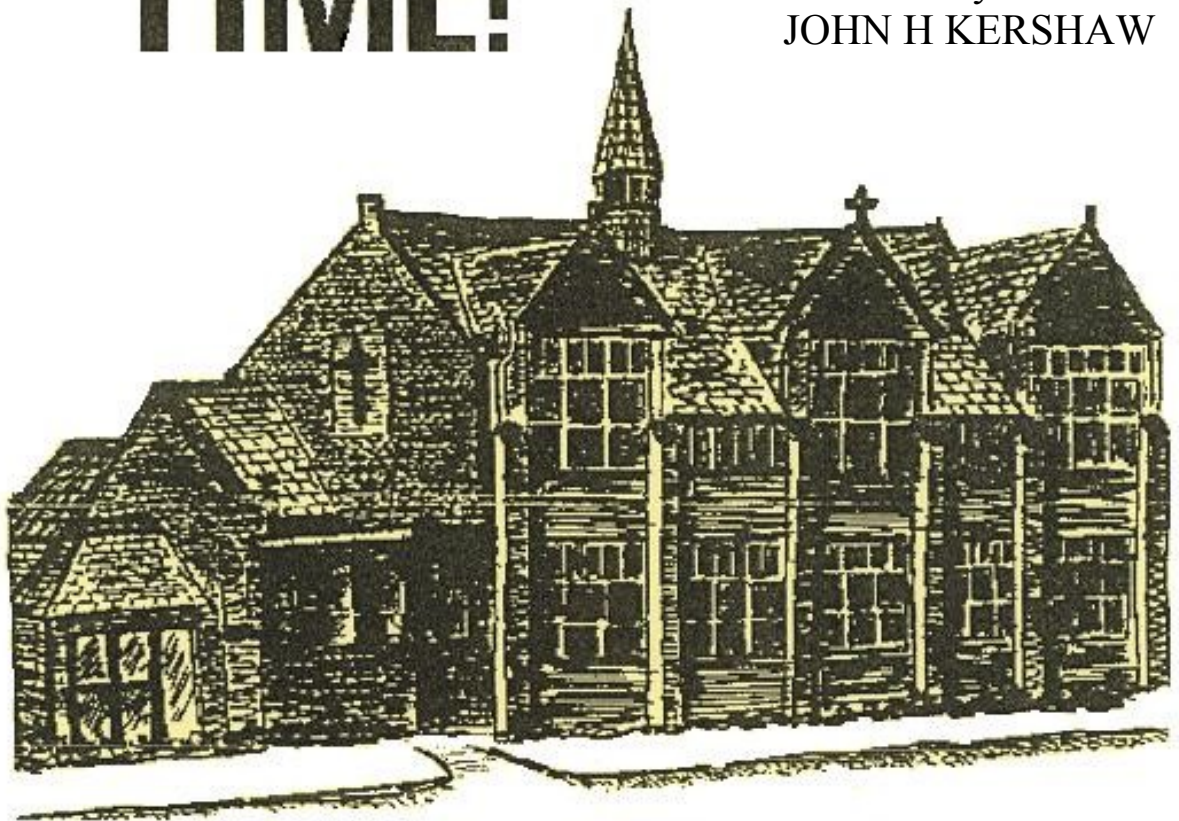


IN GOD'S GOOD TIME!

By
JOHN H KERSHAW



The growth of Deeplish and its church, 1880 – 1980

FORWARD

The task of writing a history of the foundation and development of St Luke's Church seemed simple enough before research began. However as the picture took shape it was clear that the story behind the Parish of St Luke must be almost, if not totally unique. After weeks of study it became increasingly obvious that this work could do nothing but scratch the surface of this fascinating story. This prompted the formation of three aims around which the narrative was built.

Firstly, to answer the question of why St Luke's Parish came into being in an area which well into the 19th century was little more than green fields. Secondly, to show how St Luke's developed in its early years, and why it exists in its present state today. Thirdly, to create a record of a building which in the future would have been forgotten in the same way as Broomfield, Deeplish Hill and Deeplish Hall.

We often hear the statement that the Church is really the people; nowhere could this be more true than in the formative years of St Luke's. Close examination shows that our forefathers had very much the same thoughts and feelings as we have, whilst their world was constantly changing just as ours is today. While buildings and technologies change the basic foundation of Human Nature remains constant; love, hate, fear, the whole gambit of emotions are motivated today in the same way as they have throughout the history of mankind. It is to this changeless human nature that the Church is called to minister.

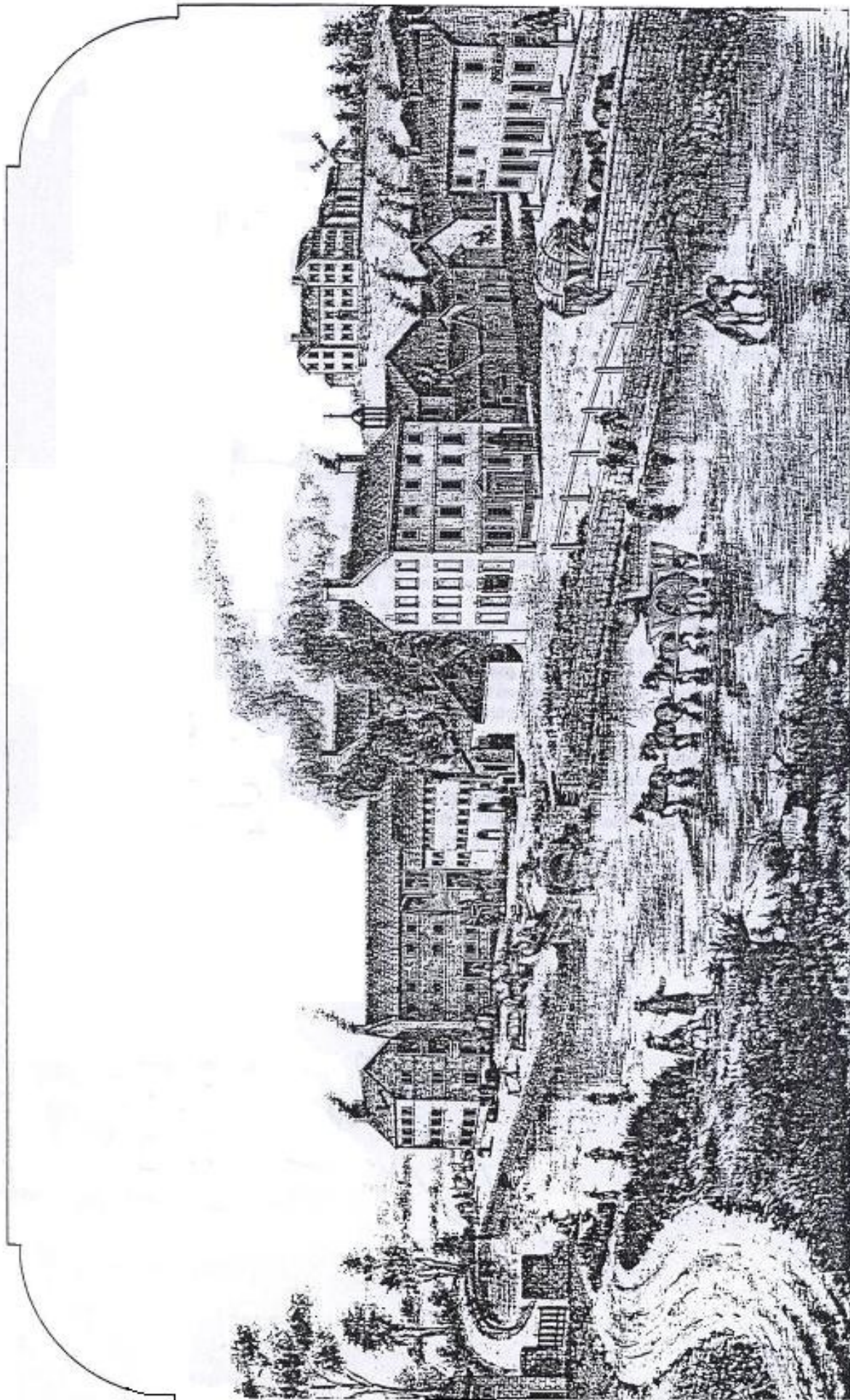
Our technology and ideas change rapidly but often the Church fails to adapt to these changes, so consequently it is dismissed as 'irrelevant'. People do not always realise that the Church has a changeless spiritual nature and mission to which the buildings and human considerations are merely a means to an end. It is when the spiritual nature is replaced by human nature that the Church loses its credibility and dynamic impact, as it has done so often throughout its history.

Throughout all this, God works through His Church no matter what. To quote Canon Maclure's words:

“... a Church will be completed in God's good time.”



MAY 1980.



