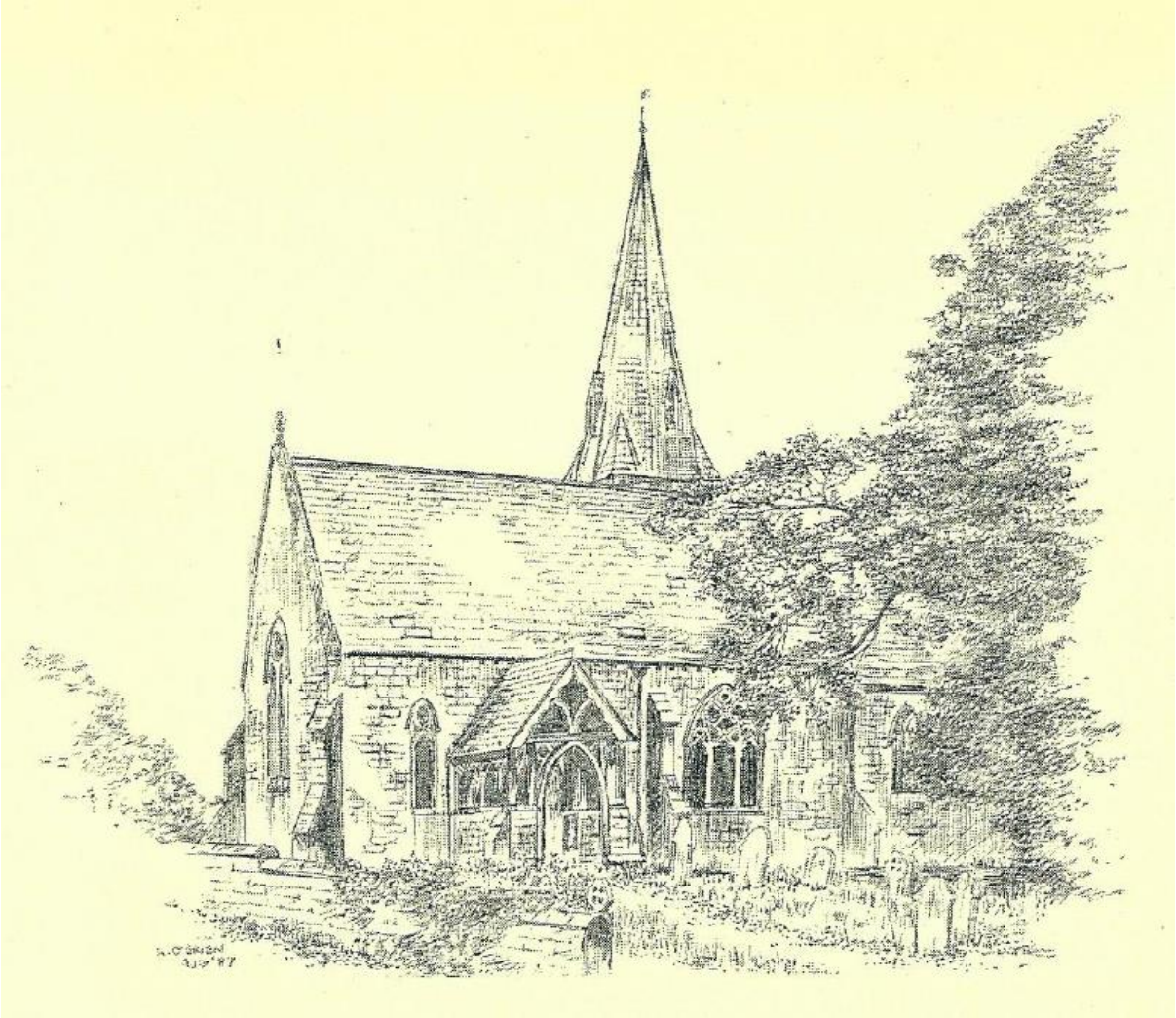

ST. JAMES'S, IDRIDGEHAY by F Long

The Church, which is 14th Century Gothic style, was designed by Henry Isaac Stevens, a Derby architect of renown. The stone shows a particular characteristic of his work in the way that it is 'dressed% this can also be seen locally at the school at North End, Wirksworth. The builder was Mr Robinson and the surveyor John Parkin who later became a churchwarden. He lived at Ithersay House which was on the opposite side of the road to the Vicarage, they were both demolished by the land mine which was dropped by the Germans in 1941.

The nave measures 30 feet by 21 feet, the north aisle 27 by 14 and the chancel 20 by 16. The tower is 9 feet square, the lower part of it is the vestry. The broached spire reaches to 94 feet. The south porch 9 feet by $6^1/_2$ feet. The ridge roof is 38 feet high in the nave and 32 feet in the north aisle. The roof is of Burlington slate.

The cost of the building including the churchyard wall was £2400. The stone came from Mr. Milnes' quarry at Alton Manor and was carted by local farmers. It was also used for the building of Alton Manor, it has a pinkish tinge similar to Hopton stone.

The foundation stone was laid on 22nd April 1854 over a selection of coins. It is not inscribed but can be recognised as the larger stone to your right as you enter the churchyard by the side gate in Cliffash Lane.

Bishop John Lonsdale of Lichfield performed the consecration ceremony on 2nd August 1855. He said that it was the 93rd church that he had consecrated during his time in office. The new parish was formed from parts of Kirk Ireton, Wirksworth and Duffield, the latter had been very large covering a sizeable portion of

the Forest (Duffield Frith). Hazelwood, Heage and Turnditch which had previously been forest chapelries were elevated to parishes shortly before Idridgehay.

