Welcome to St Andrew's, Bonby

The church visible today has undergone numerous renovations and modifications since its known construction in the mid 12th century, resulting in a variety of styles, from the 12th-century south doorway to the 20th-century organ bay. While records are sometimes illegible or non-existent, the Bonby History Group present the story of our little church as we understand it today.

The Exterior Walls

Throughout its history, the church has undergone several periods of neglect, necessitating renovations or updates. Hence, the wonderful, quirky mishmash of styles utilising new and recycled materials.

The North Wall

Three arches are visible, graced with two 15th century windows and the enigmatical central blocked doorway that may have been the private entrance of the Lord of the Manor. The windows may have been moved when the north aisle was removed sometime after 1535. You can see the shaved capital edges of the columns where the arch markers meet, indicating that the wall is thinner than the width of the capitals.

Note the pieces of golden sandstone amongst the white chalk/limestone. These are probably reused cornerstones (quoins) from the aisle. There is also a piece of sandstone in the wonky buttress on the north-west wall.

The boiler room was installed in the 1900's, and the vestry was added during the 1818 restoration.

Top: the north wall of the nave. Above: a close-up of the external shaved capital

The South Wall

The nave wall is the oldest, and the chancel was extended in the 18th-century. The doorway, blocked in 1818, had a porch as shown in an earlier C. Nattes drawing. The two lancet windows were endowed with coloured glass during the 1894 Fowler renovation, but the stone window frames are *in situ* from when the wall was *rebuilt* in the 1300s. Points in the stonework show where medieval, wooden scaffolding was attached, thus dating the wall.

The plinth stones visible in the gully suggest under-building at an unknown date, possibly 18th-century. The bigger window in this wall is oddly generic. The chancel may have been enlarged as a response to the growing Methodist movement in the village.

The West Walls and Tower

The tower was restored/rebuilt in the early 18th century after a steeple collapse in 1710. Exactly what that entailed is unknown, but the single 1450 bell survived any fall. The rebuild was completed before the two new bells, dated 1724, were installed. There seems to have been other 'improvements' at this time, though whether contemporary is not known. The west walls on either side of the tower are quite different. Squint, and you can see where the two lancet windows of the gallery were. The south side of the wall retains its sandstone quoins with fossils of shells and devil's toenails eroding out. The west wall has levelling layers of reused medieval tile and early bricks. Some later bricks may have been made in Bonby's own brick pit.

The East Wall

The 19th century saw two major restorations. One in 1818 and the second in 1894. There are floor plans for both in Lambeth Palace Archives. The latter date is when the window in the east end was replaced with the one you see today. It was designed by Fowler to be sympathetic to the existing, old windows.

In 2002, some of the rendering inside and out was stripped to allow for damp course work, revealing the very different construction methods of the south nave and chancel walls.

The area of the new kitchen was originally the stairs to the gallery and later served as a coal store. The front door and lychgate were restored in 2023.

The Interior

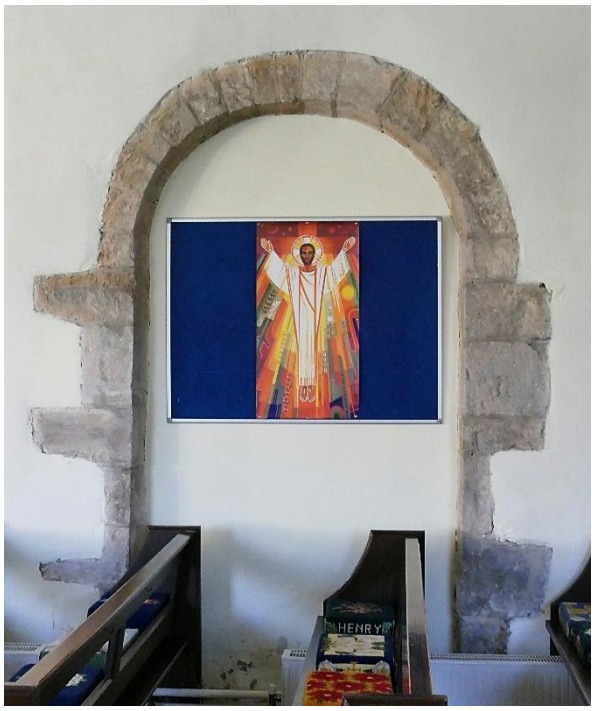
When you enter the church through the newly restored Georgian-style stone surround door (1818), the new kitchen is on your left, and the stairs on the right lead to the ringing floor. The gallery, removed in 1818, was also accessed from here. (No public access.) It has been panelled with the box pews removed during the 1894 renovations.

