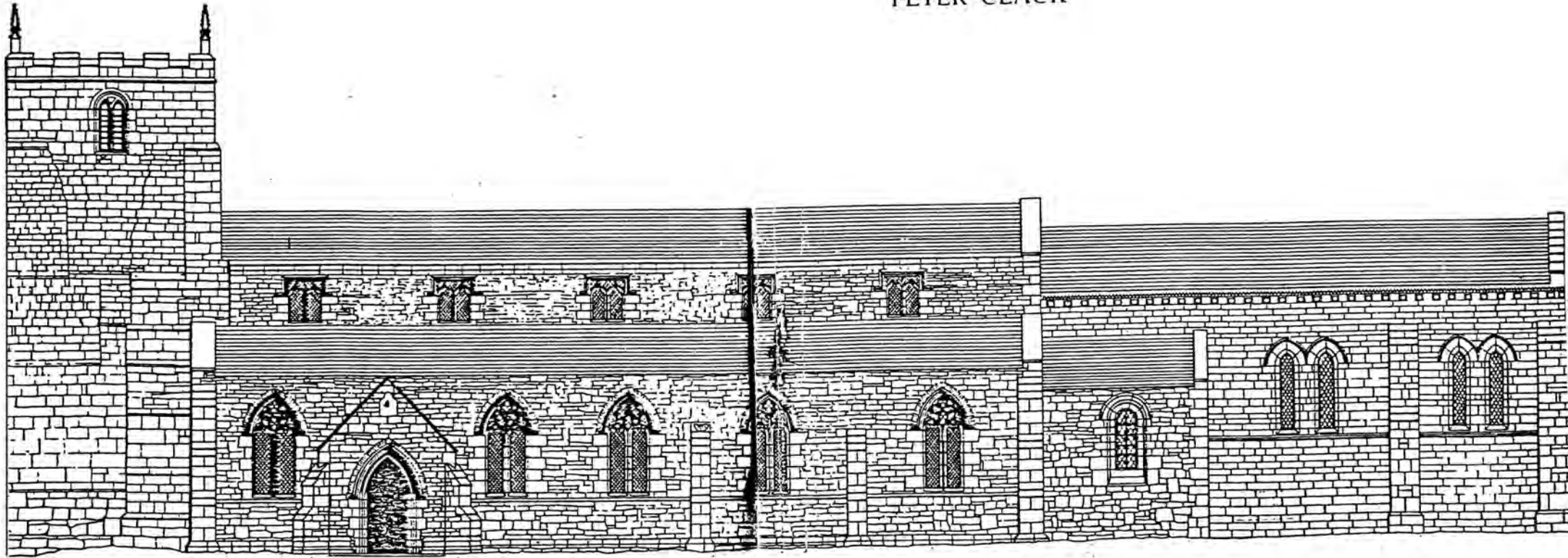


*St. Laurence
Pittington*

Church Guide

by

PETER CLACK



I would like to thank Peter Clack, who is the Dept. of the Environment's Archaeological field-officer in the north-east, for an immense amount of work in preparing this guide. It is the first guide this century, and represents a real advance on all previous works of the last century. I feel he would be content if his work served to pass on the enthusiasm he has for this building to others. Our thanks as a Church are due to all who are helping to preserve the building for the future: The Dept. of the Environment, the City and County Councils of Durham, the Dean and Chapter of Durham, and the village of Pitlington itself. Lastly, there is the care of Ian Curry, our Church architect, who has supervised all the restoration--for which we owe him a great deal.

PETER SEDGWICK,

Priest-in-Charge, Pitlington, March 1978.

HISTORY

The villages of North and South Pitlington—now Low Pitlington and Pitlington Hallgarth, respectively—appear to have formed part of the original endowment of the Priory of Durham in the tenth or early eleventh centuries. In the early fourteenth century Alan of Pitlington made a grant of land of which part was described as *Aldtunestedes*. Since North Pitlington and possibly South Pitlington have settlement forms which imply that they were laid out anew in the late eleventh or twelfth centuries, it is possible that the name *Aldtunestedes* refers to an earlier settlement replaced by one or both Pitlingtons.

Shortly after 1258 Durham Priory established and built a manor house in South Pitlington which was regularly repaired until rebuilt in stone in about 1450 and again in 1540. After the re-allocation of church lands following the Dissolution of the monasteries in 1536, part of the building was removed by Ralph Tunstall (1580-1619) and more when the vicarage was built in the nineteenth century.

