

# St. Peter's Church Rylstone - A History

The earliest known church at 'Rilleston' was circa 1160-70 and was probably a wooden structure.

The present church was built in 1851 and consecrated by the Bishop of Ripon in 1853, possibly the fourth church to be built on this site serving the townships of Bordley, Cracoe, Hetton and Rylstone..

Rylstone Church and former Chapel was originally within the Parish of Burnsall. Rylstone was not a Chapel of Ease, but a Chapel, one of two medietyes, the other being Burnsall.

At that particular time there were two Rectors of Burnsall one of whom was appointed to the mediety of Rylstone. It is understood this was a rare situation almost unknown in Canon Law.

There is little information from the Norman period.

In 1876 Rylstone was constituted as a separate Parish with Conistone-in- Wharfedale. In 1925 Conistone was united with Kettlewell and Rylstone became a separate Parish.

The style of the church is ' Churchwarden Gothic', following similar examples already built at Arncliffe and Kettlewell. The total cost is said to have been £1,700, £600 of which was raised by public subscription with a £1,100 legacy from a Mr Waddilove. The average number of the congregation being 95 at that time! The structure of the church consists of Tower, Porch, Nave of four arches on each side, Aisles, Chancel & Vestry, built of stone and roofed with slates.

A few old stones from former churches on the site are still to be seen, including 15<sup>th</sup> century benches and 12<sup>th</sup> century shaft capitals in the porch and two small stone slabs with incised crosses laid flat in the ground close to the porch. A little further afield, relics of the Church demolished in 1820 can be seen in a farm building at Threaplands whilst old tombstones have been used as flagstones in a barn in Bordley.

There are two stone shields, one above the North Nave Arcade portraying a query eagle whilst the one above the South Nave Arcade is the coat of arms of John Coigniers, 'bearing in dexter pale a maunch and a bend for Norton and in sinister pale a bend engrailed with escalop for difference for Radcliffe and a Satire for Rillesten quarterly'. These families, the Nortons (Norton Conyers), Radcliffes and de Rillestens in their turn were for several centuries Lords of the Manor of Rylstone. There is also a very old stone, possibly pre-conquest, in the vestry (set in the wall) An examination of the Church will show that all the lower windows are of stained glass, these having been installed by various families as memorials to relatives.

There are two memorial tablets containing the names of all the men from the villages who were killed in the two World Wars, placed at the west end of the Church near the Font. There is also a memorial to an Australian Army soldier in the first World War.

There is a shield of the Royal Arms hanging in the Church which would have been in use between 1714 - 1801, believed to be that of George 1, 11 or 111, and would have hung in the earlier Church.

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## Rylstone Church - a history

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The Church owns land in Appletreewick near to Stump Cross Caverns and this was known as Glebe land. It was let of for grazing by tender and the rent was paid to the Rector as part of his Stipend. In the mid 1970's the system changed with the rent paid to the Central Diocesan Board of Finance to be shared between the parishes where the Rector's income was not so augmented, to regulate and standardise clergy income.

The history and source of the 3 bells in the tower is hazy. One bell bears the inscription 'Gloria in Excelsis Deo 1648' and another 'God Us Ayde'. The large tenor bell weighs 7 1/4 cwt. The bells were re-cast in 1853 and repaired and renovated in 1990. The ropes originally used are unique but too cumbersome to use for full circle ringing. These were replaced but are kept for display.

The organ was installed in 1932, a gift from the Standeven family of Scale House. The lych gates, made from English oak, were originally fitted in 1945. The oak lectern replaced a brass model and was given by Col. Butcher of Fleets. In 1978 the Rectory was sold at public auction.

There is a separate list of clergy dating from 1556

July 2003

# CHURCH OF ST. PETER, RYLSTONE

*"CHANTRY OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY, in the Chapel of Rilston, within the Parish of Burnsall.*

*The Rev John Loksey was the Chantry Priest. The foundation was made by Geoffrey Proctor on 12<sup>th</sup> June 1523. It was situated one mile from the Parish Church and was used according to its foundation. The Church goods were valued at 3/6d and the plate at £1-6-8d. The rental income was £4-3-0d. The King claimed for "tenth" 6/-. Balance £3-11-4d.*

*At the Reformation 1540"*

**Priests and Deacons who officiated either "in charge" of the Church or as Assistants to the Rector of the Mother Church of Burnsall.**

