

1. The Holgate Grammar School, Hemsworth



From the School Magazine 1952

The Holgate Grammar School was situated in Market Street, Hemsworth. It is now the Roman Catholic Presbytery.

The Grammar School was founded on October 24th, 1546 by Robert Holgate, 59th Archbishop of York. He was authorised by Henry VIII to found two other Grammar Schools, at York and Old Malton. Two years later the Archbishop prescribed rules and ordinances for the School at Hemsworth. He endowed it with property to the value of £24 per annum.

In 1861. these rules were altered. The school received an annual grant of £300 from the funds of Hemsworth Hospital. The maximum stipend for the Headmaster was increased to £220 p.a., and for the Second Master £80 p.a. The fees for the school were:

Boys over the age of 10 not more than £1/10/0 per quarter.

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Six boys were elected by the Trustees of the school to be educated at either the Parish School or the Grammar School, free of charge. These free scholars were the sons of poor men living in the parishes of Hymsworth, Felkirke, Southekirkbye, Ackworthe, Royston and Wragbie.

All printed books, papers, pens, pencils etc. were to be provided by the parents, unless, in the opinion of the Trustees, the parents were not able to pay for them.

The instruction to be given in the Grammar School included Religious Instruction, Greek, Latin and French, Land Surveying, Geography, Arithmetic, Writing and Mathematics, Drawing and Designing, Book-keeping, General English Literature and Composition, History, and the Principles of Chemistry and Physical Science.

The scholars were to be taken to the Parish Church every Sunday morning by the head.

The Headmaster was allowed to take in Boarding Scholars. Accommodation was provided at the school for twenty such scholars and twenty Day Scholars.

In 1877 there were only ten boys in the school, including the free scholars. Because of this, In 1881 the Charity Commissioners decided to move the school to Pontefract. But Pontefract could not comply with the conditions, so, in 1883, it was decided to remove the School to Barnsley. The School Trustees resolved to oppose this Removal Scheme because there were now 36 boys in the school.

A report of the Charity Commissioners recommends that the Holgate Grammar School, Hemsworth, be removed to Barnsley as soon as practicable, and the site and buildings be sold.

This scheme was put before the House of Commons and the House of Lords on March 18th, 1885. Unless within two months Her Majesty expressed a wish to withhold her consent, the scheme would be put into operation.

The School was shortly afterwards transferred to Barnsley. The present Hemsworth Grammar School was opened in 1921.

Authorities.

1. Old Typescript (origin unknown).

2. Management and Regulation Scheme for Holgate G.S. June 27th, 1861.

3. Charity Commission Report No. 499. March 4th, 1885.

Ainge, J. A. VA, Guest

2. The Hermit of Hampole



From the School Magazine 1957

How many of us have passed through Hampole unaware of a stone, rectangular cave built into the steep side of a wooded slope, almost touching on the Great North Road? Or, if we have noticed it, how many of us are aware of its history? The fact is that this cave, as far back as the early fourteenth century, was the dwelling of the Hermit of Hampole, a certain Richard Rolle.

Richard Rolle has been put down in history as “the father of English Mysticism”. He was born at Thornton-le-Dale, not far from York, probably in the year 1285, although the exact date is not known. His parents were lowly farming people, Richard being their second or third son. Facts about his boyhood are vague, but Richard appears to have been very interested in learning, certainly very intelligent, and taught himself the essentials of reading and writing under the guidance of the clergy and travelling priests with whom he liked to converse. At an early age he left Yorkshire to continue his studies at Oxford, but when he reached the age of nineteen he decided upon a religious vocation and left Oxford, to become for a time, himself a travelling priest. When he returned to Yorkshire, he found as many of the travelling priests in Northern England did, a rich landowner to be his patron, and settled on the estate of the Dalton family, where many of his early works were composed. Richard Rolle must have been one of the first people to write in English, and his writings influenced religious life in general for generations after his death. His prime work was the translation of the Scriptures, but he illuminated psalms and wrote prayers that are used in the English Churches of today. Until a few years ago, it was supposed that most of the writings contained in the “Book of Conscience” were the work of Richard Rolle, but the latest theories are that this is not authentic. Frequently, his works have been copied and imitated, and his teachings were widely acknowledged.

