

Burton Constable, Sledmere & Burton Agnes

COUNTRY HOUSE ESTATES TRAIL



Work & Play

Life on the Yorkshire Country House Estate

The history of East Yorkshire's country-house estates is interwoven with the history of the Riding, and most of the land was estate-owned by the end of the 19th century.

Besides employment, these estates provided housing, education, charity and entertainment for a large proportion of the East Riding's rural population. This illustrated guide to the estates of Burton Constable Hall, Sledmere House and Burton Agnes Hall provides a series of walks and excursions through the grounds, parkland, estate villages and beyond. Visitors are invited to explore the surviving landscapes and buildings that document the history of these estates, from the slaughterhouse and pigsty that now houses the groundsman at Burton Constable, to the 17th-century donkey wheel at Burton Agnes and the 120ft-high memorial to Sir Tatton Sykes of Sledmere erected high on the Yorkshire Wolds in 1865.

Cover: Meet of Sir Clifford Constable's stag hounds
at Burton Constable, J.F. Walker (fl. 1854-90)

© Burton Constable Foundation 2007

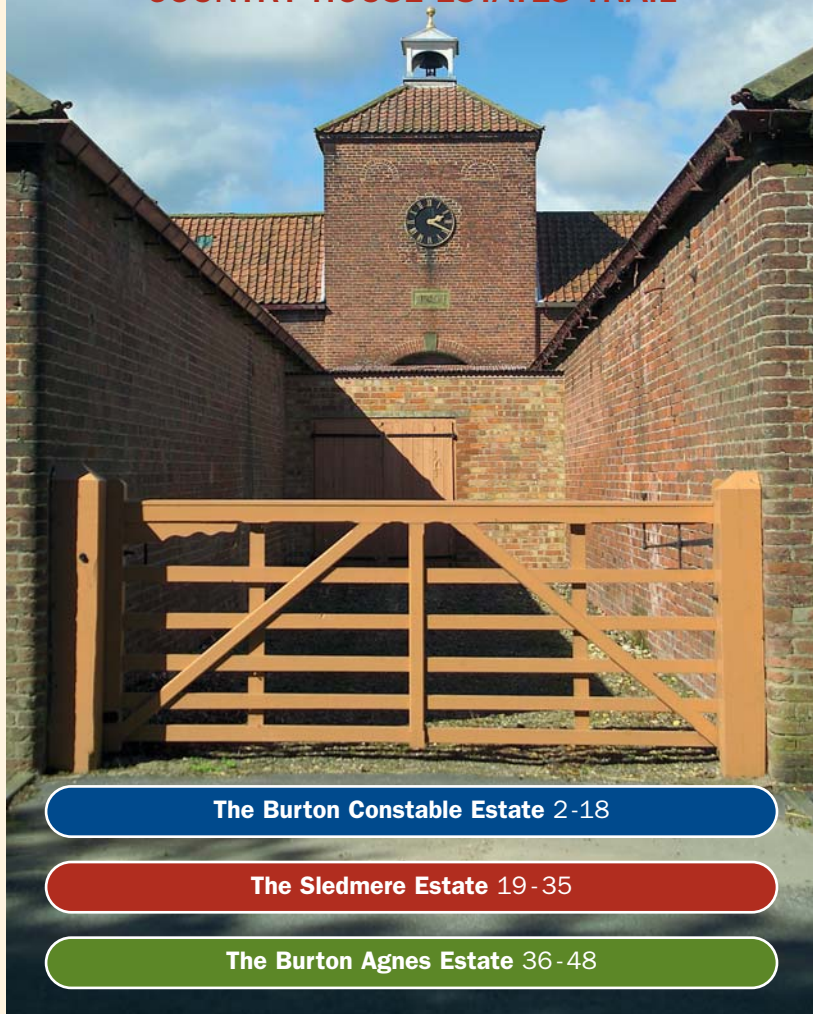
ISBN

Photography: R&R Studio

Design: Stubbs Design, Ilkley

Burton Constable, Sledmere & Burton Agnes

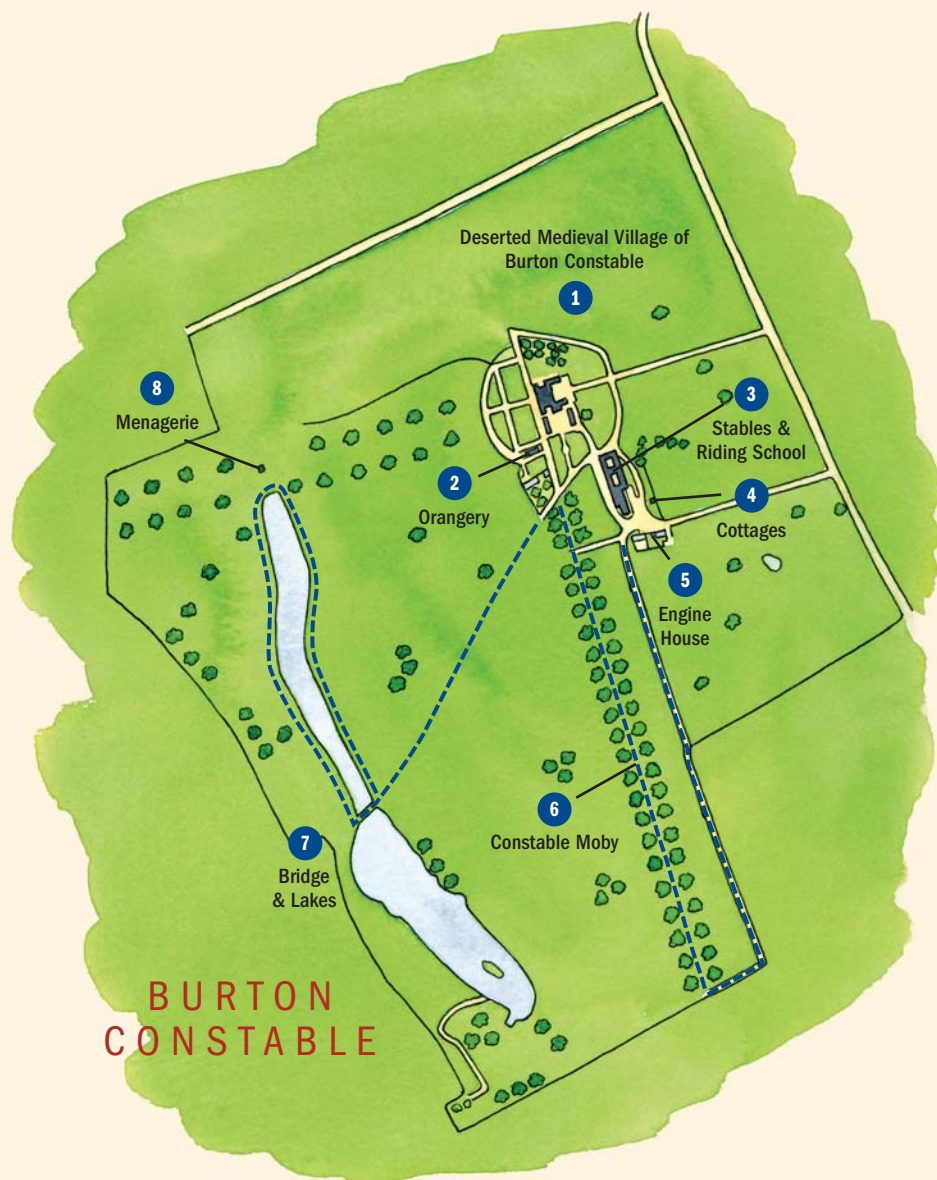
COUNTRY HOUSE ESTATES TRAIL



The Burton Constable Estate 2-18

The Sledmere Estate 19-35

The Burton Agnes Estate 36-48



The Burton Constable Estate

David Connell

The history of the Burton Constable estate dates back to the early 12th century. Although the Constable family's main residence was at Halsham, by the 14th century they had a deer park at Burton Constable, together with land in several surrounding manors. In 1560 Sir John Constable purchased the Lordship of the Seigniorship of Holderness from his father-in-law, the Earl of Westmorland. This lucrative position entitled Sir John to extensive rights over the coastline in addition to a substantial income from rents, which immediately made him the richest landowner in the East Riding of Yorkshire.

