

A photograph of Christ Church in Friezland, a Gothic Revival style church with a prominent spire. The church is made of brick and has a dark tiled roof. In the foreground, there are many bright yellow daffodils in full bloom, growing in a grassy area. The sky is blue with some light clouds. The text is overlaid on a semi-transparent white box in the upper right quadrant.

# Christ Church Friezland

A History and  
Guidebook

by A. G. Littlewood





*The Altar and East window*



**Christ Church**  
**Friesland**

A History and  
Guidebook

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*Front cover: The church from the south east  
(Copyright: Phil Lee)*

*Title page: The church from the north west*

*Back cover: Close up of choir stalls*





## Foreword

**In many ways the writing of this Handbook is the culmination of three years work, from the early days of applying to the Heritage Lottery Fund for a grant, (being shocked and delighted when it was accepted), the P.C.C. appointing architect and builders, seeing the project through to completion and finally seeing a fine building once again restored with a watertight tower and spire. During the research for this book I have drawn on much local knowledge and I am indebted to so many people who have given me snippets of information about the history of our Church and this beautiful building.**

Much money has been raised by our parishioners over the years and the Diocese has also been generous in their support since I took over the baton from Jo Johnson, a past Churchwarden, who had applied unsuccessfully for a serious grant for our ailing building but at that stage did not have the assistance of the Church being listed on the Historic Churches at Risk Register as eventually came to fruition.

It was with great delight therefore that I was able to announce in February 2019 that we had been granted,

in addition to an initial £15,000 a further £130,000 from the Heritage Lottery Fund to restore the steeple and address the deterioration of the west wall and that area of roof that had descended into a perilous state. At last we could look forward to a dry Church!

I hope the reader will indulge me in a little reminiscence of the train of events that eventually brought me to this beautiful place as I hope that I have made this short work an interesting read and not a stuffy guide that will be filed away and rarely see the light of day.

Ever since purchasing the Parsonage next door to Christ Church I have been interested in the history of the Whitehead family who paid for the work and George Shaw who was the architect of these lovely buildings. The chance to put into print much of what I have learned since moving here 25 years ago was too good an opportunity to miss.

Having been born in Oldham in 1949 it was not until the early '80s that I found myself moving to Saddleworth so having only lived here for 40 years I will still be looked upon as a "comer-inner"!

Having had a lifetime of “ups and downs” I count myself extremely fortunate to have finally settled in such a magical place.

My father was a very hardworking man ably assisted by a very hardworking wife and when he returned from the war, having been taken prisoner by the Nazis in North Africa and survived three Prisoner of War camps, the last one from which he successfully escaped, set about building up a very successful tailoring and clothing business, eventually stretching to five shops in the Oldham area. I count myself extremely fortunate that rather than ease me into the family business that they had worked so hard to promote they allowed me and my younger brother the luxury of enjoying the scientific life we both had a penchant for by going to University. Both graduating with Pharmacy degrees this enabled us to mirror their accomplishments by building up our own successful chain of Pharmacies.

No doubt the stress and strain of that effort contributed to my divorce as I worked all hours and my dear wife Nikola struggled to look after our three young sons whilst I laboured for over a year at the Pharmacy to customise what in those days was a radically new computer system to run what was becoming an ever more complicated business. By this time we had a young family of three lovely boys and after that I found myself most evenings on my own at home contemplating their future.

At that time I was living in a brand new house which had lost any appeal for me and when the Parsonage came up for sale it was like all my Christmases had come at once.

I have owned three houses in Saddleworth two of which were designed and built by George Shaw and I will always be indebted to my my brother Michael for finding me my first one by a curious turn of events. As he was on his lunch hour from the pharmacy he then managed in Mossley he had decided to take a drive into Uppermill looking for a property he could “do up” and spotted a “For Sale” sign being erected at the bottom of a long driveway just past the Farrar’s Arms. That driveway led to the coach-house to Wharmton Towers, one of George Shaw’s most romantic creations. Originally “Top Lodge House” until I rechristened it Wharmton Cottage, it originally housed the three coaches required by the wealthy family in the big house.

At the time I was engaged to be married to a young lady from Stalybridge, though this would not last, but as my brother was single and three years my junior he stepped back to allow me to compete for the ownership of the house the day after it was put on the market. In those days property was snapped up and I found myself competing with a G.P., a dentist, and the next door neighbour at Wharmton Tower. As a lowly Pharmacist it seemed most of the medical profession were after it but fortunately my negotiating skills, no doubt inherited from my father came up trumps, just as was the case with my third house and second George Shaw creation, namely Friezland Parsonage (now rechristened Friezland Grange). At least that time I only appear to have had one local builder to compete with!

I have indulged myself the opportunity of including an old photograph of my three







*Left: Easter. Above: the church seen from the south.*

sons the day that I walked out of Church after their rehearsal for the Nativity play and announced to them that I had bought the Parsonage. It may have been twelve months later before we were ready to move in but it was certainly worth the effort. *(see page 76)*

During that difficult phase of my life I had brought them to Christ Church one Sunday morning fairly exhausted and full of trepidation as I had attended other churches with them previously and found the experience not only unwelcoming but embarrassing. Friezland was like a breath of fresh air! People could not have been kinder or more considerate and I was immediately put at ease by Hilary Wrigley who at that time was running Junior Church, which my sons were welcomed into, and which is still as vibrant and inclusive today.

In such a publication it may seem odd to talk about Car Clubs but I will allow myself this luxury as in some ways I find certain similarities. Being blessed with so many hobbies and interests (perhaps a scientific mind is always restless) I have been lucky to try my hand at many pursuits including flying, tennis, photography, gardening and travel particularly driving with Heather around the roads of Britain and Europe. About ten years ago it dawned on me that there are many people out there with a passion for automobiles and I started a car club I called Saddleworth Classic And Rare Car Enthusiasts (SCARCE). The abbreviation did seem rather apt!

The Club is for like-minded individuals to find a home for their passion and not even needing a car to join in. There is no subscription and anyone can join, all we



have is a shared goal to enjoy our enthusiasm for classic vehicles and share our memories and experiences with one another. The club has prospered.

In many ways I mirror this with those churches that seem to survive and thrive. Christianity is not a closed shop. It is not some elite club that requires its members to be very rich (or very poor). All are invited to join in with our enthusiasm for Christ and all he has taught us. I find that by finding some time in between all the other pressures of family commitments, hobbies and holidays to join with fellow parishioners in worshipping God and spending time on helping with Church events and with helping each other I only go away showing a profit in the experience and with a huge smile on my face. It is uplifting and I am blessed to have found such a wonderful place.

As a scientist I find no conflict with my religion and can well understand how the Bible was written under the constraints of people's understanding during that era. I do not laugh at the stories and hope that over the centuries to come people will look back and understand our huge lack of knowledge even though in this "modern" age some people seem to think they know it all. What a folly that is.

One of my personal conflicts is that it is sometimes promulgated that one cannot have Christian beliefs unless one has disposed of all their wealth and rendered oneself penniless. I see no conflict in the parson no longer riding around their Parish on a bicycle and choosing a more comfortable means of transport. Neither do I see any problem with enjoying the fruits of one's hard work but rather an opportunity to use one's wealth to do good and help others less fortunate than oneself.

If ever such an example exists, look no further than the Whitehead brothers

who owned and built up the Royal George Mill to be a world leader in what they did. This then put them in a position to build their own church buildings along with all the ancillary requirements and gift them to the local community. It is very doubtful there would have been a church or Sunday school in Friezland had it not been for their enterprise, foresight and charity.

In addition to the considerable library of research that Jo Johnson our Sexton passed on to me I am particularly indebted to Jim Carr of Saddleworth Historical Society and also a Profile of the Parish by Carole Marsden which she compiled for her Northern Ordination course which has furnished me with additional information towards writing this historical guide. Along with the kind assistance of our Churchwarden – Duncan Ross, visits to the archives at Central Library Manchester and Church House on Deansgate and further assistance from Jo Johnson and her architect husband Malcolm the task was eventually completed.

I am inordinately grateful to Terry Andrews and Peter Whalley who have provided virtually all of the photographs which have added tremendously to the look of this publication and its importance as an





*Reverend Professor Mike Donmall enjoying his favourite task of welcoming new members.*

historical record of the church. I would also like to pass on my thanks to all those members of the congregation and those professionals who have helped to ensure the success of our HLF Grant which has generously paid for the publication of this booklet thanks to National Lottery players whose contributions have added to so many deserving projects throughout our Nation.

My partner, Heather, is also delighted that I can now spend more time with her now that she can drag me away from the computer. Celebrating my three score years and ten this month I am hoping to extend this mortal coil a little longer to enjoy what time I have with my children Russell, Guy and Harry and now my grandchildren Casper and Alfie. As one wit was heard to say, "If I had known I was going to live this long I would have taken better care of myself". Food for thought.

Happy reading. I only hope that you will find the history of our Church as fascinating as I have done. Any mistakes are entirely down to me.

I would like to finish this Foreword with some words from Rev. Harold Hutcheon Vicar of the Parish in the centenary year of 1950: "Long gone are the days when churches were full, now it is left to the faithful few to offer the daily and weekly sacrifice, and praise to Almighty God.

Further, it is left to the loyal few, to maintain the sacred building in good repair, although all parishioners claim it as their church, and wish to use it when so required."

**Tony Littlewood**  
Friezland Grange  
November 2019



*Views of Saddleworth Moor.*





## Some Local History of Saddleworth

**Saddleworth is the only part of the Metropolitan Borough of Oldham to emanate from the historic county boundary of Yorkshire. The West Riding of Yorkshire is one of three subdivisions of Yorkshire. From 1889 to 1974 it was based on historic boundaries of the County of York. The coat of arms of the West Riding County Council has a distinctive emblem centred around a white rose as opposed to the red rose of Lancashire.**

For hundreds of years Saddleworth was ecclesiastically linked with the Parish of Rochdale and the former Urban District of Saddleworth was the only part of the West Riding to have been amalgamated with Greater Manchester in 1974. Greater Manchester is divided into several civil parishes and Saddleworth comes under the civil parish of the Metropolitan Borough of Oldham.

Set on the western edge of the Pennines the major villages of Saddleworth are Uppermill, Greenfield, Grasscroft, Friezland, Grotton, Lydgate, Scouthead, Springhead, Austerlands and the four D's – Delph, Diggle, Dobcross and Denshaw.

Saddleworth is listed in the Domesday Book as “Thoac” (pronounced “Quick”) and described as the Land of the King in Eurvicsire (Yorkshire) – Agbrigg wapentake. In Yorkshire in 1086 a “wapentake” replaced several “Hundreds”. The area may well have been occupied much further back in the Stone Age and most probably for a short time by passing Vikings as findings of gold Viking rings and arrowheads point to evidence of settlements worth plundering. A Roman road most certainly passed through the area on its way from Chester to York and a Fort was built at Castleshaw to defend that section around 80 A.D.

For centuries Saddleworth was a centre of wool production with many sheep occupying the moorland of the area. Coupled with a ready supply of sheep in the outlying areas this provided an ample supply of raw wool. Prior to 1800 hand loom weaving in the four-storey cottages of Saddleworth was prevalent although by the turn of the century there were about 50 water-powered mills in the area. These were eventually modernised with the invention of the steam engines to drive the machinery. Turnpike roads allowed wool and cotton to be brought to the area and



both woollen and cotton spinning mills existed side by side.

In 1700 Parliament had passed the Calico Act blocking importation of cotton cloth from abroad as it viewed the importation of textiles by the East India Company as a threat to domestic business. The exemption of raw cotton from this law saw a huge increase in importation and triggered the invention of different looms to produce cotton cloth. Mechanical production by the newly constructed cotton mills from the mid to late 1700s put pressure on Parliament to remove the prohibition of products and sale of cotton cloth as by now the country easily competed with any imported

from elsewhere. The act was repealed in 1774 swelling the demand for more cotton to be imported from countries such as Egypt and India and the Lancashire Cotton mills became famous throughout the world with some smaller examples dotted around Saddleworth.

Assisted by the fact that this area of land close to the moors was of poor quality acid soil and had a wet climate it was a cheap place to procure sufficient land to build these mills and this happened very quickly. The huge effect of the Industrial Revolution had enabled local mill owners to become incredibly wealthy individuals.

In 1851 the largest mill in the area employed 380 people. The tiny hamlets of the cottage industry began to decline as people were absorbed into the larger work-forces. As the mills grew so larger houses for the

employees were built, back to back cottages nestling in the valleys within a few minutes' walk of the mill. As they grew and produced more, the industry was organised on a much larger scale so then the need for better communications grew. The canals which had been used to transport cargoes began to lose importance with the development of the railway system. By 1849 the Huddersfield and Manchester Railway had arrived. By 1851 the population of Saddleworth had grown to 18,000 including 3,438 people employed in the woollen mills of Saddleworth and 3,333 in the cotton mills.





Originally in the  
DIOCESE of  
LICHFIELD



DIOCESE of  
CHESTER  
formed in 1541



DIOCESE of  
BLACKBURN from  
Manchester 1996



DIOCESE of  
MANCHESTER  
formed in 1847



DIOCESE  
MANCHESTER  
CATHEDRAL



● Friezland



Originally in the  
DIOCESE of  
LIVERPOOL

# Map of the DEANERIES

Revised May 1982







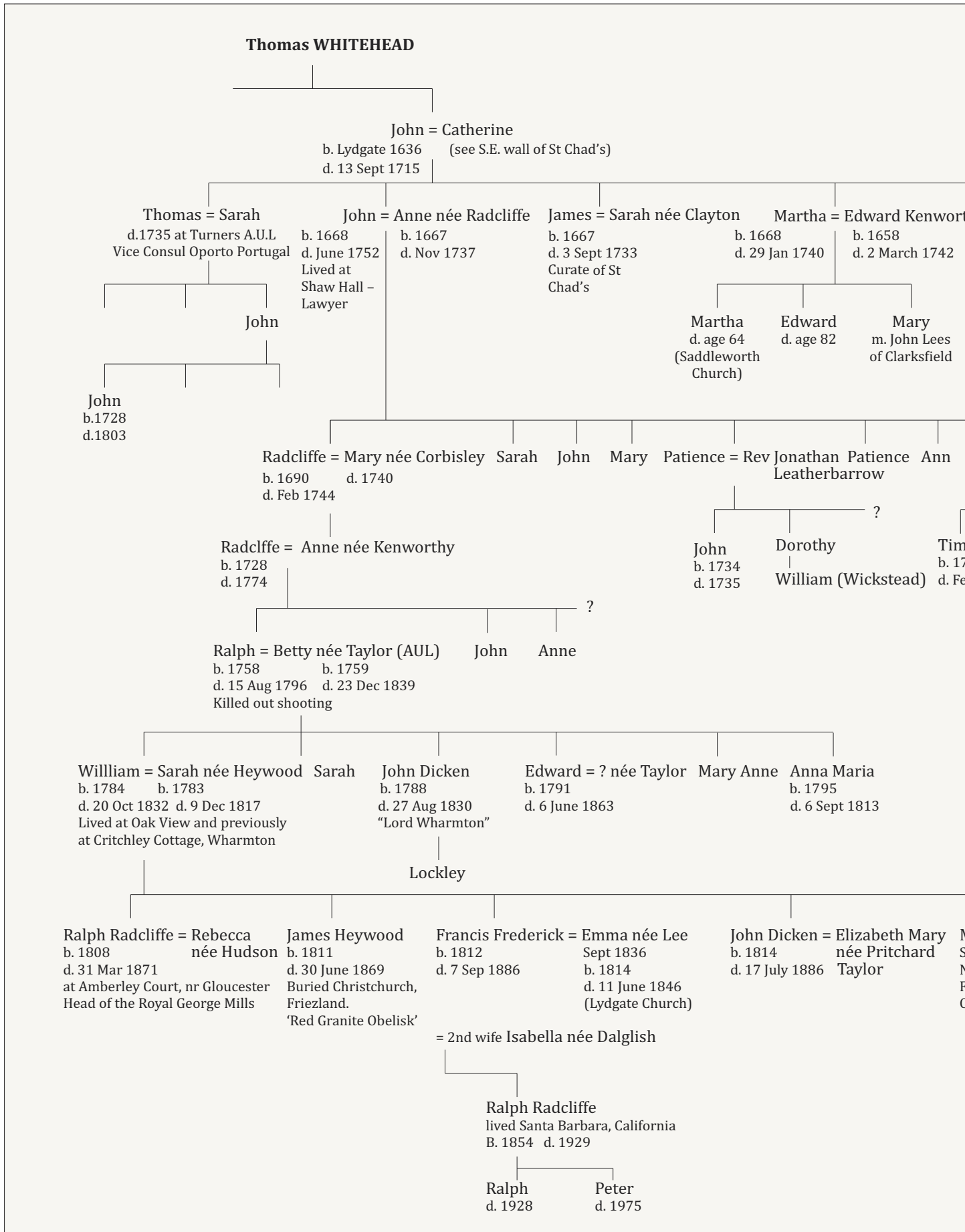
## The Whitehead Family – the Royal George Mill

**As long ago as the reign of Charles the First there is a record of a John Whitehead born in Saddleworth and baptised at St Chad's Church in 1636 and his death is recorded in that churchyard informing us:**

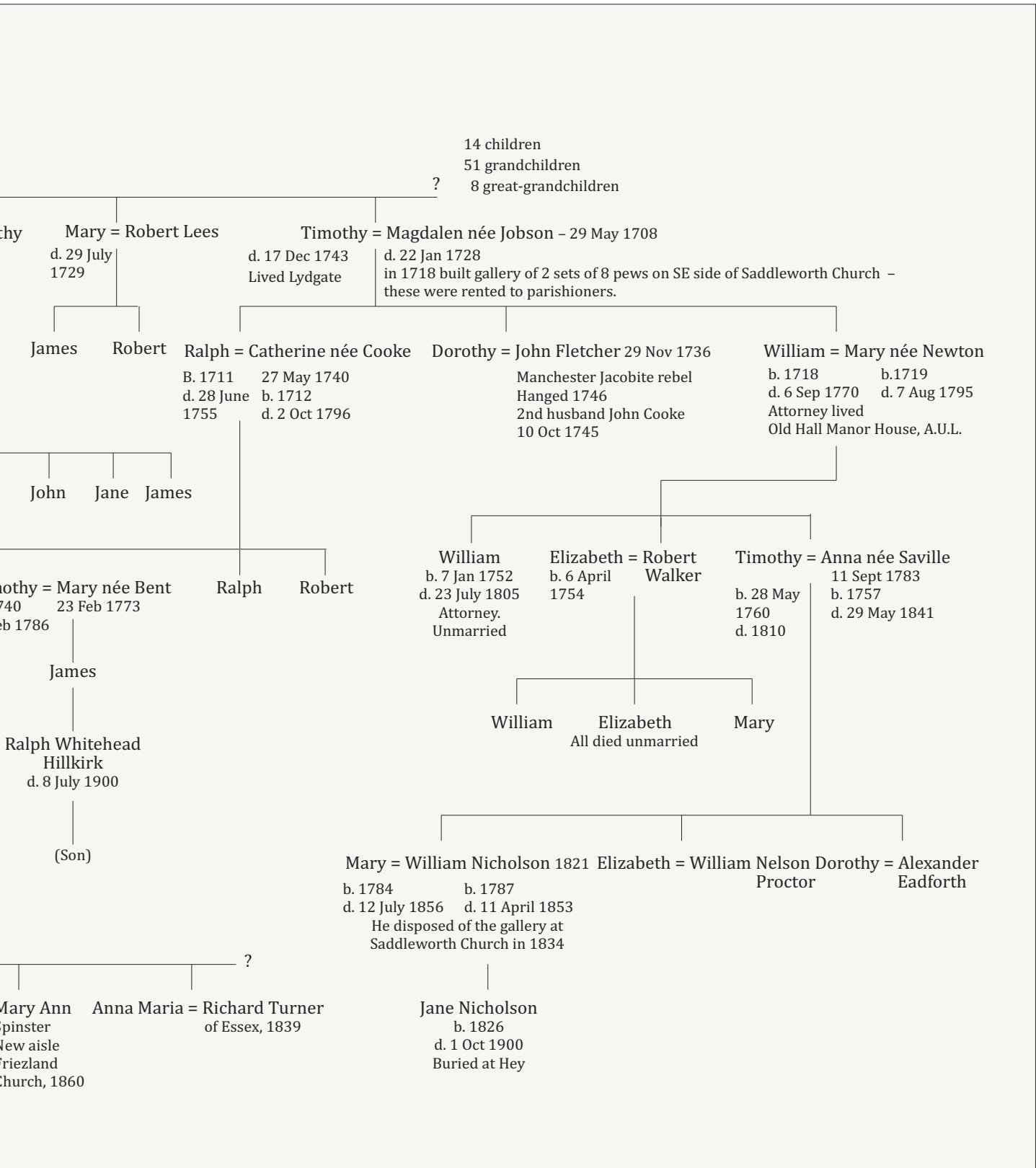
1715. UNDER HERE LYS INTERRED  
THE BODY  
OF JOHN WHITEHEAD  
LATE OF LIDYATE STAPLER WHO DIED  
13th DEC 1715 AGE 78 YEARS AND 10 MONTHS.  
HE WAS FATHER TO 14, GRANDFATHER TO 51,  
GREAT GRANDFATHER TO 8, IN ALL 73.

