

# St Anne's Church, Woodplumpton

Its History and Architecture



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## Its History and Architecture

by Peter Sheppard

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## Foreword

My childhood memories include many visits to country churches in the South East and the West Country. The sense of peace, the history, the stillness captured my imagination and paved the way for me to discover something of God in the living community of the Church today.

I hope that friends, old and new, will be encouraged by the history of this building. This place where we come to pray and meet God is blessed with the silent music of generations – their hopes and fears, their joys and sorrows. Here they have come to the font for Baptism. Their young people have made their marriage vows before the altar where we are fed. Friends and families have gathered to entrust their dead to the loving arms of God.

Here there is welcome and refreshment for all who seek it; take what you need and add your prayers to this quiet treasury – they are your gift to the future.

Father Iain Forbes  
*Priest-in-Charge*

I am pleased to be able to express my interest in, and best wishes for, the publishing of this book. The author has produced a meticulous, informative survey of history to complete all the more, the story of the Church of St. Anne.

For two years he has delved into the riches of a building which has served so many worshippers for so many years. As Euripides once said, "He has left no stone unturned", and made a valuable contribution, well illustrated, to the bookshelves of those who love Woodplumpton.

Rev. George Jackson  
*Vicar 1953-1974*

## Introduction



This booklet has been written to provide a detailed guide to the Church and its architecture, to outline its history and to record a selection of items from original documents thought to be of general interest. It is not intended to be an exhaustive history of the Church.

The booklet has been arranged to provide a guided tour of the Church and Churchyard. It is recommended that the outside of the Church is viewed first. The interior is best seen from the back of the Church. The east window, south aisle, the tower, belfry and font and the north aisle can then be looked at in turn.

## Early History

Woodplumpton is an ancient settlement being referred to in the Domesday Book in 1086 as Plunton. By 1256 it was known as Plumpton and became 'Wode' Plumpton in 1336 to distinguish it from the Plumpton near Kirkham, which became known as Field Plumpton and is now Great Plumpton. There was a Manor of Woodplumpton and its manor house, the old Hall, is believed to have stood opposite the Church on the site of Woodplumpton Hall Farm.

Woodplumpton was only ever a small village and the church was originally a chapelry in the Parish of St. Michaels-on-Wyre, to the north. The Parish of Woodplumpton came into being in the mid-nineteenth century and is an extensive parish containing the quarters of (Wood)Plumpton, Bartle, Catforth and Eaves. The bulk of the population lived at, or in the neighbourhood of, the many small farms scattered throughout the Parish. Cattle farming still dominates the area but many people now travel to work in Preston and other surrounding towns.

The church occupies a prominent site overlooking the valley of Woodplumpton Brook to the south and west. The brook actually flows north into the River Wyre.

How long there has been a church is uncertain. Some fragments of stonework uncovered when the vestry was extended in 1900 suggest a building from Norman times. Richard, the founder of Lytham Priory, held the Manor in the twelfth century and being a devout man, may have erected a Manor Chapel. One historian (Watson - *History of the House of Warren*) has quoted an unknown fourteenth century charter which stated that the Manor of Woodplumpton held the right of patronage of the church of the said Manor. This statement accords with the dating of the earliest part of the standing church.

The earliest documentary evidence of the present church is to be found in the records of a Royal Commission which took an inventory of altar furniture in 1552. The record shows that the church possessed "... a chalice, bell, vestments in black velvet with red cross, and a green vestment, candlesticks, brass censers, a handbell and a sacring bell". The first known curate, appointed by the vicar of the mother church of St. Michaels-on-Wyre, was in charge from the year 1552. A list of incumbents from that date is mounted on the north wall inside the church.

## The outside of the Church

### The South and West Walls

When the church is approached through the churchyard the external aspect is Georgian in appearance and date. There are semi-circular headed



*The view from the south.*



*The West end and the Witch's Gravestone.*

windows and doors having classical features and the south wall has an embattled parapet from an earlier wall.

The west wall is of similar period and style and shows that the church has three aisles, independently roofed. The south aisle has a segmentally headed window, the north aisle has a new four light square headed, Gothic window, built into the 18th century wall.

A short square tower (only six feet square internally) is built against the west wall. This has a round headed window and is surmounted by an octagonal lantern, somewhat in the style of Sir Christopher Wren, with an open arch on each face. Above these is a small dome and a fish weather vane. The south wall of the tower has a disused clock face.

An agreement, dated 17th June, 1747, reads, "*a contract of agreement betwixt the township of Woodplumpton and James Heath, whitesmith, that the same said James Heath is to keep it agoeing clock and to rewind – two shillings and sixpence – only the town is to pay him five shillings towards a new wheel and to rewind it every Easter. This agreement to continue for life*".

