

A Guide to All Hallows Church Harthill

The 11th Century Church of All Hallows is situated in a village settled from Saxon times when it was known as Hert-hyll. Some will say the name means “hard hill”, referring to the sandstone hill behind the church; others argue that it is named after the hart, which is why the deer is depicted on the village crest.



Harthill was given to William de Warenne (from Normandy) as a reward for help at the Battle of Hastings. The first William of Warenne built a church at Harthill dedicated to St John the Evangelist. Little of the original Harthill church remains- only the round pillars and arches at the north side of the nave, the pillars and arch at the entrance of St Mary’s (Leeds) chapel just above the sarcophagus of the first Duke of Leeds. These latter pillars were removed from their original position probably in the 14th century- a period of extensive renovation

The church was re-dedicated to All Hallows sometime before AD1249. It originally had to pay a large sum of money each year to Lewes Priory ,in Sussex , for which the priory provided a priest. But Harthill retained the chief rectoral right – to collect its own tithes.

During the 12th-16th Centuries the church grew in size and height as chapels and aisles were added to create the external appearance you see today from the south side and entrance path.

Thomas Osborne, during the time of Charles II, restored St Mary’s Chapel and had a family burial vault constructed beneath. He was given various titles by King Charles and was his chief minister. His titles included Baron Kiveton, Viscount Latimer and Earl Danby. He was a major participant in the “Glorious Revolution” in 1688 to replace James II with William of Orange and as a result was rewarded with the title of 1st Duke of Leeds. His house was the magnificent Kiveton Hall, near the Todwick boundary

The Old Schoolroom, in Church Lane, dates from 1721 when the earlier school building was rebuilt. The Schoolroom was restored and refurbished in 2001 with grants from the National



Heritage Lottery Fund and Veneziana Trust.

Porch and Font

This door was cut and the porch added in 1856. The limestone font has a Jacobean cover, probably the work of a local craftsman. Nearby in the wall is a 14th Century holy water stoup. The font cover used to be raised and lowered by a pulley but this was dismantled for safety reasons, and the ornately carved structure currently stands on the top of Sir Thomas Osborne's tomb in the Leeds chapel.



The Tower

It was built in the 15th Century in perpendicular style with paired stepped buttresses on the outside. The present high arch entrance and the rib vaulting below the ringing chamber is 19th Century. The beech screen was added in 1996. The Tower contains eight bells which are named after notable people from the history of the parish. The west window glass was designed by J F Bentley (architect of Westminster Cathedral) in 1876.



The Nave

Parts of the original outer wall can be seen carried by the arcading either side of the nave. The round arches on the north side were cut before the pointed arches on the south side. These added aisles would have been narrower than the present ones. The westernmost arch on the south side is wider than the others, at that time the south door was further east. Some of the stone pillars still show signs of their original colouring, and masons' marks can be seen .

In the 15th Century the nave was raised in height with a tier of windows forming a clerestory below the oak timbered roof. The clerestory windows are attributed to Ulisse De Matteis, a renowned artist from Florence in the 1870s. The original plaster on the walls has been removed to control damp, exposing the rubble construction above the finer ashlar stonework of the arches, and the upper courses of square cut blocks added with the roof was raised.



Also exposed on the north side is the old entrance to the rood loft which would have straddled the chancel arch in the middle ages. In 1738 a gallery was added at the rear of the nave, but was removed in 1850 when the north aisle was rebuilt and new seating and furniture provided in the nave. In 1898 the chancel arch and the chancel were rebuilt.

The funeral hatchments on either side of the tower arch are best viewed from the centre aisle. On the left as you look, are the arms of Bridget, wife of Thomas, 1st Duke (d. 1704). On the right are the arms of Mary, wife of Thomas, 4th Duke (d. 1789). Quickly painted, the hatchments were placed outside the person's home during mourning. Above the chancel arch is a Royal hatchment bearing the arms of Charles II, with the name altered to George II; an economy of loyalty.

Italian Woodwork

The magnificent pulpit, lectern and screen at the entrance to the south chapel were carved in Florence by Carlo Scarcelli in 1877. The screen, which was originally longer, first stood beneath the chancel arch. The heads carved on the pulpit depict Moses, Isaiah, Ezekiel and Daniel. A fourth piece designed as a prayer desk stood on the south side of the arch but was later incorporated in the altar front.



