

Earby Sunday School Jubilee

School Days of 50 Years Ago

Reminiscences of the Pulpit and Pew by Local Stalwarts

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Mr Edmund Lund

Mr J Lindley

Redolent reminiscences were a feature of the jubilee gathering on Saturday of the Earby Wesleyan Sunday School, celebrating the 50 years 1872-1922. Re-union messages marked the anniversary of this flourishing Sunday School, and gave an added zest to the cheery optimism which prevails amongst the leaders and strengthened the faith of the younger workers. The recital by various

speakers of the early work, the experiences, the persistence displayed making the school a power for good, together with the testimony by many of the good received, displayed at once the beauty of the cause to hand and exhibited the beneficial results

#### Looking Back

The celebrations opened on Saturday afternoon with a commemoration service in the Church. There was a large congregation with visitors from all parts of the country, including Watford, Doncaster, West Hartlepool, Harrogate, Accrington, Burnley, Nelson and Colne. An interesting visitor was Mrs W H Boyd of Ingleton, daughter of the late Mr S Leach, the first schoolmaster of the Earby School (which was a day school as well as a Sunday School) in 1872. Rev. R S Brealy conducted the service and preached a powerful sermon on the text "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses", in which he dwelt on the unrecognised influences of life and their reward.

#### The evening

Meeting in the church was a crowded gathering presided over by Mr James Moorhouse of Colne, who in his opening remarks, expressed his pleasure at meeting again many he had known for a number of years. He mentioned Mr Edmund Lund, who gave him his first lessons in English grammar. Mr Lund had asked him that afternoon if he had done him any good, and he replied that he had and that he was still learning. He remembered Mr Lund going to Colne for examinations for the local preacher's plan. Earby was famous for local preachers, and when he was a boy there were eight or nine. There ought to be 18 or 19 now when the population was considered. He recalled the names of Edmund Lund, Thomas Smith, James Brown, John Taylor, and they could say of them all they were all good men of honoured memory. The man who influenced him most was James Brown, whose addresses from the superintendent's desk some of them would remember. After James Brown came John Taylor, who was one of their great local preachers. It was he who made what in his (the speaker's) opinion was the most profound appeal he ever heard from that rostrum, and the text on which he based his sermon was "Now there stood by the Cross of Jesus, his mother and his mother's sister, and Mary the wife of Cleophas and Mary Magdalene...and the disciples standing by whom he loved". He remembered now the influence of the preacher's sermon on his mind for it came with tremendous power to him. "Stand by the Cross", that was the supreme duty of life. Mr Brealy that afternoon in his sermon was speaking about men who were not renowned. The local preachers of his early days were not renowned, they were labouring men and seemed to live commonplace lives, but they were not commonplace men. A passage came to his mind while Mr Brealy was preaching and it was the closing sentence in George Eliot's "Middlemarch" which stated that the growing good of the world was quite as dependent on unhistorical acts, and that things were not bad with us or as ill with us as they might be, was half owing to the number who lived faithfully in life and rested in unvisited tombs.

#### From the President

Brief addresses of welcome were given by the Sunday School Superintendents Messrs. H Lumb and J W Knight. Following were read the letters from absent friends and amongst those who sent greetings were Miss Bailey (St Kew Cornwall), Mrs Lawson (Forest Row Sussex), Signaller Rennie Clough (Salisbury Plain), Miss C Green (Wisbeach), Miss Teasdale (Pickering), Mr & Mrs John Pawson and Mrs E Pawson (Morecambe), Miss F Dalziel ( Nottingham), Mr & Mrs John Lund (Neath), Mr E Lund Junior (city Treasurer Carlisle), Mr A Varley (Town Clerk Colne).

The President of the Wesleyan Conference (Rev John W Wakerley) writing from Bury St Edmunds said "Permit me to share your joy in the retrospect of fifty years of fruitful toil for the young and the far-reaching and indefinable influences which have resulted. I am glad that you still sing the old hymns that carry unction with them. We are losing much in many places because we do not give all people an opportunity to praise the Lord. May your celebrations be crowned with richest blessings and result in a new consecration of the older workers and the enlistment of many fresh toilers".

Mr Hugh Currer Smith's 'I Remember'

Another letter which was received with enthusiasm came from Mr Hugh Currer Smith, Spring Gardens, Didsbury. It took quite a time to complete the reading, for the congregation punctuated the written recollections with acclamation.

**(A large section is omitted from this transcription due to a rip in the very old newspaper cutting)**

He continued: Earby Worthies

I saw the Rev. Peter MacKenzie take off the first sod of the new chapel. I think John Wilkinson and John Taylor filled the barrow. MacKenzie was in the Burnley circuit then and Mrs Bracewell got him over when the chapel was opened. Mr W H Whitehead of Manchester was organist and I was appointed organ blower, a most important job. The blower's position was in front of the organ and besides the player. During the service I was so interested in watching the player that I let the wind out. At the close of the service Mr Whitehead patted me on the shoulder and said I had done a very good job.

