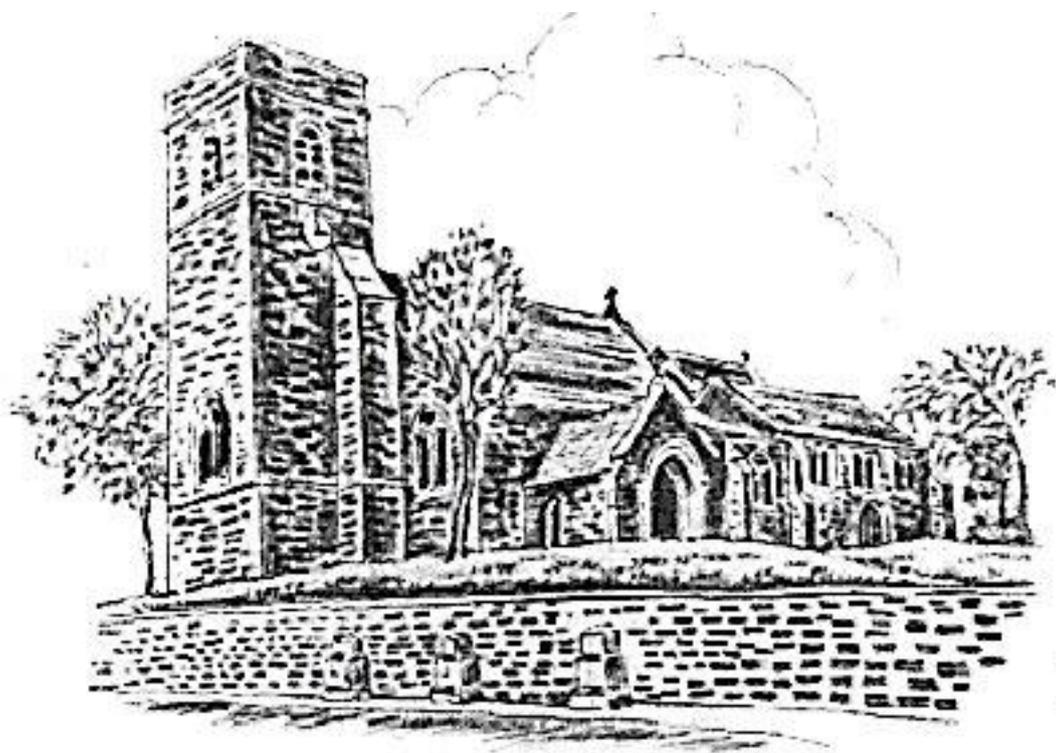


**A Brief History  
of the  
Monuments and Memorials  
in the  
Parish Church of S Helen, Hemsworth**





If you stand at the back of the Church and look towards the Chancel, what you see is a reconstruction of the Medieval Church by the eminent Victorian architect J. L. Pearson. Pearson managed to retain some of the interesting monuments of the Church, but we do know that during the 16<sup>th</sup> & 17<sup>th</sup> centuries there was a considerable spoilation of the church and many monuments and memorials of which there are records have been destroyed or removed. However we are lucky because those remaining are really interesting and they tell us the story of the families who worshipped here in past times.

### **The Lady Chapel**

This part of the church was built in the 14<sup>th</sup> century as a Chantry Chapel of Our Lady. The patronage of the Church in medieval times was in the hands of the De Wannerville family who probably built the chantry in the 14<sup>th</sup> century. It contains a very ancient tomb stone - set in the floor, to the right of the altar, it is now very fragile, worn and difficult to read, but is a hidden gem of the Church. Latest research dates it as late 14<sup>th</sup> or 15<sup>th</sup> Century. It is probably the tomb of Nicholas Wortley and his wife Elizabeth De Wannerville - both born about 1318; Elizabeth was the daughter of Adam De Wannerville. The historical context of the tomb and the chantry chapel is the reign of King Richard II deposed and murdered at Pontefract Castle in 1399 and the reigns of King Henry IV and Henry V.

During the reformation the chantries were abolished by King Henry VIII and their endowments taken by the crown. This chapel became, overtime, the site of the pew of the lords of the manor. During the 18<sup>th</sup> century the manor was shared between the Todd family of Newstead Hall and the Bradshaw family. The memorial above the archway on the left hand wall of the chapel is to William Todd, Captain H.M. 43<sup>rd</sup> Regiment of foot, who died in 1792 aged 36 years. His family home was Newstead Hall. He lived at the time of the French Revolution and the American War of Independence.

