

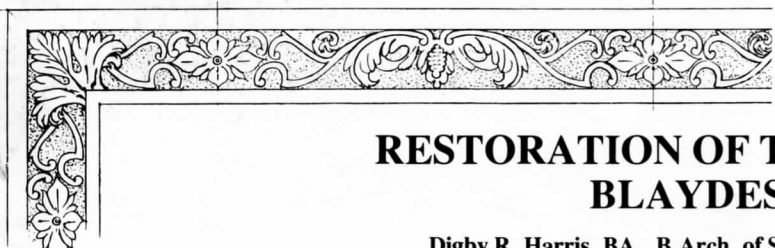
THE GEORGIAN SOCIETY FOR EAST YORKSHIRE



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Detail of Carving to Window Architrave.

RESTORATION OF THE DINING ROOM BLAYDES HOUSE

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Since acquiring Blaydes House in 1971, the Society has followed a policy of restoring first the exterior and then the interiors as funds have become available and in 1985 we were able to restore the third and largest of the reception rooms on the High Street frontage.

This latest room is adjacent to the Blaydes Room on the first floor but precisely what title it would have had when the Blaydes family were in residence is not clear. Being the largest room and having a marble chimneypiece and a very beautiful Corinthian pedimented doorcase, one would expect that it had been the Dining Room but there are no clues in the decoration to confirm or deny this supposition.

Unlike the Blaydes and Partners' Rooms which are fully panelled, the Dining Room has plastered walls above a plain wooden dado and a pretty plaster Corinthian cornice. The dado rail is ornamented with a delicate carved Vitruvian scroll embellished with leaves and the cyma mould on the skirting with acanthus leaves and a shell motif. The style of the carving indicates an enlivening rococo influence on the neo-Palladian tradition. Very little of this detail was, however, visible beneath 225 years of paint and, moreover, on the long window wall, it was wholly missing where it had been the victim of the Victorian refenestration. The Georgian windows were replaced in 1973 but the wall was left with a plain plaster finish on the inside to await further attention.

The decision to undertake the restoration of the Dining Room was prompted by the necessity of

carrying out urgent works to restrain the bulging 3 storey south wall. This meant that the floor in the Dining Room had to be partly taken up and strengthened and, so that the disturbance of the Society's tenants should not be repeated, the restoration of the room was undertaken at the same time. Because it formed part of the structural work, this restoration was grant aided by English Heritage whereas the previous restorations of the Blaydes and Partners' Rooms were deemed ineligible.

In order to remove the choking layers of paint from the carved woodwork, we followed the example of Mr. Francis Johnson's excellent procedure at Fairfax House, York, and had all the woodwork taken out, immersed in a caustic bath, and then neutralized prior to refixing: the dramatic result was to reveal the superb quality of the carving. The cleaning of the plaster cornice was a less dramatic and more painstaking task. A poultice was used to soften the layers of limewash but, after cleaning, quite a lot of detail was found to be missing and many consoles and paterae had to be replaced.

To the right of the chimneypiece, a later door, which upset the symmetry of the room but which had to be retained, we replaced by a secret or "jib" door. The precise cutting of the skirting and dado rail that this device demands to enable the door to open was a challenge to the joiner who eventually made an excellent model to show the apprentices how it should be done.

On the window wall we had to



devise a treatment to compliment the rest of the room whilst accommodating the discrepancies between the three windows and a slope in the cornice. We eventually agreed upon a scheme where the window embrasures continued to the floor, the shutters had boldly

moulded raised and fielded panels to match the door, and a narrow architrave was used above the dado, derived from that to the doors on the 2nd floor. This architrave was carved to a design which incorporates motifs present elsewhere in the carving and the skirting and dado were continued on this wall and carved to a standard indistinguishable from the original work.

Because it at present serves as a drawing office and will have to be regularly redecorated, the room has been painted very simply in a pale grey/green and white. However, in stripping the cornice, we decided it had originally been painted a stone colour (which would have toned well with the marble of the chimneypiece) and a pale eggshell blue was found on the walls.

The full programme of works was completed in the early summer of 1985 at a nett cost to the Society of approximately £10,500.00. Frederick Singleton and Sons were the Main Contractors and Joiners, Lightowler and Son did the decorating and stripping of the joinery and cornice and Richard Reid of York was the carver. All the craftsmen involved took an exceptional interest in the work and contributed immeasurably to its success.



