

## Rev John Barker

The board by the main entrance in the church lists the priests in Baslow over the last 500 years. Rev John Barker MA born 1761 was incumbent at St Anne's from 1794 to 1824. Local records show that he was responsible for building the present vicarage in 1797: much of the cost was raised by subscription, leaving him to pay £193 out of the total of £490

I have now discovered more about him. He came from Edensor where the Barkers had been the leading family since the 1600s living in a large house in Jap Lane: it has since been rebuilt and is now called the Old Vicarage. His grandfather William b1683 and his uncle Alexander b1709 were both Stewards to the Duke of Devonshire. His father William b1713 was chaplain to the Duke of Devonshire. They were a wealthy family with good connections: their business interests included lead smelting which was very profitable at the time. John the youngest son took holy orders and like his father became Chaplain to the Duke of Devonshire. Later when the Incumbency of Baslow became vacant the Duke appointed him to the post.

That is the background to a story which took place about 1820. John Barker was taking Matins one Sunday morning. As expected his family were present including his five sons including Auriol, Francis and Frederick, all tall good looking lads. Also in the congregation was the Duke of Devonshire and with him the Duke of York, brother to the king and head of the army: He was perhaps better known to generations of children as the Grand Old Duke of York. Anyway after the service the Duke of York asked his host who these lads were. "They are my Chaplain's sons" the Duke of Devonshire replied. They ought to be in the army replied His Royal Highness – and as good as his word sent them a commission on his return to London.

The eldest son, Anthony Auriol was then at Cambridge and destined for the church so the Commission went to Henry Francis, the second son who had just left Repton. He accepted and was immediately posted to India where he was gazetted lieutenant on his arrival, omitting the usual stage of being an ensign. He served 15 years in the army before retiring sick. He took holy orders but died soon after.

Rev John Barker died in 1824 to be followed by his son Anthony Auriol, who was later responsible for the major restoration of the church in 1853. He died the next year and his brother Frederick replaced him. The latter was a serious evangelical with a history of missionary work. He stayed in Baslow only a few months before being appointed Metropolitan in Sydney Australia, the senior cleric in Australia.

Quite a family.

*The story, passed down within the family, is taken from "Notes of the history of the family of Barker of Edensor" by Capt. Roland Auriol Barker, Rev John Barker's great grandson.*

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