

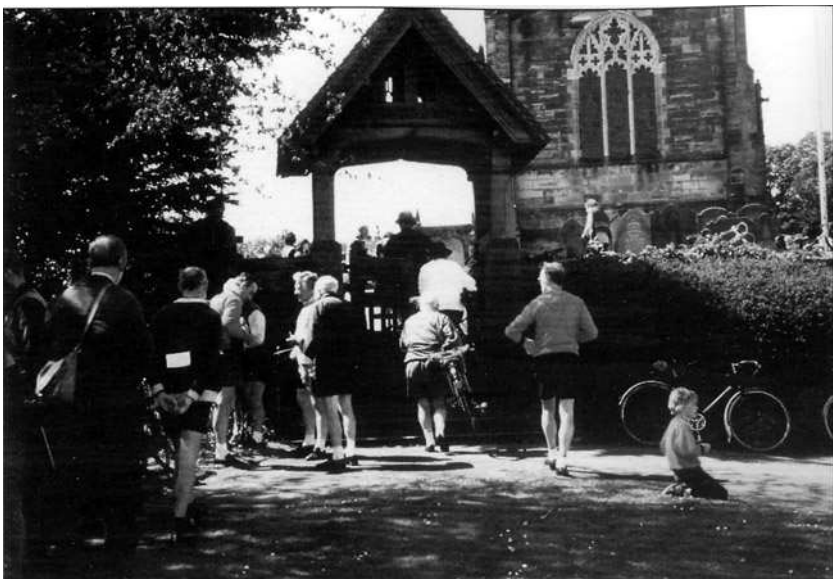
SEVENTY COXWOLD SUNDAYS

A HISTORY OF THE ANNUAL CHURCH SERVICE
FOR CYCLE TOURISTS

1927/1996



**ST. MICHAEL'S CHURCH
COXWOLD, NORTH YORKSHIRE.**



Cyclists arrive at the lychgate ready for the service.



Coxwold, 1987. Revd. Jim Thom with The Archbishop of York,
Dr. John Habgood.

**FOREWORD BY THE FORMER
ARCHBISHOP OF YORK,
DR. JOHN HABGOOD.**

When people want to give thanks for something they enjoy, it is right that the Church should help them do so. I am therefore delighted to be able to commend this booklet. It tells the story of an initiative almost seventy years ago which blossomed into a tradition and which, for seventy Sundays, has enabled countless people to thank God for the pleasures of cycling, and for the glorious countryside which their cycles have enabled them to enjoy.

In a society in which too many people take too much for granted, such acts of thanksgiving are an important corrective. I hope the tradition may long continue.

John Ebor,
Bishopthorpe Palace,
YORK.

FOREWORD BY THE
VICAR OF COXWOLD,
REVD. D.F.JOHNSON, M.A.

A view from the vicarage.

I became Vicar on April 29th, 1988. They told me "Cyclists' Service in a fortnight". This, of course, was a woefully inadequate briefing and far too late to invite a visiting preacher anyway. Nowadays, when I invite someone to preach, the sort of thing I say is:

"This is a festive occasion. The Church will be packed with a crowd of great people of all ages, predominantly dressed in modern cycling dress, which means skin tight gear in lurid colours. Their machines too will be modern - so light that you could lift them with your little finger, yet quite remarkably speedy and sturdy. Yet some will ride period bikes and wear period costume, notably, Peter Gray of the York Section of the C.T.C. on his Penny Farthing. Some machines are very smart, others look as though they had been put together by the local plumber, and the place swarms with them. These things, as St. Paul might have said, are an allegory. Your sermon too should be modern and racy; it should have more in common with an after-dinner speech than with the homilies of 1662. It should be a maximum of ten minutes, and contain stories, humour and punch. Yet remember the traditionalists too, whose needs must be served. To some extent, (and as a clergyman you will appreciate this), traditionalists are satisfied, provided that the Order of Service remains unchanged from Canon Black's day. I have suggested updating, but so far at least we stick with something with which our Grandfathers would have been quite comfortable. Scripture will be read (your choice) and should be applied to the joys of living in God's world and particularly to cycling in it."

It takes a bit of nerve to write that sort of thing to the distinguished people to whom I do write, so it may get wrapped up a bit

sometimes; but the idea is there. Unfortunately, on the first occasion that I attended the Service, it had to be I who preached. I remember that to give it topicality I talked about an appeal from 'The African Pastor Fund' which I had received. Apparently their job in life was to provide bikes for African Pastors, so that they might pursue their ministry through forest tracks and rough country. This was before cross-country cycling became as popular here, and the sort of machines they had in mind were heavy old Raleighs. There were some good stories, and a few laughs, but my suggestion that the C.T.C. might 'adopt' this as a project to support fell flat, though I understand this was eventually taken up nationally.

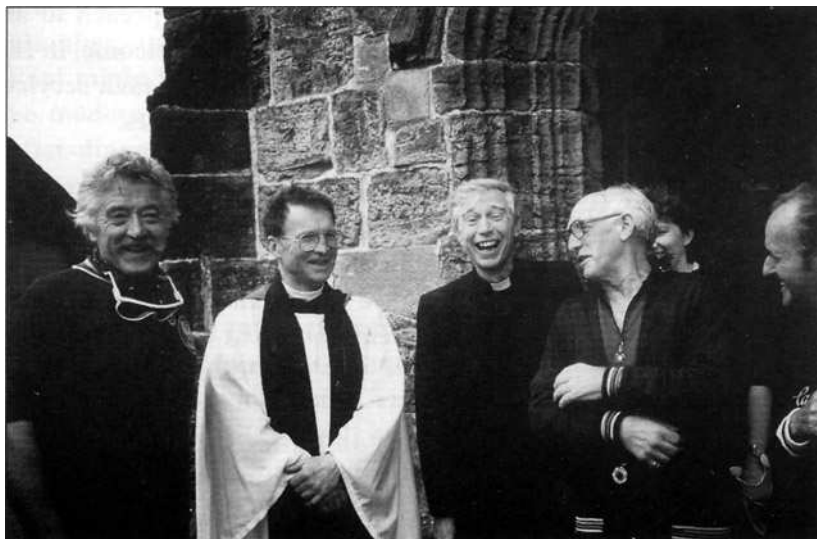
Since then we have enjoyed some pretty good sermons by Clergy of different Christian traditions. There is a list of them somewhere in this booklet, but this is the right place to record our thanks for them. We have had some good times, and, I think, have been helped to grow in Christian discipleship. We have also heard some remarkable applications of Holy Writ to cycling, such as an exposition of Ezekiel's vision of the wheels. In 1995 we welcomed, for the first time, a lady to preach to us, The Revd. Mrs. Margaret Cundiff. This year we welcome, in the footsteps of his predecessor, who attended the first such service, the Bishop of Whitby, now the Rt. Revd. Gordon Bates.

One recent and very welcome development has been in the playing of the organ by a member of the C.T.C. and the formation of a music group. This has added something extra to our services and I am sure that we would all like to record our thanks to the musicians for their enhancement of our services by their talents.

I also want to place on record my admiration for , and thanks to, Peter Gray. He organises us all. He keeps us together. He shepherds us as a flock. I particularly remember one year when the National C.T.C. met in York and we enjoyed the company of even more people than usual in Church. Peter's organisation and infectious enthusiasm made that a great day.

This account would not be complete without a mention of another aspect of 'Coxwold Sunday' from the Parish's point of view. This is a mighty feat of catering. The baking, the sandwich-making and the other preparations and the bribery of the village hall committee to wrest the use of the hall from the village hall customary craft fair, makes the whole enterprise an undertaking which involves a major proportion of Coxwold. But it is enjoyed, and it is well worth it. On this day the hospitality and the fellowship of village life is seen at its best, and it is shared with appreciative friends. Thank God that it has thrived for seventy years. Long may our successors keep it so!

**The Revd. David F. Johnson,
The Vicarage,
Coxwold,
North Yorkshire.**



Coxwold, 1991. The first Methodist Preacher Revd. Ken Marshall with Revd. David Johnson on the left.

**FOREWORD BY THE PRESIDENT OF
THE CYCLISTS' TOURING CLUB,
TED KING.**

There cannot be many who can recall the first cyclists' service at Coxwold in 1927. Those folk that can, almost certainly never dreamt that almost 70 years on, cyclists in large numbers would continue to be drawn in large numbers to this service of thanksgiving.

Doubtless the originators sought to give thanks for the safe return of friends and colleagues from the Great War and to remember those that fell in the service of their Country. Regrettably, this was to be repeated twenty years on.

However, the service has become much more than one of remembrance; it draws together a band of people who, by virtue of their common interest, the love of cycling, have learnt to appreciate, and love, the countryside, the life in it, the seasons and the weather that creates the changes that makes the same journey a never ending source of wonder.

