

***The Parish Church of St. Andrew, Swanwick, Derbyshire -  
Consecrated on 27<sup>th</sup> September 1860  
A short guide and fresh look at our history***

**Our Village** Swanwick dates back to 1304, when a wic (shelter) for swana (herdsmen) was established at Hill Top, where five footpaths crossed and still cross on land then belonging to and worked by the monks of Beauchief Abbey. Since 1911 Swanwick has also been home to the renowned Hayes Conference Centre, part of the Christian Conference Trust. St. Andrew's church stands at Swanwick's highest point, the junction of the B6179 (Alfreton to Ripley) and B6046 (Pentrich to Somercotes). Prior to 1860 villagers would worship in Alfreton's 12<sup>th</sup> century parish church of St. Martin of Tours, although by 1796 there was a Baptist church in Swanwick. The present Methodist Church originated as a Wesleyan Chapel in 1835, the Primitive Methodist chapel following in 1880. An early Belper Circuit Plan mentions meetings held in a building at the rear of the latter site in 1820.

**The Turner Charity and Charity Farm – 1740** Significant to the village history was the creation in 1740 of the Turner Charity comprising a stone cottage, farmhouse and outbuildings with 48 acres of agricultural land – Charity Farm. The farm's revenue was to pay for the education of “12 poor boys and 8 poor girls of the parish of Alfreton, of which Swanwick and Greenhill shall have preference”.



Charity Farm from Hilltop

Over the centuries the calls on the Turner Charity shifted through basic to further education and on to its merger in 2009 with local charity Valley CIDS. The objectives of the combined charity are described later in this book.

Influential in establishing Swanwick's Anglican church were the Wood and Wright families. John Wood was a Trustee of the Turner Charity. John Wright was a founding partner alongside Benjamin Outram, William Jessop and Francis Beresford of the Butterley company in 1790. Primarily a mining and ironworks company which became a vast enterprise and icon of the industrial revolution, the Butterley Company sadly is no more. John Wright's share of the company went to his son Francis, whose son Fitzherbert Wright was born in 1841. Both Francis Wright and Fitzherbert Wright played major parts in the history of St. Andrew's church and their

descendants, the Wright Trustees continue to be patrons of St. Andrew's church to this day, a patronage shared with the Duke of Devonshire.

**St. Andrew's Church – the beginnings from 1856** A meeting reported in the Derby Mercury of 26 Nov 1856 held at Alfreton's National School to consider the best means of helping the inhabitants of Swanwick to erect a church concluded that “the increase of the population of Swanwick had been very great, the great distance of the hamlet from the parish church led to great indifference to religion, sapping the foundations of piety, morality and truth.”

In 1856 the Revd John Wood gave land for a church to be built in Swanwick, at which time the village's industries consisted of coal mining, farming, the Butterley ironworks, framework knitting, shoemaking and a newly established silk stocking maker. Two of the Revd John's sons are buried by the west door of the church, the Revd Hugh Wood, and John Wood, an Alfreton solicitor. The Woods' original house dating back to 1676 still stands.



Francis Wright -  
1806-1873

On St. Andrew's day in 1858 “The Lady of W.P. Morewood Esq.,” of Alfreton Park, laid the church's foundation stone. With the aid of a donation of £3,000 from Francis Wright the building was completed in 1859 with a nave of five bays, north and south aisles, north porch and bell turret over the west gable.

The pointed arches on both sides of the nave and in the chancel imply that the architect,

Benjamin Wilson, had Early English architecture in mind when he designed the building. The parish room under the chancel was made possible because of the steep fall of the ground towards the east.



St. Andrew's Church, c1900

A number of stone heads decorate the exterior – all of nobility with one exception. The story goes that a local farmer admired the carvings and asked the masons if they could carve a likeness of himself and his wife. The mason agreed but mixed the heads – the bowler hatted farmer has prominence on the church and a nobleman appears on a former farmhouse on Sleetmoor Lane.

On September 27<sup>th</sup> 1860 Swanwick's church was consecrated and dedicated to

St. Andrew. Its first vicar was the Revd Henry Wright. The grave of Melville, infant son of the Revd Henry, is to the left of the north door.

**The church from 1860 to 1903 and the influence of Fitzherbert Wright, Managing Director of the Butterley Company from 1888 to 1902**

In 1865 Fitzherbert Wright married Louise Charlotte Rudolphine von Beckmann, daughter of a German pastor. "The Hayes" was built as a wedding gift from Francis Wright to his son and daughter-in-law.

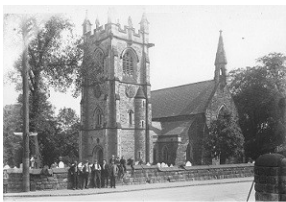
St. Andrew's church progressed rapidly. Recorded in 1876 were "best thanks to Fitzherbert Wright for the gift of new stained window" to replace the west window's plain glass – this new window was shattered by a stray stick of bombs in 1942. In 1885 the organ (built by Nicholson & Lord of Walsall) was "opened", and 1889 the eagle lectern arrived, gifted by Fitzherbert Wright.



