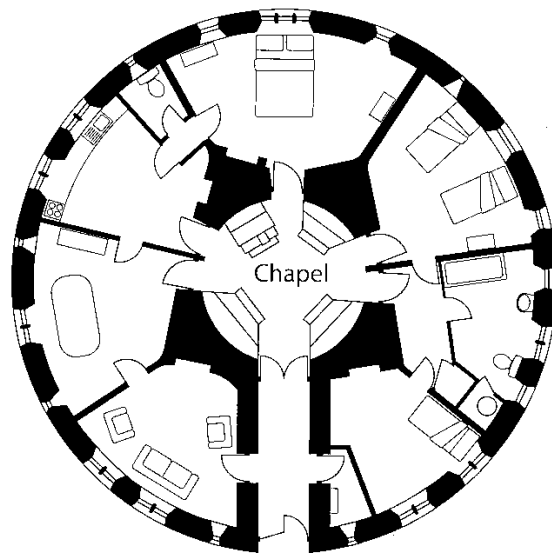


The Landmark Trust

BEAMSLEY HOSPITAL



History Album

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Updated in 2018

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BEAMSLEY HOSPITAL – BASIC DETAILS

Built:	1593
Listed:	Grade I
Acquired by Landmark:	1983
Tenure:	Freehold
Architects:	Martin Stancliffe Architects of York
Contractors:	Thompson & Walker of Leeds
Slaters:	Turner Bros of Baildon
Plasterer:	Paramount Plasterers of Leeds
Ironmongery:	Don Barker Decorative Ironmongery of York

Beamsley Hospital was the winner of a Jackson Stops & Staff / Sunday Times Country House Award in 1990.

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Beamsley Hospital

Summary

The inscription above the archway as you enter the Hospital announces that it was founded by Margaret, Countess of Cumberland in 1593, and completed by her daughter, Lady Anne Clifford. Queen Elizabeth gave her consent to the foundation in a special charter. In this the need for a Hospital or Almshouse was explained: the Countess had seen that there were "many old women in and around Skipton, decrepit and broken down by old age, who were in the habit of begging for their daily bread". She wished to offer them the protection of a roof over their heads, and a small income.

After the dissolution of the monasteries by Henry VIII, there were no longer any institutions to look after the poor and needy. Only in 1601 did the Poor Laws make this a duty of local government. Until then, the poor depended purely on the charity of individuals. It was up to the gentry and nobility to set an example in this work, and many of them founded almshouses, to take care of the "deserving" poor. Even after the new laws came in, there was still a need for decent free housing for the old, and almshouses became a regular feature of village life.

The Countess of Cumberland intended her foundation to be for thirteen poor widows: a Mother and twelve Sisters. By her death in 1616, however, only the round building was completed. This contained accommodation for the Mother, who had a tiny bedroom as well as a living room, and for six of the Sisters, with one room each. All the rooms had fireplaces. In the centre of the building, and at the heart of the women's daily lives, was the chapel, in which prayers were said each morning by a specially-appointed Reader. Its unusual design was possibly inspired by the round churches built by the Knights Templar, such as that in the City of London.

The furniture in the chapel today was provided by Lady Anne Clifford, Countess of Pembroke, who continued her mother's work at Beamsley. In a deed of 1631, Lady Anne stated that she had, after her mother's death, "erected the greatest part of the said hospital". This refers to the long range facing the road, which used to contain six dwellings, each with a tiny attic. It is possible that she also put the finishing touches to the round building, in addition to furnishing it; and she certainly put the Hospital's finances in order.

The Hospital's income came from two farms, the rents from which kept the buildings in repair and paid the allowances promised to the Mother and each of the Sisters, and to the Reader. To begin with their management was the responsibility of the Mother, but this later passed to the agent of the Skipton Castle Estate, representing the Castle's owner, who was hereditary Chairman of the Trustees. All the Hospital papers, however, were stored in a painted chest in the Mother's room. This still exists, although sadly for its safety it is no longer kept in the building.

The almswomen's lives were lived according to the Rules set out by Lady Anne. How little these changed over the centuries can be seen by comparing the original version (page 7), as recorded by Lady Anne in 1665, with the printed Orders hanging on the wall in the entrance passage, dated 1929.

By the 1950s the buildings at Beamsley were old-fashioned and inadequate, and most of the rooms were empty. A programme of modernisation was carried out 1958-60, and for a few years after this, the Hospital was full. Then numbers started to fall again. With the arrival of Council Retirement Homes and Sheltered Housing, the elderly no longer needed the Countess of Cumberland's protection.

In 1983, the Hospital Trustees decided to pass the buildings on to the Landmark Trust, as a charity which specialises in the care of historic buildings. After restoration, the long range is now let to two permanent tenants, while the round building is let for holidays to parties of up to five people, who can live briefly in these curious rooms, with the quiet central chapel in their midst.

Restoration

When the Landmark Trust took on Beamsley Hospital in 1983, the upper building was basically in sound condition. The main job to be done was the repair of the roof. The stone slates were stripped off, and put on one side for re-use. All the joinery was checked and repaired, before the slates were put back. Laying them evenly on a continuous curve was a very tricky job.

The building consists of two stone drums, one inside the other, with the inner drum, containing all the chimneys, rising up through the roof of the outer. The top of the inner drum also contains the windows of the chapel. Its walls had been rendered with cement in 1960, but this was now cracked and broken. It was all cleaned off, therefore, and the stonework beneath repaired and repointed. The chimneys were also repointed. To begin with, these were left without their odd assortment of chimney pots, but looked curiously stumpy and unfinished without them. Once they were back in place, the building regained its full character.

In 1958-60, new partitions had been inserted, to provide small kitchens and bathrooms for the almswomen. These were now stripped out to return the building to more nearly its original arrangement of seven wedge-shaped rooms, all but two opening into the chapel. The uses of the rooms have changed, however, to provide the separate sitting, sleeping, cooking, washing and eating rooms which are more appropriate for the Hospital's modern use as a single holiday dwelling.

At the same time, modern fireplaces were stripped out to reveal the Elizabethan openings behind. New elm floorboards were laid in place of modern softwood floors. New leaded lights were provided for all the windows. A new kitchen and bathroom were installed and the building was redecorated throughout, and furnished in an appropriate manner.

The chapel remains just as it was, little changed since the 17th century, complete with bible and hymn books. A record exists of the doors being painted in "grained oak colour" in 1810. The new doors in the rest of the building have been painted to match. The bell, inscribed 'SOLI DEO GLORIA [Glory to God alone] 1675' that called in residents to prayer still hangs in the roofspace.

Outside, concrete has been replaced by new stone paving. The roadside building has also been restored, and converted into two cottages which now provide homes for local people.

The Rules of Beamsley Hospital in 1665

1. That Prayers be daily said everie morning about Eight or Nyne a Clock by the Reader for the tyme being. And that the mother and all the Twelve Sisters give their constant attendance at the said Prayers and none of them to be absent at any tyme unless in Case of Sickness or other urgent occasions.
2. That none of the Sisters be out of the house without the leave of the Reader who Prayeth with them and the mother of the said Almshouse.
3. That none of their children or grandchildren or any other shall lye with the Sisters in the said Almshouse without the leave of the said Reader or mother wch leave shall not be granted but only in case of Sickness or other Reasonable occasion.
4. That the out doors of the Almshouse may be constantly locked up everie night at Eight a Clock in the winter and Nyne in the somer and not to be opened in the morning till Seven a Clock in the winter and Six in the somer.
5. That none of the Sisters do Run on the Score in the Towne because they have their allowance paid them constantly.
6. That the Almshouse court be swept over everie week, and the runnells and watercourses about it kept clean.
7. That the mother also herself observe these orders.
8. That the mother and Sisters do all of them Indevour to live peaceably and quietly among themselves.
9. That if any difference shall arise amongst any of the Sisters or mother and Sisters, Itt may be determined between the Major Part of themselves and the Reader, and in case they cannot end itt then to be refered to the Countess of Pembroke while she liveth and after her death such differences to be referred to the owner of Skipton Castle for the tyme being.
10. That if the mother or any of the Twelve Sisters shall wilfully break any of these orders that for the first fault they shall forfeit a fortnights Allowance to be abated out of the next moneys they are to Receive, and equally divided one half to the Informer and the other half to the poor of the Towne, and for the second fault to be expelled the house.
11. When any other is to succeed in the house they shall submitt to these orders or else they shall not be admitted.

Introduction

The inscription above the entrance to Beamsley Hospital says that it was founded by Margaret, Countess of Cumberland in 1593, and completed by her daughter, Lady Anne Clifford.

The foundation, of twelve poor women and a Mother, continued nearly unchanged, under rules laid down by Lady Anne, for three hundred and ninety years.

The buildings look almost exactly as they did when they were first built. There are two: the round one, further from the road, with a chapel in the centre, is the earlier, built at the time of the original foundation by the Countess of Cumberland. The other, more conventional, range with the inscription on the entrance arch, was built by Lady Anne Clifford after her mother's death in 1616 and before 1631.

The whole of the Hospital was bought by the Landmark Trust in November 1983, but only the round building is let for holidays; the long range is lived in by permanent tenants. Repairs to both were carried out in 1985-6 under the direction of Martin Stancliffe Architects of York.

The Documents

When the Landmark Trust took over Beamsley Hospital in 1983 there was an early 19th century painted chest in the chapel, which contained accounts and letter books. It was obvious, though, that some had been removed. Deeds, maps, and letters mentioned by Lady Anne Clifford's biographer, Dr. G.C. Williamson, who wrote her life in 1920, were not there; nor were two sixteenth century leather boxes and seals which were illustrated in the biography. By a stroke of great good fortune these turned up in 1990 in Skipton, in a tin box saved from the rubbish heap when the solicitor to the Trustees of the Hospital was clearing out his cellars.

The earliest papers in the tin box are deeds, with seals of Queen Elizabeth I attached to them, relating to the two farms, Fairfields and Ireton, that provided Beamsley Hospital with its income. There are also accounts, giving details of the money spent on the fabric of the Hospital, from 1681-1725, 1790 and 1807-1831. The early accounts, of 1681-1725, are written in a tall, vellum-covered ledger, whose interest is enhanced by the entry for 16th February 1684: 'Pade for this Folio book £0 2s 9d.' Then there are letter books with applications for admission to the Hospital, between 1684 and 1950, and correspondence between the agent at Skipton Castle and the Hospital inhabitants from 1916-1940 - all interesting as social history.

The original Elizabethan charter is at present, unfortunately, lost; but other documents are amongst the archives of the Yorkshire Archaeological Society at Claremont in Leeds, including Lady Anne's description of the Hospital, and rules for the inmates, written in 1665 for Charles II. The contents of the Beamsley Hospital box have been deposited there as well.



March 23^d 1790
Received then of the Earl of Thanet by pay^t
of M. John Heelis the sum of Twenty Six pounds
being a Quarter Salary due to the Reader
Mother and Twelve Sisters of Beamsley
Hospital due at Lady Day 1790 I say Rec^d
Receipt^d By me Tho^s. Holmes

One of the documents found in the chest in 1983.

The Founders of Beamsley Hospital

The Countess of Cumberland, founder of the Hospital, was born Margaret Russell, daughter of the Earl of Bedford, and a member of one of the dynamic new rich families that had gained power under Henry VIII - the owners, incidentally, of the Endsleigh estate in Devonshire, where two buildings are now Landmarks. Lady Margaret's husband, George Clifford, Earl of Cumberland, was a member of the old aristocracy: the Cliffords were a power in the north of England with great estates and castles there from the reign of Edward I. Cumberland spent much of his time at the court of Queen Elizabeth, whose Champion he became in 1590. He also organised and led several expeditions to the New World and commanded one of the ships that defeated the Armada. It was characteristic of his Queen that any profits arising from his exploits went to her, while the expenses were born by him. He died hugely in debt.

The Countess, meanwhile, appears as an altogether quieter person, eclipsed by her husband and, in the eyes of posterity, by her only surviving child, Lady Anne Clifford, born at Skipton Castle in 1590. In most accounts of Lady Anne, her mother is portrayed as having had little purpose in life beyond the bringing up of her daughter, and this may have been her own estimation of herself as well. She certainly saw to it that Lady Anne's education was thorough in every way, both academic and social, and that she married a nobleman of equal birth and wealth in the young Earl of Dorset. More than that, in the years after the Earl of Cumberland's death in 1605, she devoted herself to championing their daughter's cause as his heir, amassing all the historical and genealogical information she could find to support this.