The service is therefore one of thanksgiving for our ability to appreciate all that cycling does and means for each and everyone of us, and also to remember those that, for whatever reason, are unable to join in and enjoy our activities.

I hope that the annual Coxwold Sunday will continue to have a special place in the cycling calendar for many years to come. With the support of the Church and the people of Coxwold, and local cycling organisations, I have every reason to believe that it will.

**Ted King,
Winterbourne,
Bristol.**

**FOREWORD BY THE DIRECTOR OF
THE CYCLISTS' TOURING CLUB,
ALAN HARLOW.**

For seventy Sundays the historic church of St. Michael's, in the classic North Yorkshire village of Coxwold has welcomed cyclists to their own, very special, day. The creation of Canon Gibson Black, the annual Coxwold Cyclists' Service was then, as it still remains, a thanksgiving for the enjoyment of the open road and the comradeship of fellow cyclists. Down those years thousands of riders have made the pilgrimage to Coxwold Sunday and have experienced the spiritual uplift of the service, given by cyclists, for cyclists.

So many of those who formed the congregation in years gone by are no longer with us, but their memories live on, evergreen, with those who yearly fill the nave of St. Michael's. One of the last of such cyclists' services which began in the 1920's, the continuing tradition of Coxwold remains as strong as ever. Only the dress of those arriving at the churchyard gate, and the design of the cycles lining the wall, show the changing of the years. This is only as it should be, for cycling is life and life stands still for no-one. Each year new visitors are made welcome and it is these newcomers who will carry the spirit of Coxwold Sunday through the years to come, whose children will one day turn their wheels towards this quiet Yorkshire village and give thanks here for the simple joys that cycle touring brings.

**Alan Harlow,
Godalming,
Surrey.**



Riding to the service - lane near Thorpe Hall.



Riding to the service - lane near Kirby Knowle.



Coxwold, May, 1957.



Coxwold, 1948.

SEVENTY COXWOLD SUNDAYS.

For seventy Sundays, one year short of seventy years, generations of cycle tourists and their families, members of the Cyclists' Touring Club, have made an annual pilgrimage to a part of England's green and pleasant land. This is the same pulpit from which the celebrated cleric and writer, the Reverend Laurence Sterne, preached, as vicar of Coxwold from 1760 until his death in London, in 1768. The pulpit in question is in the imposing Parish Church of St. Michael's, which is only a few hundred yards, or in cyclists terms, only a wheel away, from the house once occupied by Sterne, Shandy Hall, where he wrote part of one of his famous novels, 'A Sentimental Journey'.

It was Sterne who wrote about the village of Coxwold, 20 miles from York, situated east of the A19 between Easingwold and Thirsk, in the beautiful North York Moors National Park, as 'a delicious retreat, both from its beauty, and air of solitude; and so sweetly does everything about it invite your mind to rest from its labours, and be at peace with itself and the world'. What he so aptly described is a village that is one of the most perfect in Yorkshire, with its honey-coloured stone houses which line the broad, grass-banked street that climbs the hill to the church, which sits like a brooding hen over her chicks. It was while he was living at Shandy Hall, that in a letter dated June 7th, 1767, Sterne wrote the line that countless cycle tourists visiting the village would readily agree with;

'I am as happy as a prince, at Coxwold'.

This then is the story, the history, since Canon Black's invitation to the Teesside District Association of the C.T.C. all those years ago, when he preached to a youthful congregation of 300 and, who every year since, in fair weather or foul, have responded by an invasion of Coxwold.

They came, after the first gathering, and continue to come each year, from Northumberland, Durham, Teesside and all parts of Yorkshire, with some members, especially those from the Hull and East Riding D.A., staying overnight at Helmsley Youth Hostel. Others ride to Coxwold, involving in some instances, a round trip of about 100 miles. They, together, make another 'sentimental journey', in fact a 20th Century annual journey, to a church service and gathering for touring cyclists, 'the occasion of many joyful reunions between cyclists' and a happy time of thanksgiving and dedication to the God and Father of us all'. This is a direct quote from the Order of Service, compiled by the founder of this historic tradition in both the national and the North-East cycle touring calendar of the C.T.C.



All roads lead to Coxwold for the Tandem Club.

THE FOUNDER

The service, especially with touring cyclists in mind, was the brain-child of Canon J. Gibson Black who, as Vicar of Coxwold from 1927 until his death in 1950, was the founder of this unique occasion, called affectionately 'Coxwold Sunday'.

It was only days after being installed as Vicar on July 26th, 1927, that the Revd. Gibson Black, as he was then, noticed two cyclists pass the Vicarage and pedal on down the main street of the village to the Fauconberg Arms, where they rested their cycles against the outside wall of the inn and went inside. The Vicar crossed the road from the Vicarage and went into St. Michael's Church, where he remained for about half an hour or so.

On coming out of the churchyard and closing the gate to the Lych-gate, he noticed them leaving the Fauconberg Arms to ride off further down the village, out and down towards the village crossroads. He crossed the road to the Inn and immediately struck up a conversation with them and learned that they were Bill and Nora Cooke of Darlington, two members of the Teesside District Association of the Cyclists' Touring Club, out for a day's touring. They explained that they loved cycling to Coxwold and the lovely villages under and around the Hambleton and Howardian Hills. They told him how they often remarked amongst the District Association members what a delightful village Coxwold was and how impressive St. Michael's Church always looked, as they entered the village, especially from the direction of either Thirsk or Kilburn.

It was then, as he was speaking, that the Revd. Gibson Black had the notion of providing an annual Church service and get-together for visiting cyclists, who could not only visit the

village, but also see something of the inside of his Church. He explained that he, himself, was new to the village, his last church being St. Barnabas, Hull. He pointed out that he had regularly held church services there for fishermen and their families. He asked them to put the idea to the members of their D.A. as soon as possible and, if they agreed, he would be happy to hold the first service that year, rather than delay until the following year, when the idea might not be acted upon.

Arriving back on Teesside, the two immediately got in touch with the D.A. Secretary, Arthur T. Rogers and Olive Stephenson of Hartlepool, who, with husband Tom, agreed to co-ordinate the arrangements for the first service and cyclists' get-together. It was only two years previously that the Teesside D.A. had been formed, in Stockton, on February 13th, 1925, out of the Northumberland and Durham D.A., when it was then merely a Section. Being such a young District Association, there was an enthusiastic nucleus of cycle tourists who did not want to disappoint the Vicar with a poor turnout, so they set about spreading the word throughout the D.A. and to other neighbouring clubs. What also made the invitation to the first Coxwold Sunday so appealing was the fact that the owner of the Fauconberg Arms agreed, after the Vicar had had a word one evening with the landlord, to provide the visiting cyclists with tea. He also readily agreed to allow them to bring and eat their own food in the bar, before the service.

So, the first gathering took place one August Sunday, under a sunny blue sky, with the Bishop of Whitby present. Who would have thought that this was to be the first of many happy occasions, held without a break, despite the Second World War years. We fellow cycle tourists that are left have passed down this wonderful occasion to future generations and, thankfully, it shows no sign of ending, despite an ever changing world, which has seen custom, practice and tradition, in all our institutions and everyday lives, turned upside down. This also against a change in the mode

of cycling, firstly to road racing and time trialling and more recently to 'off-road' cycling, with the modern mountain bike. This has resulted nationally in a fairly static membership of the C.T.C. against a background of a tremendous upsurge in ownership and use of the motor car.

This special Sunday in May is one of celebration and of irreplaceable tradition, rivalled only by one older service especially for cyclists; that held annually at Meriden, near Birmingham. The Meriden simple Sunday open-air memorial service has expanded to include the whole weekend and, for the first time, the 74th gathering in 1995 was designated 'the Heart of England Rally'. The organiser of the weekend is John Bedford, of Sutton Coldfield. He points out that it was on May 21st, 1921 that an assembly of cyclists, estimated to be around 20,000, gathered on Meriden Green to watch the then Lord Chancellor, Lord Birkenhead, unveil a 30ft. high pillar of grey Cornish granite, a war memorial in remembrance of cyclists who gave their lives in the First World War.

The Memorial was erected at a cost of £1,200, by public subscription from cyclists and cycling organisations throughout Britain to 'invoke memories of the ghastliness of war, so that men and women should not forget, so that generation after generation of cyclists should not forget, and so that they should know of the sacrifices of their fellows'. Symbolic of memory, the pillar stands foursquare to the wind and the rain, 'a token to the dead and a meaning to the living'. An open air service has been held every year since at the Cyclists' War Memorial, sited as near as possible to the centre of England.

