

Marquess of Londonderry statue

The statue of Charles Vane-Tempest-Stewart, 3rd Marquess of Londonderry (1778-1854) was erected in December 1861. Previously a soldier and one of the Duke of Wellington's commanders in the Peninsular War, in 1818 he married Frances Vane-Tempest, a wealthy heiress with colliery interests in the east of County Durham. Londonderry expanded this colliery empire founding the town and port of Seaham Harbour from which his colliers took coal to London and the south of England.

The statue, made using a process of copper electro-plating, is the largest ever attempted by this method and cost £2,000. It was created by Raffaele Monte of Milan (1818-81) who became bankrupt during the commission. A local (mistaken) legend says that when the statue was unveiled only a blind beggar realised that the sculptor had omitted to give the horse a tongue. Until 2010/11 the statue was sited closer to the church and Town Hall and faced south.

Town Hall/Guildhall

In 1555 Bishop Tunstall built a two-storey stone Tollbooth on the western side of the Market Place replacing the earlier wooden one. By 1665, when Bishop Cosin rebuilt Tunstall's structure, it was known as the Guildhall. Later in the 17th century a room called the Town Hall (now the Mayor's Chamber) was added to the back of the Guildhall. George Bowes of Gibside rebuilt the Town Hall in 1752, and in 1754 the Guildhall received a classical façade with its original doorway beneath the balcony.

By 1849 Durham was clearly falling behind other local towns with new large town halls. Begun in May that year Durham's new Town Hall with its impressive hammer beam roof adjoined the Guildhall but, lying behind the Burlison art gallery, had no frontage onto the Market Place and was entered by a passage behind the Guildhall. Opened in 1851, it was designed by PC Hardwick whose rich decorations are full of local historical references.

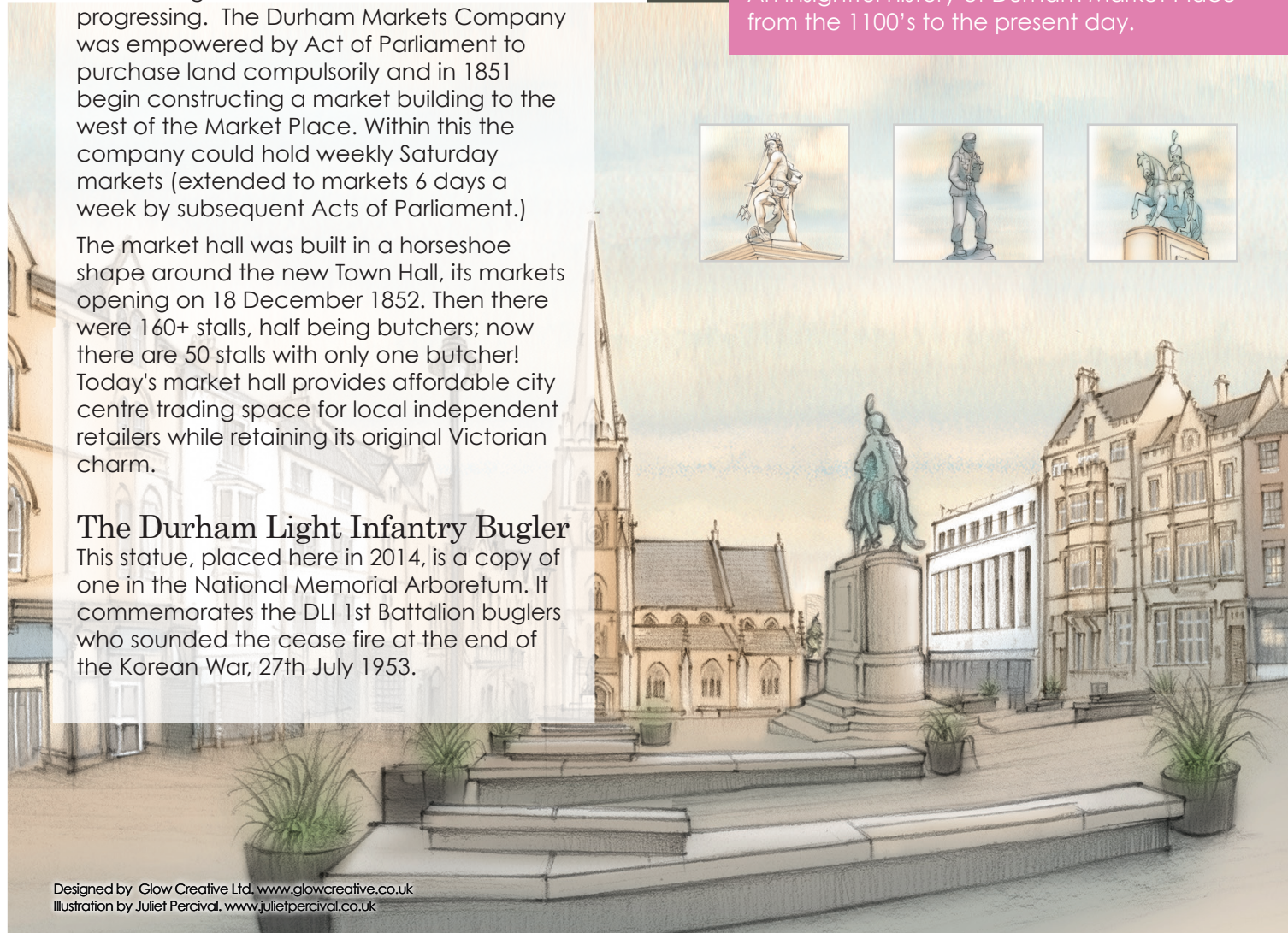
Indoor Market Hall

As the new Town Hall was being constructed, development of the surrounding area for a covered market was progressing. The Durham Markets Company was empowered by Act of Parliament to purchase land compulsorily and in 1851 begin constructing a market building to the west of the Market Place. Within this the company could hold weekly Saturday markets (extended to markets 6 days a week by subsequent Acts of Parliament.)

