

Earby Chronicles

Edition 38

AUTUMN 2005



TENTH ANNIVERSARY YEAR

QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

SOCIETY AIMS:

to raise awareness, foster an interest and facilitate research into the heritage of Earby & district including Thornton in Craven, Sough, Kelbrook, Harden, Hague and Salterforth.

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Earlier this year the committee thought it sensible to try and find out what members attitudes were to the way the society was run and if there were any improvements which could be adopted. To this end a questionnaire was circulated with the Chronicles news letter. It was realised that a good number of members are unable to attend meetings and therefore would not be able to answer or comment on some of the questions.

The results have now been collated and are presented below with the conclusions.

To use election terminology, "the turn out was low"! Only about on tenth of the membership returned the questionnaire which to a certain extent limits the usefulness of the results. However, thanks to those who replied.

The venue and the conduct of the meetings met with approval but the speaker and topic evaluation suggests that the old adage applies that "you can't please everyone all of the time". Interestingly there were no specific suggestions given for speakers or topics.

As far as outings that are arranged again the adage above applies, however there were several suggestions for trips but no general consensus.

It is pleasing to the committee that there seems to be a general approval on the way the committee functions but there was no immediate response to joining the committee or submitting agenda items.

It was also pleasing to see the general approval of the Chronicles news letter. The news letter content is of course dependent on contributions.

Recent talks & features

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£1.50

Members of
Society free

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As far as attending joint events with Barnoldswick History Society are concerned there was a fifty fifty split.

General comments included the request for an updated catalogue of the Society's extensive archive holdings. The committee is exploring this but will need help with the setting up of a computerised data base. Can anyone help?

There are no plans to publish the Thornton Parish Register transcripts but members can have access to the data which is on CD ROM using Microsoft Excel software.

In conclusion the Society is not doing too badly but the committee would like more input from members both with ideas and practical help with projects etc.

QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

	Good %	Fair %	Poor %	Comments
MEETINGS				
Venue	100	0	0	Room always too hot
Accoustics	78	11	11	
Format of meetings	100	0	0	
Speakers	64	36	0	
Topics	70	30	0	Widen scope
Trips	70	30	0	
COMMITTEE				
General Rating	100	0	0	
Comunications	100	0	0	
CHRONICLES				
Overall Rating	100	0	0	
Content	85	16	0	Too Earby focused - not much on Salterforth or Kelbrook. Include Family History Section
Format	92	8	0	
SKILLS OFFERED				
Typing	1			
Proof Reading	1			
Mini Bus Driving	1			
JOINT EVENTS WITH BARNOLDSWICK HISTORY SOCIETY				
		Yes %	No %	
Would you attend a one day seminar		50	50	
Seminar at Rolls Royce Social Club	50		50	

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Seminar at New Road Community Centre 60 40

General comments from questionnaire

Is there an update on archive holdings?

Are the Thornton Parish Register transcripts published?

Suggested Trips

Skipton Castle guided tour, Fountains Abbey, Bolton Abbey, Historical tour of a neighbouring town, Gawthorp Hall, Parcevall Hall, Harlow Carr Gardens, Houghton Tower

There was negligible response to joining the committee or submitting agenda items

EARBY CO-OP PART II

By Stephanie Carter

At their weekly Committee meetings between 1886 and 1888 resolutions approved the purchase of everyday items required for stock. Regular suppliers were Bateman's, Duckworth's (grocers) and H Dean & Co (drapers) all of Colne, and the Co-op Wholesalers in Manchester. Some orders were given to local people.

"That John Wilkinson go into Lothersdale to try to buy a pig"

"That we buy a barrel of grapes from Robt Nutter Earby."

"That we take Jno Wilkinson's butter a month on a trial"

"That Wm Hartley be empowered to see Wm Rushton's pig and arrange for buying"

"3 Indian meal Wm Bracewell Barlick"

"That we inform Isaac Bell of Otterburn to send 20lbs butter and a basket of eggs for this week only"

"That we take Thos Edmondson's dairy butter Thornton"

Other goods came from London, Liverpool, Selby and Skipton.

General household items obtained from drapers included blankets to sell at 12/- & 14/- (60p & 70p) a pair and calico shirting and towelling and "a dozen small wool shawls" from Dean & Co of Colne.

It was decided "to extend our present paraffin tank to hold another barrel and that Wm Hartley perform the task". Barrels of paraffin oil, snuffless dips, candlesticks, boxes of candles and Bryant and May Tiger Brand matches were ordered on a regular basis.

Black lead was bought in large quantities for the old fire ranges," Nitey's blacking",

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"Johnson's nickel silver black lead", "Baker's block black lead" as well as black lead brushes.

