

Thomas Fulljames: An almost-forgotten Gloucestershire architect, and his work in Lancashire and Cheshire

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Pevsner's *The buildings of England: Cheshire* states that the architects for Christ Church, Willaston, Wirral (1854), were Fulljames and Walker (*sic*).¹ Not surprisingly the volume contains no further information about this partnership, for Thomas Fulljames (1808–74), who took Frederick Sandham Waller into partnership with him, worked most of his time in Gloucestershire.² The name of Thomas Fulljames would not by now have been so generally forgotten had he brought to fruition his intention in 1840, to 'produce a work of art, views and illustrations of all the Gloucestershire churches, with copperplate engravings'.³ The name appears most often nowadays in connection with the continuing national debate about constructing a barrage across the river Severn. Fulljames was the first to propose such a barrage to control the massive tidal flow of the river, and in his grandiose scheme the barrage was intended to carry road and rail traffic.⁴

¹ N. Pevsner & E. Hubbard, *The buildings of England: Cheshire* (London, 1971), p. 382.

² For Fulljames, see Carne's presidential address, *Transactions of the Bristol & Gloucestershire Archaeological Society*, CXIII (1995), pp. 7–20. For Waller, see David Verey, ed., N. Pevsner, *The buildings of England: Gloucestershire*, vol. II (2nd edn, 1979), p. 264; and Verey, *Cotswold churches* (Sutton, 1982) pp. 94, 165.

³ F. E. Witts, *The diary of a country parson* (Wakefield, 1978), p. 163.

⁴ James Walker, *Projected bridge across the Severn at Aust Passage, report to the Admiralty*, 29 Oct. 1845; Gloucestershire Record Office (Glos. RO), Q/RUM 196; Glos. Coll. (H) F.1.10; Large lithograph of Design no. 2 in Glos. RO, D 2593 1/11/2; L. T. C. Rolt, *The Severn Bridge* (Glos. County Council, n.d.), p. 21.

Fulljames undertook three projects in Lancashire and Cheshire: a new vicarage at Lancaster (1847–49), a new church at Willaston (1849–55), and the Custom House Arcade, Liverpool (1856–57). He had already completed a Hospital for the Insane Poor of North Wales (1844–46)—an impressive building on three floors in Tudor Gothic style—and other smaller projects in Denbigh.⁵ The aim of this paper is to give some assessment of Fulljames as an architect, and to set these non-Gloucestershire projects into their context. It also traces how he came to receive these commissions, which is often one of the more difficult elements of an architect's career to uncover.

Family background, training and work

Thomas Fulljames was a son of Trophimus Fulljames (1778–1864). Trophimus and his wife moved to Gloucestershire from Kent in 1808, shortly after Thomas' birth. Trophimus' eldest brother (also called Thomas) had already found prosperity in Gloucestershire as a land surveyor from around 1795, and was commissioner or surveyor for possibly thirty enclosure awards in the county.⁶ In 1806 he purchased Hasfield Court.⁷ By 1826 he had built up an estate of 200 acres, and in 1844 he purchased the Hasfield Manor estate.⁸ He was a JP in Gloucestershire and Worcestershire. He died, without issue, in 1847. Trophimus joined his brother Thomas from about 1808 in surveying estates, roads, rivers, enclosures, and public works in the county and beyond.⁹ He was also employed for some time as a land agent, and was in partnership with William Womack of Gloucester between 1813 and 1820.¹⁰ While his brother prospered, Trophimus did not. His wife died in 1820 leaving him with a large family and in

⁵ Glos. RO, D 1381/203; D 2593 1/11/4, 2/62, 2/66, 2/101, 22/66; Edward Hubbard, *The buildings of Wales: Clwyd* (London, 1986), pp. 67, 70, 148, 153. Hubbard notes that two of Fulljames's pupils were active Gothic architects in Denbigh (p. 70).

⁶ Francis Steer et al., *Dictionary of land surveyors and local cartographers of Great Britain and Ireland 1550–1850* (Folkestone, 1975), pp. 108, 275, 489.

⁷ *Victoria County History (VCH) Gloucestershire*, vol. 8, p. 284.

⁸ Glos. RO, D1326 T1.

⁹ Gloucester Diocesan Records (in Glos. RO), G3/21–25; Glos. RO, P209 A/IN 3/1; Glos. RO, Sudeley Papers 917 Au/16 and 918 Au/17; Public Record Office, Kew (PRO), F/17 129, 165; Centre for Kentish Studies, Maidstone, surveys of Ash next Ridley (1792) and New House Farm, Wrotham (1794).

¹⁰ Matthew Boulton Papers, 463, Birmingham Central Library.

the same year he faced huge debts through the failure of his partnership with Womack. The widowed Trophimus sought new employment in London. He died in 1864 in Wells, Somerset, a lodger in the home of a general practitioner.¹¹

The younger Fulljames attended the Crypt School at Gloucester. After the break-up of the family in 1820 his well-being and future were the concern of his uncle and aunt at Hasfield Court. Uncle Thomas had met the architect Thomas Rickman at Tew Park, Oxfordshire. Rickman visited and stayed at Hasfield Court early in 1821, and the details of an apprenticeship to Rickman were settled—a premium of 200 guineas and £63 per annum for board and lodging, washing, and shoe cleaning.¹² The articles were signed on 26 March 1821 by the uncle and aunt. Thomas, now aged 13, entered the newly-opened office of Thomas Rickman at Birmingham. There was no standard form for pupilage agreements in those days, but it was generally for a period of five years, after which the pupil could become a salaried employee of the practice.

