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# QUARTER SESSIONS BUILDING IN LANCASHIRE, 1770–1830

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Between about 1770 and 1830 expenditure on building and construction by Lancashire was among the largest for any English county. In the previous century there had been a steadily rising outlay, entirely on bridges apart from occasional prison repairs. Although Lancashire is the sixth largest English county, the great growth of expenditure from the 1770s was particularly the result of the increase of population. It more than trebled between 1780 and 1830, and grew more than four times between 1750 and 1830. The estimated population of Lancashire between 1701 and 1831 was as follows. 1751: 317,740; 1781: 422,328 or 421,031; 1801: 694,202; 1831: 1,351,745<sup>1</sup>.

While population was growing all over Lancashire, the increase was especially great in the part of the county from Preston and Blackburn southwards on account of the expansion of the cotton industry. The consequent inevitable steady growth of crime and the influence of the prison reform movement led to almost continuous prison building work from the mid-1780s, although it was concentrated particularly in the decade after 1785 (when the houses of correction in Preston and Salford and the county gaol were built), and in the years after 1816 (when Salford bridewell was extended and a third built at Kirkdale near Liverpool). In this period the court accommodation was transformed, first in Lancaster Castle and after 1824 in Preston, and a lunatic asylum erected (1811–18). Because of the growth of trade and industry, bridge works were continuous, the biggest being constructed at Lancaster in the mid 1780s and the largest outlay being in the south-east, in Salford Hundred.

## THE JUSTICES AT QUARTER SESSIONS

Until nearly the end of the eighteenth century only the gaol at Lancaster (used as in other counties to hold debtors, those awaiting trial, and convicts) and at first three, later five bridges, and a raised roadway, were the financial responsibility of the county. The number of its bridges then rose, reaching 24 by the early 1820s.<sup>2</sup> The two bridewells, or houses of correction, holding minor offenders and vagrants who were expected to work for up to a few months, were financed separately. The Preston bridewell was paid for by the five hundreds of Lonsdale, Amounderness, Blackburn, Leyland and West Derby, and the Manchester prison by the other hundred, Salford.<sup>3</sup> The six hundreds were also responsible for about 500 bridges, the number hardly changing between the seventeenth and early nineteenth centuries. In 1824 there were said to be 78 hundred bridges in Lonsdale North of the Sands and 42 South of the Sands, 41 in Amounderness, 72 in Blackburn, 38 in Leyland, 139 in West Derby and 81 in Salford.<sup>4</sup> The justices referred to the ‘ancient agreement for each hundred to repair and maintain their particular bridges, the three county bridges excepted’ in 1684.<sup>5</sup> The importance of the hundreds may be explained by the emergence of all, or most, of the hundreds before the county did so in the eleventh and twelfth centuries;<sup>6</sup> also perhaps their convenient size for administration was a factor, Lancashire being one of the larger counties and long from north to south (Fig. 1).

Each quarter sessions met in four towns in succession at an interval of two or three days. Those

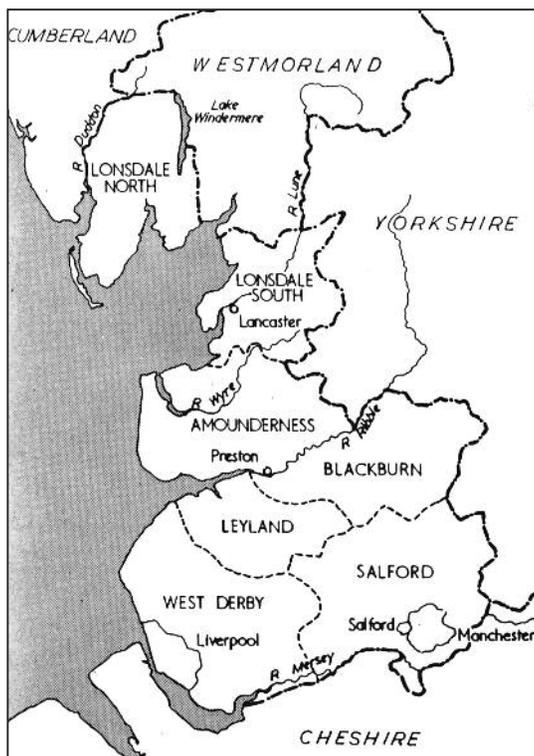


Fig. 1. The hundreds of Lancashire.

Lonsdale being dealt with at Lancaster, for Amounderness and Blackburn at Preston, for West Derby and Leyland at Wigan or Ormskirk, and for Salford hundred at Manchester. The adjournments were convenient on account of the size of the county; Lancaster, the county town, was distant from the main areas of population and communal activity.<sup>7</sup> In addition a Sheriff's Board was held by the justices at the Assizes at Lancaster to deal with business concerning the county at large, particularly the nomination of officers. In 1787 it was replaced by an annual general sessions at Preston because of its more central situation. On account of the opposition of Lonsdale justices to its removal from Lancaster, it was established by act of parliament in 1798 to handle all county financial matters (fixing the rate and approving accounts), appointing officers, dealing with the gaol, houses of correction and county bridges.<sup>8</sup>

In the later eighteenth century between three and four and eight or nine justices attended each meeting, with more on special occasions.<sup>9</sup> The majority of the justices were established gentry; a minority were either professional or mercantile men or came from a professional or trading background, particularly Liverpool or Manchester. Cotton manufacturers were not normally justices, because they were not considered to be in a position to adjudicate impartially in disputes between masters and men in the industry.

Some of the gentry, such as Alexander Butler of Kirkland near Preston (d.1811), High Sheriff of Lancashire in 1767 and the chairman of annual general sessions, 1788, 1798–1804, 1806, 1807,<sup>10</sup> and Wilson Braddyll of Conishead Priory, Ulverston, who attended the Lancaster Sessions, belonged to families who had been established on their estates for several centuries, either through the male or female line. Wilson Braddyll was the heir of Thomas (d.1776), who had modernised the mansion, making it, in a contemporary's words, a 'large and excellent gentleman's seat', with extensive grounds. Although

at Epiphany and Michaelmas were adjourned from Lancaster to Preston, thence to Wigan, and from there to Manchester; at Easter and Midsummer the sequence was Lancaster, Preston, Ormskirk and Manchester. There were occasional further adjournments. Thus in January 1779 quarter sessions met on the 12<sup>th</sup> at Lancaster, the 14<sup>th</sup> at Preston, the 18<sup>th</sup> at Wigan and the 21<sup>st</sup> at Manchester. A different group of justices met on each occasion. This system of meetings had been decided by the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster in 1547 after consultation between the judges and justices. It enabled the justices to keep local affairs to themselves, those for

the Braddylls had been settled earlier near Whalley on another estate, and a John Braddyll had bought and sold monastic land in the mid-sixteenth century, they were descended from the Dodding family who had been at Conishead since the sixteenth century. In the words of the same observer:

In the house I observed the portrait of a Dodding aet.47, A.D. 1650, together with several of the Braddylls, brought from Portfield. The original seat of this family was the house of Braddyll, with Brook Hall, near Whalley, but in the parish of Blackburn. Here they may be traced at least three centuries, but a purchase of one moiety of the demesnes of Whalley Abbey brought them to Portfield, near that place, where they continued several generations. Enriched, however, by a wealthy marriage with the heiress of the Doddings, they finally migrated to Conishead.<sup>11</sup>

Gentry belonging to families with a Lancashire commercial background had often not been in trade themselves, nor had their fathers. The ancestors of Sir Ashton Lever of Alkington Hall (b.1729 and made a justice in 1766) had been clothiers in the seventeenth century, though his father (who had built the Hall in 1735 and had been High Sheriff) was a gentleman.<sup>12</sup> Among justices who had themselves made money in trade was Peter Baker of Liverpool (d.1796), a shipbuilder who constructed both naval and mercantile vessels, and who owned the privateer *Mentor* which captured the French East Indiaman, *Carnatic*, worth £135,000, in October 1778; he was Bailiff of Liverpool in 1785 and Mayor in 1796, and owned landed property in the neighbourhood of Liverpool in the 1780s.<sup>13</sup> Some families who had made fortunes in trade in the past owned considerable estates: the Lever estate extended over much of south-east Lancashire, and included property in Manchester and the neighbourhood.

A few prosperous clergy and other professional men were also prominent as justices, such as Rev Oliver Marton, vicar of Lancaster until 1794, whose father had bought the manor of Bolton-le-Sands about 1700, and James Fenton, a lawyer and recorder of

Lancaster between 1758 and 1791.<sup>14</sup> Some gentry had cultural interests: Dorning Rasbotham of Birch House near Bolton (1730–91), who grew up in Manchester but retired to the country estate inherited through his mother in 1762, indulged in art and wrote a tragedy which was twice performed at the Manchester theatre<sup>15</sup>. The leading figure among the justices between 1770 and the 1790s was Thomas Butterworth Bayley of Hope, a country estate outside Manchester who also drew an income as Receiver of the Duchy Rents for Lancashire. His ancestors had been silkweavers and merchants in Manchester. He was High Sheriff at 24 and became chairman of Salford Sessions. An active magistrate, he paid great attention to the police and was particularly notable for his zeal over the house of correction erected at Salford in the late 1780s. He was chairman of the Board of Health set up in 1795 to improve sanitation. His other interests are shown by his being a Fellow of the Royal Society and vice president of the Agricultural Society of Manchester.<sup>16</sup>

There was little change in the background of justices who were most prominent in quarter sessions work in the first three decades of the nineteenth century.<sup>17</sup> The clergy were still a minority and there were justices from mercantile families. Several justices in the 1810s and 1820s had been at meetings long before 1800, such as Sir Richard Clayton of Adlington in Standish, where his family had been settled for more than a century; having become a justice in 1772, he was chairman of annual general sessions in 1810 and 1815<sup>18</sup>. Rev Richard Formby of Formby Hall, west of Ormskirk, had been a justice since 1790<sup>19</sup>. In the years 1812 and 1813 both chaired several quarter sessions at Ormskirk, Clayton taking a deposition from Bolton weavers that they had taken illegal oaths in 1812, when propertied people feared disorder and risings among the working classes.<sup>20</sup>

The majority of justices had less service behind them. John Silvester of Chorley, a justice since 1805, commanded a regiment of militia during the state of fear in 1812.<sup>21</sup> Among the leading established gentry

was Edward Bootle Wilbraham of Lathom House near Ormskirk, a justice since 1800 and chairman of annual general sessions in 1826 and 1828; his great uncle Sir Thomas Bootle had bought Lathom House in 1724 and rebuilt it in stone during the next ten years, after a design by Leoni. His father Richard Wilbraham of Rode Hall in Cheshire, M.P. for boroughs outside Lancashire, advised the Chancellor of the Duchy, and was made Lord Skelmersdale in 1828<sup>22</sup>.

