more strategically congenial than earlier work on the castle has assumed, especially when much has been made of the violent historical accounts of the Harrying of the North in 1069-70. At the castle, the incorporation of pre-Conquest English architectural elements, like the herringbone work (Figure 1), a tower-form chapel and the perhaps also triangular-headed passages, all suggest to me that Alan was framing Richmond as a place of lordly authority speaking to existing and local and regional leaders – in effect, the castle was speaking their language. These features could appeal to existing English elites, casting Richmond Castle as both a Norman creation but with familiar aspects of the architecture of important political manorial centres in the region. We know that Richmondshire had a greater-than-average representation of English pre-Conquest landholders, and fewer Norman settlers, in the first generations of the Conquest. McClain's study of the ways in which local Anglo-Scandinavian Richmondshire elites patronised local churches shows that, after the Conquest, these elites actively sought to play a part in the social world of the Normans, as fellow competitors or patrons-to-be in the cut and thrust of local politics and society, rather than actively resisting them. There was compromise and continued prosperity here, not endemic strife.



Figure 1 Detail of herringbone work from Scolland's Hall.
DP233748 © Historic England Archive

This emphasis on combining English affiliation with Norman power may be seen, with important caveats, in Alan's personal life. Records suggest that he entered into a relationship, and perhaps had a child, with a woman named Gunnhild. She is widely regarded as a daughter of Harold II Godwinson, the English king killed at Hastings. These kinds of unions were quite common in England after 1066, but were not always consensual and were not necessarily 'marriages' as we might understand them today. There are two letters addressed to Gunnhild which survive, and which go some way to suggesting that affection was part of her relationship with Alan *rufus*, but we do not know the whole picture, and we recognise from other situations like this that there were forced marriages and implied sexual violence, and that the victims of those crimes were evidently under considerable duress. While the exact circumstances of the union between Alan and Gunnhild are likely to remain ambiguous, it certainly had the potential to lend legitimacy and authority to both parties. In the years around Alan receiving the massive grant of what became Richmondshire, he also received estates in East Anglia which were previously held by an English aristocrat, Edith Swanneck, who is suspected of being Gunnhild's mother. A final note in support of this theory

of soft power is the political quality of another of Alan's acts, his patronage of St Edmund's at Bury in Suffolk, which was dedicated to the cult of the martyr-king Edmund, killed by the Great Heathen Army of Danes in 869. In the years after the Norman Conquest the Abbey was especially popular in, and the great recipient of gifts from, the former area of the Danelaw, of which Richmondshire also formed part. Rather than be buried in one of his own foundations as so many new Norman lords chose to be, Alan was interred at Bury, cementing an association with one aspect of England's pre-Conquest social order.

3. Scolland's Hall

The cluster of buildings around Scolland's Hall, in the south-east of Richmond Castle's enclosing walls, is the focus of the first of two detailed studies shared here. An overarching ambition with these is to show how buildings could both reflect the relationships and dynamics of the society in which they existed when built, whilst also in a very physical way shaping the way they were used. Both speak to the exercise of soft power in the early years of Richmond Castle

Recent research undertaken by Hill and Gardiner had demonstrated that the complex of Scolland's Hall was a very early and well-preserved structure, making its core, the great hall, among the oldest to survive in England, and certainly one of the oldest in the North. I call it a 'complex', because there isn't just a great hall, located at first-floor. Originally, there was also a forebuilding of some sort which contained stairs, giving access through an ornate first-floor doorway to the lower end of the great hall. At ground-floor level at the lower end of the hall was an undercroft, probably for storage. There was a further basement, below the high (east) end of the hall, which acted as a linking room between the main castle courtyard and a vaulted passage behind the great hall leading into what is now called the Cockpit Garden, a large enclosed area appended to the south-east end of the castle. Above the vaulted passage, and behind the high end of the great hall, was a chamber (bedroom) at first-floor, with an attached latrine (toilet) tower. These assorted features comprise the Scolland's Hall complex – great hall, chamber, latrine tower and passage-way. Seen from the east looking west, the passageway topped by a chamber is more akin to a gatehouse in appearance: this is significant.

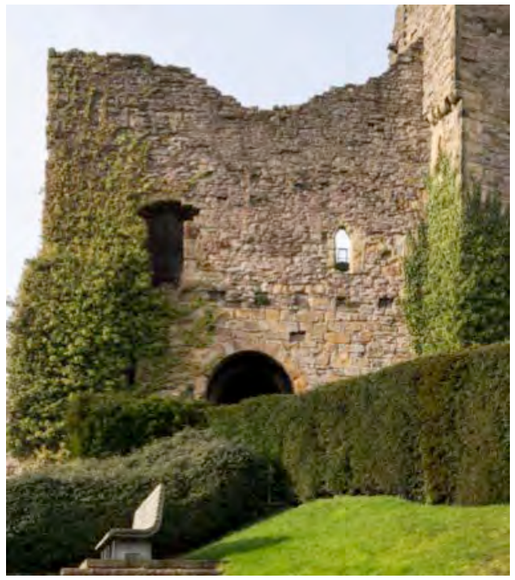


Figure 2 Exterior view of the east end of Scolland's Hall complex. The round-headed passageway sits below a line of postholes probably for a balcony, accessed by a door on the left. The latrine tower is on the right. DP184336 © Historic England Archive..

The arrangement of a great hall adjacent to a chamber atop a passageway is unusual for castles of the Norman Conquest. But, if we look to buildings connected with the rich and powerful before 1066, we can begin to understand why this passage and chamber were built as they were. This unusual arrangement echoes and imitates pre-Conquest architecture at major manorial centres. A mid-11th century (pre-Conquest) text, the 'Promotion Law', describes the buildings of a manorial centre which underlined certain ranks within contemporary society, among which are the *bellhus* and *burhgeat*, translated as 'bell-tower' and 'fortified gate'. Setting important caveats about this text aside, this amounts to a definition of sorts of what kind of buildings might exist in major manors before 1066. Since the *burh* (fortified settlement or manorial centre) was the administrative centre of its estate, the *burhgeat* was a symbol of power, the public face of the wider manorial centre. In my mind, the appearance of the passageway topped by a chamber at the east end of the Scolland's Hall complex at Richmond was a deliberate and conscious reference to the *burhgeat*.

Until recently, we thought that very few *burh-geats* or *bellhus*es survived, but this has been changed by a recent book by Shapland on these towers in England before the Norman Conquest, with origins in the 10th century. This noted several excavated and standing examples of towers connected to lordship centres across England well before the Conquest, and also drew attention to the depiction of a tower in the Bayeux Tapestry (Figure 3). It is four stories in height, with a large ground-floor gateway, several upper openings and a balcony facing the sea. It has reasonably been suggested that the Bayeux Tapestry's image of a tower-like building with a ground-floor arch, on the Channel coast and incorporating a look-out platform, represents a *burhgeat*. The features which make up the *burhgeat* as depicted in the Bayeux Tapestry are readily apparent at Richmond Castle (Figure 2); traces of a balcony overlooking the exterior; a private chamber with all the features associated with elite living, like a fireplace and a latrine; and, at ground-floor level, a substantial round-headed passageway leading into the heart of the aristocratic residence, as I infer in the Bayeux Tapestry and as is known from Richmond.



Figure 3 Detail of the Bayeux Tapestry (titulus 24), illustrating a suspected burhgeat. It has a round-headed passageway topped by two high-status rooms, one of which gave access to a balcony (left) © Detail of the Bayeux Tapestry – 11th Century. City of Bayeux.

Shapland identified other castles in northern England – Prudhoe, Barnard Castle, Tickhill – which featured gatehouse-towers resembling pre-Conquest *burhgeats*, all of which were probably built within 40 years of the Norman Conquest. In their recent discussion of Scolland's Hall, Hill and Gardiner speculated that the first-floor hall at Richmond might have been built at a higher level, rather than the common ground-floor hall, in order to elevate the prestige of the building and give it further spectacular landscape views. I think this is right, but I also think this ambition meets with the similar elevation of the bedroom above the passageway of the speculative *burhgeat*.

What can we make of this finding? In order to venture an interpretation, we need to look at the wider castle. There were three entrances to the late 11th century Richmond Castle: that below the Great Tower, that in the western curtain wall, and that below the solar (our imitation-*burhgeat)*. If we consider how each space might cater to the needs and expectations of different parts of the castle, having three entrances is explicable, if not known for certain. The grand entrance to the North was for the visits of the lords of Richmond themselves, anticipated ambassadorial, noble and perhaps royal visitors, as well as wagons for bringing supplies to the castle. Many, but not all of these visitors would be drawn from the Norman aristocracy of England. This entrance was probably also a gatehouse or imitation-*burhgeat* in the style of the other great Northern castles noted by Shapland. The western portal was for incidental supplies and ordinary visitors to the castle; it is away from the residential buildings, but close to both extant and lost buildings

which would have needed resupplying: kitchens, barns and stables. It was also close to the bridge crossing the Swale. Our third entrance at the back of Scolland's Hall, the imitation-*burhgeat*, may have appealed to figures of local importance (whether Norman, English or Anglo-Scandinavian), tenants as well as those seeking alms from this most traditional and conventional alms-giving place in aristocratic centres, the gate. The division I am proposing here is not simply between Norman elites and English or Anglo-Scandinavian tenants, but, rather, it's about different styles and approaches towards governing the lordship of Richmond. The configuration of buildings recognises the wide range of expectations facing Alan *rufus* and his successors in governing an area with its own set of conventions, cultural orientations and expectations.

4. The Great Tower

I'd like to move to our second detailed study of an early part of Richmond Castle, going from the late 11th century into the 12th century. Here, the discussion moves from the great hall of the castle to the castle's northern entrance, which was completely transformed with the construction of what is now regarded as one of England's best-preserved Norman keeps, which I call the Great Tower.

The Great Tower comprises a ground floor, two further levels stacked atop one another, followed by a parapet level which grants access in sequence to each of the four turrets in turn. The ground floor is located on the position of the castle's original, ceremonial entrance. We know this because the portal of this entrance, with its distinctive early column capitals, survives intact. The stonework of this earlier phase is very different from that of the 12th century phase. Rough, reddish, shaley stone is replaced by bright, neatly squared, sandstone blocks, which actually appear across the castle, reflecting what must have been a big period of 12th century investment in the castle.

How old is the tower? The short answer is that we cannot be sure, beyond being confident it was built in the 12th century. The tower's shallow clasping buttresses, cushion capitals and shallow semi-circular *tympana* (semicircle-shaped block of stone in-filling an arch) above several doorways, tend towards a mid-12th-century date. Its simplicity in plan is one feature which would suggest a slightly earlier date, but this simplicity may be accounted for by the fact that the tower was constructed not on a greenfield site, but atop an earlier structure, the late 11th-century gatehouse (or imitation-*burhgeat*) of the earliest castle.

Recently, English Heritage commissioned a survey of the fabric of the Great Tower to enable an improved understanding of what this building was built for and how it changed over time. The results touching upon its early history are fascinating: the Great Tower of Richmond Castle was almost completely unconcerned with any aspects of military defence. Rather, it appears that the tower was built to host important occasions, such as the signing of charters, and to welcome the most esteemed guests for receptions, presentations and general spectacle. There are several reasons for thinking this.

The first is that the survey showed that the tower really was quite simple when it was originally built. There were no fireplaces, no latrines, no obvious bedrooms or private chambers of any kind throughout the tower; it was not a place to live in. At first-floor level, as survive today, there are three large round-headed windows which overlook the barbican, a crescent-shaped area in front of the tower, where the ticket office is situated (Figure 4). The middle of these three windows had a *tympanum* set within its arch, which would originally have hosted a brightly-coloured image. This would have drawn the eye of people gathered in the barbican. This speaks to the first point regarding the tower; it was for display and spectacle, not just as a tall building in an environment with few tall buildings, but specifically for occasions where the community

of the castle could display themselves to selected guests gathered in the barbican below. The second floor of the tower also revealed an intriguing feature. There is a low stone ledge set against the north wall of the room, which was identified as part of a support for a raised platform of timber, now lost, which ran at least part of the length of the room. It may have hosted a raised platform with thrones of estate. Alternatively, it may have acted as a support for a long bench. This would imply the upper level was used as a great hall, heated by a hearth



Figure 4 View towards Great Tower from Frenchgate. The three windows were created to overlook the Barbican, as 'windows of appearance' used on special occasions. DP184271 © Historic England Archive

set on the floor and smoke being evacuated via a louvre (shuttered opening) in the roof. This explanation is deemed less plausible as there are no known kitchens nearby. The parapet or top level, whose access was out of reach from 99% of the kingdom, offered views across a landscape of hunting grounds, upland pasture, a bustling medieval town and orchards and fields. In a time before high-rise buildings, the views from the Great Tower were extraordinary.

The Great Tower was intended to impress and was oriented towards the emerging settlement of Richmond, which may have been laid out, or re-laid, in the time the Tower was built. The lack of domestic facilities, along with fine architectural details, confirms that it was a place for ceremony. These are among the reasons the Tower's construction has been associated with Conan IV, first ruler of Richmond who was also a Duke. In 1160, Conan married Margaret, a princess and the sister of the King of Scots, William the Lion, and cousin to Henry II of England. This union may have occasioned the construction of the Great Tower as a celebration, but also as a reflection of the castle's royal associations.

5. Conclusion

I hope it's clear that the architecture of Richmond Castle is more than a collective of fine architectural details, ancient buildings and big historical dates: it is a place with deep affiliations with the people and past of Swaledale and North Yorkshire. Though I've tended to relay stories about the rich and powerful in society, the lives of ordinary people, not covered here, are now intrinsic parts of the on-site interpretation panels. There is still more to learn about the castle, and new work – sometimes revealing new evidence, sometimes revisiting long-held assumptions – is helping us rewrite the story of Richmond. By challenging established narratives and reflecting on the human experience of the castle, we can catch glimpses of its early years which bring light and colour to a venerable ruin on a hill.

6. Acknowledgements

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King Harold's Daughter Gunnhild

Colin Grant

At the beginning of the 'Celebrate Richmond 950', whilst doing some background reading during lockdown, I came across the intriguing figure of Gunnhild Godwinsdatter. Gunnhild, born around 1054, is also referred to in different texts as Gunnhilda, Gunhild and Gunnilda. In medieval times, various chroniclers used different spellings for the same person. Although tantalisingly little is known about this romantic and enigmatic figure, there are as many theories about her life as there are spellings of her name. The one thing on which all accounts seem to agree is that there is strong circumstantial evidence that she was the youngest daughter of King Harold Godwinson, who was the last Anglo-Saxon King of England. He ruled for only ten tempestuous months before dying on the bloody battlefield at Hastings in 1066, defeated by William Duke of Normandy – the Conqueror.



Gunnhild pictured in the Cockpit Garden with the original Burhgeat entrance to the castle and the Golden Hole Tower.
Local Artist

Harold's first 'wife' was Edgiva Swanneck, also referred to as Edith the Fair, Eadgifu, Edgyth, Eadgiva, and Elditha. She was said to have been one of the most beautiful and wealthy Saxon noblewomen in England at the time of Hastings, owning large estates of land in East Anglia. They had six children and their youngest daughter was named Gunnhild. As Harold and Edgiva may have been cousins and, as the marriage, in about 1042, was typical of Danish families at that time through a handfast or common-law wedding, the marriage was not sanctified by the Church. This allowed Harold to make a second, political union, probably in early 1066, by 'marrying' Ealdgyth, widow of Gyffud, ruler of all Wales. This secured the support not only of Wales but also the Earls of Northumbria and Mercia.

Ealdgyth was the sister of Edwin, the Saxon Earl of Mercia, whose lands centred on Gilling West, the administrative capital of 'Ghellinges' or Gillingshire. He lived in a fortified manor, but exactly where this was has never been established. There is some historical evidence, found by the Richmondshire Historical and Detecting Association in the early 1990s, that it was at the site of Castle Hill near Scales Farm, overlooking the village, and that the Breton Count Alan Rufus rebuilt the wooden manor in stone, whilst surveying a position for his northern fortress at Riche-mont. The last vestiges of Gilling Castle were removed around 1823 and nothing remains today. Alternatively, the manor may have been, more typically, in the small village of Gilling West near the parish church. Edwin's manor, lands and property were forfeited on his death, at the hands of his own men, in 1071 and granted to Alan Rufus as a reward for his loyalty to William.

In the turmoil after the Battle of Hastings, or possibly before, for her protection as a ten to twelve year old, her mother sent Gunnhild to

Wilton Abbey, where her aunt Edith Godwin was patron. An education in a nunnery was not uncommon for the daughters of high born nobles. Gunnhild would have received tuition in French, Latin and Greek and would have practised embroidery, music and possibly calligraphy (the art of producing decorative hand writing). It is also possible that she may have been involved in one of the panels for the Bayeux Tapestry that some historians think was embroidered, in part, at Wilton.

