

WORTHINGTON ROUND HOUSE

THE BUILDING

The lock-up is octagonal, of red brick, with an octagonal brick spire. It measures approx. 3 metres across with 1.5 metre high walls surmounted by a projected stone string course. The octagonal brick spire is approx. 3.5 metres high and tapers to a strong finial. The overall height of the lock up is approx 5 metres.

In addition to the door, it has a small slit window, which may have been inserted in World War II to convert it into a pillbox.

The lock-up is believed to date from the late 18th century is a listed Building Grade II & Ancient Scheduled Monument.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- Craig Ashley, Master Mason who carried out the restoration work
 - Laurel Bank Forge - Cast aluminium plaque maker
 - Mick Mumford - Oak door maker
- Michael White, Leicestershire County Council and Alan Harvey, North West Leicestershire District Council for technical advice
 - Jon Humble and Allan Cox, English Heritage Officers
- Leicestershire County Council for Shires Grant towards restoration
 - Goff Lewis, North West Leicestershire District Council for co-ordinating the restoration and leaflet production
 - Brian Jordan & Mike Shaw for use of the photographs

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THE ROUND HOUSE WORTHINGTON



Produced and printed by North West Leicestershire District Council
In conjunction with Worthington Parish Council

LOCK-UPS - WHAT ARE THEY?

Lock-ups, also known as round houses, cage, lobby, watch house, blind houses and clinks, were temporary holding places for offenders being brought before the magistrate. Most lock-ups were purpose built, usually small square, rectangular, octagonal or occasionally circular stone buildings. Most were windowless with one or two ventilation grilles, often set under the eaves or into the single door.

The earliest recorded lock-up dates from the 13th Century and most fell out of use when police stations, with their own holding facilities were established. (Leicestershire Police Force was established in 1839).

Less than 300 lock-ups or round houses are currently recorded nationally, mostly grouped in clusters such as in Essex, West Yorkshire and Derbyshire with the highest concentration in Wiltshire and Somerset. In some Counties, such as Hampshire, there are no recorded examples. (source -Dept for Culture, Media & Sport).

Other Lock ups or round houses located in our area are in Packington, Smisby, Breedon on the Hill and Ticknall. Evidence suggests that locally the most probable use was for the confinement of drunks who were usually released the next day, with no record kept of those incarcerated.

One well know anecdote is of Eliza Soar, landlady of the “Staff of Life” public house, whose back door key fitted the lock-up at Ticknall. She let out drunks after the constable had gone home! On one Ticknall Feast Day, a number of Melbourne men were locked up for riotous behaviour. Their wives invaded Ticknall in the middle of the night and Mrs Soar was able to release their husbands, thus preventing a worse breach of the peace. (source - Ticknall Round house)

A description of a lock-up at Taunton, written in 1830 describes “a hole into which drunken and bleeding men were thrust and allowed to remain until the following day when the constable with his staff of office take the poor, crippled and dirty wretches before a magistrate, followed by half the boys and idle fellows of the town”.

(source - the Bisley Lock-up)



St. Matthew's Avenue soon after being built, with the lock-up in the foreground. 1958

WORTHINGTON LOCK-UP

The village lock-up and pinfold. Remarkably, in the 18th and 19th centuries, it was commonplace in the towns for thefts, burglaries and public scenes of drunkenness to occur and in

the countryside, for people to be assaulted, watchmen obstructed, shooting outrages to occur and sheep stolen. Sheep stealing remained a capital offence until 1872. The village lock-up was probably built in the 18th century and was used as a place of detention for local rogues and miscreants until they could be removed to a town. The pinfold attached to the roundhouse is where stray stock would be held until claimed by the owner. It was demolished to make way for St. Matthew's Avenue. In October 1839 at the County Quarter Sessions, the chairman, Charles William Packe urged his fellow justices to take advantage of the new Police Act of that year to inaugurate a properly constituted constabulary based on the system being used in London.

Charles Packe, an MP and country magistrate, knew that the current system required reform and upgrading. Up until then maintaining law and order was in the hands of largely untrained parish constables and watchmen. Packe proposed a county force of 25 officers including a chief constable and this was duly established. 31 year old Frederick Goodyer was appointed as chief constable. A policeman's lot in Victorian times was just as hazardous as it is today.

(source - Hand-me-down Hearsays)



The lock-up and pinfold. 1950



Looking up Church Street towards the church. 1935
St. Matthew's Avenue was built in the field on the left.



St. Matthew's Avenue soon after being built, with the lock-up in the foreground. 1958