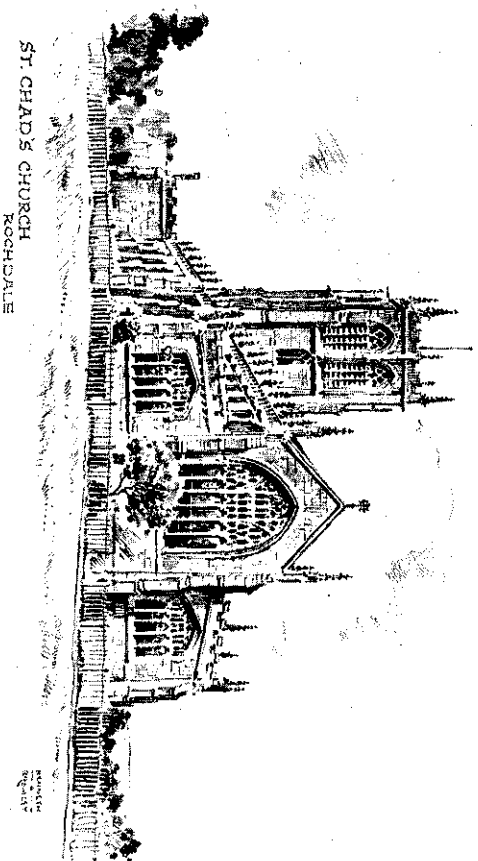


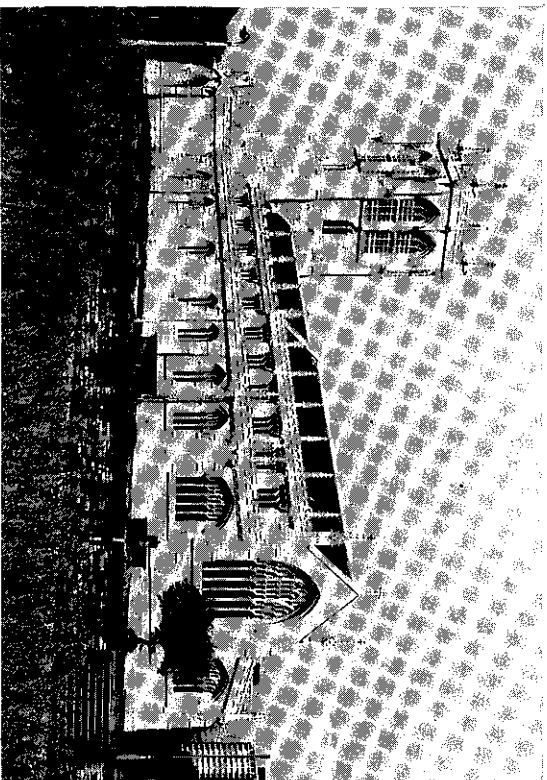
# TOP O'TH' STEPS

A History of

St. Chad's Parish Church, Rochdale



by A. S. Wild



*Rochdale Parish Church, 1970.*

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*Frontispiece: Exterior of Church prior to 1829, from an original stone engraving.*

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A. S. WILD

## TOP 'O'TH STEPS

Situated on an eminence overlooking the busy town of Rochdale the Parish Church of St. Chad is comparable in geographical position to Durham Cathedral. This Parish Church has been a geographical and spiritual focal point for at least eight hundred years. In common with that other famous enigma – the road over Blackstone Edge – the origins of the Parish Church are clouded by the mists of antiquity.

The first written record of this church was in 1194 when Geoffrey the Elder was the Vicar. It is however reasonable to suppose that a church existed here 1300 years ago, possibly having been built at the end of the 7th century when the populace were remembering their earlier beliefs. Almost a hundred years earlier, in 597, Augustine had landed in Thanet where King Ethebert's wife Bertha was already a Christian. Within a year the King was converted to Christianity. Augustine was succeeded by Paulinus who went to Northumbria and in 627 baptised King Edwin. Paulinus ceased his missionary work when Edwin was killed in battle.

The victor Cardwallon died and was followed by Oswald. Oswald sent to Iona for missionaries and led by St. Aidan they settled in Lindisfarne. Here St. Aidan trained twelve youths one of whom was called Ceadda. It is thought that about 660 Ceadda, or St. Chad as he became known, was one of 40 missionaries sent out from Lindisfarne, Iona and Canterbury to convert the people.<sup>1</sup>

St. Chad always walked from place to place, in the manner of the Apostles. In 666 he was appointed to York but later resigned when the manner of his induction was called into question. Appointed in 699 Bishop of Mercia he established his church at Lichfield. St. Chad preached and baptised if possible by a well or near water. Such wells were reputed to have healing properties and one is still extant at Chad Kirk, Romiley. Near the site of St. Chad's there is the Packer Spout Well and there was at one time a well in the

Vicarage garden.<sup>2</sup> It is interesting to speculate that the church stands near the spot where St. Chad preached and baptised. More fancifully, legend says that Garmel the Thame commenced to build a church on the north side of the River Roach at a place now called Newgate. During the night the stones were removed to the top of the hill and the same thing happened every time building was attempted on the river bank.<sup>3</sup> The real reason for the hill top site of the church was probably the wooded valley and steep hillside. Also it was the nearest place to the castle which would have stood on the hill opposite, giving defensive positions controlling the river valley floor.<sup>4</sup> The River Roach then ran in a different direction than today.

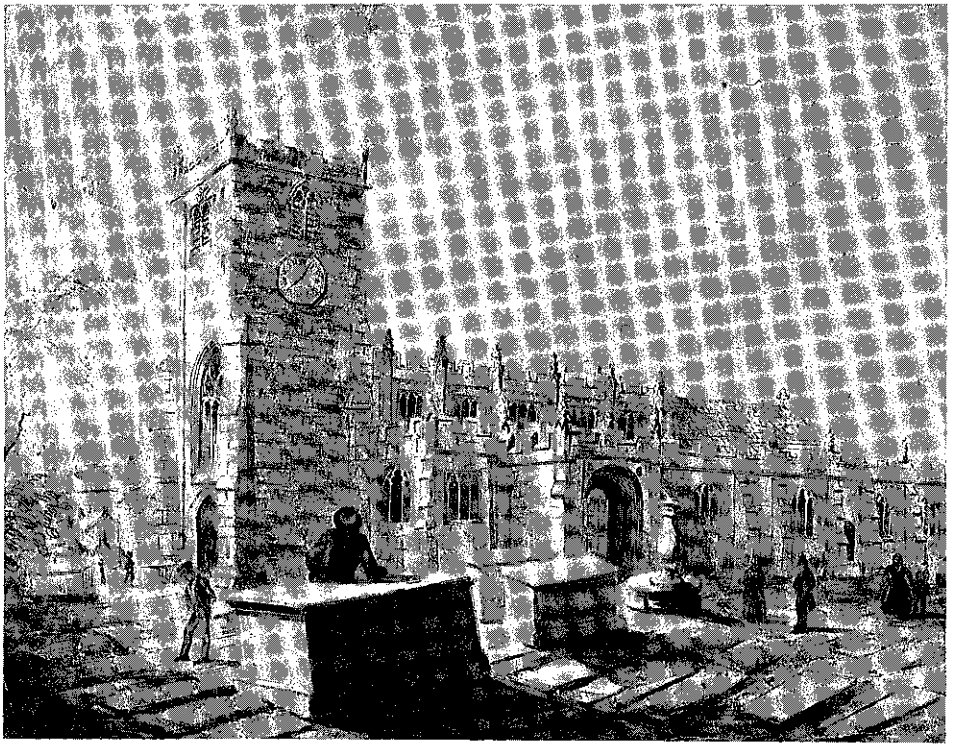
St. Chad died in 672 and the only other church dedicated to his name in the North West of ancient foundation is that of Poulton-le-Fylde. In a talk on the church Dr. Wilson (Vicar 1890–1905) maintains that the church at Rochdale was dedicated to St. Chad by the Bishop of Lichfield in 673, forming part of the parish of Whalley.<sup>5</sup> The early church would have been constructed of stone and timber, maybe even of wattle. Little remains of the original structure of such a church except the Saxon wall. This wall in the north west corner of the churchyard, consisting of slates of Whitworth stone, was found partially buried in 1903 and was re-erected, Dr. Wilson remarking at the time on the length of the wall, thirty-three feet.

In 1816, on the north west side of the church near the then north door, was found a zigzag moulding which was part of a Norman arch. Dr. Whitaker in his *History of Whalley* describes, in addition to the above, the finding of two other objects. One was a shapeless stone 8" deep, 11" diameter, with rivets to form a metallic lining, thought to be a font and found in the north aisle. The second, found in the Trinity Chapel, was a lachrymatory or tear bottle. This indicated a burial in the Roman fashion. Roman customs did not survive much longer than 250 years after the departures of the Romans in 440. The fact that there is no mention of a church in the

<sup>2</sup> Roc.L.H.Lib. CHA/1.

<sup>3</sup> Parish Magazine Sept. 1922. Rochdale Churchman Aug. 1981.

<sup>4</sup> Castle means earthwork. <sup>5</sup> Newspaper cutting Chetham's Library.



*Rochdale Parish Church, 1840.*

Domesday Book (1088) is of little account. Owing to the difficulties of the terrain the sparse populated areas were not as well surveyed as the towns.

In Edward the Confessor's time (1234–1307) Garmel the Thane held lands in Rachedham or Racedum. A Thane's position was held because he owned land, a church and or a castle. Garmel the Thane held two hides of land from the King. A hide is a measure of land which varied from 60–120 acres. Garmel also in 1086 owned as a gift from Roger de Poicton two carucates of land. A carucate is the measure of land which could be ploughed in a season by a team of oxen.

Garmel was in the highest order of Thanes by virtue of his holding his land direct from the King. Therefore it can be assumed that he had a church. He certainly owned a castle as it is referred to in 12th century documents.

Adann de Spotland gave before 1194 land for the Love of God and to save his soul and his wives, his ancestors and succession, to all the Saints and to St. Cedde and the Church at Rochdale.

In the late twelfth or early thirteenth century a William Stapelton gave a plot of land at Saddleworth to build a church. In so doing he said that he had sworn on the relics of the holy saints at St. Chad, Rochdale, to found this church at Saddleworth. To have relics indicates an earlier church had cherished these relics.

The above pointers tend to support the theories of a church prior to 1194 and perhaps endorse Dr. Wilson's premise that the church was dedicated in 673.

However, when the speculation is ended all that is certain is that when Roger de Lacey succeeded to his father's lands he found in 1194 Geoffrey the Dean as Vicar. He had probably succeeded to the title on the death of his son Robert holding the rectory in his own right. At this time the area around Rochdale was heavily forested. The forests were teeming with wild life and so secluded that the rectors or deans as they were named were cut off from ecclesiastical authority. The nearest such authority was the Bishop

of Lichfield. The Rectors of Whalley and Rochdale were often married so the posts were hereditary, passing from father to son, or failing that to the next of kin. The Council of Luteran in 1215 not only prohibited priests from marrying but also dissolved priests' marriages. Thus ended the custom of the Whalley Church and the patronage went to the chief lord of the district.

On the death of Geoffrey the Elder sometime between 1214-1233 Roger de Lacey gave the lands to the Cistercian monks of Stanlow who in 1296 moved to Whalley. In 1277 there was a Vicarage confirmed by Roger de Marland, Bishop of Lichfield. In 1220 Geoffrey the Younger, known as Galfridas son of Galfridas, surrendered his rights to the Abbot of Stanlow. This Geoffrey was the last Vicar to marry till the Reformation. He married the daughter of the Lord of Samlesbury. He had four sons, one of whom founded the locally well-known family of the Townleys. Geoffrey resigned in 1235.

