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Brodsworth Hall

Brodsworth Hall is situated near Brodsworth, 5 miles (8.0 km) north-west of Doncaster in South Yorkshire, English Heritage took on Brodsworth Hall in 1990 after the death of its last owner and a slow decline in the 20th-century as money and servants faded away. At that time, English Heritage conserved the hall ‘as found’ complete with 20th-century family clutter as well as the faded glory of its grand state rooms.

Instigated by English Heritage, work is currently in progress to carry out much needed measures in order to halt the decay of this Victorian country house. The conservation work is a one year project, and it is expected to be completed sometime towards the end of 2017. Also included will be the major work to repair the revolving window shutters, mend leaking skylights and renew the heating system.

Visitors to Brodsworth Hall during this time will experience conservation in action, and a new exhibition will enable them to discover more about the challenges of caring for the Hall.

To ensure that the delicate contents of the Hall are protected from the dust and debris created by this work, some protection has been installed around the house, and hoarding has also been put up in the rooms where the work will take place, to allow conservators and experts to undertake their repairs safely.

However, in spite of the necessary conservation work in progress, much of the house is still accessible and visitors will find that the hoardings have been decorated with interesting facts, personal accounts and oral history recordings.

A brief history of Brodsworth Hall is given by Margaret Mills, see pages 8 to 11.

The house has been preserved exactly as the last resident, Sylvia Grant-Dalton, left it in 1988 and whilst some rooms have kept a sense of grandeur, elsewhere the hard years of gentle decline are apparent. A tour of the impressive gardens is a ‘must’ for any visit to Brodsworth Hall. The gardens have been restored to the style of their Victorian heyday, and visitors are free to wander and enjoy the lovely views, the range of flowers and shrubs, and features such as the fountain and the classical summerhouse.
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Above: Cow and Calf Rocks on Ilkley Moor covered in snow

Cover: Brodsworth Hall and Gardens covered in snow Photo by Peter Mitchell

Editorial

All the staff at The Yorkshire Journal would like to wish our readers a very merry Christmas and a happy New Year. With winter now tightening its grip on our beautiful Yorkshire countryside we have tried to give you a good read in front of a cosy warm fire courtesy of our team of writers. For our first feature Jacquetta Hartley visits Skidby Windmill, near Beverley. This windmill has been grinding flour since 1821 and survived two World Wars. Jacquetta gives an account of the history and the workings of the mill which ceased to operate commercially in 1966. Today Skidby Windmill is the last working windmill in Yorkshire which now forms the Museum of East Riding Rural Life and continues to produces wholemeal flour in the traditional way.

Then Margaret Mills visits Brodsworth Hall and the gardens, near Doncaster. The hall and the families that lived there have a fascinating history which Margaret outlines and includes many of its interesting features. The gardens were designed and laid out at the time the Hall was built, so are a perfect example of the taste of the 1860s. Also linked with Brodsworth Hall is Thellusson’s infamous will, Daniel Theyer details its complications. In fact the Thellusson Will is still renowned in legal history, and it is widely believed that it was immortalised by Charles Dickens in Bleak House, as the Jarndyce versus Jarndyce case.

Charlotte Brontë first stayed at Filey in the summer of 1849, after the tragic death of her sister, Anne. Claire Mason retraces Charlotte’s steps in her article on Charlotte Brontë’s Association with Filey. Claire is able to give us some insight on how Charlotte perceived Filey and the state of her mind through Charlotte Brontë’s letters that she wrote during her stay there.

Next Stephen Riley takes us back in time to the days of steam trains and explains how two small seaside towns on the Holderness Coast in East Yorkshire developed into holiday resorts. These are Hornsea and Withernsea which became a place to relax once the railway arrived in 1854 at Withernsea and 1864 at Hornsea. Railway advertising posters that were produced played an instrumental part of their development. Stephen gives a full description of the success and sad demise of these seaside towns.

Christmas of course is associated with singing carols in churches accompanied by an organ. But sometimes these organs need to be restored. During a visit to All Saints’ Church, Roos, East Yorkshire Daniel Theyer discovered that the 1881 pipe organ was undergoing such a restoration. Daniel gives a full account of the restoration work and returned to the church the following year for a dedication organ service.

Our last feature is also about singing and medieval acoustic technology in trying to improve the quality of sound of medieval monks’ singers in the choir of Fountains Abbey church. Jeremy Clark explains in detail that medieval pottery jars found placed in the choir were intended to improve the acoustics.

But there is much more to these articles, please read and enjoy them. We welcome your comments.
Skidby Windmill, near Beverley in East Yorkshire

The last working windmill in Yorkshire

By Jacquetta Hartley

Windmills were once scattered about the Yorkshire countryside in considerable numbers. Today a windmill is a rare sight and of those that are still in existence many are derelict or in ruins. One windmill, that of Skidby near Beverley in East Yorkshire still remains seemingly unaffected by the advance of time and surviving two World Wars. Skidby windmill stands on the top of a hill, aloof from the hustle of nearby Hull, this mill can be seen from miles around.

History

There have been windmills in Skidby since 1316, although probably not on the same site as the present mill. The first record of a mill on the present site appeared in 1764. This was a wooden post mill with two pairs of stones. The post mill was sold in 1821 to make way for a new tower mill. The miller in 1821 was William Watson, but there is some doubt about the millwright employed to build the new mill. Although it is generally stated that it was built by Robert Garton, a Beverley millwright, a date stone below the balcony level suggests that Norman & Smithson of Hull were in fact the builders.

After three changes of tenancy Skidby Mill was acquired by Joseph Thompson in 1854 and the mill remained in the Thompson family for the next 100 years. In 1878 the mill was converted to the production of animal foodstuffs. This meant that new buildings had to be built around the base of the tower to house new machines, so the tower was raised in order that the sails would miss the buildings.

By the end of the 19th century Thompsons’ business, which included a steam roller mill in Hull and a water mill at Welton, was a close rival to that of Joseph Rank. In 1954 the use of wind power was discontinued and the machinery converted to electric power. The tower was converted to a grain silo supplying the various animal feed machines. Despite the devotion of the Thompsons to the family business Skidby Mill had to be sold to Allied Mills in 1962. Newer animal feed machines were brought in from the Thompsons’ mill in Hull, and these can still be seen on the flour bagging floor.

Right: A model of what the earlier wooden post mill would have looked like, which is on display at Skidby Mill

Right: A view of Skidby Mill with building around the base
The mill ceased to operate commercially in 1966 and was sold to Beverley Rural District Council (later Beverley Borough Council) for a nominal £1. In 1974 the mill was restored to full working order using wind power. Following two local government reorganisations Skidby Mill is now the property of the East Riding of Yorkshire Council who manage it as a museum of East Riding Rural Life, producing flour milled from English wheat in the traditional manner. It is now the last working mill in Yorkshire and is a Grade II listed building.

Details of the mill

The six-storey plan circular tower stands 75 feet high to the top of the cap. It is painted with black bitumen for weatherproofing, and has a Lincolnshire style white ogee cap (which in Skidby Mill’s case is onion-shaped) with a red ball finial. There is a balcony at the stone floor level to allow the miller access to the striking chain by which the shutters in the sails are adjusted. There are four double-sided shuttered patent sails, and although they may seem insignificant from afar off, each measures 36.6 feet long, and 9.5 feet wide, weighing about 1.25 tons, and with 48 shutters (called shades in the East Riding) in each. Patent sails were designed to allow all the shutters to be opened and closed simultaneously while the sails are turning. After setting the shutters the striking chain is weighted to hold the shutters at the required position, which means that they are able to blow open in a strong gust of wind and spill the wind through.

Right: The four double-sided shuttered patent sails can clearly be seen in this photograph with the back painted tower and balcony.

On the opposite side of the cap to the sails is the fantail, which keeps the sails turned into the wind at all times. Skidby’s fantail has 8 blades on the rotor set at an angle to the wind, so that when the wind changes direction the fantail starts to turn. Through a system of bevelled gears this turns the whole cap round on the curb at the top of the tower until the sails are once again facing into the wind and the fantail stops turning. The general appearance of the Skidby Mill is one of beauty.

Left: The fantail is on the opposite side of the cap to the sails which can be seen in this photograph.

The Skidby Mill has three pairs of stones: one pair of French burrs (a very hard stone quarried near Paris); one pair of Derbyshire Peaks made of millstone grit; and one pair of composite stones made from a mixture of carborundum and cement. The French stones are the ones used today for milling wheat. The other two pairs would originally have been used for grinding animal feed. The bottom stone of the pair is fixed in place and called the bed stone; the upper stone is the runner stone since this is the one that is turned by the sails. Each stone weighs about 1 ton when new.
Grain into flour

When the grain is delivered it is taken up to the bin floor by a grain elevator, which replaced the sack hoist. When the miller opens a slider in the chute the grain falls from the grain bin into the hopper that feeds the stones on the floor below. As the stone rotates it shakes the grain into centre of the stone (the eye), and grooves carved into the stones break open the grain and grind it into flour. The flour is then forced out to the edge of the stones and falls into another chute that leads down to the meal floor to be bagged.

Right: The drive shafts and millstones

The miller regularly monitors the consistency of the flour, and can alter the gap between the stones to keep a consistent grade. The grade of flour is also determined by the speed of the sails, with the optimum speed being 9-10 revolutions per minute.

The Museum of East Riding Rural Life

Skidby Mill is set in an acre of land, with magnificent views over the Wolds. The original outbuildings around the windmill have been converted to form the Museum of East Riding Rural Life. The windmill which produces wholemeal flour in the traditional way, normally operates between Wednesday and Sunday, (wind permitting). The flour is sold in the museum shop in souvenir bags.

Right: The weighing room with souvenir bags of flour

The warehouses next to the mill contain exhibition galleries with displays illustrating the agricultural and rural history of East Yorkshire. Information sheets are available free from the mill reception, and there are hand-held information sheets in both galleries and in the mill tower. The outbuildings around the courtyard contain some of the larger objects in the agriculture collection. These including a famous ‘Wolds Wagon’ built by P. H. Sissons & Sons, who were based at Beswick and built wagons from 1854 onwards. Another building has been converted to a blacksmith’s forge.

Left: This photograph shows a view of the agriculture gallery. The man on the left is ploughing the land by turning the soil for the man on the right to sow seeds. There are also old photographs which look at the agricultural history of East Yorkshire.
The second gallery has displays on many aspects of rural village life. One of these aspects was the wheelwright. The photograph below shows the wheelwright working in his shop repairing a wooden wheel.

Left: ‘Wolds Wagon’ can be seen in one of the outbuildings. During the Great War 1914-19 a Waggoners Special Reserve was founded by Sir Mark Sykes which consisted of Yorkshire Wolds farmers. Their job was not to fight but to transport food, ammunition and other supplies to the front line with their waggons and horses. The story of the Waggoners by Christopher Jowett is published in the winter edition 2015 of TYJ which can be downloaded for free on our website.

Right: The blacksmith’s forge in one of the outbuildings. To the left can be seen the blacksmith bellows that blows air onto a fire to make it burn more fiercely. This enables the furnace to reach a high enough temperature to make iron melt and to strengthen it through the addition of carbon to make steel.

