

# **An Introduction to the Architectural History of Towneley Hall**

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TOWNELEY HALL  
ART GALLERY AND MUSEUMS

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The dramatic and rather sombre impression conveyed by Towneley Hall today is the result of a long and extremely complicated architectural history. A close inspection of the walls will reveal blocked-up doorways, false windows and changes in the stonework. Inside rooms in various styles from 16th century gothic to the heavy classicism of the early 19th century bear witness to the many architects and craftsmen who have been involved in the construction and reconstruction of the building. Many of the features that give the building its medieval appearance are deceptive, although traces of 15th century work remain.

This architectural development has not been studied in detail since Whittaker's 'History of Whalley' was published in 1801. Thomas Dunham Whittaker of The Holme in Cliviger was a friend of his neighbour, Charles Towneley, and was able to examine the Towneley collection of documents. The 'History of Whalley' ran into several editions during the 19th century and most later writers have followed Whittaker closely. The authors of the 'Victoria County History of Lancashire' were not able to examine the Towneley documents and, as a result, some errors such as the attribution of Jeffrey Wyatt's early 19th century dining room and drawing room to the early 18th century were perpetuated. Mr. Walter Bennett in his 'History of Burnley' included some interesting information on the architecture of Towneley and acknowledged the many problems connected with Towneley Hall.

The Towneley Papers have now been deposited at the Lancashire County Record Office in Preston by Lord O'Hagan and are readily available for inspection. There is a collection of 83 plans and drawings at Towneley Hall and Mr. Simon Towneley has a small collection of original plans and documents. It is on the basis of an examination of this material that this booklet has been prepared, but it must be stressed that there is still a great deal to be discovered about the architectural history of Towneley Hall. It is hoped that this Introduction will stimulate further research.

## **Acknowledgements**

The staff at the Lancashire County Record Office, in particular Mr. Smith, have been most generous with both help and loans.

Mr. Simon Towneley has kindly allowed us to examine and to borrow from his collection.

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Valuable information and advice has been given by Mrs. Barbara Hutton, Dr. Ivan Hall, Mr. Howard Colvin, Mr. Ken Spencer and the staff of Burnley Reference Library.

The illustrations are reproduced by kind permission of the following: Figs. 2 & 3, Mr. Simon Towneley; Fig. 5, the Lancashire County Record Office; Figs. 6, 7, 8, 9, & 10, National Buildings Record.

The cover shows an engraving by James Basire from Whittaker's 'History of Whalley' after J. M. W. Turner's painting of Towneley Hall, 1798.

## The Early History of Towneley Hall

The Towneleys of Towneley were an ancient Catholic family tracing their origins back to the Lay Deans of Whalley. The first mention of Towneley is in a deed of about 1200 in which Roger de Lacy granted to his son-in-law Geoffrey, son of the Dean of Whalley, two oxgangs of land 'in Tunleia' [1]. A small house or hunting lodge may have been built at this time to the south of the present site on Castle Hill. Writing in about 1800, Dr. Whittaker stated 'on the eastern and precipitous side of which are the obscure remains of trenches, which on the three more accessible quarters have been demolished by the plough' [2]. No traces of these trenches are visible today and there have been no excavations on the site. It has been suggested that the timbers of nearby Whitehouse Barn came from the old house. The barn is of cruck construction, but the timbers show no sign of having been re-used.

It was in the time of Richard of Towneley, who died in 1295, that Towneley became the permanent home of the family. In 1395 there is a record of a Mass celebrated in the house of John Towneley, probably in the house on Castle Hill [3].

The present building was probably begun in about 1400. There have been so many alterations and reconstructions that little of the original structure remains apart from the coursed sandstone rubble wall on the courtyard side of the Southeast wing. This wall is 6 feet thick and, at one end, contains a spiral staircase. It also has a perpendicular gothic two light window and an unusual door formed out of the two halves of the millstone grit depressed arch which must have formed the fireplace of the medieval great hall. This door leads into the vaulted rooms of the lower ground floor. These are partially underground, but a half hidden window at the ground level of the south side of the South East wing and a mullion window on the right of the entrance porch, now concealed by the kitchen passage, reveal that the ground level around the Hall has been raised at some time, possibly in the 18th century. In the North West wing, an internal wall running behind the kitchen and family dining room and between the two art galleries is also 6 feet thick and was formerly an external wall of the medieval building. The floor level was on the level of the kitchen which has always been on this site, although it was originally larger, measuring 29 feet by 23 feet, the wooden partition walls dating from the 18th century. The kitchen retains the two wide arches for the open fires originally used for cooking.

The medieval building consisted of a great hall with two projecting wings. The great hall had a balcony and an entrance into a cross passage at one end. This arched doorway can be seen at the base of the Staircase tower to the left of the present main entrance.

There was also a fourth wing forming a quadrangle. Dr. Whittaker, writing in about 1800 describes it, 'but it was until a century ago a complete quadrangle, with four turrets at the angles.' According to Whittaker, this fourth side was demolished in the time of Charles Towneley who owned Towneley Hall from 1706 to 1711. In Mr. Simon Towneley's collection, there are two plans probably dating from about 1700 which show this quadrangular building (Figs.2 & 3). They show the fourth wing to have been 126 feet long by 27 feet wide with a central gatehouse containing an entrance 8 feet wide. This gatehouse projected from the wing and appears to have had an oriel window on the upper floor.

The linking of this fourth wing on these plans appears very awkward, and Mr. John Smith has suggested that the chapel may have been originally built as a separate structure, which was later joined to the Southeast wing. At a later date, another building may have been built to complete the quadrangle and to form a gatehouse. This is what happened at Smithills Hall, near Bolton, which was at one time a quadrangle house.

These plans also show various other entrances to the building in the South East wing and the North West wing, all of which have now been blocked up, but traces of the original openings can be seen in the masonry. Two spiral staircases are shown; a third in the courtyard wall which still remains is not shown. It has been suggested that this was a secret staircase which would explain why this staircase does not appear in any plans of the Hall, but the suggestion that it provided access from the chapel is not borne out by the plans. In the medieval building, there would be only stone spiral staircases and traces of a large spiral staircase can be seen in the curved walls of the upper part of the right hand Staircase tower behind the large 17th century oak door at the head of the stairs.

The diagonal buttresses are not shown in these plans: they were probably added by Richard Towneley in 1726 and William Towneley included one on his extension in about 1736. They were strengthened in the early 19th century by Jeffry Wyatt, who also added the turrets for both decorative and practical effect; the turrets served as chimneys. Jeffry Wyatt added most of the battlements. J. M. W. Turner's view of Towneley Hall painted in 1798 shows that only the Staircase towers then had battlements, the three wings had solid parapets, although two possibly less accurate distant views painted by George Barret in the 1760s shows the towers with solid parapets and the wings with battlements.