At this point we leave the past momentarily and move into the present, to tour in fact or imagination this 'Auld Church' and to observe the changes and events that have taken place, resulting in the building as seen today. What better place to commence such a tour than in the churchyard. In 1970 many gravestones were removed and placed to form pavements. This and the landscaping of lawns and rosebeds was executed at a cost of £7,000 by the Rochdale Corporation.

One has a choice of several entrances to the churchyard. By climbing the 122 steps first mentioned in 1660: by the stile from Church Stile: by the Lych Gate: through the archway in the wall to the churchyard on the west side. This wall until 1977 extended the whole length of the churchyard from north to south. This high wall was built by Dr. Tunstall (1757-1762) to separate the churchyard from the Vicarage. The reason for the building of the wall at the request of Mrs. Tunstall was that she wished to prevent her daughters from playing with the local children and thus acquiring a northern accent. The archway of course leads from the old

Vicarage, now the R.M.B. Museum, and was built in 1726 by Dr. Dunster.

Anyone entering the churchyard by this door will notice how much higher the level of the churchyard is than the garden they have just left. This is due to the number of interments that have taken place over this period.<sup>6</sup>

In the north west corner of the churchyard is the Saxon wall previously mentioned and together on the south side are the sundial from 1783, which used to stand where the War Memorial to the two World Wars now stands.

By the stile and the path to the Church steps are the Stocks, last used in 1822. These bear the date 1668 and the initials W.W. At one time there was a William Woodley serving as captain of the town watchmen.<sup>7</sup> The stocks were repaired in 1786 by the Churchwardens, although they were not church property. The stocks used to stand in the street outside the churchyard but in 1891 were erected in the churchyard. Old drawings were used and the timber was from pews which had been made in 1873 from the wood of Henry Pigot's (1662-1722) porch constructed in 1700. In 1931 and again in 1980-81 they were repaired, this last time by Rochdale M.B.C. It can only be a forlorn hope that they still retain pieces of Pigot's pine!

At the east end is the fenced grave of the Lancashire poet Tim Bobbin with its inscription 'Here lies John and with him Mary, cheek by jowl and never vary, no wonder that they so agree, John wants no Punch and Moll no Tea'. A wry comment on Tim who enjoyed a glass of ale as much as anyone. The West door of the church bears on each side an Angel, one with a harp and the other with tympani. There are other external carvings on the building, and terminals of broad moulds can be seen on the older part of the building. The Tower bears an ancient face on the south side, whilst at the east end Queen Victoria and Prince Albert, along with three fishes representing the River Roach, adorn the wall. At the side of the small door at the south east of the Nave is the last of many iron

<sup>6</sup> Fishwick R.O. Sept. 1907.

<sup>7</sup> Maxim Papers R.L.L.H.

ittings; it is a semi-circular foot scraper 16" in diameter.<sup>8</sup> The Porch built in 1873 replaces Henry Pigot's porch built in 1700. The present porch was, in 1977, fitted with an iron door with armoured plated glass insets. The side windows of the porch were replaced because of vandalism with a plastic material.

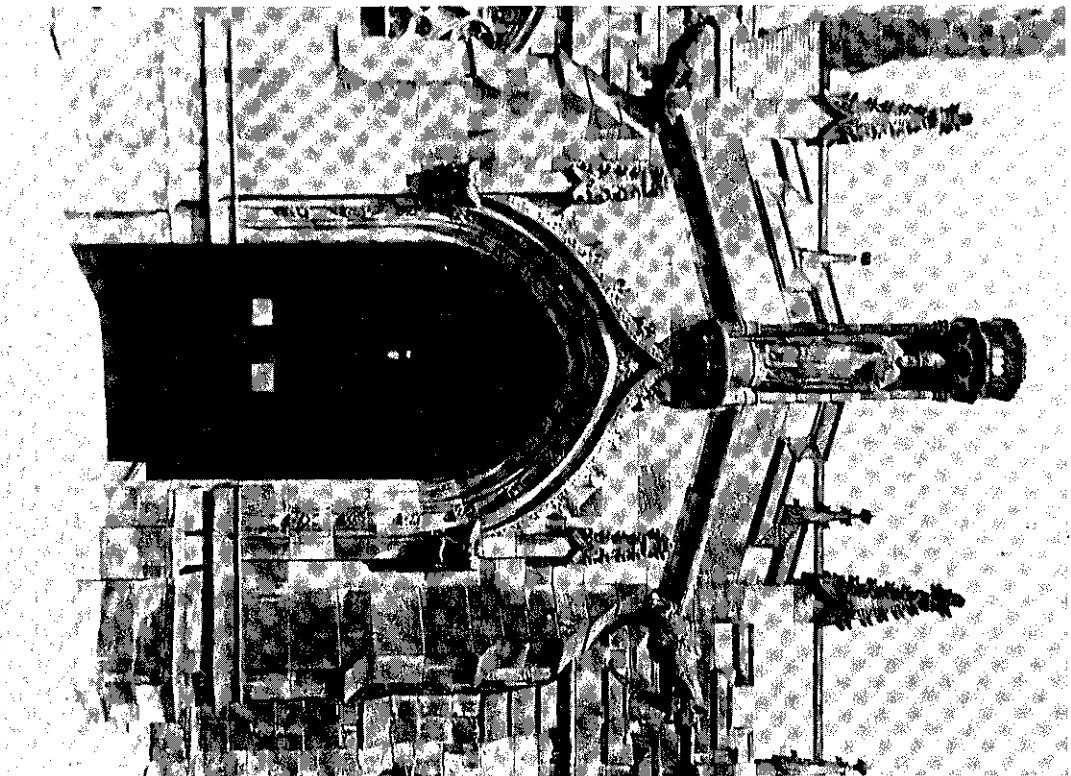
Over the porch is a statuette depicting St. Chad holding the church in his hand. The statuette is flanked on each side by an Angel. These Angels are defaced by the weather as are those of the West door, so that the inscription cannot now be deciphered. The Angel on the left bears a scroll on which was the Lex referring to the opening words of the Book of John 'In the beginning was the word'. The Angel on the right bears an open book on which was inscribed EC CL IO. One of the gravestones in the porch pavement is still partially readable and bears the following words - 'Here was interred the remains of John Taylor, Grocer 27 Feb. 1818 Age 46 years. Esther his wife 27 Dec. 1801 Age 32 years. Also Ellen daughter of the above 27 March 1800 Age 1 yr 9 months.' As you enter notice the board with the names of 42 Vicars since 1194.

### THE NAVE

It is thought that the church was rebuilt in the perpendicular style in the decade 1470-1480. At this time the nave must have had benches or forms. This can be inferred because as Edmund Howarth and a James Collyrige referred a dispute between their wives to John Byron. Both wives wished to kneel in the same spot at their prayers. John Byron directed that neither should interfere with the coming and going of the other but pray in the allotted place. This agreement was dated 1473.

In 1536 John Paslow, Abbot of Whalley was executed at Lancaster for his part in the rebellion known as the Pilgrimage of Grace. Two years later Henry VIII let the church and parsonage to one of his pages, Henry Parker, for 21 years after which it reverted to Cramner, Archbishop of Canterbury. This was confirmed by

<sup>8</sup> Maxim Papers R.L.L.H.



*St. Chad's Porch.*

Edward VI. In 1550 the Archbishop let the rights to Sir John Byron for 21 years.

It has been pointed out that the fact of the Archbishop of Canterbury being for so long patron had an important bearing on the type of parson who became Vicar of Rochdale. The result was that instead of local parsons being appointed those who held the living were men who represented the various opinions and fashions of the Anglican church.<sup>9</sup>

The pillars are in the style of the 14th century and at least two on the south side are original. The capitals are flowered, the whole in the manner of Canterbury Cathedral. The pillars were probably defaced by the erecting and lowering of the galleries.<sup>10</sup> The chamfers are the marks of the Canterbury masons who in the grotesque faces caricatured their friends.

Around the period 1530–1540 numerous gifts of money were given or left in wills to the church. For example in 1557 a Robert Belfield gave money for the 'reedifying' of the church. It is probable that the clerestory was added, the pitch of the nave roof altered and the south aisle rebuilt during this decade. At this time of rebuilding began the custom of families claiming seats. An Edmund Leigh was allowed to erect by the south door a form for the use of himself and his family in 1621. Prior to the Reformation there were no seats in the chancel. However as the chancel was kept in repair by the owner of the rectorial tithes there is a likelihood that seats were first placed in the chancel by the Byrons, who for so long were owners of the tithes.

In 1635 the chancel floor was paved at a cost of £40. The seats were arranged 'uniformed quirewise' and so the much quoted entry from the 1643 churchwardens' accounts for '3 hedgehogs'. The hedgehogs would have been bought to keep clean from insects the 'Rishes' mentioned in earlier years. Every year new rushes or as called 'Rishes' were taken to the church with much merrymaking. The rushes acted as a carpet to insulate from the cold arising from the stone floor.

<sup>9</sup> Howarth Raines Vicars of Rochdale.

<sup>10</sup> Fishwick p.136.

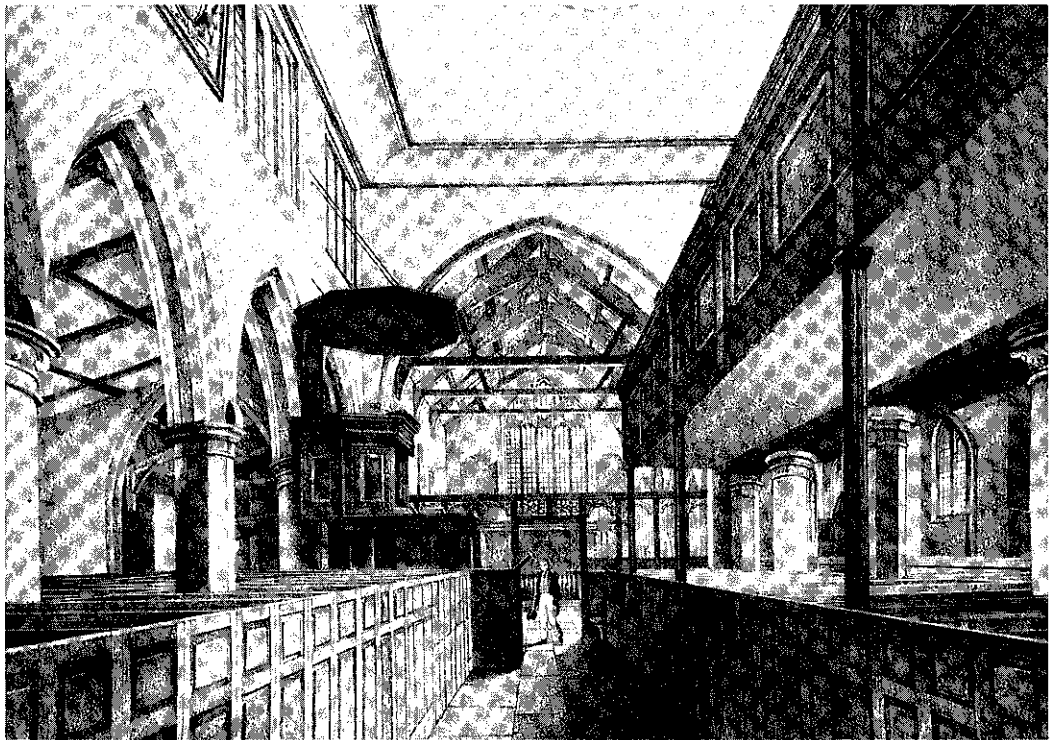
The period of 1660 onwards is the era of Henry Pigot, St. Chad's longest serving vicar, with 60 years' service and also the oldest in office when he died in 1722 at the age of 92. As time passed by the practice grew up of selling pews as in 1733 Messrs. Holt and Brierley and Brierley and Stott all bought or sold pews. The practice continued until in 1813 nine pews were sold by auction at prices from £24–£205. All the pews were nominally free but by the beginning of the 19th century only approximately 40% were free. The last owner of a pew, Sir Clement Royds, conveyed his pew to the Parochial Church Council in 1926.