Coxwold, Meriden and one other service, at the lovely village of Castle Coombe in the Cotswolds, are all that remain from over 200 similar gatherings started up just after the First World War. The service at Castle Coombe began in 1948 and has been held there every year since. Before that, however, there was a service for cyclists at St. Cuthbert's Church, Wells, beginning about

1928, with the last taking place in 1947, with a special harvest festival .

The reason for moving the service to Castle Coombe was so this would be more central to the Bristol D.A. Brenda Carlton of Cheltenham, who organises the services, points out that the Vicar, now the Revd. Clifton, chooses the hymns for the service, a practice adopted by his predecessor, the late Revd. D. Morris. After the service at Castle Coombe which, like Coxwold, must rank as one of England's prettiest villages, the ladies of the village and the church committee serve the visiting cyclists with tea and cakes before the ride home.

Meriden, Coxwold and Castle Coombe services each remain a symbol to mark the safe return of members of the Cyclists' Touring Club from the war. Sadly of course, very many members and cycle tourists did not return and many countless young men and women were taken from us, though those that were left were determined to make their own local church service a fitting tribute to their fellow wheelmen and women. So it was that after the Second World War these services took on a new meaning, for once again young men and women had failed to return, having given their lives in the service of their King and Country. At Meriden in 1963 a bronze plaque was added to the memorial to commemorate those cyclists who died during World War Two.

Coxwold Sunday, begun almost ten years after the First World War, but only five after Meriden and one after Wells is, however, not the work of the C.T.C. but the creation of Canon Gibson Black, his last service being held on May 29th, 1949. During that time he had welcomed on behalf of the cyclists, the then Archbishop of York (four times), the Dean of York and the Bishop of Whitby (twice) who, on each occasion, preached their sermons to a capacity congregation of 300.

It was in those formative years that Canon Gibson Black was able to establish the annual Coxwold cyclists' service as a most unique occasion, indeed a celebration of everything that is best and good. A pilgrimage to a wayside pulpit that will continue so long as men and women and youngsters continue to enjoy the benefits of the pedal cycle and want to offer thanks to God for the beauty they see around them; for the comradeship and companionship that is to be found in cycling groups and clubs and 'on the road'.



Canon Gibson Black (on the left) with The Dean of York, Dr H.N. Bate, 1938.

ST. MICHAEL'S CHURCH, COXWOLD

Viewed from any direction, at the many approaches to the village, on lanes ideally suited to the pedal cycle, with their high hedges an quiet, meandering ways, the outline of the Church of St. Michael, with its impressive tower, dominates the lovely idyllic village of Coxwold, North Yorkshire. The popularity of the village could doubtless be explained simply by its appearance, with its fascinating old almshouses, resting on the slope of the hill. Indeed, a show village, a picture of mellowness and grace, all capped by one of Yorkshire's finest churches.

A Saxon church first stood on this site in 750 A.D. There was then a Norman Church, stones and glass from which are to be seen in the present building, which was erected in 1420. The octagonal tower, built right to the base, contains three bells, a treble, a second and a tenor, the first two dating from 1771 and 1652, respectively. The church clock strikes on the treble bell and the entire bell frame has the date 1601 on it.

The Church's main features are: the chancel arch, dividing the nave from the chancel and containing a colourful version of the Royal Arms first used in churches in the time of Henry V111 and the wooden ceiling of the nave with its 'bosses', the decorative plaques at the intersections of the beams, (containing details of the armorial bearings of families prominent in the district in the early part of the 15th Century such as Percy, Mowbray and Colville). In addition there are a number of 'grotesques' with one in particular to be seen in the ceiling of the porch.

It was in 1904, during part of the restoration of the roof, that a 'boss' was introduced over the family pew in the South-East corner of the nave, in the form of a shield, with the Wombwell family arms. Many of the windows of the nave are of stained glass, the larger panels of the Victorian period, memorials of the Wombwell family, as are

many of the wall tablets. Much older glass is part of the tracery lights, the small sections near the top of each window. It is remarkable that so much of this glass is intact, as it is dated from the time that the church was built, with much of it from a hundred years before, from the original Norman church.

The pews are of the 'box' type, with many still having the locks dating back to the time when pews were 'owned' by families of parishioners. In 1906 both the pews and the pulpit were altered, with the high-backed pews reduced in size, as was the pulpit which was a 'three-decker', constructed in 1760. It was about that time that the Revd. Laurence Sterne was Vicar of Coxwold until his death in 1768. He lived at 'Shandy Hall', the last house on the right beyond the church, where he wrote most of his novels 'Tristram Shandy' and 'A Sentimental Journey'. It was in 1969 that the Sterne Trust, now owners of Shandy Hall, were able to bring Sterne's remains from the burial ground of St. George's, Hanover Square, in London, to St. Michael's for re-internment in the churchyard, by the South wall of the nave, just East of the porch.

Within the chancel is an elongated horseshoe shaped altar rail which was constructed about the same time as the pews and the pulpit, to compensate for the area taken up by four monuments to members of the Balasyse family, a prominent family in national and local affairs for many centuries. When Henry VIII was actively pursuing his policy of dissolving the monasteries, one of his commissioners was Dr. Anthony Belasyse, who was also one of Henry's chaplains. Anthony Belasyse willed control of nearby Newburgh Priory to Sir William Belasyse and his title to the property was secured in 1546 and he became the first of the Belasyse family to live in the Priory, as a private citizen and his descendants live there today. He died in 1603, one month after the death of Elizabeth I and his is the large elaborate tomb nearest the altar on the North side. His wife, daughter of Sir Nicholas Fairfax of Gilling, is also buried in the tomb and it is her effigy which lies alongside that

of her husband, with smaller effigies of their four sons and a daughter placed around the tomb, and the armorial bearings around it are those of Sir William's ancestors.

On the same side of the Chancel is another monumental group. The two figures are those of Sir William's great-grandson, Henry Belasyse, in Roman costume, who died in 1647 and his son Thomas, in court dress, with an earl's coronet in his hand, who later became the first Earl of Fauconberg. It was his second wife, Mary, who was daughter of Oliver Cromwell and it was she, as Countess Fauconberg who, when Charles II became King, contrived to rescue her father's body from London. The body of her father had been buried in Westminster Abbey and, having been brought to Newburgh Priory, has lain undisturbed since 1660, in a sarcophagus in the upper walls of the Priory. Thomas Belasyse lived until 1700, serving with distinction under Cromwell, Charles II, James I and William III. But the 'classic' monument in the South East corner of the Chancel is that of Thomas, Viscount Fauconberg, who died in 1652. The effigy beside him is that of his wife, Barbara.

The remaining Gothic style monument is that of Henry, the last Earl Fauconberg, who died in 1802 and, as there was no male heir, the title lapsed and the estate went first to his daughter, Charlotte, and then to the son of her sister, the Lady Anne Belasyse, who had married a Wombwell. Sir George and Lady Wombwell then went to live at Newburgh and the other church monuments are of their descendants. Sir George, who was a Lieutenant in the 17th Lancers, was aide-de-camp to Lord Cardigan of the Light Brigade of 1854, in the Crimea War. It was at Balaclava that Sir George was unhorsed in the Russian lines and was taken prisoner. It was during the arrival of the second wave of British Cavalry that he somehow managed, during the confusion of battle, to find another mount and escape. He died at Newburgh Priory in 1913 and, with his wife, the Lady Julia, is buried in the churchyard in the yew hedge enclosure. There is a brass memorial tablet to them both in the church porch. On the north wall of the nave and in the

windows above are memorials to their two soldier sons, who both died on active service, one in India and one in South Africa. On either side of the Chancel are the armorial bearings of the Fauconbergs, with the Wombwell Arms in the 'boss' above the family pew.

On the west wall of the nave are two large hatchments, black diamond shaped borders, to the Fauconberg Arms, placed there after the deaths of members of the family. Also, at the west end is the gallery containing the organ and seats for the Choir. Under one of the hatchments can be seen lines of black lettering forming the last lines of the Lord's prayer, which were discovered in 1970, when some seating was removed.

Other items of interest include a Breeches Bible, in the case near the pulpit, printed in 1601 by the printer to Elizabeth I, Robert Barker, but more properly called the Geneva Bible. The Bible case, which has a little mouse carved upon it, is from the nearby workshops of Robert Thompson of Kilburn. There are three other mice, one of these under the ledge of the piscine, the niche in the wall where the vessels used at the Holy Communion are cleansed and two in the restored family pew. A fourth mouse is on the lecturn stand, but the top, although from the Thompson workshops, was made by Josef Heu, an Austrian sculptor and woodworker, who found refuge in Coxwold in 1941. In the aisle is a black stone and lying beneath it, since 1464, is Sir John Manston. Restored in 1962 by Captain Malcolm Wombwell, is the Lady Chapel, the work of Robert Thompson, with the exception of the crucifix, brought from Oberammergau.