At this time the area was a remote part of the West Riding where changes of government and national affairs rarely affected the lives of its inhabitants. John Whitehead, son and grandson, were described as staplers, merchants and graders of wool. From old documents it is possible to piece together the lifestyle of this family. They were yeoman farmers but had, besides the usual farm buildings, dye houses and storehouses for the trade of stapling. Wool brought from local cottages, where it had been spun, would be dyed and stored before being sent by packhorse to

neighbouring towns. The family prospered. How many of the original 14 children survived infancy is uncertain. Those who did worked hard and made advantageous marriages. John Whitehead, second son, married into a family claiming "knightly descent" from the owners of Ordsall Hall, Salford. This man was responsible for the move to Shaw Hall in 1730 near to where the Royal George mill was later to be established. No records exist of the transition of the family trade as wool preparers for other factories to that of factory owners and manufacturers of cloth themselves. In Saddleworth in the mid 18th-century various processes were carried out in local cottages and it may be that these cottages gradually became centralised in the small Oak View Mill. By 1799 this Mill was established under William Whitehead, father of the four brothers who would build the Church. When Oak View became too small for their expanding trade the move was made across the valley and the Royal George Mills were built. The area was then known locally as Royal George and has now been turned into a residential development by Wiggett Construction. Wool dying was a particular process in this area because of the good water supplies from moorland streams. Felt was brought from across the







*Family Tree for*  
**THE WHITEHEAD FAMILY**

Pennines to be dyed. Eventually felt making was adopted by the Whiteheads at their mill. The mill thrived and the workforce increased.

The Mills were originally started in 1786 when they were known as the Gibbs Mills under an indenture dated Oct 28th 1785 when James Farrer the Lord of the Manor leased land near to Gibbs Farm to James Harrop of Grasscroft, Clothier, John Smith of Dobcross, drysalter and James Scholefield of Gibbs, Clothier. This entitled them to build one mill for the fulling of cloth and one scribbling mill in such a manner as they should think proper but not at liberty to erect any other Mill or Mills. Provision was also made to allow 1 acre 3 rods 12 perches for the spreading and hanging of woollen cloth to dry. The lease was for 120 years at a rent of seven pounds ten shillings per annum and stone for building the mill was to be got from the fields called the Near Shaw Field and the Far Shaw Field then in the occupation of Mrs Whitehead of Shaw Hall.

A further indenture dated March 25, 1788 mentioned the newly erected fulling and scribbling mill with two water wheels and several engines therein fixed for the fulling of cloth and scribbling of sheep's wool. By 1800 the name Royal George had been applied to the mills and after 1803 they were in the possession of James Harrop and sons who were bankrupt in 1826. The next occupiers were Taylor Son and Gibson who also operated Bank Mill, Springhead and employed 68 hands in 1834.

In 1835 the Whitehead brothers bought the mills, four stone cottages, three brick cottage and the Gibbs

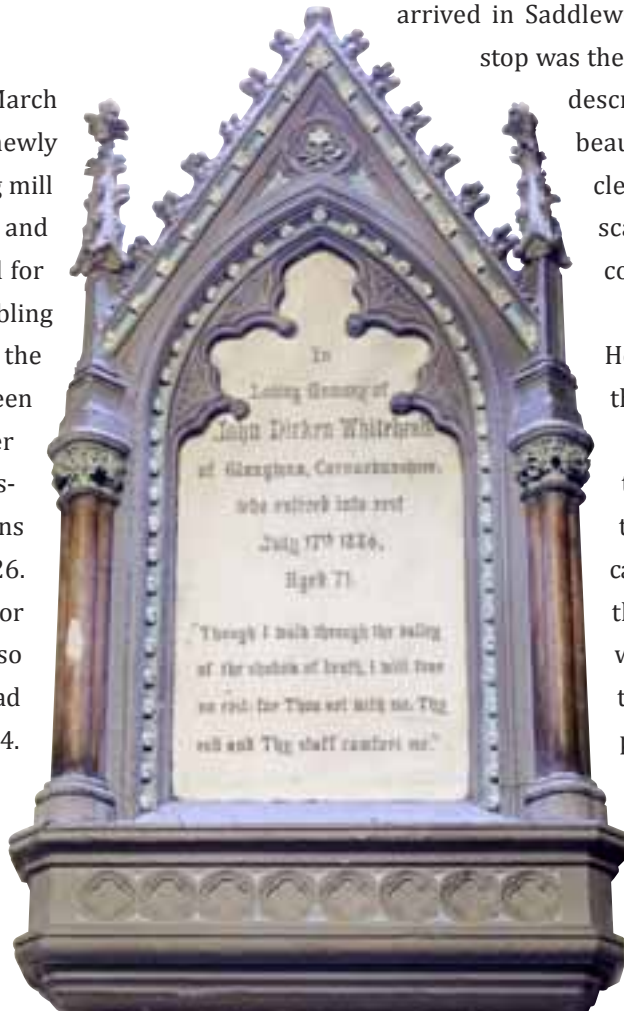
Estate for £7000 from the assignees of James Harrop. *See the Whitehead family tree.*

After leaving Shaw Hall around 1832 the brothers' father, William had moved to Oak View where he joined his brothers John Dicken and Edward in operating the small carding and scribbling mill there. William died in 1832 and from then until 1837 Oak View Mill was run by his sons, R.R.Whitehead and Brothers. In 1834 it was described as a water powered mill with between 8 and 10 horsepower employing 65. The mill was advertised for letting in the Manchester Guardian of Nov 15th 1837 demonstrating that the sons had decided to concentrate all their energies on running the newly acquired Royal George Mills.

Late in 1840, Angus Reach who was a special correspondent reporting for the Morning Chronicle on the condition of the English Working Classes arrived in Saddleworth from Oldham. His first stop was the Royal George Mills which he

described as a country factory beautifully situated in the deep cleft of a wooded glen and scattered around it are the cottages of the workpeople.

He went on to describe some of these and mentioned the stone-flagged, sanded floors, the rush-backed chairs and the nets filled with crisp oak cakes which were spread across the ceiling. Also mentioned was how the Whiteheads sent their Buenos Aires wool to be picked in the prisons of Manchester; it was so dirty it was difficult to find local workers who would handle it. He also commented on one interesting branch of





the organisation being devoted to flag making, those working on this being exclusively women. They would dye, spin and weave the bunting which was then cut into the proper pattern and sewn together in the mill or in the cottages around.

This has echoes today in as much as two of our congregation, Joan Holt and Jo Johnson have spent many decades designing and manufacturing fabric creations for the clergy. Many of our ministers past and present have sported chasubles designed by this talented pair and the banners we proudly walk through the streets with at our Whitsuntide processions have also been made by them.

The Morning Chronicle correspondent commented on the anomaly of flags for the navy being made among the hills of Yorkshire by people who had never seen a ship or ocean. Reach also discovered that the Whiteheads paid their workers above average for the district and he gives the impression that the workers were certainly not discontented with their conditions of employment unlike the employees of certain other mills in the area.

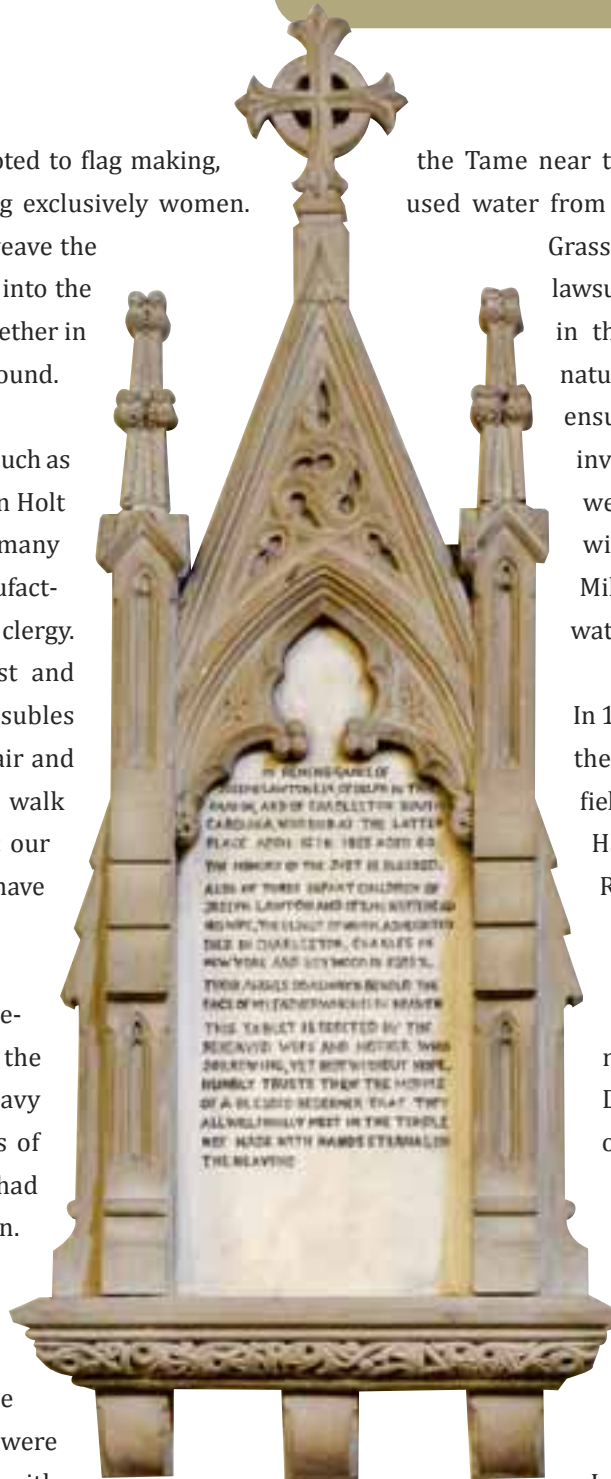
After their arrival at the Royal George Mills the Whiteheads began to purchase further land in the vicinity. One of the principal reasons for this was to safeguard their water rights. The head race for the mills began at a weir across the River Tame immediately below the tail goit of Frenches Mill and the tail goit of the Royal George Mills was constructed by the Whiteheads across their land at Gibbs to join

the Tame near the canal aqueduct. They also used water from the stream which descended Grasscroft Clough. There were many lawsuits fought over the water rights in the days of water-wheels and naturally the Whiteheads wanted to ensure they should not be so involved. However in 1838 they were caught up in such a case with Mr. Broadbent of Frenches Mill who wanted to install a larger water-wheel there.

In 1840 the Whiteheads purchased the Well-i-hole farm and all its fields from the assignees of Joseph Harrop together with the Armit Road Meadow near the Royal George Mill. More land followed with the Manns Estate and a farm called Bank near the crossroads below the Dysarts Arms together with other land in that neighbourhood.

On Dec 31st 1847 Francis Frederick Whitehead conveyed his share to the other three brothers.

In the 1850's the main additions were the High Grove Estate, which included Charlotte or High Grove Mill, a cotton spinning mill, and the former Throstle Nest Mill and the Shaw Hall Bank Estate a compact block of land extending from the middle slopes of Wharmton down to the River Tame just west of Frenches Wharf. A particularly interesting transaction in 1855 was that where part of the Staley Turnpike Road (now renamed Oaklands Road) was exchanged with the Turnpike Trustees for the new private road to the Royal George Mills from Greenfield Station which had



been constructed by the Whiteheads across their land, and which was later named Shaw Hall Bank road.

On Dec 14th 1861, John Dicken Whitehead conveyed his share to his brothers Ralph Radcliffe and James Heywood Whitehead.

The Whiteheads also purchased the Cotton Tree Inn (now the Royal George Hotel) in 1871, the Canal Wharf at Manns in 1843 and the Well-i-Hole Toll Bar in 1872.

The land upon which Christ Church Friezland was built was purchased in 1849 from the L.& N.W. Railway Company and the Church was built soon afterwards using stone cut from the cutting near High Grove Mill.

The Parsonage House at Lydgate was partially financed by Ralph Whitehead. Land on which it was to be built, "equally good freehold land near the chapel suitable for building a Parsonage house" was given. It must be remembered that the Parish of what is now Friezland was part of the Lydgate glebe. Between them the Church of the chapelry of Lydgate, then Quickmere, and the Whiteheads owned most of the estates.

The Whiteheads not only provided money at Lydgate. Three of the four brothers were wardens there. John Dicken 1828 to 1830, James Heywood 1833 to 1835 and 1838 to 1840, Francis Frederick 1842 to 1844. It has been suggested that they did not see eye to eye with the then incumbent Rev. George Cowell as regards churchmanship. In his book "History of a



Pennine Parish" Canon C.C.W. Airne suggests that the Whiteheads were of strict evangelical persuasion.

To them Tractarianism, Darwinism, and Biblical criticism were unacceptable. Nothing is known of Rev. Cowell's preaching style. Of his brother, then Vicar of Todmorden, Canon Raines noted in his diary of 1831 this comment, "bare of Gospel truth". If this were true of the Lydgate's incumbent's style it is little wonder that the Whiteheads wrote the following

inscription carved on the Friezland pulpit. "Woe be unto me if I preach not the Gospel".

So it follows that the incompatibility of the churchmanship at Lydgate with the Whiteheads own fundamental ideas set forth on the vestry tablet at Friezland may have contributed to their decision to build at Friezland. Stories of a rift between the Whiteheads and Rev. Cowell refuel a year later when a year after the consecration of Friezland he closed the Lydgate Church posting on the door the following notice:

"The Sexton of the Church having before me declared that he will no longer hold office, he having received no salary for one and half years, and there being no churchwardens nor any funds either for the repair of the edifice or procuring the necessary for the recent reforms of divine services I am reduced to the painful necessity of closing the Church on Sunday 5th Instant."

The Huddersfield Chronicle suggested on the 11th that the real reason for the Church's closure was a disagreement between the incumbent and the



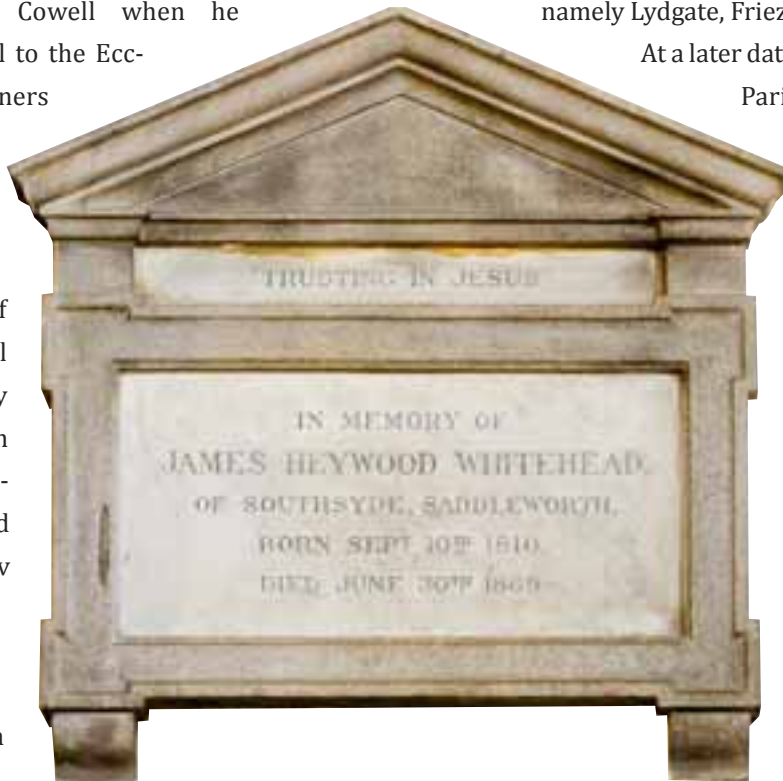
congregation who had then gone to worship at a Church recently erected and endowed by Messrs Whiteheads of Royal George.

The 1851 census of public worship shows the following figures.

	A.M.	P.M.
<b>LYDGATE</b>		
Congregation	19	40
Sunday scholars	none	none
<b>FRIEZLAND</b>		
Congregation	135	205
Sunday scholars	185	210

Oh that we could attract that many worshippers to Friezland today!

It would seem that the Whiteheads had not only taken their monetary support with them to Friezland but also most of the congregation. It must also be stated at this point that as employers of a greater proportion of the congregation from both parishes they would have great influence. The quarrel seems not to have lasted. In later years the Whiteheads signed as supporters of Rev. Cowell when he submitted a memorial to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners in 1857. In fact when by 1867 the Lydgate Parish population had reached 1400 in recognition of the increased spiritual needs of the vastly increasing population the Whiteheads suggested that the Friezland Curate went to help Rev Cowell. The Curate was transferred and given special responsibility for the area known as Roughtown.



Supported by the Whiteheads a Church and school were also built there at their expense. St John's was consecrated in 1878. It was at this time that boundaries were altered fairly frequently until the final Parishes took shape. Without considerable study like a game of chess it is not always easy to understand why this all occurred.

On 19th Oct 1869 an announcement was made that it would promote the interests of religion that the new Parishes of St. Anne Lydgate and Christ Church Friezland should be constituted into a separate district of St. John the Baptist Roughtown.

On 6th May 1873 the boundaries were altered to include a further portion of the new Parish of Friezland.

Here a new ecclesiastical district was formed which could not have been done without the co-operation of James Whitehead and Rev Cowell. Included in the appendix are copies of letters from the Church Commissioners referring to the alterations of the boundaries which made Lydgate into three parishes namely Lydgate, Friezland and Roughtown.

At a later date part of the Friezland Parish was incorporated

into the new Parish of St Mary Greenfield. It must also be noted that when Friezland became a parish in its own right the boundaries were so drawn to include the Whiteheads homes: Pike House, Beech Hill and Thorns within them. Bernard Barnes a local historian suggests that taking the obvious

and more natural line the parish boundary would not have included them.

In the late 1840s the four brothers commissioned George Shaw to build Christ Church Friezland, a Day school, Parsonage and Head-Master's house. The four Whitehead Bros responsible for this enterprise were Ralph Radcliffe Whitehead, James Heywood Whitehead, John Dicken Whitehead, Francis Frederick Whitehead.

The east window had stained glass executed by Thomas Willement (1786-1871) who matched George Shaw's idea of 13th century style Gothic. Examples of Thomas Willement's art may be seen in St. George's Chapel in Windsor Castle.

There were also two sisters who must be included in the story. Though not originally benefactors of the Church their lives became inextricably linked with it.

Mary Ann Whitehead who died unmarried in 1860 and in whose memory the north aisle was added to the church.

Anna Maria Whitehead who is referred to in John's diary and to whose son the Patronage of the Church eventually passed.

Ralph Radcliffe Whitehead lived much of his life away from Saddleworth. He married Rebecca Hudson, only daughter of Edward and Ann Hudson of Chalford in Gloucestershire in 1838 and in 1843 was described as being formerly of Hurscome House in Yorkshire but now of Hurscome House, Minchinhampton,

Gloucestershire. Later he settled at Amberley Court then called Thuscombe House near Stroud where he died, childless on 31 March 1871 aged 62.



James Heywood Whitehead lived at South Side, a large house immediately to the south of the Royal George Mills which was demolished when the mills were extended in the 1930's. In 1846 he was living there with Sarah and Mary Ann Whitehead but in 1861 his aunt Catherine Whitehead resided there with him together with four servants. He died unmarried on 30th June 1869 aged 58. In his will dated July 28th 1860 he left all his estates to his nephew Ralph Radcliffe Whitehead junior, except for land at Roughtown where a church was to be built.

Francis Frederick Whitehead lived at Thorns, Grasscroft. In 1851 he was described as a widower, his wife Emma having died in 1846, residing at the Thorns with three servants. By 1861 however he was living at Beech Hill, Grasscroft and in this year and in 1871 he was described as "deputy lieutenant". He died in 1886 aged 74 leaving a son, Ralph Radcliffe Whitehead (born 1854 died 1929) who became the head of the firm, eventually inheriting Beech Hill as his main residence.

John Dicken Whitehead was living at Beech Hill in 1851 with his wife Elizabeth and in 1861 built Wharmton Tower, another of George Shaw's creations, but he never lived there shortly afterwards moving to Glanyna in Caernarvonshire. He died on 17th July 1886 aged 71.



The Whiteheads were obviously a hard-working family who used their money wisely as true Yorkshiremen. Not for them to fritter away their family fortune as many a wealthy man of the time was known to have done. As Thomas Burke noted in his book "The English Townsman" published in 1946 ..." a remembrance of the local saying (of Manchester Men) "Clogs to clogs in three generations". It had been noted through the past hundred years that that was often the fact. "Great-grandfather had been a mill-worker and had become foreman and then started his own small mill. Grandfather developed it and the family became part of the prosperous middle-class. Father would inherit and play the fool and lose all the family property, and his son would have to go in clogs as an ordinary mill-hand like his great grandfather".

