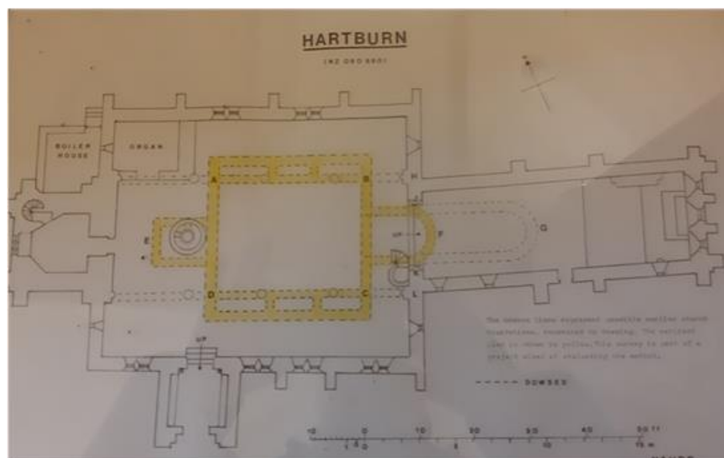
A tour of the highlights of St Andrew's Church, Hartburn, Northumberland

Prepared by Dr PW Stott, organist at St Andrew's, September 2024, with acknowledgement to Canon 'Ferg' Donnelly MA (vicar of Hartburn 1965 to 1983)

Introduction

The first written record of St Andrew's relates to a signature of rector *Ostredus* of Hartburn on a document from the reign of Henry I (1100 – 1135) but the church is older than that. It originated in Anglo-Saxon times, before 1066 and over 1,000 years ago – but we do not know precisely when.

It is very hard to see anything clearly of the pre-Conquest church, but an attempt has been made to discover the original foundations using dowsing.



The possible outline of an earlier church, identified by dowsing

At around the time of the Norman Conquest, St Andrew's was expanded as an outpost for the monks of Tynemouth Priory, which was re-founded by *Waltheof,* the last Anglo-Saxon Earl of Northumbria, in 1074; 200 years after it had been sacked by a Viking raid. St Andrew's was either a part of *Waltheof's* original gift to Tynemouth, somewhere between 1074 and 1076 or, at the latest, was part of significant gifts given to the Priory by *Robert de Mowbray* (a Norman and the final holder of the Earldom of Northumbria) in 1095. The church as we now see it was founded at some point in the thirty years after the Battle of Hastings and (give or take 20 years):

- Around the same time as the founding of Durham cathedral in 1093.
- 275 years before the Black Death killed an estimated 40% to 60% of England's population;
- 300 years before the Wars of the Roses and 450 years before the English Civil War;
- over 400 years before Columbus sailed to the New World;
- 450 years before William Tyndale's first translation of the Bible into English and 540 years before the publication of the King James version that made the Word accessible to ordinary people for the first time (for its first ½ millennium, St Andrew's would have heard only Latin);
- almost 500 years before Henry VIII fell out with the Pope, creating the Church of England (for its first ½ millennium, St Andrew's was part of the Church of Rome);

- 530 years before the accession to the English throne of James Stuart in 1603, leading to the demise of the hostile border with Scotland and, with it, the power of the border clans (the 'Reivers');
- 764 years before Queen Victoria's coronation and almost 950 years before the coronation of King Charles III.

St Andrew's has witnessed a lot of history!

The church is larger and grander than might be expected for a parish church serving a very small village. Part of the reason for this is that it was the monastic centre of a network of churches whose job was to collect *tithes* and donations to support the monks of Tynemouth. The church owned significant lands up to the dissolution of the monasteries in 1539, when they were sold to become parts of local estates. The grandeur is also the result of the patronage and generosity of a network of wealthy families in the Hartburn area. The names of the benefactors since the 18th Century are recorded in numerous memorials around the church (particularly Cookson, Straker, Bradford-Atkinson and Trevelyan).