During the Civil War the Constables supported the Royalist cause and, as a result, suffered a temporary reversal of fortune when much of their estate was confiscated by Parliament during the period of the Commonwealth. The 2nd Viscount Dunbar only managed to recover the land at great expense. William, later 4th Viscount Dunbar, gained a profitable post as Commissioner for Wrecks in the West Indies during the reign of James II, where, through corrupt dealings, he amassed considerable wealth which helped restore the family's fortune.



Burton Constable in the late 17th century

During the 18th century enclosures and land improvements increased estate income, whilst additional land was accrued by way of dowry from shrewd marriage settlements. In the 1770s the park was landscaped

by Lancelot 'Capability' Brown and the road from Sproatley re-routed to divert it away from the front of the house.

In 1821 Sir Thomas Hugh Clifford Constable inherited Burton Constable, adding his Staffordshire estate to the Holderness and North Yorkshire estates. Like many landowners, the Constables sought to consolidate their disparate holdings by selling off outlying land. Sir Thomas Aston Clifford Constable sold the family's Staffordshire estates at Tixall and Great Harwood in 1845 for the huge sum of £240,000. The income from the Holderness estate of over 12,000 acres was in excess of £18,000 a year by the 1830s and there followed a period of steady economic growth during the mid-Victorian years. Sadly, like many landowners, the Constables fell prey to the Agricultural Depression of the 1880s and in 1885 Sir Talbot Clifford Constable complained to his Steward that: 'I see nothing but ruin staring me in the face. I had far better sell the East Riding Estate altogether than carry it on with great anxiety and, as I much fear I am doing, at a considerable loss...'



Sir Thomas Aston Clifford Constable

Nevertheless, despite such pessimism, when Colonel Walter Chichester Constable inherited Burton Constable in 1895, the estate was still largely intact and it was only during the interwar years that sales of the outlying farms in Holderness became necessary. Lands at Burstwick, Flinton, Kilnsea and Witherwick were sold following World War II, as was land and property in Sproatley during the 1970s. Nevertheless, by the close of the 20th century, the Constable family still held some 3,700 acres in Holderness, with the immediate parkland of 330 acres owned by the Burton Constable Foundation.

1 Deserted Medieval Village of Burton Constable

In the 13th century the Constables added their family name to their manor of Burton (meaning settlement at a fortified dwelling), thus creating the village of Burton Constable. It was a sizeable community with a windmill, dovecote and around 100 inhabitants at the close

of the 14th century, when Robert Constable was lord of the manor. By the early 16th century the manor house had been rebuilt and the village houses cleared, in order to make way for the enlarged deer park that was created in 1517. The arable fields were converted into open pasture, and the ridge and furrow can still be seen in the parkland. However, earthworks are the only remaining visual evidence of the lost village streets and houses. Part of the original moat survives (north pond) and the north tower and lodgings wing from the medieval manor house, which were incorporated into the new Elizabethan mansion in the 1560s. Burton Constable is one of several deserted medieval villages in the East Riding and, as a Scheduled Ancient Monument, is protected from excavation, agricultural disturbance and metal detectors.



2 Orangery

The Orangery or 'Dry House' is a wonderful example of an 18th-century hothouse, designed for growing exotic fruits for the Constable's dining table. The York Architect Thomas Atkinson provided the plans in 1788 for which he charged eleven guineas. The Orangery was completed the following year and ornamented with artificial stone statues, pineapples, urns and decorative panels representing the four seasons supplied by Eleanor Code at a cost of £83-18s-7d.



The Stables and Riding School

3 Stables & Riding School

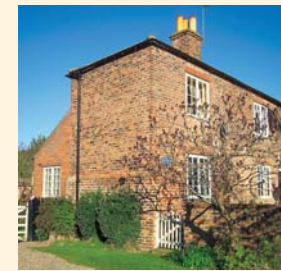
The large Stable Block at Burton Constable was built in 1770 to the designs of the architect Timothy Lightoler, replacing an Elizabethan stable block standing to the north-east corner of the main house. By the 19th century, the Stables contained four carriage houses, with stalls for hunters in the north block and stalls for 'Old Hack horses' and 'Draught horses' in the, less-grand, southern block. The attic levels contained bedrooms for grooms and servants, with a designated 'men's room' and a 'singing room'! The Clifford Constables were passionate about hunting, and in 1842 the large indoor Riding School was built at a cost of £981-4s-2d. A row of loose boxes was also added to the east side of the Riding School to accommodate extra horses (now demolished) and a 'cow house' to the west side (now the Tea Room).

4 Cottages

Although both are now private residences for employees, Gardener's and Hatfield cottages originally served a quite different function. The central block of Gardener's cottage



Gardener's Cottage



Hatfield Cottage

was a slaughterhouse, with a 'dog house' on the left and a pigsty on the right! Hatfield cottage formed part of an extensive range of dog kennels, where the staghounds and foxhounds were kept.

5 Engine House

Although candles and oil lamps had provided light at Burton Constable for several centuries, in 1860 the Engine House was built to produce coal gas, providing lighting to some areas of the house. The style of the brickwork is indicative of a Victorian railway building, which was constructed using 'fireproof' iron girder beams. A large gasometer was built to the rear of the Engine House to store the gas that was then piped to the Great Hall, the Chapel and several corridors. A pair of gaslights set on giant urns outside the French doors on the West Front also lit the gardens.

By the dawn of the 20th century, electricity was seen as a more desirable option as, unlike gas, it had no unpleasant odour, was considered safe and, as it was less labour-intensive, more affordable. No longer would servants have to trim hundreds of candles or

clean and fill dozens of oil lamps on a daily basis. The single flick of a light switch could now illuminate a whole room instantly. In 1903 A. Reame & Company of Hedon Road, Hull quoted £2,420 for installing the electrical system designed to power 500 light bulbs. The Victorian Engine House was converted to hold dynamos powered by two petrol engines, whilst the switchgear and numerous batteries were housed in the adjoining building. There were a few teething problems however, and at the insistence of the insurance company, the petrol storage tanks originally adjacent to the petrol engines had to be relocated outside the building.



6 Constable Moby (south avenue)

On the 28th April 1825 a large bull sperm whale, over 58 feet in length, became stranded on the Holderness coast at Tunstall. As Lords of the Seignior of Holderness, the Clifford Constable family had claim to anything washed upon the shore, so the whale became the property of the Burton Constable Estate. It was the first sperm whale ever to be scientifically studied and was dissected by the eminent Hull physician

Dr James Alderson – who later became Physician to Queen Victoria. Sarah Stickney, the daughter of a local gentleman, records in her journal that: ‘the whale becoming every day more putrid – it was a loathsome thing at best.’ The whale’s skeleton was eventually brought to Burton Constable, and in 1836 was erected on ironwork in the park at a cost of £30-10s-0d by the Hull whitesmith George Headley. As a great tourist attraction, it came to the attention of the American writer, Herman Melville, who was in England undertaking research for his novel *Moby Dick*. Alderson’s scientific report was a major source of information about the species and in his novel

Melville includes a humorous account of the Burton Constable whale. In the 1990s the remains of the whale skeleton were recovered from the park, cleaned and stored. The site where the skeleton was displayed is now marked by a piece of modern sculpture, *Constable Moby*, by Daniel Fraser Jones.



Constable Moby by
Daniel Fraser Jones



A SPERM-WHALE.
Cast on shore at Tunstall on Holderness on the 28th of April 1825.

Whole length	58 7	Length of the lower jaw (in young) 5 7	
Depth 1 eye between the eye & blow	22	Blow hole opening at 14 7	
Depth of the blow	22	Width of opening	2
Depth behind shoulder	24	Depth	2 2
Depth before the tail	7 7	Length as far as traced	30 2
Number of teeth 22			



7 Bridge & Lakes

The renowned gardener, Lancelot ‘Capability’ Brown was responsible for converting two rectangular fishponds into serpentine lakes in the 1770s as part of an extensive programme of landscaping the park. Thousands of tons of earth were moved to create this landscape feature. The upper lake is fed by springs and separated from the lower lake by a dam – disguised as a picturesque bridge – also designed by Brown. During the 19th century, boat houses were built on both lakes and the island of the southernmost lake sported a Tea room. In the 1840s, Sir Thomas Aston Clifford Constable advertised for ‘a Hermit...to be confined in a place and not to see nor to speak to no human...for seven years.’ It seems likely that the island was the intended site for the hermit’s seven-year incarceration!