Fitzherbert Wright  
1841-1910

The entrance porch and tower were erected by Fitzherbert Wright in 1902 as a memorial to Queen Victoria. The 1902 north door bears the inscription "NISI DOM" from Psalm 127 - "Unless the Lord builds the house its builders labour in vain" - the original north doors are still in place. The building work necessitated the re-interment of the remains of 13 women and 8 men and a tablet to this effect can be seen to the left on entering the church.

The five bells were supplemented by a sixth in 1959, and the clock's three dials face west, north and east. Prior to the installation in 2003 of three electric motors, the task of twice-weekly hand winding had been carried out by the same family for 70 years, the last 40 of which were by one man, now retired tower keeper Eric Sterland.



Church with tower & bell-cote

The tower was dedicated in 1903 in a service conducted by the Revd William Henry Draper, former curate of Alfreton church. The Revd William was the son-in-law of Fitzherbert Wright and wrote many hymns and poems. His most famous hymn "All Creatures of our God and King" is still sung all over the world today.

On the death of Fitzherbert Wright in 1910 the Hayes was sold to First Conference Estate Ltd (now the Christian Conference Trust) and in 1911 became "The Hayes Conference Centre". The copper ewer beside the font in

St. Andrew's Church bears an inscription "in memory of Fitzherbert Wright" and a dove, representing the Holy Spirit.

**Trooper (later Sgt) Jack Simms**



Sergeant Jack Simms'  
Headstone

After fighting in the Boer War in 1900-01, Sgt Jack Simms died in 1908 and was buried with full military honours in Swanwick churchyard. He was carried from the farmhouse by "stalwart yeomen" to the sound of muffled drums and the Dead March from the band. A 16 strong firing party and buglers were also present along with Yeomanry Officers and other local dignitaries.

**The years of the Great War, 1914-1918**

Swanwick Mothers' Union was founded in 1917 when the enrolling member was Mrs. Calladine of Hill Top Farm. Swanwick MU is still active today with afternoon and evening meetings, the evening session known unsurprisingly as "EMUs". 1918 brought a major headache to the Church Council of the day as the tower began to show significant cracks. Responsibility was vigorously denied by owners of both the Palmer Morewood and Butterley mines. After protracted correspondence over 4 years the bill for repair was finally picked up by the family of the late Fitzherbert Wright, whose old home, The Hayes, was requisitioned as an army barracks during the conflict.

There are two parish memorials to the fallen of the Great War of 1914-18. The notable designer Martyn Travers was commissioned to design the East Window, which bears the Roman numerals MCMXIV-MCMXVIII (1914-18) the date 1922 and Martyn Travers' emblem across the window's base. The window depicts the enthroned Christ in the centre with "Mater Salvatoris" on his right and "S. Johannis Baptistæ on his left. "A mile of pennies" collected by Swanwick's people paid for the War Memorial

**1918 to the end of WW2**

Peacetime brought the return of conferences to The Hayes. Delegates arrived by train to Butterley Station and walked to the centre, their luggage being collected by pony and trap. The Student Christian Conference in the late 1930s brought T.S. Eliot, John Betjeman and C.S. Lewis to Swanwick. During the 1939-1945 War The Hayes was taken over by the War Office and became a prisoner of war camp, some prisoners being allowed to work on local farms. Enterprising escape bids by Luftwaffe

officers from Swanwick Hayes led to the famous film “The One that Got Away” telling the amazing success story of Franz von Werra's escape.

The triptych of the nativity hanging in St. Andrew's church was painted by a prisoner of war, and it is said that the children's faces portrayed are likenesses of his own family.

A stray stick of bombs in 1942 shattered the west window and also put paid to the bell-cote. The plain glass replacement permitted by the the War Commission was itself replaced with the help of a revised offer of £800 from the War Commission and donations of £62.18.00. The new window depicting scenes sin the life of Saint Andrew was dedicated on 30<sup>th</sup> June 1953.

**The Growth years – 1946 to the 1990s** Electricity came to St. Andrew's church in 1946, and the newly installed Lady Chapel and Children's chapel in the south and north naves were dedicated on 14<sup>th</sup> February 1949. The children's chapel, originally the children's corner, was dedicated to those scholars who lost their lives in World War II. The stained glass window in the Children's Chapel in memory of the first superintendent of the Sunday School was dedicated in 1951. The 1950s brought more changes, Swanwick village saw improvements, many of which were influenced by J.W. (Bill) Andrews, builder and churchwarden. On St. Andrew's Day in 1955 the choir vestry built by Andrews the builders was dedicated, funded by the people of Swanwick with the aid of a donation from The Hayes.

In 1956 “The United Benefice of Swanwick and Pentrich” came into existence, a union which was dear to the heart of Swanwick's vicar, the Revd Lewis Roper. Whilst this event was relatively seamless in Swanwick it was a less happy experience for Pentrich church, whose vicar the Revd Frederick Boston had already taken on the additional responsibility of South Wingfield on the sudden death of their minister. This had resulted in a deputation to Pentrich vicarage asking their vicar to refuse the combining of Pentrich and South Wingfield churches under one vicar. On the union of Swanwick with Pentrich the Boston family moved into South Wingfield Vicarage, however within a few months Lewis Roper had departed from Swanwick, therefore Frederick Boston once more took Pentrich church under his wing until the arrival of the Revd Edward Lewis into the United Benefice. We are grateful to Monica Pickering (nee Boston) for these reminiscences.