Intelligent, studious, fond of reading and study, careful with money - at least in comparison to her husband - and something of a Puritan in religion, the Countess would not be the first such woman to be accused by some of being dull. She can hardly be blamed if, after the death of two young sons (which according to Lady Anne 'did so much afflict her as that ever after the booke of Jobe was her dayly



Margaret, Countess of Cumberland 1560-1616



George, 3rd Earl of Cumberland 1558-1605

companion'), followed a few years later by a distinctly unfriendly separation from her husband, she became slightly obsessed with grooming her only daughter for a great position in life.

In return, her daughter was to endow her with such saint-like qualities that it is difficult to bring her alive. Her only account of herself, quoted by Georgina Blakiston in *Woburn and the Russells* (1980), is a tragic outpouring to her chaplain, written no doubt on some occasion when her troubles seemed overwhelming. In this she compared her life 'to a dance that she called the Pilgrimage of Grief.' Following early sorrow at the death of her mother, she was married when seventeen and taken to live in the still largely Catholic north, 'separated from all I knew in a country contrary to my religion.' Of her husband she wrote that 'our mind met not but in contrarys and thoughts of discontentment', charting the breakdown of what had begun as a happy marriage.

There are occasional glimpses of a more cheerful and lively personality, however. Her daughter spoke of her charm; she befriended poets - Spenser dedicated verses to her, as did Samuel Daniel whom she employed as her daughter's tutor - and is said to have written poetry herself. Georgina Blakiston records her in later life 'dabbling in alchemy, compounding medicines for her dependents.' In *Lady Anne's Way* (1985) Patrick Eyres also says she was 'deeply interested in alchemy and natural medicine' and credited with 'discovering many excellent medicines.' In addition, she commissioned a most unusual and interesting building for her charitable foundation at Beamsley.

It is said that she controlled her husband's estates during his absences abroad, presumably in the years before 1590, when she left Skipton Castle to live in London, where she remained during the years of their separation. She clearly came to have a high regard for the Clifford inheritance. After the Earl's death in 1605, she once again left London and the south, and her own relations, to live in

the old castle at Brougham, a decision which must have called for some strength of character. From then until her own death in 1616 she managed the Clifford estates in Westmorland which had been settled on her for life as her jointure, and which she hoped to pass to her daughter.

The result of all this was that Lady Anne grew up deeply proud of her ancestry and her family's northern estates, and very aware that, as by ancient entail they could descend through the female line, she would, one day, inherit them. But when Cumberland died he left his property, not to her, but to his brother and his brother's male heirs. Only if the male line failed would the estates revert to Lady Anne. His aim was to leave the payment of his debts and the salvaging of the estates in more experienced hands than those of his young daughter, for whom he provided generously, but his will was strictly illegal.

Most people accepted its practical intentions, including James I, but not Lady Anne or her mother, who contested it forcefully and consistently. Despite spending much of her youth at court, and making two grand marriages in the south, first to the Earl of Dorset, and then to the Earl of Pembroke and Montgomerie, Lady Anne was single minded in her wish to gain possession of her inheritance in the north, which she was convinced was hers. Her case seemed hopeless until, in 1643, her nephew died without a male heir and so she finally inherited. In 1649, when she was nearly sixty, she went north, where she remained till her death in 1676, aged eighty six.

Lady Anne was a small woman, less than five foot tall, marked by the small pox, and in later life always plainly dressed in coarse black serge, but she had a will of iron and she became a legend. She kept a diary and in it she gives an account of her extensive building works. Between 1652 and 1662 she repaired her castles of Appleby, Brougham, Brough and Skipton, which were in ruins; Pendragon, which was burnt down by the Scots in the reign of Edward III, she rebuilt; she even repaired Bardon Tower which belonged to her cousin. In 1651 she founded more almshouses at Appleby, which, like Beamsley, were for poor women. She almost

rebuilt two churches in Appleby, one of them, St. Lawrence's, containing a fine alabaster figure commemorating her mother, and the heraldic tomb that she designed for herself. She rebuilt Skipton Church steeple; Ninekirk church she pulled down and rebuilt 'bigger than it was before'; she repaired the chapels at Brougham and Mallerstang.

She paid attention to every detail of the running of her estate and built new water mills at Sillersden, near Beamsley, and at Brough. Whether she was entirely popular with her tenants is doubtful; she could be a hard landlord; but there is a nice story of her insisting on a tenant giving her a chicken which was part of his rent and, when he reluctantly did so, asking him to dine with her and eat it.

Like some medieval magnate, she moved round, carried on a horse litter, from one castle to another, with her train of some three hundred retainers. When she arrived she held court at whichever castle she was at as though she was royal. Shrewd, indomitable, conservative in every sense, she was a throw-back to an earlier, more patriarchal age; and at the same time, as Patrick Eyres has pointed out, in her love for the wild northern landscape, she looked forward to the romantics - Gothic Survival and Revival in one person.

Her diaries show her justifiably proud of her achievements. Whenever her children or grandchildren came to stay they were taken to see the castles and sometimes the almshouses. In 1654 she wrote in her diary that she took her second daughter, Lady Northampton, and her husband, to Beamsley Hospital; in 1666, her eldest daughter, Lady Thanet, was taken there with her three daughters, and in 1670 her granddaughter, Lady Alethea Compton, aged nine, 'visited my Almshouse at Beamsley, which she went in to see.'



LADY ANNE CLIFFORD
aged 15
Samuel Daniel (tutor)
Mrs Anne Taylour (governess)



SIR ROBERT CLIFFORD (brother)
FRANCIS LORD CLIFFORD (brother)
LADY MARGARET RUSSELL, Countess of Cumberland (mother)
GEORGE CLIFFORD, Earl of Cumberland (father)
Lady Frances Clifford, Baroness Wharton (aunt)
Lady Margaret Clifford, Countess of Derby (aunt)
Lady Anne Russell, Countess of Warwick (aunt)
Lady Elizabeth Russell, Countess of Bath (aunt)



LADY ANNE CLIFFORD
aged 56
Richard Sackville,
Earl of Dorset (1st husband)
Philip Herbert, Earl of Pembroke
and Montgomery (2nd husband)

Anne Clifford's books in the Great Picture, 1646

Cornelius Agrippa, *The Vanity of the Arts and the Sciences*, trans. J. Sandford, 1575
 St. Augustine, *The City of God*, trans. J. Healy and dedicated the Earl of Pembroke, 1620
 The Bible
 Boetius, *De consolations Philosophia*, 1619
 Baldassare Castiglione, *The Courtier*, trans. Thomas Hoby , 1561
 Camden *Britannia*, 1578
 Cervantes, *Don Quixotte* ,trans. Shelton, 1612
 Pierre Charron, *Book of Wisdom*, trans. S. Lennard, 1615
 Chaucer's Works
 Henry Cuffe, *Ages of Man's Life*, 1607
 Samuel Daniel. *The Chronicle of England in Prose*, 1612
 Samuel Daniel, *Poetical Works*
 John Donne, Sermons and Poems, 1633
 John Downham, *Christian Warfare*, 1612
 Du Bartas, *Divine Weekes and Workes*, trans. J. Sylvester, 1611
 Epictitus, *The Manuel*, trans J. Healy, 1616
 Eusibius, *History of the Church*, trans. Hammer, 1619
 Gerard's *Herbal*, 1597
 Godfrey of Boloigne, *Caxton*, 1481
 Sir Fulke Greville's *Works*, 1633
 George Hakewell, *Apology of the Power of God*, 1627
 George Herbert's Poems, 1631
 Ben Jonson's Works, 1616
 King, Bishop of Winchester's Sermons, 1606
 Montaigne's Essays, trans. John Florio, 1603
 Abraham Ortelius, *Theatre of the World*, (maps), 1603
 Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, trans. Sandys, 1632
 Plessis du Mornay, *Discourse of life and Death*, 1592
 Plutarch's Lives, trans. Sir John North, 1605
 The Psalms, trans George Sandby, 1636
 Loys de Roy, *The Variety of Things*, trans. R. Ashley, 1594
 Seneca's Works, trans. Thomas Lodge, 1614
 Sir Philip Sidney, *Arcadia*, 1593
 Spencer's Works, 1609
 George Strode, *Anatomy of Mortality*
 Sir Henry Wotton, *Booke of Architecture*, 1624

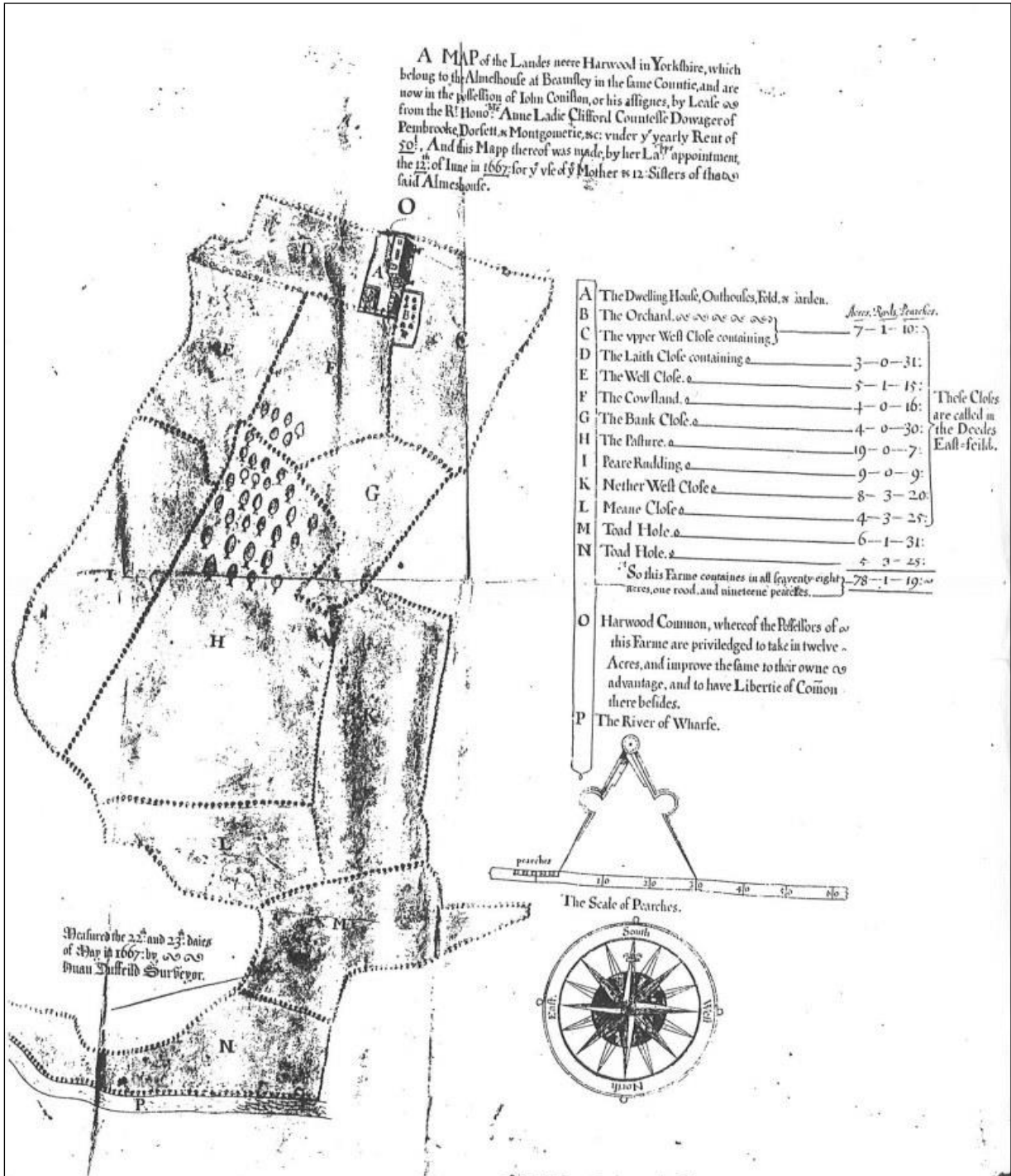


Two portraits of Lady Anne Clifford, 1590-1676. Above, Lady Anne aged 30 and below in 1646, aged 56



The Rules of Beamsley Hospital in 1665

1. That Prayers be daily said everie morning about Eight or Nyne a Clock by the Reader for the tyme being. And that the mother and all the Twelve Sisters give their constant attendance at the said Prayers and none of them to be absent at any tyme unless in Case of Sickness or other urgent occasions.
2. That none of the Sisters be out of the house without the leave of the Reader who Prayeth with them and the mother of the said Almshouse.
3. That none of their children or grandchildren or any other shall lye with the Sisters in the said Almshouse without the leave of the said Reader or mother wch leave shall not be granted but only in case of Sickness or other Reasonable occasion.
4. That the out doors of the Almshouse may be constantly locked up everie night at Eight a Clock in the winter and Nyne in the somer and not to be opened in the morning till Seven a Clock in the winter and Six in the somer.
5. That none of the Sisters do Run on the Score in the Towne because they have their allowance paid them constantly.
6. That the Almshouse court be swept over everie week, and the runnells and watercourses about it kept clean.
7. That the mother also herself observe these orders.
8. That the mother and Sisters do all of them Indevour to live peaceably and quietly among themselves.
9. That if any difference shall arise amongst any of the Sisters or mother and Sisters, Itt may be determined between the Major Part of themselves and the Reader, and in case they cannot end itt then to be refered to the Countess of Pembroke while she liveth and after her death such differences to be referred to the owner of Skipton Castle for the tyme being.
10. That if the mother or any of the Twelve Sisters shall wilfully break any of these orders that for the first fault they shall forfeit a fortnights Allowance to be abated out of the next moneys they are to Receive, and equally divided one half to the Informer and the other half to the poor of the Towne, and for the second fault to be expelled the house.
11. When any other is to succeed in the house they shall submitt to these orders or else they shall not be admitted.