The firm the brothers owned became one of the first thousand companies in the UK to be incorporated as a Limited Liability Company – R.R. Whitehead &

Brothers Ltd. The family control eventually ceased in 1932 when the Company was acquired by Porrits & Spence Ltd. who subsequently became part of the Scapa group of Blackburn. In 1980 the three pressed felt manufacturing companies in the Scapa Group – Bury & Masco Ltd., Cooper & Co. (Birmingham) Ltd. and R.R. Whitehead & Bros. Ltd. were reconstituted as a single operating company – Bury, Cooper & Whitehead Ltd. At that time the turnover of felt for piano hammerheads grew rapidly with markets opening up for them in the Far East and especially Korea and the General Manager Mr. David Paul instituted a night-shift to deal with the demand.

When the works eventually closed the buildings were left empty for some time until the plot including ancillary lands owned by the company were purchased by Wiggett Construction and the proud old Royal George Mill was altered into modern houses and apartments.



*Wharmton Tower.*



*Pulpit designed by Shaw.*





## George Shaw – Architect

*Choir stalls  
designed by Shaw.*

**The Royal George Mill was a thriving enterprise in the 1840s being the World leader in supplying high quality felt for use in pianos and flags. It was sufficiently prosperous to earn its owners, the Whitehead family, not only a Royal warrant but also a vast fortune which like many enlightened mill owners they were prepared to plough back into the community by building churches and the accompanying vicarages and schools. The architect they chose to act for them was a local man from Uppermill, George Shaw.**

George Shaw came from a family of farmers and clothiers who had lived in the area for many generations. Their family home once known as “the Milne” had been rechristened “Overmilne” and later this was changed to “Uppermill”. George’s grandfather Giles had built a woollen mill near here in 1783 and it was known locally as Giles Mill standing in the centre of Uppermill opposite the museum car-park. The little village of Uppermill was transformed with the building of first the Turnpike road and then the Huddersfield canal at the end of the 18th century and thus became a busy community. Many of the buildings in Uppermill owe much to the design of the now

wealthy family who had speculated on this expansion and into which George was born in 1810. By 1798 the old house of 1632 had become inadequate and another Giles (son of Thomas) Shaw built a new plain square Georgian house where George enjoyed his childhood. The family of nine children including George’s six sisters and two younger brothers was surrounded by a garden bordered by a trout stream – a paradise in which to play and grow up. The house has been saved from demolition by the Oldham U.D.C. and after being bought in the 1920’s as Council Offices is now the Uppermill Library.

From an early age Shaw travelled on behalf of his father’s and grandfather’s mills and was fortunate to meet many wealthy and educated people. The new romantic movement was at its height centring around some vague period of the middle ages when man’s motive in life was the Christian religion and when magnificent cathedrals were built and knights were off fighting tyrants and slaying dragons. The young Shaw absorbed all of this and in doing so accumulated a nice collection of armour and mediaeval pictures.

As he grew up he became very friendly with Francis

Raines a local curate who remained officially curate in charge of Saddleworth until 1841 and had made a study of local churches and manor houses which Shaw illustrated with fine drawings which are now preserved in Chetham's library in Manchester.

In the early 1830's the decision was finally taken to replace Saddleworth church and in the course of this Shaw (who was not responsible for the construction of the new building) acquired a few pieces including the old gateposts which he set out at the entrance to his home at the side of the High Street bridge, a few windows and some of the finials of the 1746 tower still to be seen in the garden. At this stage Shaw had the idea of creating a chapel alongside the family house for which "the rood beam of Edward III's time", rescued from the old church, would help to form a framework. By 1840 it appears his chapel was finished, complete with bell-tower as he began to date his letters from "St. Chad's Uppermill" instead of the previous name of the house, "Uppermill".

A few years later his father died and Shaw's flair for architecture no doubt inspired him to relinquish the running of the family mill and leave it to his younger brother Thomas. The business had now become Shaw and Bradbury and eventually in 1864 was taken over by the Bradburys. This freed Shaw along with his youngest brother John Radcliffe Shaw so that he could specialise as an architect of churches and fine manor houses which were being constructed by wealthy merchants and land owners in the area. A guide to his former home, the local library in Uppermill, makes comment of the fact that, "The church and vicarage of Christ Church, Friezland near Greenfield are fine examples of his work."

He inherited a Georgian house but what he wanted was a Gothic

one and so he ornamented his own house with mullioned windows, false gables and castellations and the interior was designed as a baronial hall by putting his stonemasons and carpenters to work carving ornate embellishments.

His first patron was F.F. Whitehead and the first commission George Shaw received was to build "the most attractive group of church, vicarage, school and a few other houses ... the whole work ... carried out by Saddleworth men under his supervision". Not only was Shaw now established as an architect he had already found a school of competent craftsmen whom he was to employ on similar work for the next 25 years or so. We find the church of which Friezland was the prototype, repeated with minor variations in all the other churches he was to build.

During the next few years he found another patron in John Platt, of the great firm of Platt Bros in Oldham.

Legend has it that John Platt, desiring to build a hunting lodge at Ashway Gap in Greenfield, consulted Sir Charles Barry, the architect of the Houses of Parliament and got plans from him. When these were in discussion (in Shaw's presence) someone asked how you got into a certain room. As the plans stood the room was in fact inaccessible. At this Platt threw the plans over to Shaw telling him to make some proper plans and get on with it! Be that as it may, it is certain that Shaw not long after 1850 built that romantic castle that added so much interest to the valley; sadly since demolished.



*Chair designed by Shaw.*



Shaw was lucky in finding good woodcarvers from the very beginning. The carving at Friezland is acknowledged as some of the best he ever produced. It is interesting to examine many of the choir stalls and the pulpit with its interesting verses carved around the base.

Sir Charles Barry was not the only architect to be supplanted. The Church of St Thomas, Werneth was begun by some other architect but there is no doubt that the greater part of the church, finished in 1855, is by Shaw. Not only did he build a dozen other churches but also Wharmton Tower Greenfield, Westfield – Shaw Hall, extended Woodfield – Werneth Park, twice extended the Nook – Greenfield, etc.

He frequently returned to modify his creations. Christ Church Friezland was soon extended by an aisle to the north side. The domestic part of Ashway Gap was twice extended. It is interesting to note that two of Shaw's creations in Saddleworth were used as military hospitals in the Great War – first Wharmton Towers opened by Mrs Hyde in 1915 followed by Ashway Gap in January 1916.

**Some of Shaw's other churches include:**

- Church at Carlecote, near Penistone for John Chapman, High Sheriff of Cheshire.
- A church at Norden for Dearden, Lord of the Manor of Rochdale.
- A church at Llanfairfechan and a large house, Bryn y Newydd for John Platt.
- An extension on Hurst St. John for Oldham Whittaker.
- St. James's Ashton at Hurst Brook for Oldham Whittaker.
- St. Mary Greenfield for Richard Buckley of Holyville.
- Two churches for the partners of Beyer Peacock Engineers.
- The now demolished church at Ripponden and St. Thomas's Crumpsall.
- Staley, Millbrook.
- Holy Trinity, Parkfield, Middleton.
- Holy Trinity, Prestolee.

Shaw's churches tend to follow a similar plan with low eaves, fairly steep roofs which the Saddleworth rains get little time to adhere to, and built of pitch faced Yorkshire stone ashlar in average 4" courses. Some of his stone, possibly from Highmoor, tends to weather quite badly, notably St. Thomas's Werneth and St. Mary's Greenfield. The spires are of better stone and have not suffered from the elements as badly though in the case of Friezland Christ Church at one time some of the original lime mortar was replaced with cement and this caused such problems that we are delighted that after being put on the "Heritage at Risk" register the Heritage Lottery fund eventually contributed £130,000 to the total cost of £185,000 to "repoint the spire, tower and west gable masonry; renew the tower back gutter and valley, improving the current drainage arrangements; repair timber damage caused by water ingress; carry out internal plaster repairs and redecoration."

The ends of the roofs always have stone copings with crosses at the apex and the chancel is always lower than the nave. The east window is almost invariably of three lights, the west window generally wider. The aisle windows are always two light with heavy tracery. Shaw showed off his skill by varying the pattern of the tracery in these two light windows. Friezland shows two but some of his later churches have five or six variations. He demonstrated the skill of his stonemasons in many ways. Look at the pillars alongside the north aisle at Friezland and you will see they are not all carved to the same design as would have been much simpler. Look across at the windows of the Parsonage and you will see they are also all different.

Walls were plastered and the roofs manufactured out of pitch-pine principals with straight or steeply sloping struts resting on corbels, heavy purlins and very small exposed spars with plaster close behind the slates. There is usually a small vestry at the side of the chancel.

Shaw also set out to give a full service and not only build the church but also furnish it throughout. Again

his routine was as standardised as would permit. A well designed and ornate oak pulpit, in the case of Friezland with verses carved as chosen by the Whiteheads.

His priest's desk occurs unchanged, his tablets of the commandments almost unvaried, his altar rails identical, his sanctuary chairs always to the same pattern.

Starting off with his first church at Friezland which contained mainly oak pews and elaborate choir stalls he evolved a cheaper design, usually in pitch-pine, not oak and not nearly so satisfactory for less ambitious churches.

Shaw was lucky in finding good wood carvers from the very beginning. The carving at Christ Church Friezland and the Parsonage alongside with the library exhibiting carved bookshelves and linen-fold panelling was among the best he ever produced. As time went on though his woodwork is still very good there is a lack of freshness about the carving which seems to suffer from mass production. He must have worked a good deal to stock and his stone-masons produced two types of font, one of which was apparently left over and can be seen in the garden at St.Chad's. Nevertheless what he produced was good and his church furnishings are far better than average for the period.

Well designed gravestones, all to one pattern, are to be seen at Friezland (to Richard Buckley), at Norden (to his Patron, Dearden) and at Hurst (to Oldham Whittaker and his family).



*Warden's chest designed by Shaw.*

Around 1860 Shaw found an expert glass painter and started making glass windows. Too late for Friezland though he carried out all the stained glass work at Saddleworth with one exception by Capronier. His biggest and best window is the east window at Saddleworth with a version of the last supper in the lower stage of the window and a crucifixion which Shaw suggests was copied from Michelangelo in the second stage. Unfortunately Shaw's painter appeared to take shortcuts and only the representations of Christ retain the details of the features either from inferior painting or inadequate firing and the stained glass business seems to have ended before 1870.

Shaw died in 1876, aged 66, and his little paradise quickly crumbled. About six years later his land was sold for site redevelopment by the Manchester and County Bank and his chapel was thereby reduced to a shapeless remnant of little use and no ornament. It inevitably fell into disrepair and was taken down. The house and gardens were, by a far seeing decision of the U.D.C. for which we must always be grateful, spared and bought in 1920 for use as a council offices.

His old team of carvers and craftsmen were dispersed and his chief workshop at Victoria Mill, to where the canal transported his timber, was sold to Ellis Meacock in 1881.

His house was on a care and maintenance basis through James Lawton who had graduated from carver to estate agent. George Shaw never married so finally in 1920 all his treasures were scattered in a sale.

George Shaw was an accomplished hard-working man and whilst he left behind his own pleasant garden and "Georgian Gothic" house in Uppermill, through the generosity of the Whiteheads he gave us a beautiful Gothic Revival church in which to worship and which continues to delight the people of Saddleworth with its quintessentially English village church-yard.





*George Shaw's House of St Chad's, now Uppermill Library.*







*George Shaw's beautiful craftsmanship displayed on a bed of Minton tiles at the High Altar.*



R.R. Whitehead (1854-1929)

32



## Foundation of Christ Church Friezland

**To fully appreciate the reasons for the foundation of Christ Church in Friezland we must first of all examine what was existing at that time.**

The four Whitehead brothers: Ralph Radcliffe, Frederick Francis, John Dicken and James Heywood, had acquired the Royal George Mills in 1835 and expanded them considerably. The Whiteheads had all been active Church members and attended St. Anne Lydgate, "up the hill" from Friezland, where this enthusiasm was demonstrated as their Uncle John Dicken Senior (Lord Wharmton as he was known) had been Church warden there from 1828 to 1830; James Heywood from 1833 to 1835 and again 1838 to 1840; and Francis Frederick 1842 to 1844.

During this period of the Whiteheads strong ties to St. Anne's a new incumbent was appointed on 22nd September 1835. George Cowell was born in Leeds in 1801, made a Deacon in 1829 and ordained as a Priest in 1830. Soon after 1835 Rev. George Cowell in co-operation with Queen Ann's Bounty and R.R. Whitehead & Bros of the Royal George Mill proceeded to build a parsonage house at Lydgate as a first step to

promoting the 4 Chapelries in Saddleworth into Ecclesiastical Districts with independent jurisdiction: Lordsmere, Friarmere, Shawmere and Quickmere.

Manns Estate had been purchased in 1823 by Queen Ann's Bounty and measured just over 24 acres as part of the Lydgate Glebe sited behind Shaw Hall Bank and the boundary of Wellihole Estate to the east of Wellington Road and very close to the Whitehead's land at Royal George and Grasscroft. Cowell leased this to the brothers for 21 years and at the same time exchanged two small pieces of land amounting to around one acre for one and half acres or so in the Long Seven Acres suitable for building a parsonage house.

George Cowell built the house he called Highfield at a cost of £900 and probably moved into it in 1839.

On 18th March 1844 Queen Ann's Bounty purchased two more closes adjoining it measuring 2 acres 3 rods and 7 perches which constituted the Vicarage Glebe. Ten days later Mr Cowell conveyed his house and one acre of land to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners and thus Lydgate obtained a Parsonage House.



In those days the Vicar was farmer as well as incumbent and the Parsonage had a hay loft with stall for one beast below, stone sink and slab for milk and beer in the cellar and a dovecote over the adjoining coach-house.

The provision of a Parsonage House made it possible for an Order of Council on 30th Nov. 1844 to establish the District Chapelry of Quickmere which it remained until the Rochdale Vicarage Act made it the Parish of St Anne's Lydgate with a share of the Rochdale revenues. In 1847 the Diocese of Manchester was created.

Early in the 1840s the Bros Whitehead attending St Anne Lydgate had a disagreement with Rev. George Cowell about his preaching style. If he was anything like his brother the vicar of Todmorden of whom Canon Raines had noted in his diary of 1831 the comment "bare of gospel truth" then it did not bode well.

At that time the majority of the Whitehead's workers in Friezland used to walk up the hill to worship at the Church of St Anne's that had been standing there since 1788. Ralph Radcliffe Whitehead and his brothers decided to build their own Church and commissioned George Shaw of St Chad's Uppermill (The house is now currently the local library) to build it on land that was part of Lydgate glebe and near the mill that they owned and ran. George Shaw was a local architect and had named his house after the Parish Church of Uppermill. Ralph Whitehead was the eldest of the four brothers and was the patron of the new Church.

In 1847 the Diocese of Manchester was founded as a section of the Diocese of Chester and in the same year the Factory Act was established. Around this time many of the wealthy Victorian millowners were demonstrating philanthropy by returning some of their wealth to the community that had served them so well. Perhaps seeing the writing on the wall the Whiteheads had been using a farm building in Wellihole as a church

from around 1840 and it was the east window of this which was relocated eventually to the new church at Friezland. This would have made the old building unusable and explains why services had to be moved for as short time to an upstairs room at "Lingcroft" on Mossley Road.

The Patronage of the Church by R.R.Whitehead was conveyed on 14th May 1850 passing to R.R.Whitehead Junior on 14th Sept 1922 and thence eventually to Col. Wyatt William Turner of Pinkney Park, Malmesbury before being assigned to the Bishop of Manchester in June 1980.

On 4th June 1849 a procession of Masons assembled at the Bell Inn and later at the Cotton Tree Inn at Ridding (now the Royal George Hotel) and made their way to "Southside", the Whitehead's home. There they were joined by clergy, gentry the Odd Fellows, Foresters, Druids etc. After singing the national anthem in the garden of James Heywood Whitehead they then moved via Ridding, Oakview, Frenches and through the toll gate at Shaw Hall to the site of the proposed church. Two foundation stones were laid; the first by the Lord Bishop of Manchester and the second by Mr. Charles Lee the provincial Grand Master. This was followed by a sumptuous lunch provided by the Whitehead brothers. As well as the Church and the School a Parsonage and Headmaster's house were built. In addition the Whiteheads built cottages to house their workers and land was given for recreation forming the tennis, bowling and cricket clubs adjacent to the Mills.

The church was consecrated by the Bishop of Manchester on 29th May 1850 but over the years various alterations and improvements were made. It is the only Anglican Church for public worship in the Parish.

The first Baptism took place on March 18 1849 with Rev. Green officiating the Christening of Sarah Winterbottom. There were a further 61 baptisms that year.

Letter confirming that the land on which houses at Church Meadow were eventually built had been intended to be set aside for the use of the church. Unfortunately for the church this was never legally enacted.



The first Marriage took place on December 23rd 1850 between Joseph Schofield of Royal George to Sarah Ann Buckley of Grasscroft both 21 years of age.

The early building consisted of a single nave, chancel, a tower with a good peal of bells and a baptistry beneath. The whole of the work was done by Saddleworth men except the east window. Within 10 years extensions on the north and south aisles were added. In 1856 sister, Mary Ann Whitehead died and in her memory the North aisle was added to widen the church.

It appears the organ was commissioned in 1875 but not immediately installed. A balcony originally housed the choir and organ at the west end the installation of which in 1879 had necessitated the West window to be enlarged, the organ being sited either side of it on a gallery above where the font is presently situated. In July 1908 the organ was repositioned to its current location and the gallery in the west wall was removed. In 1948 an electric blower was installed to remove the requirement to operate manual bellows. In 1954 the Sanctuary lamp was purchased and the following year an aumbry was installed to the right- hand side of the

current altar.

The south aisle had a balcony which had an external staircase which still remains whilst both balconies have since been removed. Owing to dry rot the church was re-roofed in 1923-24 and for some reason it is a little off-centre. There is seating for approximately 250 persons.

The church was reordered in 1982 with the help of the Manpower Services Commission who allocated £50,000 to the Youth Opportunities programme of work over a 12 month project with 20 trainees involved. A revolutionary heating system was installed using an infra-red radiant heating system originally used in Canada and used for the first time in a British church. I can well remember my friend John Howcroft of A.J.Howcroft and Son telling me about his design. It was installed by Howarth's Heating Systems of Stalybridge costing £8,000 and having a calculated running cost of only £1 per hour at that time. It was John's father G.B.Howcroft who designed the War Memorial at Pots 'n Pans in 1923; a local monument visited after a steep climb by many people from Saddleworth throughout the year but most especially on Remembrance Sunday – (see page 8). Improved lighting was also introduced during this period, leaving a large, bright and beautiful church, much appreciated by the local community.

In 1989 an audio loop system was installed to help the hard of hearing. In 1993 the organ was refurbished and a report is on file commenting on the high quality of the instrument and its condition.

In 1994 carpet was laid along the nave and the altar in memory of Donald and Andrew Bennett. At that time it was also seen prudent to tune both the piano and the organ with Chris Mayer clearing out the organ chamber ably assisted by Joan Holt following behind with mop and bucket.

In the year 2000 after an appeal for funds a restoration of the spire and tower was begun and a stainless steel

cross-tree and down-rod were inserted to stabilise it with the base of the spire floor being renewed with a steel structure which was then timber boarded and felted. The architect Thos. Worthington of Cheadle awarded the contract to Delta and the top few metres of the spire was removed and replaced with new stone. Pointing was begun and layer scaffolding was installed and the bell-frame was totally renovated. A new steel access ladder was added. Unfortunately the total funds proved inadequate and the project was never completed.

The finance for this project consisted of £21,000 raised by the Parishioners, £11,000 from the Diocese, £39,500 granted by H.L.F. and £14,000 raised in 1997 from selling 1400 square yards of land as additional garden to the west side of the Parsonage which had been sold in 1994.

Meanwhile fund-raising events continued as ever and I well remember one amusing incident around that time. Our choir had arranged a spectacular choral evening in conjunction with St. Anne's to be held next door at Christ Church and microphone and recorder were capturing every note. Even the Congregation were afraid to breath. I was in my usual pew at the back of the nave listening to them singing a very quiet section "demi-voix", when a plaintiff "meow" was heard from the congregation entrance. My cat "Scotch", who frequently followed me to Church each Sunday, could not understand why she had been locked out and had decided to join in. Although she is sadly no longer with us her cry is recorded for eternity!

The 21st-century saw the addition of toilets in 2010 and the kitchen area that has since proved so important to develop community events.

The spire and west wall including the ringing chamber were constantly saturated with dampness so behind the scenes work continued on trying to obtain a larger grant to address the problem.





