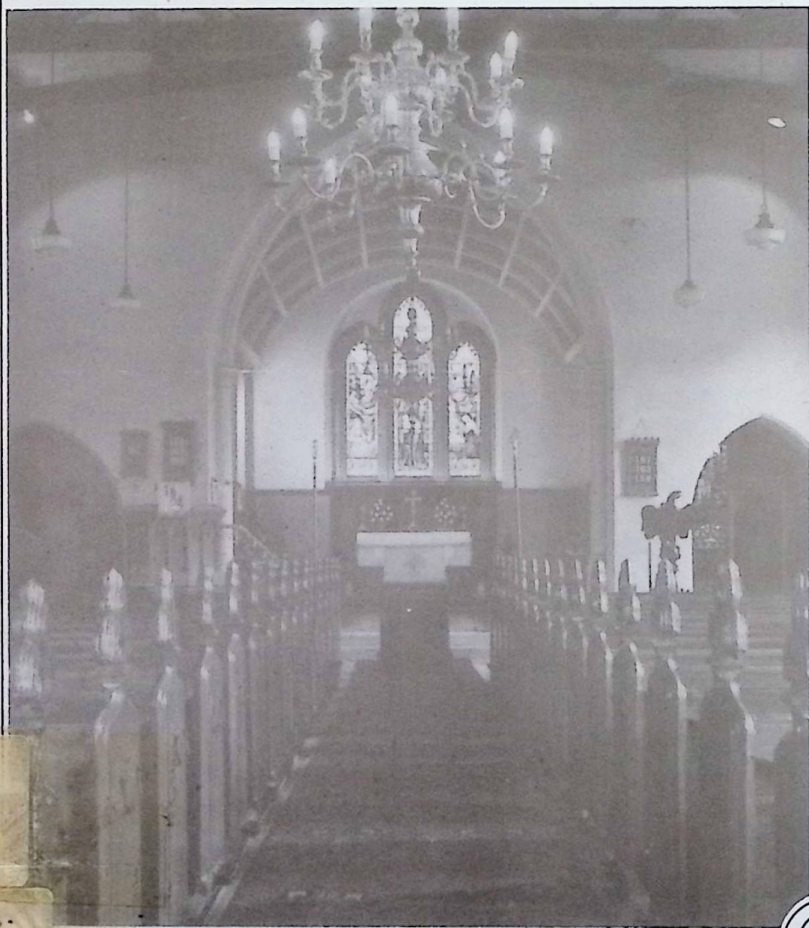


LOCAL
COLLECTION

THE
STORY OF OUR CHURCH
HOLY TRINITY,
ASHTON-IN-MAKERFIELD



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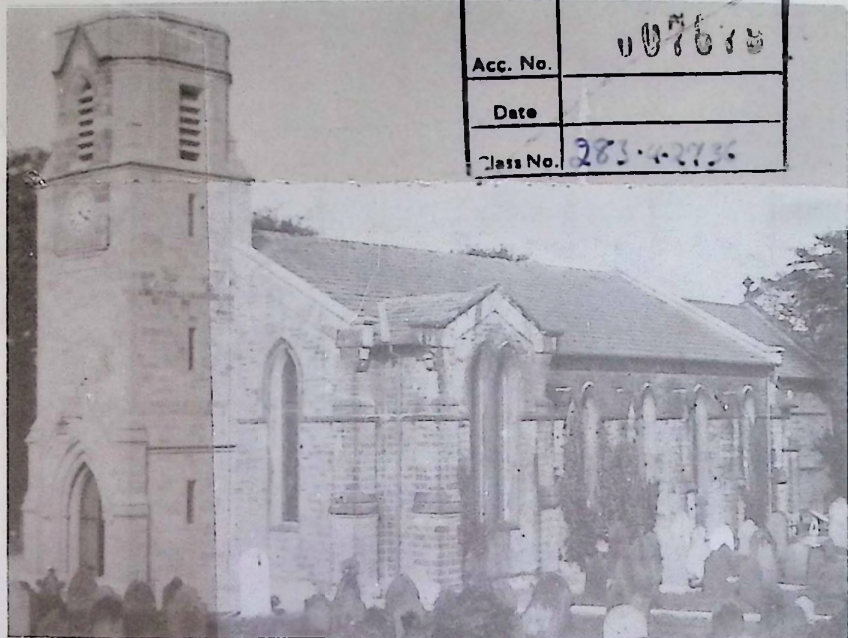
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May 28th, 1938.

Foreword

BY THE RECTOR, THE REV. D. R. ABBOTT

"You shall hallow the fiftieth year . . . it shall be a jubilee for you". In 1987-8 we keep our third such jubilee at Holy Trinity Church, Ashton-in-Makerfield. To mark this hundred and fiftieth anniversary Hilda Plant has compiled a brief history of the Church, and we are indebted to her for that. I hope that those who read it will be both informed and amused by it and that, with our other celebrations, it will be to the glory of God, in memory of all past church members, and an inspiration to the future mission and life of the parish.

May God so bless our endeavours that, in another fifty years, the church may still be a living witness to him, built upon the faith of this and subsequent generations.

God bless you all.

DAVID ABBOTT,
Rector.

INCUMBENTS SINCE 1838

The Rev. H. H. Sherlock
The Rev. W. J. Melville
The Rev. W. Williams

1838-1869
1869-1901
1902-1933

The Rev. W. R. H. Hall
The Rev. W. A. Gale
The Rev. E. Eaton
The Rev. D. R. Abbott

1933-1961
1962-1964
1964-1980
1980-

To Ashton library
with many thanks
from Hilola Plant
July 1987

GAM

HISTORY OF HOLY TRINITY CHURCH DOWNALL GREEN



Ordnance Survey Map c. 1846-50.

It must have been very exciting in Downall Green in 1837. Until then it was only a small, scattered village, with only a few of the houses we now know. The census of 1841 shows that there were only about eighty people living in the area of Downall Green including Tapster's Moss (on the road now known as Billinge Road) and Simms Lane End itself. The local industry was the manufacture of hinges, locks, nails and door handles. These were made by local locksmiths and blacksmiths working in their own homes, each with its hand-blown forge. The local "Hinge-Master" gave out supplies of iron, and finished goods were delivered on hand carts to his warehouse and an agreed price paid. There were no set hours of work.

So on the 1841 census we find many family names known to us today, such as Ashton, Heaton, Mitten, Cunliffe, Fairhurst and Simm (Nail makers); Shaw (Screw maker) and Sudworth (Hinge maker). We also find James Arkwright (Engineer).