The site of the Prior's manor house lies North-west of the church, while the rest of the village of South Pitlington lies north and east of the manor house, being mainly slight earthworks, with the present Manor House and Hallgarth Farm probably representing the northern limit of the settlement.

CHURCH

The church originally consisted of an aisleless nave and chancel. The nave extended from the present tower to the east end of the fourth bay at which point the chancel will have started. The fourth pier on each side of the nave consists of two responds attached to a piece of walling.

Nave

Details of the first chancel are unknown, but the nave had a pair of small round-headed windows on each side which are still visible. The westernmost window on the North side contains a remarkable painting of AD c 1070-1150, depicting the consecration of St Cuthbert by Archbishop Theodore and his vision at the table of the Abbess Aelfleda. The painting has recently been restored with the aid of a grant from the Pilgrim Trust. A copy of each of the scenes can be seen at the West end of the South aisle. It is possible that there originally more such paintings in the Church.

North Aisle

In about 1180-1195 the church was extended to the North when an aisle was added and the North nave wall pierced for an arcade. The outer order of the round-headed arches of the arcade has a chevron moulding to the nave and is plain to the aisle. The inner order is square and plain on both sides. The piers are of distinctive form, being alternatively circular and octagonal. The octagonal piers have an attached shaft at each angle with a flat space between while the circular piers with an attached spiral are paralleled at Orford, Suffolk and Compton Martin. The aisle was originally lit by two lancet windows which were replaced in 1846 by four round-headed windows in the Norman style.

Tower

The tower was added to the West end of the nave in the late twelfth or early thirteenth century, the tower arch being dateable to AD 1180-1220. The structural history is complex, but may be as follows. The lowest stage might originally have been very much smaller, as shown by projecting masonry on the exterior of the South-east corner. The rest of the first stage and all of the second stage was then added, probably being contemporary with the tower arch. The top stage was built perhaps in the fifteenth century when the clerestorey may have been added to the nave.

At least one of the buttresses to the tower was built in the early seventeenth century. On the North side there is a semi-octagonal stair turret.

South Aisle

The South Aisle was built c 1225-1250, when an arcade of five pointed arches with circular piers was pierced through the South Nave wall, thereby damaging the two round-headed windows of the original church. Three windows, one west of the present porch, lit the aisle. Each was of two lights under a pointed arch. All these windows were restored in the nineteenth century with a new pattern in the tracery.

The South door of the Church is round-headed and was removed from its first position to its present one when the South aisle was built. The porch was added in the mid-fourteenth century and rebuilt in 1846.

It is probable that the North aisle was extended by one bay to the East at the same time as the South aisle was built. The new arcade was similar to those on the South side. The round Chancel arch was also moved by one bay to the East.

Chancel

This was probably built at the same time as the North aisle (c 1180-95). In 1225-1250 it was reduced in length when the nave and both aisles were extended by one bay to the East and the chancel arch moved. There were three tall lancet windows at the East end and two on the South side which were later blocked. A wide, pointed window was inserted probably in the fourteenth century.

A side chapel was built on the North side of the Chancel in the early thirteenth century. Two small windows (now blocked and only visible on the exterior) may have lit the Chapel. There were two arches providing access from the chancel which were blocked by 1790. It is thought that the chapel may have been demolished in the seventeenth century. Two of the arch capitals may be seen at the East end of the North aisle where they were moved probably in 1846, in which year the chancel was pulled down and rebuilt. A thirteenth century piscina was built into the South wall of the sanctuary.

Restoration

Many minor works will have been carried out on the Church during its life to keep it in good repair. In 1846, however, a major restoration of the fabric took place, with drastic consequences: only the four western bays of the Nave remain of the Medieval church. The North and South aisles were rebuilt from the foundations, as was the porch. Both aisles were extended by one bay to the East.

The clerestorey and South aisle windows were all renewed, while the two pointed windows of the North aisle were replaced by a series of "Norman" style windows, and an imitation thirteenth century window.

Perhaps the most misleading alteration to the fabric was the removal of the fifth, pointed, arch from the North arcade and placing it as the sixth arch in the lengthened South arcade. The two western arches on the North were 'restored' to appear contemporary with the other arches of the arcade. The only redeeming feature (if such it is) of this holocaust is the new pier between the fifth and sixth (new) arches of the North arcade which is carved out of one stone.

The Chancel, built in 1846, was enlarged by the addition of an aisle on each side in 1897-9, and was lengthened and increased in height in 1905.

MEMORIALS

There are many memorials in the Church, most of which are in the form of tablets fixed to the walls or are stained glass windows.