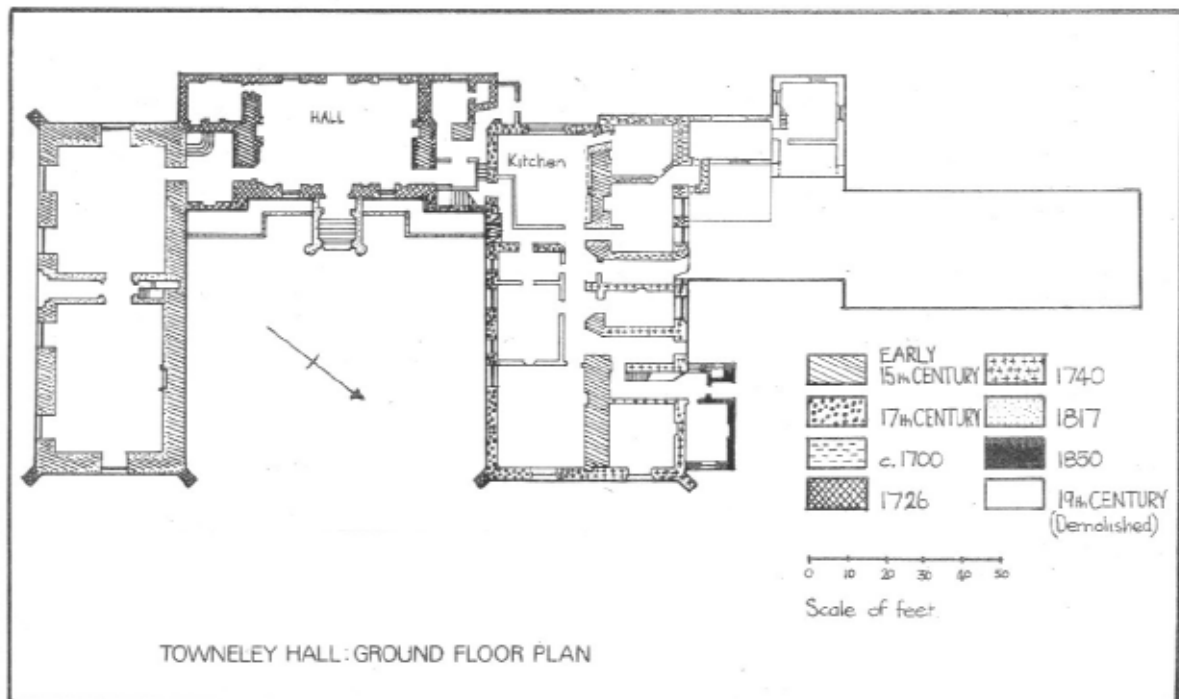


Fig.1. Plan of Towneley Hall

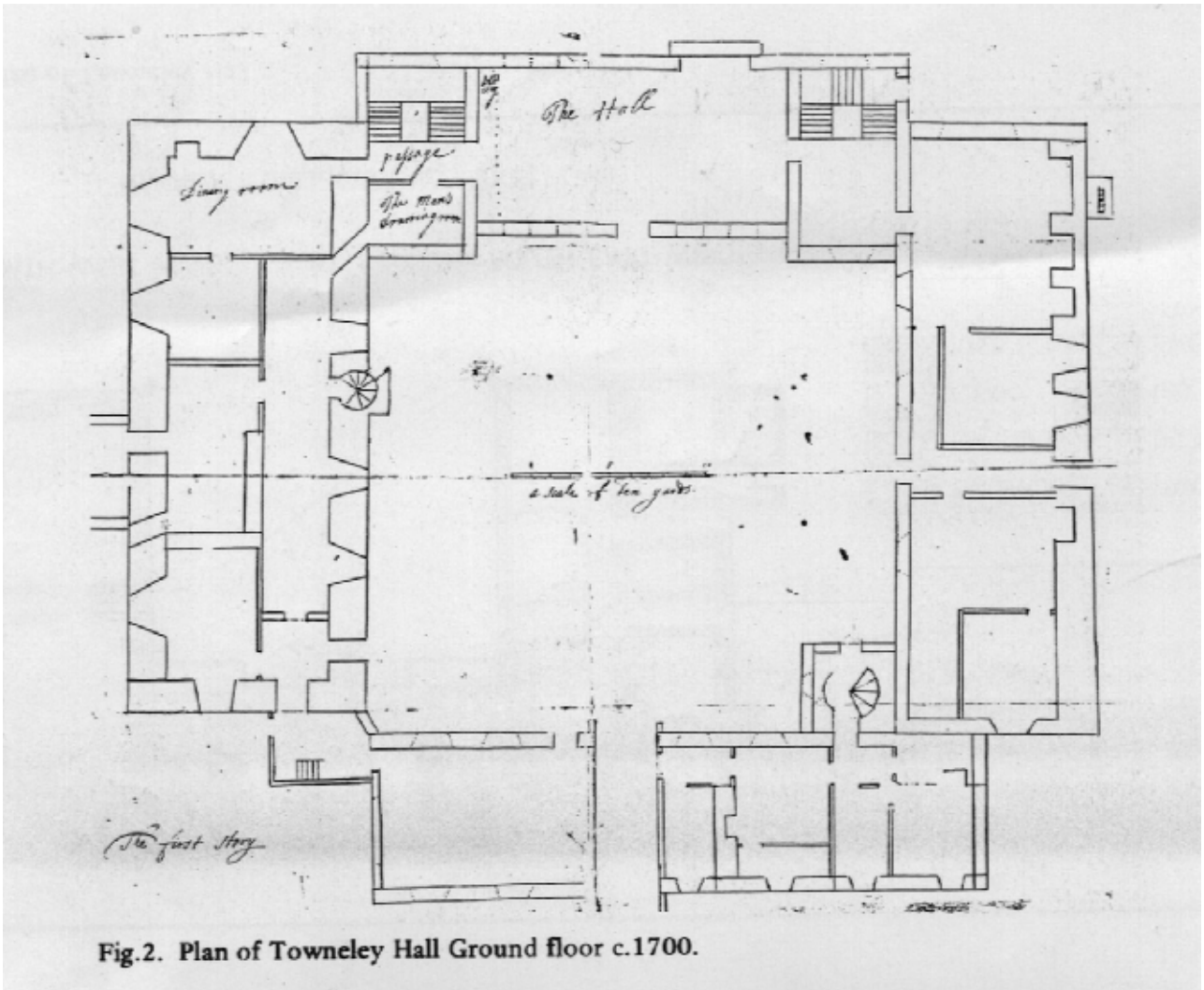


Fig.2. Plan of Towneley Hall Ground floor c.1700.

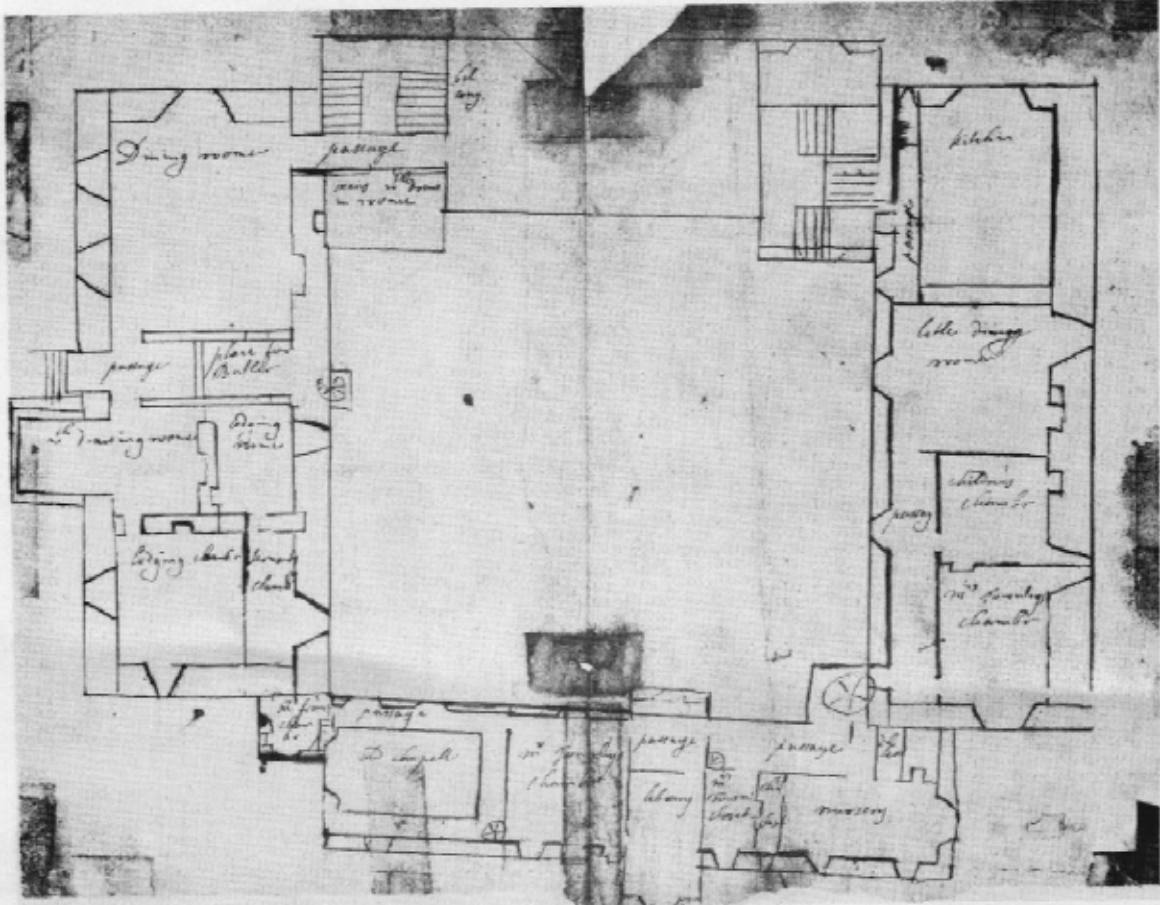


Fig.3. Plan of Towneley Hall First floor c.1700.

## The Chapel

There has been a chapel at Towneley since as early as the 13th century as Walter the Chaplain of "Tunlay" is mentioned in early deeds [4]. According to the Calendar of Patent Rolls, Mass was celebrated in the house of John of Towneley in 1395, and John Towneley obtained permission to build an oratory (a small chapel) "where Mass might be celebrated" in 1434 [5]. The area of the walled garden is known as "Chapel Lea" and the first Ordnance Survey map marks the site of a chapel in the woods behind the hall.

The present chapel was probably built as a separate building by Sir John Towneley (1473-1541) after 1515. A stone coat of arms which is now in the servants' dining room was formerly on the outside wall of the chapel; it bears the initials of Sir John Towneley and the Towneley arms and those of his first wife, Isabella Pilkington of Gaytford, whom he married in 1480 at the age of seven. The original site of this chapel was on the fourth wing and, when this wing was demolished in the early 18th century, the material from the old chapel was used to rebuild the chapel as an extension to the Northwest wing on its present site. Whittaker describes:

" . . . a chapel and a sacristy with a library over it. These last were removed by Charles Towneley about a century ago, and placed with religious reverence in their present situation, the stonework, wainscot, and everything to which the effects of consecration could be supposed to extend having been preserved entire."

This rather unusual concern for gothic woodwork at that period is explained by the family's firmly held Catholic faith and reverence for their ancient chapel. The library was originally a small room above the gatehouse which was rebuilt above the nave of the chapel when it was moved and was destroyed in 1924 when the Edward Stocks Massey Gallery was built.

Sir John Towneley's chapel was of the same dimensions as the present chapel. The chancel with its panelling and blind gothic tracery and running vine border dates from Sir John's time, as does the ceiling of the nave with its carved wooden roundels bearing initials of members of his family. The following have been identified:

- I. T. - Sir John Towneley
- C. T. - His second son, Charles
- E. T. - Elizabeth, wife of Charles his son (Dispensation  
for the marriage dated 20th December, 1515)
- M. B. - Margaret Banastre of Altham, his daughter
- B. T. - Barnard Towneley, LL.D., his uncle
- L. T. - Lawrence Towneley, his uncle

The beautiful panelled oak door to the chapel with its carved panels of strapwork, fruit and foliage, bears the initials of John Towneley and his wife and cousin, Mary Towneley, who married in 1556. Above the sacristy door, the arms and initials of Richard Towneley (1566-1628) and his wife Jane, daughter of Ralph Assheton of Lever, and the date 1601 are carved. The left half of the shield with eight quarterings shows the connections of the Towneley Family and the right half with five quarterings shows the Assheton Family. The sparrow hawk is the Towneley crest and the figure of a man is the Assheton crest.

The remaining oak panelling dates from the 17th century except for the panelling behind the altarpiece where there were two windows in the 18th century. The early 16th century Flemish altarpiece was installed in the chapel by Charles Towneley (1737-1805) in the late 18th century. Charles Towneley also created a tribune or family gallery by removing the panels behind the gothic tracery of the nave and taking part of the library and two narrow passages above to make a gallery. There were, at this time, two small windows at the end of these passages. This panelling must have been replaced at a later date as there is now only a squint hole through one panel which is reached from behind the end of the Edward Stocks Massey Gallery. Apparently, the reason for building the tribune was that the seven benches in the nave below were filled with staff and Catholics from the surrounding area who entered through the bell tower. With the building of the Catholic Church in Burnley in 1846, the Towneley chapel would not be so crowded and there would be no need for the tribune.

The original altar rail is now in the Towneley Chapel in St. Peter's Church, Burnley.