Among the justices from a mercantile background was Thomas Earle, of the Liverpool merchant family (1754–1822); in his early life he lived and worked as a merchant in a house in Hanover Street, and was Mayor in 1787. During the French Wars he was an active commander of the Volunteers. He bought the Spekeldands estate, and in 1804–5 built Spekeldands House, a large square building of white stone in which he lived until his death.<sup>23</sup> The most prominent clergyman was Rev W.R. Hay (1761–1839). He started life as a barrister, then became a clergyman, becoming rector of Ackworth in Yorkshire on the presentation of Lord Liverpool, the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, and a relation, in 1802. Between 1802 and 1823 he was Chairman of Quarter Sessions at Manchester, where he lived, and was active and painstaking; for the strong Tory line he took in support of the government during the Peterloo Massacre in 1819 he was given the valuable Rochdale living, worth £1,730 a year. He was typical of the well-connected clergyman who became a justice, but his energy in this activity brought him exceptional preferment.<sup>24</sup>

In the 1820s cotton manufacturers continued to be excluded except in extreme necessity; even the clergy were carefully vetted. Landed society still dominated the active bench, as landowners were regarded by the Chancellor of the Duchy as being most suitable on account of their gentility and respectability.<sup>25</sup>

#### EARLY IMPROVEMENT 1770–84

The county had assumed responsibility for the gaol and shire hall in Lancaster Castle in the later 1670s.<sup>26</sup> On his visit to the Castle in 1776 John Howard noted (with crown and shire halls) the prison accommodation. Men and women had separate day rooms and the men two cells for night rooms, but no separate courts. The master's side debtors, who could pay for their lodgings, had many apartments, the other debtors a large room.<sup>27</sup>

The Manchester bridewell was a small house including cells, presumably subdivisions of rooms, in 1770. When Howard visited Preston bridewell in 1776, he found a large room with sleeping closets, two workrooms and a dungeon, that is a room partly or fully below ground.<sup>28</sup> Both had been repaired extensively earlier in the century, and there was a wall round Preston prison in 1704 which was no doubt still there later.<sup>29</sup>

In the later seventeenth century and early and mid-eighteenth centuries the justices were spending money ceaselessly on the repair, enlarging and rebuilding of up to 20 or 30 county and hundred bridges a year. One of the original three stone county bridges, Skerton Bridge, Lancaster, had a typical medieval or sixteenth-century structure of several arches. Ribble Bridge at Penwortham, near Preston, was rebuilt twice in the 1750s, first by subscriptions from local gentry, Preston Corporation and its two M.P.s, and second by three county rates costing £2,000. It had five segmental arches, was about 100 yards long, and 18 feet between the parapets.<sup>30</sup> Crossford county bridge, south of Stretford, near Manchester, had been repaired in 1662, though it is not known whether it was later rebuilt. Ribchester Bridge at Samlesbury Ford, on the Ribble above Preston, and Barton Bridge on the Irwell, near Manchester, both hundred bridges in the seventeenth century and county bridges by the 1740s, were rebuilt in the 1670s.

Many of the very numerous bridges maintained by the six hundreds were footbridges or tiny carriage timber or stone bridges of single arches spanning

brooks, costing from £30 or £40 up to £80 or £100, built of stone more often than wood. The biggest bridges of several arches cost five or ten times as much. Each hundred (or occasionally the individual bridge) had its own salaried supervisor of bridges or bridgemaister who kept his own account (seen periodically by the justices) and had his own fund for making payments. He was responsible for viewing the state of the bridges in his district, reporting to Sessions on repairs and rebuilding to be done (with plans and estimates), and superintending and paying the contractors. By the 1740s all the bridges were costing over £700 a year on average, and in the 1760s about £1,300.<sup>31</sup>

The surge in building from the 1770s and 1780s which the gentry justices directed, with the help of magistrates from the professions, involved several changing motives and attitudes among the upper classes which can be stated briefly. Fundamental was the emerging belief that the sick, the poor, the criminal and the insane needed to be held and cared for in institutions such as hospitals, workhouses, prisons and asylums. The feelings accompanying this approach were mixed. Traditional history emphasised the growth of humanitarianism among the upper classes, prison reform accompanying the growing interest in revision of the harsh criminal law, opposition to the slave trade and then slavery itself, interest in education for working people, philanthropy and religious enthusiasm. This attitude involved a genuine benevolence by the prosperous towards people less fortunate in various ways. Recently sociologists and historians influenced by them, such as Rothman, Foucault and Ignatieff have stressed that the ruling classes wished to dominate these people to stop them being dangerous and to make them useful, especially to those with property. ‘Social control’ has become the favourite phrase for this view. There was a growing sense of duty and of the need for efficiency among magistrates which was strengthened by the presence of clerical justices. A succession of dedicated men and women from John Howard in the 1770s made

known the abuses of prisons and urged reform on the county and borough justices and Parliament. Again, the volume of the predominant type of building, that of houses, tended to fluctuate; large-scale house construction encouraged other types of building, as in the years 1765–78 and 1785–95, with an unprecedented jump in bridge building in the first period and in prison construction in the second.

The specific causes of the various types of English county building have been mentioned elsewhere. Prison improvement and construction from the 1770s was the result of growing population, the increasing tendency of judges to use imprisonment as a form of punishment after 1780, even for petty offences, in addition to the absence of transportation between 1776 and 1787, and the rising interest in prison reform leading to purpose-built structures. The improvement of court houses was caused by the wish to handle more cases in more suitable premises as well as the desire of the judges and justices for greater comfort. Bridge building instead of repair followed from the growth of trade in farm products and manufactured goods. Pauper lunatic asylums after 1808 were caused by a more enlightened approach to the insane, as human beings capable of treatment and cure, instead of as beasts to be whipped or chained in workhouses. Finally, building improvements which involved higher county rates were encouraged by the growing prosperity of landowners and farmers in the later eighteenth century as increasing population raised the demand for foodstuffs.<sup>32</sup>

The only new prison was the Manchester House of Correction, rebuilt in 1774 and 1775.<sup>33</sup> It cost £1,671.<sup>34</sup> The growth of population in south-east Lancashire probably made new accommodation urgent, the number of inmates jumping to 30 or more at sessions, with far fewer normally, from the late 1760s.<sup>35</sup> According to Howard, there were separate courts and apartments for men and women, and sickrooms; the men had workrooms, over which were chambers, and four cells; the women had three rooms on the ground floor and three chambers; there

ROLLS (OF RATES) ISSUED FOR BRIDGE WORKS IN LANCS., 1762–85  
(total per year) \*

Date £	County £	Lonsdale £	Amounderness £	B'burn £	Leyland £	W. Derby £	Salford £	Total
1762	100	316 14s. 4d.	350	150		119 17s. 0d.	150	1185 11s. 4d.
1763		47 10s.			125	360 4s. 5d.	200	732 14s. 5d.
1764	100	54 10s.	95	160	340	81 13s. 2d.	400	1231 3s. 2d.
1765		114 4s. 6d.	170		63 6s. 0d.	113 12s. 7d.	340	798 3s. 1d.
1766	60	365 3s. 9d.			30	60	170	685 3s. 9d.
1767	60	174 13s. 4d.	240		48/4	173 11s. 8d.	478	1,183 9s. 0d.
1768	460	785 10s. 0d.		400	30	327 7s. 7d.	280	2,282 17s. 7d.
1769	60	814 5s. 4d.	140		369 3s. 1d.	301 3s. 4d.	400	2,084 11s. 9d.
1770	500	309 0s. 0d.	350		44	136 18s. 0d.	250	1,589 18s. 0d.
1771	571	68	350	60	70	474 13s. 9d.	300	1,993 13s. 7d.
1772	233 6s. 2d.	417 10s.	300		130	460 6s.	450	1,991
1773	100	260				292 19s. 6d.	520	1,172 19s. 6d.
1774	500	68			101 19s. 4d.	840 6s. 7d.	600	2,110 6s.
1775	1,550	181			146 6s. 5d.	611 13s. 7d.	831	3,319
1776	900	362 13s.	150		137 3s. 4d.	347 18s. 9d.	1,200	3,097 15s.
1777	685 19s. 3d.	508 13s. 3d.	50		30	209 19s. 6d.	1,200	2,684
1778		128 7s.	100	500	220 17s. 6d.	260 12s. 8d.	900	2,109 17s.
1779	2,050	137 9s. 6d.	127 2s.		130	546 3s. 10d.	1,000	3,990 15s. 4d.
1780	2,000	103 12s.	50		30	404 1s. 0d.	800	3,387
1781	850	91 8s. 2d.	50		95	326 5s. 8d.	600	2,012 14s.
1782	150	46 6s. 3d.	250		116 13s.	590 8s.	1,500	2,653 17s. 3d.
1783	4,000	682 2s. 2d.	250		30	387 3s. 5d.	2,000	7,349 5s. 7d.
1784	4,750	158 4s.	50		30	299 15s. 4d.	1,750	7,038
1785	2,550	157			84 5s.	383	1,100	4,274 5s.

\*No data for 1761

was also a dungeon.<sup>36</sup> Although the premises were relatively small, the courts and workrooms, apart from sleeping rooms and sickrooms, suggest purpose-built improvements on the typical bridewell accommodation in houses.

The Preston building was not rebuilt, just repaired, despite a large increase in the rather smaller number of inmates.<sup>37</sup>

Lancaster Castle was almost unchanged until the 1780s. No major improvements were made in the 1770s as a result of Howard's initial reforming influence. Despite the recommendation of the Grand Jury at Assizes early in 1777 that proper apartments should be erected for sick inmates on a vacant plot by the Castle under the 1774 Act, Sessions, meeting at Lancaster, on 4 April 1777 decided that owing to the remarkable health of the prisoners such provision would be 'useless and unnecessary', two rooms being ordered to be set aside in the Dungeon Tower for the purpose.<sup>38</sup> Six cells were also set up, each ten feet two inches by six feet eight inches. These small changes were commended by Howard after his visit in 1779.<sup>39</sup>

There was no major bridge undertaking in the 1760s apart from the rebuilding of the hundred bridge at Hornby after a flood in 1768 for about £800, witnessed by the poet Thomas Gray when visiting the Lakes. Expenditure of sums between £50 and £200 on repairs were numerous, although not always identifiable in the order books, since orders were sometimes made to levy several hundred pounds on a hundred for bridge works without specifying what was to be done.<sup>40</sup>

The same pattern continued in the 1770s and early 1780s, with more works being identified as enlarging and rebuilding; again it is not always possible to identify the works, particularly in Salford Hundred. The bridgemasters worked as before, with salaries up to £100 according to the amount of work. Among smaller works, two masons, Robert Crabtree and John Grindrod, contracted to repair and widen Stayley Bridge for £342 10s. 11d. on 1 June 1781. It was widened 12 feet to 23 feet 9 inches, with a

footway, and the foundations were sunk seven feet below the surface at low water. Next year the one-arch Turner Bridge was widened from six to 21 feet. There were three big bridge projects, the rebuilding of Ribchester Bridge (1770–71 and 1775), the Ribble Bridge (1779–80), and Lancaster Bridge (1783–87). All were county bridges. A contract for rebuilding Ribchester Bridge for £1,150 was awarded to two masons (John Bradley and Robert Wilkinson of Aighton, Bailey and Chaidgley) in October 1769 at Preston Sessions, after public notice that they had submitted the lowest tender. The total cost of the building in 1770 and 1771 was £1,900. It was destroyed by a flood in October 1771 'which filled the arches and forced them of the pillars before the same gave way and left the foundations standing'. During the summer of 1773, 41 labourers were used to get the building stones out of the water at 1s. 6d. and 1s. 7d. a day for periods of between 18 and 37½ days, for £56 5s.. Another bridge was erected on a new site 80 yards above the old bridge in 1775. In October 1774 five masons contracted jointly for the work, one being John Law, bridgemaster of Salford Hundred, the others Robert Gudgeon, John Bradley again, Edward Blackledge and Matthew Tootell. A superintendent (Richard Threlfall, bridgemaster of Amounderness Hundred) was appointed on a five per cent commission as an additional check on the construction this time. The contract price was £2,400 and at least £2,750 was spent.<sup>41</sup> It was of three segmental arches, with fluted pilasters over the cutwaters.

