

Sowerby, Sessay and the White Horse Parishes

St Oswald, Sowerby (Church website www.stoswaldsowerby.org.uk)

Sowerby is a vibrant village (population 4200) attached to the market town of Thirsk. Within the parish there are two primary schools and Thirsk School & Sixth Form College, as well as Thirsk Farmers' Auction Mart, Thirsk Garden Centre, a community-run cinema, supermarkets and many other amenities. There is significant potential for growing mission in 'Sowerby Gateway' – a large, growing development of housing, including extra-care apartments, a new supermarket and Premier Inn and – in the fullness of time – a new primary school, to be established by Elevate Multi-Academy Trust in which the Diocese of York is a partner.

During 2016 St Oswald's had 16 baptisms, 7 weddings and 23 funerals. There were 134 people on the electoral roll. Average Sunday attendance was 67 adults and 8 children. This figure does not include special services, where attendance is often much higher.

The congregation is spread across the age range, and children and young people are particularly welcome. We employ a part-time Children & Young People's Worker and activities for children and families include Messy Church, Kids' Club, Pram Service, Youth Groups and annual Holiday Club. We have a strong link with Sowerby Community Primary School and Open the Book assemblies are held there (and at Sessay CE Primary School) four times a term. We have a close connection with Sowerby Methodist Church and many of our children's activities are run jointly. St Oswald's is also an active member of Churches Together in Thirsk & District.



There is a church choir and the church is home to Sowerby Music, a well-established music society. Home groups for prayer, study and fellowship are held regularly throughout the year. We have links with CMS, Jigsaw Kids Ministries in the Philippines, The Clock and several other charities/mission organisations.

Our 2* church building is medieval with many 19th century additions. We have a well-used Parochial Hall near the church and an open churchyard. Social and fundraising events for church members and the local community are held throughout the year.

Worship is a mixture of Common Worship and BCP, with Common Worship always used at the 10.30am Sunday service. A variety of music is used, including organ, CDs and music group.

Churchwardens: John Kennedy and David Tucker

St Cuthbert, Sessay (Village website: www.sessay.org)

The parish of Sessay is made up of the two villages of Sessay and Hutton Sessay, together with two associated hamlets.

The population of the parish is just under 400. 25% are older people, but there are also families with children. The Church is situated at one end of Sessay village, next to the C of E Primary School; both were designed by William Butterfield and built at the same time. Some of the houses in Sessay were also designed by Butterfield. The school's pupils come mostly from the surrounding villages. Church and School enjoy a good relationship: three PCC members are also school governors. 'Open the Book' assemblies take place four times a term and school services and assemblies are regularly held in Church.



Sessay and Hutton Sessay are lively villages with a wonderful community spirit. There is a Sports & Social Club in Sessay, with a variety of community activities and sports (including cricket and bowls). Annually the Church holds an Open Gardens Day which is very well supported by all members of the community. There is also a monthly Coffee Morning, and an annual Lent Lunch and Harvest Supper.

The Electoral Roll in 2016 was 37 and the average congregation was 17. Attendance is often much higher for special services and many parishioners consider the Church to be an important part of village life. There are normally two Communion services and two Morning Prayer services each month. All services are Common Worship.

Churchwardens: Anne Wady and Pat Bee

The White Horse Parishes (United Benefice of Thirkleby with Kilburn & Bagby)

All Saints, Thirkleby (Church website www.allsaintsthirkleby.org.uk)

All Saints is a small but active rural church, with committed members whose vision is for church to serve and be at the heart of the village community. Thirkleby parish has almost 300 people, the majority living in either Great Thirkleby or Little Thirkleby. There are some outlying farms and hamlets.

We have a Parish Hall belonging to the church, where both church and village events take place. There is a monthly pop-up pub in the Hall. Both villages are very friendly.