8 Menagerie (head of the north lake)

The Menagerie stands at the head of the upper lake and was built in 1761 by Thomas Knowlton to house exotic animals. Originally there was a range of pavilions to either side of the main block, although these no longer survive and the building now serves as a private residence. Although little is known about the animals kept in the Menagerie, William Constable’s account of experiments in animal breeding of 1769, suggests bizarre ‘goings-on’:



Some years ago I met with a strange account, as it then appeared to me, of a tendency to breed between a rabbit & a hen. I tried the experiment in my own Menagerie & had reason to think I had one clutch from this strange connection. Since which time, I have been informed that such a breed has been propagated at Brussels, & is still kept up. I never succeeded but once, my chickens when young had shorter wings & more down than the common sort, & I thought more bone. On the whole, they appeared like other birds of that sort & some of them bred again.

9 Tower House (½ mile to the south of Burton Constable)



Visible from the road to Sproatley are the delightfully picturesque towers and castellated parapets of Tower House, which was built in the mid 19th century in the neo-Jacobean style used elsewhere on the estate. To the rear stands an octagonal tower of c.1700 that formerly held a water tank, and which was reduced

in height in the early 20th century. The tower originally contained a donkey engine (a wheel in which a donkey walks endlessly) that raised water from springs to the tank above, and which was then gravity-fed to Burton Constable Hall.

10 Church of the Holy Sacrament, Marton (1½ miles north of Burton Constable on the road to New Ellerby)

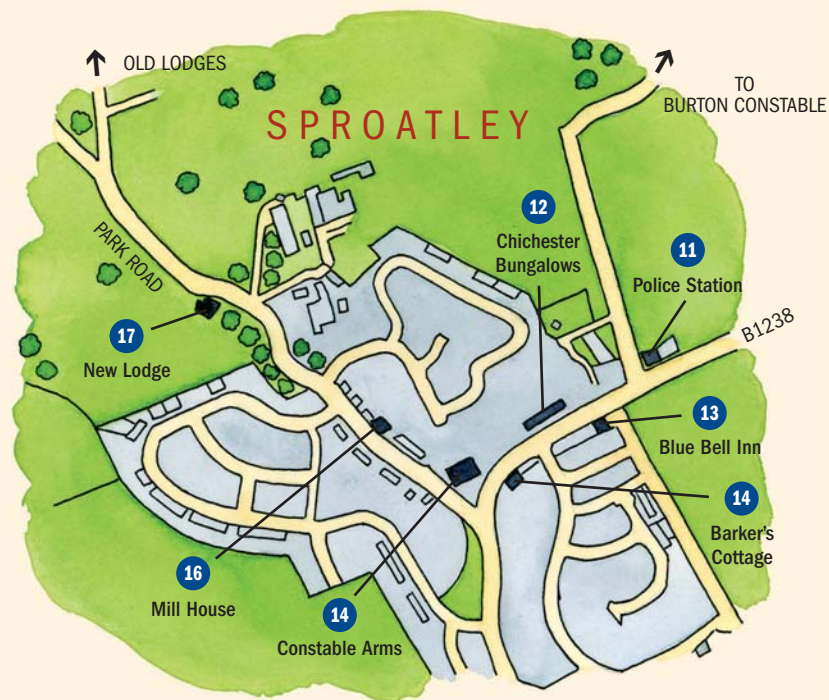
There was an ancient church at Marton recorded in the mid 13th century (from which the bell and font survive in the Burton Constable chapel), but following the Dissolution it fell into disuse and was finally demolished in the 18th century. There was still, however, a sizeable population of Catholics in the local area and the Constable family maintained Catholic priests. Catholic worshippers initially met in a secret chapel at Burton Constable Hall, although from the 17th century a private dwelling at Marton also served as a chapel. The choice to use a building surrounded by a moat, may have been to protect secret worshippers from surprise



attacks. In the 18th century, when local Catholics felt confident enough to worship more openly, the burial ground was established and, by the 1760s, seven shillings a year was being paid for window tax for 'Marton Chapelle'. In 1789, the York architect, Thomas Atkinson, was employed by William Constable to build a new chapel at Marton adjoining the old house. It was, nevertheless, still designed to have the appearance of a private dwelling from the public road, although the classical interior included an altar, gallery and box pews. The present interior decoration dates from the 19th century although several original features including the gallery and altar survive.

The Village of Sproatley

Although not strictly an estate village, Sproatley has long been closely associated with Burton Constable Hall. The living of the village church of St Swithin's was in the control of the Constable family from 1570, later passing to their close relatives the Brudenells, Earls of Cardigan. Under an Enclosure Act of 1762, 567 acres in Sproatley were acquired by the Constables, and by the end of the 19th century, most of the village houses were owned by the Burton Constable Estate. Many of Sproatley's inhabitants were also connected in some way to Burton Constable – either as tenants, employees or tradesmen. In the 1850s, besides the usual butchers, bakers and blacksmith etc., the village also



boasted several dressmakers and shoemakers, a milliner and a carver and gilder – all trades which served Burton Constable Hall. By 1900 there were still two public houses, besides a wheelwright, a blacksmith and several other shops – most of the premises being rented from the Burton Constable Estate.

11 Police Station

Built to the designs of H. F. Lockwood in 1849 as a Police Station and magistrate's room, the building also served as a Courthouse 1872-1995. Sir Thomas Aston Clifford Constable



commissioned and paid for the building of the Police Station as a service to the community, although rent was received from the constabulary for accommodating a policeman. At the end of the 19th century the rent was £6 per annum for the Police House, whilst the police officer, Superintendent Hornby, paid an additional £7 per annum for renting a paddock in Sproatley for his horses. The Police House was sold by the Constable family in 2001 and is now a private residence.

12 Chichester Bungalows



Henry Sanderson of New Ellerby built a row of eight bungalows in 1937 for the Chichester Constable family to house their estate employees. At a cost of £236 each, they replaced some of the old cottages in the village,

many of which were described as 'unfit for families'. Whilst some of the bungalows are now privately owned, others are still owned by the Burton Constable Estate and accommodate both employees and retired workers.

13 Blue Bell Inn

Although earlier in the 18th century there had been five licensed houses in Sproatley, by the 1780s there were only two. Between 1835 and 1843 the Blue Bell was owned by the Reverend Thomas Galland, a Wesleyan Methodist minister. It was purchased by Sir Thomas Aston Clifford Constable in 1847 and remained in the ownership of the Constable family until the mid 20th century.



14 Barker's Cottage

The oldest cottage in the village dates from c.1700 and is named after Harry Barker who lived there for nearly 60 years. This tiny cottage retains many of its original features including quarry-tiled floors, low ceilings and ladder staircase. The shed to the rear of the cottage was formerly a fish and chip shop and served hordes of cyclists on their way from Hull to the East Coast.

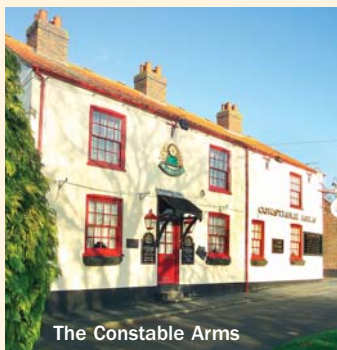


15 Constable Arms

Prior to the death of Sir Talbot Clifford Constable in 1894, the Constable Arms was known as the Clifford Arms. The licensed premises then only occupied the right half of the building, with the left hand side divided into two cottages. To the rear there was a garden, stables and a large orchard. In 1947 the buildings and land were sold to the Hull Brewery.

16 Mill House

Mill House was the home of John Rank, founder of the famous flour milling company. In 1828 he purchased the house, half an acre of land and the windmill, which stood behind the house, at a cost of £655. By the 1850s, John Rank had taken another mill in Hull, and his daughter and her husband managed the mill in Sproatley.



The Constable Arms



Mill House

17 New Lodge

Defining the entrance to the Burton Constable estate from the village of Sproatley, the new lodge and entrance gate was designed by James Blake in 1860 in the then-popular neo-Jacobean style.



