

THE PARISH CHURCH OF

ST. MARY

Walton-on-the-Hill

LIVERPOOL

*A short guide
And history*

1977

******photo of Walton church from the West
Gallery******

Walton Church from the West Gallery

FOREWORD

This Book is a Guide to Walton Parish Church and it tells something of its long history. A good deal of material from earlier Guide Books has been incorporated in this edition. In particular, reference should be made to the book published in 1961, now out of print. That book was written with the help of Mr J M Steane, Headmaster of Kettering High School, and formerly History Master at Alsop High School. Reference should also be made to an earlier handbook written by the late W C Kelly, Vestry Clerk 1925-1950.

It would not have been possible to publish this new edition without the help given by Mr J Gordon Read, County Archivist. In addition to editing the 1961 Guide Book, he has also provided us with some fresh material, particularly in the section "The Incumbents." We are extremely grateful.

B M FLETCHER-JONES
Rector

WALTON PARISH CHURCH 1760

THE EARLY HISTORY OF WALTON

WALTON PARISH CHURCH stands in a commanding position on the low spur of a plateau of the River Alt on the east. This plateau is about 135 feet above sea level, and consists of red hunter sandstone of the Triassic Age, which can be seen in the nearby railway cuttings and also in a number of the older buildings of Walton including the church and the churchyard wall. This provided a relatively dry and sheltered situation for the establishment of a community.

The name Walton is first found in Domesday Book (1086), where it is stated that *Winestan tenebat Waletone. Ibi duae carucatae terrae et tres bovatae valebant octo solidos* (Winestan held Waletone. There are two carucates of land, and three bovates, worth eight shillings.) The name means Tun or settlement of the Britons, and argues a very early origin for Walton, probably of the sixth to seventh century A.D. since it would have received its

name from the advancing Angles who penetrated this part of Lancashire at that time.

The First Church

We do not know when the first church was built in Walton. Almost certainly the site is pre-Conquest. This is suggested by the almost circular shape of the old churchyard. Unmistakable evidence is provided by the Saxon Cross shaft, now to be found in the church in the ambulatory behind the altar. It is six feet in length, tapering slightly towards the top; the ornament shows an interlaced pattern of the vine motif, and may be tenth century in date. This does not prove that a pre-Conquest church stood on the site, as it may well have served to mark an open-air meeting place.

The first mention of the church is again in Domesday Book, where it is said that "a priest at Botelai (Bootle) has one carucate of land (here belonging) to the church of Waltone." We know too that in 1093 the church and the tithes were granted to the monks of the Abbey of St. Peter and St. Paul at Shrewsbury.

The Mother Church of Liverpool

At this time, of course, there was little settlement on the estuary of the Mersey, and the parish of Walton contained, in addition to Liverpool and Walton itself, not only the adjacent townships of Bootle-with-Linacre, Everton, Fazakerley, Kirkdale, Kirkby and West Derby, but also the detached coastal township of Formby. Formby then was larger than the Formby U.D.C area, in as much as it included the whole of Ainsdale, now part of Southport! Many of those living in this large, straggling and unwieldy territory, over 40 square miles in extent, very early sought ways of avoiding travelling so far in order to worship. Chapels of ease existed from the middle

ages, not only in Liverpool but in Kirkby, West Derby and probably Formby, too. Prior to the year 1200 the parish had included the area which later became the separate parish of Sefton, which included Crosby, Litherland, Sefton, Thornton and Aintree. At some time prior to the conquest even Childwall was included. Kirkby, on the other hand, was probably once separate but drawn into it before the Conquest. Walton was indeed a place of some importance ecclesiastically.

As Liverpool grew, the subordination to Walton was felt to be more and more irksome and inconvenient. As early as 1361, during the Black Death, the burgesses of Liverpool were granted a licence to bury their dead in the churchyard of their own chapel of St. Nicholas, rather than bring them all the way up to the Parish Church at Walton.

For the year 1510-12 an account book of William Moore of Bankhall in Kirkdale survives, giving details of payments 'for Lyverpole quarter of dyvers things and labours done in the parishe church of Walton sithyn (since) the new bellis were payde fore.' He was probably acting as Walton Parish Churchwarden for the Liverpool quarter. He was Town Mayor from 1511 probably through to 1513. One Robert Kerver was paid 11s.8d. (Liverpool's share) for work on the 'rode lofte.' One can see here occupational surnames in the making. The Earl of Derby's mason, Robert Rachdale, who built among other important works, Warrington Bridge for the royal visit of 1495, was paid 20s. from time to time. William Moore found himself overspent by £2. No doubt Liverpool folk were reluctant to pay towards the upkeep of an 'out of town' church.

In 1565 the 185 householders of Liverpool were assessed to pay for repairs to Walton Church, and in 1581 they contributed to the cost of three bells. But the various leys or rates were not paid punctually and there are a number of references to sums outstanding – eg. 1599 "Money due to Walton Church XXXIs. 11d." In 1656 the Corporation refused to contribute to the repair of the church, and after protracted litigation a petition to Parliament in 1699 that

Liverpool should become a separate parish was successful. The Corporation's case rested upon the great increase in the number of inhabitants:

"many new streets are built, and still in building; and many Gentlemen's sons of the counties of Lancaster, Yorkshire, Derbyshire, Staffordshire, and North-Wales, are put Apprentices in the Town: And there being but one Chapel, which doth not contain one half of our Inhabitants in the Summer, (upon pretence of going to the Parish-Church, which is Two long Miles, and there being a village in the way) they Drink in the said village; by which, and otherwise, many Youth and sundry Families are ruined: Therefore it is hoped the Bill may pass, being to Promote the Service of God."

With the great growth of population during the last 200 years, many new churches have been built. The Rectory was further divided in 1843, when the Rectory of West Derby was created. The original parish of Walton now comprises nearly 80 parishes, all of which are of course independent, except that of St. Peter, Formby, which is still legally a "Chapel", and whose inhabitants can still claim Walton as their Parish Church. During the early years of the present century there were four Mission Churches in different parts of the parish. Of these only St. Aidan's in Cherry Lane, built in 1909 is still in use.

