

The background image is a photograph of the interior of St Giles' Church in Pontefract. It shows a large, multi-paned stained glass window with various religious scenes. To the left of the window, there is a statue of the Virgin Mary holding the Christ Child, and a small wooden structure with a hanging lantern. The lighting is warm and comes from the left, creating a soft glow.

# The Parish Church of St Giles', Pontefract

A Guide to the Church's  
Stained Glass Windows

Suggested Donation: £2

# A Warm Welcome to St Giles'

St Giles Church, is the Anglican Parish Church of Pontefract.

Situated in the heart of the town the Grade II\* listed building, with its unique octagonal tower that is visible for miles around, proclaims the Glory of God to the people of Pontefract and its many visitors.

We would like to thank you for choosing to visit our lively and growing church.

We are an open, welcoming and inclusive parish and we are sure that you will enjoy your visit.

Everyone is welcome here at St Giles' and if you require any assistance or information, please ask one of our Open Church volunteers.

The windows are fine examples of Victorian stained glass. The windows in the North and South aisles depict biblical passages and are dedicated to long serving vicars and members of notable Pontefract families.

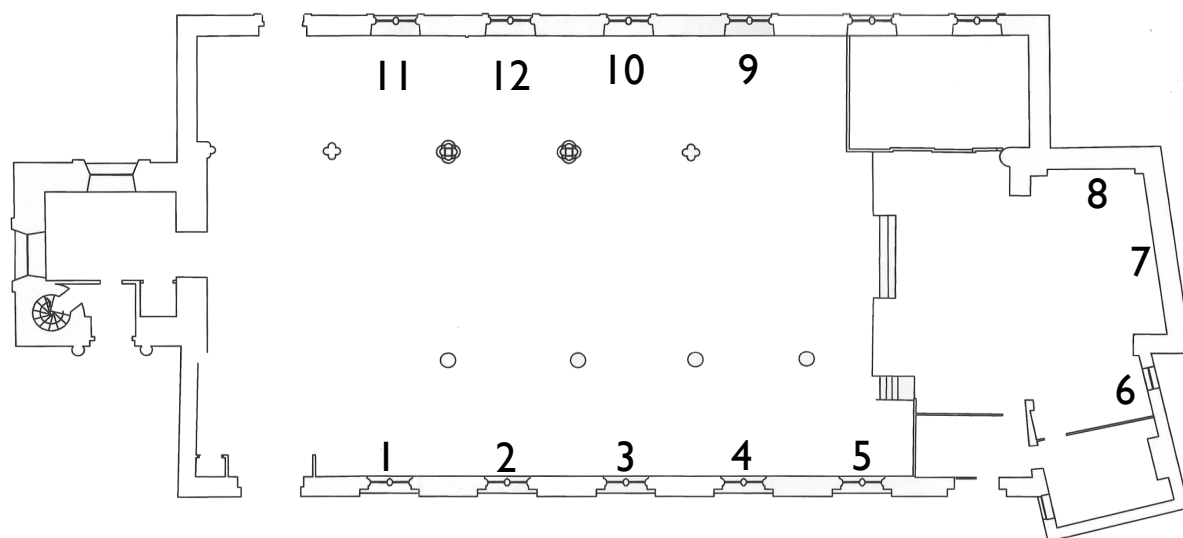
The research for this guide was assisted by Bruce Dalglish and Adrian Pope.

*If you have enjoyed reading this visitors' guide, and would like to contribute toward the work of the church, please place your donation in the publications box on the wall in Reception.*

