

The Parish Church of St Mary, Long Newton

Long Newton parish church consists of a nave with a porch at the west end of the three-bay south aisle, and a chancel with a south chapel and a parallel mausoleum (for the Vane family), with a crypt beneath, on the north.

The greater part of the building is constructed of roughly-coursed and roughly-squared stone with grey/buff ashlar dressings; the roofs of the main body of the building are of Welsh slate, and of the mausoleum of graduated Lakeland slate. Architecturally the building is in the style of the later 13th century; a number of the larger windows have additional arches of roughly-shaped voussoirs outside their hoodmoulds, a typically Victorian feature.

Architectural Description

The Exterior

The west end of the **Nave** has paired stepped buttresses at its angles, a chamfered plinth and a moulded set-back below the west window which consists of two tall trefoil-headed lancets with foiled spheric triangle above, under a moulded hood with head stops. The gable above has



South-east view

moulded kneelers and a coping chamfered on its lower edge. The impressive bellcote has a trefoiled arch set between stop-chamfered piers, under a gablet with a blind trefoiled panel and a ring-cross finial. Disturbed masonry in the centre of the gable (difficult to inspect because of the adjacent tree) probably relates to the position of the west door of the 1806 church.

The north wall of the nave has a single large buttress half way along, with big sloped off-sets and a chamfered plinth; the wall itself has a moulded string below the windows, c 2.5 m above the ground. The walling below the string is of roughly-coursed and roughly-shaped greyish stone, and looks to pre-date the browner snecked stone of the upper part. In the lower section of wall 2.5 m from the west end is a length of straight joint, perhaps the east side of a former opening, the other jamb of which has been destroyed by a ragged column of later masonry a little to the west, presumably relating to a flue (there is a 20th-century ashlar stack rising from the eaves). In front of this a stair descends eastward to a chamfered square-headed doorway into a boiler room beneath the western part of the nave. The upper part of the wall has trefoil-headed lancet windows, paired in the eastern of the four bays.

On the south side of the nave the **South Porch** projects slightly beyond the line of the three-bay aisle. It has stepped diagonal buttresses at its outer angles and a two-centred moulded arch on jambs with attached shafts that have moulded capitals and bases; the gable above has the usual

coping chamfered on its lower margin, and a cross finial. To the east the wall of the **South Aisle** has a moulded string below the trefoiled lancet windows; there is a stepped buttress between the second and third bays, and a larger gable-topped one at the end

Only the eastern bay of the **Chancel** has external walls; it has paired buttresses with trefoiled caps at its eastern angles, a big moulded plinth and a heavy moulded string, continued around the buttresses, below the windows. In the east end below the plinth are some large roughly-squared blocks that look like older work, presumably re-used. On the south there is a tall window of two trefoil-headed-lights with a circle in the spandrel; and a moulded hood with head stops. The east end has a low central buttress, and the sill string as a detached length, a carved boss of foliage at each end, at a higher level, beneath the sill of the four-light east window which has Geometrical tracery under the usual hood and head stops style; the gable above has a cross fleury terminal.

On the south the western bay of the chancel is covered by the **South Chancel Chapel**, which is a little lower than the adjacent nave aisle. This has a chamfered plinth, a stepped diagonal buttress at the outer angle, and is lit by a pair of trefoiled lancets on the south and a short window of two trefoiled lights with trefoil in spandrel set high in the east wall, with a prominent area of recent re-facing directly below it.



The **Mausoleum** forms in effect a north aisle to the chancel, although its west end (left) overlaps the nave. It is built of coursed roughly-squared brown stone like that of the upper part of the north wall of the nave. There is a large moulded plinth set c 1 m above the ground, and a moulded string below the windows. At the west end are four steps up to a large doorway with a trefoiled head and attached shafts in the jambs, and a hoodmould with head stops; above is a big spheric triangle window, with both a moulded hood with head stops, and a projecting moulded sill ending in bosses of foliage. The gable has a coping chamfered on its lower angle, with a cross fleury terminal; on the south the coping extends to a gable-topped buttress at a higher level than those at the northern angles of the mausoleum.