Although it was acceptable for women of noble breeding who fled to convents after 1066 to wear the nun's habit for protection, they may never have taken vows. The new Norman-led regime became frustrated by this and, in 1073, Archbishop Lanfranc ruled that Anglo-Saxon women who had, at the time of the Conquest, protected their chastity and safety by retreating to convents, should make a choice to become professed nuns or leave the convent. As a young full-blooded Saxon princess in a Norman occupied land, the sanctity of the Abbey would have been the safe choice. A liaison with a Breton nobleman would have been a far more adventurous option for Gunnhild, but this was the one that she seems to have taken.

William of Normandy encouraged intermarriage between Normans and Saxons. It was one way that made the take-over easier and it gave unmarried Norman knights the opportunity to claim legal tenure to English lands. Marriage, as we understand it today, was very different in those times. The concept of marriage itself was difficult to define, based as it was more on 'arrangements' than love. Arranged marriages of high born women, to cement political alliances, were common.

There are a number of theories as to what happened to Gunnhild next. The first was based on a contemporary account by Oderic Vitalis, a Benedictine monk born in 1075. Vitalis was perhaps not the most reliable chronicler of this period, as much of his life was spent in Normandy. His account is that Gunnhild stayed at Wilton and eloped with Alan Rufus circa 1089–90. In this version, the Breton Count Alan, 1st Lord of Richmond, who would have been in his 50s, visited Wilton hoping to court and wed princess Matilda of Scotland, who was also being educated there. Viltalis's account is that Alan failed with his initial plan but, instead, fell in love and eloped with Saxon Gunnhild, then aged in her mid-30s.

There is also an intriguing story that Gunnhild started to go blind and was healed at Wilton by Bishop Wulfstan, who was visiting the Abbey. The story of Wulfstan's miracle blindness cure may well be fantasy. These stories were two a penny. There is one about Anselm curing a blind man. An element of the miraculous was needed in the life of any great bishop. Monks and nuns were only too ready to oblige, usually with a healing, a blind-cure or putting out a fire. This story was undoubtedly a folklore myth, made up to enhance the supernatural powers of the clergy.

Over the years, chroniclers, historians and authors have suggested various alternative scenarios. The most convincing explanation is possibly that provided by the more recent research of Professor Richard Sharpe of Oxford University, whose theory is based on his analysis of two letters, both of which provide excellent primary sources. The interpretation of the evidence in these letters contradicts many of the accounts above. A paper published in 2008 examined this question in detail, and came to some startling, but more convincing conclusions.

Analysis of the letters supports the much more credible theory that Gunnhild, referred to by Anselm as “daughter of the king and queen” , confirming she was of royal descent, had had a much longer intimate relationship with Count Alan than suggested by Vitalis and others. It suggests that she had stayed at Wilton until about 1072, when she had then eloped with Alan Rufus to live on her mother's estates in East Anglia. They had a daughter, Matilda, born around 1073, when Gunnhild would have been about 19.

Two medieval sources indicate that Count Alan died in 1089 or shortly thereafter, but scholars such as Professor Richard Sharpe have now concluded that 1093, perhaps on 4th August, is a more likely date of his death. This is the date also favoured by English Heritage. There remains, however, some confusion as all of the accounts conflict. The confusion is compounded as both Alan Rufus (the Red) and his brother Alan Niger (the Black) are referred to as Count Alan, Lord of Richmond.

Professor Sharpe suggests that, when Count Alan Rufus died in 1093, Gunnhild had another very similar life-changing decision to make as she had become involved with Rufus's brother, Alan the Black. She wrote for advice to Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury. The church would have frowned upon such a second 'marriage' (relationship) and he replied with two letters to Gunnhild in 1093-94. He implored her to return to Wilton Abbey “I do not yet despair of what I desire for you, namely that you may yet regain your senses through the visitation of divine grace, and return to Christ, your Lord and Redeemer,”

Alan Rufus was buried in the Abbey at Bury St Edmunds in Suffolk. The date of Alan the Black's death is unknown but there are references to him dying in about 1098. After 1066 Edgiva, Gunnhild’s mother, disappears from history. Although some historians think that she may have retreated to a nunnery, there is no date of her death. Nor is there any record of Gunnhild's date of death, nor where she was buried.

Matilda, Gunnhild’s daughter by Alan Rufus, is thought to have 'married' the Norman noble Walter D'Aincourt in about 1089. Professor Sharpe embarked on his investigation because he wanted to understand why Walter D' Aincourt, a major Lincolnshire tenant-in-chief, had made gifts at the foundation of St Mary’s Abbey, York. The Abbey was closely associated with Count Alan Rufus, Lord of Richmond, but lay in a county with which Walter had little connection. Moreover, and most unusually, Walter’s wife Matilda made gifts at the same time to the abbey on her own account. The lands and property she gave had formerly been held by Edgiva Swanneck, which had initially been given to the Breton Ralph de Gael, Earl of Norfolk. When he forfeited his lands following his revolt in 1075, they were given to Count Alan. The stages by which Count Alan built up the huge estates recorded in Domesday Book are not known, but, when he died, he had acquired an enormous fortune, with lands and property covering much of Yorkshire, Lincolnshire, Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex, Cambridgeshire, and several other counties. (At the time of his death, his wealth was noted as £11,000, 7% of the net national income of England. In 2007, that would have amounted to over £81 billion).



William the Conqueror granting the kneeling Alan Rufus the Honour of Richmond Public Domain

Professor Sharpe shows conclusively that, on chronological grounds, Edgiva was Gunnhild’s mother. It is known from letters of Archbishop Anselm that Harold and Edgiva's daughter Gunnhild, had first entered the abbey to escape the turmoil around 1066. Then she

had subsequently left the abbey in order to legitimise the succession of one of the newcomers to an English inheritance by her 'marriage.' to Count Alan. He now held the land and property Edgiva had been given by King Harold. Alan and Gunnhild's daughter Matilda married Walter around 1089 and was mother of both his sons. Matilda was not, of course, treated as her father's heiress, and disposed of only a few of her grandmother's manors, but Gunnhild's 'marriage' had served its purpose in helping to consolidate the creation of the eastern portion of what was to become the vast 'Honour of Richmond'. It is difficult to explain how else Matilda came to have the extensive lands and property that in 1086 were attributed in the Domesday Book as being held by Count Alan of Richmond. The logical interpretation is that the lands and property were indeed a gift from Count Alan Rufus to Matilda, from father to daughter.

As Gunnhild had relationships with the two Alans, who were both based at Richmond Castle for more than 25 years, it is quite plausible to speculate that Gunnhild may well have also spent some time in Richmond in the early years of the castle. Carol McGrath's fascinating and captivating historical novel about Gunnhild and the two Alans, *The Swan Daughter*, vividly describes how her life could have unfolded. Carol was invited to talk to the Civic Society but as she lives in Greece, difficulties of travel or Zooming from the Peloponnese during the pandemic made this impossible. It was lovely to meet Gunnhild and Rufus when 'Time Will Tell' put on their theatrical open air performance in the Market Place in September. I can only hope that one of the legacies of the 950th is that Gunnhild can receive some recognition and be accepted as one more of the characters associated with the early history of Richmond Castle and the town.

Thanks:

My thanks to Carol McGrath, historian and creative writer, who has a degree in History and English from Queens University Belfast, a postgraduate MA in writing from Queens University and an MPhil in writing from The Royal Holloway, University of London. She has written a trilogy of books entitled *The Daughters of Hastings including the Swan Daughter*. Anyone interested in this story can read more.

Sources and further reading:

Professor Richard Sharpe of Oxford University – Haskins Journal King Harold's Daughter

Domesday People Revisited and A Question of Identity: Domesday Prosopography and Formation of the Honour of Richmond by Katherine Keats-Rohan, Linacre College, Oxford

Ruth Mazzo Karras, Professor of History at the University of Minnesota – Unmarriage

Ann Williams – Medieval Historian.

* A letter from Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury (1094)

Richmond's Gardens and Designed Landscapes Through the Ages

Valerie J Hepworth

950 years of garden and designed landscape history is a long period to compress into a short paper, so I am referring to a limited number of examples and periods.

Gardening has taken place and gardens have been made for centuries. They are enjoyed by all strata of society, from the immensely wealthy to those with little money, a small patch of ground and a hungry family to feed. Richmond was not any different; an intrinsically beautiful part of the country, with noble connections, returning two Members to Parliament and strong links with the Court and the capital, a long-established Guild tradition and a military, cultural, economic and social centre, particularly in the 17th and 18th centuries. These factors have all had an influence on the development of Richmond's gardens and designed landscapes and they in turn are significant in the environment that we enjoy today.

When I refer to gardens, they may also include designs in the wider landscape and often incorporating 'borrowed' views – not difficult in a wonderfully scenic and picturesque town like Richmond. As Stephen Switzer wrote in his influential book, *The Nobleman, Gentleman, and Gardener's Recreation* published in 1715,

'By mixing the useful and profitable Parts of Gard'ning with the Pleasurable in the interior Parts of my Designs and Paddocks, obscure enclosures, etc. in the outward. My Designs are thereby vastly enlarg'd and both Profit and Pleasure may be agreeably mixed together.'

2021 was a special year for Richmond Castle - its 950th birthday, so we should begin at the Castle. Were there gardens at **Richmond Castle** so long ago? And were there places in the Castle where the gardens could be seen? The answer to both is yes. However, the medieval garden is elusive. The present sum of all our fragments of knowledge does not reveal exactly what a medieval garden looked like in its entirety. We are dependent on some medieval horticultural treatises, manuscripts and art works. Those depicted include monastic gardens and pleasure gardens constructed for royalty and nobility, as at Richmond Castle. Fishponds and orchards were important features. The gardens were enclosed by walls, hedge, trellis, moat(s) and included a grass or flowery mead with a central pool, fountain or sundial and surrounded by raised beds bounded by raised turf seats. The trellis would be covered in climbing plants to make arbours or shelters and plants would be chosen for fragrance, beauty, food, medicine and for strewing.

The building of Richmond Castle by Alan Rufus began in about 1071. Scolland's Hall – the Great Hall, named after Alan Rufus's steward – lies in the south-eastern corner of the castle enclosure perched high above the river. Recent research by Dr Will Wyeth of English Heritage confirmed my thinking that the south elevation of Scolland's Hall must have had a wooden platform/balcony overlooking the river and the **Earl's Orchard** beyond, hence the joist holes that can still be clearly seen. The platform/balcony was probably accessed via a timber staircase by the west exterior wall of the Great Hall. This access may have been demolished when the kitchen range was built here in the twelfth century. It seems that the platform facing the Earl's Orchard may be a primary feature, dating to the late 11th century, as the joist holes stop at the masonry of the 12th century kitchen block. As to what the platform was overlooking – whether it was the Earl's Orchard or not (no records survive for the orchard so far back) – we don't know, but I would be surprised if there wasn't something

at the location of the orchard in the late 11th century. Perhaps fruit trees and a pleasure garden. Perhaps it was the Earl's Orchard at the time of Alan the Black, 1st Earl of Richmond, or of Conan IV, 2nd Earl of Richmond (1135-1171). No doubt the wonderfully picturesque views of the river, the bridge and the land beyond would have been part of the garden experience.

As to the garden in Richmond Castle itself, it seems likely that this was in the area we call the Cockpit. Similarly, evidence also suggests a viewing platform, but here accessed from the solar above the Great Hall. Certainly, by the 1280s a royal survey of the castle mentions a garden 'pertaining to the castle'. A garden in the Cockpit makes a lot of sense: it is isolated from the wider castle yet accessible specifically to the castle owners. The name Cockpit probably comes from Richmond's heyday as a county town with the theatre, hotels, horse-racing and markets in the early modern period. However, it is unlikely that there was cockfighting in the castle in the medieval period, though it is possible. And, of course, Richmond Castle had a cockpit in the early modern period shown on the Robert Harman Plan of 1724. In the 19th century we think that the Cockpit garden included a vinery.

By the 17th century international trade had made some courtiers immensely wealthy and new gardens were laid out, inspired by the ideas of the Italian Renaissance. These were formal, geometric and ordered, often on a grand scale with avenues and vistas and included fountains and classical statuary. French and Dutch ideas were introduced. Levelled, flat gardens called



Robert Harman Plan of Richmond, published 1724. (Courtesy NYCRO)

parterres were laid out with elaborate patterns of gravel and plants designed to be viewed from above – from the house, garden building or mount. The garden to the west of **Yorke House** had a parterre shown on the Harman Plan and a gazebo in the north-west corner of the gardens shown on the Samuel and Nathaniel Buck *South West Prospect of Richmond* dated 1749. For those with less wealth there would be a simpler 'knot' pattern of interlacing low hedges made from clipped box or similar evergreens, expressive of an unchanging or endless situation. By the mid-17th century 'knot' became a general term for the quarters of a square flower garden intersected by walks at right angles and these would have no doubt featured in Richmond's town gardens.

A North Yorkshire clergyman, William Lawson, wrote four hundred years ago from his vicarage in the old North Riding of Yorkshire, 'What was Paradise? but a Garden, an Orchard of Trees and Herbs, full of pleasure, and nothing there but delights... '. His practical gardening experience, designs and ideas were influential on the gardens of the gentry. In 1617 he published *The Countrie Housewifes Garden,* followed a year later by *A New Orchard and Garden*, where his design for a gentry garden shows six divisions; one is a forecourt, four are for vegetables and fruit and one is a knot garden. This was the model for many smaller gardens for 100 years or so and may well have been the model for the garden at **Hill House**. *Hill House* was rebuilt c.1585 so would have been about 100 years old when, in c.1698, Celia Fiennes visited Richmond and was generally disappointed with the town, but wrote: "There was two good houses in the town, one was Mr Darcys the Earle of Holderness' brother, [Hill House] the other was Mr York's, [Yorke House at Temple Grounds] both stood then and were chosen Parliament men, they had good gardens walled all in stone as in the whole town, though I must say it looks like a sad shatter'd town and fallen much to decay and like a disregarded place."

So, to the other garden noted by Celia Fiennes, Mr Yorke's **Temple Grounds**, the estate for Yorke House, known by the family as 'The Green'. The owners of both Hill House and Temple Grounds were related by marriage.

In 1631 the estate (Temple Grounds) was bought by Maulger Norton of St Nicholas and, on the marriage of Mary Norton to John Yorke of Goulthwaite (1633-63) in 1651, the property came into the possession of the Yorke family.

The Yorke family owned the small estate until 1824 and were responsible firstly for the late 17th century formal gardens and then later, in 1746, for the building of the Culloden Tower or Temple. This marked the beginning of major changes from what we might call a ferme ornee, that is to say a farm for pleasure as well as productivity, to a later 18th century picturesque landscape with menagerie (Temple Lodge), new walled garden, new stable block (now Yorke Square car park), walks with summerhouses and grottoes and 'borrowed' views into the landscape beyond.

The Yorkes were a prominent Whig family and the marriage of John to Mary Norton in the mid-17th century gave the family the base to become one of Richmond's two MPs.

Their grandson, another John, married Anne, daughter of James Darcy MP of Hill House. John was MP for Richmond in five parliaments between 1710 and 1754. John and Anne were responsible for the building of the Culloden Tower, probably with finance from John's younger brother Thomas – he was to inherit in 1757 on the death of John, who was found dead in his garden on 14th July 1757 and didn't have any children. The family loved their gardens and estate at Richmond, (see 'Richmond: *A Review of the Millennium* p49.). This would have been the formal gardens shown on the Samuel and Nathaniel Buck South-West Prospect of 1749. His brother Thomas and Thomas's son, another John, were to radically modify the gardens and landscape during the next decades by removing the formal gardens, building the menagerie and



A View of The Green, Richmond, Yorkshire, the seat of John Yorke Esq. by Mr Cuit 1799. View from the west. Courtesy Yorke Archive.

new walled garden, planting more trees and laying out new walks. All these modifications built on the inherent picturesque qualities of their estate at Richmond. Temple Grounds is on the Historic England Register of Historic Parks and Gardens grade II with the Culloden Tower and gates at the end of Newbiggin listed grade II* and Temple Lodge at grade II.

In the centre of Richmond, Charles Bathurst of Clints built a fine town house overlooking the Market Place in the early 18th century. It was a private town house for only a short time as, by 1727, Bathurst had built a town house in York and his Richmond property became our largest hotel, the **King's Head Hotel**. The pleasure gardens behind the King's Head Hotel were called **Plasingdale** (Pleasant Dale) with a bowling green and a circular cockpit – note the cone-roof just visible on the Harman Plan of 1724. We do not have detailed information about the gardens, but they would no doubt have been formally laid out with walks bounded by flower borders and clipped evergreens such as box, yew or holly in cone or ball-shapes.

From Plasingdale it is only a short walk to **The Friary**. John Speede in 1610 showed some detail and we know that, at the Dissolution, the site of the house with surrounding land included an orchard and a productive close. By the 18th century, the Friary was owned by the gentlemen Robinson family. John Robinson was Town Clerk for many years from 1774. They lived in the house and no doubt much enjoyed Greyfriars Tower, an authentic Gothic ruin and 'eyecatcher'; an eyecatcher and ruins, either genuine or contrived, became very fashionable for gardens and parks from the mid-18th century.