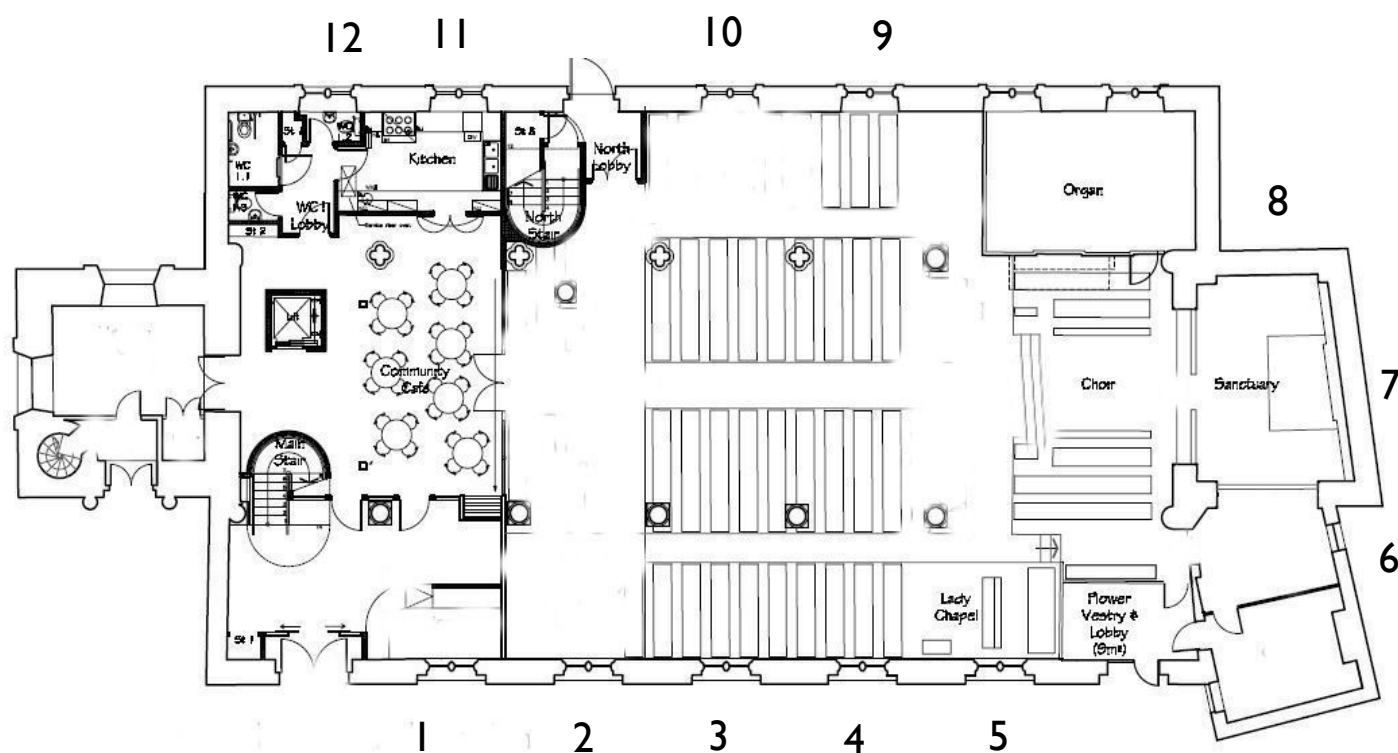


# The Locations of the Windows Pre 2012/13

## Reordering



## Post 2012/13 Reordering



### Key

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1. Coleman Family Window                   | 7. East Window                                   |
| 2. Dobson Family Window                    | 8. Rose Window                                   |
| 3. Henry Muscroft Window and Memorial      | 9. Rev'd James John Christie Window and Memorial |
| 4. Jos and Susannah Walker                 | 10. Edward Muscroft Window                       |
| 5. Rev'd Thomas Bisset Window and Memorial | 11. Harriet Smithers and Mary Linnell Window     |
| 6. Eliza Coleman Window and Memorial       | 12. Anne Hartley Window                          |

# I. Coleman Family Window

Your walk round the windows of St Giles' Church begins with this window in Reception. It is dedicated to Henry John Coleman and his sons James, Charles and Edmund and depicts The Parable of Five Talents. Henry married Eliza Muscroft (Window 6). Eliza was the sister of Henry Muscroft (Window 3) and Edward Muscroft (Window 10). Henry Coleman was an attorney and a solicitor. The family lived in Ropergate. James is recorded as being 18 when the 1861 Census was done. No records exist for Charles. Edmund became the Town Clerk of Pontefract. A Town Clerk is responsible for the records of a town, manages elections



and issues public notices. He is recorded in the 1881 Census as being single and practicing as a solicitor in St Martin in the Fields, London. It was not uncommon for parents to outlive their children in Victorian England. One in four children would die before the age of five. In industrial towns the average life expectancy was 26 years old.