Washing day requisites featured regularly as stock items, "washing boards", "2 wringing machines at once", "that we sell wringing machines at 3/5 (17½p) each", "4 dollie tubs from Colne". Soda by the barrel or cask was available and starch "Colman's white and Crown blue and Critchley's starch". The amount and makes of soap purchased was quite amazing "that we get one 14lb box of honey soap", "soft soap", "Windsor soap", "Sunlight soap", "Lovelace's soap sold at 2lbs for 7½d", "3 cwt bar soaps", "Matchless soap", "carbolic soap", "Oakwell's laundry soap", "Pears soap", "Glover's dry soap".

Other household items in demand included "hearth rugs", "bed ticking", "frying pans", "iron candlesticks", "pocket knives", "picture hooks", "door mats of assorted sizes", "carpet binding", "mahogany polish", "tin boilers" and "½ dozen mouse traps from Phillips Colne". William Hartley was "to write to Manchester for illustrated catalogue of paraffin cooking stoves" and it was resolved "that we exhibit our new machine outside on fine days".

Footwear was also ordered for the appropriate department: "black cloth slippers" "Duggit slippers from Manchester", "men's carpet slippers", "small boots for children 2s, 3s, 4s" 910,15 & 20 p. Clogs were widely worn "clasp clogs various sizes from Willan Skipton", "a quantity of clogs be ordered of John Willan and 2 pairs of leather slippers". Boot protectors and shoe horns of various sizes were also available.

Medicines were also available at the store, and it was agreed "that licences for patent medicines be obtained at once if advisable". There are records of "lung healers", "quinine water", "senna leaves and camomile flowers", "Beechams pills", "10 patent medicines", "patent of medicines as selected".

Committee Meeting Sep 5/87
Chairman G. P. Hartley
Resolutions adopted
1st That the following goods be got for sale
Oak Park Dairy 2-14 lb tubs, coffee
Biscuits 2 tins Bateman Colne
½ doz. Mouse traps Phillips
2nd That we reduce matchless dips to
4s per lb. 3 lbs per lb to 11 per pack.
Signed G. P. Hartley

EXTRACT FROM EARBY CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY MINUTE BOOK SEPTEMBER 1887

HANDLOOMS TO HEIRLOOMS

The life of William Wright 1828 - 1904. A well-known Earby character of the nineteenth century known locally as 'Owd Bill Reet'.

By Squire Firth.

William Wright was born at Kelbrook one of six children to Richard and Nancy Wright and was christened at Thornton-in-Craven Parish Church 4th May 1828. The family lived in a cottage in the Dotcliffe area and according to early census returns all the family were in occupation as handloom weavers. There were five Wright families in Kelbrook at the time of the 1841 census, probably all related. William was the last in the family to marry although his sister Ellen never married and continued to live in the family house, along with her widowed sister Betty Brown.

At the age of 26 William married Margaret Bailey at Thornton-in-Craven on the 6th June 1853. Margaret, aged 21, was the eldest of four children to John and Jane Bailey of High Hill Top Earby. High Hill Top consisted of a farm house and adjoining cottages situated on the sky line to the west of Earby village and reached by Hill Top Lane from Earby Lane Ends. (This lane was the scene of the Earby murder of 1892.) The 1851 census states that Margaret and her parents were hand loom weavers and the younger members of the family were winders.

After they married William and Margaret lived with William's parents at Kelbrook where their first two children were born, Mary Jane in 1854 and Alfred in 1857. They moved to High Hill Top Earby and lived in a cottage next to Margaret's parents where two more children were born, Elizabeth Ellen in 1858 and Fredrick in 1860. William and his wife were now working as power loom weavers at Bracewell's Victoria Mill.

After living a few years at High Hill Top the family moved to Earby village i.e. the Water Street, Aspen Lane and Riley Street area of Earby where five more children were born: Sarah Ann in 1862, Grace in 1865, Clara in 1866, Kezia in 1868 and Eleanor in 1873 who completed the family of nine children. The 1871 census states that William and his four oldest children were occupied as cotton weavers, the youngest of these four, Fredrick, was only 12 years old.

In 1878 the family finally moved to Cell Croft or Schoolfields Earby. Schoolfields comprises three adjoining cottages the largest facing west towards the old railway line and the other two smaller cottages back to back with it and adjacent to a then well used footpath to Thornton-in-Craven. These properties were owned by Christopher Bracewell.

The Estate of William and Margaret Wright.