Richmond was visited by Lord Harley in 1725 on his way to Scotland when he stayed at the King's Head and writes in his journal '...the walk that leads under the Castle wall.' **Castle Walk** was formed by the Duke of Richmond, owner of Richmond Castle, as a Georgian Promenade with stunning views of the Swale and bridge – so a very similar picturesque experience to that enjoyed from the wooden platform against Scolland's Hall in the medieval period and a place for fashionable residents and visitors to see and be seen.

During this period the woollen stocking and wine merchant Caleb Readshaw built **The Grove** in c.1740, another fashionable brick town house overlooking what is now Station Road, which would have had splendid views down the Swale valley to the ruins of Easby Abbey. The name probably came from the trees and gardens to the north of the house, where there was a fine avenue of lime trees flanking the carriage drive. Groves, usually of a single species of tree, are probably the oldest of garden features, such as the sacred groves of ancient Greece. The mysterious idea of the grove, which stimulated thought and contemplation, appealed to the English poets: 'Groves whose rich trees wept odorous gums and balm'. (Milton). Or Pope, 'Grove nods at grove.'

In the 18th century the vogue for the geometric garden slowly declined and a new landscape fashion began to emerge. This was due to great economic changes in land ownership, increase in size of estates, agricultural improvements and political influences. The writings of Andreo Palladio and experiences gained from The Grand Tour influenced the making of landscapes into a series of pictures. From the mid-18th century, the English Landscape style was developed by Lancelot 'Capability' Brown (1716-1783) and others and spread through Europe, to be followed by Humphry Repton (1752-1818), who responded to some of the later 18th century 'Picturesque' ideas.

The most notable features of the English Landscape style are large-scale with bold, smooth, rolling slopes and the park coming right up to the house with a separating invisible ha-ha or sunken ditch. Extensive tree planting in clumps and in boundary shelterbelts was undertaken, with serpentine lakes usually in the middle distance often designed to look like rivers. Kitchen and flower gardens were banished to a walled enclosure concealed by trees, and carriage rides and walks were constructed to admire set views that included grottoes and elaborate garden buildings.

The park at **Aske Hall** just north of Richmond exemplifies many of these 18th century ideas about landscape design although, contrary to what is often written, Aske is not strictly a Lancelot 'Capability' Brown design. It is derived from the imaginative proposals of Sir Conyers D'Arcy, the owner of Aske Hall between 1727 and 1758, and possibly influenced by William Kent (1685-1748), the hugely talented landscape designer and architect, who probably designed The Temple at Aske. Sir Conyers D'Arcy's works provided a foundation, which has endured and provided the basis for the present parkland pattern. This complemented the older form of the house established before the time of his purchase. Aske is grade II* on the Register of Historic Parks and Gardens. The house and The Temple behind the house are grade I listed buildings and the landscape provides the setting for a further twelve listed buildings. On Sept 6th and 7th 1769, at the request of Sir Lawrence Dundas, who had become Aske's new owner, George Jackson, surveyor and mapmaker, attended Mr Brown and then prepared a plan in a 'very particular manner for Mr Brown the Improver's use'. Brown came again in 1770, once more attended by George Jackson. However, we do not have any Brown plans and it seems that Sir Lawrence didn't carry out any major changes. Work was completed on the walled garden. It does seem likely, however, that Brown's proposals influenced later developments at Aske.

In addition to the gentry the gardens of tradespeople or artisans would have been a prominent part of the town in 18th century Richmond. We know a little about their gardens because some of them were 'florists'.

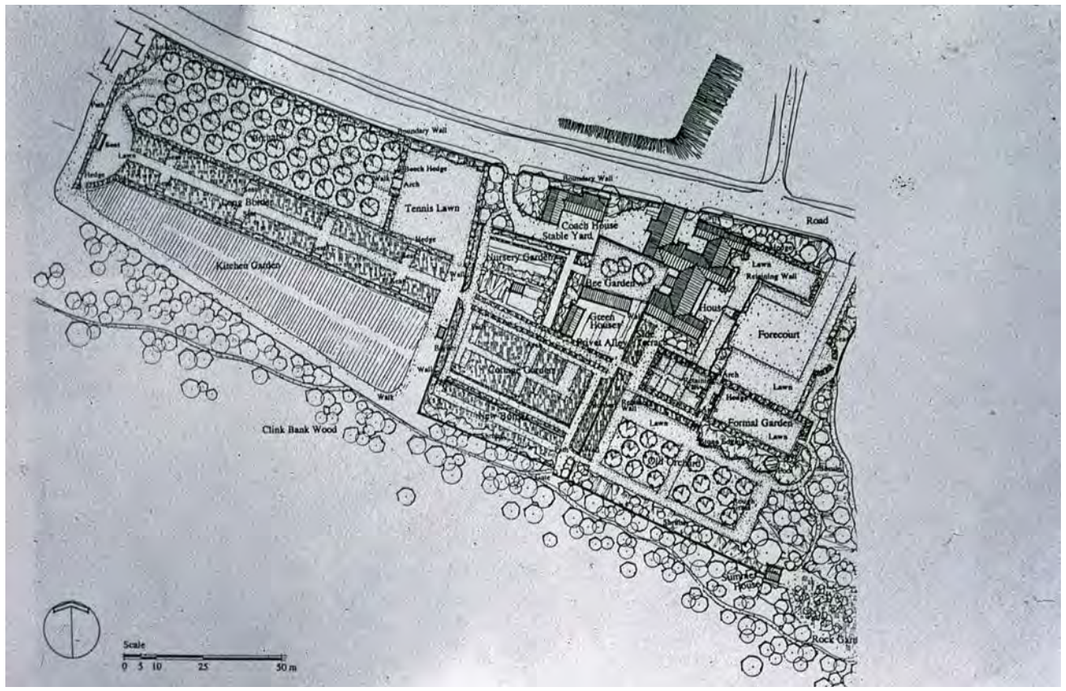
Florists grew plants for the sake of their decorative flowers rather than for their herbal or other useful properties. By the middle of the 18th century there were eight classic florists' flowers; carnation, tulip, anemone, ranunculus, auricula, hyacinth, polyanthus and, much later, the pink. The modern use of 'florist' as one who retails cut flowers developed *c.*1870. In 1768 the Ancient Society of York Florists was formed

and still exists. The members competed for prizes with their flowers and for many years a feast was held on the day of the auricula show. Feasts were a regular activity, rather like the gatherings of the Richmond Guilds. Similarly, the Wakefield Tulip Society is still holding competitions every May and many of the cultivars bred by the florists remain in existence, including a tulip called 'Bessie' bred by Hepworth c.1860 (not my ancestor!). The florists conserved old varieties and raised new kinds. Prizes were often a silver spoon or plate.

As England developed as an industrial and increasingly urban society, horticulture became a popular pursuit for a wider spectrum of people. From c.1830 concerns about the health of the lowest groups gave rise to the creation of public parks and cemeteries, making open space available to all. Rural Richmond did not have the desperate need for green space, so our two small public parks came much later. The simple design of **Ronaldshay Park** and the more elaborate **Friary Gardens**, with Greyfriars Tower and the War Memorial, were laid out in the early 20th century.

Land values fell at the end of the 19th century and those who had made their money from industry bought old estates or built smaller country houses with gardens around them. Speculative suburban housing resulted in the provision of millions of small front and back gardens. Gertrude Jekyll, Lawrence Johnston and Vita Sackville-West were all influential and, here in Richmond, The Hon Robert James – Bobbie James – laid out the gardens at **St Nicholas** as a series of rooms from c.1903. St Nicholas is Richmond's third garden that has a place on Historic England's Register of Historic Parks and Gardens.

Bobbie James was a man of considerable artistic ability, a highly talented 'amateur' gardener, and a friend of many of the significant figures in horticulture and design, including Lawrence Johnston, Augustus Bowles and Nora Lindsay. In the late 1920s Bobbie James sponsored plant-hunting expeditions to the Andes and the Far East, and, after World War II, he was a founder of the Northern Horticultural Society – now RHS Harlow Carr – with his northern gardening friends, including Colonel Charles



Plan of St Nicholas, 1990s. Courtesy Caroline Kernan.

Grey of Howick and Sir William MiIner of Parcevall Hall. Lady Serena, in summing up St Nicholas, commented 'It's an Edwardian garden, it's all straight lines.' Bobbie James, in an article in the RHS Journal 1953, concluded that an Edwardian garden was one that was inspired by William Robinson and the herbaceous border. The garden is about 7 acres and the land surrounding the house has probably been gardened since the original foundation of the hospital in the 12th century.

At St Nicholas, evergreen hedges, rather than walls, divide the garden into a series of architectural compartments. Bobbie gardened on a grand scale with elegant double borders 18ft wide contained within hornbeam hedges that stretched for more than 100yds. There is a large rock garden, reached through a woodland planting of rhododendrons and azaleas (the Himalayas), an old orchard, cottage garden and, in all, about 16 enclosures. Throughout his life, Bobbie combined intellectual garden and horticultural discourse with practical gardening. One of his granddaughters remarked that he lived and breathed the garden. She remembers being taken around St Nicholas in his wheeled wicker gardening basket, sitting amongst the weeds!

A garden that has been influenced by St Nicholas is at **Millgate House**; a townhouse facing the street with an enclosed terraced walled garden to the rear overlooking the Swale falls. The garden has won many accolades and its owners, Tim Culkin and Austin Lynch, have lavished 40 years on its design and planting. Their gardening has been influenced by the writings of Christopher Lloyd and Mirabel Osler, but the gardens of St Nicholas have also been key.

Millgate House was rebuilt by Alderman Fowler Hicks and his wife Jane in 1775 – he was mayor in 1774. In the late 19th century the ground floor housed a game dealer's business but, by 1931, it was home to Dr and Mrs Dalrymple-Smith and the lower ground floor became a doctor's surgery. The bottom garden was a vegetable plot and the top garden consisted of rectangular herbaceous beds. Mrs Dalrymple-Smith was in the house until Tim and Austin bought the property in February 1980. They inherited an established central crab apple tree into which they grew the wonderfully floriferous rambler, Rosa Helenae. At the beginning, Tim selected about 15 key trees and shrubs. There were to be no straight lines but hidden surprises and views, the best plants of their type, year-round interest, no lawn but gravel and stone, with particular emphasis on old roses, clematis, hostas, ferns, snowdrops, hydrangeas, acers and nerines. They won their first RHS National Garden Prize in 1995, presented by Prince Charles. The committee commented: '...English gardening at its very best...a subtle and complex integration of the traditional and the new... exuberant but carefully controlled...dynamic and peaceful ...with a huge variety of plants familiar and unfamiliar."

Finally two 21st century garden designs in Richmond pay homage to the past:

Linton House, Bargate, the home of Nigel Tooze and Chris Shaw, has a new rear garden designed by Alistair W Baldwin Associates and laid out in 2019. Its linearity of design, connected through the centre by a rill and path, is a reference to the past life of the site as a burgage plot. The ruin, which is probably the remnant of one of a number of small industrial buildings that once populated the site, has been brought back to life as a romantic folly.

The current house is thought to have been built in 1827-8, but plot owners are known as far back as 1679, and it is likely that there has been a building on the site long before then.

At various times during the 18th and 19th centuries it was occupied by a market gardener, a cabinet maker, a currier and leather-cutter, and a grocer. These trades account for the workshops and stores, which ordnance survey maps of the second half of the 19th century show covering at least 2/3 of the garden. We could speculate that these artisans may have also been florists.

The garden has been designed for relaxation, with the folly sitting in a sea of stone chippings, deliberately chosen to represent the slow fragmentation of the boundary walls whilst they are being colonised by plants. Clipped box cubes evoke the sense of other built remnants and sections of wall left over from the former use of the site. Corten steel for the rill is a nod to the working past of the site, as well as its link with the rust-coloured iron deposits in the walling stone. The seating at the end of the garden is elevated, giving views back to the house. Overlaid on all of this is the framing of a vista to Culloden Tower.



Contemporary Heritage Garden in Cockpit at Richmond Castle on opening day Spring 2002

Ending where we began, the millennium designed Contemporary Heritage Garden at the Castle's **Cockpit,** opened in late spring 2002. The designer Neil Swanson used hedges to continue the sense of enclosure into the garden, forming a series of distinctive spaces, and continuing the idea of strong patterns of Tudor and Renaissance gardens and openings to reveal views. On entering, there is a level terrace with a single mature apple tree. The 16 topiary yew sculptures on the parterre each represent one of the Richmond 16 (the 16 conscientious objectors in the Great War who were held at Richmond Castle before being taken to France for the 1916 summer offensives on the Somme). Neil said that these sculptures were not to be seen as a memorial; he makes no judgement on the rights and wrongs of their stance. Rather, this is a strand in Richmond Castle's history and an appropriate place to acknowledge the struggle of the individual to express him or herself within an indifferent and sometimes hostile culture. The land falls away to the central open green with, against the warmest wall, herbaceous border and seating areas following the ideas developed at Lindisfarne by Gertrude Jekyll when she worked with Edwin Lutyens.

As William Lawson wrote four hundred years ago from his vicarage in the old North Riding of Yorkshire, 'What was Paradise? but a Garden, an Orchard of Trees and Herbs, full of pleasure, and nothing there but delights… '

Acknowledgements:

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Zetland (Dundas) Archive, ZNK at NYCRO

Richmond, a Perfect 'Picturesque' Place for Artists (1780 – 1820)

Dr Véronique Gerard Powell

With the beautiful scenery of the ruins of its Norman castle crowning the escarpment which overhangs the valley of the Swale, the market town of Richmond became, during the late 18th century, an attractive destination for the devotees of 'Picturesque' taste.

While wealthy British travellers were looking for 'sublime' and 'beautiful' works of art during their *Grand Tour* on the continent, artists, poets and amateurs developed, at home, an interest in the natural beauties, archaeological remains and architecture of their own country.

The word 'picturesque', which appeared in the English vocabulary around 1700, derives from the Italian 'pittoresco' already used in 1550 by the art historian Vasari to qualify topics that, albeit not classical or religious, show enough beauty and interest to be worthy of being represented in paintings. The Reverend William Gilpin (1724-1804), the first British theorist of that trend, defined it as 'that peculiar kind of beauty which is agreeable in a picture' and closely linked this beauty with that of Nature, underlying its expressive qualities. He popularised his new concept in several 'tourism journals' written during his summer travels in the United Kingdom, some being published under titles which always started with *Observations, relative chiefly to picturesque beauty […].* Gilpin was indeed a pioneer of picturesque touring, a new hobby encouraged by the contemporary interest in a better knowledge of the geographical, naturalistic, historical and archaeological specificities of the newly formed, and newly mapped, United Kingdom of Great Britain.

Even if Gilpin did not write about it, Yorkshire was considered, from the 1760s to the 1820s, to be an ideal place for the adept of 'picturesque touring'. That was not only due to its landscapes, often as impressive as those of Cumberland or Scotland, but also to a key element of picturesque aesthetic highlighted by the artist Thomas Sandby (1721-1798). In his lectures on architecture at the Royal Academy Sandby stressed the importance of this concept in the design and representation of an estate and its country house. Yorkshire was particularly rich in such estates and, inside this vast county, Richmondshire had an exceptional number of small but interesting estates. They were sought-after stops for the traveller as were also the lively market towns, among which Richmond occupied a privileged place. The images of this town and its surroundings made during these years by many artists also reveal the evolution of the concept of picturesque towards either a rather more romantic or a more realistic approach. [1]

These artists were by no means the first to capture the exceptional setting of the town. While painting his pioneering series of views of royal castles in England and Scotland for Charles 1, the Flemish artist Alexander Keirincx (1600-1652) stopped in Richmond in 1639. He painted a detailed bird's-eye view of the whole town seen from a hill on the right bank of the Swale (*Richmond Castle, Yorkshire*, Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Fund, New Haven, Connecticut, B1978.46). In 1674, Francis Place (1647-1728), an English gentleman and attorney, as well as printmaker, drew a spectacular view of *The South east side of Richmond Castle with part of the Town* (British Museum, London, 1850,0223.828). The main features of a 'picturesque' view are already present: a naturalistic representation of the escarpment with rocks and a few trees, the play between light and shadow and a careful representation of the two main buildings,



Paul Sandby R.A. and William Taverner, *View of Richmond Castle, Yorkshire*, watercolour heightened with gouache, 42.7 x 78.5 cm, undated, Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection, B2002.9.2 Public Domain

the ruins of the castle and, near the bridge, the impressive Yorke House with its gardens.

As happened with other places, Francis Grose's *The Antiquities of England and Wales,* London, (1772-1787) – specifically in the volume IV (1775), but also addenda in subsequent volumes and re-editions – helped Richmond's picturesque appeal to be better known in England: its engravings of the town, the castle and its keep, the tower of Grey Friars, the ruins of St Agatha's Abbey and St Martin's were duplicated many times. Regarding the country estates, two publications played a key role: firstly, *The Seats of the Nobility and Gentry in Great Britain and Wales in a Collection of Select Views,* edited by William Angus (1787–1815), with local estates such as Brough Hall illustrated by a print after George Cuit the Elder; secondly, *The Copper Plate Magazine, or Monthly Cabinet of Picturesque Prints, consisting of Sublime and Interesting Views in Great Britain and Ireland, a* monthly magazine edited by John Walker with all sorts of images, among which were representations of country estates or towns, later collected in five volumes (1792-1802). Richmondshire was illustrated with a print of Wycliffe Hall, based also on a work by Cuit the Elder (vol. I, 1792, plate XXXVI) and a view of Richmond Castle after Tomas Girtin. If these books were intended for the amateur and the 'tourist', they were also a working opportunity for many artists. Most of their picturesque paintings were aimed at this market, either to be reproduced in prints for books or sold separately.