After living in Richmond for a short period he finally settled at Hampole as a hermit although he did not entirely seclude himself until the last years of his life when he contracted the plague. It was in these circumstances then, that Richard Rolle died - September 29th. 1349.

Many believe that his tomb lies underneath the floor of his cave, and this may well be, but the only genuine evidence is that the hermit is buried at Hampole. The people of the time regarded Richard Rolle as a Saint, and there are reports of miracles happening at his tomb, much elaborated by time. It was expected that after his death he would be canonised, and this was an especial wish of the Clergy of the time. On the anniversary of his death for years afterwards, a pilgrimage was made to his cave, and a service held in honour of him. The route taken by the pilgrims came to be known as the “Pilgrim’s Way”, and, though now only a rough track, the route can be followed from Brodsworth into Hampole. The remains of one of two crosses placed along the route are also to be found.

Therefore, when next you pass along this busy main road, stop for a moment and walk for a few yards up a narrow footpath, branching out from the road. And there, hidden by tall trees, the opening partially covered over by shrubs, you will find a stone entrance, which, if you enter, you will find penetrates far back into the bank side, and you will be on the threshold of a hermitage long since forgotten by men, but remembered in history as the dwelling of the “father of English Mysticism”.

Joan Martin. U.6.A. (Holgate)

3. Hemsworth Schools in the 1830s



From the School Magazine 1958

A great deal can be learnt of nineteenth century England from the directories of the period. For example, Whyte’s Directory of Yorkshire for 1838 gives a wealth of information about the Hemsworth area, mentioning particularly the types of school then available in the district and illustrating the main features of the educational facilities at that time, from which we may draw interesting comparisons with our own system.

There were few schools, and those were unevenly distributed. The parishes of Hemsworth, Ackworth, Felkirk, Royston and South Kirkby could total only seven schools and one Sunday School between them. The school in Felkirk churchyard had to serve South Heindley, Havercroft with Cold Heindley, Shafton and Brierley with Grimethorpe, while Ackworth had three.

Before 1839 there was little state-aided education, but there were such voluntary organisations as the National Society, founded by Dr. Bell, which built schools at Featherstone in 1820 on land given by Sir E.M. Winn, and at Wombwell in 1826, while it took over the charity school at Pontefract in 1816, enlarging it in 1830. Besides the 'National' schools there were 'British' schools. Two were built at Ackworth in 1831 and 1833, and in Pontefract the Methodist school room was used, until a theatre was purchased for four hundred pupils.

Schools were not dependent on the state but on charity, and were usually maintained by the interest on legacies invested in property. Felkirk school received rents from property at Worsborough and Havercroft. Mary Lewther's school at High Ackworth received a rental of forty-four pounds and the interest on seven hundred invested in five per cent shares.

Schooling was not free, except for some poor children paid for by charity. Earl Fitzwilliam paid the master of Badsworth school ten pounds yearly to teach eight free scholars; at Hooton Pagnall six were taught for the use of the school and the interest on twenty pounds; while at Cudworth seventeen were instructed free for the use of the school and its land, together with three others for the rent of a cottage purchased with thirty-five pounds left in 1796.

Opportunities for further education were few. At Hemsworth Grammar School fees were charged to pay the ushers, and at Pontefract only one boy out of the fourteen was a free scholar from the charity school. There was a scholarship to Cambridge, preferably for a boy from Hemsworth, but candidates from Wakefield and Felkirk were also allowed, While Pontefract, with twelve other schools, was permitted to send a candidate for the Hastings Exhibition to Oxford.

In the charity schools children were taught to read and write. In the Grammar Schools the emphasis was on Latin and Greek. At Hemsworth, extra had to be paid for both English and Arithmetic, but at Royston for Arithmetic only, the quarterly charge being three-and-threepence for the first four rules and six-and-sixpence afterwards. At Ackworth Quaker School boys were also instructed in gardening, and girls in domestic occupations.

Today, every child is obliged to have some kind of education, yet it would appear that in the 1830's many children in the area had little or no schooling. Moreover, today, education is available and free, whereas in the 1830's schools were small in size and number, charging fees at a time when many parents could not afford to pay for such "extras".

