

Ann Walker's place of burial.

There are written records together with the plaque, currently stored in the tower, indicating that Ann Walker was buried in 1854 *underneath the pulpit*. Burial under a pulpit is very rare for practical reasons. The pulpit itself would need to be removed before the vault could be dug and then replaced. So why was Ann buried in this way? She probably was not but she **is** there. When she was buried, with her spinster aunts Mary and Ann, there was unlikely to have been a pulpit on the north side of the aisle, probably just another pew.

Ann Walker could not be buried with her parents in their family plot just outside the old church as by then this grave was full. When it was first used for John and Mary Walker's 3-week-old baby William Walker in 1798 his parents lived at Cliffe Hill. At the time Crow Nest mansion was occupied by older brother, William Walker. But when bachelor William Walker died in 1809 John, Mary and family moved to Crow Nest. Ann's 15-year-old sister died in 1815 at Crow Nest and was buried with her baby brother. Then in 1823 both their parents joined them. Another teenager, their granddaughter Mary Sutherland, the daughter of Ann's sister Elizabeth and her husband George Mackay Sutherland was the last occupant of the family plot which was then declared full.

In the early 1860s, a few years after her death, her nephew Evan Charles Sutherland Walker paid for a number of improvements to the church. Amongst these were two pulpits and the East window. He also paid for the plaque which commemorates not just Ann but also her nephews, his brothers.

So a possible scenario would have been:- Ann is buried and a brass plate, similar to those of her aunts and others buried under the church, was mounted on a pew end; several years later her nephew improves the interior and a small pulpit is placed over the vault where a pew had been and the eastern most window on the north side replaced by a blank wall and the plaque installed as close to the burial place as possible.

The photograph to the right shows the interior of the church in 1960 before it was damaged and vandalised. The two pulpits can be seen. The smaller one on the left is the one presumed to be over Ann's vault. You can also see the stained-glass East window.



In the photograph on the left, taken just before the church was demolished in the 1970s, the Ann Walker memorial plaque can be seen in the blind window on the left near the position of the ringed pulpit.



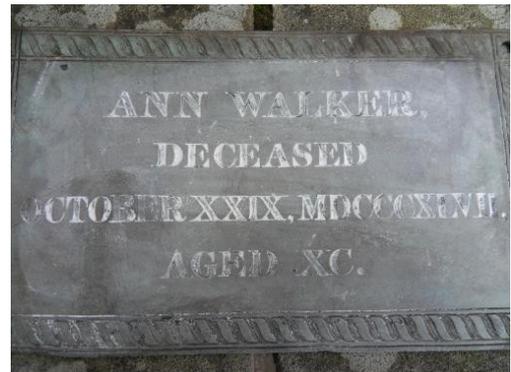
In this rare colour photograph of the old church taken just before it was demolished you can see the blanked-out window occupied by Ann Walker's brass plaque at the bottom on the left.

The site of her parents' ledger stone is just out of shot to the left of the East window.

The contract for the demolition specified that the vaults within the church were to be protected. A recent archaeological survey showed that the whole of the footprint of the church has a uniform covering suggesting that a thick layer of sand or similar material was laid prior to the demolition.

The spinster Walker aunts

Aunt Ann Walker, the elder, was buried within the church in 1847 as was another of Ann Walker's spinster aunts, Mary Walker in 1822. A brass plate commemorating Aunt Ann Walker's death at the age of 90 was attached to the end of a pew. It is now kept in the new church. Aunt Mary Walker was "buried in a vault" in the church – almost certainly the same one as the two Anns were later buried in – another brass plaque is also stored in the current church.



* West Yorkshire Kirklees Archive. Steve Crabtree & Diane Halford.