

## THE LEVER CHAPEL

In the Prestwich Parish Review there appears the following interesting article.

“How many of our parishioners who sit in the Lever Chapel, or attend the Parish Church know anything of the history of the family from which this part of the church takes its name?”

It was originally the St. Margaret's Chantry Chapel founded and endowed by the Langley family as a place where Requiem Mass could be said for the repose of the sons of the family. But in 1627 a branch of the Lever family acquired the Alkrington estates of the Langleys, and with them their interest in the Lever Chapel. Sir Ashton Lever rebuilt the chapel in 1731 as the date-stone in the wall indicates.

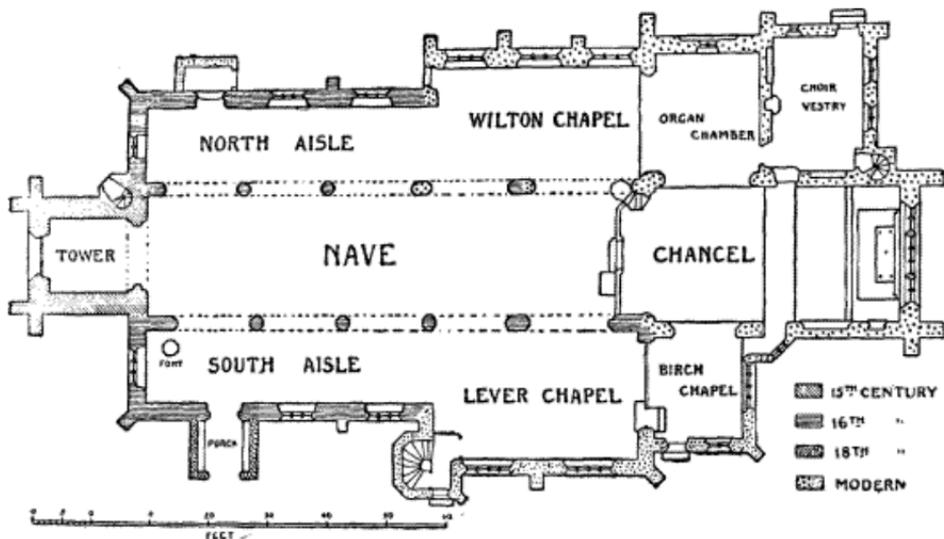
The chapel was again rebuilt in 1874 by the executors of James Lees Esq; Alkrington, who had bought the Lever estates. It retains its gallery, which has a front of poor early 19th-century gothic paneling, and is lit by two four-light windows on the south side. There is a door with a semi-octagonal porch and gallery staircase in the south-west corner, an addition to the plan of the chapel in its rebuilding of 1874.

It is only within recent years that the church bought the private rights in this chapel from the descendents of the Lees at a cost of £1,000.



**Prestwich Church 1850**

The Former Chantry Chapels: The Lever Chapel on the South side was originally a chantry chapel containing an altar dedicated to St Margaret. It was a Langley foundation and has been twice re-built, first in 1731 and again in 1874 by Canon Birch. A plaque commemorating this is set on the South wall. The Wilton Chapel on the North side was originally known as 'Hyltons Chapel'. It is now a war memorial shrine covering the two great wars of 1914-1918 and 1939 - 1945.



The Lever chapel, the floor of which is a foot above that of the nave, occupies a position on the south side similar to that of the Wilton chapel on the north, but has a lean-to roof, plastered between the spars.

The legend related in the Sir Ashton Lever chapter tells of him building Alkrington Cottage so he could overlook the grounds where Lady Mary would walk. The name of Alkrington Cottage appears on one of the grave slabs now forming the pavement of the Lever Chapel.