THE SUCCESSIVE CHURCH BUILDINGS

It appears that the church was rebuilt in 1326. We do not however, know anything about that building, as nothing, as far as we know, remained of the fabric into the 20th Century. The 16th century repairs have already been mentioned. Many alterations were carried out in the 18th century. In 1724 the roofs were renewed. In 1734 the "middle dormant" window on the south side of the church

was removed. In 1742 it was agreed at a vestry that the "south walls and pillars in the middle of the church should be taken down and rebuilt and the north wall be raised." In the same year it was decided that the church "shall be false roofed with lathe and plaster." In 1790 it was recommended that the windows should be refitted with wooden frames in the manner of St. Peter in Liverpool. In 1809 further alterations were necessary owing to the growth of the parish, and the Rector provided £350 to help pay for the rebuilding of the south side of the chancel, the parish continuing to be responsible for the north side. In 1840 the north side of the nave was remodelled and in 1843 the chancel was once again rebuilt.

The Tower had long been an important landmark. In 1768 the Common Council of Liverpool applied to Walton for permission to increase its height: "standing in a proper situation (it) may be made of great use in conducting vessels going in or coming out round the Black rocks." Nothing however, seems to have come of this proposal at the time. But in 1829 the tower was found to be in a "state of dilapidation and a very dangerous condition." It was rebuilt to the design of Mr John Broadbent, and the first stone was laid on 20 October 1829, by the Vicar, Mr Thomas Moss. The architect records that he wished to build a spire, which he thought would be a better landmark for shipping in the Mersey, but was overruled by the vestry. The tower, which is 118 feet in height, was the only part of the building (with the exception of the vestries) to escape destruction in 1941.

Further alterations were made when the interior was completely remodelled in 1887, and in 1911 the Hornby Chapel (now more usually, though inaccurately, known as the Lady Chapel) was added to the south side of the church in memory of Thomas Hornby, the last Vicar of Walton (Vicar 1847-1890)

On the night of 3rd – 4th May 1941, the church was almost entirely destroyed by incendiary bombs. Rebuilding

commenced in 1947, to the design of Lt. Col. Ernest Gee, T.D., F.R.I.B.A., a well known Liverpool architect. Externally the appearance of the building remains the same, and much of the original stone has been used again. The roof is of copper on concrete. Internally the vaulting is of reinforced concrete resting on a steel frame based on the crutch design. The windows and east and west arches are of local red sandstone; the floor of the nave, chancel and sanctuary is of Westmorland greenstone.

GUIDE TO THE CHURCH

The Porch

On the east side of the main (south-west) porch will be found a list of the RECTORS AND VICARS OF WALTON-ON-THE-HILL. The earliest name is that of Stephen (1174) and the list is complete from 1506. (It is printed in the section entitled 'The Incumbents'.)

Many people are puzzled by the fact that Rectors and Vicars held office in Walton at the same time. The Vicarage was ordained in 1326, when Edward II confirmed the grant of the church to Shrewsbury Abbey. The Abbey could have 'sequestered' the Rectory – i.e. kept the tithes and appointed a Vicar to look after the souls of the parishioners. In fact they did not take the first course – probably with the idea of presenting the Rectory to someone whom they wished to favour. The Vicarage was however created, to ensure that the parishioners were cared for in the absence of a resident Rector.

Even the Vicar did not always reside: Dr Richard Richmond (Vicar 1757-1780) was also Bishop of Sodor and Man for the last seven years!

This dual system, so strange to our way of thinking, continued into the nineteenth century. In 1803 an attempt was being made to enforce residence upon non-

resident incumbents. Sir William Heathcote, then patron of the benefice, had just presented his son Samuel to the Rectory. He was advised by counsel to protests to the Bishop of Chester that

'Since the purchase by the Heathcote family, the revenues (of considerable value) of the rectory have been considered as a fund to provide for a younger son... It would be inconvenient and tend very much to break in upon the enjoyments of the family were Mr S Heathcote obliged to reside at so great a distance from Sir William's seat in Hampshire'

He won his point: and the Rector remained free to be non-resident until 1882 when the Vicarage was suppressed, its endowments passing to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, largely for the endowment of the newly-created See of Liverpool.

The Arms above the notice-board on the west side of the porch are those of the Architect of the present building, Lt. Col. Ernest Gee.

The Baptistry

This is situated under the Tower at the western end of the church. It contains the NORMAN FONT, a relic of great interest and importance. It is made of red sandstone, and has a massive circular bowl, round which are six raised panels decorated with crude carvings. These include a representation of the Temptation, in which the serpent coiled round the Tree of Life occupies the centre with Adam and Even on either side,. Another panel shows what may be either a Flight into Egypt or an Entry into Jerusalem, with a nimbed figure seated on an ass preceeded by another on foot; behind the rider is a dove, in front is a cross. Floral decoration divides these panels.

*****PICTURE OF THE FONT*****

There is a somewhat similar but more richly carved font, probably of the same date, in Kirkby church a few miles away. Walton font was removed from the church in 1754, when a new font was purchased at a cost of £2 15s 4d, and is said to have stood near the door of an adjacent public house (The Brown Cow?) until about 1817. It was restored to the church only in 1887. It was broken to pieces when the bells crashed down during the destruction of the church in May 1941, and carefully re-assembled during the restoration by E Carter Preston, a well known local sculptor and designer.

The date of the font is uncertain. It would seem most likely that it dates from Norman times. The style of the carving is Anglo-Saxon. This is not strange. Norman architecture took time to infiltrate the country.

The windows in the Baptistry, designed like all the rest of the glass in the church by E Carter Preston, represent Our Lord blessing children of all races; St John Baptist; and St Nicholas, Patron Saint of children.

