

Starbeck Spa

(Taken from Display Board in Spa Mews, end of Spa Lane, Starbeck)
(see second page)

It is difficult to put an exact date to the discovery of the Starbeck waters. However, written evidence points to sometime before the end of the summer 1626.

By 1734 the Starbeck springs had a protective cover, a basin, and a paved area but by the end of the century they had fallen into disrepair and had all but disappeared.

Eager to cash in on the popularity of the booming Harrogate spa industry, a group led by Michael Calvert formed the Knaresborough Spa Baths Company and in 1822 set about restoring the Starbeck springs which they had renamed Knaresborough Spa.

Supplying both chalybeate (iron and mild sulphur water, the springs became popular once again and a local pauper family, who waited on the visitors, were installed into a small cottage on the site. In 1828 a modern suite of baths, one of the district's earliest, were provided.

Over the years many improvements were made and in 1852 the cottage was demolished to be replaced by the fine building we see today.

In 1869 another spring was discovered in an adjoining field, and a year later the Prince of Wales baths (now the public swimming baths) opened. Both establishments flourished for a while until a rivalry which was often less than friendly resulted in the catastrophe of 1879 when the sinking of a new sulphur well cut into a chalybeate spring and contaminated the Old Spa waters for ever.

The building was later converted into stables the occupied by a haulage contractor. The Prince of Wales Baths and all the Starbeck mineral springs were purchased by the Harrogate Corporation in 1900.

Neglected and falling into disrepair, the whole site was earmarked for demolition in the late 1970s until last minute intervention by the Department of the Environment saved the house and the front façade of the bathhouse.

STARBECK OLD SPA

"The sparkling draft that fills thy glass, kind stranger, freely sip."

"Tis not like some that sweetly pass, but leaves a poisoned lip."

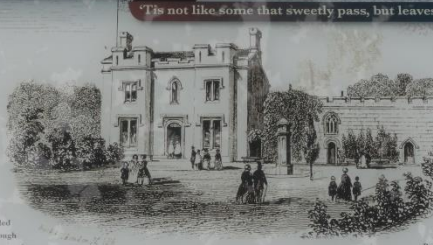
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Knaresborough Spa Baths



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Harrogate



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