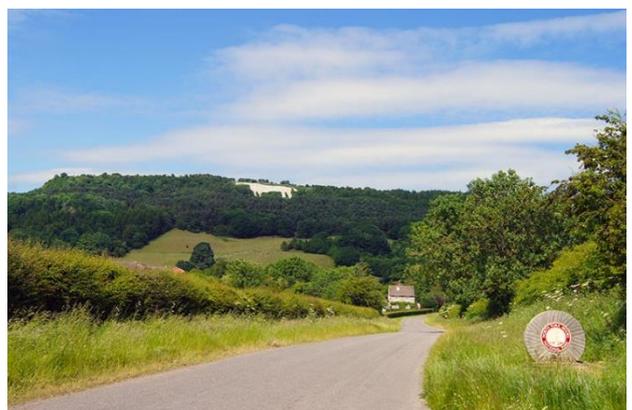
Over the past ten years, in response to a diocesan course about using buildings to enhance worship, church members have made a number of improvements to the church, including a lighting upgrade, installation of a sound system, organ restoration, addition of toilet and kitchen facilities, restoration of tower windows, augmentation of the bells and installation of lights on the church drive. We feel an important part of our mission is to make the church welcoming and accessible to the whole community and welcome its use by parishioners.

There is usually a service of Holy Communion on the second Sunday of each month (joint with Kilburn and Bagby) and a service of Morning Praise on the fourth Sunday of each month. All services are Common Worship and are supported by a small and enthusiastic choir.

Churchwarden: Doug Gillanders

St Mary, Kilburn

Sitting under the famous 'White Horse', the parish is also well-known as the home of woodcarver Robert Thompson, the 'Mouseman of Kilburn'. It comprises four settlements: Kilburn, High Kilburn, Oldstead and Hambleton. The total population is nearly 300, of whom 31 are on the church electoral roll.





The church, which stands in the village and is surrounded by an open churchyard, dates from 1120 and is in very good repair. Maximum capacity is about 100.

The parish forms a united benefice with two adjacent parishes, Bagby and Thirkleby. The united benefice is known as the White Horse Parishes.

There is usually a service of Holy Communion on the third Sunday of each month (joint with Thirkleby and Bagby) and a service of Morning Prayer on the

fourth Sunday of every other month (joint with Bagby). Services alternate between Common Worship and BCP. Congregations at Sunday services normally average about 23.

The tradition of the church is central. There are usually a few occasional offices each year.

Amenities within the parish include pubs in Kilburn and Oldstead and a village hall in Kilburn. Children attend school in local villages, or in Thirsk or Easingwold. Kilburn has a strong sense of community. The annual Kilburn Feast (www.kilburnfeast.uk) in July brings villagers and visitors together and raises a large amount for local charities, including the church.

Churchwardens: Patrick Gibson and Ali Miles

St Mary, Bagby

Bagby is a small village 3 miles from Thirsk, rising above the A19 towards Sutton Bank. The parish stretches into the hamlets of Balk and Islebeck, and even into the business parks on the edge of Thirsk. The village is made up of some 220 houses with a population of around 560, with a sixth of these less than 18 years of age.



St Mary's has a small but committed congregation, who have recognised that they no longer have the resources to run two significant buildings. They are seeking to sell their church hall, and hope to develop the church building as a community resource. Several social and fundraising events are held each year and church members have a desire to reach out into their community, recognising there is scope for growth and development.

There is usually a service of Holy Communion on the first Sunday of each month (joint with Kilburn and Thirkleby) and a service of Morning Praise on the fourth Sunday of every other month (joint with Kilburn). Services alternate between CW and BCP. Average Sunday attendance in 2016 was 16 adults. There were 34 on the electoral roll.

Traditionally of middle of the road churchmanship, St Mary's has welcomed clergy from all ends of the ministry spectrum and been equally comfortable with a wide range of worship styles. We are currently enjoying a monthly mid-week service of prayer and worship using a variety of contemporary resources.

Churchwardens: Robin Clough and Amanda Dowson