Above your head, the rounded ceiling is an excellent example of an early Victorian arched barrel vault.

Standing in the nave, the 12-13th-century square stone font to your right sits on a later base. Above it, the lancet window depicts St. John the Baptist. The second lancet window, by the pulpit, depicts Saint Andrew without his 'X'-shaped cross. The dedication was also a favourite among Benedictine

monks, such as those from St Fromund Priory & Convent in France, who controlled the church from the mid-12th century until 1403, leaving it ruinous.

The north wall, where the arcade is exposed, bears witness to the missing north aisle. The pillars are in situ (where they were originally built), and the capitals are also shaved on this side, so they could be embedded in the wall, only to be revealed again during the 1894 renovation. Amazingly, traces of red medieval paint still adorn the columns, highlighting the shape of the stone blocks.



The stonework of the inside of the blocked-up doorway on the south wall is Anglo-Saxon long and short work, which refers to the way the chalk was cut along the fracture planes, and against them. The technique prevailed into the medieval period.

Approaching the rood screen, there are the remains of the chancel arch, and possibly, to the left, the half-of-an-arch that framed the Lady chapel. Here, the stonework is more confused because some of the capitals appear to be switched, though the columns and plinths they sit on are likely to be *in situ*.

The organ bay arch is more modern, copying the style of the older columns and arches. The organ was manufactured c.1880. It is a Forster and Andrews and was purchased second-hand at a cost of £50 in 1915 from H. Shearwood of Hull.

There are only three marked graves on the church floor, and they were may be associated with individuals who helped fund the chancel's extension. Given how prestigious it was to be buried near the altar, and how old the church is, there are likely many other unmarked ones. The Rev. John Hildyard rests behind and almost under the altar. Beneath the blue, chancel carpet are Joseph Bacon, Gentleman and Rev. Theophilus Kirke. All date to around the late 18th century. However, the 1539 will of Sir William Kennington (vicar) requested that he be buried in the chancel. We can only presume he was.

There are many memorials, including two plaques, both to the family of Rev. Weever Walter, who lost his wife and two children in one year. Other inscriptions are in less obvious places, such as along the edge of the lectern.

Sitting on the grave of Rev. Hildyard, the altar is made from the oak of the gallery removed in 1984. Looking down on this is the 19th-century window at the end of the 18th-century chancel. To one side is a piece of carved stone that was recently discovered in the graveyard, though erosion suggests it's been there a few years. It is uniquely ornate for Bonby, and its origin is thought to be from a sedilia – a chair/recess on the south side where the priest would sit during the service. There's nothing visible in the church today to match the workmanship.

According to English Heritage, the base of the organ arch's left side is *in situ*. However, it has recently come to light that the half arch plinth and column may also be *in situ,* and once framed the Mary/Lady Chapel, known to have been there in 1532. It may also represent what the four arcades would have looked like. The capital on the half-arch is in two pieces, making its interpretation less clear. The pieces may have been switched from the chancel arch.

The simple oak rood screen was installed during the 1894 renovation, and since some reroofing occurred at the same time, it may be when the top of the chancel arch was altered.

The Founding of St Andrew's

There is no convenient record to tell us when the church was first built in stone. The first recorded church building was confirmed by Pope Alexander III on the 8th of March 1179.

It is known that the church was administered by the Benedictine Priory of Saint Fromond, France, and despite what records say, it is unlikely a priory was ever built in Bonby. Perhaps it was a building for the incumbent to live in, like a rectory or vicarage.

We know that Saint Fromund (or Fromond) Priory and Convent, Normandy, France, had possession of St Andrew's in 1125/1127, before Thornton Abbey's founding in 1140.