The first record of William Wright buying property is in December 1876 when he bought seven dwelling houses and shops on Water Street for £650 from Thos. Wilkinson Bread Baker of Skipton who had previously bought them from John Riley and Christopher Bracewell in 1852 for £18-18-6. Of these properties No's.13,15,17,19 and 21 faced Water Street. The other two were back to back houses with no's 17A and 19A facing Ireland

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Square (now Shaw Square) and reached by a walk way of stone flags protruding from the house wall high above the beck. This walkway was known as 'The Shelf' and it was in one of these cottages that an illegal memorial service was held for Moses Cudworth the Earby murderer. Five of these properties are now demolished leaving only No's 13 and 15, now converted into one cottage, next to the Newsagents on Water Street. These properties were in possession of the Wright Family for over 70 years and became known locally as the 'Wright Buildings' and are referred to as such in the 1901 census. (The remains of 'The Shelf' can still be seen from the bridge to Shaw Square.)

In 1878 William and family had moved to the largest of three adjoining cottages in Cell or Seal Croft known as Schoolfields belonging to Christopher Bracewell. At the Crown Hotel in Colne on Wednesday 23rd July 1879 there was an auction of freehold farms, building land and dwelling houses in Earby, 25 lots in all. Lot four was the three cottages in Schoolfields and a cottage on Riley Street which William bought for £515.

In 1887 William purchased for £125 an area of land of approximately 4,000 square yards called Pickhill. This triangular piece of land was bounded between Seal Bridge and School Bridge by the beck (called the new cut,) Seal Lane (now Victoria Road) and School Causeway (the road from Water Street to School Lane.) It was locally known as Doffer's Croft due to it's proximity to Victoria Mill and was also used as Earby's fairground. Part of this land is where the Bus Station, Old Fire-Station and Office blocks are today. This land, purchased from the Craven Bank, had previously been owned by the Bracewell family. The only building on this land at the time was the Conservative Club built 1877 although William was later to build the three houses and shops no's 4, 6, and 8 Victoria Road. Most of this land was to remain in possession of the Wright Family until purchased by Earby UDC in the 1950s.

William again bought land in 1897, this being an irregular area of land of 414 square yards which was part of a close called Ireland Meadow. It had belonged to Robert and James Shuttleworth of Thornton Hall and cost William £41-8-0, just 2 shillings a square yard or 10 pence in today's money. This land was adjacent and to the west of Ireland Square and across the beck from his properties on Water Street. He used it for the stabling of the horses used for deliveries from his grocery business.

The Children and Descendants of William and Margaret Wright

Mary Jane Wright (b.1854) eldest daughter of William and Margaret married George Henry Sephton in 1880. The Sephtons, an old Earby family, had been local tailors for generations. George's father William was one of the founders of Earby Brass Band c1840. Mary Jane had seven children of which three died in infancy. Of the four remaining children (all girls) only one, Margaret, married, but her husband Arthur Power, a local postman was killed by a train while crossing Earby Railway line. The other three girls, all spinsters, Henrietta, Minnie, and Cissie lived at Homefield and Moorfield Sough. None of the girls had any children so there are no descendants of this family.

Alfred Wright (b.1857) married Sarah Ann Patemen in 1876. She was born in Luton,

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Bedfordshire, the family had moved to Barnoldswick several years earlier. Alfred worked as a weaver all his life and was locally known as 'Keeper' Wright because he kept wicket for Earby Cricket Club for many years. They lived in the Red Lion Street area of Earby but later moved to Schoolfields after the death of his father in 1904. There were ten children in the family, eight girls and two boys. Many descendants of this family still live in the area including Earby History Society members Doreen Turner (nee Lunney) and Betty Smith (nee Dean). Granddaughters of Alfred include the well-known Earby 'Flower Sisters' Lily, Ivy, Violet and Daisy.

Elizabeth Ellen Wright (b.1858) married William Hartley in 1880. He was the nephew of Bracewell Hartley the Earby cotton manufacturer and was employed as a cotton mill tackler. They lived with Elizabeth Ellen's parents at Schoolfields after they married but later moved to Skipton Road Earby. They had one daughter Lily who married Walter Pollard from Skipton. The family eventually moved to the Morecambe area where their descendants live today.

Fredrick Wright (b.1860), locally known as 'Wed', married Selena Land of Knottingley who had moved to Thornton-in-Craven at the age of 11 as companion to her bereaved sister. They had eight children, four girls and four boys, although one girl died in infancy. The four boys all survived the great war of 1914-1918. Fredrick was working at the age of twelve as a cotton weaver, but took over his father's coal business in 1880. He also carried on the grocery business that his father had started at no.13 Water Street where Fredrick lived. On the death of his father, Fredrick inherited all the land where the bus station and council buildings are today. Descendants of this family are still in the area today, including Fredrick's grandson Derek Wright, and family, and the children of Derek's late sister Kathleen Richardson.