18 Old Lodges

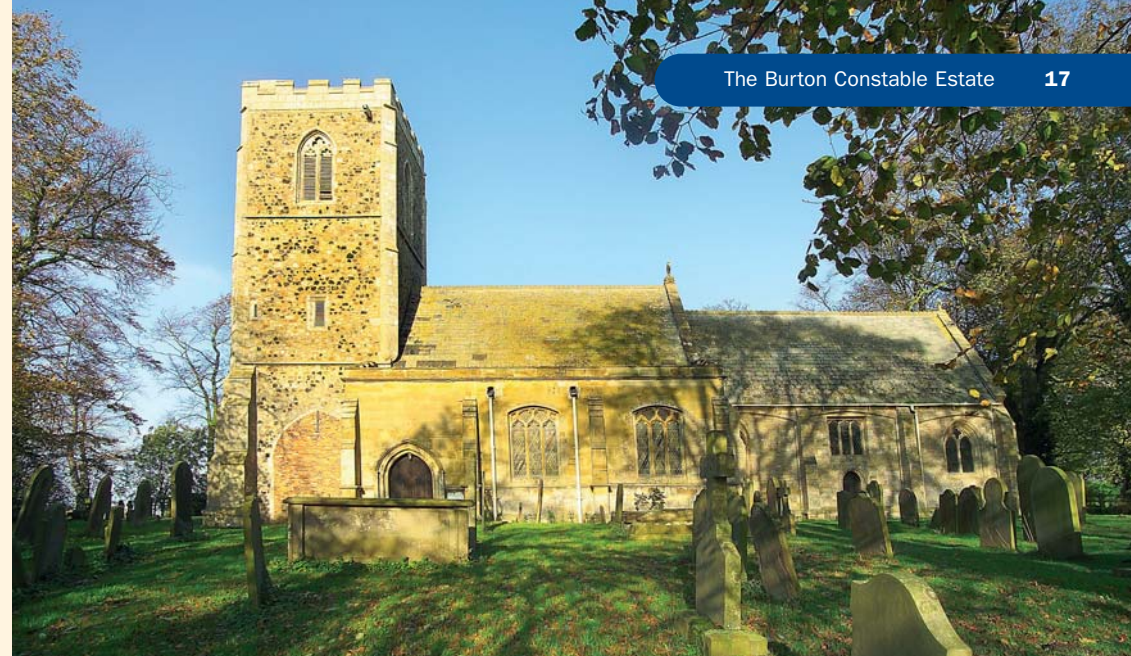
The old lodges were built to the designs of the architect James Wyatt in 1786, providing a new gateway to the park that had been landscaped by Capability Brown in the 1770s. This new entrance gave visitors the opportunity to view the lakes and the park, as they progressed towards the house from the south-west. The gatehouse lodge is built in the 'Gothick' style, considered an appropriate style for castles and gatehouses. Wyatt never visited Burton Constable, choosing rather to send his detailed plans and drawings for which he charged 25 guineas. This enabled workmen to complete the gatehouse without further reliance on the architect. Once finished, the whole building was painted to make it appear as though it were made of stone. The paint was scraped off in the 19th century, but traces can still be seen on the brickwork.



Halsham

(9 miles to the south-east of Burton Constable)

Before they settled at Burton Constable, the Constable family's principal seat was the manor house situated to the north of the Church at Halsham. In 1579 this was described as being 'all in ruin and decay' and was abandoned shortly afterwards. Nevertheless, Constable family members were still buried in the Church, they continued to support the school and hospital and, from the beginning of the 19th century, their remains were deposited in the Mausoleum.



19 All Saints Church

Of Norman origin, All Saints church is built of cobbles, ashlar and brick and has been altered over time, although much of what stands today dates from the 14th century. Whilst the chapel on the north side of the church is partly constructed of 15th-century brick, it was rebuilt in the late 17th century when stone quoins were added and a private doorway. The chapel, dedicated to St John of Beverley, was built to house the remains of the Constable family and still contains a tomb chest with an alabaster effigy of Sir John Constable (died 1451). Despite the fact that they remained Catholic, the Constables continued to be buried in the Chapel until 1802, when their remains were transferred from the vault to the new Mausoleum nearby.

20 School & Hospital (Almshouses)

Established in 1584 under the terms of the Will of Sir John Constable, Halsham grammar school, almshouse and master's lodgings continued to be supported by the Constable family until the late 19th century and provided schooling for village children until 1947. Sir John's Will provided for eight boys, whilst his wife Katherine contributed an endowment for an Oxford scholarship. Although initially the school was



generously endowed, the schoolmaster's pay saw no increase in nearly 200 years and the £20 per annum was a miserable salary by the middle of the 19th century. The almshouses, with lodgings for eight men and two

women were on the ground floor, with the schoolroom and schoolmaster's lodging above. The stepped gable survives as a typical architectural feature of the late 16th century, alterations having been made to the rest of the building, which is now a private house.

21 Constable Mausoleum

Designed by Thomas Atkinson of York, the Mausoleum was commissioned under the terms of William Constable's Will and was completed in 1802 by his nephew Edward Constable.

The bones of all the Constable ancestors were then transferred from the vault of All Saints and were all placed in one tomb, whilst the remains of Cuthbert Constable, William's father, and all subsequent Constable family members are placed in separate catacombs. The style of the building mimics the Pantheon in Rome, although the central skylight is glazed. The rather incongruous cross on the top of the dome was added in the early 19th century.



The Sledmere Estate

David & Susan Neave

Sledmere and the Sykes Family

Sledmere parish covers over 7,000 acres (2,835 hectares) and is owned, except for a handful of houses, by Sir Tatton Sykes, Bt. The village, first recorded in Domesday Book in 1086, was one of the most populous on the Yorkshire Wolds throughout the Middle Ages, and may have had a weekly market and annual fair for which a charter was granted in 1303.

At the beginning of the 18th century Sledmere was in the hands of a number of owners, but between 1721 and his death in 1748, Mark Kirkby, a wealthy Hull merchant, acquired all but a few acres of the township. His nephew and heir Richard Sykes bought the remaining freehold land and laid the foundation stone of the present Sledmere

House in 1751. Sykes also created a park to the south of the house and this involved removing some thirty houses, comprising over half the village.

The rest of the village was cleared by Sir Christopher Sykes, 2nd baronet, in the late 1770s as part of his ambitious plan to transform the landscape and agriculture of the whole township. Only the church and Sledmere House, which he greatly enlarged 1787-9, were left standing. The road from Bridlington to York was relocated to the north of the stables and church, beside which an inn, a shop and a half-a-dozen cottages were built. The park was landscaped,

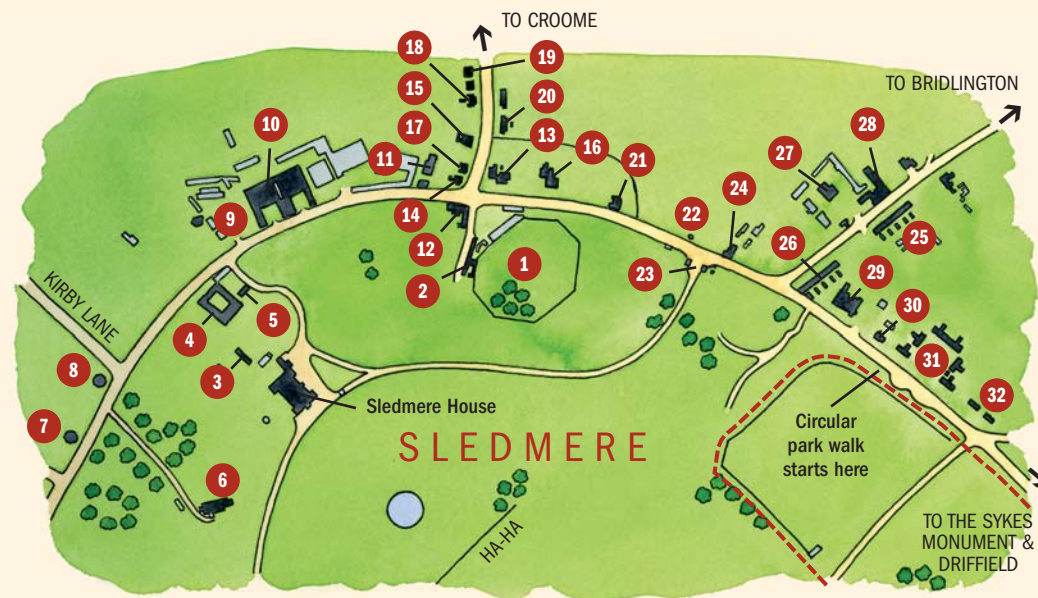


Sir Christopher and Lady Sykes by George Romney (Courtesy of Sir Tatton Sykes, Bt.)

