

*A Short History of*  
The Parish Church of  
**BARNOLDSWICK**

by  
THE REV. J. H. WARNER  
VICAR

PRICE SIXPENCE

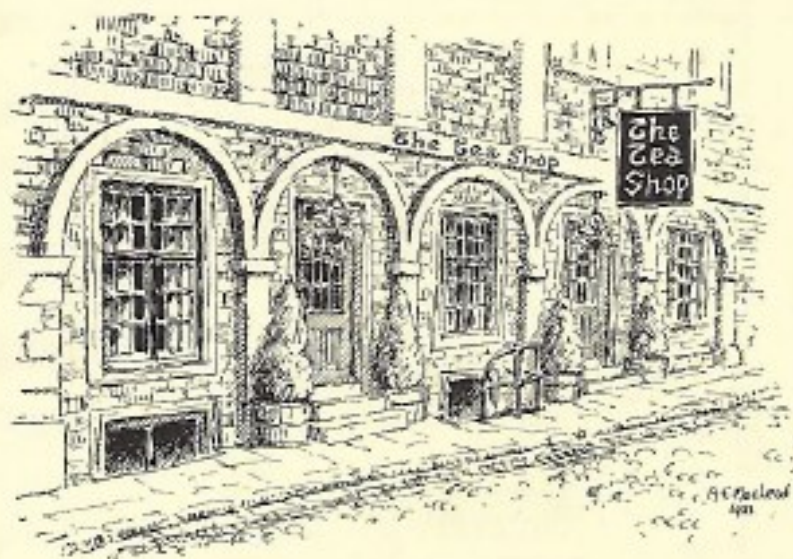
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A Short History of  
The Parish Church of  
BARNOLDSWICK

