

Victoria County History of Cumbria Project. Draft parish/township histories

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Parish/township: GAMBLESBY

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GAMBLESBY¹

RELIGIOUS HISTORY

By the seventeenth century, the inhabitants of Gamblesby were regularly baptised, married and buried at the parish church of Addingham, St Michael's church in Glassonby.² Gamblesby's tithe rent charge, owed to the vicar of Addingham, amounted to £49 in 1878.³

A chapel of ease, dedicated to St John the Evangelist, was built in Gamblesby in 1868. The site for the chapel was granted by the lord of the manor, the Duke of Devonshire, at the request of the vicar of Addingham, Rev. Edward Brown.⁴ As this site lay over the in-filled tarn on the village green, the south end of the chapel suffered gradual subsidence in later years.⁵ The building was largely paid for by private subscription,⁶ the total cost of which amounted to £1080⁷ (far greater than the '£240 or £300' estimated by the bishop)⁸. The chapel was dedicated in December 1868.⁹ Built of red

¹ The author would like to thank Lydia Gray and the staff at Carlisle Archive Centre for their assistance in the preparation of this article.

² The Addingham Parish Register begins in 1601.

³ CAS (C), PR 29/55.

⁴ CAS (C), PR 29/93 (requested in 1866).

⁵ CAS (C), PR 29/104. This pond is named as 'The Tarn' on the first edition OS map.

⁶ CAS (C), PR 29/93.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ *Ibid.*

hammer-dressed sandstone, quarried at Lazonby,¹⁰ St John's is a Gothic Revival church, designed by the Carlisle architect, C. J. Ferguson. It has a five-bay nave and three stained glass windows, with a wooden bell turret (containing a single bell) and spire.¹¹ Electric lighting was installed in 1935,¹² and electric heating in 1952.¹³

The first two baptisms at St John's took place on the day of the chapel's dedication, and the Baptism Register ran until 1999.¹⁴ The Chapel was not licensed for marriages until 1884,¹⁵ but only forty-eight marriages ever took place there. By 2001, there had been only one wedding in twenty years and two baptisms in the last five.¹⁶ As St John's lacked a churchyard, burials took place at the parish church in Glassonby, although funeral services were sometimes held at Gamblesby.

The incorporation of Addingham Parish into a United Benefice in 1975¹⁷ appears to have had little immediate effect on services, with Holy Communion and Evensong continuing to take place on alternate weeks.¹⁸ Some financial support to help pay St John's parish quota came from the two trusts established on the closure of Hunsonby and Maughanby schools.¹⁹ But by the decade's end, the chapel was in financial trouble, largely due to its dwindling congregation, which averaged between four and six.²⁰ One service in 1982 was cancelled after no one came.²¹ By 1983, services were more erratic, with the introduction of a family service and more group services at other

⁹ CAS (C), PR 29/97, 104.

¹⁰ CAS (C), PR 29/104.

¹¹ Hyde & Pevsner, *Cumbria*, 361.

¹² CAS (C), PR 29/64

¹³ CAS (C), PR 29/27-28, 88.

¹⁴ CAS (C), PR 29/97.

¹⁵ CAS (C), PR 29/63.

¹⁶ CAS (C), PR 29/99; PR 29/104.

¹⁷ With Langwathby, Eden Hall and Culgaith: CAS (Carlisle), PR 105/48.

¹⁸ CAS (C), PR 29/99, 104.

¹⁹ CAS (C), PR 29/104.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ CAS (C), PR 29/99.

churches in the parish.²² During the 1990s, there was approximately one service a month at St John's.²³ In 1999, approaches were made to Gamblesby's Methodists by the Rev. Richard Moatt about the shared use of the building,²⁴ and a public meeting was held to discuss its fate.²⁵ But, in need of expensive repairs and with an annual income of just £250, St John's closed in 2002.²⁶ The final service (Holy Communion), held on 30 June 1999, was attended by 110 communicants.²⁷ The chapel was sold in 2010 for conversion into a dwelling²⁸ and the building was subsequently used as a holiday let. The renovation featured on Channel 4 Television's 'Restoration Man' programme in 2012.²⁹

Nonconformity

Methodism was strong in Gamblesby from an early date. John Wesley made several visits there from 1749, facilitated by Gamblesby's position on the old Alston-Penrith road.³⁰ Local tradition states that Wesley planned the village's first Methodist chapel,³¹ which was not constructed until 1784, at a cost of £100.³² Prior to this, Gamblesby Methodists had worshipped at a house in Melmerby.³³ In 1864, a larger chapel with a school room was built on the same site. The new building incorporated the date stone of the first chapel (inscribed 1784).³⁴ The stone laying ceremony took place on 27 April 1864,³⁵

²² *Ibid.*

²³ *Ibid.*; PR 29/104.

²⁴ CAS (C), PR 29/104.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ *Ibid.*; DRC 22/1.

²⁷ CAS (C), PR 29/99.

²⁸ <http://eforms.eden.gov.uk/fastweb/detail.asp?AltRef=10/0725> [accessed 25 October 2013].