*Left: The steering committee for the steeple work in deep discussion.*



*Right: Canon Sharon Jones with a bird's eye view of Saddleworth from the 'cherry picker'.*



In 2018 the architect Andrew Kepczyk of Lloyd, Evans, Pritchard, then later of Kepczyk, Pearce, Sanderson was engaged to further repair the steeple which by then had been placed on the "Heritage at Risk" register and with the considerable help of the Heritage Lottery Fund the Steeple and much of the roof were repaired by Heritage Conservation Restoration who were awarded the contract and at a total cost of around £200,000 the problem was at last resolved.





*The stained glass window added to the South Transept in 1949.*





## Ornamentation; Masonry, Memorials, Furnishings and Stained Glass

**One of the most striking features as one enters the church is the Royal Coat of Arms of King George IV over the entrance doorway given to the church by the Royal George Mill.**

The mill made banners and flags for all over the world and apparently it was the only building allowed to fly the Royal Standard even though no Royalty were in residence. The Royal Coat of Arms used to be known as the "Royal George".

The Font used to be located at the base of the bell-tower in what was then known as the baptistry. Later moved to its existing position the font is used for Baptisms, the rite where adult or child is received into

the fellowship of the Church. The first baptism in Friezland was Sarah Winterbottom on 18th March 1849. The first baptism in Christ Church was Sarah Ann Wood (the daughter of William Wood the first organist) on 2nd June 1850, four days after the church was consecrated.

A Tablet on the west wall relates to the restoration of the bells in 1925, a renovation that was repeated in 1998.

The War Memorial lists the names of those of the community who gave their lives in the two World

Wars. Their sacrifice is remembered every

November when the memorial is

decorated for the service in Christ Church. Another







*There but not there – where are they now?*

local service of commemoration is held at the same time on the top of a nearby Saddleworth landmark – Pots 'n' Pans where a memorial has also been erected.

In 2017-18 research was carried out into the background of each of the names on our memorial and is available in church for interested parties. The church-yard is a registered War Graves memorial.

Perspex cut-outs in the shape of soldiers are placed in the pews at that time as a “There but not there” reminder of the fallen heroes.

The addition of the North Transept was initiated and paid for by Francis F. Whitehead of Beech Hill in memory of his sister Mary Ann Whitehead who died in 1860. The Foundation Stone outside the rear door was laid by his son, Ralph.C.Whitehead Junior.

Back in the fifteenth century men attending church would stand or kneel throughout the whole of the divine service alongside their wives and daughters who were often provided with seats. The location of their place in church, generally working from the closest position to the altar backwards, indicated their rank or precedence. The opinion once religiously held that it was beneath the dignity of a man to be seated



in church was eventually relaxed and with that came the privilege of setting up and paying for benches for themselves and their families. This separation became more and more apparent and certain pews had embellishments added and were more ornate than others.

There are pews in some churches that are served with warm air, the heating often emanating from East to West backwards along the nave getting colder and colder towards the back. No doubt the modern equivalent would be to install heated seats with individual i-pads and headphones for the wealthier members of the congregation. There are even recorded court-cases where families in dispute have fought over the rights to certain pews in an effort to get closer to the altar!

How times changed even for the Whiteheads. In the north window sills is the inscription added by Francis Whitehead “Five benches or not less than 30 good sittings in the best part of this aisle are to be forever free to first comers”. “The rich and poor meet together; the Lord is the Maker of them all”.

The Processional Banner, which is a copy of the original, was made in 1982-84. (*see page 80*)

The banner was originally processed around the Parish on Whit Sunday but is now restricted to Whit Friday when we walk behind it into Uppermill to join with other churches for a Joint Service prior to returning and spending the evening listening to Brass Bands that descend upon Saddleworth from all parts of the country (and some from abroad) in a celebration over at the Church Hall.

The “Traidcraft” stall appears in Church once a month to encourage our congregation to buy produce in fair trade to other countries.

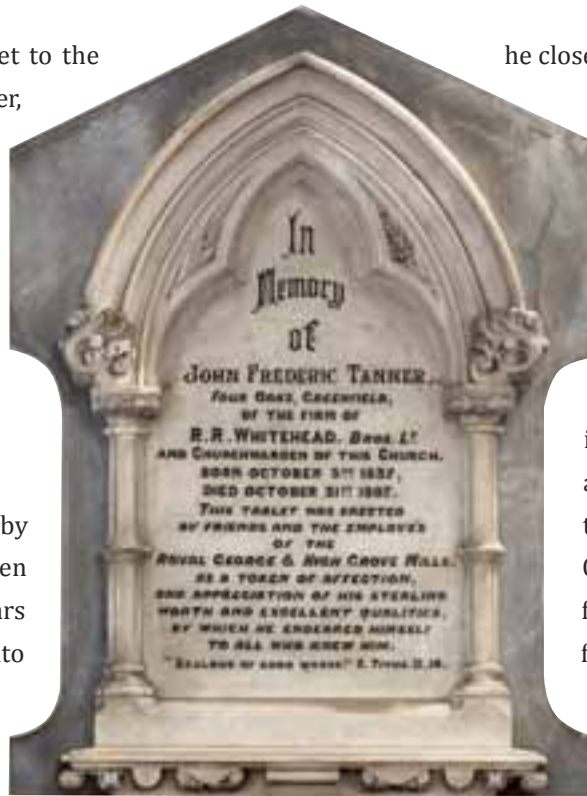
Alongside the pulpit is a Tablet to the memory of John Frederick Tanner, of Four Oaks, Greenfield. Born 3rd October 1837, died 31st October 1897. He was Church Warden of Christ Church, Friezland for many years. The tablet was erected by friends and employees of Royal George and High Grove Mills.

The Pulpit was manufactured by George Shaw's skilled craftsmen in beautifully carved oak. It bears the inscriptions "Yea woe is unto me if I preach not the Gospel" and "I determine not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ and him Crucified".

Buried in the Vault beneath the Chancel are members of the Whitehead family:

- William Frederick Whitehead of Beech Hill  
Died 09.03.1861 age 18 months
- Isabella Whitehead of Beech Hill  
Died 05.06.1869 aged 43 years
- James Heywood Whitehead of South Syde  
Died 03.07.1869 aged 58 years
- Sarah Whitehead of South Syde  
Died 24.07.1869 aged 83 years
- Locksley Whitehead  
Died 17.08.1850 aged 21 years
- Frederick James Whitehead  
Died 03.03.1859 aged 11 months
- Edward Whitehead  
Died 11.06.1863 aged 72 years

In the Chancel are memorial tablets to the founders and other members of the Whitehead family. The inscription on the tablet in memory of R.R.Whitehead reads, "His was the head to get and the heart to give freely. God's word was his daily staff and



he closed a life of remarkable activity, justice and generosity in sure and simple trust on the above merits of Christ his saviour".

The heavy Warden's Chest which is normally kept locked contains many interesting records to the archivist though from time to time they are transferred to Church House in Manchester from whence they may be further transferred to be archived at Central Library. Presently contained in the chest are Parochial Church Council (PCC) Minute

Books, Registers of Baptisms, Confirmations, Marriages and Funerals with further records held in the Vestry safes. Churchyard Plans and other records are also retained in the chest.

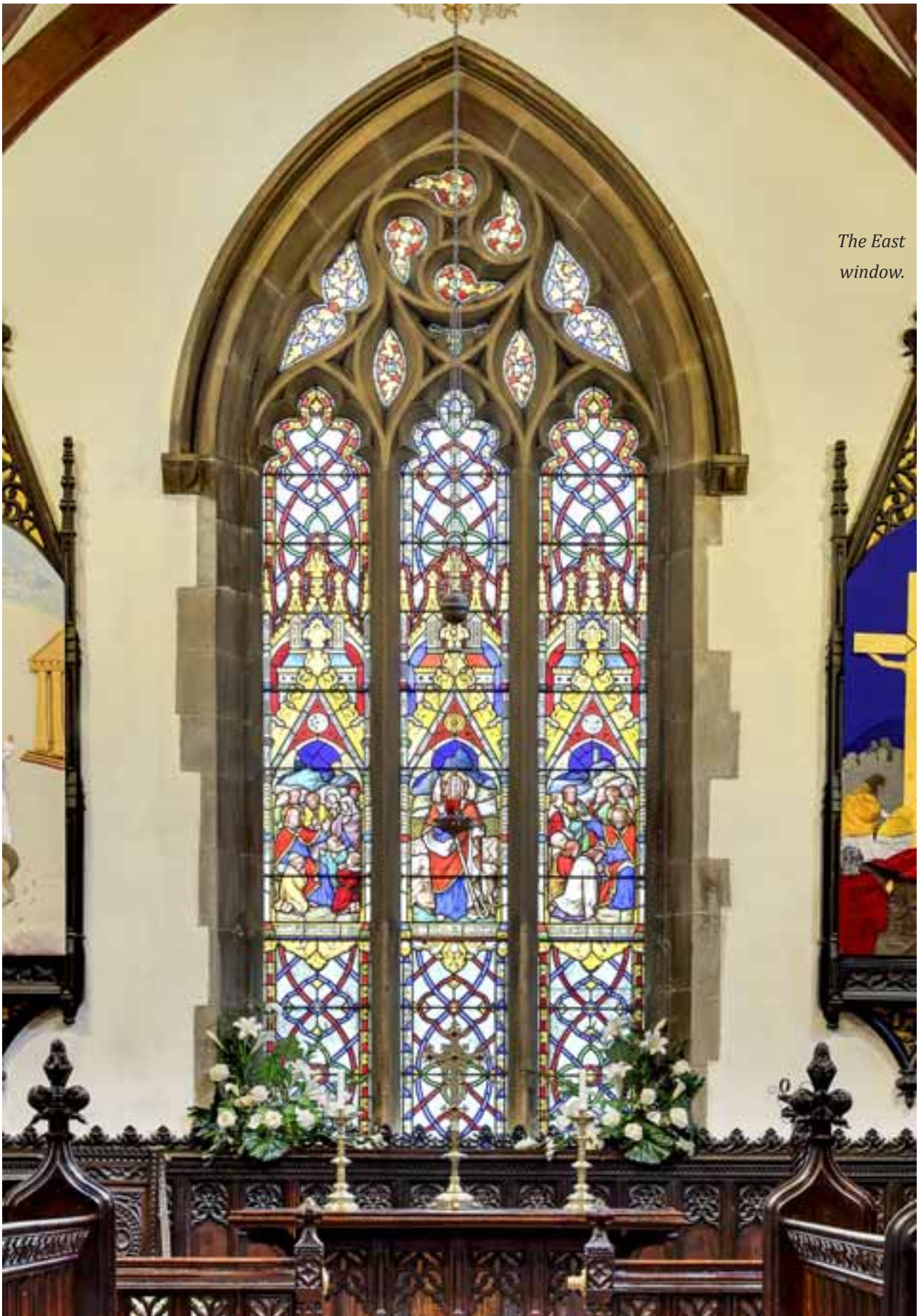
Copies of Carole Marsden's work for part of her Northern Ordination Course "A Profile of the Parish of Saddleworth" are also retained here.

It is interesting to note that when the Parish was surveyed 30 years ago the then Parishioners put "paying the quota" at the top of their list of priorities. Through Christian Stewardship the planned giving (often covenanted regular donations on which tax can be reclaimed) has increased substantially over the years. In 1983 the average giving per person per week was £1.59. It is now over £10 per week.

The East Window has three lights (*pictured overleaf*):

- The Kingdom of God
- The Good Shepherd
- Preaching the Gospel





*The East window.*



The window is by Thomas Willement who was one of the earliest stained glass designers to work in the Gothic style. His earliest window of heraldic design was 1812 but by 1830 he was producing figurative work in the mediaeval style. His work can also be seen in St. George's Chapel in Windsor Castle.

The monogram T.W. is visible in the second two light window on the right of the nave after entering the church. The glass in the chancel was presented by F.F. Whitehead in 1850.

In the Clergy Vestry to the left of the Chancel are the Brass Foundation Tablets (see p.45)

The upper tablet records the reasons why the Whiteheads built the church with particular emphasis on the spiritual well-being of those who worked for them. The lower tablet records the legal rights to build the church and records the monies made available for the church and its future endowments.

Various garments used in the services are retained in the vestry.

The Friezland Cope was designed and made in 1988-90 by a group of 16-17 people and features all of the Church of England churches in Saddleworth along with many local features. The nearby workshop of Joan Holt and Jo Johnson has been responsible for designing and manufacturing many of the wonderful Vestments exhibited at Christ Church along with many other churches.

The Eucharistic Vestments have been used by the Church for centuries. They resemble the dress of ancient Rome from where they developed.

- ALB – As the name suggests, coming from the same root as the Latin word for white it is a white full-length sort of tunic over which the other vestments are worn.
- AMICE – A piece of white material worn as a collar to the Alb.



- GIRDLE – A length of cord which may be used to secure the Alb at the waist.
- STOLE – A scarf like garment worn around the neck of a priest denoting their duty to preach the word of God.
- CHASUBLE – The outer garment, the colour of which changes according to the feast or part of the church's year during which it is being worn. It is the most significant garment of the Eucharist.
- COPE – A full vestment in the shape of a cloak often used on auspicious occasions and during processions.

The Colour of the Vestment:

- PURPLE – used during Lent and Advent to signify Penitence.
- WHITE or GOLD – worn on many important Feasts as a sign of celebration and joy.
- GREEN – the commonest colour used to signify growth in nature.
- RED – the colour of fire (representing the Holy Spirit) and also a symbol of martyrdom.



*South wall of the nave.*





To the right of the Chancel is a Tablet to Canon Green.M.A. the First Vicar of Friezland Parish a well-respected priest “head-hunted” by the Whiteheads and specifically charged by them with the task of spreading God’s word to this community.

“the law of the truth was in his mouth,  
 He walked with me in peace and equity  
 And did turn many away from iniquity”.

The South Transept (Lady Chapel) was paid for by James Heywood Whitehead in memory of his aunt. This is the site of the Aumbry (where the reserved sacrament is kept) alongside the small door which gives access to the organ pipes where a small electric blower was connected to the organ at Easter 1948 to free the necessity to pump the organ manually.

In 1949 a faculty was approved to introduce a single stained-glass window

of St. Paul to the wall of the south aisle with a memorial below to Rev. Joseph Stanley Smith Vicar of Friezland from 1926 to 1947 who had been made an Honorary Canon of Manchester cathedral.

A further tablet is inscribed “To the Glory of God and in memory of James Youdell and Nannie Shaw of Four Oaks, Greenfield”.

The window to the west side of the Chapel has a brass plaque below in memory of William Edmund Hyde of Wharmton Towers Greenfield (another of Shaw’s creations) who died 7 March 1918 aged 68. He was the Vicar’s Warden from 1910-1918.

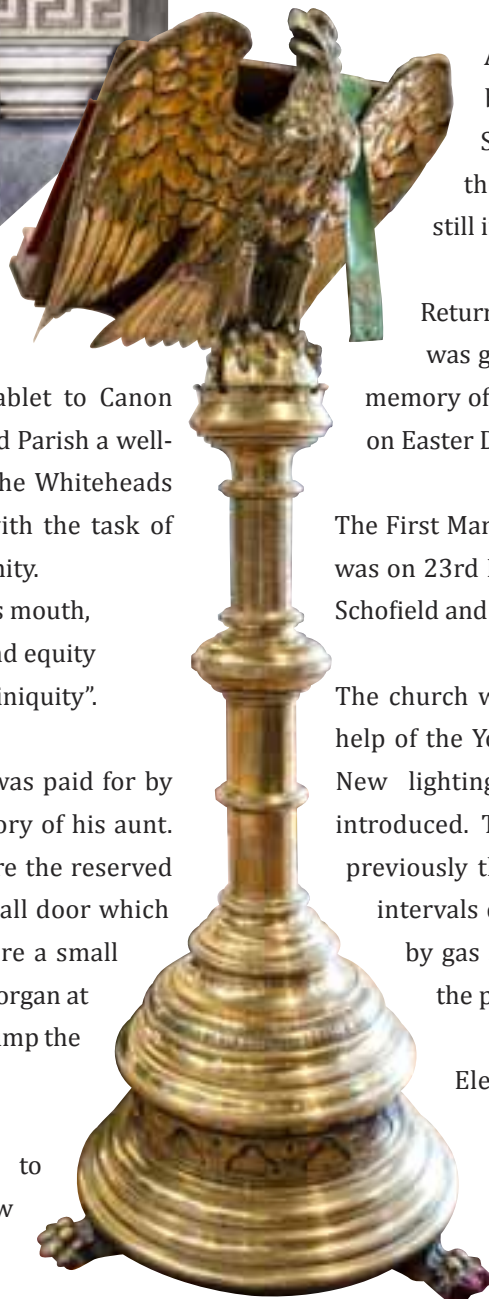
Above this window there used to be a gallery where the Sunday School children could enter from the stone steps outside which are still in situ.

Returning to the Nave the Eagle Lectern was given “To the Glory of God and in memory of Maria Turner” by her daughters on Easter Day 1897.

The First Marriage in Christ Church Friezland was on 23rd December 1850 between Joseph Schofield and Ann Buckley.

The church was reordered in 1982 with the help of the Youth Opportunities Programme. New lighting and heating systems were introduced. The heating of the church was previously through hot air grates placed at intervals down the aisles and the lighting by gas standards placed at the ends of the pews.

Electric lighting was installed in 1931. The altar was brought forward and a new High Altar built.

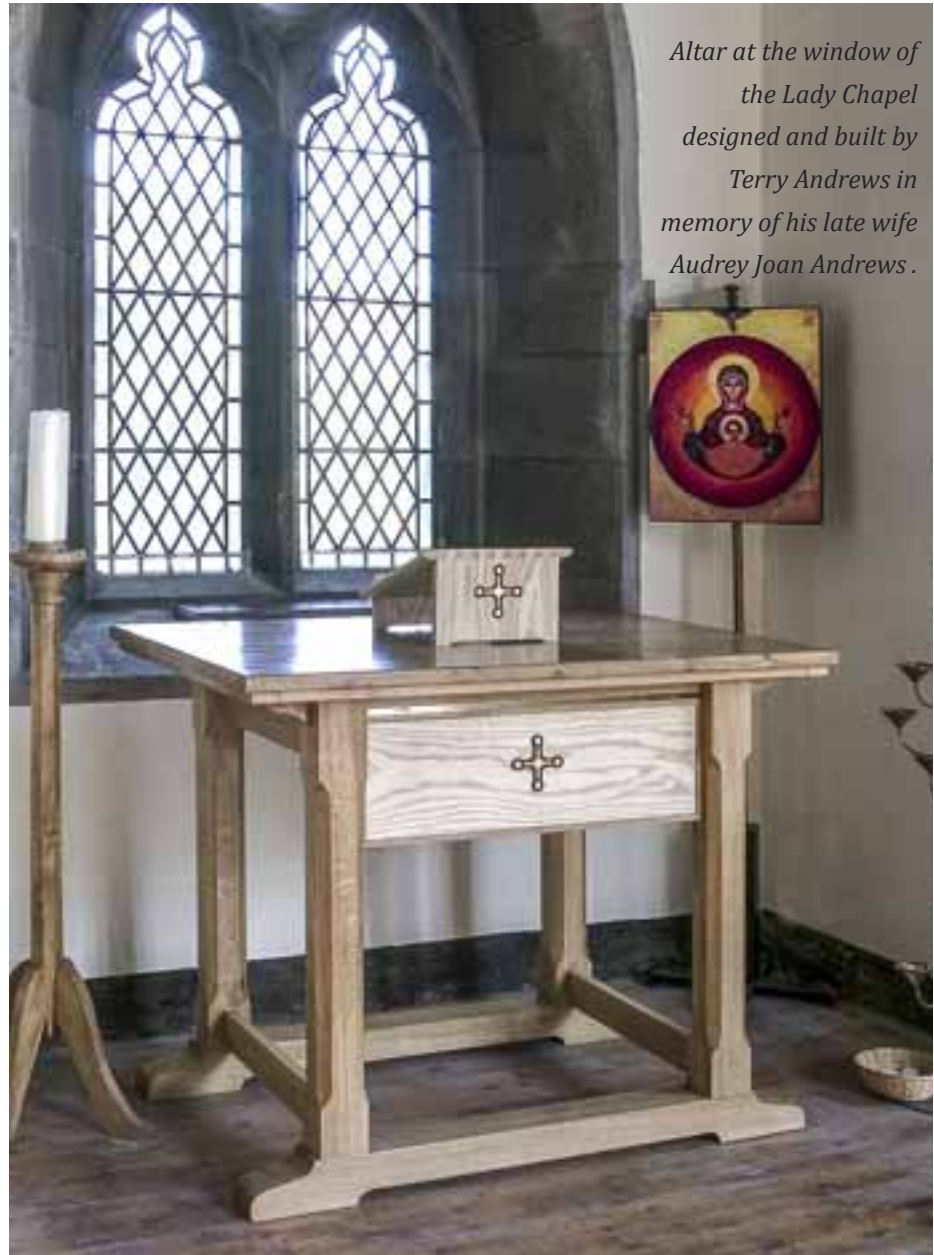


In 1994/5 the floor was sanded and re-varnished and new carpet was donated by Elsie Bennett in memory of her husband Donald, a past Church Warden.

