

St Johns Burnley Road



Prior to the building of St John's those wishing to marry or have their children baptised or buried had to travel all the way to St Nicholas's in Newchurch or to St Chad's in Rochdale that included carrying coffins for burial. Later although first connected to the Baptist Church the schoolhouse that stood on the site now occupied by the Mechanics Institute/ Library was used as a place of Episcopal; worship.

The First Parish Church of St John which was consecrated by Dr William Cleaver the Bishop of Chester on the 16th August 1788.

The Rev Joseph Ogden was the first incumbent; born in Sowerby Bridge, Halifax, he had studied at Trinity College Cambridge and gained his M.A in 1788. Reverend Ogden was described as a very slight, timid man with a very feminine voice which when trying to deliver a forceful sermon came out as more of a scream, after six years at St John's he returned to Sowerby Bridge and was there presented with his church by the vicar of Halifax in 1796.

Reverend William Porter from Cumberland was the next resident Reverend in 1796, at this time the burial fees were, seven years of age and upwards 4s 10d each. 1s 8d out of this was paid to Newchurch, the Rev of St John received 1s 6d, his clerk 2d and the sexton 1s 6d. For children under seven years of age, the fee was 2s each. The baptismal fee was 10d each. The first burial to be recorded in the Parish register is that of **Susan Wife of Nicholas Slater Backup aged 60 years October 12 1788**. The second entry is that of Mr Nicholas Slater himself who died six days after his wife. The first Baptism entry in the Baptism records is that of **John son of Lawrence Fielding of Spotland Carrier** and is dated 29th October 1788.

Bacup became a Consolidated Chapelry in 1837 which meant that from that date marriages could be performed at St John's the first Marriage entered into the records is that of **James Butterworth Bachelor of Full age Calico Printer Upper Brandwood in the Parish of Rochdale to Elizabeth Ashworth Spinster of Full age of Bacup.**

The Rev Ebenezer Brown Allen came to Bacup aged 35 from St Mary and All Saints Goodshaw in 1839, a student of Queens College Cambridge, the son of Samuel Brown a Master Sailmaker from London. Staying in Bacup for just under ten years, he left in 1849 to take up the position of Chaplain at the Royal Hospital for Consumption in Brompton. Retiring in 1873 he died at his home in Brompton on December 19th 1886 aged 82.

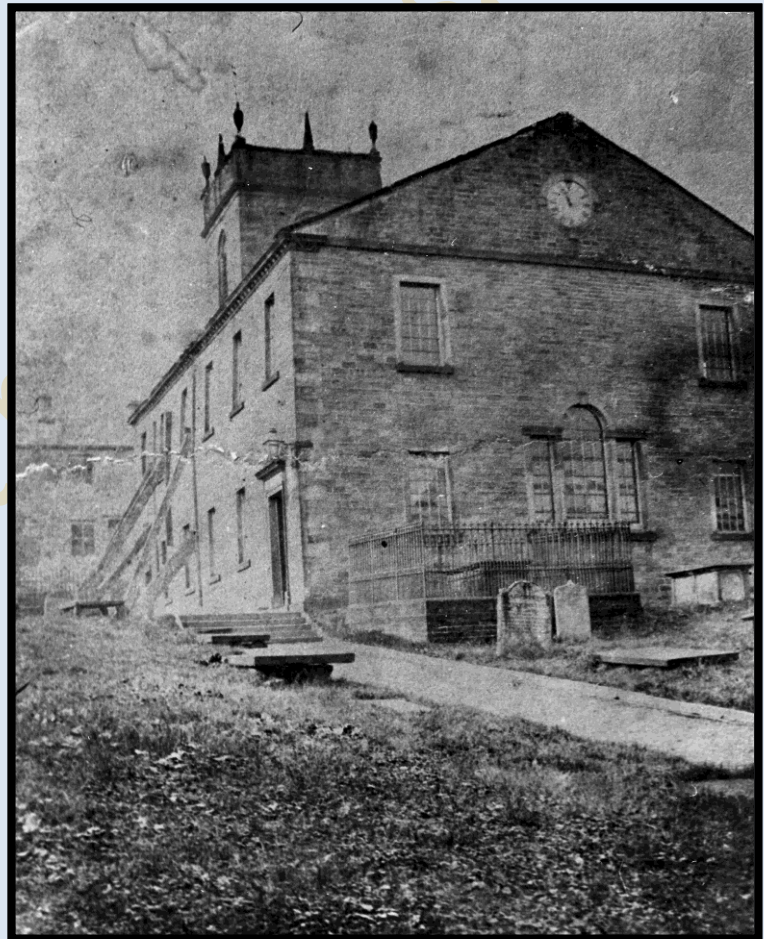
Reverend Brown was succeeded by the Rev Benjamin Tweddle who arrived in Bacup in 1850. Born in Great Aycliffe, Durham the Rev Tweddle left Bacup for Lytham for health reasons and died there aged 36 on the 1st April 1858.

The church had been in a state of dilapidation for some time before the **Reverend Joseph Brindle** gave his first sermon on Sunday 11th July 1858.

In 1856 two years before Mr Brindle's arrival, the church was examined by Mr Edward Wyndham Tarn, M.A., a member of the Royal Institute of British Architects, who interestingly was later employed by Mr James Maden Holt to design St Saviours Church. Mr Tarn was asked to carry out the inspection of St John's with a view to rebuilding it. . As a consequence of Mr Tarn's report, the Arch Bishop ordered that the galleries be closed to worshippers and one of the outer walls was supported with huge wooden props.

When the Rev Arthur Phillips arrived in Bacup in 1877 he found himself with no church because on Wednesday 19th April 1871 at twenty-six minutes to five following

a strong easterly wind a loud crash echoed from the church following the collapse of the roof at the eastern end of the church and part of one outer wall. The fall totally destroyed the church organ, pulpit, and chancel and many pews. The choir had been practising in the church the previous evening and the day after the collapse a funeral had to be carried out entirely in the churchyard.



The Sunday school was used as a temporary place of worship however that also had to be repaired before it could be used. The new church was opened on 21st June 1883 by the Lord Bishop of Manchester the Rt Rev. James Fraser. The greatest service that the church ever saw was for the memorial service of Queen Victoria on the 2nd February 1901 when over fifteen hundred people assembled.

July of 1909 saw the death of Rev Phillips by the time the Rev Vickers English took up his place in the parish the Sunday school had been rebuilt. On the 10th December 1915 a special service was held in memory of those who had fallen in defence of their country.

A service of praise and thanksgiving was held in the church on November the 17th 1918. February 16, 1924, saw Colonel Bolton unveil the War Memorial built in the grounds of the parish church engraved on the four sides are the names of those from St Johns Parish who died during the Great War of 1914-1918. The Rev Vickers English made his last appearance in Church on 13th October 1929 having been poorly for some time and confined to the vicarage at Rosehill House.