The south and west walls, and part of the east wall, are of squared smooth faced grey gritstone and represent a rebuilding or refacing of these walls.

### *The North Wall*

Observation of the north wall shows that this is much older. It is mainly constructed of irregular yellow and red sandstone blocks intermixed; for half of its length, these are supported on a course of large rectangular blocks. Below the roof are three regular stone courses showing that the roof has been raised at some stage. The wall has two buttresses.

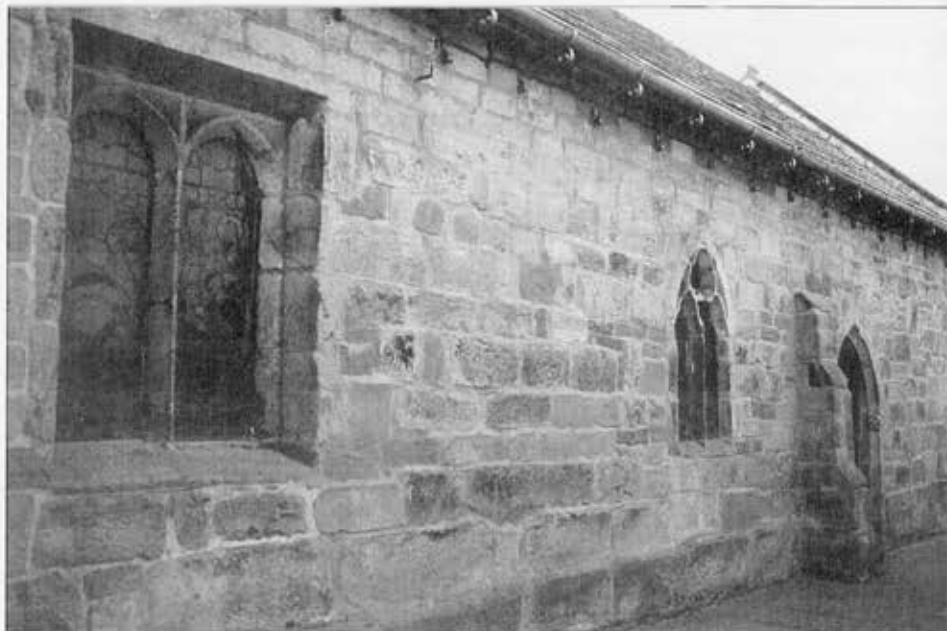
The north doorway has a pointed Gothic arch and stone chamfered jambs on which eight symbols are carved – three four leaved flowers, (or crosses), a rose,



*Symbols on North Door Jambs.*

a fish, a cross and the letter 'M' (twice). This doorway is thought to date from c.1400. East of the doorway is an early fourteenth century window having two pointed trefoil lights with a rounded trefoil above. This is the earliest and a most attractive feature of the building. The doorway, the window and the large rectangular base stones suggest that this part of the wall may be 14th century.





*The north wall.*

A second window in the north wall is two light and square headed and considered to be fifteenth century and there is a third window, now blocked off, in the vestry. The first vestry was built in 1850 and this was extended to form the present one in 1900.

### *The East End*

At the east end of the north aisle is a three light window with low four centred arched head and external hood mould built into masonry similar to that of the north wall. The east wall of the nave and south aisle is of finished blocks like the south wall. The east window of the chancel and nave is a modern pointed one of four lights which replaced an earlier three light window having perpendicular tracery. The south aisle has a round headed two light window similar to those in the south wall.

## *Inside the Church*

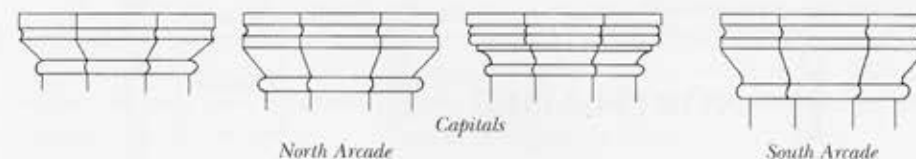
### *The Arcading (Arches)*

The interior of the church reveals three aisles of almost equal width (the north aisle is slightly wider than the other two), each aisle having its own roof.