The state of Ribble Bridge on the main road between Preston and Wigan was considered at a special adjourned sessions on 31 August 1778 at Lancaster, following an indictment of the county for not repairing and widening it. Because the wider bridge might involve a rebuilding and choice of a new site, a committee consisting of three justices from each of the six hundreds was appointed to make a report with the help of 'able and experienced workmen'.

ROLLS FOR BRIDGE WORKS IN LANCASHIRE, 1775–76<sup>42</sup>

1775	Epiphany	Salford Hundred	rebuilding Todmorden bridge	£149
		West Derby Hundred	repair of Carrishaw bridge	£150
		Leyland Hundred	ditto	£30
	Easter	Lonsdale Hundred	repair of Cowsey bridge	£42
		ditto	repair of Hawkshead Hall and Bowthrey bridges	£139
		County	rebuilding Ribchester bridge	£500
		ditto	repair of Ribble bridge and Walton Copp	£50
		West Derby Hundred	Caddishead bridge	£95
		ditto	raising causeway at How bridge	£7
	Midsummer	Salford Hundred	repair of public bridges	£500
		County	repair of Barton and Crossford bridges	£120
		County	rebuilding Ribchester bridge	£500
		West Derby Hundred	rebuilding and enlarging Parsonage Mill bridge	£157
	Michaelmas	Salford Hundred	rebuilding Brookhouse bridge, Tottington	£62
		County	rebuilding Ribchester bridge	£500
		West Derby Hundred	repairing Parsonage Mill bridge and making battlements of Pennington bridge longer	£153
Leyland Hundred		additional work to Sidebrook Lane bridge, etc.	£116	
1776	Epiphany	Lonsdale Hundred	enlarging, repairing and altering School Beck bridge and Yewdale Beck bridge	£38
		Salford Hundred	rebuilding Brookhouse and Windeybank bridges, Bolton etc	£500
	Easter	Lonsdale Hundred	rebuilding Condor bridge	£200
		ditto	widening High Little bridge	£11
		County	rebuilding Ribchester bridge	£750
		Leyland Hundred	rebuilding and enlarging two bridges	£137
	Midsummer	Salford Hundred	repairing public bridges	£700
		County	repair of Ribble bridge and Walton Copp	£150
		West Derby Hundred	widening, raising and paving Hawkley, Smithy Brook and Morris bridges	£132
	Michaelmas	Lonsdale Hundred	rest of money for Condor Bridge	£70
		Amounderness Hundred	extraordinary work on Broughton bridge	£30
		ditto	new wing wall at Wyer bridge	£40
		ditto	widening Cowbie and Tyrer bridges	£30
	West Derby Hundred	raising, widening and paving two bridges	£166	

There was then disagreement about what to do. The Court at Lancaster on 5 October decided on the basis of the report and the examination of two workmen, John Law and Robert Charnely, that the present bridge could be repaired for seven years for £40 and that rebuilding was quite unnecessary. Three days later the Court meeting at Preston, consisting of a different group of justices, most of whom probably lived in the district in which the bridge lay, decided both from personal observation and the report of the committee that it would be impossible to do any repairs to secure it effectively or to put it into a state as to make it probable that it would stand for seven years, especially for so small a sum as £40. A special sessions was recommended at Preston, so that ‘the sentiments of the gentlemen and others interested in the county should be taken upon this important business’. This meeting (on 6 November) resolved that the bridge should be rebuilt. It approved the plans obtained by the committee whilst leaving it the right to make alterations in detail. It was to have three segmental arches with an 86 yard span. Richard Threlfall was again appointed ‘inspector and supervisor’, and John Law’s tender was accepted out of those who attended the Sessions with estimates. A total of £4,000 was voted towards the building in 1779 and 1780, which cost £4,150<sup>43</sup>.

The biggest of these new bridges was Lancaster (Skerton) Bridge. According to the preamble of the act of 1782 for building a new bridge, it was very ancient, needed repairing, was too narrow to allow two carriages to pass each other safely, and was inconveniently situated. At Lancaster Sessions on 24 April 1781 the bridge and its southern approach was presented as needing repair and enlarging. The court agreed and asked the Deputy Clerk to have the matter considered by the justices meeting at the adjourned Sessions at Preston, Ormskirk and Manchester. Their opinions are not recorded, but clearly the decision was made to build a bridge in a new and more convenient position with an approach road across the waste of

the Corporation of Lancaster from Cable Street in the town. Early in 1782 the act was obtained to give the county the powers in this respect. At Midsummer Sessions (25 July 1782) it was decided to seek plans and estimates from artificers inclined to contract, with the inducement of the offer of premiums for the first, second and third best plans. The crucial meeting was held on 17 September. Five designs were received, and that of Thomas Harrison, a Richmond architect, was chosen as a basis for the undertaking. But it received some alteration following discussion between Harrison and Threlfall, an experienced bridge surveyor, and consideration by the justices at an adjourned Sessions at Preston on 11 November. The final scheme comprised a bridge 33 feet wide, with footpaths on each side five feet wide, and five elliptical arches each 68 feet long; the piers were ornamented with columns and pediments with a cornice and balustrades. The attention of intending contractors was drawn to ‘a fine stone quarry of a most excellent quality situated near the said work upon the surface of the earth and the whole of the road leading from the same gradually descends to the said work – lime is also near at hand’. After advertisement Benjamin Muschamp was awarded the contract on 17 December for £10,400, taking other members of his family into partnership in February 1783. Harrison was appointed surveyor on the understanding that he should receive no more than five per cent commission. Construction took several years, with over 100 mostly unskilled men employed at the start on pile-driving and pumping. Work was still going on in 1786 when the Court twice considered the matter of payments additional to the sum agreed by contract. At Epiphany 1786 the bridge undertakers claimed £2,286 13s. in extras, which was considered a premature application as the bridge was still unfinished. But it was decided to pay £852 3s. spent on procuring 102,261 feet of stone from ‘distant’ (but unnamed) quarries at 2d. per foot exclusive of their contract, and £235 10s. spent on opening the quarries, making roads to get the stones and other sums due to

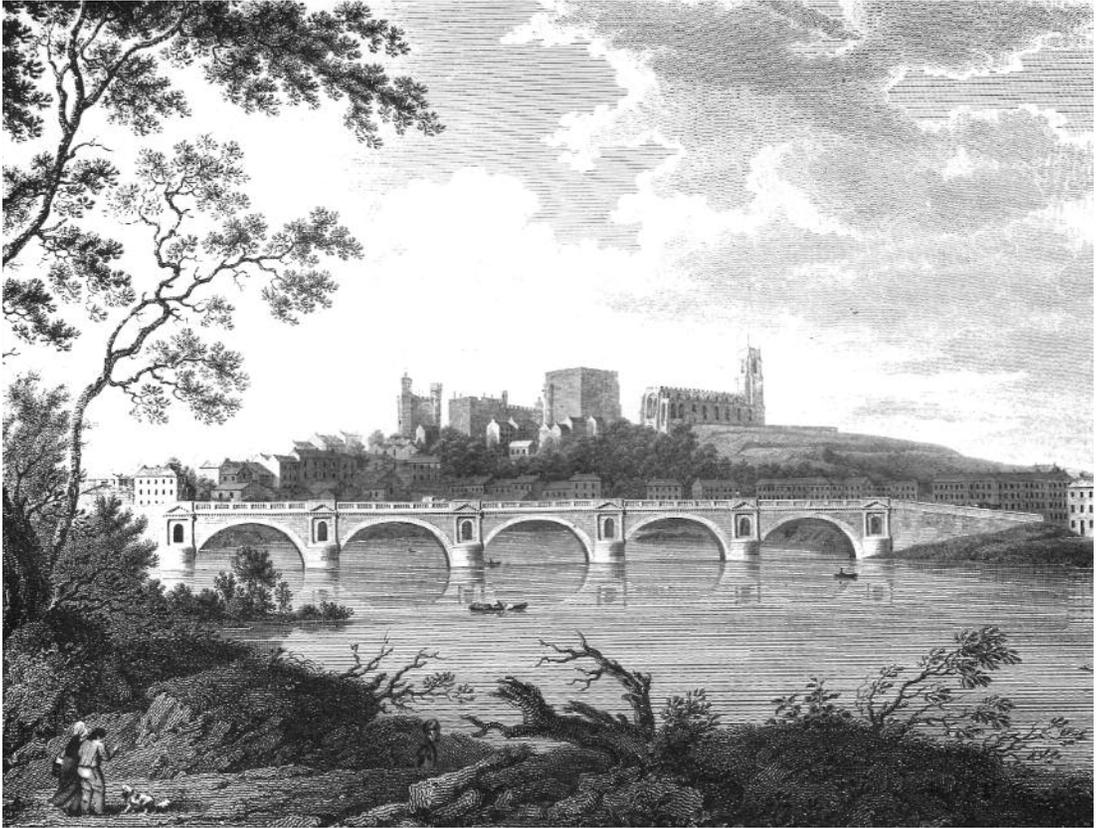


Fig. 2. Skerton Bridge, Lancaster, in 1791 (engraving by I. Landseer after a painting by Joseph Farington).  
*Lancaster City Museums.*

the quarry owners. At Michaelmas Sessions they were said to have spent £700 more than was due by the contract and to need at least another £800 to finish the bridge. The work was completed finally by Michaelmas Sessions in 1787, when another £2,000 was voted to cover unexpected expenditure by the contractors due to flooding and high tides. Thus it is likely that the final cost of the works was as much as £17,000. It was the largest bridge undertaking by the Lancashire justices in the whole period until 1830. It is notable architecturally and structurally as the first large English bridge with a level road surface from bank to bank<sup>44</sup> (Fig. 2).

