

William de Stalmyn, 14th century Vicar of Giggleswick

It is of course not surprising that some difficulty might arise in determining details of the vicarage of Giggleswick church six hundred years ago. The accounts of historians writing in the early 1900s need some clarification and correction concerning William Stalmyn. The list of vicars on a board in St Alkelda's church shows William Stalmyn vicar in 1339. Next is John Holderness in 1413. This large time gap is surprising but there is an explanation.

William's family presumably originated in what is now Stalmine in Lancashire. Cox (*The parish church of Giggleswick-in-Craven, 1920*) writes that William de Stalmyn was vicar of Pulton (*sic*) for a year prior to being vicar of Giggleswick, by exchange of benefices as noted in Patent Rolls. He also suggests that William held the post in Giggleswick for at least 60 years or even 72 years, but was ignorant of there being a second William taking over, making this suggestion incorrect. Brayshaw (*History of the Ancient parish of Giggleswick, 1932*) states that William Stalmyn of Poulton in Lancashire became vicar of Giggleswick church in 1339 as a result of exchange of benefices in 1339 with William de Preston of Giggleswick (*Patent Rolls 13 Edward III (1340), not seen*).

Shuffrey (*North Craven Churches, 1914*) lists William Stalmyn as being vicar in 1351. Whitaker (*History of Craven, 1878*) lists William Preston, followed by William Stalwyn (*sic*) vacating the post through death, without a date. We do not know when William de Stalmyn was born but one might guess a time around 1320. We do not know the date of this William Stalmyn's death.

The YASRS volume *Fasti Parochiales* of 1971 gives sources of information in Archbishops' Registers, Calendar of Petitions to the Pope (CPP) and Calendar of Patent Rolls (CPR).

WILLIAM DE STALMYN, pres. by the same, by exch. of ch. of Pulton and inst. by the archdn of Richmond (Reg. Melton, f.217d). Lic. penitentiary, 22 Jan. 1398/9, for archdnry of York (Reg. Scrope, f.18d). Ratifn, 11 Oct. 1399, of estate (C.P.R., 1399-1401, p.6). As p. had a papal grant, 5 July 1351, of a canonry of Southwell with expectation of a preb., notwithstanding he had perp. vic. of Giggleswick (C.P.P., i, 412). Will dated 16 Dec. 1412; prob. 16 Jan. 1412/3 (Reg. Bowet, i, f.352d).?

[YAS, *Fasti Parochiales*, 1971. 4.1.Finc.33 available online at https://archive.org/stream/YASRS133/YASRS133_djvu.txt].

The evidence

In 1351 there was a petition to Pope Clement VI for a post at Southwell Priory, now cathedral, in Nottinghamshire.

William de Stalmyn, priest of the diocese of York, for a canonry of Southwell with expectation of a prebend notwithstanding that he has the perpetual vicarage of Giggleswick. Granted Avignon 3 Non(es). July 1351.

[Calendar of entries in the Papal registers relating to Great Britain and Ireland: Petitions to the Pope, AD. 1342-1419

<https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=hvd.32044108760422&seq=5>

(A prebend bestows an income on its holder.)

Evidence held at Durham University Library is missing from the YASRS list and it shows that there were two William Stalmyns. William Stalmyn had a namesake William who took over his vicarage as evident from a Finchale Priory letter unfortunately of unknown date. This information is lacking in sources wondering if there was only one William serving for very many decades, from 1339 to 1412. The uncertainty is resolved by now knowing that there were two Williams, senior and junior, in the late 1300s.

Letter, of W[alter Skirlaw], Bishop of Durham to [the Prior of Durham], recommending the request of William Stalmyn, vicar of Giggleswick church in the presentation of the Prior, that he might resign in favour of William Stalmyn junior.

Dated: Calesius 16 May [] Date unknown

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This does not infer that William Stalmyn junior is son of William senior – he could be a nephew or even grandson as suggested below or other relative. Documents written in later centuries sometimes have to distinguish namesakes commonly in the same wide family as junior and senior. Calesius, the presumed source of this information, wrote the life of Pope Paul II, pope 1464-1471.

In another record at Durham, William a son of Richard de Stalmyn is mentioned in 1380. This might be a mistake but more probably is correct and this second William is really son of Richard, who is perhaps a brother, a relative, or possibly son of William senior, vicar in Giggleswick at the time.