The other occupations are shown by Downall and Livesley (Farmers); Susanna Crank (Miller); Smith, Unsworth, Boardman (Spinners); Ashton (Cotton piecer); Lowe (Cotton weaver); Betty Fairhurst (Silk weaver); Baley (Pavier); Winstanley (Coal tub maker); Birchall (Shopkeeper) and Downall (Carter). There are also various people mentioned as labourers or agricultural labourers but surprisingly, no coal miners.

On the map of 1846 it will be noticed that the roads were called lanes, e.g. Leyland Green Lane; there is no Downall Green Road, only Moor Lane. There are pits marked as Old Coal Pits so possibly no longer in use. There is a moss called Tewitt and a sandstone quarry in the Leyland Green area. Spindle Hillock is shown, and the church is built on an area called

Gustavus Hillock, with the Rectory, Church School and Blue Bell close by and also a little street called Church Street. Rectory Road is not marked, so must not have been built up, but the corn mill near the Green is shown and a building called the Big Barn near Smock Alley. It must have been very different from the Downall Green of today with its nineteenth century houses and new modern housing estates.

In 1837 Downall Green was part of the parish of Winwick, so those wishing to worship must go there or to Ashton Chapel now rebuilt (St. Thomas' Parish Church). With only country lanes to use and sometimes bad weather, this must have been a good excuse for those wishing to backslide.

However, in 1837 there came the wind of change. The Rev. James John Homby decided that the Parish of Winwick was too large to cater for the spiritual needs of the rapidly increasing population of South Lancashire. He wished the parish of Winwick to be subdivided, and offered to endow various churches in other areas such as Croft, Newton, Lowton, Culcheth and Ashton-in-Makerfield. Golborne and Haydock were to wait until the population in those areas reached 2,000 and Kenyon until its population reached 600.

A church was immediately begun in Downall Green, and the name Holy Trinity was chosen. The foundation stone was laid on 2nd October, 1837 at 12 o'clock noon, by the Rt. Hon. Lord Stanley, M.P. The service included a version of the Old Hundredth Psalm led by the Ashton Sunday School children, the Te Deum, and ended with the National Anthem. The Rev. J. J. Homby of Winwick offered the prayers.

Work continued on the building, and by Spring 1838 the church was ready for services.

The Reverend Harold H. Sherlock, the first incumbent, wrote in the first vestry book "The church was opened for Divine Service by Licence from the Lord Bishop of Chester on Sunday morning, 22nd April, 1838. The Reverend James John Homby, M.A., Rector of Winwick (and also Patron of the Church, it having been erected and endowed by his pious munificence) preached the opening sermon from Haggai Chapter 1, verse v, the incumbent of the church having offered the morning prayers and the Reverend Edmund Sibson having read the Epistle in the Communion Service. In the afternoon the prayers were offered by the Rector of Winwick, and the sermon was preached by the Incumbent from Matthew XXVII. 19. At both the morning and afternoon service there was a crowded and attentive congregation."



Interior of Church - late 1800's showing Rector W. J. Melville.



Interior of Church 1909.

The Rev. H. H. Sherlock continues that on Thursday evening the 7th June, the church was consecrated by the Lord Bishop of Chester, the incumbent offering the evening prayers and the Reverend the Chancellor - Henry Raikes M.A. preaching the consecration sermon from the text in 2nd Corinthians II vs. 15 and 16. Present at the service were many clergymen, including the Rector of Winwick along with the Rev. Frank Hopwood, the Rev. I. Gunning, the Rev. E. Sibson, the Rev. J. Bromilow, the Rev. W. Jackson and the Rev. E. Forester. There was a large congregation assembled from all parts of the town and its neighbourhood.

Later on two important Acts of Parliament were passed:

The first Winwick Rectory Act in 1841 authorised nine parishes to be formed, though some of these, including Golborne and Haydock, had to wait until their population reached 2,000.

The second Winwick Rectory Act in 1845 said that all the

- a) township of Ashton-in-Makerfield except Town End to become the parish and rectory of Ashton-in-Makerfield. Holy Trinity was to be the Parish Church and Mr. Sherlock, Rector - no further presentation, institution or induction needed.
- b) The church was to be maintained and repaired by the inhabitants of the parish following the regulations which the Mother Church had hitherto applied.
- c) Two fit persons were to be chosen as churchwardens, one by the incumbent and one by the majority of inhabitants, having suitable qualifications, one month after the Act and then annually at the usual time for appointing churchwardens.
- d) The inhabitants of the parish were to be entitled to meet in Vestry in all respects, and to have the same powers and be subject to the same provisions as parish vestry.

The information about the 1845 Act is in the parish notes and signed Harold H. Sherlock, James Billinge and William Millington.

STRUCTURE OF THE BUILDING

The original building was rectangular in shape and was built by John Palmer and made of yellow ashlar. There was no chancel as we know it now, but there was a gallery and also a porch. There were, and still are, long lancet windows at the sides and the West Front was rather original because it had steps leading to the gallery.

In 1846 an architect diagnosed dry rot in the church, and to prevent it spreading further, all the woodwork in the body of the church had to be taken out and replaced by new.

The Vestry Meeting agreed to this and the pews were to be replaced by private subscription. The wardens had then, at the expense of the parish, to clean, colour and paint the whole church, excluding the new woodwork - not personally of course. The chancel had to be re-arranged, including pulpit, prayer-desk and lesson lectern, choir stalls, altar-lecterns, side-table and litany desk (to be used on Wednesdays and Fridays only). An organ was to be bought by private subscription. An East Window of stained glass was announced as intended to be given. The meeting thankfully accepted this offer.

Services were held in the school-house during repairs, and the Vestry agreed to erect heating apparatus and prepare dwarf walls for the flooring to prevent a recurrence of dry rot. (The tax moved to 2d in the pound). In spite of this, in 1922 dry rot was reported in the gallery and had to be taken out. In 1942 the trouble recurred in the gallery. As it did not seem to be spreading it was left for a while. Eventually, by 1950, work was done because of dry rot which cost £214.19s.0d.

In May 1867 the Rural Dean wrote recommending the purchase of new Service Books, a fire-proof safe and calling attention to the smallness of the vestry. The old safe was sold for £4.10s.0d. to Mr. Reuben Morris for the Bryn and Garswood Church School Friendly Society in 1870, and in 1888 the Rector and Wardens disposed of the old brass chandeliers.

In June 1908 the church celebrated the 70th Anniversary of the consecration of the Church. The Bishop of Liverpool preached in the morning and the Rector of Winwick in the afternoon.

New improvements began to be made - the children's galleries were to be removed and seats put in their place, and a better system of lighting was to be installed.