On the south wall of the Chancel is a tablet in memory of Lord Adolphus FitzClarence, third son of William IV, who died in 1856, whilst on a visit to Newburgh Priory and is buried in the family vault beneath the Chancel. On the opposite wall of the Chancel can be seen the signatures of Queen Mary, wife of George V, together with those of Princess Mary, the Princess Royal, her husband, the Earl of Harewood and that of Captain Wombwell,

who entertained them at Newburgh Priory. Here also is a framed list of priests who have administered in the parish. This is not complete, especially for the earlier centuries.

One Priest and Vicar, Canon Gibson Black, incumbent from 1927 until 1950, is buried in the churchyard and his grave can be seen on the right by the footpath, leading to the Lychgate. On the gravestone is the following:

'In loving memory of Gibson Black, B.D., Canon of York and Vicar of Coxwold, 1927 -1950. The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want'.

The words at the end of the quote are of course from Canon Black's favourite psalm, the Twenty-third, which he had inserted in the Order of Service for Coxwold Sunday.



St Michaels Church, Coxwold (from the south-east).

THE ORDER OF SERVICE

The Order of Service was the sole work of Canon Black who, as a cyclist himself, wanted to reflect the purpose of an annual gathering, by the inclusion of both hymns and prayers, with which cyclists could identify. So he included John Bunyan's 'the Pilgrim's Hymn', for he wanted the cyclists to regard the annual reunion as a pilgrimage and secondly, with careful thought, he wanted to include at least one prayer which reflected the cyclists' use of the roads. So there is, in the Order of Service, a prayer for all who use the roads'.

The exact Order of Service, as compiled by Canon Black, has remained almost unchanged since the first service in 1927. Immediately prior to the service, the village hall is open to serve teas and other refreshments and the cyclists are welcomed by the village and church ladies committees, with the proceeds to help finance their various church and village appeals and activities.

The service involves members of the congregation, who see to the ringing of the church bells, welcoming the cyclists to worship, the handing out of service sheets and the organisation of the offertory. The service is preceded by a short introduction of welcome, when an opportunity is taken to announce the good and the bad news from the participating District Associations who have perhaps become parents, or couples who have become engaged or have married since last year. The sombre note to the announcements is to tell of members who have died since last year's service and their names are read out as a mark of respect.

On behalf of the Teesside District Association and all those present, Eddie Grainger has for several years now undertaken that task, with the introduction of welcome and the organisation of the day left in the capable hands of Peter Gray of the York Section of the North Yorkshire District Association.

Peter, with the present Vicar of Coxwold, Reverend David Johnson, confirms the date, books the village hall and, in conjunction with the Vicar, selects the preacher for the day. Decorated bicycle wheels are placed in the porch to the church for the start of the service and these are carefully and lovingly laid on the grave of Canon Black at the end of the service, with members gathering round the grave for group photographs.

If there is still plenty of food left to eat in the village hall, members, who are not in a hurry to cycle homeward, take the last opportunity to cycle down to the hall for a final bite to eat and a cup of tea, before setting off for the ride back to their homes. Then for those who do, there's the chance to say a few farewells until next year.....

The only change to the Order of Service in recent years has been the addition of the hymn, "All things bright and beautiful, All creatures great and small, All things wise and wonderful, the Lord God made them all". The 1994 service, the 68th, saw, for the first time, District Association members read a lesson, play the organ and form the bulk of the choir, thus playing their full part in the Service. This new trend was continued with in 1995 and 1996 and shows an exciting pattern for the future of the gathering.



Coxwold 1957, showing the Wych-elm before it was taken down.

ST.MICHAEL'S CHURCH, COXWOLD ANNUAL CYCLISTS' SERVICE

This service, held annually since 1927, is the occasion of many joyful reunions between cyclists and a happy time of thanksgiving and dedication to the God and Father of us all.

.....
ORDER OF SERVICE

after the Notices all shall stand and sing

THE PILGRIM'S HYMN

He who would valiant be
 'Gainst all disaster,
Let him in constancy
 Follow the Master.
There's no discouragement
 Shall make him once relent
His first avowed intent
 To be a pilgrim.

Who so beset him round
 With dismal stories,
Do but themselves confound--
 His strength the more is.
No foes shall stay his might,
 Though he with giants fight:
He will make good his right
 To be a pilgrim.

Since, Lord, thou dost defend
 Us with thy Spirit,
We know we at the end
 Shall life inherit.
Then fancies flee away!
 I'll fear not what men say,
I'll labour night and day
 To be a pilgrim.

Then shall the Minister say:

BELOVED, we have come together on this day to acknowledge our dependence upon God and to pledge our faith and loyalty to Him.

We have come from the towns and from the countryside, from narrow streets and broad highways, from factories and workshops, from fields and gardens to put ourselves into the hand of God that He may fit us for His service, and for the service of our fellow men.

Wherefore let us remember God's presence with us now, and confess all that has been amiss in our lives over the years that are past.

Then shall kneel and say together:

Most merciful God, we confess that we have sinned in thought, word and deed.
We have not loved Thee with our whole heart.
We have not loved our neighbours as ourselves.

In Thy mercy forgive what we have been,
 help us to amend what we are,
 and direct what we shall be;
that we may do justly,
 love mercy,
 and walk humbly with Thee;
Through Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN.

The Minister (or Bishop, if he be present) shall say:

Almighty God have mercy upon you, pardon and deliver you from all your sins, confirm and strengthen you in all goodness, and keep you in life eternal; through Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN.

All shall stand:

Minister	O Lord, open thou our lips;
People	And our mouth shall show forth thy praise,
Minister	O God, make speed to save us;
People	O Lord, make haste to help us.
	Glory be to the Father, and to the Son:
	And to the Holy Spirit;
	As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be:
	World without end. AMEN.
Minister	Praise ye the Lord;
People	The Lord's name be praised.

Then shall be sung in its metrical version

PSALM XXIII

The Lord's my Shepherd, I'll not want;
He makes me down to lie
In pastures green; he leadeth me
The quiet waters by.

My soul he doth restore again,
And me to walk doth make
Within the paths of righteousness,
E'en for his own names sake.

Yea, though I walk through death's dark vale,
Yet will I fear no ill;
For Thou art with me, and thy rod
And staff me comfort still.

My table Thou hast furnished
In presence of my foes;
My head Thou dost with oil anoint,
And my cup overflows.

Goodness and mercy all my life
Shall surely follow me;
And in God's house for evermore
My dwelling-place shall be.

All shall sit for THE LESSON

ALL shall stand for this hymn:

Rise up, O men of God!
Have done with lesser things;
Give heart and soul and mind and strength
To serve the Kings of Kings.

Rise up, O men of God!
His kingdom tarries long;
Bring in the day of brotherhood
And end the night of wrong.

Rise up, O men of God!
The Church for you doth wait:
Her strength unequal to her task;
Rise up and make her great!

Lift high the Cross of Christ!
Tread where His feet have trod,
As brothers of the Son of Man
Rise up, O men of God!

Then shall follow **THE SERMON**

HYMN

*All things bright and beautiful,
All creatures great and small
All things wise and wonderful
The Lord God made them all.*

- | | | | |
|---|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | EACH little flower that opens
Each little bird that sings
He made their glowing colours
He made their tiny wings: | 3 | The cold wind in the winter
The pleasant summer sun
The ripe fruits in the garden
He made them everyone: |
| 2 | he purple-headed mountain
The river running by
The sunset, and the morning
That brightens up the sky: | 4 | He gave us eyes to see them
And lips that we might tell
How great is God Almighty
Who has made all things well: |

Let us pray (Prayers as chosen by the Minister)

FOR THE PEACE OF THE WORLD

O Almighty God, who canst bring good out of evil and makest even the wrath of man to turn to Thy praise: Teach us to live together in charity and peace; and grant, we beseech Thee, that the nations of the world may henceforth be united in a firmer fellowship for the promotion of Thy glory and the good of all mankind; through Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN.

FOR ALL WHO USE THE ROADS

Almighty God, give to us and to all who use the roads the spirit of courtesy and goodwill, of carefulness and self-control; that by our thought for others, we may be preserved from needless danger and sudden death, and may live to glorify Thee in our goings out and in our comings in; through Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN.

All shall say together the act of DEDICATION.

Look upon our lives, O Lord our God.
And make them thine
In the power of Thy Holy Spirit;
That we may walk in Thy way,
Faithfully believing Thy Word,
And faithfully doing the commandments;
Faithfully worshipping Thee,
And faithfully serving our neighbour;
To the furtherance of Thy glorious Kingdom;
Through Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN.

OUR FATHER

Then shall be sung this hymn, during which the collection will be taken.