Among those works that cannot be linked with a specific order is a very attractive, but not signed nor dated, watercolour representing a *View of Richmond Castle, Yorkshire* (Yale Center for British Art) ascribed to the topographical painter Paul Sandby (1731-1809), known as 'the father of English watercolour'. The museum entry has added the name of William Taverner (1703-1772), an excellent amateur landscape artist to whom some works long attributed to Sandby have been attributed recently.[2] However, there is no proof of Taverner coming to Yorkshire, while another watercolour of Richmond by Paul Sandby is known.[3]

Many elements of the Yale watercolour are characteristic of his work, most notably the care taken in the representation of the different species of trees, the treatment of the woody

landscape and the lively introduction of people in the scenery, not just dropped into the foreground but really walking in this landscape, enjoying it. The viewpoint chosen by the painter, a curve in the Billy Bank path overhanging the last meander of the Swale before entering the town, allows him to represent a large view of Richmond and its castle in the background. The delicate use of light green, grey and white and the careful distribution of what seems an early autumn light gives a convincing depth to the landscape. This watercolour is a masterpiece of picturesque sensibility. Curiously, this superb view point on the town did not attract any other artist before Turner in 1797, followed by Cotman in 1803. It is worth mentioning a later, undated, wonderfully naturalistic view of Richmond taken from the same spot by Thomas Miles Richardson (1784-1848). (National Museum of Wales, Cardiff)

The local painter George Cuit the Elder (1743-1818) is, of course, a central figure for the picturesque image of Richmond. Born in the nearby village of Moulton and educated at Richmond School, he spent six years in Italy sponsored by Lord Dundas, developing his talent in landscape painting. Health problems drove him to settle back in Richmond in 1777. Although he did some portraits of local personalities (eg *Francis Blackburn,* St Catherine's College, Cambridge), his career was nearly totally devoted to painting the landscape of Richmond for private patrons and, as a 'source artist', to provide views to be printed in books, as already mentioned. In 1788, he painted four views of the estate of Lord Mulgrave in Whitby, exhibited that same year at the London Royal Academy. What is particularly interesting in this case, and unique among the painters of Richmond landscape, is the obviously decorative purpose of his work, made to ornate interiors, suggesting a local infatuation for this genre.

It is part of a set of six paintings (private collection) formerly belonging to Lady Serena James and of a surviving pair, dated 1788 (Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York).[4]

They were conceived as a series, their elegant oblong, oval format inserted in a rectangular wooden panel, a decorative practice fashionable in the late 18th century. The search for harmony between the paintings of each set is evident, all representing a bird's-eye view of a large green landscape under a bright and ever blue sky that occupies half the canvas. The composition, inherited from the classical tradition of the Italian landscape, is always the same: the foreground in the shade, framed by one tree on a side and a smaller bush on the other, is followed by a slight drop that allows Cuit to open a vast space where the main architectural element occupies a central position. His rectangular paintings, of a 'cabinet format' suitable for a drawing room, follow



George Cuit the Elder, View of Richmond, Yorkshire, bodycolour, oval, 50.8 x 67.9cm, 1788, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 62.251.1, Gift of Mrs. William M. Haupt, from the collection of Mrs. James B. Haggin, 1965



George Cuit the Elder, View of the Round Howe near Richmond, Yorkshire, bodycolour, oval, 50.2 x 60.7cm, 1788, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 62.251.2, Gift of Mrs. William M. Haupt, from the collection of Mrs. James B. Haggin, 1965

the same pattern. In addition to his views of the castle, mainly taken from the south, Cuit seems to be the first artist to have given panoramic views of Easby – the hall and the abbey – and to represent the new small temple built on the top of Round Howe c.1760 and, apparently, destroyed in 1791. His *View from Marske Edge* (art market, 2006), with a glimpse of Richmond in the background, gives an exceptional place to the pure country landscape.

When, in turn, his son, George Cuitt the Younger (1779-1854), settled back in Richmond around 1820, after a successful career as an engraver, he produced views of Richmond closely inspired by his father's work. George Cuitt the Younger represents perfectly what a local artist, who had cut ties with London artistic life, was not travelling and was working mainly for a wealthy provincial society, could achieve. Did he ever meet the three young and ambitious Londoners, Thomas Girtin (1775-1802), William Turner (1771-1851) and John Sell Cotman (1782-1842) who travelled north in, respectively, 1796, 1797 and 1803, to find new topics and new patrons for their passion of painting landscapes?

Trained by a topographical watercolourist of London, not having yet been involved with the Royal Academy, Thomas Girtin's first trip to the North took him to Yorkshire, Northumberland, and the Borders. He wanted to acquire a better knowledge of medieval England; he hoped, also, to sell some of his works to be reproduced in print by magazine publishers. Richmond was, therefore, a compulsory halt, though he did not come back during his subsequent expeditions in 1800 and 1801. While there, he only had time to make some sketches on the spot. Later, in 1796-1797, he produced at least four watercolours based on these drawings – now lost – whose sketchy nature has led to some discrepancies with the reality. *Richmond Castle and town from the south east* (Private collection), which is mainly a pure topographical work, was obviously intended from the beginning to be engraved.[5] The viewpoint, taken from the right bank of the Swale, facing the actual "Batts", highlights the large place occupied by the ruins of the castle, whose keep, in the centre of the composition, dominates the tightly packed houses. Although the sky seems quite cloudy, a pale sun illuminates the landscape. This allows Girtin to suggest a decorative, but in fact impossible, reflection of the keep in the river. Indeed, a print of it appeared on the 1st November 1798 in the *Copper Plate Magazine* and later, without any comment, in Walker's book, already mentioned (vol. IV, pl. CLXV). The other watercolours show far better Girtin's personality, his love of unusual topics and his deep sense of reality: another view of the castle (Leeds Museum City Art Gallery) taken from the weir, 'The Falls', a viewpoint which does not seem to have interested other artists, is particularly striking. He must have stood on some stones in the middle of the Swale in order to focus its composition on the mill that stood right on its bank. The lighter tones of this building contrast with the mass of the castle and the escarpment, treated in dark brown, a true colour of Richmond on a grey day: horses and carts are waiting near the mill, other horses charged with wheat are coming down Millgate.

It is indeed a rare image of working life in Richmond. Girtin's other watercolours are more obviously 'picturesque': *St Agatha's Abbey, Easby* (Manchester Art Gallery) is a delicate study, in shades of green, blue and yellow, of the reflection in the Swale, often very still there, of the house attached to the former tithe barn – taking some liberties with its real appearance – and some ruins of the abbey in the background. In *St Nicholas, Manor House* (British Museum, London) he enjoyed the contrast between the delicate Renaissance features of the house and the rusticity of its occupants, farmers with their cows and their chickens in the foreground. Girtin brought real life to Richmond picturesque.

One year later, in the summer of 1797, William Turner, Girtin's friend and exact contemporary, in turn made his first expedition to the North Country. Having already acquired a good reputation as a landscapist painter, he was

invited to Harewood by Edward Lascelles. From there he explored not only Yorkshire but Northumberland and the Lake District. When in Richmond, he made two sketches of overviews of the town and two of Easby Abbey[6]. He studied the town from the two opposite sides: for the first sketch, kept in his *Tweed and Lakes Sketchbook* (fol. 14recto, Tate Britain D01012), he chose a viewpoint along Billy Bank – as Paul Sandby did – but right next to the river, which gives a more impressive aspect to the hill on which the castle and the town stand. While later (1797-1798) doing a colour study (Tate Britain D0116), probably with the intention of turning the sketch into a proper watercolour, he spectacularly emphasised that effect by audaciously choosing to represent a sunrise behind the hill, slightly reflected in the Swale and in the yet very dark landscape. Such a work goes well beyond the definition of picturesque and is closer to what the philosopher David Hume (1711-1776) called 'sublime'. The second sketch, kept in his *North of England* sketchbook (Tate Britain D00932) and never translated into a watercolour, is taken from the more often used south-east side. However, he chose a viewpoint a bit further along the Swale than usual, below the ruins of St Martin's Priory that appear on the left part of the drawing near a small mill. It highlights the gently hilly surroundings of the town.

Turner's sketch of the ruins of *St Agatha, Easby* (North of England sketchbook, Tate Britain D00931) is taken from a viewpoint quite similar to Girtin's, showing the same panorama extending from the house with the tithe barn to the mill beyond the abbey. The watercolour that he drew from (c.1797, The Whitworth, University of Manchester) is, however, radically different, even though they both used a sunset light: while Girtin's view is quiet and peaceful, Turner's is more impressive, more monumental. He gives more attention to the landscape in the background and he has removed the house and the elevation of the refectory to focus attention on the western part of the building. There, he plays with the contrast between the wall, illuminated by the setting sun, and the ruin of the guest rooms, already in a greenish shade. The river, that occupies most of the foreground, guides the eye towards the hilly landscape in the background. He masterfully suggests the atmosphere that often envelops Easby when the sun sets. The importance given to the landscape surrounding the main architectural element of his composition is also evident in another watercolour of *Saint Agatha* (British Museum, London, 1958,0712.406) related to this first trip. Representing the ruins of the Guest House from upstream, with water running in the former latrine drain, the piece seems once again dominated by the fight between the sunset still illuminating the architecture and the long shadows of the evening light invading the edges of the water and the hills.

The third, bright young London landscapist to undertake a tour of the North was John Sell Cotman, who had moved in 1798 from his native Norwich to London, where he became acquainted with Paul Sandby Munn (1773-1845). After having toured Wales in 1801 and 1802, he made his first trip to Yorkshire in the summer of 1803 with Munn, where he was guest and drawing master of the Cholmondeley family at Bransby Hall. They visited Richmond and Easby Abbey on the 14th-16th July 1803. Their short stay produced only a few drawings from the castle and bridge by Munn and a strange but interesting watercolour by Cotman (Hickman Bacon Collection). Seen from Billy Bank, the castle appears as a shadow in the background, behind a juxtaposition of masses of vegetation of rather muted colours. According to Peter Bower, a great connoisseur of 18th century papers, Cotman chose an absorbent wrapping paper to obtain this general effect of flatness, quite different from the usual precise technique. Cotman was just then starting to develop a new style, more classical, with simplified shapes sharply defined, that is so characteristic of his well-known representation of Greta Bridge (British Museum), which he visited soon after his visit to Richmond.[7]

Nearly twenty years after his first stay, Turner came back to Richmond in July 1816. He had

been asked by Thomas Durham Whitaker, clergyman, antiquarian and writer, to be the source artist for the illustration of *An History of Richmondshire*, the first and only volume of his new venture, an illustrated *General History of the county of York*, which was published in 1823. [8] Turner had already contributed to other publications by Whitaker. In order to prepare the watercolours that a team of engravers chosen by him had to turn into prints, he made a tour of Richmondshire in July-August 1816, drawing many sketches, but also some fully developed studies, all in four sketchbooks now kept in Tate Britain, London. [9] Without entering into the complex history of the prints, we must remember that he had to follow the dictates of engraving, notably by compressing the composition in order to fit in as many details as possible, and by choosing the colours that will better suggest what has to be in full light or in the shadow. While in Richmond on the 30th and 31st July, he made a good number of sketches that, added to what he had done in 1797, helped him to produce two general views of the castle and the town, one of St Agatha in Easby and one of Aske Hall, a new topic for him.

The surviving watercolour of *Richmond, Yorkshire, from the North-East* (Victoria and Albert Museum, London), seen from the small hill on the path to Easby Abbey, just when leaving the town, is by far the most precise and detailed topographical representation of Richmond, extending as far as St Mary's, with not only the castle, the towers, the houses and their gardens, but also the walls, the paths and the weir.



William Turner, Richmond, watercolour, 29 x 41.7 cm, c. 1818, Victoria and Albert Museum, Given by the Executors of the late Robert Clarke Edwards,P.17-1938.



J.W. Archer after William Turner, Richmond Castle and Town, line engraving and etching, 19.2 x 27.5 cm (image) 1830, Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection, B1977.14.13296. Public Domain.

The second view, from the south-west, is only known by J.W. Archer's engraving. After having considered reusing the 1797 view from Billy Bank, he finally chose a new viewpoint, taken from Sleegill, which does not integrate Yorke House, a usual feature until then, but emphasises the long wall of the castle and the abrupt change in level of Bargate, represented for the first time, and shows a factory at work along the river. In the foreground, a washerwoman carries her bundle of laundry to the river. Turner's interest in giving an idea of daily life in Richmond is evident. Although the loss of the original watercolour makes it impossible to ensure that he wanted to represent the windy atmosphere, the fact that the cloud and the hill have been darkened in the successive proofs of the engraving tends to prove it.

Inspired by both his 1797 and 1816 sketches, his watercolour of *St Agatha's Abbey* (British Museum, London, 1915,0313.48), made around 1821 after several colour studies, is a masterpiece of elegiac delicacy. The accurate representation of the architecture, showing the leaning wall of the refectory, is softened by a very light treatment that blends it into the natural landscape and makes a wonderful screen for the cows and the herdswoman. A more traditional 'picturesque' approach characterises the watercolour of *Aske Hall, the seat of the Honorable Lord Dundas* (Astley Cheetham Art Gallery), whose viewpoint had not been chosen by him. Taken from the top of the actual Gilling road, before the descent towards the estate, the bird's-eye view is framed by two trees leaning towards each other – a recurrent topic in landscape painting – with sheep resting in their shade. Treated in shades of yellow and green, the watercolour shows the Hall in the distance, a little more impressive than in reality, in full sunlight nestled among hills.

In 1825, Turner once again took up the challenge of accepting a publishing venture, Charles Heath's project of *The Picturesque Views in England and Wales*, a collection of copper-engravings all made after the painter's own drawings. Among the ninety-six plates published by Longman between 1825 and 1838, two represent Richmond. The watercolour of the first one, a view of Richmond from the south-east with a milkmaid – the lass of Richmond? – in the foreground (British Museum, London, 1920,0212.276) was engraved by W.R. Smith. Without having to come back to Richmond, Turner had enough material to again change his viewpoint, choosing a spot halfway up the hill facing the Batts, on the other side of the Swale. This allows him to give a glance, on the left, towards the bridge and Yorke House. Being less constrained than before to respect an accurate topography, he builds a delightful image of the town clinging to the hill, planting here and there the obelisk, Trinity Church, etc., but giving a charming, accurate description of the rear façades and gardens of Millgate. The Swale is moving fast, as are the clouds in the sky. The second view, *Richmond Yorkshire (from the Moors)*, only known by Wilmore's engraving of the lost watercolour, shows a completely new scenery, certainly related to his work in the Swale valley for the Richmondshire series. Probably taken from a path towards Marske, as Cuit the Elder had done, it is a somewhat inaccurate representation of the town below in the valley, but in the most impressive atmospheric landscape.

The image that many have today of Richmond, quite remarkably preserved, still owes a great deal to the picturesque movement. Attracted by its scenery and the many testimonies of its lively history, landscapists, either rooted in the town like George Cuit the Elder or a revolutionary genius like Turner, captured its unique charm for the benefit of future generations to enjoy centuries later.

