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THE HISTORY
of
GEDNEY HILL

by

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INTRODUCTION

Gedney Hill grew up some time after 1241, when Common Dyke was built south of it, as protection from water brought down by the rivers.

Until 1699 Gedney Hill, or Gedney Fen End as it was called, formed part of the parish of Gedney. Since that date it has been a separate parish.

HOLY TRINITY CHURCH, GEDNEY HILL

The Vicar of 1708 stated that the Church was built by the Lady Margaret Roos, who also gave 50 acres of land. There is no other evidence of this.

The Church consists of chancel, nave, nave aisles, vestry, south porch and a 52 feet high tower.

Maret, in his 1814 book on Lincolnshire states that the church was a "small, neat modern building." He said, "... the churchyard is an eminence, and when Cowbit Bank broke in 1764 and again in 1771, this was the only place to which the inhabitants of this part could fly, for refuge from the fury of the watery element."

The tower, and re-used parts of the chancel, including a three-light window between chancel and vestry mentioned in Pevsner's Lincolnshire, 1964, is of the period about 1375 to 1400.

During the restoration of 1874-75 the remains of two doorways, and an east window of the late 14th century, were found, states Kelly's Lincolnshire Directory of 1889. The 1874-75 restoration cost £2,048 and the architect was James Fowler of Louth.

The Perpendicular west tower is mainly made of limestone, with about 4 feet of brickwork at the top forming battlements. The tower has diagonal buttresses for the first stages.

The west side of the first stage of the tower has a three-light window. The hood-mould has animal heads as end stops. On the west side of the second stage, there is some late 14th century decoration, with finials. There is similar decoration just around the corners at both ends. On the west side there is a niche in the centre, a small opening above, and above that a clock face. At the second stage on the south side, there is a small window with a square hood-mould which has faces as end stops. On the third stage there are two-light bell openings with transoms, on all four sides. There is a staircase and a weather-cock.

The pointed tower arch to the nave has a hood-mould with end stops, one of an animal, the other the face of a bearded man wearing a hood. There is battlementing on both sides of the arch.

The nave arcades are supported by eight wooden posts. Each post has a square limestone base with inward sloping sides. There are four re-used late 14th century or 15th century tie-beams in the nave roof.

On the east window is written, "To the glory of God, Thomas Clark, 57 years priest of this parish, born 1783 died 1870. Mary Ann Clark, born 1786, died 1845, and Edward Clark, born 1825 died 1848."

Written on the octagonal pulpit is the following:— "In memory of Thomas Charrington, 60 years a feoffee of Gedney Hill Chapel. He departed this life March 17th 1856. Aged 78 years"

On the walls there are memorials to:-

1. Jacob de Camps, who died in 1770, and his wife.
2. John Perkins, who died in 1855, and his wife.
3. Mary Kingston, who died in 1815.

On the floor there are memorials to:—

1. Robert Skin, who died in 1740. His wife died in 1737.
2. Rev. David Burrell, A.B., who died in 1779.
3. "Thomas Cherington, gent. He was 36 years one of the feoffees in trust for the land belonging to this Chapel. He died in 1789. Aged 60 years." The memorial is also for his wife, daughter and son.

To the south of the church there is the remains of a limestone churchyard cross, which has a five-sided base with two steps on the south side. It was restored as a monument to those of the parish who gave their lives in the First World War.

On the east part of the churchyard, there is a brick out-building with a stone cross built into the south side. On the east side of the building there is an inscription which reads:—

"HEAR LYETH THE BODY OF BRIAN MIDDLEBROOKE OF FLEETE FENN WAS BURIED DECEMBER THE 24, 1671.

On the same side as the inscription, there is a cross with IHS (which stands for Jesus) beneath it, both within a circle, and the date 1754 written below.

DOCUMENTS IN THE PARISH AND CHARITY CHESTS

There are many documents in these chests, which are in the vestry. I have selected information from a few of them only.

On a Gedney Pawlett Manor Court roll of 1574 there is the signature of LAMBERTE KYSBEY. In Long Sutton church on the pillar south of the main altar, there is a carved inscription which reads LAMBART KYSBEY ANO 1572.

A fragmentary document refers to days and nights work done on Southea Bank in 1614. The decipherable part includes:—

“.... laboured and watched in Southea Bancke of March 1614 unto the and fortifye the same again for the defence of Gedney, Sutton, Tydde and other and unpayd for same Thompson Viii dayes iX nights. Thomas Barber Vi dayes Vi nights” There are other names mentioned.

Documents show that Gedney Hill parish was fined £40 in 1805 for not providing two men for the militia. One of the two men the parish had offered, Thomas Woolward, a substitute for Seth Meers, “never having joined any regiment, batallion or corps is deceased or deserted.”

SOME OTHER GEDNEY HILL BUILDINGS

There is a round tower windmill which has lost its cap and sails. The mill owner's house nearby has a dated brick of 1817. The former school is dated 1860. This has been replaced in the last few years by a fine new school. The Baptist Chapel is dated 1883.

THE POPULATION OF GEDNEY HILL

There were 265 people in Gedney Hill parish in 1801. This rose each decade to 1851 when it was 569. It mainly fell each decade up to 1901, when it was 323. The population- in 1961 was 426; in 1971 was 395; in 1976 (estimated) 467.

GEDNEY HILL CHARITY

This has an interesting history. It is said to have been founded by Lawrence Frosdyke, Abbot of Crowland. The earliest date mentioned in documents is 1411.

In 1524 the charity was intended for the maintenance of a priest. After the Reformation the charity was altered, as in 1565 “the whole of the copy-lands are held for the payment of the ministers and the repair of the highways, and the tithes given to the poor, the reparation of the church, and the general good of the parish.”

The charity today is used for much the same purpose as it was in 1565.