Lancaster Civic Vision

Celebrating our Heritage – Enhancing our Environment – Shaping our Future

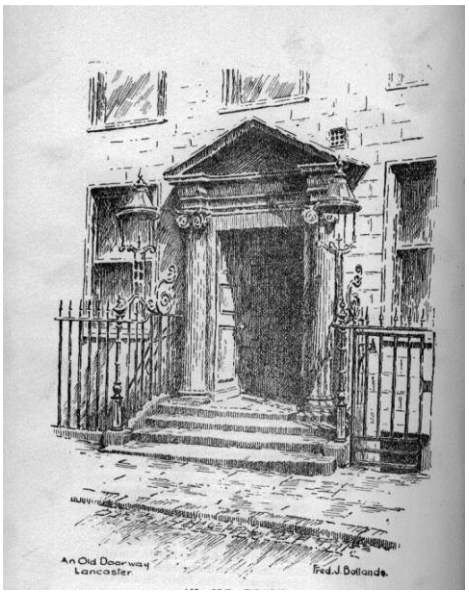
# 76 Church Street, Lancaster

**Bonnie Prince Charlie's Lodgings?**

Church Street is one of the principal Roman roads, the route having existed from the time of the Roman fort now buried beneath the Castle and Priory. At various times it has also been called St Mary Street, referring to the Priory Church's given name.

As you walk away from the Judges Lodging Museum down Church Street you will find No 76 on your left.

At first glance it is just another beautiful Georgian building in a city of Georgian buildings. You should never take anything at face value. On the back wall is a date stone of 1637. This, therefore, is a Jacobean mansion which has been converted into a Georgian town house. Intriguingly, the cellars are created from the partial demolition of two medieval houses.



The Jacobean house was originally built by Thomas and Mary Rippon. Thomas was born in 1590 and was Mayor of Lancaster from 1652 to 1654. He was one of only 16 people who paid taxes in 1641. We do not know when he died but his wife died in 1666.

The house passed to Henry Baldwin who is thought to have married the Rippon's daughter. He died in 1676 and his widow is mentioned in a famous local history "William Stout's Autobiography" as "entertaining the Judges".

The story of the house disappeared from view for a period. It was not included in a list of properties damaged in the great fire of 1698 and only reappeared in 1723 when it was owned by Edmond Cole who lived at New Hall, today's Judges Lodging Museum.

On the 23rd March Cole sold the property to a barrister, Oliver Marton. The price was £1150.

Oliver married twice and produced four sons and three daughters. He must be credited with the conversion of the house. The frontage was transformed by the addition of ashlar stone tiles with new shaped windows.

This must have been when the date stone was moved – 1637 being totally out of keeping with appearance. The internal panelling from that conversion still exist in the front right- hand room, the rear room and all the rooms on the first floor.

Mysteriously, right in the middle of the building is a room still panelled with Jacobean oak. Unfortunately, in recent years, the panelling has been painted over.

To the right of the front door is a link extinguisher. This refers to the days when the gentry travelled by sedan chair. They were accompanied by a link boy who carried a lighted torch, or link, which was extinguished on arrival. It is the only one left in Lancaster.

Oliver bought the land on the opposite side of Church Street. Here he built his coach-house and created a formal garden. In or about 1739 he built a summerhouse, known today as "The Music Room". He died in January 1745.

The house passed to his son, Edward, who became MP for Lancaster in 1747.




We need to turn at this point to the curiously worded Heritage Plaque on the front wall. Was this building occupied by Bonnie Prince Charlie when he arrived in Lancaster in November 1745?

The State Papers Domestic held at the National Archives at Kew contain a document reference SP/36/77 – Information of Thomas Clark, Lancaster, 3 January 1746. This document states:-

"The Prince slipped away to his quarters in the house of a Mr Edward Martin (sic) in or near Church Street, where he was visited by Alderman William Bryer."

This writer's opinion is that the Prince crossed the old bridge and arrived at the top of Church Street. No 76 was only recently refaced and looked impressive. Wouldn't the leader of an invading army choose the best looking building to choose to stay in?

Edward Marton died, unmarried, in 1758 and was succeeded by his youngest brother, also named Oliver.

