



THE CHURCHES CONSERVATION TRUST

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ST GREGORY'S
CHURCH

VALE OF LUNE
CUMBRIA





THE CHURCHES CONSERVATION
TRUST WELCOMES YOU TO
ST GREGORY'S CHURCH
VALE OF LUNE, CUMBRIA

Many years ago Christians built and set apart this place for prayer. They made their church beautiful with their skill and craftsmanship. Here they have met for worship, for children to be baptised, for couples to be married and for the dead to be brought for burial. If you have time, enjoy the history, the peace and the holiness here. Please use the prayer card and, if you like it, you are welcome to take a folded copy with you.

Although services are no longer regularly held here, this church remains consecrated; inspiring, teaching and ministering through its beauty and atmosphere. It is one of more than 300 churches throughout England cared for by The Churches Conservation Trust. The Trust was created in 1969 and was, until 1994, known as the Redundant Churches Fund. Its object is to ensure that all these churches are kept in repair and cared for, in the interests of the Church and Nation, for present and future generations.

Please help us to care for this church. There is a box for donations or, if you prefer to send a gift, it will be gratefully received at the Trust's headquarters at 1 West Smithfield, London EC1A 9EE (Tel: 020 7213 0660). For further information about the Trust visit our website www.visitchurches.org.uk

We hope that you will enjoy your visit and be encouraged to see our other churches. Some are in towns; some in remote country districts. Some are easy and others hard to find but all are worth the effort.

Nearby is the Trust church of:

BLAWITH, ST JOHN THE BAPTIST
7 miles N of Ulverston on A5084

ST GREGORY'S CHURCH

VALE OF LUNE, CUMBRIA

by ANTHONY BARNES

The church of St Gregory is situated at Marthwaite within the parish of Sedbergh and in the valley of the River Lune. Now in Cumbria, it was formerly in the extreme north-west corner of the West Riding of Yorkshire.

The church was built in the early 1860s: its architect is unknown. Initially it consisted of chapel and schoolroom; the two were combined at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, when most of the stained glass and furnishings were installed. In 1917 the Upton family agreed to transfer the building from their Ingmire Hall estate to the Church Commissioners. It was consecrated on 10 March 1918 by the Bishop of Richmond and dedicated to St Gregory the Great.

Construction of the church was due to Miss Frances Upton (d.1876) of Ingmire Hall. When the Low Gill to Ingleton branch of the London & North-Western Railway was being built, the company sent as Scripture Reader to the navvies a Mr Foyers, who had had experience of similar work in the Crimea. His gospel preaching also attracted a large number of local farmers; when the time came for the railway builders and Mr Foyers to move on, the farmers petitioned Miss Upton to make it possible for him to stay. This she did, providing him also with St Gregory's, designed to be 'a plain building of studied ugliness', a verdict with which subsequent generations might disagree.

Plain the building certainly is, but with the understated eloquence of so many secular buildings in the neighbourhood. Indeed the church could almost be mistaken for a barn. Low walls of Westmorland stone and slate roofs are surmounted by a glazed lantern. The liturgical north wall of the nave – it actually faces east – is blind, being close up against the house next door. There is a porch at the liturgical west end. Chancel and vestry occupy the crossbar of a T, the leg of which is the nave.

An entry in the diary of Miss Upton's sister, Mrs Florence Cottrell-Dormer, for 29 June 1900 helps to date the furnishing of the building and its conversion from hall and school into a church. On that day she rested her horses on the road from Keswick to Windermere at Wythburn. She was advised to look at the church and saw there an altar that she liked so much



Interior of the church looking towards the porch

(CHRISTOPHER DALTON)

that she had a reproduction made to go in St Gregory's. This date would explain the touches of Arts and Crafts style in the furnishings. They are of remarkably good quality, perhaps made by the estate carpenters from locally grown oak trees. Mrs Cottrell-Dormer is also known to have visited a Mr Smith of London to see the stained glass being made. This is almost certainly Frederick George Smith who was the principal designer of windows for the firm of Campbell, Smith & Co. She found it too dark but, if one looks closely, it is possible to see how Smith enjoyed the nature of the glass itself, almost sculpting it. Local rivers, trees, plants, flowers and birds are all colourfully depicted. Compare it with the charming but more conventional figures of Justice and Fortitude, by Morris & Co., in the north chancel wall and the porch window, depicting the figure of Peace, probably also by Morris. Dark or not, the windows read like a 19th-century updating of the mediaeval practice of preaching through glass or wall paintings – but in this case leading people to God through delight in nature, just as many are by the superb surrounding landscape which is amongst the finest in England.



One of the nave windows
(CHRISTOPHER DALTON)

The small window above the 'Justice' and 'Fortitude' north windows depicts the arms of Upton of Ingmire. It was given in memory of John Upton, 1865–1930, 'who gave this church'. A list of contributors hangs in the vestry. The corresponding window over the vestry door contains the arms of the Diocese of Bradford, within which St Gregory's is situated.



Detail from one of the nave windows

(CHRISTOPHER DALTON)

There are three small brass monuments to Humphrey Randle Upton Cottrell Dormer (d.1915), to Noel Bennett (d.1915) and to John William Foster (d.1917).

The bell-cote on the west gable contains a bell of 1907 by Taylor of Loughborough.

The railway line, the construction of which led to the building of St Gregory's, was closed to passengers in 1954 and subsequently dismantled. It is hoped that the church will continue to give refreshment to those who ramble along the cuttings and embankments or who follow in the steps of an earlier preacher from Fox's Pulpit to the early Quaker Meeting House at Brigflatts.

St Gregory's was declared pastorally redundant and in 1992 it was vested in The Churches Conservation Trust, which has carried out repairs under the supervision of Mr Barry Rawson of Skipton.



The church and surrounding buildings looking north-west towards the fells

(CHRISTOPHER DALTON)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Trust wishes to thank Mrs Barbara Morrison and Mr Charles Cottrell-Dormer for their help in compiling this guide.

Front cover: The church from the road (CHRISTOPHER DALTON).

Back cover: The porch window (CHRISTOPHER DALTON).

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