A new Chancel Fund was started and a Building Committee formed 2nd August, 1913. A faculty was granted to remove the stained glass windows on the east side of the existing

chancel and one of these was placed on the north and one on the south side of the church. Margaret Helen Daglish gave a stained glass window for the new chancel in memory of her mother Ann Margaret Daglish. The centre panel depicted the Crucifixion, with the Annunciation in the panel on the left and the Nativity shown in the panel on the right. These windows can now be seen above the altar. The family of Christopher Fisher gave a window representing St. Christopher, which can be seen on the north side of the chancel. On the other side of the chancel, above the choir stalls, there is a window representing St. Paul in memory of Thomas Crompton, founder of the firm and for many years churchwarden. He died in 1910 and the window was erected when the new chancel was built in 1913.

There is much carving in the woodwork of the new chancel, and Arthur Mee in his history of Lancashire wrote "Some of the best carving hereabouts is in the Holy Trinity Church at Downall Green, a little building from the early years of the Victorian age. It has stalls with open tracery and poppyheads, sanctuary seats with canopies, misereres of an angel (St. Michael) and St. George and a carving of the Good Shepherd. The four evangelists stand in the rearedos, and Peter with a key under the canopy of the Litany Desk. There are two fine candelabra and a massive lectern of oak." The stall nearest the pulpit is in memory of the Rev. W. Melville, former rector. A plaque on the south side of the nave records a service led by Bishop Chavasse when the new chancel was completed in 1914. It says 'LAUS DEO'.

On a human note, a member of our present congregation has told me that graves behind the east end of the church had to be cleared, and this proved an unpleasant task with one of the helpers badly affected.

In 1920 the Rector applied for a faculty to erect the two oak screens to be seen on either side of the chancel. This was granted and they were erected, the one in front of the Lady Chapel being the gift of Mr. W. E. McClure, remembered by many as the headmaster of Ashton Grammar School.

Later that year a faculty was obtained to erect a War Memorial, which was dedicated in 1922 and can be seen on the north side of the church. When, tragically, in 1951 the question of a further War Memorial for the 1939-45 War was raised, an extra panel was erected below the previous tablet, and the new list of names added.

In 1937 it was announced that Messrs. Tom and John Crompton had generously offered to defray the cost of building a tower at the west end of the church in memory of their father, Mr. Thomas Crompton, for many years People's Warden and son of the Thomas Crompton who founded the firm. This offer was accepted. The tower was built and dedicated by the Right Reverend the Lord Bishop of Liverpool on Whit Sunday, 5th June 1938. The service included the hymns City of God, O Worship the King and Praise my Soul the King of Heaven, as well as the following psalms: O how amiable are Thy dwellings; I was glad when they said unto me. An electrically recorded peal of bells was placed in the tower, the gift of another donor.



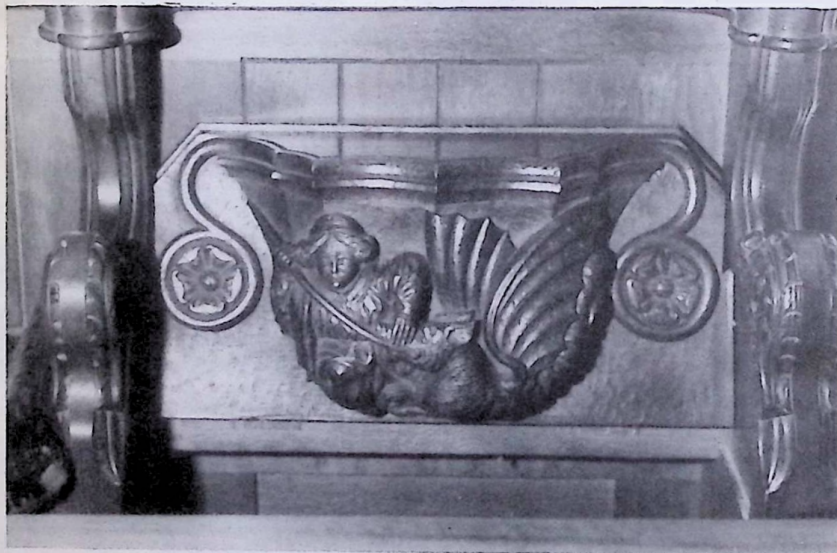
The Baptistry furnished in memory of the Rev. W. R. H. Hall, who died in 1961.



The Good Shepherd carving at the end of the Rectors Stall.



Misericordia representing St. Michael.



Misericordia representing St. George and the Dragon.

STAINED GLASS WINDOWS

The window representing the Good Shepherd in the Lady Chapel is in memory of the Rev. W. Williams, former rector. The four shields set high up in the windows on the north side of the church represent the four dioceses to which our church has belonged - York covering the area of Northumbria, Lichfield, Chester and now Liverpool. These were the gifts of the Wilcock family in memory of John, Mary and Alice Wilcock. A further shield on the south side shows the red rose of Lancashire and is in memory of Mr. H. Stanley Foster, Churchwarden and well-known J.P. Next to this is a window representing Christ as the Light of the World, given by Harriet, Mary Alice and Clara Katherine Crompton in memory of their parents, and replacing the old window taken from the east end.

In the Baptistry corner the stained glass windows and seats are all in memory of the Rev. W. R. H. Hall, former rector, in whose memory the Baptistry was created. The windows represent the following: the crossing of the Red Sea, the Flood and the Dove. The font had previously been on the opposite side of the door until it was moved into the south-west corner.

The various tablets in the church are in memory of;

- 1) David Rimmer, who died in 1928 after thirty years as choirmaster - this is near the organ.
- 2) John Edward Littler, who died of wounds received in France in 1918, aged 30 years.
- 3) William Leslie Pardey, who was killed in France in 1916, aged 19 years.
- 4) William Foster, former churchwarden, died 1934.
- 5) Thomas Crompton J.P., who died in 1910.

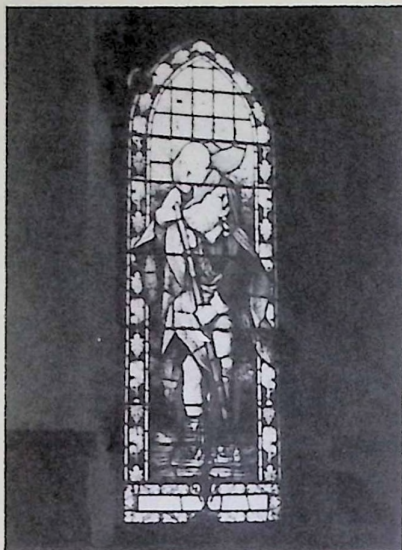
The present candelabra came from Beech House, the home of Mr. Bruce McGill, and have recently been cleaned by Tinsleys at their own expense.