*The nave and chancel.*

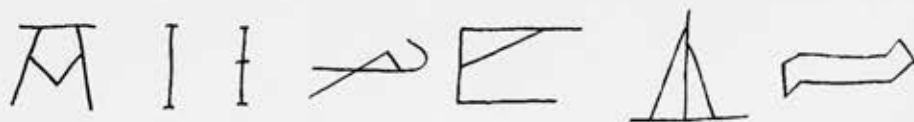
The centre aisle forms the nave and chancel, the latter being defined by arcading and modern oak screening. The aisles are divided by arcades of pointed Gothic arches in the Perpendicular style. Each arcade has five Gothic arches having two chamfered orders and octagonal columns with moulded capitals and bases. The north arcade has arches of equal width and height to the top of the capital of



about 6ft., (1.8m). There are three different designs of capital. The south arcade has unequal arch widths, the columns are 6" (150mm) higher; each capital has the same design, though one is tapered! Pevsner described the south arcade stonework as 'crude' compared to the north one. Seven of the columns were underpinned and new bases fitted during the extensive renovation in 1900.

### *Masons' Marks*

A feature of the stone arches is that they carry a number of mason's marks scratched or chiselled onto the surface of the stone by the stonemason, apparently so that individual features could be identified as the work of a



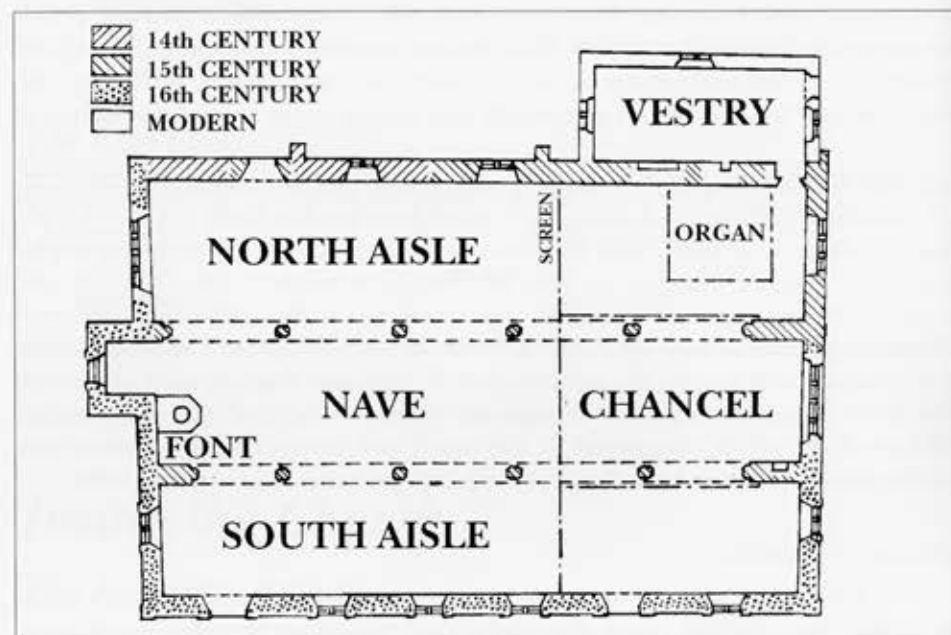
Masons' Marks

particular mason. Many of these marks are difficult to discern but one particular mark occurs frequently, and on stones in both north and south arcades. This has raised the question as to whether the same mason worked on both aisles, or was it father and son, or grandfather and grandson? (The marks were passed down within the family).

### Medieval Painting

Another interesting feature of the north aisle arcading is remnants of decorative painting on the first three arches from the west, the first and third have red paint, but also black and white in a chevron pattern. There is also evidence of painting on the other side of these arches and there is black and red paint by the two light square headed window in the north wall. There is no painting on the south arcade.

### Church Development



Plan of Church

(V.C.H. - Lancs. - VII 289)

The development of the plan of the building is not clear from the evidence of the building. The nature of its walling suggests that the western half of the north aisle may represent the nave of a fourteenth century building. This may have been extended eastwards in the late fifteenth or early sixteenth century and an aisle added on its southerly side (when the north arcade was built). Some time later the present south aisle including the south arcade was built, the newly formed centre aisle becoming the nave. The inferior quality of the south arcade suggests it was built later than the north arcade. However as wall painting is limited to the western half of the church and as the capitals in the western half of the north arcade are identical, there may have been a shorter two aisle church at some period.

### Renovations

There is some positive evidence for repair, renovation and refurbishing. The increase in height of the north wall has already been noted and this may have occurred when the church was re-roofed in 1639, a date together with initials E S, shown on one of the principals of the north aisle.