Rickman, intended by his father to be a doctor, turned to commerce, failed badly, and took a job in an insurance broker's office in Liverpool.¹³ In the course of long walks, he sketched medieval churches, and was the first to set their styles in typological sequence. In 1817, he published their names, which remain central to architectural classification—Norman, Early English, Decorated English, and Perpendicular English.¹⁴ As a self-taught architect he was designing Gothic churches by 1813. He opened an office in Liverpool in 1817, and three years later in Birmingham. Soon Rickman was well-known as a church architect, and for the next fifteen years he was one of the busiest architects in England. Fulljames's years in Rickman's office will have given him vast experience and the discipline of hard work.

It was probably in 1830 that Fulljames opened an office at 1 Barton Street, Gloucester. Fulljames took pupils, one of whom,

¹¹ 1861 Census, Chamberlain Street, Wells; Inscription in Orpington church which commemorates Thomas Fulljames, d. 1847, Trophimus and his wife Margaret (Pringle).

¹² Diary of Thomas Rickman, 13 Oct. 1821, British Architectural Library.

¹³ Howard Colvin, *Biographical dictionary of British architects 1600–1840* (London, 1978, 3rd edn, 1995).

¹⁴ *An attempt to discriminate the styles of English architecture from the Conquest to the Reformation* (1817).

Frederick Waller (1822–1905), a son of William Waller, architect, of Burford, joined him in 1839. Waller progressed from being Fulljames's pupil to being his executive assistant, then his co-designer, and, in 1846, his partner. Fulljames was appointed County Surveyor for Gloucestershire (1831–57).¹⁵ In that capacity he was heavily involved in the repair of bridges, in the maintenance and enlargement of prisons and houses of correction, and in the provision of accommodation for pauper lunatics and for the county militia. His work as county surveyor brought him other commissions including almshouses, schools, and public buildings which were mainly in gothic style, but some of the latter were in a not-very-inspired classical style. In 1838, four years after its foundation, Fulljames was elected a Fellow of the Institute of British Architects.¹⁶

Fulljames was also commissioned to repair, alter, and enlarge a number of private houses. Not all of the commissions were implemented. In 1829 Fulljames was asked by the owner of Tew Park to provide designs for a new house, and he produced working drawings for a huge house in gothic style with a Fonthill-like lantern rising over the central hall. These plans were discarded, but extensive work was done which included a Westminster-Hall-like gothic library. In 1856 there was renewed discussion about enlarging Tew Park. Fulljames and Waller drew up plans for a vast Venetian Gothic extension, enveloping the existing house and almost trebling its size. The plans were severely modified, probably on grounds of expense, and a substantial wing in Tudor style with muscular Gothic details was added to the West instead.¹⁷

The house for which he is best remembered is Foscombe (Ashleworth parish, Gloucestershire), which he designed in 1866–67 for his own use—'unspoiled Victorian fantasy . . . Fully Gothic, built of limestone with freestone dressings, it is large and irregular, with turrets and a castellated tower, and grouped chimneys. Most of the

¹⁵ Glos. RO, Q/SM 3/3, p. 251.

¹⁶ Alison Felstead et al., *Directory of British architects 1834–1900* (London, 1993), p. 333.

¹⁷ Oxfordshire Archives, Full. I–III. Some plans survive at the estate office, Great Tew. *Country Life*, 29 July 1949; N Pevsner & J. Sherwood, *The buildings of England: Oxfordshire* (1974), pp. 402, 626–27, which also records the involvement with St Michael's Church, Great Tew of Rickman, Fulljames's master; Christies's *International Magazine*, May/June 1987; *VCH Oxfordshire*, vol. 11, pp. 227–28, 230, 233; Sale catalogue, Christie Manson & Woods Ltd (1987) TEW-3603.

windows have Gothic tracery, there is a Gothic conservatory, and the house is enriched with realistic animal sculpture'.¹⁸ At Foscombe we see the full development of Fulljames as Gloucestershire's most ardent and spiky High Victorian architect.

From 1832 until 1870 Fulljames was also surveyor for the diocese of Gloucester and, for a time, architect to the dean and chapter of the cathedral.¹⁹ As diocesan surveyor he was called in when repairs, alterations, or additions were proposed for benefice property, especially when there was a change of incumbent. He also acted as an independent umpire when disputes over benefice property arose in neighbouring dioceses and further afield. Having surveyed and reported on dilapidations to the benefice house and, occasionally, the chancel of the church, Fulljames was often asked to put in hand the necessary repairs. In some places he was commissioned to provide a new house, and these were commodious and confident residences that have by now largely passed into private hands. The majority of these new parsonages were in Gothic style, but the new vicarage at Haresfield (Gloucestershire) was an 'excellent romantic Tudor composition', the same style being used for the vicarage of St Woolos's, Newport, Monmouth.²⁰

The work of the practice in regard to church buildings was mainly devoted to re-orderings, additions, and 'restoration'. Fulljames like so many of his contemporaries was backward-looking in his aim to recreate a past age rather than to conserve. Inevitably such architects compromised the historical integrity of buildings, and an un-medieval tidiness and rigidity was created. Sadly, technical skill was not matched by that inspiration and sensitivity which could have made their new designs and detailing some compensation for the loss that buildings received at their hands. In the major 'restoration' of Almondsbury, Gloucestershire, church (1836) he aimed to achieve symmetry wherever possible in the building and so compromised its architectural history.²¹ The thirteenth-century chancel was his model throughout the refashioned nave, yet he imported his version of the hammer-beam roofs of a later period. Even more drastic work was undertaken at Swindon, near Cheltenham.

¹⁸ Verey, *Gloucestershire*, vol. II, p. 91.

¹⁹ Glos. RO, D1381 (205 files).

²⁰ Verey, *Gloucestershire*, vol. II, p. 264.

