

The vicars of Kildwick - the good, the bad; the loved, the hated; and at least one who was of “unsound mind”

The early years (c.950 – 1135)

The earliest reference to a church at Kildwick comes from 1086, when the Domesday Book recorded the existence of a church building in the manor of Kildwick – one of just two in the whole of Craven.

When this church was built, or what material was used in its construction is not known. However the discovery of several stone crosses bearing Saxon designs during the work done on the current church building in the early years of the 20th century, and their subsequent dating to around 950AD, suggests that a building supporting Christian worship must have existed on the site for at least a century prior to the Norman Conquest.

It appears that this Saxon church was replaced around 1100 with a significant building of stone. Two of the capitals, from pillars that supported the roof of that structure, can still be seen in the current building. Turned upside down they form the bases of the South West pillar and the one next but two to it, in the nave.

With so little known about the early church(es) in Kildwick it is perhaps not surprising that nothing can be gleaned about the men who ministered to the church members. Rev. E.W. Brereton, in his [“History of the Ancient and Historic Church of St. Andrew”](#) (1909), suggested that a church might have been founded in Kildwick following the arrival in Northumberland of the Irish monk Aidan, who became bishop of Lindesfarne in 635. Later, Rev. J.W. Rhodes (in a booklet of 1914) went further, with the fantasy that not only Aidan but also St. Columba (d. 597) and St. Chad (d. 672) all preached at Kildwick – something he described, without evidence, as being “practically certain”.

All that is certain, is that nothing is known for certain.

Under the rule of St. Augustine (1135 – 1540)

Following the Norman conquest, all the land of England became the personal property of the new king. Over time, however, large portions were given away or sold to supporters of the monarchy, and in 1109 Skipton and much of the surrounding area was given, by King Henry I, to Robert de Romillie.

Robert had no sons and on his death his holdings were inherited by his daughter, Cecily, and son-in-law, William de Meschin.

Cecily and William endowed a new church at Skipton and a priory at Embsay. Both of these institutions were run by monks who came to the area from the Augustinian priory of St. Mary at Huntingdon whose patron was David, later the king of Scotland.

This might suggest a degree of Scottish control over Craven in the early 12th century, which can perhaps be seen by the fact that King David was subsequently able to arrange a marriage between his most powerful supporter, his nephew William Fitz Duncan, and Alice de Romille, Cecily's daughter.

Sometime between 1135 and 1140 Cecily de Romille gave the church at Kildwick to Embsay priory. The charter says this was "for the soul of her husband, William Meschin and of her sons Ranulf and Matthew, and for the health of herself and her daughters." It is from this charter that we find the first evidence that the church at Kildwick was named for St. Andrew. (Perhaps another indication of Scottish influence in the area ?)

A second charter, in the names of Cecily and William FitzDuncan, gave the monks – who by this time had founded a new abbey at Bolton – the entire village of Kildwick.

Among the witnesses to the second Kildwick charter were Thomas the chaplain, Osmund, the chaplain, and Richard the presbyter, any or all of whom may have been administering Kildwick on behalf of Bolton at that time – and could be considered as early vicars of the church.

Following this there is a gap of over a hundred years during which the names of the men managing the church at Kildwick, presumably a succession of monks from Bolton, are not known.

Simon de Haplethorp (1267 to 1272)

The first vicar of Kildwick for which a name is certain is Simon de Haplethorpe.

He was inducted in February 1267 and, following instructions from the Archbishop of York, it was determined that he should be supported by an annual stipend of at least £10. This would have put him in the middle of the range of the priestly pay of the time.

Roger de Skipton (1272 to 1302)

Simon was succeeded as vicar by Roger de Skipton in 1272.

Five years later the first tithes from Kildwick were recorded in the accounts of Bolton abbey: annual amounts of sheaves, wool, lambs and dairy payable to the church. The bulk were taken by the priory; the lesser part by the vicar.

At the same time it was determined that the priory would be responsible for repairs to the church chancel and, and the vicar for the vicarage.

In 1291 a tax was imposed on the clergy by Pope Nicholas to help finance the Sixth Crusade. This valued Kildwick parish – comprising the ten townships of Bradley, Cononley, Cowling, Eastburn, Farnhill, Glusburn, Kildwick, Silsden, Steeton and Sutton – at £38-13s-4d per annum, of which the vicar got £10.

Martin de Grimston (1302 to 1304) / Robert the chaplain (1302 to 1306)

Martin de Grimston succeeded Roger in 1302. He did not stay long, the priory accounts showing that by 1304 Robert the chaplain was administering the parish.

1305 is the date given for the start of work on a new stone bridge at Kildwick, the former bridge possibly having been damaged in serious flooding the previous year. Part of the cost of the work done in 1306 was paid for by Robert the chaplain. Work on the bridge would not be completed until 1313.

John de Walkyngton (1306 to 1316)

There is a tale that, while vicar of Kildwick, John de Walkyngton was somehow involved in depriving the Earl of Albermarle from his rightful ownership of Skipton Castle in 1309.

The details of this story are fragmentary and confused but the up-shot was that the castle became Crown property and the king, Edward II, gave it to his ruinous favourite Piers Gaveston.

During the last years of John de Walkyngton's occupancy severe and sustained flooding resulted in a famine throughout the whole of the north of England. It is quite possible that he was one of the victims.

William de Gargrave (1316 to 1326)

William de Gargrave's time as vicar of Kildwick can be described without fear of contradiction as being rather "interesting".

Following the defeat of the English army under Edward II at Bannockburn, in June 1314, the north of England was left open to attack by the Scots.

In 1316 the Scots plundered their way deep into Lancashire, and in 1318 captured the town of Berwick on Tweed. This success was followed by an incursion of the Scots into Yorkshire in May of that year, which reached as far as the Aire and Wharfe valleys.

In September 1319 a second and even more devastating raid was mounted by the Scots on the unprotected northern parts of the country. A scratch army was raised by the Archbishop of York, which included amongst its members both the prior of Bolton abbey and the vicar of Kildwick – both of whom survived this army's defeat at Myton-on-Swale.

The effect of the 1318 and 1319 invasions on the parish of Kildwick was another famine. Not only did the Scots take away all that they could but the damage they caused, for example to barns and mills, were bound to result in disease and starvation. This is reflected by the fact that the taxation value of Kildwick parish, reckoned at £38 in 1291, was reduced to just £12.

One part of Kildwick that seems to have avoided the worst of the Scottish raids was the church. The extensive damage done to Embsay church is recorded in the priory accounts but there is no mention of Kildwick at all. Perhaps the Scots felt disinclined to despoil a church bearing the name of their own patron saint ?

Robert, son of Alexander Eastburn (1326 to 1328) / Robert de Hospital (1328 to 1347)

William de Gargrave resigned in 1326 (perhaps he had had too much excitement ?) and was succeeded as vicar by Robert, son of Alexander Eastburn. He died after only two years to be succeeded by Robert de Hospital in 1328.

It seems likely that Robert combined his role at Kildwick with that of chaplain of the Knights Hospitallers at Cononley (hence the name) and it is possible that the Hospitallers may have provided some of the funds for the substantial rebuilding of Kildwick church for which no date more precise than the middle of the 14th century can be given.

At this point, Rev. Brereton notes "Of the following vicars for the next two centuries nothing is known save their names and the dates of their institution, except in two cases where this last item even is wanting." Since then, however, research by the late Michael Baumber, [published on this website](#), has filled some of this gap.

Richard Syrwode (1347 to 1348) / John de Goldesburgh (1348 to 1349) / John de Mikelfield (1349 to 1361) / John de Bolton (1361)

Baumber suggests that perhaps three of these gentlemen, and particularly Goldesburgh and , Mickelfield, may have fallen victim to the Black Death – two waves of which devastated the country in 1349-50 and 1360-61.

John de Bolton survived long enough to resign his post at Kildwick in 1361.

Roger de Slateburn (1361 to 1362 ?) / William Glayne (1362 ? to 1366 ?)

Roger de Slateburn stayed at Kildwick just a year before exchanging livings with William Glayne of Poddington, the vicar of Friskney. Glayne is last recorded as being vicar in 1366 but whether he died or resigned is unknown, as no date for the installation of his successor, Nicholas de Rimington, has survived.

Nicholas de Rimmington (1366 ? to 1403)

The first record of Nicholas de Rimmington comes from 1372 when, in October, he was recorded as 'being of unsound mind and unable to perform the duties of his vicarage' and a curate appointed to assist him.

However, he must have recovered because he and the vicar of Carleton appear on a charter of the manor of Carleton in 1376.

Also in that year, the name Nicholas de Rymyngton appears in a document in which the vicar of Kildwick sold the manor of Farnhill, with some small exceptions, to John de Coppeley, the latter being the first member of the Copley family to own Farnhill Hall.

The impact of the plague was still being felt in Kildwick, and by the whole of the Bolton monastic community. When the prior visited Kildwick, just after Christmas 1377, he made what was his largest charitable donation for the whole year: a paltry 3s, 'to the tenants of Kildwick towards their tax'.

Once again it is not known whether Nicholas resigned or died in his post.

Thomas Hulot (1403 to 1436)

Thomas Hulot was installed in 1403 and stayed until his death in 1436.

Clearly at this time Kildwick was still recovering from the effects of the Black Death. In 1428 the parish was valued at £18-3s-4d – better than the £12 of 1319 but still well below the £38 of 1291.

Richard Hanlay (1436 – 1437) / Robert Clayton (1437 to 1452) / Richard Walker (1452 to 1459)

Hulot was followed by Richard Hanlay, who only stayed a year. Robert Clayton then lasted 15 years before exchanging livings with Richard Walker.