Box pews were installed in the early eighteenth century. These remained in place until 1899 and can be seen on a late photograph. Hewitson, a well known Preston historian, described the pews as "high, narrow seated, snug for sleeping, uneasy for wide awake sitting". The pews generally belonged to particular families. An indenture dated 1797 marks the sale of a pew seat in the south aisle to Thomas Brown for the sum of eleven guineas "to hold, possess and enjoy the same", even though uncomfortable! The panelling round the walls of the present church was taken from the box pews and some, seen against the south wall, carry the initials and dates (from 1713 - 1725).

The refacing and possibly rebuilding of the south, west and east walls to create their present classic appearance is thought to have been carried out about 1748, because in October 1747, a petition for assistance on behalf of the "Minister, Chappell Wardens and Inhabitants of the Parochial Chappell of Woodplumpton" was presented to the Justices of the Peace at the Quarter Sessions at Preston.

It pointed out that the chapel had become very ruinous, the timber in the roof being greatly decayed and the walls cracked and in danger of falling. The cost of taking down and rebuilding would amount to £1,246 which the "petitioners" would be unable to raise. The petition led to the issue of a Brief (i.e., an appeal for money to other churches, approved by the Sovereign) which presumably received a satisfactory response.

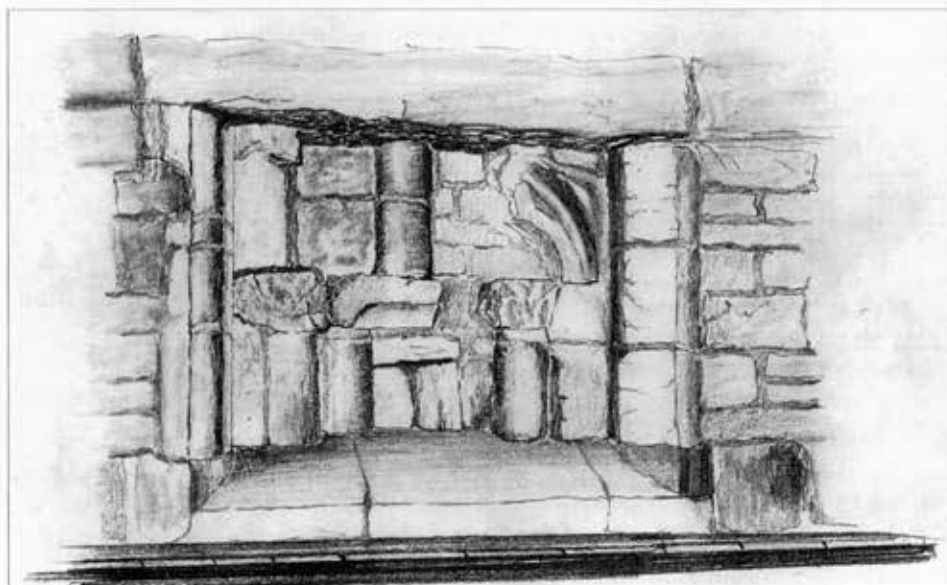
A minor renovation of the north door occurred in 1856 when a bill of £13 16s 2½d was paid for the renewal of masonry.

The church in the late 19th century is illustrated in a photograph hanging on the North Wall behind the screen. This shows the box pews, the pulpit and reading desk, (each formerly in Preston Parish Church), the three light east



*Nave and chancel circa 1890.*

window, a pointed reredos, and dark boards bearing the Ten Commandments, the Lords Prayer, the Apostles Creed and the Table of Affinity. Whitewashed walls, oil lamps and the heating pipes can also be seen.



*Ancient fragments.*

A major restoration took place in 1899-1900 when the interior was stripped of many coats of whitewash and plaster and the stonework revealed; the east window of the nave, and the reredos were replaced, stonework in the south arcade and over the windows in the south wall was renewed. The old pews were removed and new seating installed, the chancel redefined and choir stalls were added and the vestry was rebuilt. The roof was raised and renovated, with new trusses assembled above the nave and south aisle and the dormer windows were inserted. The oak screening was added later.

When the vestry was enlarged, fragments of an earlier church were discovered including two portions of shafts with scalloped capitals, indicating the existence of a building here in the 12th century, also some pieces of fourteenth century tracery and a red sandstone slab carrying a floreated cross. All the fragments were built into the vestry wall; photographs can be seen on the north wall near the organ. The cost of this restoration was almost £3,500 (The fund raising and accounts are described on pages 18 & 19).

### *The Windows*

The stained glass windows are comparatively modern having been installed during the past hundred years. Betjeman noted that the stained glass was 'above average'.

The east window of the nave is particularly fine. The four main lights depict 'The presentation of Christ in the Temple' as described in Luke II, 22-38. The four scenes are:-

Joseph carrying doves for sacrifice.