It appears that in Henry Pigot's time the seats were lined with baize and in 1707 a dispute arose between Pigot and Alexandra Butterworth over a seat. Pigot locked the church doors so Butterworth sent in a servant through the window to 'haye green bees' on the seat. On the next Sunday Pigot attempted to claim the seat and a struggle took place with Butterworth. Pigot thereupon proceeded outside with the congregation. Butterworth as a J.P. then ordered the congregation, regarding them as a crowd of people, to disperse.

The living consisting of the parsonage or rectory belonged to the Archbishop of Canterbury and for 120 years prior to 1760 was leased to the Byron family. A seat in the chancel bears the Byron arms. These are of the fourth Duke and those of his wife who before her marriage was a Portland.

In addition there were certain seats designated as the Yeoman seats. These seats had been occupied from time immemorial by Yeomen and 'first gentlemen'. The seats or pews did not have any doors. In January 1799 a Mr. Richard Holt, lawyer, acting for the Archbishop of Canterbury or his agent a Mr. Young, enclosed the whole of the seats and appropriated seats for himself, family and friends. The churchwardens called a meeting of the congregation and ratepayers. A committee was formed to oppose the action. On February 15th the seats were opened up by sawing off the ends. The following Sunday the committee members sat in the pews. The





*Interior of Church prior to 1829 from an original stone engraving.*

dispute was referred to a Dr. Alexander Croke. Dr. Croke decided that whilst the Archbishop had the right to the seats in the chancel this was over-ruled by tradition and custom. The Holls refused to comply with the ruling and did not restore the seats to their original condition. So the committee carried out the restoration. Mr. Holt continued to occupy the seats, threatening to sue the carpenter for damage to his property but did not carry out the threat.

In the early eighteenth century many pews were erected. Alexandra Butterworth had a seat by the North door in 1707. Thirteen years later the Holls and the Woolfendens all bought pews. In 1763 all the forms and benches were replaced by pews at the expense of a Mr. Stead. A new copy of the Royal arms was placed in the North aisle replacing the one erected in 1664. The Royal arms were taken down in 1864. A vestry meeting in 1738 decided that the church was in a dilapidated condition and too small so the chapel of ease of St. Mary's was built. In this period Byron repaired the chancel (1740). In 1742-1745 the North side and roof of the nave were repaired. In 1814 with the church in decay once more a new church was proposed. The Vicar and others opposed the idea. However there was a large body of people in favour. A bill was promoted in Parliament which met with opposition and eventually the Bill was changed to one for a chapel of ease St. James 1815. It was really a matter of economics. A new church would have cost £7,421-2-11 or with Tower £10,266-5-1 but the church could be repaired for approximately £900. The architect was a Mr. Taylor. The work of restoration is described in a report presented by Sir Jeffrey Wyatt to the Bishop of Chester. A new wall with seven feet foundations was laid in the Trinity Chapel. Part of the chancel was re-slatted. The gallery over what could have been the rood screen was removed. Prior to the reformation the screen would have borne a crucifix, and was removed in 1854. Maybe the gallery was the one erected in 1707 for the use of the singing boys prior to the erection in 1777 of a small loft over the seats which were at each side of the organ.



Further repairs consisted of restoring some of the arches and pillars on the south side, a chancel arch and one arch on the north side. One of the pillars, the third from the east end south side, was 14 inches out of perpendicular. It was also recommended that to protect the walls of the church two rows of gravestones should be laid flat against the walls to form a pavement. This recommendation was not carried out until 150 years later.

## GALLERIES

In 1693 a West gallery was erected partly in the belfry and partly in the nave. This was described in the relevant faculty as for the use of families who contributed to the cost and who should 'be in want of good and convenient seats'. The contributors were Messrs. Buckley, Howarth and Gartside. It was also stated that sufficient light should be allowed for the font. In 1699 a South gallery was added, reached by a staircase which was at the chancel end.<sup>11</sup> The contributors to the cost were C. Gartside and S. Ramsden. In the West gallery in 1791 seats were placed on the north and south sides of the organ. These seats were available on rental. The wardens gave these rents to the singing boys. During the Wyatt/Taylor restoration, pillars were used to support the South gallery. It had been earlier suggested, in 1776, that a gallery was erected on the north side but this work was not carried out.

A vestry meeting in August 1854 decided on further restoration. This was to consist of pulling down the north chancel aisle wall and inserting a new arch, and the north chancel to be extended so that the aisle was in line with the east chancel wall. This formed an organ chamber approximately 11 feet square. The baptistry at the north west end was to be converted into a vestry and the font placed by the south door. The north east vestry was to be pulled down. This new vestry could be entered from the Church but the old vestry was entered from the churchyard, just a step from the north door which was blocked up in this restoration. A drawing by Physick of this

<sup>11</sup> R.L.H.L.

vestry in 1833 shows a vestry with a chimney, which was built in 1773 when the partition between vestry and church was carried to ceiling height.<sup>12</sup> This perhaps was the reason for the purchase in 1824 of a firegrate, fender, tongs and poker. It could however have been that these articles were for use in the room with a fireplace, built in 1803 on the west wall for the use of nursing mothers at christenings. Many babies would be christened at the one ceremony and a prank was often played on the mothers by some of the men who had come for the baptism. After they had frequented one of the hostelries opposite the church they would return and whilst the mothers were gossiping in this room the men would switch the babies into different carriages. The mother then hurried home with her own carriage but the wrong baby.

A new west gallery replaced the old one containing the organ. The nave was re-roofed. A suggestion not carried out was that the south aisle be extended to provide seating, together with space in the tower, for 150 children.<sup>13</sup>

The next restoration was 1867 with a Mr. Cockburn as architect. At this time the tower was to remain the same height because the Vicar Dr. Molesworth objected to any increase in the height of the tower. Dr. Molesworth had offered to defray the cost of an entrance to the tower. The clock and chimes were in need of repair. For some reason not stated in the minutes of the Restoration Committee for February 2nd 1870, the architect was changed from Mr. Cockburn to Mr. Crossland who had designed Rochdale Town Hall. In a letter dated 2nd May 1870, Dr. Molesworth again stated his objection to any increase in height and that the present height was better suited to the size of the church than under Mr. Crossland's plan. Also he stated that it was silly seating people in the vestry and ignoring any alterations to the south aisle and porch. On November 3rd 1870 a new committee was formed for Mr. Crossland's plan. This was to take down the West gallery which held 45 people. The new plan seated 75 people so that 30 seats were gained. The cost to the congregation would be £2,000

<sup>12</sup> Promptpiece Fishwick.

<sup>13</sup> Plans R.L.H.L.

approximately but already £850 had been promised. The Bishop expressed the opinion that the church should increase in size, so the work began. The work consisted of:

1. Removing the clock and chimes.
2. Taking down the Porch and Vestry and lengthening the South aisle.
3. Rebuilding the Porch, extending the Vestry. Taking down and rebuilding the South aisle and extending to form what is now the choir vestry by 20 feet. The rebuilt porch was to be roofed with deal.
4. Installing the new West and South doors.
5. Increasing the height of the Tower by 30 feet.
6. Removing the old oak seats and placing in the basement of the Tower.
7. Placing the font in the Tower area.
8. Cutting away the wall of the Tower on the north side to form a door into the Vestry.
9. Removing bodies and stones if that were necessary.

It was estimated to cost £2,127 but instead cost £2,500. Some of the costs were as follows:

To making the seating of the north and south aisles uniform £280.

The Tower costs were: The making of the entrance, including a screen to separate the tower from the church £37. Ringing Chamber ceiling £34. Window glazing £66. Plastering £20.

Total tower costs £400.

The church would now seat 561. The restoration work was carried out by Messrs. John Chambers and Son of Bishop Monkton near Ripon. Messrs. Earp and Company of London who had worked at the Town Hall building executed the carving.

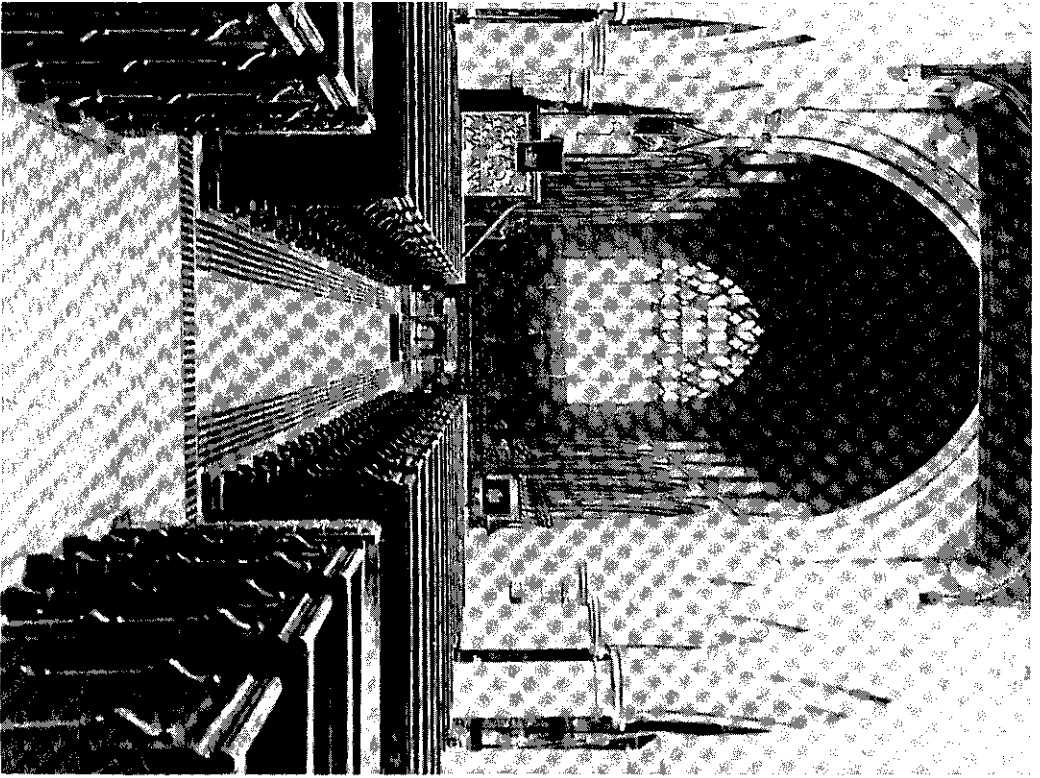
In the period 1883-1888 extensive alterations were made under the direction of Dr. Maclure (Vicar). The building at this time was very shaky due to the numerous interments that had taken place over the years. The last interment had been in 1858.

The architect Mr. Crowther had been architect for the building of Manchester Cathedral. The chancel was rebuilt and extended eastwards, as were St. Katherine's and Trinity Chapels. Between two of the piers there was nothing but sand and the columns were out of the perpendicular and in such a bad state that the building was liable to collapse. The vestry was enlarged at a cost of £22-11-8 initially but ultimately the cost was £37-0-6.