ST. MARY-LE-GILL

*otherwise* GILKIRKE

*otherwise* GHYLL KIRK

*Also for a short time known as*

ST. MICHAEL-LE-GILL

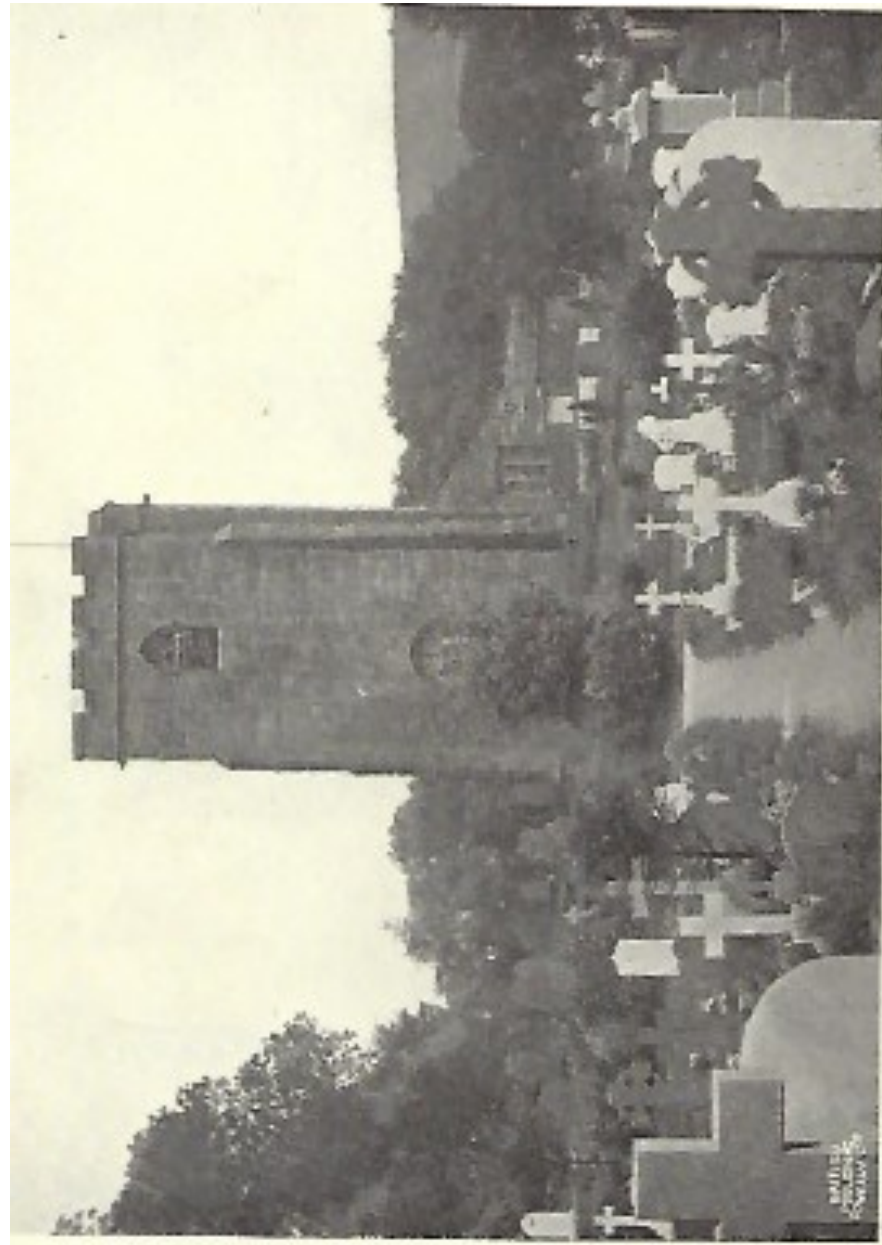
by

The Rev. J. H. Warner  
Vicar

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Photo—Marie Pederson.

THE EXTERIOR, ST. MARY-LE-GILL CHURCH.

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# GILL KIRK

*A Short History of the Church of St. Mary-le-Gill.*

THERE was a church in Barnoldswick for many years before Gill Church was built. We know this from the statement made by the first chronicler of Kirkstall Abbey, the monk Serlo, who came hither with a band of others from Fountains Abbey in 1147. He tells us that the church in Barnoldswick was then '*antiqua nimis et ab olim fundata*' (very old and of ancient foundation). We have no information as to its exact age, but it was almost certainly of Saxon foundation, and may have been at least 100 or 200 years old at the time of the Norman Conquest. It did not stand where Gill Church now stands, but in the town of Barnoldswick, somewhere quite close to the field called Monkroyd, possibly in that very field itself. It was no doubt a humble little building, partly of wood, partly of stone, and thatched; but it stood as a reminder of God's Presence to the villagers of the 'wick' or town built here by Bernulf the Saxon, from whom Barnoldswick, originally Bernulfswick,<sup>1</sup> took its name. This little House of God in which the people and their parson were wont to assemble frequently for worship was destroyed by the monks, and the story of its destruction is not very creditable to them, as even their historian, Serlo, is forced to admit. For some years after its

<sup>1</sup> Spelt in very many different ways: Bernolswic, Bernolviswik, Bernolfwic, Bernoldveswike, etc., etc. The common abbreviation into 'Barlick' goes back to the time of Henry VII.



demolition it would appear that the people of Barnoldswick were left without a church, for in 1153 the monks abandoned these parts in order to take up their permanent abode at Kirkstall; where they, under the leadership of their able Abbot Alexander, built the magnificent Abbey and great Church whose ruins stand now looking scornfully down on the modern villas and ugly factories which Leeds is thrusting round and beyond them. Barnoldswick Manor, or part of it, was, however, one of the estates belonging to that Abbey by the gift of its great patron, Henry de Lacy; and either for that reason, or possibly because of an order from the Pope to whom complaint of the destruction of the old church had been made, a band of builders came hither from Kirkstall about the year 1160, and built the first Gill Church. We can only surmise why they built the new church in this out-of-the-way place, rather than where the old one stood, in the town of Barnoldswick. Perhaps it was in order to provide a place of worship for the inhabitants of Thornton and Marton as well as the parishioners of Barnoldswick, for both these churches (of Marton and of Thornton) were built later, though only a few years later, than Gill Church. Possibly it may have been a matter of malice: the monks, being compelled by papal decree to reinstate the destroyed church, put it in an as out-of-the-way corner of the parish as they could. It is more charitable and probably also more reasonable to assume the former view to be correct. The church built here was dedicated to St. Mary, the Mother of our Lord, and being on the edge of a 'ghyll' or ravine, became known as St. Mary-le-Gill. At the time of the commonwealth an effort was made,