Endnotes

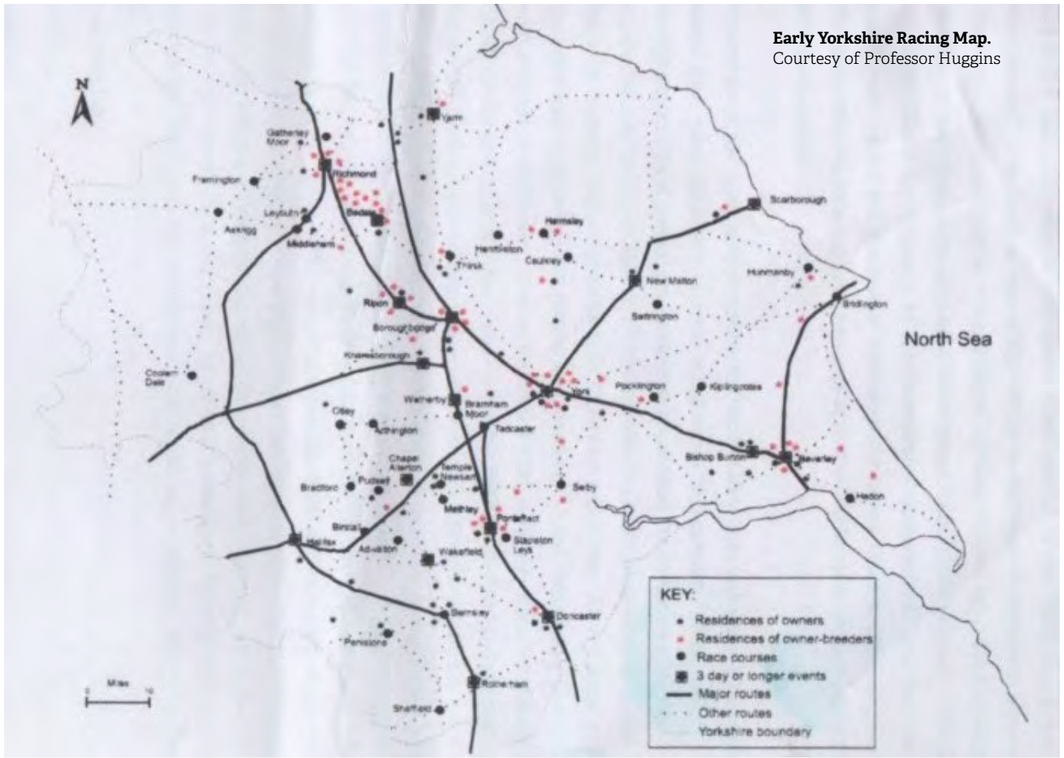
1. The images of most of the works not reproduced here are available on their museum websites. The inventory number has been added when it seemed useful to help finding them.
2. https://collections.britishart.yale.edu/catalog/tms:51074, accessed 11January 2022.
3. Sotheby's London, *Important British Drawings, Watercolours & Portrait miniatures,* 25/11/2004, n° 154, reproduced.
4. For Cuit's paintings in the Metropolitan Museum, https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/341213 ? (and 341215) accessed 20/1/2022
5. David Hill, *Thomas Girtin, genius in the North,* Harewood House Trust, 1999, pp.54-55.
6. For Turner's 1797 visit to Richmond, the main reference is the online publication by Tate Britain, where most of his drawings are kept, of David Blayney Brown (ed.), *J.M.W. Turner: Sketchbooks, Drawings and Watercolours*, Tate Research Publication, 2014, with entries by Andrew Wilton easily accessible using the inventory number given in the text. For example, https://www.tate.org.uk/art/research-publications/jmw-turner/joseph-mallord-william-turner-richmond-from-the-river-swale-r1150178, accessed 29/1/2022. Also D. Hill, *Turner in the North,* Yale University Press, 2000, pp.40-45
7. Eric Shanes, The golden age of watercolours: the Hickman Bacon collection, London, Merrel, 2001, p. 72. For the general context, D. Hill, *Cotman in the North: Watercolours of Durham and Yorkshire*, Yale university Press and Harewood Trust, 2005.
8. Stanley Warbuton and Susan Bourne, *Turner and Dr. Whitaker,* exhibition catalogue, Towneley Hall Art Gallery & Museums, Burnley Bourough Council, 1982 with many interesting elements about Turner and the *History of Richmondshire.*
9. This tour has been extensively studied by D. Hill in *In Turner's footsteps. Through the Hills and Dales of Northern England,* John Murray, London 1984 and in his entries for the online publication, D.B. Brown (ed.), *J.M.W. Turner: Sketchbooks, Drawings and Watercolours*, Tate Research Publication, 2013. See note 4.

The History of Horseracing in Richmond

Professor Michael Huggins

In October, Professor Michael Huggins gave the first hybrid lecture (both face to face and on Zoom) to the Civic Society on the History of Racing in Richmond, in the Main Hall at Richmond School. The Burgage Pastures Committee had previously approached Dr Mike Huggins, Emeritus Professor of History at Cumbria University and a world authority on the history of racing and racecourses, to commission a piece of work about Richmond Racecourse. This work formed the basis of the book *A Short History of Richmond Racecourse and its Grandstand* published during the 950th in June 2021. This account summarises the lecture and the importance of racing to Richmond. It is embellished with some extracts from the book.

Professor Huggins began his talk at a time in the past when England's national sport was horse racing, not football as it is today. What is not well known is that Richmond was a key early centre for breeding racehorses and, even though the races took place only once a year, horseracing and horse breeding generated major employment in the town. In the second half of the 1600s the future thoroughbred horse started to gain prominence. When Daniel Defoe made his famous tours round England, writing in the 1720s, he singled out Richmond and Bedale as the two most famous areas for horses. In the first thoroughbred stud book ever published by Weatherby, it showed that every one of the most famous founding mares was bred in this small area or just to the north. The first thoroughbreds were a mixture of regional horses from this area, crossed with imported horses from Turkey, North Africa or Arabia, and described as 'Oriental Stallions'. The first Jockey Club's foundation in Newmarket around 1718 (not 1750, which is



Early Yorkshire Racing Map.
Courtesy of Professor Huggins

incorrect) helped to establish racing as a national sport, but up to the 1740s the North Riding still bred the very best thoroughbreds and southern racehorses were still largely inferior. Newmarket and southern owners often imported horses from the north. Leading local breeders with national reputations included James Darcy of Sedbury near Richmond (who was Charles II's studmaster), Thomas Pulleine of Carlton Hall (William of Orange's studmaster), John Hutton of Marske and Ralph Milbanke of Halnby, near Croft. So, the history of racing round Richmond is far more important than people might think. It is a very significant part of England's racing history.

The grainy map gives a sense of the importance, of racing. The red dots are the owner breeders in the early 1700s. The main road ran through Richmond and on to Gatherley Moor. There were many trainers around Richmond and Bedale, others around Beverley and a few more around York. The North of England was already famous for its race weeks. These happened only once a year with maybe only one race a day but most races were in heats. In each heat the horses, then largely five or more years old, would run up to four miles and a winner had to win two heats. So, after 30 minutes rest, the horses would then have to run another heat of four miles. It could be a good idea not to win the second heat, so that the betting odds would lengthen for the next heat. Sometimes the race winner could run as many as five heats, so horses would be raced 20 miles and, if it was a tight race, the horse would be spurred and hit by the whip. Consequently, horses only ran rarely and might race once at Richmond and then wait several months to race again at, for example, Boroughbridge.

The rich horse owners, who had the very fast horses, wanted them to win to demonstrate their owners' status. When racing first started, the horses were just trained on the owners' estates. They soon discovered that if the horses were trained on steep ground, this strengthened their legs and lungs. So training developed on the moors at Richmond, Malton, Hambleton and Middleham. Initially, men just raced their horses where they could find a moor to race on and the bets were small. The earliest races near Richmond were at Gatherley Moor between Gilling West and Melsonby. By the 1600s an annual race was held on the 'High Moor' or Great Pasture and then on to the Low Moor where, in 1765, a new race ground was finally laid out.

By the 1600s most of the races were controlled by locally laid down legal articles of agreement which owners had to sign, to avoid cheating. Owners, although they were gentlemen, would try and fiddle the rules if they could. The first thing was that the course of four miles had to be measured. For an early race on the High Moor in May 1622 a course would have been laid out and a winner's cup was bought for 'knights, gentlemen and good fellows' – note the social classification. Horses had to run a measured course without taking shortcuts. The course was laid out with a few posts, no fences and no rails. Horses ran the course from the starter's chair past the distance chair, and any horses not reaching the distance chair before the heat winner reached the finish post were excluded from following heats.

In the early 1600s John Speede printed maps. His maps of Yorkshire included the whole of Yorkshire and maps of three towns. One was York, one was Hull, the major port, and one was Richmond. That is how important Richmond was then, a very important little town, the leading town in the North Riding. When the Civil War ended and Charles was sent down from Scotland to be executed down in London, he was brought through Richmond. There were no coach routes at that time. They were still using the old roads.

At the time of the move to the Low Moor course in 1765 everything remained temporary. Little huts offered shelter for ordinary folk. They could be made of wood and turf and there would be little stands made of steps.

A few had roofs, but no windows and they were temporary. Richmond was beginning to develop as a leisure town, one of few in England at that time, and saw itself as higher in status. At this point it got some good news. The two most important racecourses in the whole of Yorkshire were then at York and Hambleton. Hambleton was important because it had the best turf but it was remote. It was a course for rich men with good horses, but there was no real shelter other than its small inn. The better off, who could travel with their ladies by coach on the newly opening turnpike toll roads, had nowhere to shelter. Races elsewhere were offering new opportunities for the elite and middling groups (men and women) to socialise. Hambleton fell out of favour. It lost its famous Royal Plate, and King George decided that Richmond and York should each get this plate once every two years. Even more aristocrats and their ladies, their daughters and sons came to Richmond. There were plenty of places to stay such as lovely inns, but just the huts to shelter from the rain on the course. The latest innovation was a then a grandstand of stone or brick.



The Grandstand, Richmond Racecourse. Courtesy of John Harland.

Wakefield, York and Beverley already had one. So Richmond recruited the leading architect of the period, John Carr, who produced the top architecture in the Palladian style in the North. The grandstand that he designed for Richmond was comfortable. It had heating, rooms for card play and it looked good. It was a top-notch grandstand for a leading racecourse.

During the race week there was lots to do, such as examining the horses that arrived a week before the races. There were no cars or railways, so the horses had to walk to the course. Some would walk from Newmarket or even from London. The trainers would exercise them on the moor, but were careful not to make their horses look too good so that they could obtain better odds. Some people liked to bet and how much you could afford to bet was a mark of status. The most important thing when turning up to the racecourse, whether you were rich or just a barmaid, was to see and be seen. It was the high spot of the year. You would meet people you had not seen throughout the year and have a drink with them. There was heavy

drinking. In the Georgian period people drank a lot. Diaries might record on the first day - 'Got drunk'; on the second day - 'Drank a lot'; third day - 'Very drunk'. Stalls were erected by publicans as they could earn more money in the three days of racing than in Richmond in the rest of the year, due to the heavy drinking. There was commercial sex with prostitutes working in huts on the course. They would walk there with their pimps. And for country spectators it could be a time of more abandon. If you look at christening figures, they show that christenings peaked nine months after the races.

There were cockfights with sometimes more betting on these than on the races. There was much political intrigue amongst visiting politicians and supporters. Lunch time meals called ordinaries were held in leading local pubs, where people could meet and socialise. The race meetings were great social occasions where you could meet people from further afield, occasions to find marriage partners and occasions when marriages were arranged. The ladies would wear their best clothes and sometimes there were special hairdressers that came to the race meetings. The hairdressers could make a lot of money and the ladies would look their best in the grandstand and in the town. There were assemblies, balls, plays at the new Georgian Theatre, and social events. All this happened during the race week.

In their early days, Richmond race meetings were badly attended and offered only poor prize money, or, alternatively, cups and tankards such as the Snow Tankard or small pieces of plate. To increase the prize money, the meetings were subsidised by the local aristocracy and businessmen, such as in 1698 when the Mayor and Aldermen collected a guinea as prize money from the principal owners. Later owners included the Dundas family from Aske, the Duke of Leeds, the Earl of Harewood, Mr Hutton from Marske and many more.

As prize money grew during the 1700s and race meetings offered more prestigious cups, such as the first Gold Cup donated by Queen Anne in 1706, so the meetings gradually became great social and romantic occasions and were picturesque, colourful affairs. Wealthy families from all over the North would arrive in Richmond for the races in beautiful coaches and post chaises, attended by outriders and footmen, all in colourful liveries. Postilions (coachmen who guided the horse drawn carriages), would be in yellow jackets and decorated caps, and grooms in bright crimson livery. Ladies and gentlemen of fashion were stylishly attired and added to the pageantry of the occasion. Assemblies and balls were held in the Town Hall, hotels and private houses, and, for the ordinary folk everywhere, there was a sense of festivity and general jollification. Samuel Butler and his travelling players would perform plays at the Georgian Theatre. There was boxing and cockfighting, card playing, drinking and gambling in public houses in the town.

Richmond racecourse became known as 'The Shire Capital of Turf Affairs' and it was said that there was no better place in the North 'to try the goodness of a horse's bottom'. The two most prestigious races were the Corporation Cup worth 60 guineas and the annual Richmond Gold cup, worth 100 guineas, run in the autumn and attracting crowds of up to 8,000 eager race goers. Members of the public who had subscribed five guineas (about £1,000 in present day value) when the Grandstand was built received a lifetime metal circular token for free admission to the building and others paid for a season ticket. This cost 10s 6d in 1820 (about £50 today). Every year between 1757 and 1858 new Gold Cups would be awarded, many designed by the famous Scottish architect Robert Adam, and they would be placed in the window of the Mayor's house on the eve of the race.

On the race day the cup was decked with ribbons, was suspended on a pole and paraded through the town by the two Sergeants-at-Mace. They were dressed in formal regalia with antique cloaks, lace cravats and cocked hats. Not being horsemen by nature, they rode large but extremely docile horses, lent for the occasion. Thousands of people, both locals and visitors, gathered in the Market Place to watch the parade, which left the Market Cross to the cheers of spectators. It then travelled along Finkle Street into Newbiggin before ascending up Hurgill Road to the racecourse. The cup was placed in front of the Grandstand, where it could be admired by the crowd. Once the race was over, the cup would be presented to the lucky owner, filled with champagne, claret or mulled port. He would toast everybody, from the jockey and trainer down to the stable lads, not forgetting the Mayor, the Corporation and the people of Richmond.

Initially the judges and stewards had a wooden stand, offering little shelter. The stone Judge's Box or Stand was built in 1814. Not the best, but a pretty good one for its time. But then things began to change. In the 1700s Richmond was a prestigious three-day meeting with leading older horses, free to enter and funded by subscriptions collected from local gentry and townspeople that supported racing, the Corporation, innkeepers and others. Richmond races were still free to enter. The only thing you paid for was to enter into the huts and the Grandstand. Over time there were more races each day, and the heats and longer-distance races had begun to disappear But, by 1833 Richmond was dropping slowly in status, moving towards a two-day meeting with younger horses and poorer prize money. By 1863 the races were a mile or less and the quality of the horses was poor because Richmond could no longer offer the big prizes. Many of the county gentry and rich landowners spent more time in London and no longer helped fund local meetings, though the Dundas family continued with their support. The best horses went to the big towns like Newcastle and York. Racegoers increasingly came from further afield once Richmond had a railway. This was bad news, as more working-class folk from Leeds, Newcastle, Middlesborough and Stockton travelled to Richmond. They came to have a drink and bet and their behaviour could be rowdy and aggressive. By contrast, the railways changed the social and leisure patterns of local families, many of whom could go to the coast, to places such as Redcar and Scarborough for their holiday week, instead of attending the races.

Racehorse ownership was also changing. Early owners had been titled, enormously wealthy men with estates. Men such as Henry Vane Tempest, who owned the famous horse Hambletonian, which was for some time trained at Richmond. Some innkeepers, trainers and bookmakers also owned horses. Before the 1800s, betting took place on the racecourse, initially around the betting post and then the grandstand, and bets were placed with people you knew. There were no bookmakers offering odds on all horses until around 1800. Bookmakers took off in the 1840s and bets were taken before the race, though losing bookmakers were not necessarily there to pay up after the race! Wagering on horses was not only a way of making money. For the elite, gambling could be a means of demonstrating how wealthy you were. When Vane Tempest matched his horse Hambletonian at Newmarket in 1799 against Mr Cookson's Diamond, each staked £3,000, then up to a hundred years' wages for an unskilled man. Vane Tempest placed further side bets as well.

On May 13th 1851, the famous racehorse, Voltigeur, owned by Lord Zetland of Aske Hall, Richmond, took part in the 'match of the century'. The epic race took place at York racecourse, watched by a crowd that was estimated to be between 100,000 and 150,000. Many had walked all the way from Richmond to see their favourite, Voltigeur, or 'Volti' as they called him, take on 'The Flying Dutchman' in a challenge match arranged by their respective owners, Lord Zetland of Aske Hall, Richmond, and Lord Eglinton of Ayrshire. The purse was 1,000 guineas from each owner on a winner take all basis, the equivalent of £150,000 in today's money.

When the flag fell, Voltigeur went off at the 'top of his pace' and took a lead of 3 lengths. Gradually, however, the heavy ground took its toll and, as they passed the stand, the horses were neck and neck in a 'struggle of desperate effort'. It was too much for Voltigeur and The Flying Dutchman passed the winning chair in the lead by a short length. So ended the 'match of the century', one of the most celebrated match races in thoroughbred racing.



Robert Hill (Trainer) and Bob Marson (Jockey) with Voltiger.

Today, Voltigeur's name lives on in the 'Voltigeur Gate' into Aske Hall, the home of the Marquis of Zetland, and in a famous painting by the renowned artist, Edwin Landseer. This was the only portrait of a horse that Landseer painted.