## Inventories

Unfortunately there are no known early plans or paintings of Towneley Hall, but there are several inventories in the County Record Office which list the contents of the house room by room. The earliest of these is a probate record of the goods of Richard Towneley dated 1628 which lists goods in the following rooms (DDTO K/35/ 1): -

Brue house	The chamber next to Middleton's
Larder and kiching	chamber
The olde buttery betwixt the	Mr. G's chamber
hall and kitchin	The chamber next Mr. Winnell's
The Hall	chamber
The other Larder	Thomas Winnell's chamber
The old Buttery	The Chappel chamber
Servants one chamber	The yellow chamber
The house	The Little chamber
The sord house	The chamber within the little
The Chappel	chamber
The Porters Lodge	The chamber on the Dairy house
The gatehouse	My Mrs. chamber
The Next chamber	The chamber within my Mrs. chamber
The dining chamber	The chamber and the dairy house
The middle chamber	The dininge chamber
The white chamber	The old Buttery chamber
The same	The Inner chamber
Middleton's chamber	The house chamber
	The little gallery

It is difficult to relate these rooms to the present structure as there have been so many changes; there seem to have been at least twenty "chambers" or bedrooms. The gatehouse with its porter's lodge on the fourth side is mentioned as is the great hall. It is interesting to note that two dining chambers are mentioned, indicating that by this period the great hall had ceased to be used as an all-purpose living room by all the household and the family now dined in the newly built small dining room on the North West wing. However, the hall still retained a "chair table in ye head of ye hall" and "two boards (tables) in the side of the hall with 2 forms". The second "dining chamber" was evidently the bedroom above the dining room. Two butteries are mentioned; these would be rooms for storing beer as opposed to pantries which were for food. The "brue house" or brew house was replaced by the present building (now the Museum of Local Crafts and Industries) which was built in 1790.

Two 18th century inventories are easier to relate to the building. They are not dated but they appear to date from the early part of the century after the fourth wing was removed and before the additions made by William Towneley in the years 1736-1741 (DDTO Box 4).

The first inventory lists the following rooms:

Gallery	Mistres Roome
First Roome	Pantry
2nd Roome	Staire Case
3rd Roome	Chiching and Larder
4th Roome	Brewhouse and Sellar Roome
Roome at the head of the Stairs	Over the Pantery
Garrett over the Hall	Over Pantery Chamber
2nd garrett over the Hall	Chappell
Maydes Chamber	Darye
Workmens Garrett	Passage and Common Hall
Kiching Chamber	Wash House
next Roome	Garden
Dressing Roome	Stable
End Roome	Livery mens Roome
Store Chamber	in the Great halle
Prists Roome	in the parlor
Liberary	Account of Plate
Nussery	in the Stewards roome
Passage	in the Closett
Dineing Roome	Spice Closett
Drawing Roome	
Closet	

In this inventory, we can identify the long gallery with four bedrooms off it and the small room at the head of the cantilever staircase. Four garret rooms over the entrance hall are described, one of which held "bowls for bowling green", the next contained cheeses the next was the "maydes chamber" containing two beds and finally the "workmen's garrett" containing four beds. On the top floor of the North West wing, where the art galleries now are, was the "Kiching Chamber" above the kitchen which was originally two storeys high throughout, and four other bedrooms including the "Prists Roome", none of which was as well furnished as the bedrooms on the other wing. This floor also contained a nursery, a store chamber and the library which was above the chapel nave. On the floor below was the small dining room with, next to it, a drawing room; then a closet with a bed and the "Mistres Roome" also with a bed. These three rooms were in what is now known as the lecture room next to the family dining room. On the ground floor of this wing was the pantry which was probably beneath the oak stairs, with the room over the pantry (a bedroom) and the room over the "Pantery Chamber" (another bedroom) above it. The kitchen with the larder next to it in its present position is mentioned next, then the brew house which may have been an out building and a cellar. The chapel was probably entered from an external staircase and then a dairy is mentioned which was also probably an out building. Coming back into the building, the passage and common hall are listed. This was the servants' hall in its present position on the ground floor of the Northwest wing. A passage once ran through the middle of the wing and the blocked-up door can be seen in the centre of the courtyard wall of this wing. Moving outside again the stable is listed. The only room listed in the two floors below the long gallery in the SouthEast wing is the livery

men's room with three beds. The great hall with only one chair in its is listed and the parlour which was evidently the small small room off the hall which is now the office. Finally, the stewards' room and a "closett" and a "spice closett" are mentioned.

The second inventory is apparently a little later in date as the great hall now has "a large billiard table" and "5 new chairs". Some of the names of the rooms have changed, but their contents have not changed very much. The two rooms above the pantry become the "broun study" and the "little nussery"; the room next to the kitchen chamber is named as the "master room". Once again the only room named on the two floors below the long gallery is the livery mens' room.

## The 17th Century

The first major alterations to the medieval building took place in the 17th century. One of the Towneley documents states that Richard Towneley (1566-1628) "built the great building on the North side of the house where the kitchen is. It was finished about 1626." [6]. What he seems to have done is to demolish and rebuild the courtyard wall, reducing the width of the wing but retaining the thick medieval wall as the outer wall of the wing. Most of the mullion windows in the top floor of this new wall are original and some retain their original quarries, the second floor windows were replaced in the 19th century and the ground floor windows have 18th century sash windows. The extent of this wing can be seen on the quadrangle plans. (Figs. 2 & 3). The kitchen was altered but it retained its two storey height throughout and there was an external chimney at the back. There was a passage through the wing and the outline of the door to this can be seen in the centre of the courtyard wall. On the middle floor, the little dining room with its unusual diagonal panelling was installed. The date of Richard Towneley's death is above what was once a window and is now an alcove, and a contemporary still life is set in the panelling above the fireplace. There is some similar panelling at Norbury Hall in Derbyshire, and at Browsholme Hall near Bashall Eaves, although this may be a later copy of the panelling at Towneley. The next rooms which are now the lecture room were the children's chamber, Mrs. Towneley's chamber and a passage. On the top floor there was a bedroom known as the kitchen chamber above the kitchen, another bedroom, a maid's room and some smaller rooms and passages.

The two staircase wells were also probably partially rebuilt and their mullion windows installed. The oak staircase was built and a staircase may have been built in the other tower, although this has now been replaced. In addition to these major alterations, many of the lesser rooms have 17th century oak doors and cockshead hinges.

The long gallery and its bedrooms also date from the 17th century, but we have no documentary evidence of the actual date of its creation. The gallery itself is 84 feet long with early 17th century rectangular panelling with provision for family portraits in the upper part of the panelling. An illustration of the gallery in 1836 shows these portraits in situ and the gallery furnished with tall late 17th century single chairs. (Fig. 5). Although the portraits are no longer there, their titles can be read on the panelling. In about 1802 Charles Towneley paid a painter £ 12-8s-0d "for lettering pictures" [7]. The remaining inscriptions record members of the family living in the 17th and 18th centuries and include some from Stella in Durham of members of the Tempest family which were installed by Peregrine Towneley (1762-1846). In 1846 there were 92 paintings on the long gallery and they included works by Cosway, Dobson and Lely [8]. The portraits were removed when the Hall was sold to Burnley Corporation in 1901 and are now dispersed.

At one end of the gallery the panelling opens to reveal the remains of a spiral staircase in the outer wall. This was blocked off in the late 18th century and was floored to make a small closet. The lower part of the staircase is revealed behind a window in what was once a doorway onto the courtyard.

The gallery at Towneley is rather unusual in having bedrooms off it. This floor was used as bachelors' wing or guest wing and could be closed off when not in use, the family sleeping in the other wing. Three of the rooms have numbers above the door. The first room is panelled in late 17th century oak panelling with a bolection moulding around the fireplace and a mirror inset in the panelling. The cast iron grate, along with most of the grates in the Hall, is Victorian. On the right of the fireplace, part of the panelling opens to reveal a closet. The next room (Room IV) contains oak

panelling from Lymore House, Montgomery, which was built in 1675. It was installed here by the Corporation in 1939. Between rooms IV and V there is a door in the panelling to a narrow maid's room, which is now used as a costume store. Room V is panelled in late 17th century oak panelling with an elaborate frieze and door surround. The painting of Christ was originally set into the panelling above the fireplace. Room VI was originally two rooms, which were made into one and panelled by the Corporation in the 1920s.

The windows and ceiling of the long gallery were renewed by Peregrine Towneley in the early 19th century. The panelled plaster ceiling was based on the oak ceiling of the chancel in the chapel and the new windows were designed by Jeffry Wyatt. The ceiling was restored and lowered by Burnley Corporation.

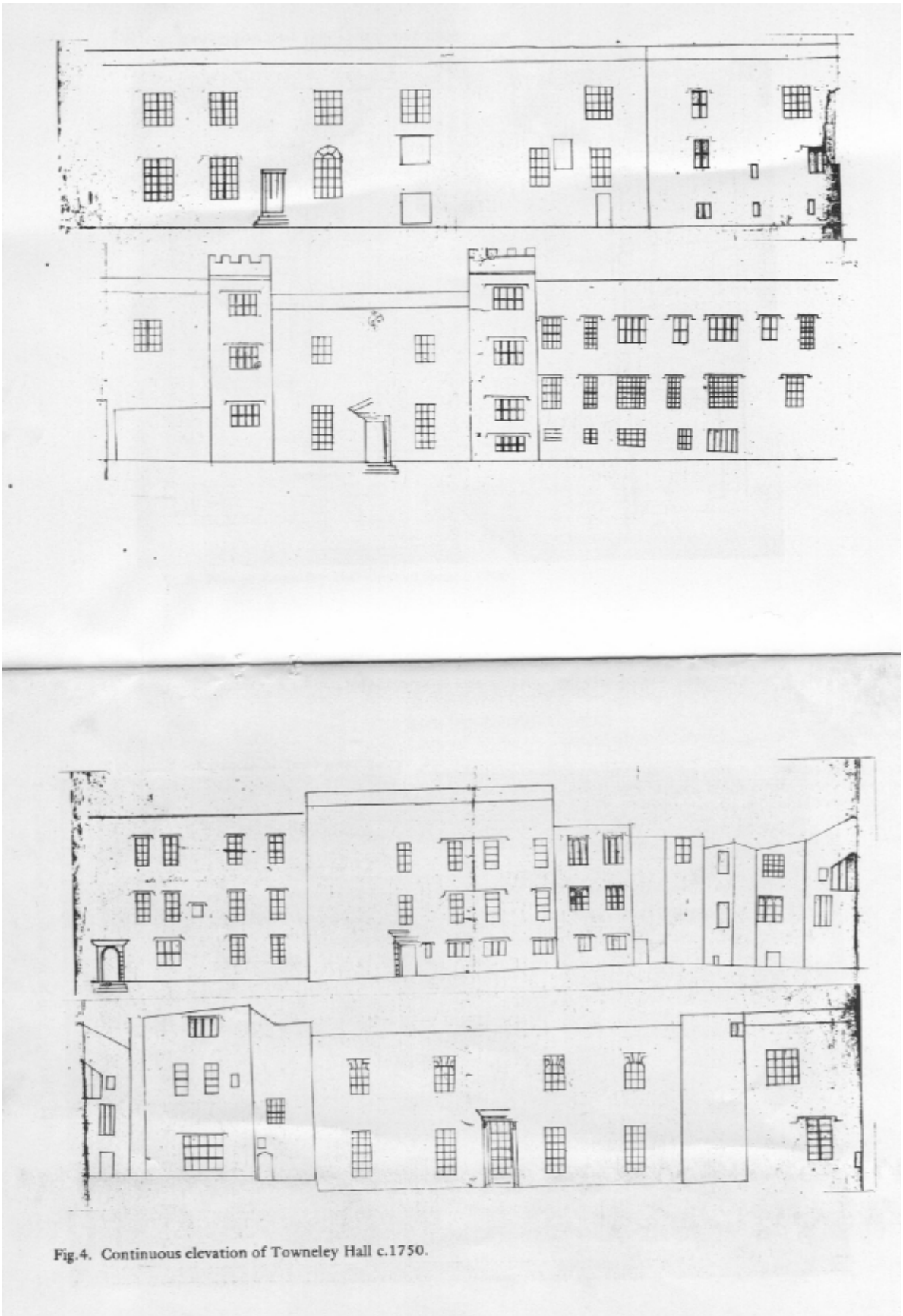


Fig.4. Continuous elevation of Towneley Hall c.1750.