²¹ Minutes of the Feoffees of the Almondsbury Church Lands Charity, Church Goer, *Rural rides* (1850) vol. 2, pp. 257–58.

ham. David Verey expressed regrets about the work that was done: 'the church was treated shamefully . . . The nave is a shocking example of neo-Norman work, with three-bay arcades and thin piers, and a chancel arch ornamented with mean neo-Norman motifs. Hammerbeam roof supported on corbels with ugly grotesques'.²²

The Kirkes family and Fulljames's north west commissions

The commission to Fulljames for the vicarage at Lancaster, the church in Willaston, and the Custom House Arcade in Liverpool arose from his marriage to Catherine Kirkes at Lancaster in December 1840.²³ She was a daughter of Morecroft Kirkes III of Liverpool and Holker-in-Cartmel, Furness, and his wife Ann. The Kirkes family, and the Moorcroft, or Morecroft, family before them, had a continuous interest in the mercantile life of Liverpool and in successive customs houses there for over a hundred and fifty years.²⁴ The founder of the family's fortune was Alderman Sylvester Moorcroft, mayor (1707) and treasurer (1716–20), who was dismissed from the latter post for being 'an easy victim to the temptations of public office'.²⁵ Moorcroft owned the third custom house at the foot of Water Street. Between 1721 and 1723 he built a new custom house on land leased from the corporation at the east end of the Old Dock in Canning Place on the site of what later became in part the Sailors' Home (1846) and the Custom House Arcade (1857–58).

Alderman Moorcroft's lease from the corporation was for a term of three lives and twenty-one years, and it had a covenant on it which allowed him on the death of any life named in the lease to add a new life and always keep the lease full. Moorcroft's only daughter, Catherine, married Hamlet Kirkes, a Manchester merchant, and their eldest son, Morecroft Kirkes I, was the principal beneficiary in his grandfather's will, under the terms of which he was instructed

²² *Gentleman's Magazine* (July & Oct. 1845), XX, pp. 21–22, 358–59, 472; Verey, *Gloucestershire*, vol. II, p. 354.

²³ Glos. RO, D1326 T3.

²⁴ H. Peet, 'Liverpool in the reign of Queen Anne', *Transactions of the Historic Society of Lancashire & Cheshire* (THSLC) 59 (1907), p. 56; E. H. Rideout, 'The Old Custom House, Liverpool', *THSLC*, 79 (1927), pp. 3–73.

²⁵ G. Chandler, *Liverpool* (1957), pp. 197–98, 295.

not to 'sell or dispose of the said old or new custom house, or the yard behind the said new custom house'.²⁶ Morecroft Kirkes I was the first member of the family who is known to have had connections with Holker and Cartmel-in-Furness. He died leaving as his sole heir an only son, Morecroft Kirkes II, who also died young, leaving a son who was born six months posthumously, Morecroft Kirkes III (1783–1832).²⁷

During the minority of Morecroft Kirkes III, the family estate was administered by trustees, who were either unwilling or unable to make any large decisions affecting the custom house. Kirkes had an active career in the Royal Navy during the Napoleonic Wars, rising to the rank of Lieutenant. In February 1808 he resigned his commission, having found his business 'affairs in such a situation as to render my presence for the preservation of my property . . . absolutely necessary on shore'.²⁸ He had recently married Ann, sister of Gilbert Harrison Timmins, a Liverpool merchant.²⁹ His growing family and arguments over the lease of the custom house caused him many problems. The premises were refurbished about 1814, and a new twenty-one-year lease was negotiated with HM Customs on 1 June 1819 at an annual rental of £895. Although the building was altered in 1821, it was stated in 1824 that

the custom house, situated at the east side of the old dock . . . [is] better suited to the port and trade of Liverpool a century ago than at present. An expectation, however, exists, that a new custom house, more worthy of Liverpool, will speedily be erected upon the site of a part of the old dock.³⁰

²⁶ Lancashire Record Office (Lancs. RO), will of Sylvester Morecroft of Liverpool 1743; Hamlett or Hamnett Kirkes married Catherine Moorcroft at the church of St. Nicholas, Liverpool, 16 May 1717. Their children Moorcroft, Sarah, and Hamnett, were baptised at Manchester Cathedral 24 Feb. 1717/18, 25 Apr. 1720, and 14 Sept. 1721 respectively. Catherine and Hamnett Kirkes had at least two other sons: Samuel Kirkes, an upholsterer in Liverpool, who was alive in 1764, and Sylvester, who was alive in 1742.

²⁷ Lancs. RO, will of Morecroft Kirkes 1749, dated 24 Sept. 1749, proved 11 Dec. 1749; Lancs. RO, will of Moorecroft (*sic*) Kirkes 1783.

²⁸ PRO, ADM 36/15968, 15969 Muster Rolls; ADM 1/2975 Lieutenants' Letters 1808, nos. 42, 43, 44; ADM 3/160 Rough Minutes, 6 June 1807; ADM 12 Admiralty and Secretariat Papers; ADM 107/32 Lieutenants' passing certificates 1805, f.398, states that he was born on 15 Sept. 1783.

²⁹ Lancs. RO, will of Gilbert Harrison Timmins of Liverpool, 1837.

³⁰ E. Baines, *History, directory and gazetteer of the County Palatine of Lancaster* (Liverpool, 1824), vol. 1, p. 195.