Neswick Hall which stood until 1954 in 200 acres of parkland about a mile east of Bainton deserves the title 'lost' more than the other houses so far covered in this series of articles. Few illustrations and virtually no documentary or printed evidence for the date of building or additions and alterations survive. A number of photographs exist of the west front in the late 19th and early 20th centuries which show a central five-bay block with three-bay pedimented wings projecting to the north and south. The building history of the house however has to be largely conjectured from these illustrations and the story of the estate and its owners.

In 1415 the de Mauley estate of Neswick passed by marriage to the Salvin family of Kilham and Nafferton. They retained the manor of Neswick until 1613 when financial problems forced them to sell it to Thomas Anlaby of Etton. The direct male line of the Anlabys ended on the death of Matthew Anlaby of Lebberston about 1710-11 when the Neswick estate was divided between his five daughters. In 1715 Thomas Eyres, a surgeon then living in Hull, the husband of one of the heiresses Elizabeth Anlaby, purchased the other four shares of Neswick and became the sole owner. It is Eyres who is likely to have begun the building of Neswick Hall for he would appear to have been the first of the post-medieval lords of the manor to reside at Neswick and he was instrumental in sweeping away much of the village of which some earthworks remain.

In the Middle Ages there was a sizeable settlement at Neswick; 110 taxpayers were recorded there

in 1377 and three hundred years later there were 25 households. Of these 25 households the 1672 hearth tax returns reveal that 22 had only one hearth, two had two hearths and one had three hearths suggesting that there was no house corresponding with a hall or substantial manor house. By 1764 the households in Neswick had been reduced to eight, the same as the number of houses given in the 1801 and 1811 census returns. There are indications that the destruction of two-thirds of the village had taken place by 1743 and it clearly coincided with the enclosure by Eyres of the open arable fields in the years 1714-40. Much of the former parkland at Neswick today contains the familiar ridge and furrow indicating the strips or lands of the pre-enclosure fields. It is possible that the enclosure was partly to create parkland as a suitable setting for the new hall built by Eyres.

Eyres was dead by 1743 and the estate which he had mortgaged for £1000 in 1734 was divided between his two daughters, Esther the wife of Robert Grimston I of Bridlington and Elizabeth the wife of Edward Nixon of Howden. In 1746 Grimston purchased the Nixons' share and became sole owner and resided at Neswick. Grimston who was descended from the Grimstons of Fraisthorpe was distantly related to Thomas Grimston who was to inherit the nearby Kilnwick estate in 1747. The neighbouring Grimston families developed a close friendship and the Kilnwick estate correspondence used by Edward Ingram in his *Leaves from a family tree* provides useful information on the Neswick family.



Esther Grimston died in 1754 and Robert Grimston I soon after remarried – this time to the heiress of the manors of East and West Bainton, Margaret the daughter of a York attorney, John Shaw. This marriage greatly enlarged the

Grimstons' landholding but in November 1756 Robert I died leaving a nine year old only child Robert Grimston II who became the ward of his distant cousin John Grimston (1725-1780) of Kilnwick. Edward Ingram describes Robert II as 'a rather impetuous, self-opinionated youth, with whom John Grimston must have had many a tussle'. When, presumably for his health, Robert II was ordered abroad in 1765 he went to Aix en Provence with I.B. Durade, a French print dealer, as tutor and extracts from his letters to his guardian make interesting reading. In October 1766 Robert II went on to Nice, Turin and Rome spending almost two years touring Italy before returning to England some time after June 1768. Two years later in June 1770 he married Elizabeth the seventeen year old daughter of the Rev. Dr. Thomas Stanley, rector of Winwick, Cheshire. Unfortunately the young bride fell ill and in searching for a cure the couple went to Gibraltar where she 'died of a deep consumption' on 1 March 1771. Grimston remained a while at Gibraltar but had returned to England in time to marry Elizabeth Garforth and for their first child Lucy to be born in 1772. Another daughter Maria was born in 1773 and a son John I in 1775. The continent seemingly continued to lure Robert II away from Neswick and although he did



West Front of Neswick Hall. c. 1900.

K HALL

and Sue Needham



undertake duties as a local Justice of the Peace it seems he was often abroad and on 10 November 1790 he died at Lausanne, Switzerland at the early age of 43. He is buried on the north side of Lausanne Cathedral. The fragment of an undated lease survives between Elizabeth Grimston of Lausanne, widow, and John Arthur Worsop of Neswick relating to the house and estate and it seems likely that the house was let for a number of years.