Fording the Roch

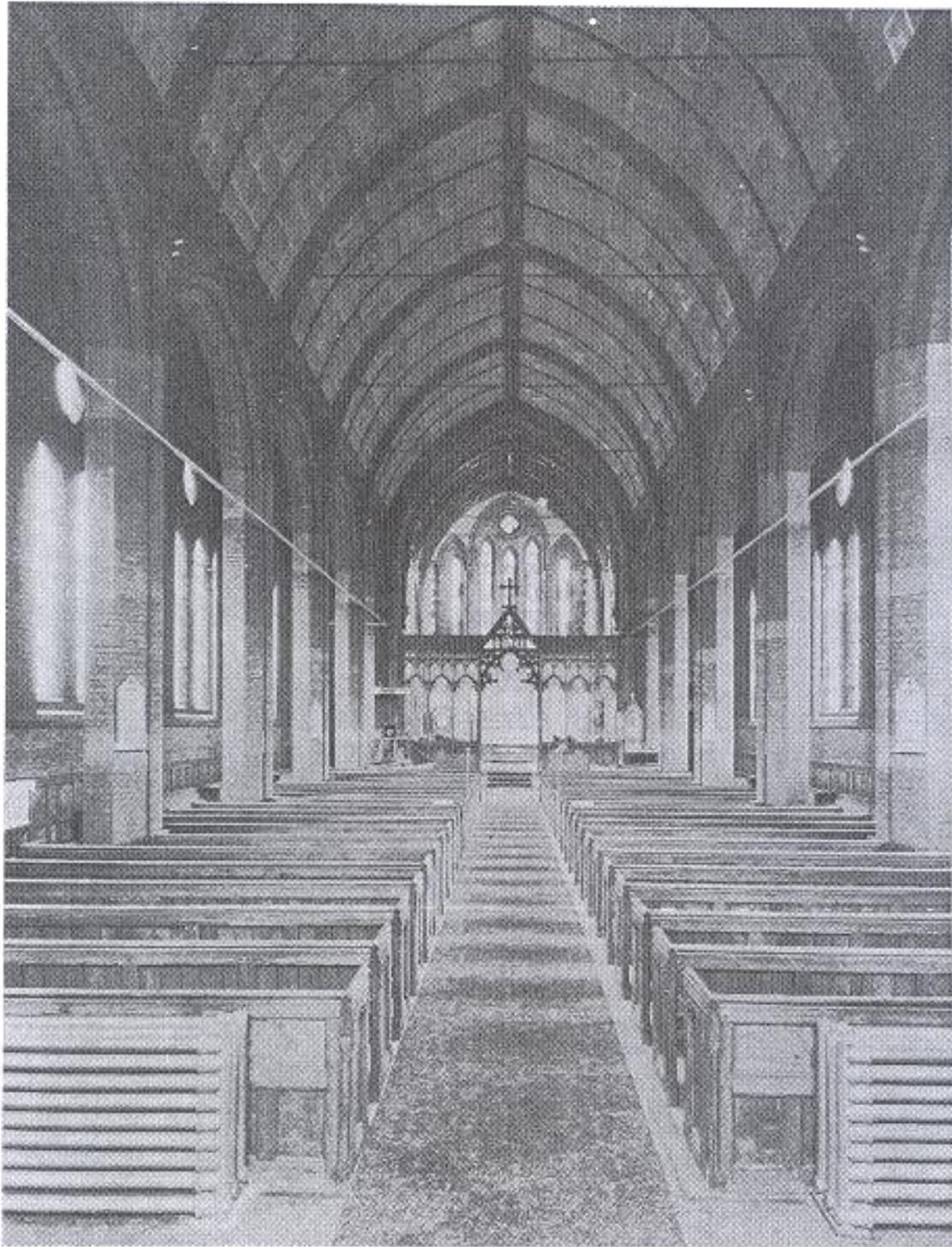
S. Luke's Church: Deeplish: Rochdale:

Sketch from South East



R. Knill-Freeman-Tribba, Architect
17 Wood Street, Bolton, May 1897

Architect's drawing of the completed church showing the proposed spire



Interior of the church building before demolition

EARLY DAYS

The name Deeplish is thought to be a corruption of 'Deep Leech' meaning deep pool or pond. The origin of this is probably due to the fact that it was noted as a water catchment area. In the 18th century the area of Castleton in which Deeplish was situated contained four reservoirs which provided the town with water. This could also be the reason why Deeplish remained undeveloped for such a long time.

To understand who and why a church was founded in Deeplish it is necessary to examine the development of Rochdale itself. This cannot be undertaken here in any depth, but a brief outline will give insight into the development of St Luke's. In 1700 Rochdale was a small country village built around the ford which crossed the Roch. A traveller passing through Rochdale to Manchester at that time wrote this about the Roch valley – "fruitfull valley full of inclosures cut hedges and trees." The writer goes on to describe Rochdale as "pretty neate towne built all of stone", and commented "here is a good large meeting place well filled, in these parts religion doth better flourish than in many places where they have better advantages."

However the increased demand for woollen materials and the advent of the industrial revolution soon changed this idyllic scene. By 1724 industry had made its mark and another visitor to the town (the author Daniel Defoe) described Rochdale as "a good market town and of late much improved in woollen manufacture." Industry continued to grow throughout the 18th century but the main producers were still the yeoman weavers based in small communities throughout the parish of Rochdale. One of these communities was situated in Vine Place on Milkstone Road but today little remains of the original dwellings who owners produced flannel and woollen cloths well into the 19th century.

THE PILLINGS AND THE ROBINSONS

The cotton industry was introduced by James Pilling in 1791 who opened a mill on Town Meadow, the machinery of which was driven by horse power. James Pilling and his family played an important part in the cotton industry and the money which the new material brought in enabled the family business to expand and to provide a suitable dwelling (Thrum Hall) for them away from the town. A contemporary of James Pilling was Thomas Robinson who founded a firm of the same name. His son John later took control of the firm and played an essential role in the foundation of St Luke's. The Robinsons decided that Falinge was the place to get away from it all!; but they also bought a large amount of property in the Deeplish area and established their foundry on Fishwick Street. In 1864 James Pilling's grandson John purchased Deeplish Hall from the Kelsall family. Two years later he built Norwich Street Mills to expand the family's cotton business. John Pilling lived in Deeplish Hall until his death on 29th April 1891 when the Robinsons who owned the land on which the hall stood, also bought the house. Twelve months later the house and several pieces of land on Castlemere, Deeplish and Lower Place were sold in auction by the Robinsons. The Hall itself was demolished around the turn of the century when the land was used to build Midhurst Street, Gate Street and Overt Street. Before the Hall's demolition the site of the gate-house was sold to build the present Zion Baptist Church in 1829. The stone wall at the front of Zion Church is all that remains of the wall which once enclosed the grounds of the Hall.

INDUSTRY TAKES EFFECT

By 1800 the town had changed substantially; the new industry was now powered increasingly by the new innovation of steam and had much to answer for. A woman visitor in 1799 wrote, "the town (most of it) is very dirty and the streets are very narrow. Avoid passing through the town on Mondays, it is market day and you may be detained in the streets for an hour or two." It was this deterioration of the town itself that encouraged people like the Pillings and Robinsons to establish their homes away from the centre.

The deterioration of the town continued into the 19th century and in 1820 11 people were killed when the battlement of the bridge crossing the Roch collapsed while they were watching a bull bait in the river bed. By 1850 roads had improved and the new housing provided for the millworkers was using up land on the north side of the town at a prodigious rate.

Surprisingly the area of Deeplish up to 1840 only contained three large houses: Larkfield (Wm Mann), Deeplish Hill (John Midgeley), Deeplish Hall (John Pilling) – an exclusive area by any standards. By 1870 this was changing, John Petrie built Broomfield Square. Pilling had built Norwich Street Mills and the present day Durham Street with its terraced housing (most of which has now gone) came into being. As this area became increasingly developed Deeplish was rapidly seen as an ideal area for expansion.

Yet twenty years later in 1890 the only small terraced houses on the south side of Milkstone Road were to be found in Deeplish Street, Nicholson Street, Welburn Street where they may still be seen today. Other large houses had been established but not with the same amount of ground as those possessed by Broomfield, Deeplish Hall and Deeplish Hill. Deeplish was, between 1860 and 1900, a desirable area for the new affluent society which the new industrial town brought into being.

Among these affluent men whose wealth enabled them to live in style was Josiah Henry Lancashire whose father came from Huddersfield in 1824 to become Manager of the Rochdale Gas Company. When the gas company was sold his father became a successful stock broker, a profession for which Josiah was also well suited. When the Midgeleys sold Deeplish Hill the Lancashires bought it and Josiah lived there until his death in 1913.