The Lady Chapel on the south of the chancel has been improved by a new altar and rail given by Mr. William Ratcliffe in memory of his wife, and an aumbry (to help in the distribution of the sacrament to the sick) given by Mrs. Hilda Finney and her family in memory of her husband, Robert Finney.

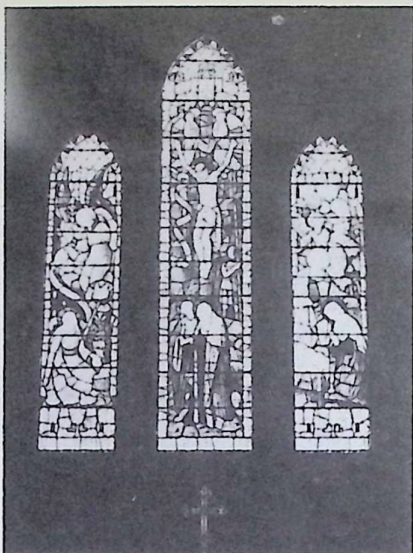
The church has now reached the time when many repairs and alterations are needed. Some of the men of the Church with much energy, recently re-flagged the main part of the church. Re-wiring has taken place, the roof is repaired, and the building now awaits re-decoration.



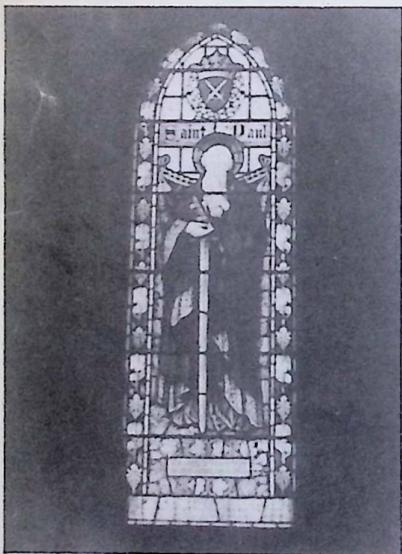
Our Christmas Crib - reminding us of the most important birth of all.



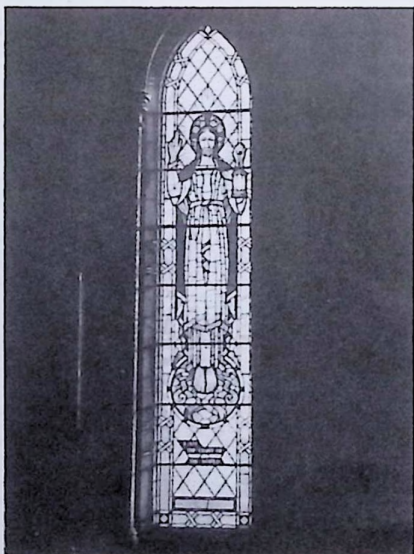
Saint Christopher given by the family of Christopher Fry.



The East Window showing the Annunciation, the Crucifixion and the Nativity, in memory of Ann Margaret Dalglish.



Saint Paul in memory of Thomas Crompton 1829-1910.



The Light of the World given by the Crompton Sisters in memory of their parents.



A new life coming into the church. The Rev. D. R. Abbott at the christening of the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. D. Unsworth.

THE CHURCH SCHOOL

Many interesting items could be added about the school, but there is sadly only room for a brief outline in this volume.

The school has existed since 1839 and was then a single storey building. Lord Derby bought the land on which the school stands for £5 from Robert Barlow, a baker from Bolton in 1880, the National Society gave £30 for enlargement. In 1902 it was made into a two storey building, with Juniors upstairs and Infants downstairs.

After the second World War there arose a need for a modern building. After much discussion a "grant aided" school was decided on and in 1964 the present hall came into use as the first phase of this. In 1972, the newly completed school was opened by the Lord Bishop of Liverpool, the Rt. Rev. Stuart Blanch on 27th September 1974.



Old Rectory C. of E. School.

THE PARISH HALL

There became need for a room where organisations could meet. Discussions began in 1948. Various suggestions were made and in 1953 a Parish Hall fund was started, receiving £20 from Ardwick Corporation of which the Rector was Mayor. 1954 the Hall was completed and opened by Mr. John Crompton. It was agreed that it could be used as an extra school classroom.

THE RECTORY

The Rectory was built soon after the church, and though impressive and commodious at the time, as the years went by became increasingly expensive to maintain and inconvenient to use.

As early as 1936 resolutions to build a new Rectory were passed, but the Ecclesiastical Commissioners said renovations would be sufficient.

After various negotiations, arrangements for a new Rectory were made. In 1984 this was built, and £9,500 was raised by various activities and gifts. The old Rectory has been sold, and is now used as a private residence, while the new Rectory is a pleasant building nearby which we hope will be a credit and asset to the parish for many years to come.



Old Rectory.



New Rectory.

ELECTRICITY

This was installed in the Rectory in 1933. In 1938 Corlett's produced a tender of £143.10s.0d. for providing electric light for the church.

THE GRAVEYARD

Originally this was immediately round the church, and a study of the old stones tells us something of infant mortality in the nineteenth century. One old stone recording the death of two young children names them as Horatio Nelson and Arthur Wellesley (the Duke of Wellington). I have been told that the coachman in those times used to hide behind the gravestones to frighten the maids returning after their night off duty. Wealthier days indeed when a rectory could boast a coachman and maids!

In 1847 there was much anxiety about draining the churchyard, as there were complaints about existing drains. The churchyard contained a well, and they proposed to drain this by deflecting its contents across the churchyard, east of the schoolyard, to empty itself in a ditch behind the Blue Bell. The cost of this project was to be £25, including carting £5 and stone £4. These projects were carried out with a temporary rise in the church rate.

By 1851 the vestry were agitating for a hearse and hearse-house, and the wardens were authorised to arrange this to accord with church architecture.

Mr. Gibbs, a sculptor, was at the time authorised to submit suitable designs for headstones and body-stones. At a cost of three pounds he was then asked to prepare a set of twelve on cardboard, showing the cost of each stone. These cardboard models were to be varnished, framed, and hung on the vestry wall for use of the Parish, and no deviation from these designs was to be allowed. It seems a far from cheerful way of decorating the vestry.

A new burial ground to the north of the church was purchased in the early 1920's, and once again the question of drainage occurred. In 1918 the path leading to the church was to be flagged. By 1925 the Churchyard Sub-Committee are recommending that all churchyard paths should be covered with tarmac.