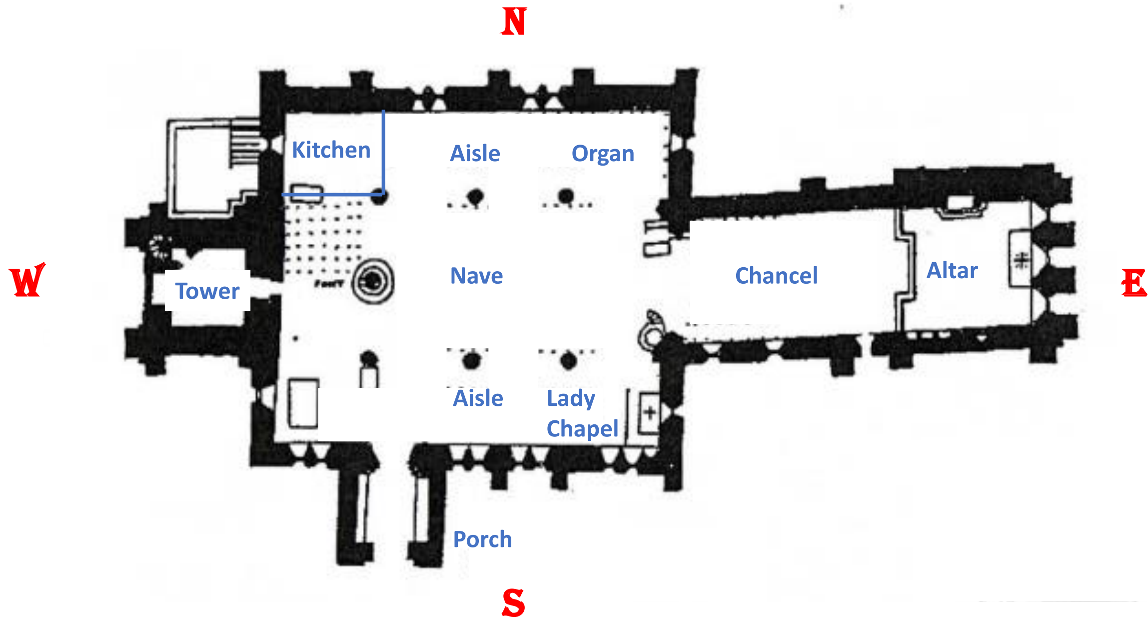
This is Waltheof, the last Anglo-Saxon Earl of Northumbria who was executed for rebelling against the Conqueror in 1076 (despite having married William's niece). His link to Hartburn is through his re-founding of Tynemouth Priory in 1074. This effigy is in Crowland Abbey in Lincolnshire, where he was buried following his beheading.

The long history has left some fascinating objects. This leaflet selects some that may be interesting to a modern visitor and a tour is proposed that might last about 1/2 hour. It is well worth making the journey. A more detailed description of some of the fascinating history (the reputed 'witch', Meg of Meldon, the Chantries, the Knights Templar and the Bradford-Atkinson memorials) is included on the Church's web site.

Orientation

Look at the plan below. Almost all churches have the altar at the Eastern end. The church runs approximately E-W, with the tower at the W end and with the porch on the South side. The main body of the church between the arches is referred to as the *nave*, with two *aisles* outside the arches, N and S of the *nave*. The Eastern end of the church, up the steps from the nave, is referred to as the *chancel*, containing the altar and the choir. The area behind the altar rail is referred to as the *sanctuary*.

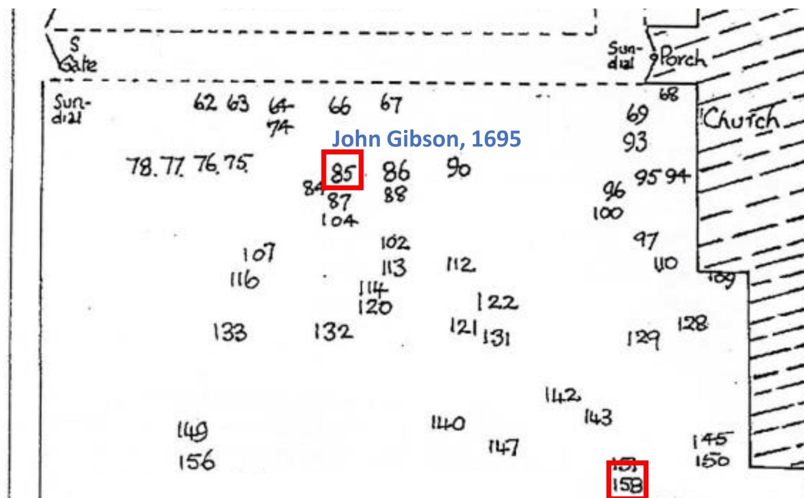
You will see on the plan that the chancel is not aligned with the nave and tower – we don't know why that was. It could simply have been poor accuracy on the part of the builders although some see it as having a significance that is lost to us and some other churches are similarly mis-aligned (for example, St Andrew's Gallowgate and St John the Baptist, both in the centre of Newcastle).



Start your tour in the churchyard

Two old graves

We suggest that you start by visiting the graveyard and say a respectful hello to Jane Robbeson and John Gibson, the two oldest inhabitants of marked graves: 1693 for Jane and 1695 for John. The stones are small, and John's is leaning over so the inscription is difficult to see.