During its heyday, racing was a major employer in Richmond. Richmond was a well-known training area for racehorses. The best horses would be run right across England and Scotland, and poorer ones only in the north of England. A trainer signed a contract with an owner to train his horses for the year, with payment at the end of the year, though every so often some had to take the owners to court as they were not paid. They had their families with them and living-in stable lads to look after the horses. Better-off trainers had servants. The most important stables were at Silvio House, Belleisle and at Aske, but there were many other trainers at places like High Gingerfield, York Place, Hurgill House and Temple View. There were also horse-breeding stud farms in the villages around Richmond, at Easby, Catterick, Gilling, and Brompton on Swale. All these farms employed stud grooms and stable lads. Married grooms in training stables would live down in the town and walk up to the stables early in the morning, except Sundays. Their horses needed veterinary surgeons, farriers, blacksmiths and harness makers. These training stables attracted touts as the racing newspapers wanted news about the current form of the racehorses. They would also get up early to see the horses training



The match between Voltigeur and The Flying Dutchman. The painting, by John F. Herring, became one of the most widely reproduced racing images of the time.



Exercising

and send down their recommendations on the telegram to the papers.

From 1870 onwards the Jockey Club began to introduce new rules, which bore down on small country meetings like Richmond, pushing for increased prize money and safer courses. By 1890 there were 190 rules of racing, which Richmond struggled to meet. The racing press increasingly described Richmond as an old-fashioned meeting. Despite the hard work of the local race committee, generous donations from the local MP and the Earl of Zetland, and the support of the Zetland family, who usually brought up a party for the races, fewer local inhabitants took an interest in it, and race meetings were now often poorly attended. The two-day race meeting gained little positive praise in the racing press, described as tame and uninteresting, or as a poor day's racing. Reports increasingly stressed the presence of card sharps, drunkards and pickpockets. Deficits in the accounts began to appear more regularly, and it became increasingly difficult to hold a two-day meeting. Long-time committee members such as John Wetherall, the Richmond auctioneer, and Alderman Alexander Young, brewer, wine and spirit merchant and racehorse breeder, were dying off. The race committee decided to enclose the course and charge admission, but, despite charging a shilling for entrance in 1889, a year when the local vicar preached against the meeting, the following year only £200 was taken at the turnstiles and £225 at the grandstand, suggesting attendances of perhaps 3,000 or so, while the meeting cost over £1,000 to run. The Earl of Zetland provided £200 towards the meeting in 1892, but the whole town only subscribed £62. Finances were bad and, in addition, the Jockey Club required course alterations and improvements to safety which could not be afforded. Closure was inevitable and the final meeting was held on 7th August 1891.

If you would like to read more about the history of the racecourse up to the present day *A Short History of Richmond Racecourse and its Grandstand* describes how the racecourse was then used by the military, the RAF and others. Our thanks go to Professor Huggins, on whose article the first section, with the history up to 1892, is based. The book takes the story up to the Present Day. It also covers the politics behind the partial demolition of the grandstand in 1970.

Sources

The detailed bibliography can be found in the *Short History of Richmond Racecourse and its Grandstand* book.

The Georgian Theatre Royal Celebrates the Return of Live Shows in Revamped Auditorium

Helga Pearson

It has been a momentous year for Richmond's Georgian Theatre Royal, with the unveiling of an impressive new auditorium and the return of live performances to its historic stage following many months of closure.

When the curtain went up on the evening of Friday 3rd September 2021, it was a joyous occasion. Not just because it was the first live professional performance in the much-loved venue since the start of the national lockdown in March 2020, but also because the audience had the extra bonus of being seated in a splendidly refurbished auditorium.

Regular theatre-goers would instantly notice the new comfortable seats with their better views of the stage; the smart re-decoration and freshly painted mural behind the boxes; the improved auditorium and stage lighting; and the more regulated ambient temperature – all thanks to a major development programme that has breathed new life into the 233-year-old building.

The journey started in the early summer of 2020. Like thousands of other arts venues across the country, the Theatre was in lockdown, with little idea of when it would be able to re-open its doors to the theatre-going public and the future looked particularly bleak.

It was at this point that the well-known philanthropist Hamish Ogston – a long-standing supporter of The Georgian Theatre Royal and its Vice President – stepped in with a donation of £375,000 to kick-start an ambitious capital works project that would bring the Theatre up to modern standards whilst maintaining the building's heritage and authenticity.

For some time, the Theatre had been acutely aware that audiences were struggling with the Georgian's famously uncomfortable seating. This seating originated from the 1960s and largely comprised hard benches, either with unsupportive backrests or no backrests at all. Whilst many people loved this 'hard-core' Georgian experience, just as many objected to a couple of hours spent in discomfort and ticket sales undoubtedly suffered.

In 2018, the Theatre commissioned architects De Matos Ryan to undertake a feasibility study to determine how the seating could be made more comfortable without detracting from the ambience of the Grade 1 listed 18th century building. As part of the process, heritage impact assessments were undertaken by both Historic Theatre Consultant, David Wilmore, and RICS approved Certified Historic Building Professionals, Maddison James Associates.

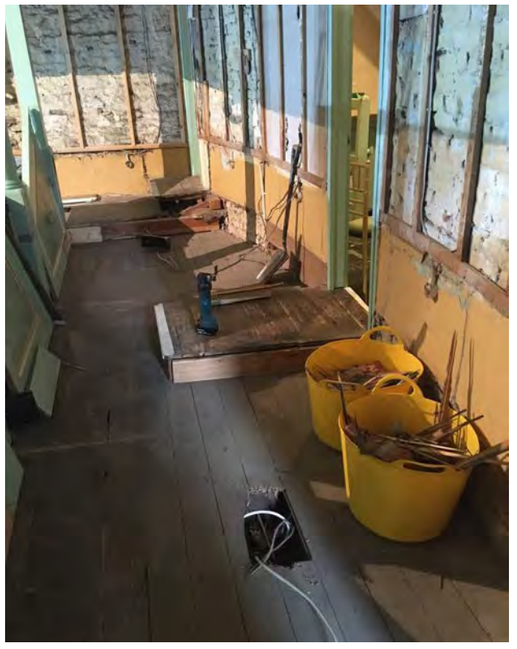
The results of the study were shared with Richmond Town Council (who own the building), Friends of The Georgian Theatre Royal, volunteers and Richmond and District Civic Society. Site visits were also conducted by Richmondshire District Council and Historic England, both of whom lent their complete support to the initiative. The plans were fully endorsed by Historic England and Listed Building Consent was granted in April 2019, ahead of securing funding for the project.

It was this vital funding from the Hamish Ogston Foundation – announced in June 2020 – that provided the green light for the project to go ahead during the Theatre's forced enclosure due to Covid-19 restrictions.

"This exceedingly generous donation offered a wonderful opportunity for the Theatre to turn

what could have been a difficult and worrying time into something with a very positive outcome," said Clare Allen, Chief Executive of The Georgian Theatre Royal.

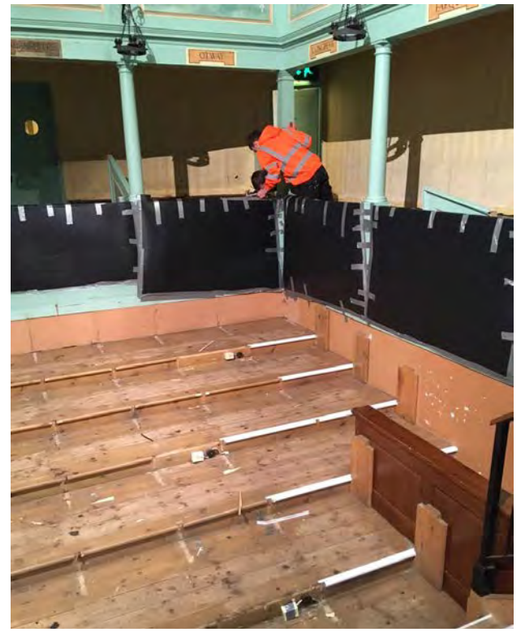
Much thought and research went into the bespoke design of the new seating, which was hand-made by Race Furniture, established national experts in auditorium seating. Ergonomically designed and tailored to suit the different parts of the auditorium, the seats ranged from freestanding chairs in the boxes to benches in the pit and gallery, with additional tipping seats for the ushers. These were all made off-site out of English oak and top-quality leather for durability and easy-care. Notable features are the increased seat depths and widths; shaped, padded back rests to improve comfort, and the finely embroidered seat numbers to aid identification.



The centre boxes have been realigned to allow improved access and a more spacious and exclusive seating area.
Courtesy Georgian Theatre Royal

The work in the auditorium itself was carried out by local company Acomb Construction. This started in autumn 2020 and was completed early in 2021. As well as more comfortable seating, one of the project's main objectives was to improve the view of the stage. This involved floor levels being raised to increase the rake of the seats. Where this occurred, platforms were laid over the original flooring, which not only ensured that the fabric of the building was preserved but, importantly, it meant that all the renovations are completely reversible. The partitions were also re-arranged in the centre boxes and the rear benches removed to open up the area in each box.

In order to achieve these goals of improving sightlines, allowing additional legroom and creating more spacious individual seating demarcations, the Theatre has reduced its seating capacity from just over 200 to 155. However, this does mean that many of the unpopular seats that were traditionally difficult to sell have now been eliminated. Part of the upstairs gallery has also been re-configured to provide a better arrangement for the two wheelchair positions.



The pit has been re-tiered to give improved views of the stage.
Courtesy Georgian Theatre Royal

As part of the project, the three-tier, courtyard-style auditorium has also been completely re-decorated, new stage and auditorium lighting has been installed, and a mural depicting a

lively Georgian audience is an additional feature behind the boxes.

"I am delighted to have facilitated this aspiring and most worthwhile project through the work of my Foundation," said Hamish Ogston. "It is essential to preserve historic buildings like this, particularly when they house some of our most enduring traditions. By developing and enhancing them in creative ways we can ensure that future generations will continue to enjoy them as we do."

It was the intention of Hamish Ogston that his donation would provide a catalyst for further financial support of the Theatre, and this has been forthcoming in recent grants from the Theatres Trust, the Pilgrim Trust, the Foyle Foundation and the Normanby Trust. Collectively, this has meant that the Theatre has also been able to replace old boilers and install a modern Building Management System, which will greatly improve both the effectiveness and efficiency of the ventilation and heating in the building. This has really proved its worth during Covid times, as the new system is able to distribute 100% fresh air into the auditorium.

The first glimpses of the new auditorium were to be had when the Theatre opened for guided tours in May 2021. The Georgian Theatre Experience is one of the area's most popular tourist attractions. The visit includes a full guided tour of the auditorium, dressing rooms and stage, as well as access to the exhibition area, which features the Woodland Scene – Britain's oldest surviving stage scenery painted between 1818 and 1836 – as well as old playbills, pantomime props and Georgian costumes.

Throughout the summer months, visitors and locals alike flocked through the doors to see the Theatre's treasures as well as the results of the renovation, but it wasn't until September



The finished auditorium of The Georgian Theatre Royal following a major development programme during lockdown.
Courtesy Georgian Theatre Royal

that the curtains finally went up on live performances.

The Theatre held its official re-awakening event on Friday 3rd September. Amongst the guests were local MP and Chancellor Rishi Sunak, and Lord Crathorne, a long-serving Trustee of the Theatre, whose mother Lady Nancy Crathorne was the driving force behind the original re-opening of the Theatre in 1963.



Pictured at the official opening of The Georgian Theatre Royal's new auditorium are (left to right) the Rt. Hon. Rishi Sunak MP, Mac Bryant (Chair of The Georgian Theatre Royal Trust), Hamish Ogston, Lord Crathorne and Albert Lau.

"We are hugely grateful to Hamish Ogston whose Foundation gave us the substantial grant that enabled us to complete much of our celebrated auditorium project," said Mac Bryant, Chair of The Georgian Theatre Royal Trust, when speaking at the event. "In addition, Rishi Sunak's staff furlough scheme and other Government initiatives have enabled us to retain our dedicated staff team and meet the day-to-day running costs of the Theatre during the closure period."

"It is thanks to them both and everyone else that has supported and donated to the Theatre throughout the pandemic that we are now able to welcome audiences back to this wonderful theatre and look forward to a glorious season of live entertainment," he added.

Starting the 2021 Autumn Season with a recital on the same evening was international pianist Albert Lau, who also played selected pieces at the opening event. He performed on the Theatre's newly restored Steinway grand piano that was renovated during lockdown.

The Autumn Season – that included evenings with Baroness Hale of Richmond, former President of the Supreme Court of the United Kingdom, and the Poet Laureate Simon Armitage – was exceptionally well supported, with several events quickly selling out. It concluded with the return of the Theatre's legendary annual pantomime, *Beauty and the Beast*, which brought together many generations to experience the magic of live theatre. It enjoyed a near sell-out run and was the perfect way to celebrate the end of a hugely significant year in the Theatre's long and illustrious history.

Sophie Campbell, a travel writer for *The Telegraph*, summed it up with her review of *Beauty and the Beast*. "The theatre has survived, miraculously, for over 230 years, in the handsome little town of Richmond, on the edge of the Yorkshire Dales. The auditorium is tiny and timber, with comfy new seats and a newly painted mural of a riotous Georgian audience.

Panto is an essentially rural tradition and that's exactly what you get in Richmond: it's warm, friendly, full of local allusions, place names and current affairs that get an instant reaction from the audience. It makes you laugh and groan, and somehow provides a vivid link with the intimate, human theatre of the late eighteenth century."

Her praise was echoed by many enthusiastic audience members, including this comment posted on social media: "We came to the panto last night and it was excellent! The show was amazing for all ages and I've not laughed so much in a long time. Brilliant!"

Clearly everyone is very pleased to be back!

Revising Pevsner in the North Riding

Dr Jane Grenville

Jane Grenville is reaching the end of a thorough revision of Nikolaus Pevsner's North Riding volume, part of his magisterial overview of English architectural achievement, *The Buildings of England*. Pevsner's background was perhaps surprising for the job: a European art historian with a fledgling career in Germany which came to a crashing halt with the accession of the Nazi party to power – for Pevsner, although a Lutheran Christian convert, was ethnically Jewish and therefore unacceptable to the new regime. Leaving his wife, Lola, and their children in Germany, he sought work in England, where he had been briefly in the summer of 1930 to muster material for an undergraduate module he was planning to teach. So he had an embryonic network which he called upon and, although he was unable to find an academic position, he scraped together a living as a buyer for Gordon Russell furniture and was able to bring his family over. The most important of his new contacts was Allan Lane, the founder of Penguin Books, for whom Pevsner worked during the war.

After the war came the pivotal moment when Lane's question to Pevsner "If you could do exactly what you wanted, what would you?" was answered with the idea of *The Buildings of England* (and the *Art and Architectural History of the World* – "which I only edit, whereas the *The Buildings of England*, of course, I write"). Lane agreed to underwrite both monumental projects and so began a quarter of a century of summer fieldwork, two counties a year, five weeks each, during the summer break from his new job as an academic at Birkbeck College. Lola drove and Pevsner, armed with a year's worth of research by an assistant, observed, made notes and in the evenings wrote it all up, so that, by the end of each day, the first draft of an entry was completed before the details got lost or muddled in his mind. In the days before digital cameras, photography was not an option as a recording method, so it was essential to get it down on paper quickly, before a new day's material muddied the recollections.



Professor Pevsner with 46 volumes published between 1947 and 1974.

The books quickly became foundational to the development of taste and architectural education ("Is it in Pevsner?") and influenced the political decision makers of the day. Jennifer Jenkins said "The BoE have had public influence on those who take decisions. Someone like Tony Crosland, Secretary of State for the Environment, would never go on holiday without one … Without them we'd have lost an infinitely larger number of buildings throughout Britain. Pevsner arrived at a crucial time".

When the series was complete, Pevsner said "Don't be deceived, gentle reader, the first editions are only *ballons d'essai*; it is the second editions which count." Jane is now reaping a further half century of research and scholarship, plus the communications from readers of errors and omissions which Pevsner requested in every introduction ("and I know by now to the full how many mistakes I have made and an unsuspecting publisher has published"). She is also addressing Pevsner's own anxieties. These are: scope (much extended beyond the staple of churches and country houses in the first editions – the absence of formal criteria for inclusion is both a blessing and a bane); errors (inevitable, but we shouldn't crow over them – none of us could approach Prevsner's achievement of 95% accuracy in the short time he had available for each volume); omissions (again, inevitable); lack of time to research properly (no change there!) and word length (still an issue – publishers are essentially quantity surveyors and, to come in at budget, the new volume will be only 33% longer than the original).

Among many joys are the lightbulb moments when one realises how things got missed. For instance, in Swaledale and Arkengarthdale, by literally following in Pevsner's footsteps, one begins to understand some of the vagaries of the volume. Why, for instance, is there so little about Reeth (three lines only!) and yet the Charles Bathurst Inn in Arkengarthdale, evidently just a standard 19th century farmhouse and outbuildings converted to pub use gets an entry of its own? It must be that he and Lola had driven through Reeth late one evening, travelling east to west, probably having 'done' Richmond and the intervening villages in the course of a hectic day. They were tired and ready for supper. Reeth is a 'drive-by' entry as a consequence – only Draycott Hall at the bottom and the Burgoyne Hotel at the top get a mention. They rushed on to Langthwaite and the CB Inn (recently endowed with new bow windows but, in the half-light, Pevsner missed their newness and they get a mention in the entry, which must surely be a thank-you to a kind 'mine host' since the building is just a converted 19th century farmstead!). In the morning, anxious to get on to Wensleydale, they turned the car southwards, missing the beautiful little powder magazine in the field to the north and even the mine owner's house, by John Dobson of Newcastle, prominent across the valley – perhaps he was shuffling his notes preparatory to a new day as Lola drove out of the car park. And off they went over the moors down to Low Row and on to Muker, by-passing Reeth so never going back to see what they had missed.