In 1943 further extension to the graveyard was needed, and for under £200 plus cost of transfer, the P.C.C. purchased from Mr. George Lowe a piece of land extending from the glebe land fence to a line midway in the street behind Rushton's shop and that of Mr. C. Shaw, and to run to the Dell. Only a narrow strip of this was enclosed at the time and the rest was set for agricultural purposes. I believe some of this is now part of the school field.

In 1968 kerbstones were removed from the old graves and later in 1970 a Flymo mower was bought so that this sometimes forgotten part of the churchyard could be kept neat and tidy.

Soon we will need a further extension to the churchyard, but in the meantime it is being well cared for by voluntary workers, and has been much improved by a Garden of Remembrance where caskets of ashes can be interred, and where people can sit in peace to meditate.

CHURCH GOVERNMENT - VESTRY TO P.C.C.

In the early days of the church, the incumbent, supported by pew-holders, held a Vestry Meeting once a year, usually on Easter Tuesday.

They then chose two wardens, one of these was the choice of the minister and the other was elected by the pew-holders. The minister also chose a sidesman and the pew-holders elected another.



The Rev. W. Williams.



The Rev. A. White - Curate.



The Rev. W. R. H. Hall, with the Bishop of Warrington on Trinity Sunday.



The Rev. E. Eaton.

After the first meeting on 2nd April, 1839, they then adjourned to the Blue Bell - in the following years the Sunday School Library was chosen instead. Perhaps they thought that this gave a higher tone to the meetings!

Later on, after the 1845 Act, it became the custom for the parishioners who were ratepayers to elect the People's Warden. The pew-holders had certain strict conditions laid down for them at a meeting held on 28th September, 1838, including one which said that a pew-holder should pay at least 6d per quarter or, the more wealthy, one shilling. In 1864 pew rents were raised to 20s. 0d. per year in the middle, 10s. 0d. for side pews, plus 6d. per quarter tax on each pew in support of the choir. Though pew rents are now abolished, some of the holders of labels can still be seen. It is fascinating to read the various names which are recorded as being churchwardens or sidesmen, but unfortunately impossible to record them here.

The first wardens seem to have been Messrs. Clough and Shaw, and the first sidesmen Messrs. Downall and Thomas Marsh. Churchwardens who will spring to mind include Thomas Crompton, born in 1829. A small boy in 1838, he was still living at the 70th anniversary of the church, but died in 1910. Many people will also remember Mr. H. S. Foster, for many years Headmaster at the church school, who became Church Secretary in 1920 and followed his father as Churchwarden in 1934, which office he held until his death in 1959. Mr. George Lowe also gave much valuable help and advice as warden, and we have lately, very sadly, lost Mr. Kenneth Liptrot whose cheerful, willing personality will be remembered for a long time. Other notable wardens of recent times were Mr. H. G. Littler and Mr. W. Walker who is still amongst us.

Later on extra meetings crept in during the year at such times as matters needed immediate attention, and extra sidesmen were chosen. There seem to have been no meetings in 1901. There was a difficult period in 1902 when, after the death of the Rev. W. J. Melville, the benefice was vacant and the wardens Henry Cunliffe and Thomas Crompton had to act as sequestrators, consulting Canon Penrhyn as to their position.

There was a Bible Class at St. Peter's in Bryn, and they were presented on the Church Committee.

In 1920 Parochial Church Councils came into being, and everything became more formal. They at first decided on a Committee consisting of:

The Rector and licenced Curate

Two wardens and two lay representatives

Fourteen men and eight women (with the same number for St. Peter's)

The male members were to be sidesmen. This number now seems very unwieldy to us.

Now the meetings became more regular, at least four a year being held, two of these in St. Peter's schools, and from time to time sub-committees were formed. As so often happens, a rift began to develop between the Parish Church and St. Peter's. A letter from St. Peter's protested at the action of the P.C.C. in taking over crockery, tea-urns and stage. Retaliation followed.

The secretary of the Parish Church was told to write to St. Peter's Women's Bible Class and tell them to discontinue using any book other than the Ancient and Modern.

Though some meetings were still held at St. Peter's, and also a Sale of Work was held there, it was obvious that the parting of the ways must come. In February 1925 Mr. James Worswick said that they intended to write to the Bishop for permission to become a conventional district with full responsibility for that end of the parish. The Rector said that he would not put any obstacles in their way. From then there is no record of St. Peter's taking part in parish proceedings.

Meanwhile, Garswood was growing and expanding, and it was felt by 1932 that a Mission Hall was required to be built there. At first the Board of Sites and Buildings refused a grant towards the building of this, and the P.C.C. unanimously supported the Rector in refusing to send in the quarter-portion of the Diocesan Quota - i.e. £10! In spite of set-backs, the movement to provide this hall went ahead, and in January 1933 the Building Committee report presented by Mr. Wright, said that £1212.0s.11d. had been raised and the cost of the building and furniture would be £1175.2s.3d., leaving a balance of £36.18s.8d. Thanks were given to Mr. Wright, and thereafter the Mission Hall of St. Andrew's has a separate identity in the parish accounts and today is a lively and active part of the parish.

Mr. Williams was now due to retire and the P.C.C. placed on record its appreciation and grateful thanks for Mr. Williams' work in the parish, his love for his people and his wise guidance in 31 years.

Many are the struggles of parish committees, but in looking through the records the following interesting items, amongst others, have come to light.

On 23rd April, 1848 a meeting was called to consider the proposed Highway leading from the church to Billinge and Winstanley. They met again on April 27th, and decided that out of deference to the wishes of Sir John Gerard, Bart., and out of sympathy for the laudable motive of giving employment to the poor, they would consent to withdraw all objections to the said project being carried into effect.

On 21st December, 1848 the wardens were authorised to repair and put into condition the footpath leading from the bottom of Church Lane across Downall Green to where it joined with the footpath leading to the town of Ashton.

On 13th December, 1849 the wardens were requested to take the requisite steps to maintain the old cart road across Downall Green.

In August, 1938 the P.C.C. were asked to see to the improving of Victoria Road - many people will remember how rough it used to be, and in 1927 to concern themselves with a tip of rubbish on Booth's Brown Road.

In the old days the wardens had the power of arrest and perhaps this might be helpful occasionally today when church property needs to be protected.

Most of the worries of the P.C.C. today are concerned with keeping the church in good condition and getting the requisite money to carry out repairs etc. There is also consideration taken of keeping congregations interested and large. It is, however, interesting to record two stands against the lowering of the moral code.

