

A Short History of Holy Trinity Freckleton.

by Peter Shakeshaft.

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HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION

Although the recorded history of Freckleton does not begin until the Domesday Book of 1087 it is clear that the settlers from whom the village derives its name were the Anglo-Saxons. Modern Freckle is either their words *Frecel & welle* meaning dangerous pool or their personal name *Frecla*. These, coupled to the old English (Saxon) word *Tun*, meaning a settlement, gave the village its name.

When and by whom Christianity was first brought to the village can now only be a matter of speculation. A church, however, of an early date was probably founded at Kirkham, as the name either in Old Norse or Old English means “village where there is a church”. It is within the realms of possibility that a church was standing when St Wilfred of Ripon in 675 was given lands adjoining the Ribble in the Hundred of Amounderness. Such a church would have also served the inhabitants of Freckleton.

It is not until the Norman Conquest that we have definite facts and at that time Freckleton was part of Kirkham parish. Its Archdiocese and Diocese was that of York. The effective administrator however was from 1090 until 1541 the Archdeacon of Richmond who had authority over the local Dean of Amounderness. Most references to Freckleton in this period relate to land transfers and legal cases. A charter passed sometime between 1242 and 1250 concerning a Freckleton land deal involving the Abbot of Cockersand was witnessed by Swaine, clerk of Freckleton. Equally the Benedictine Priory of Lytham founded in 1190 also held land and property in the village and with it no doubt some religious influence. The Priory was dissolved in 1536.

In 1541 Freckleton as part of Kirkham parish passed into the newly created diocese of Chester and some forty years later for the first time a Freckleton resident played an important part in local ecclesiastical affairs. On 17th November 1591 the Dean and chapter of Christ Church, Oxford (the Patrons of Kirkham church) instituted as vicar of Kirkham James Sharples M.A. who on his appointment named his bondsman as John Sharples of Freckleton, Yeoman. Some three weeks later 8th December, 1591 the Dean and Chapter of Christ Church granted to John Sharples and Cuthbert his son, the advowson and presentation of the perpetual Vicarage of Kirkham for 21 years.

The mid-seventeenth century saw the impact of Quakerism in the village but for Anglicans their nearest church still involved the several miles walk to Kirkham. It must therefore have been comforting to see the first Warton church built in 1722 and consecrated in 1725.

Such was the position regarding Freckleton, when during the 1820's Dr. J. J. Webber, D.D., the Vicar of Kirkham (1813-1847) commenced his plans for the division of the Parish. In an undated letter to Christ Church, Oxford, he outlined his aims and in it also stated that if a Chapel at Freckleton was built he intended to unite Warton and Freckleton as a single Parish.

The building of a Chapel was the first stage and in a letter from Christ Church to Dr. Webber dated October 12th 1832 the following important sentence was included “Meanwhile if you proceed with Freckleton Chapel as part of this plan, will be ready to find you £100 for it”. In reply Dr. Webber confirms that Freckleton Chapel is part of the plan and he asks for money, saying he has himself given £100. He also states that he intends to give a certain portion of the receipts of Freckleton to the Rev. G. Wylie (Curate of Warton) for doing duty there once a fortnight.

By 1834 a temporary Church had been erected, for Baines in his “History of Lancashire”, published in 1836 says of Freckleton “A temporary Episcopal Church was erected here about two years ago”.

The year 1837 saw the laying of the foundation stone of the present Church and the following notes giving details of the occasion are taken from an old printed circular, given to the church and found in a Bible owned by Mr. Thomas Parker:-

“This first stone of a Chapel to be built by subscription and called the Holy Trinity Chapel was laid by Hugh Hornby, the donor of the site, on this 31st day of July A.D. 1837, being the first year of the reign of Her Most Gracious Majesty Queen Victoria.

Signed:-

The Very Reverend Jas. Webber D.D.	Vicar of Kirkham	
The Reverend Geo. Wylie M.A.	Perpetual Curate of Warton	
Henry Marquis)	
Richard Knowles) Wardens of Kirkham	
John Pemberton)	
John Knowles)	
John Latham	Surveyor	
Robert Hall, Thomas Catterall, Richard Wall and William Butcher	(Contractors)	

According to Peter Hesketh Fleetwood (Lancashire Architectural Guide, 1955), the Architect for the Church was John Latham, the Surveyor named in the circular. The round arches over windows reveal his predilection for the Norman style of architecture also to be seen in his churches St Thomas, and St. Mary, Preston.

During the ensuing year the Church was completed and on June 13th 1838 was consecrated by Dr. John Bird Sumner, Bishop of Chester, and signed in the presence of Henry Raikes - Chancellor of Chester, John Pedder - Curate of Kirkham, Richard Moore - Incumbent of Lund and Felix Knyvett - Secretary to the Bishop.

