

The Kildwick Parish Library

Introduction

The creation of Parish Libraries was largely inspired by Rev. Thomas Bray who promoted, in a series of works published in the latter part of the 17th and early 18th century, the idea of creating libraries, endowed by local gentry and clergy, for use by assistants, curates and general readers. The books were to be in English, and available for use by anyone in the parish who could read them.

Bray's plans were intended to "promote all necessary and useful knowledge both divine and human". They were particularly aimed at "northern parts" which he considered to be especially "barbarous and ignorant".

The Kildwick library

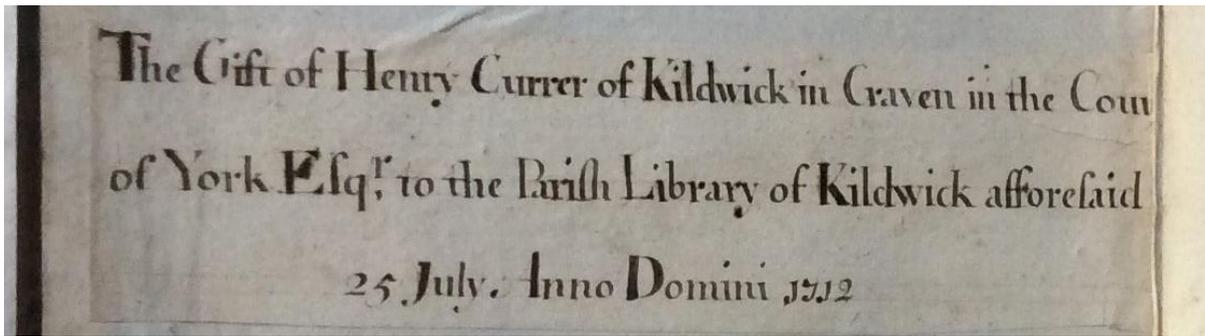
The Kildwick Parish Library consists of 79 books with imprint dates between 1530 and 1824, mostly from the 17th and 18th centuries. It includes:

- 2 -- from 16th century
- 37 -- from 17th century
- 34 -- from 18th century
- 4 -- from 19th century

The collection is made up of Protestant ecclesiastical works, including: commentaries on various books of the Bible, philosophical works, collections of sermons, a copy of Foxe's Book of Martyrs (in two volumes), and a 2nd edition of Thomas Bray's "Bibliotheca Parochialia" (published 1707). It also includes a lectern copy of the King James Bible, published in 1701, which also includes two loose Prayer pamphlets dated 1762 and 1796.

Several of the books appear to have been given to the parish by the lords of the manor of Kildwick Henry Curre (b. 1651, d. 1722) [30 books, donated between 1710 and 1722] and his son Haworth Curre (b. 1690, d. 1744) [4 books, donated between 1725 and 1727 – although a further 4 books donated in the 1720s after the death of Henry Curre are also likely to have been the gift of his son]. A further two books, both donated in 1711, were the gift of a family member, William Curre of Steeton.

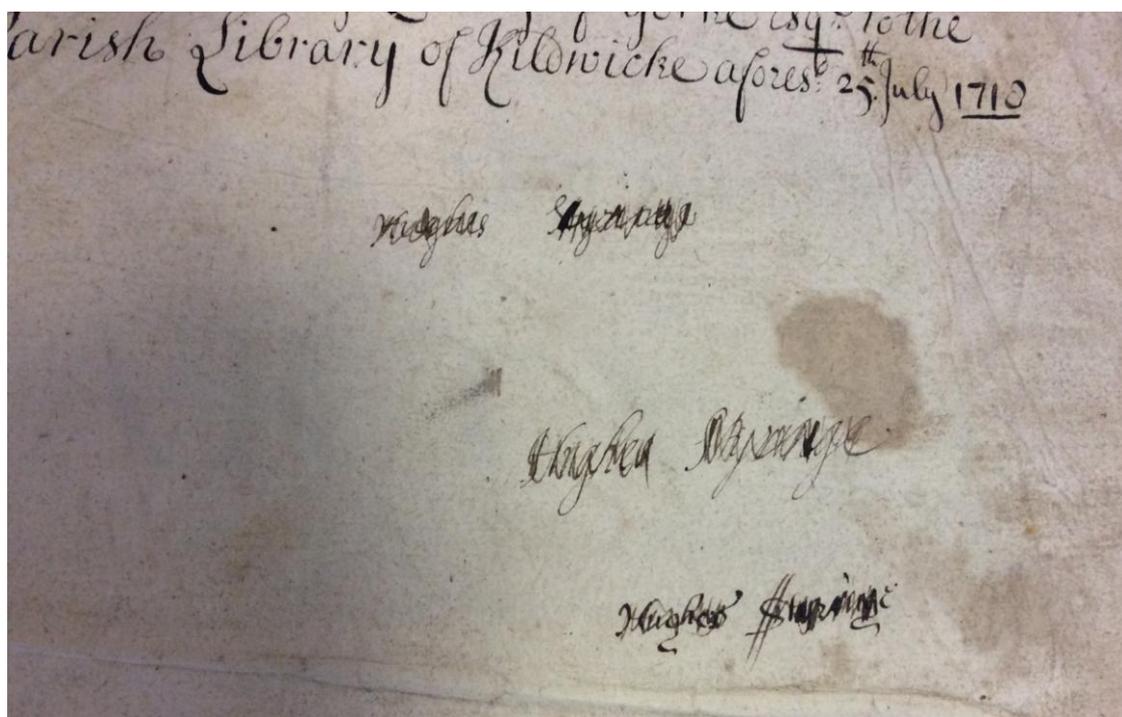
A number of the books have details of the donor written on an inside page.



