

BASLOW CHAPEL

1796—1936

Interesting Historical Reminiscences

Page 1 of 2

Methodism came to the little village of Baslow one hundred and forty three years ago—on the wings of a storm! One of Wesley's preachers, the Rev. James Buckley, when quite a young man was appointed to the Nottingham Circuit. His parents lived at Oldham. As he rode to see them on one occasion, the thunder clouds began to gather as he got near to Baslow, and thinking to stay the night in that village, he asked the "Toll Bar" keeper where he could find lodgings for himself and his horse. However, the "Toll Bar" keeper told him there was no room for them in Baslow! In disappointment he turned to ride further, but seeing a lady standing in the doorway of a house, he determined to again ask for lodgings. She, also, said there was no place for him. The preacher had an inspiration and asked if there were any Methodists in the neighborhood? The lady, looking keenly at him, said: "If you are a Methodist preacher, my son, Ralph, would be glad to see you as he is inclined that way."

This was the beginning of Methodist hospitality at "Penistone Cottage," which continued until a few years ago.

When Mr. Buckley went on his journey in the morning, he agreed to call back at Baslow and hold a service in Mr. Penistone's granary (this building still stands). Thus began the cause of Methodism in Baslow. Preachers came over from Sheffield to help with the services, until a chapel was built.

THE CHAPEL

Mr. Ralph Penistone was the leader in this matter; and purchased land on which was a house and a shop, in which at one time "Felt Hats" were made and carted to Hyde (Hyde hats were famous); These buildings were demolished and the chapel was opened by the Rev. James Buckley in 1796. The indenture shows that the land was conveyed to the trustees for the sum of £200. The land was bought from Humphrey and Robert Rowland, and had been in the possession of Paul Sidebottom and Valentine Ashton. The nine trustees of the new Chapel indenture, dated 1795, were:— Anthony Thompson, of Whiteley Wood, merchant; Abraham Hill, of Whiteley Wood, saw maker, both in the Parish of Sheffield; John Heald, of Offerton, yeoman; Samuel Ibbotson, of Hirst in the County of Derby, yeoman; William Ibbotson, of Hathersage, yeoman; Abraham Cooper, of Eyam, and Peter Merrill, of Eyam, flax dresser; Matthew Andrew, of Eyam, miner; and Ralph Penistone, yeoman

The Trust Deed was enrolled in His Majesty's Court of Chancery on the 8th day of April in the year of our Lord 1796.

This chapel, opened in the 36th year of George III, looks very little different to-day. The gallery has been removed and stained glass windows put in, and a vestry added; in which Rev. Henry Haigh translated a portion of the Bible when he was staying at Baslow Hydro.

A Reform Chapel was built, in 1857, which was later made into dwelling-houses behind the "Alma."

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Page 2 of 2

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL.—FREE EDUCATION

In 1822 the Methodists erected a Sun- day School, “by voluntary donations, and subscriptions of well disposed persons,” as a school for every Lord’s Day, for the charitable and gratuitous instruction of poor children of every sect and denomination. A committee of no less than five persons was to be elected annually, to manage* and conduct the school; these persons must have the approval of the minister. This school stands as of yore !

The ground floor was the schoolroom, where the children were taught reading and writing, and the upper room was for religious instruction. There were very many children who, had the privilege of this “free education,” and historians speak of the improvement in manners where such schools could be found! Boys and girls were taken to chapel on alternate Sundays, as there was not room [!] for them all., Two quaint hymn sheets are preserved for 1823 which evidently show native talent!

The Trustees of the Chapel bought the land in 1837 (probably rent had been paid before). The land was bought from Mr. John Lees, of Beeley Hill Top, yeoman; the price was £7 10s. This was part of a certain parcel of land belonging to him, and contained in length 14 yards and 18 inches, in breadth 10 yards and 12 inches, and in the whole 149 superficial square yards or thereabouts. The parties to this transaction were Thomas Burgoine, of Edensor, Joseph Andrew, Grindleford Bridge, John Vickers, senr., Calton Lees, John Vickers the Younger, Thomas Gardom Farmer, William Shillito, Joseph Riley, yeoman, George Sheldon, mason, Thomas Hallett, of Heathey Lee, Charles Morton, Luke Bridge, John Macdonald, James Froggatt, Curbar..

New Trustees were appointed in 1844, and an indenture for School is dated 1865. This was the only school in the village.** There was a charity school at “Stanton Ford which must have had an early foundation. There are records of it in 1720, and in 1787 it consisted of a schoolroom with two chambers over it, in which the master resided. There was about Three acres of land attached to the school; '10 boys were taught, four from Baslow and Bubnell, two from Curbar, three from Calver, and one from Froggatt.'

In 1839 a school was built at Baslow near the church, but taken down for churchyard extensions. The present village school was built in 1875.

When Baslow Chapel was opened, Wesley had only been dead eight years. This was the balloting year for the Militia, and Baslow had to provide a certain number of soldiers and sailors for the King’s! service, so there were quite a lot of events taking place in this year.

The Chapel and Sunday School stand as memories to men and women of character, who knew the meaning of sacrifice and joy of service.

H.J.N.

(From the Derbyshire Times)