1,000 acres of woodland planted, and ten farmsteads dotted around the parish, but no new village was provided. The families of the labourers and craftsmen who were needed to work the estate were housed at Pry Cottages, 1½ miles south-east, and Mill Cottages, ¾ mile to the south-west of Sledmere House. Some displaced villagers chose to emigrate, including Thomas Harper, ancestor of the present Prime Minister of Canada.

Sir Christopher's sons, Sir Mark Masterman Sykes and Sir Tatton Sykes I, added to the buildings along the main road, but it was Sir Tatton Sykes II who was largely responsible for creating the present village in the fifty years up to the First World War. This was Sledmere's heyday; it was the centre of the largest estate in the East Riding, then covering over 36,000 acres, and some 200 villagers were directly employed at the hall and in the gardens, workshops, stud, woodland and on the farms. The parish reached its peak population of 559 in 1911, almost three times its population ninety years later.

Although no longer the busy bustling settlement of the early 20th century, much of the life of the Edwardian community can be imagined as you explore what is one of the most attractive and best-preserved estate villages in Britain.



The Grounds

The landscaped grounds, when first laid out around 1750, consisted of an elongated triangular area of around 100 acres flanked by plantations that diverged to form the so-called Avenue, which was closed by a still-surviving, beech plantation on higher ground to the south. The ha-ha, or retaining wall, originally built along the south side of the York-Bridlington road, dividing the lawns from the parkland, can still be seen. The present, more extensive, landscape was laid out by Sir Christopher Sykes from the late 1770s. He had improvement plans drawn up by the landscape designers Thomas White and Capability Brown, of which he used some details but added to them with distinctive curved plantations and staggered belts of woodland to his own design, producing one of the great landscapes of eastern England. (For details of access to the more distant part of the parkland see the end of this section.)

1 Kitchen Garden

The octagonal walled kitchen garden was built in the 1780s. Here were grown pineapples, melons, grapes and figs in the hothouses and along

the heated wall. Some three acres in extent, it is now partly grassed over and is largely a flower garden but still provides fruit and vegetables for the house.

2 Gardeners' Row

Adjoining the west side of the kitchen garden is Gardeners' Row, a terrace of four cottages with a façade of 13 bays of blind arcading, built in 1786 for the gardeners.



3 Orangery

Recently reconstructed to the rear of Sledmere House is the Orangery designed by Sir John Soane in the 1780s for the now-demolished Fairford Park in Gloucestershire. It replaces the Orangery situated between the walled garden and the house which was demolished in the late 19th century.

4 The Stables

Built around a courtyard in 1750, the Stables were greatly enlarged in 1775-7 and given the white brick and stone front with classical pediment supported on pairs of columns around 1815 to designs by Watson and Pritchett.

5 Entrance Courtyard

To the east of the stables is the entrance courtyard with an introductory display to Sledmere House and Estate and the museum of the Waggoners Special Reserve. The impressive wall that divides the house and its grounds from the main road was built in the early 19th century. The bricks used for the wall and for most of the older village buildings were made at the estate brickworks at Garton-on-the-Wolds. In the wall, to the west of Sledmere House, fine wrought-iron gates with pillars bearing the family crest mark the entrance to a path that leads down to the village church.

6 St Mary's Church

The parish church of St Mary is the third on this site. The medieval church, except for the tower, was rebuilt in the 1750s and again in 1893-8 by Sir Tatton Sykes II to the designs of Temple Moore. The church that has been described 'as perhaps one of the loveliest churches of England' was rebuilt in an early 14th-century style on the medieval foundations uncovered at the demolition of the Georgian church. Faced externally in Whitby stone, the interior is of red Carlisle sandstone with floors of Kilkenny marble. The chancel is highly decorated with carving, statues and double tracery to the windows. The stonework was carved by John Baker of London, and the stained glass in the windows are by H.V. Milner, except that in the north aisle, which is by Burlison & Grylls. There are various memorials to the Sykes family including a number from the old church. The inscription to Sir Tatton Sykes II (died 1913) records that he built, rebuilt or restored 17 churches, mostly on the estate.



7 Eleanor Cross

As well as providing his estate villages with fine churches, Sir Tatton Sykes planned to give them each a churchyard or village cross. Of the latter there are good examples at Langtoft and Sherburn, but the finest and earliest is the superb Eleanor Cross at Sledmere. Erected in 1896-7 near the village pond it was designed by the architect Temple Moore as a copy of the late 13th-century cross at Hardingstone, Northamptonshire, one of a series 12 crosses erected at the places where the body of Queen Eleanor, wife of Edward I, rested on the journey from Lincoln to London in 1290. The figures and other decorative carving on the Sledmere cross are by John Baker. In 1918 Sir Mark Sykes added the engraved brass figures of officers and men of the 5th Battalion of the Yorkshire Regiment killed in the First World War. They included two carpenters, a footman and an agricultural worker from Sledmere. The figure of Sir Mark, who died when attending the Paris Peace Conference in 1919, was added later, paid for by the tenant farmers and villagers.



8 Waggoners' Memorial

The Waggoners' Memorial commemorates the 1,000 men of the Waggoners Reserve who were recruited by Sir Mark Sykes and served in the First World War. Designed by Sir Mark, and carved by Carlo Magnoni, the Portland stone monument, completed in 1920, consists of a cylindrical centre surrounded by four decorated

columns. Probably inspired by the Norman fonts on the Wolds, the panels on the cylinder depict the history of the Waggoners from recruitment in the harvest fields of the Wolds to action in France. Complaints by the German consul at Liverpool in 1938 about the depiction of German atrocities on the memorial gained national coverage.

9 The Yard

The walled yard now used as a coach park was the location of the estate woodyard with the estate gas works on the west side. From here you can glimpse the attractive hexagonal brick stallion yard erected in 1989 for the stud farm. The Sledmere Stud established in 1801 lasted for just over 200 years. In the time of Sir Tatton Sykes I it was famous for quantity, with as many as 400 horses, but the emphasis was on quality during his son's ownership, when three Derby and other classic winners were bred here. The stud had its greatest commercial success in the 1920s. The neat stud paddocks with their plank walls and charming small brick and pantile shelters contribute much to the character of Sledmere.

10 Home Farm

The Sledmere bloodstock were also housed in part of the Home Farm. This impressive range of brick and pantile farmbuildings, with two large rectangular yards separated by a central passageway leading to a cart way with pigeon loft and clock tower above, was built in 1830. There was an engine house on the north side.



11 Triton Cottage

Standing at right angles to the main road is the farmhouse for Home Farm. The brick and chalk stone house, built in the late 1770s, like much of the land to the north of the main road, is in Croome township. The Croome estate was purchased by Sir Mark Masterman Sykes from the Rousby family in 1812 and united with Sledmere. The cottage is named after the inn standing opposite.



12 Triton Inn

Built in the late 1770s to plans by Sir Christopher Sykes, and altered a decade later, the inn was the location of rent dinners and catered for events such as the annual timber, sheep and horse sales. It takes its name from the Sykes family crest, the half-figure of a triton or sea god, no doubt alluding to the origin of the family's fortunes from trade as merchants to the Baltic.

Late-Victorian Estate Buildings

The group of dark orange-red brick buildings in a Tudor style give the village its distinctive character. Built to the designs of John Birch of London, they are a direct result of the appointment of Henry Cholmondeley, nephew of Sir Tatton Sykes II, as agent for the estate in 1893. At a time of agricultural depression and rural decline he saw the need to attract the best staff and provide them with up-to-date buildings in which to live and work. The estate office and adjoining **clerk's house** 13 built 1895, were followed by the **sub-post office** 14, 1896, the **head forester's house** 15, now The Gables, 1899, and the **clerk of work's house** 16, now The Villa, 1900. Birch also provided plans to rebuild, in a similar style, the **Wesleyan Methodist chapel** 17 of 1889, that adjoined the post office on Croome Road. The chapel was converted to a pair of houses in 1947.