The Bells

These are rung from the Tower Room, immediately above the Baptistry. The details are as follows:

	Note	Size	Weight
Treble	A Mr A Jones Warden	1ft 11ins	3cwt 0qr 12lb

	Col E Gee Architect W Kelly Clerk		
2 nd	G Sharp The Rev Canon DN Spafford Rector	1ft 11½ins	3cwt 0qr 19lb
3 rd	F Sharp Peace and Good Neighbourhood	2ft 1in	3cwt 2qr 4lb
4 th	E May the Church of England forever flourish	2ft 2½ins	3cwt 3qr 23lb
5 th	D We were all cast at Gloucester by Abel Rudhall	2ft 4ins	4cwt 1qr 3lb
6 th	C Sharp Alex Langshaw Church Warden Thomas Knowles Sidesman	2ft 5½ins	5cwt 0qr 10lb
7 th	B The Rev Mr Silvester Richmond Rector The Rev Thomas Brookes Vicar	2ft 8½ins	6cwt 2qr 6lb
Tenor	A I to the church the living call And to the grave do summon all	3ft 1½ins	9cwt 2qr 25lb

The original set of six bells, cast in 1736, was badly damaged in the fire of 1941. They were recast by Taylor's of Loughborough in 1949, and bear the original inscriptions. The two smaller bells were added to make a ring of eight.

The provision of three bells for Walton Church is mentioned in the Liverpool Town Books for 1581. In 1736 it was unanimously agreed by the Vestry 'that the old bells should be taken down and a set of six bells of moderate and convenient size should be had instead of them as soon as may be.' The new set were cast by Abel Rudhall at Gloucester and cost £188 3s 9½d; and the Churchwardens had to pay 3s 'for laying timber in ye street of Liverpool' to enable them to reach Walton in safety. Great pride was taken in keeping the bells in order, and the Churchwardens' accounts record constantly recurring expenditure on new bell ropes or 'swine grease for ye bells.'

The ringers themselves expected to be well paid for their exertions. In 1730 we read 'Pd ye ringers on King George's proclamation 11s 0d.' In 1727 'Pd ringers for birthday of Queen Caroline 11s 0d.' A regular tariff is laid down in 1737. twelve shillings for state days, six shillings for extras and New Years Day, forty shillings for Sundays rung all the year round. They are to be rung three times on Sunday, viz. at half an hour past nine in the morning, half an hour past one in the afternoon, and immediately after evening service. The sexton rings at seven o'clock and one o'clock 'All ye year' and receives one pound for his pains. The ringers are to take care of ye bells and liquor, the said liquor to be bought at the Parish Charge.'

Subsequently, attempts were made to curb the enthusiasm of the ringers for observing national events: many eighteenth century battles are exuberantly celebrated which are nowadays considered unimportant in the history books. It is interesting to note that news of the Battle of Trafalgar (21st October 1805) reached Walton on 10 November, and in the accounts is recorded 'Allowd the ringers for ringing Lord Nelson's victory over the French Fleet 1 guinea.'

The Clerk's Chair

This stands at the back of the nave on the south side. It was given in memory of William Carrington Kelly (Clerk, 1925-50), himself a historian of the parish, who with the Rector, Canon D N Spafford, was responsible for saving the Parish Registers and other documents from the blazing church in 1941.

The growing importance of the Clerk, as well as the fall in the value of money, is shown by the increase of his remuneration. In 1638 his years wages were one pound; at the beginning of the eighteenth century they had risen to £2 10s and in 1804 to 12 guineas.

The best known of the Parish Clerks of Walton was John Holt (Clerk 1761-1801), who was also the master of the Grammar School. He was the author of historical, educational and agricultural works, including the Survey of the Agriculture of Lancashire published in 1794. We still possess in the Parish Records his Licences to act as Parish Clerk and as Schoolmaster, granted by the Bishop of Chester. His Survey has recently been reprinted.

The Churchwarden's Staves

These stand at the west end of the nave on either side of the central passage. They serve to emphasise the importance of the laity's position in the Church. We possess the Churchwardens' accounts from 1629 to 1641, 1650 to 1667 and 1723 onwards, and they give a fascinating picture, not only of the life of the village but also of the duties of the churchwardens.

**** picture – The Chancel and Nave from the East ****

The Nave

This is the part of the church where the people gather together for worship, today as in past generations. Some idea has already been given of the many changes in the furnishing of the nave: in the present church it is aisleless, and contains 38 pews of light oak.

The seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth century churches had galleries and many private pews, which were bought outright (sums of up to £200 are quoted in a document of 1809), and the titles to these caused great trouble when alterations were carried out. Mr Rose, in 1725, for instance, complained that his seat 'which his family have enjoyed without disturbance for above a hundred years' suffered by the late alterations to the church fabric. And in 1853 there was another great dispute concerning pew owners whose rights had been allegedly infringed during the changes earlier that century. (It is not clear why they did not apply before.)

The Windows of the Nave are of plain hand made glass, with a medallion of stained glass in the upper part of each, into which fragments of the original windows have been incorporated. The designs are as follows, in each case starting from the west end.

South Side

*SM Monogram and Crown
Vine
3 Fishes (Symbol of the Trinity)
HIS
The Lamb of God
*SM Monogram and Crown
*Crown with seven stars
*2 Turtle-Doves in Cage (Purification)
*SM Monogram and Crown
*The Burning Bush
*Star and Waves
*Crown

North Side

*SM Monogram and Crown
The Nails
The Spear and Mallet
The Crown of Thorns
*Crown
St Peter (Keys)
St Paul (Sword)
*Crown
Chalice and Paten
Gloria in Excelsis Deo
Cross, Hammer and Pincers
*SM Monogram and Crown
Dove (the Holy Spirit)
St Matthew (a Man)

*Chalice and Paten	St Mark (a Lion)
*Star and Waves	St Luke (a Calf)
*Gate and Lilies	St John (an Eagle)
*SM Monogram and Crown	Dove (the Holy Spirit)

- **These are symbols or monograms of Our Lady, to whom the church is dedicated.**

The memorial inscriptions underneath the window sills commemorate those whose memorials were on the walls of the church before its destruction in 1941, and whose bodies were removed from the vaults under the floor.

The Lectern on the south side of the chancel step is of stone, and takes the traditional form of an eagle.