Once you have finished looking at this window go through the door into the main body of church.

UNTO ONE HE GAVE FIVE TALENTS TO ANOTHER TWO TO ANOTHER ONE ||  
WELL DONE THOU GOOD AND FAITHFUL SERVANT [Matthew 25:23]  
THIS WINDOW IS DEDICATED BY ELIZA COLEMAN TO || THE GLORY OF GOD  
AND TO THE SACRED MEMORY OF  
HER HUSBAND JOHN COLEMAN WHO DIED || MARCH 27<sup>TH</sup> 1876 AGED 72  
YEARS AND OF THEIR  
THREE SONS JAMES HENRY WHO DIED DEC 5 186[5?] CHARLES HENRY JULY 24  
1869 & EDMUND HENRY AUG 8 1888



## 2. Dobson Family Window

Going through the door from Reception takes you into the South Aisle. This window is located behind the piano. It is dedicated to a father and son both named Samuel. It depicts The Parable of the Good Samaritan. Both men were wine merchants with Samuel Senior being the owner of the Market Place Spirit Vaults. He was born in Spofforth, North Yorkshire. Samuel Junior was 21 and unmarried when the 1861 Census was done. Elizabeth was born in North Shields. Her father was an innkeeper from Suffolk.



The window was designed and made by the firm of Ward and Hughes, London. Both founders of that business were dead by 1886 but the firm's signature on the glass suggests that it kept going some time after that.

TAKE CARE OF HIM & WHATSOEVER THOU SPENDIEST || MORE WHEN I COME  
BACK AGAIN WILL REPAY THEE [Luke 10:35]  
TO THE GLORY OF GOD THIS WINDOW IS PLACED BY ELIZABETH || DOBSON  
WIFE OF SAMUEL DOBSON BORN JUNE 11 1800  
DIED DECEMBER 26 1884 ALSO OF SAMUEL THWAITES DOBSON || SON OF  
SAMUEL DOBSON BORN JAN 10<sup>TH</sup> 1840 DIED APRIL 4 1867



# 3. Henry Muscroft Window and Memorial

THEY BROUGHT UNTO HIM ALL SICK ||  
PEOPLE AND HE HEALD THEM  
[Matthew 14:14]

IN LOVING MEMORY OF HENRY  
MUSCROFT MD OF PONTEFRACHT ||  
BORN MARCH 7 1830 DIED 5 [sic]  
1884 ERECTED BY HIS WIDOW AND  
CHILDREN

TO THE GLORY OF GOD  
AND THE MEMORY OF  
**HENRY MUSCROFT MD**  
SURGEON MAJOR 3<sup>RD</sup>  
BATTALION  
KING'S OWN LIGHT  
INFANTRY  
(FORMERLY THE WEST YORK  
RIFLES)

WHO DIED DEC<sup>R</sup> 5<sup>TH</sup> 1884 AGED  
54 YEARS.

THIS TABLET WAS ERECTED BY THE  
OFFICERS  
(PAST AND PRESENT) NON  
COMMISSIONED  
OFFICERS AND MEN OF THE  
BATTALION.





The next window in the South Aisle is dedicated to Henry Muscroft. It depicts Christ healing the sick. The pictured memorial is to the right of the window.

Henry Muscroft became a surgeon as his father, James, before him. He married Elizabeth Sinclair Bisset, who was born in Bourtie, Aberdeenshire, where her father, James, was minister. This wedding took place at some point between the 1861 and the 1871 Censuses as he is recorded as unmarried in the 1861 Census. The 1881 Census records that he was still working as a Medical Practitioner. He was the brother of Edward Muscroft (Window 10) and Eliza Coleman (Window 6).