Fromond was the bishop of Coutances, France. When he died in 690 AD, he was buried in the monastery he founded.

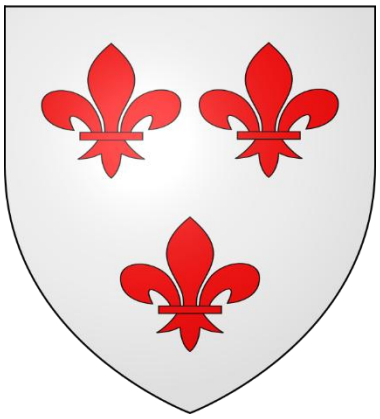
It was destroyed by the Vikings in 871 and again in 1014. In 1021, it was rebuilt by the local Lord, Robert du Hommet. One branch of this family settled in Stamford, England, where Robert's son, William, was born in 1030, thirty-six years before William the Conqueror invaded.

The du Hommets could afford to give land and incomes they owned in Normandy and England, to monasteries. After the Conquest, a monastic revival followed, and a rector was installed from the Priory and Convent of St Fromond in Bonby church. The churches run by monastic houses were often neglected and allowed to decay.

According to the Lindsey Survey (1115–1118), Robert du Humet, the Bishop's Nephew, owned approximately 840 acres in Bonby.

It is possible the church was given to St Fromond when the du Hommet's first came into possession of Bonby sometime between 1086 and 1115. This suggests that a church already existed to be taken possession of.

In 1156, Stamford Castle was granted to the Constable of Normandy and Sheriff of Rutland, Richard du Hommet. By 1204, King John had lost control of Normandy, and the du Hommets returned to France. It is unlikely the du Hommets would have invested in building a new church in Bonby after this time. Stamford Castle was given to the king's cousin, William de Warenne, to compensate for losing lands in France.



St Fromond's arms from du Hommet

St Fromond Priory, France, retained its interests in Bonby and five churches in Stamford. In 1288, it is recorded that Bonby's vicar, Stephen, was replaced by Phillip of Riston, from St George's church, Stamford.

Bonby's imagined Priory is first mentioned in records in 1403 – the year St Fromond relinquished all rights to Bonby. It is likely it never existed, being collectively lumped with around 50 other such '*alien houses'* that built priories, by writers biased by the ongoing war with France There are about 50 such alien houses inaccurately labelled as priories. War or not, Bonby's vicar did receive two tuns of the best Gascony red wine each year. That's over 2000 modern bottles!

The 14th century saw the people of Bonby battered by a series of horrific major events. With the population depleted by famine, the Black Death and flood, it is recorded in 1377, that (the manor) *is waste and without buildings, the land lies untilled in a sand and stoney place, and the meadows, pastures and marshes are flooded by the River Ancholm*. This made Bonby almost valueless and may have contributed to St Fromond offloading its rights to Bonby.

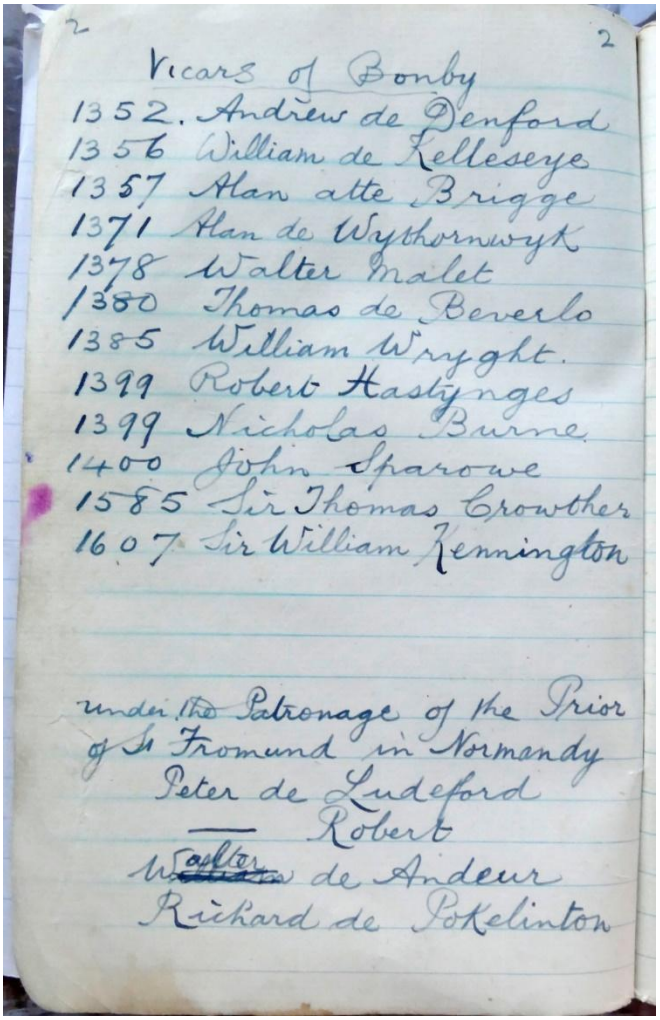
It is likely that the church was also dilapidated, but because the parishioners were responsible for the nave and their numbers had declined, any repairs would have been limited. However, new windows were added to the north aisle and are 15th-century in style.

