Lancaster Civic Vision

Celebrating our Heritage – Enhancing our Environment – Shaping our Future

JUBILEE TOWER

Lancaster Civic Vision Guide 101

Throughout the nineteenth century several landowners built towers or viewing platforms on their land in places – high on hillsides, summits or ridges – where there was a spectacular view of the local landscape: the wider and more distant the view the better.

Lancaster's example is Jubilee Tower. The Jubilee it commemorated was Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee in 1887. Other local celebrations included a beacon lit on the top of nearby Clougha, parties, processions and thanksgiving services.



Sunrise at Jubilee Tower (Source: Ian Greene)

The Tower is a plain, stone structure 3.87 metres square and 4.5 metres high with a stone staircase up to the flat top, which is surrounded by a crenellated wall. There are no doors or windows in the outer walls. The mason was a local man, Mr Gifford.

There is an Ordnance Survey benchmark on the Tower surveyed at 286 metres (938 feet) above sea level. At its best, with the clearest visibility, the view west is spectacular, including the Fylde and Heysham – and to Snaefell on the Isle of Man on the best days (around 160 kilometres (100 miles) away.



Snow at jubilee Tower (Source: Ian Greene)

To the north-west is Black Coombe in Cumbria beyond Barrow-in-Furness, and to the north you can see the hills of Furness and the Lake District. To the east the land rises from a little over 286 metres at the Tower to the top of the Forest of Bowland at Ward Stone and Clougha at around 460–560 metres (1509–1837 feet). The Tower lies south-east of Lancaster along Langthwaite and Wyresdale Roads past the village of Quernmore (postcode LA2 0QP for satnav) on the way to the Trough of Bowland. There is a car park by the Tower.

There is a commemorative plaque, reading "This tower was erected by James Harrison of Hare Appletree in commemoration of the Jubilee of Her Majesty Queen Victoria ANNO DOMINI 1887" (see the picture below). The Tower is often incorrectly dated to Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee in 1897.



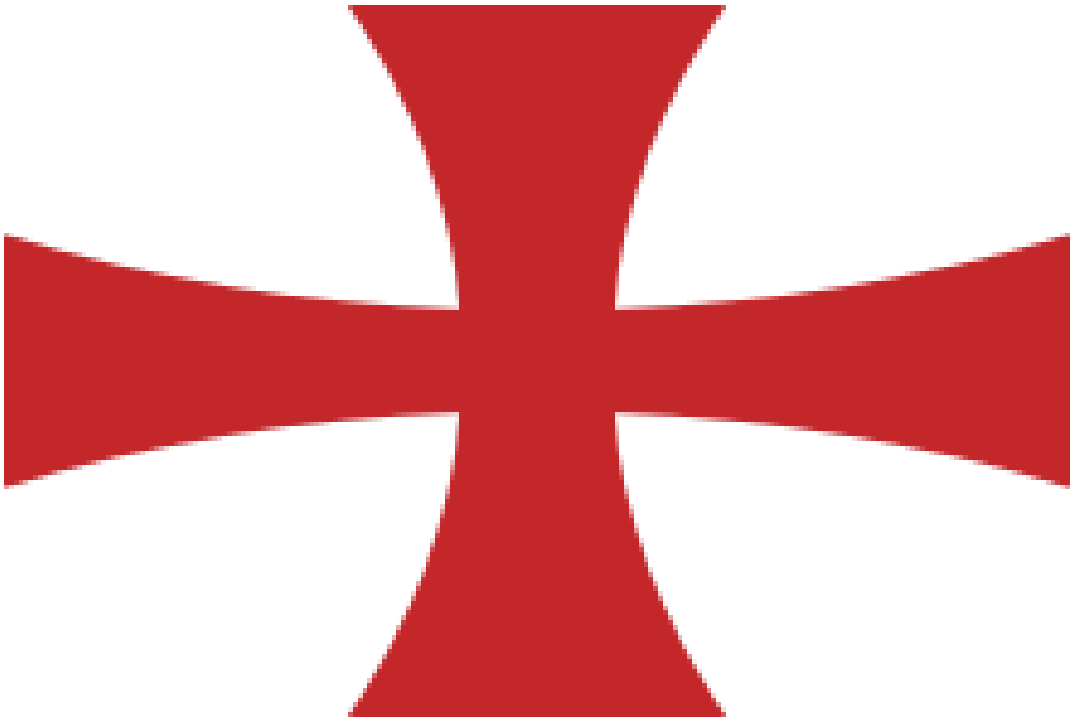
The tower lies on the boundary of the parishes of Quernmore and Over Wyresdale and there is a commemorative boundary stone dated 1887 by the roadside near the Tower (see the picture below).



James Harrison came from Batty Hill Farm in Cockerham and moved to Liverpool where he joined a shipping firm. In 1853, with his brother, he founded the successful T&J Harrison shipping line

which operated until 2000 based in Liverpool. His main home was The Laund in Wallasey near Liverpool. He also bought an estate in Kent.

Locally he lived at Hare Appletree House very near the Tower and he owned land in the parishes of Quernmore and Ellel. He was a philanthropic gentleman, not only building the Tower but also giving his farm tenants a rent reduction during the agricultural depression in 1879, donating a painting to an art gallery in Liverpool and giving money for the care of poor children in that city. He died in 1891.



The emblem of the Harrison shipping line (1853–2000)

Much of the land east of the Tower is marked as public access land on the Ordnance Survey map (1:25,000, OL41). This private land is also used for grouse shooting. Near the Tower and the road are the Old and New Gauge Basins, used to regulate the pressure of water coming off Clougha for Lancaster's original public water supply – see Guide 76 for more details on Lancaster's water supply.



The Moon over Jubilee Tower (Source: Ian Greene)

In 1973 the then owner of Hare Appletree, Mr Adam Leigh, gave the Tower to Lancashire County Council who built the car park, and by 1977 they had repaired the structure. During these works an ancient burial was uncovered and the oak coffin dating to around AD 600–700 can now be seen in Lancaster City Museum.

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