

Earby Through 60 Years

SCHOOL-BOARD ELECTION RECALLED

Thornton Rector's Retort to Opponent

(by JOHN HARTLEY)

Arising out of the last article , a friend of mine has reminded me of an interesting incident relating to the late Mr. Parker Greenwood , of Glen Farm.

It occurred during a keenly contested School Board election when "Parker" and the Rev. L.B. Morris , the rector of the parish , were keen contestants. "Parker" attended the meeting in the old Victoria Institute , and heckled the rector upon a matter in which he was particularly interested. The replies he got to his questions did not satisfy him , and as he persisted in "holding the floor," Mr. Morris reminded him , in good humoured fashion , of an old Earby saying : "That there was only a quart of sense in Earby and the "Dicks" had three gills on't." The retort caused much merriment , as the "Dicks" were one of the most numerous and well known of old Earby families , and "Parker's" mother was a member of that clan.

There is no doubt that "Parker" enjoyed these verbal duels with the rector , and that he was "worthy of his steel," for while they differed in many matters affecting politics and local government , "Parker" held the rector in high esteem. "Parker" was "getting on a bit" when he got married , and he went to see Mr. Morris before the event took place to make sure that he did the job himself. He wanted a "reight" man , and not a curate!

A few days ago I had a chat with Mr. John Edmondson , Skipton Road , whose father and grandfather were former occupiers of the White Lion Inn and the adjoining farm. He kindly offered to give me more interesting particulars of old Earby people and customs , which go back a little more than sixty years.

Veritable Swamp

About a century ago the low-lying ground between Foulridge and Earby was a veritable swamp for the greater portion of the year , and the part bordering on Salterforth was known as "Salterforth Lake." A drainage board was appointed by Government Commissioners and the meetings of the board were held in the vestry of Thornton-in-Craven Parish Church. Four large drains were made , called Kelbrook Bottoms Drain , Earby Holmes Drain , Stone Trough Drain and Lancashire Gill Drain. The reclaimed land on each side of the main stream was allotted to the farms on the neighbouring hillsides. From Sough Bridge to Earby , on the east side , one field was attached to Tunstead Farm , and the next field to Moor Hall Farm. Through this field , and a small meadow over the beck , the Moor Hall estate had a right of way on to the Colne and Skipton highway.

The second field from the Earby end was formerly in two parts , one of which belonged to the White Lion Farm , and the other part of John o' Dicks Farm , which was scattered around the village. The first field at the bottom of Langroyd Lane belonged to Waddington Fold Farm , and was called "Wadd Holme." The Kelbrook portion was known as Kelbrook Bottoms , and the Earby section as Earby Holmes. The fields on the west side of the beck were principally allocated to White House Farm.

The White Lion Farm at one time comprised 110 acres , and extended up the Banks to the

edge of Coolham Farm.

When the Bracewells came from Thornton Hall to Green End they acquired many of the Earby farms from Sir John Kaye , who was the lord of the manor. Many alterations were carried out , some old farmhouses were pulled down , and some farms , or portions of them , were joined to others.

"Nicky's Farm"

When the Edmondsons , who occupied the White Lion estate , had their farm lands restricted , they took over Cowgill's Farm , the farm buildings being situated at the far end of Water Street , the main thoroughfare in the old part of the village. This farm previously got its name from the people who occupied it , and before the Cowgill family were the tenants it was known as "Nicky's Farm." "Nicky's" farmhouse used to occupy the land where Selbourne Terrace now stands. The term "Nicky," which was applied to one branch of the Wilkinson clan , was not a proper name , and it is due to them to note that they were highly esteemed , and many of them have risen to distinction in various walks of life.

The names of the Wilkinson families used to be a real puzzle , and at one time there were at least a dozen John Wilkinsons living in Earby , each of whom had a "nickname" given to them for purposes of distinction. Some of them are well remembered , including John o'Dick's , John o'Nicky's , John o'Peggy's , John o'Phyllis's, John o'Bett's , Jack o Bessie's , Young Jack o'Bessie's , Jack o'Lucy's and Quaat John.