During 1924/25 the tiled roof was replaced with slates and at the same time the pews that had been built into the walls were segregated and renewed. The cost of renovation was £11,000.

Behind the scenes throughout the year volunteers are to be seen, amongst other things, attending to some of the tasks below:

- Locking and unlocking the building
- Moving chairs, pews and tables for changing events
- Checking heating times are programmed
- Replacing candles
- Replacing overhead light bulbs
- Cleaning windows
- Checking notice boards
- Polishing brasses
- Renewing toilet rolls
- Emptying and putting out bins
- Sweeping and mopping the floor
- Dusting and polishing
- Reading of meters
- Clearing outside grids
- Cutting the smaller lawns
- Removing leaves from valley gutters.



*Altar at the window of the Lady Chapel designed and built by Terry Andrews in memory of his late wife Audrey Joan Andrews.*

In addition:

- Fire extinguishers to be serviced
- Heating to be serviced
- Piano tuning
- Organ tuning
- Donations to be counted and banked
- Paperwork to be scrutinised and reports compiled





**Charles K. Whitehead.**  
 This piano cover is dedicated to the memory of Charles K. Whitehead. Commissioned by his former colleague and very good friend of many years, Peter Julian.

Charles was born in 1952. He grew up in Chiswick, Derbyshire and was a Spitzer fan.

Throughout his life Charles' passion was his music. His musical career began in 1975 at Bishop Stopford's School in Enfield, Middlesex, where he became Assistant Director of Music to Peter and was later also major House Master.

Charles moved back up north in 1996 to take up the position of Assistant Head Teacher supporting and teaching music at Crompton House School in Shaw. He remained there until his retirement in 2013.

Charles was highly respected, loved and admired by both colleagues and pupils for his care, understanding and fairness.

From 2002, up until his sudden and unexpected death in 2017, Charles was our very much loved and highly respected organist and choir master here at Christ Church, Friezland.

This is dedicated to Charles' memory by his friends and family and all who loved him.

*The Grand Piano showing the beautiful cover dedicated to Charles Whitehead by his wife Carol and friend Peter.*



*Entrance to the Choir Vestry.*



In order to make the church more inviting we marvel at the beautiful flower arrangements (frequently arranged by Sarah Wells and Gill Stott) which adorn the altar and the windows of the church.

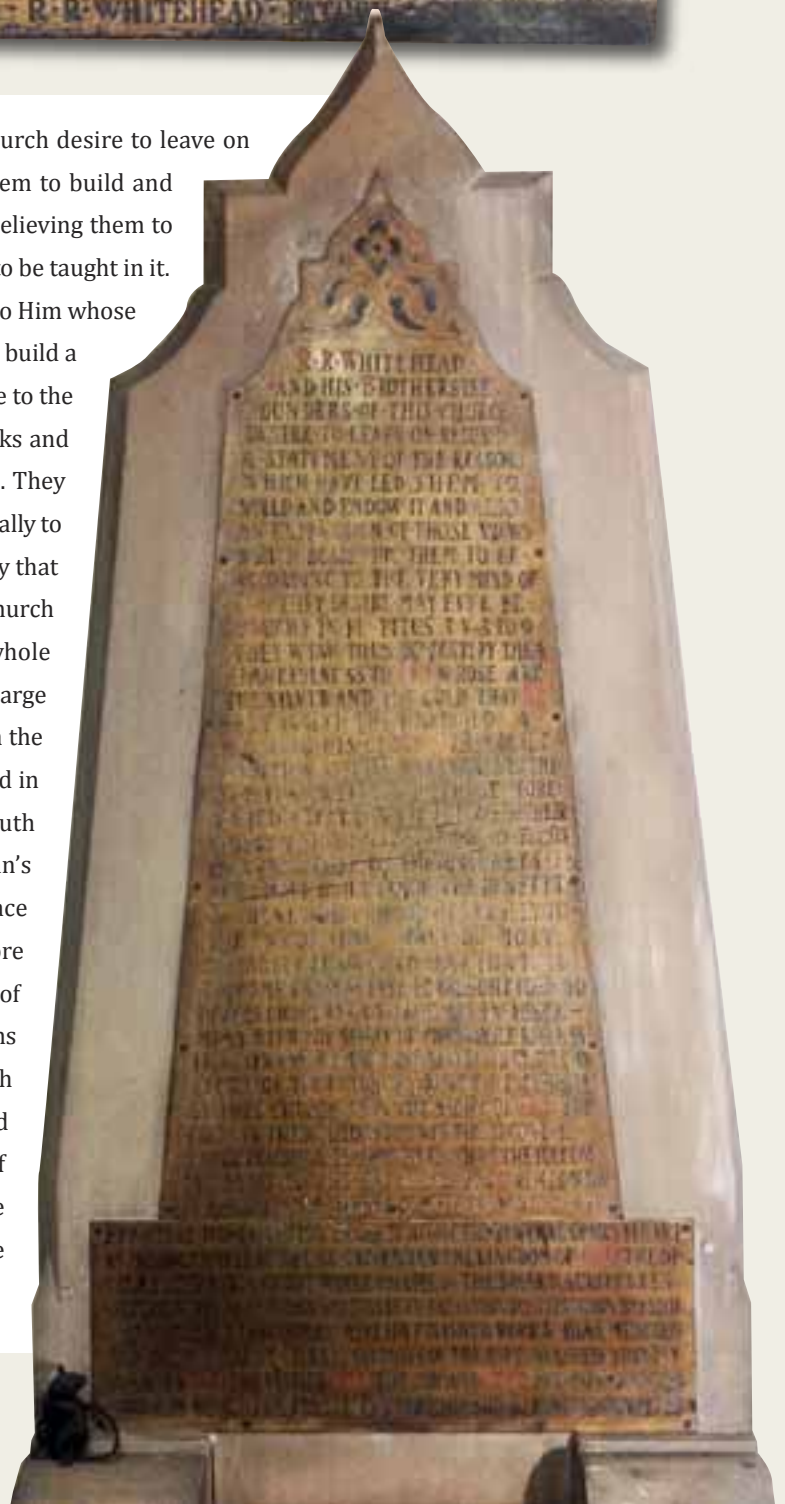






RR WHITEHEAD and his brothers founders of the church desire to leave on record a statement of the reasons which have led them to build and endow and also an expression of those views which believing them to be according to the very mind of God they desire ever to be taught in it.

TITUS 3 vv3-9 They wish to testify their thankfulness to Him whose are the silver and the gold that he has enabled them to build a house to His glory. They built it with a special reference to the spiritual welfare of those immediately with their works and whose external interests lie very close to their hearts. They have built it for the benefit of the neighbourhood generally to the end of time. They do most sincerely desire and pray that no statements may ever be brought forward in this church but such as are in agreement with the spirit of the whole Bible in its plain and natural state and they solemnly charge the future patrons and incumbents of this church as in the sight of God, the first of their appointments, the second in their teaching to take heed that the following vital truth may ever be proclaimed within its walls, viz. man's completely lost state by nature his salvation by grace alone, the renewal of his heart by the Holy Spirit before he can enter the kingdom of God the divine inspiration of the whole volume of the sacred scriptures which contains all the things necessary to salvation justification by faith in Christ Jesus through his already finished work and alone meditation of the co-equal, co-eternal divinity of the ever blessed Trinity in unity, God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Ghost to whom be all the praise and worship and glory for ever and ever.





**Rev Canon  
Sharon Jones**  
Team Rector



**Rev  
John Rosedale**  
Team Vicar



**Rev  
Aaron Jackman**  
Assistant Curate



**Rev  
Barbara  
Christopher**  
Associate Priest



**Rev Professor  
Mike Donmall**  
Associate Priest



**Rev  
Pat Gillian**  
Assistant Curate



**Rev  
Philip  
Williamson**  
Associate Curate



**Rev  
Graham  
McGuffie**  
Team Reader



**Rev  
Hilary  
Edgerton**  
Assistant Priest



**Rev  
Angela Bryan**  
Assistant Priest



**Rev  
Rosie Bowers**  
Retired Vicar



*Bishop Christopher's visit upon the 150th anniversary celebrations, 28th May 2000*





## Incumbents, Wardens and PCC

**The last Vicar with the sole incumbency of Christ Church Friezland and living at the Parsonage was Reverend David Hirst who eventually left the Parish to become a Prison Chaplain. His successor Reverend Roger White had responsibility for both Christ Church Friezland and St. Ann Lydgate and lived at the Lydgate Vicarage thereby leaving the Parsonage vacant for eventual sale.**

With the departure of Rev. White who moved to Germany the Ministry in Saddleworth was reordered and a Team Ministry was set up with Reverend Simon Brandes at the helm.

Here at Christ Church Friezland our current Team Rector is Rev. Canon Sharon Jones ably supported by Team Vicar Rev. John Rosedale who currently works primarily in the three D's-Delph, Denshaw and Dobcross. A long time figure of Christ Church Friezland Reverend Professor Mike Donmall as Associate Priest works across the Benefice focusing on Liturgy and Pastoral matters but mainly supporting Christ

Church and St. Chad. Reverend Angela Bryan as assistant Curate is often to be found assisting our Junior Church and Little Lights with her experience and qualification of primary PGCE. Our most recent addition to the Clergy Team – Reverend Aaron Jackman as Assistant Curate divides his time between the whole of the Benefice and is often to be found at Friezland's Mums and Tots group-Little Lights.

Other members of the Clergy Team occasionally visit us including Rev. Barbara Christopher whose Ministry is mainly at St. Mary's, Rev. Hilary Edgerton who works across the Benefice developing study groups, Rev. Philip Williamson who is an Assistant Curate and these are supported by a number of retired clergy including the Right Reverend Rupert Hoare and Reverends Godfrey Adams, Canon Jim Burns, Brian Cordingley, Averil Cunningham, Jenny Degg, John Faraday and last but most certainly not least the Reverend Rosie Bowers who assists the Saddleworth Team.



*Rev Roger White*

## Vicars, Christ Church Friezland

Canon Green.....	1850-1858	
.....	1870-1896	34 Years
Canon Venables.....	1858-1870	12 Years
Canon Jeffries.....	1896-1921	25 Years
Rev. H. Jones.....	1921-1924	3 Years
Canon J.S.Smith.....	1925-1946	21 Years
Rev. H. Hutcheon.....	1947-1979	32 Years
Rev. D. Hirst.....	1979-1991	12 Years
Rev. R. White.....	1992-2002	10 Years
Rev. S. Brandes.....	2003-2007	4 Years
Rev. Christopher Halliday.....	2008-2016	8 Years
Canon Sharon Jones.....	2016 -	

## Parochial Church Council (Current 2019)

Rev'd Sharon Jones	
Rev'd Mike Donmall	
Duncan Ross	
Deborah Thompson	It is interesting to note
Guy Betts	how often those
Howard Wrigley	people elected to the
Jill Barrett	PCC and other church
Josephine Johnson	committees find
Lynda McCrea	themselves giving
Mark Leadbeater	continued years of
Rachel Edmondson	service, if not just to
Simon Clark	the committee to the
Tony Littlewood	church in general.

With the shortage of clergy throughout England we are no longer able to offer Holy Communion on every Sunday of the year; but currently at Friezland, on one Sunday each month, we are led by our Authorised Lay Ministry which has been given authority by our Bishop to lead certain services in worship. At Friezland we are frequently led by Megan Harrison our A.L.M. for Prayer and Spirituality or Duncan Ross our Churchwarden who lend their own life experiences to the service. We are also fortunate in having members of the retired clergy in our congregation who can help us from time to time such as Bishop Rupert and his wife Gesine who only live a stone's throw from the Church

## Church Wardens

A churchwarden is a lay official of the Parish working as a part-time volunteer along with being an ex officio member of the Parochial Church Council (PCC). It is their duty to represent the laity working with the incumbent (or during periods of interregnum the Bishop) to maintain order and encourage unity. The warden is legally responsible for all the property and moveable goods belonging to that church and keeps an up to date Inventory. Whenever they authorise work on the church, some of which may also have required a faculty, they enter this in the Church Logbook. In the case of a vacancy the bishop or Archdeacon acting on their behalf usually appoints the warden to be sequestrator of the parish requiring them to ensure a minimum number of services continue to be held. Historically there are two types of warden – the Rector's warden appointed by the incumbent and the people's

warden appointed by the congregation at the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM).

In many parishes including Friezland from around the 1960s this distinction has been abolished.

All-powerful the only areas the warden has no authority under canon law are music and liturgy which are under the authority of the priest or bishop in charge of the Parish. From the foregoing one can appreciate that the term "part-time" can be a little misleading! Our current Churchwarden as I write is, yet again, Duncan Ross who as ever is ably assisted by his long suffering wife Sheila!

*(Dates below are approximate depending on what was originally the Vestry Meeting and later the A.P.C.M. – some records are incomplete).*



Some names that spring to mind that are not on these lists who have given outstanding service over the years (and there are many more too numerous to list) include Colin Holt (R.I.P) from whom I took over as treasurer and Caroline Stelfox who kindly took over from me, Vera Stanley, Jill Williams, Pat Haigh, Joan Hobbs, Fred & Margaret Bone, Jill Read, Jean Williamson, Margaret Hill, Pauline Richardson, Susan Brierley, Peter and Joan Whalley, Chris Collett, Jeanette Stevenson, George Nutter, Fiona Tewson, Janet Watt-Pringle, Terry Flynn, Deborah

& Kevin Thompson, Brian & Doris Fort now living in Garstang and Charles Edwards whose dear wife Shirley passed away in 2016. There are many others who have quietly worked in the background assisting over the years with the daily running of the church and our religious and social services who are not mentioned in this publication but they know who they are and they have the grateful thanks of our Church. The lists of members of the PCC and other church Committees 20 years ago contain the following names that are still around today:

Jill Barrett	Mike Donmall	Lynda McCrea	Gill Stott
Gill Broadbent	Joan Holt	David Richardson	Marion Wain
Audrey Carr	Jo Johnson	Duncan Ross	Peter Whalley
Jim Carr	Eileen Lees	Sheila Ross	Hilary Wrigley
Alan Collett	Ken Lees	John Stevenson	

## Schoolmasters

Mr. J. Shaw.....	1849-1877	28 Years
Mr.C.Priest.....	1877-1907	30 Years
Mr.J.Wildig.....	1908-1914	7 Years
See right: total 28 years		

(Church School closed and the new school on High Grove Road opened in 1915 with Mr. Wildig as Headmaster finally retiring in 1936)

1863	J.D. Whitehead	Thomas Shaw	1964	Clifford Garside	J. Saxon
1864	J.H. Whitehead	Thomas Shaw	1969-'75	S. Schofield	D.Bennett
1865-'67	J.H. Whitehead	William Beaumont	1982	Margaret Fort	Carole Marsden
1867	J.H. Whitehead	George Schofield	1983	Thomas Sampson	Joseph L. Dawson
1869	W.W. Turner	George Schofield	1988	H.Buckley	S.Broadbent
1870-'74	W.W. Turner	George Schofield	1989	Jean Williamson	Hanson Buckley
1875-'76	C. Hiller	George Schofield	1991-'92	Kenneth Lees,	Jean Williamson
1877-'88	G.W. Wrigley	George Schofield	1994	Elsie Bennett	Jo Johnson
1897	J.F. Tanner	George Schofield	1995	Jo Johnson	Colin Holt
1908	G.Schofield	John E. Mallandain	1998-'02	Duncan Ross	John Stevenson
1920	J.H. Rowe	E.A.Johnson	2003	Kenneth Lees	Jean Williamson
1921	J.H. Rowe	H.Johnson	2004	Joan Holt	Jill Read
1927-'29	J.E. Harrison	John H.Wildig	2005-'06	Joan Holt	Julia Plant
1932	Col. Sir G.Tanner	Thomas Sampson	2008-'13	Duncan Ross	
1934	J. Dawson	Thomas Sampson	2014-'15	Jo Johnson	Susan Beesley
1948-'49	Col. Sir G.Tanner	John H.Wildig	2016	Jo Johnson	
1954-'55	J.Thomas Sampson	Joseph Dawson	2017-'18	Duncan Ross	David Cartwright
1958	Clifford Garside	Thomas Sampson	2019	Duncan Ross	
1962	Clifford Garside	Thomas Sampson			



*The Church Hall, inside and out.*





## The Church School and Church Hall

*The Headmaster's house,  
now demolished.*

**In 1850 R.R.Whitehead and Bros. set aside 685 square yards as part of the overall plot for Church, Parsonage and School and as with their other buildings were designed and built by their architect George Shaw.**

The Friezland Christ Church Parochial School in the Ecclesiastical District of Friezland Christ Church in the Parish of Saddleworth in the West Riding of the County of York was founded by deed of 6th August 1850. The conveyance detailed the 685 square yards allocated plus a further 65 square yards to the north of the plot. The Scheme specified that Vicar and Churchwardens of Christ Church were to be the administrators and trustees appointing 4 managers the Chairman of whom should be the Principal Officiating Minister of the Parish. The Trustees were to permit the school buildings to be used by the Vicar of the Parish for the purposes of a Sunday School in connection with the Church of England.

There was accommodation for 334 scholars with an average attendance of 200 and the Public Worship Census of 1851 declares that the number of Sunday Scholars attending Divine Service at Christ Church

Friezland was 185 in the morning and 210 in the afternoon. This contrasts with none for St. Anne's Lydgate and at the previously best attended Wesleyan Methodist Chapel in Delph (Erected 1800, though in existence at the Old Sandhole, Millgate from 1786) 59 in the morning and 99 in the afternoon.

This made Friezland a hive of activity each Sunday with more scholars attending Sunday Services than anywhere else in Saddleworth. The Whiteheads must have been truly pleased with their immediate achievements, *see other school attendances overleaf.*

The grant for both the day and night school in 1873/74 was £116 6s 3d and in 1889 £204 19s 8d.

The building lost popularity in the early years of the 20th century having been passed to the control of the West Riding Education Authority falling into disrepair and deemed too small. In June 1911 a decision was made to close it and transfer the pupils to a new building sited a few hundred yards to the south west of High Grove Road. This was opened on 1st June 1915 and is still in use. The site of the original school is now occupied by the Church Hall.

**Figures for the census for other places of worship in 1851:**

St.Chad's	none		
Holy Trinity Dobcross	59 morning	95 afternoon	
St.Thomas Frairmere	none		
Doctor Lane Sunday school			30 evening
Roman Catholic Baguley			40 evening
Chamber Chapel Uppermill	76 morning	85 afternoon	
Wesleyan Chapel Uppermill	44 morning	49 afternoon	
Christians meeting room Delph	310 morning		
Independent Chapel Delph	103 morning	129 afternoon	
New connection Preaching rooms Delph	none		
Wesleyan Chapel Greenfield	60 morning	61 afternoon.	

A flourishing night school appears to have been continuously kept for decades with an average attendance of almost 50 scholars.

I have listed below a few glimpses of life at the new school as detailed in the school log books:

- 1 June 1915 School opens with 4 staff:  
Mr. H. Willdig Headmaster  
Miss E.M. Redfearn Salary £85 per annum  
Miss D.M. Rawcliffe  
Miss H. Shaw Salary £110 per annum
- Oct 1916 Mr Willdig convalescing at Wharmton Tower Military Hospital after active service
- June 1918 Mr Willdig returns to work
- July 1915 Caretaker's salary £72 per annum
- June 1921 School closed for measles epidemic
- July 1925 121 children on the school roll
- April 1927 Trip to Uppermill Cinema for film on Canada
- June 1930 Two weeks closure as a trial for Whitsuntide Holiday
- Dec 1930 Milk available in school for 1d. per bottle
- June 1931 Measles epidemic
- Jan 1933 School closed 2 weeks Influenza epidemic
- 1935 School had 25 toothbrushes
- Dec 1935 Electric Light turned on for first time and Wireless installed
- Jan 1936 BBC Broadcast of proclamation of new King Edward the Eighth
- School Closed for funeral of King George Fifth
- Dec 1936 Headmaster Mr Willdig retires
- 1937 Mr F. Williams begins as Headmaster
- 1938 Miss P. Wood takes over as new Head
- May 1938 Holiday for King and Queen's visit to Oldham
- Oct 1938 Gas masks tried on by pupils
- Sept 1939 Reopening delayed with start of 2nd World War
- Oct 1939 Basement of High Grove Mill to be used as air-raid shelter
- 1940 Miss Ibberson becomes new Head
- 1943 Miss Ibberson leaves Miss N.C. Spencer new Head
- May 1945 School closes for V.E. Day.



