

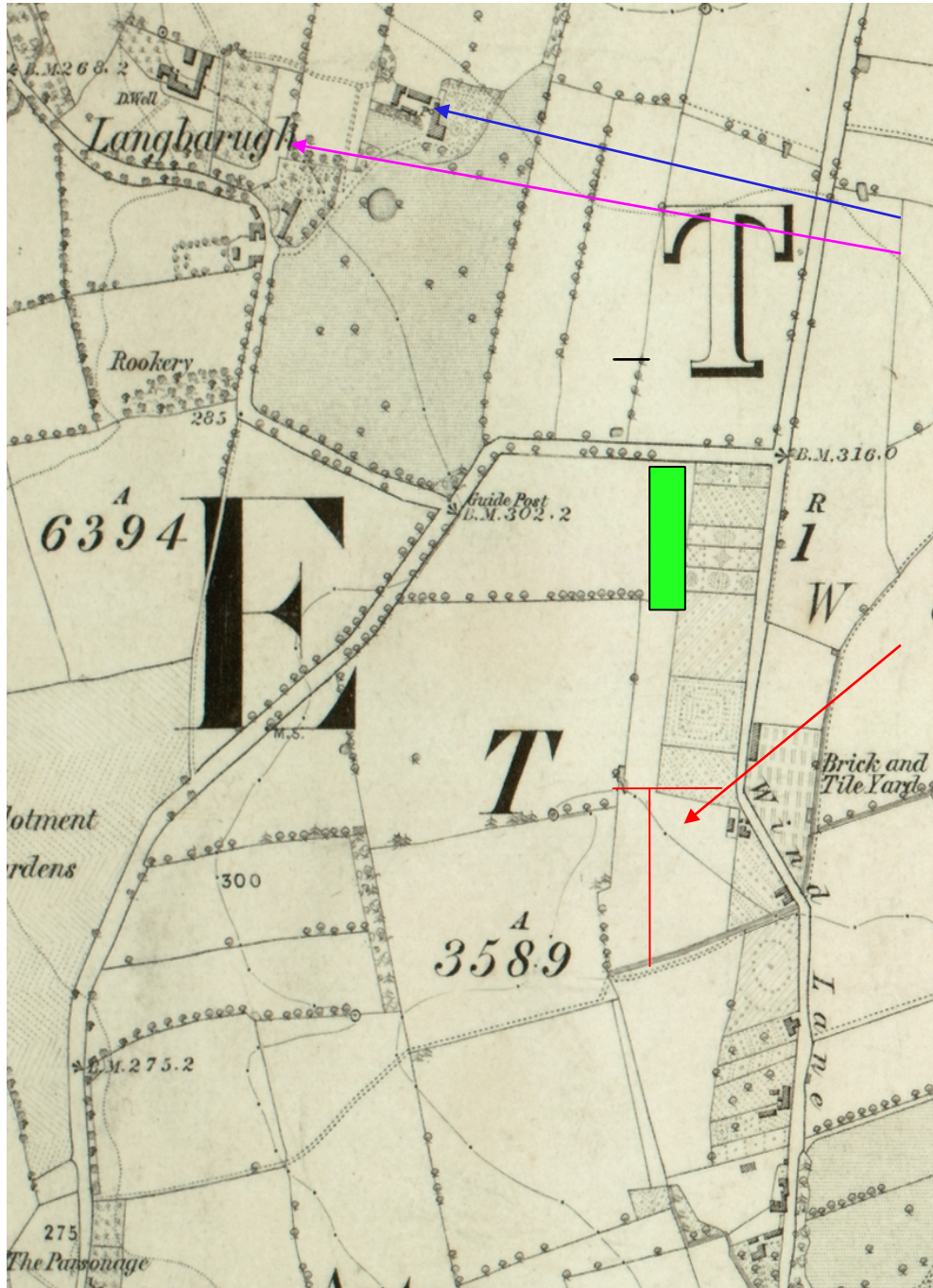
Outram cottages



My parents moved into Outram cottages in 1942 so I grew up there. As a child you don't notice anything particular about where you live, but as I became older I noticed things about the cottages that intrigued me. Why were they so fancy with their patterned brickwork and cut slates.



And why are they so different to everything else on that road. I wondered if they had been the first to be built there and how old they were. No-one could give me an explanation, so, many years later I tried to find out.



I went to the North Yorkshire County Records Office at Northallerton to do some research into the previous owners of the cottages and discovered that most of the land at the northern end of the village belonged to John Richardson who lived at [Langbaugh Hall](#) which he'd had built in 1833. He owned [Langbaugh farm](#) and a lot more land and farms in the surrounding area. He was a wealthy gentleman, a descendant from a Quaker family who had lived there since the 1600s. The 1856 map shows plots of land which he sold off in 1851 stretching from Langbaugh corner (now a garage) down to Romany road, all of which later became known as California. [Arthur st. and John st.](#) followed in 1856, quite possibly named after his sons. Some years later he chose a section of land behind these plots for his own use, running from [north to south](#) from the main road to the rear of a house called "The Bard's Recess". Facing the main road he built Outram cottages and Roseberry house and they were the only houses on this road for the next 20 years.