South Aisle

1. Window glass dedicated to Thomas Robinson of Sherburn who "drowned in the attempt to save life at Keeper on the evening of June 28, 1867" at the age of 35.
2. A tablet recording alterations to the chancel and the erection of the organ by public subscription in 1905.

North Aisle

Window dedications

1. Ralph Henry Cleasby of Broomside House, churchwarden for 35 years. 1903.
2. Rev. J. Barmby. 1899.
3. Rev. J. Barmby, Vicar of Pittington 1875-94 and Fellow of Magdalen College, Oxford. 1899.
4. Mary Guest-Williams of Plas-yr-Ackery, Painswick, Glos., who died on St Bartholomew's day, 1898. 1900.
5. Isabella Baker Baker and George Conyers Baker Baker. 1896.

Tablet memorials

1. "In memory of MARY ANN WEBSTER who in the 18th year of her age on the evening of Sunday the 18th of August 1830 (during the absence of her master and mistress) was cruelly murdered at HALLGARTH MILL in this Parish by a man her fellow servant who was executed for the offence at Durham on Monday the 28th of February 1831."
2. James Barmby, D.D., Principal of Hatfield Hall 1859-76, Vicar of Pittington Parish 1875-94, who died at Northallerton in 1897.
3. Ralph Henry Cleasby who died on 10th November 1901 aged 65 and Walter his son, killed in action near Heinesburg on 10th April 1902 aged 29.

4. ~~Ferdinand Baker Baker~~ (18¹²/~~12~~/1858-28/9/1909) and his two sisters ~~Isabel Elizabeth Baker Baker~~ (13/12/1851-8/10/1941) and ~~Eva Conyers Baker Baker~~ (2/3/1854-2/3/1931).
5. John Francis Baker Baker (31/7/1860-18/5/1925), William Henry Baker Baker, Admiral, O.B.E., D.L., J.P. (7/12/1862-7/8/1932) and Henry George Baker Baker (9/7/1850-14/3/1905).
6. George Conyers Baker Baker (5/6/1857-1/6/1892), Captain of the 60th Rifles who died at Mandalay in Upper Burmah having served in the Zulu, Transvaal, Egyptian and Sudan Wars between 1877 and 1884.
7. Henry John Baker Baker (29/6/1822-28/1/1871) and Isabella his wife (1/2/1831-2/3/1896).

Tower

1. A tablet below the window records that it was erected by public subscription in memory of Thomas Crawford of Littleton House, churchwarden for 49 years, who died on 26th September, 1887, aged 75.
2. A tablet recording that the Tower Clock was dedicated to Alfred Harrison in 1898 and that the church was restored and the chancel aisles added under the care of Hicks (architect) between 1897 and 1899 at a cost of £2000.

Chancel

Window dedications

1. The three lights of the East window are dedicated to John Pemberton and Edward Shipperdson. The northern light has the dedication "To the Glory of God by John Baker."

Tablet memorials

1. Alfred Boddy, Vicar of Pitlington 1922-30, previously vicar of All Saints, Monkwearmouth for 36 years, who died on 10th September 1930 aged 75 and Mary his wife who died on St Marks Day 1928 aged 69.
2. John Pemberton of Sherburn Hall, died on 29th January 1843 aged 64 and Mary Dorothea his wife, died 14th February 1864 aged 82.
3. Rev. W. S. Guest-Williams, vicar of Pitlington shortly before his death on 7th August 1907 at Great Rollright Rectory, Oxford.
4. Arcading on North wall of chancel dedicated to the memory of Elizabeth Guest-Williams (4/4/1823-2/2/1902) in 1905.

Memorials in the floor

1. John Pemberton of Sherburn Hall, died 29th January 1864 aged 82.
2. Edmund Hector Shipperdson of Hallgarth (1806-1879).
3. Adeline, wife of the Rev. H. Shipperdson (1802-1873).
- 2nd 4. George Baker Baker of Elemore Hall who died on 15th May 1837 aged 83; Isabella his wife who died on 5th June 1833 aged 70, and their daughter Judith, wife of Henry Towers.
5. Sir Thomas Hall of Elemore Hall, died on 10th April 1680 aged 35, his wife Susanna who died on 25th November 1715 and his daughter Elizabeth, wife of Thomas Conyers who died on 18th July 1695 aged 24.
6. George Baker of Elemore Hall, died on 15th May 1774 aged 51, and his wife Judith who died on 30th April 1810 aged 86. 1876
7. Sir Ralph Shipperdson who died on 16th June 1719 aged 42 and his son Edward who died on 14th August 1776, aged 67.
8. The Pavement of the Chancel is dedicated to the memory of Isabella Baker Baker of Elemore Hall in 1897.