Sarah Ann Wright (b.1862) married John Waddington whose family had a grocery business on Water Street opposite where the Mount Zion Chapel used to be. They lived with her parents at Schoolfields but shortly after the birth of her first child, a daughter, she died at the age of 24. John Waddington moved with his daughter to live with his family and eventually took over the business. His daughter Annie married and moved out of the area. It is not known if there are any descendants of this family.

Grace Wright (b.1865) married Henry Speak who came from Thornton-in-Craven and was a mule spinner in a cotton mill. They started married life living on Water Street, where Henry started his own business as a house painter in 1889, and later moved to no. 8 Victoria Road a shop owned by Grace's father. They moved again c1905 to no. 33 Victoria Road where Speak's shop is still in business today, it must be the oldest continuous business in Earby. They had three children Eddy, Rennie, and Jennie, and Rennie's son Donald continues running the business currently (2005).

Clara Wright (b.1866) married Squire Firth in 1886. He had arrived in Earby from Bradford to play with Earby Brass Band. (See History of a Brass Band Family, Earby Chronicles Autumn edition 2004). They had 12 children and after living for a while at Skipton and Bradford finally moved back to Earby in 1904. They lived at nos.4 and 8 Victoria Road but

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later moved to Heather View. There are many descendants of this family in the area, one being the author of this article.

Kezia Wright (b.1868) married Henry Ellerker in 1895. He came from Ripon and was chemist and postmaster at no.5 Victoria Road Earby. They had been married only 18 months when Kezia died two weeks after giving birth to a daughter who also died a few months later. Henry Ellerker continued to live in Earby with a housekeeper and her daughter.

Eleanor Wright (b.1873) married Walter Pickles in 1886, he was a cotton overlooker by trade. They lived at Schoolfields when they first married but later moved to Skipton Road. They had one son Norman Walton Pickles. Descendants of this family live in the Manchester area.

William Wright started work at the age of 10 as a hand loom weaver. With no inherited property or wealth he had, by the time he was 60 years old, 14 houses and shops and a large area of land in the centre of Earby also a greengrocery and a coal merchants business. By today's standards he must have been a millionaire. He was able to leave all his children or their descendants property and land. It is of little wonder that local people said that 'he thought

owned
place'
drove
Earby
wife in
horse
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died 29th
1904 at
of 76
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William
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Thornton-in-Craven with his wife who died on the 18th February 1916 aged 85. At the time of William's death seven of his children were still living and he had over 40 grandchildren.

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Peter Dawson explains the Rover Company's operation at Grove Mill

This family photograph taken c.1903 at Schoolfields Earby shows William Wright (with beard), Margaret (with hat), and seven of their children with husbands or wives, also some of their 40 grandchildren.

Middle row 2nd L. Eleanor, 4th L. Grace, 6th L. Elizabeth, 7th L. Clara, 8th L. Fredrick

Front row 3rd L. Mary Jane, 4th L. William, 5th L. Margaret, 7th L. Alfred.

VE / VJ DAY COMMEMORATION

The weekend of June 19th and 20th this year was Earby's celebration of the 60th anniversary of Victory in Europe and Victory in Japan days. Earby Development Group, an offshoot of the Earby Parish Council, followed up a suggestion by Peter Dawson to put on a splendid occasion.



Two of the period vehicles on display at the Community Centre

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Events started the previous weekend when Peter Dawson led a couple of walks round Earby where he pointed out the places in the town associated with war time events. The walks began at Sough Bridge Mill which was requisitioned for the Rover Company to make parts for tanks.



Part of the Society's Exhibit



The Red Cross Exhibit



The Yanks are in Town



The Navy Was in Town As Well

The main event was held at New Road Community centre which was given a war time make over with displays from various individuals and groups depicting war time life. A mock up of the old Empire Cinema was showing war time news reels, the red cross put on a display of war time red cross memorabilia with members of the red cross dressed in war time uniforms. Refreshments were provided in a NAFFI canteen. Children from Springfield School had made gas mask cases and used "old" pennies and ration books to buy sweets. There was period musical entertainment from Brian Bird and his group and the Churches' choir.

Several army vehicles and classic cars with accompanying people in 1940s dress were

present and these later went in procession round the town laden with excited children.

Last but not least the society mounted an exhibition based on the World War II names on the local war memorials. Using the Commonwealth War Graves Commission web site and local newspapers for the war time period we collected as much information as we could on each person. Any further information would be gratefully appreciated.

Saturday was rounded off with a 1940s entertainment and dance and the whole event was concluded on the Sunday with a procession to the war memorial in Sough Park with a service of remembrance.