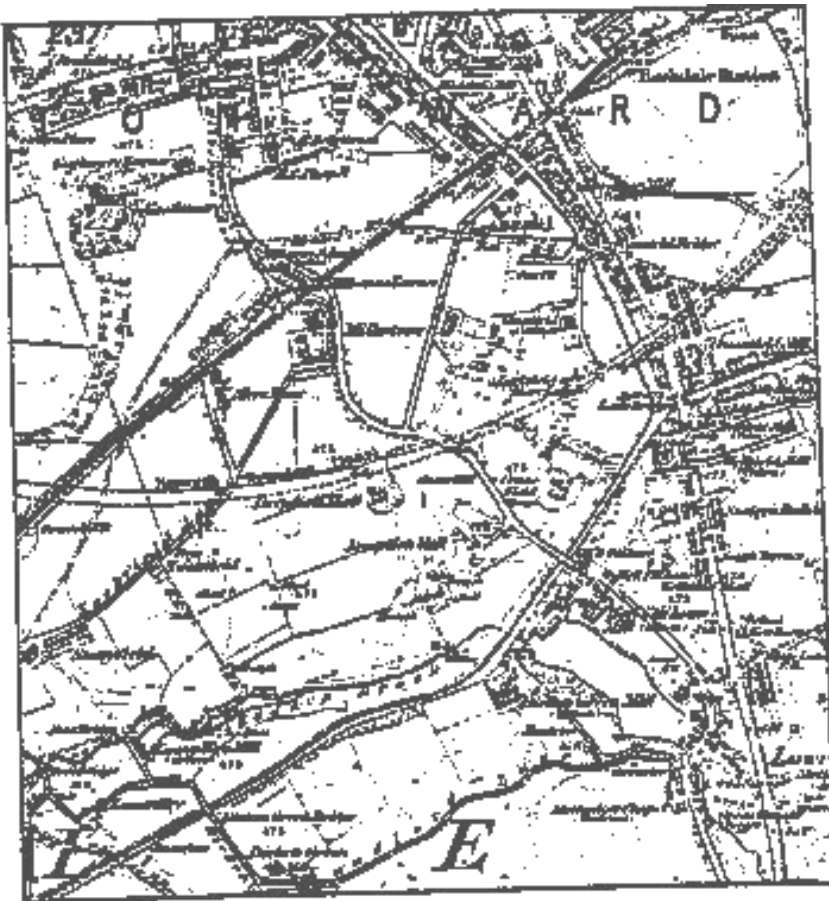
On the north side of Milkstone Road the mill owners continued to build houses for their ever increasing work force, while on the south side, Deeplish Road was being laid to enable more houses to be built for the well-to-do.

THE CHURCH'S ROLE

Throughout this period of rapid change the church lost most of its influence over the community. The established church was seen to be for the wealthy and totally out of touch with the working class. The attitudes of the vicars did nothing to change this opinion although “Old Doctor Drake” seems to have been highly respected in the community. *It is mainly through his efforts that Rochdale Parish Church exists today. However Dr Drake's successor was, like his predecessors, unpopular. William Robert Hay had been a justice in Manchester, and it was on his instruction that the troops were sent in to break up a meeting of working men in Manchester. The result of which was the Peterloo Massacre. This event lived long in the memories of Rochdadians and earned the new vicar the nickname of “Peterloo” when he took up his office in 1820. During his years at the vicarage he collected many critical letters and poems which regularly fell through his letter box. This example was prompted by the names of his predecessors who were Wray, Hind and Drake –

“We have had a full feast of fish, flesh and fowl.
But alas! They have all passed away;
And the Parish of Rochdale grumble and growl
For no one can relish Old Hay.”

Hay died of diabetes and was succeeded in 1839 by the high church Tory John Edward Nassau Molesworth.



Deeplish Area 1840

Note the weaving community in Vine Place, and the growth of industry along the new Oldham Road built about 1826.

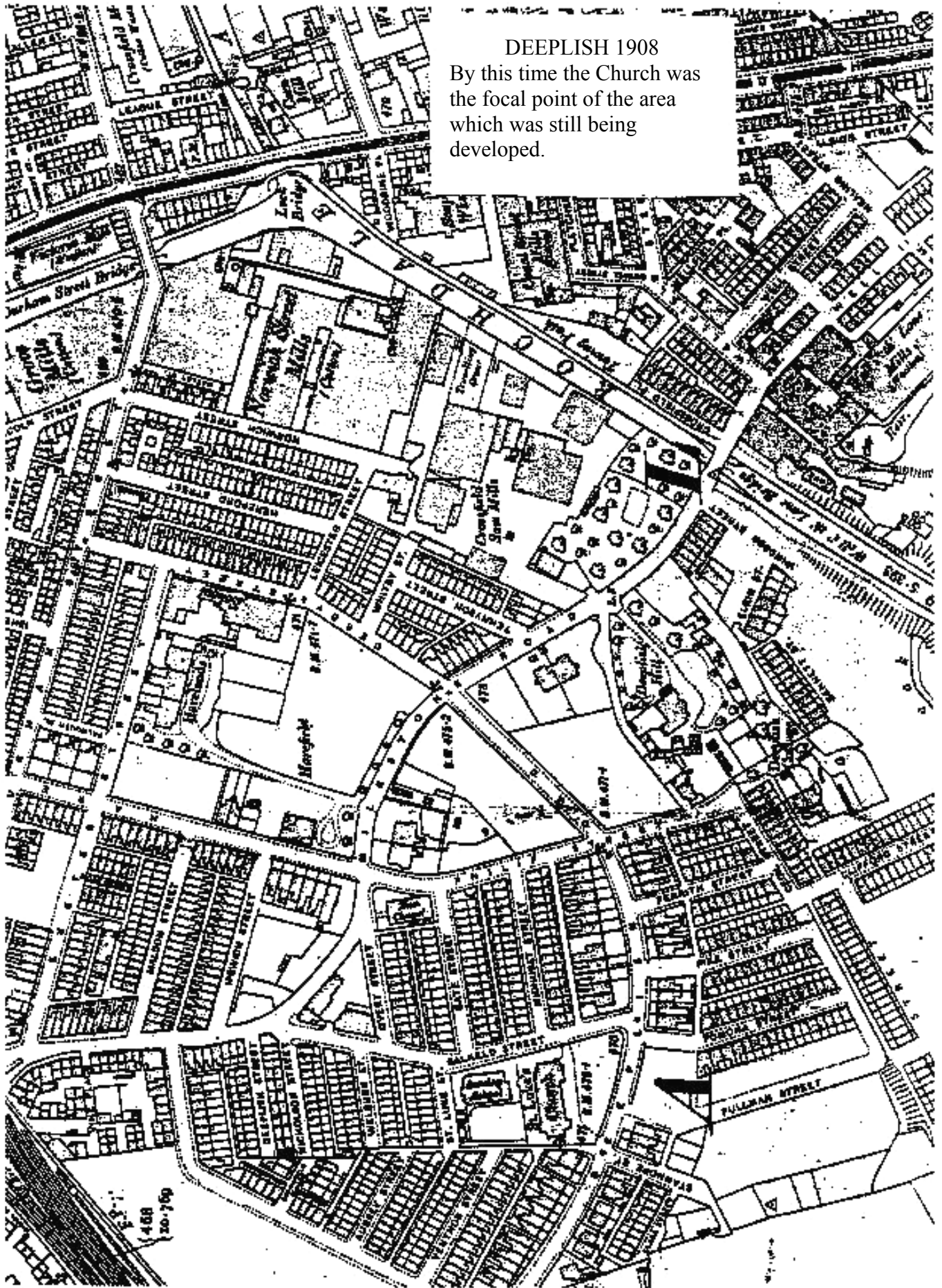
Can you find the coach house which eventually became the Durham Street Mission.



Deeplish Area 1890

The Durham Street Mission can be seen situated half-way down Durham Street. In fifty years industry has increased tremendously. Terraced housing has now started to encroach on to the south side of Milkstone Road. The development of the area is now well under way. Although the large houses of Broomfield, Deeplish Hall and Deeplish Hill are still standing, the value of the land was increasingly beyond the value of the houses standing on it, so within fifteen years two of the three had been sold for re-development.

DEEPLISH 1908
By this time the Church was
the focal point of the area
which was still being
developed.



The aloofness of the church during the 18th century left the way open for the dissenting preachers who established themselves after the 1672 Act of Toleration. The most notable dissenter in the history of Rochdale was Robert Bath, Vicar of Rochdale, who after refusing to sign the Act of Uniformity in 1662 was evicted from his living which he had held for 25 years. He immediately took up residence in a cottage in Deeplish where he preached to dissenters until the Act of Toleration enabled him to establish a preaching house near Lower Gates (possibly the one referred to by the traveller in 1700). Robert Bath was in fact responsible for the founding of the Unitarian Church in Rochdale. Quakers first appeared in 1708. Methodism was established about 1746 and the Baptists held their first services during 1772. Then in 1791 the Roman Catholics were allowed to hold services in a warehouse near John Street.

The practical application of Christianity preached by the Wesleys and the down-to-earth attitudes of the dissenting preachers appealed to people, who saw no place for themselves as members of the established church. It was this atmosphere of dissension and dissatisfaction the Rev Molesworth inherited when he replaced Hay in 1839. Almost immediately he came into conflict with the Quaker, John Bright, who opposed the church's right to levy a ½d rate. After a long bitter battle the rate was dropped but Molesworth never forgot. He saw that the only way to halt the growth of dissension was to make the church more accessible to the people. To enable this he encouraged the building of churches by offering £50 per annum for the duration of his life to every church built in his parish. He also gave generously to many of the building projects, St Luke's being the last of his projects and the one which he never lived to see established.

