

A short history of Haworth Church

Generations of Haworth people have worshipped on this site since before the Reformation, although the present church is Victorian. The earliest record of a chapel in Haworth is 1317. The old church was built in 1655 (the base of the tower probably dates back to the sixteenth century) and was enlarged in 1755 when William Grimshaw was the incumbent. Artefacts from this period include pewter flagons (one held in the vestry safe, the other on view in the crypt at York Minster), the altar and candelabra in the Brontë Chapel and a stone font which is in the churchyard on the south side of the church (listed Grade II). The upper tier of the pulpit is in St. Gabriel's Church in Stanbury.

The Reverend Patrick Brontë ministered in Haworth from 1820 until 1861. In memory of the Brontë



The old church, around 1860

family a chapel was constructed in the southeast corner of the church in 1964, where there is a monument cut by Branwell Brontë's friend, John Brown. The Brontë family vault is near to this chapel and near to where the family pew was in the old church. It is completely sealed. Anne is the only member of the family not buried in the vault. Also near to the chapel is a display of documents: a copy of Charlotte Brontë's marriage certificate, the 17th century bible kept by Patrick Brontë in his study and also a register recording the death of William Grimshaw (buried in the churchyard at Luddendon Foot).

The Brontë pew and the old church were demolished during the ministry of the Reverend John Wade who succeeded Patrick Brontë. The Foundation Stone of the present church was laid on Christmas day 1879 by Michael Merrall Esq. The church was built by Messrs Crabtree Bros of Oxenhope, from designs by Messrs T H & F Healey. The church was consecrated in February 1881.

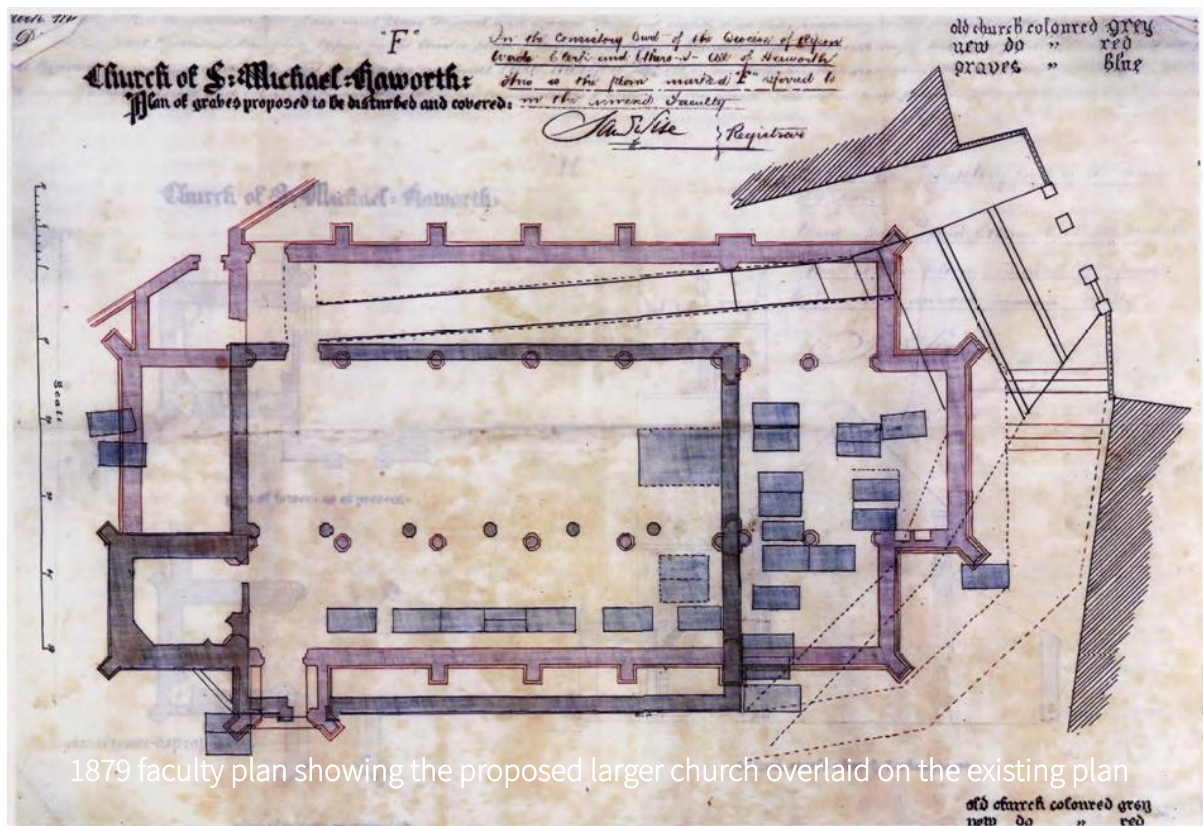
There is much stained glass including the Te Deum East Window by Clayton and Bell and the Taylor West Window by Capronnia of Brussels.

The reredos, made of Derbyshire alabaster, is based upon Leonardo da Vinci's picture of The Last Supper and was presented by Mrs Wade. The font, originally positioned at the back of the church, is made of alabaster with marble columns and was gifted by Mrs George Merrall.

The choir stalls are made of solid oak with individual carving, the rector's stall has carved animals from Revelations ch 4, v 6-7. The interior features decorated roof timbers and wall paintings.

The organ built in 1883 by J J Binns of Bramley, Leeds, was originally hand blown with the console behind the choir. It had 3 manuals, 33 speaking stops, 7 other stops, and 2,064 pipes. In 1975 the

organ was completely renovated. In 1991 several stops were added including the Pedal 'Trombone' which along with the 'Trumpet' can now be played on Great, Pedal and Choir organs. The console was moved to its present position at the same time.



In 1993, the font was moved from the west end to the north aisle. In 1998, the church was reordered, pews at the front and back being removed and the organ console being moved to the south aisle. New woodwork was installed at the west end to incorporate a display area and a new bookstall. The south vestry was reordered and a WC installed. A new heating system was installed in 2014. In 2016, the west end was re-ordered again, to install a kitchenette, accessible WC and to move the Vestry WC, adapting and bringing forward the 1998 woodwork. Improved disabled access to the north lobby included the removal of a draught lobby and the provision of an automated glass door featuring a cross based upon the west gable finial stone. A new lighting scheme was installed in 2019 to designs by Overton Architects.

The peal of bells, dated 1845, originally erected while Patrick Brontë was incumbent were restored in 1988. The clock was made by Jonathan Cryer of Bingley and was installed in 1870. It has a pin wheel escapement and chimes the quarters. A sundial on the south wall of the tower and has the inscription "Mr Richard Pollard of Stanbury gave it to this church 1726". At the base is written: "Restored in the year of our Lord 2001".

In 2013 the south slopes of the roof were recovered with new Westmoreland slate and the north slopes recovered in 2016.