## The Early 18th Century

Richard Towneley inherited Towneley Hall from his father in 1712 and, in the 1720s, began to purchase new furniture and to alter the house. The early 18th century was a period of great building and the medieval house with its small windows and oak furniture and panelling must have seemed dark and old fashioned. No doubt, Richard Towneley thought it was wise to allow the upheaval of the 1715 Jacobite rebellion, in which his brother was involved, to be forgotten before embarking on major expenditure.

In 1718, he was purchasing chairs and a couch bed covered in gilded leather and, in 1721, he bought two large walnut sconces with glass arms. (DDTO Q/10/2). His major alterations to the house took place in the late 1720s; a great baroque entrance hall with elaborate plasterwork decoration, replaced the medieval great hall, and a regular facade in the style of James Gibbs was imposed on the rear of the hall. New windows and a central doorway with rusticated pilasters and a broken pediment were made on the courtyard front.

The entrance to the hall had, in fact, been moved from its original position at the left-hand end of the hall some time earlier. The cantilever staircase, a small parlour off the great hall (now the office), the vestibule outside the chapel and the corner fireplace in the parlour next to the little dining room were installed at this time, and there may have been some alterations to the ground floor of the South East wing, but two subsequent alterations have destroyed these.

It has been suggested that the work may be by James Gibbs (1682-1754) himself, but the one surviving architect's drawing is not in his hand [9]. In fact, the Gibbs style was particularly suitable for use by provincial builders, with his simple system of measurement by cubes. Gibbs, in his "Book of Architecture" published in 1728 states in the introduction that its purpose was to "be of use to such gentlemen as might be concerned in building, especially in the remote parts of the country" and he adds that the designs may be executed "by any workman that understands lines."

The work at Towneley may well have been executed by a competent northern builder such as William Thornton, Junior of York. At one time, the Towneleys had a town house in York and Richard Towneley's grandfather had died at York in 1707, so there would be no difficulty in obtaining the services of a reliable builder from York. William Thornton was the second son of a joiner and architect and carried on his father's business after his death in 1721. He subscribed to Gibbs' book of architecture in 1728.

While the name of the architect or builder remains uncertain, the plasterers are well documented; the work was undertaken by Francesco Vassalli and his assistant, Martino Quadri. In Mr. Simon Towneley's collection, there is a receipt for 25 gns. from Richard Towneley signed by Quadri and dated September, 1730, a bill for all the work totalling £185-11-4d signed by Vassalli and dated 1731, and a letter from Vassalli to Richard Towneley written from Aske Hall near Richmond in Yorkshire dated 7th December, 1730, in which he apologises for the delay in the work at Towneley.

Stuccoists at this time were apparently allowed considerable freedom by builders and architects. Vassalli had worked at a number of large country houses such as Sutton Scarsdale in Derbyshire in 1724 and Ditchley in Oxfordshire, designed by James Gibbs in 1725, and in 1730 he was working at Aske. He went on to work at Castle Howard. One of the distinctive features about the plasterwork at Towneley is the roundels with their idiosyncratic placing of the heads; these can be compared with work at Mawley Hall in Shropshire, now destroyed, and Lumley Castle in

Durham. Vassalli may have worked at a number of other houses in the Northwest such as the Music Room in Lancaster, Burrow Hall, Lathom Hall, partially demolished, and Knowsley Hall. He may also have worked at Standish Hall near Wigan. Richard Towneley's son William Towneley (1714-1742) married Cecilia, the daughter and heiress of Ralph Standish, in 1736.

It is not surprising that Richard Towneley, as a Catholic and a Jacobite, should have chosen to build in the style of the Catholic, James Gibbs, rather than the Palladian style of Lord Burlington's Circle. For some in the early 18th century, architecture had political connotations; the Palladian style was favoured by the ruling whig landowners, while Tories tended to build in the baroque style of James Gibbs. Gibbs had, in fact, designed the Gothic Temple with its statues of ancient British historical figures as a political statement for the Tory Lord Cobham at Stowe.

The new rooms and facades at Towneley were in the very latest style, but it is interesting to note one surprising anachronism. The rainwater heads bear the initials R. T., the Towneley sparrow hawk crest and the date 1726, together with two old-fashioned split balusters of a type more usually found on oak furniture of the 1660s. The new rooms must have made a startling contrast with the rather sombre exterior and the medieval and 17th century smaller rooms. One is reminded of the contrast of Leoni's Italianate courtyard at Lyme Park with the windswept landscape around it. As Pope commented, many patrons were "proud to catch cold at a Venetian door" [10].

The alterations have not always been admired; Charles Towneley the connoisseur, apparently spoke of the back facade as "gusto scelerato" [11] and, while Whittaker called the great hall "a lofty and luminous room", Henry Taylor writing in 1884 was not so impressed: "Judging from the wealth of the family the great hall is likely to have been one of great magnificence. In the year 1725 however it was gutted and converted into an entrance hall by Richard Towneley and is now a vast and dreary apartment in the so-called Italian style." [12] A local architect, Angelo Waddington, while admiring the decoration of the entrance hall, commented on the "discordant element of Classic Orders" - "infused into the heart of the mansion" [13]. Plans to convert the entrance hall into a smaller dining room with bedrooms above, possibly with gothic decoration, at an estimated cost of £975 were made in 1850-1. The entrance hall is now regarded as the finest early 18th century room in Lancashire [14].

Richard Towneley died in 1735 and was succeeded for a short while by his son, William, who died in 1742. William made an addition to the Northwest wing. In about 1700 his grandfather, Charles Towneley, had rebuilt the chapel and library next to the kitchen at the south end of the wing; William added a stewards' parlour, a small room and a passage, and a spiral staircase next to the servants' hall, with a small bedroom and a dressing-room above and a buttress to balance the buttress on the courtyard side of the existing wing. This left a gap of 7 feet between this new addition and the earlier chapel extension which was filled in fairly soon afterwards, making three narrow rooms. Most of the external features of William Towneley's extension with its tall rectangular windows and entrance to the stewards' room have been obscured by Jeffry Wyatt's alteration of some of the windows in the early 19th century and the addition of a large tower in 1851. However, two of the windows and the impressive door to the stewards' room with its heavy baroque surround and rococo cartouche bearing the Towneley arms and crest and the Standish arms of William's wife, Cecilia, who he married in 1736, were re-used in the new tower. The armorial cartouche is repeated in the Caen stone fireplace in the small dining room which was also installed during the years 1736 to 1742.

At some time after these alterations were made in the 18th century, a drawing showing all the elevations of the Hall in a continuous strip was made (Fig.4). This shows Richard Towneley's main



entrance doorway, William Towneley's entrance to the stewards' room and doors at the northern end of each of the projecting wings. The door onto the passage by the servants' hall is now blocked up, as is the door into the stone spiral staircase on the Southeast wing. There is a door into the room below the chapel and four more windows on the back wall of the chapel. The irregular fenestration, particularly of the Southeast wing, shown on this drawing was to be tidied up by Jeffry Wyatt in the early 19th century. The spiral staircase outside the servants' hall which is shown on the quadrangular plan and the plans of William Towneley's alterations had apparently been removed by this time. This drawing is the earliest representation of the Hall that we have.

## Charles Towneley 1737-1805

It used to be thought that Charles Towneley, the Connoisseur, made no alterations to the hall. If this were the case, it would be surprising in view of his known interest in the extensions to the British Museum at Montague House and his advice to Henry Blundell on the building of a statue rotunda at Ince Blundell. The Towneley Papers reveal that, in fact, Charles Towneley took a great interest in the hall and the estate; he made considerable alterations to the hall and built many new buildings on the estate and was responsible for much planting in the gardens.

Both his parents died when he was young and he was educated in France, taking up his inheritance in about 1758 and apparently spending some years at Towneley where he "planted and improved the property"[15]. He spent the years from 1765 to 1772 in Rome where he formed his celebrated collection of classical statues. On his return to England, he purchased a house in Park St., Westminster (now Queen Anne's gate) for his collection. From this period until the end of his life, he seems to have spent the autumn and sometimes the winter at Towneley, and the rest of the year in London.

In spite of his reputation as a connoisseur, he was also interested in the practical side of running the estate. This was the period of the Agricultural Revolution and the improvements of Thomas Coke of Holkham. In 1795 Towneley's observations on the drainage of land were published in a pamphlet and, in 1800, he was asked by the Board of Agriculture to be President of the newly formed local agricultural society. The Towneley Papers contain many documents in Charles Towneley's hand concerned with crop yields, rentals, planting, fencing and timber felling. In particular, there are a great number of plans and estimates for building and improving farmhouses and farm buildings on the estate in his hand. He made many purchases of land and was particularly concerned to consolidate the estate and, at this time, the Towneley Estate was heavily mortgaged.

The Towneley Papers show that he was concerned to keep household expenditure to a minimum. From June, 1799 to June, 1800, the expenses of the household, housekeeping, gardening and team of 3 saddle horses were £ 1,965, which does not include any sum for maintenance of the building, although £30 was allowed for "Garden seeds, plants, planting". The amount spent on repairs to the hall and estate was £280-19-10 in 1794.