In 1917 the vestry passed a resolution to the effect that it was in the highest interests of the church that the sanctity of marriage should be defended and preserved and that appeals should be made to Christian men and women to resist actively the passing of any Bill which further extended grounds for divorce. Copies of this resolution should be sent to the Prime Minister, our local M.P., and the Rev. E. T. Forrest, Vicar of Pemberton, and that 5s.0d. should be sent to the last named to defray expenses.

In January, 1943 the P.C.C. decided to make a stand against a "Continental Sunday" as shown by the opening of Cinemas and Theatres on Sundays except for free entertainment to H.M. Forces.

CHURCH FINANCES

Regrettably, the question of finances is very important in church affairs. It is very sad that so much time and energy has to be used acquiring money in order that the church may survive to fulfil its religious functions.

It is very interesting to note in studying the vestry accounts, how the value of money has changed during the one hundred and fifty years our church has been in existence.

In the early days money for church expenses was raised through offertories, a voluntary rate, and from time to time, gifts and donations, as in 1846 when an organ was to be purchased by private subscription. The pew-holders also contributed with their fees. The rate varied, and it is interesting to note that repairs to the church in 1846 required what seems then to be the tremendous sum of £41.10s.0d. The voluntary rate of 1d in the pound would raise only £38.17s.6d., which created difficulties. Luckily the Rector of Winwick helped out to contribute towards the sum needed!

By 1849 the rate rose to 1½d in the pound and in 1850 to 2d in the pound, but later on, helped by private subscription, sank back to 1d in the pound (1852), only to move up again by 1854 to 1½d. There was a collection for these rates, but sometimes the work was not done and the Churchwardens in April 1862, complained that none of the rates for 1861 and, up to that date in 1862, had been collected, so they resolved that the rate for 1861 should be given up and cancelled.

In March 1864, Mr. Billinge the Rector's Warden, was authorised to pay £10.5s.0d. to Alice Aspinall on her husband selling his church rates collecting account. Later on in the century there is no mention of rates, so possibly these became difficult to collect and were abandoned.

In 1866 they abandoned the idea of improving on the smallness of fees to the sexton and clerk because of the burden on poorer ratepayers.

By 1877 the Rector arranged that offertories on each Sunday should be devoted to some special cause, one Sunday to be devoted to paying off old debts. There seems to have been a very angry meeting in 1878 because the churchwardens had used the sum of £13.10s.5½d (for the paying off of old debts) to balance the accounts generally. The struggle between expenses and income continued, and though the amounts mentioned seem small to us, they would provide a real headache at the time in the days of small wages.

It is touching to note in 1906 a rejoicing because of a balance of £25 attributed by Mr. Crompton to generous giving on the part of the congregation.

In the years 1916-17, cards were distributed to Sunday School children to collect for Church Funds between Easter and Trinity Sunday, and this reduced the debt by £50.

There was also a system known as "trays" which I have been told were gifts made to the Rector when he visited parishioners.

In 1921 the Free-will Offering scheme was begun, but there were sometimes difficulties, although it made a promising start. Later on it seems to have been abandoned, and now we have such a scheme again which is a great help - though more contributors would be acceptable.

Many Bring and Buy Schemes, Autumn Fairs, Good-as-New Sales and other ideas help to keep the church going, but the cost of keeping our church alive today is fantastic compared with early days.

CHURCH MUSIC

As parishioners know, music has always played a vital part in the life of our church. In the early days the Birchall family brought their instruments and, from their place in the gallery, accompanied the service. Later a barrel organ was used - but this limited the tunes which were available.

Later the organ was built by private subscription in 1846. The first organist was a Mr. Jas. Birchall, who travelled from Orrell. We hear of him sadly claiming three years' salary up to Christmas 1869 but only being to allowed to claim for six months before that date.

He was followed by these organists:

1870-1903

1903-1906

1906-1916

1916-1933

1933 to present day

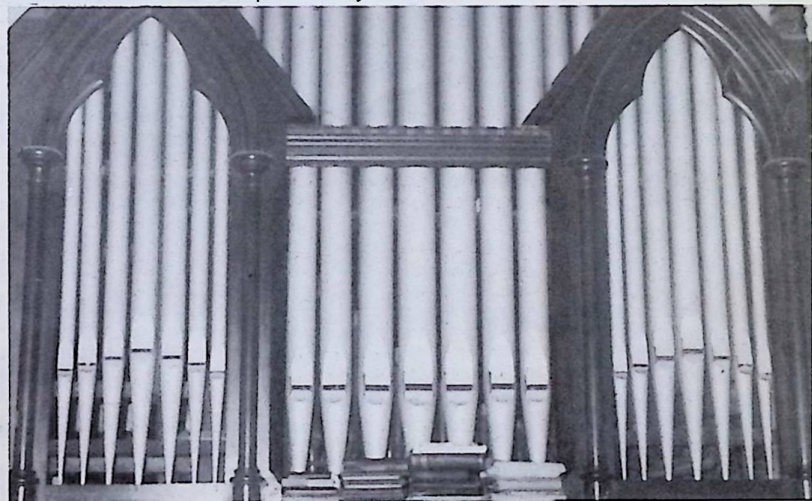
Mr. Miles Cunliffe

Mr. W. Forrest, A.R.C.D.

Mr. A. Aspinall

Miss C. K. Crompton, L.R.A.M.

Mr. H. Lowe, A.R.C.M., L.T.C.L.



The Organ.

The organ was in the position where the Lady Chapel now is, but was moved to its present place when the nave was built in 1913-14. It was originally pumped by hand. In 1849 the church meeting resolved that "the bell-ringer do also blow bellows for the organ". He would have to move quickly. 1938 £70 was spent on the organ and surplices for the choir. In 1945 an electric organ blower was provided costing £92.19.10. This was largely due to the efforts of Mr. H. Lowe. I am sure all parishioners would agree that the choir and organ play an important part in church worship, and one of our next targets must be to try and secure a new organ.



Choirboys, 24th December, 1951.

However, being a choir-boy has its drawbacks, as I am sure one boy found in 1870. The Rev. W. J. Melville had appointed the Rev. Page Oldham to the living at St. Thomas', Ashton. Following the new ruling of the church, Mr. Oldham wore his white surplice while preaching in the pulpit. This caused unbelievable uproar, riots and need for police intervention. People came from all round the district to view the disgraceful scenes. The militant parishioners of St. Thomas' blamed Mr. Melville, and indirectly "that high Church lot at Downall Green". One Sunday evening a mob carrying yellow handkerchiefs set off for Downall Green. Five constables were hastily dispatched to Holy Trinity. The mob reached our church at 7.10 p.m. and tried to rush the West door. They were promptly ejected. Forms were wedged between the doors and the base of the font. Stones were hurled through the windows, two door panels were kicked in, and young men were seen trampling over the graves.