A peculiar feature about the Dicks family was that John o' Dick's had twelve children but his brother "Joa" had none. When "Joa" wanted a farmer's man he used to take one of his brother's lads when they were old enough to work. Thus it came about that some of John's children were called after their father and some after his brother. The writer remembers "Bill o' Joa o' Dicks" keeping a grocers shop just below Cowgill's farm, and his brother, "Hartley o' John o' Dicks," working the blacksmith's shop on the opposite side of the beck. Old Dr. Roberts, of Barnoldswick, the parish doctor, had "Bill o' Joa o' Dick's" shop for his calling place on his periodic visits.

There used to be a good story told of a lad who was sent on an errand to James Brown's corner shop a little further down the road. The lad burst into the shop exclaiming "A' want a pound o' butter." "If what ?"- asked Miss Lizzie Brown, evidently bent on teaching the lad some manners. "If a' can't get it here," was his reply "A've to goa to Bill o' Joa o' Dick's"

The Smiths At Coolham

Mr.Edmondson remembered "Jim o'Jam's" family living at Coolham Farm. There was an elder brother called Michael, who looked after the farm mainly.At hay time they borrowed a horse from the White Lion Farm. Eventually they bought one, and Michael was highly proud as he drove the horse and cart up the steep Stoneybank Road. The horse, evidently, was unused to toiling up hill, and it "stalled." Do what he could Michael couldn't make the horse start again, much to the delight of the men in Stoneybank Quarry. So Michael addressed the horse in the following terms : "Na' tha'rt a bright 'un, coming to't Coolham for a bit o' haytime an' stalling wi' an empty cart!"

There was another brother named Jack, who was accustomed to roam about the hillside with a gun. Getting over a stile one day he stumbled : the gun exploded in his face and blinded him. His son "Jim o' Jack's," is still living in Stoneybank Road.

The Shuttleworth Family

The Shuttleworths, one of the most numerous and well known clans of farmers, had their origin at Moor Hall. Two of them settled at Kelbrook; Tom lived on one side of the beck, and James on the other side. James married a sister of Abraham and Sam Sunderland, who succeeded them at Moor Hall. James had three sons, Tom, Bill and Jack. Two of Tom Shuttleworth's sons, Jim and Bob, came to live at the Thornton Hall Farm when they were quite young. Jim was one of the best known members of the Shuttleworth stock, and served the Thornton parish as local guardian and representative on the district council for a long period. Before the opening of the Midland Railway in 1848 Bob used a donkey with panniers to convey the milk to North Holme.

Another of old James Shuttleworth's sons, Bill, settled at North Holme, Earby, and the family built the substantial farm buildings and dwelling-house. The same farm is still in the family, Mr Emanuel Shuttleworth and his son being in charge.

The Kelbrook James Shuttleworth had a son called Jack, and his daughter Ann, was married to her cousin, Charles Shuttleworth. Charlie, as he was generally known, took the Grange Farm, and followed with a term as landlord at the Punch Bowl Inn. In 1896 he started manufacturing at the Victoria Mill, and he was the first chairman of the Earby Manufacturers Association. The business is now carried on by his sons, George and Edgar. George had a good term of service on the Earby Urban District Council. He is also the chairman of the directors of the Earby Manufacturing Co., Ltd.

Another son of Jack Shuttleworth's, William, went to Southfields, between Thornton and Marton, and at one time he and his brother, Bolton, occupied Thornton Hall.

The Edmondsons

This well known family had their origin at Tunstead, but Richard, the grandfather of Mr. John Edmondson, moved to the little cluster of farms and cottages known as "Higher Stone Trough," on the old road from Kelbrook to Foulridge. They had the first farm, nearest Kelbrook, and from this place they moved to Earby, to the White Lion Inn and farm adjoining. His wife was a sturdy, independent character, and she saw to the management of the village inn. She was known to every one as "Owd Mary," and she was often appealed to settle an argument. On one occasion a knife was brought to her, and she was asked to adjudicate as to what kind of material the handle was made of - none of them could tell.

"That's easy to tell," replied Mary; "It's wood or summat!"

But woe betide anyone who tried to take a "rise" out of her. Once, only once, she was brought before the magistrates at Skipton, and charged by the Inland Revenue officer with using a pint pot which was not up to the standard in size. Now this pot belonged to one of the farm servants, but the officer would not listen to any explanations. The chairman of the bench said to "Owd Mary" - "Mrs. Edmondson, are you accustomed to serve a pint of beer in this pot?" "How can I," she replied, "when you say it doesn't hold a pint?" Needless to say "Owd Mary" won the day.