It wasn't just Bonby. **1315 to 1317** was the first of a series of crises that hit Europe. A famine so severe that it is said to be the origin of the cannibalistic Hansel and Gretel story. The rains rotted the crops, promoting diseases that infected and killed livestock.

It took about five years to recover and is thought to have killed around 10% to 25% of people in cities and 80% of livestock.

About **1350** the Black Death ravaged Bonby and the effects can be seen in the records for years afterwards.

In our lifetime, we have not seen a storm in this country that can begin to approach the power of the '*Grote Mandrenke'*. It translates as the great drowning of men. In January **1362** this storm is said to have reshaped the Lincolnshire coastline and swallowed villages whole. Combined with high tides, it created a storm surge in the North Sea. It would have caused severe flooding of the Ancholme valley, inundating the lower fields. It is estimated to have killed about 25,000 souls across Ireland, Britain, the Low Countries and northern Germany. The weather had become generally wetter, especially around **1350-1370**.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Vicars of Bonby
1352. Andrew de Denford
1356 William de Kelleseye
1357 Alan atte Brigge
1371 Alan de Wythornwyk
1378 Walter Malet
1380 Thomas de Beverlo
1385 William Wryght.
1399 Robert Hastynges
1399 Nicholas Burne
1400 John Sparowe
1585 Sir Thomas Crowther
1607 Sir William Kennington

under the Patronage of the Prior of St Fromund in Normandy
Peter de Ludeford
Robert
Walter de Andeur
Richard de Pokelinton

A page from a notebook written by Rev. C.G Smith, vicar of Bonby from c.1930.

The only known vicarage was built in the corner of the glebe land, in the 18th century, probably as a result of the Church providing resources to stem the tide of absentee incumbents. This 14-room, chalk-built house was demolished in 1957, after being described as dilapidated.

Grave Matters

The graveyard of St Andrew's underwent a reorganisation in 1977. The boundary hedge was removed, and the south-side gravestones were arranged in the lines you see today. If burial locations prior to the move were recorded, the document is lost. However, some stones never made it into the lines. The front yard of number 36 Main Street was paved with gravestones prior to being concreted over, leaving only one or two peeking out. The steps up to the war memorial are also gravestones. The graveyard was extended in 1963.

Burials over the decades have raised the ground level, and the 'moat' around the church facilitates drainage. It also served to keep the damp from the base of the walls. The church is built on the scarp, approximately 30m above sea level. Safe from the 5m level, which was the height of the flood tide. Brigg, at the end of a glacial terminal moraine, is where the valley narrows and is said to be the maximum high-tide level. In the medieval period, the absence of a sluice at South Ferriby meant there was no mechanism to hold back the water, and the carrs were prone to regular flooding from high tides.

Most who are buried in the churchyard are no longer commemorated with headstones. The parish registers only date back to **1649**. Those who came before are unknown.