Two which he did play a great part in establishing were St Martin's Castleton and St Alban's (now demolished). When Molesworth died in 1877 after 38 years as vicar, the number of churches in the parish (which in those days extended from Todmorden to Saddleworth) had grown from 14 to 29. He was laid to rest in his favourite churchyard of St Martin's Castleton in August 1877.

This need for more churches went hand in hand with a need for schools to teach the children of the mill workers and the mill workers themselves about the 'true religion'. This attitude can be seen in a statement made to the Vestry meeting at St Chad's in April 1877 by Henry Brierley a few weeks before Rev Molesworth died. He said, "They wanted at least three more schools in the parish of St Chad's. They had built one during the last year and they wanted still more as they found from all sides people coming to them from dissenting places of worship, and on every side there appeared a great desire to accept the ministrations of Old Mother Church."

This was the same Henry Brierly who was the secretary of St Luke's Building Committee and who also played a leading part in the running of the Durham Street Mission which came into being three years later.

THE FIRST MEETING

The motivating figure behind the idea for a church in Deeplish was Josiah Lancashire of Deeplish Hill. His contacts as a stockbroker and as a member of the parish church council made him fully aware of the need for a church in the rapidly growing community. Late in 1873, Josiah informed Rev Molesworth that John Robinson was willing to give some land to build a church and parsonage in Deeplish. The first meeting was called and held in St Chad's Vicarage on the 6th February 1875.

At the meeting John Robinson formally offered the land to build a church and parsonage. He also informed the meeting that he and a friend would give £200 towards the venture. It was then decided to accept Mr Robinson's generous offer and to immediately form a building committee. After some discussion the vicar agreed to be chairman, Mr Henry Brierley secretary, and Mr Josiah Lancashire the treasurer. Now a committee existed the only other things required were the Bishop's permission to continue, and money to build with. A meeting was arranged with the Bishop and the members present pledged money to start the project on its way-

Rev Molesworth	£500
John Pilling	£500
Josiah Lancashire	£300
Robert Schofield	£200
Mr E A Clegg	£100
Messrs J & B Dawson	£25

After a discussion about the boundary of the new parish, the meeting was adjourned until Saturday 6th March at 4.00 pm. It is interesting to note that the land given by John Robinson was somewhere in the vicinity of the present Zion House on the corner of Hare Street.

SLOW PROGRESS

When March 6th arrived, the committee didn't! Only the vicar, secretary and treasurer arrived to view the new parish boundary plan. Undaunted the gallant three met the Bishop on the 9th March 1875. The Bishop was delighted with the idea and suggested that a new district be formed immediately. To this end he promised a contribution of £20 as "a proof of his sanction and sympathy."

By the 19th April 1875 Henry Brierley had prepared a public statement which was presented at a meeting in Anne Street School. The result of this meeting was an enlarged committee of 18 who would "further the scheme of the proposed Church of St Luke, Deeplish using every enertion."

After this, the advancement of the project began to slow down. August 30th saw the completion of the site plan for the church commissioners and Rev Molesworth's promise to endow the district with £50 per annum, providing the plot was fenced round. Nothing further is noted until October 1876 when the minutes state, "No business transacted owing to lack of attendance." The reason for this lack of interest is difficult to ascertain but it is possible that other projects in the parish were seen as more important, such as the building of a school for ragged children with which Messrs Lancashire, Pilling and Brierley were also connected.

By November 11th 1876 the committee was tendering for architects to submit plans for the new building. The plans were to be for a stone church to seat 600, with a tower; the total cost not to exceed £6,000.

TEMPORARY PREMISES

1877 was a sad year for the progress of St Luke's and for Rochdale as a whole. Advancement of the church project stopped, plans were shelved and Rev Molesworth died in May. The new vicar, Canon Maclure soon became interested in the scheme but he could not see the need for a church in the Deeplish area.

Unlike his predecessors, Canon Maclure did not regard church building as the best way towards church expansion. However, when he had established himself in the parish he became increasingly aware of the need for an Anglican presence in the Durham Street area. The reason for this change of attitude was twofold – firstly, the rapid growth of the population around the Durham Street area and secondly, the foundation of a Primitive Methodist Chapel in the area. To add to these reasons Mr Lancashire and Mr Brierley pressed Canon Maclure to establish temporary premises in the area. Several possibilities were pursued but it was not until February 1879 that premises were obtained. The building was an old coach house which could be converted for £50 and used for a moderate rent. To enable the work to be undertaken money was required and several familiar people came forward to help.

Mr John Pilling	£20
Mr H Brierley	£10
Mrs Hastings	£10
Mr J H Lancashire	£10
Rev Canon Maclure	£5
A Friend (per do)	£5
The Misses Brierley, Crossfield	£5
Mr Salkeld Robinson	£5
Mr Philip Robinson	£5
Mr & Mrs Hugh White	£1 11 6
Mrs Lancashire	£1 1 0
Miss Lancashire	£1 1 0
Mr Cogswell	£1 0 0
Mr H Hoyle	£1 0 0
Mr Lord	£1 0 0
Mr Kershaw	5 0
Mr Schofield	5 0
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	£87 3 6

Despite the availability of money and permission to use the building, the actual conversion delayed the opening for over twelve months. Then in May 1880 after further delays caused by damp plaster the new mission room opened. The building itself stood almost opposite Isherwood Street on Durham Street and soon became known locally as “The Cathedral”.

For several years the mission manned by a curate provided the services of meeting room, church and Sunday school. Slowly but surely the congregation grew to the extent that on some occasions the building was filled to overflowing (eg Harvest 1885). Services were held on Sundays at 10.30 am and 6.30 pm but attendances varied and collections barely paid running costs. With this in mind Canon Maclure still held back from building a church although in 1885 the area was declared a conventional district under the charge of a curate (Rev A D Davies).

What must be remembered is that during this period everything was still under the direct control of the Parish Church. Even the head of the Sunday School department was our old friend Henry Brierley. The Sunday School grew quicker than the church congregation so it was seen that a Sunday School should be built before a church on the land given by Mr Robinson. This move annoyed the congregation of the mission who saw this as the end of any hopes for a church in the near future. Canon Maclure approached the executors of John Robinson’s estate with a view to using the existing site to build a school. To the committee’s surprise the executors offered to exchange the first site 2,600 sq yds for a larger site of 3,700 sq yds to enable the school, church and parsonage all to be built on the one site. This generous offer was accepted but the idea of building the school first was still opposed.

Things came to a head on the 29th January 1887 when the congregation of the “Cathedral” demanded representation on the Building Committee. They accused the existing committee of having no intention of building a church and of holding meetings without a quorum. The vicar refuted all the allegations and asked the congregation to elect their three members. Those duly elected were Messrs Stewart, Mills and Ripley. In view of this minor revolt, Henry Brierley resigned as secretary and a few weeks later also resigned his post as Sunday School Superintendent due to “ill health”. It didn’t take the new members long to move the project out of its rut, especially as one of the three new members (Alan Mills) was elected as secretary.

NEW PLANS AND UPSET

Within a month of the thorny meeting the Diocesan architect was asked to draw up new plans for a church. The building to seat 500 with provision for a gallery was to also incorporate a spire at a cost of no more than £4,000. The committee also asked the architect to specify how much of this church could be built for £2,000. Not everyone agreed with the idea of building the church in this manner and some objected strongly especially those who had donated to the original project. (See letter opposite).

This type of objection was eventually overcome by Canon Maclure, who explained that “if a church were built in part it would naturally generate the interest of the community towards its completion.” By the 14th June 1887 the plans were completed by Mr Freeman and accepted subject to slight alterations. The architect offered two alternatives for the part building of the church.

The first was to build the chancel and shore up the west side with timber which could be used later in the nave construction. The second was to build the chancel and temporary nave. It was this second suggestion that was finally accepted but the architect was reminded that wherever possible costs should be kept to a minimum. To this end several quotations were received from prospective builders. The successful applicant was J T Peters & Son who quoted £2,229 for the proposed work. With the plans and builders ready the turning of the first turf was arranged for June 20th 1887 the day of Queen Victoria’s Jubilee.

THE FIRST TURF

The occasion clashed with several other things on Jubilee day but it was still well attended. The widow of John Robinson, assisted by her son Charles, actually turned the turf. In a short address Canon Maclure said that “it is not my duty to explain why the building of the church has been delayed, safe to say a church will be completed in God’s good time.” After a hymn and Benediction a collection was taken (£10.8s.0d) and the ceremony was concluded. Among those present were Mr & Mrs Pilling, members of the Lancashire family and Rev A D Davies, curate in charge of the new district. The idea that had first been put forward twelve years before was finally becoming a reality.