The motivation for the building of the church came from Robert Cresswell of South Sitch and James Milnes of Alton Manor with Mr Cresswell contributing by far the larger amount. They became patrons until their respective deaths in 1863 and 1866 when the patronage was transferred to Lichfield Diocese.

As you enter the Church the stone font is to your left. There is no record of the actual purchase of the font except 'Tolls and expenses to Buckland Hollow' and `Expenses for two men fixing same' on 21st May 1857 9s 6d (47p), and on 3rd April 1859 'Lead for font' 15s 6d (77p). The ornately carved cover was the gift of John and Mary Ann Parkin in 1862. Mrs Parkin also donated the wooden offertory plates.

The first baptism was on 7th October 185 S: Marianne daughter of Joseph and Hannah Wright. He was Sexton and the village blacksmith; he made the gates.

The west window which shows the Presentation at the Temple and the Baptism of Jesus is a memorial to Robert Cresswell gifted by his 'numerous friends'. There was an announcement in the *Wirksworth Advertiser* referring to a subscription list in Arkwrights Bank `maximum 1 guinea'. The window was made by Clayton & Bell during their `best' period in the mid 1860's. The image of Christ and the Children in the tracery light at the top has been described by an expert as 'particularly charming'.

The three windows on the west and north sides of the north aisle are memorials to the Milnes and Walthall family. This may seem confusing but when Mr. J. Milnes died in 1866 he was succeeded by his eldest son Henry. He, changed his name to Walthall under the terms of the will of his maternal grandfather Peter Walthall. The windows which were placed in 1916 were made by Heator4 Butler & Baynes and cost £325.

The plaques along this wall are memorials to the Milnes/Walthall families and also the Cresswells. With the exception of Mary Mellor who predeceased the Church they are buried in their respective family vaults underneath the altar. The writing on the three bronze plaques on the east wall of the side aisle is almost illegible, they read:.

In memory of Robert son of Nicholas and Mary Cresswell of Edale and Idridgehay who died 5th April 1863 aged 79; also Mary Cresswell their eldest daughter who died 9th October 1846 aged 60 and was buried in Wirksworth Church; and also of Eliza their third daughter who died 23rd November 1863 aged 73.

also . . .

In memory of Hannah second daughter of Nicholas and Mary Cresswell of Edale and Idridgehay who died 29th October 1866 aged 78; also of Sarah their fourth daughter who died 28th December 1870 aged 75.

also . . .

In memory of Ellen wife of Revd G. P. Belcher Rector of Heather, Leicestershire, fifth daughter of Nicholas and Mary Cresswell of Edale and Idridgehay who died 12th February 1877 aged 77.

The pew 'free standing' in the side aisle was originally in the Chancel, it was moved to enable the organ to be installed.

The lectern is dedicated to Mrs. Whiston. A very sad story — she was the daughter of the Revd. Crump; she died only three weeks after her marriage to Lt. Col. Whiston and was buried 31st May 1905 aged 31. The dedication is carved around the base and reads 'To the Glory of God and in memory of Margaret Whiston RIP'.

There was a payment on 6th July 1876 for 'altering pews in Chancel', presumably this was when the organ was purchased although there is no record of it. It is a Bevington organ one of four different types made in the 1860's, and 1870's. This is type No. 3 listed in their catalogue at 73 guineas. It bears a serial No. 1026. Because of restricted space the supporting struts are curved inwards to allow the congregation a better view of the priest officiating at the altar, also, the connecting rods from the keys to the valves are inverted. A plaque has been affixed in memory of Marjory Hurt who died recently aged 92 having played the organ for approaching 80 years, and also to William Deaville who succeeded his father and grandfather as churchwarden. The organ was

rebuilt in 1993 by T. Firth at a cost of approximately £2700. An electric blower was fitted after electricity was installed in 1932 at a cost of L51 3s 4d.

The altar rail is a memorial to the Revd Crump vicar from 1895 to 1922. The pewter sanctuary lamp was a farewell present to him from h's previous parishioners at West Bromwich.

The two altar chairs were given in memory of Isabel Sybil Walthall from her husband and from her relatives. These chairs replaced the two which are now in the vestry and which were given by Mrs. Mellor, the vicar's wife in 1855.

The east window is another memorial to Robert Cresswell by his surviving sisters. It shows the Crucifixion over the Nativity and is another excellent example of the early work of Clayton & Bell.

The two windows in the south wall of the Chancel are by G. P. Gamon and cost £150. They are memorials to Frederick and Hannah Thornely, the former being a nephew of Robert Cresswell and inheritor of his estate. The window to Frederick features St. George and St. Andrew and the other St. Patrick and St. David.

The preachers chair on the south side is a memorial to Mrs. Crump. It was paid for by public subscription and made by Jones & Co., of Derby to match the other already in use. It cost 10 guineas.

1939-1941 War memorial remembers six local men, three of them are buried in war graves at the west end of the 'new' cemetery, they are:

Michael George Fernau, Nigel Ronald Wheatcroft and John Robert Warren. The latter is also remembered in the Altar Communion book and on a cushion in the preachers chair on the south side, Col. Whiston is remembered in a cushion on the other chair.

The two windows an the south wall of the nave are memorials to Rev Thomas Vernon Mellor, the first vicar. They are also by Clayton & Bell but a later period than the Cresswell windows.

George Turner who has been referred to as Derbyshire's Constable spent his last few years in the village and is buried with his second wife. His age at death is incorrectly carved on the headstone as 67, it should read 68.

There are two Ordnance Survey cut bench marks emplaced on the Church, the first in 1877 is over the trap door to the coal cellar by the outside vestry door, the second emplaced in 1947 is on the buttress to your left as you enter the churchyard by the side gate.

The 1914-18 War Memorial was dedicated by the Bishop of Southwell in 1922.

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