Richard Edmondson had two sons, William and Richard. When the father died William resided with his mother, but Richard settled at Cowgarth, a good farm on the outskirts of the village. William was also a carrier to Colne and Skipton markets, and was one of the best known and punctual carriers on the roads. William Edmondson married Jane Wormwell, from Lane Head Farm, Laneshawbridge. She was the aunt of Jim and Harry Wormwell, two of the best known builders and quarry workers in Kelbrook and Earby. William Edmondson had two children who survived childhood, and in addition to the son John their was a daughter, Mary Ann, who married a Skipton businessman, Mr. Matthew Gaunt, who was associated with Mr. John Hogg, auctioneer and valuer.

Love at First Sight

John Edmondson was born on November 12th, 1858, and is now well advanced in his 80th year. He married a Thornton lady, Ann Brunskill, whose father, Hartley Brunskill, at one time lived at Malsis, near Glusburn, and later at Foulridge. Miss Brunskill was the first infant mistress at the Earby Wesleyan Day School. Mr. John Edmondson fondly related how he first saw Miss Brunskill in the village of Thornton as he was returning with his father with the carriers cart from Skipton. "I couldn't keep my eyes off her, and I fell 'head over heels' in love with her." She wore a frock made of Scotch plaid material with an open neck, and he avers, "I never saw such a beautiful picture in all my life."

Mr. Edmondson wound up the account of his recollections by referring to the hard times and the poverty of which he had heard the old folk tell. At one time his grandfather had a cow calved, and the cow had to be killed because the calf had two heads. The meat was snatched up eagerly by the poor people, as it could not be offered for sale, and one man from Harden came late, but he carried the head in a sack over the hill to his dwelling place. Handloom weavers often had long journeys, carrying their pieces to Colne, and even to Sutton near Crosshills.

The late Canon Morris appealed to the Charity Commissioners for help. Every house was visited, and a census taken of the inhabitants in need. In one instance, when the question was asked, "How many males and females?", the good woman of the house replied - "Nayther; we're all churchfolk." She wanted to make sure of receiving some help for her family.

Scenes Above the Clough

Amid their deprivations the people occasionally made merry, and one of the most notable occasions was "the opening of 'John o' Ned's 'en 'oil." He was a queer character this John o'Ned's, but usually a quiet, harmless sort of man. He lived at 't' Fiddling Clough,' which was rather like a hospital (a refuge), where anybody without a home of their own could find lodging. He took it into his head to build a new 'en 'oil (hen cote) on the edge of Wentworth Moor. above the clough, and he had a lot of chaff to take; but he astounded all his mates by telling them there was going to be an "oppening," and a "reight good do." He actually got the consent of the village brass band to come, and some sports of a very primitive nature were arranged. The band led a motley procession through the streets of Earby, and there was no lack of spectators, who followed in their train. Some of the processionists were on ponies and donkeys, some had their trouser linings turned out, and there were others who carried strings of dumplings, and other eatables. Up the Mill Brow they went, over the Brigstones, up the Dark Lane, until they halted in a field on the edge of the moor. While the eatables were being prepared the donkey and pony races took place, to the unrestrained merriment of the crowd, and more than one rider was thrown over the head of the unwilling beast. Among the riders were two men, known as Bill and Harry "Coventry," because they were mechanics who had come from the Midland town to set up machinery in the mill. Than there were two tailor brothers, "Priest" and "Needles" (Jack and Billy Briden).

Eating dry teacakes was a tame affair compared with what followed - eating hot dumplings from a greasy plate without knife and fork. Behind the 'en 'oil there was some rising ground, and the contestants stood behind the stone structure, and their plates rested on a stone ledge or shelf. The exhibition was in full view of the hilarious throng, and no modern forms of entertainment could provide such a "star turn."

In the fall of the evening dancing took place to the enlivening strains of the brass band, and actually at the close, someone struck up "Praise God from whom all blessings flow," because

it was the beginning of a new life for "John o' Ned's." "It was a day!" said my informant, Mr. Edmonson, and he was there to see!

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