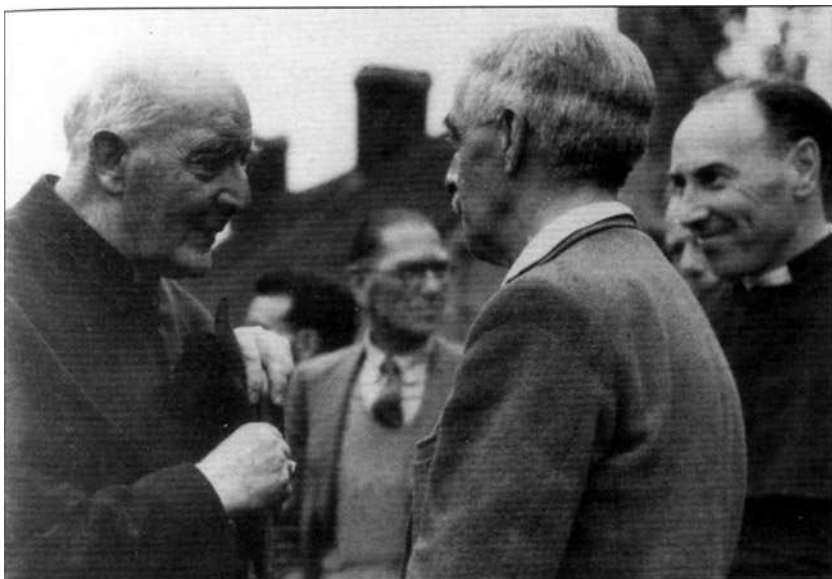
O WORSHIP the King	Thy bountiful care
All-glorious above;	What tongue can recite?
O gratefully sing	It breathes in the air.
His power and his love:	It shines in the light.
Our Shield and Defender,	It streams from the hills,
The Ancient of Days,	It descends to the plain,
Pavillion'd in splendour,	And sweetly distils,
And girded with praise.	In the dew and the rain.
O tell of his might,	Frail children of dust,
O sing of his grace,	And feeble as frail,
Whose robe is the light,	In thee do we trust,
Whose canopy space;	Nor find thee to fail;
His chariots of wrath	Thy mercies how tender!
The deep thunder clouds form,	How firm to the end!
And dark is his path	Our Maker, Defender,
On the wings of the storm.	Redeemer and Friend.
The earth with its store	O measureless Might,
Of wonders untold,	Ineffable Love,
Almighty, thy power	While angels delight,
Hath founded of old;	To hymn thee above.
Hath stablish'd it fast	Thy ransomed creation,
By a changeless decree	Though feeble their lays,
And round it hath cast	With true adoration
Like a mantle, the sea.	Shall sing to thy praise.

The Minister (or Bishop, if he be present) shall say, all kneeling:

	The Lord be with you
People	And with thy spirit
Minister	Go forth in peace
People	Thanks be to God

The service shall conclude with

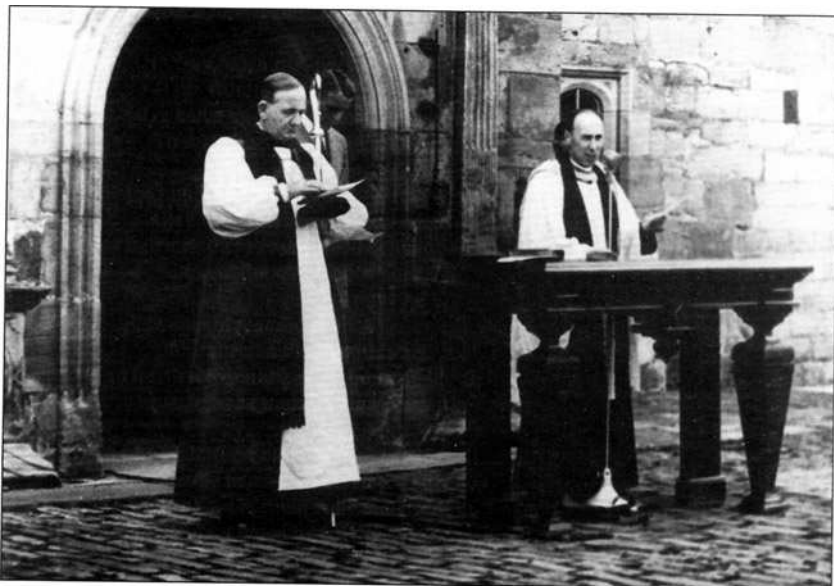
THE BLESSING



Coxwold, 1952. The Archbishop of York, Dr. C. Garbett (on the far left) with the Revd. R. Lloyd (far right).



The Bishop of Whitby, Dr Woollcombe with the congregation at the eleventh service, 1937.



The 1953 service at Newburgh Priory. The Bishop of Whitby, Rt Revd. W.H. Baddeley (on left) with Revd. R. Lloyd.



Peter Gray with Revd. Jim Thom (May, 1987).

SEVENTY GLORIOUS SERVICES

Coxwold Sunday congregations have been particularly fortunate in having heard many distinguished and learned members of the clergy who have graced the occasion, (the then Bishop of Whitby attended the first in 1927). A number, from the pulpit, talked openly about their own cycling experiences. Many of the visiting clergy could speak from much experience, since a bike was most essential to get around their parish, the motor car being an expensive item for parish clergy to run and maintain, never mind own. Indeed, several took the time to seek out apt references in the Bible so that they could use quotations that could be associated with the pedal cycle, much to the amusement of the congregations. The founder of the service, Canon Black, officiated at the first seven services, that is to say that he led the worship and preached the sermon. For the eighth, he invited the Venerable A.C. England, Archdeacon of York, followed by the Rt. Revd. H. Woollcombe, the Bishop of Whitby, for the eleventh, in 1937.

But perhaps the most memorable sermon, and one that made headlines in the following week's national daily papers, including 'The Times', was given by the Dean of York, Dr. H.N. Bate, at the twelfth, in 1938. It was from St. Michael's church pulpit that Dr. Bate made his famous advocacy of Sunday Cricket in villages, declaring that "the Christian Sunday was not meant to be turned into a day of gloom and restraint, but a day of freedom and rejoicing". His sermon that May 29th followed his journey to Coxwold in a slow steam train from Liverpool to York, passing en route innumerable villages, at each of which he noticed young men 'loafing' about on benches beside empty cricket fields. "All the time", he went on to an attentive congregation, "there was a splendid opportunity for exercise awaiting them, but none of them dare make use of it, although well-to-do people were playing tennis behind their garden walls".

This was then one of the most forward-looking, if contraversial, suggestions of the period and one that raised many an eyebrow, especially in ecclesiastical circles. It is said that Dr. Bate had to explain himself to the Archbishop later that month, but clearly he had strong support from the 300 touring cyclists who packed St. Michael's church to hear the Dean deliver his sermon. After all, they were out for the day enjoying the countryside, so why should not others do the same, whether it be playing tennis or cricket, without doing it 'in secret'. A year later, 1939, only months before the start of the Second World War, Archbishop Temple was invited back. It was almost ten years later, in 1948, and after the war was over, that the new Archbishop, Dr. Cyril Garbett, preached to a packed St. Michael's. Canon Black's association with the service was to last for a total of twenty-three years, the longest period of any Coxwold vicar, in the almost seventy years of the gathering. The Reverend Richard Lloyd, now in retirement at Sedgfield, who had taken over from Canon Black and had taken his first cyclists' service in 1950, invited Dr. Garbett back to the 1952 service, followed a year later by the then Bishop of Whitby, the Rt. Revd. W.H. Baddeley, but the actual service was held at Newburgh Priory. This was the only time in the history of the gathering that the church of St. Michael's was not used. A framed photograph of the 1953 service hangs in the vestry of St. Michael's Church, as presented by the Teesside D.A. This shows the service taking place at the entrance to the Priory.

In 1956 the Revd. Harry Broughton, now in retirement at Hutton-le-Hole, began his ministry and he enjoyed being involved with the service on fourteen occasions, only once, his first, delivering the sermon and twice having involved the then Archbishop of York, Dr. Michael Ramsey, in 1957 and 1961. Dr. Ramsey later went on to become Archbishop of Canterbury. Revd. Broughton it was who invited his predecessor Revd. Lloyd back to St. Michael's, to give the sermon at the 1960 service. In 1965 Revd. D. Sargent came to preach the sermon, as Bishop of Selby, (the Bishop made a return

visit in 1977). For his last service in 1968 Revd. Lloyd invited the then Revd. Michael Turnbull to preach the sermon, as Chaplain to the Archbishop of York. Revd. Turnbull is now the Bishop of Durham. The Revd. Alun Morris, now Canon Morris, and in retirement at Whitby had six happy years association with the service, from 1970 to his last in 1975. Then a year later came the Revd. Jim Thom and he led twelve services.

