

HOLY TRINITY VICARS BIOGRAPHIES

JOHN DALTON (1st Vicar)

John Dalton was baptised as Johannes Dalton.

He was ordained as deacon on 22nd December 1695 by Thomas Smith, Bishop of Carlisle, and was priested on 30th May 1697 by the same Bishop.

There are currently no records of him between 1695 and 1705.

He was Rector of the Parish of Dean from 24th August 1705 until 4th August 1712, when he moved to become Vicar of Distington. On 30th September 1715 he also became Curate of the new Whitehaven Holy Trinity Chapel, in the Parish of St. Bees (he was licensed to this post by Thomas Waite, Archdeacon of Richmond), while still holding the Distington post.

He remained jointly in both posts until his death in post in early November 1728 & was buried on 5th November. His death is the first time he is referred to as John Dalton.

WILLIAM BRISCOE (2nd Vicar).

From the record of his institution at Distington we know that William Briscoe's full name was Gulielmus Briscoe, otherwise known as William Briscoe.

Previous histories have named him as William Brisco but Briscoe is the consistent spelling in the Chester Diocesan Records.

He also jointly held the posts of Vicar of Distington and Curate of Holy Trinity Chapel (from 17th April 1729).

Like his predecessor he died in the joint post, on 23rd January 1744 & was buried the following day.

THOMAS SEWELL (3rd Vicar).

The first record of Thomas Sewell is on 16th June 1743 as Schoolmaster at Whitehaven, and also Curate at Holy Trinity- as William Briscoe was now Minister it seems likely that this was a Stipendiary Curacy, rather than a Perpetual Curacy. After the death of William Briscoe he became perpetual curate by May 1745 (appointed by ballot January 12th/13th 1745)

In 1745 (like his two predecessors) he was instituted as Rector of Distington, but resigned from this post in 1747.

He also died in post on Wednesday 29th November 1780 & was buried on Saturday 2nd December 1780.

The following information is taken from pages 265 to 304 of the CWAAS Transactions Volume LXII (1962):

He was born in 1711 & married Susan Oliver in Holy Trinity in 1748. His home was in Howgill Street. He was instrumental in the publication of the Bible in Manx, under the influence of Bishop of Sodor & Man Mark Hildesley (1755 to 1772). Until then Manx was a purely oral language- the translation of the Bible was the first time it was used substantially in writing, and is still important now, when Manx is an almost extinct language. In 1763 the SPCK (Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge) opened a subscription list for the publication, with J.W. Oliver of London producing the Gospels & Acts soon thereafter. In 1767 W. Shepherd of Whitehaven produced the Epistles & Revelation at a new printing works in Ramsey- the very first Manx book.

The complete bible was printed by John Ware & Son, also of Whitehaven. Wares were based at 26 King Street, and founded the Cumberland Pacquet Newspaper. Shepherd had died in the interim, so there had to be a new printer.

The editor of the full Bible was an island clergyman, Revd Philip Moore (a personal friend of Sewell), but there is surviving correspondence between Sewell & Moore (in the Manx library), which shows how Sewell oversaw the printing and shipment of the Bibles (and ensured that the printing contract did not go to the SPCK printers- Oliver of London). Then there was a regular shipping service, from this the closest mainland port to the island.

In 1771 there were 1,000 copies of Genesis to Esther produced (for the 20,000 population), with a reprint of 1,000 in 1772. Two thousand copies of Job to Malachi & the Apocrypha followed in 1773, followed by

the New Testament in 1775, and 40 clergy copies of the complete work in the same year.

From *The Fothergills of Ravenstonedale* (Heinemann, 1905) we know that Sewell was educated at Appleby School, that he had an income of £200 per year in 1749 (most of which went to poor relief), and that he was considered to be one of the finest preachers of his era. An account of his funeral is in the Cumberland Pacquet of 5th December 1780.

He left £200 in his will, the interest of which used to be distributed to "twenty poor widows". In 1842 this amounted to £7/18/- annually.

THOMAS HARRISON Vicar 1808 to 1840

Thomas Harrison was born in Whitehaven around 1782 (and baptized on either 6th March or 4th October at St. James') and was the son of Thomas Harrison, gent. He entered Queen's College, Oxford on 12th October 1798 aged 16, gained his BA in 1802 and his MA in 1806 and was a fellow of the College from 1824-1821. In the 1794 trade directory there is a Thomas Harrison listed as a Justice [Magistrate] who may have been his father. It is not clear if this is the same Thomas Harrison listed in later directories as a merchant, banker and brewer of Irish Street (by 1821 this had become John Harrison & Co of 10 Irish Street, when Thomas lived at 17 Irish Street).