In Muker there was not a huge amount to add for the new edition, but the most important vernacular building in Swaledale, at Oxnop Hall, just to the east, gets a look-in. A fun story about Muker concerns the plaques to the Kearton brothers on the school. Jane had never heard of them so went home to google them and discovered that they were pioneers of wildlife photography and proposed to include a mention in the revision. But the editors have a 'no-plaques' policy unless the individuals memorialised had a specific impact on the building. This makes sense, but in this case, with the help of an old university colleague, Alastair





The powder house to the North of the CB Inn in Arkengarthdale and the mine owners house by John Dobson opposite.
Courtesy Jane Grenville

Fitter FRS, David Attenborough was lobbied and a letter duly arrived ten days later from the Great Man to say that Cherry Kearton's film of penguins on South Georgia, made in the 1920s and probably the earliest wildlife movie, which he saw as a child in Leicester, was a pivotal influence on his future career. Happily at that point the editor, Charles O'Brien, agreed to the exception.

Further up the dale, at Keld, is a delightful group of congregationalist church and manse, school and literary institute. A letter from a retired headmaster in the North Yorkshire County Record Office, carefully kept on file, reads thus: "I have wondered whether you inspected any buildings above Muker in Swaledale? You do not mention any." He then goes on to itemise a few, including the Keld group. And the reply from Nikolaus Pevsner's secretary, dated 10th July 1977: "Many thanks for your letter of May 28. Sir Nikolaus was greatly interested. Of course your suggestions will be followed up when we start with the preparations for the next edition. Meanwhile, we have put your letter on file." It is a great tribute to that filing system that it could be retrieved almost exactly 40 years later and the buildings duly inspected and added! Jane also realised that Pevsner and Lola had indeed turned off, over Buttertubs Pass and on into Wensleydale, without looking at Upper Swaledale. The omission is corrected.

To end, some of Jane's personal favourites – the (contemporary) graffiti addition of faces to the scallop shells of the Dacre arms in a 15th century stained glass window at Raskelf church near Easingwold are a joy.



The east window of the north aisle with little faces painted on it (a 15th century joke).
Courtesy Jane Grenville

People always enjoy Pevsner's insults: the little school at Hovingham he described as "a truly hideous school of 1864 with a polygonal oriel", but Jane likes it very much as 'an endearing exercise in mid-Victorian High Gothic'. Herein lies a problem. The book is a revision of Pevsner, not a re-write, so how this will be addressed will be the subject of discussion with the editors.



The little 1864 school in Hovingham that Pevsner found truly hideous. Courtesy Jane Grenville

The aspersion cast on the Town Hall in the middle of Northallerton can certainly stand: "Really irredeemable: joyless, utterly ignorant and not inventive either. 1873 by *Ross* of Darlington."



Northallerton Town Hall, 1873 by Ross – Pevsner found really irredeemable: joyless and utterly ignorant.
Courtesy Jane Grenville

The process of updating the original text is painstaking and has to be thorough in its fact checking and re-observation of the buildings themselves. But it is utterly rewarding. We are hoping for publication in late 2022/early 2023.

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101 Richmondians.....

Jane Hatcher

"No, not 101 Dalmations, but 101 Richmondians!" That's how I'd planned to open the talk programmed by Richmond and District Civic Society for September 2021! But it wasn't to be, despite my best intentions and endeavours. Who was to know so many problems would beset us all for a second year? And especially authors, who faced bookshops having to close again; printers having more work than they could cope with – lots of people had taken up writing during lockdowns! And the final straw was a national shortage of paper – which I don't recall being among the promises made by those ardent Brexiteers when urging us to vote to leave Europe.....

So, back to my new book. Its full title is *Richmondians – Nine centuries of Men and Women of this Yorkshire town – A collection of biographical profiles.* And yes, there are 101 (mostly) short 'biographical profiles', although they actually describe 102 people as one is a 'double entry'. It was intended as the culmination of Richmond's celebration of the 950th anniversary of its foundation in 1071. It nearly didn't make it, but I was so relieved that the book did actually go on sale in Castle Hill Bookshop before the year ended, even if it was only by a whisker.

So, apart from it being my contribution to the anniversary year, what made me do it? Well, I'm a Yorkshirewoman, I dislike waste. And there, among all that material cluttering up my study, were so many laboriously researched details of people I used to wax lyrical about in my lectures, or introduce to visitors on my guided walks: "Here lived Roger Strickland, who kept an amazing account book of every detail of household expenditure in early-Georgian Richmond"; or "There is buried Robert Willance who gave his name to Willance's Leap"; or "In this building slept the boy, who would become famous as Lewis Carroll, when he began his formal education here in our very own Richmond".

And so on, to over a hundred characters. I had, of course, to begin with Count Alan, who started building his Castle in 1071. And then to include his great-nephew, who added to it our splendid keep. And to mention Lord Robert Baden-Powell's time in Richmond Castle. And additionally the artist Turner who has probably depicted our Castle to more people than anyone else.

In case, from the above, you were wondering if all my characters are men, the answer is, of course not! There are 19 women who have their own entry, and three of those have somewhat surprising names – Grathama, Tryphosa – and guess what, there's even a Christabel! Also, there are several worthy wives and daughters who creep into the stories, as pointed out by one of my reviewers! And, to further my political correctness credentials, I include one of my favourite Richmond residents, a black Jamaican.

So how did I choose them? In most cases they have left something significant behind – books or paintings, perhaps an important building, not only in the Castle but, for example, the tower of the parish church. Some are well known, but I wanted to raise from obscurity some lesser known individuals – such as William de Hudswell, a 14th century entrepreneur; the boy poet Herbert Knowles, who was for a time nationally admired; and the Richmond draper Edward Wood, who was highly regarded, not only as a geologist, but also as a pioneer campaigner for legislation to protect wildlife.

A few of the people were related to each other. The papermaker Henry Cooke was the older brother of the grocer Leonard Cooke. What did they do to warrant inclusion? Well, you'll have to read the book to find out! There are two martyrs – one Roman Catholic, the other

Protestant – and two veterans of the Battle of Waterloo. There is a centenarian, a woodcarver and a nurse, some shopkeepers, a handful of architects, no fewer than eight artists, several antiquarians, a clutch of people linked to Richmond's wonderful Georgian theatre either in the distant past or in its 20th century re-opening, and, inevitably, some politicians, clerics and schoolmasters.

I make no bones about it being a personal selection. Some people were born in Richmond, lived in Richmond and contributed to life here. Some were born here but left and made their name elsewhere. Others were born elsewhere but moved here and left their significant mark on the town. One of the characters is a person I only discovered when working on the *Life in Georgian Richmond* book I co-authored with Bob Woodings. This was Thomas Cornforth, whom I think must have given his name to Cornforth Hill. He had a meteoric rise to importance as the 'Mr Fix-it' for Sir Lawrence Dundas, who, of course, also earned his place in the book as a [Scottish] Richmondian.

In compiling the book I decided to give myself a cut-off date, so none of those included died later than the year 2000. One or two ideas fell by the wayside as I couldn't find out enough to give them a proper account. Most people were highly respectable, but I had to include one or two somewhat salacious characters. One such is the amazing Joseph Sager, who overcame extreme disability to live quite a riotous life, and another, Elizabeth Bowes, a local gentlewoman who lived in a ménage à trois with a famous Scotsman!

Most of the profiles are fairly brief, which many people have complimented is a bonus as they can dip in and read a complete entry in quite a short time. Someone has described it as a jigsaw of Richmond history from 1071 to 2000. *Richmondians – Nine centuries of Men and Women of this Yorkshire town – A collection of biographical profiles.*

950 Years of Richmond Market Place

David Dougan

If you stand at the south-west corner of the Market Place (somewhere near the Castle Hill Bookshop) and look across at the King's Head Hotel, you will enjoy one of the finest urban landscapes in England. In doing so, you will also take in two of the three towers: the obelisk and Holy Trinity Church – the other being the Castle Keep. Around the perimeter a ring of vernacular buildings constrain your gaze and force you to concentrate on the space itself.
It is no wonder that so many commentators have extolled its virtues. David Brooks, former Town Clerk, whose *The Story of Richmond* was given to every school-child in the town in 1946 to mark the end of the Second World War, commented, "There is no town of the size of Richmond to compare with its bold, impressive grandeur". A contemporary architectural historian Sir Simon Jenkins included this view in his *Hundred Best Views in England* and added, "Everything about Richmond pleases the eye". Who could disagree?

In looking for a comparison to this ravishing scene, I look to one of my favourite Italian cities, Siena in Tuscany. It too has an open space at its centre called the Campo (Italian for field) and this has been the city's natural gathering place for centuries. It was laid out in the 12th century in the shape of a shell. Around its perimeter are the great palaces of the aristocratic families who controlled the city in its early days. But then something magical happened. Instead of allowing the rich families to continue to dominate, the citizens decided that they should be responsible for running the town. To symbolize that democratic spirit, they erected the finest palace of them all, the Palazzo Publicco. It was from here that they would govern Siena.

Richmond Market Place

To validate their position, they did something that English authorities were not to do for



Richmond Market Place Courtesy David Dougan

centuries to come. They would commission great works of art; Simone Martini's Maesta and Ambrogio Lorenzetti's *Allegory of the Effects of Good and Bad Government*. Installed in the main governing chamber, the latter displayed the benefits of altruistic government with the resulting peace, harmony, trading, learning and other activities compared with the baleful effects of bad government.

Perhaps the most extraordinary aspect of the Market Place at Richmond is the island in the middle. This is the site of the large church of the Holy Trinity. Now deconsecrated, it is the the Green Howards Museum for the Green Howards Regiment, but built into its sides is an agglomeration of shops. Even the tower was buttressed by shops selling every kind of produce. David Brooks called it "the most extraordinary ecclesiastical structure that ever was". The site has been used for many purposes over the years including Town Hall, warehouse, cellarage for beers, a school and a prison. Men who had taken part in the Jacobite Rebellion of the mid-18th century were held here on their way to trial.

The best-known event in Siena is the Palio, a bare-back horse race, recreated from medieval times. It has become so popular that it is now contested twice a year. This allows each of the 17 contrada (districts) in the city to compete at least once a year. Competition is intense, pride in the winning horse off the scale.

when the present building was completed. This building provides the council chamber for meetings of councillors and officials, but also an elegant space for events and assemblies, which Richmond increasingly needed as it grew into a more and more prosperous town and tourist centre. The same need can be said to be behind the construction of the Market Hall, a few metres east of the Town Hall. Of course, it was built for trading, as its name implies, but it has also been used for social functions of many kinds. The very first cinema shows in Richmond were presented here in the early years of the last century.

I have left the outstanding characteristic of both centres to the end – their narrow entrances and exits. In both cases the centre explodes as you emerge from the approaches into the arena. Not only that, but some of the approaches tease you as you get nearer to the centre. Walk along Finkle Street and you will see what I mean. As the street does a gentle curve, one part of the Market Place after another display themselves. But, when you arrive at the end of the street, the full impact of the Market Place hits you like a thunder-bolt. From a crabbed, confined space you are now in a whole world of open sky and boundless space.

For 950 years, it has been like this. Is there any reason to believe it will not serve for another millennium?

The Palio, Siena

Nothing similar occurs in Richmond, of course, but the ceremony of the First Fruits continues to honour the farmer who brings the best crop to market. The Council continues to pay homage to this important event by the presence of the Mayor and full civic retinue. They emerge from the Town Hall, as they have done since 1759



The Palio Siena Courtesy David Dougan

Richmond Castle and the Richmond 950 Archaeology Project

Jim Brightman

Jim Brightman's original talk on the *Celebrate Richmond 950* Dig had been scheduled for November 2021 but was delayed because of Covid symptoms on his part.

Postponed until January, Jim's talk began with a little background information. His eagerness to lead the project was influenced by the fact that he was an Old Boy of Richmond School. Indeed, the first time that he visited the castle was on a school trip for Year 7 students led by Mr Berry. He began his career in the early 2000s moving away from Richmond for many years, but the memory of that large building standing over the Market Place, an integral part of the town, remained with him. Coming back to Richmond in 2012, the perspective provided by his time away made him appreciate just how special it is.

Richmond is one of the most important castle sites in the country, so to be asked to take part in the 950 Project was a dream come true. The dig was the product of several years of planning and discussion with Marcia McLuckie, whose son was one of his school friends. It was through Marcia and the *Celebrate Richmond 950* organising team that his archaeological company, Solstice Heritage, came to the idea of a community archaeological project. Professional archaeologists working alongside the community on the heritage that people valued and helping them to gain the skills to do archaeological work themselves. The result was a great success as part of the Richmond 950 celebrations, despite the two years of pandemic during the time that they worked on the project.

The archaeological excavations in the castle were really at the heart of the Richmond 950 celebrations. It was always intended that they would be, but they did not know what shape those excavations would take because, for a long time, they did not know where the money was going to come from. The Civic Society provided the initial grant for the project that began to make it concrete and suggest that something was going to happen in some form. Then, additional funding from the Castle Studies Trust was followed by support from the District Council, a suite of local businesses and local private donors as well.

In the end, the project was able to attract not just a small amount of money to allow some things to take place, but the amount that they had initially set out as an ideal. What seemed a mile away when they first started raising the funds became a wonderful reality, which allowed them to put together an entire archaeological team for three weeks, to really, really get into the heart of the site and address some of the key questions that they had.

Jim explained that we do not know much about Richmond Castle, which might seem strange. That was not to say that there had not been scholarly studies of the castle. There had been a great deal of research, from antiquarians through the 18th and 19th centuries to modern scholarship. But almost everything that we know – such as when the castle was originally built, when it was altered, who lived there – comes from scattered documentary sources. There has never really been a modern, high-quality, archaeological approach, only bits and pieces around the edges. Much of this took place in the late 19th and early 20th centuries and, even here, many of the records have not survived.

There are some things that we can say about the story of the castle, however. It began soon after the Harrying of the North by William the Conqueror. 1071 is the date used for the 950 celebrations, and although based on limited



With the turf removed, the eager volunteers could get stuck into trowelling through the layers of soil. © Solstice Heritage.

documentary evidence, there is nothing that clearly undermines this date. Building began under Alan Rufus and his younger brother Alan Niger. This would have been the first phase of the castle: the curtain wall, much of which still survives despite later modifications; the barbican, which is where the ticket office now stands, was probably built in timber; and Scolland's Hall, one of the oldest, if not the oldest, stone-built houses in England. The keep was built approximately 90 years later under Earl Conan. Finally, we know there was a phase of major alterations around 1300 under the auspices of Edward I. So, it is generally assumed that we have the broad sweep, but we do not have the detail. This is where archaeology comes in, to help provide a precise window into the past.

A ground-penetrating radar survey was carried out by Wessex Archaeology for English Heritage in 2009. What stood out from their survey of the grassy area inside the castle walls was the footprint of the 19th-century barracks block. Alongside were what might be termed 'anomalies'. These looked like the footprint of buildings, so the survey provided a real focus – in the shape of several particularly interesting targets – for the archaeological project dig to find out what exactly these anomalies were and what they could tell us about the castle.

From the start, the Richmond 950 excavations were all about involving the community. The response was fantastic. Not just volunteers from the local area, but people from around the world saw the invitation online and signed up. People and even families came to Richmond to spend their holiday literally digging a hole. Once the top layer of turf was removed and the dig moved to clean soil, the enthusiasm of the volunteers, especially the children involved, reminded the professionals of why they so enjoyed the work. Everything that came up, starting from a relatively shallow depth, was a bit of treasure.

The last trench that was excavated, Trench 4, down on the south edge overlooking Castle Walk, best illustrated that, in some places, the archaeology lay immediately below the surface. A medieval lime plaster that had been laid down as a floor was discovered just a few inches below the surface, with severe signs of burning in places. The partially dismantled floor had definitely been inside a building, but, because this was the last trench dug, there was not time to fully get to grips with the specific questions it raised.

Of what kind of building was this the floor? They knew from some scattered references and a few early illustrations that there should have been a chapel here, over the southern edge of the curtain wall. So, was this the floor of a chapel? Although of quite high quality, they would have expected some flagstones or some painted tiles had it been a place of worship – something of higher quality. The dark smears suggested a fairly simple hearth that had experienced repeated burning. Later analysis of the soil samples indicated evidence of charcoal derived from a variety of deciduous woods and shrubs used as fuel, such as apple. There were also burnt eggshells and animal bones. The finds suggested life in a domestic house, a fairly crude building, albeit with a nicely laid floor, with the inhabitants cooking their food and keeping themselves warm as they went about their daily life. Perhaps it had originally been a higher-status building connected with the running of the castle, such as a warehouse, that had fallen into disrepair later in its life and used for what looked like every-day domestic activities. From the limited evidence available the archaeologists could not be certain, but that was the best fit. It was a nice illustration of how wonderful the site is. Even a relatively small hole, dug in a relatively short time, opened up new aspects of the castle's story.