Estate office and clerk's house



The Gables



The post office



The Villa





Gabled cottages on Croome Road

Croome Road

Down Croome Road, on the west side, are two pairs of **gabled cottages** ¹⁸, built in 1876-8. Typical three-bedroomed semi-detached estate village houses set back in large gardens, they were also by John Birch. The architect was not directly commissioned, for the plans were taken from his book *Country Architecture*, published 1874, an annotated copy of which was recently found in the Sledmere Estate Yard Office. The cottages, the brick walls of which were painted white in the late 1940s, were built to a version of a design for which Birch received a prize from the Royal Society of Arts in 1864.

The next pair of **cottages** ¹⁹, with rendering to the first floor, a slightly overhanging roof and gabled porches with lattice-work sides, were designed by Ernest Collett, the estate architect, and built 1909. Collett had been a pupil, then assistant, of the leading Arts and Crafts architect Sir Thomas Jackson.

On the opposite side of the road are a pair of **almshouses** ²⁰ built in 1924-5 by the agent Henry Cholmondeley, in memory of his wife Helen, many years his junior, who died in 1923. Their son was killed in the Second World War.



Almshouses

A few hundred yards further along the road is Croome, a deserted medieval settlement with a few later buildings. Croome House, largely rebuilt by the Revd J.C. Rousby in 1776-7, is on the right, and on the left are two pairs of cottages built for the Sledmere Estate in 1877-9 to the designs of William T. Creed. The field behind the cottages contains four prominent lynchets, or cultivation terraces, possibly medieval. In the distance is Croome Farm, an attractive late 18th-century brick farmhouse. On the main road, past the Villa, is the former **vicarage** ²¹, now known as the Old Rectory, which was probably built around 1810.



²² The Well

The Classical rotunda with eight columns supporting a lead-covered dome was built over the village well in 1840 by Sir Tatton Sykes I in memory of his father. An inscription records that Sir Christopher Sykes 'by assiduity and perseverance in building, planting, and inclosing on the Yorkshire Wolds, in the short space of thirty years, set such an example to other owners of land, as has caused what once was a bleak and barren tract of country to become now one of the most productive and best cultivated districts in the County of York'.





23 The Lodges

Standing opposite the well, the lodges were built 1817-18 and were designed by Watson and Pritchett of York. They guard an entrance drive to Sledmere House.

24 Shop Farm

The shop or Shop Farm was probably one of the first buildings put up along the new road in the late 18th century. It was the main general store for the village with a small farm attached. The building was, more recently, occupied by a butcher.



Bridlington Road

The succession of Sir Tatton II to the estate in 1863 was soon followed by plans to improve the village housing. A scheme for a square designed by J.L. Pearson was not implemented, but this terrace of ten rather urban-style cottages was built on Bridlington Road in 1870. Known as Low or **Bottom Row** 25, the cottages originally contained a kitchen with larder and a large front parlour, from where stairs led to one large and two smaller bedrooms on the first floor. There are small front gardens, and at the rear a walled yard which had an earth closet, washhouse and



Bottom Row

coal house. Soon afterwards the adjacent identical terrace of ten cottages, **Top Row** 26, was built. The brickwork on the terraces was first painted in 1947. Connected with these cottages is the story that Sir Tatton II ordered the front doors to be kept locked to stop the women gossiping in the front gardens.

27 Estate Works Yard

The estate works yard, with a large workshop and clerk of work's office. Designed by Frederick Latham, estate architect, they were built in 1902.



Top Row

28 Village Hall

Originally a rifle range and then a reading room before the First World War, the Village Hall was altered in 1936 and on re-opening was used as a cinema twice a week with the support of Sir Richard Sykes who donated a 'talkie' projector. The fire station was built in 1968. Mount Pleasant, opposite, originally one house built c.1800, is divided into four cottages.



29 Primary School

The delightful school and schoolhouse designed by the leading architect G.E. Street were built in 1874-5, as a response to Forster's Education Act which threatened the imposition of a non-denominational Board School. A school (now Keeper's Cottage) had been built by Sir Christopher Sykes on the road to Wetwang in the late 18th century, chiefly for the children at Pry and Mill Cottages. Later the village school was held in rooms in the vicarage (now the Old Rectory). The present school, a Gothic building of brick and stone with a flat-tiled roof has a decorative bell-turret and ventilator. It was extended to the west by Temple Moore in 1895-6. The school house is charming early Arts and Crafts style building with half timbering and a tile-hung gable.

30 Methodist Church

Methodism was introduced into Sledmere in the 1790s and three-quarters of the population of Sledmere were said to be Methodists in the 1860s. The Sykes family would not allow a chapel to be built until 1889, when the Primitive Methodist chapel and the former Wesleyan chapel on Croome Road were built. It was no coincidence that five years earlier the agricultural labourer had got the vote and that the squire's brother was the local MP.



31 Castlegate Green

In 1945 a proposal by Driffield Rural District Council to build 10 council houses at Sledmere encouraged Sir Richard Sykes to seek permission to build new workmen's cottages and 'keep control of the village'. This resulted in Castlegate Green, a development of 12 neo-Georgian houses and a shop, in semi-detached pairs and a row of four, around a green. Designed by Jack Gold they were built in 1946 of brick and Westmorland slate, using materials from the demolished rear block of Sledmere House. Two pairs of **semi-detached cottages** 32 built 1910 and 1915, and designed by Ernest Collett, have half-timbering to the central shared gables.



Limekiln Hill

From Limekiln Hill you get a view on your left of Castle Farm, designed by John Carr of York in the form of a Gothic gatehouse. This was one of the three farms built by Sir Christopher Sykes in 1778-9. He designed the other two, Life Hill and Marramatte, the latter named after Lady Sykes' favourite dog buried in a prehistoric burial mound nearby. These



three farms were eyecatchers in the landscape and could be seen from each other and from Sledmere House.

Parkland walk

Directly opposite Castlegate is a gate in the park fence. Here begins a circular walk of 2½ miles that is open to the public by kind permission of the Sledmere Estate. A leaflet marking the route, which gives excellent views of Castle Farm and Sledmere House, and goes near the Deer House of 1792, can be obtained from the Estate Office. There are three tall ladder stiles (about 7 feet high) on the path where it crosses the deer fence. Please take care when crossing at these points. To avoid disturbance to deer and wildlife, dogs and horses are excluded, except by permission of the Estate. The walk may be closed from time to time during the period 1st November to 1st February. Please check beforehand.

The wider Sledmere estate

On the eve of the First World War the Sledmere Estate covered over 36,000 acres. Sir Tatton Sykes had land in 31 townships in the East Riding, 20 of which are on the Yorkshire Wolds. Farmsteads, cottages and schools built by the estate are spread over a wide area of the East Riding from the western Wolds to the coast of Holderness.

The most distinctive buildings are the churches where the work of leading architects and craftsmen can be seen. In the 1850s Sir Tatton Sykes I restored the Norman churches at Kirkburn, Garton-on-the Wolds, and Bishop Wilton and built Hilston church, which was destroyed by a bomb in the Second World War. Sir Tatton Sykes II's achievement in the years 1863-1913 was even greater, and probably unparalleled, by any other landowner. He built new churches at East Heslerton, Fimber, Helperthorpe, Sledmere, Thixendale, Wansford and West Lutton, and restored or refurnished the churches at Bishop Wilton, Fridaythorpe, Garton, Kirby Grindalythe, Kirkburn, Langtoft, North Frodingham, Sherburn, Weaverthorpe and Wetwang, filling them with wonderful stained glass, ironwork, sculpture, stone and wood carving, tiles, mosaics, wall paintings and decorative ceilings.

At the top of the hill between Sledmere and Garton stands the 120ft-high memorial to Sir Tatton Sykes I by John Gibbs, erected in 1865.

The memorial to Sir Tatton Sykes I on Garton Hill



The Burton Agnes Estate

David & Susan Neave



Burton Agnes and its Owners

The village was first recorded in Domesday Book in 1086 where it appears as Burton, an Anglo-Saxon name meaning 'fortified farmstead'. The suffix Agnes probably came from Agnes of Aumale, wife of Adam de Brus who had the manor in the mid 12th century.