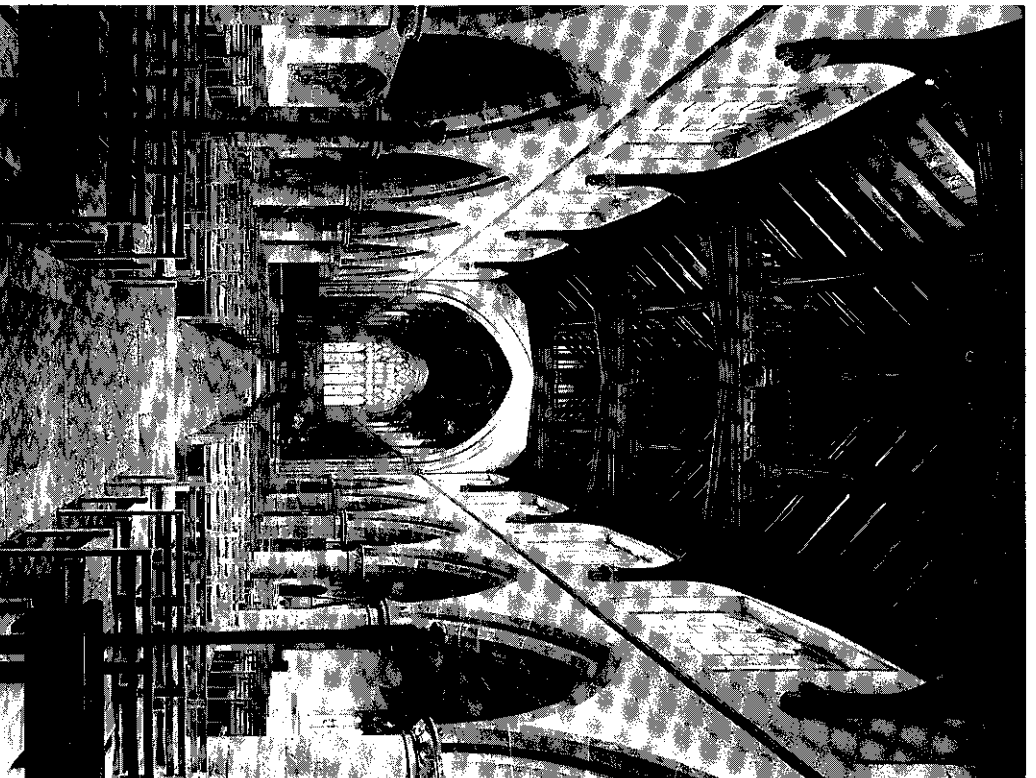
Dr. Maclure resigned in 1890, the first Vicar to do so since Henry Tilson's resignation on becoming the Bishop of Elphin in 1635. Dr. Maclure did therefore not carry out his plans for the rebuilding of the porch to contain a library and the addition of a Chapter House. The total cost of the restoration was £3,239-14-1. In 1886 the high box pews were removed, earlier described as reminiscent of sheep pens. In the autumn of this year the floor of the nave was lowered to its original level which had been raised in Dr. Molesworth's time for the installation of the heating apparatus. New bases were placed on the pillars. The cost of £300, which included new heating apparatus, was borne by a Mr. T. Dawson.<sup>14</sup>

Various repairs were carried out as required over the years but not until 1952, on the appointment of Canon Nightingale, was any major restoration of the whole church undertaken. This was very extensive, taking 20 years to complete. The pews were replaced by chairs. The total seating capacity including the chapels is now 465. Each chair was provided with a hassock. The chairs were designed by Russel who was responsible for the chairs in Coventry and Winchester cathedrals. The north and south aisles were re-roofed with copper. The exterior and interior stonework was cleaned. The interior was done by hand cleaning and not sand blasting. The organ was rebuilt with the console in the chancel, at a cost of £7,000, underfloor heating was installed together with two new radiators. The cost was £40,000. Many items of furniture were given by members of the congregation, including kneeling rails. Like the painting of a certain bridge, repair work and restoration

<sup>14</sup> Rochdale Memoranda p.169 R.L.H.L.



*Nave and Chancel before 1907.*



*Nave and Chancel after Restoration was completed 1970.*

are never completed and now, ten years on in 1982, it is estimated that once again £40,000 will have to be spent to halt the deterioration of the fabric.

### THE TOWER

The tower is the oldest part of the fabric. A respond in the south side is of the 13th century. It is suggested that the tower was erected in the reign of Stephen (1097-1154). This presupposes an earlier date for the church than is usually accepted.

In 1717 the wardens were authorised 'that the present church-wardens shall and may at the easiest expense provide a mason and other workmen to repair and amend the West Window in the steeple to the best advantage'. When completed, the wardens wrote 'Repaired and amended with stone brought from Oldham' - the only place where there was stone of that particular type. The West Window mentioned above lighted the ringing room and was a patchwork of different coloured glass.

In 1814, when a new church was envisaged, the Parish Clerk in evidence before a committee said that he could pull down the tower with his penknife! In spite of his opinion the tower still stands after 1¾ centuries of further bell ringing.

Fishwick says that a view of the west of the church by Physick in 1830 shows no west door.<sup>15</sup> There are many prints of Physick's east end view of the church but the print Fishwick refers to does not seem to have survived. Fishwick points out that in pre-reformation times there was nearly always a West door, so that on entering one could see the altar. There was a West door in 1707 because Thomas Leyland was granted permission to erect a seat by the 'Greate Door'. Even as late as 1808 J. Dearden paid £63 for a seat between the Great Door and the Little Door. This could however have referred to the two south doors.

Sometime in the 1750's a portion of the West wall of the tower was hacked away and it became the Parish Hearse House. A photo

of the church with clock shows a small door in the position where the steps to the belfry are now situated.<sup>16</sup>

In 1845 the church was first heated by steam pipes but earlier in 1823 two stoves were purchased. It may be assumed that the stoves were placed in the tower area because Dr. Brierley, in his book *Reminiscences of Rochdale*, says 'there was some sort of heating apparatus and the ground floor of the tower was a scandalous rubbish hole.'<sup>17</sup> Dr. Brierley also relates an incident when Dr. Molesworth told Mr. Dearden of the complaints that he had received regarding the cold church. Mr. Dearden replied, saying 'Tell them to drink a quart of ale before they come to church and they will noan be starved'. This advice if acted upon may have warmed the congregation and contributed to vigorous singing. The complaints were to be expected if the only heat was the fire in the vestry and the fire in the christening room, plus the two stoves and the installation in 1845 of two steam pipes. In the plans for 1855 it was proposed that a heating chamber be placed underneath the vicar's new vestry. This was not carried out because during the 1865 rebuilding of the tower heat was provided from a building in the north west of the churchyard.

As we have seen, in 1867 when Mr. Cockburn was appointed architect the tower was to remain the same height because Dr. Molesworth the Vicar objected to any raising of the tower's height. Dr. Molesworth had promised to defray the cost of an entrance to the tower. Mr. Henry Cockburn of Middleton had been appointed architect by Dr. Molesworth for his projected tower entrance so it was resolved at a meeting in July 1869 that Cockburn be appointed for the whole of the tower restoration.

In August 1869 an appeal was made by the committee to restore the tower, stating that no material alteration was to be made to the height of the tower, or its internal arrangement, the work with slight variations to be strictly a restoration of the tower as it then stood. The estimate was £700. The Vicar promised £200

<sup>16</sup> R.L.I.H. Dept.

<sup>17</sup> Dr. Brierley would be about 8-10 years old at this time.

for the lower part 'if the public will restore the upper part of the tower'. Mr. Cockburn however insisted on heightening the tower, at a cost of £700-800. This would be without the West Door. Without increasing the height the cost would have been £400-500, including Dr. Molesworth's contribution for the door. For some reason not stated in the minutes of the Restoration Committee of 2nd February 1870, the architect was changed from Mr. Cockburn to Mr. Crossland, the architect for the Rochdale Town Hall. Earlier attention had been called to the very dilapidated state of the church tower. A large cross beam had fallen, damaging the chime mechanism of the clock. The wardens consulted Mr. Kitchen who was Clerk of the Works at the Town Hall building, and he recommended immediate repair work. Mr. Crossland on his appointment spoke of 'the great danger which exists to the whole tower and risks to the lives of the ringers every time the bells are rung'. In March 1870 the committee decided to have an alternative plan prepared by Mr. Crossland which suggested raising the height. On 2nd May 1870 Dr. Molesworth again stated in a letter his objection that the tower was in proportion much better suited to the size of the church than Mr. Crossland's plan.

The repair of the tower continued and it was found that one corner was unsafe. This corner was taken down and rebuilt as far as the top of the buttresses. The elevation of the tower was raised by 35 feet, making the total height of the tower 95 feet which resulted in an extra storey. The tower was opened up by the West Door and made into the principal entrance of the church. A new ashlar was fitted to the exterior of the doorway and the West Door was of double oak. A screen was erected between the tower and the church. An entrance was made into the Vicar's vestry by a door in the north wall of the tower because the vestry was no longer visible from the church. The alterations brought into view the West Window which Mr. Crossland said contained little of the original stonework. The plain glass window was very prominent from the

body of the church. In memory of his parents Mr. C. M. Royds replaced this window with a window by Burne-Jones, depicting Faith, Hope and Charity. The glass was by another prominent exponent of the pre-Raphaelite School, William Morris. A brass plaque on the north wall records the names of the Vicar and wardens who restored the tower.

### THE CLOCK

It was intended to repair the chimes and the clock. The clock had not been noted for accurate timekeeping. This clock had been installed in 1789, replacing an earlier one. The Churchwardens' Accounts for 1644 contain 5/- for the repair of a clock. In 1787 this clock was installed in St. Mary's Todmorden where it remained until 1860 when, together with a bell formerly of St. Chad's, it was sold as scrap.

On May 27th 1787, a meeting agreed to purchase a new clock which struck the quarters. Next month a further meeting resolved to purchase two more bells and the clock was to be an eight-day one. So in 1788 a Mr. John Barnish of Toad Lane, who was about 30 years of age at this time, was asked to make a chiming clock. Having not made such a clock before he went to London to listen to the chimes of the various church clocks there. Maybe he also collected a few tips from fellow clockmakers.

In making the clock Mr. Barnish was assisted by a Mr. Stockton, a friend who transposed the tunes for the barrel of the chimes, the clockmaker doing the actual work. Mr. Stanton died on 25th May 1823 and is buried near the West Wall by the Museum area. The clock frames were of wrought iron and the wheels were of brass with steel pinions.

The chimes played 7 tunes, one for each day of the week. They were: Sunday, 104th Psalm; Monday, Lovely Nancy; Tuesday, Life let us Cherish; Wednesday, Ipswich; Thursday, Portpatrick; whilst Friday was the 103rd Psalm and Saturday, Britons Strike

Home. The words of Lovely Nancy are the only ones that have been handed down and appear to be somewhat garbled.<sup>18</sup>

'Adieu my lovely Nancy, ten thousand times adieu

I am going to cross the ocean to seek for something new

Come and change a ring with me my dear

Come and change a ring with me

And let it be a token my dear when I am on the sea.

When I am on the sea love, you know not where I am

Love letters I will write you from every foreign land

With the secrets of my heart dear and the best of my good will

So let my body lie where my heart is with you still.'

The clock was inspected by a Peter Farnley of Wigan, Clockmaker in 1790 and was passed as correct. The estimate of £350 was exceeded and so the wardens called a meeting. The ratepayers were charmed by the chimes and so quickly passed the bill for payment with its 20 guineas excess. This generosity was shortlived for six months later the bill had still not been paid. Mr. Barnish said that he would forego the 20 guineas if the bill was paid. The wardens paid the bill and arranged for Mr. Barnish to receive 4 guineas for servicing the clock. The clock chamber was below the bells and the pendulum went through the roof of the bell-ringers' room. The length of the pendulum is not known. A brass plate was fastened to the clock frame reading 'This clock and chimes made in the year of our Lord 1789 by John Barnish, Clockmaker in Rochdale. Dr. Hind Vicar. Benjamin Shaw. John Kay. Benjamin Meanley. John Wordsworth.'

