

## The History of Earby.

A talk by Clarice Carlisle

Good afternoon ladies. First I must apologise for not being able to be with you on a previous occasion.

Then perhaps I had better explain how I came to take an interest in local history. Many years ago during an inspection by H.M. Inspectors, I was taking 11 year olds, following the scheme which had been presented to me, on the British Commonwealth (Australia to be precise). When the lesson was over, the inspector, to my surprise, began to question the class on their village, & naturally, with their minds on distant lands, the answers were anything but enlightening. Turning to me she said “why not start nearer home & teach them about their own surroundings?”

This view having been conveyed to the boss, the outcome was that I was asked to scrap the old scheme and prepare a new one. No amount of arguing was any use. H M I's must be humoured.

I didn't know much about the historical background & what is more didn't know where to find out. It must be elementary because the children were only in their first year at the school. Nevertheless they proved to be an enthusiastic lot of children & helped to collect information from all sources. I visited the library but with very little result. Arthur Mee's West Riding contributed one paragraph.

Obviously whoever came here on Mee's behalf had not been impressed, neither were all his facts correct. The grammar school, built in 1594, is 16<sup>th</sup> century not 17<sup>th</sup> century neither at that time was it a dwelling. (Clock now on works at Brown & Pickles. Chapel Sold.) Next I went to see Mrs. Hartley, widow of Mr. John Hartley and she lent me a scrap book containing cuttings of articles written by Mr. Hartley for the Pioneer or Craven Herald. From these I obtained quite a lot of information & I am grateful to the late Mr. Hartley who must have carried out quite a lot of research. Later I came across, quite by accident, a rough manuscript of a book written by Mr. Lindley, school master in the village from 1885-1920. He took quite an interest in the history of Earby, which, when he came, was of course much smaller than it is now. This proved invaluable. My parents were able to give me help, having been born in 1874 & 1873 respectively. From the Council Offices I obtained old maps, plans, records of population, births, deaths, weather, local government etc. & gradually built up a scheme to last a year. Obviously in the time at my disposal this will have to be a very brief account. Unfortunately very little of this relates to Salterforth, though much of the same conditions probably prevailed.

We know that people lived here in the stone, iron & bronze ages, because from time to time relics of these times are found in the ground. There is also evidence of Roman occupation, though on a small scale. People have tried to excavate camps, though without much success, the most extensive work many years ago at Elslack. Traces of Roman roads can be found – Brogden Lane from Barnoldswick to join the Gisburn – Blacko road. One from Thornton to Booth Bridge, then over the moors, are examples.

The name Earby (originally Eurebi) is probably Danish, Euri meaning a stream, and “by” a common Danish ending, meaning “the village by the stream”. This district was part of

the Danelaw which Alfred gave to the Danes so as to keep the southern kingdom free from attack. He was not interested in the north, as it was considered to be rough & uncivilised.

When William the Conqueror conquered Britain in 1066, Yorkshire was the last part of the country to resist, & it wasn't until 1069 that it was finally subdued & as a punishment the whole of the county from the Humber to the Tees was laid waste; the inhabitants either fled to the mountains of the West or were killed (100,000) are said to have been slaughtered. It was a long time before the ground was tilled again. This part of Craven was given to Norman Roger Porteirri & it is his name which appears in the Domesday book in 1085. The entry, a copy of which can be seen in Whitaker's History of Craven tells how many carucates of land he owned to be taxed, a carucate being the amount of land a team of oxen could plough in a year. Earby was then part of the Manor of Thornton, and remained for centuries the smaller & less important village. The Manor House was at Thornton, more or less where the farm stands now, & of course the Church was built there in the 13<sup>th</sup> Century. The Manor House existed until 1644 when it was destroyed by the Royalists under Prince Rupert & never rebuilt. Loyalties in those days were divided, Sir William Lister M.P. who was Lord of the Manor at that time supported the Parliament, while Skipton was a Royalist stronghold. In a skirmish at Thornton soldiers were killed and buried at Thornton and on his way back from Lancashire to Marston Moor the Manor was attacked again and burnt. Later Sir William received compensation from parliament of £1500 for the loss of his property & the loss of his son, killed fighting for Parliament.

Earby remained for many centuries a small hamlet, the houses mainly on the higher ground, the reason being, because the beck without the present restraining walls would be liable to flood. Thus we find old cottages up Mill Brow, so called because the mill where people took their corn to grind was situated near the waterfall. Also up Stoneybank, Riley Street, Aspen Lane (which is gradually being demolished), Green End. Riley Street was known as Cattlegate, the road by which people drove their cows for free pasturage on the village green. It is now abbreviated to Catgate & is still called so by old residents.

Other cottages were built along the old road by Bawhead. When I was a child we used to play among the ruins of these houses, but nothing remains now. This road came over from Thornton, across a bridge above the Waterfall, into Mill Brow, along Mill Lane, (now impassable) then across Stoney Bank, along by Moor Hall to Kelbrook and on to Foulridge and Colne. The new road was not finished until 1827 and was a turnpike road with tolls at Foulridge and Thornton until 1879. The old milestone in the Park was formally on this old road. Welbury Holgate, who took a great interest in local history, found it forming part of a stile and took it to his garden & attached a sundial to it. Later it was brought down to its present place.