In the early years of the “new” school it was common for pupils to be “half timers” from age 12 being at school for 2 days one week and 3 days the next the rest of the time being spent in industry. In summer the pupils also worked in the school gardens growing potatoes, peas, cabbage and lettuce. These could be purchased, a lettuce costing 1d.

Desks were arranged in rows of four. New pupils used chalk and slate progressing to a pencil and paper and eventually ink in the top class.

Normal lessons included scripture, arithmetic, writing, spelling, reading, history, geography, drawing, painting, science, handicraft, sewing, poetry, bookbinding, singing and citizenship.

### Church Hall

The comparatively modern brick building that replaced the original stone-built creation of George Shaw’s as our Parish Hall lacks any particular architectural merit although it is extremely functional and apart from the main hall includes a smaller room and bar, modern stainless steel fitted kitchen, ladies and gentleman’s toilets, disabled toilet and three smaller rooms used for offices and storage. Alongside is a large car-park and on the north side is a small lawned area. The garden at the entrance is maintained by Sarah Anderson of “Tendergraft”.

The building is an important financial asset to the Church from which it is divided by Oaklands Road, as it has been rented out during term time as a Pre-school for many years and when the school is not using the Hall it is let variously for dance-groups, keep-fit, choral societies, kick-boxing, film evenings, play-groups, private parties, wedding receptions etc. and is very important in hosting many of our Church events especially the annual Whit Friday

Band Contest. Our caretaker Mick has supervised the Hall for many years ensuring that high standards are maintained working alongside our Church Hall Committee chaired by Guy Betts.

In the past it has been used for indoor bowling club nights, youth club, ballroom dancing and Brass Band rehearsals.

On those Sundays when the Junior Church do not immediately attend the main Church the children congregate in the Hall where Rachel Edmondson, Sarah Ashworth, Helène Betts and Claire Southerington assisted by other parents and helpers supervise and organise their planned projects for the children that week. Before the end of the main Church service the children then cross over to the Church to tell the assembled congregation what they have been doing that morning.

Opposite the Church Hall on the other side of Shaw Hall Bank Road was sited “Prune Hill” the house built by the Whiteheads for the First School Master in 1849, now sadly demolished with the site left vacant as a car-park.

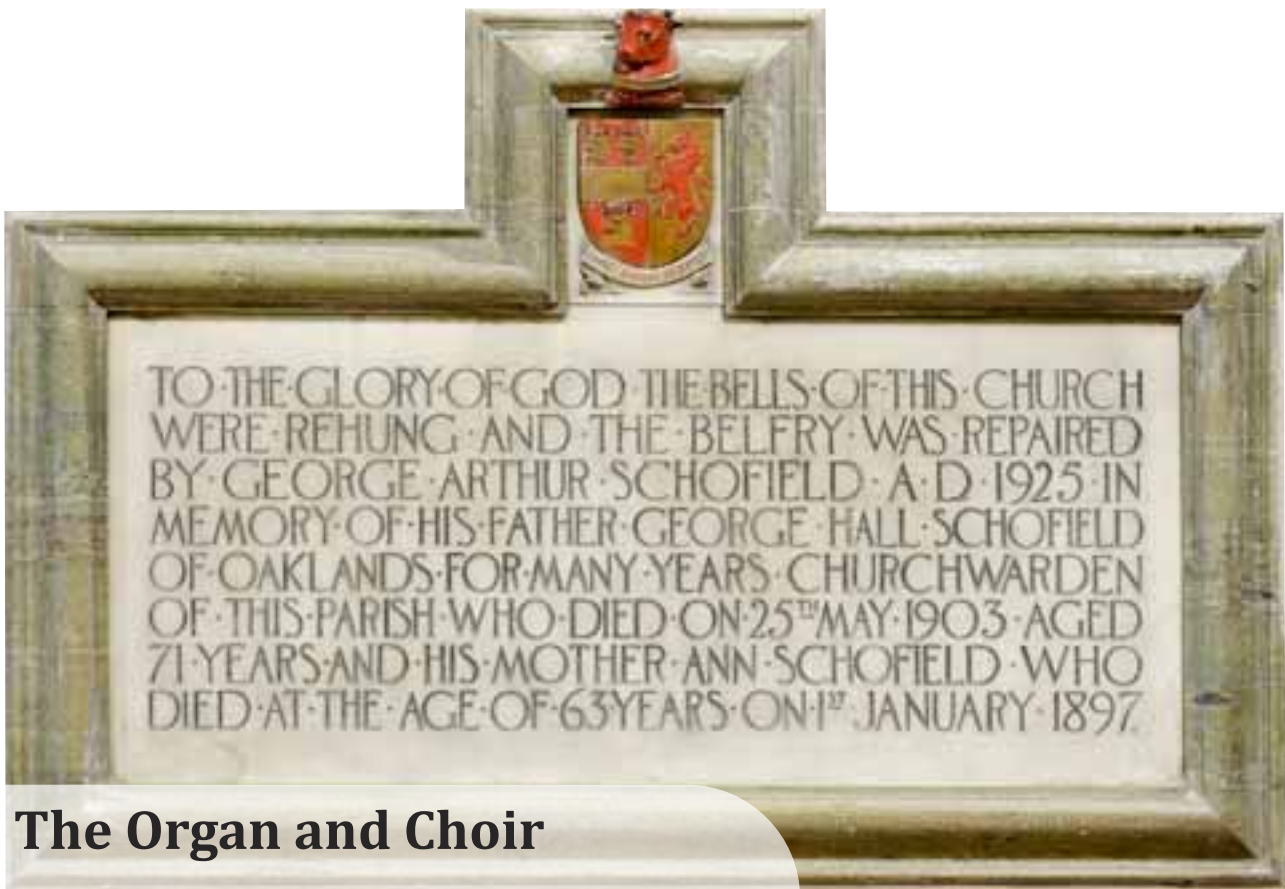
Alongside the Church Hall at number 96 Shaw Hall Bank Road lies the new school house named “Birch Bank” built in 1872 and now in private hands.



- Private garden area
- Fully licensed bar - serving local ales
- Off road car parking
- Fully equipped kitchen with gas oven
- Raised stage
- Disabled access and toilet







## The Organ and Choir

**The organ was made by Conacher & Co. of Huddersfield in 1879 who are sadly no longer in business. The organ cost £409 and originally occupied an organ loft high across the west end of the church facing the altar. The split west window shows where the floor level would have been.**

The organ has since been re-sited with the addition of the south aisle and now occupies a position to the right of the altar behind the choir stalls.

The organ is of the two manual type and pedals with its original tracker action and old fashioned "latch" swell pedal.

Although electrically blown the manual device for air supply is still thought to be in working order though not used for many years. The pipe-work is nicely voiced for general church services and many organists have also commented on the fine acoustics of the building.

The casework to the front of the organ console incorporates actual speaking pipes, not as was so common in Victorian times a decorative array of dummy pipes. The few pipes around the corner in the south aisle above the small doorway that enters the organ chamber are of course merely decorative.

The organ was completely overhauled in 1994 and is interesting in that it contains several important stops supplied by Henri Zimmermann, the famous Parisian pipe-maker.

The first organist at Friezland was William Wood of Greenfield who died on 24th Oct 1881 aged 63 years. Over the years we have had many accomplished organists.

Edgar Priest who had been organist at Friezland for some years left to go to a church in Detroit, U.S.A. He was later appointed organist at Washington Cathedral.

The stop specification is as follows with approximate pipe lengths in feet:

### Swell

2	Combination Pedals
8	Oboe
2	Piccolo
8	Voix Celeste
4	Rohr Flote
8	Salcional
8	Gemshorn
8	Viol D'amour
8	Trumpet

### Great

3	Combination Pedals
8	Open Diap
8	Dulciana
8	Harmonic flute
4	Principal
8	Stop Diap
8	Gamba
4	Clarionet
2	Fifteenth

### Pedal Organ

16	Bourdon
16(32)	Double Open Diap

### Couplers

Swell to Great
Swell to Pedal
Great to Pedal

In addition to the organ the church also boasts a grand piano which comes in very useful if the organist is unavailable and we can impose on one of our congregation such as Helen Donmall to play the hymns. Our new organist is another Helen, so perhaps that name engenders musical talent!

### The Choir

At the start of the 20th century certain alterations were made. The choir was replaced by choristers who took their seats in the chancel, the font being placed in its present position by the west window and the baptistry become the robing room for the choristers.

Nowadays the choir is made up entirely of adults and as with all local choirs would benefit from extra voices. From 1984 the choir has been robed in red rather than the black they previously wore. Many of our choir have been singing at Friezland for decades and practices are also held during the week.

In recent times the choir has benefitted tremendously from the guidance of Charles Whitehead, born in 1952, one time Head of the Music Department at Crompton House School, and also from 2002 to 2017 Organist and Choirmaster at Christ Church.

Charles died suddenly in 2017 and our grand piano now has a beautiful cover dedicated to his memory on behalf of his wife Carol and his good friend Peter Smith in his favourite colour of purple. This was installed and dedicated at a service in February 2019.

The prominence and the professionalism of the choir has waxed and waned over the years much depending upon the Leading Choir-person and/or the Organist of the time.

The choir have frequently sung in churches other than Christ Church often combining with other choirs, especially that of St. Annes's for specific choral events.

They have been frequently recorded and many C.D.'s have been produced on these occasions.

Many other groups such as the Pennine Singers and Monday Mondays have also used Christ Church as their venue as the acoustics are excellent and a decent sound system and mixing unit has been installed in recent years.



**Current Members  
Of The Choir (2019)**

- Led by Carol Whitehead
- Howard Wrigley
- Martin Luke
- Fiona Tewson
- Kate Lane
- Peter Whalley
- Joan Whalley
- Linda McCrea
- Megan Harrison
- Deborah Thompson
- Rosie Bowers
- Sandra Proctor
- Shirley Luke



*Door access to the organ pipes  
with 'dummy pipes' above.*

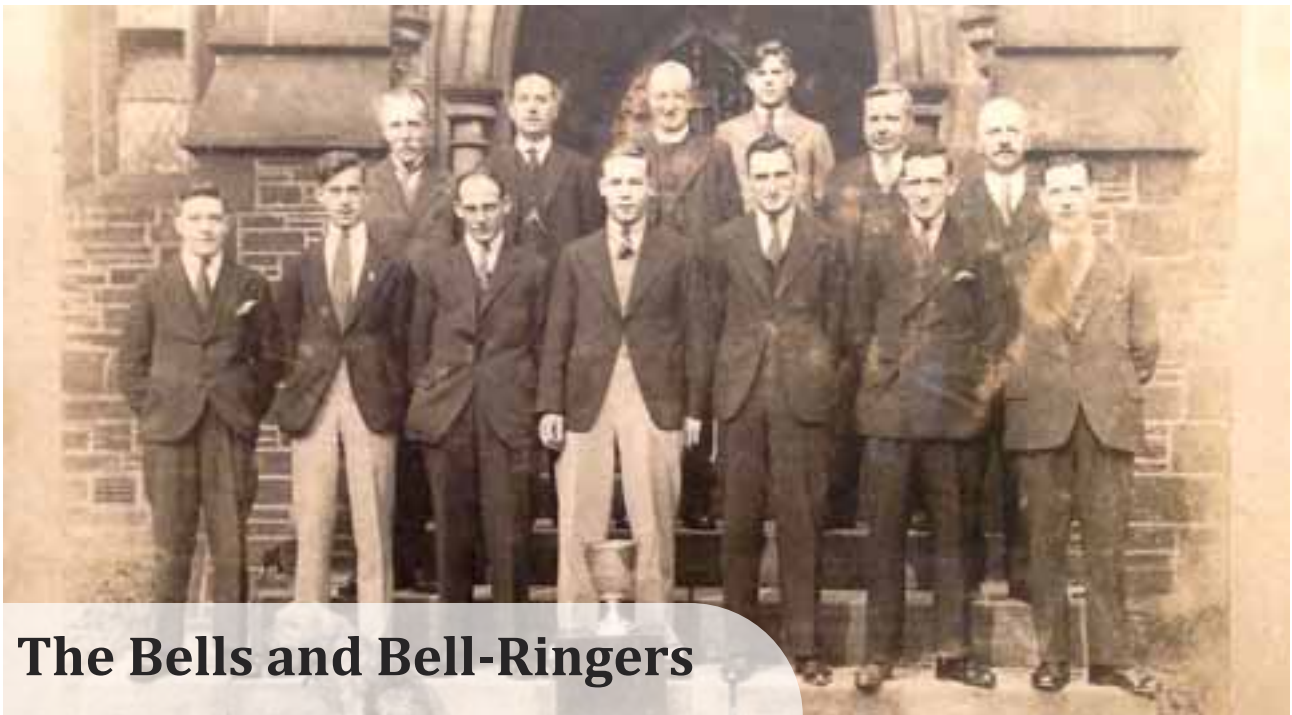


*Christ Church in its gas lit era.*



*Monument in memory of the tragedy of May 10, 1864 when a mill chimney collapsed.*





## The Bells and Bell-Ringers

**Christ Church Friezland has a peal of 6 bells.**

The lightest bell, the Treble, weighs 2 cwt and the heaviest, the Tenor weighs 15cwt.

The bells were originally installed by Taylors of Loughborough in 1850 and each bell has a name inscribed on it which is presumably the donor of that bell:

Treble:	Thomas Green M.A.
2nd:	George Shaw
3rd	Maria Turnor
4th	Messrs Taylor 1850
5th	S.M.C. Lawson
Tenor:	J.H. Whitehead

The first set to ring the bells were John Jessop, Giles Shaw, Issac Wood, Samuel Shaw, William Hall and James Carter.

Over the years Friezland ringers have won many accolades.

In 1950 for example during the centenary of the church they were able to display the "United Counties

*Above: Our winners for the Halifax and District Ringers' Association Cup, September 1931.*

Association's "Six Bell Cup", the Barnsley and District Association's Shield, The Halifax and District Association Cup and the Shelley Cup.

Originally the bells were hung in a wooden frame but later re-hung during the early 1900's in a cast iron frame.

In the mid 1900s the Friezland Bell ringers became quite famous winning prizes for their high standard of campanology, as the art of bell-ringing is called, throughout the country. The bells were even recorded on a 10 inch vinyl disc as an example of bell ringing perfection to other aspiring ringers. No doubt it was also useful to those churches who did not have any bells.

The sound of the peal of bells at Christ church used to be known locally as "Friezland's Pride".

The bells are normally rung in the pattern 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and then changed by altering any two consecutive bells. This is known as "change ringing". With six bells at Friezland it is possible to effect 720 consecutive changes in 30 minutes.

With 12 bells as some churches have it is theoretically possible to effect 479,001,600 consecutive changes taking 37 years and 355 days!

We are fortunate at Christ Church that we still have an active group of bell-ringers who are often joined by ringers from other parts of the world.

John Stevenson has been the Tower Captain for many years ably assisted by Gordon Rigby. The new work on the steeple has involved internal refurbishment to the ringing chamber and Gordon has been "hands on" in the cleaning and refurbishment of the bell-frame.

1860

July 6<sup>th</sup> - Frezland Parsonage  
 Regulation & agreement between the Ministers & Churchwardens  
 of Christ Church Friezland on the one part & John Casbury  
 the Ringer of the Bells thereof on the other part.

1<sup>st</sup> The Ringer agrees to ring the Bells properly before morning  
 service, for half an hour each Sunday, on every Sunday,  
 Christmas Day, and Good Friday, with such arrangement as  
 "tolling in" as the Minister may desire -  
 Also on Wednesday Evening before the Bells for one quarter of an  
 hour at the least & to ring the "right solemn bell" for 3 minutes,  
 every Sunday evening from 7.57 to 8 o'clock as early as can be  
 ascertained.

Also with reference to divine service, at the following occasions  
 New Year's eve - Queens accession - Epiphany - Ascension Day -  
 Christmas Eve.

2<sup>nd</sup> That for these duties properly performed the Ringer  
 shall receive every six months the Sum of thirty one  
 Shillings Six pence or thereabouts three shillings annually

3<sup>rd</sup> That whenever any person desire the Bells to be rung at his  
 or her wedding, the Ringer will ring for an hour & be  
 entitled to receive 20 pence more.

4<sup>th</sup> That the same amount be paid whenever on extraordinary occasions  
 the Bells are rung, but it is understood that no person shall be  
 obliged for or to ring the Bells except with the consent of  
 the Minister & at least one of the Churchwardens.

The original sum of 500<sup>l</sup> purchased 30<sup>th</sup>  
 not regularly received. It placed on  
 hands to the credit of the Church  
 accumulations of 1000<sup>l</sup> 12. 4.  
 returned to the same by J. Whitehall

The Trustees are the Rev<sup>d</sup>. The Green.  
 for the  
 Christ Church  
 Ringers fund

Christ Church  
 Friezland





Tapestry worked by Olwyn Buckley and presented to Christ Church by Hanson and Gladys Buckley 27 March 1994.

*... t. is upon which interest  
the Saddlebutt Bank has  
... repair fund, as will be  
... This signed on signed  
... place London April 27/52.*

*H. H. W. J. d. N. Schu Schipfeld*

*Church*

*and.*

TO THE GLORY OF GOD  
THE RINGING CHAMBER WAS  
REFURBISHED 2000 BY  
GAVIN HAIGH TOWER CAPTAIN  
IN MEMORY OF HIS BELOVED WIFE  
PATRICIA  
WHOSE RINGING CALLED PEOPLE  
TO WORSHIP IN THIS HOUSE OF PRAYER

*Dedications to the bell chamber.*

THE STEEPLE BELLS AND RINGING  
CHAMBER REDEDICATED AFTER  
RESTORATION BY  
CHRISTOPHER MAYFIELD  
BISHOP OF MANCHESTER 28TH MAY 2000  
THE 150TH ANNIVERSARY  
OF CHRIST CHURCH CONSECRATION  
ROGER WHITE VICAR DUNCAN ROSS  
JOHN STEVENSON CHURCH WARDENS





**Churchyard, War Memorials and Lychgate**





*The church and graveyard from the east.*



**We are not the only people to have received a Heritage Lottery Funded grant and amongst the many hundreds of others “Caring for God’s Acre” was established in the year 2000.**

The President of that charity is H.R.H Prince Charles who points out the vast potential for conserving and enhancing over 20,000 burial grounds, churchyards and cemeteries in the United Kingdom. Sensitive management can enhance the sanctuary that such a place provides from conserving the boundary of our Listed curtilage and lychgate to improving the site for colourful lichens, plants and animal life such as slow-worms, bumblebees and birdlife.

At Christ Church Friezland we are extremely fortunate in having a quintessentially English village churchyard with the backdrop of our beautiful Victorian Gothic building and we take pride in ensuring the grounds are well maintained with our contractor –



*The church and graveyard from the east.*

presently Earthworm services cutting and strimming around every gravestone regularly – a not inconsiderable task but greatly improving the look for both wedding and funeral services.

There are 1,562 plots set aside for graves in the church-yard and the majority of them have now been taken. The church does not sell plots ‘in advance’ and I was somewhat amused to hear the reply of our Churchwarden when asked by a passer-by what one has to do to procure a plot. “Die”, was the response!

The first burial taking place on June 2nd 1849 was of William Giddings of Hey Top, aged 2 years officiated by Reverend Green. The use of the graves then continued as follows: 1850/3, 1851/2, 1852/2, 1853/2, 1854/5, 1855/4, 1856/10 which included the burial of Mary Ann Whitehead of South Side on 18th April 1856, aged 63.

The original southern boundary of the Churchyard was along the pathway that runs from the Church entrance to the Lychgate but in 1864 the current

Church Road was constructed in a straight line from the direction of the Royal George Mills towards Greenfield Railway station and the extra land not required was handed over to the Church on 3rd September 1864 and a further 2,835 square yards was consecrated as additional burial ground with 1,054 square yards also being allocated to the Parsonage.

There are many beautiful gravestones in the Churchyard and on 4th June 1870 a red granite obelisk was erected in memory of James Heywood Whitehead Esq bearing the following inscription: “In memory of James Heywood Whitehead one of the founders of this Church. Born 10th Sept 1810, died.30th June 1869 Trusting in Jesus.

This monument is erected by persons employed at the works of R.R.Whitehead & Brothers in which he was a partner, in grateful remembrance of a just and kind hearted master.”

The majority of the gravestones were recorded during the work by the Manpower Services by sketching





IN MEMORY † OF THE MEN  
 OF THIS PARISH  
 who joined the Colours and laid down  
 their lives during the Great War 1914-1919.

