

HISTORIC WALK AROUND NORTHALLERTON

Northallerton is a prosperous market town in the heart of the Vale of Mowbray. It was the County Town for the North Riding of Yorkshire and is now the administrative centre for North Yorkshire. The name Alverton comes from Danish meaning settlement in elder trees. The town was a Roman settlement and when the railway was being built in Castle Hills, three Roman sarcophagi were unearthed and taken to Darlington. Castle Hills stands at the confluence of Sun Beck and Willow beck which flow into the river Wiske. Castle Hills lies to the west of the town and was probably used by William the Conqueror in his attempts to subdue the north. At the time of the Battle of the Standard 1138, a castle stood on Castle Hill. This was razed to the ground in 1177. The straight A1 reflects the original Roman road travelling north to Edinburgh and the road between York and Hadrian's Wall ran through Bullamoor. The town boasts several examples of Georgian architecture.

1. Applegarth

Name derived from the Norse word for 'apple tree enclosure'.

In 1918 Applegarth was bequeathed to the townspeople by Mrs Hird and family, John Todd and other landowners, in memory of those who had died in the 1st World War. This was to be used as a recreational ground and Park. As early as 1495, Applegarth was known as a playing field, when Robert Appleton and Edward Garsdale were fined 3s 4d for an affray during a game of football on the Applegarth.

The Coronation of George 6th was celebrated with a stone plinth and the planting of 13 birch trees, which we will pass as we walk down.

A canopy of fruit trees was planted this year to mark the 70th Year of Queen Elizabeth II's reign.

On two occasions North Yorkshire County Council and the old North Riding County Council had proposed building a bypass which would go through Applegarth, both of which were rejected.

Applegarth Council school was built in 1907 amid controversy about whether it should be a Church of England school or a religiously neutral council school. A North Riding election was held to decide the matter. This was for infants between 5 and 8 years, who then continued their education in the National Schools until 14 years of age.

2. The Primitive Methodist Church

The Primitive Methodists had worshipped in Northallerton since the 18th century and in 1834 they took over the old 'Theatre Royal' at the end of the Tickle Toby yard, where they worshipped for nearly 60 years, before

moving to the south end of the High Street and finally became Romanby Methodist Church in 1964.

3. Have a peep at the Secret Garden.

This was started by the Zionist URC Church as a therapeutic space and peaceful haven for individuals or groups from the Community. They aim to increase wildlife and biodiversity within the heart of the town and provide sustainable fresh grown fruit and vegetables . It is run by volunteers and their families and is open at 2pm on Mondays and Thursdays.

4. The Cattle Market and Slaughterhouse

Livestock auctions are held here twice weekly on a Tuesday and Wednesday, and they have regular Farm dispersal sales and Household goods etc. The Auction market started life in 1907 on the present premises. Prior to the outbreak of the 1st World War, Northallerton had three livestock market, as well as this one on Applegarth, there was one on Malpas Road and one at the Station. During the 2nd World War, a bomb dropped on the site of the Malpas market destroying its sales ring. The green door on the other side of the road is where the livestock were taken to slaughter.

5. The Railway Station and County Hall

Construction of the Railway Station began in 1837., when the main East Coast Railway between London and Edinburgh was planned. This meant that Northallerton developed as a route, administrative and agricultural centre. Northallerton was one of the first market towns in the world to be served for both goods and passengers. The Bedale branch line was constructed in 1848 and extended to the Hawes Junction in 1878. This brought in people, animals, and goods from Wensleydale. Passenger services to Wensleydale ended in 1954 and the direct curve from the station to the Wensleydale line was closed in 1970. The Leeds to Stockton line was built in 1852 and went via Harrogate and Ripon. The line was used for heavy freight services as well as passengers. That part of the route was closed in 1967 and trains had to go via York to Leeds and Harrogate. The Station was remodelled in 1911 and again in 1985/1986, when one of the platforms was lengthened to enable Class 800 trains to call on the East Coast services.

6. County Hall

County Hall was built on the site of the Old Racecourse. Races had taken place in the early 1800's and its three-day meeting in October was one of the most prestigious in the north of England. County Hall was built to resemble a stately home, with formal gardens, water features and a grand entrance hall. Building started in 1903 after it was decided the Court House and the Registry needed to be housed in new buildings on one site. County Hall became a Red Cross Hospital during the 1st World War.

