

St John's The Evangelist Church and Parish Hall, West Avenue, Filey

In 1857, an Iron Chapel, situated between Rutland Street and Brooklands, was licenced for Divine worship, with Rev Thomas Norfolk Jackson as incumbent. As railways developed, coastal resorts prospered, including Filey bringing numerous visitors for their holidays.

In 1867, a parcel of land, 2800 sq yards was given to the parish, by admiral Robert Mitford, of Hunmanby Hall for the building of a stone church. The church was built with stone from Whitby or Farndale quarries, at a cost of £2,277-5-0d, but with no fittings. It was consecrated in 1870, and licenced in 1873. The vicar was Rev B K Wood.

The need for a church was especially for visitors who objected to walking to the Parish church, 3 times each Sunday! The new church was entirely dependent on voluntary offerings of the congregation. Local residents were very supportive, donating monies for "heating apparatus, organ, font, decorating, brass lectern, carpets."

In 1901 the Rev Canon Cooper said, "from the old church I pass to St John's, and I put it to you that the church should be completed. Everyone says that in a few years' time, all the land between West Street, (now West Avenue) and the station will be built on, and it will be a crying shame if well finished houses surround an unfinished church."

A group of parishioners formed a committee and the church was furnished, with choir stalls, pulpit, oak panels, a new bell etc. St John's has fine examples of arts and crafts windows, notably the north transept window dedicated to a brother of Canon Cooper, and excellent memorial windows in the small rooms in the church hall.

St John's appears to have had regular services up to the mid-1930's, when a weekly communion was the only service. The church appears to have had a dividing wall installed, and the rear part used by various groups. The Christian fellowship group was very active in the 1950's, when Mr Scaife ran this group. There was a full sized snooker table, table tennis, darts available. The group performed concerts and pantomimes for a number of years. Mrs Scaife was responsible for making costumes for pantomimes etc.

In the late 1960's, when Rev Wilf Curtis was vicar, the church was brought back to life, much work being done, a dividing wall, stairs, new kitchen and toilets. The church and Parish hall thrived. Up grading of the church has continued, and in the last few years, the church has been modernised. Pews removed, font position changed, carpets laid, a new baptismal window given, producing a space for diverse uses.

When Rev Mary Williams resigned, the parish office had to move from the vicarage. The vestry and redundant organ space were combined to create an office.

The choir vestry is now a vicars vestry, and a disabled toilet is in situ. Over many years the gardens have been lovingly tended by parishioners, with silver and gold awards being won in Yorkshire in Bloom and Britain in Bloom competitions.

Written by The late Gillian Wilson