LIEUT. J. B. EMMOTT	PRIVATE C. CROGAN
.. N. HINCHLIFFE	.. J. HALL
.. J. F. TANNER	.. A. HALLSWORTH
SERGT. E. CARTER	.. N. HARVEY
.. C. GARNETT, M.M.	.. S. HIRST
.. S. SHAW	.. R. KENWORTHY
CORPL. C. WRICLEY	.. F. LAWTON
CUNNER H. BROWN	.. E. MARSHALL
.. T. FARRAR	.. J. MASSEY
.. T. FULLER	.. T. NIELD
.. W. M. WOOD	.. W. PARKIN
PRIVATE W. BEESLEY	.. F. ROBERTS
.. W. BELL	.. E. SHAW
.. J. BRIERLEY	.. W. SULLIVAN
.. F. BURCESS	.. J. W. THATCHER
.. W. BURCESS	.. C. TUCKER
.. H. BYROM	.. C. WADE
.. E. CARTER	.. T. WILDE
.. E. DANIELS	.. F. WILDSMITH
.. A. E. FULLER	.. F. WINTERBOTTOM
.. T. GREEN	.. C. WRICLEY
.. T. N. BOTTOMLEY	.. H. WRIGHT, M.M.

"THUS THESE MEN DIED, LEAVING THEIR DEATHS FOR AN  
 EXAMPLE OF A NOBLE COURAGE, NOT ONLY UNTO YOUNG  
 MEN BUT UNTO ALL THE NATION."

II. MACCABEES, VI. 31.

Also those who laid down their  
 lives during World War II  
 1939 - 1945

STOKER J. BROADBENT SERGT. D. PARKIN.  
 CUNNER A. BROWN. W.O. E. ROBERTS.  
 TROOPER E. DAWSON PRIVATE A. ROWBOTHAM  
 FLT. LIEUT. R. GILLESPIE. CAPTAIN R. M. STOTT.

*The War Memorials.*







them. One such is shown here along with the actual photograph of the headstone. This is in memory of those killed during the tragic accident when the mill chimney collapsed.

Our “Green-gym” regularly meets to move away decaying undergrowth and tend the lawns and flowerbeds which David Cartwright improved during and since his term as Church-warden.

We are also fortunate in having a professional gardener regularly attending Christ Church and Charles Edwards, John and Jill Barrett and others are happy to spend time cultivating the grounds. Our Junior Church even comes along to help from time to time.

Recent additions have included a large compost bin, a bug house and various nesting boxes and our large

number of trees are regularly inspected by an arboriculturalist to ensure they remain healthy. Areas have been set aside where logs are stacked to provide homes for hedgehogs and small mammals.

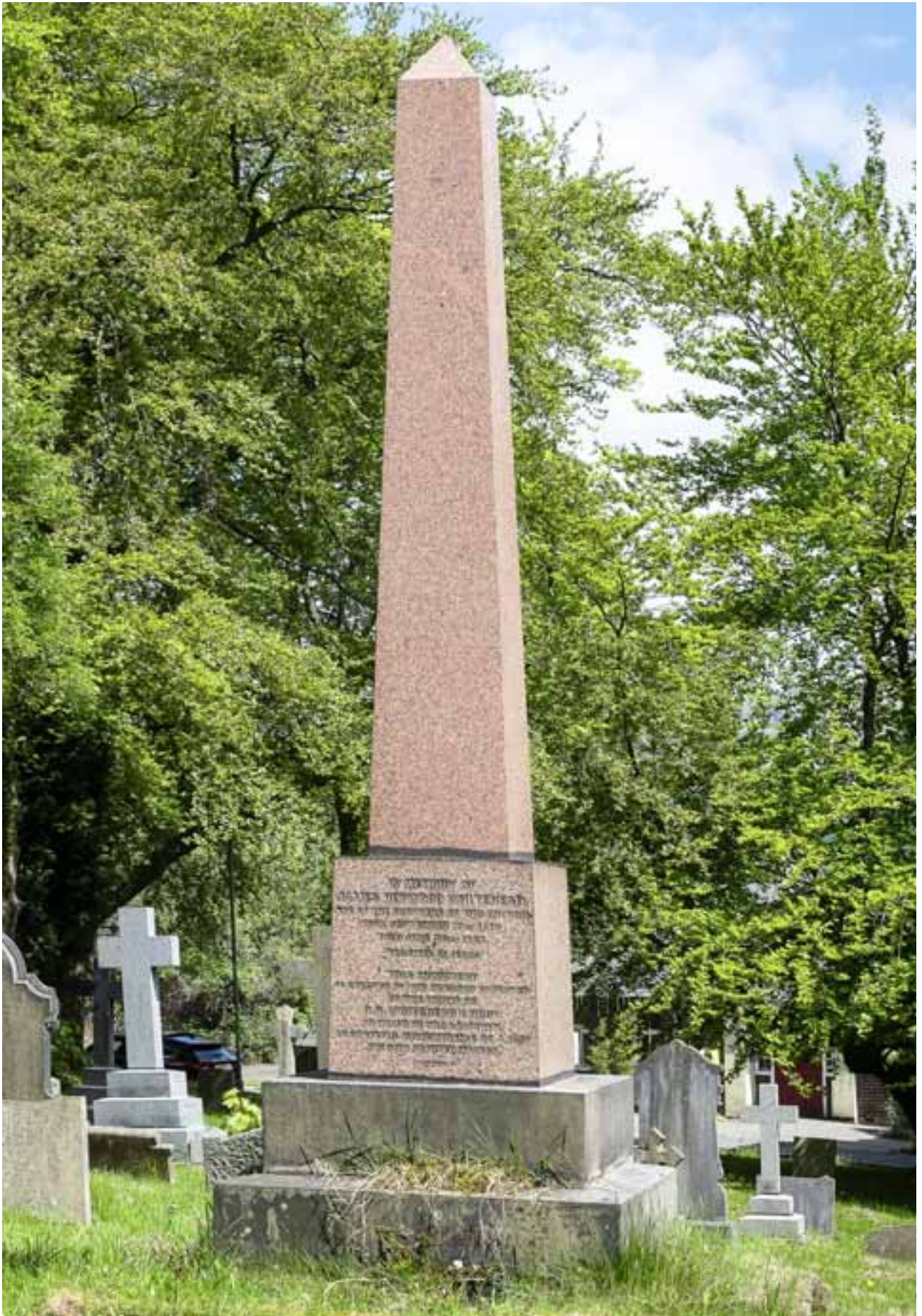
The Lychgate was designed by John Howcroft Architects and it was constructed in 1981. Affixed to the Lych-gate is a reminder that our Churchyard includes registered war-graves. These are marked by a red-spot on the grave-yard plan which is made available upon payment of a fee or free of charge on Heritage Open Days. Much work was done to establish the whereabouts in the grave-yard, and the history of our fallen dead by Simon Clark, Jo Johnson and Jill and John Barrett and a Remembrance book was drawn up with all the details that could be collated in 2014, 100 years after the start of the Great War.

*Opposite: The Obelisk in memory of J.H. Whitehead.*



*Our lychgate.*









*The Parsonage showing the original entrance off the Church driveway; Below as it appears now.*







## The Parsonage

*Parsonage, church and school (sadly demolished).*

**Since it appears that Christ Church Friezland may have been George Shaw's first substantial commission, and the building of the Parsonage commenced prior to that of the Church, it may be that this was the first new domestic building completely designed and overseen by him.**

Matthew Hyde and Alan Petford, two noted Saddleworth Historians, record that, "In the absence of Friezland school, which has been rebuilt, the parsonage can be taken as an example of his secular work. It is in good shape, though no longer housing the Parson...

With his first new house at Friezland, he could show the world that he could build domestic Gothic just as well as ecclesiastical. It is an exuberant building. Shaw has enjoyed the asymmetry with balance offered by the medieval English manor house, the off-centre entrance and the suggestion of a high and a low end. Indeed, he had an advantage over many of his contemporaries in his familiarity with the seventeenth-century yeoman houses of the Saddleworth area, many of which he had sketched, which were

sufficiently old-fashioned to have retained the medieval H-plan, but modern enough to be fully two-storeyed and of manageable size. All he had to do was take a practical house like Birchinley Hall at Milnrow (1619) make it look older by adding ogee heads to the mullioned windows and steepening the gables, give it a touch of romance by adding an oriel window – at the high end of course, and there we have it: modern Gothic; a comfortable house of appropriate style for an up-and-coming clergyman and his family. Church, house (and school) a beacon in the wilderness, together demonstrating for all to see the munificence of the clients and the advanced taste of their architect".

The first incumbent chosen by the Whiteheads was indeed an up-and-coming clergyman-the Reverend Thomas Greene M.A.

Christ Church, Friezland, was formed into a district by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, under Sir Robert Peel's Act in 1848. The Church was consecrated on May 29th 1850. The patronage was vested in Ralph Radcliffe Whitehead and his heirs. The Ecclesiastical



*Friezland Parsonage, photographed in 1862.*

Commissioners granted £100 per annum towards endowment; R.R. Whitehead and Brothers transferred £50 per annum to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners making £150 per annum payable by them to the Incumbent. R.R. Whitehead and Brothers endowed the Church with £150 more, the trustees for which were the Bishop and Archdeacon of Manchester and themselves, thus making the stipend of the Incumbent into £300 per annum.

On 27th Feb 1851 the Lord Bishop of Manchester was asked to consent to accept an endowment of £700 Consolidated Stock A in North Union Railway the dividends, interest and annual produce for the perpetual curate of the Parish of Christ Church Friezland to augment his stipend and for his own use.

This was followed on 23rd April 1855 with a further £1,500 of stock to augment the stipend.

It appears that the Whiteheads were very pleased with their new found incumbent.

In addition to a beautiful new parsonage to lure the eventual Canon to Saddleworth the new building also had servants housed in their own quarters and a coach-house equipped with Phaeton coach and horses. The house was relatively large for a Parsonage even in those days and in addition to numerous bedrooms (in case the Bishop and his entourage were in the area requiring overnight accommodation) it had a comfortable drawing room, dining room and study all lined with linen-fold oak panelling beneath the large mullion windows. In addition to a large fuel store a vaulted wine cellar was naturally included as it would be expected that the Parson would entertain from time to time when no doubt his servants would be put to the test. Roughly an acre of garden ensured privacy and no



doubt plenty of room to grow plants and vegetables to adorn the dining table with fresh produce.

Canon Green served Christ Church from its consecration in 1850 until 1858 and then again from 1870 until 1896 a total of 34 years. His marble memorial plaque can be seen on the wall to the right of the altar explaining his interim absence as he was "Appointed Principal of the Church Missionary College London 1858 of which Society he was a most generous and ardent supporter".



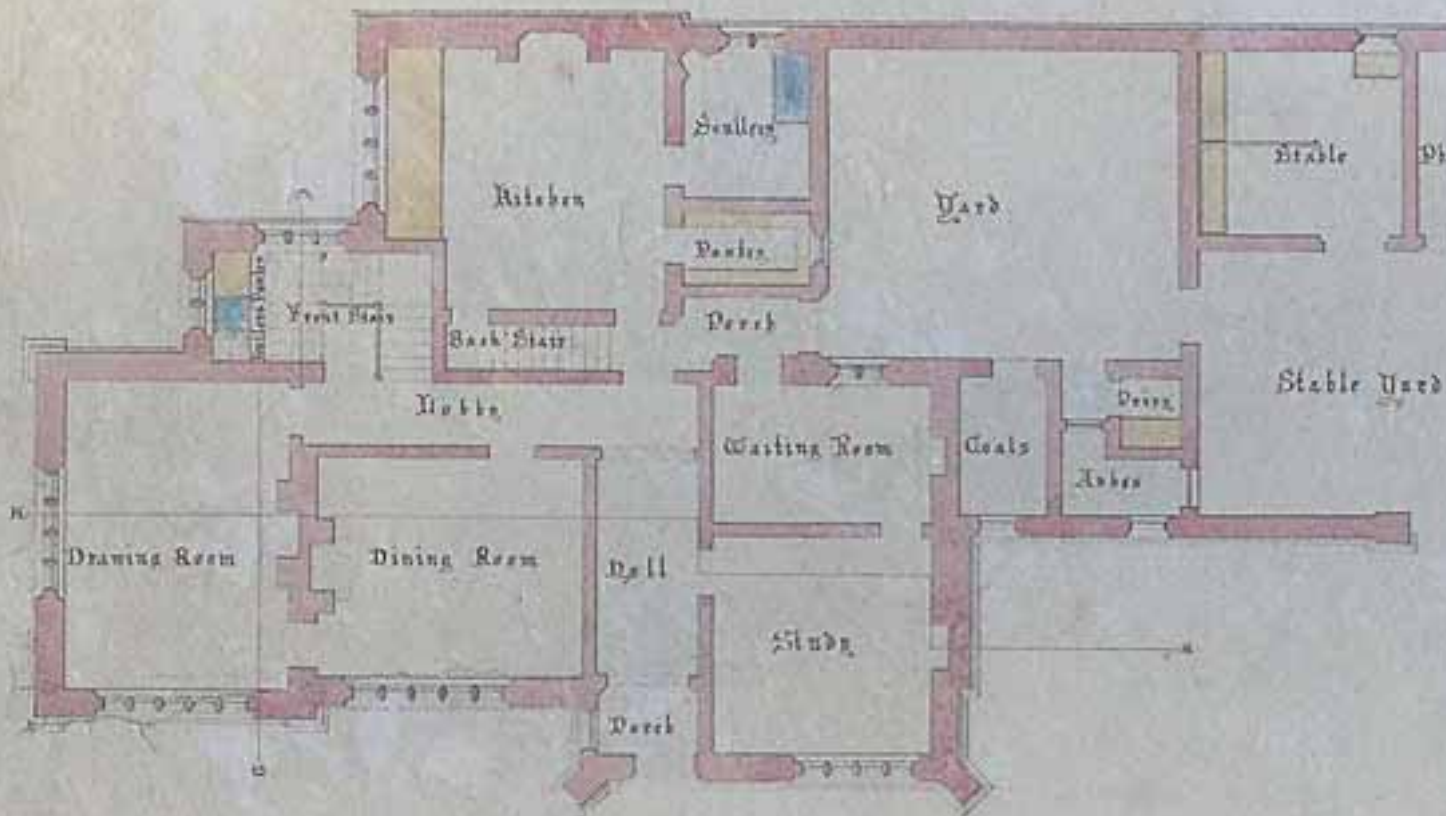
*Canon Green.*

Canon Green was born in 1819 at Prescot in Lancashire, the same year as Queen Victoria. In 1841 he took his degree at Brazenose College Oxford where he was Hulmeian Exhibitioner, graduating with honours as Bachelor of Arts with his Masters degree following three years later. Ordained a deacon in 1843 and a priest in 1844 he was appointed to the charge of St. James, Congleton. A few years later he accepted the Incumbency of Bardsley where 5 years later he was invited by R.R. Whitehead to take up the position of Vicar at Christ Church Friezland. On three different occasions he offered himself for missionary work abroad but owing to a health issue with his throat the Medical Board would not pass him. During his residence in Islington he was offered the Bishopric of Bathurst which he declined. After returning to Friezland he was elected as Proctor in Convocation for the Archdeaconry of Manchester, a most important position in 1879. In 1881 Bishop Frazer conferred on him an honorary Canonry of Manchester Cathedral. He was a theologian in the truest sense of the word – namely one versed in the Word of God. He could tell almost instantly where any verse was to be found as he was well versed not only in English but also in the Latin, Greek and Hebrew versions of the text. Little wonder that he was the man whom the Whitehead's chose for their

beautiful new Church building. His time he never considered his own and was always spent serving others.

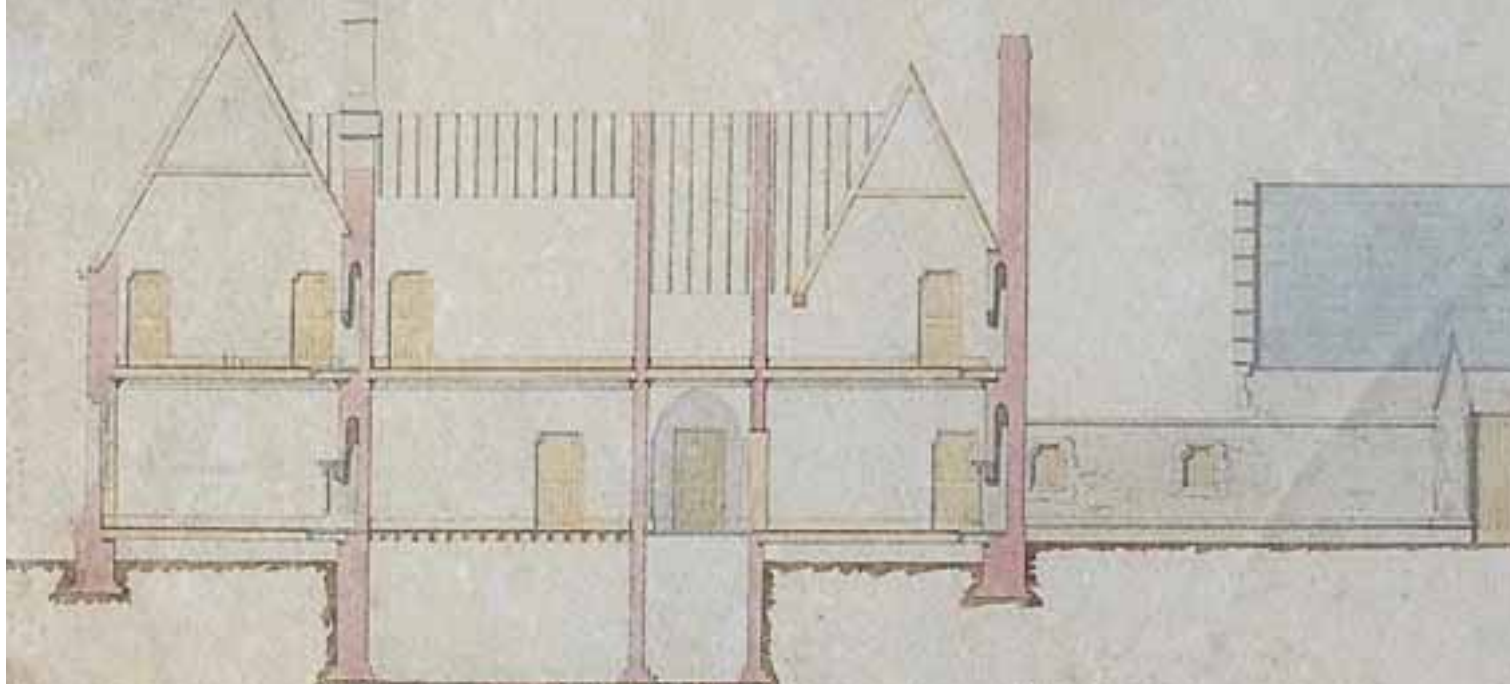
On the day he died he had been speaking of those he intended to visit.

It can be well imagined that Canon Green enjoyed his life and work in Friezland alongside Christ Church much as I have myself as the current owner of the house. Compiling this Guide Book in what would have originally been Canon Green's study surrounded by the beautiful fitted oak shelving and linen-fold panelling I can well imagine him sitting here writing his sermons in the quiet atmosphere of this magical place. Glancing up at a very early photograph of Canon Venables' wife, daughter, and King Charles spaniel in the front garden of the parsonage taken by Jackson Brothers, Photographers, Jumbo and Oldham I think how fortunate we are to have such a record. The founder of photography (as far as the British are concerned) Sir William Henry Fox Talbot F.R.S. only published his book "The Pencil of Nature in 1844 and that contained 24 actual photographs pasted in which were produced at his home, Lacock Abbey. This whole plate photograph produced in Spring 1862 was taken when photography was still in its infancy. At the same time a photograph of, presumably, Canon Venables with top hat walking through the church-yard records the earliest photograph we have of the Church. I laboured under the misconception for some years that with the Kimberley Diamond Mines in Africa being opened up in the 1860's perhaps Jumbo was somewhere in Africa for an early photographic studio to record the events where the Jackson Brothers had opened an outpost. I was somewhat brought down to Earth when I discovered that Jumbo was actually an area close to Middleton Junction, part of the estate of Bradshaw Hall (demolished 1910). I discovered this when I also found it recorded that it was in 1860 at a meeting at Lowbands Farm, Jumbo, that the foundation for the Co-operative Wholesale Society (C.W.S.) was laid.