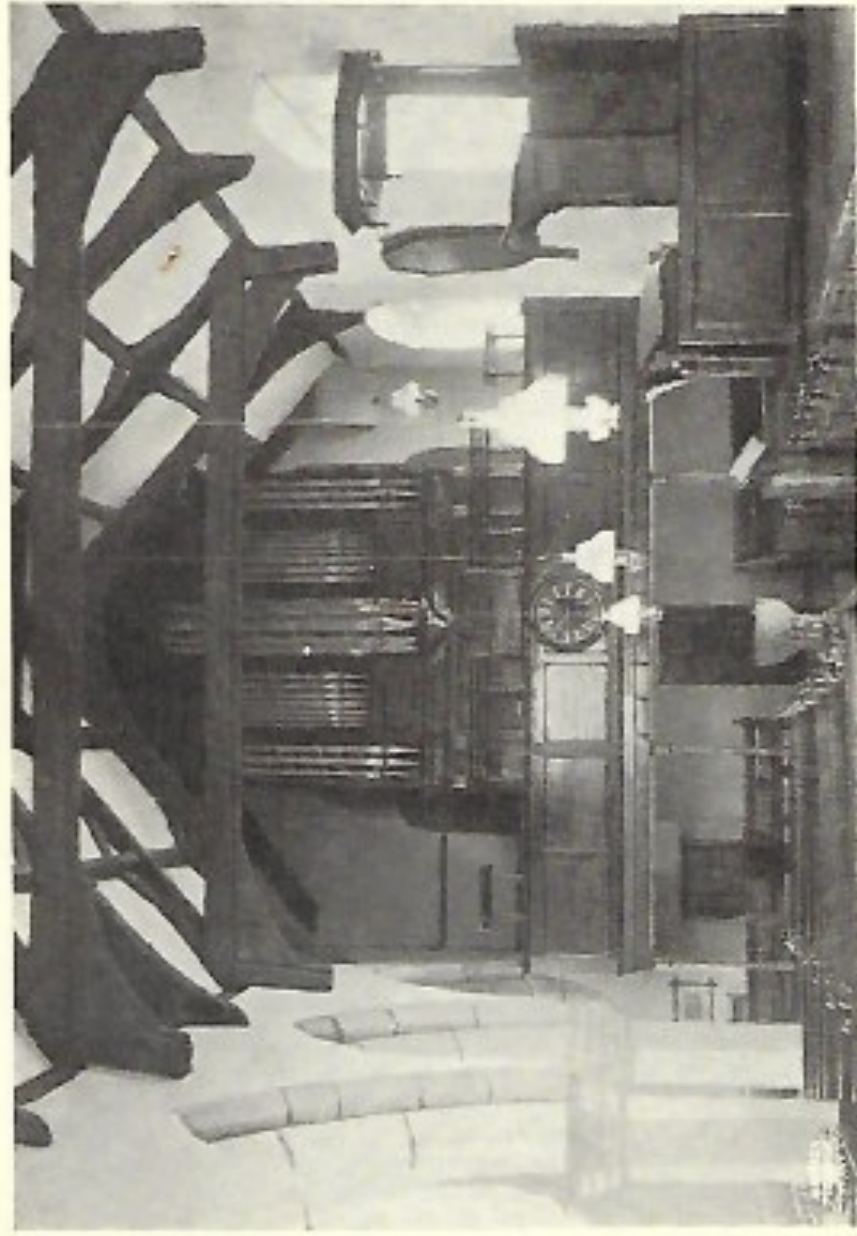


apparently, to alter the name and dedication ; and for a while this church was known as the ' Church of St. Michael and All Angels, otherwise Gillkirk ' ; but the older name outwore the newer.