Simeon, the devout man, who spoke the words of the Nunc Dimittis.

The Virgin Mary and the baby Jesus.

Anna, a prophetess, who gave thanks to God on seeing Jesus.

Above these scenes are six shields, depicting the instruments of Christ's Passion:-

A hammer and pincers – carpenters' tools.

Whips for scourging.

A shield carrying the letters INRI – Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews.

A cloak – divided amongst the soldiers.

The crown of thorns.

A hyssop and a spear.

### *The South Aisle*

In the south aisle, the east window illustrates the parable of the Good Samaritan. To the right is a modern window, showing Christ with his cross, and a ploughman, and carrying the words "Bear ye one anothers burdens" the motto of the Girls Friendly Society.



The Parish Chest rests in the east end of the aisle and was used to store documents related to church administration. Until recent times all Parish records were stored in this way. Now the old records are kept in the County Record Office in Preston, where they can be safely preserved in conditions of controlled temperature and humidity.

The other windows in the south wall depict:-

A man and woman sowing and harvesting.

Christ appearing to the two women at the tomb on Easter Sunday morning.

Joseph meeting his brothers in Egypt.

The inscribed box pew panels can be seen against the wall. The west wall carries a modern illustration of Adam and Eve.

### *The Belfry and Tower*

This houses a single bell installed in 1946. The previous bell, mounted nearby on the floor, carries a date 1596 and was in use for 350 years. There is no founders mark.

The patron saint of the church, St. Anne, is shown in the round headed window in the tower. St. Anne was the mother of the Virgin Mary and she is seen blessing her young child. Little is known about Anne but according to the 'Protoevangelism of James' in the Apocrypha, she was married to Joachim and after many years they remained childless. One day, when Anne was praying, an angel appeared to her saying she would have a child; Anne was overjoyed and made a promise to dedicate the child to God. The child was Mary.

In the tower is a Jacobean table, thought to have been used as an altar. It is dated 1635 with initials W.A., which may represent William Ambrose, who owned Ambrose Hall to the north of the village.



*St. Anne's window.*

Left of the tower is a face carved in the stone, a remnant from an older building.

The font is modern (1901); the previous one, in terracotta was sold for £1 10s 0d.

### *The North Aisle*

The splendid window in the west wall, a memorial to the Rev. E. T. Millward, shows John, the Baptist, Christ preaching, and Melchisedek. The significance of the first two portrayals is well understood but the inclusion of Melchisedek, less so. He was a notable priest and king of Salom at the time of Abraham, who bestowed a blessing on Abraham. St. Paul makes reference, in the letter to the Hebrews, to Christ as a priest 'after the order of Melchisedek'.

The Preston Guild Collage is mounted on the west end of the north wall. It is a reproduction of a stained glass window in Preston Parish Church and was made by six ladies from Woodplumpton parish for the Preston Guild 1992 during which it hung in Preston Parish Church. The composition shows great resource in the use of materials including dried flowers, seed cases, beans, cereals and pasta. Among the patterns can be seen the Preston Pascal Lamb and the Lancashire Rose.

The list of Incumbents records the names of curates and vicars from 1552. Notes on the Incumbents are on page 16.

To the right of the north door is the 13th century trefoil window whose two lights depict St. Agnes and St. Cecilia. These saints are probably illustrated together because they lived and died in Rome during the same period (3rd & 4th century) and were young maidens who dedicated their lives to the service of God, ultimately being martyred for their faith. St. Agnes came to be patroness of chastity. As the window shows, her emblem was the lamb (Agnus is the Latin for lamb). St. Cecilia is well known as the patron saint of music and is therefore shown playing a musical instrument though the connection with music seems to date only from the 16th century.

The other window in the north wall shows Jesus calling a little child to him. The quotation from Matthew is the well known verse "*Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven*".

The Henry Foster Memorial describes how the son was a notable navigator and scientist who was awarded the Copley Medal of the Royal Society of which he became a Fellow. He was drowned at an early age in tragic circumstances towards the end of a long voyage of scientific discovery. The inscription shows the high regard in which he was held.

The present organ was installed at the end of the nineteenth century, replacing one given to the church in 1849.

## The Incumbents

The signature of the first incumbent, Nicholas Lawrence, (1552-62) was written on the inventory of church goods by the Royal Commissioners in 1552.

John Hollingworth (1604-13) was responsible for the carefully kept, first extant Woodplumpton Parish registers commencing March 25th 1604. The Woodplumpton registers are fully preserved from that date until the present time except for 1625-8, a few months in 1613, and during the Protectorate (1648-59).