Opening Times for the Museum

Monday to Thursday 10.00 am until 5.00 pm. Last admission is 4.15 pm
Friday 10.00 am until 4.30 pm. Last admission is 3.45 pm
Closed for lunch between 12.30 pm and 1.00 pm daily
There is a modest admission charge
Brodsworth Hall was built in the early 1860s at the instigation of Charles Sabine Thelluson, who had inherited the estate and its original Georgian mansion, which he demolished in order to rebuild the Italianate style house we can see today. The original Brodsworth Hall was rebuilt by Archbishop Hay Drummond who commissioned plans from Robert Adam between 1761 and 1765 for both a new house and alternatively an addition to the existing house at Brodsworth. Over the next ten years major rebuilding and refacing of the house was undertaken. On completion the large house had canted bays at the centre of its main façades and a long 13-bay front overlooked the village and church, with short wings at each end reaching back to the stable block. Nothing of this house remains today.

Right: The old house at Brodsworth as rebuilt by Robert Hay Drummond. This photograph shows how the house looked just before it was demolished in 1861

Thelluson was not the only devotee of this style of architecture: Osborne House, on the Isle of Wight, was the then newly-built home of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert, who had popularised this architectural style.

Charles was the great-grandson of Peter Thelluson, an immensely wealthy Swiss banker, manager of the London Branch of the Bank and owner of several other businesses. As well as being the inheritor of the Hall and its surrounding estate, and after a brief period as an army officer, Charles served as High Sheriff of Yorkshire. He was married to Georgiana (née Theobald), and the couple had 4 sons and 2 daughters. All of the sons would die without male heirs. These rather unusual circumstances meant that each son inherited the Hall and the estate in turn, but when the youngest son of the family died in about 1929, the house passed to Captain Charles Grant-Dalton, the son of Constance, one of Charles Sabine Thelluson’s two daughters. Sylvia, Captain Grant-Dalton’s wife, died in 1988, after struggling for many years to maintain and upkeep the Hall and estate which had been left to her late husband, Charles. The Hall itself was then acquired by English Heritage, who made the decision to retain the interior as it was, rather than undertaking any major restoration of the property or replacing lost features. Many of the family’s possessions and the decorative features of the Hall were left in place, although the Grant-Daltons had been forced to shut up some parts of the house, to try to limit the amount of upkeep that was needed and to reflect the changing times, when a house staffed by an army of servants was no longer practical or financially viable.
Brodsworth’s interiors were designed, decorated and furnished for both comfort and entertaining. The architect Philip Wilkinson provided spacious Italianate hallways leading to a dining room, billiard room and drawing room in a more ornate French style. Finally the Thellussons bought several Italian marble statues in 1865, placing them to great effect against the marbled columns and paintwork of the halls.

In 1863 the London firm of Lapworths supplied the family rooms with the best quality mahogany furniture and highly patterned carpets and curtains, as well as re-upholstering some of the Thellussons’ existing furniture. Lapworths also provided grained furniture for the servants and household items like fire-irons.

As later generations updated and changed the way they used the interiors, some of the original decorative schemes were lost, particularly in the bedrooms. Many later possessions and electric rather than gas lights were introduced. From the 1930s the Grant-Daltons closed some rooms, often reusing the carpets and curtains elsewhere. With fewer servants, their bedrooms were used for storage and the Victorian kitchen was abandoned.

Nonetheless, a remarkable amount of Brodsworth’s original 1860s contents and decoration have survived, even if sometimes altered and worn. Brodsworth’s interiors show both how the Victorian house was created, and how it was lived in and adapted by later generations of the family and their servants.

Time really does stand still at Brodsworth, and much of the house has been left untouched from the time when a family and a large staff of servants to service their wants would have filled the house with activity. A remarkable feature of Brodsworth is the children’s wing. In the days where even the children of wealthy families were often relegated to the more remote and gloomy parts of their parents’ large houses (on the basis, one presumes, that “children should be seen and not heard”), to have an area of the house specially designated for the accommodation, care and education of the children was unusual, to say the least.

Another feature of Brodsworth is the amount of sculpture which can be seen, many of these sculptures being representations of children. One of the things that survives from the children who once inhabited this house are scrap screens. Screens were frequently used in the rooms of large houses, to keep off draughts in the days before central heating was common. For children, an amusing and often educational pastime was to cover the screen with scraps cut out from books, magazines and newspapers. In the days before ready-to-use scraps were common, these would be pictures of people, animals, flowers, birds, objects and so on, which would then be pasted all over the screen to decorate it.
Often the effect was quite humorous and outlandish – a large picture of a bird, for example, might be positioned next to a much smaller one of a human figure, giving a sort of role reversal of the usual order of things. We can only imagine the fun the children might have had from planning the layout of their scrap screen design.

Left: The pair of scrap screens in the Drawing Room at Brodsworth Hall dated to about c1877-80. Each screen has three folding leaves. The images on the screens date from the late 1860s to the 1880s, so they may have been the work of Aline and Constance Thellusson. They have been carefully arranged, with large images framed by smaller ones and borders. The screen on the left is dominated by images of women surrounded by flowers. The screen on the right has images of landscapes, flowers, children and animals. Screens were used to provide privacy, divide rooms, or exclude draughts, particularly in bedrooms.

The fact that the Hall was designed and built with an area that is especially for children reflects a growing interest at this period in childhood and in the child as a separate identity from that of the adult. From the 18th century onwards, there were changes in previously-held views about childhood, and new ideas in religion and science were making people think about how children should be brought up and educated in order to become rational, responsible and right-thinking citizens. No longer were children generally thought of as simply small adults – childhood was now a separate entity with its own needs. Books, such as the philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s “Emile or a treatise On Education”, were very influential, turning aside from the idea that children were born as little more than savages who needed the civilising effects of education, and instead promoting the idea that children came into the world with a kind of natural freedom, and should be allowed to grow and develop as freely as possible, away from the corrupting and limiting influence of modern-day society.

Inevitably, the policy of leaving much of Brodsworth Hall untouched has meant that the house will deteriorate over time. From the early summer of 2016, a programme of major work has been instigated by experts in their particular fields under the supervision of English Heritage, which it is hoped will provide the much-needed care and attention which will prevent the ultimate loss of this beautiful house, whilst at the same time conserving the atmosphere and surviving original possessions of this family home. In spite of the work in progress, much of the house is still accessible to the public, and although the work will continue until probably well into next year, there is still much for visitors to see and learn.

Right: The drawing room at Brodsworth Hall. Most of its lavish original fittings and furnishings survive, the carpet, gilt furniture and mirrors, chandeliers and delicately painted ceiling, though the wall silks have been patched. In the far right hand corner can be seen one of the scrap screens, the other in the left hand corner is obscured by one of the white columns which separates the smaller section of the room.

© English Heritage Photo Library
The Gardens

The gardens at Brodsworth have been described as “stunning”. Comprising an area of about 16 acres, they were laid out at the time the Hall was built, so are a perfect example of the taste of the 1860s in garden design.

The immediate setting for the house is provided by spacious lawns and terraces, linked by shallow marble steps. A series of white marble statues stand out against the frame of ‘green architecture’ of evergreen hedges and shrub borders.

Right: An aerial view of Brodsworth Hall and Gardens, looking north-east © English Heritage Photo Library

Further from the house a succession of areas of different character open into one another, providing new points of interest at every turn. Brightly planted flowerbeds are laid out around a three-tier fountain, contrasting with the predominant greens of the magnificent topiary and trees. Beyond are a rockwork grotto planted with ferns, a rose pergola, and a quarry garden laced with intertwining paths. These lead to eye-catching garden buildings like the summer house, a viewing point over the house and gardens, and the little target house, which marks the end of a former archery ground and the essential kitchen gardens required to provision a large Victorian household.

To the north and east of the hall, less formal areas of woodland planting lie towards the stable block, kitchen gardens and St Michael and All Angels church (to which there is no public access).

Left: Brightly planted flowerbeds are laid out around a three-tier fountain
Above: The summer house, which has a viewing point over the house and gardens

Left: St Michael and All Angels Church
The Infamous Thellusson Will

By Daniel Theyer

Peter Thellusson was a member of a long-established and successful European family. Originally Huguenots, the family’s focus shifted between France and Geneva. He emigrated to England in 1760, becoming nationalised by an Act of Parliament, and was married the year afterwards to Anne Woodward, her family being minor gentry in Lincolnshire. Thellusson joined the Huguenot community in London.

He was already wealthy, his assets of £12,000, being the equivalent of almost a million pounds today, and was not slow in putting his money to work in various partnerships in diverse enterprises. These can be summarised as follows

(i) Money lending in the Caribbean colonies – Mostly in the 1760’s and 1770’s.
(ii) Money lending in Britain – both to commercial interests and loans to the government. This was more important in the 1780’s and 1790’s when the Caribbean was more risky
(iii) Agency and broker work
(iv) Trading and investing in annuities and funds
(v) Trading in goods used in the slave trade
(vi) Direct trading in colonial goods - Thellusson was clearly involved in selling a variety of colonial products on commission and it is thought that most of this trade was with the Caribbean colonies.
(vii) Sugar refining
(viii) Marine Insurance
(ix) Ownership of land - Defaults on loans led to him becoming the owner of several estates in the Caribbean
(x) Ownership of ships

Thellusson was clearly an industrious and astute businessman, and had built up a fortune of some £700,000 within 35 years. No records have survived from his businesses and he penned few letters. It is however very clear that a large proportion of his wealth stemmed from the slave trade. During his lifetime this was perfectly legal and respectable but modern morals have prompted English heritage to produce a very thorough report http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/content/visit/places-to-visit/history-research-plans/slavery-connections-brodsworth. As well as a residence in London he bought a villa and small estate in Plaistow in Kent in the 1770’s. In 1791 he purchased the Brodsworth estate.

During the 1790’s he gradually retired from business, having already installed his three sons in various positions in his business empire. His retirement was to be very brief, he died in 1797, at the age of 62, and was buried at Brodsworth. The previous year he had drawn up his will, a 23 page document which ensured his place in history.

His wife and six children succeeded him, and his will provided for all of them. “During her lifetime or until her remarriage, his wife was to have the use of their residence at Plaistow, with all of its lands, furnishings and appurtenances. In addition he provided for an annual income to her of £2,140 (subject to reduction in the event of her remarriage). “To each of his three sons he gave £23,000, and for his three daughters he set up £12,000 trusts, enjoyable for life. Upon the death of his wife a further £22,000 was to be distributed between his children and grandchildren. His sons would benefit by approximately a further £10,000 approximately in six years’ time – providing they still worked for the family concerns.

It would seem that Thellusson believed he had adequately catered for the needs of his family with these bequests, amounting in total to over £125,000 – over ten million in today’s money. Each of his sons received twice the capital he had when he arrived in Britain.
The residue of his estate was some £600,000, including the Brodsworth estate.

This was to be placed in trusts, which would continue during the lifetime of his sons and those grandchildren alive at the time of his death. The inheritance would then be split between “the eldest male lineal descendants of my three sons then living”. If you are not sure exactly what that means you are not alone, as we will see. It was likely that the trust would run for about 70 years and the actuarial value placed on the likely proceeds, assuming an annual interest of 5%, was some £25 million pounds (the best part of a billion pounds today).

The family were outraged, dismissing the will as “an object impolite and pernicious”. They attempted to challenge the will in court, a move that guaranteed a barrage of publicity that would not have been welcomed by his three sons, all of whom had gone into politics. A counter suit was launched by the executors and trustees of the will. The suits came before Lord Chancellor Loughborough in 1793. But by his direction the hearing was deferred and he called in the Master of the Rolls. It was argued in December 1798, and the decision was pronounced on April 20, 1799. The will stood.