Since the 1170s, when the manor of Burton Agnes was held by Roger de Stutville, the estate has never been sold. It descended by marriage through the de Merlay and de Somerville families to Rhys ap Griffith in 1355. The Griffith family, who had the manor for 300 years, had their chief home in Staffordshire. In 1599 Sir Henry Griffith was appointed to the Council of the North which met at the King's Manor, York, and this prompted him to build the present Burton Agnes Hall between 1601 and 1610.

Whilst the Hall was being built two first cousins of Lady Griffith, Robert Catesby and Francis Tresham, gained notoriety as leading figures in the Gunpowder Plot. It may have been to emphasise their loyalty to the Crown that the Griffiths displayed the coat of arms of King James I so

Burton Agnes Hall from the east by William Marlow, c.1765





prominently on the gatehouse **1** at Burton Agnes. Their son and heir, also Sir Henry Griffith, twice entertained the king at his house at Wychnor in Staffordshire, obtained a baronetcy from King Charles I in 1627, and gave shelter to Queen Henrietta Maria at Burton Agnes in 1643 following her arrival at Bridlington with soldiers and ammunition for the Royalist cause.

Sir Henry Griffith, who was heavily fined for his support for the king, was succeeded in 1654 by his nephew, Sir Francis Boynton, son of Sir Matthew Boynton, who had been the Parliamentary governor of Scarborough Castle. Sir Francis lived at Barmston Manor House but his grandson and heir, Sir Griffith Boynton, 3rd baronet, chose to live at Burton Agnes Hall where he made major alterations to the house and grounds in the early 18th century. Further 'improvements' on the estate were carried out by the 6th baronet in the 1760s-70s, but then financial difficulties led to the neglect of the Hall for more than 50 years. The marriages of the 9th baronet, who succeeded in 1832, and the 10th baronet, who succeeded in 1854, revived the family fortunes and allowed the restoration of the Hall, and provision of new estate buildings.

In 1899 the estate passed to Cicely Mabel, daughter of the 11th baronet. She married Thomas Lamplugh Wickham who assumed the additional name Boynton. In 1989 their son Marcus Wickham-Boynton, who had inherited in 1947, left the Burton Agnes estate to Simon



The Norman Manor House



The donkey wheel

Cunliffe-Lister, his 3rd cousin twice removed, a descendant of Sir Henry Boynton, 9th baronet. The house was opened to the public in 1949, and since 1977 it has belonged to the Burton Agnes Hall Preservation Trust.

2 Norman Manor House

Externally, the Norman manor house appears to be a three-storey early 18th-century outbuilding. However, the later brickwork disguises a rare example of a Norman house consisting of an impressive stone vaulted undercroft, probably built by Roger de Stutville around 1170, with a great hall above, heightened and re-roofed by Sir Walter Griffith in the later 15th century. Sir Walter also inserted the large traceried window. The building was once part of a much larger complex, and at the rear, blocked entrances to other rooms can be seen.

Situated behind the manor house is an outbuilding with a Norman well and a 17th-century **donkey wheel**. A donkey would be placed inside to rotate the wheel by walking and so bring up water from the well.



The dog kennel

An ornamental **dog kennel**, dated 1859, with a shaped gable stands to the south of the Manor House. The yard nearby is paved in a herringbone pattern with small yellow bricks or clinkers which were brought into

Bridlington and other East Coast ports from Holland in the 17th and 18th century.

3 Stables

The extensive stables were built in 1859 with accommodation above for grooms and coachmen. Here now are the café, shops, and farmers' food store, open throughout the year.

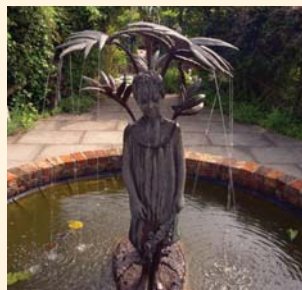


The Stables

The Gardens

The attractive old **walled garden** 4 has been imaginatively transformed since 1989 by Susan Cunliffe-Lister. It includes herbaceous and shrub borders, a potager of flowers, vegetables and herbs, a jungle garden, a scented garden, a campanula garden and a maze. In the coloured gardens are a series of giant board games including chess, snakes and ladders and Nine Men's Morris. The gardens won the 2005 Garden of the Year award sponsored by the Historic Houses Association and Christies.

The intrepid traveller Celia Fiennes, a relative of the Boyntons, commented on her visit to Burton Agnes in 1697 that the large old fashioned gardens were 'capable of being made very fine'. At that time there was a bowling green in the centre of the entrance courtyard between the gatehouse and the Hall. Now there is a wide gravel path flanked by clipped yews. The formal gardens on the east side of the house were swept away by the mid 18th century and replaced by the present lawn which ends in a ha-ha or sunken ditch.



5 The Ponds

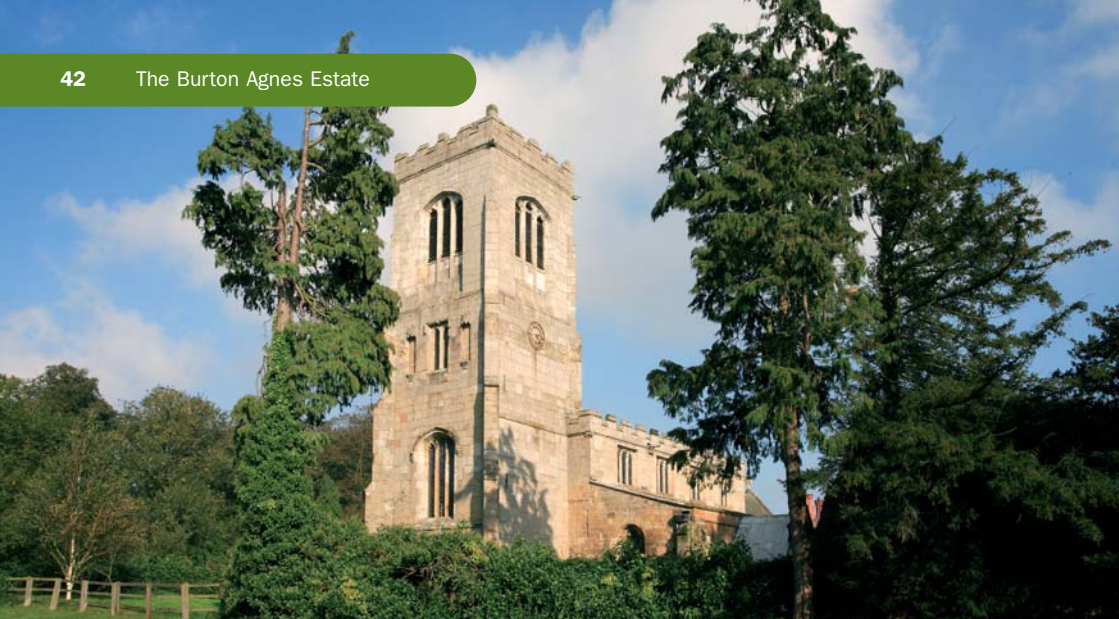
The ponds were introduced in the early 1970s, designed by the Bridlington architect Francis Johnson who was also responsible for the charming garden house at the front of the Hall in 1971 and for the **swimming pool pavilion** 6 at the rear in 1985. In the late 19th century a vast aviary stood on the site, which was created by the 11th baronet in order to house 'birds spending their lives in luxurious captivity'.

7 Woodland Gardens

To the north of the Hall are the woodland gardens, which were first planted in the early 18th century when the area was called 'the Grove'. A path runs northwards through the gardens and up steps flanked by contorted drainage tiles and bricks, presumably wasters from the estate brickworks.

8 Woodland Walk

The woodland walk, which is about a mile long, was first laid out in the 18th century and newly planted in 1998. Amongst the trees are contemporary sculptures of animals, birds and insects by Leonard Boydell. Part of the walk follows the sunken way of the old road from Burton Agnes to Rudston that was closed up in 1766.



9 St Martin's Church

A visit to Burton Agnes Hall must also include a visit to the parish church which is packed with interest. The church is reached through an avenue of ancient yews and was first mentioned in the early 12th century when it was given to St Mary's Abbey, York. Of the Norman church there remain parts of the nave walls and a restored chancel arch. The north arcade, with its sturdy round pillars, is late 12th century and the south arcade dates from the 13th century. The north and south aisles were rebuilt in the 14th century, and the tower and clerestory (the upper part of the nave) were added in the late 15th century.



