

6. The Parish Centre

On the same site that had previously been used for the St Matthew's Sunday School and Day School, the present **Rastrick Parish Centre** was built in 1971.

The building of the Parish Centre had been talked about for a number of years before the 1970 Joint Sharing Agreement between the Parish Church of St Matthew, Rastrick and the Methodist Church which formerly worshipped in Crowtrees Lane (see Local Ecumenical Partnership below).

To quote the Brighouse Echo – *'Anyone who knew the old buildings and the state they were in knew they would not have lasted much longer, and it was with joy and relief that it was learned some time ago that a grant of £15,000 had been made available towards the cost of the new building. This allocation was made by the Diocese out of the Church Commissioners Grant because the Parish of Rastrick, St. Matthew just qualified as a new development area due to the amount of new housing in the parish.'* Again, quoting from the Echo: *'It was while the new building was being talked about that the Methodist Church came to share the use of the Parish Church and after the signing of the Sharing Agreement the Methodist people felt they ought to have some tangible share in the work of the rebuilding of the Parish Centre. Various monies were raised by the Methodist congregation, some by direct giving, some by proceeds of sale of property and some came in the form of grants from other sources within Methodism.'*

The main contractors for the new Parish Centre were P.M. Cooper (Builders), Ltd of Ravensthorpe. Readymix concrete was supplied by Readymix – Huddersfield Ltd and concrete pumping was by Mobile Concrete Pumps Ltd also of Huddersfield. Steelwork was designed, fabricated and erected by Henry Brook & Co Ltd of Huddersfield. Central Heating installation was by C. Cooper and Sons Ltd of Elland and Electrical Installation was by G.W. Henry Ltd of Brighouse.

Charles Squire recalls that during the construction of the foundations of the new building, a mine shaft was exposed on the site. Stone mining has been common in this area of Rastrick for many centuries, with the nearest recorded pits being located at Holly Bank just north of the new housing area know as 'The Orchards'.¹

The building, which cost around £20,000, was financed jointly through grants of 75% of the cost from the Wakefield Diocesan Board of Finance (on behalf of St Matthew's Parish) and 25% of the cost from the Trustees of Crowtrees Methodist Church. It was the first one erected in this area to be jointly financed by the Anglican and Methodist Churches. Control of the building was exercised equally by the Anglicans and the Methodists, under the terms of the Sharing Agreement of 5th August 1971 for the Parish Centre.

Rastrick Parish Centre was dedicated and opened on Saturday the 8th May 1971 by the then Lord Bishop of Wakefield the Right Revd Eric Treacy M.B.E., L.L.D. and the Chairman of the West Yorkshire Methodist District the Revd Thomas M. Morrow M.A.

Ten years later in 1981, the building was extended at the west end on the ground floor using legacy money.

¹ Conversation with Charles S. 9 February 2016

In 2004 the kitchen was re-fitted and a toilet for disabled users was built. The roof covering was replaced during the summer of 2008, when it was so hot that the work had to be done during the night! Three-quarters of the cost of the work (around £20,000) came from grants from local organisations.



The Parish Centre with New Roof in August 2008

In 2011 the original central heating system – external boiler and radiators, was replaced by an internal boiler feeding a zoned system of new radiators. The contractor for the work was Clifford Cooper & Sons of Elland. The work was carried out during the school holidays in August to minimise disruption to Parish Centre users.

During 2011 and 2012 the boundary walls and paths outside the Parish Centre were plagued with thefts of stone. The perpetrators were never traced, although on more than one occasion the stone slabs were found by members of St Matthew's before the thieves had the opportunity to remove them completely!

In August 2012 it was noticed that an elm tree had grown up behind a temporary storage hut in the northeast corner of the parish centre land. The tree was pushing over the retaining wall on the east side adjoining the premises on Church Street occupied by Mr Anderson, Dental Surgeon. The ECC resolved to take down the tree and the upper part of the wall and rebuild the wall to the vertical. This tree work was duly completed in September by Mr Neil Moses, Tree Surgeon and the wall in November by Mr Handley, builder. The retaining wall some 3m high on the north side on the Parish centre land in the NE corner was found to be bulged by the same tree roots. This wall is currently being monitored for any further movement.

During 2013 the Parish Centre windows were replaced with new double-glazed upvc units by Anglian Windows, thanks to the fund-raising efforts of the Parish Centre

Manager Iain Bedson. Donations towards the project have been received from Rastrick Big Local, St Matthew's Theatrical Society, Brighouse Rotary Club and various individuals totalling £3,275. In July 2013 £4,800 had been spent on the project which was about 50% complete. The project was completed in 2018.

The Parish Centre is now administered by the Anglican and Methodist Church of St Matthew Rastrick as part of the Local Ecumenical Partnership.

Stored in the Parish Centre is a Wall Clock in varnished case, with supporting plaque, which came from Messrs. Walshaw Drake at Rosemary Dye Works, Rastrick. The dye works was situated on Rosemary Lane, off Rastrick Common. Machinery in the works was taken out in 1987/88 and transferred to Bulmer & Lumb in Buttershaw, Bradford. The mill was demolished in 1988, and the land is now used for housing.



The Wall Clock from Walshaw Drake with Brass Plaque

See Imperial War Museum web site www.iwm.org.uk/memorials/item/memorial/2752 for details of inscription and other information relating to the clock.

The Inscription reads:

WALSHAW DRAKE AND CO LTD/ 1939 WORLD WAR 2 1945/ THIS CLOCK AND CABINET IS DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY/ OF ERIC BANKS, JAMES E. PENDLETON, DAVID H. WALSHAW, JOHN E. WARREN WHO DIED ON ACTIVE SERVICE/ ALSO IN HONOUR OF THE MEN AND WOMEN FROM THIS FIRM/ WHO SERVED IN H.M. FORCES



Cavity Wall insulation was installed in the Parish Centre in August 2024 by Insulation Direct Ltd of Normanton at a cost of £3,052.80. The insulation to the north wall was



installed from the stage side i.e. internally because of the difficult external access.
Solar Panels installation on Parish Centre Roof September 2024

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In September 2024 Solar Panels with iBoost (to heat the hot water supply), and a hybrid inverter with 5kWh Battery storage for generated electricity were installed in the Parish Centre by Green View Projects of Elland at a cost of £10,264.00.

Additional electrical work in the form of light sensors was installed by Andrew Greenwood Electrical at a cost of £398.40 incl. VAT to reduce electricity consumption.

All the above works were funded by a grant from Rastrick Big Local of £15,064.

During 2025, the curtain winding system on the stage was upgraded by Joels at a cost of £3,161, and the wooden floor in the main hall was sanded and polished by Paul Vickers at a cost of £2,900. Convector heaters were also replaced by Coopers of Elland at a cost of £2,708 plus VAT. Also, during 2025, the concrete path to the front door was surfaced with bituminous material by D.Haigh & Co at a cost of £642.