Such was the alarm caused by this will, with the possibility of a single individual inheriting a sum of money sufficient to destabilize the finances of the country that it led to Parliament passing the Accumulations Act 1800. This, in short, made it illegal to leave money to people not yet born. This has subsequently been known as the Thellusson Act.

The family appealed to the House of Lords in 1805. As the will preceded the Thellusson Act it was not subject to it retrospectively. Following long and eloquent speeches from both sides Lord Chancellor Eldon expressed surprise that the question of perpetuities or of accumulation should again be seriously raised and the appeal foundered.

In 1821 the will was again before the Chancery court regarding the trivial matter of who was entitled to make the nomination to a curacy that had fallen vacant. It did however clarify the legal definition of who would eventually benefit from the will in a judgment in 1825.

In 1827 the Court of Chancery, decided that that “the privilege of residing in the Manor House at Brodsworth was vested only in the original trustees and the sons of the testator”

The final stage of the litigations was reached after the death of the last surviving grandson in 1856, signaling the end of the trust. Peter Thellusson’s second son George Woodford had no sons, so the estate was divided into two shares; and there were two claimants as to each of these shares. One share was claimed by Frederick Thellusson, then Baron Rendlesham a great-grandson of the testator. This share was also claimed by Arthur John Bethel Thellusson, an uncle of the Baron, and son of the first Baron Rendlesham. The other share was claimed by Charles Sabine Augustus Thellusson, a grandson of the testator and it was also claimed by his uncle, Thomas Robarts Thellusson.

The decision of the Master of the Rolls was that he was bound by Lord Eldon’s judgment in 1821 that males could not claim through female descent, and found in favour of the nephews – even though they were younger.

After 60 years the trust was worth – almost exactly the same as it was in 1797!!! The real beneficiaries were, you will not be surprised to hear, the legal profession. The trustees of the will also accounted for a not insubstantial proportion – tales of high living were legion. The 5% p.a. interest forecast was over-optimistic too. Don’t shed too many tears for the eventual benefactors though, £300,000 each was not to be sneezed at. Charles Sabine Augustus’ share included the Brodsworth estate, and the Brodsworth Hall you visit today is very much his legacy.

The Thellusson Will is still renowned in legal history, and it is widely believed that it was immortalised by Charles Dickens in Bleak House, as the Jarndyce versus Jarndyce case.
Charlotte Brontë’s Association with Filey on the East Yorkshire Coast

By Claire Mason

Filey is a small seaside town on the East Yorkshire Coast that has managed to retain something of its elegant appearance and respectability of early Victorian times. This charming little seaside resort is midway between the more famous and developed entertainment seaside towns of Bridlington and Scarborough.

Charlotte Brontë’s (21 April 1816 - 31 March 1855) first stayed at Filey in the summer of 1849, after the tragic death of her sister, Anne. It was over Christmas of 1848 that Anne caught influenza, a doctor diagnosed her condition as consumption (tuberculosis) with little hope of recovery. In February 1849, Anne seemed a little better and felt that a change of air might relieve her symptoms, so she decided to make a visit to Scarborough. Charlotte requested that their friend Ellen Nussey accompany them on the journey which began on Thursday 24th May 1849. After only a few days at Scarborough Anne died at around two o’clock in the afternoon of Monday 28th May 1849. An article on ‘Anne Brontë’s Connection with Scarborough’ by Claire Mason has been published in the Journal (TYJ Autumn 2015). Charlotte had chosen to bury Anne at St. Mary’s churchyard, beneath Scarborough castle, overlooking the bay. She commissioned a stone to be placed over her grave, with a simple inscription. Her father Patrick Brontë did not have time to make the 70 mile (110 km) journey to attend his daughter’s funeral. But he wrote to Charlotte and strongly advised her to stay at the seaside for a while, in order to obtain the rest and change she very much needed.

Charlotte did not stay in Scarborough, the memories being too painful. Therefore on Thursday 7th June 1849 together with her lifelong friend Ellen Nussey they left Scarborough and moved down the east coast to Filey. How they travelled is not recorded, but Filey’s railway station opened in October 1846, so it is likely that they went by train rather than by road. At Filey they rented rooms at Cliff House, 40 Belle Vue Street which is only a short distance from the sea front, and here they stayed for a few days.

Cliff House was built in 1824 by Mr. Smith, who had been a land agent to the Strickland family. Their estate was near Boynton and Boynton Hall was the Strickland’s former home. After the death of Mr. Smith his widower took in lodgers. Mrs. Smith, their landlady, did not realize the identity of her distinguished visitor and much to her subsequent regret, inadvertently destroyed the letters which she received from Charlotte at the time.

Right: Cliff House, now named Charlotte’s, which is a café
Today Cliff House is a café, named Charlotte’s and its appearance remains much the same as when it was first built, although the straight fronted window on the right-hand side has been made into a bay window, from this position it would have commanded a clear view of the sea. Cliff House is easily identified by its white painted stone front with a blue plaque on the right side elevation of the front bay window. It reads ‘Brontë House. This plaque was erected in Queen Elizabeth II jubilee year in commemoration of the great authoress Charlotte Brontë who stayed here in 1849-1852’, it was erected by Filey District Civic Society.

Right: The blue plaque located on the right side of the front bay window.

Shortly after taking up rooms she wrote to her father on Saturday June 9th 1849, unfortunately the letter is in fragments and incomplete but what can be extracted, is that Charlotte left Scarborough on Thursday after paying all the bills including the funeral expenses out of Anne’s money that she had with her. Charlotte ordered a stone to be erected with an inscription that cost about £3. She goes on to say that she is with Ellen Nussey and will stay at Filey for a few days which is quieter and a lonelier place than Scarborough. The coast is rather wild and there are more sea-birds on the beach and the cliffs. She refers to Filey Brigg as “a black desolate reef of rocks” where she observed birds flying over the waves. Although she had fewer headaches, a better appetite and found the sea-air refreshing and was feeling better in health, she longed to go home.

A little further information about this visit is given in Ellen Nussey’s diary of 1849, on Friday 8th June Charlotte and Ellen “walked to the end of Filey Bridge” and on Sunday 10th June they were “At Muston Church Filey”.

There is another reference to this visit in a letter written to W. S. Williams, her publisher, from Filey, dated 13th June, 1849. The following is only a short extract in which she refers to Filey -

“Filey, where we have been for the last week - is a small place with a wild rocky coast - its sea is very blue and its - cliffs are very white - its sands very solitary - it suits Ellen and myself better than Scarbro’ which is too gay. I would stay here another week - but Ellen says I must go to-morrow to Bridlington - and after I have been a week there, I intend to return home to Papa.

When she wrote ‘too gay’ it had quite a different meaning, but by 1849 Scarborough with its Spa was a well-established seaside resort providing every fashionable amenity. There were Assembly Rooms providing concerts, balls, and gaming tables. Plays were performed at the Theatre Royal, and there were fashionable shops, coffee houses, and three newspapers with visitor’s lists plus bookshops with circulating libraries.

Left: A view of Scarborough in the 1840s from the entrance to the underground Spa Well. On the skyline, extreme left, can be seen Wood’s Lodgings where Anne spent her last days with St. Mary’s churchyard where Anne is buried and the castle on the right.

Three years later from May 23rd to about 25th June 1852 Charlotte Brontë returned to Filey staying at Cliff House the same lodgings where she and Ellen had stayed after Anne’s death. She found a warm welcome from her former landlady, Mrs. Smith, but this time she was “alone, utterly alone”. She had been ill for some time and it was felt a change of air might help her, also she wanted to see her sister’s grave at Scarborough.
At the time of Anne’s death in 1849 Charlotte had commissioned a memorial stone to be erected over the grave and was anxious to inspect it. Anne is the only member of the Brontë family not buried at Haworth. Charlotte only revisited the grave once on Friday 4th June 1852 and on her arrival at Anne’s grave she was annoyed to discovered five errors in the inscription on Anne’s headstone, and had to arrange for it to be refaced and re-lettered. However, Anne’s age at death was still written as 28 when, in fact, she was 29 when she died. In April 2011, the correction was finally made when a new inscribed plaque was laid by the Brontë Society in front of the eroded headstone.

**Left: Anne Brontë’s weathered and eroded headstone, beneath is the new plaque installed in 2011**

During her stay at Filey she wrote to her father on June 2nd 1852, the following is an extract -

“On the whole I get on very well here - but I have not bathed yet, as I am told it is much too cold and too early in the season.

The sea is very grand. Yesterday it was a somewhat unusually high tide - and I stood about an hour on the cliffs yesterday afternoon - watching the tumbling in of great tawny turbid waves - that made the whole shore white with foam and filled the air with a sound hollower and deeper than thunder.

There are so very few visitors at Filey yet - that I and a few sea-birds and fishing-boats have often the whole expanse of sea-shore, and cliff to ourselves - When the tide is out the sands are wide, long and smooth, and very pleasant to walk on. When the high tides are in - not a vestige of sand remains. I saw a great dog rush into the sea yesterday - and swim and bear up against the waves like a seal - I wonder what Flossy would say to that”.

“On Sunday afternoon I went to a church which I should like Mr. Nicholls to see”. This is one of her earliest references to her father’s curate and her future husband. “It was certainly not more than thrice the length and breadth of our passage - floored with brick - the walls green with mould - the pews painted white, but the paint almost worn off with time and decay - at one end there is a little gallery for the singers - and when these personages stood up to perform - they all turned their backs upon the congregation - and the congregation turned their backs upon pulpit and parson - the effect of this manoeuvre was so ludicrous - I could hardly help laughing - had Mr. Nicholls been there - he certainly would have laughed out - Looking up at the gallery and seeing only the broad backs of the singers presented to their audience was excessively grotesque. There is a well-meaning but utterly inactive clergyman at Filey, and the Methodists flourish”.

The clergyman that Charlotte refers to was the Reverend Thomas Norfolk Jackson, Vicar of Filey from 1833 to 1873, he died in January 1891 at the age of eighty-three. The church which Charlotte Brontë visited that Sunday afternoon is difficult to identify, but Charlotte gives a clue in its small dimensions which would seem to indicate the church at Speeton dedicated to St Leonard. It is situated about 5 miles south of Filey between Filey and Flamborough Head and stands windswept and solitary on the high cliffs. The church of St Leonard’s is one of the smallest parish churches in Yorkshire and was built in the early Norman period, probably on the site of an earlier Saxon church.

**Right: St Leonard’s Church at Speeton**

A visit by the local topographer Reverend Prickett, led him to report in 1831 that, “Speeton Chapel is only an oblong room.” The east end of the church was being used as a school. Before 1911 the church was floored with brick and traces of green mould could still be seen ‘at the foot of the chancel arch’ in the 1950s.
Charlotte also refers to "a little gallery", however, there is no evidence that St Leonard’s Church had a gallery, but there might have been a slightly raised singers’ pew. The Methodist noted by Charlotte was the eldest of five brothers who were prosperous mill owners in the 1850s and 1860s.

Four days later on 6th June 1852, Charlotte wrote to her friend Ellen Nussey, the following is an extract -

“I am at Filey utterly alone. Do not be angry. The step is right. I considered it and resolved on it with due deliberation. Change of air was necessary; there were reasons why I should not go to the South and why I should come here. On Friday I went to Scarbro’, visited the church-yard and stone - it must be refaced and re-lettered - there are 5 errors. I gave the necessary directions - that duty then is done - long has it lain heavy on my mind - and that was a pilgrimage I felt could only make alone.