The Founding of the Hospital and its History

In 1593, the year it was founded, Queen Elizabeth I granted Beamsley Hospital a special charter. The charter, which is lost, but which is quoted in translation by Dr. G.C. Williamson in his biography of Lady Anne, tells how the hospital was established by the Countess of Cumberland for the protection of the 'many poor women in and around Skipton, decrepit and broken down by old age, who were in the habit of begging for their daily bread.' In the Skipton area the homeless poor would have been particularly in evidence, having lost the protection of Bolton Abbey when Henry VIII dissolved the monasteries.

Although the Countess had bought some land to support her foundation and to pay for its buildings, progress with these was slow. Perhaps other, family, troubles took over. At her death in 1616 the Hospital was only half finished and in her will she desired 'that the almshouse which I have taken order for may be perfected', a charge clearly laid on her daughter.

Long before she inherited and came to live in the north, therefore, Lady Anne Clifford was looking after Beamsley Hospital, and its finances, a task which she carried out with characteristic thoroughness: her arrangements lasted until 1900. To begin with, the Hospital's income was the rent from the farm bought by the Countess, Fairfield's, which lies south of the river Wharfe, three miles east of Harewood House. But this was a small farm of only 86 acres and in 1631 Lady Anne and her second husband, Lord Pembroke, bought another farm of 127 acres called Ireton, later Hazleton, near Duffield, north of Derby, and made it over to the Hospital. The same deed shows that, besides organising the finances, Lady Anne had completed the buildings.

After the Restoration, Charles II asked for the particulars of all the almshouses in the country and Lady Anne produced a detailed description in 1665. She explained how the Hospital was founded, how it was financed by the farm rents,

how it was administered and she gave the rules according to which the poor women were to live.

There were to be thirteen of them, twelve sisters and a Mother. The rules (which she claimed to have made herself, but they were probably along lines set out by her mother) are almost exactly the same as those hanging on the wall in the entrance passage dated 1929. The sisters were to attend prayers every day, read by an appointed (male) Reader, and live peacefully together; they were not to incur debts in the town; if there were differences between them they were to be referred to Lady Anne or whoever owned Skipton Castle. They were not to leave the hospital nor have friends or relations to stay without permission. The doors were to be locked between 8pm and 6am; the place was to be kept clean and in good order.

The Mother was to be responsible both for the discipline of the sisters and for the financial running of the Hospital, with support from the outside figure of the Reader. The rents were paid directly to her 'at fower feastes in the yeare in the Chappell of the Hospital' and were put into the chest in the Mother's room. There is a small payment in the accounts whenever the rents were paid, so presumably the tenants were fed.

The relationship between the Mother and the Reader must from the beginning have been difficult, particularly if the Mother was illiterate, which she sometimes was; certainly in 1694 Anne Brookbank, Mother, signed herself with her mark. It is not surprising that by the eighteenth century, the rents were collected by the Reader and finally the Hospital and the farms were administered from the estate offices in Skipton Castle.

This shift in responsibility was perhaps partly due to a change in attitude to women in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, but it may have been triggered by a row that upset the calm of the Hospital in 1687. In a document

signed by Lord Thanet, the 'great abuses at the Hospital' are described. It seems that when an inhabitant died the Mother continued to draw her pension, and gave it, perhaps to the family of the dead woman, or perhaps to a sister who had not yet been accepted, while what she should have done was to put it into the chest to swell the fund for repairs to the buildings.

In the description of 1665 Lady Anne Clifford says that the sisters are to receive £6 a year and the Mother and the Reader £8 each. The income from the farms was £90, leaving only £2 a year for repairs and general outgoings, obviously not enough unless augmented by 'vacancy money.' In 1718 the figures were exactly the same; but by 1812 agriculture was booming and the allowances had increased to £20 for the Reader, who had overtaken the Mother who only got £18, while the sisters received £16 each. In 1819 the Hospital's income from the farm was £335 and there is a note in the accounts saying: 'an advance from £16 to £20 is now made in the widows' salary, exclusive of the coals, due to the high rents.' The salaries remained at that for about a hundred years. In 1929 the widows received £23 and in 1940, £26.

Occasionally echoes from the outside world can be heard in the accounts. Anger against the landlord's enclosure of the common land appears early. In 1697 Christopher Pike, the tenant of Fairfield farm, had £5 abated of his rent towards the cost of enclosing part of Harewood Common by a fence which was afterwards thrown down. In 1712 he was paid £10 for enclosing 12 acres of Common on Harewood Moor, belonging to the Hospital, which was again thrown down. Common land was still a point of contention in a letter of 1881.

In 1818, the Charity Commissioners were set up to enquire into the many ancient charities in England and Wales. The first Report, of 1820, gives an account of Beamsley Hospital which is little different from that of 1665. The income still comes from the two farms, though some capital raised from the sale of timber on one of them in 1809 has, after repairs to the buildings, been invested in



Thomas Tuffton, 6th Earl of Thanet, grandson of Lady Anne

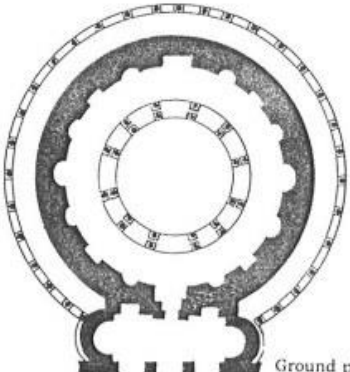
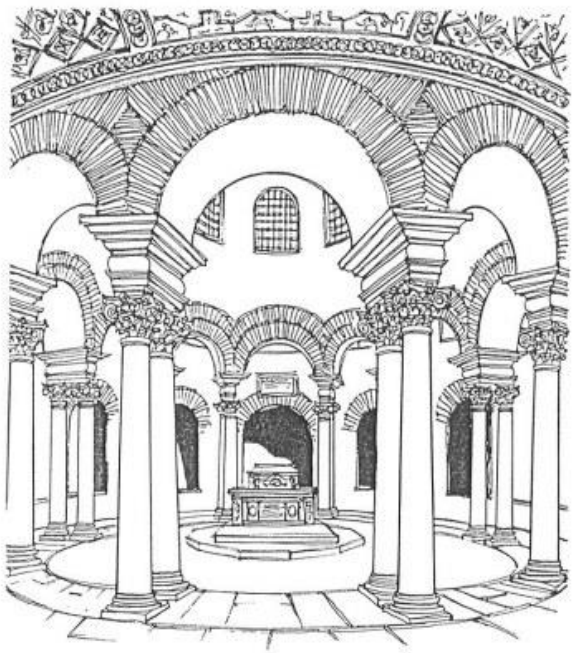
government Stocks. The buildings are in a good state, the numbers of almswomen are kept up. In later reports, some minor problems were noted. In 1820, there had been some surplus of income which was being put aside for the repair of the farm buildings. In the 1850s, no account of this could be found. Moreover, the Mother was not living in the Hospital at all, but in Skipton, and another of the sisters was also 'non-resident.' In 1886, Rev. A.P. Howes wrote to the Charity Commissioners that five of the sisters non-resident, although three, he believed, had been excused on grounds of ill-health.

By 1893, however, things had improved. All the sisters were resident. A water supply had been laid on by the Duke of Devonshire, whose Bolton Abbey estate is nearby, 'to the benefit of the inmates, who were formerly obliged to fetch their water from an outside well.' The widows' only complaint was that several large sycamores growing round the buildings made the rooms cold and dark, even in summer.

Meanwhile, there had been changes in the ownership of Skipton Castle. Lady Anne Clifford had no surviving son, so on her death the estate went to her eldest daughter and son-in-law, the Earl and Countess of Thanet. The last Earl of Thanet died unmarried in 1849. He had, however, in France, an illegitimate son, Richard, who took the family name of Tufton by deed poll and, when his father died, inherited 30,000 acres. Richard Tufton's son was created Lord Hothfield in 1881.

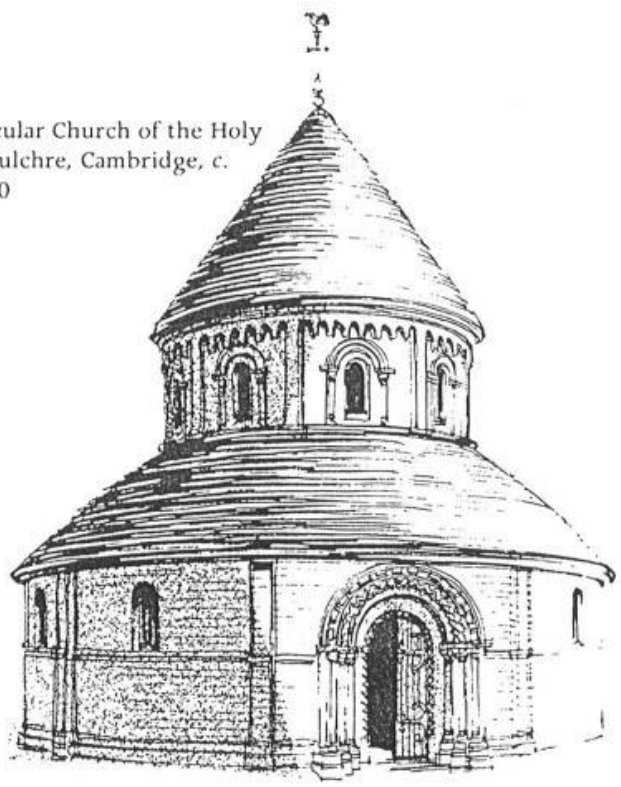
About 1900 the two farms settled on Beamsley by Lady Anne were sold and the Hospital's income from then on came from the invested capital. The link with Skipton Castle continued, however, until in 1955 the Skipton estate was sold to pay death duties when the 2nd Lord Hothfield died. Beamsley Hospital continued under Trustees, but it was gradually becoming less popular: by 1980 there was only one inhabitant. Soon afterwards, the Trustees suggested that the Landmark Trust might take it on, which they did in November, 1983.

Nave and chancel
Centrally planned Early
Christian circular church: S.
Costanza, Rome, c. 340 AD



Ground plan, S. Costanza

Circular Church of the Holy
Sepulchre, Cambridge, c.
1130



Examples of Round churches in Italy and England

The Buildings

The two buildings that make up the Hospital stand quite separately. The round one is the earlier, built by the Countess of Cumberland soon after the foundation. It is also the more interesting, being the only round almshouse in the country. Although simple, it is not a vernacular building. The round plan has an ancient and most sacred pedigree in Christian architecture. Going back to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem and other Early Christian churches in Italy, it lived on in the medieval round churches built by the order of the Knights Templar, of which there are three in England - the most famous being the Temple Church in London, with others at Temple, Northampton and at Little Maplestead, Essex. Another round church, in Cambridge, is thought to be connected with the order of St John.

It was thus a choice with strong religious symbolism, influenced too by the romantic medievalism of late Elizabethans such as the Earl and Countess of Cumberland. This led not only to Spenser's *Fairy Queen* and a revival of jousting but to a renewal of the medieval idea of a hospital in which the old were cared for as well as the sick, and where the chapel occupied a central position, uniting piety with health. This medieval outlook, incidentally, was also to have a profound influence on the life of Lady Anne herself.