Roger Farrand (1621-8) was a burgess of Preston, being listed in the Guild Rolls of 1642. He became Vicar at Broughton in 1628.

Peter Jackson (1646-7), John Wright (1650) and John Haydock (1651-2) were each paid £50 per annum from money sequestered from Thomas Clifton, 'delinquent' (during the Protectorate) to increase the maintenance of able preaching ministers.

At the time of John Harrison's incumbency, (1676-1681) the population of the parish was 646 including 46 recusants and 3 dissenters.

Thomas Kirkham (1682-1693) was described by the Churchwardens as "a man of good carriage and upright conversation. He reads the office of com(m)on prayer and celebrates the Lord's Supper according to the office prescribed in the Com(m)on Prayer book:.

Matthew Worthington (1735-1797) had twelve children of whom ten were baptised in the church; he was curate for 63 years and is commemorated on a marble tablet near the organ. Late in life, when he had 27 grandchildren, he petitioned the Bishop for financial assistance, saying "it cuts me to the heart to see my poor family in want". He was granted a living at Childwall to supplement his income.

Charles Buck (1797-1803) was previously vicar of St. Michaels-on-Wyre. He appointed assistant curates in 1798, Thomas Jackson; 1800, Roger Young, and 1801, James Potter.

Henry Foster, incumbent for 33 years, (1803-1836) was previously Curate at Copp but actually came from Yorkshire and was baptised at Giggleswick; a memorial to him and his son can be seen next to the oak screen.

Isaac Mossop (1836-1884) was formerly curate at St. Michaels-on-Wyre. According to Hewitson, "His sermons can get several of his congregation to sleep directly ... he dislikes fuss and fighting, was regardful of fresh air, old customs, evangelical theology, good milk and personal piety".

Ernest Millard (1889-1923) presided over the extensive 1899 renovation of the Church already detailed. George Jackson described him as "a dedicated and remarkable pastor ... who left a great impression on the parish".

George Jackson (1953-1974) was an erudite student of the local history of Woodplumpton and Broughton covering their religion, families and houses and publishing three popular books on the subject. Additional information on the incumbents of Woodplumpton may be found in his book.

## Churchwardens and other accounts

Some interesting extracts from old documents follow. These illustrate aspects of church affairs in times past.

### Extracts from Terrier, 1689 (A report to the Bishop)

*The Chapel with all its ornaments, utensils etc. are all in good order and decency.*

*We have a font of stone, a reading desk and pulpit conveniently set up, a common prayer booke and parchment where be registered christenings, marriages etc.*

*The Minister is a man of good carriage and upright conversation etc.*

*The clerke carryeth himself decently and diligently and is a man of honest life and conversation ...*

*The schoole Master is licensed by the Bishop ...*

*The Chapelwardens and sidesmen diligently (ensure) that during Divine Service no disturbance be made in the said chapel.*

*Lastly the Chapelwardens, while the priest is reading the sentences for the offertory, do gather and receive alms for the poore ...*

*Signed Churchwardens of Woodplumpton*

*John Duddell*

*Roger Kitchen*

### Valuation list for the deanery of Amounderness

Included in the submission of Thomas Robinson, Vicar of St. Michaels-on-Wyre on the 3rd November, 1707 was the item:-

*"Easter dues and Smal Tythes from Woodplumpton £5-0-0"*

### Churchwardens Accounts, 1805

This is a typical annual account:-

*Easter Monday, April 15th 1805*

Receipts		Disbursements	
To Assessments		By balance Outpurse	6- 8- 7
Plumpton Quarter	3-16- 8½	Visitation & commissary fees	1-17- 4½
Bartel "	3-17- 8	Clerk's salary	3- 5- 0
Catforth "	5- 8- 1	Bread & wine for sacrament	6- 9- 6
Eaves "	2-11- 3	Almanack & parchment	4- 5
	15-13- 9½	Mr. Hornby for 2 years	7- 0
Churchwardens		Gunpowder	4- 4
Wm. Houghton		Wm. Holliday's Bill	15- 6
Thos. Moon		Jas. Billington's Bill	6- 0
Sidesmen		Disb	19-17- 8
John Mayor		Rec't	15-13- 9½
Ric'd. Bradshaw		Outpurse	4- 3-11
Signed Henry Foster - Minister			

1804	Offertory Money	Communicants
Jan 6th	3- 6	
Good Friday	7- 0	
Easter Day	9- 0	
Oct 13th	3- 0	31
	1- 2- 6	

Receipts for the Assessments were collected by a rate levied on all ratepayers of  $\frac{1}{2}$ ,  $\frac{3}{4}$ , or 1d in the pound to provide church funding "for the repairs of the church and other ordinary expenses incident to the due performance of Divine Worship". From 1871, however income was derived from voluntary collections by Churchwardens and Sidesmen. The Offertory Money was collected annually on or about the days shown. There is no indication about its disbursement. Some accounts cover expenditure on bell ringers' ale and also dinner and ale for Minister and Churchwardens! What the gunpowder was for, is a mystery.

