



Little is known of the history of Middleham prior to 1066 although evidence has been found of a Roman settlement. However the fortification of William's Hill, behind the castle is entered in the Domesday Book. Middleham Caste, growing in importance by 1200, was mentioned in Gervase of Canterbury 'Mappa Mundi'. By 1270 the castle was owned by the Neville Family of Raby. In 1459 Richard Neville, Earl of Salisbury, led 5000 men from Middleham against the Lancastrians. He was trapped and beheaded at Pontefract. After the forfeiture of the estates to the crown and a change of king, Richard's son, the Earl of Warwick took control of Middleham Castle. He was known as 'Warwick the Kingmaker'. The future King Richard III spent his childhood in Middleham where he met Anne Neville, the Kingmaker's daughter, who became his wife in 1472. Anne and Richard lived in Middleham from where he administered the North and kept the Scots at bay. It was at this period that Middleham was described as the 'Windsor of the North'. Not only was it Richard's political power base, but he established Middleham's status as a town, increased its trading opportunities by creating extra fairs and started to turn Middleham in to a seat of learning with the foundation of a college in 1481. Richard's accession to the throne in 1483 was joyously celebrated in Middleham. His death at the Battle of Bosworth was greatly mourned and a requiem mass is still said in Middleham Church on the anniversary of his death. Richard's son Edward was born and died at the castle.



The town of Middleham was medieval in its layout but it was the growth of the racing industry that built Georgian Middleham. A letter to Thomas Cromwell in 1537



recommended Middleham and Jervaulx for the training of horses, but the first documented reference to racehorses

is in 1733 with the establishment of Isaac Cape as a jockey. He became the first specialist trainer. Racing was established on the Moor as early as 1739 and regular meetings were held during the 18th century. They were briefly revived in 1834 and the only race in 1836 was the 'Middleham Dinner Stakes'. The last race ever held on the moor was in June 1873. Racehorse training has survived many challenges, produced many legendary winners and is again today in ascendancy. Between 1780 and 1840 prosperity generated the replacement of most of the old buildings of the Tudor period. In recent years much of the town has been protected as a conservation area. Prosperity and 'Town Scheme' grants have enabled much of the historic property to be restored and maintained.

The town's success in winning Rural Challenge and European Funding enabled the recobbling of the historic town. It is almost impossible to think that tucked away behind the facades of Middleham are around 500 racehorses.



They are rarely on public view except when they proceed onto the moors for daily exercise. Middleham's location on a hill created wonderful opportunities for views between and over the houses to the beautiful countryside beyond. Some of the splendid buildings seem to have been designed to take full advantage of the varying levels to show them off at their best. Like many town's Middleham is a credit to the generations of local builders and craftsmen who have been involved in its development over centuries.



Middleham Town Trail

Jointly funded by Middleham Town Council and Middleham Community Heritage Project



Drawings by Gillian Wilson
Designed by Nancy Murgatroyd

Cover Image: The unusual Fairy Foxglove (Erinus Alpinus) adorning Middleham Castle in May.

On entering the church you can see that three gravestones have been used as lintels above windows on the north wall. On the tower room wall appears the skillfully carved grave cover from Abbot Thornton's tomb. His name is depicted by thorn and barrel symbols, a first class example of a 'rebus'.

Leaving the church, past the sundial that predates the church clock by many years, through the lych gate and down Church Lane, we can look through a gate on the left and see into one of Middleham's most successful racing establishments. The pointed arched doorway of Kingsley House (11) hints at its former use as a Deanery, from the time when Middleham Church had collegiate status.

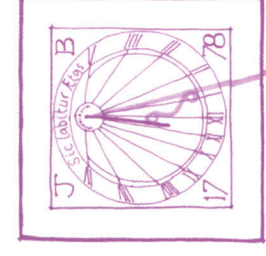
Across the main road is Warwick House (12) with its two distinctive bay windows. From the stables behind, Captain Neville Crump saddled three Grand National winners. Up the road on the left is the sign of another white boar and on the right is Brief Cottage (13) with its circular chimneys, Gothic windows and some stonework which looks as though it might originally have been part of the castle.