SCULPTURED STONES

North Aisle

1. An effigy of one of the Fitz Marmaduke lords of Horden, dated to about 1280.

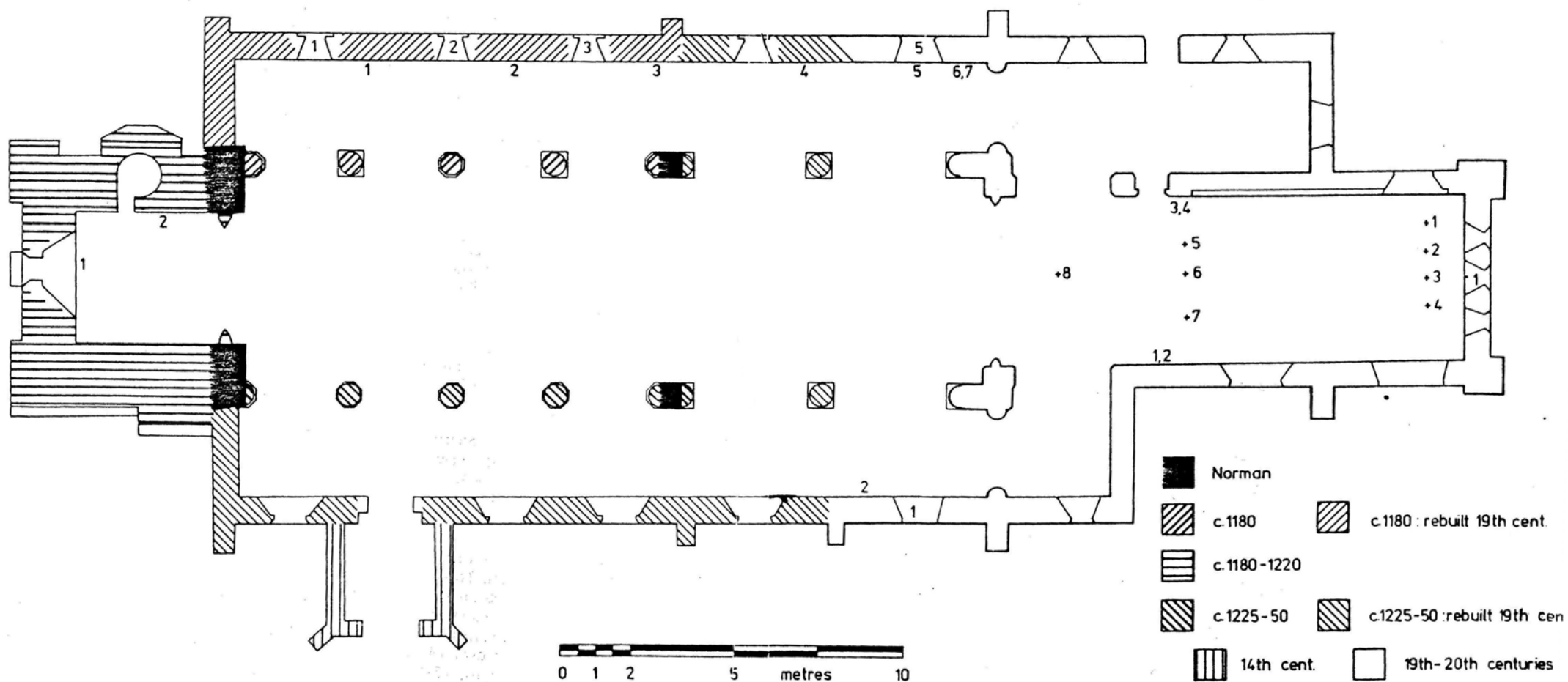
South Aisle

2. A grave slab of Frosterley or Stanhope marble bearing the inscription:
 NOMEN ABENS CRISTI TVMVLO TVMVLATVR IN ISTO
 QVI TVMVLVM CERNIT COMMENDET CVM PRECE CRISTO
 (One having the name of Christ is buried in this grave. Let him who beholds
 this grave commend him with a prayer to Christ.)

The inscription has been recut in the nineteenth century. It is believed that this Christian may have been he who held lands in South Sherburn in the twelfth century and who was Bishop Pudsey's (?master) mason.