Several have embossed tooling on the cover reading "Kildwick Parish" and, in some cases, the date of donation.



While several books appear to have been fairly new when given to the library, or perhaps bought specifically for it, the inside pages of some show the names of previous owners scribbled-out.

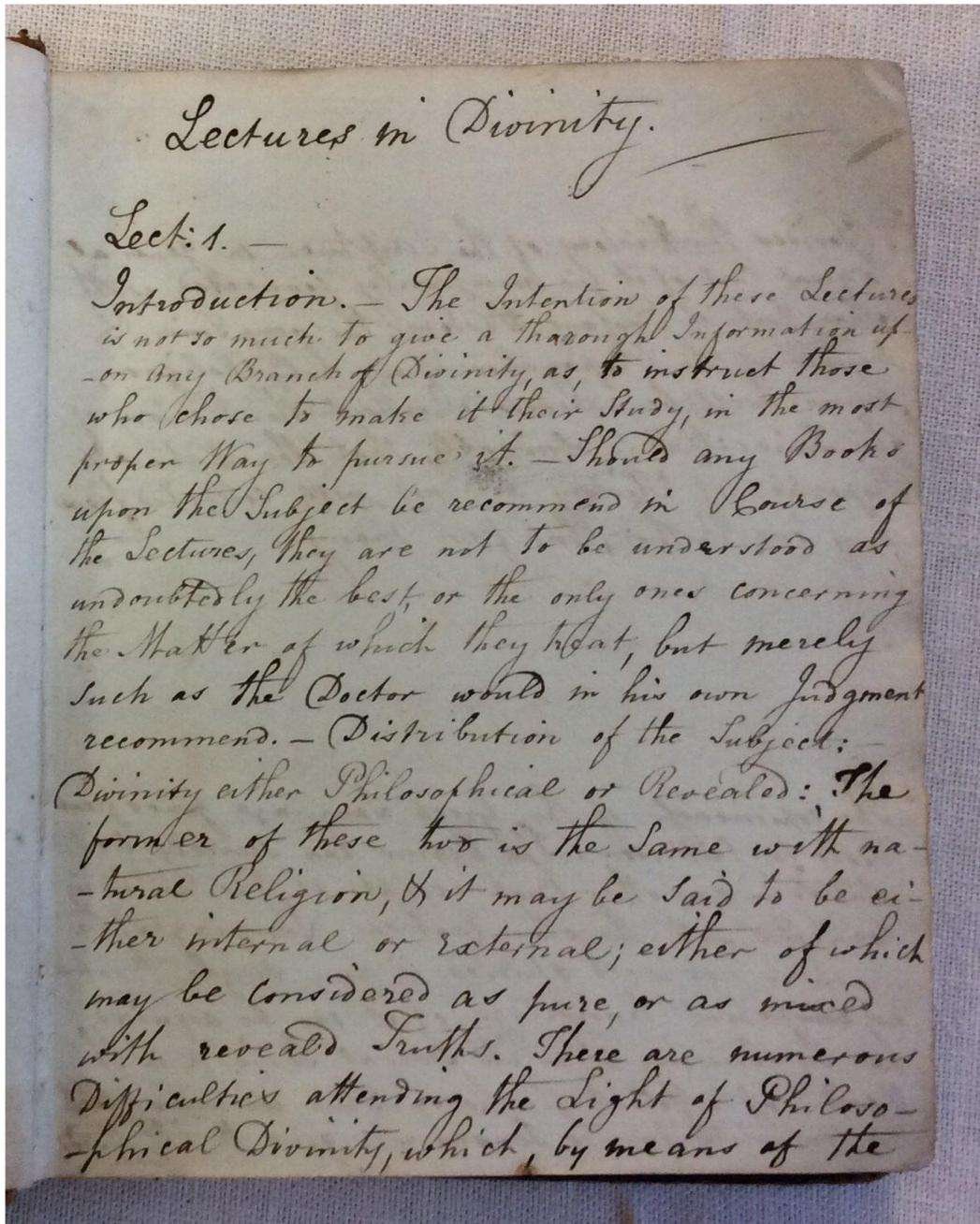


The collection almost certainly includes the works referred to by Rev. Brereton in his 1909 history of Kildwick Church:

