

# The Sledmere Monument

This is the only Sledmere Monument, the other edifices in the village are strictly speaking, Eleanor's Cross, and the Waggoner's Memorial though they all tend confusingly to be called The Sledmere Monuments.

This was built in 1865 to commemorate Sir Tatton Sykes IVth Bt (1772-1863). The cost was raised by subscription amongst 600 of his friends and tenants.

The height is 147 feet (about 42.25 metres). It is built on a motte of rubble surrounded by a dry moat. The motte is faced on the East, entrance side, in dry, cut, but not mortared stone, but dry laid brick, on the other faces. The parapet of the motte was originally surmounted by a wrought iron fence but this went to war in 1940. The close steel fence was erected in the early 1960's when graffiti and carvers became prevalent.

Each facade of the Monument faces a cardinal point of the compass which is marked by a carved stone in the gable end above the viewing room.

The main structure is of ashlar stone, the grey limestone is probably from Roche in South Yorkshire and the red from one of the bunter quarries in North Nottinghamshire. The stone is only an outer face, the inner skin being of local brick. The void is filled with rubble and trash loosely mortared. The tower is solid above the viewing room which is approximately at the 2/3 height mark. The whole is surmounted by a solid stone cross mounted on an iron pin which goes some feet back into the tower. The cross is about 10 feet in height. Details, and some inscriptions are inlaid in the red stone. Other inscriptions are carved.

The design is by John Gibbs of Oxford, very much in the style of that time.

There are 4 panels for carved reliefs but 2 are blind - left unfinished presumably. The panel over the entrance door shows Sir Tatton and seems to have been taken from a well known portrait by Sir Francis Grant. After engraving by Ward this became widely distributed. The other panel is interesting in showing not only the mid XIX century rural scene but also a very detailed carving of a contemporary plough.

This Sir Tatton inherited from his brother Sir Mastermind Sykes in 1823, Sir Masterman having inherited from his father the creator of the present Sledmere landscape, Sir Christopher (1749-1801). The Sykes family came to Sledmere at the beginning of the XVIII century when a member of the family married the heiress to the Manor of Sledmere.

The circular staircase to the viewing room leads from a lobby inside the main door. The windows to the lobby were never glazed and have been recently blocked with stone as birds and rubbish got in, the birds flew up into the viewing room and died.

Whilst taking care climbing up, it is down, that has the most potential for a stumble.

In the view room be careful of the stair hole. There is no cover and the most interesting views are over Beverley, the City of Hull and deep into Holderness from the lancet windows over the stair hole.

The structure was subject to a major repair in 1985 following lightening damage. It had a Steeplejacks external inspection in July 1998. When no defects were found.

If the guide goes up into the viewing room the important landmarks are, in the middle distance, Dalton Holme Church Spire. (the tallest, at 210 feet, in East Yorkshire), Beverley Minster with its missing central tower and on the far horizon the towers of the Humber Bridge, the City of Hull (with the unmistakable block of Hull Royal Infirmary) Salt End Refinery and Chemical Works, Hedon Church and on a good day the industrial complexes on the South Bank of the Humber as well as Patrington Spire (205 feet). Eastwards there are views in to Bridlington Bay and sometimes ships and indeed some of the inner oil rigs. The views to the West show little more than can be seen from ground level.

The Monument has always been open to the public and to facilitate this, Monument Cottage was built across the road where a caretaker used to live, though this custom ceased many years ago. The keys are now kept at the Estate Office but viewing is now by appointment only.

The building is entirely maintained by Sir Tatton and does not receive any state or other aid.