CURIOUS NORTHUMBRIA ITEMS by Alan and Pat Porrett

FOLLIES

PENSHAW MONUMENT – Near Washington – Greek style, built for the 1st Earl of Durham, John George Lampton

RATCHEUGH CRAGS OBSERVATORY – North of Alnwick – used for viewing the point to point horse races.

CODGERS FORT – Near Rothley (Northumberland) – A real but unfinished military store, built during Jacobite rebellion (1745-6).

ROTHLEY CASTLE – Near Rothley (Northumberland) – A folly built as a ruin for the Wallington Hall picnic site.

ILTON GRANGE – Near Masham (Yorkshire){Located in "Druids Plantation about 1 mile West of Ilton, Ordnance Survey Map 99, map ref. 174 787} – There are 3 genuine earth henges in area. The stone replica henge was built by William Danby of Swinton Hall circa 1820. He knew Yorkshire was the finest county and the druids would have intended to build a henge there, so he put right their oversight.

SLEDMERE CASTLE – (Humberside) – A farmhouse with delusions of grandeur. Castle façade faces Sledmere Hall.

CASTLE FARM – Near Castle Farm Road, Newcastle (not far from Freeman Hospital) – A farmhouse with a castle façade which faces a large mansion which is now a private school. Now integrated into a new housing development.

PROSPECT TOWERS (Popular in the 19th century with Land Owners)

BRIZLEE TOWER – In Hulne Park (Alnwick) – Built by Robert Adam.

WAINHOUSE'S TOWER - Halifax – A 270ft high chimney built in 1870 for John Wainhouse's dyeworks but never connected to works by the planned underground flue, due to the sale of the works. Converted into a prospect tower rather than demolish it.

CLEADON WATERWORKS TOWER – Near South Shields – Built 1863 as a chimney for the boilers used for the steam pumping engines, disguised as prospect tower. Since conversion to electric power in the 1930's it has been used for radio aerials. It was used by the Home Guard as a lookout post during second world war.

UNUSUAL LOCATIONS

BLYTH INLAND LIGHTHOUSE – Built in 1788 by Sir Matthew White Ridley of Cowpen Colliery. One of 2 lights for guiding ships into the harbour.

UNUSUAL FOR APPEARANCE OR USE

TOP TO BOTTOM HOUSING – Hebden Bridge (Yorkshire) – Built because of the very steep hillside.

SALTAIRE – Near Shipley – The first new town. Built by the mill owner, Sir Titus Salt, from 1850 onwards. Italianate style.

WARDEN TOLL HOUSE – Near Hexham – Built for original suspension bridge.

ENTRANCES

HOUSE FRONT – Manor Road, Tynemouth – Every window is a different style.

SMITHY – Ford Village (Northumberland) – Has a stone horseshoe around the door.

SMITHY DOOR – Bolton Abbey (Yorkshire) – Has branding iron marks burnt into door.

WHEEL DOOR - Grassington (Yorkshire) – Has a carriage wheel in the door.

SCHOOL PORCH – On house at South end of village of Rochester (Northumberland) – Built from stones taken from Roman camps.

BRAMHOPE TUNNEL ENTRANCE – Near Leeds – It has a castellated design with tunnel keepers house incorporated. {This item is difficult to get to}.

CHURCHES

NAVVIES MEMORIAL – In churchyard at Otley (Yorkshire) – A replica of Bramhope tunnel entrance.

KILDWICK – Near Keighley – The churchyard is divided by the Leeds & Liverpool canal. Also has an organ maker's grave.

IRON HOOPS – Warden Church (Northumberland) – Hoops over graves near Lych Gate to foil grave robbers.

WATCH HOUSE – Old Parish Church (Morpeth) – To guard new graves.

MONOLITH - Rudston (Humberside) – Over 25ft high. Said to have been hurled at the church by the Devil, but actually much older than church.

WORKERS WINDOW – Byrness Church (Northumberland) – Has a stained glass window showing the workers who built Catcleugh Reservoir. Said to be unique to have a church window depicting the working classes. Certainly unusual.

13 O'CLOCK – Whitgift Church (Humberside) – Clock has 13 o'clock instead of 12. Clock installed 1919, repainted between wars. Supposedly the painter spent too much time in the nearby pub. More likely that it was a marking out error which was just left.

ON CLOCK THEME

WATCH TOWER CLOCK - Morpeth – Marked out in quarter hours, not minutes, because it originally had a single hand.

CLOCK TOWER – Wallington – Marked out in quarter hours, still only has one hand.

SCRATCH CLOCK – South wall of Bywell Church {nearest to river} – Engraved in wall. Very rare to have survived.

MULTI-FACET SUNDIAL – Near Stocksfield – On the Minsteracres estate.

12FT SUNDIAL – Seaton Ross (Yorkshire) – On house front in village.

CURIOUS BECAUSE OF RARITY

GIANT PHONE BOX – Whitley Bay (Outside Metro station, East side) – 1927 GPO type 4 box, with Letterbox and Stamp Machines. Only 50 ever made and many never erected. Only one remaining on an original site.

TURF MAZE - Brandsby (Yorkshire) – Known as "City of Troy". Used for religious penance.

TURF MAZE - Alkborough (Humberside) – Known as "Julians Bower". Circa 1200. Replica in church porch and church window.

MAYPOLE – Barwick-in-Elmet (Yorkshire) – The tallest Maypole in Britain at 86ft and one of the few permanent poles left.

VILLAGE LOCKUP - Stamfordham (Northumberland) – Used for locking up drunks long before the formation of the Police Service.

TENANTRY COLUMN "FARMERS FOLLY" - Alnwick – Supposedly the 2nd Duke of Northumberland reduced the farmers rent during a time of hardship. The farmers built the column to commemorate the Duke. When he saw how much they could spend on the column he put their rent up again.

STARLIGHT CASTLE – On Seaton Deleval Estate, near Seaton Sluice – 4 room castle built in a day as the result of wager between Sir Francis Deleval and an actor Samuel Forte. Only a small part remains.

WINTERS GIBBET – On hill South of Elsdon (Northumberland) – Replica of original.

COASTAL WATCH MIRROR – Fulwell (up the hill behind the Windmill)

YE OLDE CROSS – Alnwick – The dirty bottles window, said to carry a curse for anyone who cleans it.

CALE CROSS – Beside old A1 road at North of Blagdon Hall Estate – Originally a Pant (water supply) at the foot of The Side in Newcastle.

GARDENS

TOPIARY FANTAIL - Eglingham (Northumberland) – Beside main crossroads.

TOPIARY LOCO – Ebchester (Co. Durham) – On Ebchester Bank.

THE FOUNTAIN Branxton near Cornhill (Northumberland) – Made by John Fairnington after he retired at the age of 80. Contains 232 gnomes and 150 animals. Open to collect for charity.