BUILDING AT LAST

The rest of 1887 was spent in foundation work and construction of the cellars, and this continued into the early part of 1888. The design of the church was unusual in the respect that the choir and vicar’s vestries were constructed partly below ground level. This had the dual purpose of reducing building costs and elevating the church to give it an imposing aspect. April 1888 saw the work advanced to the stage where the cornerstone could be laid by the Bishop of Manchester.

John Pilling's letter in which he states his opposition to the building of the Church 'piecemeal'.

Rockdale Feb 26 1857
Rev^d Garrison M^r Maclure

Dear Sir,

Saturday does not suit me to attend any meeting, and as I shall not be able to be present this afternoon I herewith give you my views as regards the resolutions passed at the last Committee Meeting, that I am totally opposed to building a Church piecemeal, or for expending £2000 in the way proposed.

Yours truly

John Pilling

The stone laying ceremony took place on the 23rd April and a silver trowel with ivory handle was purchased especially for the occasion. In a ceremony similar to that in 1887 with a hymn and Benediction and collection (£9.2s.6d) the work was now well under way. That was, until Canon Maclure complained about the inferior bricks being used in construction, and the indifferent way in which they were being laid. This held up the work for several weeks until more suitable bricks could be obtained. Eventually the architect came to a suitable arrangement with the suppliers and the builders and work recommenced late in July 1888. During this period the congregation at Durham Street were raising money through ‘sale of work’ to help the building fund. This effort raised over £81.7s.11d in 1888 which was deposited, along with other gifts, in a new account at the Penny Bank, much to the surprise and annoyance of the long standing treasurer, Mr Josiah Lancashire. This, coupled with the decision to have each cheque signed by the treasurer and the chairman, prompted Josiah to offer his resignation. In a letter which expressed his indignation and amazement at the committee’s action Josiah resigned on June 7th 1888. In a written reply Canon Maclure would not pursue the matter if Josiah stayed on as treasurer. Consequently Josiah remained treasurer of St Luke’s Building Fund throughout the twenty three years of their existence.

During 1888 the building was behind schedule because of the delays in obtaining suitable brick. The committee asked the architect to impress on the builders the need for urgency. If faster progress was not made the contract for the temporary nave was to be given to another contractor. The builders apparently heeded the warning and by September they were given permission to proceed with the temporary nave. December saw the completion of most of the external work and only the internal plastering and woodwork had to be completed. When the plasterers moved in they soon completed their work but didn’t notice that no gas lamp fittings had been installed, much to the annoyance of the gas fitter. Similarly, the organ loft was found to be higher than it should have been. But the cost of £7.0s.0d to lower it was seen as “extravagant” as no organ was planned at that stage. The installation of the heating system is a good illustration of the speed at which the work was moving by early 1889. Tenders were received on the 30th January 1889 from:

Isaac Butterworth	£87
Giles Shaw	£88
John Tonge	£77
John Petrie	£75

After some discussion in early February the work was given to John Tonge, who duly informed the committee on February 23rd that the installation was complete and operational. It took longer to find a person to stoke the boiler than it did to put it in. The arduous task was finally taken on by “Mrs Mills’ father, Wm Sutcliffe who resides at Deeplish who will undertake the task for his tobacco-money only”. As the church neared completion March and April were taken up with painting, obtaining furniture and completing final touches. During this period a debate arose about the possibility of renaming the church but no definite proposal was forthcoming. The communion table and rails were ordered on the 20th April and the opening date was set for 13th May 1889. This date was later changed by arrangement of the Bishop to 30th May, Ascension Day. This gave the committee extra time to remove furniture from the Mission Room to the new church and to give the new communion table a coat of paint. The church was complete for the time being, the brick and stone chancel with its temporary wooden nave were the limit of the available resources. Even though every saving had been made, the building fund stood at a deficit of £212.15s.1d. This need for economy and the fact of being a chapel of ease for the parish church played a great part in the early years of St Luke’s even to trivial details: “Order to be placed for 20 dozen hassocks not exceeding the price paid by parish church recently.

THE OPENING, ASCENSION DAY 1889

As previously noted the consecration and opening of the new church was 30th May 1889. On that occasion the church was filled to capacity with people from all parts of Rochdale. The Bishop congratulated all the people connected with the project and said that he hoped the whole project would be completed in the shortest possible time. The church now existed, to grow; it had to consolidate its position in the new community. This it did with great ease as the church existed before the community which grew around it. The church was the nerve centre of the area's social and religious life, although the average communicant number of 25 per week indicates that the emphasis was mainly social, possibly advocated by the Sunday Schools which flourished in the early days of St Luke's.

BUILDING OF SCHOOLS

The vicar of St Chad's raised the need for a new school adjacent to the church in late 1890. The plans for the building were drawn up by the same architect, Mr Freeman and the building was undertaken by Peters & Son who also built the church. The architect advised the building committee that the amount of land available would mean placing the school very close to the church, "presenting an unacceptable aspect". To remedy this he advised that the committee should approach Messrs Robinson with a view to obtaining more land. This was seen as an advisable course of action and a letter was sent to the Robinsons. Their reply is an insight into the business acumen of these philanthropic Victorians. In their reply Robinsons expressed anxiety at the erection of schools in the district. If the schools were going to be day schools, Robinsons' concern was that they would affect the value of the surrounding property. The committee informed them that the building would be used as Sunday Schools but would not promise that no other use would be ruled out. Eventually Robinsons agreed to sell the required land to the church, approximately 700 sq yards at a cost of 2d per yard.

Money for the project was raised by voluntary donations from all over the large parish of Rochdale. Some of these donations came via direct means others in reply of letters sent by Archdeacon Wilson to members of his congregation. (See example of reply overleaf).

The church commissioners also promised a contribution of £200 providing they approved the plans. It seems from the balance sheet that the idea of school building interested more people than church building as when the final bill was paid a credit balance of £22.1s.9d remained. Tenders were submitted by the builders to the committee who considered them all 'very wild'.

Thomas Crabtree	£3155
Peters & Son	£2828
Thomas Berry & Son	£4223
J Moore & Son	£2929
Ramsbottoms	£3380
Nichol & Son	£3250

Rochdale,
Archdale, April 22/91.

Dear Mr. Archdeacon

I should have answered your letter of the 13th Inst. earlier but I have been away from home a few days. I shall be very glad to give £25 towards the fund you are raising for the building of schools in St. Luke's Parish.

Yours very truly
Frank G. Crowther

The Reverend Archdeacon Wilson
Rochdale

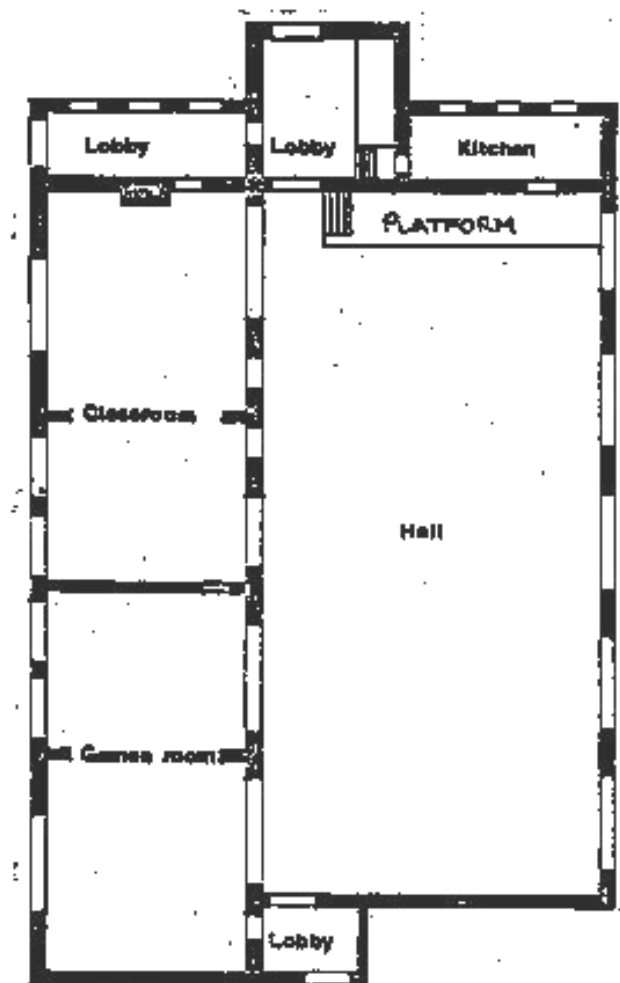
Letter from Mr Frank Crowther promising money for School building fund

The limit for the outlay on the school was fixed at £2,000 and in order to meet this the plans had to be drastically altered. On 25th April the three lowest tenders were asked to requote taking into consideration the following alterations:

1. Omit gallery, but put in all the needful preparation for it.
2. To make classrooms one storey high with a lean-to roof.
3. Omit one room for hats and cloaks.
4. Prepare for one staircase but not build it at present.
5. Reduce size of south porch.
6. Make north porch one storey high as present.
7. Reduce width of classrooms to 18 feet.