When government re-organisation took place, there was a strong campaign to move the County Headquarters near York. This was defeated and Northallerton remained the headquarters of the new Authority with six second-tier administrative Districts of which Hambleton was one.

7. The Drill Hall

This was the Headquarters of the Green Howards and housed their territorial Battalion during the 1st World War. Several buildings were commandeered as soldier's accommodation, including the new Grammar School, Town Hall, old Court House, National School, and the new Applegarth Council school. In 1914 it was used to show silent films.

8. The Grammar School

In 1838 the North Yorkshire Show was held on the site of the Grammar school but moved to Friarage fields in 1858. Northallerton Grammar School was established in 1909 and was designed by the County Hall architect Walter Brierley. This was built initially for 130 boys and girls and in 1911 it was extended to house 175 pupils. From 1945, pupils began entering the Grammar School after passing their 11+. This system remained in place until 1973, when there were 626 pupils. In 1962 substantial building extensions took place to house the increase in pupils. In 1973, the Grammar School became a Comprehensive school and in 1997 it was renamed Northallerton College. Today all pupils have been moved to the Allertonshire School site and the Grammar School buildings are no longer in use as an educational establishment.

Historically three facts can be referred to regarding the World Wars. The Grammar School fields were used as a training site for the military offenders and the field became known as Prison Field during the 2nd World War. The pupils were housed in County Hall during the 1st World War. The third fact is that four Anderson shelters can still be found on the Allertonshire playing field.

9. Georgian Theatre

Head down Tickle Toby Yard to find the green plaque, which indicates the Georgian Theatre. This was one of Samuel Butler's circuit of theatres, which included Richmond (built by him in 1788), Beverley, Harrogate, Kendal, Ripon, Ulverston and Whitby. Richmond is the only one which survives today. Famous actors such as Mrs Siddons, Edward Kean, Macready and Kemble, appeared on Samuel Butler's circuit. The theatre was in use from 1800 until 1832.

10. Betty's and Barker's Department Store

Frederick Wild opened Betty's as a little café in Harrogate in 1919 and this was taken over by his nephew when he died. In 1962 Victor took over C E Taylor & Co – a Yorkshire based café chain and tea and coffee merchant. They then opened the café in Ilkley, York (St Helen's Square), York (Stonegate) and Harlow Carr (Harrogate).

Barker's is a family run business, started when William Barker became an apprentice in Oxendales, a small draper's shop. His career then progressed when he became a partner in 1907 and finally, he bought out the Oxendale family in 1918. Barkers doubled its frontage in 1937 and then in the 1950's expanded to the back of the shop as well as buying the land covered by the Arcade. In 2000, Barker's clock was added above the entrance to the arcade. It has gilded detailing depicting Barker's history and association with tailoring, furniture, and hospitality.

11. The Old Golden Lion and Frank Clarkson's shop

Yorkshire Trading now occupies the site of the Old Golden Lion, a once famous 17th Century coaching Inn.

There were numerous coaching inns in the 18th Century which were renowned for good strong ale and extortionate prices. These included King's Head, Black Bull, Golden Lion, which had regular coaches calling at them and the Golden Lion had stabling for 60 horses as well as fields to rest the horses.

Frank Clarkson's was the silversmith who made the Mayor's Chain of Office.

12. The Guild Hall

The Guild Hall was erected in 1444. The gild was established by the Parish Council in 1441 to honour the saints on whose account it was instituted. It was the scene of the North Riding Quarter Sessions in the 1500's

(in 1570 in Elizabeth 1st reign), 7 rebels were hanged in front of the Guild Hall after being found guilty of Treason at the Quarter Sessions. In 1720 it became the Parish Workhouse. By the 19th Century it was so dilapidated that it was referred to as the 'Bastille'. This was closed in 1858 when the poor were moved to the new building.

13.The Old Grammar School

This was established as a 'Grammar and Song' school attached to Northallerton Parish Church. It occupied this site until 1909. From early days pupils progressed from here to Oxford University but in the 19th Century it's standard of education declined. The school came under the authority of North Riding County Council and in 1909 the school was moved to its present site.

14.The Site of Former Vicarages

15.The Site of Bishop's Palace

The Bishops of Durham once ruled the North of England almost as a separate kingdom. They were granted the Manor of Allerton in the years following Norman Conquest and it stayed with them until 1836. They Entertained Royalty including King John, Henry 1st and Edward 1st. During the 12th to the 14th century their armies travelled through Northallerton to fight the Scots; just north of here is the site of the Battle of the Standard where the English inflicted heavy losses on the Scots in 1138. By the 18th Century the Palace had fallen into ruin.