The clock had to be wound twice a week. The chimes only went for 12 hours so it was necessary to wind twice a day. It became a hobby with Mr. Barnish to care for the chimes and he would never let them be interrupted. Often he would hurry round to the ringing room from his home in Drake Street to stop the bell ringers if they were not halting to allow the chimes to ring. He was afraid of the damage that the bell ringers might have caused. This led to a constant battle of words. Over his door in the Crescent he had a

large clock on which was inscribed 'Deface me not I mean no ill, But stand to save for good or ill'. In his garden was the figure of a man which turned on a pivot and looked at the sun through a telescope.

Barnish died on May 26th 1829, aged 69 and was buried at St. Mark's, Cheetham Hill, Manchester. The grave marked Barnish in the churchyard is that of his parents and his children.

For another 20 years the chimes were kept in repair by Mr. Crowther, a Surgeon.<sup>19</sup> After Mr. Crowther died the chimes gradually ceased to function and the last tune rung over the town was Lovely Nancy, sometime around 1865. In 1923 a John Taylor of Drake Street wrote in the Rochdale Times, saying that he used to attend to the clock, presumably after Mr. Crowther's death. Also Mr. Taylor said that he thought the chimes had ceased to play in 1865 but for the previous 5 years they had only played Lovely Nancy and Life let us Cherish. He also said that his brother Clement Taylor took out the clock in 1872, for which he made a charge of £2-10-0 and sold for scrap for £3-1-3.<sup>20</sup> The faces were placed face down, one in the tower floor and the other in the Vicar's vestry. When the clock was dismantled it was found to be a six-day clock and not an eight-day as was installed in 1789 so it must have been altered at some time. The clock was dismantled because the new Town Hall had one of the finest clocks in the country and a carillon of twelve bells. If the chimes and the clock had been repaired a situation could have arisen where the church clock at noon played a psalm whilst the Town Hall clock played a country dance.<sup>21</sup> It would also have been necessary for the tower to be built higher to compete in strength with the Town Hall. This would have been extra expense. So sadly the clock was no more. If it had been repaired the tunes would have rung out over the town with no competition from the Town Hall, whose carillon was destroyed in the Fire in 1883.

To return to the tower, in 1896 the older portion of the north wall of the tower below the bell chamber cracked and a bulge

<sup>18</sup> Maxim Papers R.L.H.L.

<sup>19</sup> Rochdale Times Sept. 1923.  
<sup>21</sup> Report of meeting R.O. April 22, 1871.

<sup>20</sup> Rochdale Times Sept. 1923.

developed. The bulge was in the area where the old clock facings had been clamped to the wall. These faces had consisted of two stone slabs and their weight had aggravated the condition of the wall. The cracking and bulging was also due to the vibration of the bells, plus the extra weight of the extended height of the tower. This extra weight did not appear to have affected the foundations or the stability of the tower structure.

It was during the repairs of the battlements and the securing of the pinnacles with copper clamps that the real condition of the tower was discovered. This work, together with pointing the tower, repairs to the porch and aisles, and painting the ironwork of the bells had already cost £80. Final repairs cost £202-4-7. The tower walls were thick but the facings were thin, and the interiors were filled with dry rubble which had subsided. This was the cause of the bulging. The north and west faces of the tower were insecure, due to the insecurity of the bradings. It was found necessary to rebuild a portion of the north wall of an area measuring approximately 22 feet by 7 feet, where the wall had consisted of slabs of 4-6 inches with very few ties. The work was carried out under the direction of Austin and Paley, Architects of Lancaster. They said that the work was complicated and so could not be let out for contract but would have to be done on a day to day basis.<sup>22</sup> The cost of £374 was borne by friends of the Old Church. There was a new flagpole, and the roof of the tower was repaired. In 1909 the lighting of the tower by electricity was completed.

In 1900 the tower entrance was panelled and seats arranged around the walls and not on each side of the font, as originally suggested by the architect Oakley. Oakley had been an apprentice under Crowther who built the chancel. The screen was made to the design of Oakley, by Henry Hoyle a cabinet maker. Hoyle charged £50 for the panelling and 2 oak doors to fold across the West Door. These oak screens dividing the vestries from the chancel were given by Lay Helpers of the Deanery in tribute to Dr. Wilson, and the carving was paid for by Colonel Royds.

<sup>22</sup> P.M. Dec. 1896, p. 9 and Jan. 1897, p. 2.

An investigation in 1936 showed that the structure was safe, even if the belfry floor was not watertight. The pinnacles were strengthened with bronze dowels. Earlier the golden cockerel weather vane had been removed as high winds had caused damage resulting in the entanglement of the flag in the vane. The base of the weather vane, which had acted as a lightning conductor, was removed. A new lightning conductor and a flag pole were fitted. The louvres were split and so were replaced with hard Baccap stone.

The stone slated roof in pyramidal fashion was replaced by a roof of Welsh slates. It was found that the tower timbers did not rest on the masonry of the tower but on four pieces of timber under the gutter and on the inside of the walls. The timber dating from the 1873 tower reconstruction was rotten and the assumption was made that second-hand timber had been used.<sup>23</sup>

The first mention of bells at St. Chad's was of 'fyve grete bells' in 1552. The bells were all cast by Rudhalls of Gloucester, now taken over by the Whitechapel foundry. When there was a clock in the tower the Tenor bell was used for striking the hour. The two bells used for striking the quarters were numbers 4 and 6. The eighth bell, or Tenor bell's note is E flat and thought by many to be equal in tone to many bells several hundred weights heavier. This bell is at the least 260 years old, last recast in 1812. It originally weighed 20 cwts but now weighs 15 cwts.

In 1719 on 4th November a Vestry meeting decided to increase the 5 bells to 6. At some time between 1719 and 1745 the Treble bell was broken. On July 7th, 1745, the Clerk called a meeting to consider a new bell. So sure was he that a new bell would be approved that he wrote up the minutes the day before the meeting. The resolution was turned down and another meeting next day resulted in votes of 189 For - 531 Against. The cracked bell had not been repaired by June 1751 when it was decided to have a new bell and the bells made tuneable. Instead 5 new bells were bought, to be delivered in Salop (Shrewsbury) in February 1752. The foundry

<sup>23</sup> R.P.C. Mag. June 1936.



was in Gloucester and Salop would be a halfway mark, so splitting the carriage charges.<sup>24</sup>

Abel Rudhull charged 25/- a cwt for running the old metal and 1/2d a lb for every additional 1 lb of metal. The bells were taken down by a Mr. Wrigly of Manchester and the new bells rehung for £12.<sup>25</sup>

There is a curious historical fact connected to the dates on the bells. In 1752, for the first time a year was to commence on the 1st of January. Up to that time the 25th day of March was New Year's Day, otherwise the bells would be dated 1751. The sixth bell was recast in 1756. Two new bells were added in 1787, making 8 in all.

In 1795 a board was placed in the belfry containing a verse attributed to Tim Bobbin but he died, so his grave says, 9 years before. At one time the verse was attributed to Barnish the clock maker but this was doubted by the people who knew him. The verse goes:

'You gentlemen that ringers are please read the rules and take great care

No bell o'eturn for if you do, sixpence you pay before you go.

If you brawl, swear, ill words express, your forfeit then shall be no less.

Who offends by tongue or finger must forfeit pay to the

Ringers.

Then meet in love and part in peace, it will your comfort much increase

Observing time your peals to ring, and humbly pray for George our King.

In 1812 the Tenor bell cracked, caused by the number of funerals that were held and the many hours tolling this invoked. A special tolling hammer was provided for the Tenor thus making the bell easier to work. Before a peal could be rung the tolling hammer had to be detached. The bell cracked when a ringer forgot to remove the hammer before ringing a peal. It cost £54-10-0 plus £3-13-4 carriage for repairs. The frame for the bells was so

constructed that the bells hung round the tower from left to right. This is uncommon as they usually hang in the opposite direction. All new frames have followed this construction.

All the bells except the first and second are maiden ones as they were hung as they came from the casting pit, without requiring to be tuned; an unusual circumstance. In May 1872, having failed to raise money for new bells, the eight bells were rehung by Thomas Hooper of Exeter in a frame of English Oak. The bells were returned to Loughborough in 1923-1924 for tuning. For weights see tables in the appendix.

### THE FONT

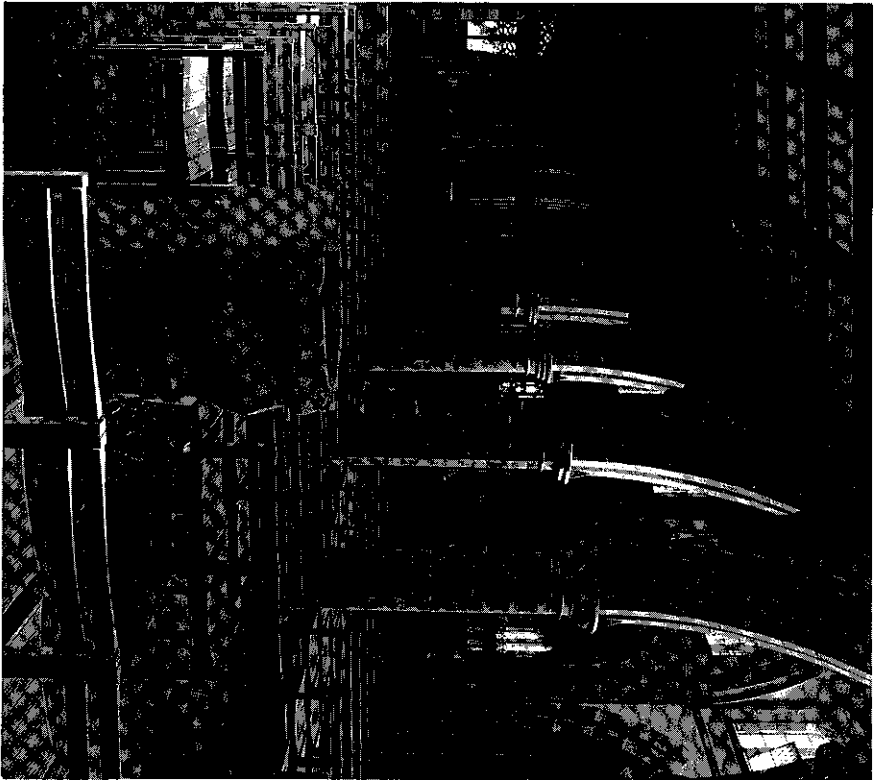
The font is now judged to be 13th to 14th century, Fishwick said 15th, Canon Wilson, Anglo-Saxon. The font was found buried by the sexton whilst he was planting a tree in the churchyard, near the wall opposite the west door on February 7th, 1893. It was probably buried in the 17th century, perhaps in Robert Bath's time (1636-1662) when the font in use was described as a decent basin! The remains of what may have been an earlier font were found in 1815. According to Whitaker it was a circular stone with a hollow if 8" diameter, with external rivets to fasten a lead lining. The next font was a basin girded with iron hoops enclosed in a small stone font placed on a wooden pedestal. The wood decayed and the font was placed in the stable yard. Dr. Maclure's son found pieces of this font in use as rockery in the vicarage garden. It was proposed that the pieces be joined together and placed in the church. However there is now no trace of such a font today but pieces of ecclesiastical rockery can still be seen in the same garden, now the garden of the Museum.

The 1824 font was a marble basin whilst the font prior to the present font was given in 1896 to All Souls, Heywood.

Two features of the present font are the four holes in the rim and the hole in the side to draw off the water. The water was changed

<sup>24</sup> Roc. Times Aug. 25, 1923.

<sup>25</sup> Churchwardens' Accounts R.L.H.L.