In the 1690s the life expectancy for men and women who survived childhood and who did not die in childbirth, accident, or war, was around 60. This means that the occupants of these oldest marked graves are likely to have been born in the reign of Charles I and therefore lived through the English Civil War and all the changes that would have been experienced at the time – for example, the public celebration of Christmas was banned by Cromwell's parliament from 1644 to 1660. We might hope that the church, along with Jane and John, had a particularly joyful Christmas at the restoration of the monarchy in 1660. They also lived around the same time as, and may have had personal experience of, the notorious *Meg of Meldon* – the owner of Meldon Park, known unfairly in local folklore as a witch. Jane and John are likely to have been born after the unification of the crowns of England and Scotland in 1603, which eventually brough peace to the border region, but old habits die hard and lawlessness persisted well into the 18th Century and would have been a feature of the lives of these two parishioners.

Pevsner notes that St Andrew's has "*the best collection in the County of well-preserved C. 18 headstones, many carved on both faces. Cherubs, death's heads, and various mortality emblems abound*". These memorials became fashionable in Hartburn following the arrival of a talented and imaginative stone mason. A note of improvements from the parish record of 1724 states: "*The Church all plastered where it was wanting and whitened & Chancell also plaistered and sentences written by the famous and ingenious* Thomas Whittle……..*Tradition says that he arrived from Whelpington riding on a goat……..It also associates his name with the Skull and Cross-bone motif on the Grave-stones. He was buried at Hartburn in 1731 still described by the Clerk, John Robinson, as "an ingenious man"* [Donnelly]. Thomas Whittle was the influence that started the trend in 18th Century Hartburn. Sadly, the ingenious man himself has no memorial that we can find. Take a walk around and have a look at these wonderful monuments.

The influence of the 'ingenious man' – the headstone for William Hepple, 1738

Look at the building from the graveyard before you enter the church

The building was completed in several stages. The Tower dates to around 1074 but the rest of the original church from that time cannot be seen. The original nave could have dated to around 1150 – 1180 (Donnelly) but it was widened, probably in around 1250. The walls were moved to form the new outer wall, creating the aisles, and the chancel was extended. The Porch appears to be the original structure moved at that time to its current position (Ryder).

The tower most likely started life as part of a defensible border church, consisting of a tower and possibly a small church with nave only. It is possible that this early building was constructed using stones from a Roman fort at Thornton on the Devil's Causeway, about 0.5 mile North East. The monks lived securely above the ground floor with access by ladder, which could be withdrawn for security purposes. The tower provided a fortification to protect them and their tithes. Note on the Eastern face of the tower, you can see the line of a steeply pitched roof that was added at one time, and which nearly collapsed the building – of which, more later.

The skeletons in the tower

In 1966 the 18th Century woodwork of the tower had to be replaced due to dry rot. When the rubble was being shovelled away from the tower floor "*a neat row of skeletons barely covered with soil was found. Forensic experts from Northumberland County Constabulary took samples, which they later dated as between 966 – 1166"* [Donnelly]. The deceased were re-interred "in-situ" – i.e. in the tower floor. Who were they, how did they die and why were they buried in the Tower floor? Donnelly speculates that these skeletons may have been monks from the earliest time of the church, that is occupants of the original tower, and this seems likely. Did they die together and, if so, how? It is only possible to speculate but the presence of what appears to be a shallow mass grave suggests that they died either by disease or violence.

Teeth from the skeletons in the tower, used for dating and subsequently re-interred. The teeth show the typical wear pattern from medieval times (due to unrefined food). That there are three teeth suggests that three skeletons were found (each would have to be individually dated). One is a wisdom tooth indicating that this was an adult individual and the wear suggests that they were no older than mid-40s. RIP.

It is hard to exaggerate how violent this part of the world was at the time these persons died. Churches and monasteries were targeted both by the Danes (the settled Vikings in the Danelaw) from the South and the Scots from the North who both mounted violent raids for the valuables that these institutions housed. The most violent episode, however, was related to the period that has become known as the 'Harrying of the North', that being William the Conquerors brutal response to rebellions that centred in the North and his approach to consolidating his hold on his newly acquired land (Bates). Rebellions against Norman rule came from the Scots, the Danes and the disenfranchised Anglo-Saxon landowners, amongst others. Waltheof himself allied with the Danes who tried to invade from the sea, anchoring in the Humber in 1069. In the same year, Norman