Jim went on to talk about the 'restoration' carried out by the Ministry of Works in the early and mid-20th century on the vast majority of prominent heritage sites across the country, now mostly under English Heritage guardianship. Most of these sites have a similar appearance, with mown lawns, small signs and gravelled paths. If you walk across the centre of the inner bailey in Richmond Castle and look at the stonework against the grass, then go to a site such as Rievaulx Abbey, they look very similar. The Ministry of Works consolidated as much as it 'restored' and, as the team came to appreciate, during the course of the Richmond excavations, they invented many things as well.

With regard to the next trench, Dr Mark Douglas, English Heritage's Senior Properties Curator in the North, and a great champion for the project from the outset, was suspicious of the different walls. He wanted to know if they were real. He wasn't asking an existential question, but, in archaeological terms, he wanted to know if they were genuine medieval walls or were they a more modern flight of fancy? The answer was 'Yes and No'. The team was able to dig down to the medieval foundation level of the wall, but everything from an inch above ground level had been re-cemented and put together by the Ministry of Works. They had actually invented something here. To the left was what looked like a squared, neatly capped wall end. The line of the plaster floor, however, showed that the original medieval wall was much longer. It was as if the Ministry of Works had not had enough stone and so decided to cap the wall at that point to make a nice, neat end. Very few records have been kept of Ministry of Works 'restoration' of heritage sites and none for Richmond Castle have been found. For 80–90 years, visitors have walked around the castle thinking that the wall ended there. In reality, it was a metre longer. Only through digging around the wall could this be shown. Although this might seem a small thing, it was indicative of other things the Ministry did which were of more lasting impact.

The next image was a favourite picture of Jim's.



Trench 1 When archaeologists talk about 'stratigraphy, this is what they mean! © Solstice Heritage.

Jim reminded the audience that Richmond Castle had had a second life in the late 19th and early 20th centuries – its association with Baden Powell and the Conscientious Objectors in the First World War were synonymous with and an important part of the castle's story. The dig team's purpose was to find out more about the medieval castle, but they were not able to avoid the late 19th and early 20th century parts of Richmond Castle's story.

The picture in Trench 1 was a beautiful example of what is done in archaeology. It is termed stratigraphy, literally the measuring of layers. Right at the bottom was the medieval flagged floor. Above it was a layer of rubble and soil that had accumulated after the castle had fallen out of use. Above that was a huge, thick yellow clay deposit that had been imported to create a level platform for the barracks block and the parade ground in the late 19th century. As they had to dig through it, they knew that they were going to have to take some measure of what was going on in the late 19th and 20th centuries, but they did not really know how deep it was going to be. Luckily, they had some excellent volunteers in this trench! They would report back to Jim on what they had found. Repeatedly, as he came by, he would suggest that it would be good to see a bit more by extending the trench by something like a half metre because it was getting really interesting. He was surprised that they kept coming back!

The grey stone immediately above the yellow layer was evidence of the late Victorian/early 20th century military installations, such as pipe trenches and building foundations. They were not able to excavate it with a machine, unfortunately, but had to go through it carefully and to record it in order to get to the medieval story of Richmond. Things began to come up

very quickly. Some of it from the 20th century, such as objects dropped by children and more recent pottery, but right from the start they were seeing pieces of medieval pottery, with its distinctive fabric, different type of glaze and coarser texture. They also began to see lots of animal bone, perhaps something to do with a cavalry station there in the late 19th century, but the animal bone increasingly came up as they went down through the layers. Clearly, it was something that they had to keep their eye on.

Jim showed an image of how Trench 3 looked once it was beautifully cleaned up. It even got a brief airing on BBC 2's *Digging for Britain*. The archaeology team didn't actually know what the revealed 'floor' was, although they (and many colleagues and visitors) had theories. Maybe, it was the remains of a demolished chapel, set away from the wall. The building was very well paved. The stone floor had shown up as a 'blob' on the radar survey. It had an arc of stone around the base, almost like a dish set on an angle, but it could not have been a pond as it was not watertight. The dig began to reveal evidence of dividing walls and stone post pads, like barriers running across the floor. There were many theories put forward to explain the mystery, such as a circle for exercising horses (though it was too small for this), or the edge of something like a grandstand for watching jousting in the field below. The suggestion that carried most weight was provided by visiting members of the Castles Studies Trust. Partially similar features had been found in castles in the south of England and were thought to be stocking areas demarcated for gathering specific materials, perhaps the gathering of taxes for the earl, similar to the use of tithe barns. This is the best theory to date until such time as a more compelling explanation is put forward.

Trenches 1 and 2 were a little deeper and, below the level sealed by the Victorian imported material, they began to reveal some really interesting and exciting bits and pieces. At the time of the talk Jim was waiting for the final report on the huge assemblage of pottery that they got from the excavations, but he could already say that they had found beautiful examples of most of the major medieval pottery from the North of England, such as Brandsby ware from near York and Humber ware. There were also pieces of imported pottery, some from Saintes on the Atlantic coast of France. The pots were widely used in the 13th and 14th centuries, the era when the castle was at the height of its power, to transport wine in. Hence their widespread distribution.

Jim then showed a jeton, with a Moor's head insignia on it, made in France around 1350. Jetons were used as trade counters or tokens on a counting board. Sometimes they were used as small change because they contained a volume of currency metal, but mostly they were used for accounting. It was a really beautiful find. The dig was beginning to reveal something of



A 14th-century French jeton. © Solstice Heritage.

the high-status nature of Richmond Castle. Important lords and barons were castellans of the castle and Richmond even came under the guardianship of various kings. Henry II took guardianship for a while and supporters of King Stephen during the Anarchy may well have hosted a mint in the castle. Edward I took control of the castle at the end of the 13th

century. So, they knew that the castle was the seat of royalty and not just of nobility. To find items that had come from across the European world reinforced the picture of the castle as a seat of power, a cosmopolitan place and hub of trade in Northern England.

Trench 2, near to Robin Hood's Tower and to the north of Scolland's Hall, proved a challenge. Based on the radar survey, the team were expecting stone wall for a substantial building, but there was no sign of this. A lot of stone which was not medieval was taken away before the dig reached a bottom of dark earth, with stones pressed into it. It was a really rather rough medieval floor, covered in butchered animal bones. They were not seeing the anticipated grand residence or high-status ancillary buildings. Though they were still awaiting the final results on the assemblage of animal bones, the preliminary findings showed that the bones were not just of cheap pigs and cows, but of cranes and other exotic birds. This bizarre diet, and the archaeological footprint of the building exposed, seemed to show peasants working in a rough, timber-roofed building, doing the dirty jobs of butchering exotic animals for the lord's table. It provided a lovely view of the dichotomy of both sides of life in the castle, from the very highest to the very lowest.

It was within this floor that the dig made the grand discovery that was revealed in the *Digging for Britain* programme. A beautiful silver penny with the face of William the Conqueror on it that took the evidence right back to the start of the castle story, rather than the 13th and 14th centuries when the castle was at the height of its power. This valuable coin, which must have dropped out of a pocket, is known as a Pax Penny from the Latin word for peace engraved on one side. Such coins were normally minted at the start of a monarch's reign as a promise of peace, or after a monarch had quashed rebellion against their rule. Unfortunately, the coin is too corroded to know its specific mint, but they could suggest that it was either minted shortly after the Conquest, in the late 1060s, or just after the Harrying of the North, after the quashing of the Northern Rebellion. In either case, this was at the start of William's reign, right at the time that the castle was being built. It provides a fabulous window into the beginning of the castle story. Before the keep had been built and before the Normans had fully established their authority, they were butchering exotic animals for the tables of the Lords Alan Rufus and Alan Niger in this building, and someone dropped this silver penny.



Staring into the face of William the Conqueror © Solstice Heritage.

It was no secret that the team were very fortunate to be approached by *Digging for Britain* and Professor Alice Roberts herself came out for a day-and-a-half's worth of filming. Most people in the audience would have seen the episode, rather than be told that they must watch it had the lecture been given on its original November date. The programme really showed the castle in its best light. A question that has often been asked since was whether the discovery of the coin actually happened as seen in the programme. Jim explained that it absolutely did. Alice and he were sat looking at pottery and bones when Mandy, one of the supervisors, along with two volunteers came charging across and said that they had found something. The scene was shot exactly as it happened. They originally thought that it was a jeton, but then Jim went to consult his notes to confirm what he thought it might be and the scene was added to a bit. There was no TV magic nor trickery. That was exactly what happened.



Much excitement greeted the arrival of Professor Alice Roberts and the Digging for Britain cameras. © Mandy Burns

The last trench was the focus of a very clear question, something that does not happen often in archaeology and, because of this, one that we were most excited about. There was a great big gap in the curtain wall, and for a long time, it has been an open question as to whether it was the site of an original gateway. There is the original main gate that now forms the ground floor of the keep, its replacement from the barbican (the modern entranceway for visitors past the ticket office) and a number of smaller postern gates that served different purposes in the southern corners. And then there is this anomaly of a big gap in the curtain wall. So, the team set themselves specific questions. Was this a gate? What was it? Why was it in-filled? What was going on with the great stone buttresses that were clearly not attached to the curtain wall in any shape or form?

It was an incredibly complex trench, with large amounts of pits and holes, but in essence the answer could be distilled down to a few key observations. When the castle was built, or at the latest when the keep was built around the 1160s, there was a sally port through the curtain wall. This was a narrow gateway at the bottom of a steep ramp. If you were under siege, you could sneak a band of people out of there, but it was too small and inaccessible from the outside to represent a weak point. Then, after the sally port was no longer needed, the gateway was filled in and the ramp down to it poorly filled with rubble. At some point after the castle had fallen out of use, perhaps around the 1450s, the section of wall simply collapsed because it had been weakened by the poor work of the medieval builders when filling in and back-filling. Then, in the early 20th century, our old friends at the Ministry of Works decided that they couldn't have an ugly, ragged gap and so they squared it off. The two to three courses of stone above ground level are medieval, and the edge of the tunnel leading to the sally port can just be seen. Everything above it was constructed by the Ministry of Works with re-used medieval masonry blocks. With the spare stone that they had left, the Ministry built the two buttresses that we see. It took several weeks of digging to figure out what had happened in the 1930s, but it's a really good result when a question about a perplexing section of the castle wall can be answered so fully.



After three weeks of excavation the answers were revealed in Trench 1. Only the lowest courses of stonework are original medieval walling! © Solstice Heritage.



Archaeologist Nathan sharing our findings with visitors to the castle. © Solstice Heritage.

Jim stressed what a real community effort the dig had been. This was helped by where it took place – in the public heart of a tourist attraction. There was a constant flow of people coming through, to help and to ask questions. The result was not just entertaining and informative for visitors but some really good archaeology. Enough volunteers even remained to help with the boring and back-breaking work of back-filling, helped by the portable pizza oven that Lucy, one of the volunteers, brought along. Even the damage to the grass has recovered.

The question that is often asked is 'What's next?' Jim explained that he was waiting on the final specialists' reports on the pottery and the bones and on some radiocarbon dating. Once this was all done, the findings would be compiled into a big report, some of which would be very technical, but which would tell the whole story of the dig. This will be freely available for download through all partner websites.

He concluded by stressing that the project was a real community event, supported through the media, the community and by the passion of many volunteers. It took a long time and a lot of heartache to get off the ground and was only made possible through generous funding. He hoped that there might be somebody out there with the funds to finance a follow-up dig.

Dirt, Digging, Dust, Discoveries and Delight!

Gabriel Bosse Chitty (10 years) and Ruben Bosse Chitty (7 years), volunteer archaeologists

Our grandparents live in Richmond and we joined Richmond and District Civic Society at the beginning of 2021 to find out more about the fascinating history of Richmond as the castle celebrated 950 years of its foundation. We were very excited to learn about the history of Richmond town and castle, and thrilled to be offered the opportunity to take part in a dig in the castle that we have visited many times.

It was a cool, overcast Wednesday morning, 21st July 2021, when we embarked upon the Richmond Castle archaeological dig. However, before long the heat began to rise and the castle grounds became blisteringly hot: it took its toll on us. The dig was made up of three trenches in the old Norman castle bailey. We were digging in Trench 1 approximately 4m x 5m, next to a large stone buttress which had been built to support the east wall of the castle. The Victorians shored it up and later, in the 20th century, the Ministry of Works added to it, reinforcing the support. On the day, we worked with Vic, a university archaeologist from Durham, who was studying how medieval people recycled glass. Our dig team was made up of us, Gabriel (10 years) and Ruben (7 years), our Mummy and our Grannie. The purpose of Trench 1 was to try to find evidence of a believed postern gate in the east wall of the castle. Our personal ambitions for the dig were to find horse bones, tools and weapons. The other two trenches were investigating features revealed in a geophysical survey of the castle bailey undertaken in 2019. The purpose of Trench 2 was to find the supposed cross-over point of two walls, and Trench 3 was investigating an unexplained anomaly. It's all about answering questions and solving the jigsaw puzzle of the past. However, when you answer one question, you open up roughly 20 others!

The process of digging was slow and laborious. When we arrived on day three of the dig, they had already cut the turf away and started digging. We had to slowly and carefully scrape off little bits of loose dirt with a small trowel, then, using the trowel, we had to sweep the dirt into the hand shovel (like a dustpan and brush) before emptying it into a bucket. When the bucket was full, we had to empty it onto a big dirt mound, which would be used to refill the trench when the dig was over. We had to concentrate very carefully and examine the ground for finds. Vic told us to remember, "you are archaeologists, not bunny rabbits".

Our overall impressions of the dig were that there were more bones and stones than we expected. It was very slow and dirty work – like working in a dust cloud – and we were surprised by how many worms there were considering how dry it was. However, this meant that when we found something, it seemed so exciting, like discovering treasure that was impossible to find. We found a lot!

Our finds included a hip bone, found in the discarded stone pile, a bent iron nail, two canines and an herbivore molar tooth (species unknown). The first find, found by Gabriel, was a yellowy-brown piece of Victorian pottery with a pressed-out rose and blue glaze on the inside. Further finds included: a fibula believed to have come from a sheep, several pieces of green medieval pottery, a couple of shards of medieval glass and window lead like you see in old churches. Vic also uncovered what she hoped was a foundation stone of the postern gate. It was amazing to think that we were the first people to touch these artefacts in hundreds of years. We also found a number of natural stones: a rock containing quartz and a small fossil.

At the time we were digging there were also interesting finds in the other trenches. For example, a piece of lead used as a pencil and sharpened with a knife, a 14th century jeton used for trading (both Trench 3) and half of the lower jaw bone of a horse (Trench 2). One of the other archaeologists in Trench 2 wanted to find the rest of the horse and the jousting knight who must have ridden it. Two days later we returned to the dig site to find out how it was going. When we arrived, Vic told us that the believed postern gate foundation stone turned out to be a drain cover and, when they opened the drain, they smelt the stale air trapped for hundreds of years.

We really enjoyed the day. It was exciting, fun and interesting to work with professional and volunteer archaeologists with lots of interesting stories of other digs they had worked on. Ruben also really enjoyed explaining to the castle visitors what we were aiming to do and what we had found. The visitors had a lot of interesting questions and Ruben was able to answer most of them. Vic was very impressed! We would highly recommend having the very enjoyable experience of digging up the past to anyone thinking of giving it a go, and who doesn't mind hot and dusty work!



Our Dig Experience at Richmond Castle.



Richmond Castle from the River Swale
Courtesy Ian Short

Acknowledgements

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Richmond Castle Courtesy Richmondshire District Council

2022 Lecture Programme

Wednesday 5th January	**Sir Thomas Robinson – Architect, Connoisseur and Scallywag** *Anthony Wood*
Wednesday 2rd February	**Dialect and Heritage Project at The Dales Countryside Museum** *Fiona Rosher and Poppy Oldham*
Wednesday 2rd March	**The Life and Career of a Yorkshire Artist** *Lucy Pittaway*
Wednesday 6th April	**The Gardens and Grounds of Bolton Hall** *Valerie Hepworth BEM*
Wednesday 4th May	**Ripon Prison Museum – Victorian Crime and Punishment** *Carrie Philip*
Wednesday 1st June	**Kiplin Hall and Gardens** *James Etherington*
Wednesday 7th September	**Gentleman Jack: An introduction to Anne Lister 1791-1840** *David Glover*
Wednesday 5th October	**The story of John Rae** (venue – the Georgian Theatre Royal) *Warnock Kerr*
Wednesday 2nd November	**A Year in Darlo** *Chris Lloyd*

Since the start of the first pandemic lockdown in March 2020, the Civic Society has been conducting lectures both on Zoom, during lockdown periods, and as face to face and Zoom hybrid meetings, when conditions allowed. Most of the Zoom lectures have been recorded and can be viewed as an archive on richmondcivicsociety.org

Notes

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Richmond Market Place Courtesy Richmondshire District Council