Although Freckleton now had a Church of its own, the Parish still remained attached to Kirkham. However in 1845 Dr. Webber wrote to the Bishop of Chester to ask permission for the separation of Warton and Freckleton from the Mother Parish. The Bishop, in turn, wrote to the Archbishop of York.

He represented as follows -

FRECKLETON. The curacy consists of Freckleton township, the population 992, distance from the parish church two or three miles. The church is situated in Freckleton and accommodates 300. No house of residence. Township of Freckleton has never been legally assigned as a district to the said church. The inhabitants being occupiers of pews have repaired to Freckleton Church, but there is no legal right to enforce the repairs on the inhabitants. No legal right to the exclusive use of a pew or sitting. Annual income £25 of which £5 is from pew rents in the church and £20 gratuitously paid by the Vicar of Kirkham. The patronage belongs to the vicarage of Kirkham. The townships of Warton, Freckleton, Bryning and Kellamere, containing a population of 1597, may be advantageously separated from Kirkham.

This submission appears to have been granted, as on January 21st 1846 Freckleton became a Chapel of Ease to Warton, which on that date had been created a separate benefice from Kirkham.

The Church continued to be without a resident curate until 1860 and this probably was one of the causes which prompted the Rev. W. L Hussey (Vicar of Kirkham 1852-1862), between 1852 and 1854, to write three letters to Christ Church, Oxford, saying that the inhabitants of Freckleton had drawn up a memorial asking to be separated from Warton, This request was not effected until January 26th, 1874 when on that date Holy Trinity, Freckleton became a separate ecclesiastical parish in the diocese of Manchester, (created 1847). The patronage vested in the Dean and Chapter of Christ Church Oxford but on August 10th, 1909, was transferred to the Bishop of the Diocese who since 1926 has been the Bishop of Blackburn.

In the last 103 years*, the church has served the needs of its parishioners and equally in their turn they have ensured its survival to render the same service to future generations. Fund raising has always

* i.e. 103 years as a parish, from 1874 to 1977.

played an important part, and the present Vicarage whose foundation stone was laid in 1926 is an example. The house itself built as a memorial to the men of the parish who died in the 1st War. The past two decades have been dominated by the need for important restoration to church fabric. Much thought and effort has been put to this task and 1976 saw the first stages of this major facelift.

Although further work is envisaged the church re-opened for worship on 26th May, 1977.

THE EXTERIOR

Standing in the heart of present day Freckleton, Holy Trinity Church is a pleasing structure made of local brick, at the west end is a tower, a major re-building of which took place in 1934. Until the 1976 restoration this tower was capped by a small but neat spire. The solitary bell, dated 1872, was a gift from the Vicar and Churchwardens of St. Jude's Church, Preston, to Freckleton in 1910.

When Hewitson (*Our Country Churches & Chapels*) visited the church in 1872 the exterior was covered with ivy. The ivy appeared to be having adverse effects on the interior as this was described by Hewitson as "exceedingly damp in many parts and singularly cracked in various places. The southern wall and the corners of the building are nearly black with damp and we attribute much of this to the outside ivy".

In the churchyard, enlarged twice in 1896 and 1932, rest several generations of Freckleton families, but the communal grave of the 1944 air disaster is sadly the best known monument of all. The disaster occurred on the morning of August 23rd, 1944, when an American Liberator bomber crashed outside the church. The aircraft fell onto the school killing 38 children and 2 teachers, the full death toll was 51 British and 9 American lives.

Of interest also is the grave of Freckleton's first Vicar, the Rev. W. Scott, which is situated in the far north-west corner.

THE INTERIOR

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The interior of Holy Trinity consists of a nave with a chancel recess at the east end, with a gallery housing the organ extending along one quarter of the church, at the west end. The pews reach almost to the chancel. The walls are simply plastered and the roof is of open boarding, supported by 4 beams. There is a seating capacity for approximately 250 persons.

WINDOWS

Of the ten round-arched windows in the main body of the church, the uniform eight are as old as the church itself. That on the north wall depicts St. Paul preaching at Athens, and is dedicated "To the Glory of God", and was erected in Loving Memory of Thomas Green of Freckleton, died 7th December, 1886, aged 84, by his widow. The tenth was installed at the time of the 1976 restoration, and in design shows similarities with the two smaller windows of the west wall.

The lovely East Window portrays in the centre the Crucifixion and Baptism, and on either side the Adoration of the Magi, and Christ blessing little children. It was made by Ward and Hughes of London, and was considered as "perhaps one of the finest that the artists have produced". It was given in 1875, the complete inscription reading "To the Glory of God, In Memory of Margaret Myres of Preston and the Naze, who died June 5th, 1875. This Window is Dedicated by her Husband and Children."