It is not quite easy to say how much of the original building of the monks of Kirkstall is now left. The first church probably had no south aisle, this being added later. It was certainly lower than the present building, its first roof of thatch being replaced in the thirteenth or fourteenth century by a stone-slated high pitch one. The chancel may be the original one, the window on the north side being of about that date (Early English). The tower, which is unusually broad and massive, was not built until over 350 years later, bearing the date 1524 carved in Roman numerals on one of its stones.<sup>1</sup> The fine three-decker pulpit and old oak pews, which are now the chief glory of this church, are, of course, of still later date, being Jacobean, put in probably about 1620 to 1650. Some of the pews, however, are not the original oaken ones, but modern replacements of such, belonging to the nineteenth century, and made of ordinary deal. The fine old carved Holy Table, also Jacobean, has suffered very sadly from the ravages of the timber beetle, and in that way, or by theft, has lost its ancient top, the place of which has been taken by a piece of deal.<sup>2</sup> The font is of about the fourteenth century. Before the Reformation, fonts were generally kept locked in order to prevent the not

<sup>1</sup>The 'M' (for 1,000) was, however, accidentally omitted, or obliterated at some time later.

<sup>2</sup>Since the above was written the Holy Table has been restored by the generosity of friends.



Photo—Marie Perle.

THE INTERIOR, LOOKING WEST.

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uncommon theft of the consecrated water which was supposed to be a preventive against disease and ill-luck. At the Reformation the locks and staples were removed, often with much damage to the stonework, traces of which can be seen. The ancient windows, both mouldings and glass, have long since disappeared, the only remnant of stained glass left being a small circlet in one of the windows of the south aisle. A curiosity which the visitor should not miss is the ancient heavy wooden bolt of the south-west door. The old stone coffin near the font was dug up in the churchyard some sixty years ago, and after lying outside for many years was recently placed here for protection against the weather. It was probably the last resting place of the body of some priest or monk, the almost perished carving on the lid being apparently that of a priest in his robes. In the porch will be found another old relic, long left exposed to the rains and frost, on which some ancient carving is also traceable, consisting of heads at each corner. Some archæologists suppose this to have been the socket of a churchyard cross ; but more probably it is part of a holy water stoup, or of a lavabo for the washing of the sacred vessels.

There is a credence shelf on the north wall of the chancel, the support to which has let into it an old oak circular panel on which are carved the arms of Kirkstall Abbey, three swords 'in fess'. This panel was originally in the end of one of the choir pews, and was afterwards moved to a place at the back of the Holy Table, before finding a final resting place in its present position.

The church has three bells which were placed in position in 1723. The first of these has a diameter of 28 ins. and bears the motto, 'Peace and good



Neighbourhood A.R. (Anna Regina) 1723'. The second one is 1 in. larger in diameter, and its inscription is, 'Render therefore unto Cesar the things which are Cesar's and unto God the things that are God's A.R. 1723'. The tenor bell is 32 ins. (nearly) in diameter and has as its inscription, 'Wm. Drake Esq., Ch. Warden A.R. 1723'. The large and heavy safe which used to stand in the vestry was moved to the Vicarage some years ago for greater security. In it are kept the old registers, dating back to 1587, some fifty years subsequent to the order made in 1538 by Thomas Cromwell, King Henry VIII's 'Vicar-General', that such registers should be kept in all parishes (the registers for the years 1538-1587 may have been lost, but more probably the order did not obtain enforcement here until the later date). An old pewter flagon and plate for use at Holy Communion have been lost or stolen somewhere between the years 1877 and 1890, but a beautiful old silver chalice is still in use.

The organ, which stands in the west gallery, is said to have been brought here from Burnley Parish Church about the year 1836. Prior to that date the music for the services in this church was provided by a string orchestra, for in 1835 we find the following entry in the Terrier of the church :—

'We whose names are hereunto subscribed do hereby declare that ye following musical instruments and singing books belong to Gill Church.

'Namely ; a violoncello, ye gift of ye Rev. Mordaunt Barnard, Patron and Incumbent.

'A viola, raised by a general subscription.

'N.B. There is a good box for ye preservation of ye violoncello.

‘A printed book of Tunes by Rogers.

‘A written Do. Do.

‘A small base and treble book for Tunes.

‘As witness our hands this twenty-third of April, 1835,  
Thos. Hayes Stip : Curate, Thos. Heap, Jas. Duckworth,  
Jun., John Rawsthorn, Church Wardens.’