However, although he lived frugally and did not keep a carriage, Charles Towneley did make improvements to the house and the gardens. There are sketches and plans of rooms at Towneley with details of measurements for paper and curtains in his hand, and surviving accounts show that he regularly purchased furniture [16].

The major alteration that he undertook was to the Southeast wing in 1767. The quadrangular plan shows that the first floor contained a dining room at the south end, a long passage 9ft. wide running almost the full length of the wing with a stone spiral staircase projecting from the courtyard wall half way along the wing, and three other rooms. These rooms may have been altered by Richard Towneley in the late 1720s, but no trace of these alterations remain. The new plans were drawn up by the York architect, John Carr, who visited Towneley in March, 1766. A letter from Carr in the Towneley Documents at the County Record Office (DDTO Box 2) states that he gave his "opinion about the Repairs to the roof etc. over the great Hall" and that he "made a Plan of the new Rooms at the end of the Dining Room, and particular drawings in the manner of finishing, the cornice, cieling and moldings for the joyners". Unfortunately, none of these drawings have been located.

The work was carried out by Mr. Butler and Mr. Atkinson, who submitted an estimate totalling £313-18s-6d on April 25th, 1767. From the receipts for payments, the work does not seem to have been finally completed until 1779 and the final bill was paid on April 1st, 1780 (DDTO Box 2).

Plans of this wing drawn by Charles Towneley when he was considering adding a statue rotunda show that the new rooms consisted of two large drawing rooms. According to the estimate, the room at the north end of the wing had two sash windows in the end wall; these can be seen in J. M. W. Turner's view of the hall painted in about 1798. There was an oak dado and mahogany, doors with brass locks, and a plain plaster ceiling with a moulded stucco cornice. The middle drawing room had a large curved alcove and, according to the estimates, an arched window. This room, too, had a moulded cornice, an oak dado and mahogany doors. The dining room was to have two arched sash windows with stone arches on the outside, but these appear as rectangular sash windows on an 18th century elevation. The estimates include a sum for "taking down the old floors stairs levelling filling up the walls". This probably refers to the spiral staircase which projected into the courtyard. The 18th century stonework can be seen to the right of the ivy. Two stone steps and a stone arched doorway remain in the space behind the walls. There is another stone spiral staircase, the lower half of which remains, at the northern end of this wall. At one time, a fairly large door opened onto it from the courtyard and its position can now be seen from the three windows above each other.

No traces of John Carr's alterations now remain. Dr. Ivan Hall has suggested that the rooms would be decorated in a sedate refined version of Robert Adam's neo-classical style. In the mid-1760s, Adam was decorating the interiors of Carr's Harewood House and Carr was just coming under his influence. Dr. Hall suggests the entrance hall at Tabley in Cheshire and the interiors at Constable Burton in Yorkshire as examples of Carr's work in this style. This is supported by the fact that the marble fireplace from the dining room which is now in the red drawing room is in the neo-classical style. Charles Towneley paid Richard Hayward, the sculptor, £50 18s 0d in 1780 as the remainder in full for this fireplace (DDTO 2 "Corresp. & Estate"). Hayward supplied fireplaces to a number of larger country houses, and the one which he supplied for the State boudoir at Kedleston Hall in Derbyshire in 1760 is very similar with the same unusual inlaid columns.

The building of a statue rotunda to house his collection of classical marbles was a cherished project of Charles Towneley's; his collection of sculpture was perhaps the most celebrated of its day. On his return to England in 1772 the collection was housed in his London home in Park St., where it was available to visitors on application. Towneley is depicted, together with what amounts to a visual catalogue of the collection in Zoffany's well-known painting, "Charles Towneley and his friends in the Towneley Gallery, 33 Park St., Westminster", which is now in the Towneley Hall collection. In the late 1760s, William Weddel had employed Robert Adam to add a sculpture gallery to Newby Hall in Yorkshire to house his own collection of classical sculpture. This consisted of three linked rooms, the central one being a top lit rotunda. Charles Towneley would, no doubt, have known of this gallery and his account book (DDTO 2 "Corresp. & Estate") records that, on August 24th, 1783, he paid the architect, Joseph Bonomi, 5 guineas "for copying my sketch of the alterations at Towneley for ye marbles". There are, in the Towneley Hall collection, two plans in Charles Towneley's hand showing the addition of an oval rooms with niches to the south end of the South East wing dating from after John Carr's alterations of 1766. In one plan, the room is shown measuring 32ft. by 23ft. and is designated "Sky light statue room"; in the other plan the room is shown as 36 ft. by 28 ft. Both plans show access to the dining room and to the small

parlour or "smoking room" off the great hall, and semi-circular and rectangular recesses rather similar to those in the circular statue room at Newby Hall.

At the turn of the century, Towneley was helping his friend Henry Blundell, a fellow Catholic, to build a rotunda at his house, Ince Blundell, near Liverpool. Blundell had started to collect marbles in the 1770s, and Towneley and Blundell met in Rome in 1776-7 to purchase marbles from the Villa Mattei and Villa d'Este at Tivoli through the agency of Thomas Jenkins. Blundell built a small rectangular temple in the garden at Ince Blundell in 1775 to house his acquisitions, but it was not until 1801 that he began work on his "Pantheon". Towneley assisted Blundell in purchasing and publishing engravings of his collection and also helped in the creation of the "Pantheon". He tried twice to purchase marble columns on Blundell's behalf in 1801, both times without success. In February, 1801, he wrote to Blundell (DDTO 2 "Corresp. & Estate"), "I hope that it is now your intention, if you undertake this building, to unite it with your principal living rooms on the ground floor of ye house in such a manner that all your marbles may be assembled together with their different classes under safe cover and by convenient access form a part of and be enjoyed along with the handsome ground floor apartment of your mansion". The building was, in fact, originally detached; it was built some 40-ft. east of the house. It is larger than Towneley's intended rotunda, being 48 ft. in diameter, with a large coffered dome and four large alcoves and four smaller alcoves.

In 1804, Charles Towneley, as a trustee of the British Museum, was closely involved in the extensions to Montague House for new antiquity galleries. There are two plans in Towneley's own hand and some correspondence on the matter in the Towneley Papers (DDTO 2 "Corresp. & Estate").

However, Charles Towneley died in 1805 without building his own statue gallery. The reason was probably financial. The Towneley Estate was heavily mortgaged and, towards the end of his life, he had been concerned to consolidate the estate for his eventual heir, his nephew Peregrine, and had purchased several farms in the Burnley area. In a codicil to his will dated thirteen days before his death, Charles Towneley specified that his brother or his uncle should, within a specified time, expend a certain sum to exhibit his collection at his mansion at Towneley, or acquire a house in London for that purpose. Eventually, the collection was purchased in two parts by the British Museum, where a Towneley Gallery was formed.

Towards the end of his life in 1803, Charles Towneley was concerned with the rebuilding of the Towneley Chapel at St. Peter's Church in Burnley, writing in July to his uncle, John Towneley, "our poor old family chancel is wholly destroyed" (DDTO Box 13). At this time he was also creating a family gallery or tribune above the nave of the chapel at Towneley Hall. On 18th October (DDTO Box 13) he wrote "I have nearly completed a very convenient tribune for the family at the chappel by taking a few feet from the library and opening the panels which look down into the chappel. The congregation has so much increased by the increase of inhabitants which manufactories and trade have caused in Burnley that it was necessary to give up to the public the whole of the chappel below stairs . . . altho the library will be diminished in point of space yet more room will be gained to contain books by forming the tribune". There are several drawings of these alterations in Towneley's own hand in the Towneley Hall collection, some of them with flap showing before and after the alteration in the manner of Humphrey Repton's "Red Books".

These panels were apparently closed up again in the 19th century and only one squint hole remains.

In addition to these alterations to the main house, Charles Towneley also built the brew house, Hanbrig Castle and the main entrance arch, and laid out and planted the gardens. These aspects of his improvements are discussed in separate chapters.

## The 19th Century

Charles Towneley had always intended that his cousin, Peregrine Towneley (1762-1846) should inherit Towneley after his uncle, John Towneley of Chiswick. Towards the end of his life, he consulted both of them about purchases of land for the Estate and borrowed money from them at times for such purchases. On September 26th, 1804 he wrote to John Towneley (DDTO Box 13), "You expressed to me yours and Peregrine's readiness and wish to concur with me in securing to the Towneley property such lands that happen to be on sale and particularly advantageous to be joined to it . . . . Should the cash come from yours or Peregrine's money in the funds, I will secure to you both the amount of 5 per cent of your money." Peregrine married Charlotte Theresa, the fourth daughter of Robert Drummond of the banking family, in 1794 and it may have been her money that enabled him to commission Jeffry Wyatt to alter the Hall in 1812, the year before his father, John's death.

Jeffry Wyatt was known for designing country houses and for his skilful alterations to improve the convenience of existing country houses. He had already altered Longleat House and Badminton House, and was to go on to alter and add to Chatsworth for the Duke of Devonshire and ultimately to undertake the complete remodelling of Windsor Castle for George IV. In 1805 he had added a room to Browsholme Hall for Thomas Lister Parker and it may have been through Parker, who was a friend of Charles Towneley and had corresponded with him on architectural matters, that Wyatt came to be employed at Towneley.

As an architect, Wyatt was well known for his efficiency and the detailed drawings he supplied to clients. In 1812 he employed 10 clerks in his office and there are at Towneley 32 plans and drawings by Wyatt dating from 1812 to 1819, with a further plan in the Central Library in Burnley dated 1812, a drawing of the profile of the external kitchen passage in the County Record Office (DDTO Bundle "Towneley Estate Rentals: Leeds Liverpool Canal") and a drawing of the rear elevation in Mr. Simon Towneley's collection. From these drawings and plans, it appears that the original scheme was to remodel the whole of the exterior of the Hall, enhancing the medieval appearance and adding battlements and turrets to the rear of the Hall as well as the Front. The windows were all to be changed to Elizabethan-style windows with dripstones, and a single storey extension where the rotunda had been intended was planned. A drawing entitled "A design for altering the South East Front of Towneley Hall" dated 1812 shows that this was originally intended to have a Norman feeling. The large arched windows were to have round arched glazing bars and a Norman nailhead moulding around the arched central doorway, but these details were not carried out. In the event, the external alterations were restricted to three elevations of the Southeast wing, the addition of a porch and kitchen passage, and the replacement of the solid parapet with battlements and turrets. Internally, John Carr's three rooms were replaced by the red drawing room and the blue dining room. In contrast with the castle-like exterior complete with arrow slits, the decoration of these rooms was in the neo-classical style. In the dining rooms, a choice of a vine leaf border or the oak leaves was provided while in the drawing room, the central roundel with its delicately detailed Aesculapian staves could be replaced by a large copy of Guido Reni's "Aurora" which Charles Towneley had purchased in Rome in 1768. A drawing entitled "Section of Window side of Drawing room Towneley Hall" by Wyatt and dated June 4th, 1817 (Fig. 12) is inscribed "the walls to be crimson and the carved part of the ornament gilt". Scrape tests carried out in 1977 revealed that the walls were originally a deep red and the ceiling white, but no traces of gilding were found. In the dining room the walls were found to be originally a pale green with a white ceiling and a deep turquoise behind the central floral motif. There are no designs for the green marble and brass fireplace in the dining room, but it is similar to one in the library at Cassiobury

where Jeffrey Wyatt was the architect. The fireplace in the red drawing room is probably the fireplace by Richard Hayward from John Carr's dining room.