I was told the cottages were probably built in the 1850s judging by their style. The owners of Roseberry house had been told that theirs was built about 1865, both appear to be wrong because neither of us are on the 1871 census, not even as unoccupied property, but in 1881 there are three cottages with three families living in them, a space and Roseberry house with George Bradley (of Bradley's quarry) living in it, but it all still belongs to John Richardson so he must have had them built and I think he was going to downsize from Langbaugh Hall and come and live here Notice the difference in size of these two properties



The cottages had been altered at some time because the bay windows and porch are later additions so I drew a sketch of them as I imagined they might have looked when new with a shared passage entrance to centre and right-hand cottages, I also did the same with Roseberry house because I remember it having large bay windows , always painted black, and I needed to portray it as it looked when originally built.

A sketch of Roseberry House pre 1945





It was when I placed these two sketches next to each other that the penny finally dropped and I realized what I was looking at. Roseberry house is the 'Gentleman's Residence' and the cottages were for the domestic staff. I had originally thought they might be for farm labourers or for retiring staff from the Hall because at that point I had no reason to connect the cottages to Roseberry house, but when you stop to think about it, they were built at the same time on the same piece of land for the same person, John Richardson, and they were meant to go together as a unit, and that's possibly the reason why the cottages are so fancy because the gentleman would have to look at them himself every day, plus the fact he wouldn't want guests visiting his grand house and finding something obnoxious next door would be. It showed he had the money to provide something decent for them both and he didn't penny pinch on either. Another reason for thinking he was going to live there was because in 1862 his son and heir died aged 25yrs. so he sold Langbaugh farm, his wife had also died by 1871 and we know the houses were built between 1871 & 81 but for some reason he never moved into Roseberry house and died in 1881 aged 85yrs.

After John Richardson's death his family started to sell off his empire a bit at a time and it was seven years before they got around to selling these properties in 1888. They were sold as they were built, as one lot, and George Bradley bought them. Now it just so happens that George's younger brother Michael Henry was living in the third cottage, nearest to Roseberry house and they must have decided that he needed more space so they would squeeze another house into the gap between the two properties. There is enough room so it's not a problem, it's how they go about it that causes the problem. I happen to know that there is a bricked up window hidden behind the plaster in the side of Roseberry house, which used to look out onto the gable end of the cottages, so it did see daylight at some time in the past.



They start to build the new house by butting the front,centre and rear walls up against Roseberry house. On the left-hand side they need extra height but they don't bother to build a new gable wall, they simply build up on top of the existing cottage gable, going from front to rear.(so they now have a house with no sides). If you walk down the hall and past the stairs you would be out in the back garden, so they carried on building on top of the rear wall of the cottage, down the garden wall and then returned a new wall across the width of the cottage plus extra to cover their staircase and created a whole new room, two storeys high.



And when a kitchen was added the backyard disappeared.



He still wasn't satisfied because he then took the back half of the cottage itself as part of his new house. He very kindly gave the front half for the use of the centre cottage, thus keeping the frontage looking the same



A large bay window and front door were added to exactly match Roseberry house so the new house looked as though it had always been there, which was the intention. It was named Tower house. George Bradley, having bought them in 1888 and squeezed in Tower house in 1889 then sold the whole lot in 1890 to a "Gentleman Esq" living at Kirby Hall, who had no intentions of living here. Michael Henry Bradley then jumped straight into brother George's big house and Tower house never needed to have been built at all. It makes me cross that they mutilated the cottages, because there was ample land to build on at the rear of the house.



They still look like three cottages from the front but you now know they reduce to two at the rear having had Tower house attached and If you go down the path on the left....



...you will see the kitchen and two storey room added to the rear of the third cottage



When the centre cottage was given the front half of the third one it had no access to the bedroom so a staircase was installed into the passage entrance giving access to all the bedrooms. Descending the stairs you would have ended up in the garden so that was the reason for the porch being added, and at this point the stone arch turns left 90 degrees and now sits over the front door. They had to make another doorway to re-enter the house by and the bay-windows would also be added now.



You can see how the arch has simply been stuffed into the brickwork instead of being given it's own pillar to stand on





Next to the front door is an original window opening and there is a fine white line running around the edge of the bricks. It is harder than paint or plaster and tile has been suggested which has gone in with the bricks as the house was being built. It is a bit more decoration that you don't notice today, and all the bottom windows would have been edged like this. I think the cottages must have been a real eye- catcher when they first appeared.

They are also patterned on the end as this was the first thing you would see when you turned the corner of the road but it is not so visible now because of a terrace of houses



This is all that remains of the railings which went across the front of both properties and were taken down during the second world war. I remember swinging on a large iron front-gate as it was closing.





Their name caused me some problems. It is carved in stone above the window so presumably John Richardson chose it. Thinging they were built in the 1850s I originally thought they might be named after 'General Sir James Outram' a British hero who fought in India in 1856, but that seemed a bit odd, as being a Quaker why would he want to name them after a fighting man.

I then found an older meaning for the word. In 7th century Saxon English the word ut, **pronounced oot** meant out, and utter meant outer. The word for village was ham, so **utterham** meant on the outer edge of the village. Over the years it became corrupted from utterham to 'ootram' and this is how Outram should be pronounced I've been told. The cottages were built on the outskirts of this village in the 1870s so these words may be the more likely base for their name.

I am fortunate to have grown up here because I have been in and out of all these houses all my life and it's knowing all the little quirks about them that has enabled me to put this jig-saw puzzle together.

COTTAGES IN 1955