During Walker's time at Kildwick, Bolton priory petitioned the Archbishop of York to be allowed to reduce the amount of money they paid to the vicar, on the grounds of reduced income from the parish. The Archbishop refused this request which led to a striking change in the recruitment of Kildwick vicars.

After Walker died in 1459 all the remaining vicars appointed by the priory were drawn from among the monks at Bolton. It is not clear whether this was an economy measure forced on the priory by the Archbishop's ruling or simply because there were no suitable secular priests willing to accept the reduced payment from the priory.

Thomas Colton (1459 to 1465) / Edward Bradford (1465 to 1478) / W Britweysell (1478 to 1514)

Very little is known about these three incumbents. However it is likely that significant work on remodelling Kildwick church was done from around 1480, so possibly starting in the time Britweysell.

The work seems to have included: the creation of the tower at the west end; lifting of the roof level to create a clerestory on the south side; and an extension of the nave. A further extension of the nave in the early 16th century gave the building a final length of 170 feet and earned it the name 'The Lang Church of Craven.'

Another piece of work affecting the church, dating from 1505, was the building of a bridge to span the stream which, until very recently, still formed the boundary between Kildwick and Farnhill. From the time the Leeds-Liverpool canal was built the stream has been culverted, but before then it was open and flowed down the hillside, beside the present Parish Rooms, and into the river on the Skipton side of Kildwick Bridge. The creation of a bridge meant that members of the congregation coming from Bradley and Farnhill would not have to ford the stream.

From Dissolution to Restoration (1540 – 1660)

In 1534 Parliament enacted the Act of Supremacy, making Henry VIII the head of the church in England. Instructions were sent out to all the parishes to replace the name of the Pope with that of the King in the prayers and to preach against papal supremacy from their pulpits.

The following year, commissioners were sent out to value all church goods, and rumours began to circulate that their properties were to be confiscated to provide money for the Exchequer. In essence those rumours were correct.

The campaign against the monasteries began in 1536, with the dissolution of the smaller monastic houses. Attacks on the cult of saints made the common people think that their holidays were about to be abolished. This, and other factors, combined to produce the revolt known as the Pilgrimage of Grace, during which the rebels laid siege to Skipton castle.

The reaction to the rebellion in Kildwick is not known but, as Bolton priory was not one of the monasteries scheduled for dissolution in 1536, it is unlikely that it was supported.

Bolton priory was finally dissolved in 1540 when, on January 29th, Richard Moone the prior surrendered it to King's Commissioners.

Robert Whixley (1514 to 1557 ?)

The vicar in charge at Kildwick at the time of the dissolution was Robert Whixley.

Both E.W. Brereton and, before him, T.D. Whitaker in his "The History and Antiquities of the Deanery of Craven" (1812), have Whixley in post until 1571 – a quite remarkable 57 years. Michael Baumber reduces this to a more reasonable 43 years and provides details of a successor missing from the earlier lists: Christopher Midgley, see below.

Insofar as Whixley remained in his post, dissolution and the end of Bolton Priory seems to have had little effect on Kildwick church. Moreover his continued presence through the reigns of Henry VIII's successors: the radical Protestant Edward VI and then the staunchly Catholic Mary, suggests he was both pragmatic and in possession of a large degree of religious flexibility.

Christopher Midgley (1558 to 1571)

Before the dissolution, the last prior of Bolton had granted the right to nominate the next incumbent at Kildwick to John Astley of Whitkirk, Robert Danby and Richard Midgley. They decided on Christopher Midgley, a former Bolton monk. He took charge on 16th January 1558.

Although it may have seemed fortuitous to have a Catholic vicar at Kildwick during the reign of queen Mary this idea quickly ran into problems when Mary died in November 1558 and was succeeded by her Protestant sister, Elizabeth.

Initially Elizabeth did not take a hard line with minor clerics. So when, in 1559, Midgley refused to take the oath of supremacy, he was able to retain his position at Kildwick. However continuing problems with Catholics both at home and abroad caused a hardening of Elizabeth's attitude and when Midgley refused to sign the oath a second time, in 1571, he was forced out of office. He died soon after.

Alexander Horrocks (1571 to 1589)

When Bolton priory was dissolved the right to appoint vicars at Kildwick passed to Christ Church College, Oxford; a situation which continues to this day. However, because the right to decide the vicar after Robert Whixley had already been granted elsewhere prior to the dissolution, the first vicar to be appointed by Christ Church was the next but one.

This might be why both Whitaker and Brereton suggest such a long period as vicar for Robert Whixley. If Whixley was the last to be appointed by the priory and Horrocks was the first to be appointed by Christ Church, then – so their argument may have gone – Whixley must have remained vicar until 1571.

By this time, Christ Church had purged all of its the Roman Catholics and was probably the most Protestant of the Oxford colleges. Although Horrocks was not a graduate of the college, he was certainly a Protestant and seems to have been quite radical in his views. See [Radical Protestant churchmen in Kildwick - from Reformation to Restoration](#).

Taking full advantage of the repeal (in 1547) of the Six Articles of Faith imposed on the church by Henry VIII, Horrocks became the first married vicar of Kildwick. In fact he married twice; his second wife being Anna, the daughter of Henry Curre of Hamblethorp – a significant local landowner, whose family would come to own the whole of the Kildwick estate.

Hugh Newberry (1589 to 1593)

The next vicar was the Rev. Hugh Newbury. He remained at Kildwick until September 1593. His resignation may have been prompted by his impending marriage and the belief that the Kildwick living was insufficient to support a family.

(As Michael Baumber pointed out, when Bolton priory was dissolved the manor of Kildwick was sold off, leaving Kildwick Church with no land to help support a vicar. This may not have been a problem for Alexander Horrocks, who might possibly have had support from his Curre in-laws, but was to prove a difficulty for some of his successors.)

John Lant (1593 to 1594)

John Lant does not appear in the lists of vicars compiled by T.D. Whitaker and E.W. Brereton. Michael Baumber has this to say about him: "Lant came, he did not like what he saw, and left after only four months."

John Hicks (1594 to 1599)

John Hicks seems to have been persuaded to accept the Kildwick living because he was simultaneously made Vicar of Carleton, which increased his income. Nonetheless he was reprimanded in 1596, following a visitation to Kildwick by the Archbishop of York, for failing to be resident in the parish.

He resigned his post at Kildwick in November 1599, becoming Rector of Whitburne in County Durham, and eventually a Canon of York Cathedral in 1615.

Henry Bradshaw (1599 to 1600)

Bradshaw appears to have taken an instant dislike to Kildwick, leaving the administration of the church to a curate, William Harrison, while he remained in Oxford.

This unsatisfactory arrangement only lasted eight months, and Bradshaw resigned as vicar in November 1600.

Thomas Chatfield (1601 to 1603)

Kildwick's last Elizabethan vicar was Thomas Chatfield, who was instituted as Vicar of Kildwick on 15th April 1601.

Like Hicks he was only persuaded to accept by being given another vicarage at the same time, in this case, Broughton. As William Harrison was retained as curate-in-charge at Kildwick, it seems likely that Chatfield resided at Broughton.

This arrangement may have been due to a belief that his presence there was needed to counter the influence of the Roman Catholic Tempest family in its parish.

Chatfield's ministry was brief. He died in 1603, aged around 39, after only two years in charge.

John Foote (1603 to 1622)

The first Kildwick vicar of the Stuart era was John Foote.

Like his two predecessors he combined the livings of both Kildwick and Broughton and, for the first three years of his tenure, was not resident in Kildwick. William Harrison remained as Curate-in-Charge at Kildwick until his appointment as Vicar of Otley in 1606.

His handwriting, never good as evidenced by the parish registers, deteriorated as he got older and from September 1621 he appears to have become incapable of writing at all – the registers being completed in a different hand. He died in the following February.

Christopher White (1623 to 1624)

Sixteen months elapsed after the death of Foote before Christopher White took up the job at both Kildwick and Broughton in June 1623.

He does not appear to have lived in Kildwick and resigned after only a year.

William Bennet (1624 to 1627)

William Bennet was another cleric who took on the joint role of vicar of both Kildwick and Broughton.

Like a number of his predecessors he did not stay long and resigned in 1627.

John Gifford (1627 to 1631)

Another gentleman for whom the combined attractions of both Kildwick and Broughton proved insufficient. Never resident in either village, he became rector of Eynesford in Kent in 1629 and finally resigned on becoming rector of St. Michael's Bassishaw in London, from where he was subsequently expelled.

His only entry in the Kildwick parish registers is on the last page of Volume II, where he signed the statement: *"The Articles agreed upon by the Church of England for the avoidinge of dissension and difference in pointes of religion were acknowledged and approved and publiquely reade in the p'sh Church of Kildwicke in Craven by John Gifford the 15th of June 1628"*.

This refers to a declaration made by King Charles I and prefixed to the 39 Articles of the Church, demanding a literal interpretation of them, and threatening discipline for academics or churchmen teaching any personal interpretation or encouraging debate about them.

Other signatories to the Articles included Henry Currer and Roger Brereley, who appears to have acted as curate between March 1623 and April 1631.

Francis Little (1631 to 1646)

Francis Little had the unique distinction of being appointed vicar of Kildwick twice; in both 1631 and again in 1660.

Of his first period in charge of the parish Michael Baumber wrote "Like all his three predecessors he was non-resident and he was so anonymous that older church histories date his incumbency from 1660 !"

As the first Civil War proceeded (1642-46), questions of religion began to dominate proceedings in Parliament. Many of the recommendations of the specially-appointed Westminster Assembly were implemented, including the replacement of the Book of Common Prayer in January 1645 and the abolition of Episcopacy (government of the church by bishops) in October 1646.

As part of these religious reforms a commission was set up to examine the beliefs of incumbent priests and those who did not satisfy the new Presbyterian tendencies were removed from their livings. These included Francis Little, in Kildwick.