Just beyond here are gate columns that were originally topped with pineapples, at the entrance to Middleham House. A little further up, and set back from the road, is Hepple House (14) which was once the primitive Methodist Chapel.

The Lower Market Place has an early stone cross (15) and is surrounded by attractive buildings. These include the remarkably unspoilt 18th Century Jasmine House (16) at the bottom of the Square, and near the top, the unusual Georgian brick fronted 'Domus' (17). Beyond this, delicate box structured wrought iron gate pillars mark the entrance to Middleham Grange (18). Around the Market Place are most of the local pubs, café's and restaurants for those wanting refreshments.

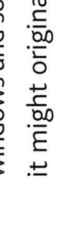
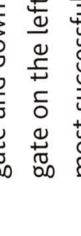
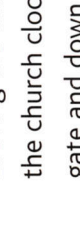
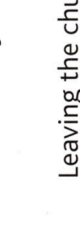
As we head back up the hill towards the Swine Market, a cast iron and glass Art Nouveau awning on the right marks the entrance to Central Stores (19). On the left is the early 19th century Milton House (20) with its bay windows and curved glass. Inside the gates of Glasgow House (21), named after Lord Glasgow (a leading owner in 1800), there

is a commemorative plaque celebrating the stable's success in training all first four horses in the 1822 St. Leger race. Next is Hill House (22), which retains

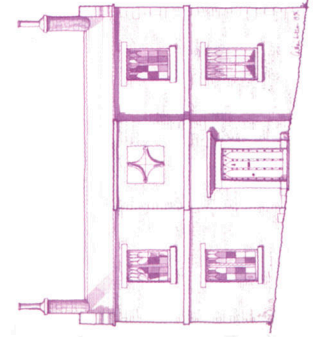
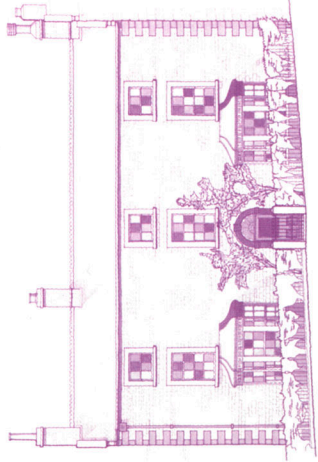


many original 18th Century features, and further on is the easily recognised Sundial House (23). The lettering on the sundial translates to 'so time slips away', and hopefully the time that has slipped away in pursuit of the Middleham Town Trail will have proved stimulating and pleasurable.

Our trail started and finished with impressive views of Middleham's historic castle. It has the largest keep in the North of England and provided an appropriate setting for a sculpture of Richard III, which also includes a white boar symbol. From the top of the spiral staircase in the keep, rooftop views give a very different perspective on the route you have taken through the 'Royal, Loyal and Ancient Township of Middleham'.



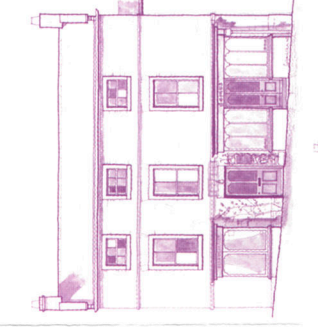
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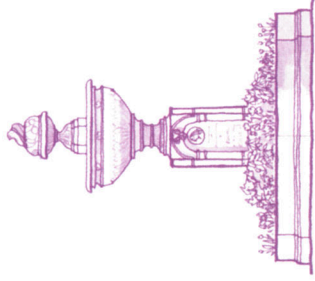