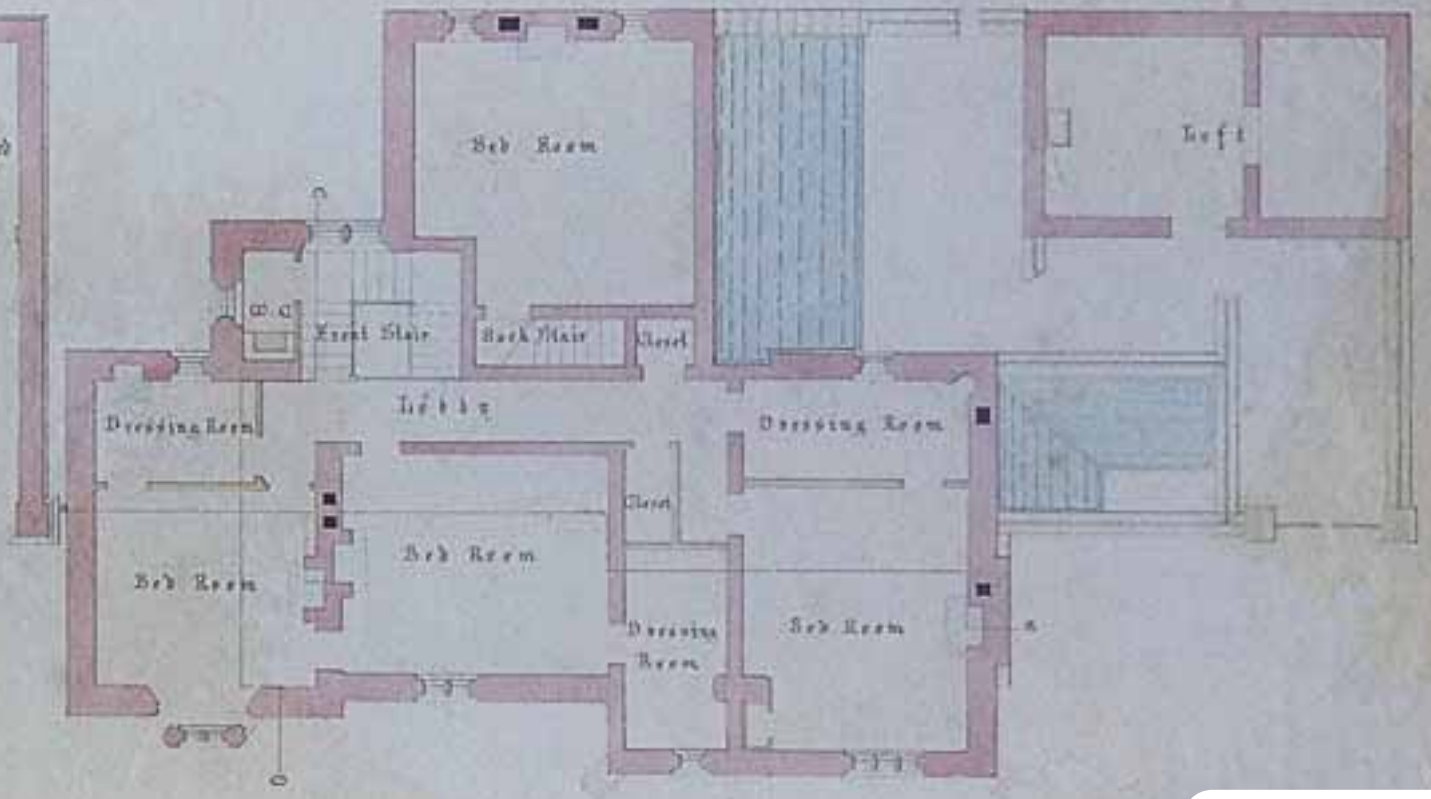
Ground Plan

Scale



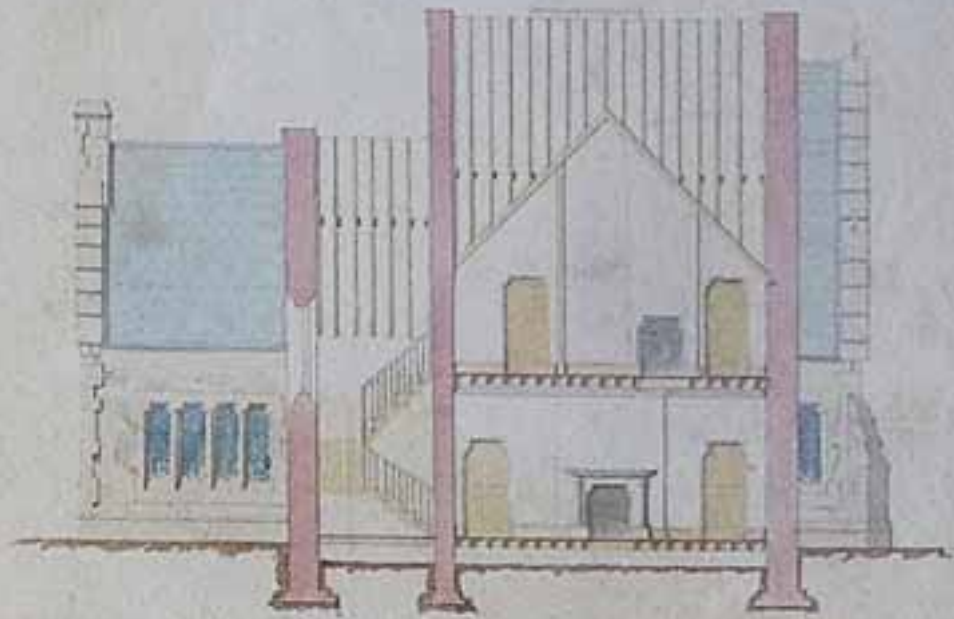
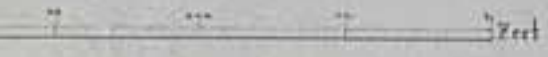
Longitudinal Section on line A.B.





Chamber Plan.

Friezeland Parsonage.  
Original plans  
by George Shaw.



Transverse Section on line C D

The Parsonage was listed on 3rd July 1986 and the listing runs as follows:

“Vicarage. C 1850. By G.Shaw. Snecked stone with decorative tile roof. 4 Bays and 2 storeys. Gothic revival. Projecting plinth, angled buttresses, coped gables with finials and decorative crested ridge tiles. Bays 1,3 and 4 all project, are gabled and have quoins. Bays 1 and 4 have 4 and 5-light mullioned windows with cusped heads to ground floor, whereas bay 2 has a 5 light window with shouldered head. The 2 storey entrance porch in bay 3 (which is also gabled) has an arched doorway, the door having glazed panels with enriched pierced heads. First floor oriel window to bay 1 with conical roof, 2-light arched gabled dormer window to bay 2 and 3-light cusp-headed window to bay 4. Weathered chimney stacks one of which has been reduced in height. Similar but smaller windows to sides and rear. A small wing has been demolished at rear. Interior retains many features including doors, fireplace, carved shelving and stair with turned balusters and acorn drops.”

The house is also listed in Pevsner’s “Guide to the Buildings of England”.

Remarkably George Shaw’s plans of the Parsonage, no doubt drawn by him in the study of his home (what is now the Library in Uppermill) still exist and hang proudly in the Billiard Room at the Parsonage.

I purchased the house from the Diocese in 1995 for myself and my three sons pictured a minute after I told them I had bought it. Even though they had been attending Christ Church with me and were rehearsing for the nativity service next door they had never seen the building before. It was well overgrown and even though at that time the driveway was immediately to the left of the Church driveway entrance it was shrouded by shrubbery. The house interior was looking very tired with wood-chip wallpaper throughout. Virtually all the plumbing and central heating needed replacing with many new bathroom suites. The gardens were somewhat overgrown and



the rhododendrons planted in the 1850’s as exotic shrubs had taken over. Desiring to call it “The Old Vicarage” I was thwarted by our then Vicar Rev. Roger White who understandably did not want any confusion with the house he was then living in- the Vicarage at St. Anne’s Church. After a straw poll and with its acre of garden which in the early 19th century was originally farm-land, it was renamed Friezland Grange. I will always be grateful for the kindness and help I received from so many of the parishioners of Christ Church as I struggled to bring up a young family at the same time as renovating a large house.

It is much easier to work on a building when you are not living in it so I took the risk of not selling my then house at the Paddock until the renovations on the parsonage were completed 12 months later. My three young sons can remember sitting upstairs watching a tiny TV whilst I helped the band of workmen to completely overhaul the building. Whilst it involved a lot of planning and hard work I always felt there was a force behind me urging me on. Wherever possible original materials were re-used and the new driveway and entrance gates and gate-posts, stone three-car



garage, and summer-house were added at that time. The rear wing housing the servants' quarters was demolished in 1981 and the Parish records show that the then incumbent was none too happy about it. The work was neatly done and when I arrived there was just a paved rear yard to be seen. I applied for listed building consent and erected an Amdega conservatory instead. With over 6 lots of planning permission to contend with I well remember many months of telephone calls searching for the right materials, one of them ending in an arduous journey down to Staffordshire with my friend and incredibly accomplished builder in a large hired truck to collect 3000 "Staffordshire Blues". These were destined to be the tiles for the garage roof so it would exactly match the house. Later modifications included repair and extension to the Coach-house which became very useful to my sons as they grew up, acting as a semi-

independent half-way house in preparation for them buying their own houses in Greenfield.

Like many other people who live in Listed Buildings I feel extremely privileged to have occupied this place for but a short time with my family now being added to by their families when they come around for barbeques, family parties and snooker evenings. It will hopefully exist for many more generations as a heritage to be enjoyed, appreciated and preserved, unlike poor old Ashway Gap.

As a temporary incumbent I have been only too happy to see the grounds used for Church garden parties and Teddy Bears' Picnics.

Like my friend John Stevenson a previous Churchwarden, I do not intend leaving other than "flat-packed", an event that I hope will be some years off.



*Friezland Parsonage.  
Original plans  
by George Shaw.*



*Above and below, Christmas fair.*





*Band contest.*

## Church Festivals and Present Day Community Events

**As with all Anglican Churches Christ Church celebrates the annual Christian festivals. Throughout the year most Sundays commemorate the resurrection by hosting the Eucharist although unfortunately in recent years owing to a shortage of clergy some Sundays are necessarily conducted by Authorised Lay Ministers and confined to Morning Prayer with no Sacrament. Our ALM's serving in 2019 were Duncan Ross, Megan Harrison and Peter Whalley.**

One of the enjoyable things about attending Christ Church is that there is no pressure put on members of the congregation to involve themselves in anything they are not comfortable with and they can attend the church frequently or less frequently to fit in with their own personal circumstances.

There are many facets to the organisation and running of not just the regular church services but also the various special events throughout the year and people often enjoy getting involved in e.g. the upkeep of the church building (fabric), the musical and choral side, bell-ringing, junior church, flower-arranging, helping

with the upkeep of our churchyard and gardens, the administrative side which includes much of the work of the Parochial Church Council (P.C.C.) and weekly events in term-time such as Little Lights requiring physically re-arranging and replacing the heavy pews each week in order to enjoy the space that such a large building can offer. There are many different courses on offer such as Bible Studies for those who feel they would like to understand better the teachings of Christ.

As with all Anglican Churches there is a routine to the religious services throughout the year and chronologically this is perhaps best outlined by starting at the beginning of December with Advent which extends for four weeks preparing for Jesus' birth which we celebrate at Christmas. Advent is also a time to look forward to, and prepare for His second coming (Advent from the Latin "Coming to"). This is followed by Epiphany on 6th January in memory of the visit of the Magi (three wise men) after His birth. Lent begins on Ash Wednesday and commemorates the 40 days which Jesus spent in the desert fasting after having been anointed by the Holy Spirit at His baptism (Luke 3.v21) when He is then led by the Holy Spirit to be





In addition to the enthronement of the Harvest Queen (in 2019 this was our Child Protection Officer Simon Clark's daughter Lexy, now superseded by Amélie Betts) which is still celebrated at Friezland perhaps our most celebrated social event occurs fifty days after Easter Sunday at Pentecost locally known as Whitsunday. Fifty five days after Easter Sunday is Whit Friday when the Whit walks are traditionally held. This originates from 19th July 1821 when a procession of

children all dressed in white walked through Manchester to commemorate the coronation of King George IV. Each Whit Friday local churches employed bands to lead them through the streets and the younger members (Scholars) would walk in their best clothes and friends and relatives would give them a few pennies. This inadvertently launched a brass band occasion and the Annual Whit Friday Band contest is now firmly in our calendar and has proved to be a very



*Whit Friday procession.*



*Susan Beesley (ex warden) and husband shelter under the umbrella and chat to Jo Johnson (also ex warden).*

successful event both socially and financially.

Early in the day we meet outside the Church for prayer and the Banners are raised and marched behind, our band safely supervised by Terry Flynn, Alan Collett and colleagues in the direction of our final destination in Uppermill with frequent stops along the way for well known hymns and local tunes. We are then treated to a sermon often by one of the Bishops of the Diocese, and the Saddleworth clergy take it in turns to read lessons and hymns. The festivities and celebrations continue throughout the day well into the evening and are held across at our Church Hall and include much food and drink, some of it freshly prepared and donated by our parishioners. We offer prizes and dozens of Brass Bands, some occasionally from abroad, arrive in coaches to play a tune in front of our judge who is ensconced in a large van so he can hear them but does not know the name of their Band. Originally introduced by John Stevenson of Manns Wharf and more recently run by Jason, our outside Bar housed in a huge marquee, serves real ale produced by local breweries and over the years word has got around so that our evening event has become extremely popular.

We take the planning of this very seriously and the Whit Friday Committee headed by John and Jill Barrett are assisted by a host of wonderful volunteers who dedicate much of the day and evening to the celebration helping on the door, at the bar, in the kitchen or outside with even Rev. Mike Donmall sometimes assisting perhaps Howard, Dave or Charles on the BBQ. The programme is professionally printed after being designed by Guy Betts and financed by advertisements canvassed by Lana Rankin.

We have many social and religious events throughout the year and I always enjoy the Horsepersons' Carol Service at Christmas when we meet at Friezland Arena where horses, dogs and even cats have been known to join in and we celebrate the festive season with hymns, carols and a little hot punch and a mince pie.

The research for this book has necessarily been intermittent depending on what free time I have had available and I have come to realise that since it has taken over twelve months to produce, it will probably have to last for many years as a Guide and Handbook to Christ Church before being revised, so I have



*A.L.M. commissioning: Above left: Megan Harrison receiving her A.L.M.commission at the cathedral accompanied by Mike. Above right: Duncan Ross (our warden with the tartan tie).*



*Left: Peter Whalley with the Right Reverend David Walker TSSF Bishop of Manchester.*



attempted to limit references to the names of people involved as I am aware none of us are a permanent feature. However, in a couple of sections I have mentioned some people by name but even then there are many of our amazing congregation and volunteers left without acknowledgement but they know who they are and I hope they will forgive me as it is impossible to refer to everyone both past and present by name.

Throughout the school year a fairly recent innovation by David and Elaine Cartwright is our Mums and Tots group held on a Thursday when about 60 toddlers with their parent(s) enjoy games and toys along with a song and a prayer usually hosted by one of our clergy, often Rev. Aaron Jackman accompanied by Rev Angela Bryan on guitar. Our team rector Rev Canon Sharon Jones may even pay us a visit although with the whole of the Saddleworth Ministerial Team to organise she is often rather busy. Once a year the group pops next door to the Parsonage where a Teddy Bears' Picnic entertains the young toddlers in the gardens.

Since the fairly recent installation of disabled toilet and a kitchen in the North aisle of the Church on Thursday afternoons we have a café which plays host to local residents and passers-by and the takings from the freshly baked produce made by our parishioners goes

to a Charity decided by the congregation. We also support charities with our after-service refreshments which this year were divided between Colin Carson's "Horizon International" and Jill Read's "Saddleworth Palestinian Women's scholarship Fund". Oldham Mountain Rescue have been chosen for next year.

Whilst on the subject of charities our Church is also active in supporting the Oldham Food-bank organised by Hilary and Howard and each month, the Booth Centre in Manchester organised by Jill Barrett and we also have a Fair-Trade stall each month selling their produce organised by Ann Forster our Churches Together representative. After a concerted effort by Matt Carson we are now an official "Eco Church".

Children's Society collections and Christmas cards have been organised for many years by Lynda McCrea who also organises the "100" club. The Church also hosts an annual Heritage Day when people can see our beautiful Church, have a conducted tour and perhaps inspect the graveyard records for names of deceased relatives. The day is also timed to coincide with an Art Exhibition erected in the Church to showcase local artists.

Our café is also pleased to support the initiative of dedicating a table as somewhere that people can sit if they are happy to speak to other customers. This



*Horseperson's  
Carol Service.*



*Above: Our 'cafe', well attended and very tasty. Below: Canon Sharon and Rev Mike Donmall helping out.*







*Above: Little lights children's group – the lull before the storm.  
Below: Jill Barrett & David Cartwright (ex-warden) still hands on.*

“Chatter and Natter” table is designed to combat loneliness and the idea which was the brainchild of Alex Hoskyn has now gone nationwide. Hopefully this will help many people who would otherwise go all day without conversing with a single soul.

We are extremely fortunate that we also have our Church Hall which has recently been renovated to include disabled toilet and well- equipped kitchen so whereas the Pennine Singers prefer the Church with its sound system, Grand Piano and Organ, local Bands may prefer the Hall with its well-stocked bar!

Other ad hoc events include “Ladies who Lunch” and “Men at Lunch” which give everyone the chance of an entertaining meal.

The Church Hall is also home to Friezland Pre-school during term time and in evenings and weekends variously hosts Dance Classes, Pilates, Yoga, Kick-boxing and Musical Evenings as well as many wedding receptions.

There is also a public defibrillator on the wall outside the Hall for emergency use by anyone in our neighbourhood.

I am grateful to Yvonne Carson who co-ordinates the Christ Church entries in our bi-monthly parish magazine “Grapevine” for unwittingly giving me an “aide memoire” to all the events we host throughout the year!

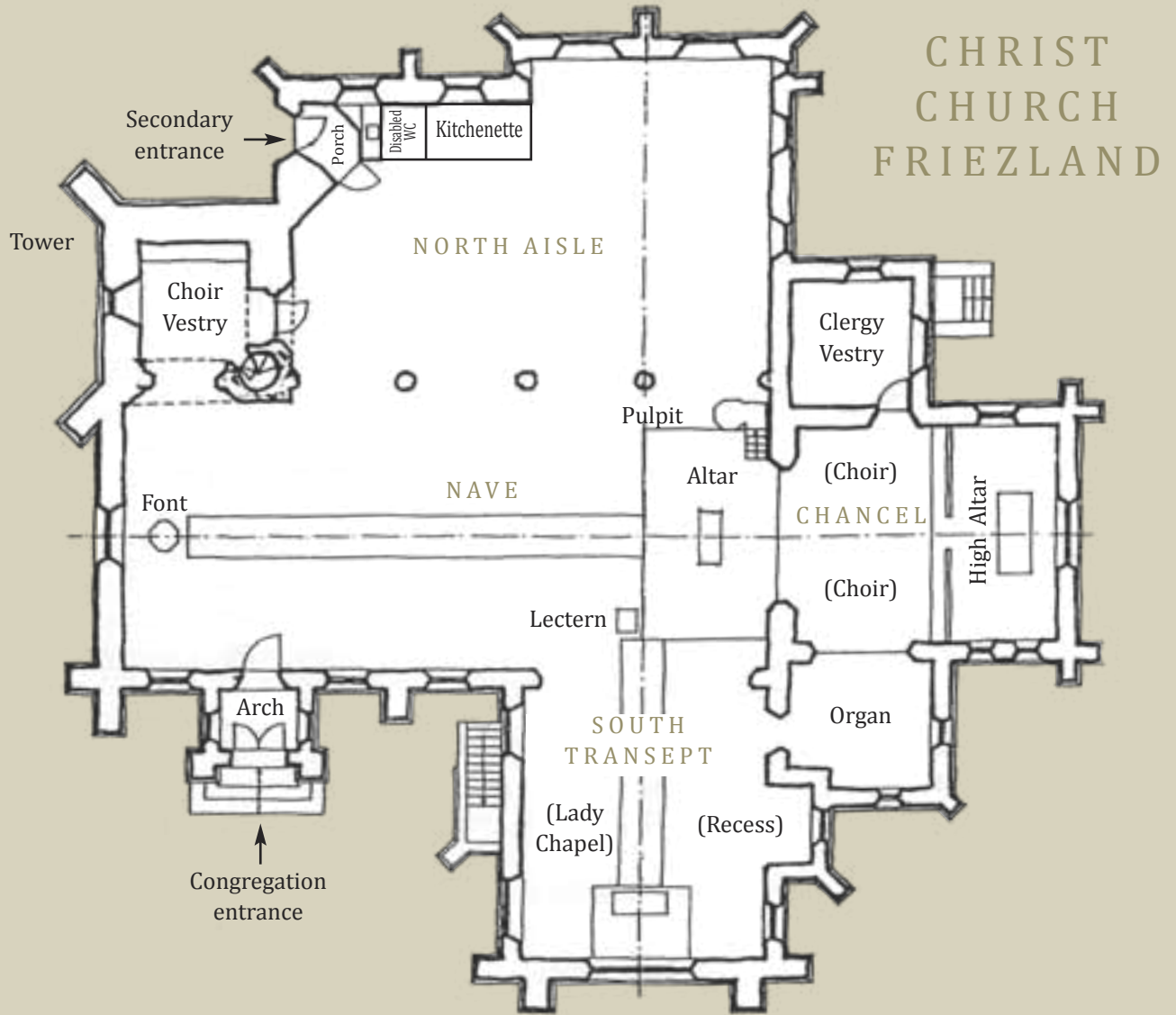






*There but not there.*





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A HISTORY OF CHRIST CHURCH, FRIEZLAND