These alterations allowed Peters & Son to requote a price of £2,150 which was accepted and work started in early June 1891. While digging the foundations the builders damaged the drain of John Petrie's house, Broomfield. This problem is something which is not unknown in the building trade, but this particular mishap led to an argument about Mr Petrie's right to drain on to the church land. Broomfield had been demolished and the present terraced housing was under construction. The great house which had been built around 1850 was demolished in less than 50 years. The school foundations were completed despite the legal wrangle and on 4th July 1891 Clement Roys laid the cornerstone. The ceremony, followed by addresses from Clement Roys, the Dean of Manchester Rev Hartley and Archdeacon Wilson, attracted a huge gathering of people who gave 1,403 coins in the collection totalling £26.13s.1d.

Building proceeded at a rapid pace and by February 1892 the New Schools and Parochial Buildings were completed. The whole project from the planning stage to the opening took less than 18 months. Saturday 20th February 1892 saw the opening of the new edifice. After a short Evensong at 4.00 pm the choir, clergy and congregation processed from the church to the school signing "Onward Christian Soldiers". Then on arrival at the school a short service officially opened the building, which today serves as the church. The schools were used for the first time on February 28th when 226 children attended in the morning and 327 in the afternoon for general instruction.



Plan of completed Parochial Hall and School

Now that the new Sunday School was completed on an adjacent site to the church, it was seen as desirable that the Durham Street Mission should be closed. The owner was approached with a view to pulling down the old mission room. Eventually the building was demolished around the turn of the century and the present houses built in its place.



Durham Street 1908.

TOWARDS AUTONOMY

Under the direction of Archdeacon Wilson the curate Rev Rathbone Hartley administered the district until August 7th 1892 when he moved to Castleton. He was replaced by Rev A D Davies, the curate who had served in the district during Canon Maclure's ministry. During the period between 1892 and 1895 the congregation grew but the attendance was erratic. People would turn out to fill the church to hear the choir sing "The Messiah" or one of the oratorios but on other occasions Rev Davies preached to a congregation varying from 6 to 100 with an average of 30 on a normal Sunday when three services were held (7.45 am, 10.30 am and 6.30 pm). Despite these comparatively low figures Archdeacon Wilson decided to give up his right to appoint the minister of St Luke's, by passing the preferment to the Bishop of Manchester. This made St Luke's an autonomous parish, to which the Bishop then appointed Rev A D Davies as vicar. His induction took place on July 4th 1895 twenty years after the meeting which started the idea of a parish in the Deeplish area.

COMPLETION OF THE CHURCH

Now that St Luke's was a parish it was becoming increasingly obvious that the temporary nave was unsuitable. In October 1896 the vicar sent a letter to every house in the parish explaining that the cost of building (£3,000) would have to come from public subscription. The balance of the church school account was transferred to pay the debt on the church; this enabled a balance of £10.6s.8d to be carried forward.

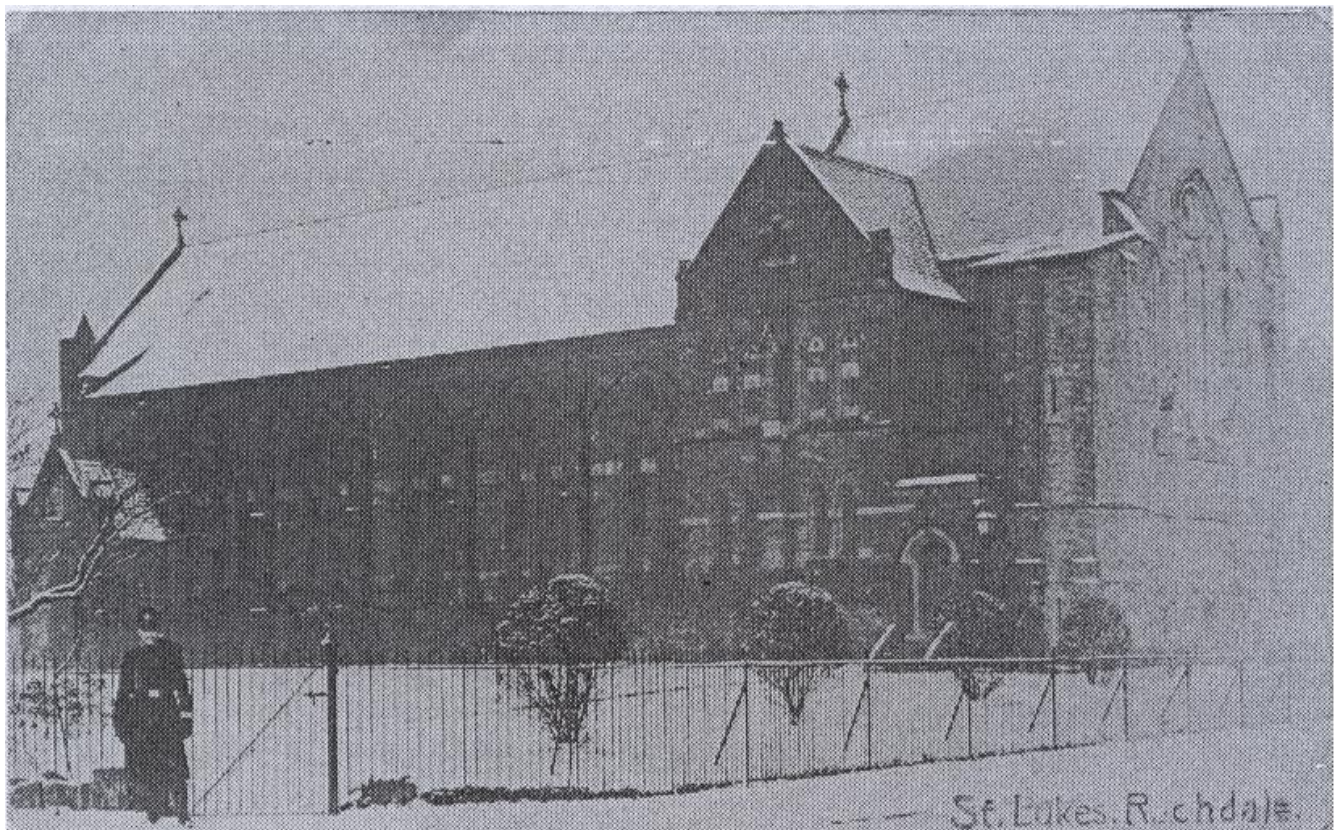
The family of John Pilling-Brierley offered £500 as long as part of the nave could be set aside as a baptistery in memory of their father. Other monies came through large donations from Josiah Lancashire and in smaller amounts from the congregation. Also a scheme for buying a brick at a cost of 1d and the sale of plates illustrating the completed church brought in more money.

The cornerstone was laid on 15th May 1897 in the 60th year of Queen Victoria's reign. To commemorate the ceremony 500 medals were presented to the Sunday School by Clement Royds. After the presentation, a tea party was held in the hall after which there was a time of "singing and entertainment". The building was undertaken by Endersley and Hutch of Bolton

who originally quoted £4,809 but after the usual alterations in the specification, this was reduced to £3,360 with an allowance of £25 for the old nave. Sadly the main saving was made by omitting the completion of the tower from the project due to lack of funds. Consequently because of ever increasing costs the tower was never completed.

Half way through the building programme the money began to run out and extra efforts had to be made to raise funds. One of the last of these efforts was a bazaar held in the town hall which raised over £130. During the building of the nave the committee decided to have standard gas lamps installed as opposed to the “new fangled incandescent mantles”. These were fitted in 1907 at a cost of £14.15s.3½d. The whole project was completed within twelve months of commencement and the opening took place on April 23rd 1898. The opening was accompanied by the now familiar ceremony which St Luke’s had seen several times over its 18 years as a district and parish.

The opening of the mission	May 20 th 1880
The turning of the first turf	June 20 th 1887
The laying of the nave cornerstone	April 23 rd 1888
The consecration and opening of church	May 30 th 1889
The laying of cornerstone of school	July 4 th 1891
The consecration and opening of the school	February 20 th 1892
The laying of the cornerstone for nave	May 15 th 1897
The final consecration and opening of complete church	April 23 rd 1898



THE BENEFACTORS

One person present at the final ceremony who must have felt great satisfaction, was Josiah Lancashire. Since the first meeting in 1875 Josiah had been the guiding light for the parish. He personally paid most of the architect's remaining bills in 1898 and gave generously to all the building projects. He gave among other things, the original pulpit and the bowling green. He was, until his death on the 24th February 1913, not only a great benefactor to St Luke's but to the church of Rochdale as a whole. Yet St Luke's was not the effort of one man's money as many churches were at that time. It was through the efforts of Believers that St Luke's came into being. Individuals like you and me who decided that they wanted to contribute towards a church "To the Glory of God".

INTERNAL ADDITIONS

Although the building was completed, other additions were made by families who wished to commemorate relatives and the congregation who simply wanted to remember specific occasions.

Processional Cross – still to be seen in the new church, was given in memory of William Knight Gibbons in February 1934. Mr Gibbons was a real character of St Luke's, choirmaster for 50 years and much loved by the members of the choir.