John Grimston I who came of age in 1796 himself leased the 'mansion house and 59 acres' for 7 years to Henry Thorold of Lincoln, esquire, in April 1821. John I died childless in January 1846 and the estate passed to the sons of his eldest sister Lucy the wife of Sir Robert Wilmot, 3rd baronet, of Chaddesden, Derbyshire. Although the Rev. Richard Coke Wilmot was the owner of Neswick in 1856 it eventually passed to the fourth and second surviving son John II (1807-79) who took the name and arms of Grimston in 1860. On his death his son John III succeeded but the house was again let. A draft advert produced in January 1880 stated:

'To be let furnished for a term of three years, Neswick Hall, the residence of the late John Grimston, esquire with or without about 2400 acres of well preserved shooting in the best part of East Yorkshire. The Mansion compris-

es every convenience for a family and the Gardens and Grounds are in excellent order'.

Trade directories record the house as occupied by George Arthur Mosscrop in 1889 and W. B. Jameson in 1897. It appears to have been unoccupied in 1892-3. John III died childless in 1895 and was succeeded by his sister Fanny the widow of Walter Francis Wrangham who curiously was the grandson of Maria the younger daughter of Robert Grimston II. By 1901 Mrs Wrangham was living at Neswick which after her death in 1929 became the property and home of Major Digby Francis Wrangham. The estate was sold after the Second World War and the hall demolished. The Wrangham family, now resident in the south of England, do however retain ownership of the hall site and some surrounding land.

The five-bay block with slightly projecting central bay could have been built for Thomas Eyres c. 1714-40 or for Robert Grimston I c. 1745-55. The two pedimented wings however are likely to have been built later in the century and can be attributed to Robert Grimston II. It would not be surprising for the young Robert on his return from his three years in France and Italy and contemplating marriage to wish for the hall to be modernised. On 18 May 1770 the housekeeper from Kilnwick reported to her employer who was

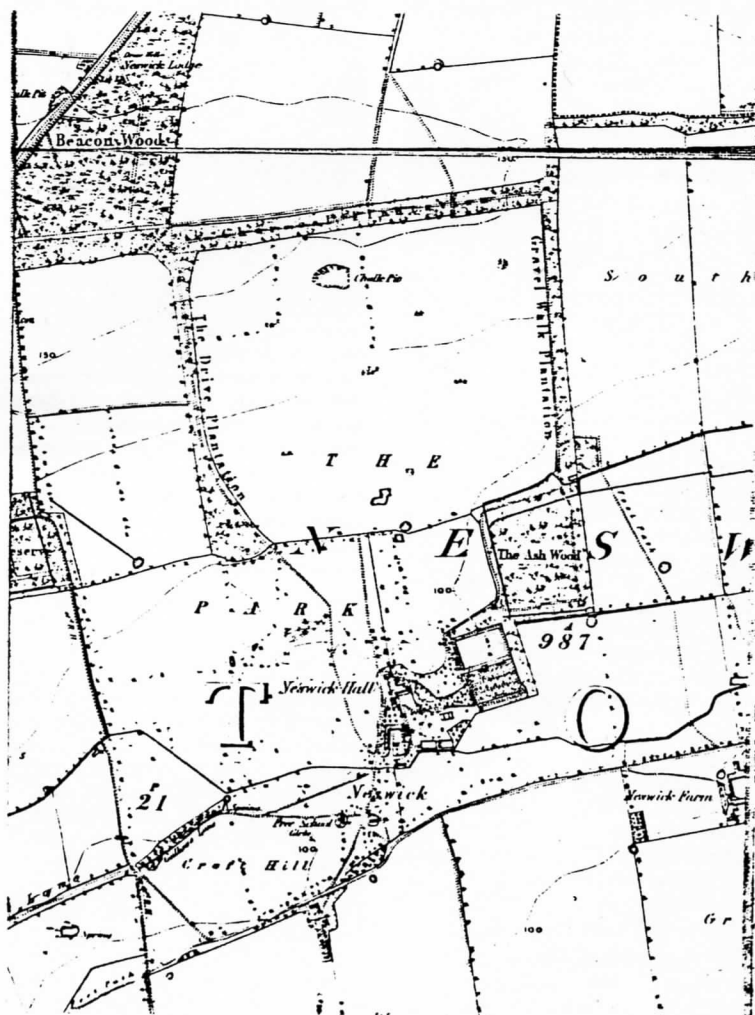
in London 'that the slaters are come out of Westmorland to Neswick where they will be engag'd about a fortnight'. The slaters who were being supervised by William Middleton, architect and builder, of Beverley were to go on to Kilnwick where extensive alterations were being carried out to the designs of John Carr. It is possible that Carr or Middleton were responsible for the works at Neswick.