References to the books of the church in the old records include the information that in the seventeenth century the works of Bishop Jewel were kept chained to the desk, and the church also possessed a book of Homilies in addition to the Books of Common Prayer bought for eight shillings from Wigan. The Bible was often in need of repair.

The Pulpit, of very ample proportions, is also of stone. The eighteenth century pulpit stood in the centre of the church until the alterations of 1887. It had been purchased in 1759, and transport ('to carting the pulpit from West Derby and Drink for the men') cost 10s. It was 'cleansed' and the soundboard was raised in 1789.

The Consecration Cross will be found cut into the east end of the north wall of the nave.

Use of the Church during the Civil War

In 1651 it cannot have been possible for the church to be used for worship. For a while, it was used to house

prisoners taken at the battle of Worcester, who the Churchwardens complained to the Justices of the Peace, 'have there continued a month and five weeks, and now latelie some part of them are removed and yet remaineth five and fiftie in the said church, which said prisoners have broken the formes and glasse windows belonging to the said church and have so defaced defiled and abused same, that itt is conceived by some workmen of good experience who have viewed the said Church that XX li will not putt itt into soe good repaire as itt was at the coming of the prisoners thereto. Nowe, your petitioners humble desire is the premises considered that your worships would be pleased to remove the prisoners from thence and to charge the hundred of West Derby or such parte thereof as your worships shall think fitt, with some reasonable taxe, for the reparation of the said Church.'

But the petition was not granted, and the parish had to pay up and clean up!

The Chapel

This was the most recent addition to the church, having been built in 1911 as a memorial to Thomas Hornby, the last Vicar of Walton. Its most striking characteristics today are the iron screen along its north and west sides, and the reredos, a copy of the Deposition by Fra Angelico, of which the original, painted in 1421, is in the Museum of St Mark in Florence. It came from the Wigan collection of the late Earl of Crawford and Balcarres.

The chapel is used for weekday services, in which we in Walton join in the Church's daily round of prayer and praise.

**** picture of the Lady Chapel ****

The Chancel

A conspicuous feature of the chancel is its highly polished floor. It is to most people a surprise to learn that it is made of the same stone as the floor of the rest of the church, Westmorland greenstone.

The stalls for clergy and choir are of the same light oak as the pews in the nave. Along the front of the choir stalls is incised a series of scenes from the life of Our Lord:

South Side

Nativity
Flight into Egypt
Sitting among the Doctors
Baptism
Marriage at Cana
Healing the Lame

Walking on the Water
Blessing the Children
Raising Jairus' Daughter

North Side

Transfiguration
Preaching from the Boat
Five Loaves and Two Fishes
Blind Bartimaeus
Miraculous Shoal of Fishes
Triumphal Entry into
Jerusalem
Last Supper
Empty Tomb
Ascension

The Organ Console is placed in the middle of the back row of the choir stalls on the north side. The pipes are behind grilles high up on either side of the sanctuary – the Great and Pedal organs on the north side of the sanctuary – the Great and Pedal organs on the north side, the Swell organ on the south. The Organ was built by Messrs Rushworth and Dreaper of Liverpool in 1953.

There are many references in the records to the musicians, instrumentalists, organists and singers. Prior to the 1887 alterations, the choir had its place (as was usual) in a gallery, probably at the west end of the nave. It was decided in 1744 'that a new gallery shall be built at the expense of the parish for ye singers.' It seems that singers had to be brought in from neighbouring townships to supplement the Walton singers: Derby and Formby singers were entertained frequently. This did not always pass: in 1767 it was decided 'that no treat to any strange

singers shall be allowed.' Instead it was decided in 1770 to employ 'a singing master to instruct the society of singers' at a salary of £9, and £1 11s 8d was spent on psalm books.

Two years later the vestry comments favourably on the singers' "proper behaviour the last year, and improvement in their singing') and votes to confirm their grant 'in order to complete their present instructions.'" By the end of 1774 they were able to dispense with the services of the singing master. And in 1778 they were beginning to blossom further into music which was too much for the vestry: 'it is recommended and desired by most of the Congregation that the Society would sing Plain Psalm Tunes only in the time of Divine Service.'

The accompaniment was provided by an orchestra, of which the bassoon and bass viol players were paid a guinea a year salary in the 1770s. an organ was bought by public subscription in 1809, and an organist was appointed whose post was renewed annually, at a salary of £10, the cost being defrayed by voluntary subscription. The organ was, of course, pumped by hand – the boy who blew the organ was paid 6d a week in 1843.

Women soloists appear: e.g. 1812 "paid Elizabeth Wilson for singing from 12th December 1812 to 18th April 1813 £2 18s 2d." The singers do not always seem to have been voluntarily regular in their attendance: 1813 December 26th "By Cash paid Richd. Sherwood for drink had by the singers to encourage them to meet 10s 6d."

A new organ was installed in 1889, and a great Bazaar was held in aid of the Organ Fund: its attractions included Waxworks which brought in £5 0s 3d., Old English Sports (£8 11s 10½d.) and a weighing machine (£1 2s 11d.)

The Sanctuary

Dominating the east end of the church is the striking window, designed by E Carter Preston. In the centre is a Nativity scene, with the Crucifixion on the left and the

Ascension on the right. The Altar Cross and Candlesticks are of bronze, and the head of the Processional Cross is of the same metal and style. The arms on either side of the sanctuary are as follows (reading from west to east):

North side: Alpha and Omega; Diocese of Liverpool; HIS

South side: Diocese of Chester; Diocese of York; Diocese of Lichfield.

Walton is now in the Diocese of Liverpool and Province of York; formerly it was in the Diocese of Lichfield (until 1541) and Chester (1541-1880.)

References to the Altar furnishings etc, in the 17th century Churchwardens' accounts reflect the kaleidoscopic religious changes of those years.