Henry became Surgeon-Major to the West Yorkshire Rifles, later dubbed the King's Own Light Infantry. He also drew attention to the "most frightful state" of the water supply in Knottingley, where the population drank the canal water, "which in dry weather threw off a most obnoxious stench and was in a state of fermentation".

## 4. Jos and Susannah Walker Window



Jos (short for Joseph) was a local banker in Pontefract. He was born in Horbury, Susannah was born in Pontefract. One of his clerks, Robert Daniel Ryder, has a memorial in the South Aisle to the right of The Dobson Family Window (Window 3). This window depicts the Presentation of Christ at the temple.

LORD NOW LETTEST THOU THY SERVANT || DEPART IN PEACE ACCORDING TO THY WORD [Luke 2:29-32]

TO THE GLORY OF GOD AND IN MEMORY OF JO<sup>S</sup> WALKER || BORN SEP<sup>T</sup> 18<sup>TH</sup> 1802 DIED FEB<sup>Y</sup> 9<sup>TH</sup> 1885 AND SUSANNAH || HIS WIFE BORN OCT<sup>R</sup> 3<sup>RD</sup> 1803 DIED JAN<sup>Y</sup> 7<sup>TH</sup> 1894 THIS || WINDOW IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED BY THEIR CHILDREN



# 5. Rev'd Thomas Bisset Window and Memorial

## WINDOW:

[Left pane] SOLOMON

BUILDING THE TEMPLE

[Right pane] THE HEAVENLY  
JERUSALEM

## PLAQUE below window:

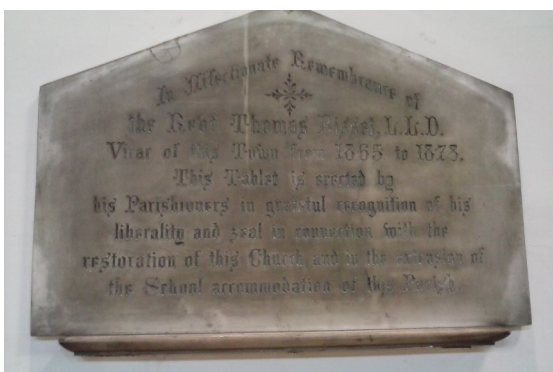
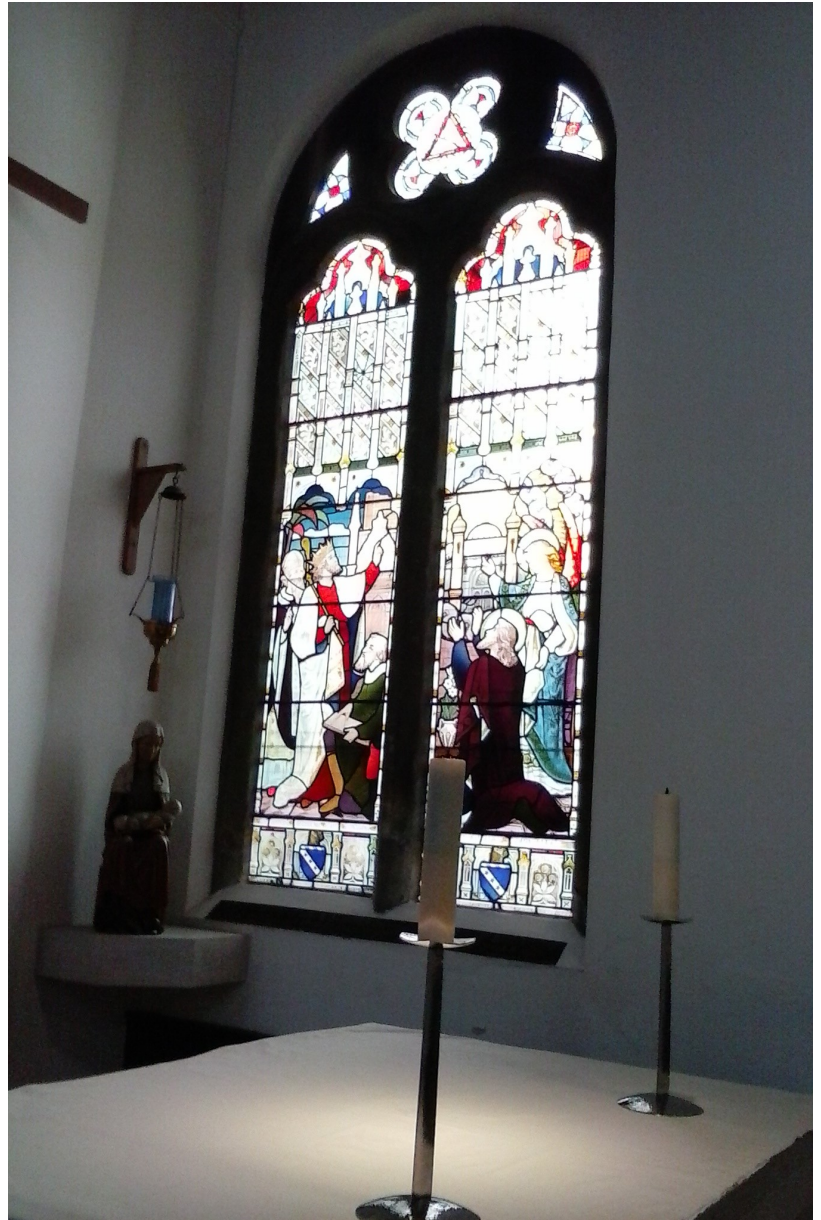
† TO THE GLORY OF GOD AND  
IN MEMORY OF THE REV<sup>D</sup>