The illustrations of the house suggest that further extensive alterations took place in the mid-19th century possibly after the death of John Grimston I in 1846. The west front was whitewashed or stuccoed and the ground floor of the central block was brought forward almost flush with the wings and apparently topped by a balustrade. Two inventories made in the later 19th century provide full information on the size and furnishings of Neswick Hall. The earlier inventory of c. 1880 lists among other rooms the front hall, drawing room, dining room, morning room, nine bedrooms, attics, gun room, servants' hall, butler's pantry, kitchen, laundry, and that most important requisite of the Victorian country house – the billiard room – at Neswick it was fitted out with a Burrough and Watts billiard table, three chess boards, four mahogany cabinets fitted with drawers containing

1937 specimens of minerals and a large engraving of the 'Meeting of Wellington and Blucher'. The wine cellar contained 78 dozen bottles of sherry and 28 bottles of champagne.

Very little can be learnt of the history of the house by a visit to its site which has no public access. A fine series of near derelict mid-late 18th century stables and farm-buildings including a square dovecote remain from the home farm and to the east, surrounded by a high 18th century brick wall incorporating a contemporary gardener's cottage, is the extensive former kitchen garden with remnants of Victorian glasshouses. In 1879 these gardens contained vineries and a peach house. The site of the mansion itself is marked by two large blocks of stone; one clearly from beside the main entrance door for it has a boot-scraper imbedded in it. Yew trees and other evergreens survive from the gardens the western boundary of which is still marked by a cast iron fence.

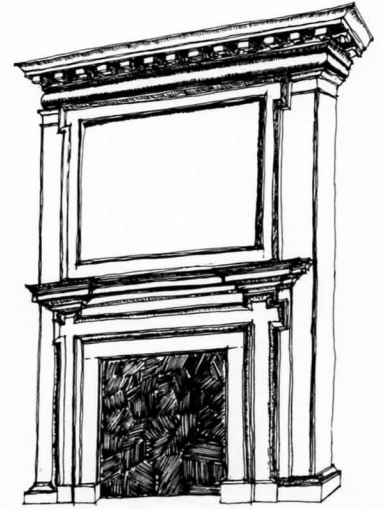
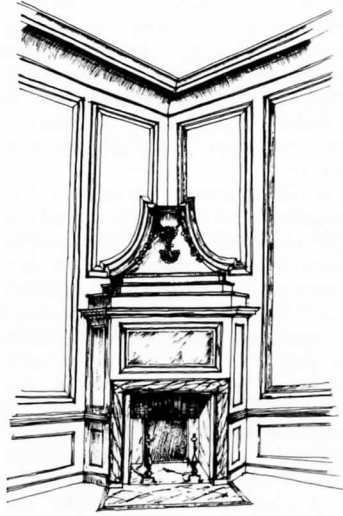
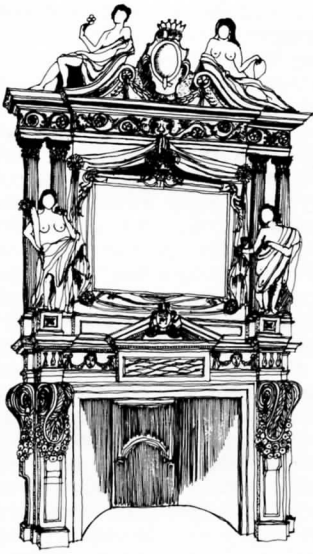
The main local document collections relating to Neswick are DDWR in Humberside Record Office and DGN in Brynmor Jones Library, University of Hull. Information for this article was kindly supplied by P. Wrangham, J. R. Wrangham, Judge Sir Geoffrey Wrangham, Angus Hildyard and Mr. Clark of Neswick.



Neswick Hall & Park in 1850.

THE GEORGIAN CHIMNEYPIECE 1650 to 1750

by Digby R. Harris, BA., B.Arch.