There were many memories triggered off that week end, some tinged with sadness and the unanimous opinion was that it was "a reet good weekend".

Thanks are due in abundance to the Earby Development Group for all the hard work they put in to make it such a success.

Barbara and David Males spent much time videoing the event and have kindly donated a copy video for the Society's archives, many thanks to them.

A FIND IN THE EAVES OF A HOUSE
by Ada Hannam

A couple of months ago, Brenda Harry went into Barnoldswick Library seeking information about an ancestor, John Crew, who used to have a photography and picture framing business at number 2 Sussex Street, Barnoldswick.

The librarian gave her what help she could and then suggested she got in touch with me (Ada Hannam) as I have been involved in family research for over 25 years.

When Brenda asked me for help I said that I had never heard of the Crew family but I did know Brian and Phyllis Hartley who now lived at 2 Sussex Street and that I would ask them if they had any information on the Crew family who had lived there before them.

What a surprise I got! In the eaves of their house they had found two boxes of death certificates, numbering over 2000. They dated from 1889 to 1926. Most of them were of Barnoldswick people with a number from Earby, Salterforth, Kelbrook, Colne and Nelson and a few deaths were in Skipton, principally at the Union Workhouse in Gargrave Road. There were quite a number of Coroners Certificates for sudden deaths and we have put a note of this under CC.

As well as death certificates there were invoices which gave a clue as to how they came to be in the eaves of 2 Sussex Street. John Crew was a Trustee for Ghyll Cemetery,

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Barnoldswick, and my theory is that a certificate had to be produced to John Crew for the opening of a grave and these certificates had been kept.

As we all know the mortality rate for children in those days was high but it brings it home when you see long lists of children who died having lived just an hour or so and many others who died under 5 years old. It was therefore a surprise to see that there were those who lived to be over 80 and even one at 96 years!

The information on the certificates gives the name of the deceased, their age, the date of the death registered and most give the address where they died. This information could be most useful to someone researching their family history as information for these years is some times hard to find.

Brenda Harry and I have transcribed the names and other information off the certificates and produced a computerised alphabetical list making it very easy to find people. I shall be giving copies of the list on floppy disc to the Lancashire County Record Office in Preston and a number of libraries and family history societies in the area.

Our thanks to Brian and Phyllis who allowed me to take the certificates home and put the information on to computer floppy disc. If anyone wants to get in touch with me (Ada Hannam) for help with their family research they are welcome to contact me at ada@hannam1937.freemove.co.uk

Editors Note : Ada has kindly donated a copy of the disc to the society.

VISIT TO EDEN CAMP WAR TIME MUSEUM

Our June outing was a joint trip with and organised by Barnoldswick History Society, the destination was Malton in North Yorkshire to visit the Eden Camp War Time Museum.

The museum covers every aspect of World II any there is too much to describes here, suffice it to say there is enough for young, old and not so old for the full day trip.

One of the highlights was the display of army cap badges which had been donated by Earby British Legion. When the Earby branch ceased as an independent branch of the Legion and amalgamated with Barnoldswick it was decided that the collection, which had been put together by local Earby people, should go to a good home and the Eden Camp Museum was pleased to accept it. They remounted the badges in a new cabinet and they make a good display.

Despite the delay on the journey due to a road closure caused by a traffic accident an enjoyable day was had.

VISIT TO THE PIONEER CO-OPERATIVE MUSEUM ROCHDALE

The Society's July evening trip was to the museum commemorating the Pioneer Co-operative movement which was founded in Rochdale in 1844. Coincidentally this news

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letter is running a series of articles by Stephanie Carter about the Earby Co-op.

The museum is housed in the very first Pioneer Co-operative shop building.

Our host, Malcolm, started with a talk giving some back ground to the co-op movement from its humble beginnings selling flour, butter, sugar and candles to the poor workers of Rochdale.

The movement was inspired by the principals of the social innovator Robert Owen who, when he took over the running of New Lanark Mills in Scotland, built housing and schools and generally looked after his work force. It was normal in those days was for the mill employers to keep control of their workers in many ways not least by paying their wages in tokens which could only be used at the company shop which more often than not sold inferior products which were usually adulterated as exemplified by adding sand to oat meal.

There were 28 original founding members who struggled against fierce opposition to get things off the ground. They were all working men so the organisation and running of the movement was originally done in their spare time, which was generally scarce in the era of long working days, and the shop initially opened at 8 o'clock in the evening. The co-operative was quick to catch on and many groups around the country and abroad were soon setting up. In 1869 the Co-operative Wholesale Society was formed to increase the purchasing power of the Societies.

The Co-op flourished for many years and nearly every town and village had a co-operative store of some sort. The first self service store ever (in the 1940s) was a co-op.