The string that runs below the windows on the north and east of the Mausoleum commences on the west front to the north of the door, in a boss carved with an angel, and is continued around the big paired buttresses at the angles; similar buttresses articulate the three bays of the north wall, all being continued up to steeply-gabled tops with trefoil-section ridges. The upper stages of the buttresses have chamfered angles with carved stops. There is another moulded string at the bases of the ashlar parapet, which as a moulded coping. The central bay has a shoulder-arched doorway (to the crypt) set in a projection between the buttresses, with above it a sloped set-back and then a semicircular-plan niche with rich foliage (badly worn) at its base and a cusped and canopied stop. The flanking bays each have small cusped spheric triangle windows low down, lighting the crypt, the plinth being stepped up in an arched form to clear their heads.

Above are windows in a late-13th century style, each with two trefoil-headed lights and a cinquefoiled circle in the spandrel, with attached shafts in the jambs, moulded arches and hoods with richly-carved stops.

The east end of the Mausoleum has the same architectural elements as the north side, with two similar small windows to the crypt; to the south of these the plinth drops in level to join that of the chancel, whilst the string above steps up beneath the sill of the three-light east window with a big circle in the head containing cusped spheric triangle lights. The gable above contains a trefoiled light under a moulded hood with foliage stops, and carries an elaborate cross fleury terminal

The Interior

The **South Porch** (which has no outer door) has a stone seat on each side, and exposed walls of roughly-tooled snecked stone. The boarded ceiling has trussed rafters, and ashlaring carried on a moulded stone string. The inner doorway has a two-centred arch with a single broad chamfer that has large broach stops at the base, and a casement-moulded hood. The doorway is set in a thickened section of wall, which internally has another chamfered arch set in a projection with chamfered angles and a stepped and gabled top.

The interior of the main body of the church is plastered, with exposed ashlar dressings. A recent remodelling scheme has seen the western and part of the central bays of the south aisle partitioned off the fork, vestries, and a new floor in the nave. In the **Nave** the west window has a two-centred rear arch with a chamfer to the head only; the four windows on the north, which do not have any exposed stonework, have shallow triangular rear arches. The three-bay south arcade has arches of a single double-chamfered order, on octagonal columns with chamfered bases and moulded capitals, and semi-octagonal responds. The windows in the **South Aisle** have rear arches like those on the north of the nave; at the east end of the aisle is a quadrant arch to the chancel chapel, now blocked and with a modern doorway in the blocking. The roof of the nave has trussed rafters, with ashlaring and scissor braces, with a boarded ceiling resting on the rafters. The aisle roof has chamfered principals with arch braces that die into the wall, and one level of purlins.

The arch into the **Chancel** is large, and set in a thick wall. It is of segmental-pointed form; the outer order has keeled mouldings that are continued down to jambs to stops c 2 m above the floor, and the inner a filleted keel that dies into the jambs. On south is a single segmental-pointed arch into the chapel; this has a wave moulding and springs from semi-octagonal responds with chamfered bases and moulded capitals. The window further east has a segmental-pointed rear arch with a moulded head. The large east window has a moulded rear arch and attached shafts in the inner jambs. The chancel has a wagon roof with its boarding painted with gold stars; the wall is taller on the north (mausoleum) side, which is balanced on the south by a vertical timbered section with triangular cusped panels.

The two windows of the **South Chapel** (now the organ chamber) both have simple triangular rear arches.

On the north of the chancel the three-bay arcade to the **Mausoleum** is of unusual form. There are in fact two parallel arcades, each consisting of broad central arch flanked by narrower openings, are all of steep two-centred form. The southern arcade, towards the chancel, has double-chamfered arches on octagonal piers and semi-octagonal responds, the northern, to the

mausoleum, has moulded arches on quatrefoil piers. The Mausoleum has a moulded rib vault with elaborately-carved foliage bosses, carried on moulded wall-shafts; the windows have



shafted jambs, moulded labels with foliage stops, and projecting moulded sills.

*Looking into the Mausoleum
from the chancel*

The **Crypt** beneath the Mausoleum is reached by a flight of stone steps descending steeply from the external doorway in the north wall, to a narrow doorway into the main crypt, which is roofed by a segmental east-west vault, in the apex of which is a hatch through which coffins could be lowered. The southern half of the chamber is divided into nine bays, each with three levels of burial compartments, the lower two with segmental-arched heads. Only the upper levels of the third to the seventh bays have been used (a total of eight burials), the front of each compartment being sealed, with a plaque giving the name and date of decease. The floor is flagged, with a drain at the east end.