THOMAS BISSET LL.D.

VICAR OF PONTEFRACT BORN

FEBRUARY 3<sup>RD</sup> AD 1801 DIED

JANUARY 22<sup>ND</sup> AD 1878



In Affectionate Remembrance of



the Rev<sup>d</sup> Thomas Bisset LL.D.

Vicar of this Town from 1865 to 1878.

This tablet is erected by  
his Parishioners in grateful recognition of his  
liberality and zeal in connection with the  
restoration of this church, and in the extension of  
the School accommodation of this Parish.

The final window in the South Aisle is dedicated to the Rev'd Thomas Bisset. It depicts King Solomon building the temple in the left hand panel and the right hand panel is the Vision of the new Jerusalem depicting the building of the church spiritually and materially. The pictured memorial is to right of the window.

Rev'd Thomas was born in Scotland on 3<sup>rd</sup> February 1801 and died on January 22<sup>nd</sup> 1878. He is recorded in the 1871 Census as unmarried. He was Vicar of Pontefract from 1865 to 1878. He is best remembered for his reordering of St Giles' between 1868 and 1870. The reordering included the removal of the box pews, insertion of gothic window tracery, the organ was moved to the South Aisle and alterations were made to the Chancel. The family motto *Abscissa Virescit*, translates loosely as *Though we are cut down, we flourish again*. The motto was created when the English were trying to crush the Scots in Middle Ages. The Bisset family were fierce warriors who would not be captured and were determined to fight on.

When you have finished looking at the windows in the South Aisle moved on to the Chancel Steps to look at the East Window.



## 6. Eliza Coleman Window and Memorial

This window is located in the Vicar's Vestry which is normally locked. It is, however, possible to ask to view this window on a Wednesday or a Saturday morning when there is a Church Warden on duty.

It is dedicated to Eliza Coleman, wife of Henry John Coleman (Window 1) and sister to Henry Muscroft (Window 3) and Edward Muscroft (Window 10). The text at the top of the window reads:

THEIR ANGELS DO ALWAYS BEHOLD THE  
FACE OF MY FATHER WHICH IS IN HEAVEN.