In the early 1960s the co-operative slid into a serious decline, resale price maintenance was abolished and intense competition came from a new breed of supermarkets. The co-ops were steeped in tradition and did not have the management skills to take up the challenge. Despite the strength of the movement not least through its banking and insurance arms, societies began to close or merge. The co-operative factories, bakeries and canneries were closed.

However despite these difficulties the co-op movement is still thriving in these modern times if not as extensively as it was.

Malcolm then showed us round the museum. The first floor is devoted to the co-operative movement and the founders of the Pioneers with many original documents from the early days and two display cabinets showing the 100th and 150th anniversary celebrations.

The upper floor is pure nostalgia with displays collected from many co-operative societies throughout the world.

The evening was rounded off with supper at the hostelry next door to the museum.

HOW JOHN O'NED'S BUILT HIS HENHOIL

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(Editors note - This piece seems to be based on an article by John Hartely in the Craven Herald 22nd July 1938, it has been somewhat embriodered but all the same it makes a good read. The original article, Earby Across 60 years, is on the society web site .)

There was a time, not all that long ago, before the days of the motor car, when the village of Earby in which this story is placed was quite different from what it is today, when the inhabitants lived undisturbed by modern innovations. Wonderful changes have come to pass since Earby was but a tiny sleepy little village, for then our forefathers had to make all their own amusements. The simple life of the people is by now forgotten; poverty such as there was has thankfully vanished ~ but something else has vanished too, which was common in those good old days, the ability to be merry in the simplest of ways.

This is a true story of just one of these good old days and it describes an event which took place in Earby in the mid 19th century; an event which even then was quite unique, its like will certainly never be seen again and the account of it must therefore take its place in our local history annals.

A new building was to be opened far up on the moor side and the preparations for this most important event were to be as elaborate as the occasion demanded. This opening ceremony was advertised far and wide by the grand title: "The Opening of John O'Ned's Henhoil". It had been built all alone in a sheltered hollow on the moor, above the farm of Fiddling Clough. This small hen hut was no different in its make-up from any similar farm outbuilding. It had one tiny window in its substantial stone walls and was roofed with flagstones, all of which materials had been quarried out of the local moorland. Built it was as a simple hen hut, and as such could not lay claim to any architectural beauty, nor even special design - it was just - well a hen hut. There was however something different to distinguish it from all the rest, for it had been built with pride and with such feeling that only the builders of cathedrals and abbeys could probably appreciate.

Its builder and architect was one, John O'Ned's -that's the only name he answered to, his proper name in truth was known, he hardly knew it himself (John Wilkinson). He was a weaver by trade, hard working, diligent, of an original turn of mind often expressed by his quaint sayings. His main interest however was in hen keeping and he was recognised as an authority on the subject. Those who knew him well (and there were few in Earby who didn't) were of the opinion that he had a "hen head" on. That is, what he didn't know about hens wasn't worth knowing.

John and his wife lived at Fiddling Clough, hidden away in its picturesque setting of trees. Two fields above, on the open Wentworth Moor, he kept his precious brood of hens, and it meant an early rise every weekday morning to give them their feed and then be off to work at the old mill by about 5 o'clock. It was on a Sunday that he was in his element, however, the worries of the weaving shed left behind in the valley, completely out of sight. No need then to worry about bad weft, or of having missed any "pieces" (of cloth) which wouldn't be paid for that week, but just to be happy and content among his clucking brood.

There was just one failing inherent in his nature however- he liked a sup - and his wife Martha, a keen member of the Baptist chapel, was for ever on to him to mend his ways. One particular Sunday morning, not feeling too well after a late night at the White Lion, John staggered downstairs and found his wife sobbing quietly to herself as she sat in the old rocking chair by the fire. "Nay lass" he said "give ower crying, a'll noan do it agean". "Aye, tha's said that afore", retorted Martha sharply, "a'll noan believe thee agean unless tha signs t'pledge." John appeared deep in thought as he got his pail of mash ready, his poor hens would be having a late feed this morning. An idea formed in his mind by the time he was ready for the short walk up the hillside and turning to Martha as he went out by the door he said "A know tha doesn't believe me, but there'll be no more drink from now on". Martha, who had heard it all before, however, said nothing, and ignored him.

