

*ROBERT THOMPSON* was born in 1876. He was apprenticed as an engineer at Cleckheaton, and at 20 he joined his father's general woodworking business. Robert was influenced by Bromflet's carving, which he saw at Ripon as he travelled to and from Cleckheaton, and before 1910 he was undertaking church work. One day he was working with another carver, Charlie Barker, who murmured something about being "as poor as church mice". Robert promptly carved one; he believed this was in about 1919. Until 1930 all mice had front paws but these were left off after that because they tended to split. Each carver had his own style, and usually the craftsman producing an article carved his own mouse. Some mice are incised. Robert Thomson died in 1955, but the work goes on. The easiest ones to see are those on the Bishop's Throne, the nave altar rails, the high altar rails, the sanctuary furnishings, in St Thomas's Chapel (presently used as a clergy vestry and not therefore accessible) and, on Sundays, the quire hymn boards.

The Bishop's Throne was originally two pieces of furniture. The throne itself was a memorial to Bishop Moseley, and the kneeling desk was a memorial to Bishop Hoskyns. The two parts were joined in 1942, and in 1985, when Bishop Whinney arrived, they were altered by Ronald Sims to fit the space behind the high altar.