John Towne (minister 1646 to 1659; registrar 1653 to 1659)

Little's place at Kildwick was taken by John Towne.

In 1653, an Act of Parliament required that the registration of births, marriages and deaths be performed by an elected civil Registrar, rather than by a cleric. In Kildwick, John Towne was himself elected Registrar and his name appears in the Parish Register as "Minister and Registrar", rather than Vicar.

John Towne died at the end of May 1659.

Edmund Garforth (1660)

After the death of John Towne there appears to have been a hiatus of up to 10 months, in which time the inhabitants of Kildwick approached Christ Church Oxford and petitioned them to appoint Edmund Garforth to the vacant post. He was already vicar of Haworth and appears to have held more orthodox beliefs than many of his predecessors at Kildwick.

The "Garforth petition" (see [Radical Protestant churchmen in Kildwick - from Reformation to Restoration](#)) was signed by 54 parishioners. Prominent amongst these were Hugh Curren (of Kildwick Hall) and Roger Coates (of Kildwick Grange). These two men had been supporters of the Parliamentary cause and it is therefore perhaps not surprising to see them, with the restoration of the monarchy imminent, hastily attempting to associate themselves with a move to the religious (and political) centre-ground.

Edmund Garforth, was certainly in post at Kildwick by April 4th 1660, as on that day, the same day on which Charles Stuart issued the Declaration of Breda outlining his proposals for the restoration of the monarchy, he amended the Kildwick Parish Register so that John Towne's reference to himself as "Minister" was crossed-out and the word "Intruder" inserted.

But Garforth's triumph was short-lived.

From Restoration to Victoria (1660 to 1843)

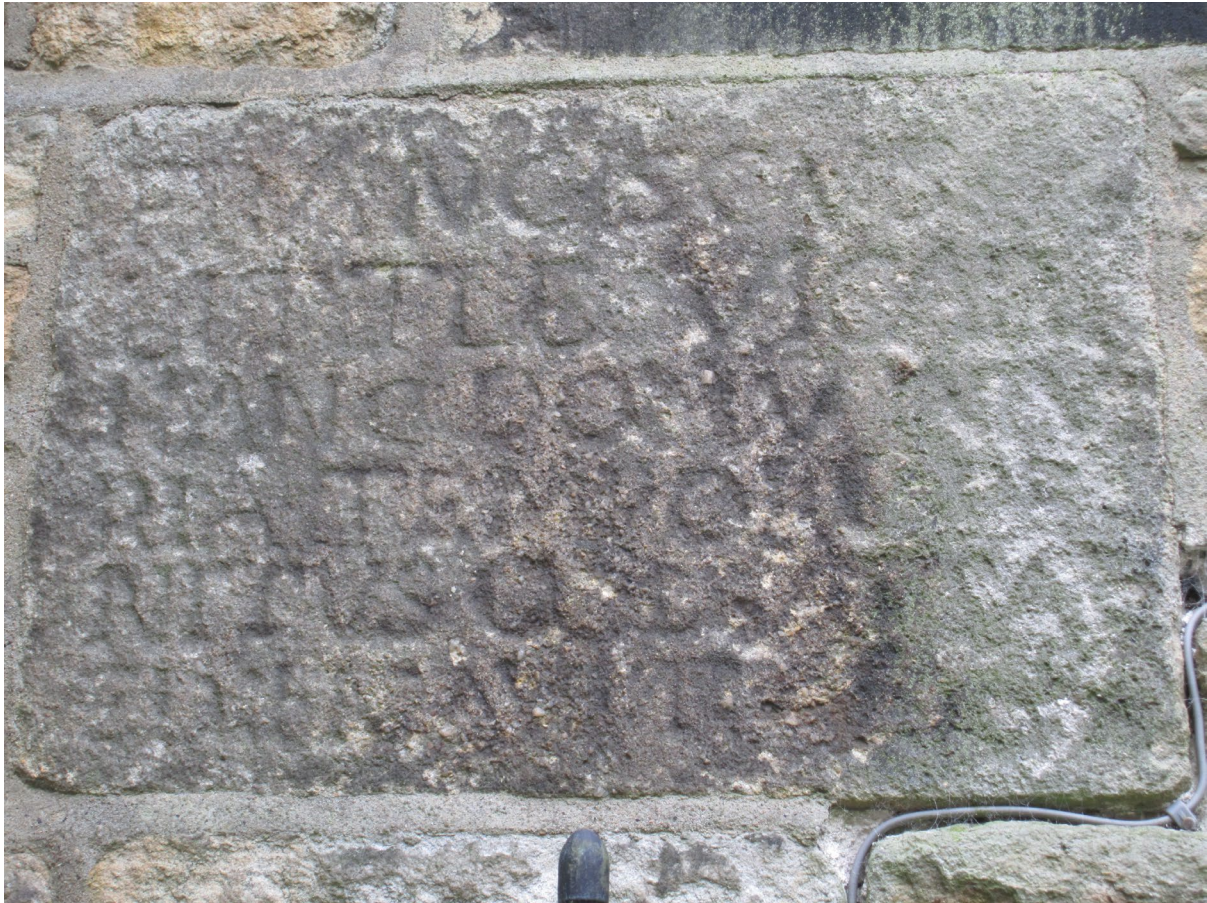
In May 1660 the monarchy was restored.

One of the first Acts of Parliament of the new regime concerned the reinstatement of clergy who had been ejected from their posts between 1643 and 1659. So it was that at the end of 1660 Kildwick saw its very own "restoration" when Francis Little again took up the post of vicar.

Francis Little (restored) (1660 to 1678)

Once restored to the parish, Francis Little may have done a little restoration work of his own.

A stone set above the door to the kitchen of the vicarage, although much eroded, reads: "Franciscus Little, Vicarius hanc domum injuria temporum penitus collapsam edificavit." (Francis Little, vicar, rebuilt this house which had fallen into decay over time.)



Calculations of the income the vicar might expect from the parish at this time shows that it was adequate but in the lower ranks of the profession unless he had another source of income.

Francis Little must have been over 60 at the time of his restoration and around 80 when he died in 1678. This may have been the reason why, for his last few years, he was provided with a curate, Richard Pollard, who became the next vicar.

Richard Pollard (1678 to 1697)

E.W. Brereton has little to say about Richard Pollard other than to comment on the entries made in his own hand in the parish registers. It seems that whereas other entries would take up just a few lines, those involving members of his own family – for example his own marriage, and the births and marriages of his children – would take up a whole page, written in large and decorated script.

The Pollard family pew with the initials R.P. on the back of it is still in place on the north side of the chancel.



Pollard also made an entry in the register confirming that all burials in Kildwick churchyard used woollen shrouds. This was to signify compliance with an Act of 1678 aimed at maintaining the demand for domestically produced wool. Failure to comply would result in a fine of £5.

XII. Concerning the burying of the dead in woollen cloth.

By the 30 Car. 2. c. 3. (which is required to be given in charge at the assizes and sessions) no corpse of any person (except those who shall die of the plague) shall be buried in any shirt, shift, sheet, or shroud, or any thing whatsoever made or mingled with flax, hemp, silk, hair, gold, or silver, or in any stuff or thing, other than what is made of sheep's wool only; or be put in any coffin lined or faced with any sort of cloth or stuff, or any other thing whatsoever, that is made of any other material but sheep's wool only, on pain of forfeiting 5*l.* as herein-after mentioned. / 3, 9, 10.

During Pollard's tenure at Kildwick, the parish accounts record a number of visiting preachers. The most frequent of these was a Mr. Garforth, who may have been the former vicar. Among the others was a Mr. Mitton, probably the Roger Mitton who was to become vicar in 1698.

It is at around about this point that Michael Baumber's research on the [history of Kildwick church](#) breaks off, and we lose our best source of information. For the next 200 years or so we must rely almost solely on the rather variable work of E.W. Brereton.

Roger Mitton (1698 to 1705)

The Glorious Revolution of 1688 saw the Catholic James II deposed and his sister Mary and her husband William of Orange take joint rule of the country. The Toleration Act that followed their accession broke the religious monopoly of the Church of England by allowing Protestant dissenters to worship in their own licensed meeting houses. However the dissenters were still required to pay their due proportion of both church taxes and the tithe.

By the time Roger Mitton took charge in Kildwick there were at least three groups of Quakers in the local area and one Baptist place of worship. These refused to pay their tithes and were regularly arraigned before the local magistrates for non-payment.

In 1703 Mitton brought no less than 12 prosecutions against eight individuals for the total sum of £7-2s-6d.

Roger Mitton resigned in 1705 and became vicar of Skipton.

John Topham (1705 to 1733)

Although John Topham was the vicar at Kildwick for 28 years, E.W. Brereton has very little to say about him other than to note that his first wife died in childbirth in 1707, his second wife in 1729, and Rev. Topham himself on 9th August 1733 aged 61.

In 1712 the first clock was erected on the church tower, paid for by Henry Currer of Kildwick Hall. The salary of the sexton, Joseph Horrocks, was doubled when he undertook to wind it regularly and make it sure that it remained in good condition.