occupiers were murdered in York and Durham and this prompted William to seek bloody revenge. William himself never ventured North of Hexham and the initial episode in the 'Harrying' in 1069 and 1070 affected mostly Yorkshire. Following the murder of the Norman Bishop of Durham in 1080, however, William sent his son Robert Curthose (Robert 'short trousers') to lay waste all the lands between the Tees and the Tweed, with the overall aim of establishing a buffer zone between settled England and the rebellious Scots. This retribution included mass slaughter of the people and their flocks and the destruction of seed corn, resulting in wide-spread starvation. The 12th Century monk Simon of Durham recorded the results of Williams 'scorched earth' exercise and reported an "abominable stench" from the un-buried dead (there was nobody left to bury them) and that from that time the region consisted of "*lurking places to wild beasts and robbers and were a great dread to travellers*" [Jackson, p19]. Hundreds of thousands starved to death during this period. It is purely speculative, but were the skeletons victims of that violent episode? Their age and the characteristics of the grave make this a possibility.

Even without the violence, being a monk at Hartburn in the early days would have been difficult. Tynemouth Priory was part of the estates of the Abbey at St Albans in Hertfordshire, the 'mother church' of all Benedictine priories at the time. For monks from St Albans, being sent to Tynemouth was seen almost as a punishment, involving significant hardship. A letter from the mid-14th Century describes the view of one of these exiles: "*Our house is confined to the top of a high cliff … day and night the waves break and roar and undermine the cliff. Thick sea frets roll in, wrapping everything in gloom. Dim eyes, hoarse voices, sore throats are the consequence"* (English Heritage). How much more of a hardship posting would Hartburn have been, even further North and in the notoriously difficult border lands? It conjures up an image of the monks huddled in their tower battling the weather and the ever-present threat of violence.

The porch

The stonework of the porch dates to the earliest time of the church and it is likely that it was moved to its current position to enable the widening of the nave in around 1250. The sculpture above the door is a seventeenth century sundial. What is more interesting, however, are the two medieval stone coffins outside to the North of the porch. These were discovered when the nave floor was lowered in 1912. The coffins held the mortal remains of two people who had been interred in the *Longwitton Chantry* – a chapel at the Eastern end of the North aisle where the organ now sits. The internal dimensions from head to toe are around 5 feet 7 inches so we can speculate that the occupants were around 5 feet 6 inches tall: around average height for men in the 1300s. Beyond that we know very little. The occupants must have been wealthy because it was expensive to pay for a chantry and the services of priests. The most likely candidates that can currently be named are William and Robert de Lisle (also appearing in the record spelt 'de Lille' and 'de Insula'), who donated lands in Hartburn to the Knights Templar in 1200, in return for the saying of prayers for the repose of their souls**.** The gift of land refers to those prayers being made at the "Chapel at Thornton" (about ½ mile North East of St Andrew's) rather than at St Andrew's, but it is possible that there wasn't room for a Chantry at Thornton, which is likely to have been small.

The Knights' doorway

Go through the door into the porch and look at the inner door. Nikolaus Pevsner, the famous chronicler of England's ancient buildings, described this highly decorated door as "*the work of an over-enthusiastic Hexham mason*". It is elaborately carved with a '*dog-tooth'* pattern: something that can be seen elsewhere in the grander churches of the Northeast. The doorway dates to the period 1200 to 1250, and Donnelly refers directly to this door as the "Knights Templar Doorway".

Look closely at the stonework on the right of the door and you will find some of the most intriguing artefacts at St Andrew's. Carved into the doorway are a splayed cross (also called a cross *pattee* and often referred to as a Maltese cross) with two Latin crosses (the conventional + shape) above it. There is a further splayed cross along with a Latin cross carved into the seat on the Eastern side of the porch. The origin and significance of these marks and their meaning are lost in the mists of time.

The crosses are the root of a strong tradition that St Andrew's was a place of worship for the Knights Templar, who were resident in the parish between 1200 and 1308. Donnelly referred to the marks as two daggers above a Maltese cross (not three crosses) and stated that he 'understood' that they signified that a building was "*inspected and passed as a fit and proper place for preceptories of Knights Templar by the Corregidor of the Order. Today this would indicate the meeting place of a Provincial Grand Lodge. Three daggers set over a Maltese Cross would have shown that the Grand Master had passed this church as a fit and proper place for the Grand Lodge to assemble".* The language used in this view seems to relate to the Masonic order of Templars which did not come into existence until the mid-18th Century. That order, unlike the order of crusading knight-monks, still exists and the Canon refers to their regalia, suggesting that the source of his understanding could be related to the order (which has a lodge in Morpeth). Donnelly further stated, however, that the Knights Templar may have made an agreement with the Abbey at St Albans in the 13th Century to extend St Andrew's to be the Knights' 'North of England meeting place' and that this was linked with the expansion of the church in 1250. There certainly appears to be a possible link between St Albans and the presence of the Knights in Hartburn parish but there is no mention of Hartburn in the detailed accounts made on the arrests of the knights in 1308, whilst the Knights' own chapel at Thornton is listed along with the contents of that chapel.