The death knell of the old custom house was sounded in 1826, when it was decided to close the Old Dock and erect a new custom house on its site, the fifth. The foundation stone was laid in 1828, but the long-awaited building was not finally opened until August 1837.³¹ Subsequently 'the old building was abandoned, and demolished', probably in the early 1840s.³²

Kirkes did not live to see the expiry of his lease with HM Customs in 1840. In 1831 he became seriously unwell, and his eldest son, and namesake, who was serving as a midshipman aboard HM schooner *Firefly* in the West Indies, resigned his commission and returned to the family at Cartmel.³³ Morecroft Kirkes III died at his residence at Holker, near Cartmel, on 3 July 1832, aged 48, leaving a widow and nine young children.³⁴ By the terms of his will, he left property in Liverpool and elsewhere—estimated to be worth under £12,000—to trustees, to be administered for the benefit of his widow and children.³⁵ At some time, shortly after the marriage in 1837 of her eldest daughter Anne to Henry Gregson of Moorlands, Lancaster, Mrs Kirkes and some of her children settled with them, and it was from Moorlands that Catherine Kirkes was married to Thomas Fulljames in 1840. The relationship between Fulljames and his wife's family appears to have been a close and cordial one. John Jackson Myers of Huyton Park, Liverpool, who married Mary Kirkes, left Thomas and Catherine, or the survivor of them, £5,000, although in the end Myers outlived Fulljames and acted as one of his executors.³⁶

Lancaster Vicarage

The door-head of the old vicarage at Lancaster had the inscription 'A.W. [for Augustine Wildbore] 1638'. The Rev. Joseph Turner was

³¹ Chandler, *Liverpool*, p. 309 states that it was not completed until 1839.

³² Rideout, 'The Old Custom House', pp. 68, 73. On p. 15 it is stated that the old custom house was pulled down in 1839. We think that this is unlikely because the existing lease did not expire until 1 June 1840.

³³ PRO, ADM 1/286.

³⁴ Lancs. RO, Bishop's Transcripts, Mf 3/3, Cartmel. He was buried on 7 July 1832. The tombstone is close to the porch of Cartmel Priory.

³⁵ Lancs. RO, will of Morecroft Kirkes of Holker, gentleman, 1833, 1837.

³⁶ Probate Registry, Somerset House, will of John Jackson Myers, dated 6 June 1865, proved 20 Sept. 1882, estate valued at £91,437 gross; Will of Thomas Fulljames, proved at Gloucester, 1 July 1874, personal estate valued at under £12,000.

appointed vicar in 1844, and declined to live in the old house.³⁷ Fulljames was asked to prepare designs for a new parsonage.³⁸ The cornerstone of the new house was laid by the bishop of Manchester in September 1848, and the new vicar moved in twelve months later, a congratulatory peal being rung on the parish church bells.³⁹ Turner was married to Ellen Gregson, the sister of Henry Gregson, of Moorlands, Lancaster. Gregson was a prominent solicitor in Lancaster, town clerk (1837–40), and later twice mayor of the town. Gregson, in turn, was married to Catherine Kirkes's eldest sister Anne. None of Fulljames's diaries or private correspondence appear to have survived, so it is not possible to be sure about how Turner came to commission Fulljames for his new vicarage. The likelihood, however, is that Turner met him through Henry Gregson.

The house with its cellars comprised, on the ground floor, a library, study, a drawing room with anteroom, dining room, cloak-room, housekeeper's room, butler's pantry, servants' hall, kitchen, larder, pantry, scullery, and a knife house; on the first floor, six bedrooms, two dressing rooms, and bathroom; and on the second floor, a further four bedrooms. Detailed drawings were made for the rainwater spouts, for the spandrels in library, study, and dining room, for the poppy-head newels to the staircase, for the doors, and for the firedogs. The cost of the house was £2,669 according to the surviving accounts, the principal tradesmen being Thomas Taylor, mason, Charles Blades, carpenter and joiner, Thomas Cross, plasterer, and Thomas Ripley, plumber and glazier. Shrigley & Jackson supplied some of the materials, Messrs Minton & Co. the tiles, presumably, and the chimney pieces and panel over the front door were supplied by Oliver Estcourt of Gloucester.⁴⁰

³⁷ Information kindly supplied by Mrs Eccles of Lancaster Library; *Lancaster records or leaves from local history* (Lancaster, 1869), pp. 283, 284, 314; Turner became one of the Rural Deans in 1849, and was collated and admitted to one of the honorary canonries of Manchester in 1853; *Fifty years ago: A brief record of events that have taken place in Lancaster* (Lancaster, 1904), pp. 3, 260.

³⁸ Glos. RO, D2593 2/75, sketch, plans, elevations, sections, site plans, specification, and details; D1381/199 for accounts.

³⁹ *Lancaster Gazette*, 7 Oct. 1848, p. 3, col. 3.

⁴⁰ Estcourt undertook a great deal of work for Fulljames in Gloucestershire and also further afield: Great Tew, the Custom House Arcade in Liverpool, and the Master's House at Pembroke College, Oxford.

Christ Church, Willaston, Wirral

The huge size of the parish of Neston on the Wirral peninsula, between the estuaries of the Mersey and the Dee, meant that it was a difficult ecclesiastical entity to manage. In the 1840s it included Leighton, Parkgate, Raby, Thornton Hough, Hinderton, Great Neston, Little Neston, Ness, Willaston, and Ledsham. In 1847 the Dean and Chapter of Chester appointed the Rev. Robert Yarker, one of the minor canons of the cathedral and the perpetual curate of St Olave's, Chester, as vicar of Neston.⁴¹ Almost immediately Yarker set about meeting the spiritual and educational needs of his new parish, and particularly of the outlying villages. He approached Fulljames to design an appropriate building to meet the needs of Willaston, and in 1849 Fulljames supplied an imaginative scheme which comprised a church with chancel and a nave to seat 150, a schoolroom, and a parsonage house.⁴²