**THE REBUILDING OF THE  
PRISONS AND THE COURTS  
IN THE 1780s AND 1790s**

During the early 1780s all three county prisons were accepted as being in need of change. Under the immediate stress of fear of the raging gaol fever, by the end of 1783 Sessions were considering alterations at the Lancaster Gaol and Manchester House of Correction, and the rebuilding of Preston House of Correction.

At a special sessions to consider the state of Lancaster Gaol held at Chorley on 6 November, attended by Bayley, Rasbotham and Samuel Clowes,

*PLAN of LANCASTER CASTLE.*

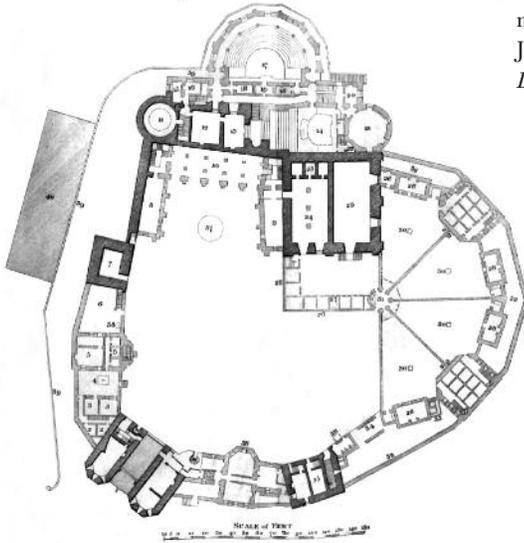


Fig. 3. Lancaster Castle: plan in 1807, showing the alterations made by Thomas Harrison and Joseph Gandy (west is at the top). *Lancaster City Museums.*



Fig. 4. Lancaster Castle: watercolour view by Freebairn, 1801, looking westwards across the court, before the alterations begun in 1788. *Lancaster City Museums.*



Fig. 5. Lancaster Castle: watercolour view by Freebairn, 1801, looking eastwards across the court towards the medieval gatehouse, with the female felons' gaol (built by 1790) south of it, the governor's house (built in 1788–89) north of it, and the male felons' gaol (built 1789–91) further north again. *Lancaster City Museums*.

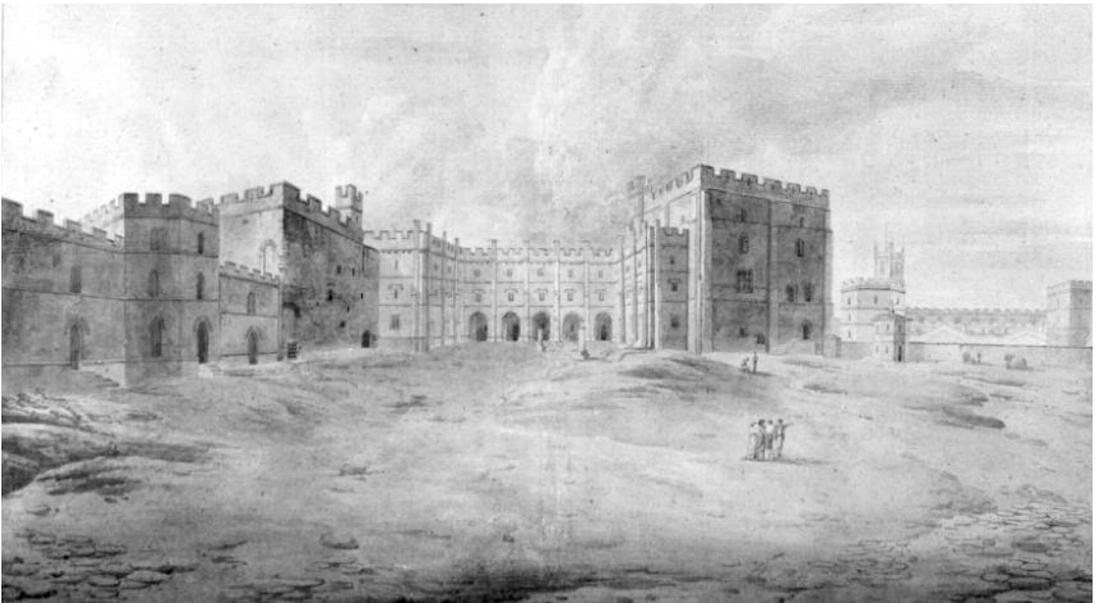


Fig. 6. Lancaster Castle: watercolour view by Freebairn, 1801, looking westwards across the court, and showing the arcade with the debtors' gaol over (built in the later 1790's), with the male felons' gaol (built 1789–91) to the north. *Lancaster City Museums*.

all Salford justices, it was decided that a house for the gaoler, apartments for debtors, separate rooms and courts for men and women felons ought to be provided, and that the justices living at or near Lancaster should have plans and estimates prepared. At Easter Sessions 1784, following resolutions at the Sheriff's Board at the Lent Assizes, three justices for each hundred were appointed to form a committee to inspect the prisons of the county. On 13 May the committee decided that prisoners attached under civil processes and those committed for trial were indiscriminately confined with convicted criminals, and that separate prisons were needed for confinement and punishment. These resolutions were approved at a special sessions on 24 August, but there was then a lull in schemes for alterations and additions at the Castle. James Fenton was thanked for his care for the state and repairs of the Gaol, and the improvements he had made to the existing buildings. Roger Dewhurst, a justice in Salford hundred, was thanked for attending to prison business, his information about them, and 'ingenious plans for their improvement'. He is an interesting example of a justice acting as architect.<sup>45</sup>

At the Summer Assizes in 1786 the Grand Jury saw more plans for alterations prepared by Roger Dewhurst. Its comments were considered at the October Sessions; T.B. Bayley felt that William Blackburn (the leading English prison architect) and Harrison as professed gaol architects should be asked for plans. The Court as a whole thought that if further plans were needed Harrison should be asked, as it trusted his work as shown by Lancaster bridge and by plans supplied of gaols at Chester. Harrison had won the competitions to rebuild Chester Castle as a gaol and courthouse in the previous year. From 1786 he and Blackburn worked up plans for it<sup>46</sup>. After the presentment of the gaol at Lent Assizes, 1787, the details of the proposed works were first resolved at Midsummer Sessions on the basis of plans drawn by Harrison under the inspection of Roger Dewhurst (and using the latter's plans to a

considerable extent). The approved scheme included a gaoler's house, new accommodation for the grand jury, a colonnade in front of the halls, an arcade, cells (presumably for men), the division of the infirmaries for men and women, worksheds, women debtors' yard and women felons' yard and day room (Figs. 3–6). Thus the courts were to be altered as well as the prison. A committee was appointed with the power to have £3,626 raised (the amount of the estimate). Harrison was appointed to oversee the work for a fee of 200 guineas, appointing a clerk of works for supervision. He was also responsible for employing the workmen and paying their wages.<sup>47</sup>

Harrison appears to have undertaken the building of the gaoler's house first, for at the meeting of the Court on 9 July 1788 he was voted £450 towards its cost. His new plans, revising part of the earlier plans, were adopted. His gratuity was raised to £350 and the estimate of works still to be done to £5,117. The Gaoler's House, finished by October 1789, cost £1,356 11s. 6d.; the other major works done were the women's wards, by July 1790 (£1,024 1s. 10d.), and the felons' wards, on which as much as £4,000 was spent between 1789 and 1791. In July 1792 Harrison's fee was raised yet again to £650, to cover further works intended to last until 1795. Next year a thorough report by Bayley and another justice (Thomas Bateman) approved the works done to date, recommending further building alterations, including accommodation for debtors, special attention to water supply and drainage, and security from locks and *chevaux de frise*. By April 1796 £16,454 12s. had been spent. The cost was increased by the fact that all the prison work was done as much as possible with hewn stone, making the Castle one of the strongest felons' gaols in the country.<sup>48</sup>

The works in the mid- and later-1790s were partly or principally concerned with the erection of the splendid civil court or Shire Hall, designed as seven sides of a polygon arranged in semi-circular formation (Figs. 7 and 8). The Grand Jury Room was also completed by the late 1790s, and new debtors'

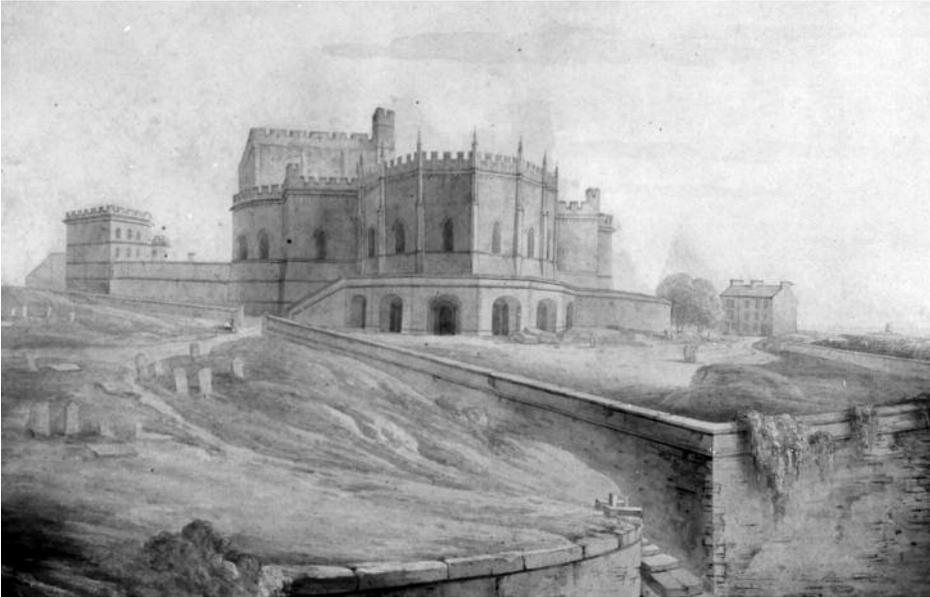


Fig. 7. Lancaster Castle: watercolour view by Freebairn, 1801, showing the Shire Hall from the west. *Lancaster City Museums*.