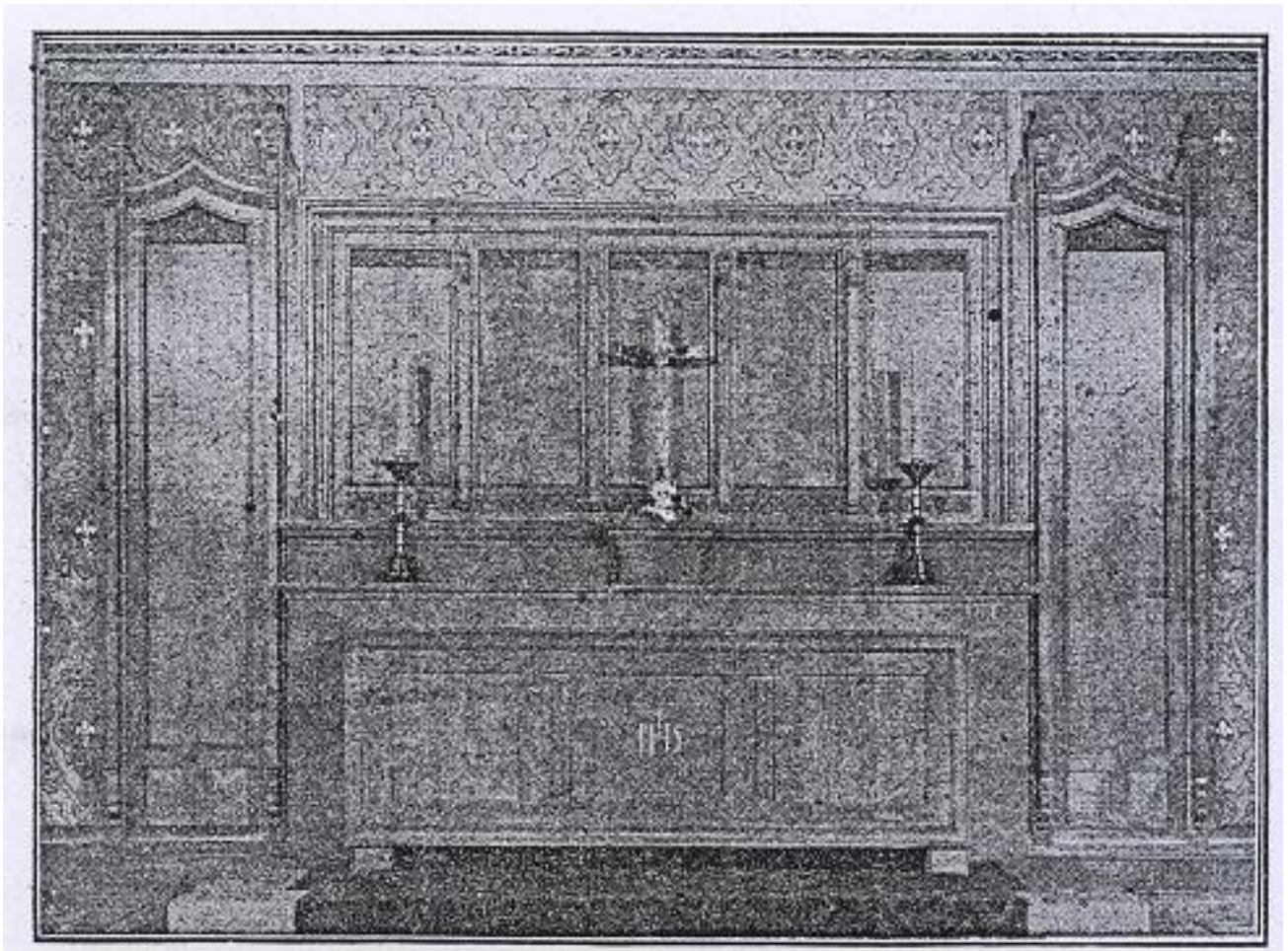
Choir Stalls – still to be seen in the new church. These replaced the painted choir stalls in 1935. They were donated by Alderman and Mrs Wycherley in 1836 in honour of George the fifth's Silver Jubilee. At the same time they paid for the Oak Paraquetine Blocks which now cover the floor in front of the coffee bar in the new church.

Altar and Reredos – To match these choir stalls a new altar and reredos were installed in 1946 in memory of Alderman Wycherley. Up to that time the altar was flanked by curtains which were changed in accordance with the seasons. When the new altar and reredos were completed one member of the congregation said "it looks like a glorified sideboard" – sideboard or not it is still in use today. On the instruction of the diocese the old altar could be used for making shelves in the choir vestry or had to be burnt as firewood in the church boiler.

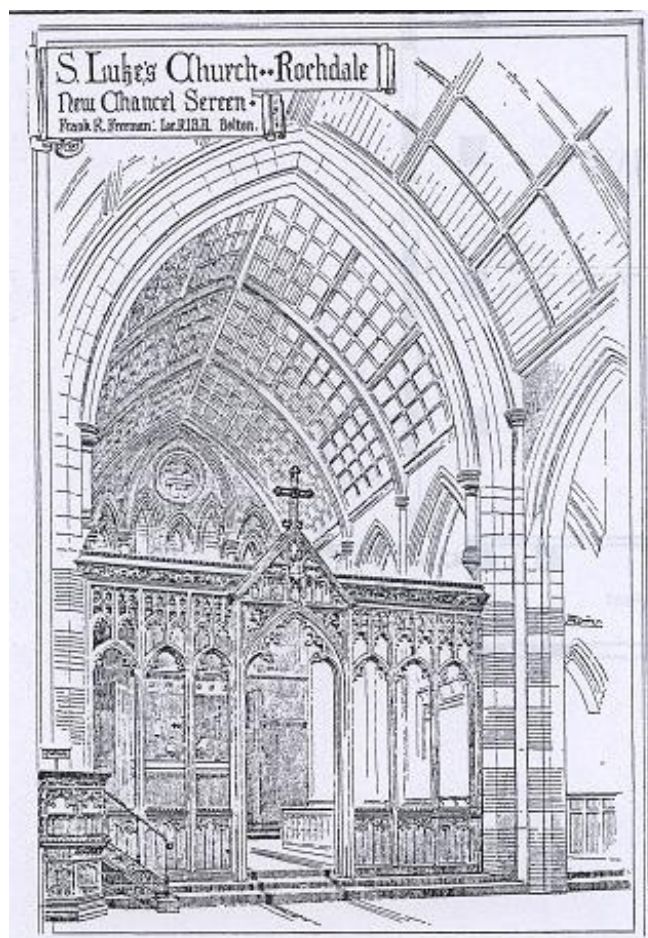
Organ (situated over Vestry) – The organ was built in 1904 and replaced a harmonium which had provided the music in the church since 1888. The old harmonium was sold to Rev Rathbone Hartley (once curate of St Luke's) then vicar of All Souls, Castleton. The organ built by Abbott Smith of Leeds, was a fine example costing £548 in 1904. It suffered damage by someone who tried to alter the tone of the pipes with a can opener rendering certain notes unplayable. The cost of repair was in excess of £3,000 in 1975 and so reluctantly, the pipe organ was scrapped and replaced by the present electronic organ in the new church.

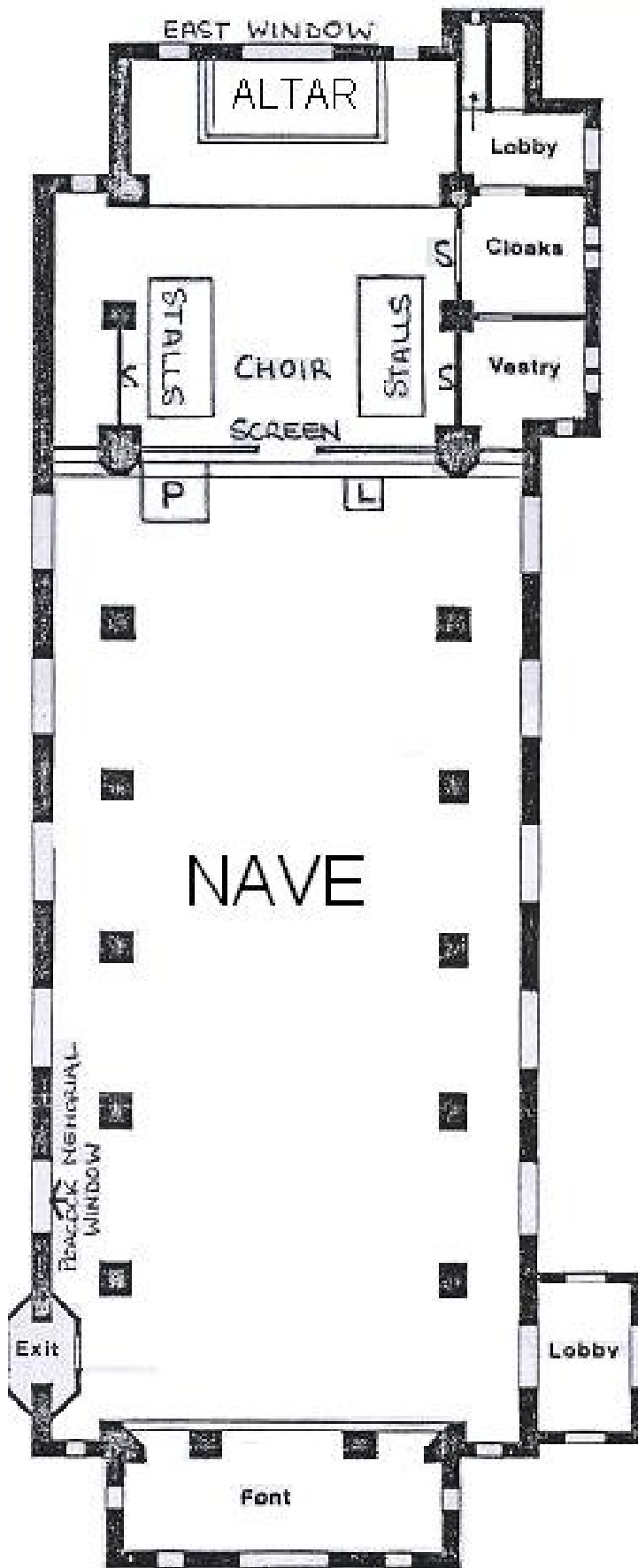
Chancel Side Screens – were erected in 1911 by the parishioners in memory of Edward VII. These screens remained intact until the demolition of the old church. Parts of the screen now make up the oak dressing on the units in the new church.

