

## **A History of the Kirkleatham Village and its Historic Buildings.**

The village of Kirkleatham and its surrounding architecture and buildings date back many hundreds of years, the history and heritage is rich and in abundance with stories of time gone past up until the present day.

Here you will find just a snippet of key dates, famous historical names and developments throughout the years. To find out so much more you can purchase a fantastic book from Kirkleatham Museum. Based on an original publication by Phil Philo and edited and revised by Peter Sotheran. It gives an in depth account of the historical events that lead us to where we are today, a truly educational and inspiring read for any history buff.

- **Early Kirkleatham**

Before the Norman Conquest, the Old Norse name for the village of Kirkleatham was 'Westlida'. In the late 12th century, it became known as 'Kyrkelidum'. According to the Domesday Survey of 1086, William I granted the manors of Kirkleatham to his loyal followers the Count of Mortain and Robert de Brus, the latter gave the existing village to his supporter de Perci. Later in the medieval period Kirkleatham passed through the hands of various wealthy landowners, including the de Thwengs, lord of the manor of Kilton Castle near Loftus and also the Lumley and Belasis families. William Belasis sold the manor of Kirkleatham to John Turner in 1623.

- **The Turner Family**

John Turner (1580-1643) came to the Northeast and in 1613 he married Elizabeth, (c. 1593-1657), the daughter of Robert Coulthirst of Upleatham. Their first-born son, John, died as an infant only a few weeks after his birth. Their second son, also called John (1613-88), in later life would inherit the Kirkleatham estates on the death of his father. John married Jane Pepys, daughter of John Pepys of Norfolk, a cousin of the famous Samuel Pepys. As he approached retirement, John and Jane Turner had made their home on the family estate at Kirkleatham.

- **William Turner**

William Turner was the youngest of the two surviving sons (1615- 1692) As a young man of thirty-five, he was working in London. In 1660 he was made Alderman of the City of London and the following year Master of the Merchant Tailor's Guild. His loyal and financial support of King Charles II led to a knighthood in 1662 and the next year he became Sheriff of London. He was made Lord Mayor of the city in 1668-69. From 1690 until his death in 1692 he was Member of Parliament for the City of London. Although Sir William's civic and business duties kept him in London, he never forgot about his family home and the poor of Kirkleatham and in 1676 he founded and endowed Sir William Turner's Hospital at Kirkleatham.

- **Sir William Turner and his Hospital**

The building was designed by noted scientist and City of London surveyor Dr Robert Hooke, and was never a medical establishment but rather a place offering hospitality. It provided poor men and women aged 63 years or over cottages to live in. Within the courtyard lived ten poor boys and ten poor girls, often orphans or from one-parent backgrounds. Here they were raised and educated by the School Master and Mistress of the Hospital. The men and women began to take up residence at the Hospital in June 1676. Sir William formally opened the establishment on Saturday 24th June of that year and the 24th June is still celebrated with an annual Founder's Day service in the chapel. The two almshouses still have two rules that were introduced when Sir William Turner opened his almshouses in 1676. To this day, residents may not place candles of any form in their cottages and residents may not keep 'walking pets' in the almshouses.

- **James Gibbs and the Hospital Chapel**

At the time the Turner Mausoleum was being erected, Cholmley Turner also began work to enlarge and improve the Hospital buildings. The magnificent chapel was completed and Cholmley undoubtedly turned to James Gibbs for advice if not designs for this work. It closely resembles in miniature Gibbs' designs for many parish churches in London City. The altar window was originally attributed to Sebastiano Ricci, but

recent research shows it to be based on a design by Venetian artist Francesco Sletzer. The centre panel portrays 'The Adoration of the Magi.' On the right is a portrait of Sir William Turner as Lord Mayor of London and, on the left his brother John Turner, Sergeant-at-Law at the Central Criminal Courts in London. The entrance to the courtyard is framed with magnificent wrought iron railing and gates. These, along with the statues and many external architectural features, were extensively restored in 2010-2012 by the Trustees of the almshouses. Sir William Turner's Hospital, popularly known as Kirkleatham Almshouses is managed by a local Board of Trustees. It is an independent and private establishment.

- **Kirkleatham Hall**

John Turner (Senior) rebuilt or consistently remodelled Kirkleatham Hall by 1669, which stood on the site of the present Kirkleatham Hall School. In 1719 Cholmley inherited the Kirkleatham estate and moved into Kirkleatham Hall. In 1757 Cholmley's brother William inherited Kirkleatham but it was his son, Charles, who completed the redevelopment of the estate and set about turning the whole of Kirkleatham village into his own private park, leaving only the Hall, church, almshouse, and Free School buildings to adorn the local landscape. Sir Charles' son, also Charles, the second Baronet (1773-1810) was the last of the Turner family to hold the estates. In 1796 he married Teresa, daughter of William Gleadowe Newcomen, and when Sir Charles died in 1810 his wife inherited the estate. Teresa married two years later to Henry Vansittart. The estate was inherited by their daughter Teresa, who married her cousin, Arthur Henry Turner Newcomen in 1841 and thus the Turner family links with Kirkleatham were broken forever.

- **Cholmley Turner and the Turner Mausoleum**

Cholmley Turner's son, Marwood William (1718-1739) tragically died in Lyons on 20th October 1739, probably of typhus or cholera. The mausoleum was built in his memory. Peter Scheemakers, one of the leading sculptors of the period, designed and carved the statue to Marwood's memory. Today the church contains many other interesting memorials and features. Visitors are welcome to the church and its mausoleum but please remember that it is still a place of Christian worship as well as being protected as a fine Grade 1 Listed Building.

- **Kirkleatham Free School**

Sir William Turner's will made provision for the education of the poor at a free school to be built at Kirkleatham. In 1708 work was started on the Free School building. The structure, known today as Kirkleatham Museum, was possibly designed by William Wakefield. The first staff of the school started in 1710 when the school opened. During its early years, the school was highly successful. In 1727 the Reverend Thomas Murgatroyd (1702-1780) became Master of Kirkleatham Free School. Around this time the school experienced difficulties and by about 1738 the building seems to have closed as a school. Around 1730 Cholmley turned the Free School into a public museum and free library and had begun to donate books and objects to the collections.

The building saw various uses over the years, but in the 1930s it was rented, and later bought by, the Bosanquet family. William Bosanquet was the manager of the ironworks at Skinningrove, and his wife Esther was the daughter of American president Grover Cleveland.

In 1970 the Esther sold the Hall and its grounds to Teesside Council for £16,000, where the building was used to store the collections of Teesside Museums and Art Service. In 1978 Langbaugh Borough Council, in co-operation with Cleveland County Council began renovating the Hall by removing the 18th and 19th century additions on the north side and restoring some of the original features. In 1981 the building opened to the public as Kirkleatham Old Hall Museum and today is now called Kirkleatham Museum and owned by Redcar & Cleveland Council.

Today, the museum showcases an array of exhibits delving into the rich heritage and history of the local area, it also plays host to an annual programme of family events, performances, and seasonal activities.