The gallery in which the organ stands is of earlier date, and was no doubt erected to provide accommodation for the choir and orchestra when such adjuncts to worship became fashionable. The clock on the front of the gallery was given to the church by the Rev. Mordaunt Barnard, who was Perpetual Curate, or Incumbent, here 1820 to 1836.

The pew for the Churchwardens and Parish Constable inside the door in the south-west of the church was added in 1836.

The north wall of the church is very irregular, and according to modern ideas badly built, but it stands now as it has stood from the fourteenth or fifteenth century ; indeed the lower courses of it may be the original building of the monks in 1160. It may be that some old mural paintings exist beneath the various coats of colour-wash with which the interior walls have been treated from time to time. Only a careful examination by experts can show whether or not such is the case. The possible remains of a rood-screen may be traced, close to the vestry door.

Within the altar rails lie the remains of ‘William Drake of Barnoldswick Cotes Esq., who was born there on the 21st day of September, 1682, and died the 13th of February, 1757’. He was churchwarden of this church for some years, and his name is recorded on one of the bells. Also within the rails lie the bodies of some infant



*By courtesy of The Craven Herald, Ltd., Skipton.*

THE REV. RICHARD MILNER, B.A.  
(Vicar from 1836 to 1870.)



children of the Rev. Richard Milner, who was vicar of this parish from 1836 to 1870.

There are various tombstones in the church, partly concealed by the pews which have been erected since the interments were made. They are as follows :—

Under pews numbered 43 and 44—

Beneath  
lieth the body  
of Peter Hartley  
late of Cotes Hall  
who departed this life  
the 16th day of March 1800  
Aged . . 4 years.

and next to it—

Here lieth the body  
of Sarah the wife of  
Peter  
Hartley of  
Coat hall who departed  
This life October  
the 5th 1784 Aged 59 years.

Under pew No. 36—

To the Memory of  
William Windle of Barnolds  
wic who died the 5th Day of June  
1790 Aged 81 years.

Also Jane Windle Relict of the  
above who died the 20th Day of  
September 1790 Aged 79 years.

And also Joshua Windle son  
of the above William and Jane  
He died at Gargrave the 17th Day  
of March 1827 Aged 81 years.

In the nave—

Here lieth the body  
of Dorothy Pollard  
Daughter of the Late  
Mr. Rich<sup>d</sup> Scarborough

of Halifax who de Part  
ed this Life April the  
15th 1784 in the 85th  
Year of her Age.

and—

Bridget Ellett  
was buried here  
from Cotes Hall  
July 1751.

In the south aisle—

Here lyeth the Body  
of William Hartley  
of Sike house who  
departed this Life  
April 12th [?] 1767 in  
the 78 Year of his  
Age.

Also Elizabeth his wife  
who departed this life  
May the 12th 1770  
Aged 72 [?]

Also Margaret daughter  
of the saide William  
Hartley who departed  
this life February the  
18th 1775 Aged 63.

(Note : curiously, in the Register of Burials for the year 1767 Wm. Hartley is recorded as being buried on March 15th.)

One or two tombstones also are probably indicated by initials, e.g. 'J.K.' within pew No. 6, and 'H.B.' in front of a pew by the vestry door.

The mural tablets include one on the north side of the chancel wall to the memory of Archbishop Enos Nuttall. He was born at Clitheroe, in 1842, and was the eldest son of James Nuttall, farmer and builder, of Coates, by his first wife, Alice, daughter of William and Martha Armistead, of Aynhams, Barnoldswick. He received his education from his mother, and the 'parish school',

which was then held in the building in the Butts, replaced by the present C.E. School in York Street. His people were Wesleyans, and his early religious training was in the faith of that church. He was a local preacher at the age of 17, and at the age of 20 became a foreign missionary of the W.M.S.

He joined the Church of England in 1862, and was ordained deacon and priest in 1866. Consecrated Bishop of Jamaica in 1880, he became Primate of the West Indies in 1893, and a year or two later took the title of Archbishop. His bravery and resourcefulness in the great earthquake in Jamaica in 1907 are still gratefully remembered. He was buried in the churchyard of St. Andrew's, Halfway Tree, Kingston, Jamaica, in 1916.