*Photograph of the Font, 1970.*

every seven days. The holes in the rim were to secure the cover with locks and staples, common to fonts of this period. This prevented the taking away of water for superstitious purposes and was a result of orders by the Bishop of Salisbury in 1217 and the Council of Durham 1220. The font would have been placed on a pedestal of two or three steps. Until the Reformation baptism was by total immersion. The font when placed in the church on the present pedestal was situated underneath the tower until 1936-1940, when it was placed before the choir vestry. It was moved back to the tower until 1969 and then moved to present position in N.W. aisle. The font had also been in the Vicar's vestry in its two positions.

The Baptisty had regularly been moved around the church to the following locations:

1806 -	N. W. Vestry
1854 -	New N.W. Vestry
1854-1873	By the S. Door
1873-1884	Under Tower
1884-1900	N.W. Aisle
1900 -	Under Tower
1937 -	Back to S. Porch
1940-1968	Under Tower
1968 -	N. Aisle.

### THE PULPIT

The earliest pulpit recorded is the one purchased in 1702 by Henry Pigot for £18-10-0 of which he boasted that it was the best and finest in the Deanery. This pulpit was a three decker, with a huge sounding board and in 1760 it was raised in height. The pulpit was richly panelled with coloured inlaid wood. Sometimes the pulpit was decorated with material. In 1717 it was a velvet cloth with gold fringe but in 1826 the decoration was ermine with gold lace trimming. The top tier was for the preacher which in the 1820's, if

not before, was fitted with a large cushion of crimson velvet filled with feathers. When not delivering the sermon the parson sat in the chancel near the pulpit. If he chose to sit hands on hips there were velvet cushions on which to rest his arms.

The priest taking prayers was in the second tier, whilst the parish clerk sat below in a seat which had been raised in height in 1779. The pulpit faced the south gallery but at the request of Bishop Sumner in November 1829 it was moved to the next pillar to face the south door, at a cost of £37-17-1.<sup>26</sup>

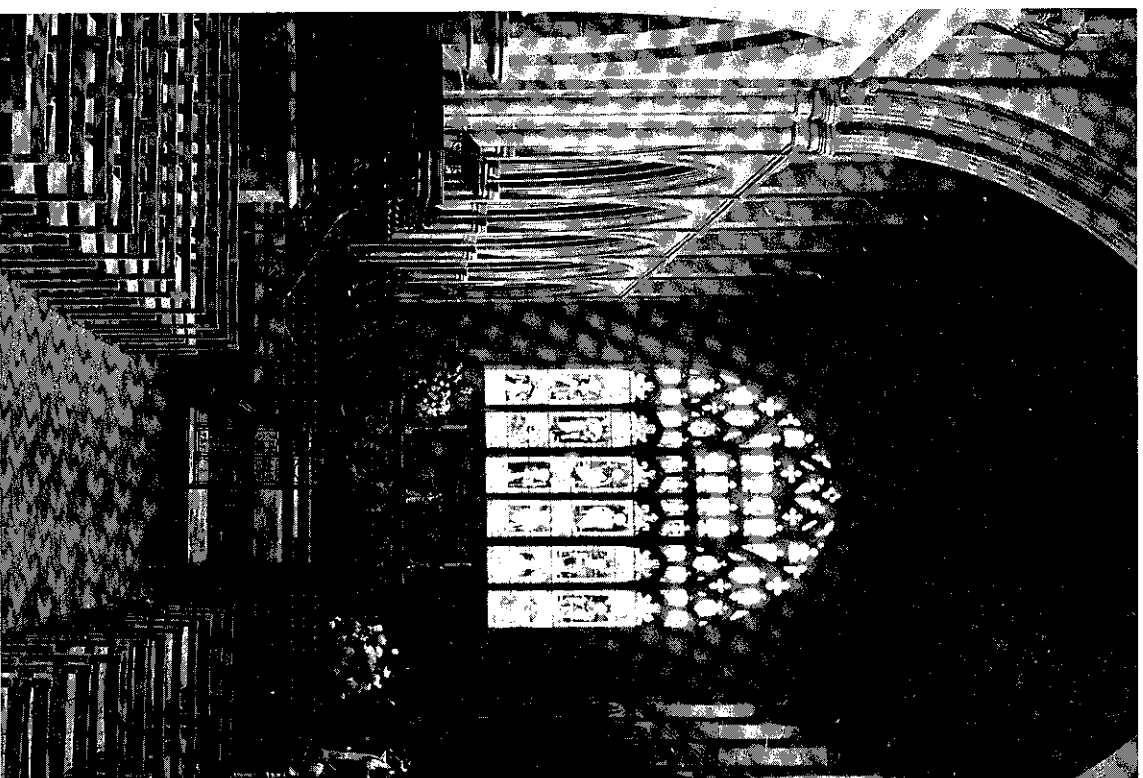
This pulpit was described in 1871 as a four decker because by some means it accommodated another person at the base. The interior also served as a broom cupboard for brooms, mops and buckets. This pulpit was replaced in the 1850's Restoration by a pulpit costing £50 given by Dr. Molesworth. The replacement pulpit was placed on the south side but was later moved to the north side. Subsequently the three decker pulpit was found by Dr. Maclure, rotting in the Vicarage stables, and made into a hat stand. This stand was placed in the Vicarage as an heirloom but has now disappeared.

In 1890 oak from the old chancel was placed behind the pulpit to improve the acoustics. The present pulpit was executed by Hatch of Lancaster and the centrepiece is of Christ delivering the Sermon on the Mount. The flanking side pieces are of St. Peter and St. Paul, also on each side are right: a Lancashire rose; left: an inscription which reads 'Dedicated to the Glory of God in memory of Abraham Brierley by his widow and children. A.D. 1907'.

### THE CHANCEL

The chancel, prior to the restoration of the 1800's was much as it had been in the reign of Edward VI. In appearance it resembled the chancel of Whalley Parish Church. Possibly the same monk was responsible for the building of both chancels.

<sup>26</sup> Rochdale Plot April 22, 1871.



*Photograph of the Pulpit and Chancel, 1970.*

On the death of Entwistle of Foxholes in March 1796, a grave was opened, situated under the first pew on the left as you enter the chancel. At the gravehead was a small stone bearing the inscription 'Here lies Sam Ramsden of Wardleworth March 1726 also Ann 1731'. In the grave were 3 coffins, those of Robert Entwistle April 25th 1778, Robert Entwistle April 20th 1787 and Nancy Entwistle 1796. The grave was now lined with lead. It was the custom to bury the Vicars near the altar so the graves of the following priests are towards the end of the stalls, where the altar would have been prior to 1886: in the centre Henry Pigot, on the south side Sam Dunster July 22nd 1754, and between Pigot and Dunster lie Thomas Wray 1778 and Richard Hind 1790.

In 1803 the Vicar was granted by the Archbishop of Canterbury ground measuring 6' 8" by 5' 4" on which to erect a seat made from a pew. Neither the Vicar nor Curate had owned such a seat before. In 1819 the Curate was given a pew on the left of the centre aisle, near the chancel, measuring 6' 7" wide, length 4' 7½" for the use of self and family. In 1804 the Vicar's seat was situated on the south side, behind a railing dividing the nave from the chancel.

The alterations to the chancel began in 1814/15 when the arch between nave and chancel was rebuilt. In 1848 £14 was spent on roof repairs but two years later the entire chancel was re-roofed at the expense of the Vicar, Dr. Molesworth, and the solid north wall was breached by an arch. At this time, 1851, a new east window was donated by the following persons: The Vicar; James Dearden, Lord of the Manor; R. G. Townley; Newall of Townhouse and Chadwick. The window, from Willemont of London, bore the arms of the last four, costing the donors £175. The installation of the window cost £43-7-0. It was sent to Willemonts in 1885 for adaptation to the new chancel. It was destroyed in a fire so a Mr. Thomas Dawson replaced same with the present Te Deum window in memory of his parents at a cost of £200-£300.

In 1854 a new reredos cost £50, offset by the sale of the rood screen for £35. Eleven years later £59 was spent in tiling the

chancel and Trinity Chapel. The estimated cost of work on the chancel in 1865 was £515 but the final bill was £525-16-1. Architect Joseph Clarke's fees were £45-5-0. This 1854 reredos provided in 1884 the oak panels in the Scarrarium.<sup>27</sup>

Dr. Molesworth wrote to the architect on December 13th, 1851, saying he objected to a proposed increase of his fees from £45 to £100. There was, he said, a complete lack of supervision, the workmen spending more time in the Bishop Blaize public house than they did working! However despite this letter or because of same, the clerk of works was paid £10-11-0 in 1857 for 4 weeks' work.<sup>28</sup>

Other work was the rebuilding of a western block of seats and provision of a temporary pulpit. The seats were lowered and provided with buffets for the choir. Across the entrance to the chancel a screen in iron and brass, with two polished gas standards, was fitted, costing £44-17-0.

In 1878 two pews in the chancel passed to C. M. Royds and Mrs. Hastings. By a faculty of 1883 these seats and those claimed by A. H. Royds and also those belonging to the Vicar were moved in the new chancel in an Easterly direction. Mr. Dearden, Lord of the Manor, was at the discretion of the Vicar granted two seats, in exchange maybe for the furniture Mr. Dearden gave from Trinity Chapel when this Chapel was incorporated into the church. The chapel furniture provided four seats at the west end of the chancel. A lectern was made from two seats. Three seats were used to provide the fronts of other seats (Vicar's and Dearden's). The seats that were provided for J. Griffith Dearden were in lieu of seats he held in Trinity Chapel. The Lord of the Manor agreed to give up seats in the chancel to make choir stalls. This was a cause of complaint from J. Griffith Dearden because he said that the seats had been commandeered whilst other seats which had been converted for choir use had been purchased from the owners.<sup>29</sup> The present arrangement is that two seats on the N.W. side of the chancel are for use by clergy whilst the Vicar's seat is on the S.W.,

<sup>27</sup> RLHL R/CHA/2.3. V/R/CHA.  
<sup>29</sup> Roc. Mem. V.3, p.103.

<sup>28</sup> RLHL.

both at the entrance to the chancel. Here in the aisle is the brass to the Royds' Family. The last seat in occupancy was that of Sir Clement Royds, conveyed in 1926 to the Parochial Church Council. The original Vicar's seat bearing the date 1663 and letters W. H. were carved with a mermaid. Two mermaids were also carved on the seat which Thomas Hippon Vavouser purchased from the Archbishop of Canterbury. This seat had belonged to the Byron family and the two mermaids were flanking the Byron family crest.<sup>30</sup> Both these seats have disappeared; maybe the figures of undraped mermaids offended the susceptibilities of a Victorian congregation. Fishwick says that they were discarded some 25 years earlier.<sup>31</sup> Raines notes however, that the Rector's pew had been altered and that the mermaids and crest had been let into other pews.<sup>32</sup> The Byron crest is now on the upright of a choir stall. They are the arms of the fourth Lord Byron. A quarter of the crest bears the arms of the Portland family into which he married in 1706, the lady being his third wife.

Prior to this arrangement of seats the chancel was of course shorter and the roof lower. The choir stalls were next to the altar and the space between the stalls and the rood screen was occupied by pews. On the north side was the Great Walmsley pew, held by Miss Leigh of Castlemerer and her pupils. On the south side the pews were occupied by the Vicarage family and Mr. John Pilling Brierley.<sup>33</sup> Behind these seats were those known as the Yeomans' Seats.

The rebuilding of the chancel in the style of the last part of the fifteenth century blended with the clerestory of the nave of that period. This resulted in a choir of six bays and six in the nave, resulting in what is known as a 'double apostles' church.