It is tempting, but perhaps fanciful, to see in this building in remote Yorkshire, a knowledge of similar ideas of the perfect ecclesiastical plan which were being developed by architects in Italy under the influence of the rediscovered buildings of the Romans. Among these were a number of round temples, seen as symbolising the earth, from which, in the words of Palladio 'human generation is subsisted.' Italian books of architecture such as Palladio's, and especially those by Serlio, were arriving in England at this time, both directly and indirectly via the Low Countries.

Above all, the Elizabethans delighted in conceits or puns, building houses, for instance with their plan forming the letter E for Elizabeth, or in the form of a triangle to symbolise the Trinity. Sir John Summerson in *Architecture in Britain 1530-1830* points out that the 'craving to objectify some symbolic or genealogical or merely geometrical idea is an essential aspect of the Elizabethan genius.' It is possible that the round almshouse at Beamsley is, in addition to its religious overtones, a purely heraldic conceit, representing one of the six round annulets of the Viteripontes, whose arms are impaled on the Clifford shield. Their great northern estates came to the Cliffords through a Viteriponte heiress and the Cliffords were extremely proud of their Viteriponte ancestors.

The other part of the Hospital, the 'lower house' was built by Lady Anne Clifford before 1631. In a deed of that date, she states that since the death of her parents she had 'erected the greatest part of the said Hospital.' The row of small dwellings is very similar to her later almshouses at Appleby. On the front she placed one of the finely-lettered inscriptions which are to be found on most of her buildings. It is likely that Lady Anne also provided the furniture for the chapel.

In her description of 1665 Lady Anne describes the rooms in Beamsley Hospital. She says that the sisters

"who reside in that Parte of the sayd house wch was built by my said late mother have each of them one handsome Roome therein and each of them a garden. And those of them who Resyde in that Parte of the sayd house wch was built by me have each of them Two handsome Roomes and a Garden thereunto belonging. There is also a mother who hath two Roomes and a garden for her own use. There is also a Convenient Chapell, And handsome walks sett with yew hedges for shade for the said widowes use."

Lady Anne's description is a romantic one, but it also reflects the expectations of the ordinary people of the day. Seventeenth century cottages were often tiny. In the round house, each 'handsome room' is a wedge shaped room, 16ft wide narrowing to 6ft, and 11ft deep. The diameter of the chapel is 15ft. The rooms in

Lady Anne's part of the Hospital are 9ft square and the second room, which could never have been handsome, is an attic the same size, reached by a ladder.

By the time of the 1893 Charity Commissioners' report, these attics are described as being 'very tiny', and used only for lumber. Their expectations for the poor were obviously not that much different, however, from Lady Anne's. The rooms are not praised, but they seem to be regarded as acceptable. It is pointed out that the mother's room is larger than the others, with a bedroom partitioned off it. In addition, each inmate has their own separate coal-house. The 'offices' (a row of privies) were also outside, being shared between the two buildings. All in all, the buildings 'though old, are of sound construction and in fairly good repair.'

Maintaining the buildings

The accounts, which are detailed, give a picture of buildings and grounds being carefully maintained. Each year, up to 1721, £2 was set aside, together with 'vacancy money', for running costs and maintenance. This paid for plastering and pointing, reglazing windows, gathering moss and mossaing, the moss being used to bed the stone slates in the roof and presumably, since it appears so often in the accounts, to stuff any draughty holes.

In the garden the well and the walls were dressed, and there are entries for walling, ditching, clipping hedges, repairing the arbour and the gates and mending the garden shears.

Inside the house, doors and windows were mended, locks were bought and beds repaired. Sometimes an entry gives an insight into how the widows lived. There are several mentions of ladders being mended not for garden use but for the widows' rooms - mysterious until you remember the attics; the entry explains how they reached them. Screens are also mentioned, used, presumably, round the beds in the upper house where the widows, apart from the Mother, only had one room.

In 1700, 1721, 1724 and 1810 four fairly major renovation programmes were carried out. In 1700 four old chimneys in the lower house were pulled down and new ones set up. In 1721 the mason, Wm. Gawthorpe, was paid £10 6s 1d 'for walling 140 yards of ye side and end wall of ye lower Hospital at Beamsley at 1d a yard as by agreement, ye said wall being very ruinous and ready to drop down, and also for getting and loading stones, sand and for laying ye ground-work very deep and strong.' His detailed account includes setting up one chimney pipe in the lower house and getting 40 corner stones. The slater sent in a bill for 'laying and pointing ye rigging being forced to take down all ye slates and rigging when ye said wall was taken down.' The rigging was the wooden infrastructure.

In 1724 Wm. Gawthorpe was paid £13 16s 1d 'for taking down and rebuilding one half of the lower house at Beamsley Hospital at the east end thereof it being much shrunk from the timber and ready to fall, for getting stones, lime and sand, making ovens, chimneys and other necessaries.' He was also paid £7 19s 3d for work at the upper hospital: 'taking down two dubble chimney pipes belonging four rooms one of which was taken down as low as the topp of the Mantle stone and building the sound chimneys up again.'

In 1722 Christopher Pike, the farmer at Fairfields, was paid £40, for rebuilding 'a good strong dwelling house upon ye farm.'

In 1775, a year for which we do not have the accounts, a laundry building was erected between the two Hospital buildings, on the left of the path as you face the upper house. The inmates were to take in washing, thus making the Hospital more self-supporting. But the laundry was not a success: perhaps too far away from its clients, it stood unused for many years. Then in 1969 a tree fell on it, causing much damage, and it was demolished.

In 1810, after the sale of timber the previous year, £394 was paid for 'a new roof over six of the apartments, new doors, plastering the rooms and building 12 coalhouses.' The stones were brought from Hazlewood (presumably from Hazlewood farm in Derbyshire, though it seems a long way to come) and 13 tons of slates were used. The carpenter's bill was £113 for 'new roof on Houses, Stable, coal houses, making new doors, making new ceiling in chapel and fixing pews etc. pillar for chandelier': also for 'new and inside box for writings and stand for ditto, hinges and 3 locks, £2 10s.'

Wm. Smith the painter's bill was £5 14s 7d and included '22 yards grained oak colour, 12s; top of chapel, painted 2s; chest painting, 5s.' The chest that was in the chapel in 1983 has a stand and three locks and is nicely painted.

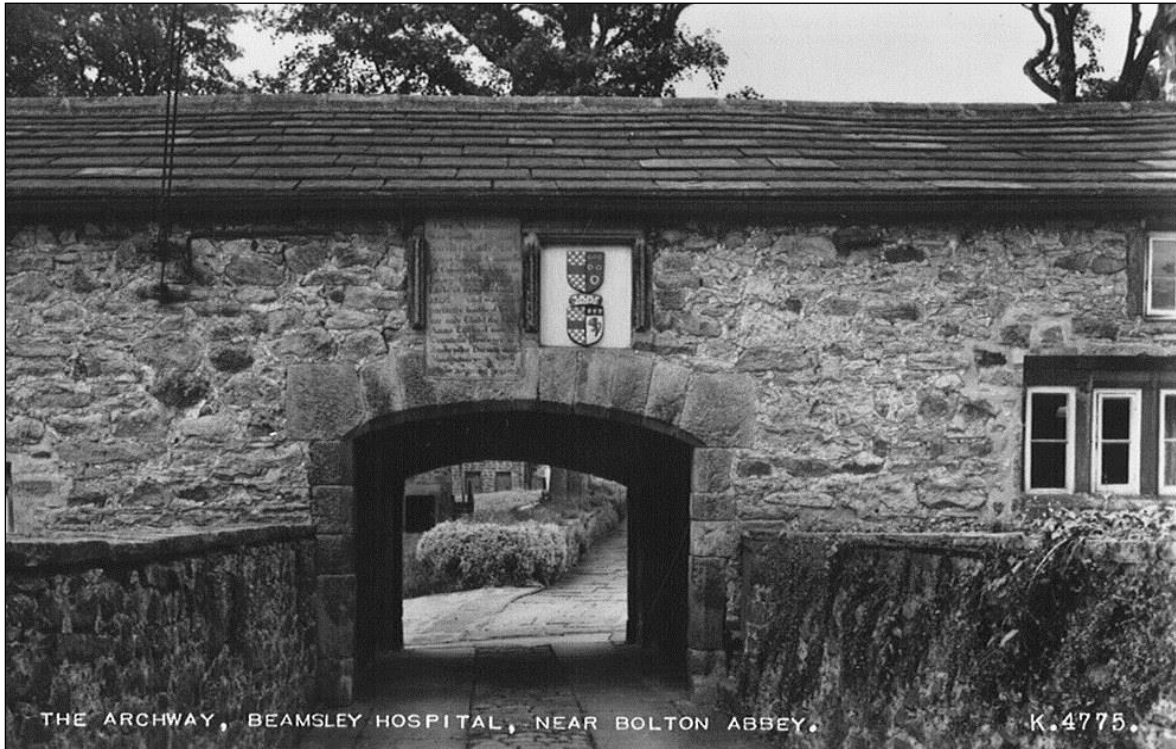
In February 1810 an orchard of 43 apple trees was planted, 42 dozen and 4 gooseberries were put in, no doubt as a hedge, a normal practice in the north at this time, also 160 thorn quicks. Sadly nothing remains either of Lady Anne's yews, nor of the orchard.

For the next century and a half, scarcely anything changed. The water supply of c.1890 produced a cold tap outside each building. In the 1930s it was extended to turn three old privies beside the laundry into w.c.s. Later, one of the rooms in the upper house was turned into a bathroom and electric light was laid on. Even so, in 1958, Beamsley Hospital seemed primitive and old fashioned. An iron range in each room was the only form of heating and the place was dark. So, with advice from the Almshouses Association, the Trustees drew up plans for repairs and internal alterations. These were carried out in 1961, with the aid of a grant from the Pilgrim Trust.

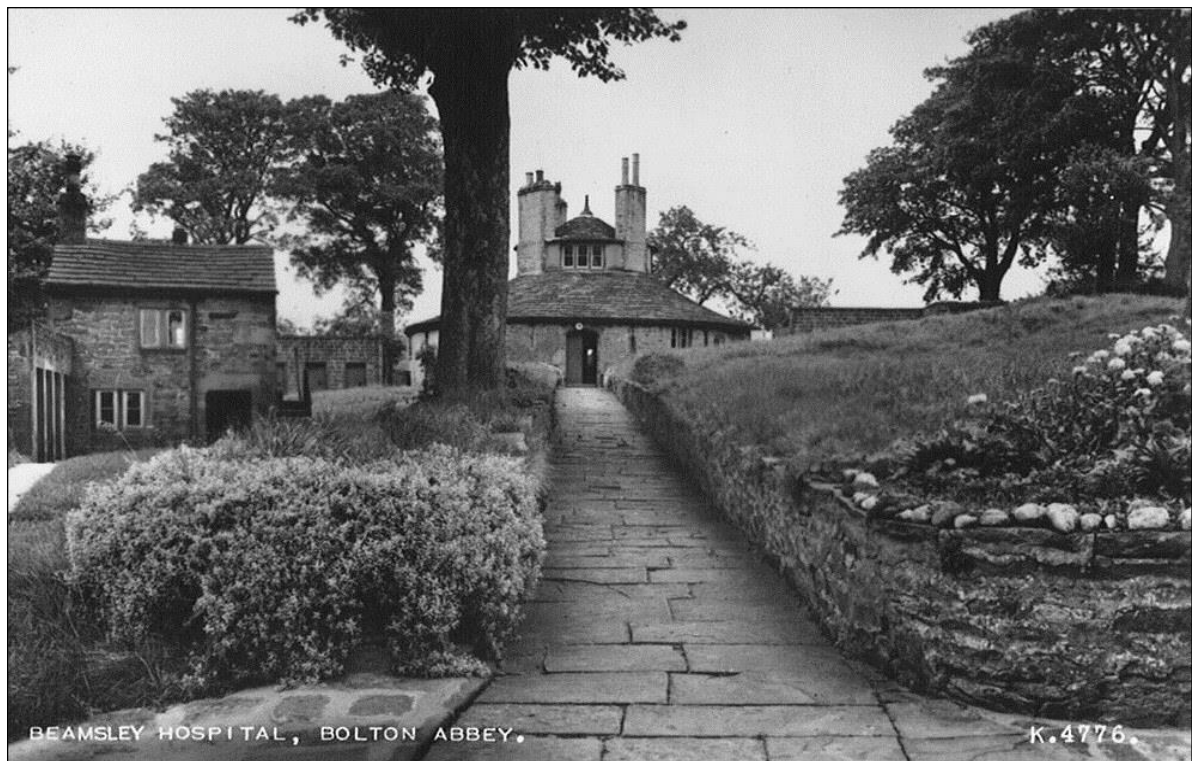
The partition walls within the round building were changed so that instead of six bed-sitting rooms and one bathroom, there were four bedrooms each with an adjoining scullery containing an electric cooker and sink, and two bathrooms; the ranges were replaced by new fireplaces. To let in more light, two small windows were converted into two-light mullion windows. Outside, some coal-houses west of the upper house were pulled down; and the old enclosing wall between the lower house and the road was demolished, to improve the view. In the nineteenth century, the stone over the archway, with Lady Anne's inscription on it, had been replaced with a copy. In 1961 the original stone was found in perfect condition in a rock garden nearby, and was put back.