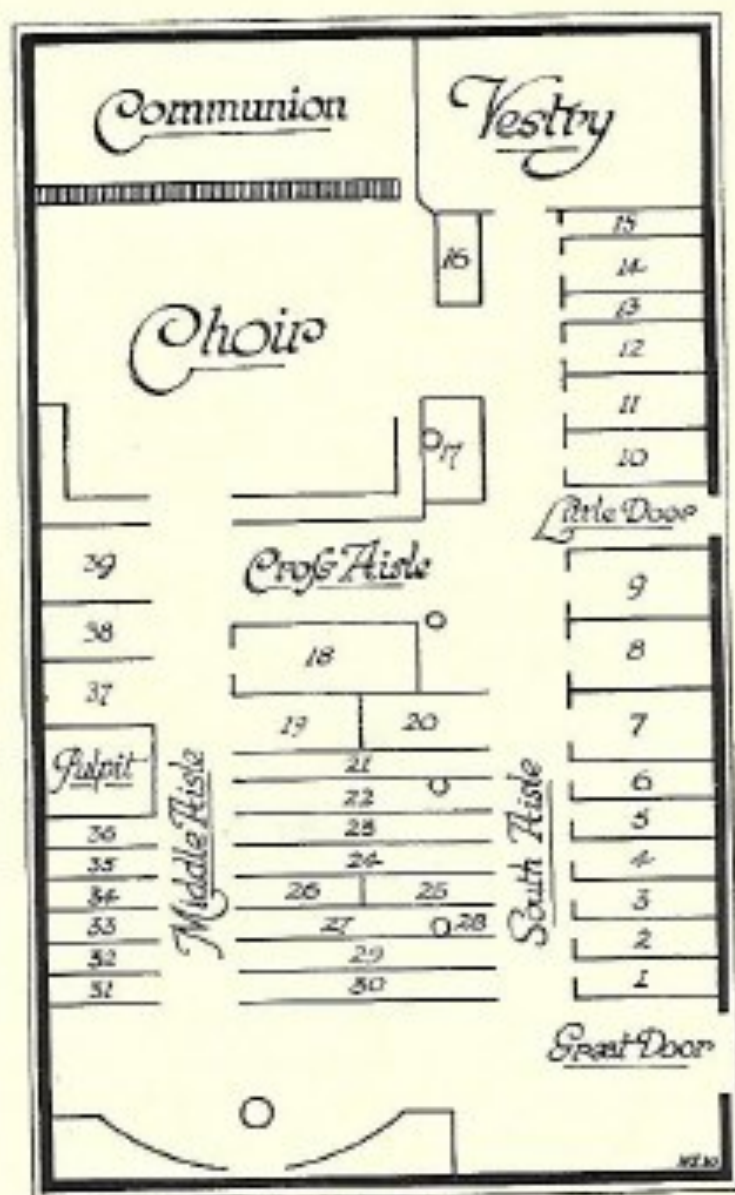
The other mural tablets in the church may be easily read by the visitor at his or her leisure. The quaint inscription on that at the South (right-hand) side of the vestry door should be noticed.

Before we leave the church it may be noted that the Three-Decker Pulpit did not always stand where it is now. The churchwardens' accounts for 1785 contain a note of the 'shifting of the pulpit'. Its original position may be surmised to have been nearer to the east end of the church, and probably facing westward. It is in a very good state of repair and retains all its original features except the clerk's seat in the lowest 'deck'.

The oldest tombstone in the churchyard now decipherable records the date 1609, but burials have certainly taken place here since the twelfth century.

A charnel house or 'bone house' stood in the churchyard against the north wall of the church for many years, until it was removed in 1851.





AN OLD SKETCH PLAN OF THE CHURCH WITH  
A LIST OF THE 'APPROPRIATION' OF THE PEWS.  
(See opposite page.)