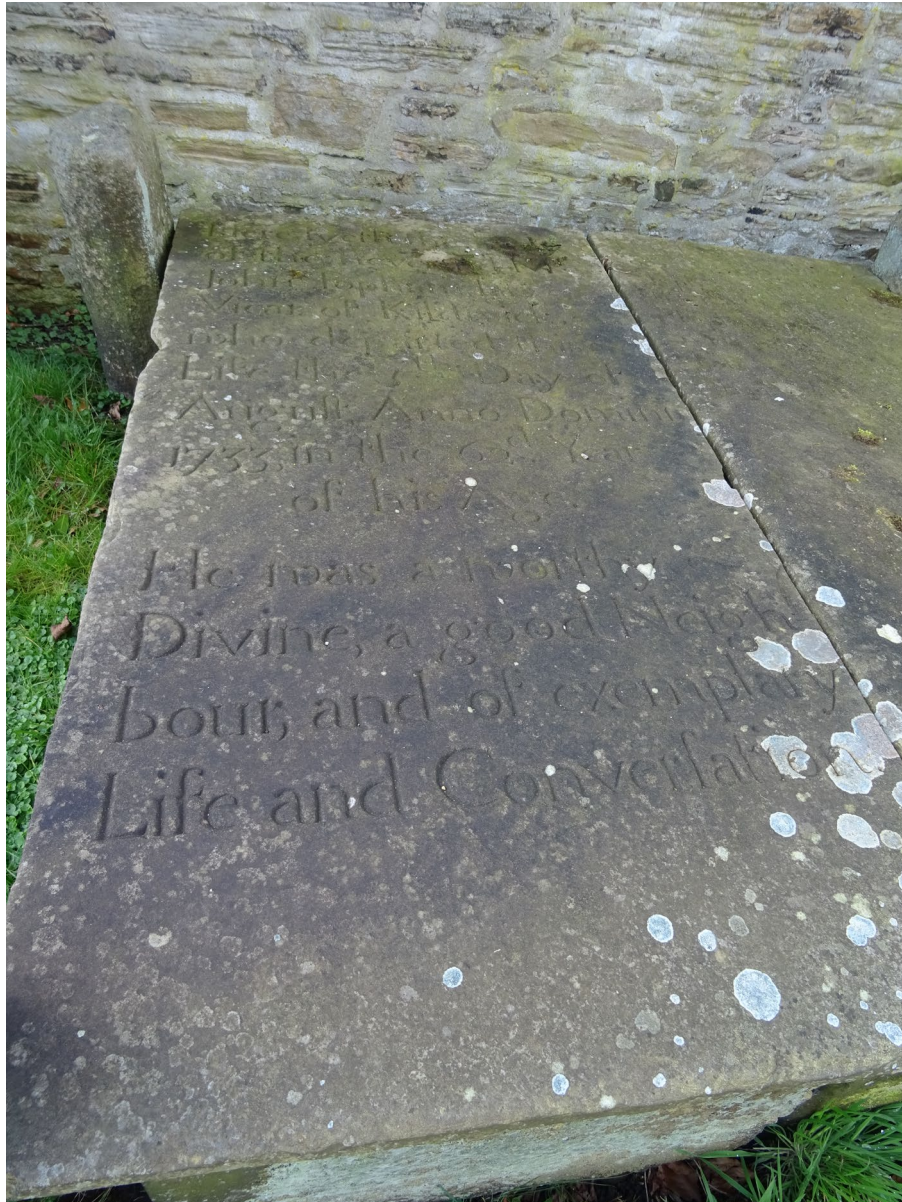
Brereton makes reference to a "certain house in Eastburn" where:

... there may be seen in the pantry a huge oak beam in the roof, on which is inscribed the name of "John Topham" in the centre, and the names of the churchwardens at the two ends, This beam is supposed to have come from Kildwick, as the church underwent some repairs in Mr. Topham's time, and the then owner of the house was one of the churchwardens.

A member of the History Group has identified the house and provided these photographs of what remains of this beam.



Topham and his second wife, Rosamund, are buried in a double box-grave in Kildwick graveyard, hard up against the east-end of the church.



The left-hand slab is inscribed:

Here lyeth the Body of the Reverend John Topham, late Vicar of Kildwick, who departed this life the 5th day of August, Anno Domini 1733, in the 62nd year of his age. He was a worthy divine, a good neighbour, and of exemplary life and conversation.

On the other slab:

Here lyeth the Body of Mrs. Rosamund Topham, late wife of the Revd. Mr. John Topham, Vicar of Kildwick, who departed this life ye 27th of July, 1729, in ye 57th year of her age.

Christopher Driffield (1733 to 1734)

Another reverend gentleman for whom the pleasures of Kildwick rapidly proved insufficient. He was in post for just 8 months before resigning to become vicar of Featherstone, where he remained until he died in 1789.

John Dehane (1734 to 1790)

John Dehane was born in Deal, Kent, in 1708, the son of a French Huguenot who had left Calais in the 1680s. He was from a large family and had at least 13 siblings.

John went to Christ Church College at Oxford, entering there in 1728 and graduating in 1732. He took charge in Kildwick on 27th September 1734. He was just 25 or 26 years old, and it was his first post.

Dehane remained unmarried through his long life but it seems that he was joined in Kildwick by his nephew, also called John, and other members of his extended family whose lives are recorded in the parish registers. One of his relatives lived at Kildwick Hall and ran two farms in Cowling which he rented from the Rycroft Charity (see [A Kildwick gentleman in the service of two Tudor kings](#)). Brereton notes that towards the end of his long life, in 1790, Dehane built Ickornshaw mill, the first place in Cowling where water or steam was used; it was subsequently operated by a member of the family.

Work on the Leeds – Liverpool canal began while Dehane was in-post. The building of the canal would have cut the vicarage – located at the top of the hill above the village – off from the church, so Dehane insisted that a bridge be built across the canal to provide him with access to the church. It is still known as Parson's Bridge.

In his later years, John Dehane was assisted by his nephew who served as curate for his uncle and appears to have taken over much of the work from 1787.

Brereton records Dehane's own description of Kildwick vicarage at this time:

The Vicarage house and its offices are ancient stone buildings; are in good condition; the house consists of a kitchen or (?), two parlours at the east end of the same, two rooms at the west end, these are floored with stone, with a closet with boarded floor; under which is a cellar; a staircase, a servant's dining room, a buttery, and a back kitchen, a garden, orchard, with several pieces of ground called the Hemp Garth, Swine Garth, Calve Garth, Dovecote Hill, Churchyard, and the Springs, containing the whole about near (upwards) six acres, and are worth by the year about £10.

John Dehane was buried on 11th February 1790. He had been vicar of Kildwick for almost 56 years.

Thomas Marsden (1790 to 1806)



Thomas Marsden took up his post in Kildwick in June 1790. He was also appointed vicar of Skipton.

Just six months later Marsden married a local woman, Elizabeth Dixon. They had four children: Elizabeth Frances (b. 1791), Thomas (b. 1795), William (b. 1797), and Maria Sarah (b. 1800).

In 1792 Marsden proposed that instead of receiving tithes in kind, he should receive the sum of £100 from the townships that made up the parish. The issue of tithes was under discussion at this time, and the problems associated with receiving tithes in kind led, eventually, to them being abolished by the Tithe Commutation Act of 1838.

Thomas Marsden performed his last marriage ceremony on January 7th, 1806, and died less than a fortnight later.

John Pering (1806 to 1843)



John Pering took up his post on 26th April, 1806. Like his predecessor, he was appointed vicar of both Kildwick and Skipton.

He remained unmarried but lived at the vicarage in Kildwick with his sister and, on occasions, a niece.

In 1814 Pering fell into dispute with his parishioners over his tithe income. He argued that the £100 per annum agreed by Rev. Marsden was insufficient. The parishioners offered to increase the annual amount to £150, but Pering wanted them to agree to either £250 per annum for the next seven years or £300 per annum for life.

The arguments continued with some parishioners suggesting that they might emigrate to America and others threatening to build a Meeting House in the village and leave the Church of England altogether. Pering stuck to his guns and the matter was finally resolved at a series of meetings held at the White Lion.

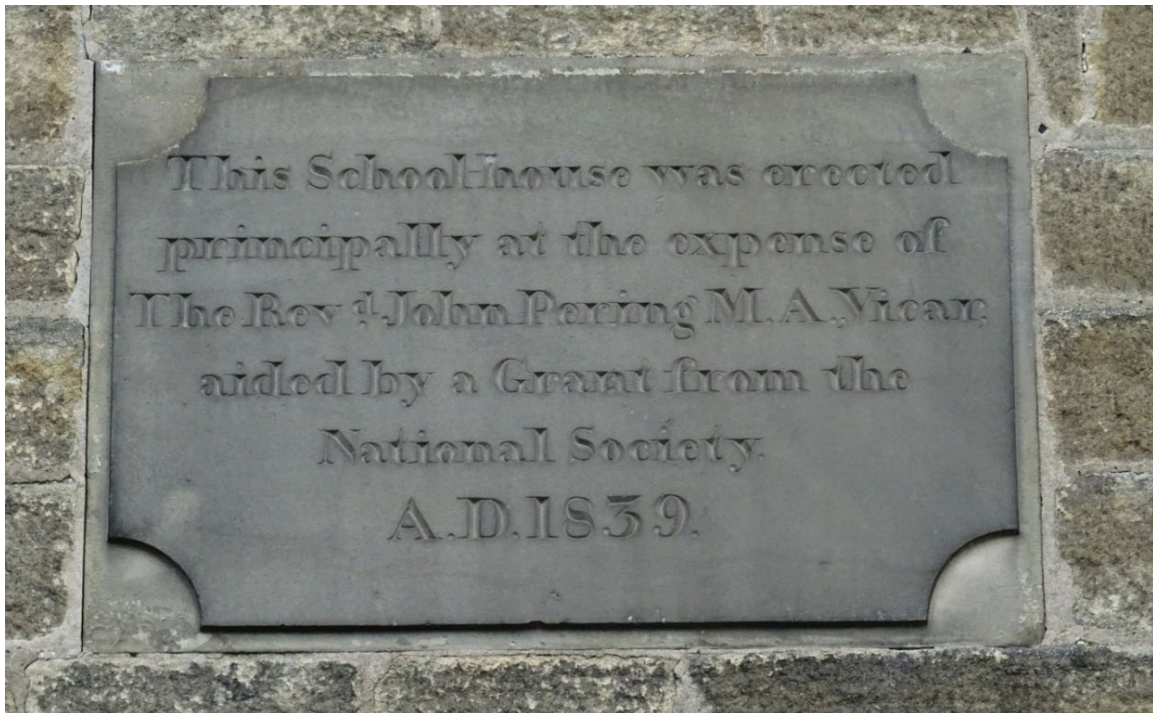
In 1824 Pering presided over a major reorganisation of the interior of the church which included the creation of a gallery at the west end (since demolished). Having a gallery in that location meant that the large wooden font canopy had to be removed. And so it was that a remarkable piece of pre-reformation art was removed, refashioned into 12 dining chairs, and subsequently sold for just £40. (Probably not the first and by no means the last piece of vandalism carried out on the church by its vicar.)