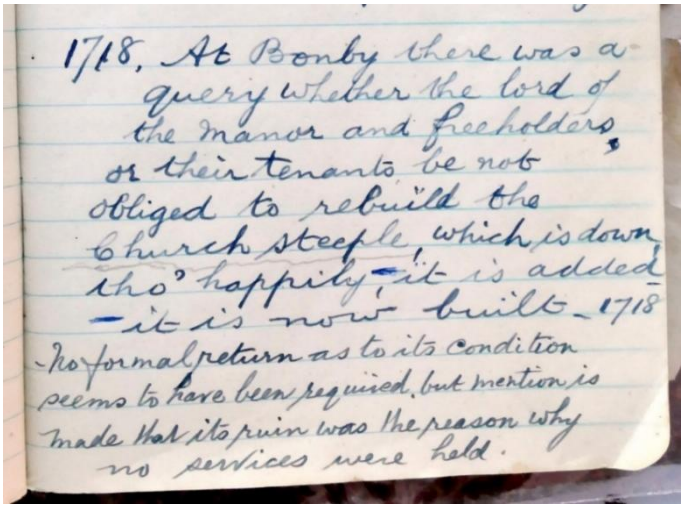
The edge of the grave of Robert Hall, who died in **1669.** The tomb's style is 19th-century, suggesting it was added during that period. Unfortunately, the name and date are too eroded to read definitively anymore.

Most of the gravestones on the south side date to the late 19th century. Research can sometimes give the names commemorated in stone, a trade, or show the house where they

lived via the archive of Norman Smith's Bonby photographs. It all adds to the rich tapestry of Bonby's history.

The war memorial commemorates the fallen from WWI, WWII and Afghanistan.

The Bells


1718, At Bonby there was a query whether the lord of the manor and freeholders, or their tenants be not obliged to rebuild the church steeple, which is down tho' happily it is added it is now built 1718 No formal return as to its condition seems to have been required, but mention is made that its ruin was the reason why no services were held.

Original records of what happened to the tower to facilitate the addition of new bells cannot be found, though it is possible that the northwest corner gave way, where there is now a small buttress. However, this notebook page, written by C.G. Smith, vicar of Bonby from 1930, suggests that the records do, or did, exist. It tells of a steeple collapse in 1710. Local lore says the tower collapsed. This is unlikely. The existing 1450 bell was not damaged. Although the tower is partially clad in old bricks, its design is not 18th-century, and it bears some markers of being much older. The church seems to have undergone restoration around this time, during which the two new bells were added beside the existing bell. The bells only chime, not ring full circle.

The **first** bell has a shield of two bells at the top and one centrally beneath. The shield can also be found on many church bells around Yorkshire and Durham, suggesting it could have been cast in the foundry of John Hoton, around the time of Henry VI (circa 1450). It also has a fancy cross on it similar to one found at Rothwell. The common inscription on this bell is "*Sancta ionnis ora pro noblis*" which

translates as *Saint John pray for us*. The bell has a diameter of 27 inches and rings a note of D.

The **second** bell, mounted on the south side of the tower, is dated 1724. It has a diameter of 30 ½ inches, plays a note of C# and was cast by Daniel Hedderley. Although he had a foundry in Bawtry, he was known as an itinerant bellmaker, and there is a strong possibility these 2 bells were cast more locally or even in Bonby itself. This would usually be done in a field near the church or very occasionally, on the church grounds.

The **third** bell is the largest. It is mounted in the centre. It has a diameter of 33 ½ inches and plays a note of B. Also dated 1724 with the inscription 'SOLI DEO GLOREA', translating as 'For the glory of God alone'.

There are limits on how you can ring three bells. At Bonby it was previously recorded that '*after chiming for 15 minutes, the tenor is sounded for 2 minutes, followed by 3 strokes on the treble. The tenor bell is rung for a morning service at 8am or at 9am.*

For a death, 7 tolls for a man, 5 for a woman and 3 for a child.

A peel is rung early on Christmas morning.

The Banns peel is rung after the first reading of the wedding banns.

A Vestry peel. The treble – or a small bell – summons everyone to attend a vestry.

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For more of Bonby's history, search https://e-voice.org.uk/bonbyhistory