In Charlotte Brontë’s letter to her father on June 9th 1849 she mentions commissioning a memorial stone with an inscription to be erected over Anne’s grave at a cost of about £3. It is understandable that Charlotte did not want to stay in Scarborough after the funeral, the memory of Anne would have been too painful for her. However, it would seem from the letter to Ellen Nussey on 6th June 1852 she regretted not staying in Scarborough to see the completion of Anne’s memorial stone after finding 5 errors.

“I am in our old lodgings at Mrs. Smith’s - not, however in the same rooms - but in less expensive apartments - They seemed glad to see me - remembered you and me very well and seemingly with great good will. The Daughter who used to wait on us is just married. Filey seems to me much altered - more lodging-houses - some of them very handsome - have been built - the sea has all its own grandeur - I walk on the sands a good deal, and try not to feel desolate and melancholy. How sorely my heart longs for you I need not say. I have bathed once: it seemed to do me good - I may perhaps stay here a fortnight. There are as yet scarcely any visitors. A Lady Wenlock is staying at the large house of which you used so vigilantly to observe the inmates. One day I set out with intent to trudge to Filey Bridge but was frightened back by two cows. I mean to try again some morning”.

The handsome lodging-houses that Charlotte mentions is The Crescent which was built in by John Wilkes Unett, a Birmingham solicitor and were completed in the 1850s. The Crescent and other buildings to the south-east of Cliff House block the view of the sea.

Left: Anne Brontë’s headstone, although much weathered, after it was refaced and re-lettered. However, Anne’s age at death was still written as 28 when, in fact, she was 29 when she died.

Left: An engraving of The Crescent, Filey in 1872 illustrating the tall elegant houses.
The “Filey Bridge” is the famous Filey Brigg which is a long narrow promontory that extends a long way out into the North Sea, at the northern end of Filey Bay. This is perhaps the most impressive geological formation on the east Yorkshire coast and especially when seen in stormy weather, waves crash over the Brigg End. It must have impressed Charlotte, who was sensitive to the bizarre and eerie in natural phenomena.

Above: On Friday 8th June 1849 Charlotte and Ellen walked to the end of the Filey Brigg, which extends a long way out into the North Sea.

Right: On Charlotte’s second visit to Filey she describes standing for about an hour on the cliffs watching turbulent waves that made the whole shore white with foam. Her outline defines this photograph of Filey Brigg.

This is the ‘black desolate reef of rocks’ mentioned in Charlotte Brontë’s letter to her father of 9th June 1849. She may have remembered Filey Brigg when writing her novel ‘Shirley’, in chapter 32, describing “A reef of rocks, black and rough, stretches far into the sea; all along, and among, and above these crags, dash and flash, sweep and leap, swells, wreaths, drifts of snowy spray. Some lone wanderer is out on these rocks, treading, with cautious step, the wet, wild sea-weed; glancing down into hollows where the brine lies fathoms deep and emerald clear, and seeing there wilder and stranger, and huger vegetation, than is found on land, with treasure of shells-some green, some purple, some pearly-clustered in the curls of the snaky plants”. Her book ‘Shirley’ was published in October 1849 soon after her return from her first visit to Filey.

From Filey Charlotte wrote again to Ellen Nussey on Wednesday 16 June 1852 and to Margaret Wooler, her former schoolmistress at Roe Head on Wednesday 23 June 1852. Both letters indicate that Charlotte felt better in health as a result of her stay at Filey. The following in an extract from Charlotte’s letter to Ellen Nussey on 16 June 1852.

“Be quite easy about me. I really think I am better for my stay at Filey - that I have derived indeed more benefit from it than I dared to anticipate - I believe could I stay here two months and enjoy something like social cheerfulness as well as exercise and good air - my health would be quite renewed. This - however cannot possibly be - but I am most thankful for the good received. I may stay another week”.

The following in an extract from a letter to Miss Margaret Wooler dated 23 June 1852 -

“The first week or ten days - I greatly feared the sea-side would not suit me - for I suffered almost constantly from head-ache and other harassing ailments; the weather too was dark, stormy, and excessively - bitterly cold; my Solitude, under such circumstances, partook of the character of desolation; I had some dreary evening-hours and night-vigils. However - that passed; I think I am now better and stronger from the change, and in a day or two - hope to return home.

E. Nussey told me that Mr. Wm. Wooler said - people with my tendency to congestion of the liver - should walk three or four hours every day; accordingly I have walked as much as I could since I came here, and look almost as sunburnt and weather-beaten as a fisherman or a bathing-woman with being out in the open air”.

The duty to be discharged at Scarbro’ was the chief motive that drew me to the East Coast: I have been there - visited the Churchyard, seen the stone - there were five errors - consequently I had to give directions for it being refaced and re-lettered.

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Obviously Charlotte was very disturbed by finding five errors on Anne’s headstone.

In her letter Charlotte refers to a “bathing-woman” who was an attendant to ensure privacy for lady-bathers and helped them in the bathing-machine to change into their bathing dress, placing their usual clothes into a raised compartment where they would remain dry. They also looked after their ‘valuables’.

The bathing-machine was then pulled by horses to the edge of the water or even into it, if the waves and tide permitted. When the machine stopped the bather inside emerged through a doorway from the back of the machine directly into the water hidden from the view of others. A complete history on ‘Sea Bathing and the first bathing machine at Scarborough’ by Sarah Harrison has been published in the Journal (TYJ Spring 2012).

Left: This engraving of Filey Bay is dated 1872, Filey was most familiar to Charlotte, though shown here some 20 years after her last visit. The sands sweep all the way around the bay to Filey Brigg in the distance which Charlotte loved to walk on. On her first visit to Filey both Charlotte and Ellen walked to the end of Filey Brigg on Friday 8th June 1849. It illustrates bathing machines in use on the beach, five of which have been rolled out to the edge of the sea. Charlotte would have used a bathing machine when she bathed. Also it shows how sparsely populated Filey Bay was in 1872 a remark Charlotte made in 1852.

By the end of the month she was back once again at Haworth ready to resume work on what was to be her last novel. She wrote a letter to W. S. Williams, after her return from Filey on 28 July 1852 in which she says “The warm weather and a visit to the sea have done me much good physically; but as yet I have recovered neither elasticity of animal spirits nor flow of the power of composition”. To add to her difficulties, her father Patrick Brontë had a seizure and was again threatened with loss of sight. Charlotte must have deeply missed the companionship of Emily and Anne, which had served to ease the composition of her earlier works. Nevertheless she struggled bravely on, and by November ‘Villette’ was in the hands of her publishers. It appeared in 1853.

Before the publication of ‘Villette’ Charlotte received a proposal of marriage from Arthur Bell Nicholls, her father’s curate, who had long been in love with her. She initially turned him down but by January 1854 she had accepted his proposal and they married in June the same year.

Charlotte became pregnant soon after her wedding, but her health declined rapidly. She died, with her unborn child, on 31st March 1855, aged 38, three weeks before her 39th birthday. It has been suggest that she died from dehydration and malnourishment due to vomiting caused by severe morning sickness. Charlotte was interred in the family vault in the Church of St Michael and All Angels at Haworth where Charlotte Brontë’s father preached. The church was rebuilt after the Brontës died, so they would not have known the building we see now. The tower is the only original part and has bullet holes which resulted from Mr. Brontë’s habit of firing a pistol off at it every morning. The family is buried in a vault below which is not accessible but there is a memorial chapel which was built in 1964 and plaques.
Hornsea and Withernsea Railway
Seaside Holiday Posters

By Stephen Riley

Hornsea and Withernsea are on the Holderness Coast in East Yorkshire, and both are small seaside towns situated south of Bridlington and east of Kingston upon Hull. Two short branch lines ran north-east and east from Hull to these seaside towns which developed as coastal resorts and a place to relax once the railway arrived in 1854 at Withernsea and ten years later in 1864 at Hornsea. Both Hornsea and Withernsea were then, as they are now lesser seaside resorts with much less railway advertising than for the larger resorts. However, considering the relative size of both these resorts, a surprising number of railway posters were produced.

Above: Hornsea Railway Station in about 1910

HORNSEA

A new line connecting Hull and Hornsea was promoted by a group of Hornsea businessmen, led by the chairman of the company, Joseph Armytage Wade, a Hull timber merchant and resident of Hornsea. They believed that the development of the railway would bring prosperity to their town as a fashionable seaside resort. Hornsea Town was the terminus of the Hull and Hornsea Railway, located around 100 yards from the sea and opened on 28th March 1864. The station was not planned to run right to the coast due to the boggy ground, but this decision was reversed and facilities were built at double the original estimate, as piling supported the station and the trackbed. Commercially, the route was never a success and with financial difficulties, the Hull and Hornsea Railway merged with the North Eastern Railway (NER) in 1866 and then it was taken over by the London and North Eastern Railway (LNER) in 1923. LNER was the railway that served Yorkshire until the nationalisation of the railways after the Second World War and became one of the most important poster producers.

Right: Map showing Hornsea, the town, Hornsea Mere and the old Hull and Hornsea Railway line. The blue arrow shows the Hornsea Bridge station, which was the proposed terminus. A late change of plan saw the line extended near to the seafront.
When British Railways (BR) was created in 1948, which later traded as British Rail, it sadly neglected to feature this attractive resort in any of its advertising campaigns. By the 1960s the railways were having to compete with cheap package holidays and more car travel which eventually ended the Hornsea railway, it closed in 1964. The station stood derelict but intact until 1987 when work began to convert the station buildings into housing; the excursion platforms were removed and new houses built on the site. A new access road was built on the trackbed.

Right: Hornsea railway station converted into houses. Photograph by Norman Booth

With the coming of the railways a pier 1,072 feet in length was constructed to encourage holidaymakers and day-trippers. This opened in 1880. Unfortunately on 28th October in the same year, the ship ‘Earl of Derby’ collided with the pier during a storm, reducing its length to 750 feet. The pier was repaired and opened for twelve summer seasons. But most of the entrance money was swallowed up by its maintenance, consequently it was sold for scrap and was demolished in 1897. The story of Yorkshire’s Seaside Piers by Susan Horton has been published in the journal *(TYJ 3 Autumn 2011)*. Subsequently the pier does not appear in any of the railway posters, being demolished in 1897 before railway advertising posters were produced.

Above: This very early photograph shows the old Marine Hotel on the cliff top with the remains of the pier in the background. In 1880 the pier was seriously damaged after a storm in which a ship was driven through it. The pier was demolished in 1897 just before this photograph was taken. To the right are the Promenade Gardens with a group on men sitting on the lawn. Photograph courtesy of Heather Fretwell

Right: This photograph is dated about 1897 before the remains of the pier were demolished which can be seen out at sea. A closer view of the old Marine Hotel is on the right at the top of the cliff Photograph courtesy of D Kemp
Hornsea has a long history and is mentioned in the Domesday Book of 1086 as Hornesse. In medieval times the town had some importance as a market centre, partly based on fishing and seaborne trade. It also has a colourful history of smuggling, a trade which was aided and abetted by the entire town. With the coming of the Hull and Hornsea Railway in 1864 the town expanded and when day-trippers appeared tourists soon replaced smugglers as the most popular visitors.

The old railway line used to run in a virtually straight line north-eastwards from Hull to the coast. From the air, the flat Wolds of East Yorkshire are a patchwork of fields, and the railway journey was swift. On Saturdays and particularly after Bank Holidays were introduced in 1871, Hornsea hosted day visitors and excursionists who came mainly from Hull. The busiest day of the year was the Bank Holiday on the first Monday in August. Soon Hornsea became a popular seaside tourist resort.