More money was raised by selling pews in the gallery to the better off members of the parish who, for sums of between £7 and £43, had the dual advantage of not only being closer to their god but also being able to look down upon those they assumed were their inferiors.

E.W. Brereton, perhaps in an attempt to excuse his predecessor, suggests that the original plan for the gallery was to provide space for a choir and an organ. However he almost immediately contradicts this justification by quoting from the original proposal for the work which was “to erect seats, pews, and benches ... to be allotted to parishioners willing to purchase the same.” It was, from the outset, a money-making scheme.

Pering also involved himself in work in the village, and two of these projects in particular are still providing benefit to local people today.

In 1839 the old school that stood close to the west gate of the churchyard in Kirkgate was replaced with a new building funded jointly by the vicar and the National Society – both providing £100.



The school-room was on the ground floor and the upper floor provided accommodation for the schoolmaster and his family.

This building is still standing, and is now used as the Parish Rooms. See [Educating Kildwick - some notes on schooling in the village.](#)

Pering was also responsible for paving the path leading from Parson's Bridge on the canal up to the old vicarage on Grange Road. Brereton makes the comment that the reason this path is so narrow is that Rev. Pering was a bachelor and therefore did not require space for two people to walk side by side.

John Pering died on 30th April 1843 and is buried close to the altar in Kildwick church.

From the early Victorian age to World War (1843 to 1917)

By the time Pering's successor took up his post the Industrial Revolution was well underway. The failure of the Kildwick vicars to adapt to the social changes that accompanied this would see the popularity of Methodism grow within the parish and, even amongst those parishioners who remained within the Church of England, an increasing unwillingness to simply accept dictates handed down from the pulpit without complaint.

John Turner Colman Fawcett (1843 to 1867)



John Fawcett became vicar of Kildwick on August 16th 1843. He was the son of a London actor who later became manager of the Covent Garden Theatre.

Fawcett was a supporter of the Oxford Movement, which tried to bring back Catholic doctrine and forms of service into the Church of England – a return to what became known as High Church practices.

This inevitably resulted in divisions within the Church of England with entirely negative results: many of the Anglo-Catholic leaders of the movement, such as John Henry Newman, eventually converted fully to Catholicism; whereas the rank and file left the church in droves to join the growing number of independent churches, such as Baptists, Congregationalists and Methodists.

Brereton's history suggests that Colman's Anglo-Catholicism did not go down well with some of his parishioners. He writes "Many a hard fought battle he waged with some of his parishioners on Church matters" and "How grievously he was at times misunderstood". Brereton, obviously a supporter of the Oxford Movement thought that this signified the church making "great progress", although it sounds more like a vicar struggling to retain the confidence of his parish.

Brereton also recounts the best known anecdote of Fawcett's incumbency. The new school at Kildwick, built in 1851, was flagged with stone; the Education Department objected to this, but the Vicar sent a pair of iron-round-side clogs up to London, and said that as all the children wore a wooden floor on their feet he must have a stone floor to the school.

John Fawcett died on August 26th 1867. He and several members of his family are buried inside the church, on the north side of the chancel.

Henry Salwey (1868 to 1875)



Henry Salwey was appointed vicar of Kildwick in October 1867 and took up his post in the parish on January 3rd 1867.

Almost immediately he instigated further changes to the layout of the church interior including the demolition of the gallery raised at the west end by Rev. Pering less than 50 years previously. Once this was done a new oak canopy, based on the design of the original destroyed in 1825, was provided by Mrs. Tennant of Kildwick Hall. It is still in use today.

This and further work continued so that by 1871 the total cost to the parish was reckoned at over £1700.

Salwey also did renovation work on the vicarage, the cost of this work being secured by a mortgage taken out by the church. This mortgage, for £380, was due to have been repaid by 1909. However, by then extensions had been obtained so that the full amount was not due to be repaid until 1924. As Brereton, writing in 1909, noted “however desirable the improvements, the burden of gradual repayment with the interest has borne hardly on succeeding incumbents”.

His work at Kildwick done, Rev. Salwey resigned as vicar in 1875 to take up a post as vicar of St. Andrew’s church in Westminster.



Rev. Sawley from a photograph held in Kildwick Church.

Herbert Todd (1875 to 1880)



Herbert Todd was probably the most-travelled of all the vicars of Kildwick.

He spent his teenage years with his parents, in Rome, Paris and also in Switzerland. After graduating from Cambridge and being ordained he spent five years in the Bahamas before being forced home by repeated attacks of yellow fever.

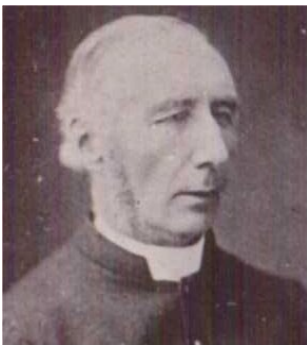
He then spent three years assisting Rev. Thomas Edward Morris, Vicar of Carleton-in-Craven, before restarting his travels with visits to Germany and France, where he saw much of the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-1.

Once more in England he became a curate in Kent before taking up the post of vicar of Kildwick on 12th March 1875.

Of his time in Kildwick Brereton has little to say other than he raised funds for the building of St. Stephen's church in Steeton and laid the foundation stone there in 1880. Otherwise he seemed to have spent his time writing and publishing poetry.

Herbert Todd died on 23rd October 1880 after catching a chill following a meeting in the cold Kildwick School. He was buried at Carleton.

Frederick Waters Greenstreet (1881 to 1887)



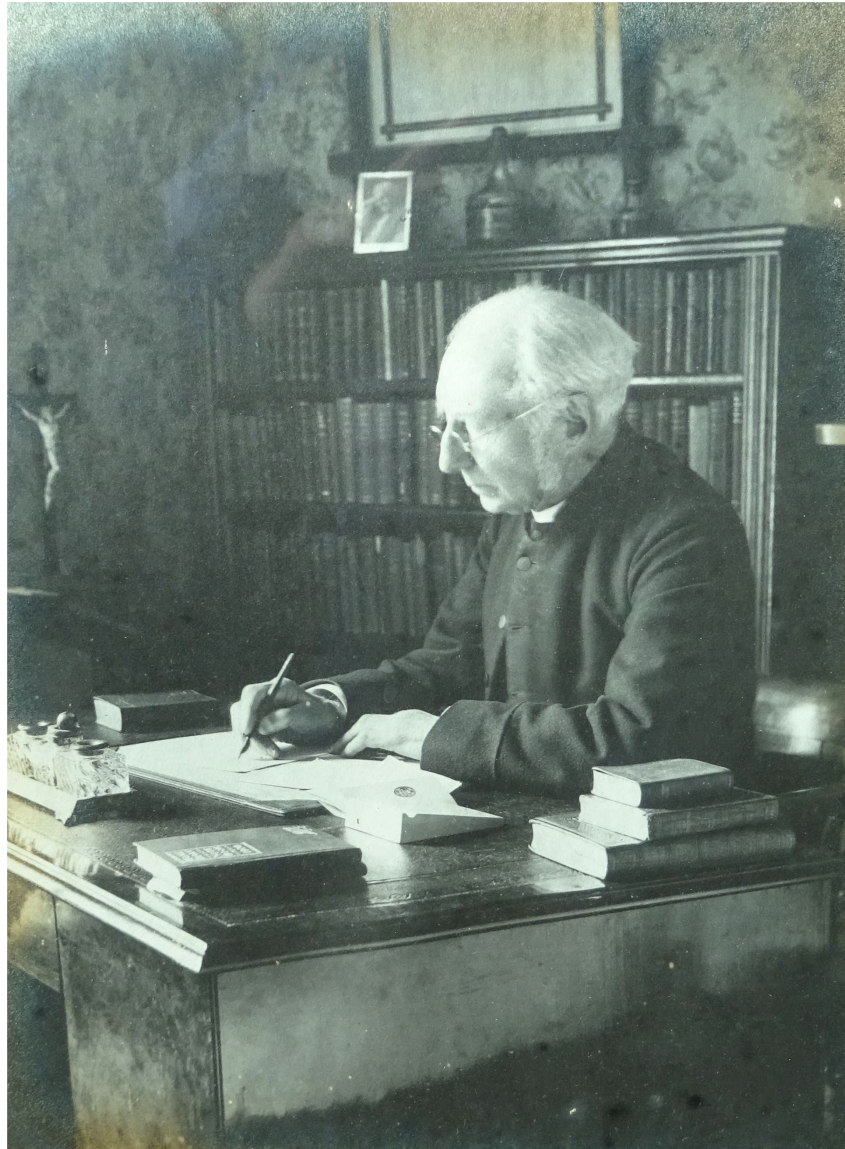
Rev. Greenstreet took up his post in Kildwick in February 1881 and was present at the consecration of St. Stephen's church in Steeton in April of that year.