Revd. Thom recalls that when he first came to Coxwold the thought of hosting an annual cyclists service was a "daunting prospect". When he became aware in the early months of 1988 that he would not be conducting the 62nd service, having accepted the living of Topcliffe, he felt a touch of sadness that he would be losing an "irreplaceable tradition". Revd. Thom, although now in retirement at Ripon, has many memories of joyful, colourful unions and reunions with touring cyclists of all ages. He vividly remembers the pre-service buzz of conversation, which moved so gently into silence as worship began and then erupted gloriously in the singing of Bunyan's celebrated hymn, with the first line, "He who would valiant be...".

He captures the whole meaning of the occasion when he says "the whole service has about it the quality of a pilgrimage for those who cycled each year and for those who came to Coxwold year after year, when their cycling days were over". The last service led by the Revd. Thom was in 1987 and he very appropriately invited the present Archbishop of York, Dr. John Habgood, to preach the sermon, on what proved to be a very happy day.

The present Vicar of Coxwold, Revd. David Johnson, who retires in 1997, will, on the occasion of the 70th service, have been personally involved with 'Coxwold Sunday' on nine separate consecutive occasions. It was he who, for his first, in 1988, made an interesting change. From the pulpit, after delivering the sermon, he announced that the collection that day would be used

for the African Pastor Fund, which supplies bicycles (of the strong safari type), to the clergy in various parts of Africa, to help them look after their many scattered churches and to visit their people. Revd. Johnson told the packed congregation that some 400 bicycles, costing £150 each, had already been sent to Uganda. A murmur of approval went around the nave of the church in support of such a worthy appeal, one that the Founder of 'Coxwold Sunday', Canon Black, would no doubt have very much approved. Here was one of the world's oldest cyclists' church services being asked to offer practical help in this way to the third world.

Not that this was the only innovation introduced by Revd. Johnson, for it was he, with Peter Gray, who introduced an ecumenical flavour to the annual service. At the 1990 service, the sermon was given by a Roman Catholic priest, Father Cyril Brookes, of St. Bees Church in York. This turned out to be more of an after dinner speech at a literary lunch than a sermon. The following year, 1991, was the turn of the Methodist Church. Bouncing into the pulpit came the Revd. Ken Marshall, Minister at Easingwold, who made mention of earning his cyclists badge by a 'baptism of the unknown'.

The Vicar of Dunnington, Revd. Simon Stanley gave the sermon at the 1992 service and was already well known for his contributions to the local newspaper and Radio York. But perhaps the most interesting innovation to the service came in 1993 when, for the first time, an active cyclist, the Revd. Andrew Mann, a Methodist minister, and member of the Gomersall Wheelers, enlivened the proceedings with a strange text which was that the Kingdom of Heaven was like the cyclists cafe at Gargrave. Those in the congregation who knew it, nodded approvingly.

For the 1994 gathering, came Des Reed, who could recall attending his first 'Coxwold Sunday' in 1939, before leaving to serve in the Territorial Army during the Second World War, then attending again in 1949 and practically everyone since. He gave the sermon at the 1994 gathering. Des amused the assembled, including visiting cyclists, who had attended the service for the first time, after attending the National A.G.M. of the C.T.C. in York, the previous day, including Audrey Hughes, with his reminiscences of his early Malton Wheelers days. Des seemed to occupy the pulpit for perhaps longer than he intended, for at one point during his discourse, the service co-ordinator, Peter Gray, had rather poignantly to remind him that many of the congregation had bikes that were not equipped with lights!

Then in 1995, for the 69th, the service had its first female preacher, the Revd. Margaret Cundiff of St. James Church, Selby.

And for the 70th, the Bishop of Whitby, the Revd. Gordon Bates has brought the Service full circle, as the then Bishop of Whitby, the Rt. Revd. H Woollcombe attended the very first, 70 Services ago.

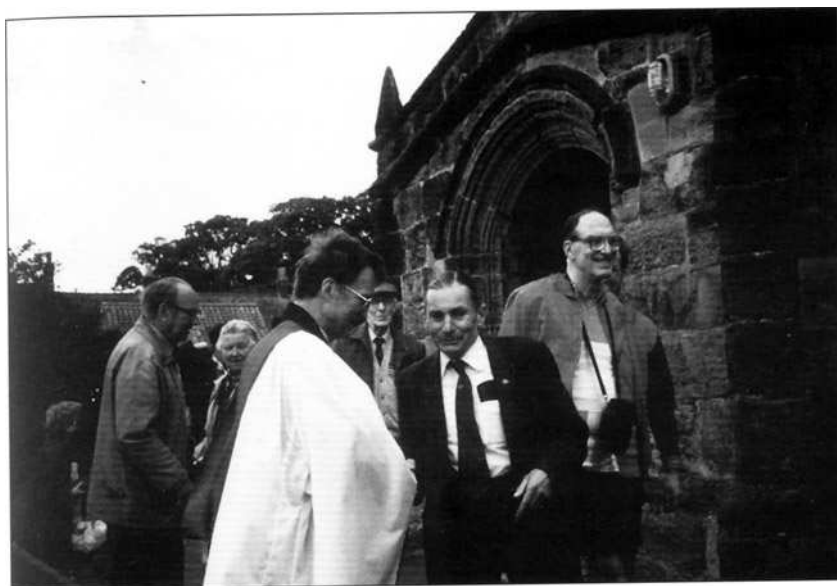


Three Teesside D.A. members who attended the very first service, from left to right:- Bill Wallace, Phil Curtis, and Mary Wallace, with Revd. R. Lewis, 1989.

SEVENTY GLORIOUS CONGREGATIONS

No annual gathering that has stood the test of time in an ever changing world, could have done so without the support each year of hundreds of touring cyclists. The annual ritual of attending 'Coxwold Sunday' has been handed down from generation to generation, which makes each year so special. It is as though a huge family, a cycling family, comes together, in an act of corporate worship. Indeed, it could be said that these several hundreds have pedalled from all over the North of England, a fraternity of freewheelers 'rapturously reunited', as the Northern Echo's Mike Amos once described it. So as the history of this great event is traced through the years, no story would be complete without careful reference to the many cycling 'characters', many of whom made this an annual pilgrimage to Coxwold, until they were unable, through old age, to cycle to the village, or who were too frail to accept a lift through in a motor car. Many attended well into their eighties, and were proud to do so.

At the very first service and everyone since, until their deaths in 1989 and 1994 respectively, were Bill and Mary Wallace. Both served as President of the Teesside D.A. Their last service together, only months before Bill's death, was 1989. Mary, who was like a mother to many younger members of the D.A. openly stated that getting through to Coxwold was the highlight of her year. Another cycling twosome, who attended almost every service, were Arthur and Marion Gilleard of Hull and East Riding D.A. Not that husband and wife tandem riders were confined to Durham and Yorkshire. From Lancashire, each and every year, came Mr. and Mrs. Albert Shackleton of Nelson. When Albert attended in 1971 he was 93 and after his death soon after, his widow continued to attend until her last service in 1979.



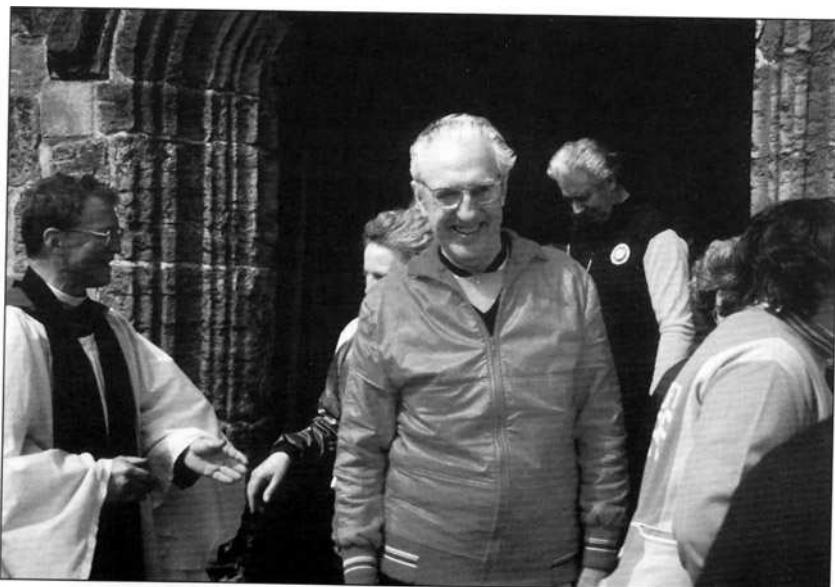
Richard Hulse shaking hands with Revd. David Johnson, 1989.



Coxwold, 1994. Beryl Burton, OBE, seated second left, with husband Charlie, standing second left, and friends.