The colourful railway posters advertising the resort were produced mostly by LNER. Hornsea has always been advertised as ‘Lakeland by the Sea’, due to the large lake, Hornsea Mere, just inland from the coast. The railway line passed the mere on the left during the train journey from Hull. It is the largest natural freshwater lake in Yorkshire, formed at the end of the last Ice Age. The Mere covers an area of around 470 acres, that is about 2 miles (3km) long and three-quarters of a mile (1.2km) at its widest point and is not much more than 8 feet deep (2.5m) at its deepest point, which is ideal for boating, rowing, sailing and fishing. It is also a Special Protection Area, due to its shallowness that results in a diverse range of swamp and fen plants. Also being close to the North Sea coast it attracts many species of birds throughout the year, and is of international importance for migrating birds. The story of Hornsea Mere by Alison Hartley has been published in the journal (TYJ 3 Autumn 2014).

The first railway poster, on the right, was produced by the North Eastern Railway in 1911 and was designed by C. W. Loten. It shows clearly how this area was marketed by the NER to encourage the tourist trade. It is also the only poster that shows the main seafront panorama. On the beach are a number of holidaymakers and donkeys are being offered for rides. The centre piece is the Hornsea Mere illustrated with the island and rowing boats. Golf and bowls activities are also inserted in the poster. What more could any Edwardian holidaymaker want for.

Below: An aerial view of Hornsea Mere showing the patchwork fields with the town on the right. The Holderness coastline can be seen to the north sweeping gently to Bridlington and then in an almost semi-circle around to Flamborough Headland.
Left: This poster was issued in the early days of LNER which became one of the most important poster producers, the railway company was quick to recognise the crowd-pulling potential of a well-designed and painted poster. This poster dates to the early 1920s and is the first poster that LNER produced to promote rail travel to Hornsea.

It depict Hornsea sands with two happy girls in bathing costumes with a beach ball sitting on the top of a tall flat wooden jetty built on top of a Groyne, which is a sea break. This timber structure is part of the sea coastal defences that were erected in the early 1900s. Under the jetty, sitting in the shade, is the outline of a dog that is keeping an eye on the beach. On the sand are a number of beach tents and flags of the Union Jack can be seen flying high on the horizon. The poster is titled ‘Hornsea Lakeland by the Sea’ the Artist is F. Gregory Brown.

Right: This rather uninspiring poster is also titled ‘Hornsea Lakeland by the Sea’ produced by LNER. It illustrates a beach scene with sophisticated holidaymakers enjoying themselves on the sand and swimming in the sea. A group of people in beach wear are sitting and standing around an open beach tent. The elegant looking man in a blue robe is standing with a cigarette in his hand. They are looking at other holidaymakers walking or talking in groups on the beach. On the sea can be seen a ship blasting out a trail of white smoke that continues all the way to the top of the poster. This poster appeared in 1923, the artist is Freiwirth.

Left: This LNER poster features a beach scene at Hornsea. In the foreground is a man with two ladies sitting on a wooden groyne, which is a sea break. The beach at Hornsea is quite steep and held in place by timber groynes as protection against coastal erosion, these are showing signs of age. The beach is scarcely populated with holidaymakers and only one solitary beach tent is illustrated on the sands. The white steep steps from the beach lead to the promenade and the Marine Hotel with its red roof. Further to the right is the Floral Hall and behind is the Granville Hotel with its domed tower. This poster appeared in 1926, the artist is Harry Rodmell.

The three posters on this page really do not do justice to the resort. However, when displayed together as here, the trio makes a nice display.
Right: This fashionable poster is beautifully composed and is eye-catching. It illustrates the Promenade with a couple elegantly dressed. The young lady at the centre is wearing a stylish yellow dress with red shoes, the matching colours go with the parasol in her hand that protects her from the sun. Next to her is a man leaning on the Promenade railings who is also dressed in sophisticated clothes which were the order of the day when this poster was produced in the 1930s. They are both looking across the sands at the sea taking in the bracing sea air. There are number of seagulls flying over the couple and behind is a group of people also elegantly dressed walking on the Promenade towards the Floral Hall. This poster is a classic example of how style, tastes and appearances changed at a time when LNER was pushing the message ‘It’s Quicker by Rail’. It is one of a series that Edmund Oakdale was commissioned to paint to show the elegance of Yorkshire.

This rare poster is in the National Railway Museum’s collection at York and is badly damaged, but has been digitally repaired.

Left: This poster shows the excitement as two young children and their mother approach the town in the 1930s. They are in a train compartment looking out of the window at a view that stretches out in the distance of the sandy beach and sea at Hornsea. On the seat next to mother is a red bucket and the young boy is holding a spade in his hand, so there is no doubt that this is going to be a sand castle making holiday for him. This poster ‘Our Arrival into Hornsea’ by LNER is dated 1930 the artist is Septimus Edwin Scott (1879-1962).

Over the years Hornsea has suffered from coastal erosion. The violent storm of March 12th 1906 demolished the promenade and some of the earlier timber defences were destroyed or damaged. Large parts of the cliff were eroded exposing the underlying clay. A concrete wall and a new promenade was built which was completed in 1907. In 1923 the sea wall was lengthened to the north and south.
This photograph of Hornsea beach covers a similar view to the one illustrated by F. Gregory Brown, 1920, and Harry Rodmell’s 1926. Although there is more detail in Rodmell’s poster which illustrates the steep steps from the beach that lead to the promenade and the Marine Hotel, they were completely filled in sometime after this photograph was taken. The Marine Hotel was first built in 1837, but the building in Rodmell’s poster and photograph is one which still exists today.

An engraving of the Marine Hotel, Hornsea in 1845, before the coming of the railway and the building of the pier. It illustrates a well populated beach with a number of bathing machines on the sands. Two have been taken out into the sea by horses. Bathing machines were very popular at seaside resorts in the 1800s but they declined rapidly in the 1890s. Bathing machines do not appear in any of the railway posters, they probably went out of fashion at Hornsea by the 1900s.

In both posters and the above photograph, the Granville Hotel with its domed tower can be clearly identified. The Granville Hotel opened as the Imperial Hydro Hotel early in 1914 and was later re-named the Granville Hotel. After being damaged by a fire it was demolished in 1990. The glass pyramid roof of the Floral Hall, can be seen below the Granville Hotel. The Floral Hall is also illustrated in Edmund Oakdale’s poster of the mid-1930s. It was built in 1911 by a local family firm J K Barr & Sons and opened to the public on the 7th July 1913, it has always been a very respectable place to be seen in. The original main hall was a typical Victorian pavilion construction of cast iron and steel with a glass roof. Over the years Floral Hall has been expanded many times, with the additions of a café and a stage. It has become popular for theatrical shows, Sunday lunches and a night life in Hornsea.

Photograph of Floral Hall as it originally was in about the 1920s

Right: This photograph is also probably from about the 1920s, and shows the inside of the Floral Hall when it was still a clear glass roof. The small audience is listening to the band playing on the stage.
Above: This 1920s photograph shows the North Promenade when it was fenced off and an admittance charge was made. In the foreground on the right are railings with a woman leaning on them. These are the same railings in Rodmell’s 1926 poster which shows a man leaning with one arm on them. Rodmell also illustrates the Promenade, which was fenced off with a group of people elegantly dressed walking towards the Floral Hall and written on the side of the roof is ‘CAFÉ FLORAL HALL’.

Left: This photograph shows bathing machines on the beach at the edge of the water near and below the Marine Hotel. These were used to preserve the modesty of ladies getting changed so that they could descend into the water directly from the bathing machine.

A complete history on ‘Sea Bathing and the first bathing machine at Scarborough’ by Sarah Harrison has been published in the Journal (TYJ Spring 2012).

This photograph is not dated, but the cliffs near the hotel are still unprotected, so it must have been taken before the storm of 1906. Photograph courtesy of D Kemp

Left: This photograph was taken before the Floral Hall was built in 1913. It shows the promenade with the Marine Hotel in the distance on the cliff top. Below the hotel on the beach are bathing machines at the edge of the water. Timber groynes which are sea breaks can be seen on the sands.
Withernsea is the last seaside resort on the East Yorkshire coast which is 17 miles (27km) south of Hornsea. Another branch line ran from Kingston upon Hull east to Withernsea (via Keyingham and Patrington). Withernsea is just east of the Greenwich Meridian and was approached by rail from Patrington, which sits virtually on the imaginary line 0 degrees longitude. The Hull and Holderness Railway was promoted by Hull merchant Anthony Bannister with the intention of linking the industrial port of Hull with the rich agricultural area of South Holderness, and to develop the coastal village of Withernsea into a new seaside resort.

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The station opened in 1854, but the line was too small to survive independently and eventually it was passed to the North Eastern Railway (NER) and then to the London and North Eastern Railway (LNER).

The 1962 ‘Beeching Report’ proposed closure of the line and in 1964 on the same day as the neighbouring Hull and Hornsea line, the Hull and Holderness line closed. All that remains of the trackbed is an overgrown footpath used by walkers and the station buildings remain, mainly in residential use.

Like many seaside towns in Victorian times, Withernsea decided that a pier was the very thing to attract visitors. Prompted by the railway, and like Hornsea the construction of a 1,196 foot long pier was built, which opened in 1877. However the life of Withernsea Pier was to be short, it was gradually reduced in length through consecutive impacts by local sea craft and storms. The last collision was in 1893 by which time the pier had been reduced to 300 feet long, this now left the once-grand pier with a mere 50 feet of damaged wood and steel. It was deemed unsafe and the final section of the pier was removed during sea wall construction in 1903. The entrance towers which were modelled on Conwy Castle were not demolished and one of these became a coastguard station in the 1950s and, later, a gift shop. They have recently been refurbished. These entrance towers that have survived the devastating fate of the pier appear in two of the railway posters advertising Withernsea as a seaside resort.

Left: Withernsea Railway Station in 1905. The train is on the turntable. To the left is the Queens Hotel, later to become a Convalescent Home.

Photograph Christopher Ketchell Collection

It would provide a cheap and convenient holiday for Victorian workers and their families, as well as boosting Withernsea’s economy. The line was easy to construct as the South Holderness area is very flat with the line terminating at Withernsea. The station opened in 1854, but the line was too small to survive independently and eventually it was passed to the North Eastern Railway (NER) and then to the London and North Eastern Railway (LNER).

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Withernsea is also mentioned in the Domesday Book, its population consisted of 14 villagers, 7 smallholders, 10 freemen and 2 priests. In 1338 Withernsea market and fair was established. Like Hornsea Withernsea has suffered from coastal erosion. In 1444 the church was abandoned due to coast erosion, and over the next few years the original village of Withernsea was washed away by the constant erosion of the sea. The villagers moved further inland and started to build a new Withernsea where the town is today.

Before the coming of the railway Withernsea was a small village with a population of about 120. The railway was important for the town, it provided a cheap and convenient holiday for Victorian workers and their families who came to Withernsea in their thousands. In 1855 a prestigious three storey hotel call ‘The Queens’, was opened next to the station to accommodate the large number of new holiday makers. The hotel was used as a convalescent home after 1902, with patients taking advantage of the clean fresh sea air.
There were a few railway posters produced for local tourism, but as with Hornsea these did not feature in British Railways (BR) advertising policy for Yorkshire’s Holderness Coast, and it was left to the LNER to do their best. However, the three that follow are classic 1920s/1930s posters.