It is not immediately apparent why Yarker should choose Fulljames, a Gloucestershire architect, for the new church at Willaston. Yarker was a son of John Yarker, brewer and wine-and-spirit merchant, of Ulverston in Furness.⁴³ The Kirkes family could have travelled from Cartmel to Ulverston—a distance of about four and a half miles—whenever they needed to go to Liverpool on business, and the town was more desirable as a shopping and business centre than Cartmel. The Yarker family's connection with the Custom House and the wine trade, which would have brought them into contact with many of the local families of quality, ensures that the Robert Yarker would have known the Kirkes family well. Ulverston and Holker were formerly in the detached part of Lancashire known as Furness. Until the coming of the Ulverston and Lancaster railway in 1857 it was a wild and remote part of the country. Ulverston was connected to Holker by carrier's van, which travelled twice a week at tide time. Wordsworth has left a memorable picture of crossing the Leven Sands to Ulverston in the *Prelude*. Ulverston's most famous son, Sir Norman Birkett, attested to the closely-knit community in

⁴¹ J. Foster, *Alumni Oxoniensis 1715–1886*, IV, p. 1,625.

⁴² Glos. R.O. D2593 2/88. The Registers of the bishop of Chester also contain a plan of the church as originally built.

⁴³ 1851 Census, Great Neston HO 107/21/78; Lancs. RO, will of John Yarker, WRW/F 1823.

his part of Furness and called the Ulverston of his childhood 'a great family town . . . everyone knowing everyone'.⁴⁴

The scheme was accompanied by a pen-and-wash 'general plan' on a scale of 20ft to the inch. The 18ft by 25ft school room was to abut the north wall of the nave and have a connecting doorway with it, a convenient arrangement which would allow the school to use the church building for prayers. A covered passageway would run between the church vestry and the parson's study, conveniently passing the school room. Yarker began to raise money for the erection of the buildings outlined in the scheme. The secretary to the trustees of Queen Anne's Bounty, however, was not encouraging. Yarker was told that the trustees could not give an augmentation of income until the church—a chapel-of-ease to Neston—had been consecrated and endowed with at least £45 per annum.⁴⁵ We know that Yarker was a generous benefactor to the new scheme.⁴⁶ He set about raising funds from supporters and 'collected a considerable sum of money for the purpose before he died'.⁴⁷ Some 2,964 square yards of land were conveyed by the Commissioners for Building New Churches on 15 July 1852 for the purpose of building a church.⁴⁸

Yarker's widow is quoted as writing that her husband's 'main object was to build a Church at Willaston that should be an architectural beauty and design worthy of the House of God'. She stated that her husband had raised £700 towards the cost of the building, but that the list of subscribers was short because Yarker had not launched a general appeal, and had only intended to do so once the building work had begun.⁴⁹ The final sums subscribed for the project amounted to between £1,300 and £1,500, and consisted of grants from various church building societies, and monies raised

⁴⁴ E. Baines, *History, directory and gazetteer*, vol. 2, pp. 572–78, 653; H. Montgomery Hyde, *Norman Birkett: The life of Lord Birkett of Ulverston* (London, 1964), p. 3. A. Bonney & J. Marsh, *Dear Mr. Salvin: The story of the building of a 19th-century Ulverston Church* (1999).

⁴⁵ Chester & Cheshire Archives & Local Studies (CCALS) P180/6/1&2, letter of 1 June 1849.

⁴⁶ G. W. Place, ed., *Neston 1840–1940* (1996), pp. 125, 130, states he gave £700. Dr Place, in a letter dated 28 Oct. 1997, casts doubt on this information.

⁴⁷ W. Bidlake, *Neston Church and Parish* (1936), p. 79.

⁴⁸ CCALS, P180/5/1. This formed part of a field known as Benson's Croft; G. E. Castle & Major Bushby, *Willaston (Wirral) Womens' Institute Scrap Book* (1951), p. 44.

⁴⁹ *Christ Church, Willaston-in-Wirral Centenary 1855–1955* (n.p., n.d.).