1556 – 1568	William Silson	
1568 – 1596	John Toppan of Cracoe (On appointment as Rector of Burnsall)	
1597 – 1602	Richard Smythson	
1602 – 1661	John Toppan B.A. (Curate of "Rilston Chappel" for 59 years)	
1662 – 1669	Jeremia Wade (Deacon)	
1669 – 1681	John Barnett (Curate)	
1681 – 1689	Christopher Lancaster (Rector of Burnsall)	
1689 – 1707	Peter Alcock (1) (Rector of Burnsall)	
1708 – 1723	Peter Alcock (2)    "    "    "    (son of the above)	
1723 – 1731	Henry Wilkinson    )	All Assistant Clergy of Burnsall residing at Rilston
1725 – 1732	Stephen Robinson    )	
1729 – 1732	James Robarts        )	
1732 – 1734	William Cragg of Rilston	
1733 – 1753	John Alcock M.A. (Rector of Burnsall)	
1734 – 1746	William Thompson B.A. - for Mr Alcock	Schoolmaster of Burnsall 1734 – 1746
1735 – 1776	Matthew Knowles M.A. –	for Mr Carr till 1748, Schoolmaster of Burnsall 1746 – 1776 Rector of Burnsall 1754 – 1776
1753 – 1810	John Alcock B.A. (Rector of Burnsall) – son of Peter Alcock (1)	
1796 – 1811	John Wilson (Assistant at Burnsall)	
1804 – 1805	William Lister (Assistant at Burnsall – at Rilston)	
1810 – 1811	John Bentham (Assistant at Burnsall – at Rilston)	
1810 – 1832	Richard Withnell (Rector of Burnsall)	
1826 – 1832	John B. Birtwhistle B.A. (Assistant at Burnsall – at Rilstone)	
1832 – 1834	M.A. Catherole (Assistant at Burnsall – at Rilston)	
1832 – 1838	John Baines Graham (Rector of Burnsall)	
1835 – 1836	William Houghton (Assistant at Burnsall – at Rilston)	
1838 – 1839	Gregory Rhodes (Rector of Burnsall)	
1839 – 1875	William Bury M.A. (Rector of Burnsall)	

1855	M. Seymour (Assistant at Burnsall)
1867 – 1869	W. Knaggs (Assistant at Burnsall – at Rilston)
1869 – 1873	Godfrey J. Horner (Assistant at Burnsall – at Rilston)
1874	H.E. Owen ) (Assistants at Burnsall – at Rilston W.H. Strong )

#### RECTORS OF RILSTON ( RYLSTONE)

1876 – 1891	Joseph John Jeckell B.A. (from 21-7-76 - died 21-1-91)
1891 – 1932	Charles Henry Lowe M.A. (from 11-4-91 – retired 1932)
1932 – 1937	Archibald Mackay (retired)
1937 – 1955	E. Lloyd Rees M.A. (retired)
1956 – 1963	John L. Oade A.L.C.D.
1964 – 1974	George B. Fairhurst M.A. (retired)
1974 – 1978	<b>Interregnum</b>
1978 – 1985	Canon Maurice B. Slaughter (as Priest-in-Charge)
1978	Dr. R.A. Keighley ordained Deacon
1985 – 1987	<b>Interregnum</b>
1987 – 1991	Alan Whitworth (retired)
1990	<b>Rylstone becomes United Benefice with Burnsall</b>
1991 – 1992	<b>Interregnum</b>
1992 – 1996	C. David E. Clarke ( appointed to Menston)
1997 - 2003	Canon Chris Hayward (Priest-in-Charge) - (Retired)
1997 – 2005	Chaplain Rev'd. Al Hodge (retired)
2003 – 2004	<b>Interregnum</b>
2004 - 2009	Andy Chrich Rector of Linton and the Upper Wharfedale Cluster, Priest-in-Charge at Rylstone ( To Trumpington 2009)
2007 - 2008	Thomas Wharton - Curate in UW cluster ( to Team Vicar Andover)
2008 -	Kathryn Hammond - Assistant clergy to UW cluster
2008 -	Fiona Jenkins – Chaplain to Upper Wharfedale cluster
2009 -	<b>Interregnum</b>
2009 -	David Macha –Rector of Linton & Upper Wharfedale Cluster – Priest-in- Charge at Rylstone

# CHURCH & CHAPEL

The parish of Burnsall included the townships of Appletreewick, Bordley, Burnsall, Cracoe, Conistone, Hartlington, Hetton & Thorpe.

As was common in the north, particularly in the sparsely populated hill areas, one church served many townships. As was common in Craven the church was not centrally situated, but nearer one corner of the parish, so that inhabitants from Bordley for instance might have to travel eight miles to services.

