

The Biddlestone Run

Sunday 29th July 2012

The run today will take us to Biddlestone which is a small village in the parish of Alwinton, Northumberland, on the fringe of the Northumberland National Park and to a building which is only open by special arrangement, Biddlestone Chapel.

Biddlestone Chapel is a Grade II Listed building and stands at the foot of the Cheviot Hills some ten miles north west of Rothbury. It is one of the more remote chapels maintained by the Historic Chapels Trust. For almost eight centuries Biddlestone Hall was the seat of the Selbys.



In 1272 the Selby family was granted land in the borders and the chapel was built as a typical 13th Century Pele Tower. In the 17th century, the building was later extended to include a West Wing with a small courtyard and gateway to the south. In this form Biddlestone became the setting for "Obaldistone Hall" in Sir Walter Scott's "Rob Roy". The family had Jacobite sympathies with

Ephraim Selby being involved in the Rising at Rothbury in 1715.

After a disastrous fire, the entire structure, with the exception of the ground floor of the original Pele Tower was demolished and replaced by a completely new house in 1796. The present chapel was built in 1820 and designed by John Dobson as a first floor wing on top of the old Pele's remains and became known as the "Chapel Wing"

There is an upper gallery in the Chapel which allowed access by the Selby family and the scars on the west wall of the chapel indicate the site of the Hall. Just inside the entrance of the rear doorway can be seen an example of an air raid shelter, a relic of the World War II and in perfect condition, used when the Hall was a convalescent home for injured servicemen, though it is doubtful if it would have afforded any more protection than the main building.

In 1914 the estate was sold by Walter Selby and the farms later bought by their tenant. The hall and 50 acres of parkland were acquired by the Forestry Commission. In 1957 the hall was demolished but the Chapel Wing was preserved. Biddlestone Chapel was acquired in 1997 by the Historic Chapels Trust. The Chapel is in a relatively good condition with extensive internal decoration completed whilst the exterior has been cleared and the grounds tidied and landscaped.





Biddlestone Hall and Chapel, pre-demolition



Biddlestone Hall and Chapel during demolition



Immediately after demolition

Leave car park at Ridley Arms Stannington and turn left, set miles to 0

0.1	Turn right	At roundabout SP A1 North
0.15	Turn left	SP Well Hill
3.7	Turn left	SP Tranwell Woods
4.2	Turn right	SP Morpeth
4.9	Straight across	No SP
6.2	Turn left	SP Meldon
9.7	Straight across at junction	SP Morpeth
10.7	Turn left	SP Hartburn
10.75	Turn right	SP Longwiton
12.0	Turn right	SP Netherwiton
13.7	Turn left	SP Netherwiton
18.8	Turn right	At The Gate
19.9	Turn left	SP Simonside
22.6	Turn left	No SP go past tower
23.1	Turn left	SP Bickerton
26.7	Turn left	SP Otterburn
27.3	Turn right	SP Holystone
30.6	Turn left	SP Alwinton
33.3	Turn right	SP Glanton
35.4	Turn left	SP Biddlestone
36.5	Stop	Biddlestone Chapel, park on grass verge
37.5	Turn right	No SP
40.5	Turn right	Over bridge
40.6	Turn right	SP Clennell
41.3	Bear left	Between posts to hotel

Clennell Hall is an historic manor house, now operated as a country hotel, situated at Clennell, near Alwinton. It has new owners and management since June 2012. It is a Grade II listed building

In a survey of 1541 the tower house at Clennell was described as 'a little tower of Percival Clennell' then newly repaired with a barmkin under construction. In 1715 it was the seat of Luke Clennell, (High Sheriff of Northumberland in 1727) and comprised an old tower on the east, a double wing at the west and a small court to the south with a 'handsome gateway'.

In 1749 Philadelphia Clennell, the heiress of the estate married William Wilkinson, (High Sheriff in 1758).

In 1895 their great grandson Anthony Wilkinson greatly extended the property by the addition of a large Tudor style mansion and created a significant country residence. The present building still incorporates the Pele tower of 1589.



Clennell Hall Hotel