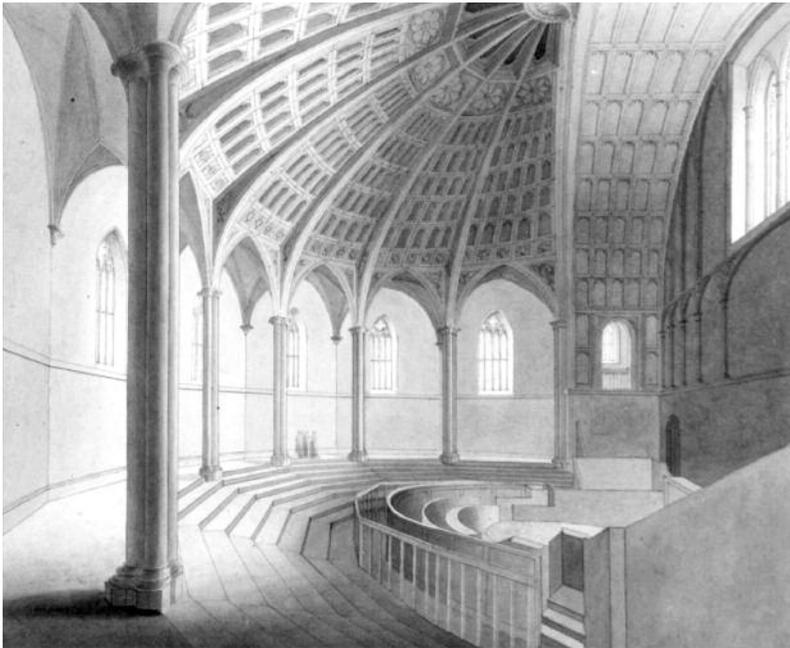


Fig. 8. Lancaster Castle: watercolour view by Freebairn, 1801, showing the interior of the Shire Hall. *Lancaster City Museums*.

rooms were erected at this time (Fig. 9). In 1796 four houses were bought to enlarge the Castle, and the accounts suggest that the works were carried on continuously for many years, though activity was less in most years in the 1800s than in the 1790s. The Crown Court, a rectangular room, was completed more slowly, the interior being done after 1802 (Fig. 10). In the five years July 1799–June 1804 £7,603 was spent on improvements to the Castle.<sup>49</sup>

The same Special Sessions held at Chorley on 6 November 1783, which recommended the provision of more accommodation at Lancaster Castle, decided that it was absolutely necessary to build a new House of Correction at Preston. Presumably it followed an investigation by justices appointed under the act of 1782, though there is no reference to it in the order books. The old building was clearly unsuitable for adaptation under the 1782 act as a ‘gaol of punishment’, that is, with proper accommodation for labour.

The decision was repeated at another sessions meeting the following August which dealt with the prisons in the county. In October 1784 and February 1785 a committee was appointed to handle the business. By the latter meeting steps had already been taken to choose an architect, William Blackburn, consult him about a suitable site and have plans prepared. The site on the outskirts chosen by Blackburn was approved and the plans which he had prepared were considered adequate to the purposes of the act and sufficient for the five hundreds it was intended to serve. The Lancashire surveyor and bridgeman Richard Threlfall was chosen clerk of the works with the order to buy the land. £12,040 was spent on the undertaking (both site and building) between 1785 and 1791. Opened in 1790, it was an extensive three-storey building mainly comprising cells and 124 solitary weaving workshops, with several courts and dayrooms, a chapel and infirmaries<sup>50</sup> (Fig. 11).



Fig. 9. Lancaster Castle, the Grand Jury room.  
*Country Life*.



Fig. 10 Lancaster Castle, the Crown Court.  
*Country Life*.

A new house of correction for the Salford Hundred was built at the same time. Despite the fact that the bridewell had been rebuilt in the 1770s, it was decided in September 1783 that a court house was vital for transacting the sessions business of the hundred, and that considerable alterations to the bridewell were needed based on the report of the two justices (Bayley and Samuel Clowes) who had examined it. In May 1784 the Hundred was presented for not improving the prison on account of the

insufficiency of the site. At a Manchester Sessions under Bayley's chairmanship which included Sir Ashton Lever, on 17 February 1785, the bridewell was resolved not to conform to statute and to be far too small in view of the huge increase in the number of crimes in south-east Lancashire. The building was condemned as insufficient for the purposes of humane confinement, wise correction and exemplary punishment, as the various acts required. It was stated that the prisoners confined in it could not be

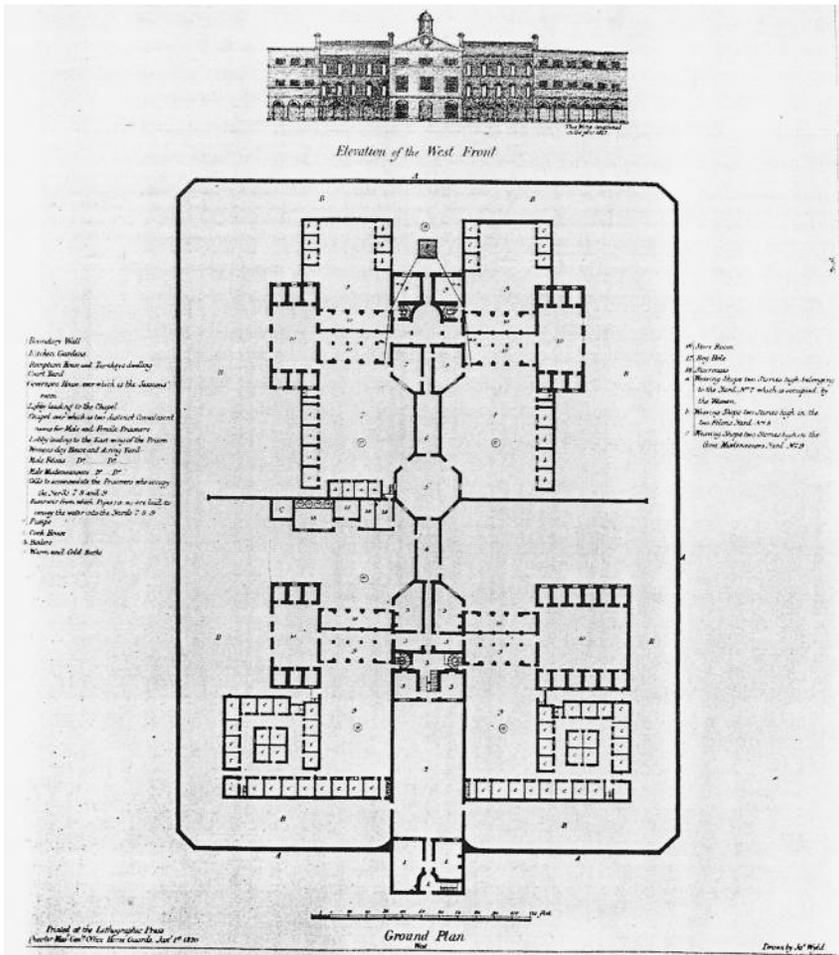


Fig. 11. Elevation and plan of the House of Correction, Preston, designed by William Blackburn in 1784: from a survey of 1820 by James Wyld.

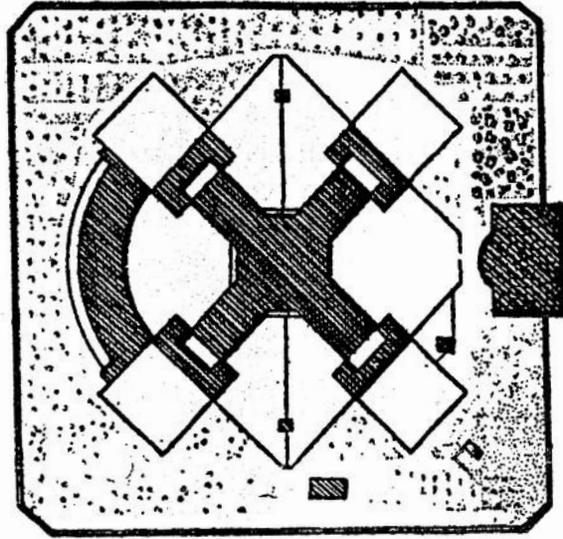


Fig. 12. Block plan of the New Bayley Prison, Salford, designed by William Blackburn in 1785, and begun in 1787: the block on the right is the Court House.

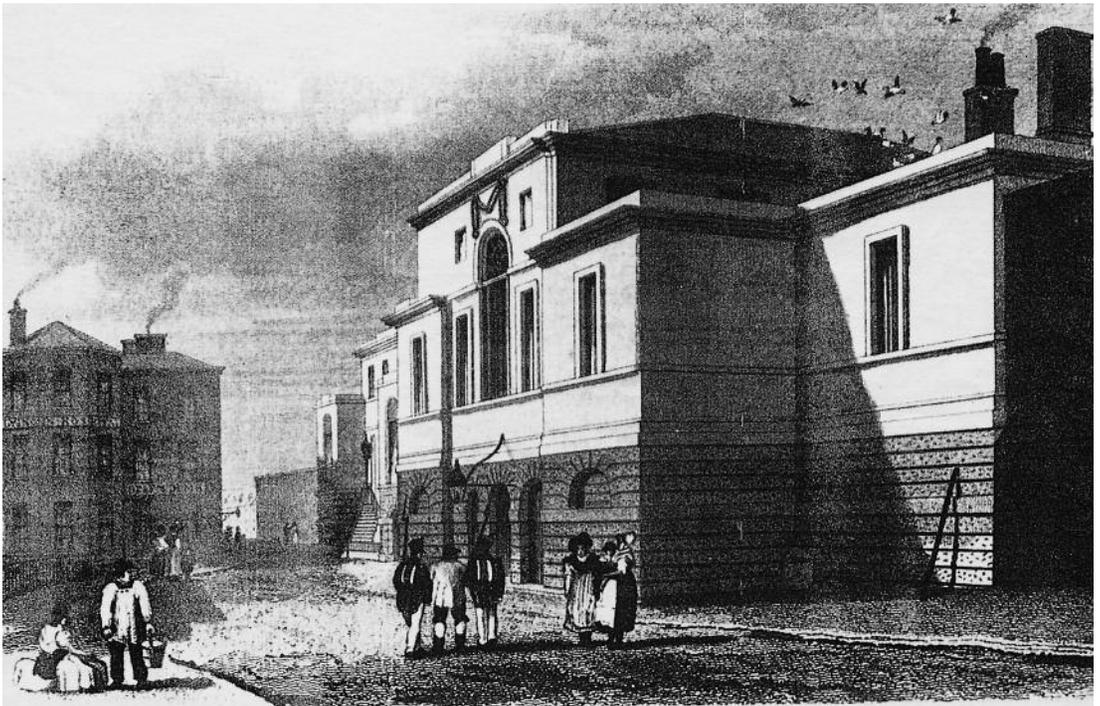


Fig. 13. View of the Court House, New Bayley Prison, Salford, designed by William Blackburn in 1785, and begun in 1787.