The fund raising of Dr. Maclure amongst prominent families led to the Doctor being called an 'Archfend', a nickname which gave him pleasure.<sup>34</sup> These same contributors to the arches also gave the chancel clerestory windows of the Apostles.<sup>35</sup> The nave roof is continued here in a grandeur fashion with 28 angels, seeming to

help the choir with their Alleluias.

On the choir bench ends can be found various figures. On the bench on the south side next to the altar rail are three pairs of curious fighting animals. This bench was bought by A. Royds in 1865 from Canterbury Cathedral and could be 15th century. Other benches have a dog with collar; two praying figures, one with closed eyes; grotesque figures with gaping mouths; and an antelope pierced by an arrow.

At the south west of the chancel are the clergy seats, faced with 16th century panels bearing the arms of local families. On the floor in the aisle is the brass for the Royds' family, dating from 1854. The stone screen was given by the boys of Clifton School in their respect for their old headmaster Dr. Wilson, whilst the ironwork screen was given by Colonel Royds.

## THE ORGAN

The inventory of 1532 contains what is called a pair of organs which means that the organ had two manuals.<sup>36</sup> There were only two other parishes in Lancashire with this type of organ, Middleton and Ormskirk. Legend says that this organ was given by Queen Mary and so became known as the 'Bloody Mary Organ'.

A Richard Parker received £50 in 1750 on a contract for the servicing and repair of the organ over a number of years. The 1854 restorations moved the organ to an organ chamber formed by extending the north aisle 11' east. This organ of 1855 was built by Samuel Groves of London, and described as an organ in the German manner, with a Cathedral sound suitable for accompanying congregational singing. The cost was £290, a sum paid in instalments. £40 was offered for the old organ. Some 25 years later the Vicar, Dr. Maclure, complained that he had never heard an organ make such horrible noises. Five years later a new organ was purchased from W. Hill of London. The price was

<sup>30</sup> Raines Vol.9, p.193.

<sup>31</sup> Fishwick p.144.

<sup>32</sup> Raines Vol.10, p.61.

<sup>33</sup> P.M. March 1927.

<sup>34</sup> Dr. H. Brierley Reminiscences.

<sup>35</sup> For names see Fishwick p.153.

<sup>36</sup> Fishwick p.132.

£1,000 plus the £29-19-1 carriage charges. It cost another £31-2-7 to fit the organ into the £207 organ chamber. This organ chamber was built out of the north aisle, at the place where St. Katherine's Chapel originally stood, and an electric blower was installed in 1903. This organ has been renovated from time to time, as in 1926, but in 1959 a rebuilding took place by Harrison of Durham, a firm originally founded in Rochdale. This work costing £7,000 included a new electric pneumatic action and new blowing equipment. The organ contains 43 drawstops, 3 manuals and 1,700 pipes.

A new console was situated in the chancel instead of in the north aisle. The organ stool is from 1937, part of the memorial to Mrs. Brierley, donator of the pulpit. Mrs. Brierley had died in 1936 aged 93.

#### ST. KATHERINE'S CHAPEL

The foundation date of this chapel is not known but is possibly of the same period as Trinity Chapel. However, in 1516 a Henry Sale and a Thomas Chadwick were ordered to pay William Node on 'the auter of Sayrte Katerine in the Parish Church of Rochdale thirteen shillings and four pence'. In the same year Jeffrey Walsden and his two sons were ordered to pay Randall Howarth a sum of money on the same altar.

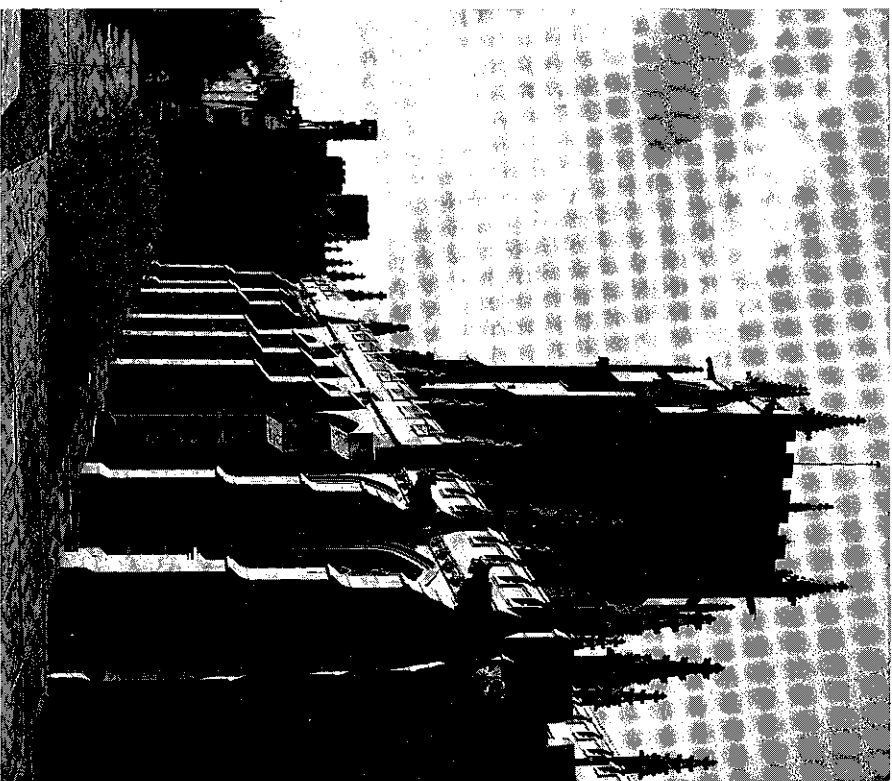
In 1535 Thomas Chadwick paid a priest to celebrate in the Chapel so maybe the chantry had been founded by the Chadwick family. It was known to be in use in 1552, after which there is no record. The present organ chamber built 1885-1886 occupies the approximate site of the original chapel. A sketch by Physick shows a vestry on this site and nearby was a 'singing pew'.<sup>37</sup> In 1907 Fishwick recalled a doorway on the north side of the church which led out to the ruins of a building and in his opinion these were the remains of St. Katherine's Chapel.<sup>38</sup> This must have been prior to

<sup>37</sup> Frontpiece to Fishwick.

<sup>38</sup> R.O. Oct. 9, 1907.



*Photograph showing the Gargoyles, St. Chads.*



*Exterior of Church at present day.*

1856, when the north door was sealed off and the vestry removed from this area to the north west of the church. The chapel had therefore covered a larger area than the vestry. The present chapel dates from 1886 building of the chancel and the extension of the north aisle by approximately 23'.

The 18th century altar table was given in 1965 by Mrs. Moir who with her husband were the architects responsible for the restoration at that time. In the same year the altar rails by Thompson of York, bearing the company's trade mark of a mouse, were given by Mrs. Mary Beaumont. The oak pedestal table was donated a year later by Mrs. Clarke of Vancouver.

On the north wall is the Gartside brass, not strictly a brass, the metal being of copper.<sup>39</sup> Erected in 1668 it was in memory of his wife Susannah by Samuel Gartside. This plate was originally against the north wall of the chancel. In 1855 it was situated behind the organ at the east end of the north aisle. Thirty years later, after removing the verdigris, it was placed in its present position on the north wall of the chapel. There are two skeletons from whose mouths issue the words: 'As you are, so were we. As we are, so must you be.' Also there is a Hebrew word meaning Lily or beautiful. The Latin inscription translated is: 'Here lies buried Susannah Gartside wife of Gabriel Gartside of Rochdale and daughter of James Gartside of Oakenroyd,' who departed on the 7th day of August in the year 1668. In memory of his very dear mother, Samuel Gartside has erected this. Lilies flourish among thorns. Virtue (flourishes) after the funeral. For the good have eternal life.' It could be that this verse was written by Vicar Henry Pigot rather than Samuel Gartside. Nearby is a brass plaque in memory of the son of Canon Machure, dated 1890.

The brass lectern was given in 1906 as an appreciation of the services of Dr. Wilson and is a copy of a lectern which then was at Newstead Abbey, the former home of the Byrom family.

<sup>39</sup> *Palatine Note Book R.L.H.L.*



## TRINITY CHAPEL

In the reign of Henry VII Trinity Chapel was founded by a Brotherhood formed to worship the Holy Trinity.<sup>40</sup> The Brotherhood consisted of Mr. Adam Marland, Sir Randolph Butterworth and Sir James Middleton. Sir James was the priest and he was instructed to pray daily for the souls of Randolph Butterworth, his mother, brother, sister; also for his friend the Duke of Buckingham. The foundation deed is dated 1487. The actual building of the chapel was, according to Canon Raines, by Henry Marland sometime between 1426-1462.<sup>41</sup> In an award of 1531 Trinity Chapel is named.

The chapel became the property in 1665 of Alexander Butterworth of Belfield, purchased from James Marland of Marland. Alexander Butterworth gave over his lands shortly before his death in 1728 to Richard Townley who had been his steward. The chapel was included in his estate and so passed to Richard Greaves Townley who, for £650 sold it to James Dearden in August 1823. Raines says that Chadwick of Healey Hall had bid £645 for the chapel.<sup>42</sup> Dr. Wilson in a talk said that the chapel had not been sold direct to Dearden but first to a person named Green who sold it to Dearden.<sup>43</sup> No price is named. Perhaps Green was Townley's agent, for in a letter to Vicar Hay in 1832 Dearden says that he has settled some difference between himself and Townley, presumably with regard to the chapel, from which it would seem that Dearden did buy from Townley.

In plans of 1823 the two chapels are marked Squire Chapels but in 1855 are called Manor Chapels.<sup>44</sup> It was sometime after 1883 when a Faculty was granted incorporating the chapel into the church, that the chapel was once again Trinity Chapel.

Prior to coming into the possession of James Dearden the chapel was furnished in the style of a drawing room, but so were the box pews in the remainder of the church. There were two stained glass windows. The window on the south wall bore the initials <sup>B</sup> AG

<sup>40</sup> Fishwick p.132, Raines p.21.

<sup>41</sup> Raines Vol.15, p.165, Vol.6, p.22.

<sup>42</sup> Raines Vol.6, p.22.

<sup>43</sup> Chetham's Newspaper Cuttings.

<sup>44</sup> R.L. Local Hist.

1602 representing Alexander and Grace Butterworth. The east window was also of the 17th century and dated 1633, bearing eight coats of arms. These arms were partially duplicated in the roof where there were six coats of arms. The families represented by the arms were Butterworth, Birdeshull, Barry, Ashton, Belfield and Clegg. In a second compartment was displayed Townley of Belfield. The eight arms in the window were six as above, with one defaced and one broken.<sup>45</sup> In the roof was a carved oak boss.

In 1886 Trinity Chapel was extended by 20' and the oak roof was replaced by one of deal at a cost of £250, with £116 extra for the carvings in the roof. The oak collection plates at present in use were made from the oak bosses of the roof in 1900 by Henry Hoyle.

A new wall had been built in 1815-1816 and in 1832 James Dearden had placed his Arms in the chapel. It was necessary to adapt to the new measurements the east window of the chapel, in the centre of which were the emblems of the Trinity, with the Virgin at one side and John the Baptist on the other. So the window was sent to Messrs. Willemot of London, where it was destroyed by a fire. Mr. Dearden then replaced the lost window with the present window of The Last Supper.

In 1883 Trinity Chapel was incorporated into the church and the cost of restoration was included in the general restoration costs. Mr. Dearden gave the furniture from the chapel, to be placed in the body of the church. The screen on the north side of the chapel was moved to the north aisle to balance the west end screen of Trinity placed forward, east of the little south door. Some portions of the screens are original 17th century work.