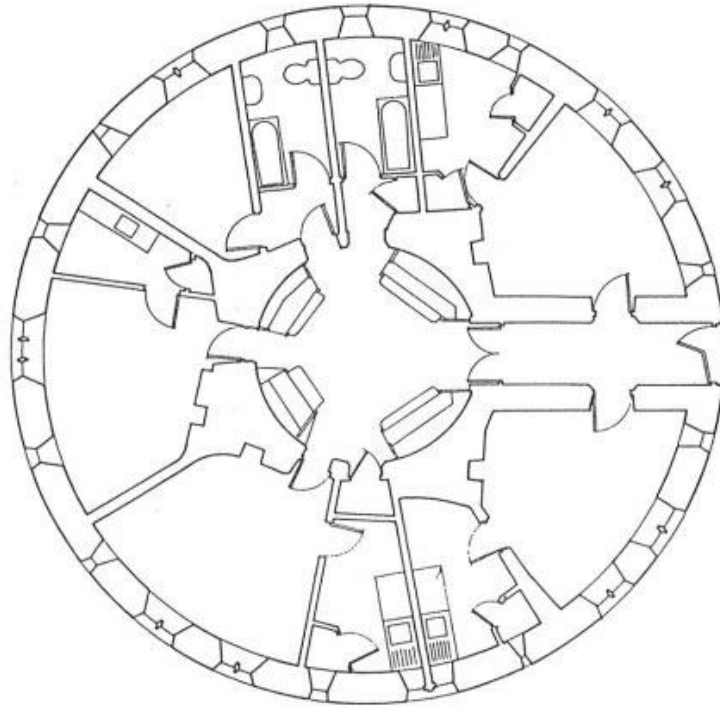
The Hospital in about 1950, with the outer wall still standing.



Old postcards, perhaps of the 1930s. Over the arch is the nineteenth century copy of Lady Anne's inscription.

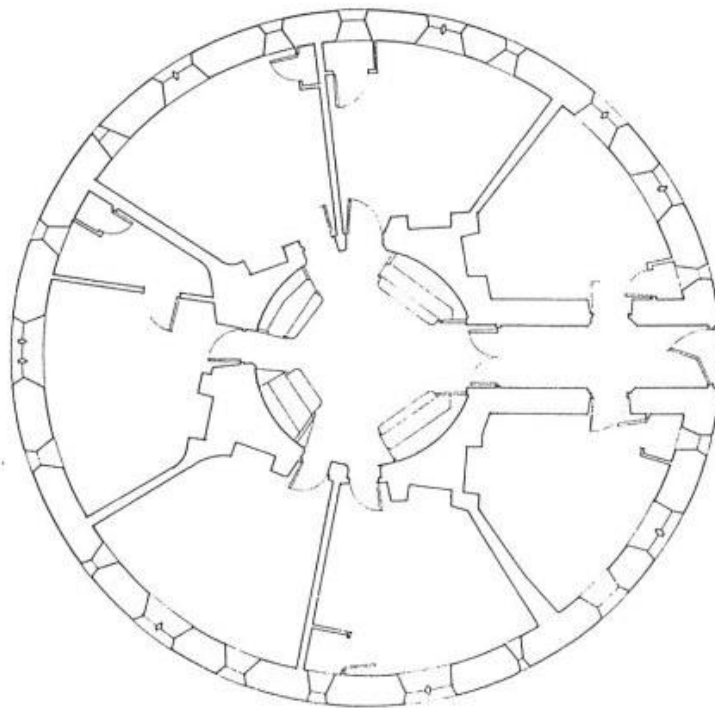


The small building on the left of the picture is the laundry, built in 1775, with the privies beside it.



BEAMSLEY HOSPITAL
ALTERATIONS OF 1958

Oct. 1986



BEAMSLEY HOSPITAL
AS EXISTING IN 1956

Oct 1986



**The laundry after a tree had fallen on it in 1969.
It was afterwards demolished.**



**The upper Hospital in the 1950s, showing some of the coal houses
that have been removed.**



The second lady from the left is Mrs Russell, whose grand-daughter remembers visiting her.

The Inmates

More is known about the Hospital building than about the people who lived in it; but through the years we find some glimpses of them.

The women for whom Lady Anne Clifford laid down the rules seem no longer to be the decrepit beggars for whom the Hospital was founded. The stress put upon orderliness and particularly rule number five, forbidding the running up of bills in the town, give the impression of a spirited, even unruly community. The mother, at least, was a woman of some standing. Lady Anne writes: 'The present mother of the sayd Almshouse is Mrs Mary Wilkes one of good Parentage and Education, under whose charge the sayd women live peaceably amongst themselves.'

In 1666 the reader suggested a candidate and she was accepted by Lady Anne 'provided that this widow Gill goe to church, and to heare common prayer in ye almshouse or otherwise itt will bring the house out of order.'

Certificates of entry begin in 1687, letters applying for admission in 1755, and a picture emerges of who the inhabitants were. Throughout the eighteenth century nearly all the applicants were widows of tenants or occasionally employees or servants of Lord Thanet. The hospital was at that time not so much a charity as an insurance scheme for the tenants and employees on the Skipton Castle estate.

In 1708 there is an entry in the Skipton Parish Register quoted by W. Harbutt Dawson in his History of Skipton (1882), on the death of Margaret Gudgeon who 'was governess or mother of ye widows at Beamsley Hospital in which place she behaved herself with much prudence and discretion.'

When the renovations of 1810 were completed, there is an entry which gives an agreeable impression of the widows being well looked after:

To 14 loads of coal for fires making in the House after the repairs before the Widows could go in safely: £1 5s 8d and to Sarah Moon for

fires making in the Houses 5 weeks at 2d after the repairs before the Widows could re-enter with safety: 10s.

By this time the widows were receiving free coal and also more services: their chimneys were being swept and their windows cleaned.

Also in 1810 an inventory was made of everything in the widows' rooms that belonged to the Hospital. The only previous inventory is dated 1690 and is for the Mother's room alone. The two lists for that room are almost identical: a range, a bed, a large table, a chair, a communion tankard (bought in 1683 for 3s 6d and still belonging to the Trustees), a large bible bound in 1682 for 2s, a common prayer book replaced in 1711, 'the old one being destroyed.' The widows' rooms, always referred to as 'houses,' each contained a range, end irons and hang bars, a bed and a chair. There was no provision for communal cooking.

In 1841, when there was a vacancy for a Mother, the Reader, Mr. Holmes, petitioned Lord Thanet to make his own mother, Mrs Holmes, Mother of the Hospital. The agent advised against this because, he said, all the inhabitants had to be local, from Skipton, Silsden or Stenton with Thoresby, and they were accepted, or meant to be accepted, in the proportion of Skipton 7, Silsden 5 and Stenton with Thoresby 1. This is the only time we hear of such a strict catchment area. Perhaps it was an excuse. The Holmeses were almost hereditary Readers at the Hospital, the post had passed from father to son since the mid eighteenth century: perhaps the agent thought they were becoming possessive.

By the later nineteenth century the inmates were less exclusively tenants' widows. In 1886, the practice had been reported to the Charity Commissioners by Rev. A.P. Howes, who had been told by the Skipton agent that only widows of tenants were eligible. The Commissioners may have remonstrated, because in 1893 they were told that all classes could apply, and that if no tenant's widow was on the list, 'the most deserving case is selected.'

Between 1887 and 1890, there were in fact twenty applicants for eight places. Of the twenty, ten had a connection with the estate: six were tenants' widows, one was a farm servant's widow, one the niece of a tenant, one the daughter of a Hospital inmate, one had relations who were tenants. Of those admitted, five were connected with the estate, three were not.

Soon after the First World War spinsters were admitted for the first time. By then the applicants were more literate and often gave the reason for wanting to be admitted; usually it was lack of funds, but often they were living with relations and wanted 'to be quiet and away from children' or wanted a 'little home' of their own. Loneliness is not mentioned till 1950 when an applicant gives as a reason 'nobody cares if I am alive or dead.'

The letters from the Reader to the agent at Skipton Castle begin in 1915 with a letter from a retiring Reader recommending a friend for the post. A letter follows from Rev. James Macnabb, vicar at Bolton Abbey, complaining that the friend is a Congregationalist, 'a worthy little man but not a Churchman, I do not want to make a complaint in the matter, but I feel that you ought to know.' The objection was carried and the Rev. James Macnabb became Reader himself, helped by a lay reader, the Duke of Devonshire's gardener at Bolton Abbey. From then onwards the Reader was always the vicar at Bolton Abbey.

In 1916 the Rev. James Macnabb had run into difficulties with one of the inmates, and was asking for her removal: 'soon after Mrs Higson came to the Hospital', he wrote, 'I had to reprove her for calling several of the others "old bitches". Mrs. Higson owned she had done so and was not ashamed and she said to me "if I had not a bit of the Devil in me I could not stand these old women".' But she remained, continuing to be thoroughly difficult and died in the Hospital in 1940.

Mrs Hoggett, who was Mother at Beamsley in the nineteen thirties, had a fine way of phrasing a complaint. In 1930 she wrote to the agent at the Castle: 'I would just like to ask if it were possible to have a few new Prayer Books? The ones we are using now are a perfect disgrace, I don't think one has a back on, and some are thumbed so much it is impossible to read the words, and some positively smell. My own copy is dated Beamsley Hospital 1844 and I have mended it up time after time but it won't hold together.' There is a prayer book in the chapel, now, dated 1930, so her request was seen to promptly.

References were required, but they were not always taken too seriously. In 1939 a referee wrote: 'I have always known Miss Hollingdrake for at the least fifty years. I would not like to say that she is not a suitable person to become an occupier of one of the homes at Beamsley Hospital, but I am bound to say that she is rather excitable and at times is apt to lose control of her temper and develop an unpleasant degree of fractiousness.' She was still admitted; but by then the applicants were thinning out.

By the 1940s there were empty rooms in Beamsley Hospital; after the restoration of 1961, they were filled but this did not last for long. With the improvement in the standard of the local council's homes for the elderly the Hospital seemed too isolated and too far from a doctor. For several years there were only two inmates, who lived in the lower building. One was Mrs. Robinson whose husband played football for England, the other, who remained till 1980, was called Mrs Soare.

Restoration

When the Landmark Trust took on Beamsley Hospital in 1983, the upper building was basically sound. General repairs were needed, with some minor rearrangement inside, but no major reconstruction. Martin Stancliffe Architects of York, who had already supervised the repair of the Culloden Tower at Richmond for Landmark, was asked to oversee the work. By the time plans had been drawn up and agreed with all the authorities, and a contractor with the right experience found, it was 1985 before anything happened on site.

The first and most important task was the repair of the roof. The ends of some of the rafters were giving way, and one principal rafter had cracked in the middle. The stone slates were stripped off, and put aside for re-use. The roof structure was checked and repaired, before the slates were put back on new battens. Laying them evenly on a continuous curve was a very tricky job.

The building consists of two stone drums, one inside the other, with the inner drum, containing all the chimneys, rising up through the roof of the outer. In the top of the inner drum are also the windows of the chapel. Its walls had been rendered with cement in 1961, but this was now cracked and broken. It was all cleaned off, therefore, and the stonework beneath repaired and repointed. The chimneys were taken down nearly to the level of the inner drum and rebuilt. To begin with, they were left without their odd assortment of chimney pots, but looked stumpy without them. Once they were back in place, the building regained its full character.

Inside, the partitions put in to provide small kitchens and bathrooms in 1961 were stripped out to return the building more nearly to its original arrangement of seven wedge-shaped rooms, all but two opening into the chapel. The uses of these rooms changed, however, to provide the separate sitting, sleeping, cooking, washing and eating spaces needed by the new inmates.