John O'Ned's missed coming home for his dinner that day and got back rather later than usual for his tea; but all the same he had a look of elation on his face when he did finally make his appearance. As he was getting his tea he could not contain himself any longer, and said excitedly to his wife, "Weel lass I've bin building a new hen hoil today". Martha was visibly shocked by this announcement. "What! Today, on a Sunday? Nay, tha gets war and war, what iver tha'll do wi thi? Its bad enough not going to chapel." It was now John's turn to be upset " Na, stop a bit, its just like a woman to jump to conclusions. I thowt a lot abart what tha said this morning about signing t'pledge, but tha knows a'm no scholar. Onny road, I thowt abart what "Owd Billy" were preaching abart last time I went to chapel, abart two men ad made a pillar an heap o'stones as a sign of a bargain and of a covenant (Genesis 31 v 49), and so a'm building this new hen hoil as a sign of a pledge never to touch drink agean". "Owd Bily" was William Wilkinson, the first Baptist minister in Earby 1819-1845. If the old story teller is correct then John had not been to chapel in over 25 years!

So John O'Ned's sweated and toiled as long as daylight would allow, hewing out the stone he needed from his own private little quarry near at hand; and gradually the little building took shape. He had a lot of chaff to take from his mates when he talked of what he was doing and why, but as work progressed his determination strengthened to keep his promised pledge, and doggedly he laboured on until the last stone flag was in its desired place on the roof. Proudly he then announced to his wife's astonishment that the building was nearly ready for opening! "Opening a hen hoil" she exclaimed in disbelief, "a'never heard such a thing afore". "Maybe, but tha's heard on it now", was the reply. "Besides its moore nar a hen hoil. It stands for my promise, an 'a mean to keep it. So let's have a reight do. Av'e getten t'Earby brass band and a procession organised, so tha mun mek summat reight to eat". Daft as it sounded the idea was beginning to appeal to Martha. John would be hard put to break his word this time; so she said "All reight lad, its thi own brass, and a'd reither tha spent it on that than at Red Lion or Owd Mary's". (Owd Mary was Mrs Edmondson, whose family had held the tenancy of the White Lion for at least four generations. Her son William had a daughter Mary Ann, who married Matthew Gaunt, whose son continued as landlord).

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John had talked of nothing else at the mill but about building the hen hut, and his pals had no doubt put the idea of the grand opening into his head. The brass band had readily agreed to come for the fun of it, and everyone looked forward to that June Saturday afternoon, which fortunately turned out to be glorious.

News of the impending "do" had spread far and wide and a merry group set off early from Colne, walking their way to Earby to be there in time for the start of the procession. There was as much disorder as order when the time to start arrived for no one had bothered to fix on a common starting place. One section congregated at "Bottom o't town", alongside "t' Donkey Hoil"- a stone building standing in Water Street just off Island Square, and which was shortly afterwards to be the site of Elisha Harrison's shop. The other main body gathered at "Dorcken Nook" which was no doubt the starting place for the brass band, behind the White Lion, as here the band used to have a hut which they used for practice sessions.

They most probably joined forces at t'Bull Ring, where later on the Wesleyan and Baptist processions met up at Earby Feast days, at the bottom of Catgate, opposite the old doctor's surgery, and the brass band of course led the way from there, with John O'Ned's and his friends close behind. Then followed another village band, playing a motley assortment of drums, concertinas, brass pipes, and anything closely resembling a musical instrument, including some that could not by any stretch of the imagination be described as such, pan lids for cymbals and washboards rubbed with a metal spoon. The only important thing was to make as much noise as possible regardless of tune.

Behind them came the "pace eggers" (pace egging was a custom when the boys of the village went round begging eggs or money on Easter eve. A pasch-egg was an egg stained by boiling and given to children at Easter for rolling down hill), riding on horses and donkeys; some with hands tied behind, and a plate of suet dumplings in front, each trying for the prize to be won by the one who finished his dumpling first. Some were dressed in costumes of all colours of the rainbow; others just had jackets and trousers turned inside out, anything to be different and gay. The tallest man was seated on the smallest donkey, one leg dangling in a white stocking while the other was clothed in black. All were as happy as sandboys as they frolicked and marlicked with each other, with the bystanders urging them on. Behind these revellers, as if following the Pied Piper of Hamelin, came all the town's children, as happy as only children can be.

They all paraded through the village, up Catgate around the village green and down Muck Street, and then over Keb Bridge up Grelpit to Top o't Town near the Red Lion. On they went their merry way up the hill at Mill Brow and down to Sally Clough (Brigstones), making a final turn at Birch Hall and up Dark Lane (it could be walked up then). At the gate leading on to the moor stood Dicky Webb, the landlord of the Red Lion; there could be no trade for him in the village that afternoon, and he had been deputed to collect admission fees of 2d a head from all and sundry. He found himself having difficulty with one person however. "Swaggering Dick", a well known hawker from Colne, was arguing

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that he should be allowed on free with his stall as he claimed he was an essential part of the day's entertainment. He was a regular stallholder in Earby, selling brandy snaps and oatcakes, and his usual stand in the village was by the side of the old village green, opposite the White Lion.