Up to 1828 'briefs' were regularly circulated from other churches, country-wide, requesting charitable contributions for special purposes, particularly renovation or reconstruction following a fire. In 1805/6 £2 18s 6d was collected towards ten briefs, two requesting help following fires.

In the late nineteenth century, there was an annual collection on 'Hospital Sunday' from all Preston churches in aid of the funds of the Preston and County of Lancaster Royal Infirmary. On 22nd January, 1898, St. Anne's, Woodplumpton raised £4 4s 4d.

## The Restoration, 1899-1900

Hand written accounts covering this restoration are archived in the Lancashire Records Office. The Architects were Austin and Paley and the builders were James Hatch & Sons, both of Lancaster. The total cost of their work was £3,356 4s 6d of which the architects fees were £167 1s 0d. The original estimate for the building work was £2,437 but a great deal of additional work was found to be necessary during the course of the reconstruction.

The funding of this work is of some interest; 123 people gave subscriptions varying in value from 5s to £100, in a total of £1,074. There was a legacy (from Ellen Tuson) of £700 and special church offertories produced £102 18s 4d. The most surprising amount was that produced by a bazaar which raised £1,206, a very large amount in those days.

The pages of the 'Preston Guardian' in September, 1898 give details. As the notice of the bazaar shows, the Woodplumpton Bazaar and Japanese Fair was held in the Public Hall, Preston on Thursday 29th September, the following Friday and Saturday and because there were still goods for sale, on the Monday. It was opened by the Countess of Bective (daughter-in-law of an Irish peer) and by other notabilities on the following days.

Cr	Summary		Dr		
To Bal on Hand per Bazaar	£	3 18 6	Faculty	£	5 5 -
Subscriptions		1206 17 3	Architect & Builders		3356 4 6
Legacy, Grant & Offertories		1074 - -	Goods, Repairs and		
Sale and Auctions		920 18 4	recovered for Church.		28 14 11
Grant & Entertainment of J		75 3 3	Choir Tunes & Printing		12 2 8
& Corporation Surplus		20 5 4	Bank Charges		4 9 8
Sale of Old Stock		1 10 -	Bal to Credit		119 9
Bank Interest		126 10 -			
	£	3429 9 6		£	3429 9 6

PR 3650 200 511

Restoration - Summary Account

The Preston Guardian reports that "Throughout the winter, social parties met at Woodplumpton and Catforth and needles were deftly plied in the production of a multitude of articles ... No fewer than 12 stalls were required to accommodate the goods forwarded for the sale ..." "The general scheme of decoration was that of a Japanese Fair ... from ceiling to gallery strings of many coloured lanterns hung in graceful curves while four huge parasols occupied the corners of the Hall" ... in the centre of the floor was a Japanese tent within which a priestess of palmistry practiced the mystic rites of her craft".

The proceedings were enlivened by music from a military band and on the Friday evening the Woodplumpton Amateur Dramatic Society presented a funny farce, *A Tourist Ticket*. Little wonder a large sum of money was raised.

The village school was closed during the four days of the bazaar and also when the church was reopened.

There is no record of when the work started on the church or where and when the Church Services took place during the restoration. However the Reopening Services took place on Wednesday, 16th May, 1900, the Lord Bishop of Manchester preaching at Evensong. "Our Lord" he observed "sowed the Divine Truth in the heart of his Church". May St. Anne's Woodplumpton be a centre for the dissemination of Divine Truth for as many years in the future as it has in the past.



## Schools

The earliest school in the Parish is known from 1622 when two brothers named Boulton were unlicensed teachers. Then in 1661, Alice Nicholson of Bartle gave £100 by deed "for the maintenance of a free school within the Manor Woodplumpton". It is recorded that "school house was built in 1664 by date over door" with the initials A.N., the founder. This school house was in Rosemary Lane, Catforth.