Looking closely it can be seen that the marks are within the main doorway opening in the South Wall, and are not part of the more elaborate carved section faced on to the wall – they are therefore not necessarily associated with the elaborate carving, which could have been added later. The main doorway appears to be from the same period as the expansion of the Chancel, around 1250, as evidenced by the mason's mark on the North side of the door, which is very similar to those around the Sedilia in the chancel (see below) and on modifications in the tower from that time. This doorway is therefore dated to 50 years after the Knights Templar arrived in Hartburn and around 60 years before they left.

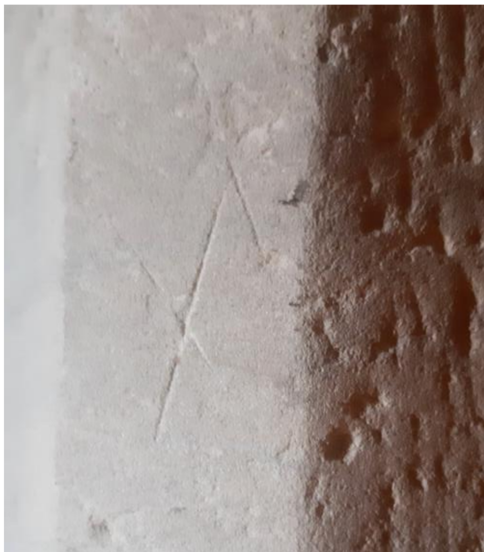
The main argument against Donnelly's 'tradition' is that we know that the Knights had their own chapel at the Preceptory at Temple Thornton and that the Preceptor was a priest licensed to say mass – so for ordinary offices the Knights Templar would not have had a need for the services of St Andrew's. It is also noted that the Order of Knights had no such tradition of marks on their churches, casting doubt at least on the detail of Donnelly's understanding, but not at all negating the possible association of St Andrew's in some way with the Knights Templar.

The marks are almost undoubtedly related to the crusades, and they are similar to graffiti on churches in Jerusalem made by Knights preparing to go on crusade. This echoes further comments made by Donnelly, who suggested that the marks in the seats may have been made by 'squires' keeping vigil in preparing to embark to the Holy Land. A second explanation of their origin, therefore, is that the marks are graffiti carved by local knights either before embarking on or after returning from a crusade: most likely the Third Crusade - Richard the Lion Heart's Crusade, 1189 to 1192, when many English knights 'took the cross'. It is conceivable that the marks relate to William and Robert de Lille, who later donated land for the founding of the Knights Templar preceptory at West Thornton and who were possibly the occupants of the Longwitton chantry, and whose family name is listed amongst the crusaders on the third crusade. The third crusade was well before the

date at which it is believed that the nave was widened, however (around 1250), and this makes this explanation also problematic, although the original earlier doorway stonework and porch may well have been moved and re-used as part of the widening of the nave and in that context the problems disappear.

This is all speculation and tantalisingly confusing (none of the explanations quite add up), and the mystery awaits further research of the medieval records. The arrest and trial of the Knights Templar is a shocking tale full of treachery, torture and accusations of satanic practices. We know that Michael, Robert, Walter, and Geoffrey from West Thornton were tried in York with charges including worshipping a 'certain cat' and worshipping a 'certain head' with magical powers. It is an amazing story and well worth reading – further details on the church web site**.**

The mysterious crosses in the door frame. The origin of the cross pattee is thought to be that the shape was more easily carved than the Latin cross, particularly by persons without particular stone-carving training.



The mason's mark on the North side of the doorway in the main South aisle wall.

Proceed through the knights' door into the Church

Stones from the earliest church

Sadly, little remains easily visible from the earliest pre-conquest church. The four massive corner *corbels* (stones supporting an upper structure, often the roof) supporting the ends of the lines of arches in the nave are thought to be parts of earliest church (Ryder).

One of the four Norman corbels at the corners of the Nave.

The font

The font looks like a 20th Century sculpture, possibly carved by Henry Moore or Barbara Hepworth, but in fact it dates to the 1250 expansion. The font has been baptising Christians for almost 800 years! The wooden cover was originally Elizabethan but it was "altered and made convenient for common use" on the instruction of Archdeacon William Sharp in 1723 and further repaired in 1764.