classed or divided, be kept to hard labour, or placed in separate apartments as laid down in the acts of 1782 and 1784, and ‘that from the amazing increase of felonies, and other offences in that part of the county of Lancaster, it is become absolutely necessary to provide an house of correction capable of containing one hundred prisoners in different classes, with a separate apartment for each prisoner and proper and convenient places for labour, which in this manufacturing neighbourhood ought to be especially attended to not only as a measure of public economy, but as one of the best means of correction’. Textile hand work would raise money and discipline the prisoners. If this was to be done a new building was needed on a more extensive site, and this was agreed, together with the use of a plan supplied by Blackburn (subject to suitable alterations). A site in Manchester on the Byrom Estate near the River Irwell was first considered, but rejected on account of its liability to flooding. With Blackburn’s advice a field in Salford belonging to a local charity was chosen. A Manchester stonemason, David Board, was appointed full-time ‘surveyor and inspector of the intended works’ (in effect clerk of the works) at 30s. a week. One million bricks were contracted for supply by a local brickmaker, Roger Sands, for 10s. 6d. per thousand. In March 1787 an advertisement sought tenders for stone and mason work, timber and carpenters’ work, brick work, and different kinds of lime and ‘water sand’ to be delivered to the site. Proposals for lead and plumber’s work, slate and slating and cast ironwork were advertised next month. The new building, comprising a central three-storey octagonal structure with four wings, included 100 cells and numerous workrooms (Fig. 12). It was named the New Bayley Prison in recognition of the initiative and efforts of Bayley in pressing the scheme despite opposition from some justices, and in helping to guide the progress of the work (Fig. 13).<sup>51</sup>

The building and land appears to have cost £23,000 or £24,000, of which £14,000 was borrowed,

and £2,266 13s. was recovered from the sale of land in 1792. The debt was paid off at £1,000 a year, beginning in October 1791. The money was raised by a roll every six months to include principal and interest on the outstanding debt. Thus the sum levied declined slightly each year as the amount of money needed to pay the interest fell. So on 13 October 1791 a roll was issued for £850; by October 1794, the last time an exact amount was stated in the order book, the figure was £785.<sup>52</sup>

#### THE BUILDING OF THE PRISONS, THE SECOND PHASE, 1815–28

Designing from 1799 involved a change of architect. After Harrison moved to Chester in 1793 to work on Chester Castle as well, relations with the Lancashire justices deteriorated. In 1794 he had to advance money for timber and other materials as the treasurer failed to give him half the levy due, and next year he was accused of giving precedence to Chester works. His job ended either in late 1798 or the beginning of 1799, after which no architect is mentioned in the order books for five years. Work continued on the prison and county courts at Lancaster Castle in the 1800s and 1810s. There was expenditure on improvements each year, but in only two years between 1801 and 1814 (in 1806 and 1807) did it rise above £2,000. Plans were being considered and work being done for finishing the Crown Court for some years after 1802. In March 1804 plans and drawings by J.M. Gandy for finishing it were approved by the committee. In 1806 cells and apartments were ordered to hold prisoners to be used as evidence for the Crown at an estimate of £1,200. After 1810 there were several orders for enlarging parts of the prison; thus in March 1813 the committee decided to add a storey to one of the new towers in the felons’ ward. Gandy was architect until at least 1819.<sup>53</sup>

Outlay on the Castle rose between 1819 and 1823. The female penitentiary, intended to provide for the

classification of prisoners and for labour, was being built in the form of a tower. In November 1813 the gaoler proposed a separate female prison to classify the inmates. Its cost was probably £10,000. The organisation of the work was under the direction of the ‘superintendent mason’ or superintendent of works (William Coulthurst or Coulthart from August 1818), who, with the treasurer, hired the workmen, bought the materials and paid for their carriage. For example, the accounts between June 27 1818 and June 20 1820 show that £8,617 6s. was spent on the penitentiary and other works, including repairs. The workmen were paid fortnightly, the amounts varying between £49 7s. 10d. on July 4 1818 and £160 8s. 10d. on November 20 1819. They were usually paid 3s. or 2s. 6d. a day. Major payments for materials such as stone, wood, lime and sand, and their carriage, especially timber, included £326 12s. 6d. for wood from Langton and Co. of Liverpool on 17 November 1818, £228 10s. to a Thomas Wadsworth for carting stone on 28 October 1818, and £89 5s. on 17 September 1818 to a William Bell for stone. There were also payments to master craftsmen for ironwork, glazing and painting, especially some big sums to Moore and Walton for ironwork, including £435 on 14 October 1819, and small sums to Thomas Townson for glazing and painting and to two men called Shrigley for painting. The growing expenditure in these years naturally involved an increase in the workforce. In March 1817 five masons and two joiners were employed on the Castle works: in August it was decided that not more than 20 masons should be employed, and a sufficient number of labourers. Probably at least 100 men were being used in periods such as the second half of 1819 and from February 1820. Changes to the wards were made in 1822 and 1823. The extent of refined equipment by this time may be seen from ‘apparatus’ to supply warm air under the Courts, water closets in hospital rooms, iron bedsteads and canvas blinds. By about 1824 the works on the prison and court rooms that had been carried on without a break since 1788 appears to

have been completed at a cost of about £140,000. Sums spent in the following years were for minor improvements and repairs.<sup>54</sup>

No major enlargements to the New Bayley Prison in Salford took place before 1815, although the increase in the cells from 100 in 1790 to 140 by 1814 presumably reflects some additions to the building. In October 1814, following two presentments about its insufficiency, a committee was set up to enlarge and improve the prison. The reason was the very rapid growth in the population of Manchester and the rest of the hundred of Salford, and the consequent expansion of the number of prisoners. There were then 319 prisoners housed in 140 cells intended originally to be occupied singly. At the Manchester adjournment of the Epiphany Sessions 1815 the committee recommended a plan of additional buildings probably supplied by the Salford architect Thomas Wright. Land was bought adjoining the existing prison. In April the committee and Wright examined the tenders received in answer to advertisements, first for building a wall to enclose the ground, and second, to erect the building. One contractor, a local man named Bellhouse, was awarded both works, as he made the lowest offer in both cases. In this case the justices meeting at the Manchester adjournments of quarter sessions gave the work to a single contractor instead of following the more usual Lancashire practice of the county acting as direct purchaser of materials and employer of labour. The new building comprised two parallel crescents each in nine parts, including dayrooms, each with a range of sleeping cells (which totalled 232), and workshops (Fig. 14). It was finished by November 1817, at a cost of about £33,000. But almost immediately after completion, at Epiphany Sessions in 1818, the prison was presented as needing enlargement. Alterations appear to have been almost continuous during the following decade, with numbers steadily growing. There was an average expenditure of several thousand pounds a year until 1826. The order books record that in May

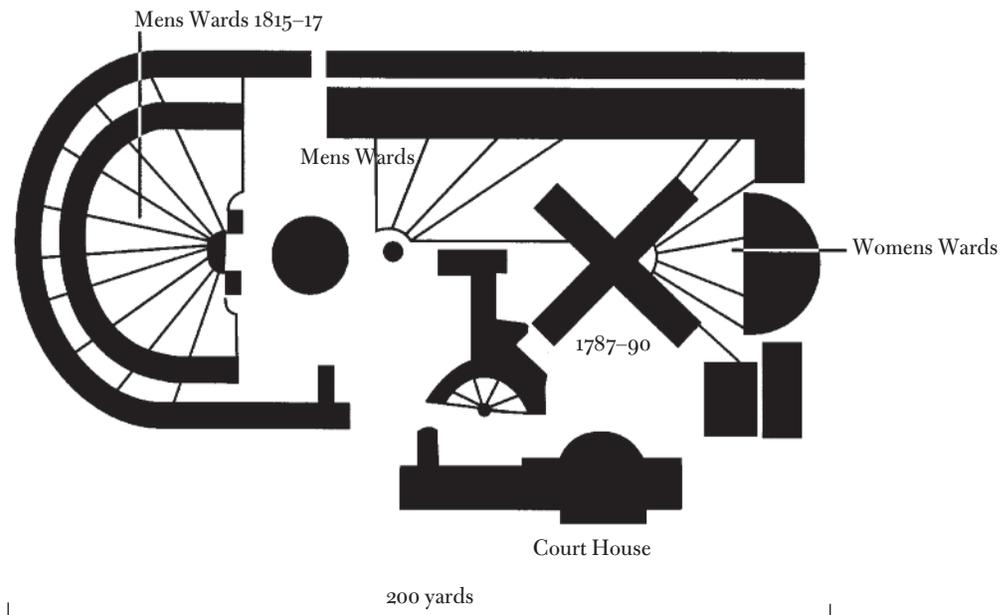


Fig. 14. Block plan of the New Bayley Prison, Salford, showing the additions made in 1815–17 to the designs of Thomas Wright (from Banck's *Plan of Manchester and Salford*, 1831).

1821 the construction of additional workshops was approved, and three years later it was decided to build a hospital. On 24 October 1825 two justices presented the House of Correction as insufficient under the recent prison legislation and in need of enlargement. The Visiting Justices were appointed a committee to consider the best way of enlarging the prison to accommodate at least 150 more prisoners according to the terms of the act of 1823, and arrangements for enlarging the female part to allow inspection and classification. About £18,000–£20,000 was spent in 1826–27 on these works<sup>55</sup>. There was then a pause in the alterations for several years.<sup>56</sup>