Left: This poster shows two real landmarks of this small seaside town. These are the twin towers of the pier entrance and the lighthouse. The pier opened in 1877, it was nearly 1,200 feet (364m) in length with an admission charge of 1 penny. Sadly the towers are all that remains; as one ship after another gradually reduced its length. The entrance towers which were modelled on Conwy Castle have been refurbished and today they are part of the sea defences to hold back the relentless stormy waves. To the far left of the pier entrance towers is the lighthouse which was built in 1892-3, because of the high number of shipwrecks that were occurring at Withernsea, when ships could not see the lights at either Spurn Head or Flamborough, sadly too late to save the pier. It stands 127 feet (38m) high with a huge weathervane on top. For 82 years the lighthouse guided ships to safety before it was finally switched off and closed in July 1976 and is now used as a museum.

Frank Mason is the artist of this muted-palette painting, it is one that rarely appears and is easily one of his lesser-known works. The LNER poster is titled ‘Withernsea’ and is dated to the 1920s.

Right: This poster is of a mother and daughter on the beach. The mother in a green bathing costume and white robe is holding her little redheaded girl in her arms, who is wearing a red swimming costume. It must be a breezy day because the wind is blowing their hair but they look happy. Behind them is a wavy green sea with no distinguishing landmarks, but it is a classic seaside poster of the 1930s. This LNER ‘It’s Quicker By Rail’ poster is titled ‘Withernsea’ and is dated 1933, the artist is Margaret Horder.

Left: On the Withernsea beach again, but this poster highlights activities. It shows a couple in swim wear playing with a yellow beach ball. Behind them are a group of children making sand castles and in the far distance the Pier Towers can be seen. To the far right is what looks like the bandstand on the promenade.

This is another LNER ‘It’s Quicker By Rail’ poster, it is titled ‘Withernsea Yorkshire’ and is dated 1930 the artist is Maud Briby (1923-1947).
The Withernsea Lighthouse illustrated in Frank Mason’s LNER poster of the 1920s was built between 1892 and 1894, a quarter of a mile inland from the coast. It was surrounded by sand dunes, as storms had swept away the coastal cliffs and damaged the pier. Today much of the town is closer to the sea than the lighthouse. These buildings were erected after the promenade was extended along the sea front.

Right: The lighthouse on Hull Road in about 1900. Photograph courtesy of Phil Mathison

Left: The Withernsea Lighthouse. The light when it was in use would shine out over the town to the east coast. Photograph by Gordon Hatton

The lighthouse is 127 feet (38m) high and there are 144 steps to the lamp room. It was built because of the high number of shipwrecks that were occurring at Withernsea when vessels could not see the lights at either Spurn Head or Flamborough. Sadly it was too late to save the pier.

The lighthouse is built of bricks and concrete in an octagonal shape, although the inside is round. It was not designed to be lived in, the tower has no dividing floors only the spiral staircase leading to the Service and Lamp Rooms at the top. In 1936 when the oil light was electrified it had a range of 17 miles. The lighthouse continued to shine its beam until the 1st of July 1976 when, after 82 years of invaluable service, the light was no longer needed and was switched off.

Attached to the lighthouse are two cottages, these were the homes for the lighthouse keepers, they now form a museum with displays about the lighthouse and town. The museum also houses an exhibition on the life of actress Kay Kendall (1926-1959) who was a film star in the 1950s. She was born in the town and died of leukaemia.

On the far right of the Maud Briby LNER poster of 1930 is an illustration of a simple structure that could represent the bandstand on the promenade. It was built in 1901 but in the late twenties the bandstand was lowered due to structural damage to the legs. A few years later it was completely removed.

Above: The bandstand on the promenade in 1930 after the legs were removed and it was lowered. The Pier Towers can be seen in the distance Photograph courtesy of Jack Whittaker

Left: The complete Bandstand on the north promenade in about 1915. Concerts were given on a regular basis.
Above: Aerial view of Withernsea showing the Withernsea Pier Entrance Towers, Withernsea Lighthouse, St Nicholas Church, Site of the Queens Hotel and the Site of the Railway Station

Below: Model of the pier on the promenade with the remains of the pier towers
The Restoration of the Pipe Organ at All Saints’ Church, Roos, East Yorkshire

By Daniel Theyer

It has become our custom over the last few years to celebrate wedding anniversaries by taking a trip to somewhere new – and enjoying a meal of fish and chips. This is fine if we are on holiday somewhere (though fish and chips in Italy is not so easy to come by), but, having lived in the same house for nearly 30 years the number of new places worth visiting within easy day trip range is steadily diminishing. In 2015 the sun shone and we decided to “do” Holderness, previously only travelled through on birding trips to Spurn.

The first stop was Hedon, an attractive small town within commuting distance of Hull. Its heyday was in the 12th century, when it was the most important port on the north side of the Humber. The splendid edifice of St Augustine’s church dates from that period, and is still known as the King of Holderness. Despite being on the “at risk” register it is obviously well cared for with several interesting features worth seeking out, including a very fine modern reredos, a 14th century font with carved flowers and a splendid medieval tall backed priest’s chair.

Having met the King the next stop had to be Patrington to see the Queen of Holderness – St Patrick’s church. Now a small village the size of the church reminds us that Patrington was an important market town in South Holderness in the middle ages. Cyril Garbett described it as the “most beautiful parish church in England,” although as a former Archbishop of York perhaps he was a little biased? Here too the reredos and font repay attention, as does the Easter Sepulchre in the gothic architecture. Among the notices was one stating that the parish church at Roos was open to the public that week while the pipe-organ was being removed for restoration. As our French son-in-law’s name is also Roos we decided we had to include it on the itinerary.

Right: St Augustine’s church, Hedon, is known as the King of Holderness

Left: The Queen of Holderness – St Patrick’s church, Patrington

Right: This beautiful specimen of decorated work is carved in Caen Stone and remains in a fair state of preservation. It is 2ft 11in from the step to the top of the bowl, 25 in across the top and the bowl is 14in deep.
But first those fish and chips, so we headed for the seaside resort of Withernsea. After a stroll along the impressive, but almost deserted, promenade, we enjoyed our alfresco lunch on the beach in the warm July sunshine.

Refuelled and refreshed we set off for Roos. Although it is quite a small village we needed some help to find All Saints church right at the edge of the settlement. The church is built chiefly of boulders with ashlar dressings. The plan of the church suggests origins in the 11th century, but the oldest remaining features are the 13th century nave arcades and tower arch. Throughout the centuries modifications have been frequent, right up to the late 18th /early 19th century. Fragments of medieval stained glass survive in the chancel windows. The organ transept was added in 1881 at a cost of £200, designed by F. S. Brodrick of Hull. The pipe organ was built by Karl Christian Reiter of Hull also at a cost of £200, with a further £25 for modifications and a handsome oak case to house it.

Once inside the attractive building we were warmly greeted, and introduced to the churchwarden, John McWilliams, who patiently explained the background to what was happening. We were surrounded by piles of organ pipes, varying in size from tiny, pencil sized ones, to some several feet long. Even to our untutored eyes some were not in the best condition. There was also a large hole where the organ used to be.

The organ gave excellent service for a century, but the ravages of time, woodworm and damp rendered it unplayable by the late 1980s, and the decision was made to purchase a Wyvern electronic organ.
This proved not nearly so durable and by 2014 it was beyond economic repair. Fortunately the parishioners had successfully resisted the wishes of one of its priests, who wanted to have the original pipe organ removed, and had started a fund for the its eventual restoration. Over the years this accumulated a total of £8,419.15. In 2014 estimates were obtained for repair of the pipe organ, now one of only two remaining Reiter organs, and a bid was made to the Heritage Lottery Fund. This was accepted and a grant of £44,200 was made towards the estimated costs of £73,000 (this included supplementary work to organ chamber and the installation of a stained glass window). Further grants were received from the Sir John Priestman Charity Trust (£10,000) and Church Care (£4,500), with the remainder of the funding coming from The Friends of Roos Church Pipe Organ Fund and The Roos PCC Organ Fund, abetted by a legacy from George Wright in memory of his wife and family. Peter Wood & Sons of Harrogate were chosen to restore the organ.

Left: Busy scene during refitting of the restored organ

Restoration of the organ took many months. While rubbing down the organ pipes traces of the original complex decorations were revealed. To have the original decorations professionally restored would have cost several thousand pounds – which had not been budgeted for. John McWilliams volunteered to carry out this highly skilled labour. Perhaps it was an offer he wouldn’t have made had he realised how many hundreds of hours painstaking work this would entail. Fortunately only 33 of the pipes would be visible, so the remaining 567 did not need to be decorated!

Above: Churchwarden John McWilliams busy redecorating the restored pipes

Left: Good to see an artist enjoying his work

The restoration revealed some interesting points. Recycling was alive and well in the nineteenth century; it was discovered that the ‘great’ soundboard dated from c.1860 and its flimsy oak sliders with square holes suggests it was used in an earlier organ. The ‘swell’ soundboard, made by Reiter, is of much better quality, and the sliders have properly drilled round holes. The swell box had been built for another organ – Reiter had to extend it. The organ has 29 pedals but the pedal board accommodates 30. The top pedal is a dummy, which has confused many organists over the decades. The original hand bellows had been mechanised by a local agricultural engineer in a somewhat uncommon but effective manner.
Right: A close up of the finished pipes showing the wealth of detail

A service to dedicate the restored pipe organ was scheduled for May 2016, which added to the pressure on John and Mark Wood, who had supervised the restoration, to ensure timely completion. I am pleased to say that they did – just. The service was conducted by the Bishop of Hull, the Right Reverend Alison White, and the organ was in the capable hands (and feet) of Mark Keith from Holy Trinity, Hull.

Below: Organist Mark Keith

The readings and hymns were all chosen for their topical musical references. A newspaper report of the original dedication service of the organ was read out during the service. It sounded a very grand affair, attended by the great and the good. The re-dedication was a much more homely occasion. My wife and I were surprised to find that there were only 3 other non-Roos inhabitants in the congregation, and one of those was Mark Wood. After the service everyone was invited to the Roos Memorial Institute, where the excellent ladies of the W.I. had laid on a magnificent spread – and a spectacular organ cake, enough to feed us all at least three times over. We were very impressed by the friendliness shown by everyone to two complete strangers. A fitting climax to a wonderful achievement, and one which will continue to give pleasure for at least another century.

Above: The Right Reverend Alison White, Bishop of Hull, conducts the service of dedication

Left: Organ specialist Mark Wood cutting the cake, directed by the bishop, in the Roos Memorial Institute after the dedication service
The British Institute of Organ Studies

The National Pipe Organ Register (NPOR) (website www.npor.org.uk/) is provided by the British Institute of Organ Studies. The NPOR is a comprehensive resource containing details of 35,000 organs including 10,000 pictures and 260 sound recordings. If you want to know more about the pipe organ in your local church it is the place to look. The entry for Roos includes the following details -

Yorkshire, East Riding Roos, All Saints (N04040)
Anglican Parish Church
Grid ref: TA2830
Survey date: 1980(c.)
Organ playable.