Brereton's description suggests that he was an argumentative and inflexible man and almost constantly at odds with both his parishioners and other people who crossed his path.

He was a strong Anglo-Catholic and almost as soon as he arrived voiced his objection to the fact that the choirmaster and several members of the choir at Kildwick were, in his view, "dissenters" (i.e. not members of the Church of England). The choir, which had a reputation of being one of the best in the area, and which brought people into the church from other parishes just to hear them sing, promptly resigned en-masse and was subsequently disbanded.

From November 1885 to March 1886 Greenstreet engaged in a public dispute with the Baptist minister of Sutton which took the form of competing sermons, published letters, and lectures. Like so much Victorian sermonising these were long, tedious and amounted to little more than handbags at ten paces along the lines of "My flavour of religion is better than yours, so there !".

Greenstreet finally decided that he had had enough in 1887 and exchanged parishes with Kildwick's next vicar.



Rev. Greenstreet from a photograph held in Kildwick Church.

Archibald Douglas Cavendish Thompson (1887 to 1899)



After swapping parishes with Rev. Greenstreet, Thompson's first task on arriving at Kildwick was to chair the committee formed to celebrate Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee – a major feature of which was the building of Farnhill Pinnacle. He was subsequently involved in raising funds for repairs to the Parish Rooms and for the building of an extension and new classroom for Kildwick School.

In 1897 it was discovered that the east end of the church was unstable and liable to collapse.

According to the architect employed to report on the building "The chancel was in that state that a man could not tell whether it would stand ten years or ten hours". Restoration work did not begin until November 1901.

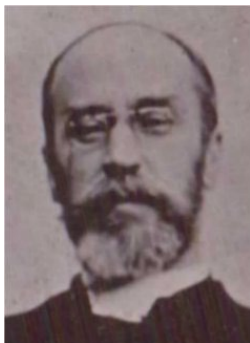
Increasingly infirm in old age, he found himself unable to cope with the demands placed upon him by the scale of work required to repair the building. And, when an outbreak of typhoid occurred in the village at the very end of 1898, he retired. He died in 1901.

Edward Henry Morris (1899 to 1901)



Edward Henry Morris was the son of Rev. Thomas Edward Morris, Vicar of Carleton-in-Craven. He arrived after the typhoid epidemic had subsided in 1899 and left in 1901. His short tenure included a four month absence in France.

Edward William Brereton (1901 to 1909)



Although probably best known for his [history of St. Andrew's church](#), Edward Brereton's most significant contribution to the church must have been the urgency with which he commenced the work necessary to make safe and restore the east end of the building.

Brereton's first service at Kildwick was on 29th August 1901 and the two-year programme of work required to secure the church was started on 25th November. But for him it is possible that there would be no building standing today. (Full details of the work involved can be found in his book.)

An Anglo-Catholic, Brereton was criticised throughout his incumbency for his High Church views, including letters sent to the local press shortly after his appointment, and protests made repeatedly at vestry meetings against the use of candles on the altar. Presumably such weighty doctrinal matters were of vital importance at a time when the building was quite literally falling down.

Late in 1908 Brereton arranged to swap parishes with Rev. J.W. Rhodes, of Whaplode in South Lincolnshire. He performed his last service at St. Andrew's on 3rd January 1909 and left Kildwick the following day.

Unsurprisingly Brereton's history ends with his departure from the village in 1909.

The rest of this piece is based on newspaper reports and personal recollections. These are, of course, rather variable sources.

John William Rhodes (1909 to 1914)



If the parishioners of St. Andrew's had thought some of their previous vicars were inflexible, they were to discover the true meaning of the word with the arrival in Kildwick of Rev. John William Rhodes.

Whether Rev. Rhodes period in charge started well is not known. What is certain, however, is that by 1914 things had gone so badly downhill that something that started out as a trivial matter and should have stayed that way, was so badly handled by the vicar that it quickly escalated into a major dispute that went on for the rest of the year; during which time the church lost its churchwardens, two organists, a choirmaster, all the adult members of the choir and, finally, the vicar himself.

This is the timeline of the dispute, summarised from reports in the local press.

March 1914 – Things started to go awry early in March, when St. Andrew's professional organist, Mr. Longbottom, accepted a Sunday engagement to play in a performance of Hadyn's "Creation" at Silsden Primitive Methodist Church. Mr. Longbottom believed he had the permission of the vicar to do this and provided a deputy for the service he would miss at St. Andrew's.

However, the vicar said he had made no such agreement and, on March 21st he wrote a letter of complaint to Mr. Longbottom which ended "... I presume you propose terminating your engagement with us". Mr. Longbottom replied to the vicar saying that he had no intention of resigning; to which, the vicar responded "... there is no alternative. I shall expect to receive your resignation by return of post."

Also on March 21st, the vicar wrote to the choirmaster, Mr. Arthur Smith: "As Mr. Longbottom is leaving us and it will be a most desirable point to have a free hand to make entirely new arrangements, may I ask you if you will kindly send me in a notice of resignation next quarter-day, June 25th." In his reply, Mr. Smith wrote "You say Mr. Longbottom is leaving us. Of this I had no idea until I received your letter on Sunday ... I understand there is friction between you, but why I should have to suffer for it I fail to see."

Further acrimonious letters were exchanged, the up-shot of which were that both the organist and the unfortunate choir-master were told that their services would not be required after June 25th.

On hearing of the sackings the adult members of choir, giving their "entire confidence and sympathy" to Mr. Longbottom and Mr. Smith, resigned en-masse, also effective June 25th – leaving the vicar without organist, choirmaster or choir from that date.

April 1914 – In April things got even worse when the organist, choir-master and the adults of the choir all went on strike in response to comments made in sermons by the vicar and by his curate, Canon Griffin.

At this point you might have thought that one row at the church would be sufficient, but at the same time as Rev. Rhodes was in dispute with the organist, choirmaster and choir, he was also getting in a strop with his churchwardens.

At the annual Vestry Meeting, held on April 15th, the agenda had two major items: the signing-off of the church accounts for the previous year, and the election of a new slate of churchwardens. Right from the outset the vicar set himself in opposition to the others present. He claimed there was an issue with the accounts, in which funds designated for one purpose had been used for another in order to rectify a technical shortfall. He called this a mis-appropriation of funds and would not consent to the accounts being signed off.

He then required the churchwardens who were completing their one-year term of office to perform a ridiculous piece of theatre in which they signified the relinquishment of their posts by ceremonially laying their keys on the table. This was done with no good grace. The subsequent election of new wardens then descended into farce. Various people were nominated and all refused to serve. Mr. Sam Haywood, when asked to serve for a further term, actually went so far as to say "No, thank you. Not for a pound a minute. No, NO !"

Shortly after this one of the parishioners present suggested that the meeting be adjourned so that things might cool down a little. The vicar refused and pre-emptorily closed the meeting, adding that because no new churchwardens had been elected the old ones remained in-post and would be responsible for any shortfall in the accounts.

One quick-witted onlooker pointed out that by making the wardens hand over their keys he had already accepted their resignations and consequently they could not be compelled to remain in post. Another suggested that another meeting should be held at a later date. The vicar said that as he was intending being away from the parish for some time if any meeting were to be convened it would have to be held elsewhere.

On April 30th, in the vicar's absence, another parish meeting was organised to elect church wardens and other officers. The intention was to hold this meeting in the belfry but as people assembled in the churchyard the belfry door was found to be locked. Seth Tillotson, the sexton, was seen nearby and Sam Heywood demanded the keys from him. Mr. Tillotson refused and was then told by Mr Heywood that because the wardens paid his wages they were in effect his employers. Mr Tillotson responded with the biblical quotation "No man can serve two masters." and left.

After an unsuccessful attempt was made to get into the church through a window, the meeting went ahead in the church porch. In addition to the election of church officials, this meeting carried a motion of protest against the vicar for locking the belfry and agreed to make a complaint about the vicar's behaviour to the Bishop.

May 1914 – Throughout the whole of May services at St. Andrew's were held without the usual organist or the adults of the choir, the typical compliment being just 6 to 8 Boy Scouts.

In the middle of the month, the local papers reported that a new organist had been appointed: Mr. F.E. Fisher ARCO LRAM – a friend of Canon Griffin.

June 1914 – In the St. Andrew's parish magazine for June 1914 the vicar once again returned to the issue of the disputes that had been going on since March. Using quite intemperate language, he referred to the organist, Mr. Longbottom, as incompetent, and then went on to accuse "the hot heads of the Parish of instigating a season of parson-baiting". At the end of the article he dropped a bit of a bombshell:

"As it is my fixed principle to decline to quarrel with my parishioners, who seem bent on quarrelling whatever I do, it seems the kindest solution of the problem is for me to permanently retire. I will therefore try to make arrangements to do so, as soon as possible."

The vicar then tried to arrange a Vestry Meeting to discuss the situation on June 10th. Nobody turned up.

July 1914 – In the July edition of the St. Andrew's Parish magazine Rev. Rhodes announced that the new organist, Mr. Fisher, would be arriving in Kildwick on or around July 16th.

During the service on July 19th, the first at which Mr. Fisher participated, curate Griffin announced that the vicar was leaving the church and that his last service would be on Wednesday 22nd. He then planned to leave the parish on the 23rd. However no new vicar could be appointed until the Dean and Chapter of Christ Church, Oxford, reconvened after the summer university holidays.

In fact Rhodes did not leave the parish until the end of the year.

October 1914 – In the parish magazine, the vicar reported that the previous vicar, Rev. Brereton, had agreed to return to Kildwick to help out with the parish until a new permanent vicar could be appointed.