Chancel Screen – This masterpiece of oak carving was erected in 1914 to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the dedication of the church. For those who never saw this screen an idea of its size can be gained from the architect's drawing opposite.



Altar and Reredos given in memory of Alderman Wycherley.





Layout of completed church with location of various items of interest

- S Chancel Side Screens
- P Pulpit
- L Lectern

Stained and painted glass – The east window was erected as a memorial to those who died in the great war 1914 – 1919. The window was paid for by subscription from parishioners and was completed and consecrated on Saturday March 9th 1921. The central theme of the window was the risen Christ with adoring angels. Beneath were figures of St Luke and the Archangels, Michael and Gabriel. The outer lancets contained St George and St Alban, representative of England and St Martin of Tours and Joan of Arc representing France. When the glass was removed from the old church, the figures of Christ and St Luke were incorporated in the new entrance porch. Other windows in the church commemorated Rev Dobson Peacock and his wife also Arthur Winterbottom, choirmaster and secretary for many years.

Many other items were donated by members and friends of St Luke's, and where possible these have been incorporated in the new building. For example, the Bishop's chair given in memory of Edmund Storey, churchwarden, hymn boards, plant stands and many other small items, all have a place in the new building, also the wall mounted cross incorporates the original brass altar cross. Such items as the eagle lectern and the large candlesticks had to be sold to provide funds to convert the school to its present state. However all gifts were not received with open arms by the church; when one particular family wanted to donate a sanctuary lamp they were asked to choose a more suitable gift. Eventually they decided on a litany desk which is still in the possession of the church.

Pulpit – The carved oak pulpit was part of the original church fittings in 1888, donated by Josiah Lancashire. Later in 1935 a canopy was provided in memory of Annie Maud Sherwood. Along with the screen the pulpit had to be sold when the old church was demolished.

Font and Cover – The marble font was originally installed with a plain wooden cover which was replaced, after the death of Rev Dobson Peacock, by an elaborate carved oak font cover paid for by subscriptions from the parishioners in his memory.

Church Plate – The church plate bought by the church in 1890, consists of one chalice and two patens, one with a stand, all in solid silver. This was supplemented in 1949 by another chalice in silver plate given by Mr & Mrs J Eastwood. Then in 1968 two silver plate wine jugs were given, one by the Church Furnishing ladies and the other in memory of James and Lucy Heath. Finally in 1969 two silver hammer finish patens were given in memory of William and Maggie Lee. The brass offertory plates, used at present, were originally given for the use of St Chad's, but have been in the possession of the parish since the foundation of the mission room in 1880. The plates which weigh 1½ lb each, have the following words engraved in the pattern "He that giveth to the poor lendeth to the Lord" "God loveth a cheerful giver". One is engraved on the reverse with a coat of arms while the other states that the plates were given for the use of St Chad's church in 1850 by Emma and Thomas Feerrand-Dearden.

VICAR'S ACCOMMODATION

During the early years of the church as a chapel of ease, the curate apparently lived at Harelands in the vicinity of Durham Street. Later when the district became a parish, the vicar also resided at Harelands until he was provided with a house at 48 Deeplish Road, while the new parish curate had to live with families willing to take him in; this state of affairs continued for several years. In 1903 another member of the Robinson family (Rev J L Robinson) gave the present vicarage site to the parish. Although the site was available it wasn't until 1908 that plans were drawn up and building began on the present vicarage.

The ministers who have led the parish of St Luke's through its 100 years of existence are:

Rev A D Davies (Curate of St Chad's)	1880 – 1889
Rev Rathbone Hartley (Curate of St Chad's)	1889 – 1892
Rev A D Davies (Curate and later Vicar)	1892 – 1905
Rev G L Richardson (Curate)	
Rev W T Battersby	1905 – 1929
Rev J W Rodgers (Curate)	
Rev W R Trevitt (Curate)	
Rev J R Morgan (Curate)	
Rev H Lawton	1929 – 1938
Rev Dr H Dobson Peacock	1939 – 1959
Rev T L Sides	1960 -1971
Rev J P Simpson	1972 –

MAINTENANCE OF PLANT

Throughout its hundred years St Luke's has seen many changes. By 1906, £60 worth of dry-rot repairs were made in the church, and the school was in need of extensive repairs. Renewal of heating and lighting systems have been undertaken several times during the history of both buildings. The work of maintaining the buildings lies mainly in the hands of the churchwardens who advise the PCC on necessary repairs. Throughout the whole of St Luke's history the buildings were maintained to the best of the ability of the wardens and the money available but in 1975 it became increasingly noticeable that the church building was becoming a drain on the church's resources. To this end the PCC commissioned a Feasibility Report to examine the best use of the available plant. The report, completed in August 1975 by a Manchester based firm of architects, examined all aspects of the church. Finance, worship and the use of buildings were the key features of the study.

It was noted that for two years the church had not been used in January or February to save heating costs. The oil consumption was thus reduced from 2,950 gallons per year to less than 1,600 per year but as oil was considerably increasing in cost this still constituted a heavy burden, especially as the school was also burning 2,450 gallons per year. This, coupled with the ever increasing Diocesan Quota, called for drastic action to avoid running the church at a loss. The report put forward four alternatives:

1. A single storey alteration to the Hall	£42,183
2. Two storey alteration to the Hall	£64,123
3. Adaptation of existing church	£37,098
4. Single storey extension to the Hall	£22,663

It was decided that one of the options should be taken, but to do so would mean demolition of one building. This would provide the money from the sale of the land to carry out the alterations. Proposal 1 was rejected because of the cost, as was proposal 2 because it was thought that sale of either the church or school site would only nett £20,000. The third proposal was rejected not only because of the cost but its use of the church would be totally unacceptable to the Diocese. The final proposal seemed the answer but it would have meant building on the bowling green and none of the existing building would be touched. After some discussion, this too was rejected.

The architect was asked to come up with a cheaper version of the first scheme for the PCC to review. This was eventually done and when it was reviewed, further alterations were made to reduce the cost below £20,000. The whole project was then placed before the Parish at a public meeting to explain the motives behind the demolition of the church building. That is one meeting the author will never forget. Opposition was high at the meeting, but the facts

overruled the situation and after several years of upset and prayer the last service in the old church was held on Easter Sunday 1978. Demolition followed shortly afterwards. During the ensuing months, St Luke's congregation worshipped in the vicarage while the alterations to the school were being made.

Finally, on Sunday September 16th 1978, the new church of St Luke was consecrated by the Bishop of Manchester, The Rev Patrick Campbell Rodger.

ONWARD TO COMPLETION.

Today, St Luke's is still serving the same purpose it was set up for in that small mission in Durham Street in 1880. Buildings and people change to suit their surroundings and their purpose, but the Love and Grace of God never changes. It is the Church's mission to present the truth that through faith in Jesus Christ we have Eternal Life. To the society in which we live the church building has become increasingly regarded as something special, not an integral part of people's lives. The new church of St Luke is a step away from this idea. The building is the spiritual home of the Anglican Christians in Deeplish where they can meet together as a family to worship and praise God whose Spirit brought the Church into being.

There can be no doubt that the demolition of the old church building caused much grief. But for those who perceive the real mission of the church, the demolition of the old building was a necessary act to enable the Church to continue in a world where it is no longer regarded as relevant. Perhaps in years to come the present building will be replaced by yet another, thus enabling god's work to continue.

Whatever the future holds we can be certain that the Church will continue to change, until its completion "in God's Good Time."



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