Builders
1881 K.C. Reiter Hull
2016 Peter Wood and Son Harrogate Organ restored with the aid of a grant from the HLF
### Department and Stop list

**Pedal** Key action Tr  Stop action Me  Compass-low  C  Compass-high f₁  Keys 30  

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**Swell** Key action Tr  Stop action Me  Compass-low  C  Compass-high g₃  Keys 56 Enclosed  

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**Console**

**Couplers**  
Swell to Pedal  
Swell to Great  
Great to Pedal  

**Details**  
Blowing Unusual Bellows Giving out  

**Accessories**  
2, 2 composition pedals  
Ratchet Swell pedal
March 29, 2015 -

We are excited to announce that the restoration of the pipe organ at All Saints’ Roos will be taking place this year. Funds have been raised over the years by ‘The Friends of Roos Pipe Organ’ and Roos PCC. More recently we were awarded a grant of £10,000 by ‘The Sir John Priermon Charitable Trust’ and £4,500 by ChurchCare. This week came the wonderful news that our bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund was successful. They will be supporting our project by providing the remaining £44,200 required to restore the organ and refurbish the organ chamber. Our 1881 organ by K.C.Reiter of Hull has not been played for 25 years. By the end of 2015 it will have been restored to its original condition.

July 13, 2015 -

... and so it begins!

Mark Wood and his team have arrived and the week-long task of dismantling the pipe organ has started. The church is open 10am to 4pm Monday to Friday this week. Come and see what’s happening and stop off for a cuppa!

July 23, 2015 -

A huge thank you to all the volunteers who have helped at Roos church over the past two weeks. So much has happened .......

The pipe organ was safely dismantled and transported to the workshop of Peter Wood & Son in Harrogate.

September 3, 2015 -

A huge ‘thank you’ to Mark and his team at Peter Wood & Son (organ restorers) for hosting a visit to their workshop today.

Work on the Roos pipe organ is progressing well and it was fascinating to learn about the processes involved in restoring a heritage instrument.

2016 January 8 -

On display in the church is one of the completed organ pipes. Prepare to be surprised! Churchwarden John McWilliams (who handle for us is very skilled) is painstakingly reinstating the original decorative design using colours which have been accurately matched to traces which were revealed when the organ builders rubbed them down. High Victorian Gothic Revival was the order of the day in 1881.

February 5 -

We have some more completed organ pipes at the church. Churchwarden John McWilliams is doing a marvellous job in restoring the original decorative design. He has made his own stencils from the patterns of the south window will be revealed!

March 28 -

The vestry is temporarily a painting studio. John is busy working on the largest organ pipes. We aren’t letting him out until he has finished! April 4th is the deadline. This is when the organ builders will be on site putting everything back together.

April 4 -

Well it’s all happening. Today was day one of the rebuilding of our historic pipe organ. The church is a sight to behold. Come and see what is going on. This won’t be happening again for another 100 years. End of day 1, the frame is back in place.

April 5 -

Day 2 began with the two bellows assemblies being replaced into the frame followed by the swell sound boards. The oak coaving looks like new having been cleaned and washed; it gives us a glimpse of how magnificient the organ will look when complete.

April 6 -

Day 3. It’s starting to get techy now. Roller boards, rods and other pieces of carefully crafted kit which transfer the action from the keys and pedals at the front all the way to the sound boards. Make the most of our light, bright organ chamber. When the swell box goes in tomorrow much of the south window will be obscured.

Meanwhile, John Mcwilliams is oblivious to everything apart from painting the pipes.

April 7 -

Day 4. A day of heavy lifting assisted by a great team of volunteers. The swell box is now in place ‘upstairs’.

The framework to support John’s painted pipes has been assembled.

Down on the ground the pedals and connectors have been installed.

April 11 -

Day 5. Working on the trackers and connectors which relay the action from the pedals to the soundboard.

The craftsmanship and attention to detail is unbelievable. Come down and take a look.

April 12 -

Day 6. More work on the trackers and connectors. Volunteer Gill assisted by Jenny cleaned and painted the weights which sit on the bellows. Karl Christian Reiter’s initials can be clearly seen.

April 13 - Roos -

Day 7. Traditional glue! It gets heated up and provides an effective seal to prevent air escaping from the sound boards.

It’s starting to look like a pipe organ but still much work to do.

April 15 -

Day 8. We were very pleased to welcome the children and staff from Roos C of E Primary school today. They have completed some fabulous written work to be stored in the organ chamber as a time capsule. The children asked lots of sensible questions and made the most of the opportunity to witness village history in the making.

April 16 -

Day 9. A hasty trip to the workshop of Terry Shires Organ Pipes Ltd in Leeds for a ‘while you wait’ repair on one of our 8 ft pipes which had suffered a mishap.

We are very grateful for their prompt assistance. The dent had been smoothed out before Helen had finished her cup of tea!

Meanwhile back in the organ chamber it was rather crowded Three organ builders plus two electricians.

Many thanks to Richardson and Smith (Roos) for putting in the starter motor for our new electric blower.

April 18 -

Day 10. Setting up the action for the two manuals is taking longer than anticipated. Much adjusting of trackers and connectors to ensure the tension on all the keys is the same.

April 19 -

Day 11. John’s paint pots are redundant. All 33 front pipes are finished and ready to be put into service. Very well done John. We are all so impressed.

Mark Wood and his colleague have finished setting up the action. The number of adjustments and attention to detail is awe inspiring.

Tomorrow’s work will be ‘upstairs’ and the glue pot will be simmering.

April 21 -

Day 12. A very annoying discovery. We now know why the carved oak plinth was leaning forward instead of being straight. Reiter must have pushed it to compensate for the fact that he had made all the conveyancing boxes (which transport the air from the soundboard to the front pipes) an inch too long. These boxes have sealed channels inside running from end to end. We have had better days.

On the plus side, the sound boards are in place and we have played our first 4 notes!

April 22 -

Day 13. The conveyancing boxes have been trimmed and the ends releathered. Mark Wood has spent most of the day cutting and resoldering the lead conduit pipes which slot in the ends so that it all fits as it should.

Meanwhile his colleague also called Mark has been working on the swell box This is where 436 of the pipes will stand.

April 23 -

Day 14. We can now see how stunning our pipe organ is going to look. We also have had a little taste of how it will sound. Still much work to do but it’s going to be fabulous.

April 26 -

Day 15. Much activity today. The problematic conveyancing pipes are all in place. We have a good number of pipes in the swell box. Most of the front pipes are up. More pipes and the new blower arriving tomorrow.

April 27 -

Day 16. Photos do not do this justice. The usual reaction of visitors is ‘Wow’. Nearly all the 600 pipes are in. Just the oboe and some bourdons to go.

April 28 -

Day 17. All pipes in. Electric blower up and running. We have music! A long day of tuning tomorrow but the team from Peter Wood & Son are smiling! This organ is going to sound lovely. Just right for our beautiful Grade 1 Listed country church.

April 29 -

Day 18. Most of the 600 pipes have been tuned. The electric blower is regulating the air pressure in the bellows. The oak casework is being reassembled. Finishing off tomorrow followed by a celebratory tea attempt on the bells beginning at 3pm. It’s all getting very exciting.

April 30 -

Day 19. What a wonderful day. Mark Keith, the organist who will be playing at our service of celebration and dedication on Sunday came over to try out the pipe organ. He loves it. BBC Radio Humberside have been to make a recording to be broadcast on Sunday and Monday.

Mark Wood and his team worked hard all day to reassemble the case work and continue with the tuning. By late afternoon the 8 bells in the tower were being pealed in celebration of a job well done.

May 2 -

Where to start? So many ‘thank yous’. Yesterday’s dedication service led by Bishop Alison (Rt Rev Alison White, Bishop of Hull) was such a wonderful occasion. The organ looked stunning thanks to John McWilliams brilliant painting of the front pipes. It sounded amazing thanks to the first class restoration job by Mark Wood and his team. Mark Keith played with such sensitivity and skill. The singers performed really well.

Meanwhile back at the Roos Memorial Institute, the Roos WI had everything ready for tea after the service. Bishop Alison and Mark Wood cut Lorna Ledger’s marvellous cake featuring the painted organ pipes.

July 12 -

15 year old Nicole playing some Bach on the organ today. It sounded fabulous. Can we have an audio next time please?

October 23 -

Many thanks to everyone who made our concert and supper evening such a success. At least £900 has been raised – still counting. Organist Mark Keith, singers Adele and Elinor Kirkby and guitar/vocal Barnaby Teasdale, members of the Roos and South Holderness singers and East Riding dialect reader Joy Moote entertained a full church to an exceptional standard. Chef Alan Lavender and his team served a delicious supper.

https://www.facebook.com/allsaintsroos/
The Roos Carr Model Wooden Boat Figures

In 1836 some labourers in cleaning a ditch at Ross Carr found a collection of well-preserved wooden objects. These including “naked male warriors with shields and clubs” (originally they thought the paddles were clubs), a wooden box, a serpent-headed boat, and various other wooden articles.

In all eight wooden figures were found but four of them disintegrated on excavation. The remaining four wooden figures that survived together with the wooden boat and various other attachments which seemed to be arms, paddles and shields, were given to the Hull Literary and Philosophical Society, eventually became part of the collections of Hull Museum. A fifth figure was acquired by the museum in 1902 from one of the men present at the time of the discovery. He had apparently given the wooden figure which he thought was an 'ancient doll' to his daughter to play with.

A crude attempt to re-assemble the figures was made in the 19th century which resulted in four of the figures being fixed into the boat, each leg was stuck in one hole up to the ankle. None had feet. Two of the figures had shields, one was given a paddle as a right arm and all were glued or nailed on wherever they seemed to fit. Later they were put on display in the museum in this condition.

More recently the figures have been professionally conserved using the latest technical methods to their original state. They have been dated from the yew wood of which the figures were made to the Later Bronze Age/Early Iron Age. This wooden collection was originally deposited in or near water which suggests that they were probably deliberately placed in water to honour their ancestors and make offerings to gods. This practice of depositing items such as metalwork and artefacts in rivers or marshes is in keeping with other sites in Britain in the Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age.

The Roos Carr figures can be seen in the Hull and East Riding Museum, Hull in the Prehistory Gallery.

The Medieval Pottery Acoustics Jars found in the Choir at Fountains Abbey near Ripon in North Yorkshire

By Jeremy Clark

Fountains Abbey lies along the valley of the River Skell which is located about 3 miles (5 kilometres) southwest of Ripon in North Yorkshire. It was founded in 1132 by 13 Benedictine Monks from St Mary’s Abbey in York seeking a simpler life, who later became Cistercian monks. The abbey was named Fountains Abbey because of the springs of water that existed in the area. Fountains Abbey became one of the largest, prosperous, and the most influential Cistercian abbeys in Britain. It owned vast areas of land across western Yorkshire much of its wealth was also based on the trading of wool and lead, two of the Yorkshire Dales’ most abundant resources.

For over 400 years Fountains Abbey prospered until the 1530s when Henry VIII had become angered by the influence of the churches, their wealth and independence from the Crown. By an Act of Parliament, known as the “Dissolution of the Monasteries”, Henry VIII closed all monasteries and nunneries in 1539 and pronounced himself Head of the Church of England. The surrender of the Fountains Abbey was made on 26 November 1539 by Abbot Marmaduke Bradley in the Chapter House. He was given an annual pension of £100 a year, the Prior received £8 the monks between £7 and £5.

Following the dissolution the abbey buildings and over 500 acres (200 ha) of land were sold by the Crown to Sir Richard Gresham a London merchant in October 1540. In order to help pay the purchase price he sold some of the stone, timbers and lead. The property was passed down through several generations of Sir Richard’s family, finally being sold to Sir Stephen Proctor in 1597 who built Fountains Hall probably between 1598 and 1604. The hall was built partly with stone from the abbey ruins.