16.The Parish Church of All Saints

All Saints Church is of Norman origin, but the site was almost certainly used pre Norman Conquest as carved Saxon stones have been found on the site. It is suggested that St Paulinus, Archbishop of York had a church here in the 7th century. The present Church retains some Norman work, but is predominantly Early English and perpendicular, built under the guidance of the Bishops of Durham. The Church was badly damaged by the Scots in the 14th Century. The tombstones around the Church were flattened in 1911.

17.Porch House

This is Northallerton's oldest house built in 1584 by the powerful Metcalfe family. Charles 1st stayed here in 1640 and again in 1647 as a prisoner whilst being taken to London from Scotland following his defeat in the Civil War.

18. Vine House, formerly Rutson Hospital

A huge vine once grew up the front of this house, hence its name. The house dates back to Tudor times. In 1877 it became the cottage hospital housing 8 patients and during the 1st World War wounded soldiers were nursed here as well as at County Hall. It then became the Rutson Rehabilitation hospital before finally closing in 2016 to become the Potting Shed pub.

19. Sunbeck House, site of Carmelite Friary

This was built in 1857 as the town's workhouse for 120 of the poorest people. In 1881 the workhouse housed 33 males, and 33 females (including 9 boys and 8 girls), as well as a quota of itinerant vagrants. The Friarage Hospital gets its name from the Carmelite Friary. The hospital was established during the 2nd World War as an RAF hospital. Wooden huts were built to house casualties from Teesside. The NHS took over the hospital in 1948.

20. Fleece Inn site of the Austin Priory

The 14th Century Austin Friary was founded by William de Alverton in 1341. These were mediant friars supporting the poor. There is no trace of the original building. Both the Carmelite Friary and the Austin Priory were suppressed during Henry VIII's reign.

21. Town Hall

The Town Hall was built in 1873 by the 'Market & Public Improvements Co Ltd' on the site of the old, dilapidate Toll Booth and the disgusting Shambles, the butchers market. It was a venue for amateur entertainment during the late 1800's. In 1938, the basement of the Town Hall was designated as the headquarters of the ARP (Air Raid Precautions). After local government restructuring in 1974 it was proposed that it be demolished, but Hambleton District Council decided to offer it to the Town Council for £1.

22. Market Cross and site of old Market Place

The 19th Century Market Cross was built to replace the ancient cross removed in the 1870's. Northallerton has been an important trading centre since Norman times as it lies at the junction of routes in the fertile Vale of Mowbray. The 16th century cross (originally in the Shambles) was demolished in 1872. It was moved to a private home and in 1913 was re-sited in front of the Town Hall. It was moved to its present site further south in 1987. The town was granted the right to hold regular fairs by

King John in 1200. There were 4 fairs taking place in Medieval times, when sheep, cattle and horses were sold. These became the time of 'The Hirings' when domestic servants and agricultural workers gathered in the marketplace looking for new employers. The May Fair became known as the "Pleasure Fair" with roundabouts and other forms of entertainment.

23. Golden Lion

The Golden Lion's Georgian façade has been a feature of the town and the present building has been there since 1725. Prior to that an inn has stood on the site since Tudor times. It was a coaching inn and Posting House on the Great North Road between Edinburgh and London and in 1745 the Boroughbridge to Durham Turnpike opened increasing the traffic through the town.

24. Demolished Prison

The prison was first used from 1788 and was last used in 2013. In the 1881 census it held 126 inmates, 113 male, 13 female and 21 children (under 21's) prisoners during its history. It was a military prison during the 2nd World War. The Governor's House and Female Wing are the only parts of the former buildings preserved. Prisoners were sent to work in the Prison gardens in Greenhowe Sykes Lane.

25. Register House

This was the old North Riding Registry of Deeds. The Georgian building was built in 1736 and converted into the Register's House in 1782. In the early 18th Century, there were only two places in the country where deeds and other important documents could be registered, and this was one of them. This is one of the main reasons why Northallerton developed into the County Town.

The history of Northallerton on these pages seems very disjointed as we are looking at particular buildings. If you want a more chronological history then I recommend 'The History of Northallerton, North Yorkshire' by Michael Riordan. This is available from the library.