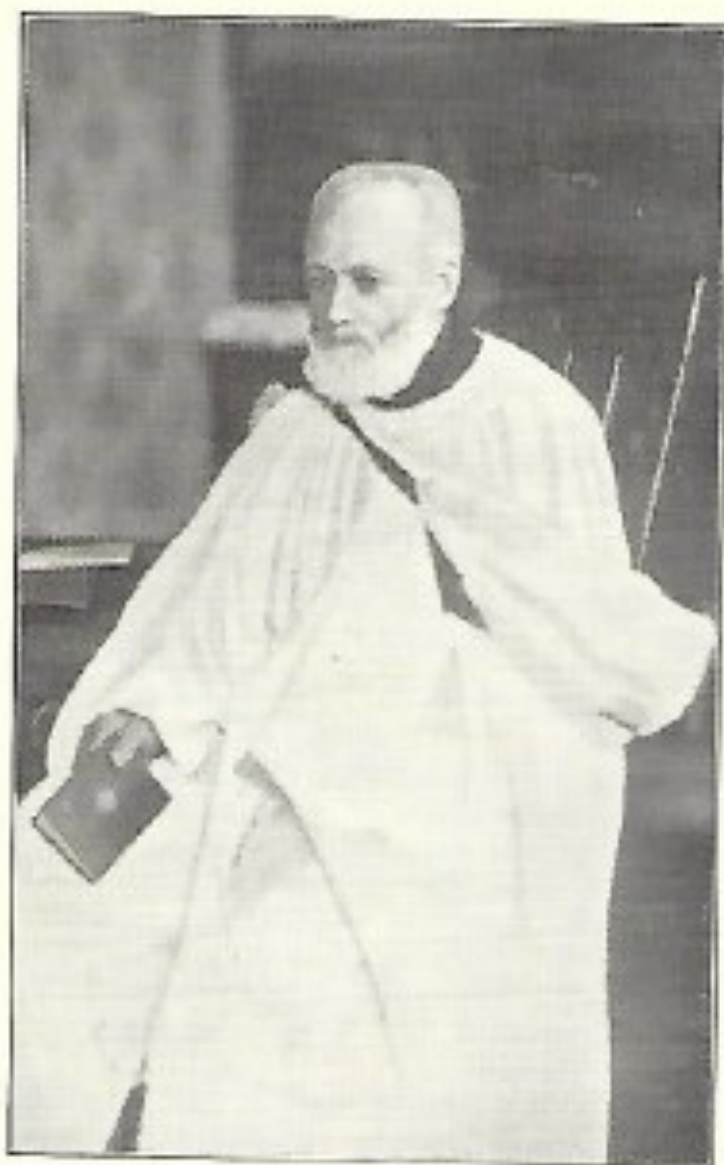
The coach-house and stable standing at the entrance to the churchyard were built in 1823 to provide accommodation for the traps and horses of farmers and others driving to worship in the church.

Here is an old sketch plan of the church with a list of the 'appropriation' of the pews. There is no date, but it seems to be about 1800.

- |                                          |                                                       |
|------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| 1, 2, 3 (Not appropriated).              | 20 M. C. Park Lower (?).                              |
| 4 Syke House and 'Upper Flatts'.         | 21 Mitchell.                                          |
| 5 Green Hill, in part.                   | 22 Cross Keys, North side of it, Key Field, Dam Head. |
| 6 Parson's House.                        | 23 Mr. Parr.                                          |
| 7 Ed. Wilkinson, Esq., Green Hill House. | 24 Spen head (?) with another ancient house.          |
| 8 Brockden Hall; Lidget Flatt.           | 25 Syke House and Up. Flatts.                         |
| 9 Wm. Cockshot, Far Hey.                 | 26 Mean Lathe Flatt; I. Roydes.                       |
| 10 Wellocks; Mr. Roundell for wood.      | 27 to 31 (Not appropriated).                          |
| 11 Wm. Baldwin's Farm; Balmer.           | 32 (?) Gill.                                          |
| 12 Wm. Lowcock.                          | 33 Dye House.                                         |
| 13 Cowpasture; New House.                | 34 Ash Close House; C. Waite.                         |
| 14 Springs; White House.                 | 35 Cotes.                                             |
| 15 Long Ing.                             | 36 Cotes.                                             |
| 16 Famers, West Close.                   | 37 Mr. (?) for Gill.                                  |
| 17 Rain Hall.                            | 38 Greenborough (?).                                  |
| 18 Windles.                              | 39 Cotes Hall.                                        |
| 19 Mitchells.                            |                                                       |

In a record of 1832, giving a rather different list of seatings, there occurs a note: '2 large seats on either side of the Communion Table are the property of the Incumbent of the Parish, but James Crook has the privilege of sitting in the one on the North Side during his life'.