The Studley Royal Estate was adjacent to Fountains Abbey and was owned by the Mallory Family from 1452. John Aislabie inherited the Studley estate from his elder brother in 1693. He was the Tory Member of Parliament for Ripon, but when a vast financial operation collapsed which was promoted by him personally, he was expelled from Parliament and disqualified for life from public office. Aislabie returned to Yorkshire and devoted himself to the creation of the garden he had begun in 1718. He was responsible for the design and layout of the Water Garden and buildings which we can see today.
After his death in 1742, his son William extended his scheme by purchasing the remains of the abbey and Fountains Hall and thereby was responsible for combining them with the Studley Royal Estate. He extended the landscaped area in the picturesque romantic style, contrasting with the formality of his father's work.

Above are two coloured mezzotint views of the classic Georgian water gardens at Studley Royal by A. Walker dated 1758 after Balthazar Nebot, as completed by John Aislabie and his son William. The left view shows the ruins of Fountains Abbey in the background with a group of elegantly dressed Georgian people in the foreground. The right view is at the Moon and Crescent Ponds with Greek God statues and the Temple of Piety on the left. Elegantly dressed Georgian people are taking in the impressive views.

Studley Royal Water Garden was designed to impress the 18th century visitor with classical statues, views and follies amongst the lush green gardens and the fashionably romantic abbey ruins. Hotels in Ripon and Harrogate offered carriage outings to Studley Royal water garden and the abbey which has changed very little since it was laid out in the 18th century.

Studley Royal House stood in the north-west corner of the park but in 1716 it burned down and was rebuilt by John Aislabie. He filled in the centre, to which his son William added a portico in 1762 to complete its Palladian appearance. However, this building was destroyed by fire in 1946. Only a large stable block, built between 1728 and 1732, survived and is now a private house.

Above: Photograph of Studley Royal House, it was destroyed by fire in 1946.

After stone was removed from the buildings of Fountains Abbey to construct the hall in about 1600 it was then allowed to fall into further ruin. Visitors to Studley Royal water garden were also allowed to walk around the abbey ruins. But it was not until 1854 that an archaeological excavation of the site was carried out under the supervision of John Richard Walbran, a Ripon antiquarian who had taken an interest in the history of the abbey.
The Discovery of the Medieval Pottery Jars

It was during the winter of 1854 that nine medieval pottery jars were found when removing the earth and stones from the floor at the entrance to the choir. These vessels were set into the north and west walls of the choir and were found to be partially filled with charcoal which presumably came from the adjacent furnace where lead stripped from the church had been melted down into suitable blocks in order to be sold after the dissolution of the abbey. There has been much discussion as to the function of these pottery jars, one probable explanation put forward at the time of discovery is that they were for acoustics to increase the sound of an organ placed above the now destroyed choir screen or that they would improve the sound of the singers since they were found in the choir of the church. But there was some doubt as to how sound could be amplified by the arrangement of pottery jars. Another theory that was suggested, is that they were used for some kind of storage, possibly for food or drink, to contain relics, for burning incense, even for warming the feet or hands of officials. All plausible but not practicable because the mouths of the pottery jars must have been hidden when the stalls were standing. Also these jars were laid on their sides set in square openings along the walls that were made purposely for the pottery jars and packed in place with rubble and cement.

These pottery jars dated to the early 13th century and when found in situ their necks protruded out from the walls. Consequently over time, part of the necks and the rims have been broken off.

Left: Plan of the choir showing the pottery jars in situ in the north and west walls which were removed during the 1854 excavations

A - Pillars on the south and north Aisles
Right: Front views of the west and north walls showing the pottery jars in situ. There were original four pottery jars on each side, but two were removed during the 1854 excavation.

Above: Plan of Fountains Abbey illustrating the site of the walls containing the pottery jars.

Left: One of the pottery jars set between two blocks of stones and packed in with rubble and cement. The jar is laid on its side with part of the neck and rim broken off.

Photograph courtesy of Rita Wood.

This object is in the English Heritage store.
The Medieval Pottery Jars

All the pottery jars appear to be of the same type and with the same dimensions 30cms high, 20.5cms rim diameter and 15cms diameter at the base. The fabric is brick-red well fired and hard. Most of the interior is covered with a dark brown glaze. It is probable that they were made especially for the purpose, produced at the Winksley Medieval Pottery-Kilns 5 kilometres north-west of Fountains Abbey. The Winksley potters were established on one, or possibly two tofts belonging to Fountains Abbey, the earliest known grant relates to Nicholas the potter in the decade between 1223 and 1233. It was regranted by the abbot and convent to William the potter. Once established the pottery like others of its kind continued for a considerable period.

Right: A vertical section of one of the jars showing its shape and outline

Left: This photograph shows a close-up looking inside of one of the jars showing the brick-red fabric and dark brown glaze. It is set between two blocks of stones and packed in with rubble and cement.

Photograph courtesy of Rita Wood

This object is in the English Heritage store

The acoustic jars found at Fountains Abbey are not unique, they have been found built into the walls in several medieval English churches. At the Church of St. Peter, Mancroft in Norwich about twenty-six pottery jars where found immediately under part of the church that was formerly occupied by the choir stalls. These were discovered in 1850 and are believed to be the first acoustic jars to be recorded. In 1878 about fifty-two pottery jars were found at Leeds Church near Maidstone in Kent. They were discovered immediately below the wall-plate embedded in the top of the nave wall on both sides of the church, and running the full length of it. Examples of these jars are on display at the Maidstone museum.

It is generally accepted by archaeologists that these medieval pottery jars were placed in the choir areas of medieval churches with the intention of improving the acoustics. This is medieval acoustics technology in trying to improve on the quality of sound and singers in their churches. Today acoustics is present in almost all aspects of modern society with the most obvious being audio which we now take for granted.

Visitors to Fountains Abbey will find no information concerning these intriguing acoustic jars, in information boards or in the Porter’s Lodge which was once the gatehouse to the abbey and now houses an exhibition with displays about the history of Fountains Abbey and how the monks lived. It must be remembered that one of the main duties of medieval monks was to praise God by singing the prescribed services with the utmost regularity and strictness of ritual. Cistercians began the day at 2 am by singing the two first offices, matins and lauds, with little or no interval. The others followed at 6 (prime), 9 (tierce), 12 (sext), 3 (nones), 6 (vespers), 7 (compline), evening prayers, after which the monks went to bed.

It is not surprising that the monks needed all the help that they could get with singing at all these services and the acoustic jars may have been a ‘God send’.

Right: An aerial view of the ruins of Fountains Abbey
No idleness was permitted, when the monks were not engaged in church they had to occupy themselves with study or work, in summer a nap was allowed after dinner, as the night sleep was shortened by vespers and compline being an hour later. Although they spent most of their time in prayer and meditation, they managed their farms well, with lay-brothers as farm workers.

In 1966 the Abbey was placed in the guardianship of the Department of the Environment and the estate was purchased by the West Riding County Council who transferred ownership to the North Yorkshire County Council in 1974. The National Trust bought Fountains Abbey which is maintained by English Heritage and the Studley Royal estate from North Yorkshire County Council in 1983. The trust also owns Fountains Hall, to which there is partial public access. St Mary’s Church is owned by the state and managed by the National Trust it was designed by William Burges and built around 1873. In 1986 Studley Royal Park including the abbey was designated a World Heritage Site by UNESCO.

Today the site is situated in peaceful of tranquil surroundings, a place to take in splendid views and relax, it is also a haven for wildlife.

The arrival of the railways in Ripon in 1848 put the abbey within the reach of ordinary people. In fact Ripon was the principal intermediate station between Harrogate and Northallerton and was the station for Fountains Abbey. It was on the Leeds-Northallerton line and was once part of the North Eastern Railway and then LNER before being closed to passengers in 1967 by British Rail. At one time posters promoting rail travel to Fountains Abbey were produced by the railway companies.

*Right: Two railway posters promoting rail travel to Fountains Abbey*

*Below: Studley Royal Water Garden showing the Moon and Crescent Ponds with Statues. To the right is the Temple of Piety and on the hill to the left can been seen the Octagon Tower*
Alfred John Brown by John A. White
Reviewed by Jon Harley

The subtitle of this new biography is Walker, Writer and Passionate Yorkshireman and any readers who have already heard of this little known Bradfordian will likely have encountered A. J. Brown through his writings on Yorkshire. While pursuing a variety of careers, A. J. Brown (1894–1969) wrote novels, poetry and walking guides about England’s greatest county, and spent a lifetime roaming it, and expounding on its folklore over a great many pints. In his day (and he lived in an era when Yorkshire, and especially Bradford, had produced a stellar array of celebrated authors) he was acquainted with the likes of Phyllis Bentley and J. B. Priestley, yet his work is little known today. John White’s book attempts to remedy this with an exhaustive account of A. J. Brown’s unusual life story. A. J. Brown had a meandering career, much of it in the wool trade, with breaks for military service and a foray into the hotel business.

His literary output was also diverse, including personal stories such as I Bought A Hotel, two novels written under the now dated sounding pseudonym of Julian Laverack, his series of books about walking in different parts of Yorkshire, and Yorkshire cultural books including Broad Acres - A Yorkshire Miscellany. Because he tried his hand at many different genres, as well as contributing to Yorkshire life through the Heaton Review, the Bradford Pageant of 1931 and more, different parts of this biography may appeal to different readers. His walking books are well documented, and this volume is amply illustrated with maps, both new and reproduced from the originals. The hotel period takes up 5 of the 21 chapters, perhaps surprisingly since it lasted less than 5 years. Each of Brown’s published works is examined along with chronicles of his life, including his military service, his various bouts of serious illness, his marriage (he appears to have been a faithful and devoted husband) and many business and literary setbacks.

It is clear that John White’s biography is the product of many years of meticulous research, and for the benefit of future scholars, dozens of pages are devoted to references to the source material. For the casual reader, it may be a book better suited to dipping into a few chapters at a time to read about one phase or the next of Brown’s varied and interesting life story. Although the style is scholarly, the reader does occasionally glimpse the character of A. J. Brown, for example his obstinate insistence that “tramping” was a much better word than hiking or rambling, or in the endless self-justification in his journals as to why each of his endeavours was thwarted. The lasting impression is that A. J. Brown was a man who was almost within touching distance of literary fame and fortune, but who never quite reached it. John White’s book succeeds in placing this interesting Yorkshireman back in the eye of the public – the Yorkshire public, at any rate. A. J. Brown would not have been interested in any other!
Alfred John Brown - Walker, Writer and Passionate Yorkshireman by John A. White

Book Copy Information & Availability

The book is self-published by the author as a 500 copy limited edition, with each copy individually numbered. It is a hard back monochrome work with a dust cover, illustrated with photographs and maps, priced at £15.00 plus £3.50 post and package costs.

It is available from the printers and distributors Smith Settle Printing and Bookbinding Ltd., Gateway Drive, Yeadon, Leeds, LS19 7XY.

Copies may be obtained by contacting Tracey Thorne via email: tthorne@smithsettle.com or by telephone: 0113-250-9201, or alternatively online via Amazon Books UK.

An article on A. J. Brown - Yorkshire’s Tramping Author, was published in the Autumn edition 2016 of TYJ.
Views of Skidby Windmill in Winter

Below is a drawing of how the first windmill may have looked