Marlene Coughlan U.V1.A. (Holgate)

4. Stephen Cawood's Charity School



From the School Magazine 1959

East Hardwick is a village in Yorkshire which lies midway between two North/South roads-(the A628 Pontefract Road and the A1), at a point east of High Ackworth, and approximately three miles north of Hemsworth. In 1877 there was a crisis in the township of East Hardwick arising from the visit of one of Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools to Stephen Cawood's Charity School. The Inspector visited the school to examine the pupils, but he found only eight out of twenty-seven children presentable for examination. He also found the schoolhouse, yard, classroom and offices unfit for their purpose and not up to the standard required by the Education Board. The trustees of the school withdrew the register and gave the school-mistress two month's notice. The school, however could not be closed permanently, since the trustees were bound to maintain, for ever, a schoolmaster and a free school. Both this school and the Carleton Mixed School were inadequate, so it was suggested that the two schools should unite and form a School Board.

There were three courses open to the parish. They could put the present school premises in order, refurnish the school and pay the schoolmistresses salary, or build a completely new school, or unite with Carleton to form a Board. Under Forster's Education Act of 1870, School Boards could be formed by the ratepayers if they were needed. Most of the ratepayers did not favour a School Board, but those who paid heavier rates did not mind a union with Carleton if a School Board became a necessity.

Following the inspection, several vestry meetings were held and various propositions were put forward. Two of the ratepayers proposed that the present schoolroom should be enlarged and they suggested that the ratepayers should pay half the cost of the enlargement, so long as it did not exceed fifty pounds. Two ratepayers were chosen to represent the township before the School Inspector.

The Inspector informed the two men that under the Public Elementary School Act there was no accommodation for thirty-five children. He said that there was no need for a schoolmaster as well as a schoolmistress for such a small school, and he recommended that the mistresses salary be increased and that the various repairs should be carried out at the school.

Some of the villagers thought that it would be much better for the school if a small fee were charged on a weekly basis, for each scholar in attendance, but this was impossible since a free school had to be maintained there. Eventually a solution was found. It was suggested that the parishioners should raise ten pounds each year, either by rate or voluntary subscription, and pay it to the minister of the parish to assist in the payment of the schoolmistress' salary.

This crisis is an interesting example of the condition of our local schools in the nineteenth century. We can see how reluctant the villagers were to form a School Board. Rather than build a new school and provide better conditions for their children, they preferred to repair the old, inadequate school.

Julia Street LVIA (Guest)

5. Life in South Elmsall 1900



From the School Magazine 1959

At the end of the nineteenth century, the population of South Elmsall was very small and consisted mainly of farming communities. However, some inhabitants were employed at the local brickyard, the quarry or in the malting industry. The people lived in small cottages and on small farms, and South Elmsall was especially proud of its three Elizabethan cottages situated halfway up South Elmsall hill. As in many rural villages of this time, the shopping was concentrated on the village post office, which sold a wide range of goods - from stamps and sweets to gunpowder, used for blasting at the local quarry. In addition, three low-built, whitewashed public houses served as meeting places for the inhabitants and as rest houses for travellers.

The transport of the village was limited, in the main, to the horse and trap or "Shanks' Pony." If farmers wished to take perishable goods to the market at Doncaster, they did so by means of Horse and trap, but cattle were made to undertake the journey "on the hoof." There were two main transport facilities for public needs. Every Monday, a horse-drawn wagonette would set out for Hemsworth pawn shop with goods, returning on the following Saturday when people had received their wages and were able to re-purchase their property. The second kind of transport was provided by the village cab which was used for weddings, funerals and gatherings of an immediate local nature. One of its special functions was to bring people home from the fever hospital, hence its popular name among the local people- "the fever cab."

Communication with the outside world was possible through the telegraph system, but this means was very unreliable at South Elmsall. This can be illustrated by the story told of the gentleman who wanted to send a telegram to Doncaster. A friend of his bet him a small amount of money that he could reach Doncaster before the message. The bet was taken and the man won it easily - he had returned from Doncaster before the message had been received! The fault lay partly with the telegraph boy who received the telegram at Hooton Pagnall, or at South Kirkby Colliery, and delivered it in his own time, with very little understanding of what he had to do. But communication by rail was quite good for this time, as South Elmsall was served by the Doncaster to Leeds line. There were two trains per day in each direction. An attempt was also made to build a branch line direct to Pontefract, but this scheme was never finished.