C 1950

Modern fireplaces were stripped out to reveal the Elizabethan openings behind. New elm floorboards were laid in place of modern softwood floors. New leaded lights were provided for all the windows. Finally the building was redecorated. The chapel doors were still the 'grained oak colour' of the 1810 accounts, and were repainted to match. Their other sides, which were white, were also 'grained', but in a lighter shade. The chapel itself remains just as it was, little changed since the 17th century, complete with bible and hymn books. Some electric fires were taken down, and the workings of the bell overhauled. Outside, recent concrete was replaced by stone flags.

Attention was then turned to the lower building, which was restored and converted into two cottages. An attempt was made to find, as modern almshouses, elderly ladies who had spent their lives fighting for the cause of preservation, but this proved unsuccessful and they now house more ordinary tenants.

At the same time, the wall in front of the Hospital was rebuilt. The weight of traffic and traffic noise on the main road had increased since 1961, so a barrier was needed. The stones for the arch were found in the garden.

The Landmark Trust tries to leave its buildings, when restored, looking as if nothing has been done to them - something it is easier to say than to do. Success in realising this aim lies to a great extent in the use of traditional materials, such as stone slates, and lime rather than cement for mortars and plasters, which are in harmony with the old work and quickly blend in with it. Equally important is the skill and care of the men doing the work, who in this case came from the firm of Thompson and Walker of Leeds, with other specialist craftsmen employed for tasks such as slating, plastering and glazing. The result, we hope, is of a standard to please Lady Anne Clifford, that pioneer in the repair and conservation of historic buildings.

Details of the Landmark Trust's Repairs



The roof was most obviously in need of attention. The render on the inner drum was decayed, as were the windows. The tops of the chimney stacks had to be partially dismantled and rebuilt, and the lower parts repointed.





Work in progress. With their backs to us, Richard Thompson, building manager and Eric Nevison, foreman.





The roof stripped of its slates and with the chimney stacks taken down.



Looking down on the main, lower, roof. Its construction consists of principal rafters running from an outer wallplate to the upper section of the inner drum; trussed purlins curved to follow the line of the walls; and common rafters.



A broken principal rafter. Only one principal rafter had to be replaced, above the dining room. The others could either be repaired, or were sound.



Wallplate of upper roof.



Main roof: principal rafter, purlins and common rafters before repair.



Bearing of rafters of lower roof against masonry inner drum, before repair.



Upper roof structure.



Crown post of upper roof structure.



Looking at the roof from inside the almshouses with the ceiling taken down. Posts to support the principal rafters can be seen resting on the radial partition walls.



From the mother's room; showing how the ends of the principal rafters are built into the upper section of the inner drum.



The top of the inner drum with the render removed, before facing repairs.



A ring beam was formed round the inner drum to hold the rafters of the main roof. The end of one can just be seen built into the new work.



Interiors before the Landmark restoration. The chapel has hardly changed, except for the removal of an electric bar fire.



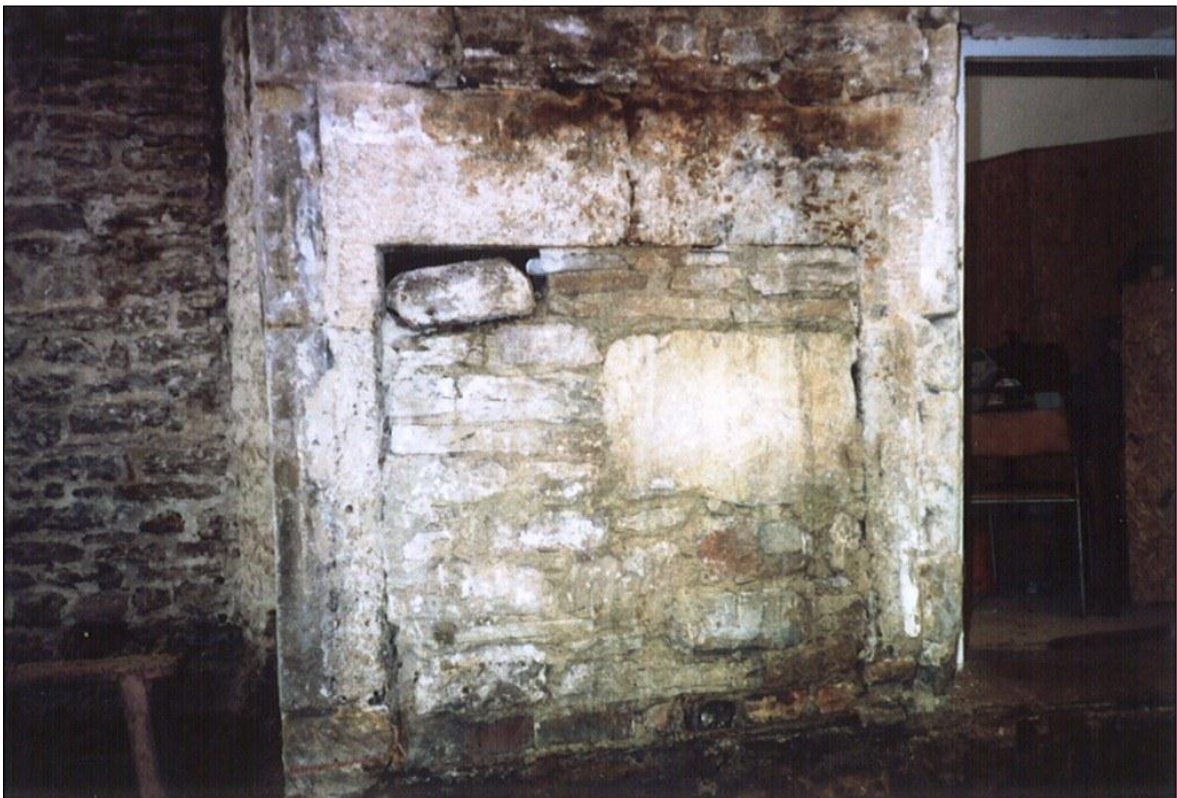
One of the sculleries



Door from the sitting room to the passage.



The fireplace in the sitting room, fitted in 1958. The softwood floorboards were replaced with elm here and in the bedrooms.



One of the original fireplaces when first uncovered. There is a groove in the stone where an iron hobgrate was fitted into the space.



The doors were painted in 'grained oak colour' in 1810 and probably before.



The bell has been left hanging unchanged.



The old concrete that surrounded the building was replaced by stone flags.



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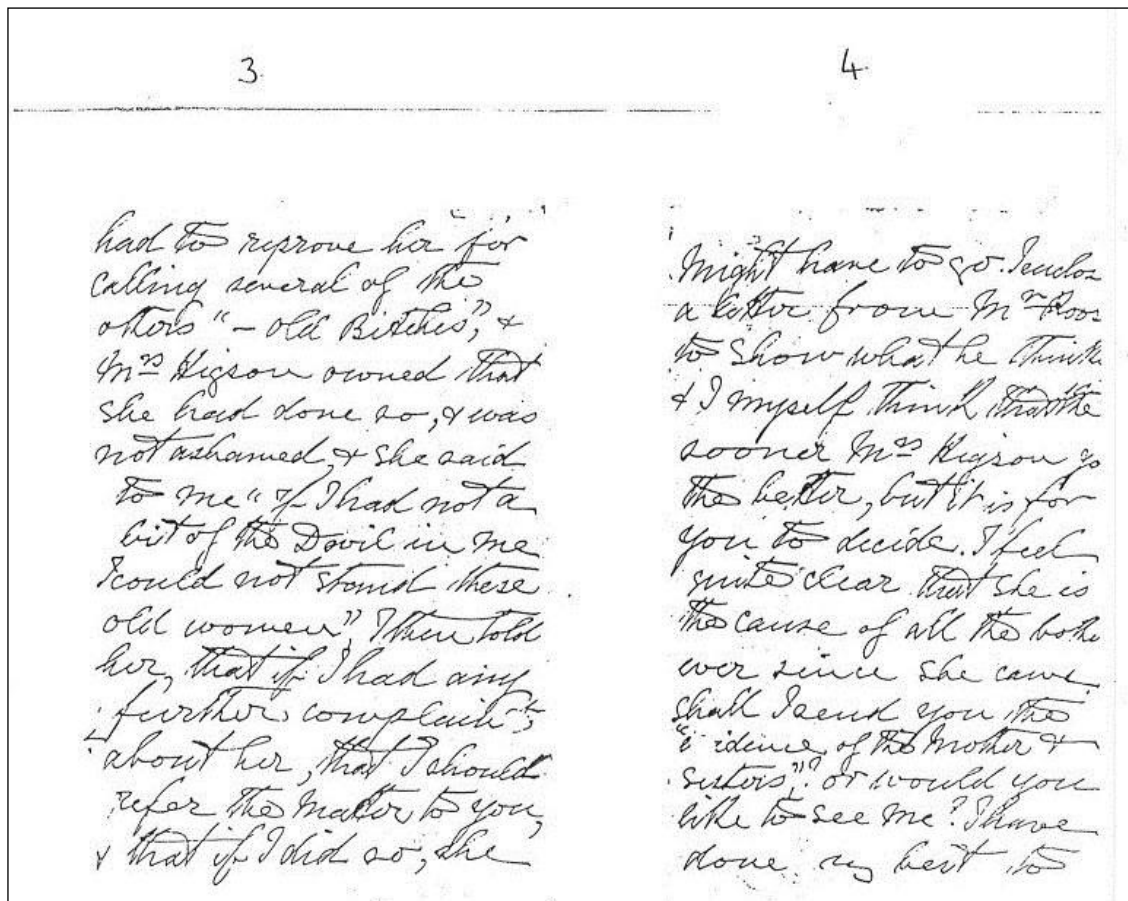
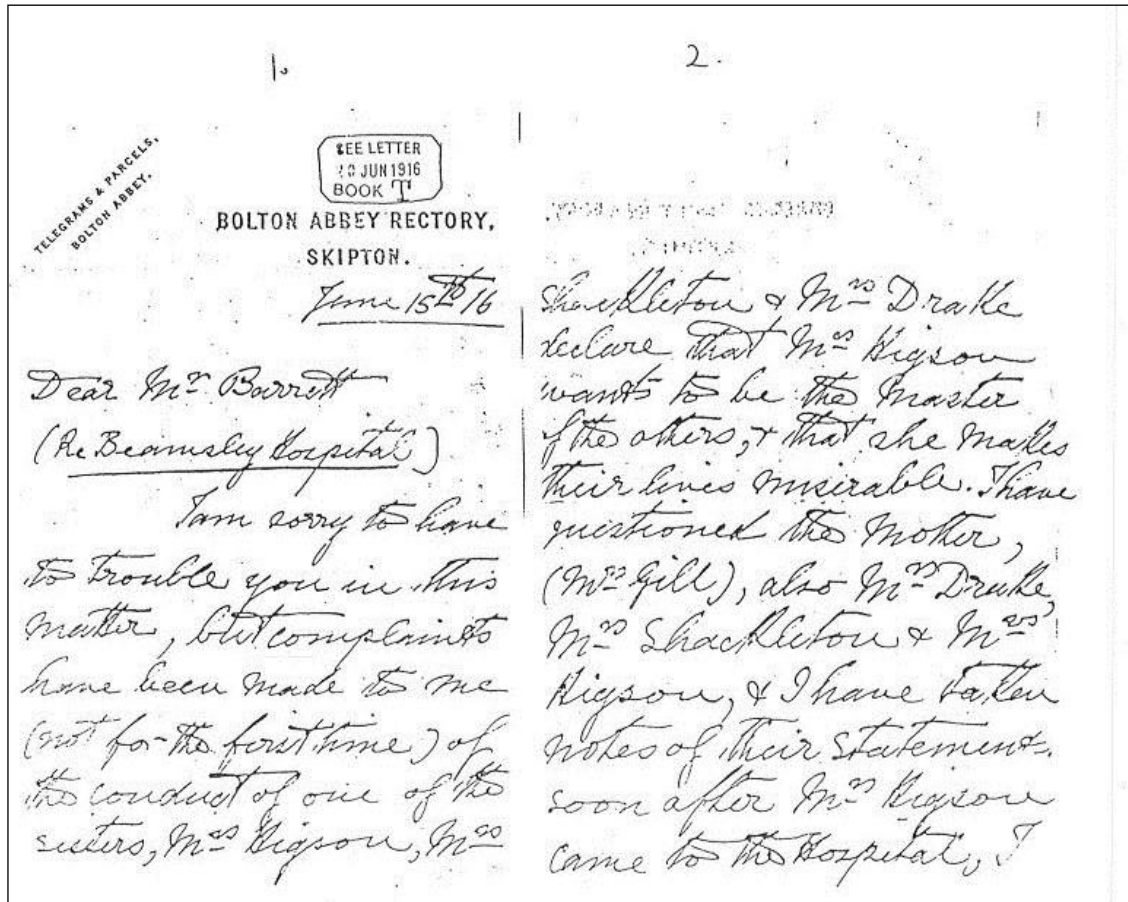
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Letters on Hospital Matters

The correspondence on the following pages is between the Reader of the Hospital and the Agent at Skipton Castle, and between the Inmates of the Hospital and the Agent, 1916-1940. The first dozen or so are taken up with misdemeanours of Mrs Higson; then follow the gentle complaints of Miss Hoggatt and one or two others which show that Lady Anne's rules were still kept up in the 1930s. All are taken from the letter-books that were found in the painted chest when the Landmark Trust took over Beamsley Hospital in 1984.