According to Twycross's "The Mansions of England and Wales" written before Peregrine Towneley died in 1846, the work was begun in 1814 and the rooms were apparently furnished and ready for use in 1826, although this latter date is perhaps a mistake for 1820. The rooms were intended for entertaining guests: since as early as 1626 Towneley had had a large dining room for entertaining and a smaller dining room for family use. However, by the time "The Mansions of England and Wales" was published in 1847, they are referred to as the red and blue drawing rooms and a late 19th century photograph shows the blue room furnished with all the clutter of a Victorian drawing room. The photograph also shows the original brass oil lamp chandelier with its six scrolled arms and glass shades and a pair of unusual mirrored doors to the vestibule between the two rooms. The rooms were probably furnished with furniture purchased by Charles Towneley in the late 18th century. The red room contained fifteen paintings which included the "Aurora" and other copies of Italian paintings purchased by Charles Towneley, and the blue room contained seventeen paintings which included more Italian works and Zoffany's portrait of Charles Towneley. These paintings would have hung two deep around the walls and the rooms would also have acted as picture galleries. The red room also contained marble busts of members of the family including Nolleken's bust of Charles Towneley and his copy of "Clytie", Charles Towneley's favourite bust from amongst his classical collection.

Wyatt also added the turreted porch bearing Peregrine Towneley's heraldic achievement in place of Richard Towneley's Georgian doorway with its broken pediment. It was probably at this time that the oak doorway from the recently demolished wing of Standish Hall was added. Peregrine's uncle, William Towneley, had married Cecilia, the heiress of Standish, in 1736 and part of the marriage agreement had been to maintain the two separate families, but Edward Towneley Standish of Standish, Peregrine's cousin, had died without an heir in 1807. The door is carved in the gothic style and bears an inscription and rebus which can be read "Ralph and Alis Standish. TW made this door 1530". Ralph Standish married Alice Hartington.

The external passage running beneath the porch was added so that servants could carry food quickly from the kitchen to the dining room without having to pass through the entrance hall.

Peregrine Towneley carried out a number of other alterations to the house. The long gallery was repaired and a new plaster ceiling based on the wooden ceiling of the chancel in the chapel was made. The large Georgian window on the courtyard side of the gallery was replaced by mullion and transom windows similar to the late 17th century windows to the blocked off spiral staircase in this wall. The Georgian windows of the small dining room and the rooms next to it were replaced with mullion windows with cast iron sashes which were ordered from Liverpool in 1817 (DDTO Q/3/1) and the mullions were replaced in two windows of the floor above. No doubt some other windows such as those at the back of the chapel were blocked up at this time.

Peregrine Towneley was obviously proud of his restoration of the family seat; a portrait of him painted by E. Walter Mackay and engraved by W. H. Egleton shows Towneley Hall in the distance with the new turrets emphasised. In the same way, Wyatt proudly listed Peregrine Towneley amongst his employers on a portrait painted by his brother in about 1820.

After Peregrine's death in 1846, his son Charles Towneley (1803-1876) inherited Towneley Hall. He was the last member of the family to make additions to the Hall; his eventual successor

inherited only one-sixth of the Towneley estates and was ultimately unable to maintain the Hall, selling it to Burnley Corporation in 1901.

The authors of "The Illustrated Itinerary of the County of Lancaster" published in 1842 wrote that "Large portions of the mansion are unoccupied or resigned to menials" [17]. However, starting as soon as he came into possession of the Hall in March, 1847, Charles Towneley had a number of plans drawn up by an unknown architect for improving and adding to the Northwest wing. The last of these plans is dated January, 1853 and they include plans to convert the existing entrance hall into a smaller dining room with bedrooms above it, and the creation of a huge new entrance hall. These ambitious plans were not carried out, nor were plans to add a milk house and ice house and two bedrooms to the brew house. A five storey tower with battlements was added to the Northwest wing. Two of the Georgian windows from William Towneley's addition and the doorway with its impressive Gibb's surround were re-used in the tower. The ground floor contained a new steward's room, the next floor had a bathroom and the three upper floors had a bedroom on each. It was probably at this time that the large room next to the small dining room now known as the lecture room was created out of the old drawing room and the lady's bedroom. A drawing by Charles Towneley shows that the old drawing room contained the corner fireplace dating from about 1725 and was panelled. On the plan of William Towneley's addition (DDTO Box 16) it states "the corner chimney to be removed", but this was never carried out.

A second gatehouse opposite Hanbrig Castle and some small houses on the estate were built in 1857. A long two storey extension on the east side of the Hall consisting of a conventional stone house with a pitched stone roof-was probably also built at this time and there were probably improvements to the domestic offices.

Charles Towneley was eventually succeeded by Alice Mary Towneley (Lady O'Hagan) in 1886 and, until she sold the Hall to the Corporation in 1901, it was apparently rather neglected. "The Victoria County History" published in 1906 states that the rooms on the ground floor were "mostly abandoned and quite without interest". In 1902 the Corporation opened the larger rooms of the Hall to the public. Gradually, repairs and slight alterations were made and more rooms were opened to the public. A door was opened from the housekeeper's room (now the natural history room) through to the servants' hall, and a way through to the old stewards' room (now the East Lancashire room) was made. The George III cast iron grate in this latter room was brought from Burnley Barracks. Eventually, two bedrooms were made into one large room and reproduction 17th century panelling was installed and, for another room, antique panelling was bought. However, the major alteration was the installation of two top lit paintings galleries on the top floor of the Northwest wing. The first was made in 1907 and, behind the original windows, the small bedrooms and nursery were removed. The second made in 1923 involved the removal of the library above the chapel and two workmen's bedrooms above it. The narrow room next to the library included what had formerly been the outside wall at the back of the chapel extension. This bore a stone coat of arms which carried the initials of Sir John Towneley (1473-1539) and the Towneley arms which carried the initials of Sir John Towneley (1473-1539) and the Towneley arms quartered with those of his first wife, Isabella Pilkington, the daughter and heiress of Sir Charles Pilkington of Gateford. They were married in 1480 and she died in 1522. The stone was removed and placed in the servants' hall above the fireplace. The next room was the "green room"; a drawing by Charles Towneley shows that it contained an 18th century fireplace with a scrolled pediment. This too was removed and placed somewhat incongruously in the servants' hall. In 1970 repairs to the ceiling of the entrance hall meant that the floors in the garret rooms above had to be permanently removed.



The brew house and laundry fell into disrepair and in the years 1969 to 1971 it was carefully restored and converted into a Museum of Local Crafts and Industries, with the help of the Towneley Hall Society.

## Priest Holes

In the Elizabethan period, Lancashire was a particularly strong area of recusancy and no family adhered more strongly to the Catholic faith than the Towneleys. Towneley Hall was marked on Lord Burleigh's list of recusants as "of more than ordinary perversity" and as "a place and family to be wiped out by fines and imprisonment" and John Towneley (1528-1607) suffered long imprisonment and heavy fines for his refusal to give up his Catholic faith. He was arrested and tried at Lathom Hall in 1568 and admitted that he had kept a former Catholic priest at Towneley for six years.

There were, at one time, eight priests' hiding places at Towneley. They are listed in a most interesting document which was quoted in F. Odo Blundell's "Catholic Lancashire", but which has not been traced.

### "A Note of the Private Places at Towneley

In the library, over against the closet door, the middle panell slides back, and the same over against the window. On the floor over against the door, the base slides up and takes out: in the floor is a hole in which an iron hook is to be put and will open to a large place by lifting up the whole floor. At the back side of the library door, the side wainscote may be taken out and lets you into a place where some boards may be taken up, which will let you into a large place which held all the library books.

At the chapel door, taking up one board which is not nailed fast will let you into such another. In the chapel, the alter table draws out, and also the upper steps, which will let you into a large place in which may be laid all the gilding, which is only put on with pegs and takes to pieces. Care must be taken not to knock the gilding in taking down or putting up.

Over the canopy of the alter in the library lies a door for the tabernacle, balls for the top of the pillars, instead of the flowerpots, and also capitals and bottoms instead of the gilding, so that the place may be made use of though the gilding be taken down.

At the steps going from the stone stairs to the garret, a step may be taken out, where there is a large place over the Green Parlour.

In the second room in the Gallery, the wainscoting opens in the middle of the chimney upon hinges, where there is a hole in the wall, not very big. In the third room in the Gallery is the close-stool closet: the panel towards the garden has a latch within, which is opened with an iron pin at a hole in the door, which lifts up the latch, which may be made fast by those within: it has a seat and will hold two persons.

No servants should be trusted with this, but open some occasion some trusty servant may be made use off for some of the places to be used but not made acquainted with them all.

Copied from a paper found in 1793 in my father's (Peregrine Towneley's) pocket-book and wrote by my great-grandmother, Ursula Towneley; she was D. of Fermor of Tusmore in Oxfordshire.

C(harles) T(owneley) "

This has recently been examined by Mr. Michael Hodgetts and the following summary is partly based on his conclusions.

Ursula Towneley married Charles Towneley in 1685 and died in 1748. The listing of the chapel and library and, in particular the reference to a closet next to the library, suggests that this list was made before the gatehouse wing was demolished in the early 18th century. The six hides in these two rooms would be lost in the reconstruction of the chapel and the rebuilding of the library on the new site. In 1931 Granville Squires visited Towneley and, under a misapprehension that the family dining room was the library, drew a number of false conclusions about the situation of some of the hides.