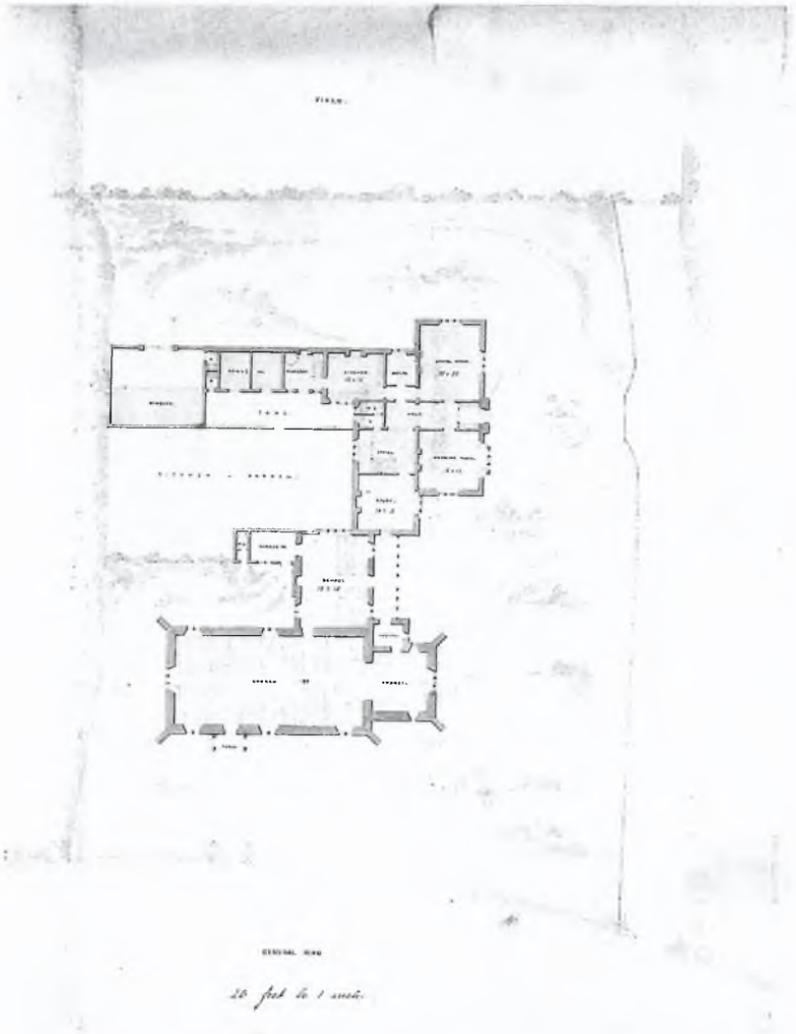


FIGURE 1 *Plan of Willaston church and school, 1849. Gloucestershire RO, 2593 2/88.*

by a committee which included John Dean Case, JP, of Poulton Hey and the Rev. Mark Coxon, rector of Heswall, who, as the chairman of the Board of Guardians of the Wirral Union (at Clatterbridge), had a close interest in the provision of a church to serve the Union.⁵⁰ A list of subscribers was extant in 1955 which showed that ninety-seven people asked for seats in the church for themselves and their families. The church was designed to serve the populations of the townships of Willaston, Raby, and Thornton Hough. At the time of the 1851 Census they had 317, 195, and 164 people respectively, making a total of 676 souls.⁵¹ A church was not built at Thornton Hough until 1867.

Yarker died on 10 May 1853, and his work was carried on by his successor as vicar of Neston, the Rev. Richard William Gleadowe, who knew the Yarkers well, having been a sacrist and minor canon of Chester since 1839.⁵² Plans were already well advanced, and the foundation stone was laid by the dean of Chester, Frederick Anson, on 5 July 1854.⁵³ The stone for the church was quarried from a site adjacent to the church on Neston Road, where Kays the Chemist now stands.

Shortly afterwards James Gerrard of Great Crosby read in the *Chester Courant* for 4 October 1854 that the church at Willaston needed further financial contributions, and provided two fine stained-glass windows on either side of the east window in memory of his maternal grandfather Richard Jackson of Willaston and Jackson's stepfather Jonathan Hill of Little Neston.⁵⁴ Robert Yarker's widow, in her will dated 22 March 1854, directed her executor Philip Stapleton Humberton 'to expend any sum of money he may think necessary not exceeding £50 in putting up a suitable memorial in Willaston church to the memory of my late husband in

⁵⁰ See CCALS, P180/5/1. According to Dr Place (letter of 28 Oct. 1997), *Slater's Directory of Cheshire* (1855), states that the sum raised was £1,500, F. White's *History, Gazetteer, and Directory of Cheshire* (1860), p. 623, states that 'the cost of building the church was £1,300, which was defrayed by voluntary contributions', and *Christ Church, Willaston-in-Wirral Centenary 1855-1955* states that over £2,000 was raised.

⁵¹ *Post Office Directory of Cheshire* (1857) p. 177.

⁵² CCALS, WS Robert Yarker 1853, *Chester Courant*, 18 May 1853, p. 3.

⁵³ E. C. Bryan, *Willaston's heritage* (1975), p. 9. The *Centenary* booklet states that an order of service was printed for the occasion. Castle & Bushby, *Willaston (Wirral) Womens' Institute Scrap Book* states that the quarry belonged to the Pollard family.

⁵⁴ *Centenary* booklet.

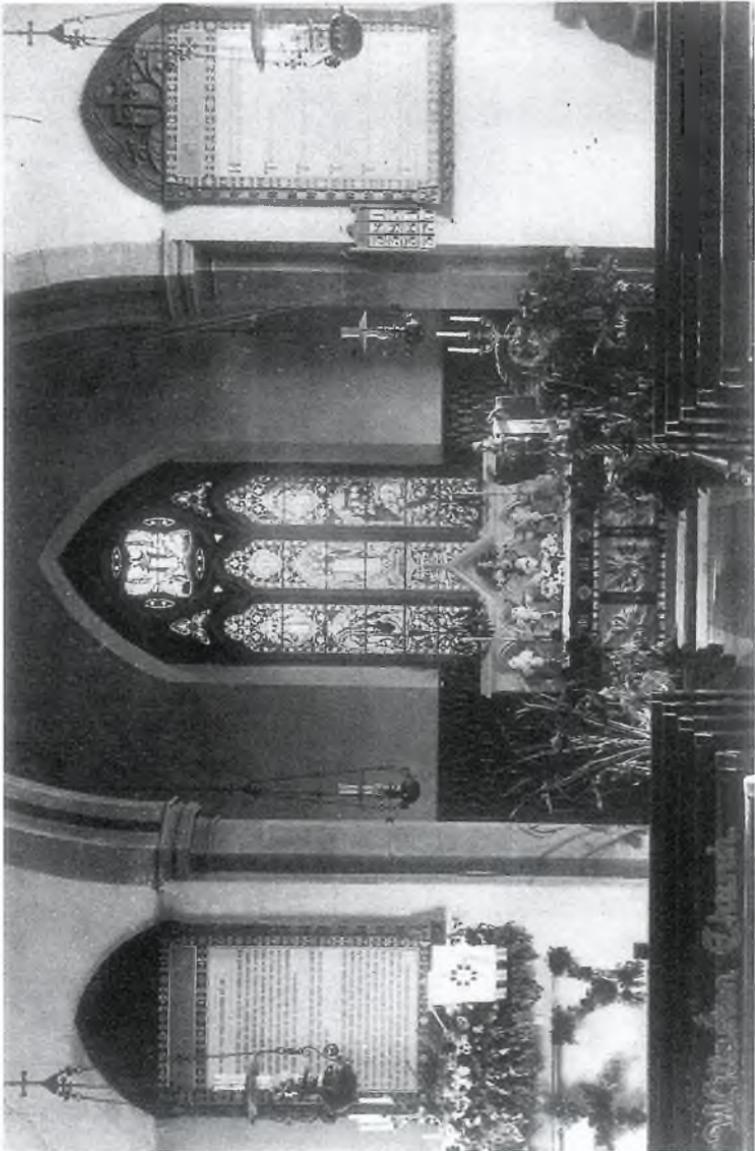


FIGURE 2 Interior of Willaston church, c. 1900.