The village green was in the centre of the village as it was then, bounded by the stream, Aspen Lane, Riley Street leading to Green End. In 1681 the White Lion Inn was built on the edge of the green, and would do good business when travelling fairs came or local festivals like May Day were held.

The Bull ring was situated opposite what is now Dr. Morrisons surgery. This was a common sport in early days. A chain was attached to a ring in the ground, connected to a ring in the Bulls nose & then it was set upon by bull dogs which were noted for their powers to hang on. The bull defended itself by butting with its head & kicking. It was argued that the bull must be bated to make the meat more tender to eat.

The old tythe barn where people had to take their contributions of grain, eggs, chickens etc. instead of payment of taxes, was where Earlham Terrace now stands because the ground was known as Thurlham Tythe Barn Croft.

Where Rushton Avenue stands and the waste land opposite was once a lake or pond. – hence local name Tramire derived from Tarn Mere, – both meaning a pond. No wonder the builders had trouble. The foundations slipped and the row was nicknamed Earthquake Row. – The trouble seems to have been remedied, but the land around is still swampy.

Earby was fortunate to have a school built at a cost of £100 in 1594 by money subscribed by Mr. Robert Windle. He left money invested to yield £20 per year to pay the School Master. Education was not free, so only few children would attend. In fact for a long period it seems to have fallen into disuse, but with the opening of the railway in 1848, and the first factory in 1839, seems to have flourished again. Education became compulsory in 1872 & at that time Riley Street School was opened. Still children had to pay School Pence (in my parent's time 3d for young children, 4d for older ones). This was quite heavy as they also had to provide their own slates & writing materials. In 1890 School Pence was abolished and School Boards were formed. New Road School was opened in 1896 and was known as the Board School. Since then of course as the population increased other schools were needed – Alder Hill in 1910, Spring Field 1939 and of course you all know what the position is today, only two schools remain in use. Prior to 1872 the majority of children depended on the Sunday Schools to teach them to read and write, but many went through life unable to do either. Today?

At the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century we know from the record of payments of Poor Relief, that the people in this district were very poor. This was a nationwide problem due to the aftermath of the Napolionic War, but more to the Enclosures Act. Instead of land being common to all, it began to be enclosed & turned into more compact farms, & people who could afford for land, enclosed it with fences and walls. The poor who had hitherto cultivated a strip of land and grazed the odd cow, pigs or poultry on common ground were left destitute & either became labourers or tried to eke a living by hand loom weaving or accepted poor relief.

It was at this time when help was most needed that a family called Bracewell came to Earby. They enlarged a house at the top of what is now New Road (then a private carriageway with gates top and bottom) & built the first cotton mill in 1839 on land where now Prestons garages stand. So people turned from agriculture to industry. Later in 1852 they built Victoria Mill for spinning and weaving and from that time Earby began to grow. Rows of houses were built and many bear dates in the 1880's and 1890's when up

to 1908 (Brook Shed) all the factories were built and all for manufacture of cotton goods, spinning at first also but later just weaving. All with the exception of Spring Mill stand near the streams because of the necessity for water for the engines which were driven by steam. The population increased by leaps and bounds from about 750 in 1743 to 1500 in 1875 & nearly 6000 in 1909 when the Earby Urban District Council was formed. Until about 1884 the Bracewells virtually controlled Earby. As well as the mills they bought up many farms and were indeed the real squires and looked up to as such for the livelihood of most people depended on them. In 1884 there was a disastrous fire at Victoria Mill and they left to live in America but other people continued the cotton industry. Now of course, other industries have taken over and modernised the old buildings and Earby is no longer purely a cotton town.

#### Religion.

Until towards the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the only church was Thornton Church, but at this time people began to be influenced by the non-conformist movements. John Wesley preached in Colne, but to my knowledge never came to Earby, but is said to have visited the Inghamite Chapel in Salterforth.

People both Methodist and Baptist began to hold services in private houses, but in 1821 the Baptists built a chapel near Jim Lane, (now called Chapel Square). They baptised people in the stream which flowed behind the church. But of course, as the population increased this was too small, so in 1860 the present Chapel was built on part of the village green. The Wesleyans also erected their first chapel in 1821 – a large room over two cottages at Stoopes Hill. Access was by a flight of stone steps at the end of the building. In 1840n it was enlarged and the cottages underneath were utilized and half the upper room became a gallery. By 1861 this had also become too small, so a new chapel was built at a cost of £2000 to accommodate 400 people. The old chapel served as a Sunday school till 1892 when the Wesleyan School was built. These buildings were also part of the old green. The old chapel was converted into 3 cottages which became alms houses. Now all are demolished but the site can still be seen opposite Spring Mill. The social life of the village was centred around the churches. The Church built 1910, before that a tin Church near Armoride.

Bracewells gave money to help build both these churches. They also gave an Institute which was pulled down to make room for the Coronation Hall and Liberal Club (1911) which is now the county library. They provided a cricket field which was between their first mill and the stream. They may have been autocratic, but they were certainly responsible for Earby's growth. Thornton has remained a small village because apart from the quarry and a bobbin factory at Booth Bridge, no industries were set up there.

In recent years great changes have taken place in the village and our way of life has changed, but whether all for the better is questionable.

Transcribed by John Turner