

offbeat Wirksworth

drawings by Elvin Ibbotson



Drawing Wirksworth

Wirksworth is a fascinating town full of quirky buildings and winding lanes clustered around its magnificent parish church. Some of the buildings are grand, some elaborate, many very modest. There are hints of Italy in the town hall and Venetian windows. There is an ancient cruck-frame gable and shops and cottages which wouldn't look out of place in medieval York. Around every turn is a surprise: a contemporary extension, a wild open space, a relic of old industry. There is history. There is George Elliot's Adam Bede.. There are old lead mines, quarries, ribbon mills, lime kilns, railways,...

Artists find plenty of subjects around Wirksworth but here I have chosen slightly unusual views: familiar buildings seen from different directions, little jewels which have escaped notice, contemporary interventions, views we can walk past without noticing but which repay a closer look.

Historic buildings
where The Dale
meets Greenhill



Houses on The Causeway



The fine old buildings at the bottom of Greenhill are familiar to anyone who has explored Wirksworth but there are many more fascinating streets and buildings to be discovered like The Causeway with its half-round tower and half-round tree which will lead you to a wild open space popular with dog walkers. Or Blind Lane which runs from Coldwell Street past a stable block and the ornate old grammar school (both now repurposed as homes) to a tiny stone shack dwarfed by the magnificent church.



The Stable Block on Blind Lane





The churchyard provides a quiet haven away from the traffic but only a few yards from the main street along several short alleys. More paths lead out from behind the church to other parts of Wirksworth and to Hannage Brook, the source of the River Ecclesbourne.



St Mary's church and the end of Blind Lane
seen from one of Wirksworth's back paths

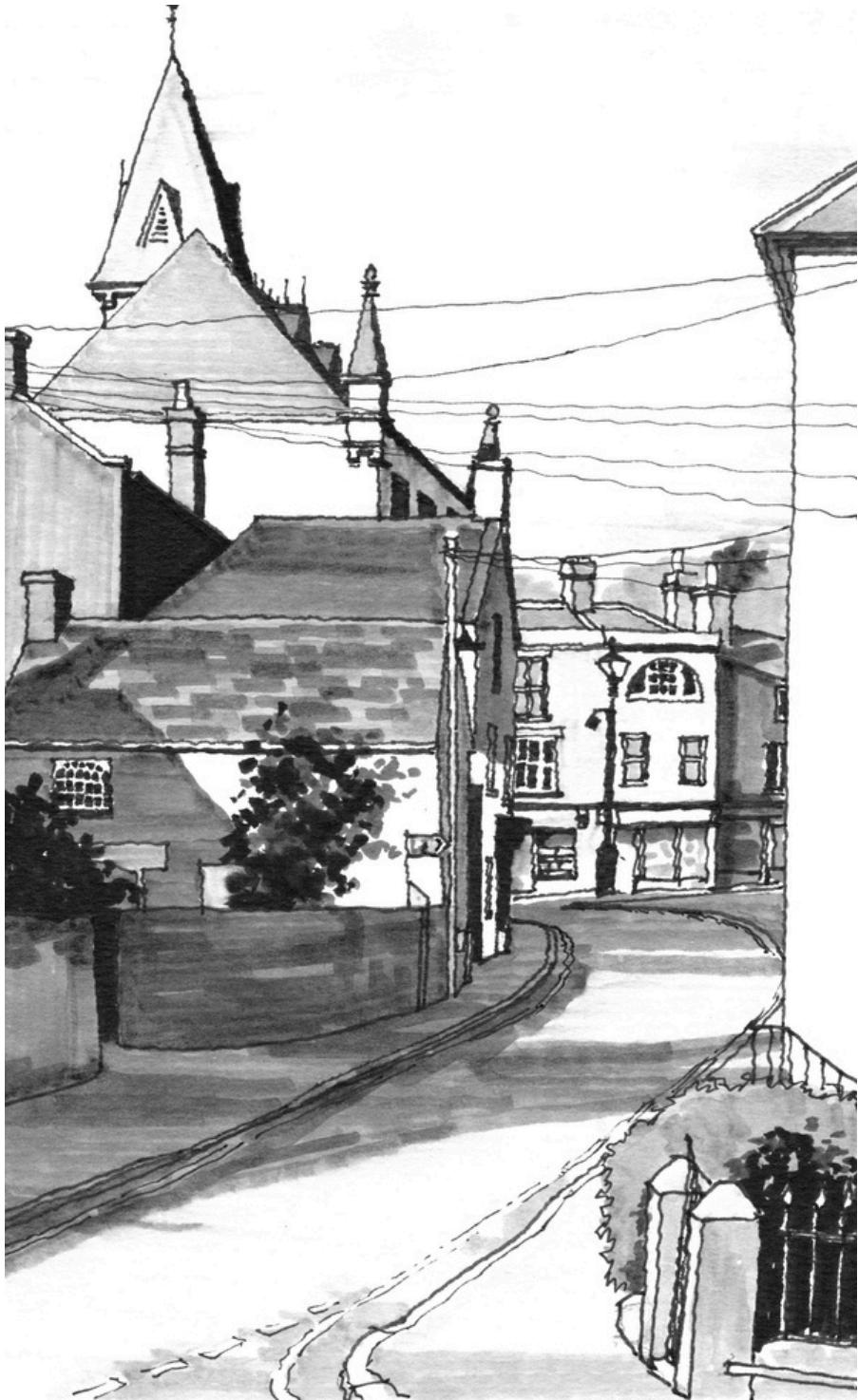


The Red Lion Inn
from Harrison Drive



The Red Lion is an old coaching inn opposite Wirksworth's Town Hall and library. The front has an arch through to the yard with a Venetian window, an arched window and a pediment over, but the drawing is of the side of the building with its massive chimney stack. The Town Hall is as significant a landmark as the church, visible from all around and giving the town its identity.

