

Who built Victorian Fakenham?

During Victorian times Fakenham expanded quite a bit, powered by the local builders. To begin with they were just bricklayers with other jobs such as publicans. They worked with other tradesmen who had the expertise to build four walls and put a roof on them. Even the brickmakers built houses. Brickmaker Gilham probably built Campbell's 'Highfield House'. Gilham's own house 'Gilham House' in Wells Road was a small size replica.

As time went on we find that there are more dedicated builders who had staff supplemented by sub-contractors and labour hired in for the day.

Isaac Fisher looked for commercial/industrial work and did some work for Miller the printer on his expansion.

James 'Jimmy' Needs also did work on Miller's expansion and also built the Wesleyan Chapel in Oak Street. He later did work for Wyman & Sons who had bought Miller out of liquidation. He also built the Council School on Queens Road (at a loss) but these are outside of our time frame

Charles Tuthill looked for domestic work and built the Primitive Methodist Chapel in Oak Street.

Hagon, Colls, Turner, Bensley & Readwin & Langley took on anything. There was plenty of domestic building to be had in Queens Road, Sculthorpe Road & in Wells Road where, as legend has it, the town Pound was built in the wrong place and had to be rebuilt! There were also a number of yards to be filled up around the town. It would be interesting to know if any of the local builders were involved in Fakenham's two big construction programmes. The Corn Exchange was built in 1855 and the mill was enlarged at about the same time.

There were at least five brickyards in Fakenham and yet bricks were imported from Barney Brickworks and the Holkham Estate.