It seems that one of the de Rillestons founded and built the Chapel at Rilston, near to his Hall. Whitaker states that it may be of the same date as Burnsall as it has similar buttresses. Whitaker also comments that Rilston Chapel (as with Conistone, the other chapel in Burnsall Parish) have no Chaplains or separate endowments and therefore belong to a class unknown to canon law. Part of the fabric was rebuilt in Henry VIII's reign and there is now a sketch of the church as it was in 1797. It had two chantries, the south belonging to Rilston Hall and the north to Bordley Hall. The church suffered two re-buildings in the nineteenth century. The second was paid for by Mr R. Waddilove and the masonry work was carried out by Mr Thomas Wright of Rilston. It is well described in "North Craven Churches" by W.A. Shuffrey (1914).

The Procters also had a small chapel at Bordley Hall (& nothing remains save the name of a small field - Chapel Garth) which they maintained and kept a priest. Geoffrey Procter in his will (1524) endowed the chantry and provided for a priest at the chapel but all would be confiscated at the dissolution of the chantries in Edward VI's time (1549).

Although the inhabitants, being in the parish, had the right to be baptised, buried or married at their parish church of Burnsall, they could also use Rilston Chapel which kept separate registers published in 1895 in 2 volumes by Rev'd C.H. Lowe. They start in 1559 but many marriages were carried out in Burnsall between 1753 - 1796 and there are churchwardens accounts from 1747. The registers are quite informative and often name the farms and give occupations. On one occasion (1651?) the village constable caused to be written into the registers that he had been reprimanded for ill order kept on Cracoe greene on the Sabbath day "wherefor all masters are to looke to their servants and fathers are to looke to their sonnes for keeping of such ill order and that there be not a football throwne on Cracoe greene, but those that do it, to take notice of them". He evidently felt that it was up to the parents to control their sons activities on Sundays.

In 1743(?) Archbishop Herring made a visitation and sent a questionnaire to his clergy. The answers for Burnsall parish said that the Rectors provided for Divine service at Rilston and Coniston once each Sunday. That they had 80 communicants at Rilston at Easter (the whole parish being about 320 families) and that there were about six families of dissenters who were Quakers and that there was a licensed Quaker meeting house wherein a few assembled now and then.

The story of the Quakers goes back to the earliest days of the foundation of the sect. In 1651 George Fox came to Yorkshire (he started preaching in 1647). In 1653 while travelling in Yorkshire and Lancashire he ascended Pendle Hill, from whence he saw places where "a people were to be gathered" and truly many places within sight of Pendle Hill soon had Quaker meetings.

As early as 1652 among his converts were William Watkinson of Scale House, together with his brothers Edward of Bradley and George of Scotton. The three brothers were imprisoned in 1660 for refusing to take the oath. In 1658 at a meeting at Scale House on the twenty fourth day of the fourth month, the term Yearly Meeting was first used, and this is taken to be the first of the Yearly Meetings ever held. After a few provincial meetings the Yearly Meeting was transferred to London. William Watkinson's son lived at Scale House from 1675 onwards but did not follow his father's faith and the connection was broken. (see 'Bradford Antiquary' & 'Society of Friends in Bradford' H.R. Hodgson 1926.)

In 1658, James Conyers of Rilleston sold to the following (as trustees) William Watkinson of Scale House, Thomas Procter of Bordley and Christopher Moorhouse of Hetton - a small piece of land (21 yards long and 18 1/2 yds in breadth "being part of a close called Fox House adjoining a pasture called Rilston Rakes"- "the premises being purchased for the use & behoof of the people of God, to be a meeting place, and a place for burial of their dead from tyme to tyme." The burial place was used thence forward and from the Parish Register records it is apparent that members from further afield were buried in 'Rilston Reakes'. It is unusual that the parson should record the Quaker burials, did he have some sympathy with them.

In April 1713 a meeting house and stable adjoining the burial ground was built and sold to the trustees for £54. Meetings had been held before this house was built, perhaps in a barn. The minute book of the Rilston & Airton women's monthly preparative meeting have survived (Quaker records-Brotherton Library H15). They show that meetings were held alternately at Rilston & Airton. The minutes are not very informative, no discussions were recorded. Their main purpose seems to have been to assure themselves that their poor were adequately provided for, and about seventeen women (in 1699) contributed small sums of money to help.

Janet Tailforth told them she intended removing to Skipton with her son " that he may be taught with a master that is a Friend.

In 1757 parcels of land in Cracoe ( about 4 acres of open field strips) were transferred to the trustees "for the benefit and advantage of poor and necessitous people called Quakers, as reside within the limits of the Quaker Meeting, but this land was sold again in 1779 for £96. By the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century the preparative meetings had been transferred to Airton and in 1813 the meeting hose and burial ground were sold for £96, since when they have been used as a barn, though planning permission has been sought for alteration to a house!

Scale House & Rilston Rakes have been visited by Friends from all over the world as one of the earliest centres of their faith. How pleasant that they should be able to see them still in the unspoilt countryside.