

The Old Lock Up

Quorn Parish Council welcomes you to Stafford Orchard

This unassuming early 19th century building, originally the village gaol and now in probably its third reincarnation, has served many interesting purposes in its long history. Although its origins are unknown, records show that the first major redesign took place in about 1836 after it was found that: *“The dark hole was very insecure, persons having escaped during their confinement”*



William Flint, a renowned architect from Leicester was instructed by the Vestry Committee:

“to draw a plan and give an estimate of a building to be erected for the purpose of a Dark Hole, a place for the Fire Engine, and also a place to lodge poor persons upon travel.”

It seems difficult to believe that this building managed to fit so many purposes. If you look carefully on the left side you can see the carriage doors through which the fire engine was wheeled in and out. In fact, in 1872 serious consideration was given to extending it

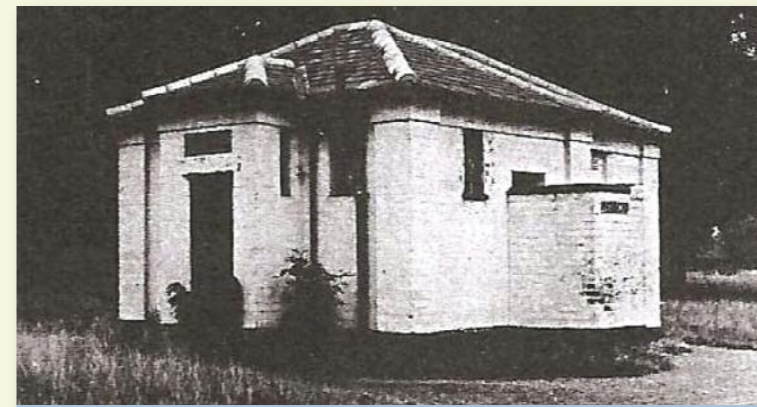
further by building an upper storey to house a meeting room for the Local Board, which would also double as a reading room and community venue. This proposal, when it was eventually rejected, stirred bitter feeling in the village. Thomas Sheldon, a local man, wrote to the Loughborough Advertiser in December 1872:

“I herewith promise those gentlemen who did not vote for this much-desired measure, (and I consider those who held aloof to be more blameable and mean), that I will do my utmost to replace them with better men when their turn for re-election comes”

By 1920 the Lock Up had largely fallen into disuse and other uses were debated amongst which was the conversion of the building into a public convenience. This caused a petition to be presented to the Urban District Council against the proposal, causing the chairman to remark:

“I cannot understand people’s objections to an obvious sanitary improvement such as this. It seems going backward rather than forward to receive a petition against a public convenience. If some of these people who signed this petition saw Quorn at night or first thing in a morning before these people get up, they would be surprised. The streets are used as a public convenience now.”

Despite the protests, the building was used as a public convenience until 1963 when a new public lavatory was built close by. The Barrow Rural District Council wished to relinquish the lease, but by then the building had been listed as being of historical merit, so it stayed, achieving fame by being featured as an oddity on the BBC’s Tonight programme.



The Lock Up pictured in the 1960s

By the 1980s it was leased to the East Midlands Gas Board who used it as a gas governing station and by the 1990s it housed a Pizza takeaway business.

The old Lock Up is owned by Town Lands Charity and leased to Quorn Parish Council. Including the Lock Up in the 2009 Parks for People lottery project has enabled the Parish Council to

have more control over the façade of this listed building and to oversee a sensitive restoration.

The stocks you see nearby are a representation of those which stood in front of the Lock Up until about 1868. The Reverend Foord-Kelcey wrote in 1908 that old people in the village remembered a comical local character called Tommy Taylor being put into them.

Find out more about Quorn's history at www.quornmuseum.com



The Lock Up in the floods c1930

Funded by the National Lottery’s Parks for People Scheme, Quorn Parish Council and Charnwood Borough Council.

www.StaffordOrchard.co.uk

Park Maintenance: Please report any issues to the Groundsman or the Parish Office 01509 414491.