The market hall was built in a horseshoe shape around the new Town Hall, its markets opening on 18 December 1852. Then there were 160+ stalls, half being butchers; now there are 50 stalls with only one butcher! Today's market hall provides affordable city centre trading space for local independent retailers while retaining its original Victorian charm.

The Durham Light Infantry Bugler

This statue, placed here in 2014, is a copy of one in the National Memorial Arboretum. It commemorates the DLI 1st Battalion buglers who sounded the cease fire at the end of the Korean War, 27th July 1953.



Designed by Glow Creative Ltd. www.glowcreative.co.uk
Illustration by Juliet Percival. www.julietpercival.co.uk

Durham Pointers Durham Market Place

Free

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M Market Place

This has been the commercial heart of Durham for 900 years since Bishop Flambard cleared traders from the ecclesiastical and military core in front of the Cathedral. As the only borough with a market licence it soon became the main commercial centre and civic focal point.

From the 12th century, shops and houses developed on all but the north side of the Market Place with the typical medieval 'burgage' pattern of long thin plots extending back from a narrow frontage, still clearly visible in some premises.

In the late 15th or early 16th century the Neville family built a town residence, New Place, on a site now covered by the Town Hall and Market Hall. After the Northern Rising of 1569 the Westmorland estates were forfeited to the crown and New Place was used for woollen manufacture, a school, a workhouse and, on market days, for the sale of cheese, butter and eggs.

When the new indoor Market Hall opened in the mid-19th century the Market Place ceased to be used for trading, but its original function returned in the 21st century as it is now used for a weekly outdoor market and other outdoor events.

Today's Market Place reflects ongoing change:- in the 1960's with the creation of the through road; the removal of its iconic traffic control box during pedestrianisation in the early 1970's; the insertion of the High Street entrance and in 2009-11 remodelling and the introduction of a timeline highlighting significant events in the city's history.



S St. Nicholas' Church

The first St. Nicholas' church (dedicated to the patron saint of merchants) was in existence by 1140. Part of its graveyard extended into the present Market Place but was paved over in the early 1840's. Clayport Gate, part of the old city walls at the east end of the church, was demolished in 1791. To widen the Claypath entrance to the Market Place the east end of the church was shortened in 1841. In 1857- 8 the church was rebuilt in 14th-century style by J.P. Pritchett to the basic outline of the old church but adding a tall spire (the first in the city) on the tower, and a hall to the north. The statue of St. Nicholas above the main door holds a ship because he is also patron saint of seafarers.

The church was modernised and re-ordered internally in 1977-1982 when George Carey (later Archbishop of Canterbury) was the vicar.



B Boots

The art-deco building on the north-east side of the Market Place was built in 1938/39, and opened in December 1939 as a department store for Deggarts. Arthur Deggart built up a chain of 17 department stores across the North-East. By 1980 eleven stores remained (including Durham, which employed 57 full-time and part-time staff) but all closed at the end of 1980.

B Banks

What is now Barclays Bank was built for Jonathan Backhouse & Co. The Backhouse family were linen and woollen manufacturers in Darlington who began banking as a side-line, opening the Durham branch here in 1815. Alfred Waterhouse's new building is marked by the 1887 monogram in a gable panel on the central of its three taller left-hand bays. The griffin holds a wind-vane flag with a 'B' (for Backhouse's Bank). The mythological griffin could reputedly locate and guard buried treasure so was seen as an appropriate symbol for a bank.

Barclay & Co. was created in 1896 from the amalgamation of 20 banks including Jonathan Backhouse & Co. The Durham branch was extended in 1923/24 by the three right-hand bays and the central bay has 'BB (Barclays Bank) 1924' on a shield in the gable.

There are currently two other banks in the Market Place - Natwest, which was built in 1876-1878 for National Provincial Bank of England; and Lloyds, which was built in 1900. The building now housing Thomas Cook's was built in 1898-1900 for the York City & County Bank (which became the Midland Bank), and the present Nationwide Building Society was built in 1916/17 as the Bank of Liverpool & Martins.

N Neptune statue

George Bowes of Gibside presented the statue to the city in 1729/30 reputedly to encourage support for the idea of a canalised River Wear to enable the easy transport of coal downstream to Sunderland.

Bowes was an MP for the county and also a city alderman, serving as mayor for three terms and regularly making presentations to the City after an election so it is likely that the statue was linked to the outcome of the 1730 election.

The statue is made of lead with a stone 'skeleton'. Originally it stood on the pant – a reservoir supplied from the Fram Well, the city's main water supply. The statue was moved to Wharton Park in 1923, damaged by lightning in 1979, taken for restoration in 1986, returned to the Market Place in May 1991 and moved to its present location in 2010.