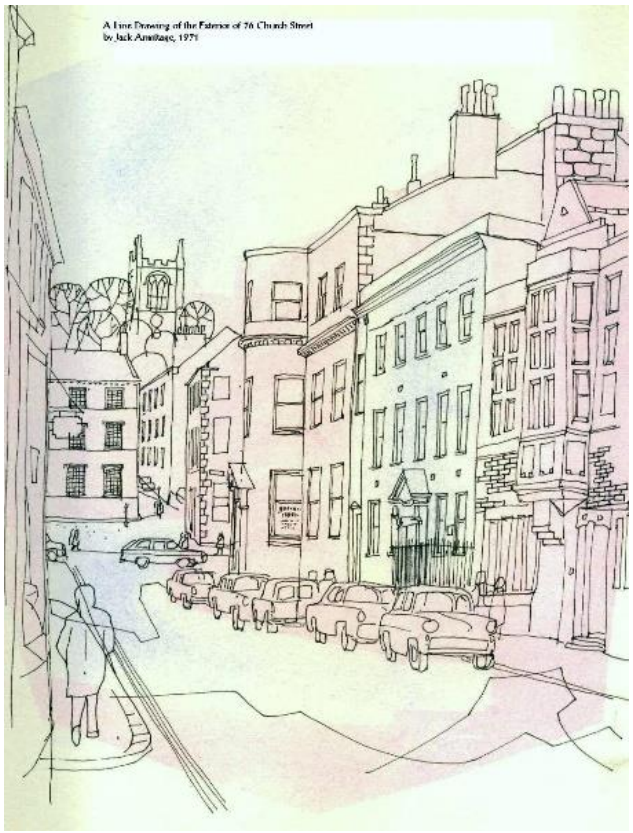
Oliver, being the youngest of four sons, had entered the Church and was appointed Vicar of Lancaster in 1767. He is credited with the next level of alterations to the building.

The left-hand side of the house, ground-floor corridor, stairs and first floor corridor are panelled in mahogany, installed by the famous furniture manufacturers, Gillows. The staircase was also designed and installed by Gillows. The house contained the largest known amount of Gillow mahogany panelling in the Country. On the first floor is a small ante-room containing a mahogany cupboard used for storing wigs on their stands.

Oliver was very acquisitive and built up a large portfolio of land and properties around the City and Lune Valley. Capernwray Hall, Borwick Hall, Thurland Castle, farms in Heysham and Middleton, properties in China Lane (Street), Market Street, land in Penny Street, Haverbreaks, and all the way up the valley were owned at one time or another.

His marriage to Jane Edwardes produced two sons, Oliver and George Richard. Unfortunately, young Oliver was diagnosed as a lunatic and cared for under a trust. He died in 1843.

On 1st November 1790, Oliver wrote his last Will and Testament. He appointed John Fenton Cawthorne (Fenton Street and Cawthorne Street), Thomas Greene and Antony Atkinson as his trustees.



Oliver had moved from the house by this time and was living at Capernwray Hall. The property was occupied by Anthony Atkinson. He died in 1794.

In June 1797, the house was sold to Robert Addison, John Park and John Lewthwaite. The dee does not mention the land on the South side of Church Street as this had been sold previously. John Park was a solicitor in partnership with Lewthwaite. Lewthwaite became the Town Clerk of Lancaster.

John Park bought out his co-owners in 1802. In 1803 he became the secretary for the Local Volunteers raised to combat the threat of invasion by Napoleon. He became Mayor of Lancaster in 1814.

He died sometime before 1829 when the property was transferred to his brother, James Park. The property was converted into flats.

In 1883 the Lancaster Conservative Club was formed. Samuel James Harris was a Director of Gillows and was Treasurer of the newly formed Club. He purchased the property for £1800 and leased it to the Club. That same year he was elected Mayor of Lancaster.

The Club continued to occupy the building until 2000 when the Club ceased trading.

It is now in the ownership of two local business owners. Long may it continue as one of the gems of Lancaster.

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**John conducts regular tours of 76 Church Street. To learn when future tours will occur and to book a place please contact him by email at:** [reganjf@outlook.com](mailto:reganjf@outlook.com)