Non-Structural Features of Interest

All fittings in the nave are recent, except for the **Pulpit** which together with the **Choir Stalls**, with foliate poppy heads, are of 1903; the **Chancel Screen** is of 1904, and designed by Joseph Philips of Attrington, being donated by the Marquis of Londonderry at the same time as he removed the effigy of the Third Marquis to his private chapel at Wynyard Hall. The elaborate ashlar **Reredos** has three cusped arches, with figures of the Holy Family and Magi in the centre one. A brass plate on the north wall states that it was given in 1887 in memory of John Wilson rector, 1869-1885. The octagonal Victorian **Font**, at the west end of the nave, has shafts of black crinoidal marble, and cusped panels on its principal faces. Mitchinson, writing before the 1850s remodelling (see footnote 2), describes the previous font as ‘ancient, quite plain, and covered with paint’. The **Rails and Gates** between the chancel and mausoleum, with gilt fleur-de-lys tops, are contemporary with the Mausoleum.

The **Stained Glass** in the Mausoleum is by Wailes of Newcastle; the east window shows the baptism of Christ and the north ones the four evangelists; the west window has an especially impressive and colourful display of heraldry. In the nave the west window, SS Peter and Paul, is in memory of Bishop Van Mildert.

The one Bell in the bellcote is dated 1599 (Durham Diocesan Bell Catalogue, 1979, 11)

Sepulchral Monuments

In the floor of the chancel are two ledger stones, both of black marble, the southern to Thomas Rudd d 1719 (with a Latin inscription) and the northern to Dame Elizabeth Vane widow of Sir George, d1684. In front of the Mausoleum is a slab with the inscription 'Sir H V Tempest Vault opens here'. Another slab at the south-west corner of the chancel has been thought to cover a vault, but on being lifted recently only earth was revealed.

At the east end of the south wall of the chancel is a wall tablet to Dame Frances Vane, d 1795, signed by Thomas Atkinson of York, and further west on the same wall one to Thomas Hart Dyke, rector., d 1866 by Skelton of York. At the east end of the north wall is a tablet to Sir Henry Vane, rector d 1794, again by Atkinson York. In the south aisle is a marble tablet to Charles Plumptre, rector d 1812.

Within the Mausoleum are several memorials to the Vane family. In the centre of the east wall is a tablet to Frances Anne Vane, Marchioness of Londonderry d 1865, signed by Austin & Sealey London; to the south of it one to Frances Vane Tempest d 1872 and to the north one to Avarina Mary Vane-Tempest d 1873, both by Oldfield of West Hartlepool. In the centre of the north wall is an elaborate Gothic-arched recess with crocketed pinnacles and a gable with foliage carving, to Charles William Vane 3rd Marquis of Londonderry; a long inscription details his military life and battles followed by his subsequent political career (as an 'unswerving supporter of Conservative opinions', builder of Seaham town and the Seaham and Sunderland railway, founder of schools, builder of churches, hospitals, mechanics institutes. On the west wall to the south of the door is a monument with a kneeling figure to Sir Henry Vane-Tempest Bart d1813, by Sir. R. Westmacott (Pevsner & Williamson 1983, 355), with another beneath it now hard to read, and on the north one to George Vane d 1750, with a coloured coat of arms above. At the west end of the south wall are tablets to Adolphus Frederick Charles William Stuart Vane Tempest d 1865, signed by W H Burke and Company of London, and Lady Susan Vane Tempest d 1875, by Oldfield.

A marble effigy of the Third Marquis of Londonderry, by Monti, was at one time in the centre of the Mausoleum, but in 1904 was removed to Wynyard Hall.¹

The VCH refers to a brass plate in the floor (probably concealed by the modern carpet) to Sir George Vane, who died in 1679, which bore the inscription: 'Here lieth the body of Sr George Vane interred | May the first 1679 second son of Sr Henry | Vane sometime principall Secretary of State | to King Charles the First he married Elizabeth | the heiress of Sr Lyonell Maddison of New | castle vpon Tyne, by whom he had thirteene | hopefvl children, viz. fovre sons and nine daughters | His honour wonne ith feild lies here ith dvst | His honour got by grace shall never rust | The former fades the latter shall fade never | For why, he was Sr George once but Sr George ever.'