5.

TELEGRAMS & PARCELS,
BOLTON ABBEY.

BOLTON ABBEY RECTORY,
SKIPTON.

Keeps Mr. Higson quiet,
I have warned her, she
says she does not care
if she has to go, she
does not attend the
Society, & says she is under
the doctor, & when asked
her for a certificate, &
from the Doctor, so that
I might be justified in
giving her leave of absence

6.

from the Society, she declined
saying "I might as well be
in a poor house", all the
time she can do her work
go for walks, & go to Skipton
once a week. She declared
that her husband had
been a very bad man, &
she hoped that he was
in hell fire, & that if
was any hot; she further

7.

said she had on one
occasion "torn her
husband's whiskers out
when he was drunk.
do you think she is
fit to remain in
the Hospital?
I must put this matter
in your hands to
decide. I much regret
having to report about
a sister at the Hospital
but I feel it to be my

8.

ity for the sake of the
thors.

I remain

yours as sincerely

Janeat. Mearns

Reader

Crown Hotel, Scarborough

17 June 1876

Dear W. Mearns

Beamsley Hospital

I am very sorry to hear

of Mr. Higson's conduct is

so bad. We must have a

careful inquiry & then

Lord Hothfield will decide

on the action to take. I

return to Skipton tomorrow

and will write you further.

With kind regards.

Yours sincerely
R. Mearns

20th June 1916.

Madam,

The Reader of Beamsley Hospital reports that you are guilty of disgraceful conduct, and language, that you have frequently broken Rules 1 and 6, that you are a disturbing influence in the community.

Under Rule 10 you will forfeit the next fortnight's allowance, and if you do not in future strictly adhere to the Rules, and behave yourself in a decent, and becoming manner, you will for the next offence be expelled, by Lord Rothfield, from the house.

I enclose a copy of the Rules for your guidance.

Yours faithfully,

R. Barrett

Mrs. Higson,
Beamsley Hospital,
Skipton.

The Hospital I have been under Dr. Robert Fisher with Rheum. if you think that could be so insulter and not speak to my self I leave it to your opinion.

Beamsley June 21 1916

Atam of Nerve trouble for 6 weeks and still having medicine. Second about disgraceful conduct my neighbour Mrs. Shackleton disgrace me by saying that I went among farmers in eye lanes. Thirdly my neighbour Mrs. Drake upbraiding me about the reason why I have not attended service

SEE LETTER 23 JUN 1916 BOOK 11

Mr Barrett

Sir

Sorry to hear that you have had such a bad report about me by saying that kindly hear my explanation why it occurred - First Rule Broken

Yours Obedient

Harriet Higson

11/11/19

23rd June 6

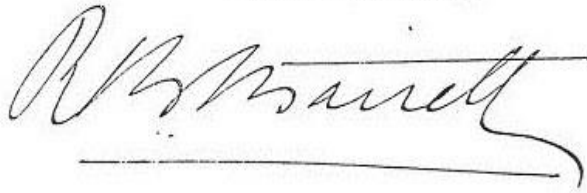
rs. H. Higson,
Beamsley Hospital,
Skipton.

Mrs. Higson,

The statement in your letter of the 21st instant is no excuse for your disgraceful conduct. If you cannot live at peace with the other sisters in the Hospital you will be expelled, and this will take place at the next offense you commit.

Enclosed is cheque for s15/6 half of your usual monthly allowance.

Yours faithfully,



R. M. Stewart

6th January 1928.

Mrs. Barker's daughter
called at the office to
complain of Mrs. Higson's
conduct towards her Mother.

Jan 5 " 1927
Mr Mrs

Dear Sir I am
very sorry to have to say
Complantes about Mrs Barker
Mean Tricks to me I had
just cleaned my Flags after
the snow on Monday when
she came from her Coal House
and left all her Dirty Feet
Marks on them she has been doing
these Dirty mean tricks all
winter. I had a few words
with her I said that she had
only so far to go before I should
report her to you I told her

she was a Wicked Old Women ~~she~~
she has been nothing but a mischief
maker ever since she came here
I hope you will be kind enough
to put a stop to it is unbearable
I think I had enough to put up
with at Woffham without having to go
through it here with a woman like ~~some~~
Mrs Harriet Higson Barker

Copy

Copy

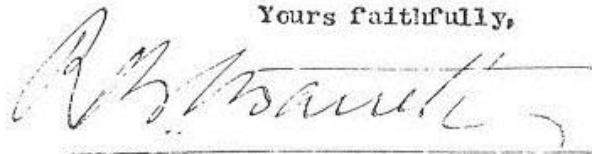
7th January 1928.

Madam,

Mr. Ross has laid your letter of the 5th instant before me. Great complaints have been lodged against your conduct and language to an old woman like Mrs. Barker.

I now write, as Chairman of the Trustees, to inform you that steps will be taken to remove you from the Hospital if any further complaints are made with regard to your conduct. This is the second time I have had to write you on ~~xxxx~~ this subject.

Yours faithfully,



Mrs. Higson,
Beamsley Hospital,
Bolton Abbey.

Jan 9th 1928

Mr Barrett

Dear Sir

I'm reply to yours this
 morning "You have no idea
 what the has to put up
 with here. There is always
 two sides to a tale
 When you are trying to keep
 all clean it is not nearly
 nice to have it dirtied
 as soon as you have got
 it done as for my conduct
 there is no one that can

say it they will speak the
 truth that I have ever done
 a dirty action

Yours faithfully

Harriet Higson

12th February 1940.

Mr. Soar telephoned that Mrs. Higson had been removed to the Skipton Infirmary on the advice of Dr. Crabtree, Addingham. She was quite willing to go.

Mr. Soar is arranging to remove Mrs. Higson to one of the empty rooms in the Chapel at Beamsley Hospital, as the Institution Infirmary has been commandeered.

24th May 1940.

BEAMSLEY HOSPITAL.

Mr. Soar, Deputy Reader at the Hospital, reports that he is arranging for Mrs. Higson to be taken to the Institution Infirmary, Skipton, owing to her unclean habits, if she would be agreeable, and asks that her house may be kept open until her return. He has had the house cleaned and tidied out.

Mrs. Higson is 80 years of age.

8th February 1940.

9th February, 1940.

Dear Mr. Soar,

Beamsley Hospital.

It is very good of you to take all this trouble with Mrs. Higson, and for arranging for her quarters to be cleaned out, and for her to be taken temporarily to the Institution Infirmary at Skipton if she is agreeable to go. I will certainly arrange for her house to be kept for her return.

I frequently hear of your many kindnesses to the Mother and Sisters of Beamsley.

Yours truly,

(Sd.) C. E. FORDYCE.

Mr. G. Soar,
Farfield Hall,
Addingham.

Sep. 22nd / 24.

Beamsley Hospital
Dolton Abbey.

To Mr. Ross.

Dear Sir,

I should be very grateful if I could have something done to my Coal House. Whenever it rains, I have to walk through a pool of water, as it is just within the door, get all the droppings on my back, & it is most uncomfortable.

Now the Clothes Post has given way, as it is a necessary thing, I asked a man if he could fix it up, he came to do so, but said it was impossible as the bottom was rotten, & would require a new bottom or else a new Post. So I thought I had better let you know. I am sorry to trouble you but things keep wearing out & have to be replaced.

Yours respectfully
Thomas F. [unclear]

To Mr. Barret.

Bolton Abbey

Dear Sir,

I have used my Oven to
bake bread today, the first
time for 6 weeks. I had a lot
of trouble with it, & it spoiled
the two dinners, so I dare not
risk bread. I sent word by the
messengers, but of course could
not expect a man to come for
one job so got Mr. Gill to come &
see what he could do. He has
taken a lot of trouble & has
got it so that I can use it
again, unfortunately the trouble
is out of my reach, however if it
will only bake I don't mind.

I do hope the weather will alter
I am nearly drowned in my
Coal House have to sweep it-
out every time I go. Regret
very much to keep complaining
but these are all necessities

Yours respectfully
Eleanor F. Hoggatt

13th January 0.

Miss Hoggatt,

Beamsley Hospital,
Bolton Abbey.

Dear Madam,

I am sorry to hear you are having trouble again with your
oven. Mr. Barrett has decided to supply you with a new set of
fixtures, which will be fixed as soon as obtained. It may be some
little time before this can be done as they will have to be specially
ordered.

Yours faithfully,

Mar 14th / 30

To Mr Ross.

Beamsley Hospital
Bolton Abbey.

Dear Sir,

I used Am, New ^{even} to bake with yesterday on the
Friday, & it answered beautifully.
It is such a relief to know that it
is all right & not have to keep on
worrying whether it will cook or
not, & I am very grateful for the
consideration shown to me.

I am afraid you will think I no longer
want one thing than I want another,
but I would just like to ask if it were
possible to have a new New Prayer
book? The ones we are using now
are a perfect disgrace, I don't think
one has a back on, & some of them
are stained so much it is impossible

to read the words, & some positively shall
my own copy is dated "Beamsley Hospital 1844"
& I have mended it up some after time
but it wont hold together still 86 years
is a good age for a book especially
one used so much. I know it is not
place to work, but no one seems to
think of it. I thought I would
mention it. Apologizing for the liberty
I have taken

1844 1841 0.

Geo Hoggatt,
Beamsley Hospital,
Bristol Abbey.

Dear Madam,

Your letter of the 14th instant to Mr. Dr. Everett is
consulting Mr. Tomlinson on the matter of Prayer Books.

Yours faithfully,

May 21 - 132
 To Mr. Cross.

Beamsley Hospital
 Bolton Abbey.

Dear Sir,

I am sorry to say that
 our Water Closet is the only one. It
 is the first time it has gone wrong
 since it was put in, & I don't think
 there is very much the matter, but it
 won't flush & all the water has to be
 carried. I have asked Mr. Gill if he
 would come & see it; but without result.
 If it goes on will probably get worse.
 So I thought it best to let you know.
 I wish something could be done to
 remedy my wall. This continuous rain
 has saturated it so that I have
 had to nail the paper to keep it
 on the wall. I showed Mr. Simpson
 my wall with two big holes inside
 & he said the men should see to
 it when they came up, but alas!

They don't come so I got a Plasterer
to do it. for me - because it looked
so disreputable. I paid him 4'6.
So it looks a bit tidier, but the
wall is very difficult to do. I know
but wish something could be done
Yours respectfully
Rearm. F. Hoggatt
ve

Nov. 11th/32

% Dr. Jones.

Beamsley Hospital
Bolder Abbey.

Sir,

I am glad to say my
Coal House is mended at last.
& it is such a relief to go in
without having to wade through
a Pool, & having water running
down my back. Perhaps now
my inside wall will get dry.
When there is no water running
down the walls. I am most
grateful now that it is done.
I have not been able to wash
since my Rheumatism has been
so bad; but Mrs Beecroft tells
me the Boiler Fireplace is falling
down & she can hardly light it.

Christmas Night.

To Mr. Ross

Beamsley Hospital
Gollon Abbey.

Dear Sir,

I got a letter from my
my Brother in Law, to say my Sister
was ill & wanted me. She has been
under Dr DeLeon for some years with
Diabetes & it has affected her eyes
till she is almost blind. I went to
see her today & the Dr says she
has had a serious Nervous Breakdown
through being so much alone. (her husband
works on the Railway) so she was not
to be left alone. Her husband has
had to stay at home with her three
weeks & of course can't bring the living
in, so she begged me to come & stay
with her, so I thought you would
not mind letting me go for a few
weeks, as I never left the Hospital

for more than 2 years; & a few weeks
might make a great difference to
her. Just to have a companion. I shall
be very grateful if you will let me go.
Yours respectfully
Charles F. Huggart

29th December 1973.

