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NORTH CRAVEN BUILDING PRESERVATION TRUST

THE MUSEUM OF NORTH CRAVEN LIFE

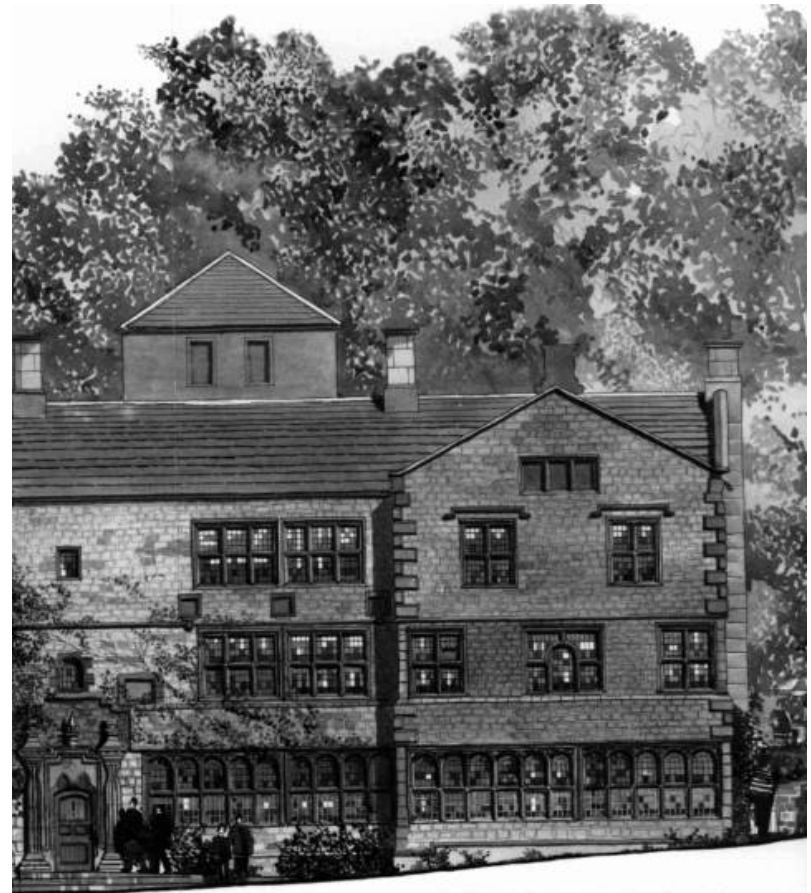


Illustration of the Folly by Richard Carmen. © Niall Phillips Architects

THE MUSEUM OF NORTH CRAVEN LIFE: INFORMATION FOR VISITORS

Brief history

The museum was founded in 1977 and was housed for a short time in the barn in Twisleton's Yard in Upper Settle. It then moved to premises in Victoria Street acquired by North Craven Building Preservation Trust and restored with sponsorship from the Manpower Services Commission. In 1983 the Trust bought 6-8, Chapel Street and the museum moved again, in order to gain space and be closer to the town centre. In 1995 the Trust realised its long-held ambition of purchasing part of The Folly, with a view to opening it for public enjoyment of the house itself and as a permanent location for museum and gallery displays. The Chapel Street property has now been divided, with the front section rented to a local firm of architects and the rear retained as museum office and storage space, together with a proposed education room on the ground floor.

Aims

The museum aims to provide a service for the benefit of the people of North Craven and for visitors to the area, by collecting, documenting, preserving, displaying and interpreting material relating to North Craven.

Museum Collections and Administration

The collections are owned and administered by North Craven Building Preservation Trust. The museum achieved full registration status in 1991 with the Museums and Galleries Commission (now the Council for Museums, Libraries and Archives), which means that certain standards and guidelines have to be met. These are too numerous to be fully listed here, but important among them are recommendations regarding acquisition methods and the formulation of a collecting policy. Loans, apart from those on a short-term basis for a specific exhibition, are now strongly discouraged, and where possible, museums must acquire objects by outright gift or purchase. We still have a number of long-term loans which we are trying to renegotiate as gifts. Our collecting policy takes into account the policies of adjacent local museums and also our ability to store and display items in the correct conditions. We aim to concentrate on items which relate specifically to the social and industrial history of North Craven, but deliberately avoid collecting archaeology (The Craven Museum, Skipton is the regional centre for this) and textiles, for which we do not have the proper environmental conditions. Since we are an entirely volunteer-run museum, as part of our registration conditions, we have the services of a curatorial adviser (the District Museums Officer), who can provide professional advice, but, sadly, no funds!

Exhibitions

It has always been our policy to mount exhibitions on particular themes. Both our permanent display on North Craven and our temporary exhibitions illustrate this approach. We were advised by the Area Museums Service from the outset not to concentrate solely on displaying collections of bygones, but to develop a strong local identity. Since we have moved into The Folly we have the additional challenge of respecting the architectural features of the house and not allowing our displays to detract from them. At the same time, we need to preserve a good degree of flexibility in our use of space, so that we can accommodate special events at short notice.

Finance

The museum receives no regular funding from any outside source. We rely on a modest annual contribution from North Craven Building Preservation Trust's flat-rental income to pay the costs of exhibitions, materials, insurance, documentation, conservation and other outgoings. Where possible we try to obtain grants to cover some of these items, but it is a continuing struggle and we depend on donations and the goodwill of our volunteers to keep the museum afloat and to preserve the standards which people have come to expect of us.

Anne Read, Hon. Curator