On the south wall are memorials to Thomas Bradshaw, Lord of the manor, who lived at the High Hall who died in 1765 and Emilia Pearson (his dear friend?).

To the memory of Thomas Bradshaw. Esq. late of the High Hall. Died August 12th, 1765, aged 72.
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In Memory of  
Mrs. Emelia Peirson,  
who was justly esteemed the sincerest of friends.  
She was a kind tender mother,  
endowed with great good nature, joined to good sense  
to which was added the most agreeable sweetness of temper.  
She died the 15th of July, 1753  
and was truly lamented all who knew her merit.

This Monument was erected by Thomas Bradshaw, Esq.  
of the High Hall, to whom she was nearly related.

Later the Wood family (Lord Halifax) and the Leatham family became lords of the manor and owned the pew on this site, hence the memorials. After the Great War the chapel was restored for worship and the altar set up again and dedicated to Our Lady also as a memorial to the men of Hemsworth who gave up their lives in the 1<sup>st</sup> World War. Their memorial is on the right hand wall, and forms the Parish Cenotaph.

### **The North Aisle**

The wall of the North Aisle has two large memorials. The large 18<sup>th</sup> Century Classical monument of Carrara marble is to the memory of the Stocks family of Kinsley and the more interesting Gargrave Monument.

### **The Gargrave Monument**

Erected by Prudence Gargrave in 1631 in memory of her mother Catherine. Prudence was married to Richard Berry, Oliver Cromwell's doctor.

Memoriae Sacrum.

To the happie and perpetual memory of her dear and ever honored mother, Catharin, late wife to Thomas Gargrave. sonn and heire to Sr Cotton Gargrave. of Nosthall, in the county of Yorke, knight: daughter to Thomas Wentworth, of Wentworth-Woodhouse, Esquire, by his wife

Margaret, daughter and sole heir to the honourable familye of the Gascoignes, of Gawthorp: hears interred in the same grave with Briget, her mother-in-law, first wife of the said Sir Cotton, and daughter to Sir Willyam Fairfax of

Steyton. in the said county, knight. She lived in wedlock eight years with her said husband; and remayned his mournfull widdow thirty and six yeares; spending her dayes religiously to God, hospitable towards her friends, and charitable towards all: and deceased the sixt day of October, 1631, leaveing issue to condole her want, her one1y daughter and heyre Prudence Gargrave, by whom this monument was erected

Below:-  
Humble in prosperitie,  
Constant in adversitie,  
rarely exemplar  
in both fortunes.

At the reformation the Gargrave family was given Nostell Priory by King Henry VIII. Thomas Gargrave was President of the King's Council of the North and subsequently Speaker of the House of Commons in the first Parliament of Elizabeth 1.

### **The Story behind the Monument**

Catherine Wentworth was married to Thomas Gargrave in 1585 (the grandson of Thomas Gargrave Speaker of the Commons). This Thomas Gargrave was found guilty at York for the murder of a young servant boy called - surname 'Gardynner'. The charge was that Gargrave had poisoned the boy and burned his body in the oven. The case was disputed and Catherine always maintained his innocence, Gargrave was executed at York in 1595, during the reign of Elizabeth 1. Her daughter Prudence also campaigned to clear her father's name. She was a Puritan lady and a supporter of the Parliamentary Cause, but benevolent, she endowed many local Churches including St Peters at Felkirk.

### **Catherine Gargrave**

Catherine Gargrave was born during the Elizabethan Settlement of the Church of England and lived during the great events of the time: the execution of Mary Queen of Scots 1587, the Spanish Armada of 1588 and the Accession of James 1 in 1603, the Gunpowder Plot of 1605 and the King James version of the bible in 1611 She died in the reign of King Charles 1 and eleven years before the outbreak of the Civil War.