Rev. Rhodes also announced, perhaps rather sulkily:

"We need only wait until the necessary routine of our exchange is concluded and Kildwick may speedily forget the six years interlude in Mr. Brereton's vicariate. I shall, of course, be obliged to be in Kildwick for a short time to complete the work of handing over the parish, and making the necessary arrangements for removal etc., but need not obtrude myself upon you very much."

November 1914 – You might have thought that, with his departure imminent, the vicar would have decided just to keep quiet for the rest of his time in Kildwick. But in his monthly column in the parish newsletter, Rhodes once again tried to justify his actions of the previous six months.

His piece was rambling and incoherent, and hardly what you would call Christian in its attitude. In one paragraph he asked for people to:

"... grow in sweet kindness, trusting the vicar and your neighbours, and placing always the kindest construction on their words and deeds".

Then, in the very next, he said:

"... [I] did the parishioners the honour of trusting to their good sense and loyalty ... My disappointment was extreme when they proved themselves unworthy of my confidence."

Sweet kindness indeed.

In amongst all this, however, was the news that the much-heralded new organist, Mr. Fisher, would leave Kildwick before the end of the month. He had been in his post for just four months. (Quite why he left is not known.)

December 1914 – As the year came to an end, so did the sorry tale of the Rev. Rhodes and the dispute at Kildwick Church.

In this month's Parish Magazine the vicar announced that the Rev. Gerald Richardson had agreed to come to Kildwick as a temporary incumbent. This would enable Rhodes to leave the parish immediately and only return when it was convenient for him to remove his furniture. He also announced the imminent departure of Canon Griffin – leaving the parish without any cleric in-post.

However, even despite nine months of total turmoil, the vicar still could not seem to acknowledge any responsibility for what had happened. He closed his piece with a rather nasty sideswipe at his former parish:

"I cannot think that it is much of a joy for you to see me breaking up my home in my old age ... It seems to me that some mistakes have been made in Kildwick as well as in Germany, and both places have lessons to learn ...".

And with that hyper-inflated view of his own importance – comparing his self-inflicted problems with a World War – John Rhodes left the parish; his departure regretted by very few.

Into the modern era (1917 to present)

A full-time replacement for Rev. Rhodes did not arrive in Kildwick until 1917. Perhaps, following what had happened, Kildwick had acquired the reputation of being a “difficult” parish and few candidates were willing to take it on.

However this hiatus may have been a blessing in disguise, as by the time the next vicar did arrive the world had changed irreversibly and the church, however reluctantly, had had to change with it. There would be no more acceptance of clerics who acted as if they had stepped straight out of a Victorian novel.

Christopher E.V. Hodge (1917 to 1932)



Although he came from a family of clerics – his father, uncle and brother were all vicars – Christopher Edward Vere Hodge could not have been more different to his predecessor.

Born in County Durham, his first job was as curate in Sunderland before taking on a parish in Saskatchewan, Canada. He was appointed to the job at Kildwick in December 1916 and arrived in the village, along with his wife Gladys and two daughters in January 1917, after a 14-day journey from their previous home.

Shortly after his arrival, on 18th February, Hodge officiated at a service of commemoration for Walter Dawson who had been killed in action earlier in the month. Prayers were also offered in memory of other local men who had also died.

Rev. Hodge was formally inducted as vicar at the end of March by the Venerable Archdeacon Cook who, perhaps aware of the problems that had arisen between the congregation and the previous vicar, asked them in his sermon:

“... to remember that if differences arose between them and they resorted to prayer, a solution would be found. If they carried on their work in the spirit of prayer the parish would become the most peaceable place possible”.

But a peaceable parish would have to wait.

In February 1918, Rev. Hodge used the Kildwick Parish Magazine to announce that, with the support of his wife and the Archbishop, he had applied to become an Army Chaplain and consequently was likely to be away from the parish for some time. In his letter to the congregation he wrote

“I do feel very strongly that the Church at home must be prepared to sacrifice some of her privileges [in order to] work among our soldiers.”

Ordained ministers of the Church were exempted from conscription. However, every battalion in the British army had a chaplain and their work was important. Rev. Hodge was appointed chaplain at Prees Heath Camp, Whitchurch, in Shropshire, and he subsequently served in France. At the end of the war he volunteered to serve as a chaplain with the army of occupation, but his services were not required and he returned to Kildwick on 17th March 1919.

The Hodges' last child, a fourth daughter called Gillian Margaret, was born in 1922 and was baptised at St. Andrew's.

Gladys Hodge died in 1931, aged 44, and was one of the first burials in the new graveyard at Kildwick. The side-gate was erected in her memory.



Rev. Hodge and his family left Kildwick the following year and he took up a post near Chichester. He died in 1945 and is commemorated on his wife's gravestone in Kildwick.

Arthur Thomas Walkden (1932 to 1953)



Born in Liverpool in 1876, the son of two school teachers, by the start of WW1 Arthur Thomas Walkden was the curate of Skipton Parish church. He volunteered to serve early in 1916 and obtained a post as an army chaplain at Clipstone Camp in north Nottinghamshire, receiving his commission on 7th March of that year.

Clipstone was a purpose-built camp, created in 1915 to accommodate the soldiers of Kitchener's New Army who would be trained there prior to being posted abroad. During the course of the war it would grow to become one of the army's largest training and dispersal centres.

Shortly after taking up his post at Clipstone he married Marjorie Hogarth, the daughter of a Gloucester bank manager. The ceremony was performed by the Dean of Gloucester Cathedral.

Later, towards the end of the war, he must have volunteered to serve abroad: his military records show that he arrived in France on 12th August 1918.

After the armistice Walkden remained with the army until the end of 1921 when he became vicar of Jacksdale, a rural parish north-west of Nottingham; subsequently moving to Shelley, near Huddersfield, where he remained until taking up the post of vicar of Kildwick early in 1932.

Walkden appears to have performed his clerical duties adequately – including visiting Kildwick school annually to check that the pupils were learning their catechism, ready for confirmation – beyond that, however, he was not a very sociable man and was not often seen in the village.

This was perhaps unfortunate, given that he was the vicar throughout WWII, and a lot of the pastoral work which would normally have been performed by the vicar was largely taken up by the minister of Farnhill's Methodist Chapel.

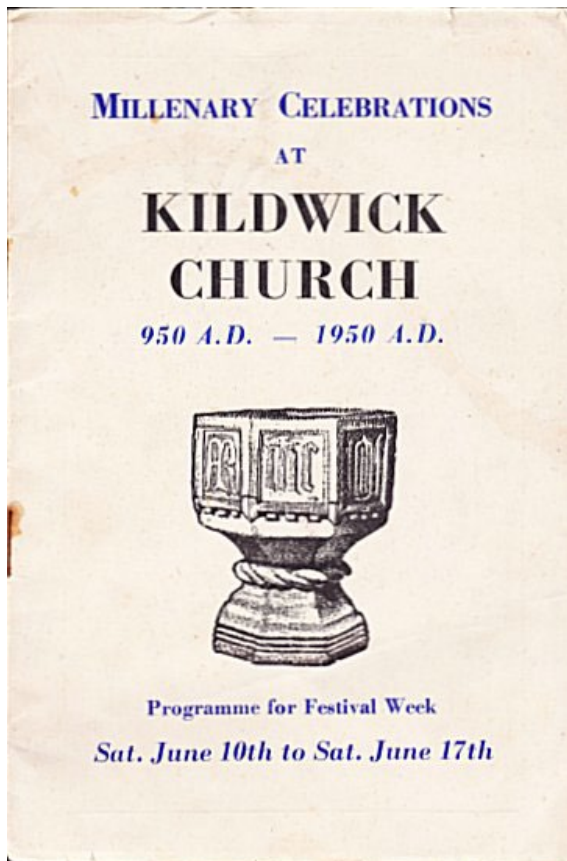
During his time at Kildwick, Walkden helped organise celebrations in the village to commemorate a number of royal events; including the silver jubilee of King George V (1935), the coronation of King George VI (1937), and the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II (1953).

Due to increasing infirmity, his participation in the last of these was restricted to a single church service. However, for the 1935 silver jubilee he may have had the stone shown below laid, by the entrance to the porch at St. Andrew's,



In 1950, based on the archaeological dating of Saxon crosses found during the restoration of the church between 1901 and 1903, St. Andrew's held a Millennial celebration.

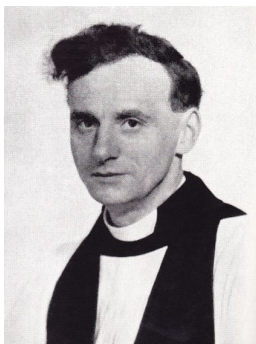
Rev. Walkden personally signed the back page of each programme.



A copy of the [full programme of events](#) can be found on the website.

Arthur Walkden retired in 1953. He died in May 1955 and his ashes were interred at St. Stephen's Church, Steeton.

Sydney Arthur Selby (1953 to 1974)



In terms of his sociability Sydney Arthur Selby, or "Sas" as he was known by the young folk of the village, could not have been more different to his predecessor.

He was much loved, as much for his eccentricities as for the amount of work that he did in the parish, and many people still living in the local area have readily attested to his kindness.

He was very involved in village events and could even be found, on occasion, enjoying a drink with some of his parishioners in the White Lion.

Born in Gloucestershire, Selby was educated at St. John's College – a grammar school for boys – in YstradMeurig, in Cardiganshire. From there he went to King's College, London and then went on to teach in approved schools in Oxfordshire – where he developed a keen interest in child psychology.

In 1944 he became private tutor to the children of the Earl of Rosse at Womersley, near Pontefract, , and he maintained contact with the family when he later left to join the church. (The Earl of Rosse was the step-father of Antony Armstrong-Jones, who subsequently married the queen's sister, Princess Margaret.)