There is no sign now of a hide in the second bedroom off the long gallery, but the hide above the parlour remains. It was originally reached by lifting the short flight of steps behind the oak door at the head of the cantilever staircase, but these have been fastened down and the entrance is now through a hole in the floor. This is probably the largest hide known, being 18 feet by 15 feet and 5 feet 6 inches high, enough in which to stand upright. It is lined with a layer of clay and rushes about six inches deep and is situated between the floor of the bedroom above and the ceiling of the parlour. The parlour and staircase and the back wall of this part of the Hall were reconstructed in 1725 and this hide must have been retained. As Catholics and Jacobites, the Towneleys must have still felt the need of a hiding place in the early 18th century.

## Outbuildings

An early 18th century inventory shows that there may have been various outbuildings including a brew house, a stable and a dairy, and a plan of the estate dated 1661 shows a separate stable and barn at some distance from the house. A house such as Towneley would require a range of domestic offices such as a laundry, a dairy, a brew house, and an ice house since, in many ways, the estate would be self sufficient, brewing its own beer and providing produce from the home farm and kitchen garden.

By the last quarter of the 18th century, these domestic offices were clearly felt to be inadequate and Charles Towneley had a number of plans for outbuildings drawn up. In fact, Charles Towneley lived rather modestly for the period, employing ten male staff and two female staff in the house and garden in 1793 (DDTO Bundle "Towneley Estate: Leeds Liverpool Canal"), but his plans for extensions were ambitious. By far the largest was one drawn by Josphe Bonomi in 1788; this was to be an extension to the west of the Hall which would have been much larger than the Hall itself, and would have included a laundry and a brew house with a gateway between them, a slaughter house, a pigsty, a poultry yard, an ice house, stabling for 28 horses, room for six coaches, harness rooms and saddle rooms around a courtyard with a pond. As Charles Towneley did not keep a coach at all, this seems to be rather more than he must have had in mind and none of it was ever built. However, Charles Towneley did build a smaller stable block at some time in the late 18th century. The larger part was demolished in the 1950s and the remainder has been converted into a cafe. He also built a brew house and laundry which has now been converted into a Museums of Local Crafts and Industries. This little stone building with its stone flagged roof, arched doors and mullion windows, was built in 1790 and its progress is recorded in a diary by Charles Towneley. On a rainy Monday, August the 2nd, "Dent began the alteration of the henhouse walls for ye plan of the brewhouse", on the Friday "the windows and door stones arrived from ye delf' and were cut and faced for the next two working days. In the week of the 16th of August the "mason raised walls and lower windows and doors except ye arch" and the walls were finished on September the 28th. The brew house was certainly well used ; from June 20th to Nov. 13th, 1,040 gallons of ale were brewed and 538 gallons of small beer were brewed. (DDTO Q/3/6).

An early 19th century drawing shows that there was only a low open shed in the area between the brew house and the Hall at this time, but during the 19th century a long two storey extension and several other buildings were built in this area. The first edition of the Ordnance Survey Map, which was surveyed in 1844, shows several buildings in this area. They were demolished by Burnley Corporation.

The ice house may have been built at this period. It is a large underground domed chamber some distance from the Hall to the north, used for storing ice. It is difficult to date and may equally have been built in about 1815 when Jeffrey Wyatt was altering the Hall.

## Hanbrig Castle

There have been at least four entrances to Towneley in the past, one at the end of the avenue on Red Lees Road, one in Cliviger, one at the top of Todmorden Road and the main entrance at the bottom of Todmorden Road at the end of the carriageway. This has always been the main entrance and so was subject to special architectural treatment.

Hanbrig Castle, or Handbridge House as it was later known was built by Charles Towneley in 1797-8. The work on the building is mentioned in several letters between Charles Towneley and his agent, Thomas Forshaw, who was to live in the house. In a letter to his uncle, John Towneley, dated 10th September, 1796, Charles Towneley writes:

"The Hanbrig Castle meets with checks from the drunkenness of masons, scarcity of stone from the great demand at the quarries, and the undertaker often taking the masons to another job, me pazzienza, I think we shall cover it before winter. It will answer our purposes well for a good habitation for the farm, or for uno che campa ciel suo, and as a characteristic passage to an old chateau like this house, I do not think I have seen a better, real old castles excepted."

The 'undertaker' or builder was one Benjamin Muschamp who charged £424-8-2 for the stonework of the house and the arch; the total bill was £687-0-2. An early 19th century drawing (Fig. 11) shows the 'castle' and arch as they were built, later an extension was added to the 'castle'. Clearly Charles Towneley's intention was to build an impressive entrance that would give an indication of the antiquity of the house to the visitor. His interest in the gothic as well as the neo-classical style of architecture had already shown itself in his purchase of the Flemish Towneley altarpiece and a design for a gothic armchair in his hand in the Towneley Papers, and it was later to be demonstrated in his careful treatment of the Chapel woodwork when creating a family tribune.

Hanbrig Castle was not part of the original purchase of Towneley Hall by Burnley Corporation in 1901, but was part of a second parcel of land purchased from Lord O'Hagan in the 1920s. In spite of being a popular landmark, the house fell into decay and was sadly demolished by the Corporation.

The opposite lodge bears the initials of Charles Towneley 1803-1876 and the date 1857 on a windowsill.

## The Gardens

Towneley has long been admired for its woods. Whittaker wrote in about 1800: -

"The great ornaments of this place are the noble woods principally of ancient oak, finely disposed and scattered over the park and demesnes to a great extent:"

At this time the woods would be of oak; they have since been replanted mainly with sycamore.

The first known plan of the gardens occurs on a plan of the estate surveyed in 1661 by James Hamilton which is in the collection of Mr. Simon Towneley. This shows a rectangular enclosed area behind the Hall marked as the garden, with another enclosed area running at the side of the Hall to the east covering the area where the War Memorial and cedar trees now are, marked as an orchard. There is another enclosed area in front of the Hall with a stable and a barn at some distance from the Hall. A wood is marked behind the Hall beyond the garden and a small wood on the edge of the part of what is now the golf course nearest to the Hall, but the land does not seem to be as extensively wooded as it is today. A tree-lined avenue runs from the front of the Hall down to the River Calder as it does today.

An interesting document in the County Record Office dated 8th March, 1742/3 is an agreement between Mrs. Cecilia Towneley and Ralph Reynals, the gardener at Towneley. In return for all the produce of the kitchen garden, Ralph Reynals agrees "to serve and bring to the house fruits, Roots and Herbs of all kinds what is wanted by my Mistriss Towneley and her servants by way of housekeeping and also I do agree that I will mow the little green before the hall Door and all the sloops, and cut all ye Hedges and greens I usually did cutt, and nail all the wall Trees about the House and find nails at my own proper cost and charge, also wood and Rowle all the gravel Walks, make the fence about the Orchard, buy find and provide all seeds which I shall want, mow the green walk in the Kitchin garden and have everything in the same repair as I now find it." (DDTO Q/3).

This gives us a picture of a garden with lawns and hedges, gravel walks and espaliered trees, with a kitchen garden with a grass path and a fenced orchard. The garden was probably laid out in the geometric style with straight paths and clipped hedges. Whittaker writes "One forest scene immediately beyond the house (was) formerly perforated by rectilinear avenues in the geometrical style of gardening which prevailed in the latter end of the last century", (i.e. the 17th century).

This suggests that the garden was influenced by the style of the great French gardener, Le Notre, who laid out the grounds of Versailles. This formal style was introduced to England by Charles II after the Restoration and remained popular until the landscape garden, with its increasingly less formal style, emerged in the late 1720s.

Charles Towneley (1737-1805) evidently modified the gardens to create a landscape garden. Whittaker writes that the straight avenues "had been fortunately neglected till the awkward intervals were nearly closed, and the oaks had acquired a bulk and solemnity which called for nothing but the hand of taste, removing obstructions and exhibiting them in proper points, to produce a most picturesque and interesting effect." A picture by George Barrett (1728-1784) painted at some time before John Carr's alterations of the late 1760s, shows Towneley Hall set in an extensive landscape of smooth fields, woods and scattered trees with an informal pool (the deer pond) and a herd of deer. These are the main ingredients of a landscape garden in the style of

Lancelot (Capability) Brown. There are no formal gardens or flower beds around the house only the straight avenue behind the Hall remains of the formal garden. Another of the requirements of the landscape garden was the ha-ha wall or sunken fence which created an uninterrupted view of the landscape. The ha-ha wall at the front of the house appears in Turner's painting of Towneley Hall in 1798. The wall around Thanet Lee wood was built in 1800; it was 824 yards long and cost £55-7-2 to dig out (DDTO Bundle "Towneley Rentals; Leeds Liverpool Canal"). Charles Towneley was concerned that the whole landscape should form a picturesque view. In a letter to his agent, Thomas Forshaw, dated 4th Mar. 1800 (DDTO "Estate Towneley") he writes "If I ever have the pleasure of being in Towneley again that Newhouse farm will be seen by self and friends and therefore I wish that it may not appear in a slovenly state. I wish particularly that in levelling the old fences you would leave standing singly, any of the handsome thorn bushes, hazel bushes, or young timber plants because such single are pretty and I will fence them if necessary." Later in the same year on 15th May he wrote to the apparently rather insensitive Forshaw "I beg you will not cut down any trees near Towneley scattered, as you call it here and there; those trees standing here and there are often the most desirable to preserve."

Charles Towneley was also responsible for the other features of the garden such as the culvert beneath the road to Towneley farm on the edge of Thanet Lee wood with its rusticated arches and the "hermits well" in that wood. He also rescued the Foldys Cross from Burnley churchyard, where it had been partly destroyed in 1789, and re-erected it behind the chapel at the back of the Hall. It was removed to its present position at the top of the Lime Avenue in 1911. The pond in front of the house was probably made in about 1800. It is not shown in Turner's drawing of 1798, but it appears in a plan of the park in Charles Towneley's hand.

Although the Landscape Garden required flower gardens and kitchen gardens to be hidden from general view, Charles Towneley took a great interest in these aspects of the garden from an early age. At the age of twelve, he was instructing Mr. Craven in a letter dated March 1st, 1749/50 (DDTO "Peter Rents") to build "a good plane brick wall for fruit" to run "from ye garden shed to ye old fence of the Chappell Lee" on the advice of Mr. Tempest. Towards the end of his life, he spent at least £30 a year on plants and seeds for the garden, purchasing a wide variety of ornamental trees, fruit trees and herbaceous plants and shrubs, in addition to planting many native trees such as oaks, ashes and elms. An advice note from Messrs. McNivens of Manchester dated 1803 (DDTO Bundle 504) lists 33 varieties of shrubs and trees sent to Towneley by "Mr. George Howarth's waggon" which included Damask roses four varieties of maples, weeping ashes, tulip trees, cedars, striped hollies, double blossomed cherries, scarlet leaved American oaks, and three varieties of laurels.

