



## *The Markenfield Irregular*

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MARKENFIELD HAS ACQUIRED a most intriguing 7"x5" sepia wash sketch of the house from the north-east, dated 1825. It is by George Cuitt the Younger of Masham (1779-1854) who in his day was well known. One's first impression is that very little has changed: the N side of the moat, which forms the foreground, is much rougher and irregular, there is what appears to be a mooring post as if those who lived there kept a boat on the water, and there are little gates and walls illustrating how the house and land was at this stage divided between two tenant farmer families - the Harrisons and the Hawkesworths.



The intriguing surprise is that no moat to speak of is shown on the E side, the side overlooking the valley where the mediaeval main road ran from Ripon to Ripley. The house was built defensively in 1310 and the E side was its most vulnerable. There are a number of nineteenth century references to the moat only being three-sided, but these could perhaps be explained by Walbran's account of the house (1851-1857): "it is surrounded by a moat, parts of which are now filled up". Could it be that they were deliberately filled up on the E side when England had become more peaceful? Or could it be that Cuitt embroidered what he actually saw to make a more satisfactory picture, as JMW Turner used to do?



CHRISTMAS AT MARKENFIELD last month raised £1,466 for the Persecuted Christians in the Middle East, via two charities: The Diocese of Cyprus & The Gulf and The Friends of the Holy Land. Bishop Clive Handford, who has been at the centre of these terrible events, at the conclusion of the service described what is taking place which has received little press coverage.



THE ESTATE has now been approached by Gladman Developments Limited who wish to build a "new village settlement" on the land between Markenfield and the A61. From the documents they enclosed, it is clear they are talking of 150 to 200 houses. They say they are willing to spend in excess of £500,000 developing the project, which will make the "landowners into multi-millionaires". We are replying that we are already extremely rich but thanking them for their concern for our welfare.

MARKENFIELD has been able to purchase a rare copy of the *Reliquiae Antiquae Eboracenses*, or *The Remains of the Antiquity in the County of York*, by William Bowman (1855) which has a five-page illustrated chapter about the house. One of the illustrations is shown below. It is interesting that on the extreme R, the heavy doorway is shown already re-sited at ground level instead of where the little square window is - one of Walbran's changes - but the fenestration around and above the front door is still in its old position. It is from this book that we know that, in 1855, both the Chapel and Great Hall were being used as granaries.



HISTORIC ENGLAND reports that a grandfather aged 69 had been awarded a six-figure sum against it for falling into a moat at Carisbrook Castle on the Isle of Wight, which it owns. It also had to pay out to a woman who fell into a moat at Carlisle Castle *at 2:00 o'clock in the morning*. She suffered pelvic and hip injuries and received £15,000 with legal costs of £37,250. In the first case, the rule judged that a sign was not on display to indicate the danger of a moat.

If Markenfield were to install a forest of signs, it would destroy the very nature of what people came here to see, enjoy and wonder at; and by the time they had read them all, there'd be no time left to visit the house.

DANGER  
please do not fall into the moat  
- the swans may bite you and  
that could make them poorly