We had a busy time taking off the soil for the new school. Mr Bracewell sent horses and carts and there was a small army of fillers of various ability, some good, some only middling, but all doing their best in filling the carts and clearing the ground. Most of the workers of that period have passed away.

I have been told that Edward Lund, Thomas Smith, James Clegg and John Hobson all were placed on the Colne Plan at the same time and remained for 40 years, a record at that time. The younger generation will not remember these men Edmund Lund, Thomas Smith, John Taylor, James Brown, John Duxbury, Benjamin Parker, Henry Brown, G P Hartley and many others, but they did their fair share of the work in their time. We have two of their sons taking part in the reunion, Rev F E Brown and Rev John Parker, worthy sons of worthy sires. . I have now come to a period that many will remember better than myself, so close my letter by wishing every success to the anniversary.

Peeps at the Past

Mr Edmund Lund (Embsay) one of the old worthies came in for a great reception and his remarks were listened to with great interest. Giving an account of the Sunday School during the time he was connected with it, he said his family came to Earby from Thornton in 1858. The school opened at 9 o'clock in the morning. There was a bell on top of the old chapel and it used to ring a short time before the assembly of the school. At 10.30 there was a short interval of ten minutes, and to prevent the boys running away they had to leave their caps in school. There were three services for public worship 10.30, 2.30 and 5.30. There was only one small school at that time, and at it most of the children in the village got their education. Starting as a scholar in the bottom class, he passed through all the classes and became a teacher, and was afterwards made secretary of the school. When he was secretary he had to mark the register for the whole school, and going from class to class he got to know every teacher and every scholar intimately. He had found part of the old register from June to December 1865 and the superintendents then were John Pickles, Thomas

Wilkinson and James Brown; there were seven classes of boys with 85 scholars and nine classes of girls with 95 scholars, a total of 180 scholars and 32 teachers. The teachers attended alternate weeks. There was another class called "the select class" but they had no record of that class. The teachers of it were Edmund Lund, Thomas Smith, James Brown and John Taylor. In 1863 the Earby temperance Society was formed by scholars and teachers of the Wesleyan School and Baptist Sunday School. At that time teetotalism was a very unpopular thing, especially amongst the old people, and there were people who thought it impossible to live a healthy life without drink. However, the young people put their heads together and a strong Temperance Society was formed. He signed the pledge then and had kept it ever since. In 1865 he was told he must go on the plan as a local preacher. He was never asked if he had a "call" to preach, or if he had the qualifications; there was no choice in the matter, he had to go. Their's not to reason why, their's not to make reply but to go and try. He concluded by saying he left Earby in 1873 and he had stuck to the Sunday School in various places as well as he could, but having so many engagements as a local preacher, he had found it impossible to work in the school. He had always been happiest in the Sunday School work and he wished Earby a very great success in its future work.

#### Mr Moorhouse Trout Tickling

Commenting on the old names mentioned the churchman recalled that on one occasion he went with James Brown to Mount Pleasant at Trawden to preach, and coming home he confided to Mr Brown that he was rather afraid of a pompous looking man who had been present. James dismissed his fears by saying "Tha needna be frettened of him, he canna preach for toffee".

Mr J Lindley (Doncaster) in a reminiscent speech, told of his early recollections of Mr Moorhouse, and related how he and a lady were taken for a walk and Mr Moorhouse showed them how trout were caught in the Earby beck. Stripping off his coat and rolling p his shirt sleeves, Mr Moorhouse lay on a rock and caught three trout, and when they were admiring them, the lady asked " Are those red herrings?" Another story was about he and Mr Moorhouse going together to the New Ship for several years to preach the "fire and light" and he remarked that Mr Moorhouse took the "light" in the morning and he attended to the stoking operations in the evening. He went on to emphasise that he considered the supreme work of the Church was the spiritual side He referred to his happy association with the work in Earby in the past, and said they ought to feel encouraged by the large number of souls which had been brought into the Kingdom of God.

Short addresses were given by Rev F E, Brown DSO (West Hartlepool) a former scholar in the school; Mrs Proctor and Miss A Haworth

During the evening a reunion choir conducted by Mr J Foulds, gave the anthems "Send out thy light" and "Radiant morn". Mr R Pawson was at the organ. The services on Sunday were conducted by Rev F E Brown and in the morning he preached to a good congregation on bearing the Cross and its rewards. In the evening he delivered a striking sermon on the parable of the Good Samaritan and neighbourliness. At the musical service in the afternoon Mr A Mounsey presided and spoke in a reminiscent vein. Musical items were given by Miss E Hartley who sang "How lovely are Thy dwellings" and Mr T Tattersall who sang "Nearer my Gog to Thee"