Before the Education Act of 1891, the cost of sending a child to school was 4d. a week. In South Elmsall the school was held in the Wesleyan School Room, but there were very few regular pupils. An interesting feature of this time, however, was the local method of raising scholarships: these were provided by the tax paid on whisky bought at the three public houses. This was popularly known as "Whisky Money." The first person to receive secondary education in this way was A.M. Wilson's daughter, who passed an entrance examination to Wakefield Girls' High School.

One of the prominent citizens of South Elmsall at this time was a Mr. Turner, who owned the Plough Inn. He was well-known as the Overseer of the Poor - the poor and mentally defective people were a village responsibility. In South Elmsall, poor relief was given "outside" the work-house, although some paupers were admitted into the nearest workhouse, which was at Hemsworth. The Overseer of the Poor came round each week in a pony and trap and handed out the money, which was very meagre.

As a very few people attended school, the illiteracy rate was high in the village. Before Mr. Turner arrived, one newspaper served the entire population, and this was not delivered till mid-afternoon. He initiated a change by insisting on an early morning paper, to be brought on the early train which arrived in South Elmsall at 8a.m. After this, it was a common sight every morning to see the men of the village gathered together in the Plough Inn, listening to Mr. Turner reading the newspaper to them and explaining any difficult points in the text.

Up to 1906, the layout of the village was the same as it had been for centuries - a few cottages and farmhouses surrounded by open fields. Westfield Lane was merely an old cart track which led up to a small wood where the children spent their summer afternoons. But in 1906 this was completely changed - the sinkers began their work. Unlike many other shafts, this one offered few difficulties. By village standards, the master sinker and his men received high wages for their work. Soon, houses began to spring up in Westfield Lane for the sinkers and their families, and Westfield Terrace and Park Terrace were built. At first, the ownership of the Colliery was strictly a family affair; the Addeys played the most important role, giving only their close friends a share in the business. Later, however, the Addeys opened the Colliery to other shareholders. During the first few years the profits were small, but they increased rapidly as time went on.

So a village which had followed the same pattern for centuries - there is a reference to it in the Domesday Book - began its expansion into a more complex unit and burst forth into the thriving mining community we know today, with an approximate population of 10,000.

Kenningham, V.S. LV1A (Talbot) 1959.

6. Twentieth Century Christian



From the School Magazine 1967

Modern society no longer punishes its members for the views they hold. A man is free to think as he will. As Christians we are no longer thrown to the lions or stoned: we are, on the face of it, free to worship our God without fear of reprisal. The persecuted Christian of times past would think our current situation almost ideal, but the truth of the matter is that we too live in a cage, the cage of tolerance.

All the persecution of the mighty Roman Empire could not break the Church. On the contrary, it merely served to strengthen faith and harden resistance - in fact the unity it provoked gave the Church its foundations for future development and stability. The intolerance of succeeding ages has been a perpetual source of strength. Modern Christians, however, have never known persecution.

Just as persecution creates strength so acceptance breeds weakness. Now that we have no real and obvious enemy, we turn our attentions too much inward and split ourselves into groups and will not tolerate our own trivial differences. Disunity in the Church will at some time mean failure because it divides our strength.

Not only have we our own internal problems to deal with, but we have to withstand attacks from outside. It is never very smart to be in the majority and, through acceptance, we are in a kind of majority-position. The smart thing is to be Anti-Christian and attack. This is a particularly attractive proposition because it not only demonstrates that one can see through the folly of the vulgar masses, but it also allows a feeling of release in that it removes the source of troublesome conscience, the fact of God.

So it is that the modern Christian is besieged by people asking questions designed to discredit God and His Church. Any disaster such as that which recently saddened Aberfan provokes an outcry against God. "Why does God allow such things to happen?" Such criticism is in itself difficult enough to answer, but it is made impossible by the attitude of the people who ask it; they are not of the Church and have no interest in the answer. Someone must be to blame, so it may as well be God.

Material wealth and possessions have never been more important than in the twentieth century. In such a society it is easy to put material possessions before spiritual matters, especially when such possessions mean security and self-respect for one's family. This age divides a man in two, fighting to keep a respectable place in society and at the same time, to keep his Christian identity. When a man is divided he is of course, weakened.

Social conditions and official tolerance are combining in their effects to subtly undermine Christian Unity and personal faith. It is, perhaps, harder to be a Christian now than ever before in recent history.

Horsfall, P. A. L6A.