The small stained glass window immediately above the chancel arch is inscribed "To the Glory of God, and in Memory of Alderman John James Myres of the Naze and Preston, died 27th January, 1881. Erected by his son, Edward". It depicts a coat of arms and a dove with wings outspread. Above the inscription is the Latin phrase *Non Dormit – Qui Custodit*. (He who guards does not sleep) Alderman Myres appears to have played an important part in parish affairs in the formative years. A member of Preston Corporation from 1842 - 1881 he was Mayor in 1868/9 and 1873/4. At a sermon preached in his memory in 1881 at Holy Trinity, the Rev. W. Scott described him as a "cordial helper in every movement that he originated for the benefit of the parish".

THE CHANCEL

The entrance to the chancel is an arch flanked by two classical columns.

The Altar was presented to the church in 1909 by Mr. W. Wignall. Made of solid oak it has the words "HOLY HOLY HOLY" inscribed around the top. Mr. Wignall also gave the beautiful Altar cross in 1909 as a memorial to his parents.

The brass Altar rails, the inscription on which is now badly worn, were given in 1912 by Edward Myres.

The modern Credence Table on the south side of the chancel was given in 1963 by the Sunday School, and in immediate contrast are two 18th century carved chairs on either side of the Altar, the origins of which are rather obscure.

The book of the English Liturgy is in memory of John Threlfall, a churchwarden for 21 years, and was presented in February 1961 by his wife and family. The cushion upon which it rests was given by Miss E. Eastham.

THE PLAQUES

Of the four memorial plaques in the church, two are to be seen on the north wall, and commemorate the Reverend W. Scott and Reverend E. J. Hack, the first and second vicars respectively who between them gave 56 years of service to Freckleton. Facing them on the south wall is a tablet in memory of R. Eastham, a sexton at the church for 32 years (1884 - 1916). The remaining plaque, situated in the gallery, is the memorial to Albert Woodhouse who was organ blower from 1915 - 1949.

THE PULPIT

The Jacobean pulpit standing on the north side of the chancel arch is the church's most prized possession. Originally in the 17th century Church of Kirkham (demolished at the beginning of the last century) it was presented to Freckleton by the mother church. Unfortunately, previous to its removal it had been covered by many coats of whitewash. However it was carefully restored to former beauty, and is now in a good state of preservation. The delightful Jacobean carving is depicted on every part, and many of the carefully detailed faces are no larger than an inch in diameter. The following inscription is carved around the top: "ISAIAH, CRIE ALOUD, SPARE NOT, LIFT UP THY VOYCE LIKE A TRUMPET".

The pulpit was made in 1633 when the Vicar of Kirkham, Edward Fleetwood, commissioned one Robert Weaver, for the task. It cost £10. Of interest is the fact that the present pulpit at Kirkham Parish Church though different in design, still carries the same inscription.

During the 1976 restoration several pews were taken out and the pulpit re-sited; enabling all sides to be advantageously seen. The new spiral steps adding their own grace. The original situation of the pulpit is not certain, it appears however from a note on one of the registers to have been placed in its pre-1976 position in 1866 and first used there on October 14th of that year. At the same time the original pulpit steps were given by the Rev. W. H. Self, first Vicar of St. Johns, Lytham.

LECTERN AND BIBLE

The Lectern was given in 1936 by Mr. E. Bonney and takes the form of an Eagle with out-stretched wings. The previous Lectern had been in use for many years and came from a Preston Church.

The Lectern Bible was given in 1932 by Mr. and Mrs. Bonney, it being the 1928 Revised Version and the third to be used for service in the church. There is no record of who presented the first Bible, but the second to be used was given by Mrs. Greene of Holly House, Freckleton, in 1904. It is the 1662 Authorised Version and is still used on certain occasions.

VICAR'S STALL

Situated by the Vestry door, the Vicar's Stall was presented to the church in 1956 in memory of Mr. William Kirby, a former churchwarden. Of imposing design it reminds us of present day craftsmanship.

LITANY DESK

The delightfully carved Litany Desk, presented in 1930, was the gift of the daughters of Richard and Mary Cookson, in memory of their parents. The Prayer Book which lies on the table is in memory of Mary Elizabeth Stuart who died in 1971, and was presented by her husband in 1973, Mrs Stuart was one of the daughters of Richard and Mary Cookson.

An earlier Book of Common Prayer was given in memory of the Rev. R. Hayward who died in 1929.

CHURCHWARDENS RODS

Attached to the pews near the font, the Churchwardens Rods were both given in 1923; one by Isaac Throp Esq., and the other by Ann, widow of John Whiteside Esq.