The text on the small stone plaque under the window reads:

THIS WINDOW IS ERECTED  
BY GRATEFUL MOTHERS OF THIS  
PARISH AD 1899 PSALM CXVI.

The text on the brass plaque to the left of the window reads:

IN MEMORY OF: ELIZA COLEMAN  
WHO CAUSED THIS WINDOW TO BE PLACED:  
AND WHO DIED. (BEFORE SEEING IT INSERTED)  
† DEC 21<sup>ST</sup> 1890 ... AGED .71 †  
RESTORED BY MEMBERS OF THE  
FAMILY IN 1963  
IN MEMORY OF  
HENRY WILLIAM AND GERALD EDWARD  
COLEMAN  
† SURGEON SONS OF THE ABOVE †



## 7. East Window



At the Chancel Steps look East towards the imposing and beautiful East Window. It depicts the Crucifixion in the central window, with the Resurrection in the left window and the Ascension in the right window. The top of the three quatrefoils depicts a lamb.

We think the window might have been made by the London based Kempe of London in 1879. Other windows made by Kempe are in Wakefield Cathedral and York Minster. There is a possibility that this window may not have been made by Kempe, however. All Kempe windows have a signature

wheatsheaf which is missing from this window. The window was given to church by a local clergyman Rev'd J A Rhodes.



## 8. Rose Window



The Rose Window is on left hand wall of the Chancel. In order to get a better view of this window you may have to move back to the Rev'd Thomas Bissett window (Window 5). The window depicts Christ in the centre surrounded by angels.

# 9. Rev'd James John Christie

## Window and Memorial

Left hand window:

J.J.C.

OB XXIV [24<sup>th</sup>] DEC

MCMII [1902]

Right hand window:

M.A.W.C.

OB XXV [25<sup>th</sup>] NOV

MDCCCXCIV [1894]



PLAQUE under window

A.M.D.C.

IN LOVING MEMORY OF THE REV.  
JAMES JOHN CHRISTIE FOR 21  
YEARS VICAR OF PONTEFRACT  
AND MARIA AUSTIN WARMAN HIS  
WIFE THIS WINDOW AND TABLET  
ARE ERECTED BY THEIR SONS

---

They rest from their labours and  
their works do follow them





After you have finished looking at the East and Rose Windows turn left and walk past the organ into the North Aisle. This window is dedicated to a former Vicar of Pontefract, Rev'd James John Christie and his wife Maria. It depicts St Paul and Dorcas, a lady who St Paul raised from the dead.

James John and his wife Maria were both born in Jersey, the Channel Islands. He was Vicar of Pontefract from 1878 - 1899. He is recorded in 1861 as being Second Master at the East Retford Grammar School and in 1871 as Clergyman without the care of souls, schoolmaster at Rotherham Grammar School. It seems that he made himself unpopular at St Giles' by trying to revive the system of tithes. A tithe is giving a tenth of your income to the church. In Medieval times tithes were collected in villages and divided between the parish priest, upkeep of the church, the poor and the bishop. Such was the strength of feeling that an effigy of him was burned in the Market Place! The Christie family also had a motto: *Sic viresco*: thus I flourish.



# 10. Edward Muscroft Window



The next window you come to in the North Aisle is dedicated to Edward Muscroft, brother of Henry Muscroft (Window 3) and Eliza Coleman (Window 6). It depicts Christ walking on water towards his Disciples who have been caught in a storm whilst fishing. This was designed by Ward and Hughes, Firth Street, Soho, London. After the death of the founders, T.F. Curtis was the main designer. His signature and date is on this glass.

Edward was a wine and spirit merchant. When the 1891 Census was done he is recorded as living in Park House. He was recorded as

unmarried in the 1891 Census but one of his nieces of the Coleman family and one domestic servant lived with him. He owned Muscroft's Beastfair Vaults and Muscroft's Market Place Vaults, later to become the Borough Arms, a pub which is located on the opposite side of the Market Place to St Giles'.