1634: "Payde unto John Chantrell for the rayle [a communion rail] and for cutting the communion table shorter IIIIs." This was one of the liturgical changes dictated during Archbishop Laud's regime, and with the Puritan reaction seven years later – 1641: "item spent att takeing down the rayles and removing the communion table VIIIs. Item spent att takeing down the glasses VIIS." (here the stained glass is probably referred to.) The tables are turned in earnest at the restoration: 1663 "Spent upon Henry Webster when he came to make the style and the communion table rayles Is." In 1665 ornate hangings for the communion table involving six and a half yards of kersey at 3s 4d a yard and 18 yards of "Silke" fringes for the communion table cloth are noted.

The Communion Plate in use at present was given to the church in 1901 on the demolition of St George's Church, Liverpool, which stood where the Queen Victoria monument is now situated. It was made in 1749 at a cost of £240 13s 6d by Humphrey Payne, a London goldsmith, and consists of eight pieces; 2 Chalices, 2 Patens, 2 Flagons, 1 Salver and 1 Almsdish. It is of silver, fire gilt,

and the repousse work on the large pieces is particularly fine.

The silver plate, consisting of "a flagon, chalice and two bread plates, not exceeding 123 ounces" which were bought in 1781 at a cost of £42 3s 6d, were given to the Church of St Luke the Evangelist in Goodison Road, Walton.

The Ambulatory

This is a passage running right round the north east, and south sides of the chancel and sanctuary. Immediately behind the Altar will be found the Churchyard Cross, which has already been described. This was found buried beneath the east wall of the church during the rebuilding, and was re-erected in its present position to protect it from damage. Unfortunately it was broken into two pieces when being disinterred, but otherwise it is in an excellent state of preservation, lacking only a base and a cross-piece. There seems to be no evidence that the hollowed-out block of sandstone in the churchyard, near the door of the chapel, ever formed the base of the cross.

The Vestries

These are situated at the south-east corner of the church. In the larger of the two, used as a Choir Vestry, is a large safe dated 1811, in which are kept the Registers of Baptisms, Marriages and Burials from 1586 to the present day.

The Registers from 1586 to 1743 have been transcribed and published as volumes 5 and 91 of the Lancashire Parish Register Society. One of the Registers; that of Burials from 1790 to 1812, is interesting in that it gives the cause of death in each case, as many registers do for that period.

The Churchyard

Reference has already been made to the almost circular nature of the original Churchyard. By 1845 this was full, and further pieces of land were bought to supplement it. The last available space was used in 1958, and it is now of course not possible to extend it further.

Extensive alterations to the central part of the churchyard were made in 1973, when this area was landscaped.

Several of the tombstones have interesting inscriptions, like that of George Miles Smith the Blacksmith, who died 11 November 1719:

My Sledge and Hammer lye reclined,
My Bellows also lost their Wind,
My Fires extinct, My Forge decayed,
My Vice I'th'Dust My Friends have layd,
My Coals are spent, My Irons gone,
My Nails are drove, My Work is done.

The oldest stone commemorates William Fazakerley of Kirkby, and is dated 1600. the longest lived person commemorated is Hannah Wall of West Derby, "who departed this life on 2 august 1938, at the extraordinary age of 111 years."

The Grammar School

This stands in the corner of the Churchyard, just inside the gate leading from the Black Horse. There is some doubt as to the date of its foundation: there was a Grammar School and Schoolmaster at Walton in 1548; but it seems probably that the present Grammar School was founded in 1613 when "a gift of £120 was given by Thomas Harrison, late of Walton, to be used for the maintenance of a free school to be continued in Walton forever." The roof timbers of the building are specially fine.

The Schoolmaster's duties are thus defined in 1755: he is to "instruct the children of the said school in English, writing and Merchants' Accounts, also the Latin and Grecian tongue." The only mentions of books for the school are in February 1733: "Pd for a new dictionary for the school as per bill 17s 0d." and October 1748: "Pd for two books for concerning dystemper'd cattle 1s 4d." The school building was rough, floors being made of clay. There were rushes on the floor of the school house. In 1735 the churchwardens partitioned and altered one room and were told to "Build a little house for ye convenience of ye said school." Later on a schoolmaster was elected who had too large a family and was allowed to live elsewhere and to let the school house rooms to a tenant.

In 1808 the hours of attendance of the schoolmaster are laid down: "from half past eight to a quarter before twelve o'clock in the forenoon and from half past one to five o'clock in the afternoon." The master is allowed to receive "such a number of out day scholars also boarders (not exceeding six in number) as shall not be detrimental to the interest of parish scholars. He is entitled to "claim quarterly the sum of five shillings from such scholars as learn arithmetic and two shillings from such scholars as learn writing."

In 1843 a thorough enquiry into the organisation of the school was instituted with special emphasis on rendering "its course of instructions more suitable to the exigencies of the present time." The influence of the growing interest in religious education in the Church is seen in the additions to the curriculum. "Lessons of the day in the Old and New Testament and the Church Catechism" are added and it is enjoined that "the business of each day be opened and closed with prayer, a form of which will be prescribed by the clergy of the Parish Church." There is also a demand that "the schoolmaster shall use his best endeavour to prevent the children from using the churchyard as a common playground."

A school for girls and infants in Heathcote Road (now St Mary's Hall) was opened in 1847; and a new boys' school was built next to it in 1871, the old Grammar School building having become too small.

A new and larger school for boys and girls was provided in 1893 in Bedford Road, and the boys' school was converted into an infant school. These schools still remain as the direct successors of the 17th century Free Grammar School. The old building is now used for parish purposes.

St Mary's Hall was extensively renovated and extended in 1968 and it now houses Walton Youth Centre. In addition to youth activities, this building serves the needs of a wide variety of community activities.

THE INCUMBENTS

The 'TWO PARSONS' of Walton were an accepted part of the local scene.

The following table of rectors and vicars is taken from the Victoria History of the County Palatine of Lancashire, published in 1907.