The nave and aisles and the perils of over-building

Some might say that St Andrew's has delusions of grandeur and not only in its relatively large size. Attempts to make the church grander (Pevsner might say make it "a bit more Hexham") backfired and threatened the building itself.

- Look up at the tower and you can see a large arch that has been filled in. Look above the arch and you will see where the tower started to crumble when the arch was opened – and then filled in again before the tower came tumbling down.
- Look at the pillars supporting the arches that separate the aisles from the nave, which were part of the 1250 expansion. They are too small for the wall they are supporting (the original nave wall) and the wall had to be adapted to fit where it meets the top of the columns. It could be that the pillars were salvaged from somewhere else and made to fit, or it could be that the masons simply measured incorrectly.
- Notice also that many of the pillars are far from vertical. It is thought that the fitting of a large pitched roof (the line of which was seen earlier on the outside of the tower) to cover the entire building when it was expanded in 1250 almost collapsed the church and it had to be removed and a lighter flat roof fitted.

There are also some attempts at stone carving in St Andrew's:

1. There are three St Andrew's crosses carved in the stonework of the nave. These possibly signify that the stones concerned are re-used from somewhere else but more likely are simply tributes from the stone masons that made them. Two of them are still visible but the third is too difficult to see above the wooden kitchen. The easiest to see is by the kitchen. Stand with your back to the North wall next to the kitchen and look between the arches – in the third course of stones you will see a cross (pictured below). For the other that is visible, stand by the font and look at the apex of the first arch of the South aisle. Count 5 courses of stone up and then about 3 to the right and you will see another St Andrew's cross. This one is more challenging to find.
2. Above each column on the North side and above one on the South side of the nave there are crudely carved heads (picture below) – a sheep, horse and a dog have been suggested but the definition is poor. Either they were poorly done or they were obliterated in the reformation or in the time of the Puritans, along with a lot of other decoration in churches (there is damage in the same place on other arches).
3. The best carving is that of a fish (a brown trout most likely), on the head of the East-most column on the South side. More obvious are the *pellets* or balls carved on the head of the column next to it. Their significance and origin are a mystery.

The St Andrew's Cross visible from the North wall by the Kitchen

One of the animal heads on the arches on the North aisle – Horse? Dog?

The "Intruder"

We are fortunate to know the names of all vicars of Hartburn for over 900 years, listed on two boards on the West wall, adjacent to the tower door. These names include Ralph Ward who is noted as an 'Intruder' in the period up to 1660. Ralph was the 'killjoy' that banned Christmas, as noted earlier in relation to Jane Robbeson and John Gibson. "*In 1645 Parliament abolished the book of common prayer. At the same time Cromwell's soldiers smashed up churches and tore down organs*" (Gant). The Book of Common Prayer was replaced by the *Directory for the Public Worship of God*. The Royalists finally lost the Civil War in 1648 and Charles I was executed in 1649 so we can presume that Ralph's intrusion started around that time. During the commonwealth the role of bishop was abolished along with the book of common prayer and much of the ritual and ceremony of the Anglican church. How much St Andrews was vandalised we do not know. The monarchy was restored in 1660, at which point Anglicanism resumed with the installation of Robert Bonner. What

happened to John Snape, who had been vicar for 12 or 13 years when the intruder came along, or Ralph Ward himself, we do not know. Written records for the church did not commence until 1682. We also do not know what sort of puritan Ralph Ward was. "*Puritanism split into a bewildering variety of offshoots and splinter groups, some highly exotic, others difficult to pin down*" (ibid). Whether Ralph was a Quaker, Seeker, Muggletonian or Digger (an early form of communist) or other we, sadly, can't say. Nor can we say whether he was popular protestant priest or fanatical puritan.

The year 173½

Just before the Chancel steps there is a slab of black stone in the floor marking the interment of "*Dorothy, wife of William Aynsley, of Highlaws*" who died on March 18th in the year 173½. It would be nice to speculate that this has something to do with a portal to Hogwarts, but the explanation is much more mundane.