## WINDOW:

[Left pane] IT IS I BE NOT AFRAID [John 6:20]

[Right pane] TO THE GLORY OF GOD AND IN MEMORY OF  
EDWARD MUSCROFT OF PONTEFRACT BORN  
5 MARCH 1828 DIED 30 MARCH 1898, THIS  
WINDOW IS DEDICATED BY HIS  
NEPHEWS AND NIECES A.D. 1899

# II. Harriet Smithers and Mary Limnell Window

This window is the kitchen. Please note: the kitchen is not open to visitors. It is best to view this window on a Wednesday (10am-12pm) or Saturday morning (9am-12pm) when coffees are served. To view this window go into the café opposite Reception. The window depicts a couple of Saints with a dove for Harriet.

Despite extensive searching no records can be found about Harriet. As for Mary the first record of her living in Pontefract comes in the 1881 Census. She's recorded as living in a boarding house on Salter Row. Her age is given as 60. She is receiving annuity. By the 1901 Census she is recorded as 'living on her own means'. Her daughter Eleanor Mary Limnell is recorded as living with her in both Censuses. Interestingly, Eleanor is recorded as being a British Subject (France). Could Mary have lived in France for a period of time and given birth to Eleanor there?



## WINDOW:

[Left pane] PURE IN HEART [Mathew 5:8]

[Right pane] THY LIGHT IS COME [Isaiah 60:1]

TO THE GLORY OF GOD AND IN || MEMORY OF HARRIET SMITHERS  
WHO DIED 21<sup>ST</sup> MAY 1878 AND || MARY LIMNELL WHO DIED  
3<sup>RD</sup> APRIL 1902 THE GIFT OF THEIR CHILDREN.



# 12. Anne Hartley Window



WINDOW:

[Left pane] THY WILL BE DONE

[Right pane] HE IS RISEN

TO THE GLORY OF GOD AND IN || LOVING MEMORY OF ANNE, WIFE OF  
BERNARD HARTLEY OF || PONTEFRACHT WHO DIED AT PAU BASSES  
PYRENEES FRANCE 8<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 1894 || IN THE 63<sup>RD</sup> YEAR OF HER AGE

The final window on your walk round church is located in the Ladies' Toilet at the West End of church. To the left of the serving hatch for the kitchen is a door which takes you into where the toilets are located. This window was originally located where the North Door is now. It was moved as part of the reordering to give natural light to the toilet. It depicts a couple of Saints

Anne was born in Gloucester. You will have noticed the location of her death. They were forced to move to France following the Featherstone Riot of 1893. Bernard, as the local Justice for the Peace, had to deal with a rowdy 'rebellion' by miners in Featherstone. Because of the deteriorating situation he read the Riot Act and got soldiers to shoot into the crowd in an attempt to restore order. Unfortunately, two miners were killed. The couple moved to France to avoid the strong reactions which the event caused. Sadly, Anne died there before they could return to England.

Sadly, Bernard is best remembered for this event. He came from a family of architects spanning several generations. For example his grandfather Bernard (1745 – 1834) designed Pontefract Town Hall and carried out eastward extensions to the north & south aisles either side of the Chancel in St Giles before 1800. His uncle Jesse is famous for almost completely rebuilding and then expanding Liverpool Docks. Bernard himself was originally a Bridge Engineer. He later became the Civil Engineer for West Yorkshire from 1855-1882. He was also a Church Warden at St Giles' and became a freeman of Pontefract in 1911. He died in 1913. The family have two streets named after them called Hartley Park View and Hartley Park Avenue. The family house was on Halfpenny Lane and is now the Miners Welfare.



# The St Giles' Project is supported by:



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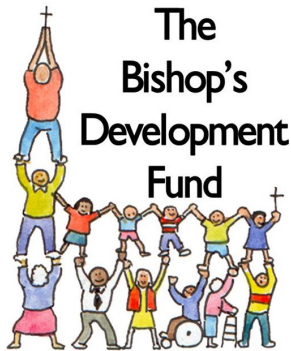


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