After trying the calm the congregation, the Rector closed the service and ushered everyone out through a private door into the Rectory garden. Some of the choirboys, very frightened indeed, ran out in their surplices. One was caught by the mob. His surplice was removed and torn to shreds. Just then the police arrived and, following their half-tipsy leader, the mob returned to Ashton proudly carrying the tattered surplice like a banner.



Crowning the Rose Queen before 1914.



Crowning the Rose Queen, Saturday, 14th June, 1975.



The lady members of the Handicrafts Guild who made kneelers etc., for the Altar steps - late 1970's.



The men of the Church who recently energetically re-flagged the floor.

THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

In addition to what has been previously written, it was thought that as this century is eighty-seven years old we ought to consider our church during that period, and especially today. I am, therefore, adding a few more details to what has already been written.

The two World Wars have, of course, taken their toll and removed from among us many whose lives would have affected the story of the church. Their names are recorded on the War Memorial.



The War Memorial with names of the fallen in both World Wars.

The second World War, bringing the conflict nearer to us because of air warfare, caused many changes. The Sunday evening service had to be at 3.00 p.m. because of the black-out, and some committee meetings had to be held at St. Andrew's where, of course, it was easier to cover the windows.

In 1939 the P.C.C. made a grant of £10 to the Rector so that he could provide cigarettes for the members of H.M. Forces visiting him while on leave.

Repairs have been constantly needed, the wall on Booth's Brow Road being rather troublesome. In the 1939-45 War, the gate there had to be kept locked from Sunday evening to Saturday morning. The windows, the brass and the organ have been taken care of when necessary.

In 1926 Scott's of St. Helens provided estimates for a new heating apparatus, which was later installed. Later, in 1933, fire extinguishers from Minimex were purchased.

The religious life of the church is, of course, the most important and this has seen many changes in the past twenty years. First of all we had Series 2 in dainty (but easily destroyed) little blue books, to be tried out for seven, later reduced to four years. In 1973 Series 3 was

tried out and in 1980 we found ourselves using the A.S.B. - rather bulky and like a Bible in size. There have been the usual misgivings and mutterings, but we are all now using Rite A and Rite B as to the manner born. During the last few years some new services have been introduced when apart from Easter Sunday, always a much loved service, we have beautiful services on Maundy Thursday (a period of reflection), Good Friday (the Last Hours) and a very much appreciated "candlelight" service on Holy Saturday evening. Our mid-week Wednesday service is very popular, and people enjoy the services of Healing and the Requiem services according to their needs. There are also many pleasant services at St. Andrews.

In 1978 the parish boundaries were revised and for the last few years we have had special services at Holy Trinity and St. Andrew's on the Saturday of Rogation week-end, accompanied by a walk round the parish. After lunch at St. Andrew's we finish Beating the Bounds by going down Arch Lane and over the fields into Carr Mill Road, a really beautiful and peaceful walk.

The church sends two members to the Deanery Synod so that we may be kept abreast of new ideas and movements.

We have made a determined effort towards unity with the Methodists and Roman Catholics by having two united services a year, starting with one at St. Thomas's in 1969. We usually meet in the icy cold of January (inside), and the equal chill of Good Friday on the Green. During the last year we have had ecumenical meetings, mostly supported by the Roman Catholics and ourselves, where we discuss various items of belief, and have discovered some surprising facts about our relative faiths.

Nor have the Wardens and P.C.C. been idle. Though no longer asked to deal with rubbish piling up on Booth's Brow Road and misbehaviour and bad language in the Dell, they are kept busy keeping the church fabric in order and, most difficult of all, finding the money to do it. There are always concerts and Good as New Sales, to say nothing of the jumble which is turned over and the amount of cups of tea and scones consumed at the Bring and Buy Sales in various houses. People work really hard to provide items for the Autumn and Christmas Fairs and to collect boxes for Gift Day. If anybody coming to church does not possess a weekly offering envelope or has not signed a 'covenant', I hope that this will encourage them to do this right away. You can also get rid of your old furniture at one of our exciting auctions.

The Mothers' Class gave us all much pleasure recently with their Daffodil Tea.



Mothers' Class 50th Anniversary - 1981.

Right back in 1929 there was an Old Fashioned Fair, and photographs of ladies in poke-bonnets can still be seen, but one of the oldest church social events has been on Shrove Tuesday - formerly tea, concert and dance, but later including whist and dominoes. This year we are celebrating St. David's Day with a dance and have also seen in the New Year and have had a Harvest Supper (very popular in the past also). The Garden Party with its stalls and teas and children's entertainment is well-liked. Every year we have a stall at the Deanery Bazaar and make contributions to the Deanery High School as well as several funds to help Liverpool Cathedral.

There have been many church groups especially formed during the later years. In Mr. Howarth's class-room in the old school an Activities group was formed about 1964 or 1965, and Mrs. Eaton formed the Women's Fellowship about 1969. This is now ably carried on by Miss B. Lowe. Mrs. V. Finney and Mrs. L. Cunliffe keep us all busy with Mothers' Union events and we have had pleasant evenings and outings with both societies.

There are many other activities for mothers and wives and the men of the parish and these have all played their part in the development of the church. We are very anxious to do all we can to help and encourage young people. In 1958 there was a Boy's Brigade and Girls' Guildry, and Nurse Stokes formed the Trinity Girls Band in that year. For a while also, until age overtook them, the Young Communicants flourished.



Holy Trinity Girls Band 1957-8.

However, no story of our church would be complete without mention of Trinity Sunday. Originally the walk was held on a Monday and a Field Treat on the following Saturday. Then the walk was changed to Sunday. With its banners waving and bands playing it is always a subject of public interest. Among families it used to be a day for re-union or 'Jelly Day'.

I hope that for many years to come, whatever our difficulties or differences, the members of our church will still gather at Trinity time to bear witness to our faith and to show our loyalty to Holy Trinity Church.



Trinity Sunday 1957.





Walking Day 1970's.



Walking Day 1958.

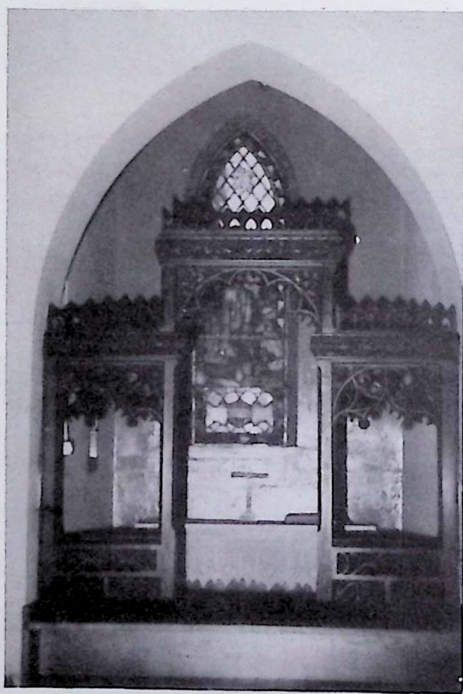
CONCLUSION

I have found this study fascinating and from the bare bones of the vestry books have built up in my mind pictures of personalities and events mentioned in the notes.