¹Marchant states that the effigy was returned to Longnewton by Sir John Hall, who purchased Wynyard Park in the 1980s, but local enquiry suggests that this return never actually took place..

Historical Notes

- 1793 The earliest description the church is by William Hutchinson (II, 167-8). 'The church of Longnewton has no ailes or tower. The chancel is about six paces in width, and in length about seven paces. On the south side is a niche, containing two seats, divided by a small column, and ornamented with some pierced work: It is lighted by a window of three divisions to the east under a pointed arch, and separated from the nave by a round arch. The nave, of equal width with the chancel, is eighteen paces in length. There was a chantry in the church dedicated to the Virgin Mary... but when or by whom it was founded is not said or known.
- 1823 The Durham historian Surtees (III, 216) states that...'The church, which was nearly rebuilt in 1806, consists of a nave and chancel of equal width, divided by three pointed arches, which have replaced the original round arch. The nave has two pointed lights on each side under pointed arches; the chancel has one light on each side of the same form, but divided by stone mullions and spandrils. The East window has three lights under a pointed arch. The entrance is at the West end of the nave. The whole structure is in extremely neat order.
- 1834 Mackenzie and Ross (II, 62-3) give a very similar description to Surtees, but add that the nave windows were 'modern'.
- 1857 Fordyce (II, 217) comments that the style of the 1806 church was 'locally known as the Barrington', and gives some information relating to alterations underway when he wrote. The triple chancel arch of 1806 was to be removed, and the flat slated roof superseded by a raised one. The foundations for a tower had been measured out. Plain sash windows were being replaced by ones with stone mullions, but there is no mention of the Mausoleum; the Londonderry family vault lay 'within the altar rails'.

Faculties and Other Records of Structural Work

Faculties from 1806 onwards are in Durham University Library, Palace Green; all are coded DDR/EJ/FAC/.... Only those directly dealing with the church structure or matters of potential archaeological interest are listed. The earlier records, from the Churchwardens' Accounts, are taken from Marchant (1988)

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| 1630 | Bellcote repaired and 'setting of the dials' - perhaps relating to a clock or sundial. Royal Arms installed. |
| 1636 | Battlements removed. |
| 1639 | 'Reading Seat', communion table, clerk's desk and choir partition fitted. |
| 1723 | Reading desk removed |
| 1770 | Pews renovated. |
| 1806 | 3/151 'Taking down and rebuilding church and chancel' |

1856	3/91	The Marchioness of Londonderry to erect a mausoleum
1903	3/436	Erection of a chancel screen with gates
1949	3/3178	Removal of stones in churchyard
1965	3/4763	Removal of undecipherable gravestones
1970	5/1970	Works including rebuilding of churchyard walls
1971	3/5258	Oil-fired central heating system and tank
1986	3/6362	Reconstruction of west boundary wall and re-siting of headstones
1987	3/6630	Removal of memorials and kerbstones from sections of churchyard
1990	3/7023	Demolition of churchyard wall to 150 mm below ground
1991	3/7436	Repair of stonework
2000	3/9282	Re-ordering of church in accordance with revised scheme by W S Atkins.

The Structural History of the Church

Marchant gives a detailed reconstruction of the structural development of the church, but it should be noted that this is largely based on comparisons with other churches in the area, rather than factual evidence. This account is only used here when it actually cites historical sources.

The old church was clearly a medieval building. Hutchinson's description of a round chancel arch would seem to imply a 12th-century date; the fact that the chancel was of the same width as the nave might point to its being rebuilt, and the 'late 2-light 5-foiled windows. On N. and S' and 'similar 3-light E. window' described by Dean Mitchinson² sound like late medieval features re-used when the chancel was rebuilt in 1806 window.