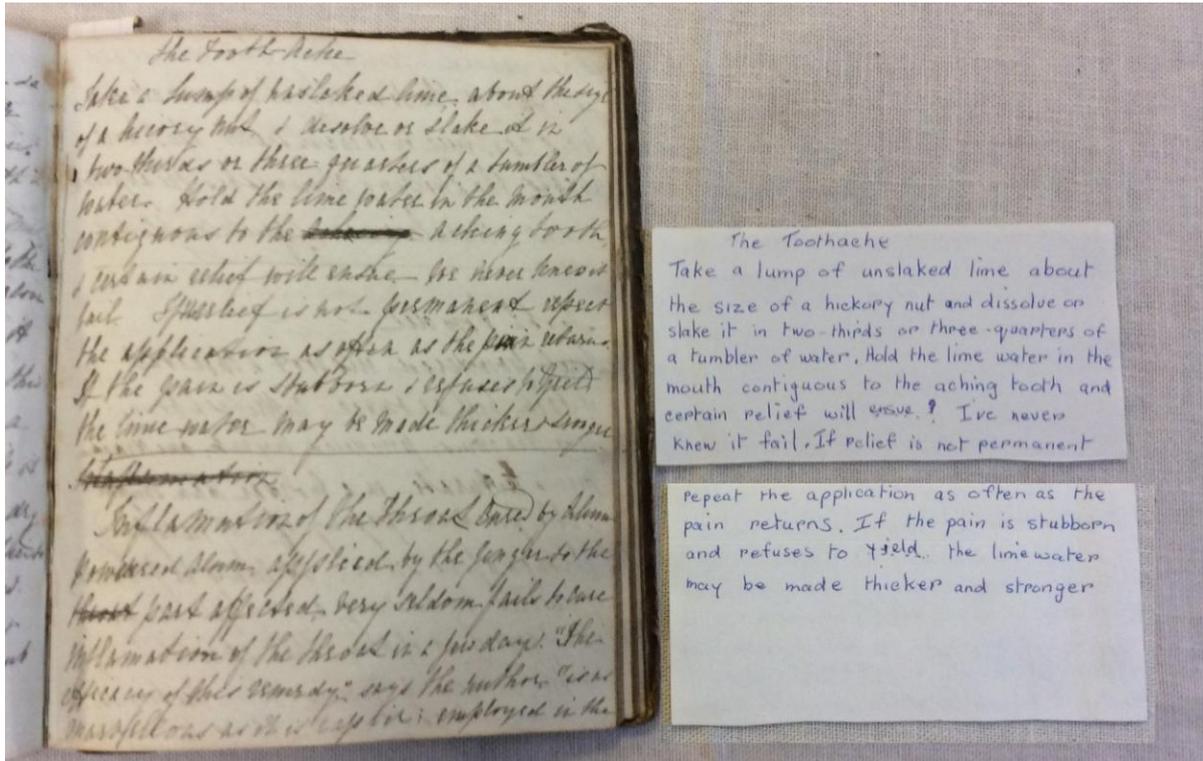
An old cupboard of oak, with open front, two doors of trellis work containing a 17th century library, many of the books, the works of Anglican divines, being the gift of Henry Curren, of Kildwick Hall.

Later works were probably donated by various vicars, the latest being Rev. Walkden who donated three books in the 1950s (all dating from 1811 but possibly rebound).

The only manuscript in the collection, probably begun in 1789, is the work of Rev. John Pering (b. 1762/3, d. 1843; vicar from 1806) and contains his "Lectures on Divinity".



The latter part of the book also contains recipes and household hints and tips.



The books are generally in good condition and all but a few are complete.



Some show a slight amount of damage to the bindings.



In a small number of cases, the leather has deteriorated and lifted away from the cover boards.



In one or two cases the cover boards have become fully detached.

There is also some evidence of the damp conditions in which the books have been stored in recent years.

Cataloguing the Kildwick library

At the time of Rev. Brereton, in the early 20th century, the library was kept in a cupboard in the Church. However at some point the books were moved, and for many years they have been stored in far from ideal conditions in the attic above the vicarage garage.

Plans to sell or redevelop the vicarage after the departure of Rev. Figg led to the need to find the library an alternative home; one where it would be stored in conditions that would prevent any further deterioration, and the History Group was asked to help.

In January 2019 members of the group, including an archivist from the Brotherton Library in Leeds, transferred the books from the garage to the Parish Rooms and set about cataloguing them. Each book was given a unique number and the following information recorded:

- Title
- Author
- Date of imprint
- Details of donation to the library, if known
- Size – to determine the shelf space required
- Other relevant notes

Each book was also photographed, to record its condition.

[Click to view the full catalogue.](#)

Finding the library a new home

Once the collection had been catalogued, work started on finding somewhere it might be re-homed.

One option presented itself immediately. In 2018 York University agreed to house the Petyt Library held by the library in Skipton. This, together with the knowledge that the University had previously accepted other Parish Libraries from elsewhere in Yorkshire, led the Church to approach them with the information compiled by the History Group.

It took a few months, but York University's Rare Book Collection agreed to accept the Kildwick Parish Library on permanent loan.

At the end of September 2019, the library was taken from Kildwick to its new home in York.