At last, when all were assembled around John's sturdy but hardly imposing structure, the proceedings were opened by Sagar a' Bobs, who began by saying he hoped that the hens now busy pecking round his feet would lay well, aye lay golden eggs if that were possible. May they never want for owt, and may their owner never want for owt either.

After that there were more speeches in similar light-hearted vein. Owd Faddy, Will O'Though, Owd Sefton, Ned O'Dicks, Owd Boos (from Stanridge), and many other Earby characters all said their piece and were applauded in turn.

Most of the inhabitants of Earby, as in other villages, were more commonly known by a nickname and about 10 years previous to our story, Rev (late Canon) Laurence Morris became rector of Thornton church, having purchased the advowson from the Lord of the Manor. He recalled that shortly after his arrival in the village, he wished to find a man called John Wilkinson, and asking the first person he met as he entered Earby from Thornton, received the following reply - "Which John Wilkinson do you mean? - John O'Peggy's, John O'Phyllis's, John O' Dick's, John O'Ned's, John O'Nicky's, John O'Bessy's, John O'Bett's or Quart (quiet) John". The man was quite deliberately teasing the new rector as it was said in a droll drawling country manner, and there was a merry twinkle in his eye as he reeled off the names. The rector enjoyed the joke enormously and it was one he loved to relate. When he told the Bishop of Ripon on his next visitation to the parish, the Bishop was equally delighted and insisted he told it again.

But we digress: back to our tale. The speeches over, Martha and her friends took charge, busying themselves serving teas. There were tarts, rhubarb pies and apple pastries, not to forget baum cakes, a well known Earby speciality, with enough for all, and all were well

SOCIETY ANNUAL DINNER

Make a note in your diary that the annual dinner will be held on Saturday February 25th 2006 at Auntie Emily's Tea Room. Details and booking form with the Winter edition of your Chronicles

and truly satisfied. It was now time for the games to be organised for the children, and some sort of order grew out of chaos, as they had a rare time on that steeply sloping moorside, with the infant Earby beck rippling merrily along barely two hundred yards away, all but hidden in the bottom of the valley. Donkey and pony races took place, and more than one rider was thrown over the head of the unwilling beast, to the great amusement of all. Among the riders were two men known as Bill and Harry Coventry because they were mechanics who had come from that town to set up machines in the old mill in New Road. Another pair were the tailor brothers, with the nicknames of Priest and Needles (James and Billy Briden). In one of the games the contestants had to eat hot

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dumplings from a greasy plate without knife and fork. The contestants stood on rising ground, behind the 'en 'oil in full view of the merry throng, their plates resting on a stone ledge or shelf. Many a young man and maiden wandered away by themselves and formed friendships and relationships, some never to be broken.

To properly round off the proceedings a photo of John O'Ned's and Martha was taken. They stood rather self-consciously together, everyone looking on in awe, for hardly any of them had seen a camera before, after all it was only about 10 years before that the first daguerreotype had been invented. Martha was wearing her best fine cashmere shawl on her shoulders and her dress was protected by a crisp white apron. John, as befitted the occasion, wore his best suit. In the fall of the evening, dancing took place to the enlivening strains of the brass band, but at last the setting sun cast a red glow over the landscape in the direction of Pendle Hill, and warned them that it was time for home. So to finish off the day's events a vote of thanks was proposed to all for the simple pleasures and innocent enjoyments given and received that day. The band struck up the last tune, God Save the Queen and when that was finished Martha and her Baptist friends set up the

THE SOCIETY

Meets at the Community Centre, New Road, EARBY on the 3rd Tuesday of the month at 7.30 p.m. (except for outside visits).

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION

£5.00
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Overseas £11.00

Contents:

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BURNLEY AND DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY LOCAL HISTORY DAY "ECHOES FROM THE PAST"

Saturday 26th November

Speakers - Dr Alan Crosby - "Writing Down Memories"
Bill Turner - "Mary Hindle and her Transportation to Australia"
North West Sound Archive "Recording History in the 21st Century" -
Including workshop

Cost £10 including buffet lunch - Details from Margaret Jones 01282 773186

SOCIETY PROGRAMME

Tuesday 18th October	Dennis Cairns "Up the Dales Slowly"
Tuesday 15th November	Marion Smith "It Shouldn't Happen to a Nurse"
Tuesday 20th December	To be arranged

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NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

Don't forget this is your newsletter. Send in articles, photos and any other anecdotes, so that we get as wide a flavour of Earby & District, yes that means Thornton in Craven, Kelbrook, Sough, Harden and Salterforth as well.

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