3. On the exterior face of the South aisle, at the top of one of the buttresses is a sundial. It is not possible to be certain about the date, but it may have belonged to the first church.

Pittington church: St Laurence



Nave

Collected together at the West end of the Nave are a number of grave markers and sculptured stones.

4. A gravemarker believed to be for twin sons who died in infancy.
5. A twelfth century grave marker in the shape of a house with a ridged, shingle- (tile-) clad roof.
- 6-11. Six grave markers, all medieval, and all with a simple incised cross with a geometric pattern at the top of the cross.
12. There are, in addition, a number of fragments of tracery and mouldings. Among these is a corbel with a muzzled bear's head carved on it.

BELLS

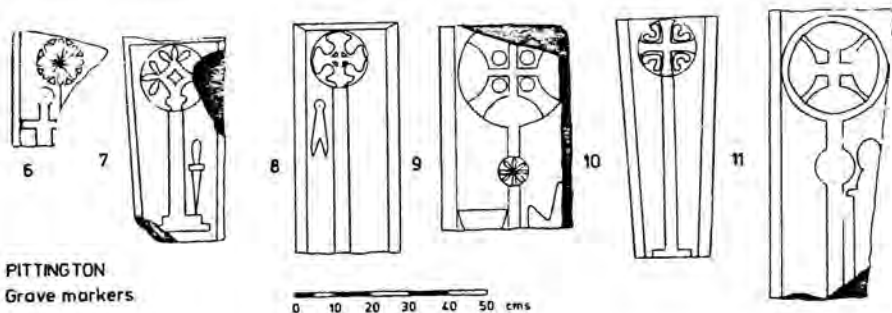
There are three pre-Reformation bells in the tower all of which are inscribed.

1. *Sca Maria ora pro nobis*
2. *Sca trinitas unus deus miserere nobis*
3. *Sancta Marineta . . .*

PLATE

The plate is all of the nineteenth century, apart from one chalice, which is Elizabethan: Maker's Mark 1570-71.

Medieval Grave Markers and Stones



PITTINGTON
Grave markers

INCUMBENTS

Richard	1147	Robert Jakeson	1510
Peter de Derlyington	1235	Ralph Whitehed	1528
Yvo	1285	William Whitehed	1530
William de Billingham	1297	Nicholas Merley	1548
John de Dalton	1309	Roger Watson	1560
Hugh de Corbrig	1329	Robert Murrey	1562
Thomas de Throcklington	1340	William Murrey	1594
Hugh de Prendstret	1345	Richard Thursbye	1621
Richard de Aukeland	1356	George Shaw	1631
William Baty	1358	Christopher Thompson	
Reginald Porter	1388	Christopher Thompson (II)	
John Appelby	1407	John Powell	1717
William Winlawton	1419	William Thompson	1718
John Gresmire	1422	Arthur Shepherd	1730
Robert Bates	1439	Samuel Viner	1770
William Maymorne	1452	James Deason	1772
William Greffeson	1499	Samuel Gamlen	1810
Thomas Patenson	1507	James Miller	1822