By far the largest single prison undertaking was the building of the Kirkdale bridewell between 1818 and 1823. The steps which led to the building of a

new county prison near Liverpool began at an adjourned meeting of 13 justices at Lancaster on 3 September 1816. At the representation of the Preston justice Samuel Horrocks (of the family of cotton spinners) and following the examination of the prison governor and of the Preston architect Robert Roper it was decided that the Preston House of Correction, used by all the Lancashire hundreds apart from Salford, had become too small to accommodate the great number of prisoners assigned to it and that it was essential to enlarge it. On 7 November an adjourned meeting at Preston noted that presentments had been made by Horrocks and the Grand Jury. It appointed a committee to do the work, decided what parts of the building should be enlarged (including the construction of 18 cells) on the basis of Roper's

plan, ordered him to buy timber, and ordered a levy of £1,800 towards the cost. A Sessions at Preston the following February received resolutions from Liverpool Corporation, from a committee of borough justices, and from a meeting of county justices in the neighbourhood of Liverpool, apparently concerning the need for accommodation for prisoners in West Derby Hundred, that is, the Liverpool area. A committee was set up to hire part of the Liverpool town gaol, with the option of procuring plans and estimates for more permanent prison accommodation for the hundred. At the Annual Sessions at Preston on 26 June the Court considered the formal presentment of the insufficiency of the Preston House of Correction and the need to provide one or more new ones, made at Ormskirk on 9 May. It received the report of the committee set up in February, and approved the hiring of three wings in Liverpool borough gaol to provide a house of correction for three years. It also confirmed that a new house of correction should be provided for the five hundreds, with a suitable court house, either in the borough of Liverpool or within three miles of it. Ground plans and elevations had already been advertised for in May. A committee was appointed to complete the arrangements about hiring the section of the Liverpool gaol, to choose a situation for the new house of correction and treat for a building site. At the same time it was decided that it would be cheaper and be more convenient for the public if an adjourned quarter sessions was held at Liverpool to transact the business of West Derby Hundred, instead of at Wigan and Ormskirk; prisoners for offences in West Derby Hundred would be committed to the house of correction there. In January 1818 it was decided to borrow £45,000 for the building and in February 1818 a high position near the village of Kirkdale was chosen for the site. During 1818 and 1819 the making of bricks (with clay from county land), the supply of stone, the brick and stone work, carpentry, slating, plumbing, plastering and painting, were all advertised for letting separately. In November part of the

building in course of erection collapsed on account of the sinking of a bed of sand beneath the clay of the foundations, and in January 1819 there was a complaint about the quality of the mortar<sup>57</sup>. The total cost was £85,204 7s. 11d., comprising the land, building the huge prison and court house and fitting up and furnishing them, and erecting a house for the chaplain. It consisted mainly of two detached semi-circular wings, for men and women, of three storeys designed by Thomas Wright, holding 800 inmates in 22 classes. About £4,000 was also spent in alterations and improvements in 1825–26, which included a chapel, chaplain's house, watch house, laundry and drying house. Altogether £76,000 was borrowed by mortgaging the rates, to be paid off between 1823 and 1839.<sup>58</sup>

The construction of the new house of correction for West Derby Hundred naturally reduced the pressure on prison accommodation in the Preston bridewell, but population and hence the number of prisoners were growing during the 1820s. In 1823 it was decided to follow the example of other counties by acquiring a treadmill, which meant classifying the prisoners during their labour, and to provide a larger chapel. The existing court house was added to the prison as part of the alterations. Expenditure on improvements cost over £5,000 between 1824 and 1826, and about £9,000–£10,000 in 1827–28.<sup>59</sup>

#### THE LUNATIC ASYLUM

At the first meeting of Sessions which discussed the erection of an asylum, at Wigan early in 1810, the neighbourhood of Liverpool was proposed as a situation because the 1808 act required an 'airy and healthy' environment and because of the 'beneficial effects of sea air and sea-bathing in the cure of insanity'. Land was bought in Walton on 3 February. But local doctors pointed out that Liverpool already had an asylum and that Liverpool was not in a central position in the county. In regard to cost there would

be disadvantages not only from the expense of moving lunatics but also in building and supporting an asylum in the area: 'great and unnecessary expense would be incurred by the County, not only in the removal of lunatics to this remote corner of it but in the erection and support of this establishment in the vicinity of a large town where the price of land and labour is exceedingly high and the price of provisions much greater than in the interior of the county'.

The site was therefore abandoned, and moors near Preston were mentioned as much more central. A meeting of justices at Preston on 30 July 1811 decided instead to use a site on Lancaster Moor offered free by the Corporation, which would be accessible to magistrates attending Assizes; it appointed a committee

to fix the precise site, procure plans and estimates and contract for and superintend the building. The choice appears to have been made partly because the Corporation offered the site free, and partly for the convenience of the justices, who could inspect it at their visits to the county town during the spring and summer Assizes. At another important meeting on 17 September the committee approved the site, considered several plans which were produced, and adopted that of Thomas Standen of Lancaster, architect, subject to several alterations which were suggested to him.

It was decided to build the north front first. A meeting of the committee on 24 March appointed Standen as surveyor: he was to be paid £40 for the



Fig. 15. Lancaster County Lunatic Asylum, Lancaster Moor, designed by Thomas Standen, and built between 1812 and 1816. *Lancaster City Museum*.

plans which he had prepared, and was to be allowed £1 6s. a week during the building for drawing the working plans and superintending the work, and £1 6s. a week for his foreman. The committee examined the tenders which it had sought by advertisement for the stonework of the north front and accepted the proposals of Edward Gibson and James Harrison, stonemasons of Kendal. The contract specified the price for each type of work beginning with 1s. 3d. per yard for ‘common walling’ and 1s. per yard for ‘common flagging’, followed by other types of flagging, steps, chimney pieces and various types of ashlar work. The work was to be completed by 1 September 1813. Materials were to be bought by the county. A further meeting on 25 August adopted plan 1 instead of plan 2, which had a pediment and pillars.

The year after the completion of the north front Gibson and Harrison did the stonework of the wings on the west and east fronts, again after tenders had been sought by advertisement and they had been awarded the contract at slightly higher prices than in the former agreement. The stone came from a quarry on the premises, but there were substantial recurring payments to two Lancaster firms for imported timber (Welch and Eskrigge, and Thomas Inman and Co.); lime also came from a regular supplier, lead in sheets was bought from two Liverpool firms (Walter Maltby and Co., Mather Parkes and Co.) and 78½ tons of slates were bought between August 1813 and February 1814 from George Jackson of Hawkshead. Under the direction of the foreman (Thomas Ripley), were a group of labourers who in 1814 numbered about 36, paid weekly at a daily wage mostly of 3s. and 2s. 6d. A number of jobs were done by master craftsmen helped by their own journeymen and labourers. Thomas Standen, who was both a stonemason and plasterer, received £465 7s. 3d. for digging the foundations early in 1812 before the labourers directed by Ripley were first hired; from April 1815 he was receiving regular payments for plastering. There were also master craftsmen doing the joiner’s work (Henry Hogarth), ironwork (John Moore and Co.), painting

(Thomas Shrigley), and plumbing and glazing (James Willan). Several people were also paid for carting.<sup>60</sup>

By June 1820 £42,000 had been spent (exclusive of furnishing) and accommodation had been provided for 250 (Fig.15). Nor was this the end: in 1821 £1,123 8s. was spent on more land, and £21,919 15s. was laid out on building improvements during the decade. Expenditure was particularly high (about £8,000) in 1825–26, when a new building was erected to increase accommodation to 300, and a chapel was built<sup>61</sup>.

#### THE NEW COURT HOUSE, PRESTON

By the early 1820s the court house at Preston, in the centre of the House of Correction (Fig. 11), was being found both inconveniently situated and ‘not sufficiently commodious’. In 1819 it was decided to build a new court house in front or at the side of the existing bridewell. In 1823–24 there was a further incentive provided by the decision to extend the prison accommodation. At an adjourned Sessions on 9 September 1824 the justices decided to spend £10,000 on the erection of a new building and record office outside the walls of the prison. The county employed the architectural firm of Rickman and Hutchinson of Birmingham, who were paid five per cent on the expenditure for making designs, working drawings, specifications and superintending the building between 1825 and 1828. A clerk of the works provided constant supervision. The building was of two storeys; the subsidiary basement floor included a records room, room for counsel, Clerk’s office, turnkey’s rooms and lock ups; the main storey had a large court room in the centre and two rooms on each side, those on one side being for the use of the Justices and those on the other for the grand jury and their witnesses. The county used a single contractor, a local partnership of Robert Roper, architect and building surveyor, and James Dandy, timber merchant, joiner and builder. Despite the careful way in which the working drawings and specifications were claimed

to have been drawn up by the architects, on 5 March 1827, during the course of building they complained of faulty work in part of the carpentry and plumbing. It included the omission of some floor joists and ceiling joists and all the wall plates of the roofs in much of the building, and deficiencies in the lead work of the lantern and gutters. The deficiencies were remedied, and the work was largely completed by the beginning of 1828 (Fig. 16). There was extra expenditure in addition to the contract, particularly on stonework for the foundations, on the lantern, fitting up the court house and several other items.

The cost was as follows:

Contract price	£7,305
Extras	£1,801 9s. 8d.
Clerk of the Works	£310 16s.
Printing and advertisements	£10 4s. 6d.
Architects' commission	£471 7s. 6d.
Total	£9,898 17s. 8d.

Alterations were made in 1829–30 which brought the total cost to between £10,000 and £11,000.<sup>62</sup>

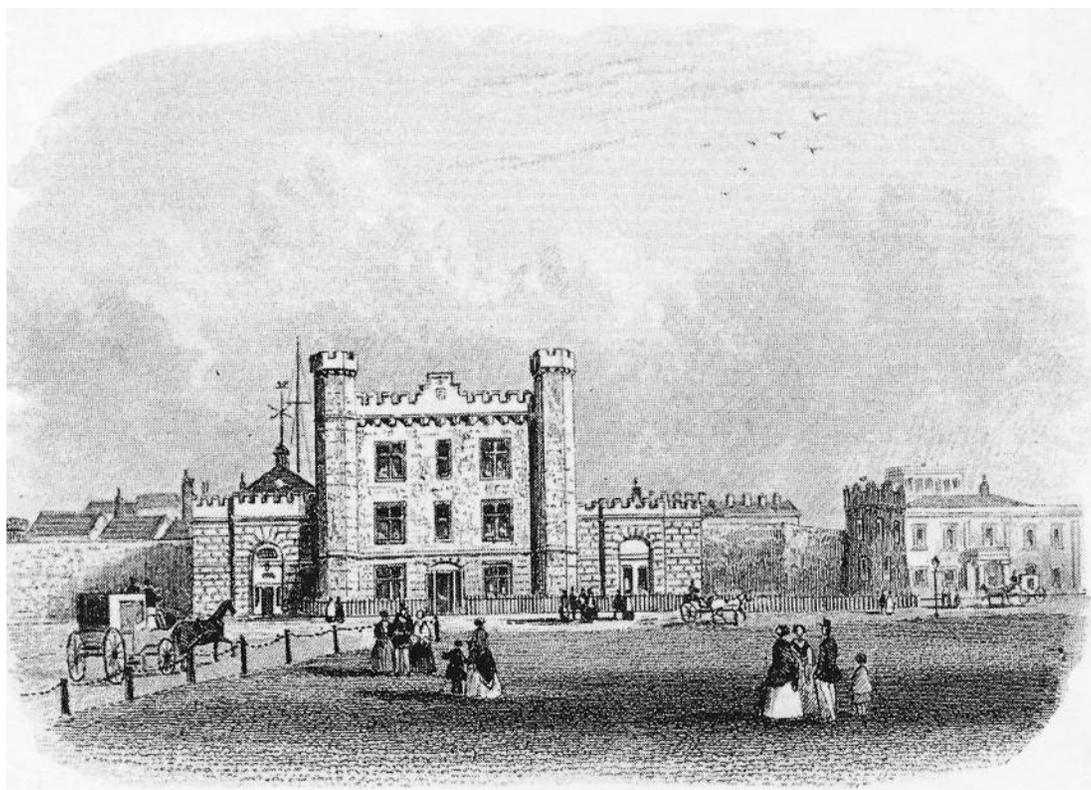


Fig. 16. The Prison and Court House, Preston, designed by Thomas Rickman and Henry Hutchinson and built between 1825 and 1828. *Harris Museum and Art Gallery, Preston.*