He served his curacy at New Hutton, near Kendal from 1804 to 1808. He was licensed as Perpetual Curate of Holy Trinity on 10th May 1808 where he remained until his death on 19th October 1840 aged 58. He was buried at Holy Trinity on 23rd October 1840-there is no gravestone.

He was also Rector of Corney in plurality from 1816. From 30th September 1840 he had been licensed to be non-resident in Holy Trinity Parish, and died at Park House, Bigrigg. From his death notice we learn that he was also a Magistrate.

He had married Mary Ann Bridget Benn (born 1792 at Hensingham, of the Benn family who built Hensingham Church) at Holy Trinity on 30th September 1820. In 1861 she was resident at 11 Lowther Street, Whitehaven but died at Clare Terrace, Liverpool on 25th June 1867. She was buried on 29th June 1867 at St. Mary's, Edge Hill, Liverpool. She left a fortune of nearly £20,000.

They had three children- Marianne, Eliza Jane and Sarah baptized at Holy Trinity on 4th February 1822, 12th February 1824 and 13th January 1827 respectively.

Marianne married a Revd William Dyer Anderson (born at Sandwich, Kent) in 1847- he trained at St Bees College, was Curate of Welcombe, Devon 1848-1852 and Rector of Milton Damerel in Devon from 1852 until his death in 1897. She died at Brentford, London in 1899 aged 77. They had 8 children.

Eliza Jane married a Rev Matthew Atkinson (from County Durham). By 1881 they were living at Weston-Super Mare but at her mother's death were at Chesterfield, Derbyshire. She died at Weston-super-Mare on 27th June 1882. He had trained for the ministry at St. Bees, served curacies at Preston and Jarrow on Tyneside. He then served at Tynemouth, Wolsingham, St. Joseph, Newcastle, Chesterfield 1860-1878 then Weston.

Sarah also died, unmarried, at Clare Terrace, Edge Hill, Liverpool aged 41 and was buried, presumably with her mother, on 6th January 1868 (we know this is the correct identity from her mother's will).

THOMAS DALTON Vicar 1840 to 1889.

He trained at St. Bees Theological College in 1829, was deaconed in 1832 and priested in 1833 at Chester. He was Rural Dean from 1st January 1862 and died on March 9th 1889 at 17 Irish Street. He is buried in grave 4A127- a bricked grave 5½ feet deep. See also gravestone Y6.

In 1885 the population of Holy Trinity Parish was 5,007 and the income £300

JAMES ANDERSON Vicar 1889 to 1902.

He graduated from Edinburgh University, was deaconed in 1876 & priested in 1877. He became Curate of Holy Trinity, then Vicar on the death of Thomas Dalton (above). As he is not in the 1908 Crockfords his entire ministerial career thus seems to have been at the one church. In 1881 the Vicarage was at 6 Howgill Street. He originally came to Whitehaven as a Presbyterian Minister between 1861 and 1871, living at 111 Queen Street in 1871.

Soon after he became Vicar he had an accident in which he broke his leg but made a full recovery.

He was deprived the living in 1902, for unknown reasons.

He died on 13th August 1910, aged 75, and is buried in Preston Quarter Cemetery in Grave 1Y44. The Church has a photograph of his gravestone.

His wife was Mary- she became Lady Jane Bruce, and they had seven Children- Jemima (Born 1861 in Midlothian and died on 29th January 1919 aged 58) , John George (Born 1853, became a Doctor and died on 3rd July 1925 aged 72), Georgina (Born 1864 in Dunbartonshire), Susan Wilkie (Born 1851 in Midlothian, and died on 14th March 1935 aged 84), Susan M (Born 1854), Mary B (Born 1858), Joanna B (Born 1859). Jemima & Georgina were Pupil Teachers in 1881, Susan was a Tobacconists Assistant.

FREDERICK KNOWLES FELL Vicar 1902 to 1932.

He was born in the Lancaster area in the March quarter of 1860 and graduated from the University of Durham in 1891. He was deaconed in 1892 & priested in 1893. He was Curate of Long Marton from 1892 to 1898, Christ Church, Penrith to 1900, Warcop to 1901 & Grasmere to 1902, before becoming Vicar of Holy Trinity. He was also the Workhouse Chaplain for his entire stay in Whitehaven.

He died in post and was buried on 2nd June 1932 in Grave 4H73- no gravestone survives.

By 1929 the population of the parish had declined to 3,706 but the income was £350

Produced by I.S. Nicholson

The information contained within these bibliographies has been extracted from CCed, Crockfords, Bishops Acts Books at Chester to 1865, Bishops Registers at Carlisle from 1865 and many other sources, including censuses, GRO indexes, and wills.