The calendar that divides the year into 365 days and 12 months was instigated by Julius Caesar in 46 BC. The Julian calendar was slightly inaccurate and by the late 16th Century, 10 days needed to be removed from the date to restore the church holidays, such as Easter, to the correct time of the year. Pope Gregory made this correction for all Catholic countries in 1582 – instigating the Gregorian calendar by which we now measure the passing of the years. We were not subject to the Pope's orders, however, and many people at the time were very concerned about being robbed of ten days of their lives. In England, therefore, we did not move to the Gregorian calendar until 1752. The new calendar not only removed 10 days but also moved new year from Lady Day, March 25th (the quarter day at which the year started in England) to January 1st. All very unsettling. In England between 1582 and 1752, any date between January 1st and March 24th came with uncertainty as to which calendar was being used and many dates in the parish records hedge by giving both years. For example, Dorothy died on March 18th in the period between January 1st and Lady Day in 1732 – but it was still 1731 by the old calendar, so the record gives both years just in case. She died in 1732 or 1731, depending on which calendar you are measuring by.

Descendants of UK's only assassinated Prime Minister

On the North wall of the nave near the organ are two brass plaques to the Perceval family. Ernest Augustus Perceval was the son of Rt Hon Spencer Perceval, the only British Prime Minister ever to be assassinated – in the House of Commons in 1812. Ernest married Beatrice Trevelyan who was born at Wallington and they lived at Longwitton Hall, another Trevelyan seat. His son, Cecil Henry Spencer Perceval in the second plaque was a noted expert on fungi and one of the founders of the British Mycological Society in 1901. The motto on Cecil's coat of arms is a Latin pun: "Sub Crucem Candida" translates as "beneath the white cross" but Candida is also the name of a yeast organism.

Move on up to the Chancel

Immediately on your right as you enter the Chancel is a small stained-glass window. This is at the site of the priest's door that was moved to the current position when the chancel was lengthened around 1250. It is now called the *leper window*. Traditionally this would be where 'unclean' or plagued individuals could see the altar during mass, without entering the church and risking the health of others.

The priest's door on the South side marks where the altar was prior to extension in 1250. We know that because there is a *piscina* (*a stone sink next to the altar to clean the utensils used during mass*) next to it, so there must have been altar. There two other piscinae in the church today marking where altars have been, in the aisles at the sites of the chantries, and a fourth at the current main altar, again on the South side.

The marble floor of the *Sanctuary* (the railed area around the altar) was a gift in memory of the Reverand Bielby Porteous Hodgson. This was one of several gifts made during the "Great Repairs" undertaken between 1889 and 1892. Other gifts, from the Cookson family, include the Caen stone *reredos* (the carved stone screen behind the altar, which was finally completed in 1910 with the installation of the statues of St Peter and St Paul) and the hanging Florentine lamps.

A Portrait of Bielby Porteous Hodgson (1808 – 1889), vicar of Hartburn 1856 – 89, painted by George Richmond around 1836, when Reverand Hodgson was 28 years old. On March 10th, 1888, the Morpeth Herald reported that Rev. Hodgson's butler, Mr Hebblethwaite, raised the alarm that the church tower was on fire and that, along with a Mr Brittain, he ascended the tower and extinguished the flames. That the 80-year-old reverend was looked after by a butler says much about the benefice of Hartburn in that era.

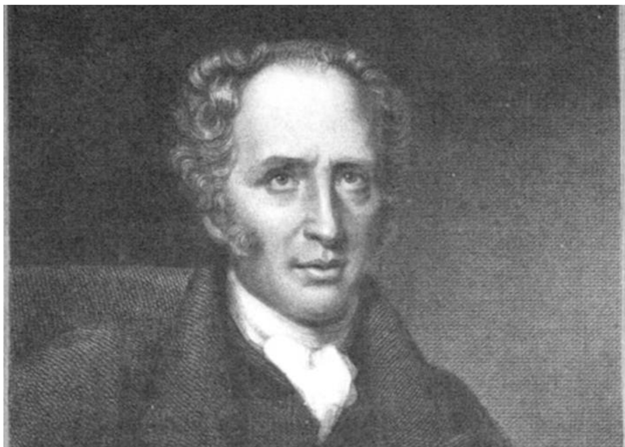
The sedilia

The *sedilia* are the three stone seats on the Southern wall. These were where the monks sat during services or '*offices*'. There were 7 offices starting with *Matins,* normally around midnight, followed by *Lauds* at around 4am in Summer and 6am in Winter and finishing with *Compline* in the evening. Not a lot of unbroken sleep for a medieval monk! Imagine three cowled monks in black robes sitting in these seats chanting plainsong and reciting in Latin, often by candlelight. They are not very comfortable – possibly intentionally, helping to keep the monks awake during Matins in the early hours of the morning. The beautifully carved seats date to the 1250 expansion of the chancel and the fact that there are three is unusual in a church of this size. It suggests three officiating monks or priests at mass and thereby suggests that some services were more elaborate than normal for a

small parish church. Were these for rituals for the Knights? Sadly they were infilled with later memorials but you are welcome to try to sit in them and take a pause – the Eastern-most is recommended to get the full effect. To the left of that seat you can just make out some faint masons' marks, (photograph below). These were effectively signatures of the masons that installed the sedilia. They are very faint and look little more than scratches but you are looking at a communication from over 750 years ago.