	Rectors		Vicars
1192	Stephen		
c1206	Robert of Walton		
-	William, son of Robert		
1240	William of Walton		
1272	Robert		
1311	Thomas of Chorleton		
1319	Ralph of Shrewsbury	1327	John of Walton
1328	Simon of Clopton	1329	Thomas of Knighton
c1331	Thomas of Clopton	1349	John of Eccleshall
1349	John of Bulkington	1350	John of Barre
		1351	Richard of Sutton
1356	Richard of Winwick	1364	William of the Hall
		c1391-4	Roger Winter
		1405	John of Woolaton
1409	Richard of Stanley	1418	John Ironmonger

1435	Ralph of Stanley	-	Thomas Blackburne
(or 1427)			
		1455	William Whittingham
1459	Thomas Fairclough		
1471	John Molyneux (founded the Chantry)	1472	William Bolton
1485	James Stanley		
1506	Richard Dudley	1511	Ralph Radcliffe
1528	Edward Molyneux	1528	Thomas Norris
1536	Richard Gwent		
1543	Anthony Molineux	1550	Thomas Allen
1557	Anthony Molineux (godson of Preceding)	1562	John Finch
1565	Alexander Molyneux	1565	Robert Halsall
		1572	William Hesketh
1575	William Haworth		
1576	Alexander Molyneux	1586	Peter Hey
		1624	Nevil Kay
1631	Thomas Legh		
1639	Andrew Clare		
c1645	William Ward	1654	Henry Finch
1655	Robert Eaton		
1660	John Heywood	1663	John Walton
		1665	Thomas Marsden
1671	Thomas Pawlett		
1690	Richard Richmond	1720	Silvester Richmond
1722	Silvester Richmond (previously vicar)	1722	Thomas Brooke
		1757	Richard Richmond
1768	Henry Heathcote	1780	Miles Atkinson
		1788	Henry Heathcote
1803	Samuel Heathcote	1816	Thomas Moss
		1844	Thomas Gerard Leigh
1847	Thomas Gerard Leigh (previously vicar)	1847	Thomas Hornby
1868	Richard Leigh		
1884	James Gerard Leigh		
1906	George Hardwicke Spooner		
1921	William Ord Hunter Rodwell		
1936	Douglas Norman Spafford		
1955	Kenneth John Fraser Skelton		
1962	Basil Mills Fletcher-Jones		

None of the early incumbents can be said to be really famous by today's standards. A number, however, have some claim to our interest. William, son of Robert, was one of King John's clerks, and may have been given the rectory soon after King John granted Liverpool its first charter. William of Walton was married. Married clergy were fairly widespread in northern Europe up till this time. Ralph of Shrewsbury rose to the Chancellorship of Oxford University and the Bishopric of Bath and Wells. Richard of Winwick was not even ordained deacon till 1361. He belonged to a well-established dynasty of clerics. In 1364 he took a trip to the Court of the Pope, then at Avignon and was robbed and held to ransom on the return journey. Papal intervention secured the release of Richard and his party. He became a canon of Lincoln and was buried in the Cathedral.

We know rather too much about James Stanley, also Warden of Manchester College, and from 1506 Bishop of Ely and sixth son of the first Earl of Derby, stepbrother of Henry VII. He was responsible for the installation of the choir stalls in Manchester Cathedral, c.1505-10, 'the finest in the North of England', says Professor Pevsner. He lies beneath a somewhat mutilated memorial brass in the same Cathedral. He was well known for lavish living and a successful illegitimate progeny. His elder son was knighted for his gallantry at Flodden Field in 1513. "Little priests metal was in him" said the 16th century ballad-singer. However, as a public figure, he was rather successful. He played a large part in the establishment of several Cambridge colleges. Who knows, if he had belonged to an order of married clergy, he might have had an unblemished character as well?

The various members of the Molyneux family who held the rectory were often rectors of Sefton as well. Anthony Molyneux II was an adherent of pre-Reformation doctrines and went beyond the seas for his opinion's sake. Alexander Molyneux, a younger son of Sir Richard Molyneux, builder of the oldest surviving part of Croxteth Hall, took office very young, holding the rectory for 66

years. In 1591, he was said to be unlearned and not used to say service or administer sacraments. In 1575 the Queen intervened and issued a mandate presenting William Haworth, "preacher of the word mandate presenting William Haworth, "preacher of the word of God." Despite all this, Rector Molyneux proved his rights and stayed on! At his death, he bequeathed his theology library to his successors.

Dr Clare was a staunch Royalist. Expelled from his rectory by the Parliament, he went abroad. John Evelyn, the diarist, records hearing him preach in Paris in 1651, "the first Worcester." The Vicar, however, Neville Kay, was a Parliament man and was buried in Walton in 1654. after Dr Clare's deposition, a Parliamentarian Rector was installed.

With the restoration of Charles II in 1660, it was "all change" again. Not all at once though. The Rector, Robert Eaton, had to leave, but the Vicar, Henry Finch, a Presbyterian from Standish, was a supporter of the "new Royalists" who rose against Cromwell in 1659. Thus he was initially undisturbed by the Restoration. His convictions were too strong for the Act of Uniformity, however, and he was ejected in 1662, and became a well-known preacher in the Manchester area. A gracious and charitable man, he was one of a generation of men of which Richard Baxter is the best known, who were able to see other points of view than their own, and only sought personal liberty of conscience.

Fortunately, some original letters of Thomas Marsden survive, at the home of Lord Kenyon, Gredington Hall, near Whitchurch, in Shropshire. He had a long stint from 1665 to 1720 and lived through uncertain times. He appears to have been astute in keeping on the right side of the powers that were.

Here is an example of his letters:

1679, April 28th, Walton. – "The bearer hereof, Thomas Stanynought, is the best yeoman in the towne hee lives in

and is lately come from Popery to Communion. He hath the reputation of a very honest man and is heartily pleased with our religion. At his request, I inform you that hee is ready to take the Oathes as hee hath taken the Sacrament with us. I beg also to acquaint you that a popish beggar-woman (who hath no good reputation among us in any kind) hath informed my Lord Molineux that the said bearer T.M. (sic) hath lately shot one of his dear, whereupon he is bound to the Sessions. Now, my request is that because hee cannot have his things ready on Monday, his prosecutor may not bee suffered to bring the businesses on till Tuesday. This wee verily believe is a dry blow given him because he hath deserted the Romane way."