The petition accompanying the 1806 faculty describes the church as 'a very ancient fabric and hath been and at present are in a very ruinous and decayed state and condition so as to render it dangerous for the Parishioners to assemble therein'. Although it was stated that the church was to be taken down and rebuilt (on the same site and of the same dimensions) it was obviously countenanced that some parts of the old fabric might be retained; the south wall of the chancel

² Durham University Library Addl. MS 324. DURHAM CHURCHES.
A bound volume of notes, sketches and photographs presented to the Dean and Chapter of Durham by the Rt Revd John Mitchinson (1833-1918), 25 March 1914.

was to be expressly taken down, but the north and east only demolished 'if found necessary'.

The 1856 faculty refers to the addition of 'a crypt and monumental aisle above', and also states that the remainder of the church was to have new roofs, windows were to be replaced 'with stone', and all pews removed; a new south aisle (and chancel chapel) were to be added.

Turning to the present building, the question arises as to what, if anything, survives of the medieval building described by Hutchinson. It is clear from the 1806 faculty that the rebuilding countenanced retention of parts of the older walls, and was to keep to the old ground plan. However, if Hutchinson's paced dimensions are correct, it would seem that the chancel was lengthened during the works, although it seems likely from Mitchinson's description that the old windows - probably late medieval work - were retained. An 1825 plan in the Archdeacon Thorp collection³ shows that the chancel and nave of the rebuilt church are of the same dimensions as those of the present building. There certainly looks to be older fabric in the lower walls of the nave on the north and west, and also perhaps in the east end of the chancel; the only discernible feature associated with this earlier phase is a blocked opening near the west end of the north wall of the nave. It is not shown on the 1825 plan, and thus must pre-date the 1806 remodelling, but has no datable features.

The humble 1806 church was again completely remodelled in the 1850s, a project initiated by the decision of Lady Londonderry to erect a mausoleum for her husband the Third Marquis, who died in 1852. Plans were initially prepared by S.S. Teulon, the well-known Victorian 'rogue' architect, and included a tower on the south side of the nave and a dome to the mausoleum. These proved unacceptable; the present design was submitted by the architect P.C. Hardwick in 1856⁴.

The Churchyard

The churchyard is sub-rectangular, truncated to the north-east by a curving line of hedge dividing it from the grounds of the former Rectory. Rather as at nearby Elton there is an earthwork feature, a linear bank, in the southern part of the churchyard, running parallel to the road (and cut through by the approach path from the south gate) but swinging northwards at its east end. The monuments have obviously been thinned out in parts; many are of 19th century date, although there are a few 18th-century examples including one late 18th century (?) box tomb some distance south of the chancel, and a good headstone of 1752 to Michael Middleton (with a winged skull) 9 m south of the eastern bay of the south aisle. Three further 18th-century headstones are laid flat in the modern garden of remembrance near the north-west corner of the churchyard.

The low wall on the south side of the churchyard looks to have been rebuilt with old materials; the square piers at the south gate have pyramidal caps, and are of early 19th-century character.

³Durham University Library Addl. MS 82-85 PLANS AND DRAWINGS OF CHURCHES IN THE ARCHDEACONRY OF DURHAM, 1825-29. 4 Volumes.
Drawn by John Burlison and countersigned by Charles Thorp, Archdeacon of Durham 1831-62.

⁴Pevsner & Williamson (1983, 355) state that the church remodelling was by Teulon (1856-7) and the mausoleum by Hardwick (1859)

Archaeological Assessment

Despite being an almost entirely Victorian building, Longnewton church stands on a medieval site, and may well incorporate some medieval fabric. Any major disturbance of floor levels, in particular within the nave or chancel, should be attended by archaeological recording. It is known that the old Londonderry family vault underlies the chancel; despite being of post-medieval date this will be of considerable archaeological interest, and should be properly recorded if the chance to inspect it arises..

The Londonderry Mausoleum is a structure of considerable historical interest and some architectural merit, despite the removal of the effigy of the Third Marquis that it as intended to contain. Whilst the recent internal refitting of the nave and aisle have considerably altered the overall character of the church, the Mausoleum is in its very nature less happily adaptable to a pragmatic modern use. From an aesthetic and historical point of view it would be best served by the return of the effigy for which it was built. It is likely the value and importance of a high Victorian structure such as this, and the monuments it contains, will be more highly rated in the near future that they are at present

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