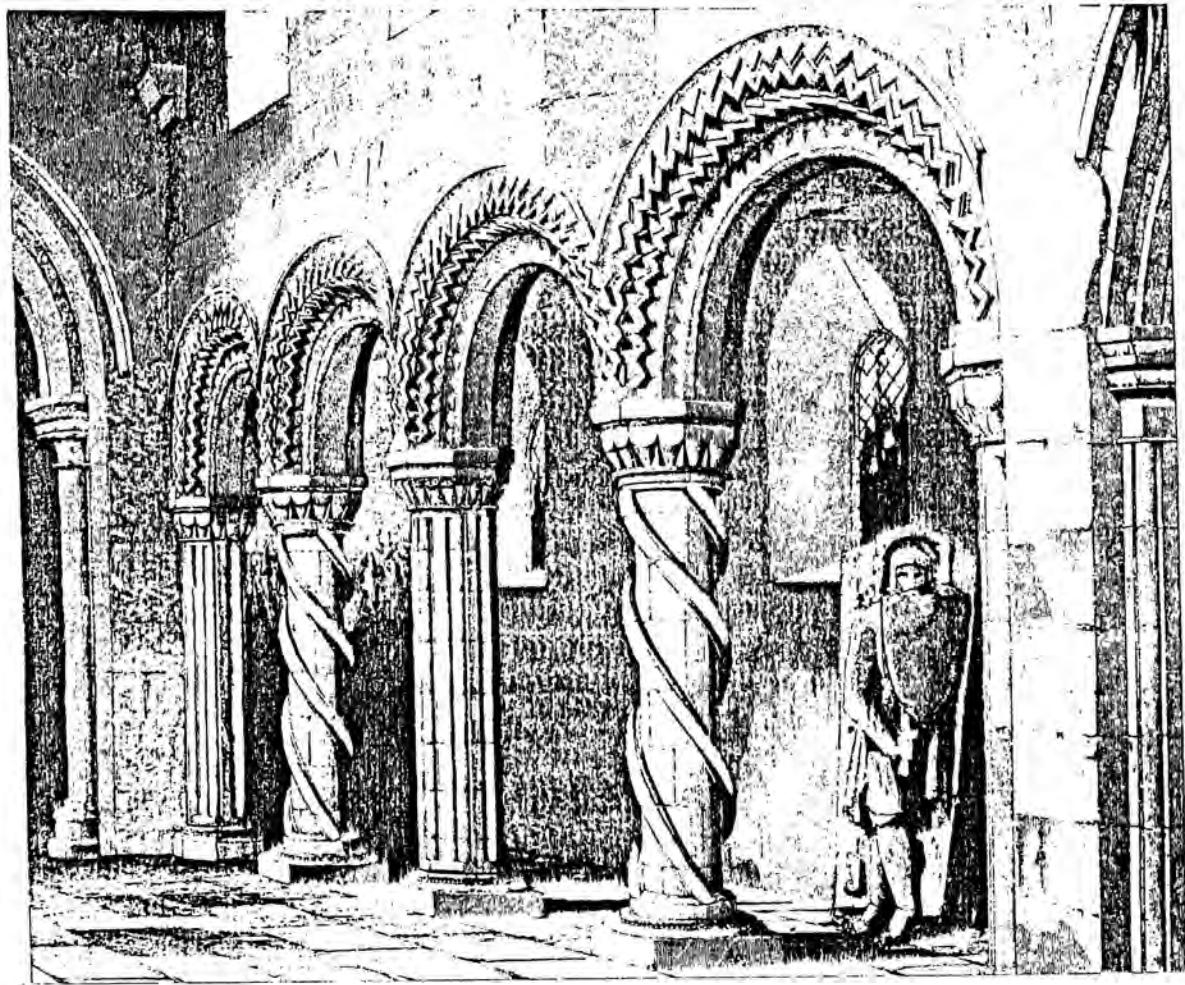
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P. A. G. C.



VICARS OF HALLGARTH

1854	John Edwards
1862	Henry Stoker
1875	James Barmby
1894	Samuel Guest-Williams
1920	Hubert Hughes
1922	Alexander Boddy
1930	Edward Walter Bolland
1940	William Allen
1959	Jack Norwood
1974	David Davison
1978	Peter Sedgwick
1980	Charles Havens

PITTINGTON AFTER THE REFORMATION

In the first years after the dissolution of the Benedictine Monastery, Pittington changed little. The last Prior of Pittington, or Hallgarth, Hugh Whitehead, became the first Dean of Durham. He built the last Hall at Hallgarth in 1524.

After his death, Ralph Tunstall, Prebendary of Durham, pulled the building down. The stones were used elsewhere. In 1570, a chalice was bought, which is still in use. The Register dates from 1538—very early. There is a vestry minute book of 1584-1699.

The Nineteenth Century

In 1801 the population at the first Census was 220. In the 1820s the first pits opened and in 1831 the population was 1,632. A strike in 1844 was broken by Lord Londonderry who brought many Ulstermen to Pittington, and built the new village of High Pittington. By 1851 the population was 2,530. The pub "The Duke of Wellington" records the visit to the new pits in 1827 of Lord Londonderry and the Duke of Wellington.

The main improvements were by the Methodists, Primitive and Wesleyan, who came to Pittington in 1832. One local preacher, Sam Galbraith, became Liberal M.P. for Mid-Durham in the middle of the nineteenth-century. He lived in Wellington Street as a boy. Another famous Pittington Methodist was Peter Lee, Chairman of the County Council, after whom the new town of Peterlee is named.

In 1874, the Co-op opened, with Church and Chapel supporting it. As well as a store, it built houses and gave Charitable relief. By 1913, only Elemore Pit was working. This closed this century, and the village population, dropped. However, although the Co-op finally closed, new buildings have been built this century: in 1933, the county primary school; in 1962 the Methodist Church of St. John's; in 1968 the Village Hall. Today, the population is steady around 1,300.

PETER SEDGWICK