case the same shall not have previously been put by me in my lifetime'. The grey limestone, octagonal, carved font was erected to his memory, and, following the death of Frances Yarker on 4 January 1855, the fine east window in Willaston church was erected to her memory.⁵⁵

The deed of consecration, dated 21 June 1855, states that the church was 'now finished, furnished, and adorned'.⁵⁶ It is described in a contemporary work as 'a neat Gothic structure of red sandstone, consisting of a nave, chancel, porch'. The church had 200 sittings, of which 154 were 'free for ever', and pew no. 35 was assigned to the minister and his family.⁵⁷ In 1857 it is called a perpetual curacy valued at £70 p. a. and in the gift of the vicar of Neston.⁵⁸ The Church Wardens' Accounts for Willaston show that the Rev. William John Ward served as the first perpetual curate between 1855 and 1861, and reveal that a good deal of work was done about the church in 1855–56, including digging over the churchyard, providing a covering for the reading desk, providing a curtain and rods for the harmonium, a stove, matting, hassocks, a bell rope, and a drain. The slates which were left over from the work on the roof were sold off for five shillings in October 1856.⁵⁹

Whilst the church was being built there were still hopes that Fulljames's plans for an integrated church, school room, and parsonage could be realised, and we learn from the *Centenary* booklet that a printed appeal for funds was circulated in 1854. Sufficient funds were not forthcoming and the opportunity was lost. It was not until 14 April 1859 that local landowners met to find a site for a school room, 'the necessity for which is so immediately felt'. A one-room school house was subsequently erected on the village green, and served the children of Willaston, Raby, and Thornton Hough.

About the time that the church was consecrated the village attracted a new resident, Duncan Graham, a Liverpool-based

⁵⁵ CCALS, will of Frances Yarker of Flookersbrook, near Chester, proved 16 Mar. 1855 by her brother Philip Humberstone. Her estate was valued at under £20,000.

⁵⁶ CCALS, P180/5/1: the deed is signed by Rev. Canon Slade, rector of West Kirby, Rev. Mark Coxon, and Rev. R. W. Gleadowe.

⁵⁷ F. White, *History gazetteer and directory of Cheshire* (1860), p. 623; Castle & Bushby, *Willaston (Wirral) Womens' Institute Scrap Book*, p. 44, state that there were originally 150 sittings of which 36 were let.

⁵⁸ *Post Office Directory of Cheshire* (1857) p. 177.

⁵⁹ CCALS, P180/7/1 Church Wardens' Accounts 1855–1921.

South American merchant, who subsequently purchased the Lydiate and built a substantial residence on the estate. He served as the second Vicar's Warden between 1856 and 1858, and took a considerable interest in the church. Through the combined efforts of the Revd Richard Gleadowe and Duncan Graham the Ecclesiastical Commissioners finally assigned a parish to the chapel after Graham had built a vicarage on Hooton Road at his own cost, endowed it with a garden of two acres, and added them to the gift by the Dean and Chapter of their interest in the tithes from the parish to produce an income of £117 p. a. for an incumbent.⁶⁰ The first vicar, inducted in 1865 on the presentation of the new patron Duncan Graham, was the Rev. Charles Henry Barlow, who succeeded Ward as perpetual curate. Thus sixteen years after Fulljames drew up his original plans and eleven years after they were revised, Willaston had a church, a school, a vicarage, and an incumbent, although not quite in the way in which Fulljames had planned. The church remains as a permanent memorial to his involvement.

The local red sandstone gives the building a most agreeable warmth. The roof is unusually steep, and according to Pevsner 'mannered'.⁶¹ The internal springers for the roof are most unusually luscious, carved with foliage, and out of scale with the building. There are pleasing foliated terminals for the dripstones around the windows, and there is heavy coving for the buttresses. Fulljames's scheme for the church was altered in 1925 when a new north aisle and new vestries were built. The north windows were retained and reset in the new wall, but the carved internal springers on the north wall were removed, and fragments of them could be found in the 'new' church yard as late as the 1970s.

The Custom House Arcade, Liverpool

On 26 July 1853 Liverpool Corporation sold by public auction the leasehold land in eight lots on which a former Custom House had stood and which was then the site for eight shops. The land lay on the east side of Canning Place, and the lease was for 74 years. The lease was acquired by the Trustees of the Estate of Mrs Kirkes, who asked Fulljames to draw up plans for the redevelopment of the

⁶⁰ CCALS, P180/6/3 a, c, d, f.