1. Double Cube Room, Wilton. Completed 1652. Designed by Inigo Jones and John Webb.

2. King's Dressing Room, Hampton Court Palace. 1689. Designed by Sir Christopher Wren.

3. Entrance Hall, Drum House, Edinburgh. 1727. Architect: William Adam. Plasterer: Samuel Calderwood.

4. Tabernacle Room, Blaydes House, Hull. c. 1760.

For the Georgians, a fireplace in every room was essential if a house was to be habitable. Eighteenth century diaries and letters are studded with references to the cold and dampness endured by their writers and to the necessity of lighting fires regularly in winter in all rooms if the decorations and hangings were not to be spoiled by mould and mildew. The British have, however, always foregone comfort and economy for the sake of seeing open fires, instead of adopting the much more efficient continental stoves. Only in halls and galleries were stoves employed and these were generally disguised e.g. in the Sculpture Gallery at Newby Hall where the stoves take the form of pedestals to some of the statues. Not until the end of the eighteenth century were any great advances made in the development of central heating. The fireplace was thus the natural focus for the design of the Georgian room and more money and attention was lavished upon it than on any other component.

What we today call the FIREPLACE was, in the eighteenth century, universally referred to as a CHIMNEYPIECE. A chimneypiece with an OVERMANTEL (an architectural or decorative feature above the fireplace) was a CONTINUED CHIMNEYPIECE.

The Georgian designer faced the problem that although the "ancients" had left instructions for the construction of hypocausts,

they had not vouch-safed any designs for fireplaces. In the words of Isaac Ware, 'fancy is to stand in the place of rule and example in the construction of the chimney-piece'. 'Fancy' in fact generally meant that, with infinite variations, Palladio's rules for framing a doorway were adapted to frame a fire instead. Whereas in Tudor and Late Gothic times the fireplace had been merely a decorated hole in the wall with stone surround, sometimes in the form of a four-centred arch, in Jacobean and Elizabethan times the fireplace with the wall over became a much more flamboyant affair, frequently framed in elaborate free-standing orders. But compared with the fully classical compositions of Inigo Jones, these examples are mere assemblies of classical details.

Very few of Jones's decorative details are of his own invention and throughout his career he turned to French sources; the Queen's House chimneypieces are derived from designs in Barbet's 'Livre d'Architecture' of 1633. Jones's designs were, however, highly influential, less so in his own day than in the eighteenth century when they were reproduced in the engraved works of William Kent, John Vardy and Isaac Ware at the instigation of Lord Burlington. None of the Queen's House chimneypieces survive but that in the Double Cube Room at Wilton House (fig. 1), although in fact carried

out by his pupil John Webb 'with the approbation of the master' illustrates his work at its most splendid.

The taste for a Franco-Dutch style superseded Jones's Palladianism with Sir Christopher Wren as its greatest exponent. He favoured a chimneypiece with a bold marble bolection moulding, generally set flush with the wall, often with naturalistic carving of the Grinling Gibbons type on the wood panelling above. Fig. 2 illustrates a variation on this theme much used at Hampton Court Palace with the great advantage of providing several receding mantelselves for the display of the then highly fashionable blue-and-white oriental porcelain pots, or Delft or Lambeth imitations of them.

Because the Baroque was a comparatively little used style in domestic architecture, being better suited to palaces and churches, Baroque chimneypieces are rare. The most successful example is probably that in the hall at Castle Howard where an open arch surmounts the chimneypiece revealing one of the staircases beyond; the flue is directed to left or right. Disappearing tricks with flues are uncommon in England but less so in France. Fig. 3 shows a more modest example from Scotland where a boldly modelled military trophy forms the overmantel which dominates the composition. The architect was William Adam, father of the more famous Robert

and James, and the plasterer Samuel Calderwood.

With the rise of Neo-Palladianism in the 1720's with Lord Burlington in the vanguard, Palladio and Inigo Jones were reinstated as joint arbiters of classical good taste. Fig. 4 shows a simple but handsome wooden continued chimneypiece from Blaydes House which, though dating from c. 1760 looks back to Jones's designs of more than a century before. Similarly at Boynton Hall there is a chimneypiece of the 1730's, possibly by William Kent, with details derived from Inigo Jones's chapel screen in Somerset House.

The best Palladian chimneypieces were of white statuary marble with reliefs carved by one of the leading sculptors of the day, such as Rysbrack or Van Nost, Cheere or Scheemakers. The most splendid (or pompous) examples commonly featured classical caryatids or terms at each side but these, according to Isaac Ware in 'The Complete Body of Architecture' (1756), had to be very carefully considered. The Persian (male) figure should 'have a look of dejection without pain. Let the Persian seem to say that he does not feel the load but the indignity; and the caryatid that she understands her position with humility'. And finally there was the problem of draping the caryatids, for 'we banish anatomy from the parlour of the polite gentleman'.