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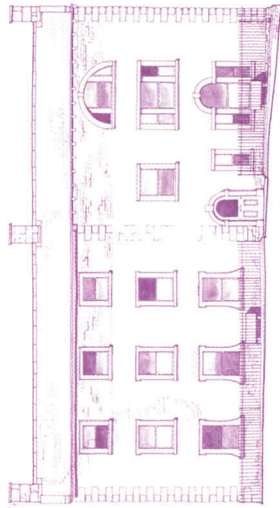
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The ancient township of Middleham has two market places and one of these is the starting point for the Town Trail. The Top Cross, or Swine Market, was once the venue for the livestock market and a sign at the Swine Cross (1) mentions the original market charter, granted in 1479 by King Richard III. The sign also suggests that the badly eroded sculpture may have been either a white boar, Richard III's personal emblem, or the bear and ragged staff which was the symbol of the Earl of Warwick. What do you think?



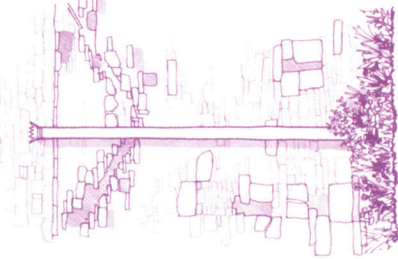
Near the stone fountain (2), which was built to celebrate Queen Victoria's Jubilee, is a metal 'bull ring'. This may have been used for tethering the bull on market days.

Our suggested circular route leads up the hill by a cluster of cottages built close to the castle wall. Some of the houses you pass are even older than they appear. Laundry House (3) displays a strong hint of early construction with its left wall buttressed



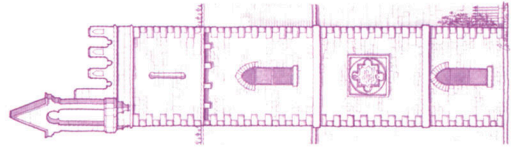
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by a large ancient chimney and the neighbouring property, Manor House (4), is an impressive Georgian stone building behind which are the stables which have been used by three generations of racehorse trainers from the Peacock family. Dobson Peacock sent out winners of the Northumberland Plate on six occasions and his son Matthew trained the famous Dante (winner of the Derby in 1945).

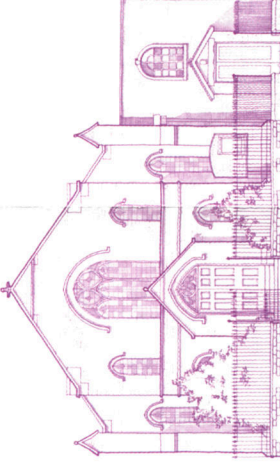


The shrubbery in front of these houses was said to have been planted to commemorate Peacock Stables racing successes. The railings which originally surrounded it were taken away in the war.

On the right, before the road turns towards the gallops, there is an elegant gateway, which was once the entrance to Middleham Hall.



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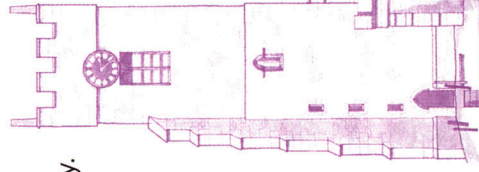


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This splendid Georgian residence was burnt to the ground in 1889. Nearby, but partly hidden by overgrowing trees, is a rare example of a Victorian cast iron sewer ventilation pipe (5). As we return down the hill, on the left overlooking the Swine Cross is Neville Hall (6) which was built in 1824. In front of this is the Old School (7), a Victorian Gothic curiosity with a castellated tower and its school bell still in place. It was built in 1869 and dedicated to Rev Birch (a former Rector).

The road to the left passes the Methodist Chapel (8), the last of three once existing in Middleham. This road leads via twin stiles and a paved footpath, bounded on the right by the very high garden wall of Middleham House (9), into the churchyard near the war memorial.

The church (10) is dedicated to St Mary and St Alkelda and contains a magnificent font cover, beautifully proportioned 14th century columns and arches, and gravestones taken from Jervaulx Abbey.



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