

**Appendix. three****A BRIEF GUIDE TO ST. MATTHEW'S CHURCH HASLINGTON****Introduction**

The Parish Church, dedicated to St. Matthew, stands in the centre of Haslington. Its origin is of a very early date, although there is some controversy about the exact date because reference books on the subject differ. It was originally referred to as a Chapelry

The First Chapel, Waterloo Road c1302

The original Haslington Hall was built on a site in Waterloo Road in the 1200s and probably had a domestic chapel built by the Vernon Family for the ease of themselves and their tenants. According to Bishop Gatrell, a noted Historian, *"The Hall of Haslington with the Chapel and all other buildings thereto belonging were licensed for a meeting in AD1302."* Omerod gives a list of chaplains of Haslington Chapel from 1302. The Parish records go back to 1645. They record baptisms and marriages. The earliest were written in Latin. Records were also kept of donations to National Calamities, such as, fires, floods or pestilence in such places as Cambridge, Blackburn and Morpeth.

**Haslington Chapel c1500 – 1810**

Haslington Hall was rebuilt on its present site when Sir Frances Vernon returned home from the Spanish Armada. He used materials from three wings of the Old Hall along with woodwork salvaged from wrecked Spanish galleons to construct the Hall, which today stands a mile east of the village. St. Matthew's Church was also built in half-timber from materials reclaimed from the Old Hall. The style of the first church was that of a traditional black and white Cheshire Church of the 1500s. The houses round it were in the same style and there is still a neighbouring cottage dated 1510.

This church remained for 150 years of worship until it was replaced in 1810. Tradition says that the church burnt down, but there is no available written evidence to confirm this. Omerod says *"An ancient chapel of timber and plaster was taken down a few years ago (mid 1800s) and its site has been occupied by a modern building..."*



The Vernon Chapel became famous as a dissenting preaching house. The second incumbent, Joseph Cope, was ejected from Sandbach in 1662 soon after The "Revolution" and became installed in Haslington. He kept up a very considerable congregation until he died aged 83 years.

In 1704 the Vernon's renewed their association with mainstream Anglicanism

**The Church 1810 - 1910**

In the early 1800s the ancient chapel of timber and plaster was declared to be "so dilapidated as to be almost ruinous" and was pulled down. It was rebuilt, at his sole expense, by the Rev. Sir Thomas Broughton of Doddington Hall, who was the local Landowner and minister of the Chapel.

The new church was a plain Georgian brick building with a nave and a western turret with a white wooden bellcote. The eastern window contained specimens of

ancient painted glass from Doddington Hall. The Cheshire Directory of 1864 refers to the window as "curious old glass said to be the oldest in the district." This 16th Century glass was sold in 1910 to help pay for the new Chancel. "It is much broken and pieced and it will be impossible to insert in the New East Window." (Faculty number 1152)

The church built in 1810 is referred to in several documents as being restored or rebuilt at various dates. Bispham's Directory (1850) says. *"the structure underwent complete reparation in 1848. The living is endowed with £20 per annum a perpetual curacy augmented with £200 benefaction, £200 Queen Anne's Bounty and £1143 Parliamentary Grant."*

When the church was rebuilt in 1810 it was stated that there was no evidence that the old chapel had been consecrated. The old Chapel was closed in 1810 and the new one consecrated on 15th November 1811 by the bishop of Chester. Haslington was part of the Parish of Barthomley and there is a letter dated 1689 asking for Haslington to become a Parish. It became a district in 1860 and a parish in 1870. In the letter of 1689 it was recorded that the curate was paid £20 p.a

## The Church Today

### Interior

The Church is a place of light. The high East Window and the tall round-arched windows of the early 19th Century nave are finely proportioned and allow unhindered light. The walls are smooth, plastered and reflective of that light and give good acoustics.

### Doors

The West Doors were placed in 1962 in memory of The Reverend Thomas Lever M.C. vicar 1954 – 1958. They were donated by his sister.

### The Baptistry



The font was repaired and altered to mark the centenary celebrations of the school in 1959. The faculty for the removal of the pews and the repositioning of the font was applied for in 1962. In December 1975 a table and a tapestry picture of "Jesus the Good Shepherd" was donated by Mrs Susan McLeod



to form a children's corner and altar. The carpet was given by the M.U. to mark their centenary year.

### The Organ

The present organ was purchased for £600 in 1967 from Reeves & Merner of Talke. It was second-hand and the price included a 25-year guarantee!

### The West Gallery

This was probably constructed for musicians and the choir before the coming of the organ and the enlargement of the church.



### The Bishop's Chair

The Oak Bishops Chair was given in memory of Mr. Bloor by his widow in 1967. The dedication of the chair was delayed because of an outbreak of "foot and mouth" disease in the village.

### The Lectern, Communion Table, Rails, and Choir Stalls

These are all of oak and were bought for the new extension in 1910.

### The Pulpit

The pulpit is made from oak and dates from 1810. It was repositioned when the church was extended in 1910.

### The School Plaque

This commemorates the National and Infant School for children of both sexes, with residence for the Master, which was erected in 1859-60 at a cost of £1,600 on land presented by Sir Henry Delves Broughton, Bart. (now Delves Broughton Court) The vicarage is built on the site of the Master's house.

### The Sanctuary Lamps

These three lights were installed in 1947. In 1971 they were in poor repair and money was donated to install candle-type fittings.

### Exterior

One hundred years separates the western and the eastern ends of the church. The west is of 1810, a brick Georgian building with arched windows and a narrower entrance bay. It has an arched doorway and over it a lunette (semicircular) window. A cupola stands a little behind on the west gable containing one bell.

The east is of 1909, designed by Reginald T. Longden. The style is decorated with a seven light east window. Plans were made to rebuild the whole church in this style to accommodate the change from pulpit centred worship to resurgence of emphasis in Holy Communion and resultant renewed interest in chancel and sanctuary.

### The Churchyard

There was no churchyard in Haslington until 1811, before this date anyone who died in Haslington had to be carried to Barthomley for burial. It was consecrated with the church on the 15<sup>th</sup> November 1811. The first burial on the 14<sup>th</sup> January 1812 was of Elizabeth Beech who died aged 35 years. The oldest gravestone is that of Jane Merrill, 14<sup>th</sup> April 1813. Half an acre of extra land was given to the Parish by Sir H D Broughton in 1882. Other generous donations of land have been made by Colonel Humphrey Watts (formerly of Haslington Hall) and the Leech Family.



**The Sandstone Font**  
On the north side of the churchyard used to stand an old sandstone font. There is no record of its history, but it is believed to have been in the old St Matthew's. This is now placed in the church porch.

**The Clock**  
This is situated on the outside of the porch and dates from the 1890's