Members of Bygone Bikes (Yorkshire) meet Revds. Lewis and Johnson at the Village hall, Coxwold



Coxwold, 1994 from left to right:- Revd. D. Johnson, Margaret and John Wilson, with in the background Mike Haseltine.

Other frequent visitors who added colour to the occasion were Richard Hulse, who wore his familiar cycling knickerbockers and Ed Green who, even when he went to live at Ambleside in the Lake District with his wife, still made for Coxwold, cycling over to the east side of the country on his trike the previous day. He would stay overnight at a Youth Hostel or a friend's house, before riding back to his home after the service. It was at the 1941 service, despite the depleted numbers in attendance, because of the war effort, that Ed, then a C.T.C. Councillor for Yorkshire continued the practice he had begun some years earlier, of addressing the assembled wheelfolk before the service, under the wych elm, just by the Fauconberg Arms, until this succumbed to Dutch elm disease. Ed had many fond memories of his association with the service and once confessed to spending a fortune on accommodation in Coxwold after the service in 1947, when the roads around the village were awash, following a terrential rain storm. That night Ed was having to pay out the princely sum of 6/6d for evening meal, bed and breakfast!

Other stalwarts of the service, who attended almost from the start are Eric Sanderson and Raymond Thompson of York, Arthur Sykes of Brighouse, West Yorkshire, who confesses to missing out on the first service, but was at the 1928 gathering. He remembers that the day of the service, April 15th, which saw snow covering up the famous White Horse on Roulston Scar. It was from then on that it was decided to put the date of the service back about one month, in fact the following year, 1929, the service was held on June 1st.

Arthur's ride to Coxwold involved a round trip of about 100 miles. For many years he made a weekend of the event, often staying Saturday night at either Ripon or Boroughbridge, returning home via York and Tadcaster. So thrilled was he with his first visit to the service that he personally saw to it that all touring clubs within a 60 mile radius were notified of the dates of the services down the years. Arthur records that cyclists from as far as Manchester often attended.

Arthur Rodgers of Romanby, Northallerton, who attended his first 'Coxwold Sunday' on June 1st, 1929, with the Hartlepool Section, recalls reading the lesson at the 1979 service, 50 years after his first. He is also a stalwart of the service, relishing every aspect of the day, mixing with all the visiting cyclists, both in the village hall beforehand and immediately after the service in St. Michael's. When he attended in 1991, he did so with his pal the late Alf Bailey and another pal, Norman Riley. Arthur was still riding his bike when he was 81 years of age, on the occasion of the 68th annual gathering in 1993, and hopes to arrive on a bike for the 70th, one month after his 85th birthday. Regrettably, the number of cyclists who can recall attending the first services, and especially those before the Second World War, has reduced to a small number. There can be little doubt that the high level of fitness and good general health that regular cycling can bring, enabled many wheelmen and women to cycle to the gathering long after other pensioners and non cyclists unfortunately had to give up active life.

Bit by bit, individual recollections of Canon Black and 'Coxwold Sunday' emerge, from people who were related to him. Miss Ann Rogers of Poynton, Cheshire wrote, recalling how her father, the late Alfred T. Rogers, was a regular visitor, having attended the first service as D.A. Secretary, with his good friend, the late Phil Curtis, until his death in a cycling accident in 1964. She sent a photograph of her father entering the churchyard on the occasion of the 1949 service, Canon Black's last. Mary Hopper from Hull wrote with details of her memories, based especially on the time that her father was Sunday School Superintendent at St. Barnabas Church, where Canon Black was the Vicar. Then Paul Everatt from Aberdeen recalled his visits to Coxwold with the Hull and East Riding D.A. and sent a newspaper photograph showing the then Bishop of Whitby, the Rt. Revd. H. Woollcombe, surrounded by visiting cyclists at the 1937 service. So, clearly, very many people have their own special memories of their own annual pilgrimage to Coxwold, or have relatives who attended, evoking special memories

of loved ones who meant so much to them. There can be no greater tribute to the Coxwold gathering than that so many people spread across the length and breadth of Britain, remember those days and times with so much affection and nostalgia.

Which brings the Coxwold story to the present day and the people who make the service so relevant to today's world. The gathering seemed to falter slightly during the middle to late 1960s for lack of numbers, though the congregation never fell below the sixty to seventy mark. Those were the years when motor car ownership seemed to rise steeply and many cyclists acquired a motor vehicle for the first time. But the steep rise in the cost of Middle East oil about 1973 and the increased cost of running a motor vehicle, seemed to make for less leisure motoring and from about that time attendances began to increase again.

It was, however, not until the early 1980s that the figures resembled those of the pre-1960 era. That is to say a packed church of 300, with many more arriving late, unable to get a seat. In those halcyon days of cycle touring, cyclists of course had the roads and lanes to themselves. If any cyclist did not arrive at the church for the start of the service, (this was later altered from 2.30 p.m. to 2.00 p.m.), he or she would have to settle for listening to the service relayed by loudspeaker. Then an Easingwold electrical firm hired out loudspeaker equipment that, if the wind was blowing in the wrong direction, somehow failed to capture the atmosphere inside the church, and riders unlucky enough not to find a seat, could be seen sidling up to the speakers, craning their ears for a snatch of the words of a prayer or hymn. But they were just pleased to be a part of this great occasion, despite not being able to get a seat in the church.

After attendances dropped and the service looked like coming to an end and the Teesside D.A. active membership was at an all time low, no-one seemed prepared to co-ordinate the arrangements for each year's service. The then D.A. Secretary,

Robert Murphy, who had done his best to keep alive the service, then resigned and into the breach, so far as making the service arrangements was concerned, stepped newly arrived to the York area to live and work, Peter Gray, who attended his first service in 1985. Peter takes up the story.

"It was a most pleasant day out. It seemed a shame that the event was so poorly supported. Then I found out why. Revd. Jim Thom would ring up Robert Murphy, sometime early in the year, and ask when the service ought to be. By which time most clubs had set their calendar. In a way the retirement of Jim set the die for the future. Realising that unless someone intervened there would be no service in 1987, I booked the church for the service, with the verger and spread the word. As the attendances increased, so the amount of food beforehand in the village hall decreased. The three dears who used to cater for decades were ageing and could not cope with the extra numbers. In 1989 new catering arrangements were introduced under the leadership of Jean Cobb. It was hard for the organist, Jean to do both. In 1990 we brought our own organist, Peter Main, and in 1992 added a volunteer choir and in 1994 an orchestra and bell ringers". (For the 1995 Service there was a soloist accompanied by a Teesside D.A. member, Tim Jackson, and a solo and choir anthem is planned for the 70th Service).

So, it was Peter who, almost single handedly, infused new life into the annual gathering, recruiting Peter Main of York, a cyclist, to play the organ, which he still does even today. He was quick to involve the members of the various D.A.s who support the service, getting them to help with bell-ringing, acting as sidesmen and women, taking the offertory, reading the lesson and much more recently, since the 1994 service, providing both a choir and an orchestra to accompany the hymn singing.. All the participants are active cyclists, so that, thanks to Peter, it can truly be said that the service is about cyclists, for cyclists and organised by cyclists. All that remains is for the present vicar, Revd. David Johnson to get out his pedal cycle, which he has threatened to do



The 'Winged Wheel' is laid on Canon Black's grave.



Coxwold, 1949.



Bicycles among the gravestones, St. Michael's Churchyard.

for several years now and the picture of an all-cyclists occasion would be complete.

But, perhaps Peter's real achievement, was the introduction of the superb catering arrangements in the village hall, before the start of the service. What Peter did was to expand on the previous arrangements, when the landlord of the Fauconberg Arms had laid on cups of tea before the service and then, later when the church allowed use of the village hall, 'tea only' was provided, so that the cyclists could consume their own food at the trestle tables set out around the hall and on the stage. Now, the catering has moved up somewhat and is like a scene from the story of the feeding of the five thousand, except that, in place of the loaves and fishes, is a spread of food that would do justice to a banquet at any large hotel in Yorkshire. Each year Peter challenges the assembled to 'clear the decks', and in true cyclist tradition they usually clear the hall of every morsel of food, put out by the ladies of the village, who never fail to please with their culinary delights. But, as they will testify, the washing up afterwards seems endless!

What of my own recollections? Well I do recall my first ever visit on June 2nd, 1957, with the former, now alas defunct, Redcar Section of the Teesside D.A. that at one time in the mid-1950s was the strongest section, with regularly between thirty and forty on a Sunday clubrun. That year the vicar, the Revd. Harry Broughton welcomed the then Archbishop of York, Dr. Michael Ramsey, (later to become the Archbishop of Canterbury), and it was he who preached the sermon that day. As a junior club rider I had heard of the service from the older members of the section who attended each year and they could remember how, at the 26th service, on June 8th, 1952, with Dr. Cyril Garbett, the Archbishop of York present, the Teesside D.A. presented to the church, a prayer book, in memory of Canon Black. That Trinity Sunday, 500 cyclists attended, according to the St. Michael's church magazine, which was first published in 1951. It was on April 9 th

of that year that the Coxwold Parish Meeting formally decided to erect a permanent memorial to Canon Black.