²⁹ Televised January 2012.

³⁰ G.H. Bancroft Judge, 'The Beginnings of Methodism in the Penrith District', *Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society*, 19.7 (1934), 153-157.

³¹ CAS (C), DFCM 4/6/7/2.

³² CAS (C), DFCM 4/6/7/2.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ *Cumb. & West. Advertiser*, 3 May 1864.

while the dedication ceremony followed on 14 April 1865.³⁶ The cost of the building work amounted to just over £685.³⁷ The chapel is still in use and celebrated its 150th anniversary in 2014.

Three women numbered among Wesley's first adherents in the village: namely, Sarah Sawyer, Fanny Falder, and Mary Watson, the latter of whom donated the site of the first chapel.³⁸ By 1791 membership of the Gamblesby class included twenty-four women and thirteen men.³⁹ In 1802 there were fifty-one members.⁴⁰ In 1841 it was noted that seven or eight Methodist families lived in Gamblesby, all of whom were 'regular at church and sacrament'.⁴¹ One of the first chapel trustees, Joseph Salkeld, together with his brother, Benjamin, had been preachers before the chapel was built. Joseph, who later moved to Kirkby Lonsdale, set up a pulpit in his home, which was later used in the chapel.⁴² Other trustees of the first chapel were local yeomen farmers, John Faulder, Thomas Benson of Unthank, Anthony Benson, and James Atkinson.⁴³ By 1864, trustees of the new chapel still included representatives of the Salkeld and Benson families.⁴⁴ By 1893 only three trustees remained and numerous appointments had to be made in order to raise this to number to twenty four, as required by the chapel's model deed.⁴⁵ A similar situation occurred in 1949, by which time fourteen trustees (all of whom had been appointed in or before 1923) had died.⁴⁶ The new trustees appointed in 1949 were all farmers from Gamblesby or neighbouring townships.

³⁶ *Cumb. & West. Advertiser*, 18 Apr. 1865.

³⁷ CAS (C), DFCM 4/6/7/2.

³⁸ *Cumb. & West. Advertiser*, 1 July 1884; 'Beginnings of Methodism', 156.

³⁹ Durham Record Office, M/BC/2.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ *The Diocesan Book of Walter Fletcher, Chancellor of Carlisle Diocese 1814-46*, ed. V.J. Platt (forthcoming 2015), 127.

⁴² From the reminiscences of his great nephew, Benjamin Salkeld: *Cumb. & West. Advertiser*, 1 July 1884.

⁴³ CAS (C), DFCM 4/6/7/2.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ CAS (C), DFCM 4/5/115.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

On 27 June 1884, a large party was held to celebrate a centenary of Methodism in Gamblesby.⁴⁷ Two large marquees were erected to accommodate the 1,500 people who attended, 300 of whom were seated for lunch. It was reported that over 1,000 people attended the meeting that evening.⁴⁸ The chapel received several legacies, including £100 left by George Dufton in 1922, for the benefit of the chapel's Sunday School. The money was duly invested and used to provide prizes for the children who attended.⁴⁹ Electric lighting was installed in 1934, together with redecoration and water being laid on.⁵⁰ A new organ was purchased in 1941, while a lavatory and cloakroom were added in 1949.⁵¹ Part of the Kirkoswald Methodist Circuit since 1871, services were held at Gamblesby every third Sunday in 2013.⁵²

The Congregationalists had their first place of worship in Gamblesby by 1824.⁵³ This was replaced in 1864 by a new chapel, which cost £400 to build and could accommodate 200 people.⁵⁴ In 1929, the Charity Commissioners appointed the Lancashire Congregational Union as trustees for the chapel building and the cottage and land which belonged to it.⁵⁵ By 1928, services were only held every third Sunday⁵⁶ and the chapel closed in the 1930s. The cottage was sold off in 1938,⁵⁷ followed by the chapel itself in 1939.⁵⁸ A year later, the former chapel was converted into a dwelling called

⁴⁷ *Cumb. & West. Advertiser*, 1 July 1884.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ DFCM 4/5/115. Legacies of 100 were also left by a Sarah Cowen and Anthony Metcalf.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² CAS (C), PR 29/104.

⁵³ *Congregational Magazine*, vol. 7 (1824); Bulmer, *Dir. Cumb.* (1901), 368.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.* 'Independents Chapel' is marked on the first edition OS Map of 1860/1867, but is in a different place to the later chapel built 1864.

⁵⁵ CAS (C), DFCCL 13/39; the cottage was then leased out for £5 p.a.

⁵⁶ CAS (C), DFCCL 13/32.

⁵⁷ CAS (C), DFCCL 13/39.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

Hazelgarth.⁵⁹ In 1954, the owners, Mr and Mrs James Purvis, gifted the house to the Kirkoswald Methodist Circuit for use as a manse.⁶⁰ The building became a private house again after it was sold in 1962, a new manse having been built at Langwathby.

⁵⁹ CAS (C), SRDP 3/PLANS/473 & 509.

⁶⁰ CAS (C), DFCM 4/6/7/1.