The interior has excellent Georgian box pews and pulpit, and the monumental squire's pew – all provided by Sir Griffith Boynton around 1730. The chancel was rebuilt in the 1840s by the vicar, Archdeacon Robert Wilberforce, son of the anti-slavery campaigner William Wilberforce who is commemorated by a carved figure on the north wall.

As one would expect in an estate village the church has many memorials to the family at the 'big house'. These include the superb alabaster

tomb of Sir Walter Griffith, died 1481, who fought for the Lancastrians in the Wars of the Roses and his wife, and the rather gruesome monument to Sir Henry Griffith, died 1654, and his two wives, which has three black coffins, instead of figures, and a display of skulls and bones. Nearby is the memorial to Sir Henry Griffith, the builder of the hall, who died 1620 and his wife Elizabeth Throckmorton. Of later monuments the best are those to Sir Griffith Boynton, died 1761, and Sir Griffith Boynton, died 1778, the latter with a delightful carving representing the grieving widow and children.



The tomb of Sir Walter Griffith and his wife

There is a great range of stained glass, including the east window in the north aisle of 1772 by William Peckitt of York, which depicts Sir Roger de Somerville and his wife, the chancel windows by William Wailes, 1844, and the south aisle windows by Herbert Bryans, 1924.

The Village of Burton Agnes

10 Old Rectory

To the west of the church is the former vicarage, now the Old Rectory. The 18th-century brick house was evidently greatly enlarged for the Revd Charles Lutwidge, vicar of Burton Agnes 1833-40. He seemingly added the entrance front with Tudor-style arched doorways and hood moulds to the windows and the pointed Gothick window in the attic storey. Mr Lutwidge was the uncle of Lewis Carroll (Revd Charles Lutwidge Dodgson), author of *Alice in Wonderland*. Another literary connection comes through one of Mr Lutwidge's curates, Henry Nussey, who soon after leaving Burton Agnes proposed, unsuccessfully, to his sister's great friend Charlotte Brontë.





Church Farm



Mount Farm

11 School

A village school built in 1847 stood in the north-east corner of the churchyard where a brick and slate outbuilding survives. The school was replaced in 1871 by the present building on Rudston Road paid for by Sir Henry Somerville Boynton, 11th baronet.

12 Church Farm

Standing opposite the rear of the Hall stables, Church Farm is of the late 18th century. The house is painted cream and the front door green – the Burton Agnes estate colour. Much of its character derives from the retention of the original wooden Yorkshire sliding sash windows.

13 Mount Farm

The mid 19th-century Mount Farm, further south on Shady Lane, has the bricks laid in an attractive chequerboard pattern, with red stretchers (bricks sideways on) and pink/yellow headers (bricks end on).

14 Hospital Hill

Until 1939 there was an almshouse or hospital on the main road opposite the end of Shady Lane. Built in the early 18th century under the will of Elizabeth Boynton, the single storey brick and pantile row of four cottages was demolished for road widening. The road at this point is still known as Hospital Hill. To the west of the hospital site is a joiner's shop, the side windows of which have the small panes common

to workshops. Further on is the former smithy, and the Blue Bell Inn, so-called by the early 19th century.

Station Road

Running south from the Main Street on the west side of the Mere, Station Road has a number of estate houses dating from the late 18th to the early 20th century. They include the 18th-century **Mere**



Farm 15 and two pairs of **cottages** 16 bearing the initials of the Wickham-Boyntons, one pair dated 1913, the other 1926. To the west of Station Road stood the estate brickworks first mentioned in the later 18th century and closed just before the First World War.

17 Burton Agnes Station

The station on the Hull-Bridlington railway line was built in 1845-6. Designed by George T. Andrews, the former station master's house and waiting room are now a private house. Alongside is a signal box of 1903 and to the east the former holding sheds.

18 The Mere

In the centre of the village is the Mere, a large pond surrounded by trees from which a stream, the Mill Beck, flows eastward. There was





Mere House

a watermill at the south-east corner of the Mere that was first mentioned in the 13th century.

19 Mill Farm House

To the south of the Mere a lane leads from Station Road, passing Mill Farm House, dated 1769, across the Mill Beck towards the Main Road.

20 Mere House

Mere House was built as a Wesleyan Methodist Chapel in 1837. The pointed windows with Gothick tracery made it a more decorative building than many contemporary chapels, presumably at the wish of Sir Henry Boynton who, as the inscription on the building records, granted the site. The village population was said to be 'almost entirely Wesleyan' in the mid 19th century and the estate bailiff was the chief man at the chapel. It was converted to a private house by the architect Francis Johnson in 1987. Nearby is the village **Reading Room** 21 built in 1907 in memory of Sir Henry S. Boynton.

Main Road

The busy main road is lined with estate housing of various dates. The Post Office and village shop has been in the same premises since the mid 19th century. On the gable of the house



Mere House

can be seen the line of the former roof and chimney stack. Opposite is **Manor Farm Cottage** 22, formerly the Manor Farmhouse. Dated 1767 it is one of a number of farmhouses built on the estate by Sir Griffith Boynton, 6th baronet. Like much of the earlier estate housing, it is cream painted. This was seemingly due to Sir Henry Boynton, 9th baronet, owner of the estate 1832-54, who was responsible for 'beautifying' the village houses. His son built the row of **three cottages** 23 at the east end of the village. Set back with large front gardens these typical architect-designed brick and slate-roofed estate cottages are inscribed 'HB 1857'.



24 Home Farm

Adjoining the Hall grounds is a delightful unspoilt example of a late Georgian farmhouse. It is a three-bay building of brick with a hipped pantile roof, that is a roof where the sides slope up to the central ridge, a feature typical of the years 1790-1820. It has a Regency doorcase with decorative fanlight.



Home Farm

25 Maypole Hill

The car park for the Hall takes up part of Maypole Hill – so-named by the mid 19th century. This was probably the village green and the scene of maypole dancing. In the 13th century it was the location of the short-lived Tuesday market and the annual week-long fair in November.

The Burton Agnes Estate

In the early 18th century the estate covered just over 9,000 acres including nearly all of Burton Agnes, Barmston and Haisthorpe in the East Riding and Roxby in the North Riding, as well as land at Rudston and Boynton, and Swanland and other places to the west of Hull. Although the more distant holdings were sold in the later 18th and early 19th century, other land was purchased and in the 1870s the estate covered some 9,300 acres. Barmston and Haisthorpe were sold in the mid 20th century and the present estate consists chiefly of the township of Burton Agnes.

There are buildings associated with the estate at Barmston, five miles south-east of Burton Agnes on the Holderness coast. The 16th- and 17th- century Manor House of the Boyntons at Barmston was partly demolished in the early 18th century but a substantial brick range with large chimneystacks survives near the medieval church. The latter contains interesting memorials to the family. On the main street is the former almshouse, built by Sir Griffith Boynton in 1726, and Manor Farm dated 1768. The Methodist Church was built in 1839 on land given by Sir Henry Boynton.



Barmston Manor House and Church by William Marlow, c.1765

Work & Play

Life on the Yorkshire Country House Estate



For opening times of houses, grounds and parkland contact:

- ① Burton Constable Foundation,
Burton Constable, Skirlaugh, East Yorkshire HU11 4LN
Tel: 01964 562400 www.burtonconstable.com
- ② Sledmere House, Sledmere, Driffield, East Yorkshire YO25 3XG
Tel: 01377 236637 www.sledmerehouse.com
- ③ Burton Agnes Hall, Driffield, East Yorkshire YO25 0ND
Tel: 01262 490324 www.burton-agnes.com

Work & Play: Life on the Yorkshire Country House Estate is an exhibition project developed through the Yorkshire Country House Partnership, a collaborative research venture between the country houses of Yorkshire and the University of York. Other participating houses: ④ Brodsworth Hall, ⑤ Harewood House, ⑥ Temple Newsam House.



For further details see www.ychp.org.uk



Wind dial in entrance hall at Sledmere House by Robert Burns, 1916



Supported by
The National Lottery[®]
 through the Heritage Lottery Fund



Heritage
 Lottery Fund

This project is part financed by:



LEADER+
 In the East Riding of Yorkshire

An EU & UK Government funded initiative



EAGGF



defra
 Department for Environment
 Food and Rural Affairs