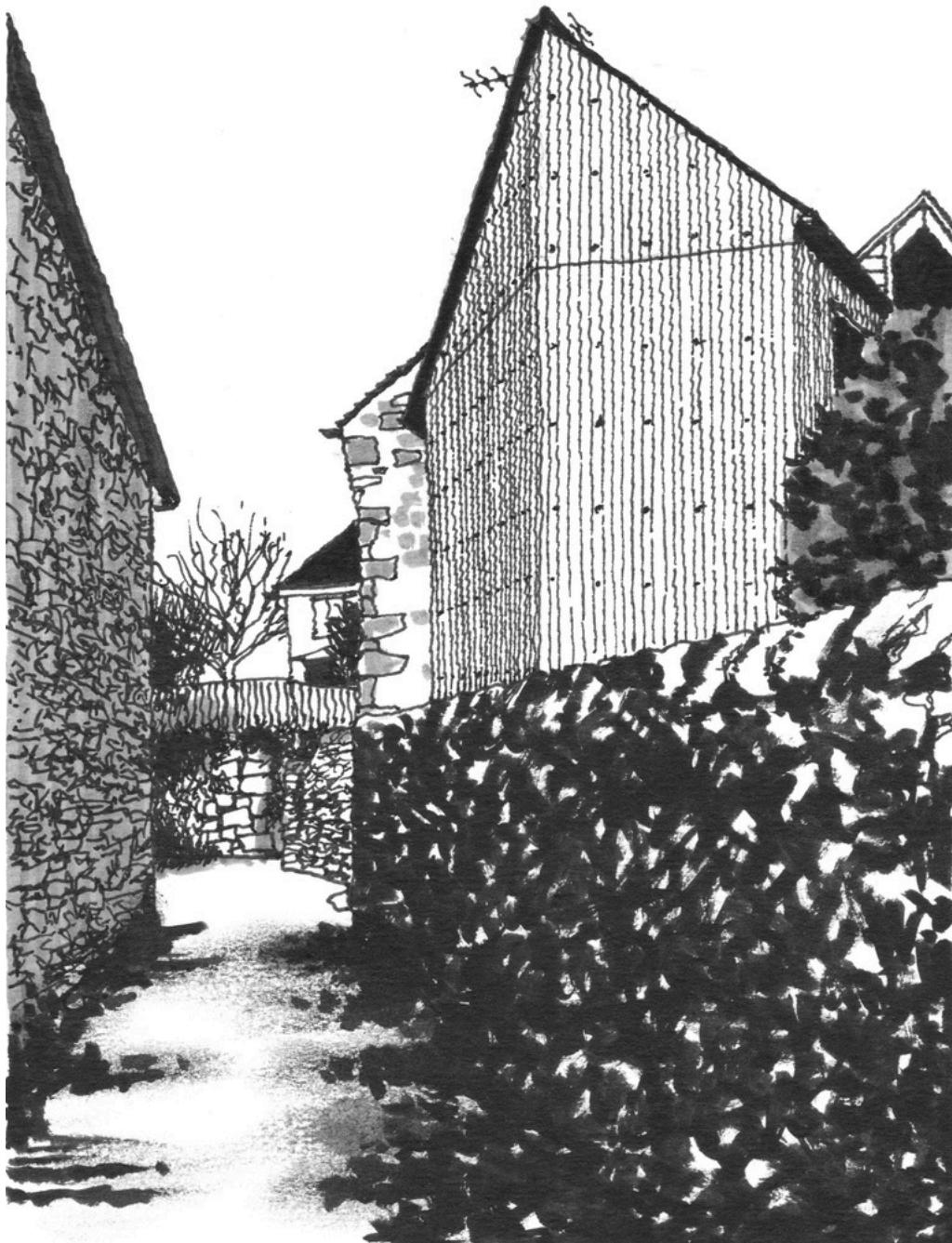
Looking west along
Coldwell Street





Looking towards Wirksworth Town Hall from Bowling Green Lane, just one of a maze of winding paths between Greenhill and The Dale, steep, narrow streets lined with stone cottages and only grudgingly accepting of the car.

A contemporary
extension on Bowling
Green Lane





Wirksworth is full of old buildings - most built in stone - some grand but many more humble and functional, but here and there are modern buildings and extensions such as the new Heritage Centre.



Looking towards Brooklands Avenue
from the path by Hannage Brook



The path by Hannage Brook leads to Water Lane, Willowbath Mill and Gorsey Bank, a hamlet on the edge of Wirksworth with some interesting buildings like the old Providence Mill and the little Roman Catholic Church of Our Lady and St Therese of Lisieux