In the summer after Charles Towneley's death, in a letter dated 24th August, 1805 (DDTO Box 10) John Towneley described the house and garden to his son, Peregrine, "All the outside of the old mansion had been newly painted and the Doors and windows of the Offices, so that it looks very neat and the shrubs all round the House have grown very much - and all the walks and plantations had been weeded and rolled and the foliage all around very good."

John and Peregrine Towneley continued Charles Towneley's policy of planting woods; in 1812, 3,055 oaks, Scotch firs and larches were planted in a new plantation in the park, and in 1813, 5,500 trees were planted to fill up the plantations in the park (DDTO "Various inc. Hapton Estate").

There have been few major changes to the garden of Charles Towneley's day, apart from the creation of the formal Italian Garden to the east of the house and the building of the War Memorial.

The garden of today, with its woodland walks, was largely laid out by Charles Towneley, although later plantings of rhododendrons and sycamores have obscured many of the landscape views.



## ARCHITECTS AND CRAFTSMEN ASSOCIATED WITH TOWNELEY HALL

### Joseph Bonomi, 1739-1808. Architect.

Bonomi was born in Rome and came to England to work for Robert and James Adam in 1767. He was elected to the Royal Academy in 1789, and, in 1804, he was made honorary architect to St. Peter's in Rome. He is referred to as a fashionable architect in Jane Austen's "Sense and Sensibility".

Charles Towneley paid him 5 gns. on August 24th, 1783 "for copying my sketch for the alterations at Townley for ye marbles". (DDTO "Corresp. & Estate',.) According to Wyatt Papworth's "Dictionary of Architecture" (Architectural Publications Society 1 852-92), he made a design for a sculpture gallery in 1789. A plan for a stable block at Towneley signed by Bonomi and dated 1788 is in the Towneley Hall collection. Charles Towneley's account book also records a payment to him on June 13th, 1786 of 3 gns. "for copying 3 drawings of Temple at Pozzi". It seems that none of Bonomi's designs were ever executed at Towneley Hall.

### John Carr of York, 1723-1807. Architect.

Carr was born at Horbury near Wakefield into a family of builders. He lived and worked for most of his life in the City of York, although his architectural practice extended throughout England and Ireland and even to Portugal. He was one of the most successful of provincial architects and was the only provincial architect to be elected a founder member of the Architects' Club, the predecessor of the Royal Institute of British Architects. His most celebrated work is the design of the exterior of Harewood House in Yorkshire, for which Robert Adam decorated the interior.

Carr had a substantial practice with Roman Catholic patrons. The following letter from Carr exists in the Towneley Papers at the Lancashire County Record Office (DDTO Box 2):

"Sir

I have expected that in the course of my business I should have had an opportunity of waiting of you at Townley, to have given you or Mrs. Townley my account for a journey I had to Townley from York in March 1766 to give my Opinion about the Repairs of the Roof &c over the great Hall, which I did in a particular manner to the Carpenter and Mason, and also for making a Plan of the new Rooms at the end of the Dining Room, and particular drawings of the manner of finishing them, the Cornice, Cieling, and moldings for the Joyners, which drawings were in sent to Mr. Townley in London, as he directed decem<sup>r</sup> 13, 1766. For which designs and my journey from York, my charge is Twenty Guin<sup>s</sup>.

I have often been informed that Mr. Townley was abroad, was one reason why I did not trouble you with my account. You will I think remember my being at Burnley, after which I sent my Bro<sup>r</sup> to give the workmen his assistance as he was more conveniently situated for waiting of you than me. Pray what part of the World is Mr. Townley in.

An answer to this Letter will very much oblige sir.

Your most obed<sup>t</sup> hble servt.

York 23rd Jan. 1775 Jn. Carr

P.S. I shall be very glad if you can put me into a method of being paid, as I have not been very pressing for my recompense."

Estimates and receipts for the work from Butler and Atkinson also survive in the Towneley Papers (DDTO Box 2). Atkinson was probably Thomas Atkinson, a mason/architect, who was almost certainly a Roman Catholic. The brother referred to in the letter is probably Robert Carr junior, who took over John Carr's surveyorship to the West Riding in the early 1770s. The two rooms were situated in the Southeast wing, but all that now remains is a marble fireplace in the neo-classical style by Richard Hayward

**Richard Hayward, 1728-1800. Sculptor.**

Hayward was born in Warwickshire. In 1753 he spent a year in Rome and was a friend of Thomas Jenkins who supplied Charles Towneley with part of his sculpture collection. It may have been through Jenkins that Charles Towneley employed Hayward. Hayward made chimney pieces for Woburn Abbey (1771), Kedleston (1760), Ingres Abbey in Kent (1771) and a large number for Somerset House in London beginning in 1778.

There is an entry in Charles Towneley's personal account book which reads (DDTO "Corresp. & Estate):

"1780

To Richd. Hayward sculptor remainder  
in full for dining room chimney pd  
dft. on Wrights 25 July                      £50-18s. "

This is probably for the marble neo-classical fireplace which is now in the red drawing room. It is certainly very similar to a fireplace in the State boudoir at Kedleston. This similarity includes the use of the rather unusual inlaid marble columns.

### **Francesco Vassalli and Martino Quadri. Stuccoists.**

Vassalli and his assistant, Quadri, like other stuccoists working in England in the first half of the 18th century, were both from the Italian-speaking part of Switzerland. Vassalli is known to have worked at a number of English country houses such as Sutton Scarsdale in Derbyshire in 1724, Castle Howard in 1736-7 and Shugborough in Staffordshire in 1763. Comparisons with the work at Towneley have led to the attribution of plasterwork at several other houses in Lancashire to Vassalli.

His work at Towneley is his best documented. In addition to a receipt and a bill for the work, Mr. Simon Towneley has a letter which reads in translation:

"Most Respected Sir,

Having written a letter to you during the past month of July to which I have received no reply, I do not know to what I should attribute the reason for this &c. Perhaps you are dissatisfied with me for not having finished your hall before this time. Wherefore, if the reason lies here, I am very glad that it is within my power to win back your favour in that, since I have been in Italy, it is in my power to satisfy you more than I could have done before I returned into Italy. I hope you have procured everything for the completion of the above-mentioned work, for, at the beginning of February I shall be at Towneley to finish all, and in everything which you may condescend to require of me you will find me ever ready to execute your most esteemed orders. At present I am at Aske near Richmond in Yorkshire, the hall of which I have decorated with five rooms, the hall c.47 feet in length, and 30 broad, c.30 high.

I conclude by subscribing myself always

Your most humble servant

Fran : Vassalli

Aske the 7th day of December 1730."

### **Sir Jeffry Wyattville, 1766-1840. Architect.**

Jeffry Wyatt was a member of the numerous Wyatt family architects; as a young man he spent time in the offices of both his uncle, Samuel Wyatt and his uncle, James Wyatt. He became known as a country house architect, specialising in the Gothic and Tudor styles, and also for his skilful alteration of older country houses for modern requirements.

His great work was the transformation of Windsor Castle for George IV, which he started in 1824 and continued until 1837. For this work George IV authorised him to change his name to Wyattville to distinguish himself from other members of his family, and to adopt the motto "Windsor". He was knighted in 1828. He was elected an Associate of the Royal Academy in 1823 after waiting 18 years.

For Peregrine Towneley he provided at least 34 drawings and plans ranging from a scheme to remodel the whole of the exterior of the building to details of shutters and chimneys, with dates from 1812 to 1819.

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1801 and subsequent editions.

## NOTES

Documents in the Towneley Papers deposited in the Lancashire County Record Office are cited in the text (DDTO). Where a location is not specified for a painting, drawing or plan, it is in the Towneley Hall collection.

- [1] For further information on the early history of the Towneley family see:  
W. Bennett - The History of Burnley. Vol.1. Burnley, 1946.
- [2] All quotations from Whittaker are taken from:  
T.D.Whittaker - The History of Whalley. Vol.II. London, 1876. pp.186-188
- [3] Bennett. Vol.2. p.240
- [4] John Allen - Official Guide to Towneley Hall. 1909. p.27.
- [5] Bennett. Vol.2. p.240.
- [6] This is quoted in several books and pedigrees including Allen - Official Guide to Towneley Hall, 1909; the original document has not been traced. However, a diary dated 1622 (DDTO Box 19) bears the later inscription "Pocket book of Richard Towneley that rebuilt the west wing".
- [7] DDTO Bundle "Towneley Estates & Rentals".
- [8] Twycross - The Mansions of England & Wales. County Palatine of Lancaster. Part 1. p.4.
- [9] Terry Freidman - James Gibbs: The Formation of his Architectural Style. 1970. Unpublished PhD thesis. Dr. Freidman points out that Gibbs did commissions for Richard Towneley's wife's family, the Widdingtons, in Westminster, Chiswick and Yorkshire. He compares the rear facade at Towneley with Shrewsbury House, 1718-1722 (demolished), a design for Down Hall and the Stable Block at Kirkleatham, and compares the plasterwork with the saloon at Ditchley, 1725<sup>o</sup>27, where Vassalli worked with Gibbs. In a letter to the assistant curator dated 7th June, 1974, Howard Colvin states that the surviving design for a window is not in Gibb's hand "so in my opinion the attribution to Gibbs can hardly be sustained".
- [10] Alexander Pope - Epistle to Lord Burlington: Of the use of Riches.
- [11] Twycross. p.3.
- [12] Henry Taylor - Old Halls in Lancashire and Cheshire. Manchester, 1884.
- [13] Angelo Waddington - Architectural sketches on the Calder & Ribble in and around Whalley. Burnley. 1869.
- [14] Peter Fleetwood Hesketh - Murray's Lancashire Architectural Guide. London, 1955. p.136.
- [15] Sir Henry Ellis - The Towneley Gallery. Vol. 1 . London, 1836. p.2.
- [16] The documents referred to in the preceding three paragraphs will be found in the uncatalogued part of the Towneley Documents, e.g. DDTO "Estate Towneley distr. and DDTO Bundle 504".
- [17] An Illustrated Itinerary of the County of Lancaster. London, 1842. p.188.
- [18] Mary Elizabeth Towneley. London, 1827. p.12