In another letter, he hoped that the Earl of Derby would show himself "zealous both for Church and State, against dissenters and republicans, and particularly against the clan." He appears to have been very active in County politics, at least behind the scenes. Yet he fraternized happily with Nicholas Blundell, the Catholic Squire of Little Crosby. He was appointed a King's Preacher in 1690. It is sad that his gravestone has been destroyed. It bore this inscription:-

"Here lies the body of Thomas Marsden
About 55 years Vicar of this Parish,
One of the King's Preachers of this County,
And often member of Convocation for Diocese of Chester
Great he was an happy genius,
Hard study, Orthodox Faith and Heroic Piety,
Much Learning and long experience could make him
He was a neat linguist,
A polite Scholar,
A Profound Divine,
A Good Disputant,
And a nice Casuist,
Geneva felt him and was afraid,
And Rome trembled at his pen."

One or two letters survive of Richard Richmond, his Rector from 1690, too in the same collection. He appears to have been similarly minded to the Vicar, only less

energetic. From now till 1780, Walton was tied up with the Richmond family.

From 1722, Thomas Brooke, son of Sir Thomas Brooke, of Norton Priory, now part of Runcorn New Town, was the Vicar. We have a fine sketch of him from Goronwy Owen, the Welsh poet who was his curate from 1753 to 1755, and is probably the best known of all Walton's clergy:-

"I never heard a more sincere preacher or a more convincing story teller. Though clumsy and untidy, he is a very strong man, with massive flanks. He is indeed a mountain of a man, and has the face of a lion. He is accustomed to chew tobacco leaves, allowing, to the disgust of onlookers, two streams of juice to run down his chin. I felt discomfort at having to walk beside so massive a form, for I resembled a small boat at the side of a large vessel."

From Squire Blundell's journal, we also learn that he enjoyed bowls and, on occasions, watching a cock fight!

More work must have gone to the curate when Richard Richmond II was Vicar, He kept the emoluments of the Vicarage when he became Bishop of Sodor and Man, on account of the influence of the Duke of Athol, (to whom he was Chaplain), who was "Lord of Man." He was known for his "unbending haughtiness" as Bishop. He lived most of the time away from his duties, in great extravagance, and is said to have died, insolvent, in London!

The 19th Century produced characters, too.

Regarding 'the Rev.Mr.Moss' it is impossible to do better than quote from the vivid and gossiping reminiscences of J.Aspinall entitled *Liverpool a Few Years Since*:-

His share of the "drum ecclesiastic" was decidedly the drum *stick*. But, although a very moderate performer in the pulpit, he had a very good standing in society, and was very much liked in his own "set". Not over witty himself, never was man the cause of so much wit in others, and often at his own expense. He was known in his own circle as "Old England", because "he expected

every man to do his duty", that is, he never met a brother clergyman by any chance without seizing upon him, and asking him if he could do his duty on the next Sunday. In allusion to his convivial qualities and bad preaching, somebody once said of him that "he was better in the bottle than in the wood." This gave him such dreadful offence that he positively consulted his lawyer on the subject of prosecuting the impious blasphemer for a libel. The answer to his enquiry was a hearty laugh on the part of the solicitor himself, with an intimation that he would be laughed out of court also, amidst a shower of jokes about the poet's description of the Oxonians of that day.

"Steeped in old prejudice and older port," and be poked with all sorts of fun about canting, recanting, and decanting. The decanter triumphed, although it was a strong allusion to the original offending joke, and the idea of a prosecution was abandoned.

Mr Moss had an intense horror of all sorts of innovations, and in the case of the first railway, that between Manchester and Liverpool, this feeling was greatly increased by the fact of his being a large share-holder in a certain canal which might be affected by its success. He was in a fever of excitement, and almost raved whenever the subject was mentioned in company. He long clung to the notion that that accomplishment of the line was impossible and fabulous." He magnified every difficulty, dwelt upon every obstacle, and concluded every harangue on the question with the triumphant exclamation, "But, never mind, they cannot do it; Chat Moss will stop it; Chat Moss will stop it." This was said in allusion to that great boggy waste, so called, which for so long a time did really battle with and baffle the skill and efforts of the engineers. On one occasion, when our friend had been holding forth in his usual strain, and finished with a look of defiance at all around him, "*Chat Moss will stop it,*" Mr Thomas Crowther who was one of the party, quietly answered, "Depend upon it, your chat, Moss, will not stop it."

The various members of the Leigh family, three of whom were rectors of Walton, were all descendants of a remarkable self-made man, John Leigh, an attorney who, with uncanny foresight bought up much of the land in and around Liverpool which was destined to rise fastest in value. This enabled his heirs to leave the district altogether and reside in rural Bedfordshire. He bought up the rectory of Walton, too. Any descendants of his with cultural pretensions, which then meant "the church" (one of the few professions for a gentleman, the other three being the army, the navy and, at a pinch, the law), were thus certain of immunity from penury, to say the least, the living being worth, in 1884, £3000 per annum at the very lowest conjectation.

The Rev. James Gerard Leigh, who after leaving Walton, became rector of Halsall and died in 1921, was described as "one of the last of the old generation of clergy whose refinement, courtesy, moderation and quiet devotion have left their mark on the church of England. He was the pattern of a Christian English gentleman". He clearly took his local responsibilities very seriously even though till 1890 there still was a vicar, too. His first Merseyside cure was as vicar of Maghull, from 1869 till 1884. During his years at Walton, from 1884 to 1906, the population of the parish doubled, thus involving, for a rector of whom it was said "he gave his people the best, unstintedly and unremittingly", labours which told permanently upon his health. The Rev. J.W. Tyrer, one of his curates, wrote as follows of him: - he was a devoted clergyman. He never shrank from any duty, however disagreeable or difficult it might be. I used to marvel at the calm way in which he would undertake to carry out schemes that involved great mental and physical labour, including the collection of large sums of money, because he felt them needful for the welfare of his parish. There are, I should fancy, few clergymen who have left behind them four such visible memorials of their work as the Rev. J. G. Leigh has done :- the new church at Maghull, the restored church at Walton, the Walton boys' and girls' church day schools and the new church of St. Luke, Walton. It may be said of

him in truth that "he rests from his labours and his works do follow him".