I would like to thank the Rector, the Rev. D. R. Abbott for asking me to undertake this work and giving me access to the facts. I would also like to thank the following for information: Mr. H. Lowe and Mr. F. Lowe, and also Mr. H. Howarth. I am grateful to Mrs. M. Smith for voluntarily and painstakingly typing my notes, and Mr. A. Barrow for taking photographs of the church. Mr. H. Lowe and Misses H. and M. Kay have given me access to photographs, as have also Mrs. O. Shaw and Mr. W. Camey. Mrs. A. Fairhurst kindly gave me a copy of the service when the church tower was dedicated and I would like to apologise for anything I have omitted from the text. Any photographs not used will be displayed in our exhibition.

I would finally like to express my appreciation of the kindness of Mr. M. A. Mason and Mr. E. Williams of Wigan Libraries for providing me with photostats of maps, newspaper accounts etc., and giving me advice. I do hope that many members of the parish near and far, will enjoy this work.

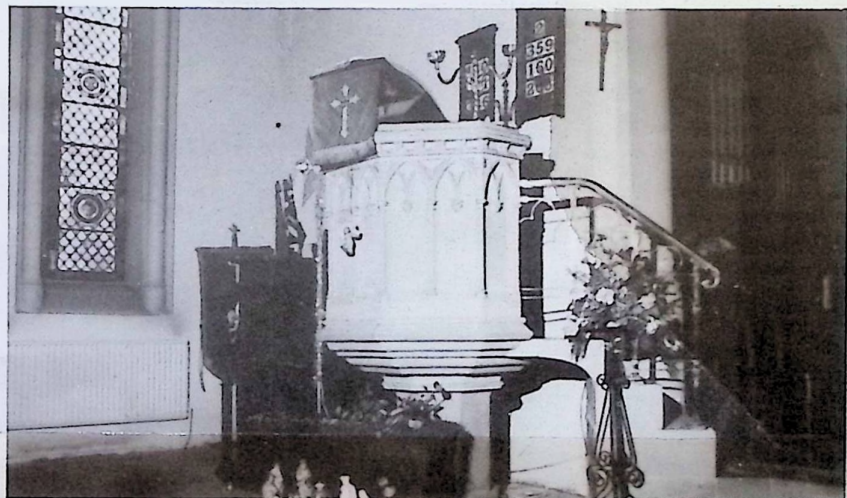
HILDA PLANT.



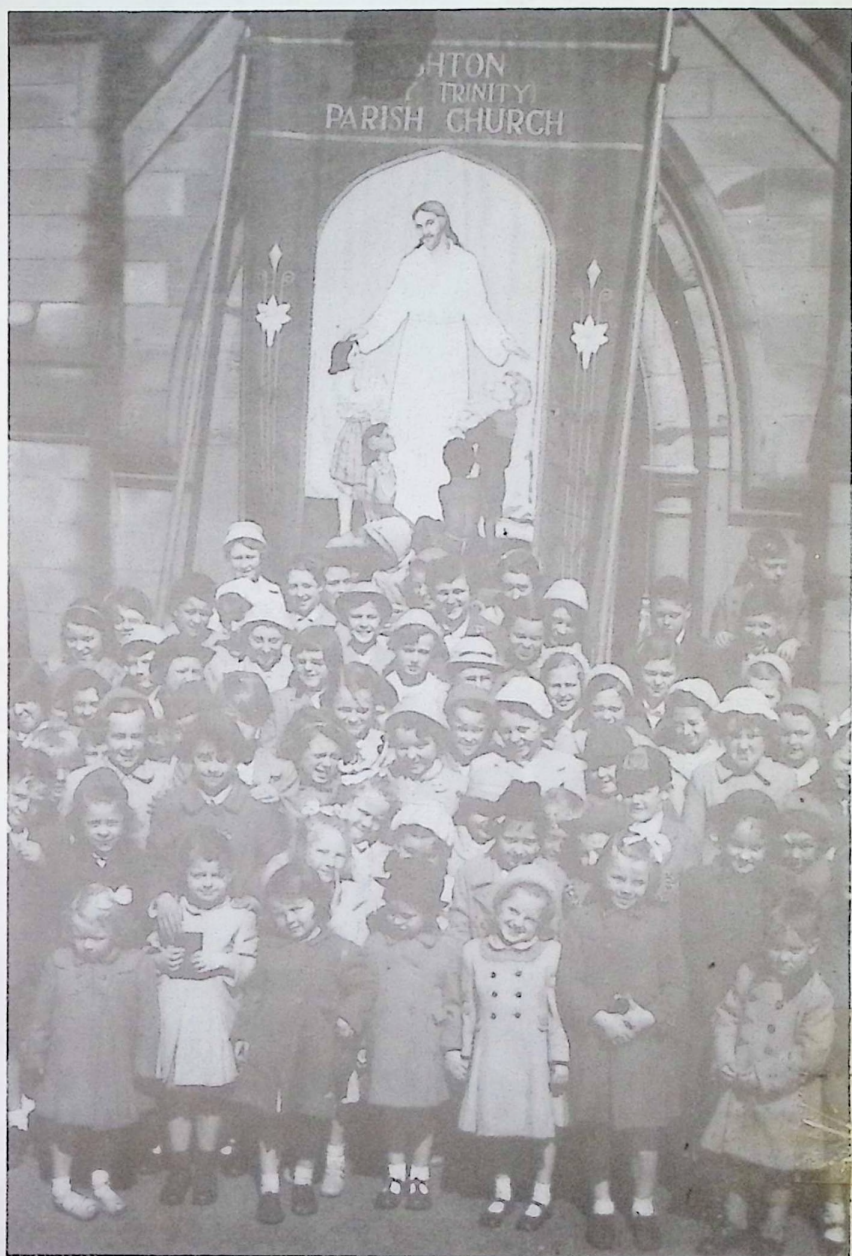
The Lady Chapel showing carved screen - recently improved by gifts, in memory of Mr. R. Finney and Mrs. M. Ratcliffe.



The Church before 1938.



Interior of Church, 1986.



Dedication of new Banner.