Fishwick quotes at length from a book, Popular Genealogists, regarding the monuments and brasses that James Dearden set up in the chapel.<sup>46</sup> When James Dearden's Arms were registered in 1841 his lineage could be traced to Richard Dearden of Handle Hall, 26th May, 1630. Richard Dearden was a yeoman, not a knight or lord, and none of his ancestors were entitled to carry arms or were even Lords of the Manor. The quotation says that in the

<sup>45</sup> Fishwick p.147.

<sup>46</sup> Fishwick p.147.



*Exterior of Church in 1865.*

centre of the chapel was the figure of a cross-legged knight with the arms of Rachdale on his shield.<sup>47</sup> Alongside was a Bishop with mitre and crozier, claimed to be Dearden Bishop of Lichfield in the time of Stephen, who of course had to be buried in Rochdale, not Coventry as is usually accepted as the burial place. The knight bore the arms of the legendary Lord Racedham, which is a martlet. This bird can still be seen in the few tiles left along the south wall of the chapel, below the brasses. This bird also appeared on the old coat-of-arms of the borough prior to the 1974 reorganisation of the borough. The martlet also appears on the arms of the local family of Chadwick.

The effigies are now buried under the floor and only two slabs remain set in the floor. These are of a pointed cross or a decorated sword pinning down a beast which could be a boar or small hind. The other slab is that of a priest which from the robes could represent an Abbot. A common priest would not fit in with Dearden's ideas of his ancestry. The brasses are of course still on the walls. These represent: 1. James Duerden at prayer, 1609; 2. Oliver Duerden wearing armour, carrying a sword, 1545; 3. Ottwell Duerden armour as figure 2 but the tabard depicts martlets; 4. Richard Duerden kneeling in armour, 1586; 5. Richard Duerden standing, 1630. Each brass bears an inscription in English or Latin:

A paper published by Rev. Chadwick describes the condition of the brasses in 1936.<sup>48</sup> The brass to James Dearden was obscured by a radiator and the dates on other brasses cannot be read. These brasses are sometimes believed to be genuine. Even Arthur Mee thought so and complains of their obstruction by a radiator and a harmonium.<sup>49</sup> However the opinion of an expert, a Mr. Greenhalgh, called in by the Vicar Rev. G. Molesworth in 1948 was that, as everyone was aware, they were fakes. They were not earlier than 1847, but accurately represented the period 1523-1609 and had been executed by a skilled artist well-versed in the brasses of the period, and that with care they should last another

<sup>47</sup> Fishwick p.450.

<sup>48</sup> Pseudo Brasses. Transaction Mon. Brass Soc. 1936, R.L.H.L.

<sup>49</sup> Arthur Mee, Lancashire p.180.

800 years.

This paper by Chadwick, whilst stating that Fishwick had the wrong dates for the deaths of James and Richard having not read the brasses correctly, makes a blunder. He says that James Dearden purchased the chapel from Lord Byron, when of course the Byrons had never been in possession of the chapel. That the ecclesiastical authorities allowed all these spurious monuments was, according to Fishwick, because they had earlier permitted the Entwistle monument, now on the south wall of the tower. This monument bears the false claim that an Entwistle had fought at Agincourt. So they could not refuse Dearden permission to bring to reality his own fantasies.<sup>50</sup>

During the period 1828–1832 there was a long correspondence between Vicar Hay and James Dearden regarding the right of Dearden to have a family vault in the chapel.<sup>51</sup> Vicar Hay's opinion was that the Vicar had the sole right to determine when and where a burial should take place within the church. Furthermore, that in 1821 the Bishop had issued directions as to where burials should take place because burials had undermined the foundations when near the walls, causing the danger of the church walls falling down. The dispute was referred to arbitration and was finally resolved when a deed of 1665 was discovered. This conveyed the fee simply of the chapel to the Belfield family from Andrew Marland of Marland, reserving the right of burial to himself. Burial in the chapel had taken place from an earlier date when a child of the Buckley family, Edward Buckley, was buried in 1617 by permission of Alexander Butterworth. The last interment was Dearden's daughter in 1858. The actual letter in which Hay admitted the right of burial in the chapel is missing and the above regarding the deed is from a letter of thanks to Hay from Dearden. This letter also says that Dearden has settled some difference between himself and Townley, presumably with regard to the sale of the chapel.

The communion rails are 16th century, whilst the Communion

Table had served until 1886 as the altar table when it was moved into the chapel. This table was bought at a cost of 12/- on June 8th, 1717. Canon Raines says that the table had been disfigured by the insertion of drawers. The table was repaired in 1936 and a close inspection will reveal evidence of these repairs.

Canon Raines also said that when the table was new, a new tablecloth was provided and that this lasted until 1829. The cloth was velvet with a gold fringe which was too large for the table so the curate was instructed to cut to size and use the remnants on the altar. The replacement was still in service in 1855 but by this time it was white.

The wood floor was laid in the 1960's restoration and new chairs provided.

The candlesticks and cross date from 1871.



This ends the short history of the church and I hope that you have a new sense of this place, this 'Auld Church'. But what of the faces that occupied the pews and pulpit? Henry Pigot described by an old early-Victorian lady as a small eighty year old man with long scant white hair. Dr. Dunster arriving at church on horseback, falling up the three-decker pulpit steps forgetting to remove his spurs. The long church rate dispute. The Quaker wearing his hat in church. John Bright standing in the pulpit so that parson Molesworth had to address the people from the balcony. Dr. Molesworth himself, the wealthy autocrat. The ordinary folk sitting in the free pews, a weekly rest from the toil of the mill. The crocodiles of Sunday School scholars coming from Coventry Street and up Drake Street from the Fold to all enter at the West Door. So many hymns and prayers over so many decades have filled this place.

<sup>50</sup> Roc. Obs. Oct. 1907.

<sup>51</sup> R.L.H.L. D.R./Roch./2/2.

## THE BELLS

It is worth while, however, to record in the Magazine the inscriptions on the Bells. Their very secular character has been commented upon by more than one person who has examined them as they stood in the Churchyard. The inscriptions run as follows:—

1st or Treble Bell (E flat).  
Jno. Rudhall fecit 1787.

2nd Bell (D).  
Robt. Bell,  
Jno. Crosbey, Churchwardens,  
James Longdon, 1787.  
Lawrence Lord.

The names of the second and third Wardens are wrongly spelt. They should be Crossley and Longden.

3rd Bell (C).  
"Prosperity to the Trade of this Town," A. R., 1752."

4th Bell (B flat).  
"Peace and good neighbourhood; A. R., 1752."

5th Bell (A flat).  
"Abel Rudhall, of Gloucester, Founder 1752."

6th Bell (G).  
"Samuel Dunster, D.D., Vicar; A. R., 1752."

7th Bell (F).  
Thos. Wood,  
John Schofield,  
John Smith, Churchwardens.  
Edmund Redfearn,  
A. R., 1752

8th or Tenor Bell (E. flat).

"This bell was re-cast by John Rudhall, Gloucester, 1812."

"Success to the Town and Trade of Rochdale."

T. Drake, D.D., Vicar.  
T. Steele, A.B., Curate.  
S. Newall,  
J. Heape,  
E. Dawson, Churchwardens.  
J. Chadwick,  
D. Nield, Clerk, 1812.

The Bells are once more installed in their old place in the Tower, and will be rung, all being well, the first time for service on St. Chad's Day. The following details of the Bells have been received from John Taylor and Co., and may be taken as correct. It is interesting to compare the weights with the estimated weights given before:—

	Weight	Note	Weight Note (previously given)
Treble .....	6 0 18	E	5 E flat
Second .....	6 1 25	D sharp	6 D
Third .....	6 1 23	C sharp	6¾ C
Fourth .....	6 3 18	B	7¼ B flat
Fifth .....	7 3 19	A	8¼ A flat
Sixth .....	9 0 0	G sharp	9¼ G
Seventh .....	11 2 0	F sharp	12 F
Tenor .....	15 1 23	E	17¼ E flat

It will be seen that the weights are considerably less than the old estimates, a little difference can be accounted for by the fact that the old crowns have been cut off. But the greatest error was in the case of the tenor bell; as mentioned in the last account of the bells this was cast in 1752 and re-cast in 1812. On this occasion no new metal was added and of course in the process some was lost. It is possible that 17¼ cwt. was the weight of the original casting.

The bells have been retuned, and the pitch taken from the 2nd, which was before flat. The pitch of the second has not been altered, so the estimate of the pitch was a semitone too low.

The old oak frame, made in Rochdale, has been retained, but braced up with stout angle plates. Such massive oak beams are now almost impossible to obtain.

Apart from the actual Bells and the oak frame, all the rest is new. The bells are now bolted to curved iron headstocks, the advantage of this method being that it brings the centre of gravity of the bell nearer the axis of the headstock. The bells are, so to speak, "tucked up," and therefore easier to swing. In addition they are now mounted on enclosed ball bearings, and whereas formerly they required oiling every week, they should now run for ten years. — L.W.F.

Reprinted from Church Magazine, September 1923 and February 1924.



**Key to References:**

R.L.H.L.: Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Local History Library.

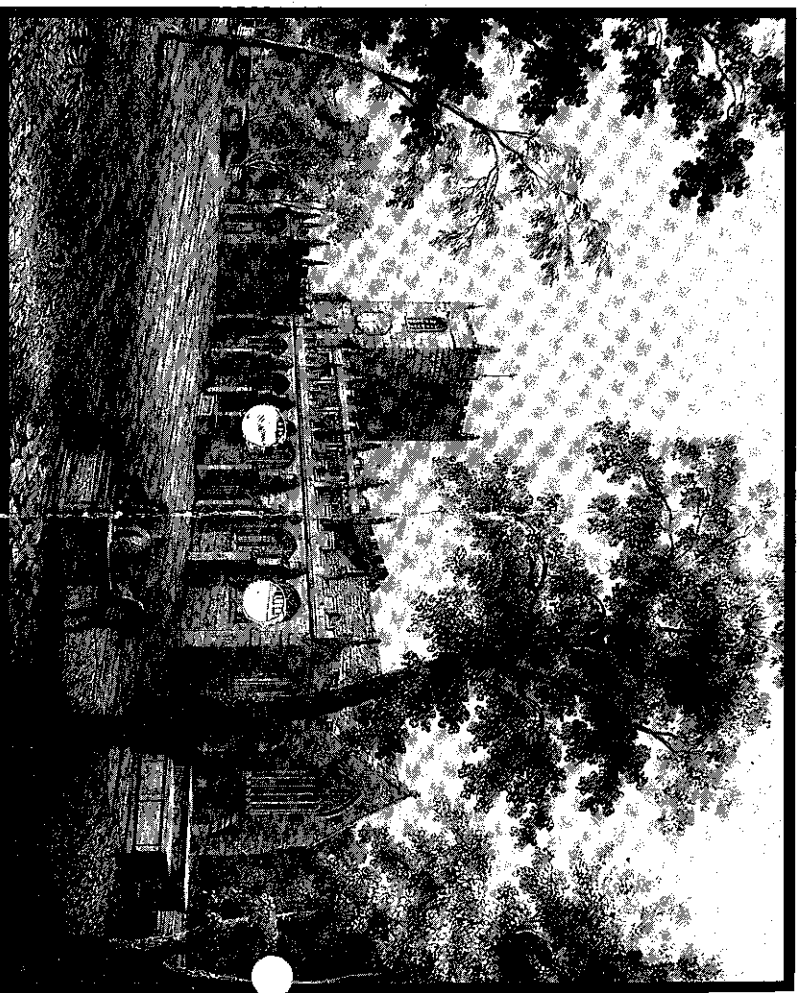
Fishwick: History of the Parish of Rochdale.

R.O.: Rochdale Observer.

# TOP O'TH' STEPPS

A History of

St. Chad's Parish Church, Rochdale



by A. S. Wild

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