South Aisle

The south aisle was widened in perpendicular style during the 15th Century. On the south wall are two 18th Century boards listing benefactions and in the first window, there are painted slated panels of the Apostles Creed and Lord's Prayer. The easternmost window is a memorial to Charlotte, wife of the 6th Duke. The centre panel (1884) depicts 'Charity'; it is another beautiful window by the Italian Ulisse De Matteis.

South Chapel (St George's Chapel)

The original chapel was dedicated to the Holy Trinity and was added in the 14th Century. The decorated tracery of the east window survives. There is a piscine and part of what was possibly an Easter sepulchre in the south wall.



The priest's door was added in the 19th Century and the path outside leads directly to the Old Rectory. The south windows are in perpendicular style. The iron gates probably date from around 1600. In the restoration of 1898, the chapel became a vestry. In 1952 it was again refurbished as a memorial to the fallen of two World Wars, with new window glazing showing 'Christ in majesty' and dedicated to St George whose figure is carved in painted wood.

The Chancel

The chancel is as long as the nave and dates from the 13th Century. There is an original lancet window in the south wall near the altar. The memorial in the sanctuary on the north wall is to Lady Margaret Osborne who died in 1624; the fine sculpture shows her kneeling.



The appearance of the choir today is Victorian; an extensive restoration in the 1890s provided a new chancel arch and new arches on the north side in harmony with those on the south. The choir and clergy stalls and sanctuary panelling are made from Canadian walnut.

The roof beams are made of oak, taken from a single tree grown in Sutton-in-Forest near York. The east window is by Charles Kempe, unveiled in 1899. The rebuilt organ was placed in the north chapel and provided with a new front to match the choir stalls. This masks the Leeds Chapel and its east window. The floor of the choir and sanctuary are laid in marble and the wooden communion rails are 18th Century.

Carved on the altar front are the four figures symbolising the Gospels, either side of a representation of Christ, the Lamb of God. Now kept in the treasury of York Minster are the two fine silver gilt candlesticks by Jacob Bodenick (1675).

North Chapel and Memorials (the Leeds Chapel)

The original 14th Century chapel of St Mary was the burial place for the Serlby family, and earlier occupants of the manor before the Osborne's.

Hugh de Serlby was favoured by Edward 1 and given the privilege of hunting deer and game in the area. His tomb is near the northern wall, outside the entrance to the Leeds chapel. It is raised and has an inscription around the edge " Praye for ye sowle of Hughe Serleby Esqueyere". It is the oldest decipherable tomb in the church and dates from c. AD 1298



The chapel entrance is now guarded by iron gates which probably came from Kiveton Hall. The marble tomb of Thomas Osborne, 1st Duke of Leeds stands behind the gates. The east window, the finest of the windows made by Ulisse De Matteis , is a memorial to Louisa Catherine, widow of the 7th Duke, and now unfortunately obscured by the organ which was moved to this position in 1898. On the north wall is a memorial to Sir Edward Osborne, a staunch Royalist supporter, who died in 1647. His gauntlets , supposedly worn during the Civil wars , are kept in a case in the north aisle together with a large wooden chest bearing his coat of arms. The green funeral pall of the 8th Duke was made in 1872 and restored in 1983. The chapel was rebuilt in Classical style in the 18th Century, with its walls and roofline raised. Further changes at the end of the 19th Century harmonised it more with the restored chancel.

The 17th century ornately carved wooden font cover currently stands on Sir Thomas's tomb, for safety reasons.



North Aisle

The earlier aisle possibly widened in the 14th Century was rebuilt in the 19th with round arched windows. One has glass from 1886 depicting the Good Samaritan and the Good



Shepherd in memory of Revd George Hudson. The recent glazing in plain glass was designed by R G Simms, the west window commemorates Mark Hydes, former chorister and benefactor and his son Alonzo, organist.

A Grant was awarded by English Heritage via the Listed Buildings Roof repair fund in 2016 to restore and make water-tight various parts of the roof , including the Tower, and to improve drainage.

When you visit All Hallows Church, you will find an illustrated guide on the Welcome Desk, which will help you to make a tour of the most interesting features .

Photographs courtesy of Mr P McLaughlin