

1. The Diamond Inn, to the east of the river and north of Ponteland Road.

The Diamond Inn occupies a commanding position at the eastern end of the river bridge (rebuilt and widened in 1925) and next to the former smithy dating from 1822 and Grade II Listed, which was still operating as a smithy up to circa. 1980. Whilst the hostelrys *The Seven Stars* and *The Blackbird* are both formally Listed as Grade II, The Diamond Inn has – rather inexplicably – never been so Listed. It has, however, been particularly important to the social life of Ponteland for nearly 200 years; it occupies a central position next to the river bridge and facing a stretch of the River Pont – a view which has been much photographed and painted by artists over the years. Perhaps more importantly, it has always occupied an important role in the life of the ordinary people of Ponteland and has apparently never been closed except for building improvement work.



The Diamond Inn was built circa. 1830 as a two-storey building of red-brick construction using common bond brickwork surmounted by a tiled roof; the windows were all originally Georgian sash windows. It is likely that the bricks were made locally – in the 19th Century a Brickyard was located one mile north of the village off the A696 [1] and another to the west of the A696 south of Belsay where the remains of a kiln can still be seen.



A further storey having four gables to the frontage was added to the Diamond in stages between 1900 and 1912, as shown on the adjacent photograph [2]. The new second floor is timber-framed, and slates were used for the raised roof and gables instead of tiles. Bay

windows were inserted to the Ground and First Floor front elevation around the 1950s. It should be noted that, in the early 1900s, the river at this point was evidently much wider and also somewhat shallower than today (except, that is, for serious flooding at intervals).



Occasional gatherings of many carriages and carts would also appear to have taken place – possibly on annual Hiring Days for the farming community. The photograph of such a gathering is thought to date from circa. 1912.

[1] “Ponteland; One Thousand Years of History.” Pub. 1984. Leslie Almond/Ponteland Local History Society. p. 53.

[2] “Ponteland” Pub. 1999. John Turner/Tempus. p. 11.