Owing to the fact that Gill Church was a 'Peculiar', i.e. exempt from the jurisdiction of the Bishop and Archdeacon until recently, a complete



*By courtesy of The Crafts Herald, Ltd., Sligton.*

THE REV. THOMAS HAYES, M.A.  
(Vicar from 1880 to 1887.)



record of its Incumbents or Perpetual Curates cannot be obtained from the York Diocesan Registers, where they would have been enrolled had they been licensed in the usual way. The following list is compiled from other sources, chiefly the registers of baptisms, etc.

1595 (or a little earlier) to 1612	Robert Coldecke.
1612 to 1626	John Eastwood.
1626 to 1643	Francis Piell.
1643 to 1671	George Stott.
1671 to 1678	Thomas Garfort.
1678 to 1717	Timothy Lancaster, also Vicar of Bracewell.
1717 to 1750	Arthur Tempest, B.A., also Vicar of Bracewell.
1750 to 1751	Charles Pindar.
1751 to 1772	John Riley.
1772 to 1785	William Burton, also Minister of Newchurch-in-Pendle.
1785 to 1791	David Greenough, presented by Edmund Starkie of Huntroyd.
1791 to 1820	Edward Capstack, presented by Nicholas Starkie of Frenchwood.
1820 to 1836	Mordaunt Barnard, B.A., also Minister of Thornton-in-Craven.
1836 to 1870	Richard Milner, B.A., presented by R. Hodgson, Esq.
1870 to 1880	Samuel Henry Ireson (Patron, Josiah Ireson, Esquire).
1880 to 1887	Thomas Hayes, M.A.
1887 to 1890	John Woods.
1890 to 1922	Frederick William Patten (presented by George Dawson, of Tunstall, Co. Durham).
1923 to 1930	John Calderbank, M.A. (Patron, Lord Bishop of Bradford).
1930 to	John Henry Warner, B.A. (Patron, the Lord Bishop of Bradford).

Sir Stephen Glynne, the famous antiquarian, visited this church in 1860, and the following note of his visit as recorded by himself is of interest. It is taken from the Yorkshire Archaeological Journal.

(The church stands) 'In a lonely and rather romantic spot away from the populous part of the parish. Like the neighbouring churches, it is essentially late Perpendicular, has a nave and chancel each with south aisle, west tower, and south porch. There is one lancet (window) on the north of the chancel and the east window is a triplet, the remains of original work. The other windows are square-headed, of three lights, mostly without foils but not entirely so. The arcade is of pointed arches with octagonal columns; those in the nave large and with capitals. There is no architectural distinction of nave and chancel, but the nave is of five,<sup>1</sup> the chancel of two, bays. The aisle is low; the roofs have stone slates. One window north of the chancel has a label and head corbels. There is a doorway on the south, within the porch, which has a Norman look, but is doubtful. The tower is large and late Perpendicular, embattled with corner buttresses, a square turret, at the north-east, and is unbroken by strings. The belfry windows of two lights, no door, but a three-light west window, poor and without foils. The outer walls are partially stuccoed. There is an organ. The font has a circular bowl on a stem of like form. In the churchyard are some stone coffins, and what appears to be a font.'

Those who wish to know more about the history of Gill Church as connected with the general history of Barnoldswick are referred to a larger volume, *Chapters in the History of Barnoldswick*, by the author of this booklet.

<sup>1</sup> This is a 'slip' on the part of Sir Stephen. There are only three bays in the nave and two in the chancel.



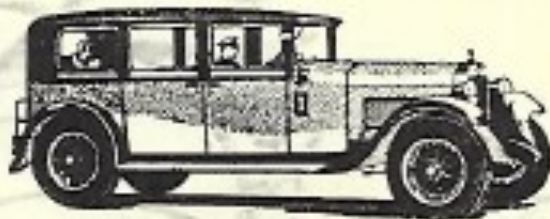
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