*The school today.*

A Terrier in 1689 concerning the church, records that "*The school Master is licensed by the Bishop ...*" and in 1735, a testimonial was sent to the Lord Bishop of Chester by the "*Trustees of the freeschool of Woodplumpton*" commending the present Master, William Critchley, "*to be a man of orthodox principles, religious deportment, exact sobriety and indefatigable industry and every way qualified to teach ...*". The Charity Commissioners reported that sixty children attended in 1824. This school closed in 1870 and a new County school opened at Catforth in 1874.

In the meantime, Woodplumpton Church of England School, was opened in 1863, built in brick in the Gothic style usual in the Victorian era. The cost, of £1,058, was met by local donations, an educational grant and a substantial gift from Mr. C. A. Birley of Bartle Hall who also provided the site.

The Schoolmaster had no full time assistance in teaching up to sixty pupils until 1897, when an assistant mistress was appointed. The attendance was still about 60 in 1931. The school became a primary school in 1953.



*Schoolchildren c. 1890.*

Three additional classrooms were built in 1963 and a further one opened in 1994. It now caters for 105 pupils and has 5 staff and demand for places exceeds availability. The school is a vibrant focal point for the local community and an essential element in the promotion of the work of the Church in Woodplumpton.

## Around the Church

The main entrance to the church is through the lychgate, erected in 1912 and the gift of a Miss Humber.

Along the wall to the left is a mounting block, a relic of the days when rural people came to church on horse back.

Nearby are the village stocks with ornately carved sidestones and the wooden inserts in place. On the right hand stone is carved A B 73, presumably the mason's initials and a date, though which century must be guessed. Offenders were punished in the stocks for various offences; stocks were used in some places until the early nineteenth century. Moving round the wall to the left, there is a wicket gate whose gatestones are the same as the stones of the stocks. So





*Miniature gravestones.*

Woodplumpton clearly had two sets of stocks.

To the left of the pathway leading from the wicket gate to the church is a sundial, mounted on an octagonal pedestal, and dating from 1637.

To the right are four miniature gravestones carrying only initials and date. There is a fifth to the west of the church. The dates are from 1743 to 1769.

Also to the right is the oldest gravestone, dated 1689, engraved in Roman style – the name Carter runs from one line to the next (see illustration). It commemorates the deaths of James Carter in March 1687 and his daughter, Alice, in July 1689.

On the south wall of the church, a much larger sundial has been inscribed together with the Latin phrase "Sic transit gloria mundi" – 'so passes away earthly glory'.



*Carter gravestone.*

Down the main path to the west of the church can be found the so-called Witches grave. The large boulder is said to mark the site of the grave of Meg Shelton, a reputed witch.

Along the north wall of the graveyard, immediately west of the Church, a local diviner claims to have located thirty-eight burials close together and laid north-south. (Burials are normally east-west). These are thought to be plague burials from 1631 when the dreaded sickness claimed 61 lives in six months.

Three vicarages exist in the parish; the oldest was known as 'The Parsonage' and is now known as 'old Vicarage Farm' (in Bartle Lane). There were farm buildings attached and the Rev. Isaac Mossop must have engaged in farming as living under his roof in 1861 were a 'farm servant' and a 'dairy maid'.

Mossop moved to the Victorian vicarage in Sandy Lane (next to the motorway) sometime before 1881. The present vicarage, also in Sandy Lane was built in 1956.

John Betjeman described St. Anne's as "One of Lancashire's most attractive and best cared for churches". We hope that visitors agree.

## **POST SCRIPT**

### *Woodplumpton Hall*

Examination of the first edition of the Ordnance Survey Map surveyed in 1844 and published in 1847 (6" version) shows 'old' Woodplumpton Hall located at the western edge of the present village playing field at the end of the modern road "The Orchard". The cobbled road still there almost certainly served the Hall. In 1838 the property consisted of house, outbuildings, garden, fold and orchard. In 1851 the associated farm consisted of 190 acres.

The Reverend Thomas Jackson Calvert, Warden of Manchester, owned the Hall from 1823 to 1840, but it was occupied by William & Ann Jackson. William died in 1825 but Ann remained there until her death in 1859. It is not presently known when the old Hall was pulled down, but a barn remained there within living memory. However, the 1890 25" Ordnance Survey Map shows Woodplumpton Hall as the building opposite the Church (Woodplumpton Hall Farm) referred to on page 5.

### *Errata*

Page 11 line 17 should read "can be seen on a late 19<sup>th</sup> C photograph (overleaf)".

Page 20 line 6 should read "Rosemary Lane, Bartle".

# Acknowledgements

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Other sources referred to were:-

The Blackburn Diocesan Registry.

The Cheshire County Record Office.

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**Proceeds from the sale of this booklet will go entirely to Church Funds.**