THE ORGAN

When Hewitson visited the church in 1872 he described the musical arrangements as - "The singers sat in a pew at the North West corner. The harmonium player near them"

Sometime after that date and prior to 1906, an organ, probably a harmonium, was given to Freckleton by a Preston church and was more than 70 years old when replaced.

The present organ was purchased in 1906 at a cost of £200 and made by Messrs Harrison and Harrison of Durham. Prior to its installation the then Vicar (Rev. E. J. Hack) appealed for financial help. One result being that Mr. Andrew Carnegie (1835 - 1919) the famous American philanthropist wrote from his Scottish seat of Skibo Castle, Dornoch, Co. Sutherland, and promised that if £100 was raised by the parishioners he would donate the balance.

Although there is no apparent record of this promise being fulfilled, it is very probable that the £100 was in fact given.

The specification of the organ is:

MANUAL (CC—a3)

Open Diapason 8') Unenclosed
Principal 4')
Claribel Flute 8') Enclosed
Salicional 8')
Harmonic Flute 4')

PEDAL (CCC—F)

Bourdon 16'

Manual to Pedal Coupler

Balanced Swell Pedal

Concave, radiating pedal board.

The organ was almost certainly opened by Mr. Arthur Harrison, the Senior Partner in the firm. Under his guidance the firm was soon to become one of the most celebrated organ building concerns in the world, a position they still maintain. As this booklet goes to press the firm are about to completely overhaul and recondition the organ. The work will also involve repitching the salicional and flute stops to 4' and 2' respectively to increase tonal flexibility and add brightness to the ensemble.

THE CLOCK

Halfway along the gallery is the clock which was given in 1944 by Mr. J. S. Barlow as a memorial to his grandchildren, who died in the disaster of that year, also his son-in-law who was killed in action.

THE FONT

Unfortunately no history can be found of the font and it would appear that it was installed when the church was erected. In shape it is octagonal and is made of stone being capped by a wooden cone-shaped cover.

PSALM BOARD

The Psalm Board was donated by the “Oldest Church Workers” in February 1932.

BOOKCASE

The modern glass-fronted bookcase was given in 1973 and is in memory of Mary Elizabeth Stuart, who died in 1971.

THE REGISTERS

The registers begin and are continuous from the following dates:-

BAPTISMS	—	September 30th, 1860
BURIALS	—	November 15th, 1860
MARRIAGES	—	September 22nd, 1874

CHURCH PLATE

The Church Plate is comprised of the following:-

Alms Plate	No inscription
Alms Plate	Church of Holy Trinity 1845
(Two) Alms Plates	In memory of Richard Thompson sidesman of this Church and treasurer of the Youth Fellowship 12th October, 1951.
(Two) Alms Plates	Church of Holy Trinity, Freckleton 1923
(Choir) Alms Plates	Holy Trinity, Freckleton
Chalice	No inscription (possibly the first to be used)
Chalice	In memory of the Reverend R. Hayward, Vicar of this Parish 1922 - 1929.
Chalice	In memory of Henry Carter Whiteside, died June 1958. The gift of his wife Elizabeth and son John 1959.
Flagon	No inscription
Patten	Holy Trinity, Freckleton Parish Church. The gift of the Senior Girls - Easter 1926.
Patten	No inscription (1)
Patten	No inscription (2)
Pyx	In memory of Albert Rayton, died 26th May, 1960. The gift of his wife, Anne.
Siborium	In loving memory of Margaret Nightingale RossaII.
Wafer Box	No inscription.

RESIDENT CURATES AND VICARS

Resident Curate	Rev. G. H. WATERFALL	1860 - 1861
Resident Curate	Rev. W. SCOTT	1861 - 1874
Vicar	Rev. W. SCOTT	1874 - 1892
Vicar	Rev. E. J. HACK	1892 - 1917
Vicar	Rev. F. P. MANSFIELD	1918 - 1920
Vicar	Rev. W. PRESTON	1921 - 1922
Vicar	Rev. R. HAYWARD	1922 - 1929
Vicar	Rev. J. W. BROADBENT	1930 - 1950
Vicar	Rev. H. C. POPE	1950 - 1959
Vicar	Rev. N. S. SAUL	1959 - 1966
Vicar	Rev. D. L. SEARS	1966 - 1974
Vicar	Rev. J. R. ARMFELT	1975 - 1979
Vicar	Rev. T. F. UNSWORTH	1979 - 1983
Vicar	Rev. J. W. S. WILSON	1984 - 1986
Vicar	Rev. S. F. BRIAN	1988 - 1997
Vicar	Rev. M. A. GISBOURNE	1998 - 2003
Priest-in-charge	Rev. J. E. C. PERCIVAL	2003 -

† Obviously, dates after 1977 are additions to Peter Shakeshaft's text

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