### **The Monuments of the Chancel**

High on the South wall of the Chancel is the very fine monument in the baroque, Italianate style. The memorial is to **Robert Wrightson** who was born at Low Hall in Hemsworth 1629 (during the reign of Charles I). He owned extensive land in the area and also through three 'good' marriages he amassed enough land and wealth to enable him to buy Cusworth Hall and its estates. He moved to

Cusworth in 1669 and at the time of the Restoration of the Monarchy, a contemporary portrait shows him in the style and dress of a Country Gentleman. In 1685 he acquired the patronage of Hemsworth Church (which remained in the family for 300 years). He famously 'threw out' the Puritan Rector Steven Ludlam from the living and installed his own choice in the Parish, the Rev. Henry Farrar, who set about restoring the church. Robert Wrightson was a lawyer by profession and was closely connected with the administration of The Archbishop Holgate Hospital in Hemsworth. He died in 1708 aged 79. Opposite Robert Wrightson's large, theatrical monument over the vestry door is the rather more modest memorial to his third son **William Wrightson**. He became wealthy in his own right through marriage to Isobel Matthews who had inherited a fortune based on a successful coal merchants business. He lived in Newcastle and was so popular there he became Tory M.P for the city in 1713. He retired to the Cusworth Estates in 1730. He died in 1760 aged 84. His portrait still hangs at Cusworth in the north drawing room.

Near this place lye interred  
the bodies of Robert Wrightson,  
of Cusworth, gentleman, and Sarah his wife,  
one of the daughters of sir Thomas Beaumont,  
of Whitley, knight, by whom be had several  
children, whereof three only survived them:  
viz. Thomas, William, and Mary. He was patron  
of this church, and a generous assertor of the  
rights and privileges of the Hospital in this parish.  
He dyed 17 December, 1708, aged 79.  
She dyed 13 September, 1717, aged 72.  
To whose memories William Wrightson,  
Esq. their son, one of the Burgesses  
in several parliaments for the  
town and county of Newcastle  
upon Tyne, erected  
this monument, A.D. 1720.

Near this place  
lie interred  
in hopes of a joyful resurrection,  
William Wrightson, late of Cusworth, esquire,  
and Isabella. his wife.  
She died Nov. 9, 1745, aged 46;  
a worthy pattern of imitation  
to all her sex.  
He died the 4th day of December,  
1760, aged 84;  
full of years and honour.

In the sanctuary north wall is the beautiful Regency style memorial to **Barbara Bland Wrightson**. She married William Wrightson, the grandson of William Wrightson of Cusworth, in 1780. Barbara was 16 years old, tragically she died two years later probably in childbirth. Only 18 years old, the inscription on her memorial speaks for itself, and remains a beautiful and elegant tribute to her memory. Underneath Barbara Wrightson's memorial is a Victorian brass plaque set into the sanctuary wall. It tells another sad story of **Arthur Herber Thomas**, son of a former Rector who died in Ramnad in India aged only 28 years. The memorial was paid for by his friends in India and the Tamil Christian congregation amongst whom he was working in 1890.

IHS  
Arthur Heber Thomas BA  
Missionary in the SPG District of  
Ramnad, South India  
who entered into rest on All Souls Day 1890  
Aged 28 Years  
This tablet is erected by his friends.  
Chiefly those in the Tamil congregation  
at Ramnad as a token of their respect  
and affection for one who did so much  
during his short career for the  
development of the Church of Christ  
in that part of His vineyard.

The Archway and fine carved oak screen within it, that separates the sanctuary from the Lady Chapel, is carved from wood brought here from Westminster Abbey by the son of the Abbey "Master of Works" Mr. Wright in 1888 - together with a small memorial plaque it is dedicated to the memory of **Robert Holgate Archbishop of York** (1545-1553) who founded the Alms Houses and Grammar school in Hemsworth.

## The Church Yard

Mainly Georgian and Victorian memorials - to the north of the church by the stone wall is the flat tomb tablet of the **Rev. Richard Stringer - Master of Holgate Hospital.**

“A religious and devout man  
He married Francis, eldest daughter of Henry and sister of John Farrer  
Both Rectors of this parish,  
By whom he had several children who all died before them.  
She died April 1751 aged 76.  
He died April 1786 Aged 89.”

(This was at the time when Robert Wrightson was the Patron of the living of the Parish of Hemsworth)

Another interesting gravestone set by the path near the tower on the Church Hill side of the Church.

**Beaumont Family** (for Anne?)  
She departed this life 1816 Aged 81.  
-Stop your footsteps and rest here a while  
And as you now are – so once was I  
As I am now so you will be –  
Prepare yourself to follow me!

**Notes from the talk given to Fellowship of S Helens - by R.W Hyde.  
May 2011**

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