Meanwhile in 1890, the last vicar of Walton died, the rev. Thomas hornby, in his ninetieth year, having been there since 1847. He preached his last sermon shortly before his eighty-ninth birthday, and was engaged in pastoral ministrations up to the month before his death. "In him the poor, the afflicted and the bereaved found a true and sympathetic friend", said the Liverpool daily post. He was assisted in his work by four daughters, one of whom was an associate of Florence nightingale. "He was a low churchman who took an interest in all matters affecting the public weal and his sermons were well up to date. He was a warm adherent of Mr. Gladstone until the latter became afflicted with the home rule mania", according to the Liverpool courier.

So ended an era. In 1895, the city of Liverpool absorbed Walton. No longer a rich semi-rural parish keeping two parsons, one of whom prior to 1847 often did not reside locally, and thus suitable for placing gentlemen's younger sons. But it is reassuring to know that the last representatives of the old order passed on in high esteem. In the venerable G.H. Spooner, at Walton from 1906-1921, archdeacon of Warrington 1906-1916, and of Liverpool 1916-1933, a most able and active parish and diocesan worker was found. Involved heavily in education and Sunday school work, holding many high offices in these connections, he also wrote a number of books, pamphlets and hymns.

In more recent times, the rt. Rev. Kenneth Skelton, rector from 1955-62, has achieved distinction. Academically brilliant, a double first, he became bishop of Matabeleland from 1962-70, and assistant bishop of Durham, 1970-75. in 1975 he became bishop of Lichfield, the diocese in which, prior to the creation of the diocese of Chester in 1541, Walton lay. He has been awarded the C.B.E.

THE CHURCHWARDENS

The churchwardens (one until 1831, two thereafter) were elected from each of the townships of the parish in turn for one year at the vestry meeting on Easter Tuesday. At

the same meeting the vestry would decide on the amount of the church rate or levy, depending on the probable expenditure. The churchwarden was responsible for the upkeep of the church:

1632: "paid to the glazier for his last great wynde for repairing the glass window VII d."

1633: "Item paid to John Syan for timber toward the making of the church style VIII d."

"Item. For seven pound of leader to laye the gudgeons in the wall and carrying to church XVI d."

Churchwardens had much travelling, and even more paper work to do, or rather to supervise for usually they found an amanuensis for writing the accounts. They had to make presentments to the assizes, to attend the quarter sessions and the dean's court and to meet the high constables at Prescot and childwall, again to make presentments. Curious returns they had to make included "the names of ye communicants" (to check on roman catholic recusants), the names of recusants, and in 1654 "a list of the poor and particularizing ye important apprentices and such as were able to work". "at ye rush bearing in seeing who brought rushes and who made default VIII d.", also needed the spying eye of the churchwarden.

Eradication of vermin was also a duty of the churchwarden:

1724: for three fox heads to lord Darby man 3s.

1735: the churchwardens should pay for every dozen of sparrows that are taken and brought to him three pence and after ye same pay for a greater or less contribution and for every magpie one halfpenny.

1743, June 10th: also every person who brings the head of a bullfinch shall be paid an halfpenny by the churchwarden and so on for any quantity.

They did not, however, always consider such expenditure justified:

1730: unanimously agreed that the churchwardens shall not, at the charge of the parish, allow any money for foxes heads it being esteemed by the parishioners then present as a gross cheat and imposition upon the parish.

They were also responsible for travellers and unwanted vagrants, who tended to be pushed out into another parish:

1651: also paid for an order to clear the parish of an old blind man that was due in the old churchwarden's time 2s. 4d.

1724: paid to a passenger that had lost his shirt 6d.
Given a passenger going from Whitehaven to Bristol 6d.

1726: given a man with a petition that had a loss by fire 6d.

1730: given to two men with pass sufferers by an inundation 2s. 0d.

1735: given two poor passengers who had been slaves at turkey 2s. 0d.

1743: to several distressed seamen 2s. 0d.

1731: given to a Jew turned Christian 5s. 0d.

Among other curious expenditure the churchwarden was responsible for providing the uniform of the constable:

1790, Jan. 12th: paid Mr. Thompson for a laced hat for the constable #1 5s.

At the other end of the scale old Bentley the dog whipper is provided with clothes:

1746, aug.3rd: Bentley's pumps 4s. 6d.

Stockings for Bentley 1s. 6d.

Getting rid of noisy dogs who wandered into the church after their masters needed numerous whips bought for the dog whipper:

1724: paid for whipping and for brooms 7s. 0d.

As there was no effective police system the churchwardens were also responsible for preventing and detecting crime. A sum of #41 16s. 0d. was expended on catching and trying "jno pessinn who was condemned at Lancaster upon Wednesday the 26th day of March 1746 for robbing the church". In 1769 it was decided that "if any felony or misdemeanour be committed within this parish the churchwarden for the time being shall endeavour by proposing what he may think adequate rewards to bring the offenders to justice and also all the moneys incurred for carrying out prosecutions against such offenders be carried on and supported at the joint expense of the

parish" . for less serious offences there was the summary punishment of the stocks.

The duties of today's churchwardens are certainly less arduous but also less varied and interesting!

THE CHURCH TODAY

This book is a guide to a building standing at the centre of a densely populated parish. The church witnesses to the presence of God in our community, and it provides the opportunity for worship and prayer. Day by day the church's round of prayer and praise is offered, and members of God's family can come to receive the Body and Blood of Christ in Holy Communion. Children are baptised at the ancient font, couples are married at the Chancel Step.

The church stands at the centre of the community and it is there to serve the community in this day and age, just as it has done for the last 1,000 years or more. The Sunday school and the day school, the various organisations for young and old, the youth centre, are some of the ways through which that service is rendered today.

The building itself is modern, but it retains many traces of its long history. Through its worship and through its service to the community the church witnesses to the reality of the presence of God in the world today, and at the same time it draws on the rich treasure of the past.

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