One of the memorials commerates John (Johannes) Hodgson who was vicar of Hartburn between 1833 and 1845, who published the definitive history of Northumberland (still an important reference work). His life's work remained unfinished at his death in 1845 but it was eventually finished by others and published in 15 volumes between 1893 and 1940.

Masons' marks below the sedilia



The Reverend John Hodgson, antiquarian and vicar of Hartburn 1833 to 1845. With the encouragement of Sir John Edward Swinburne of Capheaton Hall, and Walter Calverley Trevelyan of Wallington Hall, he created the definitive History of Northumberland. The work was un-finished at his death in 1845 and completed by others finally in 1933. He is buried in Hartburn and is subject of one of the memorials in the sedillae.

Two interesting burial slabs

There are two memorial slabs in the chantry floor just by the priest's door. The Southern one records the death of Thomas Errington, vicar from 1302-10, about a century before Chaucer published the Canterbury Tales. Thomas was the vicar at the time of the arrest of the Knights from Temple Thornton. The inscription is in latin and now very hard to read but it translates: *"Here lies Master Thomas some-time vicar of this church. Pray for him"*. The Northern one records the death of Anne Wood, who died in 1606 (the year after the Gunpowder Plot). She was an Elizabethan and possibly also remembered "bloody Mary". The inscription is in English but still very hard to decipher, it says: *"Here lies the Body of Ann Wood who departed this life March the first 1606 – memento mori"*. When preparing his book in the 1970s Canon Donnelly noted: "*It is a salutary thought that the interval between these two stones is almost as long as between the second and our own day"*.

These two stones really give the impression of how much history this beautiful church has witnessed.

The Bradford-Atkinson memorials

There are many dedications and memorials around the church, including tablets, window dedications, dedications on the magnificent Caen stone reredos and pulpit (1890), and not forgetting the tablets commemorating the fallen of the twentieth century's two world wars – in the South aisle near the lady chapel.

Worthy of note specifically are the rather grandiose memorials of the Bradford-Atkinson family in the Chancel. These include the two marble tableaux on the North Wall, the three military colours flying above the space and a number of lesser plaques. These tell the story of the Peninsular and Napoleonic wars (amongst others), Waterloo and its aftermath, the British Army in India and the tragic death of a clearly much-loved wife and mother on the voyage home from India. The tableau of Lady Mary Bradford is sculpted by Francis Legatt Chantrey RA, the greatest memorial sculptor of the regency era, and her husband, General Sir Thomas Bradford (1780 – 1853), was a bona-fide military legend in his time. There is a small monochrome portrait of the General just beyond the altar rail on the North side. The flags are colours of regiments he commanded: the 30th Cambridgeshire Foot on the South side (battle honours: Badajoz, Peninsula, Salamanca, Egypt and Waterloo) and the 4th Kings Own Foot on the North Side (battle honours: Corunna, Salamanca, St. Sebastian, Peninsula, Badajoz, Vittoria, Nive, Brandenburg and Waterloo). The Bradfords inherited Angerton Hall and Estates (about 500m South of the Church) from an uncle but the family effectively died out and the Hall moved on within two generations – but they left a significant mark on the Church.

There is much more to the church in detail, available on the web site, but this ends the tour of the highlights. You may want to round your visit off, however, with a walk of a few hundred metres to the West and visit..

Reverend Sharp's folly

After your visit to St Andrew's you might like to take a stroll through the village to see the developments of the Reverend Sharp, vicar between 1749 and 1792. These include enlargement of the magnificent vicarage (1760) immediately to the West of the Church (which looks straight out of a Jane Austen novel), the Tower House (1762) which was the village school with garage for the village hearse on the ground floor (you can't miss it when walking through the village) and his folly down in Hartburn Dene. The folly is a grotto with a magnificent fireplace, carved into the cliff down by the river (the Hart Burn). Walk through the village and take the path into the woods on the right. Be careful, the paths are steep and can be slippery when wet (which is most of the time), but it is worth the trek. There is a shallow tunnel between the grotto and the river, which Pevsner speculates could have been to facilitate access for 'discreet bathers' to the pool in the river just by the grotto. Then again it might be no more than a drain, but the speculation is nice.

John Sharp aged about 56 with his wife Mary, as they appear in a portrait by Johan Zoffany in the National Gallery