Fig. 17. House of 1675 in Church Street, Lancaster, bought by the County between 1802 and 1807 and used as Judges' Lodgings from then until 1975. *Lancaster City Museums.*

#### JUDGES' LODGINGS

Public accommodation was extended further in the 1820s by a new judges' house at Lancaster. General sessions on 19 August 1822 decided that better lodgings and accommodation were needed for the judges; an act of parliament was obtained giving the justices the power to spend up to £7,000. In September 1827 the commissioners appointed under the act reported that they had bought and furnished a house in Lancaster (Fig. 17).<sup>63</sup>

#### BRIDGE WORKS, 1786–1830

During the 1790s expenditure on bridges averaged nearly £5,000 a year, about four times what it had been before the period of the three large bridge works in the 1770s and early 1780s. After the completion of Lancaster bridge there was no major undertaking. Instead the growth of expenditure was the result of the great increase in the works done to the hundred bridges. They were rebuilt, widened or otherwise improved, normally for no more than a few hundred pounds. This was particularly the case in Salford

Hundred, where outlay was over £3,000 in the four years 1790–93. It reflected the great growth of the cotton industry and trade and the population increase which accompanied it. From 1790 bridge building was also active in Blackburn Hundred (where industrial activity was also growing markedly), and it continued strongly in West Derby Hundred, particularly highly populated because it contained Liverpool, which needed good road communications with other parts of south Lancashire. The number of county bridges grew from five to ten by 1800, with bridges being thrown on the country in 1784 (one), 1790 (one), and 1797 (three), but they remained a handful compared with the number of hundred bridges (491 in 1801). This pattern of bridge work continued in the 1800s; among the biggest undertakings was Blaquoith bridge in Salford Hundred, for which £1,200 was voted in October 1802, and the rebuilding of St Michael's bridge for which £900 was paid in July and October 1803<sup>64</sup>.

General Sessions in 1800 and 1801 disapproved of the Glasburne decision which put the maintenance of poor quality bridges, privately erected, on the county; they wanted all new bridges to be built with county

supervision and consent, clarification of the liability to repair the road within 300 feet of the bridge, and special contributions to bridge building by localities. Attempts to secure suitable legislation by Bayley, the Deputy clerk, and the county members failed, except that the act of 1803 provided that no bridge privately or publicly built should be a county bridge unless erected under the supervision of the county surveyor. Lancashire now appointed the hundred bridgemasters as county surveyors. The terms of the 1803 act were extended to hundred bridges in 1814.<sup>65</sup>

Bridgemasters undertook or supervised bridge repairs and rebuilding, sometimes themselves preparing plans and specifications. They were now described as ‘stonemasons’ or ‘gentlemen’. In January 1825 the Court at Lancaster decided that the bridgemaster of Lonsdale Hundred (South of the Sands), should be a ‘good, practical stonemason’, in April appointing William Coulthart, the ‘principal mason’ at Lancaster Castle, who had just built the Savings Bank in New Street (now the Children’s Library, according to Dr Andrew White) and the Amicable Society Library in Church Street (now Royal Bank of Scotland, according to Dr White). The ‘gentlemen’ may generally have been former masons, as in the case of Benjamin Muschamp, a ‘mason’ when he worked on Lancaster Bridge in the 1780s, and a ‘gentleman’ when he was bridgemaster of Blackburn Hundred in 1807. Presumably a gentleman mason contracted the work with other masons. That the choice of bridgemasters was restricted is suggested by two successive surveyors of the same name, as in the case of the bridgemasters of Amounderness Hundred, Richard Threlfall in 1808 and William Threlfall from 1811. Salaries varied according to the number and importance of the bridges, sometimes suggesting a part-time and sometimes a full-time occupation. In 1808 Thomas Fawcett was paid £18 10s. for Lonsdale Hundred (South of the Sands), and Richard Chaffers of Burnley, stonemason, £45 for Blackburn Hundred. In 1818 the salary of James Housgreave, gentleman for West Derby Hundred, was increased to £100. A

variation was William Coulthart’s £10 a year and 5s. daily with travel allowances. Despite the sharp rise in prices in the 1790s and 1800s, salaries were no higher than in the 1770s, suggesting that bridges were now in better condition and needed less work. A security payment was normally expected.<sup>66</sup>

The two biggest bridge undertakings before 1830 were in the 1810s. Only half the cost of Warrington Bridge in West Derby Hundred was met by the Hundred. Jointly with Cheshire a wooden bridge with stone abutments was erected in the place of the old stone bridge over the River Mersey, the Lancashire Justices raising £4,000 between 1812 and 1826. The plans were by Thomas Harrison, now a Chester architect, and his partner William Cole, Harrison also being the builder, presumably subcontracting much or all of the work.<sup>67</sup> The Cheshire Quarter Sessions order book notes that in January 1811 Harrison or another architect named Nightingale or a bridgebuilder was preparing a plan and report on repairs, and that Thomas Telford the Shropshire County Surveyor had proposed an iron bridge.<sup>68</sup>

Crossford Bridge at Stretford near Manchester was rebuilt in 1816–18 when Peter Hewitt, gentleman, was bridgemaster. It had been greatly damaged by floods and rebuilding allowed it to be widened. The estimate was at least £10,000 and in the event the cost was £12,000. As a result over £13,000 was raised in bridge rolls in 1816, an exceptional amount.<sup>69</sup>

During the 1820s expenditure averaged just over £8,000 a year, about the same in real terms as in the 1790s. Salford Hundred continued to provide much of the work, but the addition to the county bridges (12 by 1815 and 27 by 1825) was contributing in a small way to the total outlay. The rebuilding, widening and improving of bridges continued to be important, although no undertaking matched that of Crossford bridge. Between 1821 and 1830 there were at least nine county and hundred bridge works costing more than £1,000. The most expensive was the rebuilding of Tarleton bridge between 1820 and

ROLLS ISSUED FOR BRIDGE WORKS IN LANCASHIRE,  
1786–1820 (*total per year*)<sup>70</sup>

Date	County	Lonsdale	Amounderness	Blackburn	Leyland	West Derby	Salford	Total
1786	£1,088	£176	£100			£236	£700	£2,300
1787		£198			£160	£605	£1,100	£2,063
1788	£150	£533	£250		£56	£1,100	£2,400	£4,489
1789	£550	£60			£332	£518	£2,400	£3,860
1790			£670	£450	£475	£800	£3,044	£5,439
1791			£150	£1,000	£252	£1,000	£3,600	£6,002
1792		£233	£320	£1,400	£506	£600	£3,300	£6,359
1793		£90	£70	£1,400	£410	£800	£3,800	£6,570
1794	£150	£1,065	£870	£650	£80	£300	£2,100	£5,115
1795		£150	£620	£250	£80	£200	£1,800	£3,100
1796		£455	£70	£300	£140	£800	£1,900	£3,665
1797	£100	£200	£70	£1,100	£240	£400	£2,100	£4,210
1798		£150	£670	£600	£250	£200	£1,100	£2,970
1799	£100	£150	£370	£900	£220	£1,200	£1,800	£4,740
1800	£1,000	£350	£70	£1,400	£220	£900	£2,200	£5,740
1801	£100	£450	£70	£900	£150	£400	£2,000	£4,070
1802		£350	£70	£300	£90	£800	£2,200	£3,810
1803		£255	£970	£900	£1,070	£1,200	£3,200	£7,595
1804	£200	£250	£70	£1,000		£1,200	£3,200	£5,920
1805	£590	£200	£470	£1,600	£300	£1,000	£2,000	£6,160
1806	£200	£600	£70	£1,600	£500	£800	£2,000	£5,770
1807	£1,071	£1,060	£270	£1,300	£400	£800	£2,000	£6,901
1808	£600	£550	£270	£1,170		£800	£2,000	£5,390
1809	£100	£320	£470	£650	£200	£800	£1,500	£4,040
1810	£200	£200	£270	£450	£400	£800	£1,300	£3,620
1811	£400	£450	£350	£870	£200	£200	£1,800	£4,270
1812	£200	£324	£630	£900	£200	£1,400	£2,100	£5,654
1813	£200	£250	£200	£700		£2,300	£1,910	£5,560
1814	£300	£300	£900	£600	£200	£2,200	£2,200	£6,700
1815	£1,000	£855	£300	£800	£500	£500	£3,400	£7,355
1816	£5,022	£2,727		£570	£179	£2,846	£1,914	£13,255
1817	£1,256	£649	£233	£570		£1,798	£957	£5,461
1818	£2,093	£779	£349	£855	£179	£1,199	£1,913	£7,364
1819	£3,138	£520	£349	£998	£179	£600	£1,914	£7,694
1820	£1,256	£649	£233	£1,140	£179	£600	£2,711	£6,764

EXPENDITURE ON BRIDGE WORKS IN LANCASHIRE, 1821–30<sup>71</sup>

Date	County	North Lonsdale	South Lonsdale	Amounderness	Blackburn	Leyland	West Derby	Salford	Total
1821	£304	£101	£113	£205	£672	£76	£985	not known	-
1822	£4,553	£77	£406	£315	£491	£126	£815	£4,299	£11,082
1823	£423	£36	£2,126	£343	£476	£500	£1,087	£4,397	£9,388
1824	£1,199	£21	£1,327	£346	£820	£513	£1,017	£3,062	£8,301
1825	£1,366	£38	£593	£453	£762	£384	£730	£3,611	£7,937
1826	£1,163	£84	£1,284	£400	£605	£343	£804	£4,366	£9,049
1827	£525	£42	£306	£189	£794	£1,258	£2,478	£3,295	£8,866
1828	£532	£59	£334	£142	£1,826	£337	£818	£2,029	£6,077
1829	£918	£65	£134	£167	£727	£593	£823	£2,277	£5,704
1830	£2,978	£54	£175	£261	£347	£151	£1,217	£1,655	£6,838

1822, the bridgemaster being Richard Chaffers, still ‘stonemason’. The previous structure was ‘so narrow that one vehicle can only just pass over it, and the walls on each side were said to be too low and weak to stop a vehicle falling over the edge; yet it lay on a main road’. The new bridge cost £4,058.<sup>72</sup>

Lancashire and the West Riding were the two largest county bridge spending authorities, though technically most of Lancashire’s bridge outlay was on hundred bridges. The new Lancaster Bridge erected in the 1780s was one of the biggest English county bridges. When its county buildings are also considered, the county gaol, the new houses of correction and the lunatic asylum, Lancashire stands out as one of the biggest spenders on building and construction.

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