By the time Swanwick pit closed in 1968 there was an influx of young people into new homes built on farmland previously owned by the Palmer Morewood family. The late 1970s brought changes to the churchyard enabling easier maintenance, also the War Memorial was moved from the roadside to its present position within the churchyard.

The Queen's Silver Jubilee Service on 4<sup>th</sup> December 1977 saw the dedication of the Japanese oak screen erected under the archway in St. Andrew's church. The screen was given by her family in memory of Phoebe Andrews, mother of Bill Andrews whose building company J.W. Andrews continues to operate from Swanwick. At the same service, the memorial book donated by the Mothers Union, the book's cabinet in memory of William and Ada Ward of Old Hall Farm and a portable communion set were also dedicated. The communion table was made and dedicated in 1983 to the memory of Mary Beall, a loyal member of St. Andrew's for many years. The loop system was installed in the late 1990s and thanks to a generous donation by the late Ron Woolman, the ramped access to the north door was laid.

**The Millennium and onward** By the end of the millennium St. Andrew's church fabric was in a sorry state, with damp, flaking walls and a leaking roof. The organ not fully functional – and indoor toilets a distant dream. Heritage Lottery funding was granted thanks to the diligence of Eric Sterland and the business of raising a further £100,000 began. Church members found previously untapped skills and talents in undertaking a period of intensive, inventive and inspired fund-raising. Swanwick Hall School sixth form block became our spiritual home for five months from Easter to September 2001.

The church was re-roofed, partly re-plastered, totally re-decorated and re-carpeted. The ringing chamber was re-decorated and re-carpeted, and guards were installed to the west window and children's chapel window.

### **Then came September 11<sup>th</sup> 2001.**

On Friday 14<sup>th</sup> September 2001 the church was full of people cleaning, arranging flowers and still painting. At 11 am all work stopped for two minutes' silent prayer for the victims of 9/11. The church opened the following day complete with new altar cloths sewn by members and two new cross and candlestick sets donated by members. We celebrated the full restoration of the organ on Remembrance Day 2001.

Over the course of the following 2 years the tower clock was re-gilded and spindle mechanism restored, toilets and tea-point facilities installed in the former Choir Vestry and five pews shortened to improve wheelchair access to the Lady Chapel communion rail. Electrification of the clock winding mechanism brought the project to a close.

**Valley CIDS - The Turner Charity and Charity Farm** The Swanwick-based charity Valley CIDS was founded in 2000 by a small group of Christians including Dorothy Whitaker, daughter of the late Bill Andrews. Twelve years later Valley CIDS is now a company limited by guarantee and has become a vibrant Christian organisation, employing teams of children's and youth workers who undertake a vast range of outreach work in schools and the wider community. In March 2009 the Charity Commissioners approved the amalgamation of the two Swanwick-based charities – the Turner Educational Charity established in 1740, and Valley CIDS. With many common elements from both past and present in terms of the well-being of young people, this merger offers a unique and exciting opportunity to enable young people in today's society to reach their full potential.

**Our 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary** On Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> September 2010, The Bishop of Derby, the Rt Revd Dr. Alastair Redfern presided at a service celebrating the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of St. Andrew's Church. Our anniversary was celebrated by the publishing of "Swanwick 1304-2010 - the Story of our Village" which sold over 600 copies. A new Rectors' board depicting vicars from 1860 onwards was also installed.

**2011 and onward** On 31<sup>st</sup> January 2011 The Revd Carole Lloyd was licensed as Priest in Charge of the United Benefice of Swanwick and Pentrich and Diocesan Stewardship Officer.

### **The Mission and Ministry of St Andrew's in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

At St Andrew's, as part of God's worldwide Church, we are called to serve people in our local community and in the wider world by sharing God's love and the good news of Jesus Christ.

We hope to do this in several ways

- By working with other community groups such as local schools, the Parish Council and uniformed organisations to improve our community and to help those who are in most need.
- By giving encouragement to those working with children and young people in our community.
- By supporting charities who work locally, nationally and internationally both practically and financially.
- By supporting individuals in need.
- By making our facilities and buildings available to community groups.
- By deepening our relationship with God in worship, through reading our Bibles and in prayer, both as individuals and in community.
- By developing forms of worship which are accessible and challenging to those who are already members and those who are searching for the answers to the big questions of life.
- By encouraging and teaching those who are new to faith.

To do this we are continuing to develop our buildings and in 2012 we are planning to install a new audio visual system which will enable us to widen the scope of our outreach.

St Andrew's is a church which is here for everyone, whatever your age or background. The good news of Jesus Christ is for all people and for all times and St Andrew's looks forward to being in the heart of the Swanwick community spiritually and physically in the years to come.