Dear Madam,

With reference to your application for leave of absence to stay with your sister, you are at liberty to take one month, say to the end of January next.

Yours faithfully,



Miss Hoggatt,
Beamsley Hospital,
BOLTON ABBEY.

Dec 29th Beamsley Hospital
To Mr. Mrs.

Dear Sir,

I write on Christmas Day to ask permission for a few weeks to be with my sister who has had a serious nervous breakdown. As I have not received a reply, I am taking the liberty of going & it is only because it is necessary that I am leaving my little home. I trust I am doing right. yours respectfully
E. F. Hoggatt
My address
52 Broughton Rd
Stretton

-55-

Jan 24th / 34 52. Broughton Road
 To Mr. Cross. Skepton

Sir

I thank you for giving me
 the month of January to stay
 with my child, & I was intending
 going back home next week,
 but the Dr. does not wish me to
 go just yet; could you give me
 another fortnight? I hope by
 that time she will be so much
 better that I shall be able to go
 back home. She is really
 very much improved in health
 & can sleep now, but seems
 to have no memory which is
 very distressing. I shall be very
 grateful if you can do so.

Yours respectfully
 W. H. Cross

Nov. 13th/36
To Mr. Ross.

Beamsley Hospital
Bolton Affay.

Dear Sir,

I am sorry to trouble you but I think my house must be infested with rats. You had the coal house all plastered up, & now they are in the house. This week they have attacked the entrance torn a lot of paper from the wall & a lot of plaster, each morning there is a fresh supply of plaster in clear away, & it is a most unpleasant feeling in the night to hear them rooting about I cant sleep for them. I know there is one big hole at the bottom of my bed; my brother

filled it with stones & put a piece of wood over for the bed foot to rest on. But that has been there ever since I came. Can anything be done? My fire back is badly burned away, but I was not going to bother till the Spring, would it be as well to have it done & plaster up some of the holes? My next-door neighbour has a burnell out fireback. Please do something, it is very, wretched night after night worrying.

Yours respectfully
Eleanor F. Duggan.

Nov. 18th/36

To Mr. Cross.

Beamsley Hospital
Bolton Abbey.

Dear Sir,

I am most grateful
for having my house made
habitable once again, it was a
great relief to be able to get
applied last night.

Wednesday. 10/11/37.

Beamsley Hospital

To Mr. Cross.

Sir

I am sorry to say that
Mrs Lindley has had a Calastrophe.
through the Storm. That defective
Spout by her door overflowed & the
drain could not take it away, in
a few minutes her house was
swamped, Carpets, Mats &c. floating
about. The water reached a height to
the wall opposite. Could you please
send someone to do something. If
it should occur again during the
night it be a great stay. As it is her
knee things will take weeks to out.
Mrs & Child. Mr. C. behalve Mrs. Lindley

Sept. 12 - '38.

To Mr. Ross.

Beamsley Hospital
Bolton A. Tex.

Dear Sir,

Could I have my Holiday
beginning on the 14th... I have not
been away for 4 years through
my lameness, but I am going to
try, if I can't keep up I shall
not come back.

I have been here, worried the
last week or two, I thought it
was rats; they were clamping
about when I was in bed & it
was nerve racking to lie still &
listen, for fear we jumped on the
bed, however the men have moved
the furniture & can't find any
holes, so I must content myself
that they are only mice.

Respectfully yours

Edward G. Suggatt

-60-

To Mr. Mrs.

Beamsley Hospital
Dollin letter

Dear Sir

Recd. 9/2/40.

I am sorry to complain but I am nearly choked with smoke when to sit with my nose open which is not very pleasant in this weather. I always have a lot of trouble with it & sleep I once a month or should not be able to go on at all. Please have something done soon I am a poor lame old woman 53 & it is hard work to get about at all, & there must be some means of getting in light.

Yours respectfully

Thomas J. Hoggatt

J. W. Inman reports that the chimney pot on Miss Hoggatt's house is defective. He has purchased one from Wass's, Silsden for 12/6 and is sending Hardaker and Hartley out to Beamsley in the morning (Saturday) to fix it, and also open the drains from the fall pipes at the Chapel

9th Feby. 1940.

To Mr. Moss

Beamsley Hospital

Bullin Oakley

Recd 22/4/40

Dear Sir,

I am writing to ask for
 leave to go away for a time, it
 has been a long cold winter &
 I have had a lot of pain, so
 my nephew & his wife want me to have
 a rest & change & hope I shall
 be able to return better fitted for
 my daily work. This has been
 my little home for more than 18 years
 & when for a rest I don't like to leave it.

Yours faithfully,
 Edward Moss

22nd April 1940.

Dear Sir,

In reply to your application received to-day, you
 can take a holiday at your convenience.

Yours faithfully,

Miss
 [Signature]

Miss Noydatt,
 Beamsley Hospital.

22nd April 31.

Miss Braure,
Higher Edge, Silsden Moor,
Brulley, Keighley.

Dear Madam,

I note that you were ~~made~~ officially admitted to Beamsley Hospital on the 17th instant. Please let me know when you take up your residence there in order that the rent of your house can be apportioned. Have you, by any chance, heard of anyone who would care to take it?

Yours faithfully,

M. Ross

No. 5, The Hospital
Beamsley.
June 23. /31

Dear Sir

I write to inform you that I took up residence here a week ago, on Monday the 15th. Hoping you will excuse the delay in writing you, owing to unsestlement of mind as well as body.

And I earnestly request Mr Barrett's permission to have a few branches taken of the Trees in front of my Room, to allow of more light and sunshine, as during these darksome days, ~~it~~ the gloom increases my depression.

Hoping you will excuse my not writing you in respect of your first note, as I meant no disrespect there-by, only I could not tell you what I did not know.

Yours Respectfully

S. A. Braure.

Hospital
Beamsley.

Mr Ross

Dear Sir

I am in receipt of your note of yesterday. And sincerely regret my inability to comply at once with your request, as I have not so much money on hand, and do not like to borrow from any of them here, and cannot very well get any, until I have leave of absence, so to save time and trouble could you not take it out of the month's allowance money please, and so settle the account.

And also, will you please be so kind as to grant me 4 Days leave of absence from Friday morning, until Monday evening, as I wish to go to Bradford to see the Pageant, as a young Girl relative will be taking a part on Friday afternoon and also to see my other Relatives

Hoping you will kindly oblige
Yours Respectfully S. A. Breare.

18th July 1.

18th S. A. Breare,
Beamsley Hospital,
Bolton Abbey.

Dear Madam.

I enclose herewith your Rent Book duly receipted for £2 : 10 : 3, and will take the 25/3 out of your next allowance.

You are at liberty to take leave of absence from Friday next to Monday evening. Please show this note to Mrs. Hulston, the Mother.

Yours faithfully,
R. Holt,

The Hospital
Beamsley.
Recd 31/7/36

Mr Ross

Dear Sir

Am writing to ask you to please grant me special leave to have the young Girl Cousin with me for one week & to sleep in with me as she has never been anywhere alone

always with her Mother, or with myself on the Moor.

And as it is her last School Holidays before she begins to work, would like her to come to me at Beamsley very much, from Saturday or Sunday which is most convenient to get her over.

Hoping you will grant me a favourable reply.

Yours Respectfully
S. A. Breare.

31st July 1

1st S. A. Breare,
The Hospital,
Beamsley.

Dear Sir,

Your application for special leave has been placed before Mr. Barrett who wishes to permit it but it is against the rule to allow anyone to stay with you except in case of sickness, but on occasion he will make a concession and grant your request, but he does not wish you to regret the application.

Yours faithfully,

R. Ross

Mr. Ross

Beamsley

Hospital

Recd. 15/8/51

Dear Sir,

Will you please grant me a Four Days leave of absence, as from Monday morning to Thursday evening,

as I want to go over to Silsden to see after a few ~~after a few~~ belongings that I need here.

And also to go up onto the Moor to gather up or dispose of the few remaining things which were left behind, and to tidy up before there is a shoot.

as a day is nothing, its all going & coming so to speak, and too far, to get much work done.

so hoping you will oblige, and let me have your sanction by Monday Mornings Post please

Yours Respectfully
L. A. Breese.

The Countess Pillar at Penrith

The 'Countess Pillar' is a monument erected in Cumbria by Lady Anne Clifford in 1656. It commemorates the spot where Lady Anne last saw her mother, 40 years earlier, and on which is recorded the endowment she left for a sum of money to be distributed there to the poor of the parish every year

In 2016, Brian Le Messurier sent us the photos below with the following note:

I realise that the Countess Pillar at Penrith is not a Landmark property, but it is illustrated in your book (*A History of Britain in 50 Landmarks*) as a feature in the story of Beamsley Hospital, but for this reason you may like to see a picture of a group of people attending the ceremony described at the top of page 107 on Maundy Thursday 1942.

As I recall, the two women to my right were the beneficiaries. The young girl bending over the flat stone was, like me, a holiday visitor to the area. I was with my parents visiting my grandparents who like us had left Guernsey before the German occupation. They were living at Woodside Farm, Temple Sowerby, a few miles to the east, and we had walked to the Pillar for the ceremony. (The war got people moving around the country in an unpredictable way!)

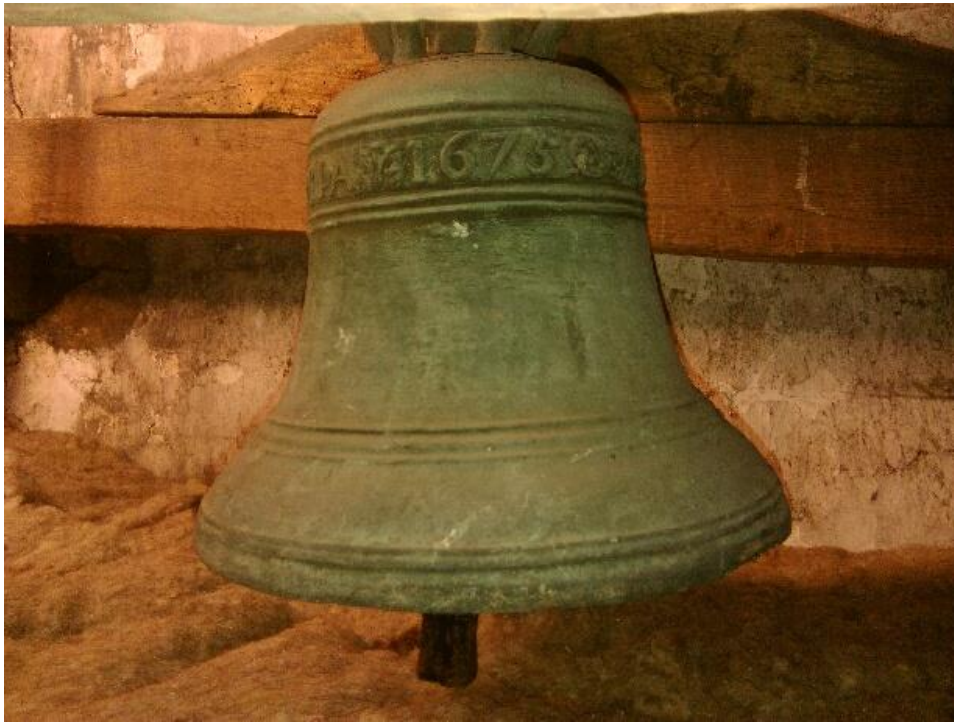


"Maundy Thursday, 1942, Countess Pillar, Penrith"



Brian Le Messurier is the boy in the cap.

A note on the Beamsley Hospital bell



Roof maintenance works in 2016 allowed this photo to be taken of the Beamsley bell. Ruth (our housekeeper at Abbey Gatehouse in Tewkesbury) and her husband David are keen bell ringers and, seeing the photo in Landmark's weekly internal Friday email, they forwarded the photo to Chris Pickford, one of the country's leading bell historians. He in turn consulted George Dawson who identified it from the style of the inscription as being cast by Samuel Smith, and provided the following information.

There was a medieval bell foundry in York, restarted after the Reformation by William Oldfield in about 1620. He was succeeded by Abraham Smith and William Curedon, who cast bells until 1663. The bell foundry business continued with Samuel Smith, who worked from 1662 until 1709, casting the Beamsley Hospital bell in 1675. His son Samuel II Smith took over the business, and when he died in 1731, he bequeathed it to his brother James, who seems to have disposed of it.

February 2016