⁶¹ Pevsner & Hubbard, *The buildings of England: Cheshire*, p. 382

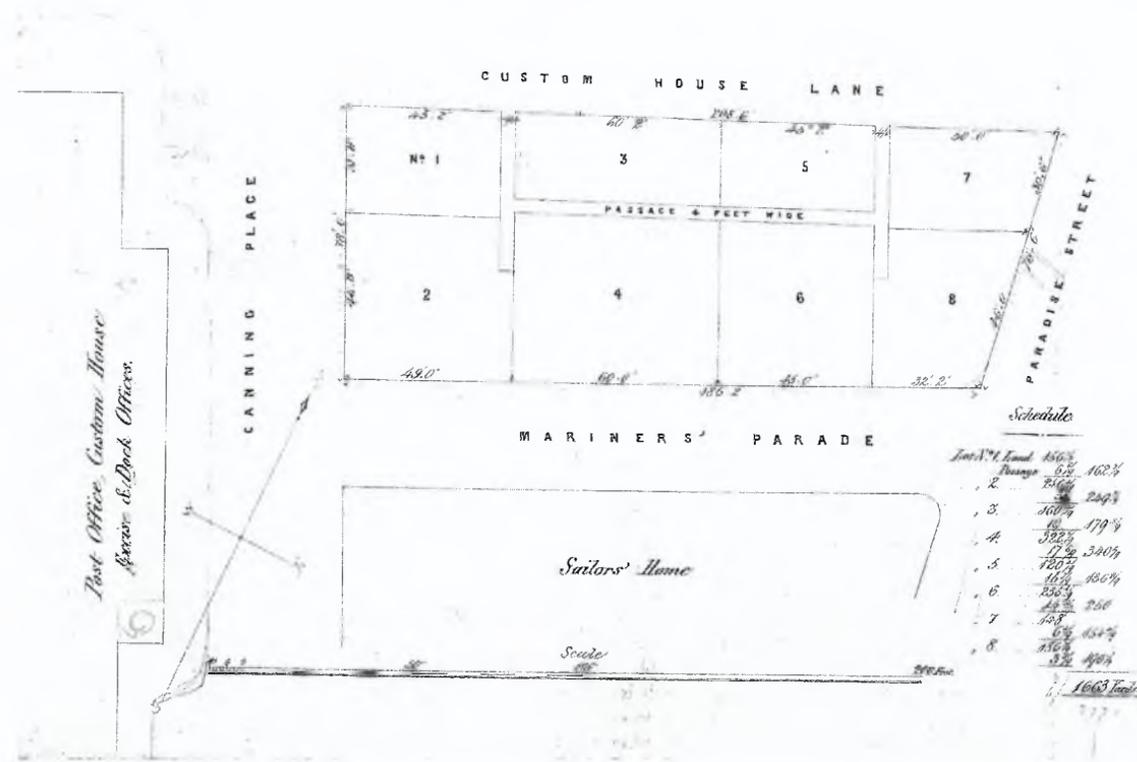


FIGURE 3 Site of Custom House Arcade, July 1853 (detail from sale catalogue of Thos. Winstanley & Sons). Gloucestershire RO, 2593 2/113



FIGURE 4 Photograph of Custom House Arcade, 1939, presented by Fr D'Andria (detail). Liverpool RO, Canning Place file

site.⁶² Between Custom House Lane and Mariners' Parade he designed a building with a central walkway from Canning Place to Paradise Street, with a dozen shops facing the walkway on either side. Eight shops on either side were about 16ft wide by 30ft deep, and there were double-width shops at each end; the top-lit central arcade was about 15ft wide. Although figure 3 shows the location and orientation of the building, the interior divisions on this plan bear little relation to Fulljames's redevelopment: later Ordnance Survey maps and the Liverpool trade directories show more than twenty shops in the building. The total cost of the building was £12,321 os 6d, almost £3,000 of which was paid to the Gloucester mason Oliver Estcourt for the carved detailing. The main contractor was John Jump & Son. Henry Gregson, solicitor of Lancaster, handled the payments on behalf of the trustees which began in June 1857. Henry Ramm was employed as agent for letting the shops and receiving rents, Mrs Kirkes receiving the first payment of rent in May 1858. The children of Morecroft Kirkes III continued to have a financial interest in the Arcade at least until 1891 when his daughter Catherine Fulljames bequeathed her interest to her sister Mary, the widow of John Jackson Myers of Liverpool.

The Custom House Arcade was situated off Canning Place, next to the Sailors' Home. In 1889 the arcade included the premises of the Liverpool Society of Friends of Foreigners in Distress, Emigration Offices, Local Marine Board Examination Rooms, and St Andrew's Waterside Church and Mission Room.⁶³ The 1891 ten-inch to the mile Ordnance Survey map shows that the arcade housed the Liverpool Seamen's Dispensary. By 1939 the arcade housed MacSymons, ships-store dealers, chandlers, and export merchants. It was destroyed during an air raid on 24 September 1940, and the site was subsequently used to build the College of Nautical Catering.⁶⁴

Conclusion

Tracing Fulljames' architectural practice in any detail has only been possible because of two fortunate occurrences. First, unlike the majority of architects, Fulljames was retained by the county and

⁶² Glos. RO, D2593 2/113 Plans, elevations, sections, specifications, contract, details, and accounts.

⁶³ *Gore's Directory of Liverpool* (1889), p. 901.

⁶⁴ Liverpool Record Office, photographs and files relating to Canning Place.

diocese of Gloucester as a surveyor, and both of these bodies have considerable archives. Second, while moving to bigger premises, Astam GBC Consultancy Ltd, the successors to Fulljames in practice, deposited with the county record office a large quantity of long-forgotten archives going back to the beginning of the practice. The biggest part of Fulljames's commissions arose directly or indirectly from his county and diocesan work, but his work outside Gloucestershire illustrates some of the personal links that could lead to architectural commissions. Some work in Oxfordshire seems to have derived from work done by his master, Thomas Rickman. Work at Denbigh almost certainly arose from family links with Waller: commissions elsewhere stemmed from his experience as a county surveyor. The Lancashire and Cheshire commissions, however, are much clearer, and were dependent on his wife's connections and the broader Kirkes/Gregson family and business network.

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