

10. The altar



The altar, like the pulpit and pews, dates from the seventeenth century. In most churches the altar is in a more central position, but – as noted above – the Protestant Reformation

gave much greater importance to the pulpit, and so at Ghyll the altar is off to one side and the pews mostly face away from it. The sermon was seen as being much more important than Holy Communion, which, in any case, was only offered four times a year.

11. William Drake



Just inside the sanctuary, behind the altar rail, is a memorial to William Drake of Coates Hall. He must have been an important person to have been buried in such a

prominent place. Coates Hall had previously belonged to Sawley Abbey but was owned by the Drake family from 1667 until 1758, the year after William Drake's death, when it passed to William Bagshawe. We know that William Drake paid land tax of £9 for the hall in 1756.

12. The Ten Commandments



Above the altar, painted onto two boards, is the text of the Ten Commandments. Similar boards elsewhere in the church carry the text of the Lord's Prayer and the

Creed (the statement of what Christians believe). These boards date from the nineteenth century, when the industrial revolution and the building of the Leeds-Liverpool canal had led to the expansion of Barnoldswick.

9. List of vicars



Walk down the aisle on the south side of the church (further away from the pulpit). As you come to the end, notice the list of vicars which goes all the way back to 1596 – the time of the Reformation. Some 400 years

later, in 1994, the Church of England ordained its first women priests. The first female vicar of Barnoldswick arrived in 2013.

10 The Coach House



The building just outside the churchyard, now known as the Coach House, was probably originally a bier house (that is, the place where coffins would

rest overnight ahead of a funeral the next day).

Come with us, on a tour of...

ST MARY-LE-GHYLL CHURCH



You are very welcome to come in and look around this beautiful and ancient church, founded in 1157 and still an active place of Christian worship to this day. You might like to follow the tour outlined below, but feel free to explore for as long as you like:

1. Norman stone coffin



Not much remains of the original Norman church, built by monks from the Cistercian order in the 1150s. The stone coffin just by the porch is one of the oldest features of the church.

Nowadays it serves as a flowerbed rather than a final resting-place.

2. Constable's and churchwardens' pew



Pass through the porch and enter the church. On your left you will see the constable's and churchwardens' pew which dates from 1836. One of the churchwarden's duties was (and still is) to maintain order and discipline during worship, so she or he would sit near the door to ensure that any trouble-makers could be ejected. Presumably the constable was there as back-up in case of resistance or fighting!

3. Interior: a Reformation church



Pause to take in the interior of the church. Although founded in the medieval period, the interior of the church is very typical of the Reformation period. and some of its furnishings date from the seventeenth century. Although the Reformation in England is often traced back to the desire of King Henry VIII to get his marriage to his first wife, Catherine of Aragon, annulled, the Reformation was fundamentally a religious movement with its roots in the rise of Protestantism in northern Europe. The Reformers wanted to move away from what they saw as the 'excesses' of Roman Catholicism in worship and church architecture, and so church walls were whitewashed, as they are at Ghyll, to cover over any decoration, and the church was kept as simple as possible.

4. The font



As you walk forward you will see the font in front of you to the left. The font is another remnant of the earliest church building here at Ghyll, dating from the twelfth century. It is still in regular use for christenings. The wooden lid, with its stern instruction to repent and be baptised, is a more modern addition!

5. The Book of Common Prayer



Turn to face the tower and on your left you will see a bookcase full of copies of the Book of Common Prayer. One of the great innovations of the Reformation was the introduction of worship in the languages that people actually spoke, as opposed to Latin, understood only by priests and the most learned (and probably richest) people. In England, this led to the publication in 1549 of the Book of Common Prayer, which for 400 years was the Church of England's only prayer book, containing the words for all the services of the church. It was only at the end of the twentieth century that services adopted more modern language, but in its day the Book of Common Prayer was incredibly radical because it meant that even ordinary people could understand what was going on in church. The copies at Ghyll date from the 1920s.

6. The tower



In front of you, you will now see the door that leads to the tower. For health and safety reasons this is now kept locked except for bell-ringing and for special tours. The tower was

added to the church in 1524 and houses a ring of six bells, the oldest of which date back to 1723. Three new bells were added in the early 2000s.

7. The pulpit



Turn now and start to walk towards the altar. Halfway up on your left you will see the triple-decker pulpit which dates back to the seventeenth century. Few such pulpits survive today, but they were popular in the Reformation period because they gave particular prominence to the reading of the Bible and preaching about the Word of God – in English, of course – which was central to the beliefs

of the Reformers. One early translator of the Bible into English, William Tyndale, is said to have boasted to a priest who wanted to keep the Bible only in Latin that if he had his way a simple ploughboy would soon know the Bible as well as any learned clergyman.

The priest would preach his sermon (which would have been *long*) from the top level and his words would be amplified by the sounding-board above his head which acted as a sort of microphone to ensure that everyone could hear. The Bible would be read from the second level, and a clerk would lead the congregation's responses and prayers from the first level. Climb to the top if you'd like to and enjoy the view of the church!

8. Box pews



As you walk towards the altar, notice the box pews on each side of the aisle. Before the Reformation, seating in churches was restricted to the lord of the manor or other very important people. Ghyll church would originally have had no fixed seating at all. From the sixteenth century on it became the norm to have seating in churches, as people were expected to be able to pay attention for a long time as the preacher preached his sermons from the top of the pulpit (from where he could see if anyone was not paying attention!). Notice how all the pews face the pulpit rather than the altar: this again reflects the emphasis placed on preaching during the Reformation.



Box pews were a way for families to sit together and provided a degree of privacy. Families would rent a particular pew: and you can see in Ghyll church names carved onto the side of the pew or plaques affixed to the doors (although these date from a later period). In the seventeenth century, families often installed curtains, tables and even fireplaces. Sometimes the panelling was so high that it was difficult to see out and this could also be used as cover for 'un-religious' activities!



9. Enos Nuttall



High on the wall, on your left-hand side as you approach the altar, notice a plaque commemorating a famous Barlicker, Enos Nuttall, who went to the West Indies as a missionary and became Bishop of Jamaica and then Archbishop of the West Indies. He was active in campaigning for British aid for the West Indies following natural disasters in the region, and in 1907 he was asked to speak to the Anglican church in Virginia, USA on the subject of the inclusion of black people within the church.