Mr. Selby was ordained in Keighley Parish Church, in 1948, and he became assistant curate at the Church of St John the Divine, in Menston. (He may also have served, perhaps part-time, as a chaplain at Wakefield Prison.)

His arrival at Kildwick, in 1953, was [reported in the local press](#).

It was apparent that there was much work to do and Rev. Selby set about organising events to raise much needed money. One of his early and most ambitious accomplishments was a plan to build a church hall in Station Road, Crosshills, on land bought by the church in 1925. At the onset of this plan there was only about twelve hundred pounds in the kitty but further contracts and pledges brought the sum up to between five and six thousand pounds.

The foundation stone for the hall was laid in August 1955 and when it was completed a year later, Selby asked the Countess of Rosse to officiate at the opening ceremony.



The land was purchased in 1925.
The Foundation Stone was laid 23rd August, 1955, by E. Zillessen, Esq.
Chairman, G. Green, Esq.

ST. ANDREW'S CHURCH HALL, CROSS HILLS

The opening was the first of a series of events that went on in the hall for a week. The [full programme](#) is available from the website.

The hall was used for the Sunday school and for social and fund-raising events – the annual bazaar being probably the highlight of the year. Under the guidance of Mr Selby the ladies of the parish worked hard throughout the year sewing, crafting and making preserves to sell at this popular event.

During Mr Selby's incumbency the church building, inside and out, was improved and well maintained. He was responsible for its re-decoration and for installing new lighting and new heating. He was also responsible for the removal of all the headstones from the front and side of the church and the construction of a car park.

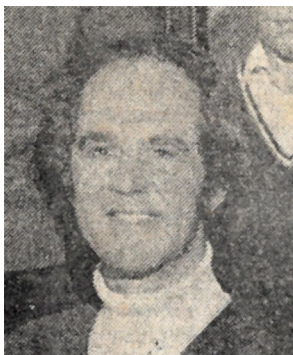
He was very much involved with Malsis School in Glusburn where he taught religious education and acted as honorary chaplain. It was through this latter role that the school's carol and end of term services were held in the church.

In his time at Kildwick 'The Friends of Kildwick Church' was a very active group. In 1963 they published a booklet 'The History and Description of the Church of St. Andrew, Kildwick-in-Craven', written by local historian, Alec Wood.

In 1973 he became Rural Dean of South Craven and a Canon of Bradford Cathedral.

Sydney Selby never married and in 1974 this hardworking, loved and well respected vicar moved to St Mary's Church, Gisburn (his departure was [reported in the local press](#)). He remained there until his retirement in 1982 at the age of sixty-five.

Ian Frederick Newman Busby (1975 to 1993)



Ian Frederick Newman Busby came to Kildwick in 1975 (as [reported in the local press](#)) with his wife Shirley and their two sons: Jeremy, aged thirteen; and Timothy, aged ten. Both he and Shirley originated from Leeds and had lived also in Bardsey, near Wetherby.

Ian served two years of National Service and his first career – lasting thirteen years – was as a bank clerk with the Westminster Bank in Leeds. He went on to study at the Theological College at Rochester in Kent and subsequently became curate at Bedale in North Yorkshire.

Whilst at Bedale, he and Shirley started, in their home, a fellowship group for young wives and told them about 'Christian Aid'. With the Busby's encouragement, in 1968 the group formed the Bedale committee for 'Christian Aid' – raising money by door to door collections and organising cake stalls in the Market Place.

From Bedale he became vicar of a church in Stevenage, in Hertfordshire, before being appointed to the living of Kildwick. At Kildwick he was a popular vicar, spending time getting to know his parishioners, visiting them and taking comfort to the sick and bereaved – not only those who attended the church, but any one in need. He supported the village in general – at the Queen's Silver Jubilee celebrations in the village, in 1975, he allowed himself to be thrown into the canal during a tug-of-war.

Services were well attended during his incumbency and there was an excellent choir with many young people in it – they having been recruited from the local schools.

Ian and his wife started 'Tea and Scones' which provided refreshment for regulars and visitors, and funds for the church, every Sunday afternoon in the Parish rooms. His parishioners missed him when he went on sabbatical to Nicaragua. This trip made an emotional and lasting impression on him.

A kind and gentle man, he had some difficult decisions to make during his time at St Andrews. One of these was to sell the church hall in Station Road which had become an expense which the church could not sustain. Things were changing within the Church of England and Ian introduced a new service: "Series 3" and the "New Bible".

Unfortunately he had to retire through ill health at the early age of sixty. The large number of people, both from the church and also from the surrounding neighbourhood, who attended his farewell party in Farnhill Institute, showed just how many people had held him in high esteem.

He and Shirley remained in the local area and he continued his pastoral work as one of the chaplains at Airedale Hospital. He died in August 2016.



Rev. Busby wearing the "Kildwick Cope" – from a photograph held in Kildwick Church

Paul Henry Moore (1993 to 2000)



Paul Moore came to Kildwick in the Autumn of 1993 with his wife Lucy and their young son, Arthur, and baby daughter, Judith. He had been educated at Baliol College Oxford and Wycliffe House, Oxford and came to Kildwick from his post at St Andrew's, Oxford.

He and his wife were very much involved with young people and Lucy was the instigator of 'Messy Church', which has gone on to flourish around the country. The couple made friends with several young families in the village and started a children's summer holiday club in the church.

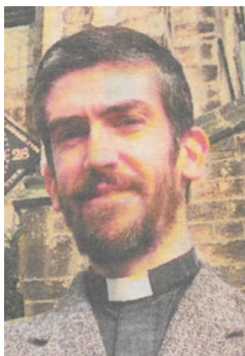
Moore was involved with the school in Kildwick and was Vice-Chair of Governors during his incumbency.

He left Kildwick in 1993 for Cowplain near Portsmouth and then became Archdeacon for Mission Development in the Diocese of Winchester. He was the first Anglican Archdeacon not to be assigned a part of a diocese to look after. He was always passionate about mission and his role in this capacity was to support and stimulate fresh mission thinking in key areas – education, discipleship, training, pioneering new church communities, social transformation and partnering with the world-wide Church.

In 2004 he was appointed Rural Dean of Havant, and an honorary Canon of Portsmouth Cathedral in 2013.

In 2020 he was appointed Priest-in-Charge of Hathersage with Bamford and Derwent and Grindleford in the Diocese of Derby.

Robin Arthur Rex Figg (2000 to 2017)



Rev Robin Figg joined the parish from Berkhamsted in Hertfordshire with his wife Elizabeth and three sons: Matthew (9), James (7), and Paul (4). He was a former Royal Navy engineer who in his mid 20s, after serving on several ships, gained a BSc in Engineering and became an officer. He then reconsidered his future and decided his path lay with his faith in God. Kildwick was his third parish and his first incumbency.

The parish at this time had 3,500 residents and a congregation of approximately 90.

In 2003 plans were announced for a major refurbishment of St Andrew's Church: with toilets, a kitchen, removal of all the pews which would be replaced with comfortable seating, re-siting of the church antiquities to a heritage area, a new disabled entrance, an upgraded heating system with underfloor heating, a meeting room, a creche, a secure vestry space and parish office, and a modern lighting and sound system. It was hoped that the church could be used for many new activities including arts, crafts and music workshops, conferences and exhibitions. The alterations would cost £800,000.

The parish was very divided with regard to the expense and wide-ranging alterations to this important Grade I listed church, and eventually the dispute was put before a Consistory Court which was held in the church. The Chancellor of the court decreed that he was mindful to grant a faculty for some work to be carried out, but was concerned about the large amount of money required and said that he would give the committee two years to raise the funds, after which he would then tell them what alterations they could make, bearing in mind that any alterations should be reversible if necessary at a later date. Because the committee were not able to tell potential donors what they were intending to do regarding alterations, as they did not have a faculty, they were unable to raise any funds for the re-ordering and eventually the alterations were abandoned.

Sadly, all these disagreements caused many of the congregation to leave St Andrews and either attend elsewhere or stop going to church at all, and the numbers attending were much reduced.

During his incumbency Robin Figg introduced at some services a Taize form of worship with lots of silence and prayers and repeated chants.

Robin and Elizabeth moved to Lancashire in 2017 when Robin became vicar of Warton and Borwick with Yealand, after their last son left home to go to University.

Julie Bacon (2017 to 2021)



Julie Bacon grew up in the Midlands and attended Newport Girls' High School. She went on to read Philosophy, Politics and Economics at St Hilda's College, Oxford and graduated in 1986. From there she spent four years working on the London Stock Exchange and then retrained as a solicitor in 1992 and worked in London then Yorkshire and ceased practising in 2006. She trained for ministry on the Yorkshire Ministry Course between 2011 and 2014, and as part of her training studied for a BA (Hons) in Ministry and Theology at Sheffield University, graduating with a first class degree.

Julie came to Kildwick from St Peter's church in Shipley where she had been an assistant Curate. She is married to Matt and has two children: Jack and Kate. She was appointed as Priest in Charge for a 3 year period with a cost-cutting brief to make one Parish out of three, namely Kildwick, Cononley and Bradley. After two failed attempts to gain planning permission to build houses in the Kildwick Vicarage garden, the Diocese sold the Vicarage and, as the Cononley Vicarage had already been sold, Julie continued to live in Shipley – in spite of promises by the Diocese to provide a vicarage in Crosshills.

Although the Kildwick parishioners had hoped that this time they might have a vicar who would get involved with the village and get to know them, the fact that Julie was living so far away and was so busy with her brief that this was not to be. Finally Coronavirus made its appearance and no one was able to go to church for months at a time. The pandemic also caused Julie's three-year period at Kildwick to be extended by a year. She performed her last service at St. Andrew's in June 2021.