Arriving about noon, at the 31st Service in 1957, the Junior members of the Redcar Section were unable to find anywhere to park their bikes, never mind later, get a seat in the church. It seemed that the whole village, along both sides of the main street, through Coxwold, up from the crossroads leading to Byland Abbey and Newburgh Priory, to way beyond Shandy Hall, was littered with cycles and about ten deep at that! They had exotic names; 'Royal Enfield', 'Sun Wasp', 'Rotrax', 'Phillips', 'B.S.A.' and the like, mostly equipped with single 'fixed' or single freewheel or, if the rider was lucky (or rich) enough, with Sturmey Archer hub gears. Only the extremely fortunate appeared to have on their bikes either three, four or five speed derailleur gearing.

That year and the following one, 1958, after eating my sandwiches and then disappearing into the church for the service along with members of the section, we then emerged afterwards into the afternoon sunlight. Indeed, the sun always seemed to be shining at Coxwold. You can imagine my feeling when I went to claim my prized possession, a 'Bianchi', which I had bought complete from a club member for £8, to find it buried beneath ten or twenty others! After a break of two or three years, I have now attended every service for over twenty-five years. I had the honour of reading the lesson at the 1991 service after riding into the village from Husthwaite, past the lakes at Gilling, then through the grounds of Ampeforth College and along the lane at Thorpe Hall, emerging at Newburgh Priory. I was with my good friends from the Teesside D.A. The following year, 1992, I was followed in reading the lesson by former Teesside D.A. Secretary, Kathleen Sutcliffe, a strong supporter of the gathering, along with her husband Geoffrey, D.A. Vice-President Charlie Imeson, D.A. Chairman, Ivor Wallis, together with Frank Bradley, Eric Pengilley and Cathy Woodroffe. At the 1993, 1994 and 1995 services were Beryl Burton and her husband, Charlie. Beryl still enjoys her touring and values her

membership of the C.T.C. although she is better known for her championship racing feats.

Members of Bygone Bikes (Yorkshire) Club have been attending the cyclists service for over 12 years now. The Club was formed in 1967, by Bill, Ken and Eric Auty and the object and aim of the Club is to find, restore and preserve cycles and cycling miscellanea from years gone by. The success of the Club is shown by the many bicycles, tricycles and tandems which have been collected, restored and preserved by an ever growing membership, such machines as the wooden wheel velocipede (boneshaker), the high wheel ordinary (penny farthing), and the solid tyred safety cycle, and many other cycles manufactured before the turn of the century.

Other interesting machines after 1900 include the cantilever Dursley Pedersen and many others with famous names such as Humber, Raleigh, New Hudson, etc. Tricycles and tandems covering the same period make up a collection which shows the development of the pedal cycle from its inception to the present day. The club's displays and rides on these historic machines starts in May with the Coxwold service. Members of the club meet at the home of one of the members who lives in the village of Crayke, from where members can choose a variety of routes to arrive at the village hall at Coxwold in time for lunch, and to where members return after the service.

In my view what has immortalised the service is the fact that it remains almost as Canon Black planned it, shielded from change, when it seems that the rest of the World and life in general has changed, as we all know, sometimes not for the better. For that is what 'Coxwold Sunday' is about. It is a large family, albeit cyclists, coming together for prayer and thanksgiving. If that sounds old hat and old fashioned, I for one can live with that.

All that has changed are the bicycles, bearing names like "Jack Taylor", "Claud Butler", "Ellis Briggs", "Arthur Caygill", etc., etc. Mind you, the Yorkshire Branch of Bygone Bikes, with their veteran and vintage bikes and members wearing their period dress, who now attend each year, remind us of the past and help us to remember that cycling and cyclists have been around for a very long time, well before the invention of the motor car. Had it been the other way around, one wonders whether the cyclist would have been allowed onto the roads, given the almost unbelievable and unrestricted use of the motor car.

Long may this happy seventieth association of the wheelfolk and their God continue, certainly into the 21st Century and certainly until, and hopefully beyond, the 75th 'Coxwold Sunday'. Already, here on the occasion of the 70th, countless generations of cyclists and their families can look back with pride and pleasure that the annual gathering, indeed an annual Sentimental Journey to a wayside pulpit, has thankfully stood the test of time.

All that should remain now, (in my opinion) is, for the 75th gathering, to have erected a permanent memorial to all cyclists and visitors, past, present and future. This of course may be a dream, but it could and should, in my view, be provided, subject to the final approval of the St. Michael's Church Council and the vicar and the Parish Council. There are five years to launch an appeal to raise the money for a lasting memorial, possibly in the form of a cross set inside a bicycle wheel, with the 'winged wheel' emblem of the Cyclists' Touring Club, to denote that we are all part of a national organisation, founded in 1878, to look after the interests of touring cyclists. We owe it to past and future generations of 'Coxwold Sunday' worshippers to see that this irreplaceable cycling and Christian tradition lives on as long as cycling and cycle touring is enjoyed by people of all ages.

Eddie Grainger, Teesside D.A.

COXWOLD CLERGY

1927/1996

- + 1927/1949 Canon Gibson Black, B.D.
- 1950/1955 Revd. R. Lloyd, M.A.
- 1956/1969 Revd. H. Broughton, L.Th.
- 1970/1975 Canon A. Morris, C.B.E.
- 1976/1987 Revd. J. Thom, B.A., D.Th.
- 1988/ Revd. D. F. Johnson, M.A.



The Archbishop of York Dr. NI. Ramsey with Albert Shackleton, of Nelson, Lams, May 1957.

VISITING PREACHERS

1927/1996

1927	The Bishop of Whitby (The Rt.Revd. H. Woollcombe)
1934	The Archbishop of York (The Ven. A. C. England)
1936	The Archbishop of York (Dr. W. Temple)
1937	The Bishop of Whitby (The Rt. Revd. H. Woollcombe)
1938	The Dean of York (Dr. H. N. Bate)
1939	The Archbishop of York (Dr. W. Temple)
1948	The Archbishop of York (Dr. C. Garbett)
1949	Revd. G. Townley
1950	Revd. S. Morris
1951	Revd. J. A. Kent
1952	The Archbishop of York (Dr. C. Garbett)
1953	The Bishop of Whitby (The Rt. Revd. W. H. Baddeley)
1957	The Archbishop of York (Dr. M. Ramsey)
1958	The Bishop of Whitby (The Rt. Revd. P. Wheeldon)
1959	Canon T. H. Tardrew
1960	The Revd. R. Lloyd
1961	The Archbishop of York (Dr. M. Ramsey)
1962	The Archdeacon of York (The Ven. C. R. Forder)
1963	The Revd. C. Morrison
1964	The Revd. H. G. Tylor
1965	The Bishop of Selby

	(The Rt. Revd. D. Sargent)
1966	The Archdeacon of Cleveland
	(The Ven. S. Linsley)
1967	The Revd. A Dietz
1968	The Revd. M. Turnbull
1969	The Revd. B. Crosby
1970	The Revd. K. E. Nelson
1973	The Revd. F. A. Youngman
1975	The Revd. K. E. Nelson
1976	Canon W. Wallis
1977	The Bishop of Selby
	(The Rt. Revd. D. Sargent)
1978	The Archdeacon of Cleveland
	(The Ven. J. Southgate)
1979	The Revd. C. Blount
1980	The Revd. P. Wordsworth
1981	The Revd. A. Greenhough
1982	The Archdeacon of York
	(The Ven. L. Stanbridge)
1983	The Revd. D. Lee
1985	The Revd. G. M. Bass
1986	The Asst Chief Constable of N. Yorks Police
	(Mr. P. Ryan)
1987	The Archbishop of York
	(Dr. J. Habgood)
1989	The Revd. R. Lewis
1990	The Revd. R. Brookes
1991	The Revd. K. Marshall
1992	The Revd. S. Stanley
1993	The Revd. A. Mann
1994	Des H. Reed
1995	The Revd. Margaret Cundiff
1996	The Bishop of Whitby
	(The Rt. Revd. Gordon Bates)
1997	The Revd. D. Johnson (provisional)

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Coxwold, 1989 from left to right:- Peter Gray, Revd. D. Johnson, Frank Bradley and the author's son, Neil Edward Grainger.



Coxwold, 1994. The author, Eddie Grainger, with service stalwart Arthur Rodgers of Romanby, Northallerton, with Revd. D. Johnson.



Coxwold village after the service, viewed from the lychgate.



Coxwold, 1949. Teesside D.A. member Alf. T. Rogers.