Presentation by Robert prior and the convent of Durham addressed to [Thomas over erasure], archbishop of York, or his vicar general in distant parts, of William son of Richard de Stalmyn, having the chapelry or chantry in the chapel of St Mary and the Holy Angels [al. St Sepulchre], York, to the vicarage of Giggleswick, in order to effect an exchange of benefices with William de Stalmyn, vicar of Giggleswick.

Date: Durham, 11 June 1380.

[If the date is correct the archbishop concerned cannot have been Thomas [Arundel]: he was provided to York in 1388. The hand is the same as the preceding entry.]

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In 1399 the Patent Rolls (*Hen IV 1399-1401, vol. 1, membrane 34*) show the grant of ratification of a benefice for William de Stalmyn, vicar of the church of Gikeleswyk, in the diocese of York.

[\[https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015031079463&seq=5\]](https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015031079463&seq=5)

A charter gifting land to Robert Benous in 1409 was made by William, surely William junior at this date (WYAS WYL163/117). This was a grant and confirmation concerning the perpetual vicar of the parish church of Giggleswick.

*Know (men) present and future that I Sir William de Stalmyn perpetual vicar of the parish church of Giggleswick have given and granted and by this my present charter confirmed to Robert Benous and the heirs of his body begotten all my lands and tenements with its appurtenances which I have by gift and feoffment to the same William of Langcliffe and Emmott his wife in the township and lands of Giggleswick to have and to hold all the aforesaid lands and tenements with their appurtenances by the aforesaid Robert and the heirs of his body begotten with all commodities and easements of the abovesaid lands and tenements within the township and ought to be(?) in whatever way well freely wholly peacefully and quietly of the chief lord of the fee by the services owed and accustomed by law And verily I the said William and my heirs will warrant and defend against all people forever all the aforesaid lands and tenements with its appurtenances to the same aforesaid Robert and the heirs of his body begotten. In testimony of which I have affixed our seals to this my present charter these being witnesses Sir John de Pudsay knight, Alan Catterall, John de Morlay, Thomas Bank, Thomas Foster and others
Given at Giggleswick on the birthday of St John the Baptist in the tenth year of the reign of Henry iv after the conquest.
(Birthday of St John Baptist is 24 June).
[Henry IV 10th year was from 30 September 1408 to 29 September 1409].*

One witness to this document was Alan Catterall, of a family in Lancashire at Mitton, and at some point a branch established itself in Rathmell. This link with the Catteralls might explain why William de Stalmyn senior moved to Giggleswick in the first instance.

William Stalmyn (previously junior) died in 1412 leaving a will.

[Archbishop's Register (Consistory Wills) Borthwick vol. 18 fol. 352].

Testament of William Stalmyn vicar of Giggleswick

In the name of God Amen on Sunday just before the feast of St Thomas the Apostle AD 1412 I William Stalmyn vicar of the parish church of Giggleswick sick in body but of sound mind make my testament in this manner. First I bequeath my soul to God, blessed Mary and all the saints and my body to be buried in the said same church. Item I leave to the high altar of Horton Church two shillings. Item I leave to dom. Adam Morton chaplain five pounds. Item I leave to dom. Richard Hayholme forty shillings. Item I leave to dom. Henry Rauthmell chaplain a [.....] five silver spoons and two pounds. Item I leave an ordinal to be read in the sanctorum of Giggleswick Church aforesaid. Item I leave to the Hospital of Salley nine coverlets to be received by the inmates. Item I leave all my domestic utensils and all the grain in the tithe barn and my grange to John Calnlay and his sister Agnes to be divided between them in equal portions. The said John Calnlay and dom. Henry Rauthmell chaplain I ordain make and confirm to be my executors by these presents thus making and disposing as if they wished to be answerable to the highest judge.

Given at Giggleswick the place and year above written.

Memorandum the 16th day of January in the year above written at Cawood the said will was proved and administration was committed for all the goods of the deceased to the executors named in the said will in form confirming to the legatees abovementioned ordained and abovesaid in lawful format.

(Feast of St Thomas the Apostle is 3 July)

These various communications with church authorities over some years are noteworthy for the careful administration of church matters and record-keeping at the time.

John Holderness took over as vicar in 1412 after William's death as noted in Durham archives.

Presentation by John prior and the convent of Durham addressed to Henry, archbishop of York, or his vicar general in distant parts, of Mr John Holldernesse, LL.B., chaplain, to the vicarage of Giggleswick, vacant by the death of William de Stalmyn, last vicar thereof.

Date: Durham, 24 December 1412.

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Michael Slater, February 2024